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Corporate Crisis Public Relations

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The rationalization of public relations was created primarily as a product of war. Major world powers competed for the goodwill of their own civilian populations from the Great War through the Cold War. Ships, weaponry, bombs and military machinery couldn't have been created without the support of the civilians. The political aspect behind public relations was to find a "human interest" side of war so the people would trust in government authorities and support the ongoing battles with a positive outlook. To this day, a public relations campaign is used by corporations to build a positive outlook of the company, and is directed towards the general public, in an attempt to create "free" positive press.

A public relation publicity campaign is essentially a "free" form of presenting an organization's product, person, or service to the general public using a human-interest angle. The media will look for areas of public interest, and televise/print the information to increase their own ratings. The more newsworthy a feature is, the higher the ratings for that particular news channel. Public relations is virtually "free" for a company, with the exception of paying a public relations agent (or agency) to create the subjects the media will find enticing.

Public Relations contain the following components:

- Human Issues
- Media Worthy
- Typically Free
- Finding the Unknown Angle
- Promoting the Desirable
- Image

Crisis situations such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita provide excellent opportunities for organizations to help communities, while at the same time increasing their positive image. Katrina has caused the largest displacement of Americans since the Civil War, and charities are scrambling to figure out how to aid hundreds of thousands of people.

Among the top 10 corporations, which have donated to the Katrina Relief and have increased their public relations in a time of crisis are:

1. Wal-Mart: \$17,000,000+
2. Freddie Mac and The Freddie Mac Foundation: \$10,100,000
3. United Health Foundation: \$10,000,000
4. EXXONMOBILE: \$7,000,000
5. General Electric Company: 17,000,000
6. Ameriquest: \$5,000,000
7. Chevron Corporation: \$10,000,000
8. Coca-Cola Company, Foundation, and Bottlers: \$5,000,000
9. Toyota: \$5,000,000

10. Amgen: \$2,500,000

Among the top 7 individual donors who have increased their public relations are:

1. Sindney Frank: \$5,000,00
2. John and Renee Grisham: \$5,000,000
3. Leona Helmsley: \$5,000,000
4. Boone Pickens: \$5,000,000
5. George Clooney: \$1,000,000
6. Diddy: \$1,000,000
7. Jay-Z: \$1,000,000

Anything an organization can do to improve public relations will increase the ability to get results. These essential questions must be asked to develop a plan for achieving and developing a campaign:

1. What impression and effect do we want to make on the general public?
2. What is it that we are trying to get the public to do?
3. What actions must the public take if we are to achieve the results?

If your organization is not taking critical steps using PR in a crisis situation, they may be missing a large opportunity to increase profitability and public awareness.