

INSIGHT.  
EXPERIENCE.  
PERFORMANCE.  
RESULTS.

## CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

When a high profile crisis hits, the future operations of a business, the survival of venerable institutions, and the careers and reputations of leading individuals can all be on the line. Whether sparked by litigation, government investigations, financial issues, scandals involving senior executives, environmental hazards, regulatory or political scrutiny, or a range of other issues, an organization's communications strategy can play an important role in the outcome of the breaking crisis - enabling it to disseminate key messages and support its operations during the crisis and beyond.

Our approach to each situation melds our experience in legal and business issues, media relations, targeted and internal communications, politics and community relations, and our extensive track record as strategists for companies and organizations in myriad industries.

The firm's top professionals have worked with a wide range of clients in crisis situations, including public and private companies, national associations, prominent not-for-profit organizations, high-profile individuals, healthcare institutions, law firms and property owners, among many others.

With principals of our firm having previously held senior positions in government, we bring a unique perspective to crisis situations. This experience has become particularly valuable as business crises increasingly become political crises - with elected officials and government regulators not only responding to, but often driving the process.

When problems can be anticipated, we work with clients to develop crisis communications plans prospectively, preparing for contingencies and putting in place rapid response mechanisms and other strategies that create a framework for dealing with the media and other key audiences. The objective is to be ready when, or if, the crisis strikes.

During crisis situations, we can relieve pressure clients face by managing the communications process - from media relations to internal and external communications. This allows clients to focus on the important and complex business, legal or personal issues at stake. When we are introduced to a situation after a crisis has already caused damaging publicity, we help to contain the damage, restore a client's image and move forward.

At the onset of a crisis, we work with key leadership to identify and assemble a crisis communications team, working hand-in-hand with legal counsel to ensure that the communications strategy supports the legal strategy. We quickly collect critical information - both positive and negative - to understand the complex and critical issues at stake.

We seek to identify key internal and external audiences with whom communication is essential. In addition to the media, these audiences may include employees, shareholders,

directors, government officials, customers, creditors, investors and other financial partners, local communities, employees, and other stakeholders. We determine who to contact, what to say and when.

We identify spokespeople and potential allies from outside the company. We then develop necessary materials and a communications matrix and timetable to ensure that we reach all audiences and have systems in place for communicating with them promptly and effectively as events unfold.

Even with a media maelstrom swirling around a negative issue, it may be possible for the business or organization to continue to market itself in a positive way. We assist our clients in moving forward on both tracks - focusing on the crisis at hand, without neglecting opportunities to move the business or organization forward by publicizing good news and projecting positive messages.

Our work in this area has included:

- Criminal and civil litigations, on behalf of plaintiffs and defendants, in which our work with the media helped to shape the environment in which the case was litigated.
- Corporate bankruptcies and restructurings.
- Major not-for-profit organizations threatened by scandal and blistering media coverage.
- Major labor disputes, including the health care industry and Major League Baseball.
- Incidents involving allegations of sexual abuse, in corporate settings and within arms of the church.
- Companies dealing with environmental issues, including one which spurred an international e-mail campaign urging a boycott of a chain of resorts.
- New York City's convention and visitors bureau on a crisis communications campaign that began a post September 11 turn-around.
- Legislative initiatives that helped save organizations and industries from ill-conceived governmental actions.
- Contentious public attacks that threatened the reputation of individuals in the judiciary and the legal profession and organizations in health care, hospitality, real estate, transportation and gaming.