Thanks for joining me today for this crisis communications review.

Let’s first talk about how to determine if your event is a crisis. Once you know that, you can develop a communications strategy. Your tactics to work the crisis will follow.

Background – crisis work at hospital, academic medical center and Kiwanis. Former reporter, anticipate questions that could be asked.

We define a crisis as something that threatens our integrity or reputation – of Kiwanis or any of our family members such as Key Club or Children’s Fund.

A crisis can involve a person, such as a club member who is arrested, or a natural disaster or fire – anything that could attract media negative or unwanted attention.

A crisis is something that needs immediate attention – we used to say we
lived in a 24-hour news cycle and now it's hourly – sometimes even every 30 minutes. And it’s immediate with social media. People expect information within minutes of an event. Because our news cycle is shortened, and because of social media, we know that anything can receive media attention – and fast.

Issues and situations will pass much more quickly but will need attention to make certain they don’t escalate.
With that in mind, these are the elements of a crisis.

We also want to be aware of any long-term repercussions that could follow the crisis.
Not everything is a crisis, though it can seem like a crisis in the moment.

Many perceived crisis are not really crisis level, but they can escalate if they are not managed properly. Our biggest challenge with either a crisis or an issue is the social media component, because everything is out right away, and you need to be able to manage your communications. In today's world, you can't get away with ignoring something or not responding.

The difference between a crisis, which we just reviewed, and an issue, is the long-term harm.

We'll walk through some examples to help you determine what's what, and what you can do.
Our Kiwanis risk management statistics show that our top crisis situations are some form of accident that causes a death - This could be an accident at a parade, such as a float running into the crowd, or an explosion at an event, such as a propane tank on a grill.

This category also includes injuries that occur at events or just accidents in general – someone slips and falls at an event, any number of things.

We have many situations of inappropriate behavior, some that lead to criminal charges and others that don't. Some involve children, some involve the children who are members of our youth programs, and some involve children in their care. Yes we have a robust background check process but we have to be prepared for anything.

Another situation we often see is theft such as embezzlement, from either club funds or the member's job, or both, or with family or other circumstance. It does happen.
Because of our societal focus on social media, we must watch our channels closely to make sure comments, photos or any links to posts are appropriate. While it's not the equivalent of a fire or a crash, it can blow up and become a crisis. (Examples – the why I stayed scenario – became a trending hashtag on social media when domestic abuse survivors tweeted about why they stayed. A pizza company got in to the conversation with tweets about staying for the pizza, not knowing the underlying scenario. The lesson: if a tweet has a link, follow it. If there's a hashtag, look it up before you retweet it.

Also, monitor your channels. We monitor our channels, and see a lot of yours, too, but you have to stay on top of your channels for comments and questions.
Let's identify some situations that aren't a crisis situation but could be if you don't act appropriately and promptly.

You could have club members criticizing one another, a discussion of politics – internal and external and or personal comments being made and shared on social media. In these instances it's best to reach out personally. Encourage club members to avoid a public view of their criticisms. And social media is not the place for that.

Remember, we're all members of Kiwanis to help kids. Let's take our disagreements off social media.
When you return home after convention, assemble a crisis team. If you have team and a plan, you’ll be ready.

If your club does not have a PR chair, suggest one! This position is so important, not just in a crisis situation but in helping the members of the club set your communications strategy – deciding what your club is going to do and how you are going to do it and how you will share those messages. We have lots of information PR chairs can use at kiwanis.org/brand

Club leaders should all have each other's cell phone numbers, so you can start a group text when necessary.

Email addresses, too. Not everyone has email on their phones, but nearly everyone has texting capability.

And, you can decide ahead of time about your club spokesperson. Will it always be the club president? Or the PR chair? Or the club secretary? It
doesn't have to follow rank – it should be the person most comfortable answering questions, speaking to the media and talking under pressure.

Once you've established your contact list and identified your spokesperson, you'll want to practice a couple of scenarios and we'll do that today. If we don't get through them, I'll give you some documents to help you when you get back to your club.

And, you will want to test your phone, text or email list.

PR chair - best case scenario - should be someone who is or has been in the media world and is comfortable in that environment. Not just TV or newspapers, but also advertising, marketing, design – any of those related fields.
Your chain of command should be to call Kiwanis first. If you're not sure if it's a crisis or an issue, give me a call or send an email. If it's an accident or injury, you will want to notify Risk Management.

When do you call? When you become aware of an incident. If you can let us know before it hits the media, it's a bonus. Sometimes someone will be cited or arrested and everyone learns at the same time. But if you learn of an investigation or an arrest, please notify us.

I can walk you through the next steps. We'll develop some talking points and decide how to proceed. If you have worked with local media, know local media, and want to have a local spokesperson, we can discuss that. If you don't want to manage it, I'm here for you.

