

2004

Crisis Management in Athletic Public Relations

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Crisis Management in Athletic Public Relations

Degree Type

Open Access Senior Honors Thesis

Department

Communication, Media and Theatre Arts

First Advisor

Kathleen Stacey

Keywords

Athletes Public opinion, Crisis management, Public relations Management, Sports Public relations

Subject Categories

Sports Management

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APRIL 26, 2004

CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN ATHLETIC PUBLIC RELATIONS

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CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN ATHLETIC PUBLIC RELATIONS

**CHRISTINA M. ZAVICAR
HONORS THESIS
WINTER 2004**

PREPARED FOR: KATHLEEN STACEY

Crisis Management in Athletic Public Relations

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INTRODUCTION

Kobe Bryant sits at the front of the room with his tearful wife by his side and she is holding his hand. The flashbulbs are going off like crazy and Bryant attempts to get his words out through his cracking voice. He is apologizing over and over again for the wrongs he has committed. In July 2003, the Los Angeles Lakers basketball star was accused of raping a minor while on the road in Colorado. Bryant admits to committing adultery, but insists the sex was consensual. This is what Bryant is insisting to this room full of reporters with his wife by his side.

This press conference is an example of a way to deal with a crisis in athletics. Crisis management is probably the most difficult aspect of public relations. Crisis situations that arise in different companies, businesses, and sports teams cannot be completely planned. No matter how much planning is done for a problem occurring, every situation is different. This aspect of a crisis makes it particularly difficult in dealing with.

What is the best way to deal with a crisis situation? Is there a template that can be put in effect once a crisis occurs? I believe there are both similarities and differences in dealing with crises in general public relations' practices versus athletic situations. With athletic media relations, there are probably more image issues than anything else. Unlike business-type issues that may occur in other types of organizations, athletics must be focused on image in order to keep fans coming back to watch the contests. The way fans look up to teams and players is a key factor in generating success for athletic organizations.

Public relations practices are continually being modified. Although it may be thought that many organizations have a developed crisis-management team, this isn't necessarily true. What are some good examples of dealing with crisis situations in both athletics and in general public relations practices? Where did good public relations practices originate?

In order to answer these questions, the researcher will review crisis management strategies in general public relations practices as well as focus on three specific examples of dealing with crises in public relations:

- 1) *Johnson & Johnson's case of Tylenol poisoning*: This case gives a great example of a focused reaction to a crisis. The way Johnson & Johnson dealt with an extreme situation paved the way for future public relations practices.
- 2) *The Chicago "Black Sox" Scandal*: This case will give some insight into possibly the first crisis situation in athletic public relations. It shows the ways Major League Baseball had to deal with the situation while having hardly any background information on how to do it. The methods used gave future organizations a guideline for how to react to similar situations.
- 3) *The University of Michigan's Ed Martin Case*: This case is an excellent example of how to deal with a crisis in modern-day athletic public relations. The way the university handled the situation could almost be used as a template for other in similar situations, and is a great learning tool for the modern athletic era.

All three of these cases will shed light on the best ways to deal with crises in athletic public relations. After researching these three cases, the researcher will look for insight on the best ways to deal with crises by comparing and contrasting them both with each other as well as with the research that will be done on general public relations practices.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, the researcher will look into different cases of crisis management both within athletics and outside of athletics. The first step, however, will be to research crisis management in general public relations' practices by looking through scholarly journals and articles.

The purpose of looking at research and crisis management methods in a general public relations' venue is because it will give the researcher an overview of how crisis management is practiced. This project's purpose is to find the best-possible way of dealing with a crisis - therefore every possible area should be looked at. Once different methods of crisis management have been researched, a conclusion can be drawn as to what the basic fundamentals of dealing with a crisis are.

The researcher will next look at a general public relations' case in order to determine a good way of dealing with a crisis. The case that will be studied is the Johnson & Johnson Tylenol case, in which the company had to deal with poisonings in the Chicago area. The purpose of looking at a general public relations' case is to see how a non-athletic corporation would handle a crisis situation.

Once the Johnson & Johnson case has been explored, the researcher will look into athletic crisis-management situations. The first will be the Chicago "Black Sox" Scandal that occurred in the early 1900s. This research will shed some light on perhaps the pioneer of crisis management in athletics. Major League Baseball had to deal with the possibility of players throwing a World Series in cahoots with local gamblers. The way in which the organization dealt with the crisis shows methods for dealing with such cases in its purest form.

Finally, the researcher will look into the University of Michigan's Ed Martin Case, in which the university had to deal with a scandal in its men's basketball program. This will give the researcher an idea of how athletic crises in today's day and age are dealt with, and will give insight as to how crisis management in athletics has evolved.

Once all of these areas and cases have been explored, a conclusion will be drawn as to what is the best possible way to deal with a crisis in athletics.

COMPONENT ONE: CRISIS

MANAGEMENT IN GENERAL PUBLIC

RELATIONS PRACTICES

Crisis management is one of the most important aspects of public relations. How those in an organization handle themselves when in a crisis can make or break it as credible in the eyes of the public. Using crisis management techniques in public relations is still a relatively new practice. Although it would seem that crisis management techniques would be a given in most companies, they were still rare as recently as the early 1980s.

One prime example of dealing with a crisis occurred in the fall of 1982 with Johnson & Johnson. Seven people in Chicago had reportedly died after taking Tylenol capsules. After autopsies had been performed, it was concluded that those individuals had ingested cyanide-laced Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules. With crisis management practices being relatively new, Johnson & Johnson had to determine the best reaction.

The Tylenol case is considered by some public relations practitioners as one of the best-handled crises in history. Johnson & Johnson took measures to both deal with the situation at hand, as well as restore the image of the company as well as the Tylenol product.

The first thing Johnson & Johnson did to help maintain credibility with the public was take responsibility for the problem. The first thing the company did was put out a mass message via the media to alert all customers of the possible danger in consuming Tylenol capsules. Johnson & Johnson also did a mass recall of the product, costing the company millions of dollars. A \$100,000 ransom was also put up for any information that could lead to the catching of the person who was responsible for the poisoning of the medicine.

Finally, Johnson & Johnson offered an exchange to all customers who currently had Tylenol capsules in their possession. The company did a straight-up exchange of the capsules for the tablets in order to take away any apprehension consumers may have had about taking the product.

The move on the part of Johnson & Johnson to put the customers first regardless of monetary cost put them in a good light with the public. It showed compassion for the safety of the customers, as opposed to a defensive attitude. The company very well could have claimed innocence to the situation, and held back because it did not want to appear responsible. But the outward showing of concern for the safety of the general public helped to restore and maintain Johnson & Johnson's positive image in the public eye.

Once the immediate problems had been taken care of, the company was able to work to restore its image with the public. Once the situation had come to a close and the killer had been caught, Johnson & Johnson were able to begin its campaign to maintain its command over the over-the-counter drug market.

