

# Welcome to the Jungle: Navigating the Interface between Conventional and Social Media When the News is Bad



© 2019 BY REPUTATION STRATEGIES, LLC. THIS MATERIAL MAY NOT BE SOLD, DUPLICATED, PRINTED, BROADCAST, TRANSMITTED VIA THE INTERNET OR DISSEMINATED IN ANY MANNER WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM THE COPYRIGHT HOLDER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

# Our objectives today:

1. Understand how social and conventional media intersect, and how they differ, when the news is bad.
2. Understand how to pre-plan for management of both major communications channels so that you're ready for an incident
3. Understand how to speak with each, so that your story is told accurately and fairly.

# Welcome to the Human Village.

*“The outrage mob. . . employs a form of guerrilla warfare. Campaigns are launched by a faceless, amorphous adversary well-versed in weaponizing online review systems for political and social gain, all made possible by an asymmetry of power and reputational risk between the activists and their targets. [An] activist mob with copious amounts of free time, nothing to lose and an infinite will to prevail has a far lower opportunity cost associated with waging this proxy battle across platforms.”*

--Melissa Chen, [www.spectator.us](http://www.spectator.us)

# How and Why Conventional Media Feeds Social Media

- It's another distribution channel
- Which hasn't stopped social from eating conventional media's lunch

# How and Why Conventional Media Feeds Social Media

*“When someone gives you a product for free or below actual cost, there’s usually still a product being sold. And YOU are the product.”*

# How and Why Social Media Feeds Conventional Media



# How and Why Social Media Feeds Conventional Media

*“A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on.”*

# How and Why Social Media Feeds Conventional Media

If an erroneous narrative about our organizations begins to take root, we need to address it before it gets locked into public perception. That means constant vigilance – and rapid response.

# Social Media and Other Online Groups

Identify all of the various online locations where people are likely to talk about you when the news is bad – before anything happens.

# Managing Social when things are tough

- Remember: Nothing good happens after midnight
- People WILL pile on assuming that the information in the share was the absolute truth
- People WILL NOT go back through previous commentary to see what you posted earlier
- Don't be afraid to re-post information – acknowledging it was previously posted.

# Managing Social when things are tough

- “We’re re-posting this because so many of you are new to this thread and we currently have nothing new to report. We’ll keep you updated as we learn more.”

# Managing Social when things are tough

- Remember: Nothing good happens after midnight
- People WILL pile on assuming that the information in the share was the absolute truth
- People WILL NOT go back through previous commentary to see what you posted earlier
- Don't be afraid to re-post information – acknowledging it was previously posted.
- You may need to repost frequently – even every 15 to 30 minutes

