

January 1987

**TO: Executive Addressed**

**FR: James E. Lukaszewski, APR Chairman**

**RE: Five Critical Steps in Crisis Management**

For most organizations, a crisis is a barrage of urgent, unexpected, unpleasant events that allows no time to think, organize, or plan appropriate actions. Unfortunately, most organizations begin to plan for crisis only after a crisis occurs. This is a mistake.

The goal of a crisis management plan should be containment and positive counteraction. Here are the five critical steps:

- Structure and plan. Hypothesize the worst scenarios and circumstances, and then the best possible outcomes. In structuring your plan, work backwards from the outcome to identify the steps needed to reach that goal.
- Analyze and critique. Set up a crisis control committee and talk through the plan, event-by-event, situation-by-situation, and develop a schematic that "visualizes" how the plan works.
- Test and demonstrate. Conduct rehearsals or simulations as close to full-scale as possible.
- Establish contingencies. Include "what if's." Identify outside experts who can work side-by-side with your people before the situation gets out of control. Include them in your tests and analyses, too.
- Coach and train spokespersons as quickly as possible, and routinely thereafter. They will lead, focus, and control the organization's crisis-plan execution and reaction to crisis.

For a more extensive approach to each of these steps or additional information on crisis management and planning, please write or call The Lukaszewski Group Inc.

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