

An illustration on a teal background showing five business people in dark suits running from left to right along a white path that ends in an arrowhead. The person at the front is blowing a large orange megaphone. The other four people are following in a line, each carrying a briefcase. There are white clouds in the upper left corner.

# MCH8179 Risk and Crisis Management

**Week 9: Crisis management and stakeholders**

# Welcome back!



# **Reminder: assessment 2 discussion forum opens on Tuesday, 2 May**

[https://ncl.instructure.com/courses/48223/discussion\\_topics/32547](https://ncl.instructure.com/courses/48223/discussion_topics/32547)

Tips for now:

**1. Wait until the semester finishes** (you're still learning, and some crises aren't over)

Assessment due: 4pm on Monday, 22 May

**2. Read (and re-read) the assessment brief carefully**

**3. Do your research**

- <https://libguides.ncl.ac.uk/news/current>

## **Week 9**

### **Learning Outcomes**

- Develop a critical awareness of the role of crisis management in a PR context
- Develop critical understanding of the changing identity of PR and the challenges faced from digital media

#### **Key focus:**

- Stakeholder management
- Media relations

# Today we're going to be looking at...

- The importance of stakeholder management in a crisis
- Types and examples of stakeholders
- How to communicate with stakeholders
- Media relations
- The role of the CEO
- Week 10 seminar instructions

# Stakeholder Management

- Stakeholders can have a significant impact on the success or failure of a crisis response. Therefore, managing stakeholders during a crisis is crucial for maintaining trust, protecting reputation, and minimising negative consequences.
- ‘The whole point of stakeholder management is to manage the consequences and impact of what has happened, and to make sure that your action to respond to the crisis is communicated directly from you’. – Amanda Coleman

# Stakeholder Classification

- Traditionally, we divide stakeholders into two groups that are interdependent with an organisation based on economic, social and political concerns:
- primary stakeholders
- secondary stakeholders

# Primary stakeholders

- The primary stakeholders are individuals or groups who have a direct and significant interest and connection with an organisation. They are directly affected by the organisation's actions and decisions, and often have a strong influence on the organization's success or failure.
- Primary stakeholders can have a tremendous power over an organisation: they can stop organisational operations and trigger a crisis, e.g. employees can go on strike or discontented customers can boycott.
- Primary stakeholders are crucial to the organisation as often it's impossible to replace the contributions those stakeholders provide (Mitchell, Agle & Wood, 1997).



# Some examples of primary stakeholders include:

- Customers/Consumers
- Employees/Staff
- Shareholders
- Suppliers
- Governments
- Communities

