



# National Transportation Safety Board

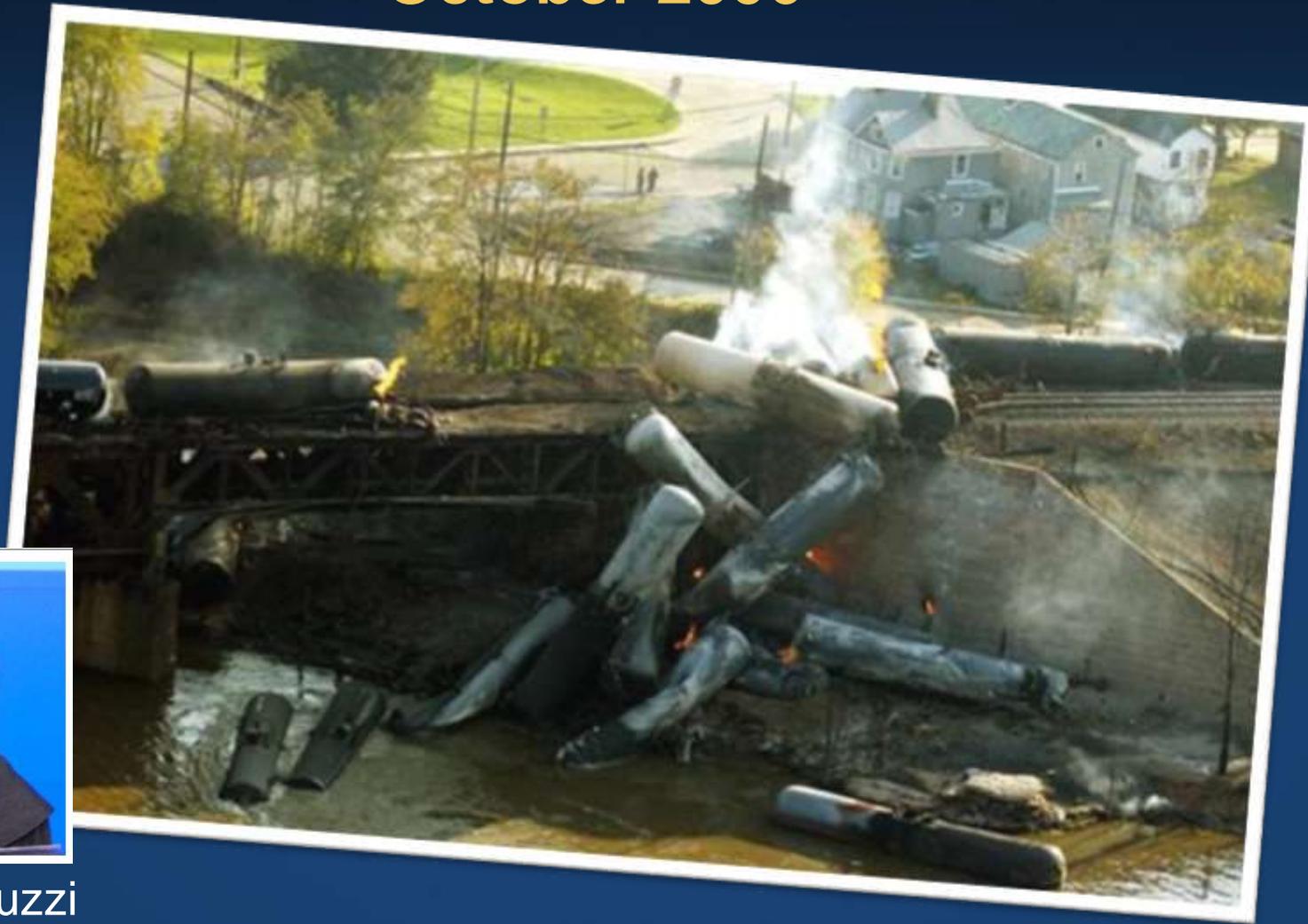
## The Accident – Now What?

