



# MEDIA POLICY: FIRE SERVICES AND PARTNERS

Incident Command System Summit

Goodwood Auditorium

L.Geswindt

20 June 2013

## Why Media Policy And Communications Plan?

## **Examples of miscommunication during crises**

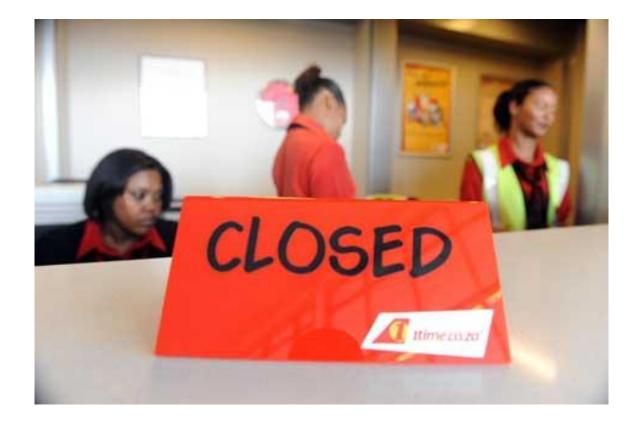
#### 'GuptaGate'







#### **'1Time Airlines Closure'**







## **Crisis Communications**

- Every organisation is vulnerable to crises. If you don't prepare, you WILL do more damage.
- Without adequate communications:
- ✓ Operational response will break down
- ✓ Stakeholders (internal and external) will not know what is happening and quickly be confused, angry and negatively reactive
- ✓ The organisation will be perceived as inept, at best and criminally negligent, at worst



#### **Best Practice**

## Guidelines when working with multiple stakeholders in crises

- Identify Crisis Communication Team (PIOs and key agencies involved)
- Discuss the plan of action (who drafts media release, TV interviews etc.)
- Decide who key spokesperson should be + KEY MESSAGES
- Regular information: decide amount of releases per day, as incident progresses
- Decide if regular media briefings is necessary
- Once you're in crisis mode, if you don't communicate immediately, you lose your greatest opportunity to control events
- Work quick and fast!





#### **Best Practice**

#### **Preparation:**

- Anticipate Crises
- Every potential crisis should if possible- be logged on a Media Issues and Risk register
- If you're being proactive and preparing for crises, gather your Crisis Comms Team for brainstorming sessions on all the potential crises which can occur in the organisation/service
- Media holding statements can be designed in advance:
- ✓ Think of your end product, how does it impact the public (think about the how).
- ✓ Decide what is most important (e.g. Five patients injured, deceased, evacuation, hectares of land).



## **Building Relationships**

# Relationship management is key and is very important when working with different agencies

- Face to face interaction is ideal
- Delegate tasks as a team
- Not about egos, be cordial
- Build trust relationships
- Keep information flowing
- Trust your colleague
- Get to know the organisations you work with.





7

## **Way Forward**

## Developing media policy and building stakeholder relations

- Need for integrated media policy that will guide all fire services and stakeholders during an incident (doesn't work if only on paper)
- Must be flexible, dynamic as an incident never goes to 'plan'

#### Process:

- ✓ Workshop with focus groups/stakeholders (PIOs and media spokespersons of fire service and agencies)
- ✓ Plan and do exercises (scenarios)



Thank you

# Contact Us



BETTER TOGETHER.

#### **Lisa Geswindt**

Assistant Director: Marketing, Awareness, Research

Lisa.Geswindt@westerncape.gov.za

www.westerncape.gov.za