

Crisis

1. If you plan properly for all of your media opportunities, there will be little difference in the way you handle a crisis.
2. Beware the inclination of not talking about a crisis; you'll only make matters worse.
3. The fact that an issue is damaging to you or your company is not a compelling reason to a reporter as to why it should be left out of the story.
4. Reporters are not obligated to your company or stockholders. Reporters are obligated to get the best story and the highest ratings or circulation which, in turn, can be used to generate the highest ad revenues and profits for the media corporation.
5. If you don't talk to the media during a crisis, the media will assume you are hiding something and are guilty of some heinous crime.
6. Legally, you don't have to talk to the media. But legally, the media can quote other people on the record and on a not-for-attribution basis in such a way as to paint you as a monster.
7. The media like to "get" people in a crisis who don't seem forthcoming.
8. If you are the one official spokesperson during a crisis, then be ready to speak at all times.
9. If you are not the official spokesperson during a crisis, then keep your mouth shut at all times.
10. During a crisis it is even more important than usual to get back to reporters before their deadlines.
11. Try to find a lawyer who understands the importance of winning in the court of public opinion as well as the legal courtroom.
12. Don't panic.
13. Figure out your positive message, say it, then stick to it.
14. If you have made a blunder, apologize and say exactly what you are doing to make amends - without waiting to be asked.
15. Stress solutions to problems-especially if you created the problem.
16. Act enthusiastic about getting your message out.
17. Never defend.
18. Be proactive.
19. Reporters feed on emotions. If they sense you don't want to be there, they will sink their teeth into you until you cry.

20. Look calm and pleasant, as if this were any other day.
21. In a crisis situation, it is even more important that usual to rehearse several times on video.
22. It is hard to make a negative impression if you stay positive, focused and polite.
23. Refute incorrect statements in a positive way.
24. If bad things happened, show some compassion.
25. Never repeat negative words or negative assumptions.
26. If the media show up at your home or your office without calling, you are already in trouble.
27. Never try to think on your feet in a crisis situation.
28. Don't say "no comment."
29. Don't put your hands over your face.
30. Don't look distressed.
31. Don't run away.
32. Don't shout obscenities.
33. Don't shut a door in the face of a journalist.
34. Don't ask that "the camera be turned off."
35. Don't remind the media that they may be on private property.
36. Don't threaten to call the cops.
37. Don't threaten to call your lawyers.
38. Don't threaten to call the reporter's boss.
39. Don't feel obligated to grant an interview immediately to reporters who show up unannounced. Ask them their deadline and then promise them an interview at your office later that day.
40. Be friendly to reporters even when they lynch you.
41. Don't act guilty.
42. Don't look guilty.
43. Say "Hi (reporter's name), I'm happy to see you. I've always answered your questions in the past. Of course, I'll answer your questions. Why didn't you call me first to set up an interview?"
44. Before that interview, figure out your positive message.
45. Rehearse your message.
46. Stick to your message in the real interview.

47. Building and maintaining strong working relationships with the media over time can prevent media crisis from occurring in the first place.
48. If the media knows you, likes you and trusts you, they will occasionally give you the benefit of the doubt.
49. If the media feels you have ever been misleading to them, they will never give you the benefit of the doubt.
50. If the media don't know you, they won't give you the benefit of the doubt.
51. Regular communication with the media can make crisis situations much less tense.
52. Get all the bad news out at once, so the story doesn't have a new news hook every day.
53. Don't screw up on a slow news day. Your story could be blown way out of proportion.
54. If you know bad news is coming, put it out yourself - that way you are ready.
55. Friday afternoon at 4:59 PM going into a Holiday weekend might be a good time to put out the bad word.