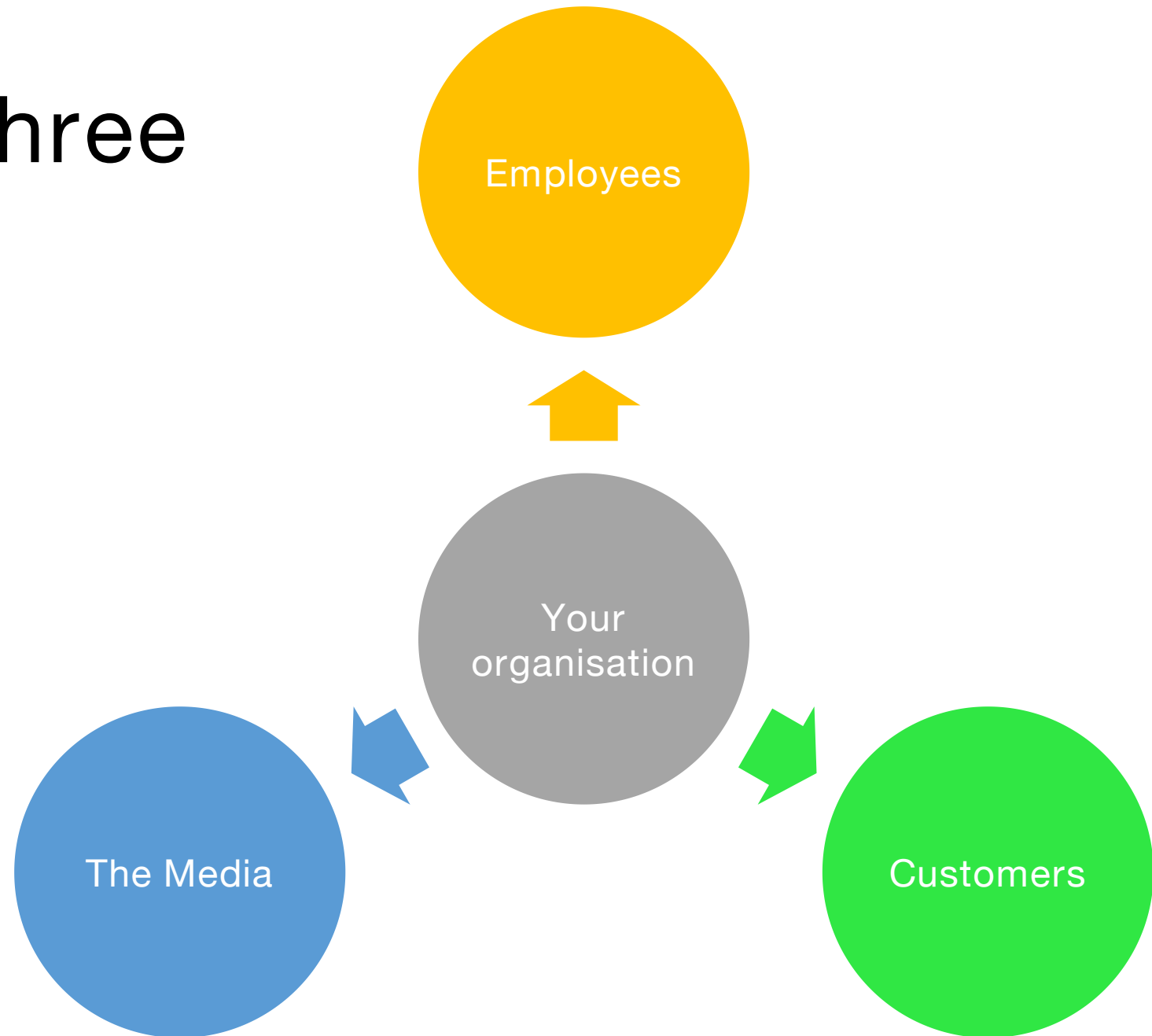
# Secondary stakeholders

- Secondary stakeholders are individuals or groups who do not have a direct or immediate connection to the organisation, but who can still be affected by its actions or decisions. Unlike primary stakeholders, they may have a more indirect or diffuse interest in the organisation, and their influence may be less immediate or significant.
- Although secondary stakeholders do not have the same power, they also can harm an organisation's reputation and trigger crises. The media, pressure groups, and special interest groups can expose organisational misdeeds or generate negative publicity while competitors can instigate lawsuits (Coombs, 2019).

# Some examples of secondary stakeholders include:

- The media
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Pressure Groups (PGs) and Special Interest Groups (SIGs)
- Competitors
- Trade unions
- Opinion Leaders and Opinion Formers
- Regulators

# The Big Three



Employees/Staff



# How to communicate with employees?

Channel	Example	Benefit	Issues	Engagement level
<b>Central communication issued</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Memo</li><li>• Intranet story</li><li>• Email</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speed</li><li>• Scalability</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of access to IT</li><li>• Can be ignored</li></ul>	Low
<b>Noticeboard</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poster</li><li>• Intranet</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scalability</li><li>• Proximity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can be ignored</li><li>• Slow to update</li></ul>	Low
<b>Manager brief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cascade briefing process</li><li>• Team meeting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personal</li><li>• Allows for questions</li><li>• Trusted source</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open to interpretation</li><li>• Depends on manager's approach</li><li>• Requires time</li></ul>	Moderate
<b>Social discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blog</li><li>• Internal social media platform</li><li>• Intranet discussion forum</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allows discussion</li><li>• Different viewpoints</li><li>• Involves staff</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of central control</li><li>• Challenges corporate position</li></ul>	High





# Customers/Consumers

# How to communicate with customers/consumers?

- The appropriate channels to communicate with customers and consumers during a crisis will depend on a variety of factors, including the nature of the crisis, the demographics of your customers, and your existing communication channels.
- Social media
- Email
- Phone
- In-person communication
- Holding and Position statements
- Ultimately, the channels you choose will depend on your specific situation, but it's important to ensure that your messaging is consistent and that you're using channels that are appropriate for your audience.



# TikTok 'experts' and how to deal with them:

- Well-meaning (but causing problems)
    - Opportunity to work with them and access their audience.
    - Can develop a relationship with them (they can become your ally!)
    - If you keep them informed, they can help you
  - Conspiracy theorist (also causing problems)
    - Do not engage directly with them!
    - You're not going to change their mind!
    - Make sure they're not getting the airtime in the way they want to (you have to control the narrative!)
- From Amanda Coleman's interview included in Week 9's Sway.