The first thing the company did was to change the packaging of the product. Tylenol became the first product to have triple-seal protection on the packaging of the product. First, the box was glued shut and had to be ripped open. Second, there was a plastic ring around the top of the bottle, as well as a foil seal covering the opening of the bottle. A warning was also put on the box and the bottle stating that the product should not be used if any of the three seals were broken.

Johnson & Johnson also put an advertising and marketing campaign into effect to entice consumers who may have strayed away from Tylenol to purchase the product. Coupons were offered to consumers that could be acquired by calling a toll-free number

or from local newspapers. A new pricing plan was also put into affect, and Tylenol executives made presentations to people in the medical community in order to promote the use of Tylenol.

The actions of Johnson & Johnson in this case are considered one of the most brilliant public relations campaigns of all time. The timely manner in which the company handled the problem allowed its product to remain a dominant one on the market. The steps Johnson & Johnson followed can be used by other companies to handle crisis situations.

Timeliness is one of the biggest factors in handling a crisis. Quick response is imperative when a crisis occurs. Basically, if the company does not inform the public of its stance in the event of a crisis, the public will fill in the blanks by itself without asking any questions. When Johnson & Johnson quickly took responsibility for its product being the cause of death while not taking responsibility for the poison being inside the bottles and the capsules, it maintained its credibility with the public. Imagine if the company had sat back, claiming it had nothing to do with the deaths, and others had occurred? The integrity and image of the company may have been tarnished for good. Timely response is needed in the event of a crisis.

Johnson & Johnson's response in itself is another key point in responding to a crisis. The company acknowledged the deaths as resulting from a Tylenol ingestion, but in no way, shape or form did the company admit to being responsible for those poisonings. A company should not admit wrongdoing or apologize just to gain sympathy in the public eye - this could come back to haunt the organization. Instead, a reaction like Johnson & Johnson's is ideal. Sympathizing with the families, announcing its intent on

finding out the root of the problem, and acting out of the safety for customers was the correct way to react.

As Philip Lesly says in *Lesly's Handbook of Public Relations and Communications*, a good crisis plan should:

- 1) Establish among everyone in the organization that it will put first the interest of the people concerned.
- 2) Make it clear that the organization will be as open as possible about what happened as the facts and conditions permit.
- 3) Give priority to resolving the emergency and protecting people affected.
- 4) Emphasize that the organization will be fair to all, including critics or opponents who may have instigated the problem.

Johnson & Johnson included all these steps within their crisis management plan, and it obviously paid off. The company was able to reestablish itself as a credible one, simply by putting the best interests of the public ahead of its own.

Besides the overall dealings of a crisis management plan, there should be other fundamental factors involved when dealing with a problem within a company. Along with the needs to put the public first and be as open and honest as possible with the public, the company should look at other factors in order to carry out these actions in the best way possible.

According to the guidelines of Baskin, Arnoff and Lattimore in their book of *Public Relations: The Profession and the Practice*, there are six components to responding to a crisis:

1) *Have a designated spokesperson.* This person does not necessarily have to be the CEO of the company, but should be the person best qualified to handle the job. The person needs to be able to handle the questions of a media conference, when he or she will be center-stage to answering some possibly controversial questions. The responses of that person will be extremely important to the company, and it should therefore pick a person who will represent the image and the beliefs of the organization.

2) *Gather all facts and verify them.* The company should be sure to take responsibility for answering all questions possible. If there is something the media or the public will speculate about, the best route of the company will be to get that information to provide it as quickly as possible. The last thing an organization wants to happen in a crisis is have the media or another source uncover information before the organization has the opportunity to process and respond to it.

3) *Set up a media center.* Having a place for the media to congregate during a crisis is a good idea just for the stability aspect of it.

4) *Do not release names of dead or injured until relatives are notified.* Out of respect for families involved, this should be enforced during crises involving death or injuries.

5) *Respond to all media inquiries, but if you don't know the answer, say so.* It is better for the company to respond with, "I don't know right now, but I will try to get that for you as soon as possible," then to try to make up any sort of response. The company needs to maintain credibility. It is better to say, "I don't know" than to risk giving out the wrong information.

6) *Do not speculate.* This falls under the fifth component as well. The credibility of a company during a time of crisis is extremely important. Speculation into something may ruin that credibility. Once again, "I don't know" is better than giving out the wrong information.

Ultimately, getting the right information out in a timely manner is needed to have a good crisis-management plan. The media and the public will fill in the blanks for any information not provided by an organization. The company should do all it can do to acquire the information the media will request before they request it.

The company also needs to realize that the best interests of the public should always go first. When the organization shows compassion toward the public, the public will most likely be able to reverse that and show compassion toward the organization.

In a crisis situation, organizations should try to follow these steps in order to get through the event. Sometimes a crisis may include something as tragic as death or serious injury, but could also be something humiliating such as someone connected with an organization getting caught doing something against the law. In any event, the public relations professionals must stay mentally prepared for any situation that may come up. Preparing for the worst possible scenario will help a crisis situation go as smoothly as

possible when one does occur. Although no one can truly know what will come up, being prepared and focused for any possibility will help panic from occurring when something does arise.

**COMPONENT TWO: THE “BLACK
SOX” SCANDAL:
A PIONEER OF CRISIS
MANAGEMENT IN ATHLETICS**

Before the “Black Sox Scandal,” in the early 1900s Major League Baseball was as close to untarnished as it could be. No one even considered beginning a public relations practice since no one could conceive of problems within the organization. The only public relations practices used had to do with ticket sales - with major league clubs implementing programs similar to ones currently used by the major leagues today. Days such as, “Old Timers’ Day,” “Ladies’ Day,” and days for the YMCA and Sunday schools were used to attract people to the ballparks. The idea of crisis management was not a part of the major league baseball organization.

Major league baseball and the media had developed a symbiotic relationship over time. The media would cover the baseball games, which would increase attendance, which would boost newspaper sales. This relationship between the organization and the press kept major league baseball from putting together any sort of crisis management or public relations strategy. Why put together something to protect the organization from the media when the media was already its best ally?

The organization was considered pure, and those who were associated with running it did not see a need to implement a crisis management strategy. Major league baseball simply took care of itself. The organization was so shielded from controversy that the media and fans had a difficult time believing there could be any dishonesty going on within the organization. When accusations of a scandal surfaced in regards of the eight members of the White Sox ball club throwing the 1919 World Series against Cincinnati, the media and the fans did not believe it could be possible.

A Chicago-based sports writer, Hugh Fullerton, was the first to accuse the eight team members of conspiracy to throw the series. The White Sox had been greatly favored in the series, and he raised the questions on whether or not the team had lost on purpose. Major league baseball was so highly regarded that the media became angry at Fullerton for even suggesting any problems within the organization. It would be assumed that if the same thing had happened in today's day and age, the media would have jumped all over the opportunity to cover the story of major league baseball having a cheating conspiracy. But baseball was looked upon as such a pure sport, that the media was more angered with someone bringing up the idea of foul play than excited at the thought of uncovering the story.

