

## **Crisis Management in the Workplace: A Public Relations Perspective**

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Over the past few years, America has seen quite a few companies go through great economic turmoil, intense product recalls (Toyota), and several other downfalls affecting different types of businesses everywhere. Companies and organizations have problems every day that do not ever seem to alter business. When a crisis occurs that can threaten the life of a company, the need for a crisis plan is imperative. Many do not realize public relations has a major role in crisis situations. Unfortunately, many businesses have no conception of the difference between a “crisis” and a “problem.” Knowledge of public relations functions can be useful in crisis situations. In a typical scenario, it is the PR professional’s role to make certain the proper statements are given to the public in a prompt, concise manner following a crisis. If the public is underinformed or misinformed, the company’s reputation can be damaged. The strategies of public relations, based on crisis management theories, allows companies to formulate a crisis management plan (CMP). This study surveyed a convenient sample of ten businesses/organizations across Lake and Porter counties. The highest ranking member of the staff was selected as the respondent. The results indicate organizations are not aware of crisis plans. Plus, organizations are not aware of image and reputation theories in communication.

### *Information about the Author:*

After several public relations courses, Rochelle Reinholt became interested in the topic of crisis communication. She felt that if more companies used public relations knowledge in times of crisis, the outcome would not be as harsh. Rochelle is currently a senior at VU with an individualized major in organizational communications with a concentration in public relations. She completed her internship through Whiteco Enterprises at Lighthouse Restaurant and Banquets and will continue her career at another Whiteco property after graduation.

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