



WHEN CRISIS CALLS:
YOU ARE NOT ALONE — BUILDING
RESILIENT COMMUNICATIONS FOR
MULTIFAMILY PROPERTIES



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ALWAYS ON AIR: THRIVING IN SURPRISE INTERVIEW SCENARIOS

- Phone Calls
- Emails
- Social media
- Neighborhood events/meetings
- Networking events/panels & conferences
- Text Messages





“Hey I see your ads for help,” Mr. D, an organizer with the local electrical workers union, texted the site’s project manager in May.
“We have manpower. I’ll be out that way Friday.”

“Hahahahaha yes — help needed on unskilled low wage workers,” was the response. “Competing with our federal government for unemployment is tough.”

THE REPORTERS' "PLAYBOOK"

Every reporter has a style:

- ***The Gunner***: Questions in rapid succession.
- ***The Interrupter***: Tries to get you off balance.
- ***The Joker***: Best of friends – then “boom!”
- ***The Shrink***: “You mean to say that...”
- ***The Hypothetical***: “What if..?”
- ***The Pregnant Pause***: Lets you fill the silence



RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

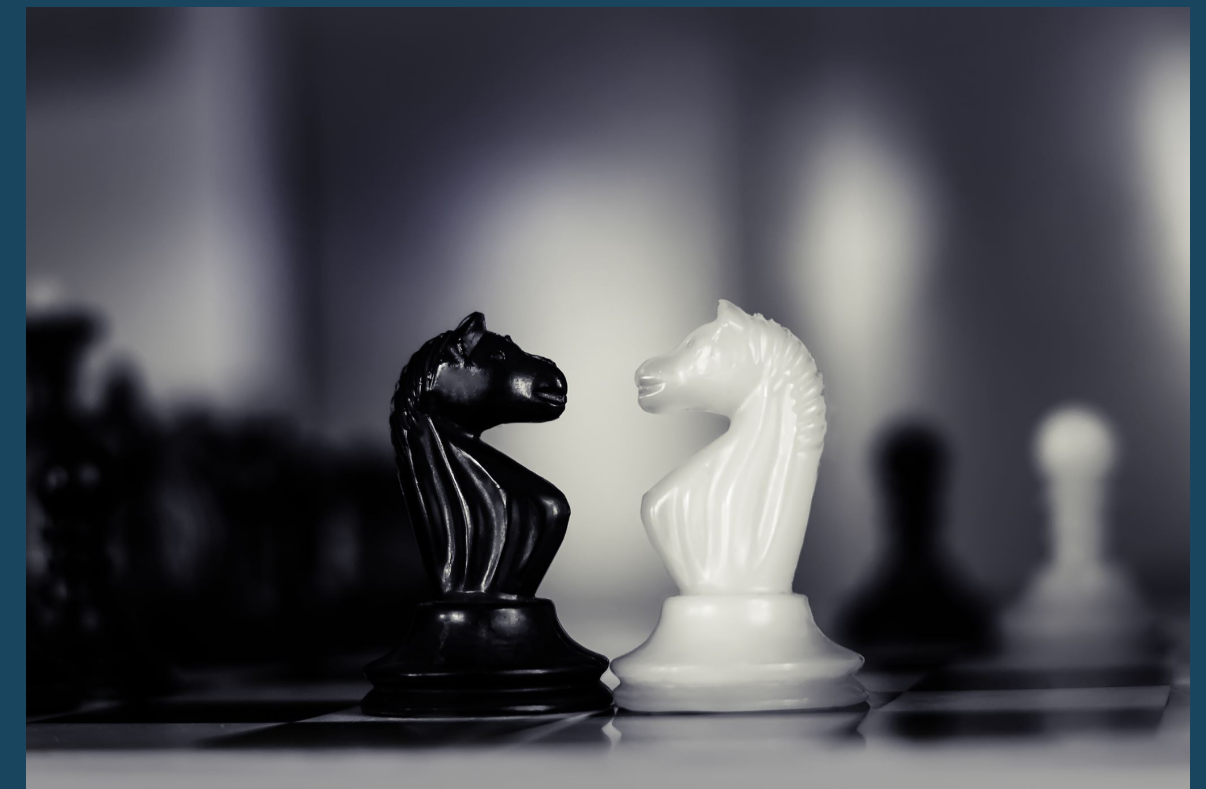
You have the right to know:

- Who is the reporter/news org?
- What's the story? The reporter's angle?
- Who else is being interviewed?
- When is your deadline?



CREATING YOUR CRISIS BLUEPRINT

- The media “chess game” - anticipate moves before they happen = research and plan
- Develop three or four simple messages
- Know the audience – it’s not the reporter
- Know the facts
- Know your vulnerabilities



WHAT WOULD YOU DO?



Client Example:

Scenario: A reporter shows up at your property with no notice. She puts a microphone in your face asking for comment on a “trend” that has a negative impact within your industry. How do you respond if you are not the spokesperson? What if YOU are the spokesperson? What do you do?

Client’s response and their next steps result in a media story that becomes an “evergreen” crisis story.

DIFFUSING THE SITUATION

Take the power away , even if it's a "citizen journalist"

"Let's find somewhere to sit down so we can have a conversation. I'd be happy to listen and respond as I'm able to based on your questions."

*This tactic helps deflate interviewer's combative stance while eliminating the element of surprise.

WHEN YOU DON'T ANTICIPATE YOUR NEXT MOVE...



