

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE WHEELS FALL OFF?**

### **New PR crisis management consultancy launched**

The Crisis Communications Consultancy has been launched in Johannesburg to assist companies in preparing for and managing the worst. Recent news events have clearly shown that many companies are not ready to manage situations that pose a threat to their survival.

By identifying areas in which problems could cripple a business and developing defensive strategies and tactics to withstand them, the Crisis Communications Consultancy will counsel organisations how to quickly and pre-emptively act to minimise the damage a PR crisis can cause.

"All senior managers hope that they never have to tackle a crisis that threatens the future of their company. Without effective crisis planning, a business can suffer serious damage to its reputation, brand and revenues - or even bankruptcy - if it is not ready. Good corporate governance demands executives ensure their companies are prepared to handle any situation," says Evan Bloom, MD of the Crisis Communications Consultancy.

Many companies do not communicate correctly during a crisis. "We ensure the right message gets to the right audience at the right time and this is one of the keys to surviving a crisis," says Bloom. "Some companies use all their internal resources to tackle the crisis while ignoring their operational needs. Another common mistake made is not having a designated crisis team ready to tackle a crisis, whether it originates internally or externally."

### **Research by US-based ICM for the period of 2004 shows that:**

- 81% of all crises have their roots inside a company;
- 53% are caused by management;
- 28% are caused by employees; and
- only 19% are caused by external sources.

No accurate records are kept in South Africa, but the trends are generally similar with the possibility that a slightly higher percentage of crises are caused by external factors. For example, the past few months have seen a rapid increase in strike action and other crises in the mining, retail, airline/transportation and manufacturing industries.

Crisis management is not about sending out a press release or two when something goes wrong. "It's about planning for and understanding all eventualities a company could face by being aware of its vulnerabilities before the crisis happens. Once an adverse situation occurs, following a well-designed and flexible plan will ensure the company is able to operate as near to normal as possible while the crisis is tackled," concludes Bloom.

### **A host of services that facilitate effective crisis management are offered by the consultancy. These include:**

- Vulnerability auditing,
- Crisis planning,
- Crisis exercises,
- Media training,
- Crisis continuity,
- Crisis communications,
- Crisis management,
- Specialised campaigns,
- Post crisis assessment.

The life cycle of a crisis is made up of three phases, each with their own unique characteristics: the pre-crisis phase, the crisis phase and the post crisis phase. The Crisis Communications Consultancy will work alongside its clients to ensure that their companies are effectively managed through the crisis phases so they can resume regular operations as soon as possible.

With an MA in communications and a specialisation in public relations and crisis management, Bloom has honed his skills in the USA and UK. He has provided crisis planning and management assistance to

companies in the airline, mining, retail, IT, financial services and FMCG industries. For more information, please refer to [www.crisiscomms.com](http://www.crisiscomms.com).

**Further media information:**

e-mail: [info@crisiscomms.com](mailto:info@crisiscomms.com)