



Unit 1

Introduction to Communication Strategies

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Identify common communication problems that may be holding you back
- ✓ Develop skills to ask questions that give you information you need

Unit 1

Introduction to Communication Strategies

Creating Positive Relationships

One winning communication strategy is to always develop positive relationships with people. Most of us want to do well in life and work, and we want to look forward to our day, not get out of bed with a feeling dreadful or apprehensive.

If you add these ten tips to your toolkit, you will build stronger, positive relationships.

1. **Speak to people:** There is nothing as nice as a cheerful word of greeting.
2. **Smile at people:** It takes 72 muscles to frown, but only 14 to smile.
3. **Call people by name:** The sweetest music to anyone's ears is the sound of their own name used properly and positively.
4. **Be friendly and helpful:** To make a friend, you have to be a friend.
5. **Be cordial:** Speak and act as if everything you do is a genuine pleasure.
6. **Be genuinely interested in people:** You can find things to like in almost anybody if you try.
7. **Be generous with praise,** cautious with criticism.
8. **Be considerate** with the feelings of others. There are usually three sides to a controversy: yours, the other person's, and the truth.
9. **Be alert to give service:** What counts most in life is what we do for others.
10. **Practice your positive sense of humor:** The kind that is about telling funny stories about yourself, not other people.

None of these techniques are rocket science, but our ability to apply them sometimes slips away from us.

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your present ability to carry out these 10 strategies on a daily basis?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Complete the following quiz to shed some light on your feelings.

	Yes	No
I'm concerned that I'm not effective enough when dealing with my supervisor or my co-workers.		
After I've had a conversation with someone, I sometimes worry if I've said anything that could be construed as offensive.		
I am frequently in a position of trying to counteract a bad impression I believe I've made.		
I rarely worry about being considered by others as misinformed or ignorant on things.		
When I'm in social situations, I'm not concerned about following rules of etiquette or being self-conscious.		
I tend to fret that others may think I don't know what I'm doing.		
I fear that others may not see me as adequately disciplined.		
I usually wonder whether my co-workers think that I'm not putting enough time and energy into my job.		
I avoid criticizing someone else's judgment for fear of appearing in the wrong.		
I tend to worry that others will laugh at my ideas.		

There are no right and wrong answers to this questionnaire. It is a tool to give you an idea about how you feel about your communication skills. Throughout the workshop, we will present techniques and tools to help you be a stronger communicator.

Developing Confidence

When it comes to communicating, we can be hampered by our own fears of failure or embarrassment not necessarily because we lack expertise in communication, but because we lack confidence in ourselves.

In order to get better at communicating, there are a few things that we can do to develop confidence.

Fake it until you make it.

Be well prepared.

Learn how to relax.

Be consistent.

Communication Strategies

Setting a Goal for Each Communications Piece

Setting the Objective

Each communications piece, from a three-day conference to a 50-character tweet, needs a clear objective to be effective. Consider the following questions when developing any communications piece for your company.

Communications Checklist

Who is the target of this communication: businesses, individuals, or someone else?

In what geographical region will the communications piece be circulated: local, regional, national, or international?

What is the purpose of this communications piece?

- ✓ Building relationships with customers
- ✓ Increasing visitors to our location or website
- ✓ Improving Internet visibility
- ✓ Increasing sales
- ✓ Increasing customer connection to the brand
- ✓ Other (Details: _____)

What are your targets (if applicable)?

- ✓ Number of visitors per month: _____
- ✓ Number of unit sales per month: _____
- ✓ Monthly sales: \$ _____
- ✓ Average dollar amount per sale: \$ _____

Strengthening Your Core Message

Building Core Strength

Lately, there has been a big health focus on core strength: the benefits to body and mind when one's torso is toned and properly aligned. Appearance, energy, agility, concentration, and wellness are all affected by the degree of a body's core strength.

