

PRACTICAL

Leonard & Finco Public Relations, Inc.

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Here is the latest edition of our electronic newsletter! Read on to find tips and information for effective public relations.

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Communicating Bad News

Let's face it, it's never easy to communicate bad news. So if you have bad business news to communicate internally or externally, how do you do it? While every situation is different, there are some basic guidelines to follow:

- Develop key messages and talking points about the situation. Have a small group work on this so you get several perspectives before putting the messaging together.
- Those messages should cover: what the bad news is, why it is happening, and what will happen next. Don't try to over explain.
- Deliver the information as soon as possible to employees first then, if needed, to key customers and vendors. Drafting a timeline for informing people will help keep things consistent and on track.
- If it's necessary to inform the media, do it after telling employees, customers and vendors. However, it should be soon after informing those groups so you have an opportunity to provide your information to the media before someone else does.
- Remember, anything you put in writing is likely to be seen outside of the company, so choose your words carefully if you are sharing written information.

Finally, be compassionate. How you handle yourself in delivering bad news sets the tone for how others will react to it. While bad news is never easy to share, controlling how its communicated allows you to manage the message and prevent rumors from starting.

Good News in a Bad Economy

We know it seems like the only news these days is bad news. But that's exactly why this is a great time to communicate good news! Reporters and media outlets are looking for:

- Stories about businesses and organizations that are doing well despite the economy. They'll want to know why you're succeeding when others are struggling.
- Experts who have unique or different viewpoints about what's happening in our world and community.
- Community outreach efforts by your business or individuals.
- First of the year stories, looking ahead to trends or providing information about how to succeed at New Year's resolutions such as weight loss, better budgeting, time management, etc.

If you have a good story to tell or offer, contact a reporter you know and share the information!

Reaching out to key stakeholders

The success of almost any project in today's world of "instant" communications is to reach out to the key stakeholders and keep them informed of the project and its need/benefit in the community.

The first step is identifying key stakeholders. For many projects, like road and utility construction projects, key stakeholders include landowners directly impacted by the project, neighboring landowners, local officials and key community leaders. Less obvious stakeholders might include local civic or business clubs and organizations, area unions, businesses benefiting from the project, environmental organizations and/or other interested parties.

It's also essential to communicate early and often with these groups. This provides a great avenue for feedback from those most interested in the project. This will likely help you learn about potential areas of conflict in advance of it becoming public which allows you to develop a strategy to address those concerns.

It's also an opportunity to establish stakeholder buy-in which provides the opportunity to have the stakeholders act as ambassadors or champions for the project. The best ambassadors for any project are the ones who are directly impacted by it and still support it.

When communicating, investigate all avenues to reach your audience. Traditional mail may work for some, but most folks today are much more technology savvy.

Communicating with stakeholders can take many forms, including:

- Newsletters
- Fact sheets and other hand outs
- Open houses
- Stakeholder meetings/presentations
- One-on-one meetings
- Web site updates
- E-mail
- Blogs
- Viral video

How you identify, interact and listen to the feedback of the key people impacted by a project can be the difference between whether the project is praised and supported or criticized and risks being voted against.

Quick Quote

***"Be always at war with your vices,
at peace with your neighbors,
and let each new year find you a better man."***

~Benjamin Franklin

NAME Dropping

Congratulations to **Cole Buergi**, senior account executive of Leonard & Finco Public Relations and **Marina Solo**, president and owner of **Marina Solo Real Estate Group**. Both were recently chosen for the **Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce's "40 Under 40" award**. The honor recognizes their achievements in both their professional and personal lives. Buergi and Solo will be honored on Thursday, February 12, 2009 at Legends in De Pere, WI.

Here's a sampling of what's going on with our clients:

Parallel 44 Vineyard and Winery, located in Kewaunee, Wisconsin, received a Double Gold medal from the Tasters Guild 13th Annual Wine Lovers Consumer Competition in Washington D.C for its Meditation Wine. Less than six percent of all entries received the Double Gold medal. In fact, Parallel 44's Meditation wine was among only a handful of non-California wines to win the distinction and was the only estate grown wine from Wisconsin to receive the award. Parallel 44 also received awards for its Rosso 44, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Riesling, Nouveau Rouge and Dolce Blanc.

Welcome to our new clients:

Dura-Fibre®, headquartered in Menasha, Wisconsin, specializes in laminating and die cutting of fiberboard products for consumer and industrial packaging. Dura-Fibre® is known for its technology, innovation and green solutions it offers customers. End use applications include protective packaging, folding cartons and furniture. Although Dura-Fibre® was officially formed in January 2004, the company's history spans more than 70 years of laminating and die cutting experience. To learn more, visit www.dura-fibre.com.

Welcome to our new client, **Alta Resources**. Alta Resources is a Neenah-based sales, IT and customer service outsourcing business, with operations in Wisconsin, Michigan, California and the Philippines.

We also welcome **Lakritz Furs** of Milwaukee. If you want to keep toasty warm this winter, they're the folks to see! They're located at 7912 West Appleton Avenue, Milwaukee.

Quick Links...

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