

John Darrow

PR Tactics I

Final Project

Part 1

Penn State Allegations:

Penn States' first, and probably most costly mistake, was not acting when being told the actions Mr. Sandusky had supposedly done to young men. Once the public found out something so horrific had been kept secret by the university their reputation was a catastrophic downfall. Even having not said anything to any law enforcement about the allegations, which were brought to Penn States' attention earlier this spring, the university somehow never took the time to prepare any sort of strong rebuilding process prior to knowing their schools admired reputation was going to be in jeopardy and made a mockery of throughout the country.

I believe the largest public relations fail in this situation (other than the lack of preparation by the university officials) came from the "face" of Penn State in Joe Paterno and previous athletic director Tim Curley. When the university students and public heard the news that Mr. Paterno had known of the allegations it was total chaos. Many are still asking the question why someone so wise such as Coach Paterno, would not just go straight to authorities to get this man off of his staff. This essentially led to his departure from the football program after 46 years. Even with the lack of preparation, when allegations like this went public, Penn State should have hired a PR firm right away to analyze the situation and begin resolving it slowly with the necessary actions and apologies.

As much as I do not want to say this because of my strong support of Coach Paterno, I do think he is the key person who could have stopped this entire Penn State massacre. As human beings we cherish relationships with those who have earned a spot at our side with trust and honesty. This is the reason I personally believe Mr. Paterno could not go to the authorities which is what exactly was needed to bring the act seen by Mr. McQueary, a graduate assistant coach at the time, to justice. That was also Sandusky's first time being caught performing these allegations on a young boy. I think once Coach Paterno received the news he should have first gone to the police and then proceeded to go to the school board, president, or anyone he had to in order for this to go public because once you take a situation as horrific as this to the news it has to be dealt with, not kept quiet. I believe that would have ensured the safety for those who were assaulted by Jerry Sandusky in that 15-year period. Yes, it would have still created many questions about the program and school, but it also could have saved his job and the others that were terminated due to secrecy.

I agree with the comments in one of the articles I reviewed stating that the only positive thing that can come out of this situation is the full focus and attention on the matter by the communication of students. Penn State University has a PR crisis on their hands being viewed by the entire nation and those students are now getting "front row seats" on what not to do when a crisis occurs. Other than finally hiring a crisis team, no I do not think Penn State has done anything promptly to fix/rebuild the university's image. As for their reputation, I think they acted against everything that institution stands for. Penn State broke the honesty barrier towards the public that created an image of being liars and a dishonest school. From here everything must go upwards for Penn State if they want to retain a good reputation in the next five to ten years.

Honesty and full university participation in the Sandusky case will be crucial for the survival of the Nittany Lions.

Part 2

Nicetown University:

As Director of Media Relations, I would start to develop a plan in case what is being told to “Miss Y” is true. Whoever handles the public speaking portion of the school’s PR team should have a convincing, honest, and strong take on the topic to gain a positive reaction from our identified publics who need to be set at ease on the matter. Make sure everyone on the crisis team knows and executes their rolls in the event the claims are true and go public. Also, I would begin brainstorming on possible recovery actions for fully restoring “Nicetowns” image.

When addressing the media, I would make sure to state that the university is doing everything necessary to see that the situation is dealt with appropriately and efficiently because there’s no room for that behavior at our institution. Cancel “Camp for Kids” for the time being and re-evaluate every volunteer with a precise background check. Apologize to the people and families involved and to the university for the embarrassment. Depending on how many people come forward and cause the crisis to expand I would also probably be announcing Coach Xs’ extermination.

University of Nicetown

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Investigation Taking Place within Nicetown Baseball Program

Nicetown, IL - A press conference will be held at the University of Nicetown located at 2948 East Brother Street in Nicetown, IL to address the situation. The press conference will start at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 16, outside of Smiley Hall on campus.

Allegations toward a member of the University of Nicetown Baseball coaching staff are officially under investigation. A member of the university's baseball program is being accused of sending messages via Facebook to members of the teams "Camp for Kids" program encouraging them to take part in sexual contact.

At the University of Nicetown our goal is to help students acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes appropriate to their specific major and career objectives for the future.

For more information about the press conference, contact John Darrow at 608-513-8611.

10 Questions from the Press

1. Q: Are there only one person(s) under scrutiny at this time?

A: Currently yes

2. Q: Who is the individual involved?

A: "Coach X"

3. Q: Is the job of "Coach X" in jeopardy?

A: In these situations, you always must get all facts prior to making any sort of decisions but if coach is found guilty of these allegations then yes, we will consider finding a replacement.

4. Q: Who were the victims involved?

A: Members of our "Camp for Kids" program who have asked to remain anonymous at this time.

5. Q: Are you worried of what people will now consider when thinking of Nicetown U?

A: Of course, but that's why we are acting quickly so if a replacement needs to be made it can happen soon, so we can move on and rebuild.

6. Q: Have you spoken to "Coach X" today?

A: Yes, he knows what he is facing as well as the consequences that could follow if he doesn't cooperate.

7. Q: Have any of your players chosen to exit the team because of these matters?

A: Currently no, but depending on the allegations we do expect to meet with the team.

8. Q: Is there suspension going on currently?

A: Yes, I have asked that coach remains at home away from the team while we sort the situation out.

9. Q: Have you heard from any parents of the victims?

A: At this point and time I have not but we look forward to working with them to make sure the proper penalty is chosen.

10. Q: Do you see this affecting the baseball program in the future?

A: I do not. I expect the winning tradition will continue through "Coach X" or whomever we choose to replace him.