

17. Subject: Crisis Management – Think Before Speaking – Part 1

“Think twice before you speak, because your words and influence will plant the seed of either success or failure in the mind of another.” -Napoleon Hill

As the leader of your company, your words can wreak havoc. Even if you aren't a television or music celebrity, your words are subject to scrutiny. Thoughtless outbursts will instill irreversible damage to your brand.

So the first step in averting a brand disaster is to think before speaking. As the spokesperson for your company, how do you react when the company is involved in a crisis? The first days after a disaster can make or break the brand's reputation. What you say and do after a crisis can worsen the reputation damage.

Think BP's response following the oil rig disaster in 2010. BP deeply underestimated the breadth of the oil leak and the time to repair.

BP's chief executive Tony Hayward, tried to minimize the environmental impact, saying it would be “very, very modest” and that “the Gulf of Mexico is a big ocean”. That cost him his job. Since the disaster, BP has spent billions in environmental and reputation clean-up.

Even if you aren't a BP, chances are your company will have to deal with some type of crisis. Take responsibility for the problem; be visible and sensitive to your customers' angst and provide them with timely information on a resolution.