Prepared, Professional, and Proactive:

Crisis Communications for EMS Agencies

Acadian Ambulance Service

C. Randall Mann

Vice President, Marketing & Public Relations

- BA, Public Relations, University of Louisiana, 1985
- 40 years in various advertising & communication roles.
- 16 years @ Acadian

Prepared, Professional, and Proactive:
Crisis Communications for EMS Agencies

- Importance of Crisis Communications
- Preparation Strategies
- Crisis Implementation Steps
- Recovery & Review
- Q&A

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Why Crisis Communications Matter

- Fast-moving situations demand accurate, timely and consistent communication
- You set the narrative
- Protects public trust and agency credibility
- Critical for employee morale and organizational resilience
- Stakeholders:
  - Employees
  - General Public
  - Fellow First Responders
  - Permitting Authorities
  - Industry
  - Facilities (customers)

Prepared, Professional, and Proactive:

1. Developing a Crisis Comms Plan

- PIO is a member of the Command Team for incidents
- Incident escalation notification protocols
  - Who does Comm Ctr notify and method
- Identify authorized spokespersons
  - Subject Matter Experts
  - Media, Policy & Legal guidelines
- Involve legal, HR and clinical leads early
- Messaging templates for common scenarios

2. Media List

- **Maintain Media Contact List**
  - **Local and regional outlets**
  - **Industry publications**
  - **Public information officers and government officials**
  - **Update regularly**

Tip:

Use specific contact names and addresses *AND* generic ones (*news@KXYZ.com*) when possible.

3. Media Outreach

- **Before a crisis occurs:**
  - Share success stories, community engagement and awards
  - Send releases / Offer SMEs for topics of public interest
  - Invite media for Communications Center and station visits
  - Builds trust with media before a crisis occurs
  - Create a 24/7 media hotline phone number and email address

Tip:

Organize or participate in preparation roundtables/exercises (hurricanes, MCI drills, etc) and invite the media.

It Happens . . .

- Disaster response in which your agency is involved
- Employee death in the line of duty
- Data breach or cybersecurity incident
- High-profile accident or clinical error
- Allegations of misconduct
- Social Media issue
- Loss of contract or major regulatory finding
- "Stupid Human Tricks"

4. Media Outreach

- **When a Crisis Occurs**
  - PIO gathers available information and remains in the info chain
  - Determine SME(s) for the incident
  - Determine if preemptive media notification is warranted (sometimes it's best to wait)

Tip:

Use "X" to disseminate frequent updates. Encourage the media to follow (@acadiannews).

*Prepared, **Professional**, and Proactive:*

- Immediate Actions
  - Confirm facts internally
  - Notify internal leadership and staff
  - Assemble crisis response team
  - Prioritize internal/family notification before media
  - Prepare SME/spokespersons with talking points
  - Prepare initial holding statement
  - Prepare releases and statements before requested
  - Avoid speculation, be factual and compassionate
  - Ensure alignment across all platforms

*Prepared, Professional, and **Proactive**:*

- Ongoing Actions
  - Regular updates to staff and media
  - Provide a method for employees to ask questions/seek information
  - Media monitoring and (appropriate) response
  - Coordinate with partner agencies
  - Avoid speculation, be factual and compassionate
  - Ensure alignment across all platforms

*Prepared, Professional, and **Proactive**:*

- **After a Crisis**
  - Provide peer support and EAP info
  - Conduct agency-wide debrief
  - Acknowledge successes and gaps
  - Update crisis plans and protocols
  - Recognize employee contributions
  - Continue public engagement

Prepared, Professional, and Proactive:

- Key Takeaways
  - Be proactive:
    - Make plans
    - Set protocols
    - Run drills
    - Explore scenarios
  - Relationships matter before, during, and after a crisis
  - Consistency and transparency build trust
  - Preparation saves reputations

Employee Death Communications Procedure

Purpose:

This communication plan will be followed in the event of the death of an employee, so that we are fair in communicating information and honoring our fallen comrades.

Procedure:

In the event of the death of a current Acadian Companies employee, the PR & Marketing department will assume responsibility for distributing the information internally and externally.

Employee Death Communications Procedure

For a Line of Duty Death:

- PR & Marketing will work with the Executive Committee to draft an announcement. Once approved and the employee's immediate family has been notified and given permission by the company, the announcement will be posted on Acadian Central and social media.
- The Chairman & CEO will write and send a letter to the employee's family.
- The respective division's social media profile photos will temporarily switch to a mourning band graphic.
- PR & Marketing or the employee's division/region may share funeral information internally, but not externally (unless the family gives express permission).
- The American flag may be flown at half-staff for a first responder who dies in the line of duty and only after a proclamation is issued by the governor of the applicable state, per United States Flag Code

Employee Death Communications Procedure

For all employee deaths:

- PR & Marketing will work with the employee's division/region to post an announcement on Acadian Central within one week of the employee's passing.
- PR & Marketing will post an In Memoriam graphic on the digital message boards.
- PR & Marketing will post an announcement on the respective division's public social media accounts.
- PR & Marketing and/or a local administrative assistant will post in all internal employee groups.
- PR & Marketing will include the employee's name in the *Nouvelle* condolences section.
- PR & Marketing will include the employee's name on the In Memoriam page on the Acadian Companies website.
- PR & Marketing will include the employee's name in the annual Company Meeting In Memoriam presentation.
- The Acadian and ESOP flags may be lowered to half-staff in memory of an employee for a specified amount of time. The request may be made to flagpole@acadian.com.
- The American flag may only be flown at half-staff for a first responder who dies in the line of duty

Employee Death Communications Procedure

- Employees who may wish to express their condolences to the loss of a comrade on their personal social media may use the applicable Acadian mourning band graphics located in this folder: Mourning band graphics

- For a Line of Duty Death, every effort will be made to post an announcement on the same day. For other employee deaths, every effort will be made to post an announcement within one week. These announcements will be made after the family has been notified and has given Acadian permission to post, and in accordance with any investigation. In this respect, employees should refrain from posting information on their profiles until the company has made an official announcement.

Prepared, Professional, and Proactive:

- Q&A

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RMann@Acadian.com

Acadian.com/AAA

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