Crisis Leadership: How The Ability Of Leadership To Communicate Affects The Outcome Of Crisis

Andrew Szilvasi
Seton Hall University

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CRISIS LEADERSHIP:

HOW THE ABILITY OF LEADERSHIP TO COMMUNICATE

AFFECTS THE OUTCOME OF CRISIS

BY

ANDREW SZILVASI

THESIS ADVISOR
Professor Richard Dool

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

"When written in Chinese the word "crisis" is composed of two characters.

One represents danger and the other represents opportunity."

John Fitzgerald Kennedy — President, United States of America, 1961-1963

On September 11, 2001, our lives were changed forever. No longer were catastrophic events limited to countries far away. No longer were Americans protected by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. On that day, we discovered that crisis can occur at any time without provocation or warning.

We also learned that effective leadership can hold the key to successfully navigating the crisis, no matter the scale. Leaders can do much more than sit in an office making high-level decisions that affect the bottom line. Their actions can have very real consequences. The way in which a leader steps forward and manages a crisis often dictates the outcome of that crisis.

We can learn a great deal about crisis management by looking back to the days, weeks, and months that followed that tragic day. We can explore the September 11 tragedy and several other events throughout American history searching for lessons to take regarding ways a leader can effectively communicate during a crisis. This thesis will explore ways in which leaders can utilize their power and position to affect a positive outcome.
Crisis can be a dangerous time for an organization. Yet, as John F. Kennedy said, it can be a time of great opportunity. Out of crisis leaders can emerge. To seize the opportunity, a leader must utilize strong crisis management and communication skills. Among the most important of these skills are:

- Developing and maintaining credibility,
- Utilizing the power of the media, and
- Seeking out historical examples of what may happen in the future (prodromes).

The author intends to discuss these leadership actions and their effect on crisis resolutions.

**The Media and Crisis**

There are three sides to every story: his side, her side, and the truth. In today's world of 24/7 media overload, we see countless examples of crisis; government agencies face them, political figures face them, corporations and their leaders face them. And each crisis has different truths, depending on who you believe. The one constant in every crisis, however, is the presence of media coverage.

The American public is bombarded with images of war casualties, infidelity in the Oval office, corporate executives looting their organization’s coffers, and celebrities on trial. We rely on our newspapers and televisions to not only tell us what Condoleeza Rice said during her testimony in front of the 9/11 panel, but to analyze her words, her tone of
voice, even her body language to determine if she was telling the truth. We often form
opinions of the issues affecting us according to what we are told and the images we are
shown by the six o’clock news. But how can we be sure that what is presented to us is the
truth, rather than his or her story?

The reality is that we cannot be sure. In fact, when we dissect the messages disseminated
by the media at large, we see they can be laced with partisan bias. As we scour the radio
dial, we hear Sean Hannity and Rush Limbaugh advancing a conservative, republican
point of view on the issues affecting our nation: Iraq, the economy, the Presidential
election. Then we hear Al Franken giving us the liberal viewpoint and presenting it as
fact. Our social conscience is formed dependent on which side we decide to believe.

On our televisions we see CNN and MSNBC showing images of U.S. casualties in Iraq.
We grow angry as the death toll rises. Our social conscience begins to form. Yet we have
not heard the other side. Are there any positive stories regarding our presence in Iraq?
Have we done no good there? Have we not freed Iraqis from the iron rule of a ruthless
dictator? Have media outlets chosen not to report those stories?

In a perfect world, media would report the good, the bad, and the ugly. But in today’s
reality, the only stories that sell are the bad and the ugly. Too often, media decide which
side of the story is good, which is bad and how ugly they can make it. The majority of
Americans accept these slanted accounts as fact. And the results can be devastating —
corporations, political careers, personal reputations — they all can be destroyed, regardless of what the truth really is.

Media wields immeasurable power over the tide of public opinion in the United States. Is it possible for leadership, be it a government leader or a corporate leader, to harness the media's power to positively affect the outcome of crisis? Is it possible for a leader to convince media to look past any existing bias and report crisis in a truthful light? The actions of leadership, the reactions of media and the relative calm after the tragedy of September 11, 2001 illustrate that, yes, it can be done.

In the aftermath of those terror attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Americans everywhere tuned in to their television sets, radios and computers for the latest developments. We listened to Tom Brokaw, Peter Jennings and hundreds of other journalists present "the facts" regarding the single largest attack on United States' soil — just as our parents sat in stunned disbelief 38 years earlier watching as Walter Cronkite announced that President Kennedy had been assassinated.

In the days following the attack, New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani stepped forward, assuming the role of "America's Mayor." Through a perceptive use of (and partnership with) media, Mayor Giuliani gained control of the crisis. We saw him walking through the streets of New York to assess the damage mere minutes after the attacks. We saw the pain etched on his face during the countless press conferences he led. Mayor Giuliani became the leader of the United States in a time of chaos. Americans
could go to any television network, newspaper or radio station to hear and see Mayor
Giuliani speaking with real determination and emotion. Media actually cooperated with a
politician whose approval ratings on September 5, 2001 were near an all-time low. Now,
in the wake of the terrorist attacks, absent was the partisanship to which the American
public had grown accustomed. Instead, media supported the leadership of the nation.

In much the same way, albeit much less effectively, President George W. Bush also
utilized the power of the media. On August 27, 2001, just fifteen days prior to the
September 11 attacks, President Bush’s approval rating hovered at 50%. By September
23 of that same year his approval rating had skyrocketed to 82% (Zogby). Did President
Bush’s use of media have an effect on this increase?

Throughout modern American history, media have delivered to the American public
news of crises that greatly affect the nation. Public opinion has been shaped; public
support has been harvested; public hatred has formed — all at the discretion of media that
may sometimes seek to further its own agenda, whether that is to get a higher share of the
ratings or to elect the President of their choice.

How often does the public stop to consider if the media deliver stories of crisis without
bias? How often does the public assess the validity of the crisis? Are we an intellectual
community who, when presented with the facts, can form our own opinions of what is a
crisis? Or have we become a bloodthirsty society who buys into each piece of sensational
journalism and eagerly awaits the next? Has the American public contemplated the power media outlets exert in the formation and outcome of crisis?

The leadership of Rudolph Giuliani during the September 11 tragedy helped grow the author’s interest in the techniques of crisis management and communication. Coupled with an existing affinity for media, the author has become engrossed in the topic and now seeks to explore the power of leadership during times of crisis and techniques that can be employed to influence the outcome of crisis.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Americans has lived through some of the most intriguing crises to have ever occurred. The 1960s saw President John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev standing on the brink of nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis; the 1970s saw President Richard Nixon pull American troops from Vietnam and Americans taken hostage in Iran; in the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan challenged Russian General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev to “tear down this wall”; the 1990s witnessed the Intern scandal of President Bill Clinton.

The one constant in these and other crises is this:

A leader’s ability to effectively communicate during times of crisis has a determinate effect on the outcome of that crisis.
Perception is reality — when a group of people believes something to be true, regardless of its validity, that perception becomes reality. Therefore, this study seeks to answer this question:

_How can leaders use communication to promote positive outcomes of crisis?_

This study seeks to outline a plan of action for leadership to follow to aid in the maintenance and repair of an organization’s public image. By doing so, a leader can help obtain a positive outcome of crisis.

