Alan Jay Zaremba, **Crisis Communication: Theory and Practice**, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2010, 245 pp., $51.03 (hardcover).

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For organizations operating in today's global market, effective crisis communication is crucial. Hardly a day or week passes when we do not read or hear about an organizational crisis. The media are a constant reminder that organizations are not immune to the plethora of crises that could befall a company due to both human error and natural disasters. Some colleges and universities now offer undergraduate and graduate courses in crisis management and communication; however, despite its relevance, few textbooks have been published on the topic. Recently, Alan Jay Zaremba wrote an invaluable text, *Crisis Communication: Theory and Practice*, offering students an introduction to the discipline and an understanding of what is meant by "effective crisis communication."

The textbook consists of nine chapters that focus on several significant topics. These include crisis preparation, response strategies, team effectiveness, and communication strategies. The opening chapter provides a general overview of crisis communication. Specific truths relevant to crisis communication are reviewed, and a brief preview of forthcoming chapters is provided. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth analysis of the term "crisis," by noting the definitions of several scholars within the field of crisis management and communication. Using those definitions as a foothold, the author develops his own definition of a crisis. The chapter also explores some of the myths associated with crisis communication. Toward the end of the chapter, the author offers an exhaustive list of terms frequently used in crisis communication, which should prove useful for both students and practitioners.

Theories associated with crisis communication are examined in Chapter 3. The author distinguishes between theory and law, and then introduces six communication theories and their associations with crisis communication. Throughout the chapter, Zaremba outlines the theories, notes their relationships to crisis communication, and presents major components undergirding the theories and case applications for principles presented in them. The author's work in this area should be commended; however, much more attention should have been given to the theory of human relations. As presented, it provides a myopic view of the theory, at best. Adding a separate section on human relations might have provided a more holistic view of the theory.

Chapter 4 focuses on the importance of crisis planning by examining several important issues, such as maintaining legitimacy, being proactive versus reactive, globalization, and effective communication during a crisis. Although the chapter does provide valuable insight into how points such as these are central to crisis preparation, more attention could have been given to addressing the "steps" for
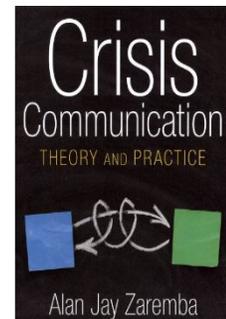
crisis planning. The author provides a brief section on the steps for effective crisis planning, but much more is needed for students seeking experience and those interested in crafting crisis-management and communication plans for organizations.

Along with effective crisis planning, students need to know how to appropriately respond in the event of an organizational crisis. Chapter 5 provides a comprehensive review of response strategies that may be employed in the event of a crisis. Using the theory of image restoration, along with the image-restoration approaches presented in literature by Benoit and Coombs, the chapter offers a detailed discussion of each strategy and its application with a specific company or industry. Questions are posed within many of the strategies, which allows greater comprehension of the material. The chapter concludes by providing some general concerns in responding to a crisis.

Chapter 6 explores the ethical dimensions of effective crisis communication. The author addresses a number of different topics in this area, including ethical behavior and legal decision-making, understanding transparency and ambiguity during a crisis, honesty versus deviance, and fallacious arguments. The chapter allows students of crisis communication to perceive the significance of open and honest communication in the event of a crisis. Lastly, this chapter equips students with the ethical knowledge and tools to consider when communicating to multiple constituencies about a crisis.

Toward the end of the text, Chapter 7 covers the role of teams prior to and during a crisis. This chapter does an excellent job of covering key categories, such as team conflict, cohesiveness, decision-making, and leadership. Closely related to leadership is the selection and role of the spokesperson in the event of a crisis. Chapter 8 is devoted to ensuring the effectiveness of a spokesperson during a crisis. While some crisis communication texts scarcely cover this topic, readers of this text will find a vast array of topics ranging from anxiety concerns, speaking styles, delivery, and so forth. Chapter 9 concludes the text by differentiating crisis from risk communication, recapping the significance of crisis communication, and encouraging effective leadership during a crisis.

Throughout the text, the author provides multiple exercises for students to apply the principles presented in each section; this not only allows for greater understanding and comprehension, but also strengthens the learning curve of the material. Likewise, at the end of each chapter, the author provides a "practitioner's perspective" on crisis communication, which allows individuals in the field the opportunity for commentary and opinion. Also, it should be noted that the author does an extremely good job of gathering worthy sources to validate many of his claims presented in each chapter; students will find these sources to be valuable reference points in class discussions or in preparing for advanced coursework in crisis communication. Finally, there are various discussion questions that are pivotal for students interested in this field of study.

This text is a nice contribution to the study of crisis communication. It is suitable for upper-level undergraduates and graduate students interested in the study of crisis communication and management. It would also be a welcome addition to the library of anyone interested in pursuing this line of study.