**Managing Truth and Reputation:**

**Crisis Communication in the Opioid Era**

Session One: Crisis Communication and managing your story

Audiences are critical to any communication effort

* There is no ONE audience
* Must understand different aspect of diversity to know how to reach audience
* Targeting is critical
* Segmentation and tailoring makes it easier to do our jobs

Questions to ask about your audience

* What communication channels they use
* How are they using those channels for biggest impact/return on investment (ROI)
* How my audience processes info
* How does your audience feel about the problem/goal and would change your audience’s perceptions

Goals of messaging

* Inform
* Persuade
* Motivate
* Achieve mutual understanding

When evaluating messages for your audience, think about whether that message is:

* Appropriate
* Meaningful
* Memorable
* Understandable
* Believable

How public opinion works

* Often surrounds issues of contention
* What you hear about doesn’t have to be the majority
* Often small, vocal minority
* Press can perpetuate inaccuracies by looking for sources from both sides

Opinion leaders

* Opinion leaders serve as catalysts for the formation of public opinion through their knowledge and ability to articulate ideas about specific issues
* Sociologists describe them as:
	+ Highly interested in a subject or issue
	+ Better informed on an issue than the average person
	+ Avid consumers of mass media
	+ Early adopters of new ideas
	+ Good organizers who can get other people to take action

Life cycle of public opinion

* Define the issue
* Involve opinion leaders
* Public awareness
* Intervention (often with government/regulatory involvement)
* Resolution

The role of mass media in public opinion

* Via mass media, you can become major players in forming public opinion
* Often provide the mass media with the information
* Idea is mass media determine what the public believes is important
	+ Also called Agenda Setting Theory

Research about messages

* Positive better than negative
* Radio and TV better than print (most of the time)
* Emotion and fear are good for low interest
* Logic better than emotion for highly educated
* Altruism needs good motivator

Limits of persuasion in messaging

* Lack of message penetration
* Competing messages
* Self-selection
* Self-perception

Crisis communication planning

* Serves as a road map
* Should help describe and define what a crisis is
* Definition of “crisis” may vary

Crisis communication team

* Should be established before a crisis occurs
* Need a spokesperson to be the “face” of your org
* Spokesperson could be:
	+ Head of your organization
	+ PR or communications person (or whoever serves that function)
	+ Expert on the topic at hand

Fighting misinformation

* Rejecting information requires cognitive effort
* It’s harder for your brain to weigh the truth of information than just accept it
* If the topic isn’t important to you (or you have other things on your mind) misinformation is more likely to take hold

When information sticks with an audience

* Conforms to our existing world view
	+ Political
	+ Religious
	+ Social

Strategies to fight misinformation

* Replace the existing narrative
* Focus on the facts
* Keep it brief
* Tailor the message to the audience’s beliefs
* Repeat, repeat, repeat

Six principles of sticky ideas

* Simplicity
* Unexpectedness
* Concreteness
* Credibility
* Emotions
* Stories

Keys to storytelling

1. Bring the emotion and humanity to our story
2. Listen to your audience and learn about what’s important to them and their stories with your product/organization/service
3. Find the protagonist (your company/org/service) and antagonist (enemy of your success) of your story. Look for stories within your organization and from your customers to flesh this out.
4. What is the twist, turn, change that can make the story compelling? Is there something new the customers wouldn’t know that you can bring out?
5. Transformation – this is how you bring the story to a close. What is it that makes what you do unique? Important? Unique selling proposition?

Goals with storytelling

* Build empathy between the audience and the “product”
* Weave storytelling techniques into all communication efforts
* Inspire the audience to ACT and ENGAGE

Session Two: Inside the newsroom

About the media

* Don’t care about helping you
* Get a LOT of releases/pitches
* Don’t have time to chat
* Like easy stories
* Want to hear a really good story

About newsrooms

* Staffs are VERY lean
* Major metro TV stations: 2-4 people
* Deadlines are short, stories shorter, expectations high
* Press releases are reviewed by the DOZENS. Most fail!
* If the story objective isn’t clear, it’s dismissed
* You have just a few seconds to break through the clutter

Having your story break through the clutter

* Build your press release around people (tell a story!)
* When possible, ID a person who media can contact who is PERSONALLY affected by the topic
	+ Have contact info for the person available (phone, email)
* Putting a face to a topic is impactful
* Provide added facts in bullet points
* Make it easy for reporters to understand WHY your story is important
* To get to the top of the pile, get to know the reporters
* Cultivate the relationship before, during and after the story
* Meet them informally – coffee works!
* Know who makes the decisions at the media outlet
* Check in with them from time-to-time
* Follow the reporters on social media
* Create a relationship – friendship/working relationship

Traits of a good press release

* Timeliness
* Impact
* Prominence
* Conflict
* Unusualness
* Proximity

Things to avoid in a press release

* Have a news-like headline
* Stay away from being sales-y
* Assume NO knowledge on the part of the reader
* Don’t use overly hyped up words, adjectives or jargon
* Stick to the facts
* Keep it (normally) to one page (400 – 600 words)

Interview best practices

* Ask the topic matter, what org the journalist is with and what their deadline is
* Ask for questions ahead of time
* Ask the journalist their knowledge on the topic
* Give answers as if you were speaking to a 6th grader (average reading level of the public)
* Avoid jargon
* Think about the message YOU want to impart and focus your responses on that

Alternatives to a press release

* Infographics – can use Venngage or Canva (free online tools)
* Video – can use your phone or online tools such as Promo, Animoto or Magista
* Fact sheets
* Hold a press conference