# Journalists/The Media

# Media Relations



Interviews



Doorstepping



Press  
Conferences

# Interviews

- A media interview refers to the process of a spokesperson or representative of an organisation speaking with a journalist or member of the media to address a crisis situation that has attracted public attention.
- The spokesperson is expected to provide honest and transparent answers that help to address the concerns of the public.
- Interviews allow the organisation to demonstrate they are taking the crisis seriously and are committed to resolving it. They provide an opportunity to refute any misinformation or correct misunderstandings and minimise the damage caused by the crisis.

# Gavin Williamson interview





# Nadine Dorries interview



# Golden rules!

- Do not let the interviewer butt in without a fight
- Refute any incorrect statements
- Stay off the defensive
- Do not get side-tracked
- Be positive
- Stay off the 'ums' and 'ers'
- Do not tail off with 'and so on', 'and so forth'
- Only hesitate if it is deliberate
- Know the facts
- Do not get angry
- Do not volunteer information
- Watch for the interviewer getting in a harmful last word
- Look alert
- Try to anticipate surprises
- If the interviewer rephrases your statements, make sure they have got them right
- Do not use jargon
- Avoid too many 'wells..'
- Do not fill embarrassing silences, that is the interviewer's job



# Doorstepping

- Doorstepping is a term used to describe a journalist's attempt to obtain an interview, or piece to camera, without prior arrangement with the interviewee or agreement, typically by confronting them in a public space, such as outside their home, workplace or courthouse.



# Boris Johnson 'confronting' journalists



# How to confront doorstepping journalists:

- Stay calm and professional
- Admit when the answer to a question is not known
- Try to control the narrative
- Contact your organisation's legal and PR team if necessary

# Press Conferences

- A press conference can be a useful tool to address a crisis situation and to provide the media and the public with accurate information and updates. A press conference can be use...
- To acknowledge the crisis
- To provide accurate information
- To respond to questions
- To demonstrate transparency
- To show empathy
- A press conference should be just one part of a comprehensive crisis communication strategy. It should be carefully planned and executed to ensure that the message is delivered effectively and that the organisation is perceived as taking the situation seriously and being transparent and proactive in their response.

# Maria Sharapova's Press Conference

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Maria's Live Press Conference

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, likely reading 'MS' or 'M. Sharapova', positioned centrally on the graphic.

SHARAPOVA

MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2016

TIME: 12:00 PM PST

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# How to prepare for a press conference?

- Think like a journalist – anticipate what questions they might ask
- Develop answers and key messages
- Brief key spokespeople / people you're 'putting up' for the press conference
- Think about non-verbal messaging.
  - Clothing
  - Body language
  - Tone of voice