**SUBSIDIARY QUESTIONS**

In examining this research question, other questions arise:

- How does media coverage of a crisis affect the outcome of that crisis?
- How does the degree of media bias influence public perception of that crisis?
- Does the American public generally believe that they are receiving unbiased news of a crisis from media outlets?
- How has media influenced public opinion of past organizational crisis?
- Can organizational leaders utilize media to better manage crisis?

The author will examine crises throughout American history with a focus on leadership’s specific actions to navigate the crisis.
PURPOSE OF STUDY

This study is being conducted to discover the link between a leader’s actions during a crisis and its outcome. Through the use of a research matrix, thorough analysis of major events in American history will form the basis of a comprehensive list of suggested actions a leader should take during crisis. These actions will enable leadership to seize control of the crisis to garner favorable public opinion and promote positive outcomes.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Throughout this research thesis, the reader will find terms that require further clarification. This section serves as a reference for those terms.

1. Crisis: A major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting the organization, company, or industry, as well as its publics, products, services, or good name (Fearn-Banks, p. 2).

2. Media: term used to describe print media (newspapers, magazines); broadcast media (radio stations, television stations, television networks), and often Internet-based media (World Wide Web pages, weblogs). Usually the term includes all working journalists and is often used by those who would make generalizations about the product of "most" journalists, for example that journalists who work for large media corporations, or who are based in New York City or Washington, D.C, harbor a liberal (or conservative) bias. ¹

3. Bias: A partiality that prevents objective consideration of an issue or situation.
4. Crisis management: The process of strategic planning for a crisis or negative turning point, a process that removes some of the risk and uncertainty from the negative occurrence and thereby allows the organization to be in greater control of its own destiny.²

5. Crisis communication: The dialog between the organization and its publics prior to, during, and after the negative occurrence. The strategies and tactics are designed to minimize damage to the image of the organization.²

LIMITATIONS

The fusion of leadership, media and crisis has many angles from which it can be studied. While this study intends to outline specific actions leaders can take to promote positive outcomes of crisis, it will not in any depth discuss media’s duty to report crisis in an unbiased fashion.

CHAPTER 2 - REVIEW OF LITERATURE

WHAT IS A CRISIS?

As discussed in chapter 1, a crisis is a major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting the organization, company, or industry, as well as its publics, products, services, or good name. It can disrupt the everyday business of business; it can even threaten the very existence of an organization. Depending on the way in which the crisis is managed, the organization may or may not be in control of its own destiny. Depending on the way in which a leader communicates during the crisis, the organization may or may not suffer significant damage to its image.

The integration of effective crisis management with good crisis communication is critical to the future health of the organization. And to successfully integrate the two, a leader must possess a basic understanding of the nature of crisis.

According to Kathleen Fern-Banks in her book "Crisis Communication: A Casebook Approach", there are five stages in the lifecycle of a crisis:

1. Detection
2. Prevention/Preparation
3. Containment
4. Recovery
5. Learning

An effective management and communication strategy will seek to prepare for crisis by planning through each stage.
1. Detection

In medical terms the word "prodrome" means an early symptom indicating the onset of an attack or a disease. In our discussion, prodromes are examples of crises that have occurred in the past and can be used as learning tools to cope with, or even avoid, future crisis.

Good crisis detection utilizes prodromes to foresee possible future crises. Leaders can use this early warning system to diminish or even eliminate the negative effect of a crisis before it occurs.

2. Prevention and Preparation

Only through a genuine partnership between an organization and its constituents can there be a sense of trust between the two parties. And only with that sense of trust can potentially catastrophic crises be prevented.

Communication is essential in the prevention of crisis. By opening the lines of communication between the members of an organization, as well as between the organization and its customers, leaders may have an opportunity to learn of impending crisis early enough to eliminate its effects. And the strong relationships discussed above may allow the organization to receive the benefit of the doubt in some situations.

Preparing for the unforeseen is just as crucial. By organizing an action plan before an
unexpected situation arises, a leader can avoid costly confusion on the part of his team.

3. Containment

A good crisis strategy seeks to limit the negative effects of a crisis to the immediate area it occurs in and for the shortest period of time. By limiting the crisis to the area of the organization where it occurs, the organization protects its other interests from the crisis.

4. Recovery

It is crucial after a crisis for an organization to restore the confidence of its constituents. To accomplish this, the organization must return to a business-like routine as quickly as possible without ignoring the crisis.

5. Learning

As discussed earlier, prodromes are invaluable to the detection and prevention of future crisis. In the learning stage, a crisis is dissected so it can be used as a prodrome to future crises.
MANAGING A CRISIS

The effects of a crisis can vary greatly: the organization dies due to the negative effects from the crisis, the organization lives but is greatly weakened, or the organization retains, or even improves its public perception. More often than not, the determining factor in the outcome is the organization’s ability to convey its key messages to its publics. And the tool it must use to express its key themes is the media.

As part of the prevention stage of crisis management, a leader and his team must consider the role of media in the crisis. By taking into account how media will react to a crisis, a leader can prepare to provide appropriate information to media. He can also eliminate the element of surprise that can occur when media begin to investigate a crisis.

The author will not discuss in great length the strategy of developing the key themes to be delivered to stakeholders during crisis. Instead, we will briefly analyze the formation of the key themes to be presented. These themes are the centerpiece of the organization’s crisis management and communication plans and serve to control the negative effects of the crisis.

Developing the Message

Beyond simply providing information, an effective leadership message does one thing — build trust between leader and follower. Without it, the message loses its power. The audience will focus not on the details and spirit of the message, but instead on looking for ulterior motives, reasoning behind the message. When that doubt exists, a crisis can quickly escalate to uncontrollable status.
Credibility in a leadership message (Baldoni, p. 29):

1. Speak the truth — As straightforward as it seems, offering the truth builds credibility with an audience.

2. Don’t hide bad news — In today’s media-heavy world, bad news will always come to the surface. By confronting that bad news early on in the lifespan of a crisis removes the possibility of some hidden piece of information coming to light later and challenging the credibility of the leader who did not divulge that detail.
3. Never over-promise — The 2004 presidential election was one of the most hotly contested and controversial elections in American history. Never before had the country been so angrily divided in their opinions of President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry. The underlying reason for such animosity toward each candidate on the part of the others’ constituency was the perception that each man over-promised during the campaign.

4. Do what you say you will do — Related to the point above regarding over-promising, a leader must let his actions demonstrate his ability to lead. Bold promises of what a leader will do to alleviate a crisis and prevent another mean little without the actions to set those promises in motion.

*What Should the Message Accomplish?*

A good, credible crisis message will accomplish four things (Baldoni, p. 33):

1. Inform
2. Involve
3. Ignite
4. Invite
Four I's Leadership Message Model

- Inform — During crisis, a leader’s first and foremost responsibility is to inform his constituency of the crisis. The leader must, as soon as humanly possible, assess a crisis situation in language the audience will understand.