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| ✓ Accountability | ✓ Excitement | ✓ Nature |
| ✓ Achievement | ✓ Expertise | ✓ Order |
| ✓ Adventure | ✓ Fame | ✓ Power |
| ✓ Affection | ✓ Freedom | ✓ Public service |
| ✓ Authority | ✓ Friendships | ✓ Purity |
| ✓ Change | ✓ Growth | ✓ Quality |
| ✓ Commitment | ✓ Honesty | ✓ Responsibility |
| ✓ Community | ✓ Independence | ✓ Security |
| ✓ Competence | ✓ Influential | ✓ Self-respect |
| ✓ Cooperation | ✓ Inner harmony | ✓ Serenity |
| ✓ Creativity | ✓ Integrity | ✓ Sophistication |
| ✓ Decisiveness | ✓ Intellectual | ✓ Stability |
| ✓ Democracy | ✓ Involvement | ✓ Status |
| ✓ Ecological awareness | ✓ Knowledge | ✓ Sustainable |
| ✓ Effectiveness | ✓ Leadership | ✓ Tranquility |
| ✓ Efficient | ✓ Meaningful | ✓ Truth |
| ✓ Ethical | ✓ Merit | ✓ Variety |
| ✓ Excellence | ✓ Money | ✓ Wisdom |

Likewise, your core message supports the strength, efficiency, outlook, and reach of your communications efforts. As discussed earlier, your core message should be reflected in your mission, vision, and values statements; elevator pitch; and company plans. Like your body, your core message benefits from consistent use and occasional adjustment. There is always opportunity for improvement.

Key Words and Ideas

Consider some key words that describe you, your company and/or your product or service: Use these key words in your communications as often as possible and where appropriate. Even if you are not using them directly, keep them in mind when developing your pitches and documents.

Thinking MEDIA

Sharing Information through Media Releases

Key Pieces of the Media Release

Looking at the Options

A **media release** is an invitation to another outlet to share your message. The benefits include minimal cost (your time and expertise). As well, you can leverage their credibility and their audience. The drawback, however, is that you cannot control how or if the message is shared. The media outlet may use all, some, or none of your release. If they do run the story, it may be with their own slant or context.

A **blog** is a media release of sorts, or an article, in your own words. Typically, a blog has minimal cost as well, but it gives you more control over the message and how you share it. You will also have the option to share your blog on other blog sites. On the downside, however, it can take much more time to get your blog out there. You need to know how to leverage SEO (Search Engine Optimization) to build your blog audience. As well, your blog may not be widely read or established as credible, causing it to get lost in the vast sea of Internet information.

Media Releases

Let's discuss the media release first. Before you start to write, ask yourself:

- ✓ Is your topic newsworthy? Some people think everything they do is newsworthy, or that everything outside of the usual routine is newsworthy. Make sure you look at your news from the perspective of the media and the public. If it's not newsworthy, it may be time to rethink your topic.
- ✓ Can you write the release in a way that it answers all the questions that it raises? That will help cut down on questions after you release it. It also prevents turning off the journalist reading it who may not have time to call you.
- ✓ Will this release help to meet some part of the organization's strategic plan and move it forward?
- ✓ Have you checked every piece of information in the release? All facts, data, dates, links, and references must be accurate.

Once you are in a position to answer "yes" to all the questions above, you are ready to create the first draft of your media release.

Drafting Your Message

Once you have chosen your topic, organize your writing to start with the most important elements first. Then, if an editor has to cut the size down, nothing essential is deleted. Keep information concise and on the topic or you will lose the interest of the editor and the reader.

The following items should be included in your draft.

Choose Hard or Soft

A hard release includes topics like new product releases, surveys, product releases, and staff appointments. A soft release, also called a feature release, can include updates of ongoing projects, trends, or human interest stories.

Release and Issue Dates

There are two dates included: the date of issue and the date of release. Keep the release within your organization until it is ready for the public, just in case. You cannot control the message once it is issued, even if it is sent before the release date.

Contact Person

If you write the release, you should usually be the contact person. However, sometimes you need to direct inquiries to the spokesperson for a particular project, issue, or department. Include their name, e-mail, and contact number. If this release pertains to an emergency, it is likely that an inquiry could come outside of regular business hours, so you will need to include a cell phone number, too.

Catchy Headline

This is the first chance for you to differentiate yourself. Keep the headline short, valuable, and compelling so people read what is underneath it. Although an editor who publishes your release will change your headline to match their publication or website, your job is to catch the editor's attention. If you are using e-mail to submit a press release (and you likely will), your headline becomes your subject line.

Font and Letterhead

Use your official company letterhead, which also includes your address and a look at your brand.

Consistent Design and Font

You can have this created for you by an outside firm or you can set up a template of your own. You should use a standard font such as Times New Roman or Courier in size 11 or 12.

In the document, use consistent grammatical styles and formatting. If your company has a style guide, use it. Otherwise, use a media reference guide like The Associated Press Stylebook.

