Social Media Roles in Emergency Management

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WHO I AM...

▶ Chief Public Relations Officer (PIO, Emergency Management Director) with 30+ years of communications experience.

▶ Collaboration with all facility departments, local schools, media and local law enforcement agencies.

▶ Plan and facilitate hospital-wide trainings and coordinate educational materials for staff.

▶ Specialized training in healthcare marketing, emergency management, special districts and public relations.

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WHAT WE WILL DISCUSS...

The public information officer (PIO) is a vital part of the incident command team, charged with delivering accurate information to the right people at the right time.

This session will review the role of the PIO and present attendees with strategies for utilizing social media for emergency communications.

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What is Happening?!

Everyone wants to know...
And everyone THINKS they have the right answer!

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Whatever the Situation – Accurate Information is key

Evacuation

COVID-19

Wildfire

What is Happening?

BREAKING NEWS

EVACUATIONS-
Where?
When?
Who?
How?

The community, family and friends ALL want ANSWERS...
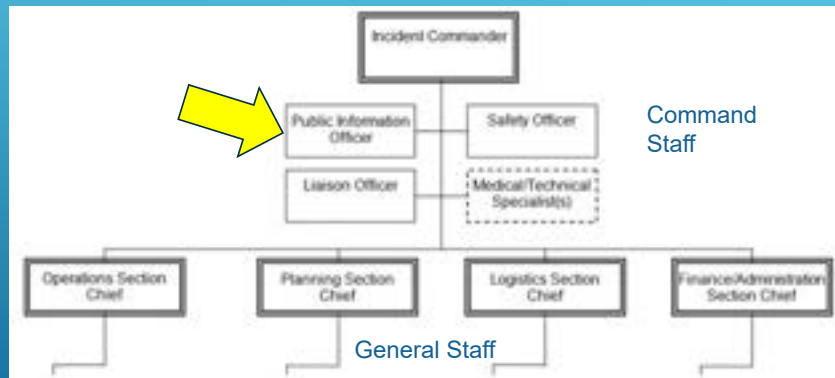
News Travels FAST

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The Role of the PIO – Control the Message!

The Public Information Officer is responsible for **COMMUNICATING** the **MESSAGE**…

*"Get the **RIGHT** information, to all of the **RIGHT** people at exactly the **RIGHT** time, so everyone is empowered to make the **RIGHT** decisions."*

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Hospital Incident Command

Command Staff

General Staff

Foundations of Crisis Communications

Shape the message...

Don't be shaped by the message

Lead the Crisis

or the Crisis Will Lead You

The PIO is the FACE of the TEAM

Foundations of Crisis Communications (cont.)

Be brief
Be brilliant
Be gone

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We Have ONE Chance to Make a First Impression

√ Establish Credibility

√ Provide Knowledge of the Event

√ Provide Knowledge of What to Do

√ Project a Positive Image

√ Get the Media to Tell OUR STORY

√ Include Official Information as a Part of the Story

Control the Message

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Planning the Process:
An 8-Step Communication Model

1. Assess the Current Situation
2. Set Communication Goals
3. Identify Intended Audiences
4. Develop and Pre-Test Message
5. Determine Channels, Materials, Partnerships and Activities
6. Develop Action Plan
7. Develop and Pre-Test Materials
8. Implement, Evaluate and Modify Plan

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Communication Matters

1. Command the MESSAGE
   - Information your audiences NEEDS to know
   - Information on HOW you are going to address/solve the issue at hand
   - Information on your position (readiness)
   - Don't be generic
2. Practice the 3 C's
   - Control, Competence, Concern
3. The Golden Hour
   - Get information out quickly – or others will shape your message
4. Mistakes Happen – what to do?

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Communication Matters (cont.)

Strategic communication can:

- SAVE LIVES
- REDUCE INJURY
- PROTECT PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

HOW?

- Raising Public Awareness
- Increasing Disaster Preparedness
- Effective Communication in a Disaster

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Responsibility Checklist

- Work with IC on information
- Develop materials for media briefings
- Obtain approval for media releases
- Contact with media
- Arrange briefings, tours, interviews
- Establish and work with JIC if necessary

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Stay Organized, Stay Informed

- Maintain summaries of incident
- Activity Log (ICS214)
- Manage inquiries
- Coordinate public information and warnings
- Monitor media for accuracy
- Forms, reports, documentation, debriefing

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When Do you Wear your PIO Hat?