- Involve — Leaders will involve not only their immediate staff, but also representatives of all involved audiences, soliciting input on the crisis.
Involvement breeds a sense of togetherness that can help maintain and even develop a strong public perception of the leader and of the organization.

- **Ignite** — When appropriate (depending on the specific crisis), a strong message will ignite people to come together to achieve a positive outcome. This can be a very powerful tool in corporate crisis situations, and can even help in public ones, such as the September 11 tragedy.

- **Invite** — A step beyond involvement, inviting constituents to help in the crisis solution empowers those people by developing a contribution attitude that can be a great help toward crisis resolution.

**PRODROMES IN HISTORY**

In its relatively brief existence, the United States has seen quite a number of crises. And with those crises came countless examples of leaders who successfully navigated the crisis as well as some who did not perform as well during the crisis. By analyzing our nation’s leaders we can learn a great deal about how leader actions affect the outcome of crisis. The author will use a matrix to analyze three events in American history. The matrix will highlight the crisis, immediate reaction to it, media’s portrayal of it, and lessons we can take form the leader’s actions.
Franklin D. Roosevelt – The Attack on Pearl Harbor

1. The Crisis

On December 7, 1941, seemingly with any provocation or warning, Japan attacked an unprepared American Naval fleet at Pearl Harbor. For the first time in the 20th century, Americans were attacked and killed on U.S. soil.

2. Immediate Reaction

On December 8, President Franklin Roosevelt addressed Congress to ask for a declaration of war.

No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us. Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people we will gain the inevitable triumph—so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

This address served to not only put the Japanese Empire on notice, but also to solidify the resolve of the American people. His short speech perfectly delivered a clear, concise message that America and its people would face this crisis and emerge victorious.
3. How Did Media Portray the Crisis?

In the immediate aftermath of the attack, when many Americans did not even know
where Hawaii was, the Government invited the Press to see the carnage of Pearl Harbor.
Newspapers ran countless articles of the attack and printed bone-chilling photographs of
burning and sunken ships. These images angered Americans and aided Roosevelt in his
pursuit of authority from Congress to declare war against Japan.

The media continued to support the war effort in their own way. In early January 1942, as
the homefront became mobilized for war, posters and signs quickly began appearing
across the United States. One of the earliest slogans to appear was “Remember Dec. 7th!”
It was created during the dark days soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor
(www.exccpc.com).

4. Lessons To Be Taken

President Roosevelt did a masterful job of mobilizing American public opinion in the
first few days after the attack. He understood that the most direct way of gaining support
for his plan of declaring war was to show Americans evidence of why that was the only
appropriate action.

Although his administration deplored the news media, he invited the Press to see the
disaster at Pearl Harbor. He knew this was the only avenue he had to reach all Americans.
So what lessons can we take from the successful crisis management displayed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt?

- Act quickly – Within one day he was heard on radio in front of Congress eloquently stating his intentions to defend the country from the present danger and ensure that it would never happen again.

- Understand the power of the media – Roosevelt knew the best way to convey his message was to use the media to deliver it. He successfully gained public support by making the crisis real to Americans.

*Jimmy Carter – The Economy*

1. The Crisis

President Carter faced a much different crisis than the one faced by President Roosevelt. Instead of an attack by a foreign nation on a far off island most had never heard of, Carter’s crisis hit home for every American. The United States economy was mired in a period of great fluctuation. “More damaging than specific events was the increasingly problematic economy, which alternated between bursts of inflation and slowdowns in production throughout Carter’s term. Most disturbing to the public was the soaring rates of inflation, peaking at 18 percent in 1980.” (Greenstein, pp. 136-137).

When he first took office, President Carter made a point of presenting himself as an “every man”. He attended his inauguration in a common business suit; He would often be seen dressed casually in a cardigan; He even attended a Massachusetts town meeting. His approval rating in March 1976 of nearly 75% demonstrated that his approach struck a
cord with Americans. However, as the plummeting economy crept into the forefront of his administration, his rating likewise fell. By June 1979, it had been reduced to just 29%.

2. Immediate Reaction

In July of 1979, Carter canceled a vacation to prepare for an address to the American people about the country’s energy crisis. In the address he said:

*I know, of course, being president, that government actions and legislation can be very important. That’s why I’ve worked hard to put my campaign promises into law -- and I have to admit, with just mixed success. But after listening to the American people I have been reminded again that all the legislation in the world can't fix what's wrong with America. So, I want to speak to you first tonight about a subject even more serious than energy or inflation. I want to talk to you right now about a fundamental threat to American democracy.*

*I do not mean our political and civil liberties. They will endure. And I do not refer to the outward strength of America, a nation that is at peace tonight everywhere in the world, with unmatched economic power and military might.*

*The threat is nearly invisible in ordinary ways. It is a crisis of confidence. It is a crisis that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will. We can see this crisis in the growing doubt about the meaning of our own lives and in the loss of a unity of purpose for our nation.*

*The erosion of our confidence in the future is threatening to destroy the social and the political fabric of America...*

...In closing, let me say this: I will do my best, but I will not do it alone. Let your voice be heard. Whenever you have a chance, say something good about our country. With God’s help and for the sake of our nation, it is time for us to join hands in America. Let us commit ourselves together to a rebirth of the American spirit. Working together with our common faith we cannot fail.

3. How did media portray the crisis?

The President’s address was a success in the eyes of both Americans and the American media. He was able to speak to the fears of the nation and ask each and every person to help the cause.
Yet just two days after his speech, he unexpectedly asked for the resignation of his entire cabinet. This action brought serious concerns about Carter’s emotional well-being on the part of the American public.

4. Lessons to be taken

Carter began his Presidency with a soaring approval rating. He appealed to the common man with his humility. Yet, when he was faced with an energy crisis the likes of which the nation never expected, he began to act irrationally.

“As the years continued, Carter’s limitations as a public communicator began to manifest themselves. His speeches suffered because they reflected the absence of organizing principles in his program. He read their lines in an uninflected voice, barely moving his lips, and pausing at inappropriate points. It was evident that his presentations would profit from coaching and rehearsals, but he spurned suggestions that he invest effort in improving his speaking style.”

Learning points from President Jimmy Carter:

- Appeal to the common man — Carter used his actions and his appearance to convey togetherness with the American people.

- Improve upon your weaknesses — Even at the urging of his advisors, Carter steadfastly refused to improve upon this weakness in communicating with his constituents. When a communications skill is lacking, it is imperative that a leader rectify or risk losing his constituency.
Lawrence Rawl - The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill

1. The Crisis

Unlike the examples above which all focus on government leadership, this example examines the actions of a corporate entity, Exxon, during one of the greatest crises in recent memory.

In March of 1989, the Exxon Valdez, an oil tanker off the coast of Alaska, ran aground among the shallow reefs of Prince William Sound. Approximately 11 million gallons crude oil poured into the Sound. The resulting effects to the environment were devastating: in addition to the countless fish and crustaceans that perished, an estimated 1 million birds and one third of the sea otter population died (Fearn-Banks, p. 98)

2. Immediate reaction

Exxon had no plan in place. As a result, confusion swept over the local corporate leadership. The corporation’s immediate reaction was to lay blame at the feet of the tanker’s captain.