Q & A List (Question and Answers)

If you can see that your press release will lead to some questions but you don't answer them within the release itself, you can attach a sheet of answers to help people out. This is also a great way to help out members of your own executive that might have to field questions. You can use this list to give them background information that is too wordy for the release.

Photos

A blog feature can be added to an existing website, or a site can be started specifically for blog posts. The cost of blogging is primarily time and expertise. To be effective, blogs should be posted consistently, frequently, and in a timely manner, especially if the goal is to build credibility as a subject expert.

Guidelines

Here are some guidelines for blogging.

Read as many blogs as you can. Pay attention to what's working (and what's not!).

Pay attention to things like page layout, length of posts, pictures, color, and, of course, the content.

Explore your options.

Depending on who is hosting your hub site, they may also offer a blog space, or you can have one created for you. You can also look at some of the popular blog sites that offer free spaces, such as Blogger and WordPress.

Be brief.

With people's very short attention spans, blog posts need to be concise. Seth Godin, who writes about marketing and has a brilliant blog, sometimes creates posts that are only a few hundred words long. Whether you are creating short, informative pieces that are less than 500 words, or longer, more introspective pieces, you want people to read, remember, and think about your blog.

Choose a voice.

The tone of what you say should reflect who you are, what your company stands for, and catches people's attention. You can explore being informative, being controversial, asking questions, and having some fun.

Do NOT assume that you are a writer unless you have those skills.

If you are new to writing as well as to blogging, behave like a student and learn what you need to do.

Add tags or keywords.

This will help you find your old posts and categorize things. It will also help people find what you are writing. Make sure that you set up some kind of analytics, too, so that you can see which posts attract attention, which ones didn't, and who is reading them.

Keep and reuse your old posts.

If your content is good, it has staying power. A blog post you wrote six months or a year ago that remains relevant can be included in another blog post or re-posted to Twitter because it seems like a

Connecting Through Social Media

The Importance of Social Media

Social media is a firmly established element of the media, and it's going to continue to evolve and wrap its way throughout our lives in intangible ways. Every media release, public appearance, and annual report, as well as aspects of information that used to be kept protected, are now found within social media. If you're going to embrace your role within communications, you need to embrace social media.

Test your Knowledge

Do you know how to find information on all the big social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Digg, Tumblr, Flickr, LinkedIn, Google+, and others that will come up from time to time?

What about news services and blogs?

Getting on Board

Social media has been embraced much more quickly by individuals than businesses, although big business is slowly getting on board as well.

Social media platforms (such as Facebook) have increased their integration with our personal lives by being accessible on desktops, tablets, and smartphones. They started as a website to visit and post status updates. Now, they offer a dedicated chat service; a personalized experience; ability to

add photos and videos; and applications for gaming, shopping, and more. In addition, many social platforms now work together so that you can access all of your social information in one place, meaning that information you post on one service pushes to other platforms as well.

From a marketing perspective, you've got to determine which social networks are worth your time. Establishing a presence takes time, as does making those very important connections with your prospects and customers. If you do it right, your market share increases. If you make a mistake, your time and money have been wasted.

The overall trend seems to be that social media is becoming a bigger part of an individual's life. Businesses are starting to understand that they need to use these platforms to catch people's attention. Keep in mind that marketing with social media is still a segment of Internet marketing, which is all just a part of your overall marketing plan.

Social Media Plan Worksheet

This worksheet can be used to develop a new social media plan or to augment your existing plan.

Business Information

Business Name

Is the social media plan for the entire business or a portion? (If it is for a portion, describe it.)

What does the company sell: products, services, or a combination of both?

Briefly describe the products or services that you sell.

Is there an existing social media plan? If so, are you conducting an update, or creating an entirely new strategy?

Does the company have an existing website, social media profiles, or social media sites? List the URL(s) here.

Does the company have an existing social media presence? What is currently taking place? (Some ideas: blogs, podcasting, or status updates)

Who is the target of your social media campaign: businesses, individuals, or someone else?

What geographical region will the social media campaign target: local, regional, national, or international? Write the details of the range below.

Rank the goals of your social media campaign in priority order, with 1 being the most important and 7 being the least important. Each item must have its own number; no ties allowed!

- ___ Building relationships with customers
- ___ Increasing visitors to the web/hub site
- ___ Improving search visibility
- ___ Increasing sales
- ___ Saving money on print advertising
- ___ Increasing customer connection to the brand
- ___ Other (Details: _____)

Campaign Budget

Fill out the table below to create a draft budget for your social media plan.

