

Social Media Roles in Emergency Management

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1

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.

2

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.

3

What is Happening?!

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



4

Whatever the Situation – Accurate Information is key



COVID-19

Evacuation



Wildfire

5

What is Happening?



EVACUATIONS-
Where?
When?
Who?
How?



The community,
family and friends
ALL want
ANSWERS...



6

News Travels FAST



7

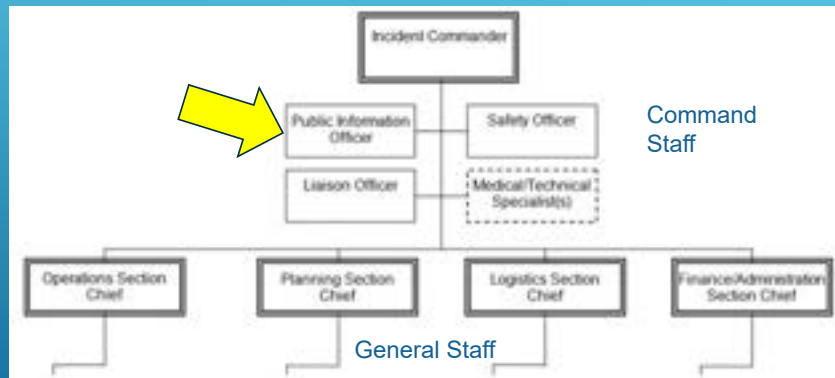
The Role of the PIO – Control the Message!

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.”*

8

Hospital Incident Command



9

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

10

Foundations of Crisis Communications (cont.)

Be brief
Be brilliant
Be gone



11

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



12

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

13

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?

14

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

15

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

16

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

17

When Do you Wear your PIO Hat?

IT NEVER COMES OFF!

- Community Preparedness
- Risk Reduction
- Education/Awareness

Not ONLY in a Disaster Situation



18

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



19

Best Practices

Preparedness

Response

Recovery

20

The Changing Media World



21

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



22

Social Media's Role in Emergency Management



23

Social Media Isn't Just Social

Social Media is the NEWS for many....

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

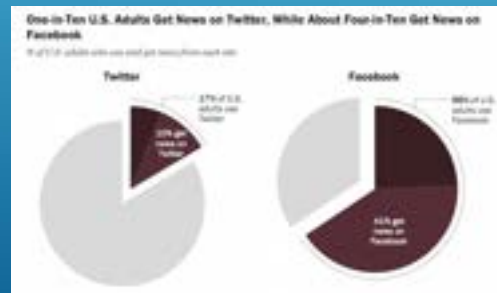
How do you know that is true?

I saw it on
FACEBOOK

24

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



25

Functions of Social Media

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

26

Building & Implementing Social Media

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

27

Social Media Implementation Methods

Method	Description
Develop a Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the target audience, objectives, tactics, and staffing requirements including roles and responsibilities • Create a governance structure for approvals • Identify desired social media channels and processes
Establish and Adopt Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop overarching documents that provide guidance to emergency managers for the effective use of social media • Implement policies that help foster leadership support and sustainable strategies
Establish a Social Media Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish accounts on popular social media platforms and become familiar with the online culture by sustaining an active presence • Establish a complementary mix of social media • Engage with the community in advance through social media and recommend standard hashtags
Manage Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage early and often with the public to help set realistic expectations during emergencies • Disclose the source, type, and frequency of official emergency communications
Establish a Concept of Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine how social media will be managed during emergencies • Establish training and staffing plans to allocate more resources to social media monitoring during an incident • Incorporate social media strategies into emergency management exercises
Distribute Timely and Frequent Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-engage the public to increase visibility and credibility by posting regular updates during all phases of emergencies and during times of non-emergencies
Coordinate with Partnering Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with other organizations to coordinate consistent key messages • Set up a central online source for emergency-related information from a variety of official sources • Coordinate social media efforts regionally
Actively Monitor Social Media Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor conversations on popular social networks • Engage with community members by responding to questions and comments and providing clarification

28

Social Media Implementation Methods (cont.)

Method	Description
Evaluate Public Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in community discussions and follow relevant hashtags in order to build and maintain better awareness for the Whole Community³ Include collaborative dialogue about hardships, consequences, and developing safety concerns
Plan for Loss of Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek feedback from community members to help assess the usefulness and frequency of information shared through social media

29

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



30

Social Media in Action



31

Successful Social Media Communications

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

32

Communication Reality



33

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

34



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Questions?



35



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36