



# Crisis Communication - 101

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Kate Snedeker & Carrie Cason



# Who?

## Kate Snedeker

- Owns PR firm
- Many clients plus crisis communications expert
- Former press secretary to Indpls Mayor and Speaker of Ind House
- Former VP of comms for international media company for 10 years



## Carrie Cason

- Owns PR firm
- 25 years experience
- Adjunct Professor - Butler University
- Former Director of Comms for Westfield Mayor for 8 years
- Former Director of Comms for BAGI



# Importance of Communication

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- Builds Relationships - Trust
- Enhances Teamwork and Efficiency
- Minimizes Misunderstanding
- Provides Clarity
- Builds Empathy and Respect
- Prepares for Crisis

# Examples of Crises

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Cybersecurity

Natural disaster

Organizational miscue/malfeasance

Lawsuits

Turnover at the top

Other examples?

# Planning for a Crisis

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- **Establish a Crisis Team**
  - Including roles and responsibilities
  - Include lawyer
- **Identify Communication Channels**
- **Identify Audiences & Stakeholders**
- **Create Message Templates**
- **Create Contact Lists**



# How to approach a crisis

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- Your message - what do we want our audiences to know?
  - Avoid technical jargon
  - Short - to the point
- Clear next steps
- Handling media inquiries
  - Remain consistent
  - Stick to the facts
  - Don't speculate
- Engaging with the public
  - Maintain calm, reassuring tone

# What NOT To Do

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Don't wing it - ever!

Don't say "no comment"

Never lie

Do not open yourself up to legal liability

Never assume you're speaking "off the record"

Avoid getting defensive

It's ok to not know the answer - get the answer, and follow up



# Remember

REGARDLESS OF AUDIENCE - YOU KNOW MORE THAN THEY DO ON THE SUBJECT!





# We have a CRISIS!

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You are the on-call employee for the City of Batesville. At 7am, you receive a call from Batesville PD that there was a large water main break. Several roads are closed as a result. Early morning traffic is at a standstill in many areas including several school buses on their way to pick ups.

What are your first steps?