

ISSUES AND CRISIS

JOUR 201

**INSTRUCTOR: JACQUELINE
KEISLER**



UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina



GLOBAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

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MANAGING CONFLICT

- How issues evolve
- How issues may be identified
- How issues may be managed proactively to minimize the need for crisis management

CONTINGENCY THEORY

A theory that proposes that the best course of action in any situation depends on the specifics of the situation.

FACTORS

Internal Factors

- Size
- Structure
- Culture
- Autonomy of the PR department

External Factors

- Threat of litigation
- Business competition
- Political support
- Size and power of publics



RESPONSE OPTIONS

Pure Advocacy

- A stance in issues management in which a public relations practitioner firmly pleads an organization's case without compromise.

Pure Accommodation

- A stance in issues management in which a public relations practitioner fully concedes to a public's demands.

Sometimes it's better to advocate than to accommodate.



ISSUES MANAGEMENT

- A systematic process whereby organizations work to identify and resolve issues before they become crises.
- Proactive monitoring and management to prevent crises from happening.

MONITORING

- Continuously monitor your organization's internal and external operating environments.
- Listen carefully
- Conduct formal and informal research
- Find early, potential or emerging issues

IDENTIFICATION

- Describe the issue
- Determine if it's something significant or insignificant
- Environmental, political, economic and social factors

PRIORITIZATION

- Decide which issues require resources and when.
- Weigh the potential scope and impact of each.

ANALYSIS

- Determine how the issue might affect the organization and its publics.
- Include all sorts of publics. Each public will have its own specific concerns related to the issue.
 - Customers
 - Employees
 - Volunteers
 - Donors
 - Faculty, staff, alumni

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Develop communication and relationship strategies for each key public
- Strategic action response
 - Consider the specific actions that should be taken as well as who should take these actions, when and with what resources
- Messages that will be communicated in conjunction with that response
 - Communication plan must be coordinated with management operations



IMPLEMENTATION

- Includes both action and communication.
- Put policies and programs into action.
- Activate PESO model
 - Paid
 - Earned
 - Shared
 - Owned

EVALUATION

- Assess the results
- Measure the beneficial outcomes, including the crises prevented or averted

SITUATIONAL CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS THEORY

Effective crisis communication entails choosing and applying appropriate response strategies depending on how much *responsibility* for the crisis is attributed to the organization by key publics.

CRISIS RESPONSE STRATEGIES

- Deny

- Absolve themselves of any responsibility

- Diminish

- Acknowledge the existence of the crisis, but minimize the organization's responsibility for the crisis or any bad intentions

- Rebuild

- Public acceptance of the responsibility
 - Apology
 - Boomerang effect
 - Compensation

- Reinforce (relationships)

- Bolstering
- Ingratiation



CRISIS COMMUNICATION

- 1.** Put the public interest first
- 2.** Take responsibility for correcting the situation
- 3.** Be as open as possible with all stakeholder groups
- 4.** Have a designated spokesperson
- 5.** Establish a central media or information center
- 6.** Respond to all media inquiries
- 7.** Use social media to communicate with stakeholders
- 8.** Avoid speculation (and never say “no comment”)

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CULTURAL COMPETENCE

The ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across **cultures**.

Cultural competence encompasses being aware of one's own world view, developing positive attitudes towards **cultural** differences, and gaining knowledge of different **cultural** practices and world views.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CULTURE

- ***Culture:*** A shared system of beliefs, values, customs, etc. that guides the behavior of a particular group or public.
- ***Intercultural public relations:*** Management of relationships between organizations and publics of different cultures.



CONTEXT MATTERS

Low-context communications

- Exchanges in which most of the meaning of messages is stated explicitly in the messages and requires little understanding of context.

High-context communications

- Exchanges in which most of the meaning conveyed between people lies in the context of the communication or is internal to the communicators.



CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

- Power-distance
- Individualism-collectivism
- Uncertainty avoidance
- Masculinity-femininity
- Long-term orientation

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

The ability to adapt, communicate and interact effectively across cultures by learning and applying cognitive, emotional and behavioral skills.

Head, Body and Heart

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

- A subset of international public relations that focuses on promoting national interests.
- **Mediated** public diplomacy is a nation's strategic use of media to promote its agenda abroad to foreign publics.
- **Relational** public diplomacy is engagement between a nation and its foreign publics in cultural exchange and two-way communication with the goal of achieving mutual benefits.



RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

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TAKING CARE OF RELATIONSHIPS

- Positivity
 - Favorable attitude and collegiality
- Openness
 - Disclose nature of the relationship
- Assurances
 - Emphasize importance of publics in the relationship
- Social networking
 - Common affiliations between the organization and its publics
- Sharing tasks
 - Asking for or offering support when appropriate



KEY OUTCOMES OF RELATIONSHIPS

- Exchange relationships
- Communal relationships
 - Control mutuality
 - Trust
 - Satisfaction
 - Commitment

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

- The character of an organization
- History
- Approach to decision-making
- How it treats employees
- How it deals with the world outside
- The sum total of shared values, symbols, meanings, beliefs, assumptions and expectations.

HOW DOES PR CONTRIBUTE TO ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE?

- Establishes organizational communication policies
- Can help in designing and implementing organizational change and/or new programs
- Provides expertise on internal communication



INTERNAL COMMUNICATION POLICIES SHOULD ...

- 1.** Keep employees informed of organizational goals and plans
- 2.** Inform employees of organizational activities, problems, accomplishments, before informing media
- 3.** Encourage employees to provide input/feedback
- 4.** Encourage two-way communication among managers and employees, especially re: progress and position
- 5.** Establish culture where innovation and creativity are encouraged



ISSUES-DRIVEN RELATIONSHIPS

- Nonprofit organizations
 - Constituents, donors, volunteers, board members, government entities, corporations, employees, media and more
- Public affairs/government relations
 - Constituents, elected officials, activists, regulatory agencies