Category	Amount Per Month
Design and Writing	\$
Photography and Video	\$
Marketing and Paid Ads	\$
In-House Labor (costs and hours)	\$
Programming	\$
Tools and Equipment	\$
Revisions and Changes	\$

Return on Investment: _____% within _____ month(s) / year Campaign Objectives

Fill out the objectives that apply to you.

- ✓ Number of Visitors per Month: _____
- ✓ Number of Downloads per Month: _____
- ✓ Number of Comments per Month: _____
- ✓ Conversion Rate: _____
- ✓ Monthly Sales: \$ _____
- ✓ Average Dollar Amount per Sale: \$ _____

List any other objectives here.

Competitive Analysis

Describe your target market very clearly. Use specific demographics, geographics, industry, segments, job titles, etc.

Why should a customer buy from you instead of a competitor? Use this space to clearly describe your value proposition.

List at least ten competitors and their websites, blogs, and related social media pages.

Competitor	Website	Blog	Social Media Pages

Content Creation for Effective Communication

Using Stories to Communicate

The Importance of Story

As human beings, we are wired for stories. We don't often hold a whole list of items or facts for long, but we will remember the gist of a good story for a lifetime. Metaphors and analogies are often a part of storytelling.

Using stories can help make your communications more compelling, more coherent, and clearer. In his book *All Marketers Are Liars*, Seth Godin talks about the power of a story to draw in customers and to persuade. He also shares some things we can learn.

Stories have to make you stand out.

If you simply repeat someone else's story and try to make it sound original, it won't. If you are trying to convince your spouse that a holiday to the Mediterranean is in order, and it is the same story your friends are telling each other, you won't be very convincing. Tell your story.

7-Up called their product "the un-Cola" to differentiate from all of the cola drinks in the marketplace. You have to find something that helps you stand out from the crowd. If there is nothing that makes your story stand out from all the others, your results won't stand out either.

Your story has to be believable.

If your story is not true, you won't get results. You cannot persuade by telling lies, can you? Well, actually you can! This is why people buy garbage from watching infomercials: they become convinced that this particular gadget will do what they need, make them look like they want, or bring them some kind of status. The reason that stories that actually lie still persuade people is because sometimes people want to agree with you. Once they do agree to something, they do not like to be proven wrong.

Storytelling works when it makes something more.

If you believe storytelling, then you may believe that a different glass makes your wine taste better. Does food cooked in cookware endorsed by a famous chef taste better than that cooked in the same

Polishers and Time Savers

Communication Fact Sheets Preparing Fact Sheets

Checklists and fact sheets put essential information at the ready, at a glance. This can make the development, polishing, and delivery of a communications piece more efficient. Often, these one-pagers are called “cheat sheets,” but the concept is not cheating at all, unless it is the cheating of inefficiency in your workplace.

Here are some examples of one-page information sheets that can help your communications projects run smoothly.

About Us

This sheet should include:

- ✓ The company’s official title
- ✓ Branding title (if different)
- ✓ Mission, vision, and values
- ✓ Date of founding
- ✓ Number of employees
- ✓ Core products/services
- ✓ Number of offices
- ✓ Net worth and annual sales
- ✓ Any other facts you wish to share with the public

This sheet can be used internally to help with fact checking. It can also be circulated as an attachment to media releases.

Pitch Summary

Include:

- ✓ Your elevator pitch
- ✓ Marketing targets
- ✓ Communication goals
- ✓ Key words for online presence.

This sheet is helpful for crafting media releases and blogs.

Social Media Summary

Include:

- ✓ Each platform (such as Facebook, Twitter, or WordPress) that you post on
- ✓ Company contact (person responsible for monitoring and posting to this platform)
- ✓ Topic list
- ✓ Frequency of posting
- ✓ Length of posts

This can be used to keep social media contacts on track or as a quick training guide for temporary or permanent replacements. User names and passwords should be kept in a secure file with at least two trusted employees in order to protect the integrity of the site while allowing company access if needed.

Strategic Summary

Include the executive summary and primary goals from the company’s guiding documents, such as the:

- ✓ Strategic plan
- ✓ Business plan
- ✓ Communications plan
- ✓ Marketing plan

Having all documents and goals listed together ensures continuity in operations, highlights conflicts, and helps familiarize key people with all planning.

