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Crisis Comm & Media Relations E-Newsletter May 1, 2009

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1. Swine Flu: Is Your Crisis Comm Plan Ready?

At press time for this newsletter, the situation in Mexico regarding Swine Flu appears to be worsening. The World Health

Organization just raised their Alert Level to Phase 4, though encouragingly, the Center for Disease Control remains at an Alert Level of Zero. Only time will tell if this is the pandemic flu that health officials have been warning us about for years.

The single best place we know to go for the latest information is <http://www.pandemicflu.gov>. There, you will find easy-to-understand information from both the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (W.H.O.). Of particular use to you on that website may be a grid that compares the CDC and W.H.O. alert levels. You can view that grid here: <http://tinyurl.com/cqws89> This grid is especially useful for its descriptions of the mandatory restrictions that will come into play should alert levels rise.

The communications challenges for government agencies is immense. Writing in the 4/29/09 New York Times, Dr. Lawrence Altman wrote,

"The W.H.O. and public-health agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention find themselves in a delicate balance, obliged to provide information about potentially lethal diseases without causing panic. Although health officials have held exercises to prepare for pandemics and outbreaks caused by bioterrorism, they have yet to master the necessary communications skills. They are in a 'damned if they do, damned if they don't' situation. A decision about travel restrictions or advisories, for example, could affect trade and finances at a time of economic chaos. If the public health emergency declared by the W.H.O. and the Obama administration turns out to be a false alarm, officials will be ridiculed for unnecessarily worrying millions of people - perhaps even for creating fear to justify their budgets. (But) if a pandemic materializes, some of the same critics are very likely to blame officials for failing to prevent it." (for the rest of this article, click here - free registration may be required: <http://tinyurl.com/cjkrq>)

If we are indeed heading into a pandemic flu situation, now is the time for you to create your Crisis Communications Plan. Your employees, clients, students, customers, bankers, suppliers and other interested parties need to hear from you first about how you are going to stay in business or continue to deliver services in the event of a pandemic. Or what to do if someone in your school, business or organization is actually discovered to be ill with the flu, swine or otherwise.

You can find basic information about putting together a Crisis Communications Plan at <http://www.ready.gov/>. If the needs of your firm or organization are a bit more complex, please call Hennes Communications. We stand ready to assist.

Speaking of communications, we've been using Twitter to find out the latest information in real time. One Twitter feed we count on for the latest news, in particular, comes from Veratect, a private company providing timely and actionable information about emerging risks to companies and agencies around the world. You can follow their minute-by-minute Twitter feed here: <https://twitter.com/Veratect>

Without a doubt, social media (e.g. Twitter) is a useful tool and it's here to stay. Check out Brian McDaniels' comments about the use of social media in public health situations: <http://tinyurl.com/cak524>

Lastly on this subject, if you live in the Cleveland area, The BEP Institute, Your Business Emergency Planning Resource (formerly The Business Emergency Planning Association), will host free pandemic flu workplace seminars on May 6 and 8 in convenient locations around Northeast Ohio. These free seminars help businesses, nonprofits and government agencies prepare their workplaces for a pandemic flu. Studies report that while most organizations know a pandemic flu is possible, two-thirds are not prepared. In this practical 60+ minute presentation, you will learn:

- * What to expect during a flu pandemic
- * The differences between seasonal flu and pandemic flu
- * How the influenza virus spreads
- * Steps to reduce the spread of flu in the workplace
- * Questions to ask about workplace policies, practices and protocols related to the potential and impact of a flu pandemic

The program is a pilot project of the American Red Cross with the support of a grant from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Although the seminar is free, pre-registration is required. For complete information: <http://tinyurl.com/caspb5>

2. Susan Boyle as Parable: Our Hunger for Mighty Metaphors

As people everywhere showered plaudits on this woman for her vocal gifts, the giddiness was clearly about more than Boyle's lovely and resonant performance. But, we must admit there is a certain glee -- a reflex that all might be righter than we thought -- when we see someone or something so judged by its cover, shine its truth through. Especially when the switcheroo is so extreme and in addition to our shock, we get to actually watch others be shocked. MediaPost OnlineSpin

<http://tinyurl.com/crjhc6>

But do looks REALLY matter? Pam Belluck says yes. New York Times (free registration required)

<http://tinyurl.com/djwfgs>

3. Mayhem at Kent State - Case Study Response

When you teach public relations, there's nothing like having a crisis situation in your own backyard to use as a case study for your students. Here's how one of our favorite instructors rates Kent State University's response to the College Fest mayhem over the weekend. It's not easy to criticize your boss, but Bill Sledzik doesn't pull any punches when he rates the University's response. Check out Bill's two blog posts on the subject: <http://tinyurl.com/dhultt> and <http://tinyurl.com/dx2x75>

4. Domino's Response Offers Lessons In Crisis Comm

The online hubbub and furor caused by two Domino's employees in Conover, N.C., last week reached stratospheric levels, as the use of social media has become both the source of evil and good.