The story was finally uncovered when a case regarding a game between the Philadelphia Phillies and the Chicago Cubs came under suspicion of gambling rumors. When that case went to trial, the case of the eight Chicago White Sox players also went to trial. The jury convicted the eight players of "defrauding the public" since no law existed regarding the fixing of baseball games. The sentence was later reversed, however, after written confessions from some of the players were retracted. The judge argued that there was no longer a case, and the eight players were dismissed.

But major league baseball still had to deal with the issue of the tainting of the league. Although the players were released free of charges, major league baseball no longer held the image of being "pure." The response from the media was overwhelming. It was outraged at the jury's decision, and believed the players should be punished for their actions.

Major league baseball had to act on this issue. It couldn't simply lay back and not do anything about the growing resentment toward the league. The "Black Sox" had obviously tainted the image of the game, and crisis management had to go into effect. There were two main things major league baseball did in response to this scandal.

The first thing the organization did was to hire a commissioner. At this point, the only governing body it had was called the National Commission, which consisted of three men: National League president Henry Pulliam, American League president Ban Johnson, and Cincinnati owner Garry Herrmann. This group of men was put together after the American League came into existence and began opposing the National League. The trio wasn't much of a threat, so major league baseball appointed Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis as the sole commissioner of baseball.

It can be looked at as the organization doing when modern-day public relations would consider appointing one person to be the representative during a crisis. Landis was able to take control of the situation and speak on behalf of major league baseball. Landis didn't waste any time putting a campaign together, and was quick to let the public know where major league baseball stood in regards of the Chicago "Black Sox."

Landis quickly went into a crisis-management plan, and the first thing he did was give the public what it wanted; he expelled the eight members of the White Sox accused of throwing the World Series from major league baseball for life. What he did was show that there would be no tolerance for that kind of behavior within the organization.

Landis did what he believed was right in the situation. He had media and owners complaining that this would hurt the organization. American League president Ban Johnson was quoted as saying that the players' actions were the "greatest crime it was

possible to commit in baseball. The fact that they were freed does not ... minimize the magnitude of the offense.”

Although the court system could not find any cause to convict the eight players of any crimes, the media and the public were convinced they had done wrong, so Landis gave them what they wanted.

This shows that even in the early 20th century, the media held tremendous power. Landis really didn't have a choice in whether he would expel the players or not. If he allowed them to continue play, the media would have given the organization bad publicity. Crisis management is important for this exact reason. The media can make or break an organization, and it must be catered to in every situation.

Once Landis expelled the players, the anger from the media decreased. The commissioner made sure to get his point across that major league baseball would not tolerate gambling. This was a good move on his part. He made sure to let the media and the public know that major league baseball was committed to doing the right thing – the White Sox were one of the best team in the game and those eight players were among the best. Landis did what he had to do to ensure trust from the media.

The other step major league baseball did in response to the crisis was to set up a press office called the Service Bureau. The press office was set up in December of 1922, and its purpose was to disseminate information to the media. Although this put Major League Baseball on the right track, it was nowhere near to a media relations office today. The branch was set up to give information to the media if it was requested, but it wasn't until the 1930s that the organization actually began being proactive in the giving of information.

The development of the bureau in general put the organization in the right direction, but this also brings up the point of a mistake Major League Baseball made in regards to the “Black Sox” scandal. One thing modern-day public relations would be sure to include in crisis management is being proactive. When writer Hugh Fullerton brought up the possibility of gambling within the World Series, Major League Baseball turned the other cheek and chose not to respond. It wasn’t until the organization was forced that it acknowledged the possibility of a scandal.

This would be a mistake by today’s standards. The best way to approach a situation is to discover what the source of rumors is and get to the bottom of them. Major League Baseball should have done the investigating itself so it would be able to report the results to the media and the public.

There is, however, the factor that the media and the public was incredibly accepting of the organization at the time, and didn’t give Major League Baseball much cause to be proactive. At the same time, the organization was extremely lucky that the media didn’t turn on it. The conclusion that Major League Baseball covered up the scandal could have easily been drawn since it wasn’t active in getting to the root of the accusations. If the organization truly was dedicated to having honesty within itself, wouldn’t it have done everything in its power to rid itself of the tainted parts? This is something modern-day organizations think about, but that may not have been as big of a factor in the early 20th century. Still, it is easy to see how the scandal within Major League Baseball was one of the pioneers to modern-day crisis management within organizations – particularly in athletics.

COMPONENT THREE:

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN'S

ED MARTIN CASE: A MODERN-DAY

CRISIS MANAGEMENT SUCCESS

The University of Michigan coping with the Ed Martin scandal is an excellent example of crisis management in athletics. U-M had to deal with the possible tainting of its pristine athletic image that it had built over time. When it surfaced that Martin had violated NCAA rules by giving four Michigan players and their families money and gifts, the university had to deal with the repercussions.

After years of investigations, it was finally determined that Martin had violated NCAA rules. The University of Michigan had to react in a way that would uphold its values while cracking down on the wrongdoings of Martin. Not only was Martin responsible for what happened, but the four Michigan basketball players (Chris Webber, Maurice Taylor, Louis Bullock and Robert Traylor) were guilty of accepting his money and gifts. How would the university maintain the clean image its athletic program had always had?

First off, as it is said in general public relations' practices, it is good to develop a plan of action when dealing with crisis management. U-M did just that once the situation unfolded. In order to prepare for the press conference that would take place after the conclusion of the investigation, the public relations team set up a mock question-and-answer document in order to prepare for the conference. The Q-and-A included extensive messages the university wanted to get across in the press conference.

All of the messages portrayed in the press conference were meant to build the trust back up that may have crumbled between the university and the students, athletes, fans, media, faculty, staff and general public. First of all, U-M wanted to take credibility for the actions of those connected with the university. It was sure to admit wrongdoing

and assured that the situation would never happen again. This is an important factor because being on the defensive is a good way to portray guilt. By admitting a wrongdoing, the university showed class, accountability for actions that occurred, as well as honesty in order to help rebuild trust with students, faculty, staff and the community that may have been lost.

Secondly, the university conveyed that it would be working closely with the NCAA to bring this situation to a close. By doing this, U-M showed its dedication to *getting the situation right*. This is key in this situation because it once again shows that the university was not concerned with pointing fingers. Instead, the university was concerned with getting the situation right for everyone involved. U-M would take the punishment for the incidents that had occurred, even if those who would take the punishment had nothing to do with the initial wrongdoing.

U-M also conveyed the message that it had let its “Michigan Family” down. This is extremely important, particularly with the University of Michigan. A very important part of the university’s athletic program is the donations made from the Alumni Association. The University of Michigan has a lot of alumni loyalty, and many sporting events are filled with season-ticket holding alums. The message of “letting the family down” helped show those involved with the university know they were important. U-M didn’t lose sight of the most important people in the situation: the students, faculty, alumni, and community.

