

PREPARE

Every legislative office should have a communications plan

AND a crisis communications plan.

Define your goals.

To present the legislator as a responsive voice of his/her district and a leader in an issue area.

Determine the deliverables.

Map out specifically how you are going to deliver the communications to reach your goal: Facebook, press releases, media interviews, etc.

What story do you want to tell?

ADAPT

Respond, regroup,
reload. Repeat.

Feed the media

Message discipline is always a key but you need to offer the media real life examples. REAL stories.

Local, regional, national media

All are journalists but with different deadlines, different audiences, different needs with the same story.

What makes news changes

With the 24/7 attention by so many media outlets and all competing for a unique angle, stories that aren't normally stories become news.

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The 2012-2013 legislative session presented leaders with the opportunity to make changes to the institution for the better.

Memorandum of Understanding: The leadership from both sides came to an agreement about how a session day would run.

New Structure Set: Partisan caucuses would meet in the morning and session would start promptly at 1 p.m. Agreed upon debate times would be set and overnight sessions would be limited.

Bipartisanship: Bipartisan speaker task forces were developed to focus on important issues to recommend legislation to entire body.

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• Keep telling stories

- Coordinate with members, stakeholder groups.
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Talking points, listen to their story ideas and constituent reactions.

- Try to anticipate, but expect the unexpected.
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Develop your daily “if-then” assessments. Stay alert and hopefully, ahead of the game.

- “Plant a seed” or explain why the reform is needed.
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Try to do it a visual and meaningful way.

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An example of presenting a problem in search of a solution...

Conservative voices are not offered or allowed to be heard at state universities.

Study of invited speakers paid by taxpayer dollars on the UW System campuses.

Made a free speech challenge to UW System at start of 2016-2017 school year.

Unveiled Tommy Thompson Center on Public Leadership that will also promote bipartisanship.

Introduced Campus Free Speech Act.

Center approved in budget. Legislation approved in Assembly awaiting Senate action.

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Not expecting 100,000
protestors in your state?

How can you respond with
likely issues in your chamber?

Scenario 1: The chamber is having a session day and the legislator is going to miss a vote due to a campaign event?

Scenario 2: A legislator is claimed to have said/did something offensive.

Scenario 3: Legislator has broken the law in some way.

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- What makes the difference during a crisis communication response...

- Have phone numbers of everyone you would need to consult. Know who needs to sign off on the plan of action.
- Establish good relationships with the media who may give you more time to respond or hear you out if the story is done unfairly.
- Have good relationships with stakeholders and other interested parties who would be your echo chamber.

Remember in the media/social media world: TIMING IS EVERYTHING!

What are your takeaway points?

•1

- Prepare a communications plan based on the legislator's goals.

•2

- Assess the story or accusation?
- Is it even true?

•3

- To respond or not to respond. Are you making it a bigger story if you respond?

•4

- Review. Is the story correct? Is it getting traction?

•5

- Change the story if necessary and then, change the story.