The key messages we create will have multiple purposes – they will help you gather your thoughts and can be used for media relations and for club and district updates. Once you have your key messages, you can stick to the main points and your risk of running off course is reduced,
you won't ramble and you are less likely to forget an important piece of information. It's all about consistency.
Your team should include your PR chair, whomever you've decided to be your spokesperson and the outline of an action plan. Agree on one spokesman for continuity.
If you've determined you're in a crisis situation, there are a few things you need to do:

Describe the situation – it's the who, what, when, where, why and how of any event. This is important, and you'll need to make some notes and keep records.

Determine the threat to Kiwanis. Reputation? Integrity? Trust? Could be one, could be all three.

Key messages are next – you have to have all the information to develop your key messages. If you look in our handbook on Pages 4 and 5, key messages are explained. Basically it's three talking points that will help communicate your response.

Develop a holding statement – this gives you some time to finish your planning. It could be a simple as "We are aware of the situation and will provide information as soon as we can." We can help with this. We have some standard statements and we have examples for specific situations.
Think of any recommendations about how to improve or rectify the situation.

And finally, what are the unintended consequences that you can start to manage now.
Call us!
We can return the call to the media or work with you to develop talking points depending on the situation.

But, if you're caught off guard and asked questions, try to remember a few things:
Never say no comment – you can say you don't have the information the reporter seeks and you will get back to them. Get the timeframe, respect the deadline, call us and we'll determine the next steps.
Don't speculate – simply say you don't know and will find out and be in touch.
Never ever, ever lie.
Off the record is a great plot device to keep a story moving but don't play. If a reporter asks for an off-the-record comment, you should decline to comment.
Everything you say, whether you are being recorded or a reporter is taking notes, is fair game. So be careful.
So now you're ready.

Something has happened, the media calls you, and you call us. Ask about deadlines, how soon do they need a return call?

We'll create some key messages, and practice them. You already know who your club's spokesman is because you are prepared.

And, regarding the spokesman, it does not have to be the club president. It should be someone who is comfortable talking, particularly if tv or radio media are likely to cover. Or it's KI.

There's a great technique called bridging that you can employ to get back to your key messages – it's language we use every day with our spouses, partners, children, colleagues – as I was saying ... It's important to note ... what's most important is ... say that, then bridge back to your key message.
I have a couple of scenarios for us to practice, merge in to small groups and everyone will get one. Review the scenario, decide if it's an issue or a crisis and what should happen next.
So let's go over a few of these - who did the CKI example?
Was it a crisis or an issue?
What did you do first?
What is the long term harm?

For the shooting issue --
Clearly a crisis – what's next? Do you still need to call us of the media is already covering the story (YES)

For the theft – crisis or issue? What happens next?

And the Key Club advisor – another crisis, correct?
If the media has the story, do you still need to alert Kiwanis? Should you comment?
Follow up club-level

- Review crisis plan
- Adapt as necessary
- Brainstorm crisis situations
- Practice
A glance at this photo would only give you pause because the club is using the wrong logo. But this is an example of a crisis we faced last September. A club in South Carolina held a candidate’s debate and the congressional candidate made a joke that was inappropriate and insensitive. We live in a politically-charged environment and words travel fast, particularly words that are seen as inflammatory.

This became a crisis for us because the photo clearly showed our logo and took place at a Kiwanis event, leaving people to ask us if we sanctioned the event or approved of the comments.

We worked with the club to develop a statement for the media and we pinned a similar statement to our Twitter page because we could not keep up with the comments and it’s back at us. We had thousands within an hour.

Our message:
Kids need Kiwanis. Kids need role models. Kids need adults to provide
examples of how to behave.

That's not what happened Thursday at a candidates’ debate our Kiwanis club sponsored between Rep. Ralph Norman and Archie Parnell, candidates for the 5th Congressional District.

Kiwanis events are supposed to be forums for figuring out how to help kids in our community – not a place to crack jokes about sexual assault. We believe Rep. Norman crossed a line with his joke – it was not funny. It was in poor taste. It absolutely does not reflect the values of our club.

Video and audio recordings of the debate clearly demonstrate that a very small minority of the audience — club members and their guests, as well as a number of guests invited directly by the two campaigns — laughed or clapped.

This incident and the social media firestorm it ignited sullied the reputation of our club as we prepare to celebrate our 99th anniversary of helping children in Rock Hill, throughout North Carolina and the world. We know this community respects our club and its work, which includes making sure hungry students have food to eat over the weekend and financially supporting the renovation of the Northside Center Playground.

We want our community to understand that our focus is helping children and we are united in service to kids. If you want to join us, come to a service project, drop in for a meeting or give us a call. Kids need Kiwanis and Kiwanis needs you.
Here’s an example of crisis communications by Boeing after the recent crashes of two of the company’s airliners. The CEO is staying on message and using bridging techniques to take the conversation where he wants, not where the reporter wanted to go. He wants to focus on safety, so he steers the conversation back to safety.
Questions?

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