

Comprehensive Crisis Communications Planning and Training for OPRA Members

Project Overview:

Ashire Communications proposes the following comprehensive crisis communications planning and training for OPRA member organizations. Working with the participating organizations, Ashire will:

- Create a crisis communications plan written especially for each organization;
- Train each organization's leaders to execute the plan in a crisis;
- Conduct a drill to enhance and test the proficiency of each organization.

Ashire guides organizations step by step. We create an easy-to-follow written plan in partnership with the organization's leadership team. Our training relies heavily on experiential learning – learning by doing – as well as case studies about actual crises, which makes the training realistic and engaging. A major component of our training includes teaching leaders how to handle news interviews. Organizations will receive lots of individual attention throughout the program.

Special Features for OPRA Member Organizations:

- Our consultant has worked for years with organizations that serve people with developmental disabilities.
- The training and planning will include concerns that are unique to organizations that serve people with developmental disabilities.
- The consultant will travel twice to each organization's main office.
- Our fee will be discounted because up to eight OPRA member organizations will be participating together in parts of the program.

About Crisis Communications:

Organizations spend years building their reputations. In minutes, their reputations could be destroyed if a crisis is not handled properly. A damaged reputation could hamper fundraising, recruitment of employees and board members, and an organization's ability to generate clients and consumers. Crisis communications is a form of public relations that helps organizations protect their reputations. Like insurance, it's something they hope they won't ever need to use. (Crisis communications is a form of reputation management. It is not crisis management, which is a broader term that involves more than communication.)

Deliverables:

At the start of the program, each attendee will receive a binder with basic information about crisis communications.

After the program is completed, each organization will have:

- A binder with a customized crisis communications plan developed in partnership with Ashire Communications;
- The knowledge and experience to react accordingly in a crisis to protect the organization's reputation;
- The basic skills to handle a news interview;
- The know-how to apologize publicly and appropriately, as warranted.

What's Included in the Fee / Generally:

- **Session 1 / Fundamentals - Columbus:** The basics of crisis communications; how to apologize; how to start compiling the crisis communications plan. *A half-day session with all organizations in attendance.*
- **Session 2 / Media Relations Training and More – Organizations' Main Offices:** An in-depth session for media relations training, discussion of possible scenarios unique to each organization and orientation for organizational lawyers and board leaders. *Full-day session customized for each organization.*
- **Session 3 / Drill - Organizations' Main Offices:** A crisis communications drill at the participating organizations' offices to enhance learning and test proficiency. *Half-day session customized for each organization.*
- **Two Conference Calls:** An in-depth phone call or video conference will be conducted with each organization before the first session and near the end of the program to help each organization get organized, discuss expectations and review the draft of their crisis communications plan.

What's Included in the Fee / More Details:

- Guidance in selecting the organization's crisis communications team;
- Discussions about vulnerabilities of each organization;
- Basic media relations training for spokespersons;
- Learning how and when to make public apologies;
- A basic review of an organization's communications practices;
- Drafting templates for public statements and news releases;
- Developing contact lists to use in crises;
- Orienting the organization's attorney and board leaders;
- Individual phone calls, video conferences and emails with the consultant throughout the program, as requested by the participating organizations.

Expectations

Participating organizations will:

- Designate two to six managers to participate in the program.

- Encourage the organization's attorney and board leaders to participate in a session designed exclusively for them, either in person, on the phone or via video conferencing.
- Provide specified information to be included in the crisis communications plan.
- Make a payment before the program begins, followed by periodic payments while the program is ongoing. (Specific terms will be provided.)
- Provide a meal and snacks to participants during the two sessions at their offices.

OPRA will:

- Provide marketing services, in partnership with Ashire, to generate registrations.
- Provide a room in Columbus for a training session. The room needs to have tables and chairs to accommodate up to 40 people.
- Provide lunch and refreshments for the training session in Columbus.
- Explore whether participants can earn continuing education credits.

Other notes:

- Ashire President Elliot Grossman will be the primary consultant providing services.
- Ashire will pay for the consultant's lodging and other travel expenses.
- The number of participating organizations will be limited to eight.
- A professional agreement based on the details in this proposal will be submitted for signatures before work begins.

About Ashire Communications and Elliot Grossman:

Ashire provides marketing and public relations services to nonprofits, colleges and school districts. Ashire's clients have included numerous organizations in Ohio that serve people with disabilities. The firm, which is based in Greater Cincinnati, specializes in crisis communications, communications planning and management, communication audits, publicity, annual reports, newsletters and media relations training. Elliot Grossman, Ashire's president, has worked on both sides of crisis communications – as an advisor to organizations facing crises and as a journalist covering crises. Earlier, Mr. Grossman worked for the nation's largest media companies as an editor and reporter, including Enquirer Media, which owns The Cincinnati Enquirer. He also taught communications arts at Xavier University and journalism at the State University of New York.

Total Fee: \$8,590

- *The fee will be charged per organization. Each organization can have up to six managers participate.*
- *Participating organizations based in southwest Ohio may receive a modest discount due to their proximity to Ashire's office.*

Additional services, if requested, will be charged at Ashire's hourly rate:

- Development of a dark web page that can be activated in a crisis;
- Assistance with an actual crisis;
- Annual follow-up services, including plan updates, refresher training and drills.

Proposal prepared by Elliot Grossman – Jan. 2, 2019