The University of Michigan chose a spokesperson for the press conference that would get all this information to the public and declared its stance on the issues at hand. University of Michigan President Mary Sue Coleman spoke on behalf of the university.

She made sure to get the point across that the University of Michigan was 100 percent appalled and shamed by the events that had occurred. She made sure to get the key message across that the university did not approve of anything that went on with Ed Martin or the players who were involved. U-M made sure to separate itself from those who went against the rules of the NCAA. The university had already chosen to cut all ties with Ed Martin, and cutting ties with the four basketball players who were involved were part of the self-imposed sanctions the university would place on itself.

The university also made sure to express its support for the current men's basketball program. In his statement to the press, Athletic Director Bill Martin began by confirming that no one who was a part of the current men's basketball program including coaches, players, and staff had in any way been a part of the program when the incident between Ed Martin and the four U-M players had occurred. He went on to express his and the school's support for the current head coach and his assistant coaching staff. These statements about the current program put the point across that the university had complete confidence in those who currently held the key positions in men's basketball. Support toward the program was important because it helped show the students, faculty, alumni and community that the current program was "pure."

In a press conference announcing the results of the investigation into Ed Martin, the athletic director stated, "I believe that my job as athletic director is to hire coaches of honor and integrity, who can win at the national level the right way, and who can recruit student-athletes who graduate. I see the results of this work in Coach Tommy Amaker. When I see the way he runs his program and the high standards he sets on and off the court, I know that our basketball program is in the best hands."

The outward showing of support toward everyone involved in the current men's basketball program was key. It showed the media that the University of Michigan had all intentions on ridding itself of anything that might taint the program. In no way did U-M want anything occurring within the program that had occurred when Ed Martin had been involved.

In addition to using key words and statements to support the university and the current men's basketball program, the university made the point to be *proactive*. This showed the media, and all others connected with the university that the University of Michigan was dedicated to making the situation right. U-M worked closely with the NCAA to come up with a “punishment” for the school. The University of Michigan chose to self impose sanctions and present them to the NCAA for approval. This showed the university taking matters into its own hands and show that it believed, along with the NCAA that what had happened was wrong and needed to be addressed. to show that it, too, believed what had happened was wrong.

By doing this, U-M gave the message to the students, alumni, media, and general public that it found problems with what had happened. It portrayed the image of U-M setting out to do what was right. This also continued to show separation between the university and Ed Martin. By going out its way to self-impose sanctions, the university portrayed the message that it was ready to take the punishment and move on. Forgetting that anything had happened would be the ideal situation, so addressing the wrongdoings and putting them in the past was a message the university put across.

The university came up with its own sanctions for approval by the NCAA. These sanctions were presented to the NCAA for review in order to see if it met the NCAA's standards.

The self-imposed sanctions included:

- 1) Forfeiting all games won while the four players were ineligible
- 2) Repaying to the NCAA about \$450,000 U-M received for postseason play with those ineligible players
- 3) Declaring the men's basketball team ineligible to participate in the 2003 NCAA and National Invitation (NIT) tournaments
- 4) Placing the men's basketball program on probation for two years

Other actions taken were revising the policy on complimentary tickets, limiting access to the tunnel area of Crisler Arena and to the locker room, developing an intensive education program on NCAA rules for players and staff, careful tracking of student-athletes' automobiles, requiring completion of written tests and signed verification from student-athletes on booster rules and extra benefits, and regular outreach by compliance staff to booster groups and local businesses.

The NCAA approved all of these self-imposed sanctions. U-M was able to show that it, along with the media and general public, was in disapproval of Ed Martin's behavior. What this did was help to rebuild trust between the university and the media. Through the media, trust could be built with the students, alumni and general public.

Actions taken by the University of Michigan in this situation are a great portrayal of good crisis management in athletics, as well as good crisis management for any organization. The way the university took a proactive approach to the situation allowed it to be seen by the media and the public as truly sorry for the events that took place.

Since this process took place, the University of Michigan's athletic program has had to feel the repercussions of the situation. Players from the men's basketball team were unable to participate in important events in their college careers because of the actions of players before them. The men's team was not able to compete in the NIT or the NCAA tournaments last season because of the team's ineligibility. This was particularly disheartening because it was speculated that the team would have done well had it been able to compete. It can be seen by any who look at the situation that it is unfortunate for the current program that the past events had taken place. But the university had to take the punishment. It was just unfortunate that the current college players had to endure the consequences for the actions that occurred years ago.

**COMPONENT FOUR: THE
IMPORTANCE OF CRISIS
MANAGEMENT IN ATHLETICS**

One of the biggest reasons crisis management in athletics is so important is because image is such a big part of sports. Even the suggestion of a crisis occurring could ruin an athlete's image and his or her career. Crisis management practices in general public relations are very similar to crisis management practices in athletics. With sports clubs being such a major business in the United States, teams may even have more to deal with than a general business. Sports figures are looked up to by both adult and child fans. Therefore, image is extremely important in the world of athletics. This poses the problem of bad publicity ruining the careers of major sports figures.

Kobe Bryant, for example, is going through a major crisis. A teenage girl has accused the basketball star of rape. Bryant has since admitted to committing adultery, but he does plead innocent to rape. Before this incident occurred, Bryant was considered to be a man with high family values. He was looked up to by adults and children alike, but this issue being brought up has opened the possibility of that changing in the eyes of his fans. Even if Bryant is found innocent of raping the accuser, his image will most likely be tainted for life. He may never be the wholesome sports figure he was before this incident.

This is a problem all sports figures may have to face throughout their careers. All someone has to do is *accuse* a sports figure of something and it is a public relations disaster. Accusations can ruin the career of someone in the spotlight very quickly. Even if a sports figure is accused but is found innocent, just dragging his or her name through the mud can be a major crisis for the person that could be career-ending.

Therefore, keeping a positive image with the media is crucial. This is the major reason crisis management is so important in the world of athletics. Keeping a good relationship with the media is a necessity when dealing with athletics. The media can be

extremely brutal, and it wants to be informed on a regular basis. If the media is not given information it needs to write stories or cover an event, it will fill in any information blanks with assumptions. This is a disaster from a public relations' standpoint. The last thing a public relations practitioner wants to happen in a crisis situation is for the media to make any assumptions about what is going on.

As some of the pioneers of crisis management in athletics, those who had to deal with the Black Sox scandal learned first hand about the power of the media. Major League Baseball was already using the power of the media to its advantage when the scandal happened. The organization had developed a close relationship with the media – a “you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours” mentality. The media would cover games in order to generate a fan base which would in turn increase newspaper sales.

But Major League Baseball may not have realized the power of the media when dealing with a crisis. In regards to the media “filling in the blanks,” Major League Baseball in the early 1900s did not do a good job in being proactive and keeping the media informed. The organization was lucky that the media didn’t jump all over the possibility of a scandal occurring within the World Series games when it was first suggested by sports writer Hugh Fullerton. It can be assumed that in this day and age, the media would have gone crazy at the thought of World Series games being thrown, and would not have given the organization “the benefit of the doubt.” The fact that the media held back because it believed in the wholesome image of baseball proved to be extremely lucky to Major League Baseball.