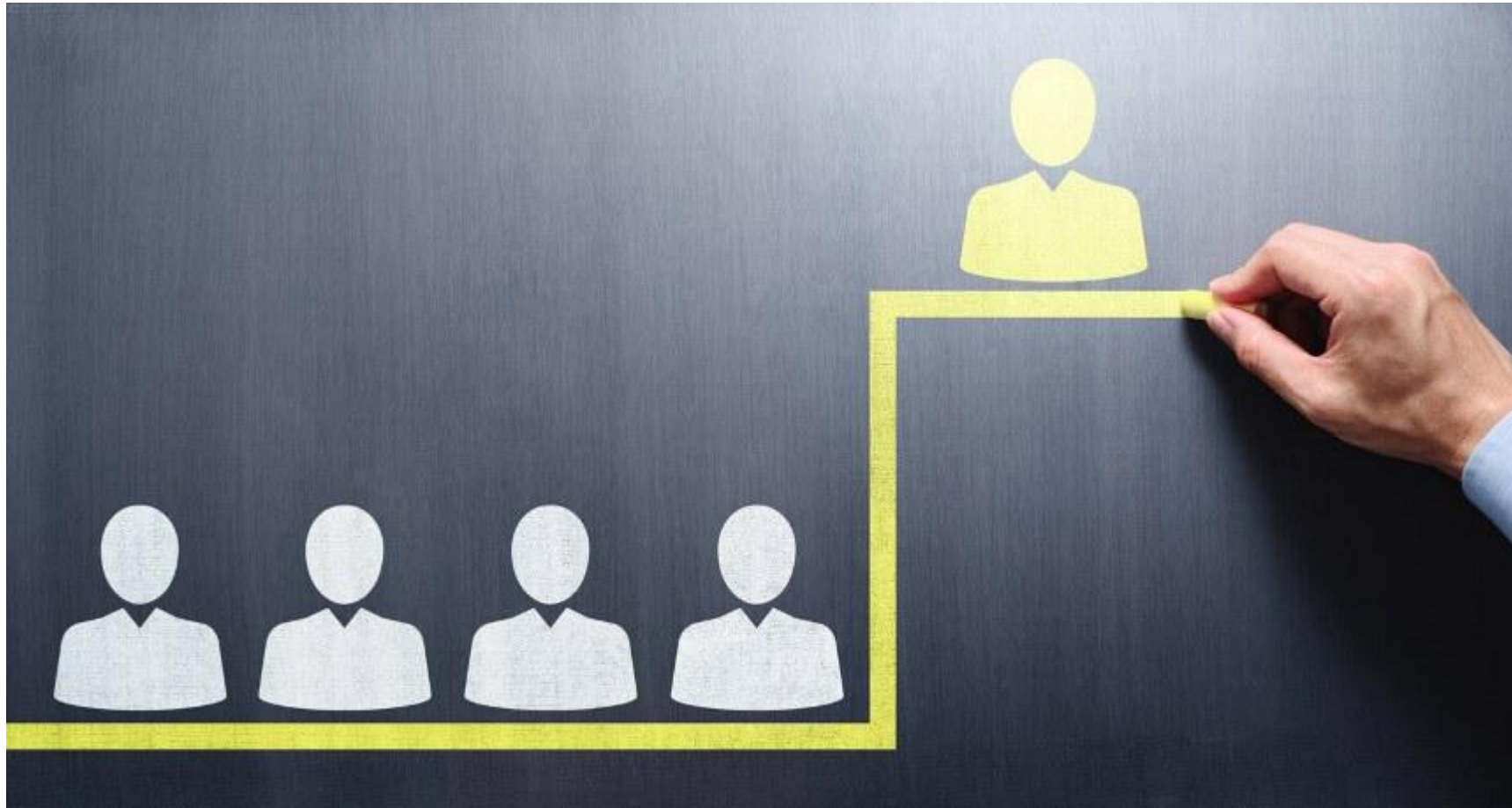
# How to prepare for a press conference?

- Pretend you're the journalist and ask the questions
- Rehearse the Q&As with your key spokesperson (Select, Repeat, Cleanse, Field).
- Remember to always bring a question back round to your key messages
- Don't tell a journalist what questions they can and can't ask!
- Admit when the answer to a question is not known
- Remember: You **SHOULD** be in control of the situation!

# Crisis Management Team

- CEO/President/Senior Execs
- Comms
- Marketing/Sales
- Operations
- HR
- Legal

# When should a CEO step up?





# CEO in crisis

- You need more than one person

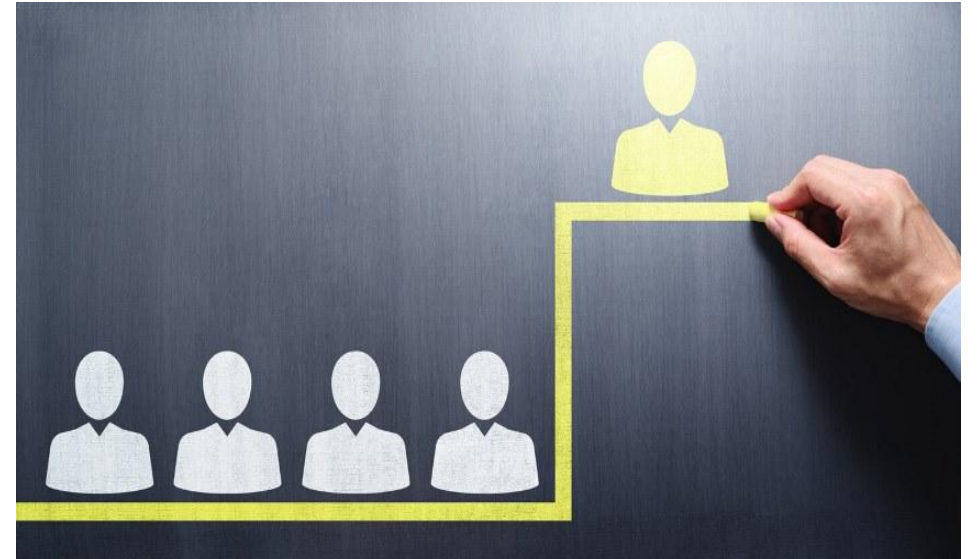
BUT

- With one voice and message
- They have to be media trained
- Manage expectations
- Consider crisis size and impact



