



Avoiding the PR Crash:  
How communication can  
work in an accident crisis



A driver for your company calls...there's been an accident



The Boy Scouts have it right.



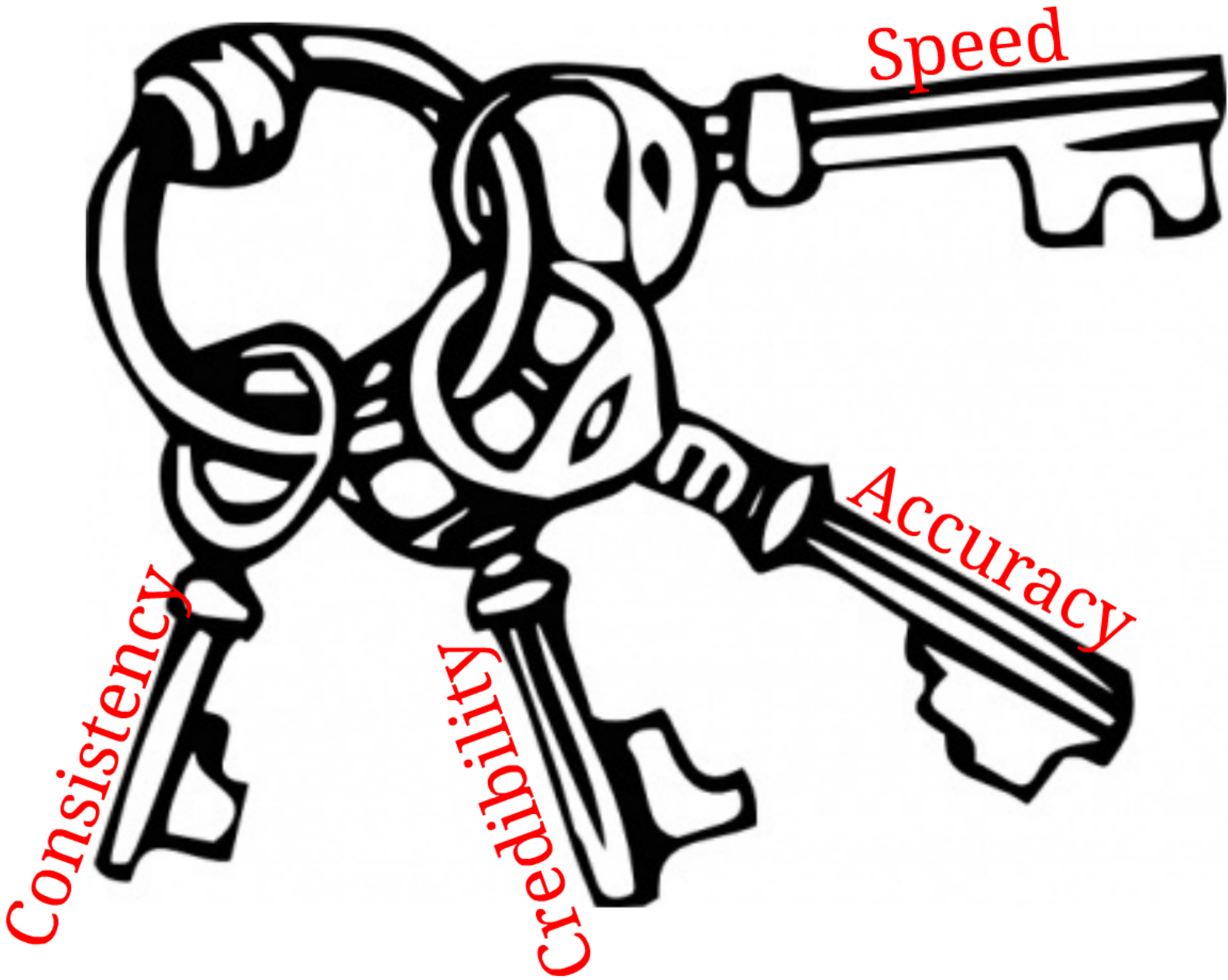
Be Prepared.



# Crisis Plan

- Scenarios of potential crisis events.
- Who should be contacted immediately? If they are not available who do you turn to?
- Emergency contact numbers for anybody that should be contacted.
- A policy on dealing with the media during a crisis. Who will be the primary spokesman?
- How to communicate to various public entities and how will it be accomplished?
- How will the facility be secured and access granted?
- A general philosophy of management on dealing with a crisis.
- Who is the legal representation for the owner? Will they be available?





Speed

Accuracy

Consistency

Credibility

Speed

Accuracy

# Credibility



Consistency





# Common Conditions

- Decisions will have to be made quickly. External perceptions are established almost immediately, and once they are in place, it is difficult to change them. Whether or not you gain control over the situation is determined within the first 24 hours.
- Options will be limited
- Poor, hasty decisions – as well as inaction – may produce undesirable consequences.
- Groups with conflicting objectives have to be dealt with.
- The owner will become directly involved.



# *Do's & Don'ts*

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## Roles

Spokesperson



Management



Employee



# Spokesperson



- Press Kit:
- Company background
  - Photos and descriptions of your facilities
  - The annual report
  - Fact sheets
  - Descriptive pamphlets and general information
  - Executive biographies and photos
  - The official company statement



- Must lead through
- Must be accessible
- Must be decisive

## **Press Kit:**


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# Management



- Must lead through example
- Must be accessible to the media as well as everyone else
- Must be decisive

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# Employee



# **CRISIS CARD**

- **Emergency contact info**
- **First steps**
- **Secure the site with law enforcement**
- **No discussion with emergency responders or media**



TOP STORY AT 10PM



STATE TROOPER MOURNED





# *Recovery & Evaluation*



## Top 3 Things

1. Be proactive in a reactive situation.
2. Keep all communication lines open from top to bottom.
3. Develop key messages and stick to them.

# Points to Remember

1. No organization is immune to crisis.
2. Be honest.
3. Organizations that have an open communications policy are in a stronger position.
4. Internal communication IS AS important as external.
5. Share your crisis plan with departments in the organization.
6. Keep materials you are likely to need up-to-date and at your fingertips.
7. Be aware of the media's needs and how they are likely to react to your crisis.
8. Know that the media as well as members of the public may turn to outside parties as a source.

