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Crisis Communications Media Training
Media Relations Litigation Communications
www.crisiscommunications.com

Crisis Comm & Media Relations E-Newsletter March 15, 2009

Bruce M. Hennes

hennes@crisiscommunications.com [LinkedIn](#)

Barbara Paynter, APR

paynter@crisiscommunications.com [LinkedIn](#)



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1. Run For Your Lives - Please

From one of our favorite web blogs, John Solomon's "In Case of Emergency, Read Blog – A Citizen's Eye View of Preparedness" (<http://tinyurl.com/cxzc4s>) we have mention of Time Magazine writer and author of "The Unthinkable," Amanda Ripley, who "examines the issue of how best to alert people in advance of a disasters. She points out that before Hurricane Ike made landfall the National Weather Service put out a rare "certain death" warning which got the attention most of those in the storm's path. However, she notes there is some controversy on whether scaring people is the best warning method."

Governing Magazine <http://tinyurl.com/bs72ec>

2. Are Some Newspapers “Endangered”?

Last week, Douglas A. McIntyre of 24/7 Wall Street (<http://247wallst.com/>) wrote a controversial piece called “The 10 Most Endangered Newspapers in America.” That piece was picked up by Time.com, giving it additional credibility and distribution. You can read the full article here: <http://tinyurl.com/cgwe26>

With the confluence of the recession and a dramatically changed business model for print publications, newspapers across the country are in seeming free-fall. Layoffs and shrinking news holes (the amount of space given to news content) seem to be epidemic. Clearly, McIntyre’s piece hit nerves rubbed already raw.

Cleveland Plain Dealer Publisher Terrence Egger immediately contradicted the article, stating that the piece was “baseless”: <http://tinyurl.com/d3s6yn>

Veteran media executive Alan Mutter also took strong exception to McIntyre’s article: <http://tinyurl.com/ajnapr> (be sure to read the particularly thoughtful comments by others towards the bottom of the blog). The Poynter Institute, one of the best-respected newspaper industry sites, also posted other comments on the original piece, including a reply from Douglas McIntyre, the original writer: <http://tinyurl.com/bgfz68>

Is your newspaper “endangered”? Is going all-digital a “doomsday scenario”? Is McIntyre right? Or is Mutter?

This we know for sure: shrinking news holes and eroding standards of journalism are not good for democracy.

3. Is It Entertainment – or News ?

While we’re on the subject of journalistic standards, let’s talk about The Daily Show’s Jon Stewart’s evisceration of CNBC’s Jim Cramer, host of “Mad Money.” You can view the entire UNEDITED show (not the edited version that actually ran on the Daily Show) here: <http://tinyurl.com/asebmt>

Since Cramer’s cable TV audience is relatively miniscule and we don’t know many people over the age of 50 who religiously watch Jon Stewart on the Daily Show, we’re sure many readers of this ezine may be tempted to skip reading further. But don’t.

Here’s why this Stewart-Cramer feud is important – because it speaks directly to the blurring line between journalism and entertainment, with major implications for the way public policy is created – or not. And while we can’t assign singular blame for the stock market crash to Jim Cramer and CNBC, neither can they wash their hands of irresponsible behavior.

When he appeared on The Daily Show, Jim Cramer tried to defend himself and his program by saying, "There's a market for it," to which Jon Stewart replied, "There's a market for cocaine and hookers, too."

This is the perfect illustration of why you should think through your answers BEFORE an interview, and you should practice with a "truth teller" who will let you know if your answers sound really stupid. (We call that media training.)

The recent Stewart-Cramer confrontation on The Daily Show was succinctly summed up by Variety, who wrote:

In the process, Stewart again displayed journalistic instincts that put many conventional TV news organizations -- including CNBC -- to shame. The key exchange, in fact, hinged on Stewart explaining to Cramer what journalists do after Cramer threw up his hands at the idea that CNBC might have misled viewers because CEOs had lied to him.

"I'm under the assumption you don't just take their word at face value," Stewart said, hitting at his central point: That CNBC is so enamored with, and has been so deeply in bed with, the financial heavyweights that their breathless coverage was "disingenuous at best and criminal at worst."

A penitent-sounding Cramer meekly protested that he's simply doing "an entertainment show about business," but there's the rub: Either it's entertainment -- and therefore not to be taken seriously by those seeking genuine financial advice -- or it's a show about business, in which case CNBC's willingness to lap up whatever Wall Street figures said amounted to letting them get away with financial murder. "They burned the f--kin' house down with our money," Stewart said. In that context, Cramer's ranting and wacky sound effects look

considerably less amusing -- less a sideshow than an abdication of responsibility.