Managing the Aftermath through  
Effective Crisis Communications

Robert Sumwalt

# Pennsylvania

## October 2006



Lauren Peduzzi

# Philadelphia, Pennsylvania May 2015



Peter Knudson

# Lac-Mégantic, Quebec

July 6, 2013



# Lac-Mégantic, Quebec

July 6, 2013

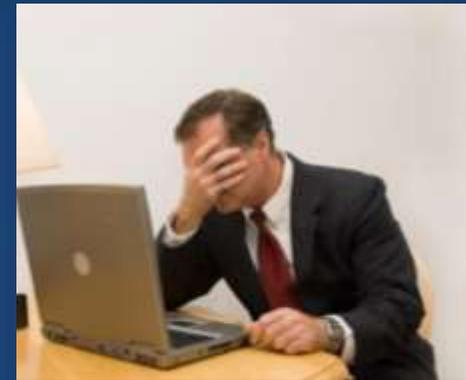


# Could this be you?



# Could this be you?

- Reputations suffer
- Credibility destroyed
- Confidence shattered



# Could this be you?

Your organization may survive after a poorly handled crisis, but your career may not.

# Could this be you?

Your organization may survive after a poorly handled disaster, but your career may not.





Could this be  
**YOU?**



**The way a crisis is publically  
handled can either make or  
break you.**

# Advance Preparation



# Advance Preparation

In order to effectively manage after a crisis, you must prepare before the crisis.

# Advance Preparation

- Plan – have one
- Practice the plan
  - Drills, table-top exercises
- Anticipate
  - Prepare media templates in advance
  - Website and other marketing considerations

# Good Execution



# Execution Strategies for Effective Crisis Communications

- 1) Prepare Yourself
- 2) Display Command Presence
- 3) Show Compassion
- 4) Demonstrate Transparency
- 5) Project Credibility

Crisis Communications Execution Strategy #1

# PREPARE YOURSELF

# Prepare yourself

- Know the facts
- Identify your talking points
- “Murder board”





# Snow brings traffic to a standstill in Atlanta

Updated: Wednesday, January 29 2014, 02:22 PM EST  
Like 2 Tweet 0 Pin 2



# Prepare yourself



Crisis Communications Execution Strategy #2

# DISPLAY COMMAND PRESENCE

# Command Presence

- Be in control; control the environment
- Don't be overrun by the media

# Command Presence

- Be in control; control the environment
- Don't be overrun by the media



# Command Presence

Please raise your hand.  
When I call on you, state your  
name, your media affiliation,  
and ask your question.  
Thank you.



*P.S. – Don't be defensive!*



Crisis Communications Execution Strategy #3

# SHOW COMPASSION

At approximately 9 this morning, a flight operated by ...

Before I go any further, on behalf of the NTSB, I would like to extend our condolences to the families and friends of the victims of this tragic accident.

- Don't *read* this – speak from the heart!
- Show that you care!
- Show compassion!

Crisis Communications Execution Strategy #4

# DEMONSTRATE TRANSPARENCY



NBC News Investigation of Crumb Rubber

UNITED STATES  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION AGENCY



# The way you answer *does matter*

*What was the speed of the airplane as it departed the runway?*

“I can’t answer that.”

## If you are the investigator

“One of the many things the investigation will do is develop a complete timeline of events, including speeds throughout the accident sequence.”

## If you are the operator

“The NTSB is conducting the investigation, so that question would best be directed to them.”



Crisis Communications Execution Strategy #5

# PROJECT CREDIBILITY

# “Stay in your lane”



Don't talk about  
things that are  
outside of your  
area.

# Execution Strategies for Effective Crisis Communications

- 1) Prepare Yourself
- 2) Display Command Presence
- 3) Show Compassion
- 4) Demonstrate Transparency
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**Good Luck!**