Therefore, the scandal doesn’t show a good example of what could happen if an organization is not proactive, because Major League Baseball stayed out of trouble. But

the organization quickly learned that it had to act fast once the case was brought to trial. Once it was seen that there was some validity behind the accusations of writer Fullerton, the media and the public began to react to it. The media that didn't believe in Fullerton earlier were suddenly forced to face the fact that there was a possibility that the World Series may have been thrown. The organization's actions to bring in Landis as the commissioner and begin its Service Bureau became the way it was proactive – it just began later than it most likely would have by today's standards. Since the early 1900s, public relations and media relations practitioners have learned the necessity of being proactive in a crisis situation.

Both the Tylenol and Ed Martin cases show similarities in how they were dealt with in the crisis situation. Both Johnson & Johnson and the University of Michigan made a point to be proactive in their public relations' strategies. This proved successful in both cases; although it can't be known what would have happened had either of these groups *not* been proactive. But it can be seen that both cases were successful, and one thing it can most be attributed to is the proactive nature of the crisis management teams.

Both groups made a point to show their concern for those affected by the crises. Johnson & Johnson was adamant about protecting its customers, and those within the organization went out of their way to be sure customers could continue taking the product and feel safe doing so. Had Johnson & Johnson *not* been proactive with the customers, the public may very well have drawn the conclusion that the organization didn't care about the safety of those buying its products.

The University of Michigan did something similar in that it reached out to those affected. The way U-M protected its "customers" (students, fans, alumni, etc.) was by

showing empathy. Putting across the general idea that the university understood it had let down its “family” and that it would do everything it could to make it better was a way to comfort those affected.

Both organizations showed care and concern for those involved and affected by the crises at hand. Good crisis management teams do such a good job it isn’t noticed, meaning that the public and media will notice if an organization is *not* proactive, but will most likely not notice when the organization does everything right. Had Johnson & Johnson not been proactive in its approach, and just shunned off the fact that their organization may actually be responsible for the deaths of innocent people, there most likely would have been a huge reaction from the public. It may have been assumed that the organization was heartless and didn’t care to do anything for those at risk.

The same would be true for the University of Michigan. Had U-M not responded in a sympathetic way towards those who may have been extremely upset about the situation, the students, alumni, staff and fans may have turned on the university and blamed the university for the problems that occurred. In a way, by showing concern toward those involved shifted the blame away from the university. There may have been a rebellion against those currently involved with the men’s basketball program, but because of the proactive attitude from U-M, it could be seen that it was just as upset by the events that had taken place as the students, alumni, etc.

Being proactive is something that may go unnoticed, but the absence of being proactive is something that will definitely be noticed. The media will jump all over an organization that doesn’t give it answers. Those that cover a crisis need answers to give to the public – the media doesn’t care whether it gets those answers from the organization

itself. Once the organization shows it doesn't have answers, or shows that it isn't going to help the media cover the story, the media will simply fill in the blanks.

THE EVOLUTION OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN ATHLETICS

Organizations must have good relationships with the media – particularly when dealing with athletics. The media can make or break a person or organization, so there must be a good working relationship. Although it may be thought that all modern organizations have a crisis management team, it is actually much rarer than one might think. Companies and organizations are still just on the tip of the iceberg as far as crisis management is concerned.

In regards to athletics, the Black Sox Scandal is one of the pioneers in showing a good working relationship with the media. When the situation began, Major League Baseball's relationship with the media was held to the media helping the organization generate ticket sales. By the end of the situation, Major League Baseball had developed the Service Bureau to help the organization get information out to the media.

Although this was a branch of the organization meant to help the media, Major League Baseball did not become *proactive* in its approach until the 1930s. This proactive nature helps to nurture the relationship between the organization and the media.

It is easy to see how the nature of public relations in athletics has evolved over time by comparing the Black Sox Scandal to the Ed Martin case. The University of Michigan was nothing but proactive in its approach to dealing with the crisis at hand. Not only did U-M go out of its way to inform the public of what was going on within the

university, but it went out of its way to self-impose sanctions that would meet the standards of the NCAA.

Major League Baseball chose to lay back and ignore the situation at hand. Basically, the boat hadn't been rocked yet, and the organization wasn't about to do any rocking itself. With the pristine image of the organization, it is easy to see the reasoning behind this decision. It was more of an "if it ain't broke don't fix it" mentality. If the media and the fans weren't going to judge Major League Baseball for the accusations, then why go out of the way to present the case to the public? Out of sight out of mind.

It is easy to see now that being open and honest about the situation is the right way to go. The evolution of crisis management in this regard can be seen in current crisis situations at hand. With the current Kobe Bryant case, the basketball star did everything he could to put himself out there with the public and share his side of the story. As soon as the accusations went public, Bryant was holding a press conference to confess to the public his wrongdoing. Bryant made a press-conference appearance with his wife by his side, confessing to adultery but denying any charges of rape.

By doing so, Bryant showed a vulnerability to the public. He apologized for letting down his wife, child, family and the fans. He showed his human side. Had Bryant sat back and waiting until the situation had festered, assumptions about his character would have been made without him telling his side of the story. Although it can't be said that the public views Bryant as completely honest, things may have been even worse had he not voiced his side of the story to the public and the media.

Current crisis management situations have been dealt with correctly thanks to prior events that have occurred such as the Black Sox Scandal. Crises that have unfolded

in the past have paved the way for situations in the future. Crisis management is learned through experience – no two situations are alike and can't be treated as such. But guidelines can be laid out in the event that something does occur. It is more than likely that something will occur throughout the life span of any business or organization, so being prepared is the way to go.

THE INABILITY TO AVOID A CRISIS

One point that must be touched on when discussing crisis management is that situations cannot be avoided. No matter what, the Chicago White Sox had still gambled on baseball and threw the World Series. There is no way that Major League Baseball could get around that. Even with the success of the moves made by the organization, there were plenty of bumps along the road.

Although Landis was looked up to for his expelling of the eight White Sox players and preserving the purity of baseball, many objected to his harsh ways. There were plenty of cartoons and editorials criticizing his harsh words and actions. Even though the organization had done the “right thing” in getting Landis in there to take control and pave the way, there were still some who objected to what he was doing. No matter what, Major League Baseball couldn't reverse time and change the fact that the situation was what it was. The players had bet on baseball, which changed baseball. There is no avoiding that.

No matter how well Major League Baseball dealt with the situation, there were still those players who bet on baseball. It can be seen with this situation that perhaps the organization had tried to avoid anything happening by “turning the other cheek.” By

today's standards, one problem with the way Major League Baseball handled the situation was that it was not proactive in its approach. With the media not believing the possibility that the Chicago White Sox could have bet on baseball, the organization was most likely hoping the entire situation would blow over instead of looking into the situation itself.