Richard Levick, president of Levick Strategic Communications, gives an F to Domino's response for the first 24 hours, but an A for everything after. Check out Levick's tips to prepare for this kind of crisis. Wall Street Journal Blog

<http://tinyurl.com/czkhag>

5. Brands That Got Punk'ed by Social Media

Here's a list of companies that were blind-sided by the internet because they didn't understand the impact of the power shift to the participants, or how fast information would spread, or were just plain ignorant.

Criteria of "Punk'd" include a situation where the story "would have not been told if social media was not available, or if social media enhanced the situation.

Web Strategy Blog <http://tinyurl.com/6f72yh>

6. Serial Killer

Why the 'serial comma' isn't important.

Columbia Journalism Review <http://tinyurl.com/dgmj9e>

7. Reporters as Storytellers

"It's easy to teach people to become recorders of events or repeaters, transferring a message from one source to another," writes former Rocky Mountain News editor John Temple. "It's difficult to teach people how to become storytellers." We couldn't agree more.

Temple Talk Blog <http://tinyurl.com/dcvxya>

8. Ohio House Speaker Armond Budish

Our government in Washington may dominate the headlines - but our government in Columbus actually has more to do with our daily lives than does Washington. >From school funding, road repairs and worker's compensation to the licensing of your barber and therapist, as well as the inspection of the elevator you took to visit your therapist, the Ohio state legislature heavily influences our everyday business and personal lives.

The man who heads up the Ohio House of Representatives carries the title of Speaker of the House. And it's been over 75 years since a Speaker hailed from the Greater Cleveland area until just a few months ago when the Democrats regained majority control of the House and elected Armond Budish as Speaker.

In one of his first speaking events in this area, Speaker Budish will be honored at a luncheon sponsored by The Press Club of Cleveland on Monday, June 1st to be held at Nighttown, home of The Press Club.

The June 1st luncheon at Nighttown begins with a reception at 11:30; lunch at noon; and it ends at 1:30. The cost is \$22 for members of The Press Club of Cleveland and \$30 for non-members. For registration information about this luncheon and The Press Club (which, according to their bylaws, includes members of the working press, public relations, corporate communications and "anyone with an interest in the media"), please visit <http://www.pressclubcleveland.com>.

If you have an interest in Ohio politics, this is a rare opportunity to get up close and personal with our new Speaker of the House.

9. 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.

10. Stellar Presentations

Our resident presentation trainer, Phil Stella, is back with another installment of his "Audience-Centricity" presentation techniques. This issue, Phil writes about facial expressions. Check it out here: <http://tinyurl.com/caf28c>

To read or re-read "The Best of Phil Stella," click here: <http://tinyurl.com/cb8yh4>

Would you like to speak, argue, cajole, motivate, encourage, articulate and present with power and authority? Phil is available for one-on-one executive coaching and/or group presentations. Just give us a call at 216-321-7774 to tell Phil what your needs are and he'll put together a custom quote for you or your organization.

11. Coming Trends in TV News

Turn on your TV today and it becomes readily apparent that mainstream media is in transition. For starters, many network affiliates have totally re-engineered their local offerings or are in the process of doing so. What market forces are driving these changes? What do today's media consumption trends look like in local markets across Middle America—and what does it all mean to you, as a PR person who works with the media, broadcast or otherwise?

Bulldog Reporter <http://tinyurl.com/cr9cyu>

12. Crisis Communications for Churches, Synagogues & Mosques

If you work in one of the above community institutions, you are not at all immune from needing a crisis communications plan. Here's the why and how. Baptist Press <http://tinyurl.com/czfvd2>

13 Check Out Bruce & Barb's Schedule....

Many thanks to Christy Mosier from the Coshocton, Ohio County Board of Health who spent much of the last year orchestrating a half-day seminar, held on April 23, for us to speak to 114 public health commissioners, public information officers, mayors, fire chiefs, police chiefs and other public safety and health responders about crisis and risk communications. Little did we suspect that just a few days later we'd be faced with the possibility of a pandemic and the immediate need for some of the communications techniques discussed in this seminar.

Interestingly, in the seminar audience was the managing editor of the two daily newspapers covering this area, Len LaCara, from the Zanesville Times Recorder and Coshocton Tribune. It's not terribly often we have reporters or editors in the audience for our seminars, so it's always interesting to hear or read what they have to say about the advice we give on "managing the media." Here's what ran in both newspapers this past weekend: <http://tinyurl.com/cm2g34>

If you'd like to bring us to your community for a 4-8 hour seminar, please let us know and we'd be happy to put you in touch with Christy Mosier so she can tell you how she brought us to Coshocton.

Please scroll down to see our upcoming seminars.



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)

10/12/09 Ohio Association of School Superintendents Association

How the Media Manipulates the News (1 hour)

5/11/10 Akron Sales & Marketing Executives

How the Media Manipulates the News (1 hour)

NOTE: Most 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.

14. 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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Administrivia

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

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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.



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