



## TenStep Supplemental Paper

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### **Dos and Don'ts of Crisis Management**

It's not how well you handle a crisis that matters, but how prepared you are to handle a crisis. This can impact the organization's reputation. In fact, it could enhance the reputation of the company. Pan Am hid behind a curtain during the aircraft crash at Lockerbie. Consequently the company lost 14.5% of transatlantic business and went bust.

However, the CEO of British Midland, Michael Bishop, chose to express his concern by being present at the crash site at Kegworth in the 1980s. The airline did not lose business.

In an ideal world, no organization would undergo a crisis that seriously jeopardizes its reputation – however, such crises do occur. In the eventuality of such a thing happening, here are a few tips:

#### **What You Should Do**

1. Have a brief, realistic and achievable crisis plan
2. All decision-makers need to agree on a common course of action, which is peppered liberally with openness and caring
3. Understand the public reaction
4. Crisis is all about people's fears, concerns and perceptions. Address them
5. Act upon the crisis quickly and be visible doing so
6. Exhibit the human face of the company
7. Train the spokesperson to address the media
8. Handle the stress, which is bound to happen
9. Divert the attention from your organization to some other 'villain' of the crisis
10. Deluge the public with information. The more you give, the faster they lose interest

#### **What You Shouldn't Do**

1. Detailed preparation for every contingency. This may create a cumbersome procedure
2. Delay
3. Say "No comment!"
4. Shut your eyes and hope the crisis passes away on its own accord
5. Simply communicating the facts will never suffice
6. Trying to take a cool strategic overview from the outset will only aggravate the situation
7. Expect the PR people and lawyers to take care of things
8. Get into a combat mode with the pressure group extremists



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9. Hold a press conference only when it is absolutely necessary