The newspaper industry website PoynterOnline put together a particularly-excellent compendium of websites with other views of the controversy:

"He wandered out into the line of fire. It was a massacre." <http://tinyurl.com/dyrer2>

"The gutting of Cramer was 'a remarkable public service.'" <http://tinyurl.com/bfw22k>

"Some Cramer responses were especially eye-opening." <http://tinyurl.com/be9bpc>

4. Why Reputation is Everyone's Responsibility

An employee at a Little Rock McDonald's steps in to save a female customer from an assault and gets shot in the chest for his troubles. Now the company refuses to pay his medical bills because they "did not arise out of, or within the course and scope of his employment."

Dumb. Dumb. Dumb.

The Holmes Report <http://tinyurl.com/c9s3k2>

5. Cleveland International Film Festival



Once again, Hennes Communications is a proud sponsor of the 33rd Cleveland International Film Festival, starting on March 19. And if you're a "friend of Hennes Communications," that means you can save money on every ticket you purchase. Here are the details: Online -- Use the code "HENNES" when purchasing tickets at www.clevelandfilm.org (available 24 hours a day); Phone -- Use the code "HENNES" when calling the Cleveland International Festival Store at 877.304.FILM (3456); Store -- Use the code "HENNES" at the Cleveland International Film Festival Store in the lobby of Tower City Cinemas.

Ticket prices (before discount): \$10 Cleveland International Film Festival Members; \$12 Non-members; \$10 Students and Seniors (day of show only)

One of our clients, Nighttown, will be the site of a pre-film reception, on Wednesday, March 25, before the screening of "Dean Spanley" (<http://tinyurl.com/dkg9qm>), the new Peter O'Toole/Sam Neil flick, at the Cedar-Lee Theater. For more information about the pre-and-post film receptions (free to ticket holders), click here: <http://tinyurl.com/ct8y4k>

Visit www.clevelandfilm.org for Film Festival program updates and comprehensive information about the 33rd Cleveland International Film Festival.

6. The Rapidly Changing Media Landscape

Larry Smith, Senior Veep at Levick Strategic Communications, interviews Scott Broom, Digital Correspondent for Washington D.C.'s CBS affiliate WUSA-TV.

Levick Strategic Communications' Bulletproof Blog <http://tinyurl.com/cv9mez>

7. An Abundance of Talent

Undoubtedly, your local newspaper laid off writers and editors during the past year. In fact, it's been gut-wrenching to watch

many of our friends and professional acquaintances lose these jobs, positions they all thought they had for life. However, there is always opportunity in the face of crisis - and this situation is no different.

Does your business, nonprofit or government agency use writers and researchers from time to time? If so, there is an enormous pool of talent out there right now, all of whom are willing to roll up their sleeves, writing reports, backgrounders and brochures and doing deep-dive research projects, all at a reasonable cost to you. If you have need of those services, call Hennes Communications at 216-321-7774. We're in touch with many of these reporters and editors who are now freelancing. On a no charge basis, we'd be happy to put them in touch with you and get out of the way.

8. The Perfect Pitch

There are only 26 letters in the alphabet. If you arrange them correctly, you can get your story in the newspaper, on TV, radio or a blog.

The Bad Pitch Blog <http://tinyurl.com/cyrmew>

9. Promoting Experts

Are you an expert? Do you work for an expert? Do you want to get your expert in print or some airtime?

Bulldog Reporter <http://tinyurl.com/avcjyr>

10. Our Permanent Collection

A. Our favorite blog on the subject of public and citizen preparedness. Undoubtedly, you will find it helpful to you, your family, your business, nonprofit, government agency and your community when it comes to preparing for emergencies -- big and small: <http://incaseofemergencyblog.com/> Written by John Solomon, he's also the writer of "It's An Emergency – We're Not Prepared," which can be read here (free registration required): <http://tinyurl.com/5twym9>

B. Our favorite radio program is Homeland Security Inside & Out. This is a weekly broadcast on the internet featuring interviews with key figures in Homeland Security, crisis and disaster response. The weekly program can be accessed live via their website, as a podcast email sent to you and listenable on your computer at your leisure or as a free, subscribable podcast, using your iTunes software. For more info: <http://tinyurl.com/5pca64>

C. Our favorite book about Homeland Security is "Our Own Worst Enemy: Asking the Right Questions About Security to Protect You, Your Family, and America" by Randall Larson, director of the Institute for Homeland Security. The book provides a solid, practical, logical approach to personal security for all Americans and explains why the government is not prepared to help us in a time of crisis. For more info: <http://tinyurl.com/5ad3dz>

D. As we learned on 9/11 and after Hurricane Katrina, when landline and cell phone telephone lines go down or are jammed to overcapacity, short text messages (150 characters maximum) can often get through. This is because person-to-person voice phone calls basically require an "open pipe" while text messages occupy very little bandwidth and can be "lined up" for delivery. The easiest way to send a text message is cell phone to cell phone (for instructions on how to do so, we suggest you find a 13 year old – they all appear to be quite capable of texting).