Contact Lists

Include:

- ✓ Media contact names and preferred contact method (e-mail, cell phone, or text message)
- ✓ Company contact names in the event of an immediate or after-hours demand for a quote or the unavailability of the primary contact

Maintaining Fact Sheets

Compiling these sheets can take one to two hours, depending on the research and volume of information involved. However, those hours will be saved quickly when related projects run more smoothly. No more frantic digging for a company profile or the exact wording of the mission statement when writing a document on a deadline! Once the sheets are compiled, assign staff to review and update as needed.

Text Your Knowledge

What other one-page sheets could assist your communications operations?

The frequency of posts and mailouts to a manageable number.

Some companies have the resources to post five tweets and two Facebook messages daily. Some do not. The single greatest factor in media success is consistency. It is best to do a blog post once every week rather than three days in a row and none for the next two weeks.

The number of platforms to a manageable number.

Proponents of various sites will claim their platform is the best, leading companies to believe they must be on every platform to be successful. Unless your company has significant human resources to manage this multitude of platforms, keep your choices to a select few that you can manage well. An unused account is the derelict building of the information highway: better it not be there at all than be abandoned. Each platform must be a contributing part of your community.

Reuse

Blog postings on your site.

If the topic remains timely after a few months or even a few years, you can post it again with an update of when it first appeared. Or, run a Best Of series with a look back at some popular posts. Review some popular blog sites: most if not all of them do this. There is no expiry date on good information, but there is a premium on time.

Blog postings on other blog sites.

Offer your article as a guest post to sites offering similar or related information as yours, and invite their bloggers to do the same on your site.

Content.

You can use media releases as blog posts and vice versa. Or, share your mission, vision, and values as a Facebook post or tweet. They can be an interesting reminder for your audience and your staff while providing solid content on a slow news day.

Recycle

Blog postings as social media postings.

Use the title, the catchy first line, a key statistic, or an interesting quote as your posts. Spread these posts over a few days with a link back to your blog and you will promote your blog as well.

Postings between media.

You can recycle and re-craft posts to use between media, but do NOT use identical postings for different platforms. Facebook and Twitter, for example, have many of the same users but the style and etiquette are unique. Folks know when a Facebook post has been copied as a tweet, and they do not look upon the offense kindly: they will see your company as lazy or incompetent. If you wish

to use the same content, be sure to word the message as it should read from the various sites, using the appropriate tags.

Media releases as social media postings.

You can use the title, opening line, quotes from key people, or any other stand-alone sentences from media releases and blog posts as a social media post. This can provide posting fodder for several days while keeping your topic in the spotlight.

Customer correspondence as social media postings, if they are something you wish to share.

Thank-you, testimonials, interesting stories, photos, and other messages sent by customers are interesting to the audience and a great advocate for your message. If carefully done, even negative correspondence can be a successful social media posting: a company that finds a successful solution to a problem, owns up to its mistakes, and takes customer satisfaction seriously will gain support from an audience that values authenticity. Be sure to edit out any identifying information (such as customer name and address, for example) for their security and yours. You may also want to get permission from the customer to use their correspondence.

Enhancing Your Results

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

What is Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?

No matter how popular your company is, or how unique your name is, people still have to be able to find you online. Thinking again of our multi-lane highway, the Internet is a frantic bumper-to-bumper 40-lane highway at rush hour. Your online presence, including your website, blog postings, and social media posts, needs all the help it can get to direct traffic from the chaos of the Internet to your message.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) can help you gain and maintain a digital reach that is both broad and deep. When you optimize your web pages, social media sites, blog, and wherever else you have an online presence, SEO helps you to get as close as you can to the top of search results – preferably to the top of the first page.

In order to get to the top of a search page, you need to select search terms and keywords that people look for, and then optimize your content to make it easy to find, or “search friendly.”

Test your Knowledge

Think about the last time that you searched for something online. What words did you use?

Which links did you click on from the search page?

Did you just look at the paid ads at the top of your search or the first few organic links?

Did you go to the second page?

Metatags

When your web pages are created, there will be a space for a **metatag** where you can list your keywords. These metatags are not required for search engines, but they will enhance your ranking and they help you keep track of your keywords. Visitors to your web page don't see the metatags either, but they do appear in your coding. A good strategy is to vary where you position search terms on different pages because search engines truncate keyword tags at different lengths.

Getting the Best Results

Your best SEO results come from having great content on your sites. This will also help you attract people who are interested in what you have to offer; the **qualified prospect**. Throughout our conversations about SEO, it's important to remember that nothing is effective unless you offer good, strong content. Unless you appeal to visitors to your site, they don't become qualified prospects and convert to customers.

