

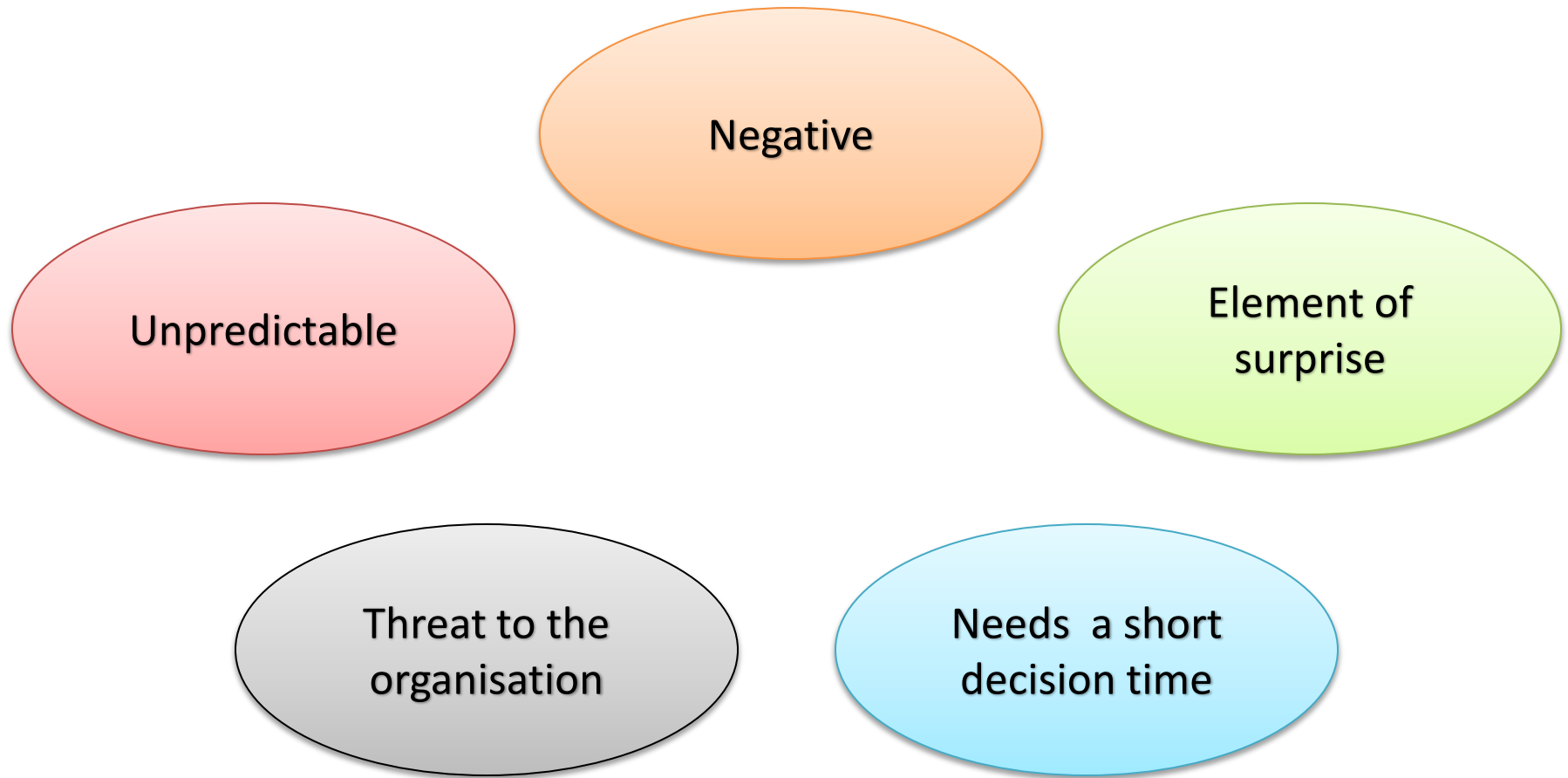
# Managing a Crisis Media Etiquette



# What is news ?

- Good news - gets few headlines
- Bad news is big news!
  - *Disaster, accidents, deaths, corruption, product recall*
- If you succeed, it's not always story
- Watch out
  - *If you threaten jobs, lives or property*
  - *If you damage the environment*
  - *If you have tried to hide the truth*

