

**Proposal for a Crisis Communications Plan  
Submitted to Eastern Health Authority  
By Bristol Group Inc.**

**February 9, 2007**

## OUR EXPERIENCE

Bristol is pleased to submit this proposal to the Eastern Health Authority for the development of a crisis communications plan and subsequent crisis sensitivity training for your executive team.

For three decades – since Bristol was first established in St. John's – we have provided high quality strategic communications and corporate communications counsel to governments, businesses and non-profit organizations. Our company – which started as a small communications shop – now employs 140 communications professionals in offices across Atlantic Canada and provides strategic advice and professional services to national and international companies. Our sustained record of growth has resulted from an ever-expanding base of elite clients, and a strategic expansion of our communications services.

Today, we are now the strongest full-service marketing communications firm in Atlantic Canada. Recently we have also formed a formal business alliance with Hill and Knowlton, Canada's industry leader in public relations, public affairs and strategic communications.

Our client list is extensive. A sampling of our experience in the health sector includes:

- (Former) Health Care Corporation of St. John's
- Waterford Foundation
- Emergis
- Astra Zeneca
- IWK Health Centre
- NLNU
- Amgen
- Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection
- Heart and Stroke Foundation

At Bristol, we recognize that our ongoing success depends on leading edge thinking and client services. Our strength lies in our ability to anticipate and respond around-the-clock to our clients' needs. We currently hold responsibility for the provision of 24-hour emergency response to several clients including Newfoundland Transshipment Limited, Canship Uglan, EnCana, Halifax Shopping Center and Irving Oil.

As you know, what you do and how you behave in the first few hours of a crisis is critical to minimizing the damage done to your reputation and your organization. We work closely with clients to make sure your first response is the most appropriate one. We ensure your crisis communications messages are aligned with your business strategy.

Our professional crisis managers have experience handling any event or series of events that could seriously damage your corporate reputation. From environmental and airline disasters to public health and safety issues, ethical and legal issues, we've developed crisis management strategies, trained media spokespeople and provided on-site logistical assistance and ongoing counsel as the crisis unfolds.

Often, however, our most notable contribution is in those situations that never become crises. Our work in crisis preparedness - from the creation of crisis-ready Web sites and manuals, to providing on-site simulation training - ensures that when a crisis strikes, your organization can respond swiftly and with confidence.

It is also important to highlight that Bristol has the leading public relations practice in the province. We offer a full service media monitoring capacity which benefits our clients on a daily basis. We have first-hand access to all the media in Newfoundland and Labrador including the eight hours of open line radio daily. Our ability to quickly access this information means we always have our finger on the pulse of information.

We invest in the ongoing research required to monitor media trends and behaviors that impact crisis communications, and in the talent and equipment resources required to offer clients the best in crisis counsel and service. Through our alliance with Hill and Knowlton we hold regular forums to share and advance the industry's dominant crisis thought leadership practices.

We are also the creators of a local and relevant media training seminar. **In the Spotlight** is a program specially designed by Bristol consultants. We have had the privilege of training hundreds of local people, groups and corporations. This is a service that could be suitably adapted for Eastern Health in your on-going crisis training and preparation.

The team of professionals we are listing to work with the Eastern Health Authority is the core group of people you will come in contact with. Our Health team, led by Carolyn Chaplin, includes Cathy Dornan and Jo-anne Polak. We are extremely proud of the diverse experience that each one brings to the table.

Our team has successfully managed crises ranging from environmental disasters to public agencies and the health care sector. We know the considerations, sensitivities and players and this defines the difference between rapid response with knowledgeable counsel and a destructive first 60 minutes following a crisis that can break an organizations reputation.

Bristol would be honored to be selected as your communications partner for this project. We will work for you in a committed and dedicated way to ensure we meet your deadlines and your budgets.

## **OUR TEAM**

### **Carolyn Chaplin**

#### **Senior Public Relations Counsel**

Carolyn is the newest addition to the Bristol team bringing over a decade of national and provincial public affairs and marketing communications savvy. She began her career in Ontario working in the packaged goods industry and sports marketing before moving to government and serving as a Chief of Staff to an Ontario Cabinet Minister through four social and economic portfolios.

