

March, 2020

 *Create
Defy
Grow*

**Managing damage
to your brand
during a downturn**



Agenda

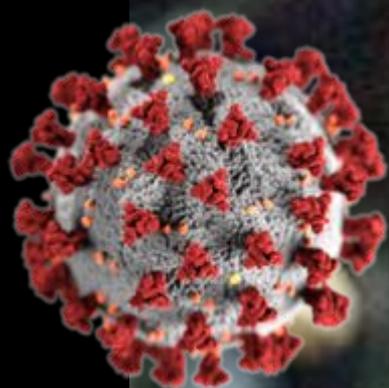
- Quick introduction
- Help you understand how to recognize and respond to a crisis at the business level
- Teach you how a PEAR can guide your response
- Show you how to tailor your messages for the press and social media
- Offer tips that you can put into action today to help manage your brand reputation and minimize the damage from this downturn
- Lots of Q&A – let's share ideas!





What's keeping you up at night?







Sound familiar?

Keep the event or cancel?

Are we contributing to the hype?

What are the other guys doing?

Are we being tone deaf if we...?

But we need the income.

What will happen to our employees?

What will happen to our members and visitors?

When should we resume business as usual?



That was LAST week



Why crisis communications matters

Our Associations and Meeting Venues have respected brands in the minds of the public.

That asset needs to be nurtured and protected as much as our tangible assets.



Why is it so important?

- People remember how a crisis was handled longer than the details of the crisis
 - Long-term damage to an organization is done before and after a crisis more than during it
 - Proactive crisis communications helps minimize damage, improve morale, encourages healing
 - Need for communication grows the longer the crisis lasts (*tip for today's crisis!*)
 - News media has significant long-term impact on public perception and organizational reputation
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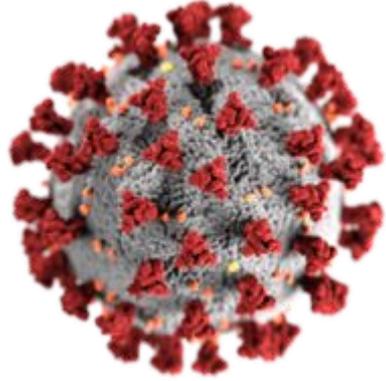


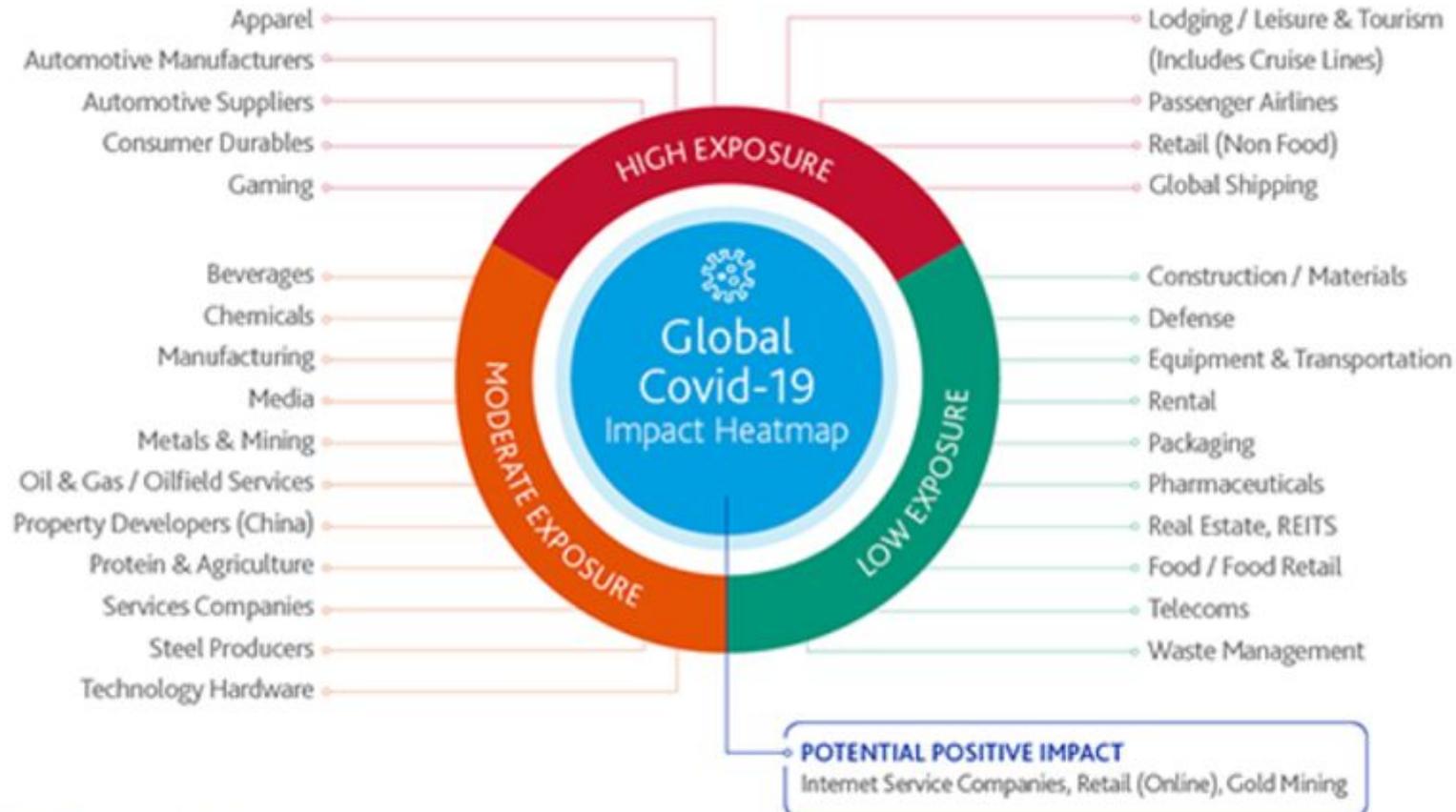
Crisis? What crisis?