You can also use your computer or Blackberry-type device to send a text message, also known as SMS, to a cell phone, just like a regular email. Here are the exact email addresses you can use to send computer-to-cell phone emails (the x's represent the cell phone's area code and phone number, without the "1" and without any dashes):

- AT&T xxxxxxxxxxx@txt.att.net
- Nextel xxxxxxxxxxx@messaging.nextel.com
- Sprint xxxxxxxxxxx@messaging.sprintpcs.com
- T-Mobile xxxxxxxxxxx@tmomail.net
- Verizon Wireless xxxxxxxxxxx@vtext.com
- Virgin Mobile xxxxxxxxxxx@vmobl.com

For a complete list of all cell phone company "texting domains", type in <http://sms411.net>.

WARNING: 1. Depending upon the recipient's cell phone contract, they may pay a few cents to send or receive a text message; 2. Sometimes computer-to-cell phone text message are nearly instantaneous, sometimes they can take hours to go thru the system. Best bet: we suggest you try sending a few computer-to-cell phone text messages now – before you need to do this in an emergency.

E. It's been seven years the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and three years since the issuance of The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States Report. Are we safer today? The authors of that official report think the answer is no. You can read what they recently wrote here: <http://tinyurl.com/25zzxz>

F. Want a short refresher on crisis communications? Check out this short, six-minute video of Bruce Hennes on the web: <http://tinyurl.com/ybfdeq> If you'd like to post something similar on your own website, Steve Petti is the guy to call. For more info: <http://www.newimagemediamedia.com>

G. Dan Hanson at GreatLakesGeek.com, interviews Bruce Hennes:<http://www.greatlakesgeek.com/podaudio/bios/brucehennes.htm>

H. Make a Plan: With ready.gov/business, the business you've worked so hard to build can be as prepared as possible should a disaster strike. Download free, easy-to-use checklists, templates and other resources to help you develop an affordable plan. Protect your business or life's work - start or update your plan today. Becoming a success is hard work. Protecting it isn't. Here's how: <http://www.ready.gov/business/>

I. Emergency & Crisis Info: Do you live in Greater Cleveland? If so, you may be in range of these new, low-power, community and emergency information stations: Mayfield Heights 1700-AM; Mayfield Village 1640-AM; Beachwood 1630-AM.; Pepper Pike 1670-AM; Lakewood 1660-AM; Strongsville 1640-AM; Brunswick 1700-AM; Westlake 1680-AM. In the event of an emergency, you will find these stations to be an important source of information. Please consider setting a button to one on your car radio.

J. Pandemic Flu Links: <http://www.ccep.ca/ccepbird.html>

K. Disaster Links: <http://www.disasterlinks.net/>

L. More tips to keep your family & business safe: <http://att.sbc.com/gen/general?pid=1325>

M. Apologizing – Vanity Fair's All-Purpose Public Mea Culpa Kit: <http://tinyurl.com/ysu4ch> Keep a copy handy - the reputation you save may be your own.

N. When disaster strikes and telephone lines are jammed, how can you assure your critical calls go through? The National Communications System (NCS), part of the Department of Homeland Security, offers priority telecommunications services to first responders, police, fire and rescue, public safety officials at all levels of government, and other national security and emergency preparedness personnel to ensure ongoing communications during crisis situations. Sign up today at www.ncs.gov or call 800-NCS-CALL.

O. Give your family, friends and clients The Gift of Safety. You can find a wide assortment of emergency wind-up radios (with built-in flashlights and cell phone chargers), first aid kits and other home/business emergency preparation items, all at reasonable prices. Best of all – 100% of the proceeds go directly to The American Red Cross, Greater Cleveland Chapter. All you need to do is download the two PDF's below, print them out and send your order in.

Red Cross Radios: <http://tinyurl.com/6lmqhy> Other emergency gifts: <http://tinyurl.com/5a4ybu>

P. Tell me, again, about crisis management: <http://tinyurl.com/b7no3>

Did someone forward this e-newsletter to you? You can get your own subscription at no charge simply by sending your request to hennes@crisiscommunications.com.