Making matters worse, CEO Lawrence Rawl did not step forward to assume a leadership role. He neither communicated with the public nor to his employees. As a result, Exxon employees began to speak out on their own, claiming the corporation’s culture was a major contributor to the cause of the crisis.
As days went by, the vastness of the oil spill was revealed. Still, Rawl did not visit the affected area. Instead, he remained at the corporate headquarters. When he eventually did make a statement, he did not apologize nor show any emotion whatsoever. Finally, a full three weeks after the oil spill, Rawl visited the site — although he still refused to apologize to those affected.

3. How did the media portray the crisis?

The oil spill occurred on a Friday evening. By Monday morning, all major news networks in the United States had crews at the site. They showed ghastly images of wildlife fighting for survival and spoke to hundreds of fishermen whose livelihoods had been taken away just 48 hours earlier. Media also focused on the apparent disregard that Exxon leadership had for the crisis and its effect on the area.

4. Lessons to be taken

The Exxon Valdez oil spill is a textbook example of a severe deficiency of leadership. The organization had no plan in place; there was no study of prodromes; there was no emotion or empathy for those who suffered.

Learning Points from the Exxon Valdez oil spill:

- Have a plan — An organization must develop a crisis management and communication plan in place.
- Look for prodromes — This crisis has become a prodrome for all other oil companies because of Exxon’s failure to look for other prodromes.
• React Immediately — Exxon lost all control of the situation within the first 48 hours. The leader’s absence left his staff to fend for themselves. As a result, bad information was disseminated and the organization lost all credibility.

• Communicate with your public and employees — Rawl’s refusal to communicate with the public was appalling. Alaskans and environmentalists perceived this as a slap in the face, and coldness coming from the organization. Similarly, his indifference to communicating with Exxon employees had disastrous repercussions. Instead of creating spokespersons out of Exxon employees, he created more adversaries.
CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCHING PERCEPTIONS
AND PERSPECTIVES

At the heart of the issue of media’s effect on a crisis situation is the American public — in what regard do we hold media, and how much credence do we put into what we see and hear from them in regards to crisis? To discover the extent of power that media possess over our opinions of crisis, the author conducted a random survey designed to evoke Americans’ feelings on media, crisis and leadership’s role in fusing the two.

The survey consisted of a series of ten general questions and two power rating charts. It was circulated to respondents through two methods: (1) hand-distributed, and (2) through the use of a web-based market research company.

The following is a listing of all questions asked in the survey and the author’s rationale for posing the question. The survey can be seen in its entirety in Appendix A. The results of this survey will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Part I — General

Part I utilized the Likert technique of measuring attitudes regarding the subject matter. Subjects were asked to express agreement or disagreement with a statement using a five-point scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

1. Generally, media outlets are good sources for information regarding a regional or national crisis.
Statement 1 seeks to establish a true baseline of perception among respondents of the validity of media as a source for news regarding a crisis. This statement has been purposefully positioned here so as to garner a response before respondents' reactions are slanted by subsequent statements.

The author's expectation is that most, if not all, respondents will agree or strongly agree with the above statement. The author's research suggests that there is an overwhelming feeling throughout the United States that what is heard or seen in the media must be the truth.

2. *The media have a responsibility to report the truth without interpretation or conjecture.*

Although common sense would dictate that this is a true statement, therefore an unnecessary statement to include here, it serves to establish a universal truth regarding the duty of media in the reporting of news. This truth furthers the creation of the baseline of perception.

3. *The media generally provide accurate and objective news about a crisis.*

This statement is designed to invoke thought on the respondent's part on the type of information presented by media. The literature would suggest that as most Americans believe that media are a good source for information regarding a crisis, most Americans also believe media generally provide accurate and objective information.
4. *News of an event or crisis is generally the same from news source to news source.*

With this statement the author seeks to address the issue of accuracy in media as well as bias in media’s reporting of a crisis. It is logical that respondents who agree or strongly agree with this statement will also agree that media generally provide accurate and objective information.

5. *For the most part, bad news sells.*

Statement 5 seeks to confirm the premise that media tend to sensationalize news stories, focusing on the negative or “bad” aspects. The author suspects the majority of respondents will agree that tragic or negative news garners more attention.

6. *An organization’s ability to manage crisis typically plays an important role in determining public opinion.*

Perception is reality. In other words, no matter what the reality of a situation is, the public’s beliefs can be even more important than the truth itself. Statement 6 is designed to illustrate that regardless of the degree of a crisis, an organization’s performance in managing that crisis can greatly affect public opinion.

7. *Extensive media coverage of a crisis influences public opinion.*

Statement 7 continues with the public opinion aspect by suggesting that the sheer amount of attention given to a crisis situation by media can affect the perception of that crisis.
8. *The media can be a useful tool in an organization's effort to overcome crisis.*

Can an organization's ability to utilize the media positively influence the outcome of a crisis? Statement 8 attacks this question by asking respondents to consider ways in which an organization can use the media's power of persuasion.

9. *Sometimes, the media exploits news to provoke a crisis.*

Do media outlets have the power to create crisis? The statement asks respondents to contemplate the validity of some of the crises they have learned about through various media sources.

10. *The media can make a crisis seem worse than it is.*

With all the influence media possesses over public opinion, and the responsibility that accompanies that powers, do media sometimes pursue the "bad news" sell? The author expects respondents to agree with the statement.

**Part II — Power Ratings**

Part II consisted of two power rating charts asking respondents to:

1. Rank a series of leadership skills from "very important" to "not important" during times of crisis.

2. Grade five American leaders on their performance during specific national crises.

The scale used was a simple 1–5 scale; 1 representing the lowest rating and 5 representing the highest.
Power Chart 1:

Chart 1 asked Respondents to rate a series of leadership skills in order of importance, “5” being very important and “1” being not important. The author specifically had the actions of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani during the September 11 crisis in mind when constructing this chart.

1. Provide an unwavering presence — In the aftermath of the 9/11 crisis, Mayor Giuliani was as visible as any leader has ever been. He held regular press conferences, attended funerals and memorial services, and even attended sporting events. What effect did this constant visibility have on the public? The author expects a majority of respondents to feel an unwavering, unchanged presence by leadership is crucial to the ability to overcome the crisis.

2. Being a great communicator — The way in which a message is delivered can be as important as the message itself. Mayor Giuliani succeeded in his communication because his words were delivered in an honest, sincere manner. Again, the author believes most respondents will agree that great communication is an important leadership skill during times of crisis.

3. Exercise the power of the position — A leader can not become so engrossed in the crisis itself that the power of the position is forgotten. For example, Mayor Giuliani became the first mayor in 50 years to address the United Nations assembly when he urged worldwide support to fight terrorism. He called for Wall Street businesses to stay in New York rather than move to New Jersey. He even toured Ground Zero with
numerous foreign dignitaries to build global support for the unified war against terrorism.

