

CRISIS MYTHS: THERE'S MORE TO CRISES THAN YOU THINK

By *Dustin Eno*, COO & Crisis Response Manager, Navigate Response

Navigate Response, a subsidiary of Witt O'Brien's, shares our passion for helping clients develop resilience. Together our experts offer clients best-in-class reputation management when a crisis occurs. Our two companies bring maritime crisis communicators and operational crisis responders together under one roof for the first time.

When I tell someone that I work in crisis communications I almost invariably get the response, "that must keep things interesting," and indeed it can. However, that's generally the only thing people understand correctly about crises. If the conversation proceeds much further it quickly becomes apparent that most people completely misunderstand the reputational impacts, threats and indeed opportunities that a crisis can present.

Let's take a minute to "bust" the top five myths about crises!

1. A crisis always damages reputations

Not true. Managed well, a crisis can help to raise a company's or product's profile and enhance its reputation. From a communications' standpoint, a crisis represents both a risk and an opportunity – it all comes down to management. Just remember, advertisers pay millions for the publicity that will come for free from a crisis.

2. Any publicity is good publicity

Don't believe it! If managed poorly a crisis can cause irreparable damage to reputations, sales and earnings. A single set of events and facts can be used to tell many different stories, and only through active management can you ensure that a favourable story is told.

3. Saying nothing to the media means there's no story

Wrong. 'No comment' often translates into 'I've got something to hide', and will spur the media to investigate you further, and almost everyone has something that they'd rather wasn't splashed across the headlines. The media is going to write a story; your only choice is whether your part in the story is defined by you or by some else.

4. A competitor affected by a crisis is good news for my business

Usually wrong. In the maritime sector, one company's poorly managed crises can often motivate the introduction of antishipping legislation that negatively impacts everyone. More generally, loss of consumer confidence in a product or brand can have an overall market impact, driving consumers to other choices. Also, remember that highlighting a problem area will alert the media to investigate other players in the market. That could mean you.

5. A crisis manual is all that's required

This is a dangerous assumption. A manual and a procedure is a good place to start, but crisis management should be an ongoing process. Practice, media monitoring and proactive relationship building are all essential. Media response should be a part of every emergency drill you do.

About Dustin Eno:



Dustin has over 12 years of communications experience including as the head of crisis communications for the largest wildfire management centre in British Columbia, Canada. In this role he managed media and social media relations for destructive wildfires and property loss, routinely filling the Information Officer role in the incident command system.

As our Chief Operating Officer and Crisis Response Manager, Dustin manages the media response for numerous shipping incidents, coordinates the operations of our global network and is one of the company's lead media trainers. Dustin is also an award-winning workshop presenter and public speaker.