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Are You Media Crisis-Ready? CHLA October 22, 2007

The Interview:

- ❖ **Know your media BEFORE a crisis**
 - Type, e.g. broadcast, print, weekly, daily, news hour
 - Frequency
 - Distribution/audience
 - Market positioning, e.g. hard news, investigative, soft/leisure, trendy
 - Persona or style of interviewer

- ❖ **Determine the purpose for the interview**
 - Are you the best person?
 - Will you/your company benefit?

- ❖ **How can you make the interview successful**
 - What do you know
 - What do you need to know
 - What are your risks
 - What can you say
 - What can you add to best position the story for your company

- ❖ **When granting an interview you must offer**
 - Accuracy
 - Credibility
 - Honesty
 - Relevance
 - Timeliness

- Reliable information

❖ **Preparing for the interview**

- Gather ALL facts, positive and negative- meet with key team members, e.g. PR representatives, owners, senior management
- If you don't know the answer, say so! Do NOT guess or suggest.
- Review history of the incident or similar incidents
- Secure copies of relevant documents, e.g. permits, reviews, licenses
- Anticipate undesirable questions and answers
- Incorporate "bridging" statements to "spin" the story to your benefit
- Prepare a fact sheet, backgrounder about the hotel/resort
- Provide press kit, photography and b-roll on cd/dvd
- Identify key points to communicate, limiting to 2-3
- PRACTICE!

❖ **The Interview**

- Stick to the facts - do not guess. If you don't know the answer, offer to find out and get back promptly with an answer
- Be concise
- Be accurate
- Be honest
- Incorporate key messages
- Demonstrate appropriate concern, respect for subject(s)
- Be professional and friendly, as appropriate
- Broadcast Interviews: Carefully select the site for on-camera interview to provide the best (or at least neutral) vantage point for your company for the interview filming
- Print interviews: Consider time limits. Provide printed background materials

❖ **Post interview**

- Follow-up, as appropriate
- Do not request the journalist to provide you a clip of the interview



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The Interview Tips

- Speak slowly and without slang
- Avoid distracting mannerisms – keep your hands away from your face
- Check your physical appearance – are you clean shaven, dressed neatly, without flashy jewelry and suggestive dress
- Keep your eyes focused on the reporter
- Be concise
- Consider “sound bites” when speaking
- Avoid humor and flippancy
- Breathe deeply to retain composure *before* meeting with reporter
- Incorporate key points and repeat as often as possible
- Wait for the question – it is an interview!
- Do not speculate or answer hypothetical questions
- Tell the truth and only the truth
- Attempt to bridge negative questions to a more positive angle
- Know your facts/statistics
- Act as an authority, deserving of respect
- Never speak “off the record”
- Do not hesitate to refuse to answer questions that are too personal, compromising or leading – attempt to bridge them
- Prepare to answer difficult, anticipated questions
- Do not appear either too friendly or too argumentative
- Allow time for print journalists to record notes
- Do not assume broadcast journalists will include the entire interview (unless live) but recognize they will cut & paste the tapes just as print reporters will do with written notes
- Be prompt and considerate of journalist’s deadlines
- Be respectful and sympathetic to victims
- If you don’t know the answer – say so!
- Do not disclose confidential company information

- Do not lie, mislead, cover up or repeat quotes/hearsay of others
- Do not answer “no comment” – bridge to answer what you do know or can respond to
- Do not ask to approve the interview before airing or print
- Do maintain composure at all times



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***Suggestions to Help Create a Positive Influence
During a
Hotel/Resort Crisis***

Remember to:

- Feed the media beast
- Identify your key messages
- Communicate with your guests
- Work the lobby – be out front and visible
- Increase security
- Stage the press
- Distribute fact sheets & support materials
- Implement PR support on site
- Be timely
- Be honest
- Be candid
- Be careful
- Be consistent
- Be concise
- Be considerate

- DO THE RIGHT THING

Remember news reporters are

- Not your friend, nor your enemy
- Not to be feared
- Seeking the facts
- Always on deadline
- Highly competitive
- And always seeking the BIG story