During her tenure in Queen's Park, Carolyn provided strategic advice to the Minister for Cabinet and Cabinet Committees including Social Policy, Super Build/Privatization and Statutory Business where she gained insight into health policy and the drug formulary. Known for her ability to navigate through tough situations and fix problem she was named a member of the Premier's crisis communications team for Walkerton. Carolyn's responsibilities also included issues management, policy and strategic communications planning and stakeholder relations with the pharmaceutical and health industry.

A native Newfoundlander, Carolyn moved to Newfoundland late 2003 to work as the senior communications advisor to the Minister of Health and Community Services. While in Health, Carolyn managed stakeholder relations, issues management, media relations; provided policy advice to the Minister and developed communications strategies to manage the province's challenges with OxyContin abuse, cancer clinics, health board restructuring, review of health services and budgetary issues during an era of fiscal restraint. She has worked closely with several pharmaceutical companies including Purdue Pharma, Amgen, Jansen-Ortho and Astra Zeneca.

Prior to joining Bristol, Carolyn held the post of Senior Director of Communications for Executive Council with communications oversight of all social policy portfolios and Finance. She also led government's issues management response and developed communications strategies for Budget, Auditor General's reports and all Access to Information issues.

Carolyn holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Memorial University and a Bachelor of Public Relations (Honors) from Mount Saint Vincent University.

### **Cathy Dornan, ABC**

#### **Managing Director and Senior Public Relations Counsel**

As Senior Public Relations Counsel & Managing Director, Cathy manages our client's public relations needs in St. John's. Cathy contributes significantly to the public relations leadership role Bristol enjoys in this region. In more than a decade of client service with the firm, Cathy has provided strategy and counsel on many of the major public relations issues in Newfoundland and Labrador during that time, earning her the trust and respect of colleague and client alike.

Cathy's experience in crisis communications is extensive, ranging from managing the media and communications during the 9/11 crisis at St. John's International Airport, the management of an oil tanker incident involving a fatality, labour crisis and valuable experience in crisis preparation and emergency preparedness.

Currently she advises such clients as Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, Canship Uglad, IOC, Loblaws and Newfoundland Transshipment Limited. Cathy is an accredited business communicator (ABC) and is a member of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).

**Jo-Anne Polak**  
**Senior Vice President, Hill and Knowlton**  
**National Practice Director Crisis Communications**

Jo-Anne Polak is the National Practice Director for Crisis Communications for Hill and Knowlton Canada, a position she has held for over 10 years. In that capacity, Jo-Anne provides strategic communications support for all H&K's clients involved in risk management, issues management, crisis preparedness, crisis training, and of course strategic communications for clients in crisis. She also manages an infrastructure of crisis professionals in 9 Canadian markets. Jo-Anne is a core member of H&K's International crisis team.

Jo-Anne is one of Canada's leading crisis communications professionals. She has handled dozens of crisis for H&K's national and international clients. She succeeds because she continuously reinvents the offering to meet the needs of a rapidly changing communications environment. She brings experience and sensitivity to each assignment and ensures each organization is in a position to put their best foot forward under often difficult circumstances.

Jo-Anne's diverse background—in media, government, corporate and agency worlds—combines to provide a unique and valuable perspective on all elements of communications.

Jo-Anne began her career as a Political assistant at Queen's Park during the Davis era. She followed that by joining two communications agencies, with one of her clients being the Ottawa Rough Riders of the Canadian Football League (CFL). The team hired Jo-Anne as General Manager in 1988 making her the first female GM in professional sports history. All of this experience provided her with the skills to effectively deal with crisis. Politics provided an issues management sensibility early in her career. Running a very high-profile professional football team that was on the verge of bankruptcy during the CFL's fragile years gave her personal exposure to managing crisis in the media's glare. This foundation has evolved with the management of dozens of crisis since arriving at H&K 12 years ago.

Jo-Anne has received several awards including the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) President's Award and The Ottawa Citizen Guardsman Award presented annually to the individual who has done the most to elevate Ottawa's profile on a national level.

## OUR APPROACH

Our approach to crisis is changing dramatically. Because of the profoundly changing media landscape, people are not getting their information the same way they did 18 months ago, and this is certain to evolve further over the coming 18 months. Traditional thinking regarding information dissemination in crisis must be challenged, and Bristol understands the urgency of getting this right. Our methodology of information dissemination is based on a simple principle. How do we effectively reach the people who matter, quickly?