Op/Ed articles

* Start with a sentence – should summarize the main point you want to make
* Forget objectivity – this is an opinion piece, you don’t need to be objective
* Be informal – write as if you were debating a friend
* Back up your opinion – data, anecdotes, quotes – you need to support your opinion to make the point you’re trying to get across more powerful
* Keep it short and simple – same as a press release, think in terms of 400-600 words
* Know your audience and outlet – every media outlet is different when it comes to op-ed rules and audiences they serve

Developing a media list

* Assess your target audience
* Research the media outlets
	+ What topics does the outlet cover
	+ What is the outlet’s reach/audience size
	+ What’s the frequency of publication
* Know the precise contact person
	+ Don’t send to a general contact address or form
	+ Read your target media outlet and see who covers the type of story you’re pitching, know the different job titles you might want
	+ Don’t send to multiple people in the same outlet as it can look like you’re spamming them
	+ Tailor the pitch and release to that person
* Organize and update your list

What to do when stories go bad

* If facts are wrong, reach out immediately to the reporter
* If no correction is necessary, but context is important, say so
* If a correct IS necessary, ask for that or a follow-up story
* If the reporter won’t make a correction, ask for their supervisor (editor/producer)
* WORST CASE: Tell the reporter/editor that the mistake and lack of correction will impact the future of your relationship

Creating good social media content

* Understand psychology
	+ Learn what motivates your customers
		- Conduct surveys or polls
		- Analyze comments
		- Analytics let you know what is effective and the reach
	+ Find demographic info about your audience
	+ Figure out what value your posts provide to your audience
* Be a good copywriter
	+ Communicate effectively and succinctly
	+ Select content that grabs attention and holds interest
	+ Play on their triggers and emotions (goes back to what you learned about the psychology of your audience)
	+ Be surprising/interesting (give them the unexpected)
	+ Cut out jargon, complex language – make sure your audience knows what you’re saying
* Be analytical
	+ Do the initial research to understand the audience
		- Learn when your audience is online, content they react do, demographics, etc.
	+ Review your analytics to plan content
		- Knowing times/days to post
	+ Experiment with content and see what sticks
	+ 70/20/10 formula for content
		- 70 percent original content focusing on your audience
		- 20 percent other people’s content (retweets, likes, reposts, shares)
		- 10 percent self promotion
* Use strategic communication
	+ Consistent content creation across platforms for audience is key
		- The overall message can be the same
		- Delivery should be different depending on platform
* Think monthly/quarterly
	+ Impossible to plan too far ahead
		- Create a social media calendar for a few months at a time
	+ Need to be flexible
	+ Line up your calendar
	+ Ready to go with trends
		- Create content based on breaking news, holidays/occasions, trending content
	+ Adopt new platforms
		- Always be open to new platforms as they arise or as your business/organization changes

Planning content tools

* Hootsuite (free tool) – ability to manage 3 social profiles in one place and schedule 30 posts in advance
* Buffer (free tool) – similar to Hootsuite in abilities
* TweetDeck (free tool) – Twitter-specific tool allowing you to manage Twitter posts, lists and check analytics
* Facebook Insights – built into Facebook, allows you to schedule posts and view analytics
* Instagram Insights – built into Instagram, allows you to schedule posts and view analytics

Session Three: Smartphone training

Phone camera settings

* Recommended:
	+ 720 HD, 30 FPS
* Alternatives:
	+ 4K/1080 HD (will use more phone storage)
	+ 24 FPS for cinematic look and feel
	+ 60 FPS if you plan to use slow-mo during edit

Landscape vs. portrait

* Landscape (horizontal)
	+ YouTube
	+ Facebook, Twitter, etc.
	+ Big screen
* Portrait (vertical)
	+ Snapchat
	+ Instagram
* Never both at the same time

Three keys to professional video

* Stability
	+ Eliminate or minimize shakiness
	+ Use a tripod
	+ If no tripod, use your surroundings
		- Tabletop or ground
		- Trees/walls
		- Tuck elbows, hold camera closer to body
* Lighting
	+ Light source (sun, windows, etc.) ALWAYS at your back
	+ Interview subject should FACE the light
	+ If indoors, try to move subject underlights
	+ NEVER shoot into the light
	+ Signs of poor lighting technique? “Light halo” in video, subject is darker than background, lack of crispness in video
* Sound
	+ Get CLOSE – an arm’s length away
	+ Account for “ambient” sound: construction, children playing, traffic noise
	+ Use wireless ear plugs
	+ Indoors: lights that give off a “hum”, vacuum cleaners in the background, people talking

Panning and zooming

* NEVER zoom with your phone camera
* Loses resolution and quality
* “Move with your feet” (get closer)
* Pan SLOWLY and STEADILY
* Pick a starting and ending point
* “Short distance” pans
* Avoid quick, sweeping pans

Framing

* Get close enough to maximize the experience
* Faces and fronts, not butts and backs
* Sequence shots: close, medium and wide
* Match action
* Shoot lots and lots of footage, then shoot MORE

Session Four: Elevator pitches (and how to give them)

Elevator pitch basics

* Focus on one message
* Do some research on your audience
* Decide on your angle for that audience
* Map out your story
* Plan on 30 seconds to 1 minute for the pitch

Pitch layout

* Open with:
	+ Introductions – this is where you establish your credibility and relevance to your audience
* Main body:
	+ Personal story – could be yours or an example from your work
* Close:
	+ Summarize and ideally have an “ask” – you always need to end with an action step asked of your audience