

The Sports Turf Manager as a Crisis Communicator

Sports Turf Managers Association Editorial Staff

Perhaps you will never be faced with responding to a crisis. But, if you ever have an athlete get injured during play, an employee who gets hurt on the job, a disgruntled employee, a weather related disaster, or an environmental incident, you just might find yourself in the spotlight and under scrutiny.

As a manager of people, you may have to deal with an employee's death or illness, a sudden change in top management, or employee issues of sexual harassment. Each one of these can constitute a crisis. You must be prepared for that decisive moment when your response can lead the crisis to better or to worse. An initial negative perception is nearly impossible to reverse.

Crisis Communication Response Tips

- Respond within 24 hours.
- Don't point fingers.
- Always be available to the media.
- Be visible and on-site.
- Tell the absolute truth.
- Never say "no comment."

You are judged within the first 30 seconds of speaking if you and the information you are providing is trusted. Appearing empathetic and caring are the most importance characteristics you can exhibit to show "trustworthiness". Your audience will also assess your competence, your honesty and your commitment. Your goal as a communicator is to demonstrate these attributes.

It is important to recognize that the media is usually more interested in covering opposing viewpoints and that bad news and conflict are more newsworthy. Most reporters are working under a tight deadline, have limited scientific and technical knowledge and can be a bit cynical. When preparing to talk with the media, address the principal underlying concern of the audience/questioner/listener keeping your responses short and concise.

In many crisis situations it is important to bring in a third party and to tell the media who you have contacted.

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2013 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

STMA Annual Conference
January 15-19, 2013
Daytona Beach, FL
800.323.3875
www.stma.org

2013 Rutgers NJAES OCPE Courses
Organic Turfgrass Management
January 29, 2013

Reducing Pesticide Inputs & Exploring Organic Options for Sports Turf
February 12, 2013

Baseball & Softball Skin Surface Selection & Management
February 20, 2013

Two-Day Athletic Field Maintenance
February 21-22, 2013
Rutgers Cook Campus
New Brunswick, NJ
732.932.9271
www.cpe.rutgers.edu

Welcome! New and Renewed SFMANJ Members

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*Onofrio Prinzivalli
Mike Reissner
Carmine Ricciardi
Carl Rossi
Francisco Rubi
Mike Rusin
Frank Russo
Rich Russo
Barry Scasserra
Greg Schabel
Joseph P Scullion
Ben Selcow
Adam Simmons
Michael Sinesi
Fred Smith
Dave Spence
Blair Spencer
Ben Stentz
Tom Storer
Terrance Tanner
Victor Tarrazzi
Norman Torkelson
Tom Tuttle
Steve Vandegrift
Anthony Vitolo
Chris Whyte*

*No Brunswick Twp. Parks
E Brunswick Parks and Rec
Westfield BOE
Clifton Recreation Dept.
Newark Public Schools
Westfield BOE
No Brunswick Twp. Parks
Rutherford Schools
No Brunswick Twp. Parks
Clifton Recreation Dept.
Princeton Recreation Dept
Robinsville BOE
Glassboro Parks and Rec
Collingswood Public Schools
River Dell Regional School District
Piscataway BOE
Burlington Twp Rec.
Princeton Recreation Dept
Highland High School
Hopewell Valley Regional School Dist.
Ridge High School
Hopewell Valley Regional School Dist.
Davison Golf
Lawrence BOE
Mantua Aberdeen Regional School District
Berkely Heights BOE*