4. Be a cheerleader — In the sports world, cheerleaders strive to lift the spirits of their team and energize its fans. Mayor Giuliani took on the role of cheerleader in the aftermath by encouraging New Yorkers to get back to their normal lives — urging them to go to restaurants, Broadway shows and sporting events. He spread praise widely, honoring firefighters, police officers, emergency personnel, and all New Yorkers for acts of heroism.

5. Take on many roles — With the sheer enormity of the tragedy, every part of New York City was negatively affected. As its leader, Mayor Giuliani needed to appeal to all New Yorkers, no matter how their lives had been affected. He became the conduit for everything from the Office of Emergency Management to Wall Street.

**Power Chart 2:**

Chart 2 asked Respondents to rate a group of United States leaders according to their performance during a crisis, “5” being the highest and “1” being the lowest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States Leader</th>
<th>Crisis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President George W. Bush</td>
<td>September 11, 2001 Terrorist attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor Rudolph Giuliani</td>
<td>September 11, 2001 Terrorist attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President John F. Kennedy</td>
<td>Cuban Missile Crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President Ronald Reagan</td>
<td>Ending of the Cold War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President William Clinton</td>
<td>White House Intern Scandal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart asks Respondents to consider the performance of each leader during crisis. Particularly interesting will be the comparison between President Bush and Mayor...
Giuliani. As discussed in Chapter 3, each man had a distinctively different approach toward communicating with constituents in the aftermath of the terrorist attack. The author surmises that Mayor Giuliani will be ranked more positively than President Bush for the simple fact that he was a better communicator than the President.

Part III — Optional Questions

These optional questions were designed to elicit background data from survey respondents; gender, age and highest level of education completed.
CHAPTER 4 - SURVEY RESULTS

As discussed in chapter 3, public perception of a crisis often determines the outcome of that crisis. And there is no greater influencer of public opinion than mass media. Through the use of this survey, the author seeks to determine how people view a select group of leaders that have faced crisis, as well as the media that delivers news of these crises.

Part I of the survey (found in Appendix A) utilized the Likert Scale for participants to register their opinions, from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”, on a series of 10 questions. The Likert technique presents a set of attitude statements. Subjects are asked to express agreement or disagreement of a five-point scale. These questions were formulated to uncover respondents’ feeling toward leadership, media and the fusion of the two during times of crisis.

Part II of the survey utilized a power chart consisting of a simple 1–5 scale; 1 representing the lowest rating and 5 representing the highest.

Survey Participants

The survey consisted of a series of ten general questions and two power rating charts. A total of one hundred thirty-three people responded to the survey.
Respondent Breakdown:

Gender:
- Male: 79 (59%)
- Female: 54 (41%)

Age Group:
- 18-34: 100 (75%)
- 35-49: 26 (20%)
- 50-64: 6 (5%)
- 65+: 1 (1%)

Highest level of education completed:
- High school: 22 (17%)
- College: 73 (55%)
- Graduate: 37 (28%)
- Other: 1 (1%)

Survey Responses

Part I - General

1. Generally, media outlets such as television news or newspapers are good sources for information regarding a regional or national crisis.

It is not surprising that 102 of the 133 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. For decades, television and newspapers have been the traditional source for the American public to get its news. This question sets a foundation for
rest of the survey that most people regard media as a valuable source of information.

2. The media have a responsibility to report the truth without interpretation or conjecture.

![Bar Chart](chart1)

Almost unanimously, respondents agree or strongly agree that media have a responsibility to report news in a truthful, unbiased manner.

3. The media generally provide accurate and objective news about a crisis.

![Bar Chart](chart2)
It is quite interesting that although 77% of respondents feel media outlets are a good source of news and 93% agree that media have a duty to report news truthfully, 48% disagree that media actually follow that duty to report news in an unbiased manner. Therefore, a large segment of Americans know they are gathering news from sources that should report news in an unbiased format but do not.

4. News of an event or crisis is generally the same from news source to news source.

If media report news with a bias, it is logical to believe that bias can vary from news source to news source – therefore, news of a crisis would vary depending on the bias of the particular media outlet. The responses to this question are interesting in that nearly 52% believe news is the same regardless of which outlet reports it, while 36% feel it does vary.
5. For the most part, bad news sells.

![Bar graph showing responses to the statement about bad news]

Nearly all respondents agree that generally bad news sells. In other words, negative stories attract more attention than positive ones. This result seemingly contradicts the earlier finding that most believe media outlets are a good source for news and information. If bad news sells and media have a tendency to report news in a biased fashion, can they really be good sources?

6. Public opinion can play an important role in an organization’s efforts to manage crisis.

![Bar graph showing responses to the statement about public opinion]

Over 86% of respondents feel that public opinion can play a vital role in an organization’s ability to manage crisis. This is in agreement with the author’s
hypothesis that public perception directly affects the outcome of crisis and illustrates the importance of an organization gaining the support of media.

7. Extensive media coverage of a crisis influences public opinion.

An overwhelming majority agree that media can wield a great power over public opinion. This means that media can further their own agendas, their own biases, and because they are regarded as good sources of news and information, they can influence public opinion.

8. The media can be a useful tool in an organization's effort to overcome crisis.
Most respondents agree that organizations can take advantage of the power of media to affect crisis by manipulating public perception. With the influence media have over public opinion, organizations must learn to effectively use media to promote successful outcomes of crisis.

9. Sometimes, the media exploits news to provoke a crisis.

An overwhelming number of respondents agree that media do at times create crises. This is interesting given the context established be question #1. Can media be a good source of news when the audience knows that they sometimes exploit that news?
10. The media can make a crisis seem worse than it is.

![Bar Chart]

Respondents acknowledge that media can, through power over public perception, worsen an existing crisis.

**Part II – Power Ratings**

**Power Chart 1**

Respondents were asked to rate a series of leadership skills in order of importance, “5” being very important and “1” being not important.

1. Provide an unwavering presence.
Over 85% of respondents felt an unwavering presence is important or very important to show an unwavering presence during times of crisis. A crucial part of Rudolph Giuliani’s actions in the 9-11 aftermath was his constant and unwavering presence in the eyes of the nation.

2. Being a great communicator.

![Graph showing responses to importance of communication in crisis]

Again, a vast majority of those surveyed agreed that great communication is essential to good crisis management.
3. Exercise the power of the position.

Almost 80% agreed that a leader can not become so engrossed in the crisis itself that the power of the position is forgotten. Leaders must use all the power they can to lead the organization through the crisis.

4. Be a cheerleader.

It is interesting that nearly 70% do not believe that a leader must be a cheerleader during crisis.
5. Take on many roles.

Although the majority of respondents believe a leader must take on several roles while managing through a crisis, the margin is smaller than the author predicted. It seems that a large portion of people believe leaders should remain in their own role and allow others to manage as well.

