

PR and Media Management

The statements made by the organisation both internally and externally are vital to reputational management. However, there can be a danger that the whole organisation becomes media obsessed to the detriment of its recovery and the loss of effective control.

Reputational survival depends on all the other elements of resilience working effectively so as to allow media managers to have an excellent story to tell.

1. Can your organisation get a press statement out in 45 minutes of an incident occurring?

This can be a holding statement of a factual nature. To achieve this a speedy decision making mechanism, as referenced in the crisis management section, needs to be implemented. The statement also needs to be accurate and this means that passage of information has to be speedier than might normally be the case.

2. Can the media be controlled or otherwise managed?

No, not even governments can achieve this. What you can do is understand their needs and try to oblige them in a positive and structured fashion that emphasizes the positives in what you are doing to rectify the situation.

3. Who should give press statements?

It depends on the circumstances but the press will want to hear from the CEO/Chair and senior management not just a spokesperson. Often the press will be at the site of the incident not the recovery location so bear this in mind. Additionally speaking to the press is not a natural talent and training needs to be given to anyone responsible for making any statement.

4. What's the worst that can happen?

The worst is arguably a situation where the issue will resurface again and again, such as inquiry, court case, parliamentary committee, coroners court, etc., (remember thalidomide) so the sooner the matter is dealt with effectively the better.

5. Isn't social media massively important nowadays?

Undoubtedly so, but it is just another medium of the media and can be addressed in a similar fashion. Bear in mind that social media is more opinion forming than news in itself. It does however emphasize that all those affected by an incident need to have their concerns addressed properly and empathetically.