Media Training & Coaching

Your firm is in trouble...your CFO has been arrested...the company truck was in an accident...hackers hijacked your database...the pressure is on...the camera crew is at the door....

Do you know how to handle a high-pressure TV interview? Do you know where to look? What to wear? Where to put your hands? Do you look at the camera – or at the interviewer?

It takes a lifetime to build a reputation and only a few seconds to destroy one. In a split second you could find yourself in a position where you need to know how to handle the media or be a public spokesperson. Would you know what to do or how to respond?

More important – will you “manage the message” and advance the cause of your business, agency or nonprofit?

You can be certain the senior executives at virtually all of the Fortune 500 companies have been thru media training, working with a media coach, where they’ve learned to deal with adversarial situations with journalists. Perhaps it’s time for you to learn this specialized set of media survival skills?

We also offer straight spokesperson & presentation training and coaching, which consists of ways to improve a spokesperson's skills and daily interactions with peers, subordinates, investors, journalists and other outside parties.

Call Bruce Hennes and the staff at Hennes Communications today at 216/321-7774 and talk to us about media, spokesperson and presentation training and coaching for you, your top execs -- or anyone who might have to hold the fort down with a reporter until the appropriate spokesperson can be located.

Ask us, too, about how we can help you create, implement and test a crisis communications plan.

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Call Hennes Communications For Media Training & Crisis Comm Plans



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***** SPECIAL NOTE FOR ATTORNEYS *****

We can do our signature seminar - Managing the Media: Lawyers & The Press - in your office for the benefit of your firm’s attorneys, corporate counsel and clients. A number of firms have used our seminar as an effective marketing tool to reinforce existing business relationships and prospect for new business. For more information, including a list of the nationally-known firms that have retained us for this service, please call us at 216/321-7774.

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About Hennes Communications LLC

Hennes Communications is a crisis communications, media training and media relations consulting firm based in Cleveland.

Serving corporations, government agencies, nonprofits and individuals who are “on trial” in the court of public opinion, Hennes Communications also offers litigation communication support and public relations services to their clients. The firm is a coalition member of ProtectingAmerica.org and National Preparedness Month (US. Department of Homeland Security).

We can be reached by calling 216/321-7774 or by email at hennes@crisiscommunications.com.

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CHECK OUT BRUCE & BARB'S SCHEDULE....



3/27/09 Business Volunteers Unlimited

Business Continuity for Nonprofits (2.5 hours)

<http://tinyurl.com/6jo56n>

Co-Presenters: Robert Goszka; Dr. Nancy Grant; Pam Oliver, Kristen Putnam-Walkerly & Theresa Schaffer

3/31/09 Ohio Safety Congress

How the Media Manipulates the News & Extreme Crisis Communications (2 hours)

4/3/09 Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce

How the Media Manipulates the News (1 hour)

4/23/09 Coshocton County Health Department

Managing the Media AND Extreme Crisis Communications (4 hours)

<http://tinyurl.com/coshocseminar>

5/13/09 Lake County Communicators

How the Media Manipulates the News (1 hour)

5/14/09 Portage County Safety Council Annual Meeting

How the Media Manipulates the News (1 hour)

6/22/09 American Red Cross Ohio Training Institute Disaster Day

Extreme Crisis Communications (2 hours)

7/21/09 Ohio Fire Chiefs Association Annual Conference

Extreme Crisis Communications (2.5 hours)

9/17/09 Ohio Human Resource Conference

Standing Tall: When Your Company Is In the Media's Crosshairs (1.25 hours)

5/11/10 Akron Sales & Marketing Executives

How the Media Manipulates the News (1 hour)

NOTE: All of the above are open-to-the-public. Some of the seminars are free, others require a fee, payable to the sponsoring organization. Please call or write us for further information.

Administrivia

This email newsletter about Crisis Communications & Media Relations is generally published twice a month.

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FORMAT: There are still many browsers and email programs that are not state-of-the-art and subsequently cannot automatically "read" HTML (the coding used to design web pages). Therefore, this newsletter is designed simply, omitting most graphics, and can be read by virtually any email program.

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OUR FAVORITE QUOTE: You simply can't communicate your way out of a situation you've behaved your way into (credit to Don Etling at Fleishman-Hillard for this insight).

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When your business or reputation is threatened, you need a specialist.

A crisis communications specialist.



**2841 Berkshire Road
Cleveland, Ohio 44118
216-321-7774**

<http://www.crisiscommunications.com>