

# Bianchi PeRpectives

An e-newsletter offering PR-related info to use, challenge and amuse.

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## WORD NERD

**Twit-e-quette** *n.* - An unofficial code of conduct you should adhere to when Twittering in order to fully maximize your Twitter potential and minimize your chances of ostracization. [Click here](#) to read *Fast Company* magazine's take on Twitequette.

## Latest Bianchi Biz Blog Post

"10 Lessons for Chapter 11"

Visit the [Bianchi Biz Blog](#)

## Client Kudos

Congratulations to [RDA Group](#) and [TRW Automotive](#) for recently receiving prestigious World Excellence Awards from Ford Motor Co.

## Recent Project

Bianchi PR recently helped **Habitat for Humanity Detroit** and **Habitat for Humanity**

## It's Not a Crisis ... Yet!

*One of your products is involved in a safety recall ... people are sick ... a young child has died.*

*A group of employees has mismanaged client funds ... a client just found out ... and is ready to alert the media.*

*Your CEO was in an accident ... she is deceased ... no, severely injured ... no one knows exactly.*

It's a sunny Friday afternoon and you just became aware of the situation. In the middle of trying to obtain the details, your phone rings - the media are looking for a comment. What's your next move? You know that you need to act promptly and strategically, but how?

Remember, you're not dealing with a crisis yet - just (really) bad news. The crisis will start when you lose control of the communication. To prevent that by preparing yourself for bad news, read on.

*Jim Bianchi, APR*

President



## Preparing for "Bad News"

People tend not to think about the "worst case scenario," often leaving the details of these matters to just work themselves out. While you can't plan for every potential situation, with a bit of preparation, you will be better able to act promptly and strategically, should a difficult situation occur.

When bad news happens - and it will eventually - you must act quickly to get your message out before the public creates the message for you. And believe us, the public's message will not be favorable to your organization! Below are some of the steps organizations (whether B2B, B2C, non-profit, etc.) can take to help them prepare for "bad news" situations.

[Oakland County](#) garner **3.4 million media impressions** surrounding the organizations' 2009 Building on Faith Blitz, which resulted in six partner families receiving new homes in Detroit and Pontiac.

## LinkedIn Group

Bianchi PR has formed a LinkedIn group for employees, contacts, clients, business partners, vendors, alumni, friends and fans to network, exchange ideas and brainstorm electronically. On [LinkedIn](#)? We invite you to become a member of our group by clicking [here](#).

## PR / Social Media Resources

[Click here](#) to view / download PR and social media tipsheets, including:

- Twitter Guide
- Finding Your Perfect PR Agency Match
- Media Interview Tips
- Maximizing Your Trade Show ROI with PR
- Social Media Content Tips

## Past Issues

Looking for past issues

- **Create "worst case scenarios"** - craft a list of three to five organization-specific worst case situations. Ask multiple departments (legal, HR, IT) this key question: "Tell me what bad news would keep you up at night?"

- **Identify a communications team** - define the individuals who need to be alerted when the bad news hits and have quick access to multiple methods of communication, such as cell, home and vacation home phone numbers. Prioritize and remember to alert the organization's switchboard operators, as they are the gatekeepers and will receive the majority of initial inquiries and will need to route them correctly. Update this information regularly and have it available via multiple formats.

- **Know your target audiences** - understand who your stakeholders are (media, employees, investors, suppliers, etc.) and how to reach them. Include key contact information and notes regarding their preferred mode of communication.

- **Outline key messages** - these will mimic your organization's mission statement and have blanks to fill in situation-specific information to match the various bad news scenarios you anticipate.

- **Establish company resources / document templates** - draft skeleton templates of news releases, fact sheets, Q&As, etc. Set up a crisis "dark page" on your Web site, a toll-free hotline and / or company e-mail address available for rapid response. Engage in social media tools, such as Twitter, that can help disseminate your message rapidly. *(Note: social media will only serve you in a critical situation if you have an established relationship with that mode of communication prior to the situation - so start now!)*

- **Make the tough decisions now** - have your legal department review and approve as much of your plan as possible. Identify a group of potential company spokespeople and media train them for tough situations. Most importantly, create a flow chart to expedite the approval process once the situation occurs.

Remember, while you can't plan for every situation, you can prepare for most. Each situation will have its own unique challenges, but the above tips can help you meet these challenges with a bit more confidence. Please [click here](#) for tips on "Dealing with Bad News,"

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"Selecting a Spokesperson" and "Interview Tips for Crisis Spokespeople."

For more info on crisis communications, visit the [Institute for Crisis Management](#) website or [e911.com](#).

If you need help establishing a crisis communications plan or training your spokespeople, please [contact us](#).