Crisis communications is simply strategic communications when the stakes are high. Simply put, it is about creating the right story, then getting it to people.

### Key Messages

Telling the right story is the foundation of success. The messages have to be plausible, supported with substance and compelling. We follow a simple CAP formula to ensure the organization is putting its best foot forward. The first message is always *Concern or empathy*. This demonstrates the organization understands the seriousness of the situation, giving credibility to the source. The second message is *Action*, which outlines what it is you are doing to address the problem. This could range from full cooperation with authorities, to conducting an internal investigation. This action message instills confidence that the organization is capable of managing the problem. The final message is *Perspective*, allowing the organization to put the problem in context.

Once the messages have been determined, they can be turned into a series of documents which can be used to reach the various audiences. These documents range from a news release or media statement, to talking points used for conversations with key people.

### Stakeholder Outreach

The second step is getting the story to the people who matter. Media relations in crisis are important, but Bristol believes the days of using the media as the primary vehicle to reach important audiences are long gone. First, the number of media outlets has exploded making it more difficult to reach people. Traditional television, print and radio are being augmented by on-line immediate delivery of breaking news, and blog dialogue which journalists are turning to for information. There are many other factors changing the media landscape, least of which is intense competition for advertising dollars making the need to be first, more important at times than the need to be accurate.

There is no need for any organization to make media relations the primary channel for information dissemination. Each organization has direct channels to influential stakeholders. In a crisis, these stakeholders must not be ignored and therefore messages must be delivered directly. Bristol firmly believes media relations must be conducted, but in concert with aggressive stakeholder relations.

We work to create comprehensive stakeholder maps. These charts identify every stakeholder, their contact information, their perspective on the issue at hand, a simple strategy to reach them, a list of deliverables required and assignment of responsibility. This chart can be completed very quickly and ensures everyone is being considered.

### **Engaging with our partner – our client**

Our approach to understanding the environment and objectives of this assignment is consistent with Bristol's 30-year philosophy – **building actions and strategies on a base of credible and reliable knowledge**. As part of our knowledge-gathering process, client engagement is critical to understanding the objectives and directing information needs. We propose to conduct a one-day “Deep Think” session with your senior team. These sessions enable us to work with clients, asking questions, reviewing information, challenging thinking (yours and ours) and setting priorities. At the end of the session the objectives and next steps are clearly articulated and agreed upon before moving forward.

Moving forward, we would customize the Crisis Communications Plan to the unique circumstances that would affect an emergency response at Eastern Health Authority. This would involve a comprehensive review of your current pandemic communications plans, and extensive liaison with your team.

The Crisis Communications Plan would spell out how Eastern Health would meet public and stakeholder expectations during the evolving stages of a crisis. It would underline Eastern Health's commitment to communicating openly and honestly with internal and external audiences during a crisis.

Bristol's Crisis Communications Plan for Eastern Health would provide a clear, detailed outline of the appropriate communications response to any incident facing the organization. The plan would include (but not limited to):

- A description of the Crisis Communications team and the roles and responsibilities of personnel in that group along with their contact information;
- A comprehensive stakeholder map identifying key stakeholders, their contact information, their perspective on the issue at hand, a simple strategy to reach them;
- A Functional Organizational Chart and information flow chart that would outline personnel assignments during a crisis;
- Guidelines for establishing the seriousness of the incident or emergency;
- General key messages;
- A description of the communications responses that are appropriate to the seriousness of any incident; and
- An outline of a post-crisis evaluation process

Following completion of the plan, it would be necessary to take your primary communications response team and members of your senior executive team through a workshop. This session would act as a prerequisite to any future simulations that you might chose to institute. It would also create an internal understanding of the contents of the plan and its importance

## **TIMING AND BUDGET**

Bristol anticipates it will require four-to-six weeks to complete this initiative. The cost for the development and production of a Crisis Communications Plan, combined with a subsequent internal training session, would be [REDACTED]

Bristol can also discuss with you, at a future date, any ongoing support you might need as part of your on-going crisis preparedness plans.