



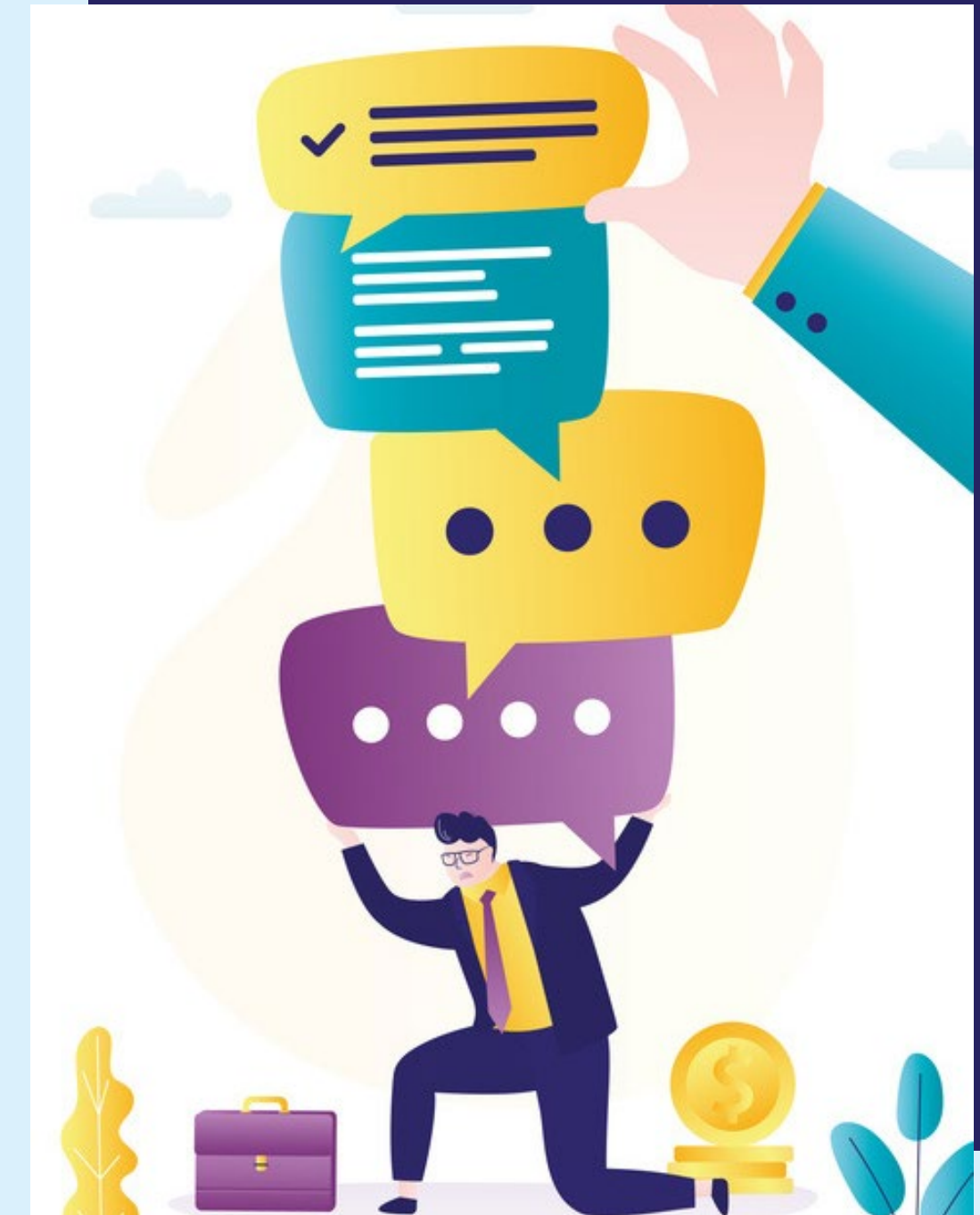
# BEYOND SERVICE

Why Crisis Communications Support  
Matters to Our Members



# What is crisis communications?


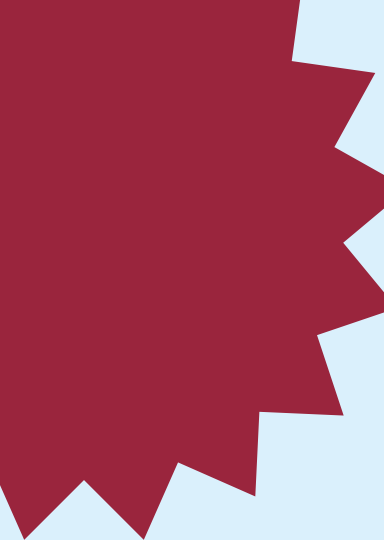
The sharing of information to address a situation that threatens public safety, finances and/or the reputation of an organization.