NARRATIVE CONTROL - STAY ON MESSAGE

Messaging Framework: Own it. Explain it. How you will fix it in the future.

Acknowledgement

*Demonstrates accountability
and builds trust*

Conclude first - think soundbites!

*State your main point first, then offer
supporting points*

Address the audience

*Have empathy - don't be
tone deaf*

Put it in your own words & "bridge":

*"That's not my area of expertise, but I can
tell you..."*

STEERING THE CONVERSATION THROUGH CHAOS





THE DANGER ZONE: WORDS AND PHRASES THAT UNDERMINE YOUR CREDIBILITY



Personal opinions

Professional
buzzwords

Speculation

Overreacting

Lying

Off the record
comments

Criticizing the
media

Money

Proprietary

Sensitive topic

Legal issues

Unconfirmed
details

THE “FOUNTAIN OF TRUTH”: SOCIAL MEDIA

- Citizen Journalism = often times **first channel to break news**
- Every employee is a brand ambassador with a megaphone
- Does every post need a response? Create a monitoring threshold
- When in crisis mode, check your scheduled auto-posts
- Utilize as research tool for impending crises - monitor chatter in neighborhood forums, groups, Redditt, etc.



CRISIS COMMUNICATION ESSENTIALS



Accurately, first
day of news cycle



Establish chain of
command and
assemble
appropriate crisis
team



Maintain “one
voice”



Consistent
communication
and relevant
platforms



Written
statements as
often as possible



Stop when there
is no new
information

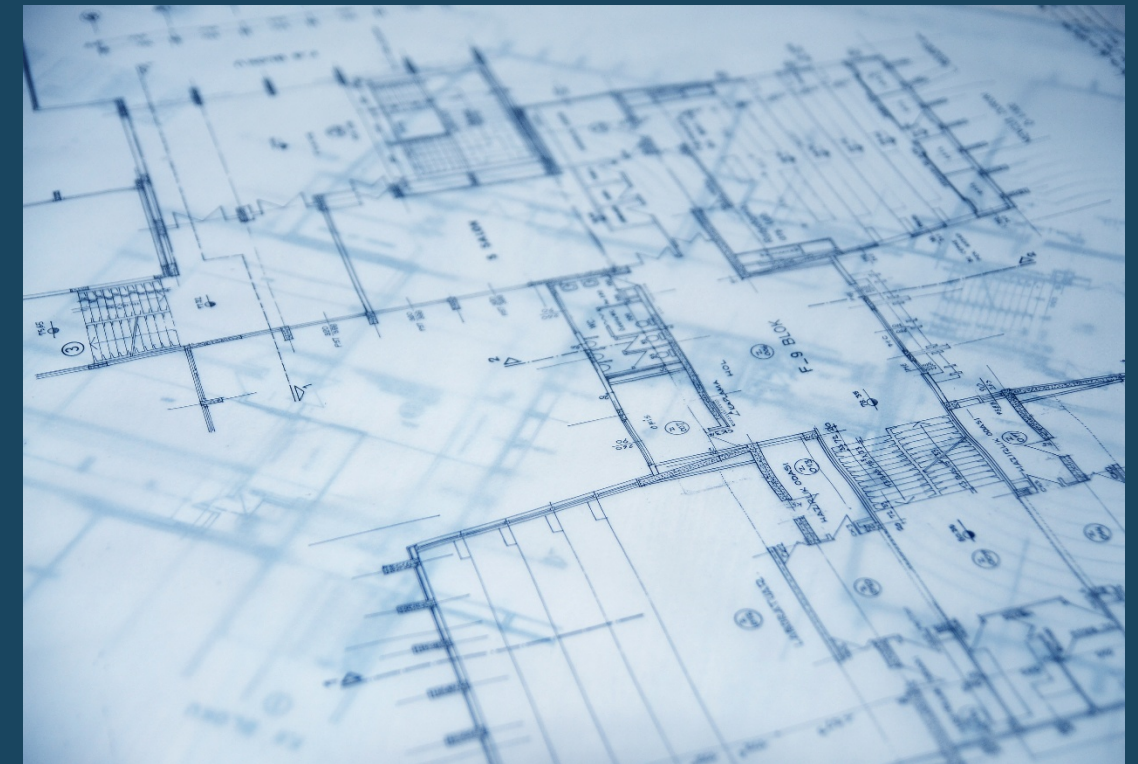
CRITICAL PROTOCOLS FOR CRISIS

- NEVER place hands over camera lens or speak angrily.
- Keep your discussions to a minimum, IF you're the spokesperson.
- Ensure every employee/property site knows what to say during media ambush.
- Follow chain of command. Always keep leadership/comms informed of any spontaneous contact/inquiries from media.
- Do not answer questions about number of injuries or fatalities, and do not comment on a legal/criminal investigation.

PREPARE BEFORE MEDIA IS KNOCKING ON YOUR DOOR

Create (or update) contingency communications plan:

- Chain of command and contact info
- Implementation checklist with roles
- List of publics (and contact info. as relevant)
- Crisis scenarios with sample statements
- Social media crisis flow chart
- On-property/on-site emergency protocols
- Media training! OR, at the very least, media protocols
with interview tips/process



The single biggest predictor of reputational harm is that people think you don't care. Effective crisis response is a timely and persistent demonstration that you care.

Remember...

1 – Create Your Crisis Playbook

2 – One Statement for ALL Employees

3 – Chain of Command

4 – Update Playbook & Start Media Prep Now



THANK YOU!



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