# What constitutes a media crisis?



# Get the media on your side

## How?

- Find out who is covering what
- On which media, daily or weekly publications
- Build relationships
- Important to have a perspective of the wider industry
- Nurture and cultivate these relationships – they will be useful when a crisis breaks
- Try to anticipate ‘what’s around the corner’ and be prepared to address issues

# Handling the media: Do's

- Strive to build very good relationship with media
- Be prepared to talk about positive points you want to cover during the interaction
- Anticipate questions before the interaction
- Prioritise facts and key messages
  - *Request that you will revert later with the facts, if you do not know/ or if there is lack of understanding*
- Keep your answers short, simple and to-the-point

# Handling the media: Don'ts

- Formally or informally sharing any information with any media representative unless authorised
- Provide any information off the record
- Succumb to pressure tactics imposed by media by way of tight deadlines
- Offer opinion or criticism on Government policies or judicial decisions; even in personal capacity
- Speculate and comment on controversies or issues that are in litigation
- Criticise competition

# How to be effective in a crisis

- Resist the urge to panic
- Don't try to hide by becoming unresponsive – this enrages the media
- Offer information to reduce the chances of speculation and inaccurate information being reported.
- By providing even a little bit of information, you can take control of the situation
- Never lie – the media will find out sooner or later

# How these 'strategies' work?

To Prepare:

- Step 1: Detailed crisis communication plan
- Step 2: Take immediate steps to control
- Step 3: Successfully regain public trust

*This detailed crisis plan is an assured answer to all future crisis situations*



# Media strategies

*People remember what they hear first and last*

- Designate an official spokesperson who is always available during the crisis
- Technical expert - Depending on the crisis
- Press Release
- Practical Media questions and responses
- Connect with favourable friendly journalists and end users to spread our word
- Updated factsheets



# Handling Media Interviews

# Never Assume

- Don't be fooled – there are no 'silly questions' – assume you are under the scanner from the moment you get out of your car
- Never assume that they know everything – be clear cut
- Never let them assume that they know – you drive the facts
- Never speculate. If the interviewer says something that is not factual, correct the information
- If you made a mistake, say so. Explain why that mistake occurred and what you are doing to fix the problem. Don't be afraid to say that you are sorry

# Risk and Opportunity

- Every interaction and engagement is an opportunity and a risk
- Examine the risks before you go for the opportunity
- If the risk is too great, turn it down
- Reminder: Statute of Limitations

# Before the Engagement

- Research the journalist or interviewer
  - Research the publication or TV station
  - Research your company / organisation
  - Research others' quotes on you
- 
- Research you!

**Constantly. Ongoing. Always.**

# Who owns the problem

- Is it your problem?
- Is it an industry issue?
- Is it a government issue?
- Is it someone else's problem?

*If it's not your problem, don't take ownership*

*But if it is your crisis, take ownership quickly*

# Off the Record

- What “off the record” means
- Don’t go off the record
  - *Always stay "on the record." If you don't want something reported, then don't discuss it*
- Expect the source to be obvious

# No Comment

- Never (ever) say outright “no comment”
  - “The situation is still being reviewed and we will have a statement as soon as we have all the facts.”
- Always Block and Bridge
  - “In this specific case, what I can confirm is...”
- Tell them why you can’t comment
  - “As an organisation, we cannot discuss aspects of a case that is sub judice ...under investigation



# Technique: Bridging / Deflection

## ➤ Effective in

- Steering a reporter back to the relevant topics and key messages
- Moving away from controversial, uncomfortable topics and back to key messages

# Bridging / Deflecting Statements

- Let me answer you by saying that ...
- That's an important point because ...
- I hear you, however, the real issue is ...
- I see that, but ... <<key message>>
- I'd also like to add that ...

# Technique: Flagging

- It is like waving a flag to signal the most important points you want to make
- Used to:
  - Underline your key messages
  - Helping a reporter remember what you want him to remember



# Flagging Statements

- There are 3 things you need to remember ...
- Let me summarize our announcement in three quick points...
- Let me take a step back and repeat that ...
- And as I said earlier ...
- Let me point out again that ...

# Food For Thought

There's a line by the poet Gulzar that illustrates how he experienced the daily news:

**“The daily newspaper I get at home is drenched in blood”**

(Meray ghar akhbaar roz khoon se lipta hua aata hai)

Brings home the point of what makes the news,  
what makes the headline,  
what brings in the money...