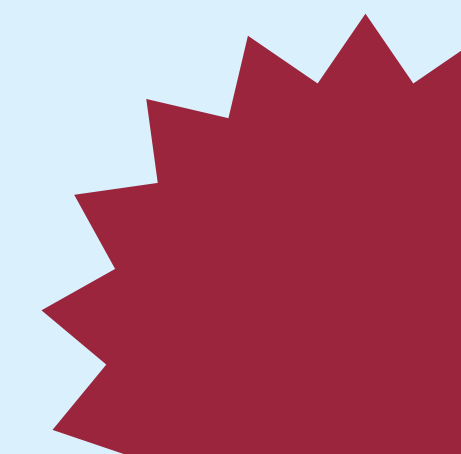
# Incidents requiring crisis comms help (obvious):

- Immediate crises (weather emergencies, shooter on the loose)
- Law enforcement officer behavior, officer -involved shooting (perception of excessive force)
- Bad behavior by a city employee/councilor/mayor
- City involvement in a claim dispute or a lawsuit, announcement of settlement
- Environmental concerns
- Announcement of service disruption (power grid, water plant)





# Incidents requiring crisis comms help (less obvious):

- Loss of major employer
  - Response to a questionable social media post
  - Preparation for a news media interview or a data request
  - Preparation for a public meeting
  - News media reaction to an incident or wars with reporters
  - Letter to the editor wars
  - Racial incident occurring in the city
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# Why do we provide crisis communications services?

- ✓ Valuable service our members need
- ✓ Strengthen our reputation as a trusted partner
- ✓ Protect and reinforce our members' image and credibility
- ✓ Make city officials look confident and in control
- ✓ Inform and educate
- ✓ Do no harm – avoid liability or further litigation



# How we connect with members



City directly  
reaches out to  
us

We reach  
out directly  
to city



Referred by  
LMC or  
LMCIT staff

Referred by  
a peer





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# During the fact-finding call

- Ask individual to describe the problem (even if you are familiar with details)
- If not clear, ask for any needed clarifications to help you understand the problem



# Additional questions to ask:

From a communications perspective, what are the city's primary concerns?

What is the city hearing so far from the media? From residents?

What communication tactics, if any, are being considered?

What kind of help from the League would be most useful?



# Next steps

- Describe what kind of comms help the League can provide.
- Work with the city to determine what kind of help might be most appropriate.
- Discuss specific needs for deliverables (additional info, timing, follow -up, etc.).
- Determine who else from LMC/LMCIT, if anyone, should be involved.
- Review the plan to ensure all are on board.



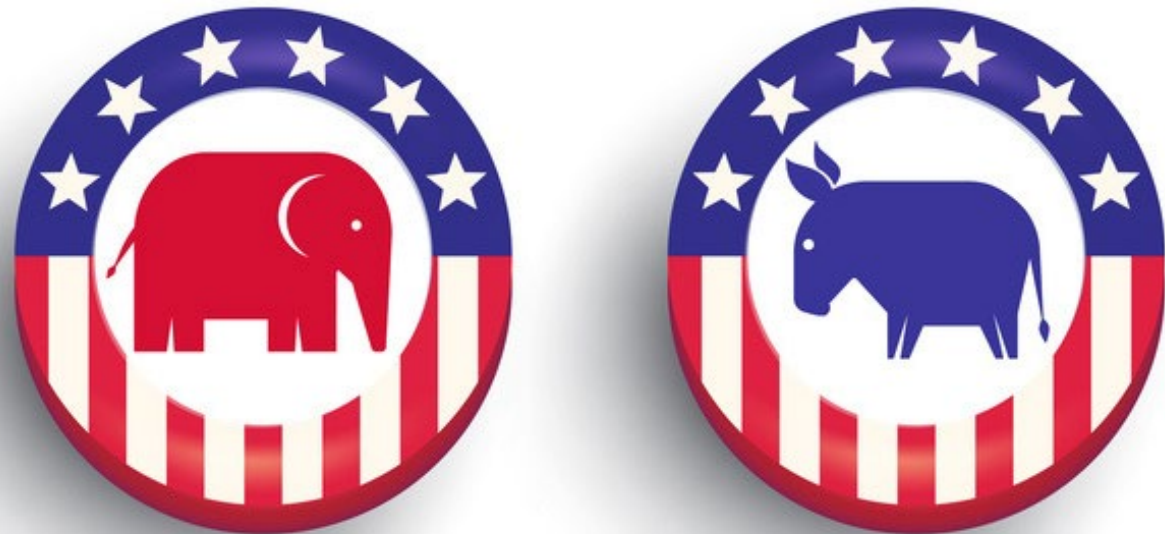
# Crisis Comms Tips



- Designate a sole spokesperson
  - Electeds make a good “consoler in chief”
- Develop key messages/talking points for every situation
- Do not assume or articulate blame
- Stick to the facts
- Be consistent
- A written statement might be a better choice than individual interviews or a press conference
- Find additional resources on LMC website: [lmc.org](http://lmc.org)



# Crisis communications is NOT



Political communication, or comm that benefits individuals involved in personal/professional spat



Legal advice. Refrain from trying to answer legal questions. Instead, consult with a qualified person.



# Random considerations

- The city decides what they want to do with our recommendations.
- It's our job to articulate the pros and cons of possible choices.
- Oftentimes, empathy is enough.
- Keep a poker face. If we remain calm and confident during conversation, city officials pick up positive and useful vibes. If we appear nervous or uncertain, then we lose credibility.
- Bring in the city attorney.
- We work very closely with LMCIT claims staff and legal team in matters that involve (or may ultimately involve) a claim or lawsuit.





# A f t e r m a t h

Check in with the city official at least once after the crisis has passed.



# Thank you!

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