**Power Chart 2**

Respondents were asked to rate the following leaders in order according to their performance during crisis (1=lowest, 5=highest):

**United States Leader**

President George W. Bush
Mayor Rudolph Giuliani
President John F. Kennedy
President Ronald Reagan
President William Clinton

**Crisis**

September 11, 2001 Terrorist attacks
September 11, 2001 Terrorist attacks
Cuban Missile Crisis
The Cold War
White House Intern Scandal
1. September 11, 2001

Respondents were asked to rate both President George W. Bush and New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani regarding their performance during and after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

An overwhelming majority favored Giuliani's method of communication — daily news conferences, face to face meetings with his constituents, attending funerals and memorial services — to President Bush's style.

2. President John F. Kennedy — Cuban Missile Crisis: Nuclear War threatened
President Kennedy’s crisis management skills were put to the test during the seven days of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Respondents believed that his performance in meeting the crisis head on helped to avoid a crisis of epic proportions.

3. President Ronald Reagan — The ending of the Cold War with the Soviet Union

Respondents agreed that President Reagan’s ability to communicate with Mikhail Gorbachev on a global stage was a determining factor in the eventual end of the Cold War.

4. President William Clinton — The White House Intern Scandal
The response to this question proves that great communication skills may not always be enough to overcome a crisis. President Clinton has been widely described as an excellent communicator. Yet, this crisis — which stemmed from his own actions — could not be successfully managed.

**Summary**

When looking at the statistics generated by this survey, respondents generally answered as expected. The results affirm the author’s assumptions that media can and do influence public opinion about existing news stories as well as create new crises that will benefit them.

Over the past several decades, we've seen a profound shift in the way that traditional print, radio and TV media present news. These traditional media sources have become less inclined to engage in thorough investigative journalism, choosing instead to focus on, and even sometimes invent, crisis. There are three primary reasons for this:

1. Investigative journalism done correctly is expensive, time consuming and burdened with risk of litigation. Media outlets discourage this sort of journalism accordingly.

2. Conflict and crisis makes for riveting television. It boosts ratings and sells papers. While this monetary motivation would be a temptation under the best of circumstances, the advent of cable news has led to a 24 hour news cycle in which there is far more competition as well as far more time to fill.
3. Less stringent regulation has allowed for more media conglomeration. A small handful of companies control the vast majority of media outlets. These companies are not above using their media holdings to further their interests.
CHAPTER 5 - LEADERSHIP SHOWING THE WAY

“When written in Chinese the word “crisis” is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity.”

John Fitzgerald Kennedy — President, United States of America, 1961-1963

Crisis management and communication are disciplines that cannot be learned in a “baptism by fire” situation. Rather, leaders must look ahead to the possible crises that face the organization. Leaders must look for the prodromes that are present everywhere — as long as one makes the conscious effort to look for them — and then take the necessary steps to prepare themselves, their teams and the organizations for what may lie ahead. We have seen throughout history the ramifications of a leader’s refusal to prepare for the inevitable crises that can strike without warning. We have also witnessed the positive outcomes that result from a leader’s diligent preparation.

When the crisis hits, the organization’s steadfast support of its mission, values, and integrity, as well as its ability to manage and communicate will be what make up a successful outcome. An effective leader will consider communications within the organization and with all stakeholders as equally critical as those with the public and media. The leader must communicate with integrity and openness, using messages consistent with the organization’s mission and values.
In today's reality, crisis communication and management are necessary skills for all leaders. Today, with the myriad issues an organization must deal with — economic, political, and global — there is a greater urgency, a clearer recognition that crisis communication and management are leadership essentials.

Crisis is defined as a catastrophic and negative event that must be avoided. Yet, in looking back at crises throughout history, we see that often, crisis has been the catalyst in the development of some of the greatest leaders of our time. The research presented in this thesis has demonstrated that with just some basic actions, leaders can promote a positive outcome from crisis — the understanding of these basic rules of leadership communication and management can catapult leaders and their organizations to great things.

The author offers these lessons for leaders to follow not only in times of crisis, but also in times of relative calm within an organization. They are designed to help both leader and organization prepare for and successfully navigate through crisis.

Outlined are eight actions a leader must take and eight actions a leader must avoid to facilitate positive outcomes of crisis.
The “Do’s” of Crisis Leadership

1. **Look for warning signs (Prodromes)** — Often, a crisis can be foreseen simply by looking for, and learning from, prodromes. Prodromes are defined as warning signs delivered in the form of other crises. For example, the 1982 Johnson & Johnson Tylenol tampering scare became a prodrome for other pharmaceutical companies to take measures to avoid possible tampering. “To detect these early signs, organizations form employee committees that function like lighthouse keepers watching for vessels at sea, watchdogs, or whistle-blowers. These whistle-blowers report warning signs to organization officials who can implement plans to avoid the impending crisis or at least have time to prepare to address the media or other publics” (Fearn-Banks, p. 9). Those companies who listened to the prodrome acted before their own crisis arose, taking steps to reduce the chance of their own products being tampered with.

2. **Prepare for a crisis before the crisis** — Discuss all possible crisis situations that could hit your organization and develop a communication plan for each. Use prodromes to help foresee crises before they occur. A modern day example of preparation in action is the way in which New York and New Jersey officials run regular drills to simulate a terrorist attack similar to the 9/11 tragedy. Officials are using the prodrome of 9/11 to prepare for a similar crisis. Emergency management personnel are trained to provide care, communications personnel are prepared to disseminate vital information, and leadership is prepared to follow the
chain of command during crisis.

3. **Limit the crisis** — By acting slowly, an organization can actually perpetuate a crisis. Instead, leaders must take fast action to contain the crisis to only those areas affected. Johnson & Johnson successfully contained the Tylenol crisis by first being open with the media. The organization then recalled all Tylenol products while standing behind its other products. This decision successfully contained the crisis to Tylenol only and helped Johnson & Johnson effectively navigate the crisis.

4. **Admit what you do not know** — A spokesperson will be looked upon to have every answer when in crisis. And that spokesperson may feel obligated to provide answers to media. However, if there is not a 100% accurate answer at that moment, the spokesperson must state "I don't know." A crisis communication team needs to prepare the spokesperson to answer questions with no answer, or those without fully substantiated answers, by saying "I don't know" or "I will not speculate." A spokesperson that attempts to provide answers to these questions may inadvertently open the door to other aspects of the crisis that media can exploit.

5. **Establish the key messages** — When crisis hits, the organization must act quickly to respond. The crisis communication team must meet to develop the key messages of the organization. In doing so, the team ensures that consistent
information is provided to the public, leading to increased credibility.

6. **Involve your employees** — An organization’s message during crisis is only credible if the entire organization broadcasts that same message. During crisis, a leader should address employees to include them in the process of disseminating the organization’s message. By doing so, the leader recruits not one spokesperson, but hundreds if not thousands who will spread the message.

7. **Recover from the crisis** — Once crisis hits, it is vital to disseminate the organization’s message quickly and accurately. It is interesting to point out that an effective way of promoting the organization’s recovery is to focus on promoting the recovery of parties injured in the crisis. For instance, in the Exxon Valdez oil spill case, Exxon focused on healing the Alaska tourism market before looking to heal itself. This action undoubtedly aided in the diffusion of public anger towards Exxon.

