

PROFILES IN JELL-O®: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES GUARANTEED TO PERPETUATE TROUBLE®

All too often when America's largest companies and organizations fix mistakes and cope with disaster, embarrassment, and difficulty, a familiar pattern of initial behaviors occurs that Mom would not be proud of, at least at first.

There are few acts of corporate courage early on, especially at the highest levels. It's more often confusion, contradiction, and avoidance – Profiles in Jell-O®: denial, victim confusion, testosterosis, arrogance, search for the guilty, fear of the media, and navel picking.

Organizations do have vulnerabilities and show-stopping problems – the landfill to be sited or closed; the labor agreement that's getting tougher to negotiate; the sudden appearance of a new tax provision in an otherwise benign piece of legislation; a product recall; a kick-back scandal; saying too much; buying too much; selling too much; blowing something up; burning something down; allowing something to leak, seep, smoke, or stink – and critics who grow stronger with every mistake. The bigger the enterprise, the greater the potential for large-scale problems.

These ongoing vulnerabilities add a complicating dimension to trouble, career-defining moments, and Profiles in Jell-O® can lead to career-defining moments.

CAREER-DEFINING MOMENTS

What makes a career-defining event? Here are seven ingredients to the pattern:

1. Sudden high internal and/or public profile;
2. Intense stockholder and/or government interest;
3. Pointed, less gentle questions from the board of directors;
4. Well-known reporters in the lobby, at the gate, or landing in helicopters;
5. Sweat, fear, and sore guts from simply knowing it's going to be bad;
6. The arrival of subpoenas, or seizures of corporate records or product; and
7. Spontaneous executive huddling and clumping.



PRODUCT DETAILS

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James E. Lukaszewski (loo-ka-SHEV-skee) advises, coaches, and counsels the men and women who run very large corporations and organizations. He is an expert in managing and counteracting tough, touchy, sensitive corporate communications issues. The fastest growing portion of his practice involves civil and criminal litigation. He is one of the few who can and truly does coach CEOs.

He is a prolific author (several books, hundreds of articles), lecturer (corporate, college and university), coach, and counselor. He is quoted in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Miami Herald*, the *Harvard Business Review*, and industry trade journals. He is a columnist, advisor, or editor for almost every major public relations periodical. His 1992 book, *Influencing Public Attitudes: Strategies that Reduce the Media's Power*, remains a classic work in the field of direct communication. He is an internationally recognized speaker on crisis management, ethics, media relations, public affairs, and reputation preservation and restoration. Visiting his Web site, www.e911.com, is like attending the University of Crisis Management.

An accredited member of the International Association of Business Communicators (ABC) and the Public Relations Society of America (APR), Mr. Lukaszewski is a member of the PRSA's College of Fellows (Fellow PRSA) and Board of Ethics & Professional Standards. He served as a crisis communications advisor to the International Disaster Advisory Committee, Agency for International Development, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance from 1989 to 1992, and is a civilian advisor to several other federal agencies. He lectures annually at the U.S. Marine Corp's East Coast Commander's Media Training Symposium and was the second recipient of its Drew Middleton Award. He is the recipient of both Ball State University's 2004 National Public Relations Achievement Award and the 2004 Patrick Jackson Award for Distinguished Service to PRSA, and is among the winners of the 2005 *PR News* Lifetime Achievement Award. His name appeared in *Corporate Legal Times* as one of "28 Experts to Call When All Hell Breaks Loose," and in *PR Week* as one of 22 "crunch-time counselors who should be on the speed dial in a crisis."