# CEO in crisis

- Key considerations:
- Number of affected employees
- Casualties
- Litigation / stock plummeting
- Negative media hype & loss of reputation
- Government investigation





**‘Share what  
you know  
and admit  
what you  
don't know’**

*Amy C. Edmondson*

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# CEO in crisis

- Admitting the unknown
- Providing information and acknowledging the impact of the crisis
- Updating about corrective actions taken
- Expressing sympathy and relevant actions
- Bolstering (where appropriate)

*For more, look up Coleman (2020) 'It's Tough at the Top' (Ch 5, pp. 102-109).*

# Always remember the 3Ps, 3Rs, and 3Cs

## 3Ps

Pity

Praise

Promise

## 3Rs

Regret/Remorse

Reassure

Response/Reaction

## 3Cs

Compassion/Concern

Control

Commitment

# Crisis Response Scenario

- There is fire in the at The View. It started at around 2:20pm
- Some people have been injured, but it's unclear whether they are students or/and staff
- The cause of the fire is not clear
- The emergency services have been called and are on their way
- The entire building is being evacuated



- It is now Saturday morning and Newcastle University's Estates and Facilities (E&F) is about to give a press conference to speak directly to media.
- Your team spent yesterday's afternoon and the evening liaising with the Newcastle University's E&F team to confirm details of the incident and have been working closely with communications teams from Northumbria Police, the North East Ambulance Service and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service to agree on actions.
- It was agreed that as the lead emergency service, Northumbria Police would provide a briefing to media yesterday evening.
- This briefing was given by Detective Inspector Mark Parish – in it he said that:
  - Emergency services were immediately called and were on site within a matter of minutes
  - As a result of the incident 4 casualties have been taken to either The Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle or Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead dependent on the nature of their injuries
  - Of these, 2 casualties are in a critical condition
  - 2 of the casualties are understood to be students
  - It is understood that 2 of the casualties are Newcastle University's staff
  - A further 12 people were treated for minor injuries at the scene but were not admitted to hospital

# Your task:

- You need to prepare to act as both a member of the crisis management team and a journalist during the press conference.
- Work with your team members and decide on the allocation of the following roles:
  - Director of Estates and Facilities
  - Health and Safety Manager
  - Head of Accommodation
  - Head of People Services (HR)
  - Head of Legal
- Use the briefing document from Canvas to support your preparations. The press conference will begin with an opening statement from the Director.
- Your seminar tutors will assign you to a team in Week 9.



PLANNING GUIDE

1. Director of E&F Introductions – team:

On my left..... On my right.....

2. Opening Statement: Recap what has happened, brief outline, 3Ps/3Rs

3. LATEST NEWS; WHAT HAS BEEN DONE; WHAT YOU ARE DOING; WHAT YOU WILL DO

1

2

3

QUESTION PROCESS: SELECT, REPEAT, CLEANSE, FIELD

SPECIALIST SPOKESPERSON 1

SPECIALIST SPOKESPERSON 2

KEY MESSAGES

KEY MESSAGES

1

1

2

2

3

3

4

4

POSITIVE POINTS, e.g., Training and Track Record

1

2

3

4

Director's Closing statement: CARE & COMMITMENT to Further Action

"AS SOON AS WE HAVE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION, WE WILL TALK WITH YOU AGAIN"

# Crisis Masterclass from Visiting Professor Timothy Coombs

- ▶ Extreme crises and moral outrage
- ▶ Barbara Strang Teaching Centre, 1.46
- ▶ Thursday, April 27, 3pm – 5pm

Dr Timothy Coombs is a globally-recognised scholar of issues and crisis management. His Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) is recognised as one of the most influential theories in crisis communication. Dr Coombs' work has been at the forefront of establishing crisis communication as an identifiable research field within corporate communication.



# PR Masterclass from Visiting Professor Timothy Coombs

- ▶ Transmedia storytelling in public relations
- ▶ Tuesday, May 2 (4-6pm)
- ▶ Merz Court L1.01



- **Week 10 Sway: Post crisis recovery**

- Seminar 10: Press conference

- Tuesday, 2 May, **DF opens**

**What's next?**

**Weeks 10 and 11**

- **Week 11: Reputation and trust in PR context and assessment Q&A**

*Teaching Ends.*

***DF closes at 4pm on Friday, 19 May***

➤ **Assessment due: 4pm on Monday, 22 May**