

Marketing Insights

Marketing & Public Relations Strategies from Bay Marketing Consultants

Communicating During a Crisis:

There's been a major fire at your plant and customers are calling asking about their orders. A senior officer has been accused of harassment. A local television station is planning to air a negative story about your company.

Each of the above situations is a potential media crisis and calls for a strategic communications plan. The tools and resources must be in place now in order for you to effectively deal with such a situation should it occur.

Any crisis is serious, but the following factors help to determine the severity of the situation:

- Will it result in a loss of confidence in your company from key supporters - customers, employees, lenders, community leaders, board members?
- Can your personal or company reputation be damaged?

- Does it appear that wrongdoing, including violation of laws took place?
- Will you have a legal liability?
- Have the media contacted you about the situation?

The best way to survive a crisis is to have a well thought out plan in place before an incident occurs. Here are some must-do's to minimize the damage to your company and personal reputation:

- Develop a crisis team. These employees and advisors will implement a pre-developed action plan should a crisis occur. Maintain a current list with each of the team member's work, home and cell phone numbers, pagers and e-mail addresses. Make sure that all members of the team have the list as well as appropriate staff such as security, operations and human resources.
- Decide who will be the company's spokesperson for inquiries immediately following a crisis. Have a backup in case that person is out of town. Pick people who can be counted on to maintain their composure under pressure, have strong communications skills and the ability to think on their feet. Make sure that all inquires are directed to this person.
- Be sure to communicate with employees during a crisis, if possible before you speak publicly. Provide them with as many facts as

possible and tell them what to do if they are contacted by media for comment. Stay in touch throughout and after the crisis and ask employees for their input to help avoid possible future problems.

These are just a few of the many elements of a successful crisis plan. Talk with your management team and public relations advisors about what kinds of crises could affect your business and develop a plan of action. Do something now, not when the media is already at your home or office.

Rules for Successful Communication During a Crisis

- Show sympathy toward those that have been affected by the crisis.
- Be frank and straightforward. Chose the questions that you publicly respond to carefully.
- Be aware of security issues or official investigations that may be affected by your comments.
- If possible, talk about plans to make sure that the incident does not occur again.
- Involve appropriate local officials to share the facts.
- Use layman terms, not industry jargon.



Advertising Trends

How Color, Size & Location Affect Print Ad Success

According to recent research conducted by Roper Starch for the Newspaper Association of America, full-page newspaper ads are noticed by readers 39 percent more often than quarter-page ads. Here are some of the additional findings to help you in placing your next print ad:

- Use of four-color in newspaper ads increases reader attention 20 percent over black-and-white and increases in-depth readership by more than 60 percent.
- Use of a photograph boosted notice of an ad by 20 percent, compared with ads with simple line art. Ads with product were noted 25 percent more often and ads with prices were noted 80 percent more frequently. Too much price clutter, however, diminishes returns.
- Placing ads next to editorial content rather than next to other ads had no impact on readership. Placement below or above the page fold also didn't matter.



- Placement within a section didn't matter unless the ad was the first ad in a section, or on the back page.

Creating Successful Customer and Employee Newsletters



Communication with employees, customers and prospective clients is an important factor in any organization's success. An eye catching, well-written newsletter is an essential communication tool for many companies.

Bay Marketing Consultants produces a variety of internal and external newsletters. Services differ for each client. Some require only graphic design and printing while others prefer to have the entire process managed for them: content development, writing, design, photography, production, database management and mailing.



"Many clients also post their printed newsletters on their websites or intranets allowing for expanded readership," said Teri deMatas, Bay Marketing Consultants.

For more information about newsletter services, call 810-757-2177.

Our Area Code is Changing

Due to the implementation of eastern Michigan's new area code, Bay Marketing Consultants area code will change from 810 to 586 after Sept. 22. Callers will be able to reach us using either area code through March 23, 2002, at which time they will be instructed to dial the new area code.



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