It is easy to see the rationale in this approach. Even in the best-handled crisis situations, there are still repercussions to the occurrences of them. No matter what happens – good or bad – as far as handling the situations as they arise, the negative factors of a crisis are still out there to taint the organization. As in cases like Kobe Bryant's, an accused athlete may be innocent or an accusation toward a sports' team or organization may be false. But *the accusation and the crisis are already out there.*

The same is true for the University of Michigan. No matter how well the university handled the situation, nothing could take away from the fact that the men's basketball program was tainted. With the Ed Martin case, there is even more emphasis on the fact that the situation itself couldn't be avoided. Not only did the university have to deal with the situation while it unfolded, it now has to deal with the consequences for years to come.

U-M is not allowed to acknowledge any of the players who were found guilty of taking money and gifts from Martin. The university also had to forfeit any records and titles that were accumulated and won during the seasons those players were a part of the team. The men's basketball program and its fans are forced to remember the case every time a record comes up that had to be forfeited.

The university participated in the National Invitation Tournament in 2004. All of the statistics and notes had to be altered to go along with the NCAA sanctions. U-M participated in the 1997 NIT, which is one of the seasons the university has had to forfeit. Along with the number of games Michigan had participated in during that NIT, the team also won an NIT championship. Therefore, whenever the notes handed out to the media were written, many of them included lines like, “the all-time record is 10-0 with three games forfeited due to NCAA sanctions.” The university cannot get around the fact that the situation occurred, no matter how well it dealt with everything as it unfolded.

This is a learning situation in that it shows that it is best for an organization to acknowledge the problems that have occurred instead of allowing them to fester. If there is a crisis that occurs, the best way to deal with it is to acknowledge it, apologize for it if necessary, and move toward being proactive and getting any information out there that needs to be out there. Dealing with the situation as it unfolds is a necessity. No matter what happens, the crisis is out there.

The University of Michigan dealt with the situation in what appears to be the best way possible. It acknowledged the situation, apologized that it occurred, and took action to put it in the past. Even with the situation being dealt with practically perfectly, the repercussions of the crisis still loom with the university. Think if the university had *not* reacted in this way. What would be occurring on top of what it is dealing with now?

More than likely, the image of the university and particularly the men’s basketball program would have been tainted for a long time. The image of the program took a big enough blow without the university shying away from admitting wrongdoing. If the University of Michigan had denied any problem and let the situation fester, this may have

caused much shame with the students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Standing up and playing the bigger part helped with the image of the university.

Although it was difficult to have to admit to such a large crisis occurring, it saved the face of the University of Michigan. By the majority of those involved with the situation as well as the general public, it seemed the majority of those involved with the situation as well as the general public did not consider the university anything more than being in a situation that was incredibly unfortunate. The message sent was that there were a few bad apples that had to be removed, but that all would be well again once the university was able to stand back on its feet. The “Michigan family” came first and foremost to the university and that was something that was said time and time again.

HOW ORGANIZATIONS SUCCEED IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

After researching general public relations practices as well as these particular cases at hand, it is believed that a crisis situation is due to extremely simple factors. There are three main factors needed in order to be successful in dealing with a crisis: be proactive, be honest, and show care and concern toward those involved.

The need to be proactive has already been discussed at length, but it is one of the most important aspects of dealing with a crisis situation. Sitting back and letting the situation unfold without any input as to what is going on can be deadly to an organization. Without helping the situation along, an organization is just handing its image to the media to do whatever it wants with it.

An organization should want to be the one that gets to the bottom of a situation. The Black Sox Scandal was a situation that more than likely would have – and should

have – been handled differently in today’s day and age. As soon as the possibility of issues occurring within the organization were suspected, Major League Baseball should have been the first to figure out what was behind the accusations. Shouting the problem from the rooftops may not have been a great idea, but letting the media know that the organization was looking into the problem would at least show that it wanted to get to the root of what was wrong.

If the same situation occurred today, most likely a press release would have been issued to the media to tell Major League Baseball’s stance on the. The idea that the organization was simply trying to uphold its standard as the purest sport should be conveyed in the release. There are ways to let the media and the public know about a problem without tainting the image of the organization.

The organization then could have taken the initiative to get to the bottom of the situation. Whether the correct thing to do would have been to take the accused to trial or simply to ban them from baseball all together could have been something determined with the help of an investigation. The severity of the crime would of course have to be taken into effect, because the organization does not want to be accused of turning the other cheek after a severe crime had been committed under the noses of the administration.

By being proactive, Major League Baseball could take the focus off itself. Because of the day and age, the organization wasn’t under a lot of scrutiny after news of the scandal got out. Frankly, the image of the organization would have been tarnished whether or not it had gone out of its way to get the message across. But in today’s time, getting the message out there would have possibly kept the public from focusing its

attention on Major League Baseball and giving blame. Organizations that remain quiet during crisis situations can appear very guilty – particularly because they are leaving the answers to questions open to anyone who feels like answering them. Without providing answers to the media, the public and the media are left to draw their own conclusions.

Honesty is also a key factor in a crisis situation. One thing that should be stressed when dealing with honesty is that being honest does not mean admitting wrongdoing for something that was not the fault of the organization. Although apologizing can seem like the right thing to do, it isn't always the best thing to do. Apologizing for something that was not the fault of the organization is not a good way to go. It may be looked upon as a good way to gain sympathy but it can backfire.

Both the University of Michigan and Johnson & Johnson did this well in their respective cases. With the University of Michigan, it apologized to the “Michigan family” for what it was going through, but did not admit to being the reason things occurred within the university. The first thing the university did was disassociate from Ed Martin and dismiss the current head basketball coach. Although the university apologized for not realizing what was going on, it did not take responsibility for what happened. U-M simply cut ties with the people who were truly responsible for the events that occurred, apologized to the “Michigan family” for what it was going through, and took action to move on with the situation.

Johnson & Johnson also did a good job of apologizing and directing its apologies in the correct way. In no way did the company admit to poisoning the Tylenol. Although it expressed sympathies to the families for what they were going through, the company did not take responsibility for the poisonings. By doing so, Johnson & Johnson was able

to take ownership in *fixing* the problem and did everything it could to fix the problem, but it did not admit to something it was not responsible for. Think if the company had apologized to gain sympathy from the public. It may have been thought of as directly responsible for the deaths of innocent people!

Finally, showing care and concern for those involved is extremely important in crisis management and particularly important in crisis management in athletics. Fans of sports teams invest a lot of their time, money, energy and emotions into athletes and the teams they play for. Particularly with children, it can be devastating to a fan if a player is drug through the mud in a scandal. As with Kobe Bryant, even players who have the possibility of being found innocent will most likely never recover from harsh accusations.