8. **Learn from the crisis** — *He who does not learn from history is doomed to repeat it.* This old saying could not be truer than in the context of crisis management. An organization must look back at the whole crisis, from the reasons it happened to the way the organization performed. Actively dissecting the crisis will create a prodrome for the future. An example of this is the way in which the airline industry has improved security measures since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. With governmental help, airlines have reviewed the specific security failures that
contributed to 9/11 and have made improvements to help reduce the chance of a similar crisis.
The “Don’ts” of Crisis Leadership

As there are rules outlining what leaders and their organizations must do to successfully navigate a crisis, there are also rules governing what leadership must avoid during a crisis.

1. **Reveal too much information** — During times of crisis, it is vital to deliver important information to the public through the media. However, media have a job to do—uncover more than meets the eye, whether it is relevant to the crisis or not. By divulging more information than is absolutely necessary, a spokesperson may open the door for media to discover angles that could further disparage the image of the organization.

2. **Allow groupthink to make decisions** — Groupthink is defined as “a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive ingroup, when the members’ strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action” (Irving). Groupthink can undermine a good crisis management plan.

3. **Select the wrong spokesperson** — The decision of who will serve as spokesperson for the organization is as important as the message being delivered. It may be appropriate to choose the Chief Executive Officer of the organization as the spokesperson; however, the choice must be clearly thought-out. The spokesperson affects much more than the style of message delivery; the
spokesperson becomes the organization. If that person is viewed by media and the public as not knowledgeable, uncaring, uncomfortable, aloof, or less than honest, public perception (and therefore public reality) will suffer.

4. **Deny responsibility** — Perception dictates the outcome of crisis. As such, except in some rare cases, failure to apologize for a crisis can negatively sway public opinion. Failure to accept responsibility when appropriate, no matter how little the organization had to do with the cause of the crisis, can be catastrophic to an organization’s effort to successfully navigate that crisis.

5. **Wait and hope the crisis goes away** — One of the most critical errors an organization can make is to ignore a crisis in hopes that it simply “blows over.” In doing so, the organization allows itself to lose the public relations battle, which can greatly affect the outcome of crisis. By not promptly and publicly reacting to a crisis, an organization runs the risk of appearing uncaring, aloof or defensive. If the public begins to believe that, it may be too late for the organization to reverse it.

6. **Be incurious** — Being incurious means the leadership of an organization fails to inquire about the happenings within the organization; leadership fails to question the actions of its staff. This incuriosity can severely hamper the organization’s ability to act upon a potential problem before it develops into a crisis situation. An example of this failure is the recent crisis at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, Iraq
where Military Police were entrusted to guard Iraqi detainees. Brigadier General Janis Karpinsky, the commander of the prison, failed to be curious of the way in which soldiers under her command treated detainees. This resulted in failure to put a halt to the inappropriate actions, thereby losing an opportunity to avoid the crisis.

7. **Fail to plan ahead for crisis** — It is easy for an organization to say “it will never happen here.” Such thinking results in the organization failing to use prodromes to plan ahead for crisis. Without a well-planned universal crisis management action plan, the organization will be late to react. Exxon and the Valdez oil spill exemplify this concept. Exxon CEO Lawrence Rawl failed to plan ahead for a possible oil spill. That breakdown led to the failure of the organization to deliver a pointed, unified message to the public.

8. **Fail to establish media contacts** — Media possess the power to not only influence public opinion, but to determine where public opinion lies. And that determination may be made without all of the facts. However, if an organization has established good relationships with members of media, it may be possible for the organization to deliver its message. Having solid relationships with other members of media can aid in diffusing a crisis by giving the organization an avenue to present its message.
Sample Crisis Communication Plan

Along with the internalizing the above recommendations, a leader must prepare the organization for possible crises. An effective way to prepare is the creation of a crisis communication plan.

The author has created a sample crisis communication plan to illustrate the effectiveness of preparation on the outcome of crisis.

Scenario:

In June 2004, news broke of the mistreatment of Iraqi detainees in Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, Iraq. Six members of an Army Reserve military police unit were arrested and face charges of assault, cruelty, indecent acts and maltreatment of detainees. Below is a suggested crisis communication plan designed to help American military officials navigate the crisis.

When news of this crisis breaks, leadership must immediately convene the crisis communication team to determine the following:

1. Key publics and key messages to be addressed
2. Proper spokesperson
3. Location of the crisis control center
4. Timing
### Key Messages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>American public</strong></th>
<th><strong>Iraqi public</strong></th>
<th><strong>American military personnel</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. We believe this to be an isolated incident carried out by an isolated group of persons who do not represent true American soldiers.</td>
<td>1. We apologize to the victims and their families for having to endure the harsh treatment they received at the hands of a few renegade souls.</td>
<td>1. The people responsible for this injustice are not indicative of the quality of the true American soldier. We trust in your abilities to represent the United States with the utmost decorum and pride.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The incident is currently under investigation.</td>
<td>2. Those people acted with complete disregard for these human beings or for the purpose of American presence in Iraq.</td>
<td>2. This type of behavior is neither condoned nor tolerated. Those responsible for this or any other incident will be dealt harshly to the fullest extent of military and criminal law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. We have interviewed all involved detainees and determined there are no serious injuries.</td>
<td>3. It is believed at this time this is an isolated incident carried out by persons not representative of American soldiers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Choosing the proper spokesperson

In such a sensitive situation, it is vital to select a spokesperson that will exude respect, dignity and confidence to all three publics. In this case, because the audiences are so varied, it is best to employ three spokespersons:

1. A main spokesperson, preferably a United States government official overseeing the investigation, who will provide high-level information on the crisis.

2. A United States military spokesperson, preferably a General or other high-ranking officer, who can discuss in detail the military’s role in the investigation and procedure changes for the future.

3. An Iraqi government official, preferably someone who has the respect of both the Shiite and Suni populations, to ease the fears of the Iraqi public during this crisis.

Location of the Crisis Control Center

The control center during this crisis will need to have two locations. The primary center will be located in Baghdad. Here, all three spokespersons will meet with Iraqi and other Middle Eastern press as well as on-location American press. The secondary center will be located in the Press Room at the White House. American press who gather here will be able to ask questions via video teleconference equipment.
Timing

The initial press conference must be held almost immediately, certainly within 24 hours of the story, to control any rumors or public outcry in the United States or Iraq. This conference will be brief and succinct, announcing the launch of an investigation. Subsequent press briefings will be held on first, a daily, and then a weekly, basis to continually update the press and public on the latest developments from the investigation.

In addition, American military leaders will invite the press to tour the prison facilities in the area. The purpose of this is to quell the fear that the mistreatment of detainees is a common occurrence.
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Appendix A

Survey Questionnaire
Crisis and the Media

The one constant in the news today is crisis – from national events that affect us all to organizations in crisis affecting their bottom line. This survey will only take a few moments of your time, but will undoubtedly aid in understanding the role that media plays in the reporting and outcome of crisis.

This survey is being conducted as part of a thesis project for Seton Hall University’s Master of Arts in Corporate and Public Communication (MACPC) program. Your opinions are STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL and will be used solely for the completion of this project. Survey and thesis results will be made available upon request via e-mail at andysly5@msn.com.