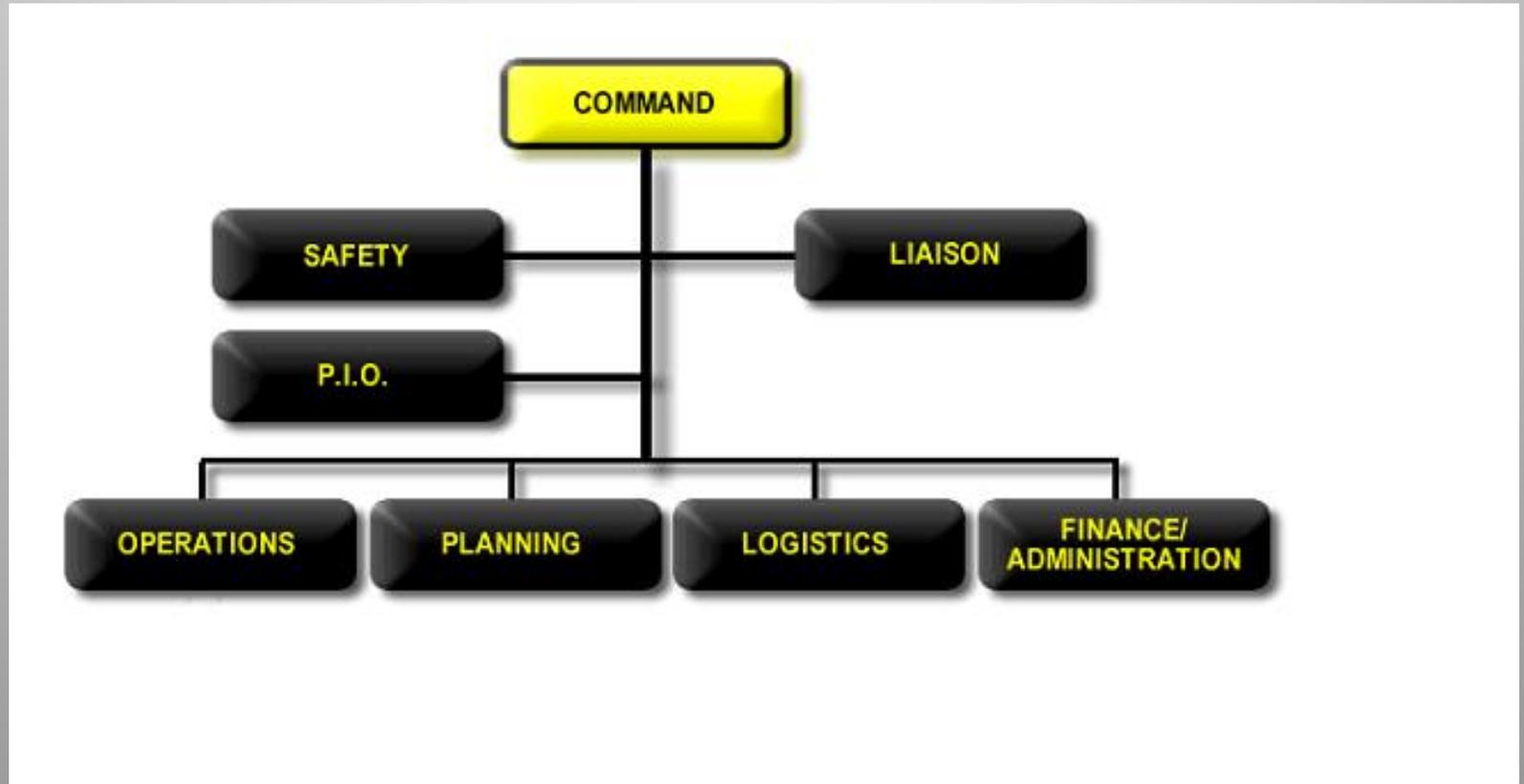
# Managing Social when things are tough

- Remember: Nothing good happens after midnight
- People WILL pile on assuming that the information in the share was the absolute truth
- People WILL NOT go back through previous commentary to see what you posted earlier
- Don't be afraid to re-post information – acknowledging it was previously posted.
- You may need to repost frequently – even every 15 to 30 minutes
- Don't let people suck you into arguments or debates.

## A need for speed

- There is always a lag time between incident and understanding
- Communications is an integral component of crisis response

# A need for speed



Standard Incident Command format from National Incident Management System protocols

# Emergency Communications Planning

- Internal Communications – Staff, Boards, Financial Partners, Vendors and others...?

# Emergency Communications Planning

- Internal Communications – Staff, Boards, Financial Partners, Vendors and others...?
- External Communications – Victims, Families, Friends, First Responders, Government Agencies, Social Followers, the Public and others...?

# Emergency Communications Planning

Your plan should contain:

- A directory of the HUMAN RESOURCES you might need, and how to activate them

**Incident Commander**

**Operations (who's running the heavy lifting)**

**Finance**

**Planning and/or Logistics, if applicable**

**Public information Officer**

**Spokesperson**

**Story Tracker, Conventional Media**

**Social Media Tracker**

**Family/Survivor liason(s)**

# Emergency Communications Planning

During an emergency, there are plenty of critical-path decisions that are case-specific. Make the important decisions that are NOT case-specific before you actually have a case.

# Emergency Communications Planning

Your plan should contain:

- A directory of the HUMAN RESOURCES you might need, and how to activate them
- A directory of the PHYSICAL RESOURCES you might need, and how to deploy them
- Log sheets and forms
- Simple explanations of roles and processes
- Templates for press releases, statements and social media posts
- An Emergency Communications Media List

# Emergency Communications Planning

## Emergency Communications Media List:

- Nearby daily newspapers
- Nearby TV stations with newsrooms
- Nearby radio stations with newsrooms
- Closest National Public Radio affiliate with a newsroom
- Nearest Associated Press bureau

# Training to the Plan

- PIO
- Spokesperson(s)
- Social Media Manager(s)
- Other Roles

# How to talk real good

- If your social media posts and/or press releases read like they were written by a lawyer, people will assume that they were.
- Plain English, please. Hone your key points so that they're easy to understand.
- Avoid “Copspeak” – *‘At the present time...’*
- Avoid “Lawyerspeak” – *‘To the extent that...’*, *‘To the best of our knowledge...’* and - oh, yeah – any sentence with more than two clauses in it.

# How to talk real good

- Be as candid as you can without getting yourself into trouble.
- The sooner you feed the fish, the better you'll feel... with the following caveat:
  - **Someone dropped twenty feet from a zipline and was apparently seriously injured. It looks like the trolley failed.**
  - **Someone dropped about twenty feet from the zipline and was injured.**
  - **What you DON'T Know:**
    - **How the equipment failed**
    - **Why the equipment failed**
    - **When the equipment failed**

# How to talk real good

Whether speaking with a reporter or with social media followers...

- Avoid speculation
- Stick to what you know to be facts

# Fight or Flight

The problem with “cancel culture”

- Take the time to consider both the short- and long-term implications of a decision

# Social Media as a Crisis Communications Tactic

- Cross-post press releases and statements to social streams
- Avoid commentary if using Twitter
- Followers will often ask questions reporters ask later; pay close attention
- Keep your sense of humor. You can't fix stupid.

# Conclusions – Conventional and Social Media in a crisis

- Have a plan (and check it annually)
- Train to it (ongoing process)
- Practice it (at minimum, once per year)

# Questions...?

Thanks for the opportunity to speak with you!

Skip King

Reputation Strategies, LLC

[sking@reputationstrategies.com](mailto:sking@reputationstrategies.com)

207-318-7067 (mobile)