Therefore, showing care and concern toward the fans of athletics is extremely important. With the investment of the fans comes an extreme loyalty. Looking at it simply as a business move would show that by keeping fans keeps the money flow coming in. Changing the opinion of a particular sports team with one fan could affect many others. How many children do we see who are fans of sports teams just because mom or dad is?

Showing care and concern is a must and no organization could have done it better than the University of Michigan. The university had a lot to lose if its “Michigan family” lost faith in U-M athletics. U-M has one of the largest alumni bases throughout the country. Keeping those people happy is a must with the university. By coming out and letting those people know that it felt care and concern for what they must be going through was a positive in that situation. Students, staff, family, alumni and general fans could get the feeling that they were important in the eyes of the university. The message

was put across that there was a genuine feeling of empathy toward those people – perhaps showing that it wasn't just about business, it was about the feelings that went along with loving the University of Michigan.

There are many other factors that go along with these three guidelines, but it is imperative to follow these three in order to be successful in a crisis management situation. These three guidelines will pave the way for a good result in a crisis situation. Although no matter what a public relations' professional does it cannot take away from the fact that the situation has occurred, that person or team can do whatever it can in order to receive the best possible result.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Duke, Shearlean. "Crisis communication by the book." Public Relations Quarterly 47, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 30-35.

Ultimately, organizations must anticipate the worst scenario possible and prepare a "textbook" crisis plan for responding to them. This way, organizations will not be running around crazy when disaster actually strikes. This article shows the example of a college freshman who died after taking over-the-counter cold medication and mixing it with marijuana. The university followed its "textbook" crisis plan, and was therefore able to get through the problem.

According to Coz Mallozzi, crisis management has four basic steps:

- 1) Crisis preparedness
- 2) Initial response
- 3) Maintaining ongoing corrective actions and reactions during the course of the crisis
- 4) Evaluation and follow-up

The university followed these steps to a tee; it already had a crisis plan which had been updated within the past year; the crisis team gathered as much information as possible immediately, sending out an initial news release ASAP; the team continued to send out releases on a daily basis, staying proactive throughout the process. The names of the deceased and other students were kept confidential. They also held a press conference at the university once all information had been obtained; and finally, the university vowed to intensify efforts to educate students about drug use. It also held a candlelight vigil for the deceased. Basically, the university stayed proactive in order to control the flow of information.

Melillo, Wendy. "Crisis management." Adweek 44 no. 40 (Oct. 2003): 26-27.

This article focuses on the importance of being proactive. The biggest mistake a company can make in a crisis situation is to let questions go unanswered. Once questions are left hanging in the air, the press has to fill in the blanks and that usually isn't pretty. Another main point this article makes is to maintain innocence and not to apologize for things just to look better in the public eye. Be sure to stand firm to the position you are taking and don't fall into the trap of being apologetic just to look better.

Pines, Wayne L. "Myths of crisis management." Public Relations Quarterly 45 no. 3 (Fall 2000): 15-17.

This article discusses 10 myths of crisis management and then the actual truths. First, the spokesperson for the company should always be the CEO. This is not true. The person best-suited to be the spokesperson for a company in a crisis situation may not be the CEO – anyone could step into the role. Second, announcements on Friday will

generate less publicity because no one reads Saturday newspapers. This is untrue because, with the fast growing Internet, the story might actually stick around the headlines longer if released on Friday – web pages may not be updated until after the weekend. Third, by now, most major companies have systems in place to manage a crisis. Although this is a common thought, it is not true that most companies currently have crisis-management systems in place.

Fourth, that the worst thing that can happen is to have a negative story on 60 minutes. Fifth, that if you're caught red-handed, try to keep the story out of the newspapers. This couldn't be further from the truth. It is actually likely that the public will actually *forgive* major blunders if the guilty party fesses up. The next myth is that, during a crisis, in order to control the story, you can't be too aggressive. This can easily occur. Although you should be sure to be proactive, you should be sure not to be over-aggressive.

Next, it is thought that the constraints that lawyers impose on communications efforts during a crisis are not really necessary. Although lawyers and public relations professionals may not agree on how to approach a crisis situation, both are acting in a way that best suits the individual. Another myth is that communications professionals should manage crises because crises are largely communication problems. Although some issues may be dealt with in a crisis-situation, other times there are other professionals who should deal with the situation. The next myth is that the government won't help much during a crisis. Although it may seem this way, government agencies deal with crises on a regular basis and are very prone to them. Finally, the last myth is that crises are downers. Although no one wants a crisis, it can help the company internally. It can bond co-workers and strengthen bonds.

Campbell, Tricia. "Crisis management at Coke." Sales & Marketing Management 151, no. 9 (Sept. 1999): 14.

This article was written shortly after the poisoning crisis with Coca-Cola in Belgium. When the poisoning occurred, Coke denied a problem was slow to address it, and offered a belated apology. There are thoughts that this may have irrevocably damaged consumer confidence in Europe. Immediately following the incident, Coke's second-quarter earnings dropped 21 percent.

Burnett, John J. "A Strategic Approach to Managing Crises." Public Relations Review 24, no. 4 (1998): 475-88.

This article defines a crisis as "a disruption that physically affects a system as a whole and threatens its basic assumptions, its subjective sense of self, its existential core." The author believes there are four major questions in determining whether there is actually a crisis situation: (1) Is there really a crisis? (2) If there is a crisis, do I have to act? (3) If I decide to act, when do I make my move? And (4) If I act, who else should be involved? The article uses different models to explain the best way to explain crisis-management situations. There are four steps in dealing with a crisis situation. First is

issues management, which includes scanning the environment, collecting data, and developing a communications strategy. Second is planning prevention, which includes monitoring the environment, establishing information/warning systems, and developing internal communication procedures. Third there is the crisis, which includes evaluating the company's response, preempting negative publicity and targeting messages. Finally, there is the post-crisis, which includes paying attention to constituencies, monitoring the issues, and continuing to inform the media and evaluate the crisis plan.

Stanton, Peter V. "Ten communications mistakes you can avoid when managing a crisis." Public Relations Quarterly 47, no. 2 (2002): 19-22.

This article starts out by addressing what generally happens in a crisis situation. The facts that the regular business hierarchy is usually not in effect during a crisis as well as that the company will most likely be under huge media scrutiny are just two things touched on at the beginning of the article. The author also discusses the things that communicators can do wrong during a crisis situation. First, he advises not to rush to judgment. When the company is under intense media scrutiny, it sometimes occurs where the company will hurry to get out facts when they may not be the total truth. Instead of rushing to get things out, give statements that acknowledge the issue, but that do not give a false answer. Answers such as, "We do not know at this time, but are working hard to get that for you" would be an acceptable answer.

The second thing companies can generally do wrong in a crisis situation is overreact. The author advises to be sure to differentiate between crises and emergencies, because emergencies need to be dealt with on a much smaller level. The criteria the author gives for designating a crisis from an emergency is that in a crisis there will be risks to life, health, safety, and environment, resources will be needed beyond internal capability, management and still will be diverted away from the routine for an extended period, and communication requirements exceed routine.