Defining Crisis

A crisis is any event, issue or situation that threatens to undermine the relationship between your organization and one or more of its stakeholders; or any event, issue or situation that may negatively affect your business and/or reputation.





MOODY'S

<https://www.moodys.com/newsandevents/topics/Coronavirus-Credit-Effects-007054>



**Two types of crises:
sudden and smoldering**



Two Types of Crises

Sudden (30%) – (*e.g., Mass shooting, fire*)

- Initial chaos; then “aftershocks”
 - Leaders can prepare for them
 - Establish the facts and use consistent messages
 - Speed is essential (possibly full-time coverage)
 - Updates every 30 minutes for first few hours, then hourly thereafter even if it means telling them there is nothing new to report (on social media, too)
-



***“When the eagles are silent,
the parrots begin to jabber.”***

– Winston Churchill





Two Types of Crises

Smoldering (70%) – *(e.g., Coronavirus Pandemic, embezzlement)*

- Much more likely to occur
 - More difficult to identify in early stages
 - Leaders often avoid, ignore or misunderstand the potential severity
 - Mismanagement or human errors are sometimes involved
 - Sometimes go away on their own
 - Reflect on the quality and ability of leaders
-



Preparing



Preparing for a crisis

- **Plan proactively with your staff and board**
 - **Consider communications logistics, who does what**
 - **Anticipate the need for extra staff**
 - **Communications toolkit: Email, social media, press releases, etc.**
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Preparing for media during a crisis

- May learn about the crisis before you (or maybe social media)
 - Will be on-site before you are ready
 - May be adversarial
 - See spokesperson as the “spin doctor”
 - Want to assign blame
-



Responding : Three Cs and a PEAR



What, when, in what order?



What, when, in what order?





**P
E
A
R**



P - People

E - Environment

A - Assets

R - Reputation



PEAR lessons learned from others



Lessons learned





Lessons learned

ENVIRONMENT JUNE 2, 2010 / 2:43 PM / 10 YEARS AGO

BP CEO apologizes for "thoughtless" oil spill comment



The BP chief had remarked “I want my life back,” to several news organizations, including Reuters, in recent days.

“I made a hurtful and thoughtless comment,” Hayward said in a statement. “I apologize, especially to the families of the 11 men who lost their lives in this tragic accident. Those words don’t represent how I feel about this tragedy.”

“My first priority is doing all we can to restore the lives of the people of the Gulf region and their families - to restore their lives, not mine,” he added.



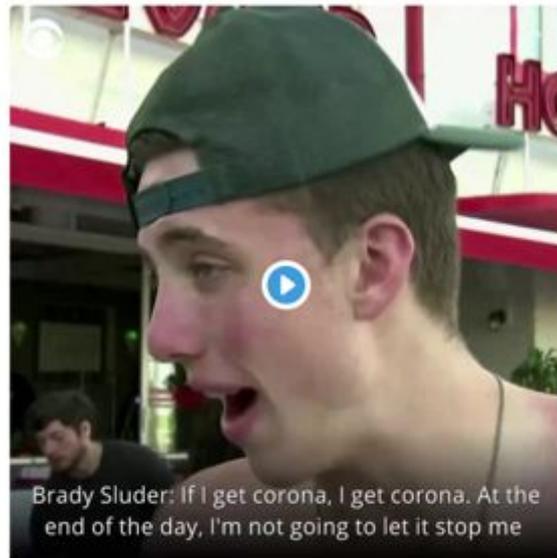
Lessons learned



Video of spring breakers saying coronavirus won't 'stop me from partying' sparks viral condemnation