IT NEVER COMES OFF!

- Community Preparedness
- Risk Reduction
- Education/Awareness

Not ONLY in a Disaster Situation

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Effective PIO's

1. Training/Exercises
2. Updated Crisis Communication Plan
3. Media Relationships/Contact Lists
4. Resource Kits
5. Considerations for ALL Populations
6. Equipment and Resources
7. Familiarity with JIC's

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Best Practices

Preparedness

Response

Recovery

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The Changing Media World

Factors in How We do Our Job

- Changing Population
  - ✓ Growth, Poverty, Life Expectancy
- Culture
- Access to Information/Communications
- Today's Media – Facts and Notes

Change, Change and More Change

Social Media's Role in Emergency Management

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Social Media Isn't Just Social

Social Media <u>is</u> the NEWS for many....

- Primary News Source (53% 2021 Pew Study)
- Number one form of communication

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Why is Social Media Important in Today's Media Environment...How it Fits in Emergency Management

- Outlets
- Rapid Communication
- Public Participation

- Larger Reach
- Situational Awareness
- Monitor and Respond
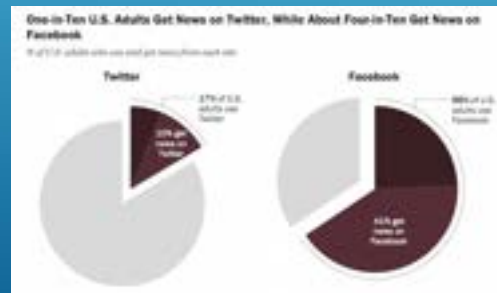
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Functions of Social Media

1. Provide service
2. Achieve outcome
3. Stimulate participation

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Building & Implementing Social Media

- What is to be **ACHIEVED**
- How to **ENGAGE** target audiences
- **FOCUS** on select few
- Create **TRIAL** accounts
- **SUPPORT** structure

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Social Media Implementation Methods

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Social Media Implementation Methods (cont.)

Method	Description
Evaluate Public Information	• Monitor social media channels to assess the manner in which official messages are being received • Quickly correct any misperceptions or inaccurate rumors • Use social media management tools to track, analyze, and document messages
Utilize Maps to Increase Visual Context	• Use mashups and location services such as crisis maps to provide visual and spatial viewing of social media content • Include layered map data such as evacuation zones and shelter locations • Allow community members to submit damage reports containing photos, videos, and eyewitness accounts relating to the emergency response
Engage with Digital Volunteer Organizations and Virtual Operations Support Teams (VOST)	• Enlist digital volunteer communities to help satisfy demand for information when in-house resources are taxed • Use a VOST to monitor sites, spot trends, and seek and disseminate information
Improve Community Awareness	• Engage in community discussions and follow relevant hashtags in order to build and maintain better awareness for the Whole Community[9] • Include collaborative dialogue about hardships, consequences, and developing safety concerns
Plan for Loss of Connectivity	• Ensure the network infrastructure is robust and able to handle peak demands during disasters • Establish a contingency plan that can mitigate loss of power and connectivity
Engage with Community Members After an Incident	• Seek feedback from community members to help assess the usefulness and frequency of information shared through social media

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Challenges with Social Media

- Leadership Approval
- Staff Skill and Knowledge
- Consistency
- Technical Issues
- Privacy and Security
- Access – 22% of adults do not have internet
- Credibility
- Easy access can be both POSITIVE & NEGATIVE

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Social Media in Action

Successful Social Media Communications

- Write a plan
- Set expectations
- Establish your presence
- Know your audience

Communication Reality

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Summary

"In an emergency, you must treat information as a commodity as important as the more traditional and tangible commodities like food, water and shelter."

-Jane Holl Lute, Deputy Secretary, Homeland Security

"We used to worry about accuracy, now we worry about speed."

-Tom Olshanski, Director of External Affairs, US Fire Administration

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Questions?

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