The third thing the author cites that companies generally do wrong in a crisis situation is the failure to act. He is talking about the lack of action from companies that are using the thought of, "If we ignore it, it will go away." The fourth thing companies can do wrong in a crisis situation is to "bend" the facts. Organizations can do this out of the temptation to bend facts to the company's benefit. The author cites five things a company should do when stating facts: define the problem, its source and extend of known impact; describe what the public can do to avoid the problem/mitigate further damage; describe management actions; define when resolution is likely to occur; and identify any positive points.

The fifth problem a company can run into during a crisis situation is to have a lack of concern/empathy/sympathy. The sixth problem a company can run into is to affix the blame. The author cites that the reaction to the problem does not necessarily have to be how the company is going to fix the problem, but rather how the company is going to address the problem. The seventh problem companies can run into is to remain insular, which is to keep an inward focus instead of looking toward an outside perspective. The

eighth problem a company can have is an absence of teamwork. Next is restriction of information internally, and lastly is the failure to make a plan entirely.

Temple, Richmond K. "Responding to a crisis requires overcoming barriers to effective advance planning." Public Relations Quarterly 48, no. 1 (2003): 40-42.

This article discusses the fact that, although it might be believed, many companies do not have a crisis management plan in place. Particularly in light of recent terrorist attacks, it would be thought that many organizations would at least have some kind of plan. The author cites three barriers to effective action in reacting to a crisis situation.

First off, the author cites that the company can have too much positive thinking. Basically, companies have a sunny outlook to the possibility of a problem occurring instead of being prepared for the unexpected. The second barrier is not taking preventive action because the company believes it could not possibly predict every possible thing that could go wrong.

Although this is true, the author states five things an organization can do to prepare for a crisis: assemble a core group of top reports representing operations, legal, human resources and communications; focus them on the objective - to identify only those scenarios most likely to be materially disruptive to the business given the nature and extent of its operations; set aside a full day, or more, to accomplish this; assemble this core group offsite away from daily distractions; hire a facilitator to keep the meeting on track, stimulate unfettered discussion, and record, analyze and report back the group's findings. Finally, the third barrier to effective crisis management is the failure to make a distinction between crisis response planning and crisis communications planning.

Zoch, Lynn M. "'Feeding the media' during a crisis: A nationwide look." Public Relations Quarterly v42n3 (1997): 15-18.

This author discusses the best way to deal with the media - particularly broadcast media - during a crisis situation. The results of a research project surveying all 256 television news directors belonging in the Radio and Television News Directors Association are cited. The directors were given short surveys and 133 - a 52 percent response rate - responded. The conclusions arrived to by the author is that the main purpose of most of the directors who responded was to get the story first. There was no major plan of action the directors had for getting responses to a breaking story - they just wanted to get the story and report it before any competitors had the chance. The author cites the best way to deal with this situation is to develop relationships with the media. By doing so, it will minimize the damage of a crisis to an organization.

Adams, William C. "Responding to the media during a crisis: It's what you say and when you say it." Public Relations Quarterly 45, no. 1 (2000): 26-28.

This article lists the different things an organization can do to plan for a crisis. The first thing the author cites is to have a crisis plan. Second, is having a good

relationship with the different media. Basically, training to deal with the media and maintaining a good relationship before any crises may occur will help deal with any situation better. Business knowledge is the next step to prepare for a crisis. Knowing possible spokespeople within the business as well as knowing the organization and its related businesses inside and out is a good idea.

Having community and industry support is also a good idea. Good community relations and relationships with organizations throughout the industry will help to strengthen the organization before a crisis may hit. Finally, auditing the competition will help to know what others have faced in various crises situations as well as knowing the best and worst responses.

The author next discusses the best way to deal with questions when they come during a crisis situation. He lists six rules to responding to a question when asked. First of all, the person in the spotlight must listen to the question being asked. Listening to what has been said and taking a moment to reflect and decide on a good answer is a good idea in this situation. Although a person wouldn't want to let an enormous amount of time go by between a question and answer, there is nothing wrong with taking a short pause to really internalize what has been asked so the best possible response can be formed.

The next rule is to indicate what will be done. Although there may be no information on a crisis at the time of a press conference or media briefing, the public relations person will at least get him or herself out in the public and explain where the organization stands on the situation. Even if the situation is that the organization is simply doing all it can to come to any conclusion, it is better than saying nothing and being unavailable. The third rule is to have useful background materials ready. Even if the organization cannot provide answers to current questions, it can serve media with up-to-date information about the organization's current status.

The fourth rule the author cites is to know the "usual suspects." The "usual suspects" refers to third-party individuals who make themselves available to the media and may give out inaccurate information about the organization. The way to deal with this is to have a list of credible sources readily available for the media. Rule number five is to go into pro-active mode as soon as possible. Ron Levy, president of North American Precis Syndicate is quoted as saying "communicating what your organization is doing to serve the public interest" will help maintain credibility and build confidence in the long run, especially if the crisis continues. The final rule listed by the author is to show concern and action. Making sure the organization sounds sincere when dealing with crises is imperative in being successful in the aftermath.

Shepardson, David. "U-M must release records of Martin case." The Detroit News 18 Nov. 2002. <<http://www.detnews.com/2002/um/0212/18/f01-38122.htm>>.

This article is about the Ed Martin case, from when the University of Michigan was forced to give up information about Martin to a federal judge. The article also mentions issuing a subpoena to Chris Webber's aunt, Charlene Johnson, in order to obtain

possible "notes, memorandums, correspondence, witness statements." Webber was one of the players suspected of taking Martin's money and gifts. The article also has a statement from U-M general counsel Martin Krislov, saying no U-M notes exist from the university's July 26 interview with Martin's attorneys, as well as saying they would be happy to comply with the subpoena.

Izenberg, Jerry. "No one should escape scam." The Star-Ledger 12 Nov. 2002.

In this article, Izenberg discusses the issues that were plaguing the University of Michigan at the time of the Ed Martin case in 2002. The article has a sarcastic tone about it, and basically touches on recruiting as well as Chris Webber and former head coach Steve Fisher. Izenberg mentions that Fisher has answered nothing in regards to all his paper's questions, and is denying he had any involvement in the scandal that took place in the mid-nineties. The article also has a quote from Webber stating that he was hurt by the current allegations because he "gave everything to Michigan." The article is quick to point out that the IRS would love to have heard about the \$280,000 that was supposedly exchanged during the time of the scandal.

Various press releases and documents from the University of Michigan. 1997-2003

Many of these releases and documents focus on the strategy of the University of Michigan in dealing with the Ed Martin case. Everything from mock question-and-answer documents to the president of the university, Mary Sue Coleman's, speech to the press. There are also many documents citing the self-imposed sanctions from the NCAA and the University of Michigan toward the men's basketball program and the athletic program. These documents are not official, and may or may not be able to be released to the public, but they were imperative in this research project.

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