"If I get corona, I get corona. At the end of the day, I'm not gonna let it stop me from partying": Spring breakers are still flocking to Miami, despite coronavirus warnings. [cbsn.ws/33sb67i](https://www.cbsn.ws/33sb67i)



Brady Sluder: If I get corona, I get corona. At the end of the day, I'm not going to let it stop me

57.6K 4:15 PM · Mar 18, 2020

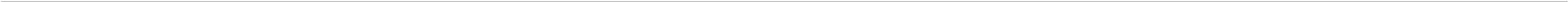




The three Cs



The three Cs





The 3 Cs

Cs = HOW you communicate a crisis

- **Control:** We are in control of the situation
- **Competence:** We have competent professionals working on it
- **Concern:** We care, Here's how you can help

It's not what you say, but how you say it.

Care + Concern = Credibility (the P in PEAR)



Responding during a crisis

- The first 30 minutes set the tone (sudden) or the first few days (smolder)
 - Gather facts, think ahead, what's the impact?
 - Develop response options
 - Select appropriate point person (not always the ED/CEO)
 - Share information **ASAP** – staff and board first, stakeholders/elected, then media/public/social media
-



Managing the Media (and social media)



Preparing messages for the media



The #1 Rule

It's not about **answering their questions**,
it's about **delivering your message**.



“Does anyone have any questions for my answers.”

– Henry Kissinger





Preparing messages for the media

When the media calls you...

- Develop key messages you want to deliver
 - Find out who else is being interviewed
 - Anticipate questions
 - Who is the right spokesperson?
 - Know and respect their deadline
-



Preparing messages for the media

Strategies...

- Fight emotion with emotion (e.g., anger at those who misbehaved or sympathy for those harmed).
 - Put a **human face** on the crisis: Humanize your Association or Venue. Make it personal by helping people know why we exist and that we care. Faces, not logos. Not always the ED/CEO.
 - Engage third parties. (Associations, Elected Officials, etc.)
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Preparing messages for the media

Be 100% Honest All the Time.

- **If you don't know the answer, say so!**
 - **Don't answer a question you don't understand**
 - **Don't exaggerate**
 - **Always tell the truth**
-



The #1 Rule

It's not about **answering their questions**,
it's about **delivering your message**.



Media Myths

- Media will wait for all the **facts**
 - **Context matters** when covering news
 - Reports will “**play it as I say it**”
 - All media is **the same**
 - Media has **no bias**
-



Talking with the media

- Do a quick list of **3 key points**
 - Accent the **positive** do not volunteer the negative
 - Nothing is **off the record**
 - Never say, “**No Comment**”
 - Be **confident** in your own expertise
 - **Correct** misinformation
 - **Avoid** hypothetical situations
 - Repeat your **key messages**
-



Talking with the media

- Go over the **basics**
 - Simple statements/**avoid jargon**
 - Be **brief** - sound bite
 - Be **interesting**
 - Use **analogies**
 - Don't rush
 - **Don't say more** than you have to
 - Stick to your **key messages**
-



Talking with the media

Steering the Conversation

- “Just as important...”
- “We may be overlooking the fact that...”
- “I would describe it differently...”
- “The real issue here is...”
- “But what concerns me even more...”
- “The spirit of what we are announcing today is...”





Thinking Ahead



***“A good chess player thinks
three moves ahead.”***

– Paul Fahey





Thinking ahead

“This too shall pass.”

What are we saying next week?

Plan now for ramp-up strategies and messages. How do they sound?



Thinking ahead

- **PEAR** - People. Make members' lives better.
 - **Communicate often**. Aggregate other news, labor, loans, job boards, just fun human moments.
 - **Communicate regularly**. We crave routines. It makes us feel stable. Friday Facts, Monday moments...whatever.
 - **Listen**. Ask questions on social media. What's keeping you up at night. How can our staff and board help guide you through this?
 - **Be human**. It's ok. It's our first pandemic together and we're bound to make a few mistakes. All in this together. HS musical.
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So, in summary...



Summary

- Need for communication grows the longer the crisis lasts
 - PEAR
 - Always remember the **#1 rule**: “It’s not about answering questions, it’s about delivering your message.”
 - Communicate often, even if you don’t have anything new to say
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Be there for your people. Your members. Guests. Whatever you call them.

Because they'll remember how you treated them long after this is over.





Feel free to call, please. We're here to help, not profit.



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Questions, Conversations and Tales from the Trenches