Thank you for your taking the time to share your opinions on this topic.

Andrew Szilvasi

What is crisis?

A major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting the organization, company, or industry, as well as its publics, products, services, or good name.
Part I - Survey
For each of the following ten statements, please circle the response that most closely reflects your feelings and provide any additional comments you may have.

SA = Strongly Agree  A = Agree  N = Neutral  D = Disagree  SD = Strongly Disagree

1. Generally, media outlets are good sources for information regarding a regional or national crisis.
   comments: ________________________________

2. The media have a responsibility to report the truth without interpretation or conjecture.
   comments: ________________________________

3. The media generally provide accurate and objective news about a crisis.
   comments: ________________________________

4. News of an event or crisis is generally the same from news source to news source.
   comments: ________________________________

5. For the most part, bad news sells.
   comments: ________________________________

6. An organization's ability to manage crisis typically plays an important role in determining public opinion.
   comments: ________________________________
7. Extensive media coverage of a crisis influences public opinion. 
   Comments: 

8. The media can be a useful tool in an organization’s effort to overcome crisis. 
   Comments: 

9. Sometimes, the media exploits news to provoke a crisis. 
   Comments: 

10. The media can make a crisis seem worse than it is. 
    Comments: 

Rate the following skills of a leader during crisis in order of importance, “5” being very important and “1” being not important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crisis Leadership Skills</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Not Very Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Provide an unwavering presence.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Being a great communicator.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Exercise the power of the position.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Be a cheerleader.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Take on many roles</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rate the following leaders *in order* according to their performance during crisis (5 highest, 1 lowest):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President George W. Bush — September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor Rudolph Giuliani — September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President John F. Kennedy — Cuban Missile crisis: Nuclear War threatened</td>
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<tr>
<td>President Ronald Reagan — The ending of the Cold War with the Soviet Union</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>President William Clinton — The &quot;Monica Lewinski&quot; Scandal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Part II- Optional Information**

Gender: ___ Male ___ Female

Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>18-34</th>
<th>35-49</th>
<th>50-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Highest level of education completed

- High school
- College
- Graduate
- Other - Please indicate
Appendix B

Respondent Comments From Surveys
Part I

"If there were another way to be informed of world news and other current events other than having to rely on the local and national media, we might be better off. Unfortunately, a lot of the time, the media does not check its sources before reporting any news (good or bad) and therefore leads me to believe that not everything I read or see is factual."

"Media has become so diverse that it is hard to respond to this survey. Is media defined as the news? Panel discussions? Tabloids? A very different reality if we compare CNN Headline News to the McLaughlin Report, Hardball, or Rush Limbaugh..."

"The media is a necessary evil."

"The media at large is influenced too heavily by left wing politics and special interests. Too often I find it to be overtly anti-Christian and against traditional family values; even anti-America."

"News sources have gone from providing factual unbiased news to promoting a particular viewpoint or agenda. Sadly, there are very few true ""news"" sources today. Editorials belong on the editorial page!"

"Hard to really determine the truth as story could be inaccurate across the board and we wouldn't know. Info from the White House is the most suspect as they spin the story to get the support they desire to accomplish their agenda."

"News media today is merely entertainment exploiting tragedy for profit. I write this as a freelance television news director."

"Because of political opinions, lines of questioning and the desire to invoke controversy the public almost never receive an unbiased media report of a crisis event."

"The media has more power than they should. They often only show the horrible stuff and show only what they want people to see. They have the power to edit and misrepresent what the public sees at times."

"Most media runs on an agenda, which is the make themselves the most money."

"I think with respect to neutral and unbiased reporting of news, I believe the media of my fathers generation accomplished this while contemporary media outlets certainly lean in one direction or another (i.e. CNN versus Fox news)"
"The problem with major media outlets is that they are too biased and more concerned about spinning current events to make it more sensationalized. For instance, the war in Iraq. Lately all the media outlets are concerned with is the Vietnam syndrome. "Daily casualty reports and the bitter hatred. Yes this is one side of the story, but many are not going out of the way to report any positive stories. What good have we done for the people of Iraq? We freed them from a repressive dictatorship that murdered and raped the country. We provided a new economic standard of living with more free trade, the ability for these clerics to have freedom of religion and expression. You just don't hear about things of this nature by the big conglomerate media sources. A buddy of mine just returned from Iraq with the 101st Airborne. He told me of some of the bitter fighting he was involved in and how he was wounded by a roadside bomb. But he also told me about some the more compelling human interest stories and the warm embrace they received from many of the citizens of Iraq who have been starved of life and rights."

"I find that most news outlets provide too much information in effort to exploit a particular story, especially on a slow news day. How many locations and angles are there to cover a blizzard or a hurricane? Sometimes the over hyping of a story can make a bank robber, a hotel heiress or a serial killer a "'cause celebrity". I'd rather get my news from the internet or a newspaper than watch an empty suit posture as if they were more important then the story at hand."

"For all its faults, the media still performs its task pretty well."

"I think that the media can strongly sway whether an event is perceived as positive or negative. Likewise, media outlets can dictate what makes news, but I feel that the news they deem important is inconsistent with what I think is the important news. I rarely watch TV news; as a college student I usually just read newspapers online. I think that national news outlets are more balanced and reputable than local news outlets - I feel like local sources of news sensationalize more.

"Always cross-check your sources. Never trust Faux (Fox) or CNN. Know that the New York Times has an extreme New York-centric world view and a strong "'industry will save the world so don't question the cost"' bias."

"I believe the media can take a situation and blow it out of proportion. I also don't understand the media coverage regarding the war. What really gets me is when the media will say "'The U.S. is not prepared for Smallpox.'" Why we would put that on national television when we have our enemies listening to it."

"Media does influence news and crisis."

"I STRONGLY believe that the media is giving out too much information at times. Like, with our wonderful guys and gals over in Iraq. We are getting too much info about what is happening to these people. Parents, spouses and all loved ones are seeing too much of what is going on and it hurts. There are just some things and times
that we do not need to know about. It also feeds the enemy with just what info they want and need. The media can be in too many places."

Part II

"Leaders should pay strict attention to the crisis at hand instead of trying to juggle many different tasks at once."

"Needs to be open to input from subject matter experts, but must convey a presence of being in control and calming people."

"Needs to be able to communicate what is happening, but it does not necessarily have to be a memorable speech."

"Depends on what you mean by being a cheerleader. It is probably more important to have a reassuring effect on people letting them know everything will be okay."

"Doesn't necessarily have to do everything him or herself."

"Being able to let other lead is vital."

"being truthful, sincere, honest is more important than being a ""great"" communicator."

"During times of crises, people need to feel reassured that someone is in charge. During the 9/11 tragedy, there was a sense that the President was hiding so many turned to the mayor of NYC for reassurance. The media assisted by focusing so much on Giuliani's efforts to keep NYC running smoothly."

"Nature abhors a vacuum. When the expected leader does not fulfill his promised role, someone else will and it is not always to the benefit of the masses."

"Similar to exercise of power. A leader must be sure to delegate power and use individual experts in their fields rather than to assume that he or she can take on the roles of those experts."