Taking Your Communication Pulse

There are many ways to analyze the results of your communications efforts. As with most everything these days, there are software packages that you can purchase to monitor your brand’s activities, social presence, market share, and customer response. You can also hire a company to manage analytics for you.

There are, however, also some low-cost or no-cost methods that you can use. You may, in fact, have access to a lot of information that you’re not aware of. You can set up notifications electronically (through Google Analytics, for example) that will help you find people who talk about your company or products on their web or blogging sites. You can track people who have clicked on links in your e-mails or e-newsletters, or simply those who visit your website.

You can also use internal and external focus groups to check in with the people connecting with your brand. Some key questions to ask include:

- ✓ How are we meeting our brand promise?
- ✓ What is working for you?
- ✓ What is not working?
- ✓ What new trends are you seeing?
- ✓ How do you feel about the brand?
- ✓ How does this compare with how you felt about it last month? Six months ago?

Focusing on the Research

Choose a topic for a focus group that would benefit the market research for your company.

Where would the group be held?

Who would be invited?

What information would the company hope to gain?

SWOT Analysis

What is SWOT?

SWOT stands for the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing your company. The strengths and weaknesses are usually considered to be internal, while the opportunities and threats are generally external to the company. This analysis helps you ask yourself, “Where are you now?” It can also help you identify where you need to go.

A SWOT analysis should consider:

- ✓ Your company and its strengths and its weaknesses
- ✓ Your products and/or services and their strengths and weaknesses
- ✓ The community and what is currently going on that may affect future planning
- ✓ Your primary and secondary target markets and what they want/need
- ✓ The competition and what they are doing
- ✓ The external forces that will affect your business
- ✓ Opportunities that are available to you and your company
- ✓ Environment and market factors that could threaten your business

SWOT Matrix

You can perform a SWOT analysis using a matrix like the following:

	<i>INTERNAL</i>	<i>EXTERNAL</i>
<i>P O S I T I V E</i>	Strengths	Opportunities
<i>N E G A T I V E</i>	Weaknesses	Threats

Next Steps

Once you have used SWOT analysis to answer the questions about your company, you will repeat the process to consider your competition. After you have gathered this information, you may have ideas to help lessen the impact of the competition. For example, perhaps you have eliminated barriers that the competition has not been able to minimize for themselves. If you have partnered with a great distributor and the competition is struggling to get their product out to stores, you have eliminated a barrier. These facts can become part of your communication strategies and can help you communicate what your brand is all about.

Test your Knowledge

Complete your own SWOT analysis chart.

	<i>INTERNAL</i>	<i>EXTERNAL</i>
<i>P O S I T I V E</i>	Strengths	Opportunities
<i>N E G A T I V E</i>	Weaknesses	Threats

Maintaining Your Message in Crisis

Crisis communications have a different intensity than much of our other work, but the essence is the same in that you must communicate effectively, consistently, and in a timely manner. In the case of an emergency, if an emergency operation center needs to be set up, the most senior member of the team remains in charge until the team leader reports in. If you aren't the team leader or the communications leader, you absolutely should not be making statements to the media. Let the communications leader, who has been trained in what to say (and not to say) look after that function when they arrive.

It can be very practical to have colored vests for each member of the team, so that other members and employees know who is in charge. You can use vests that match your operation in some way, or coordinate with what your local emergency services use. Just make sure that people are visible. Think about blue for spokesperson, orange for first aid, yellow for transportation, green for the person in charge, etc.

Work with, not against, emergency services personnel who may also be responding to the incident. Regardless of the circumstances, you need to make sure they can complete rescue and recovery, transport injured people, and conduct investigations as needed. You also need to keep yourself informed about what is going on, what is being said in the media (if you can), and prepare to communicate frequently.

The chain of command for your crisis management team (the order of who is in charge) is a necessary part of your crisis management plan. It needs to be communicated to, and understood by, everyone in a communications role.

Further Reading:

- ✓ *Benjamin, Susan F. Perfect Phrases for Dealing with Difficult Situations at Work. McGraw-Hill, 2008.*
- ✓ *Blanchard, Ken, and Sheldon Bowles. High Five! The Magic of Working Together. William Morrow, 2000.*
- ✓ *Boothman, Nicholas. How to Make People Like You in 90 Seconds or Less. Workman Publishing Company, 2000.*