

MAY

SOBELUTIONS

2012

NEWS! NEWS!

Sobel + Firestorm® = The Difference Between a ‘Disruption’ and a ‘Disaster’



Suzy Rhulen Loughlin
Executive VP & Chief
Administrative Officer

We are pleased to announce that we have added an invaluable asset to our camp crisis response team. Effectively immediately, Firestorm will act as our crisis communication and management experts. And as you see when you read the brief summary from Suzy Rhulen Loughlin that follows, they have precisely the camp expertise to get the job done!

“Our camp expertise begins in 1934 when my grandfather, Max Rhulen, started the Rhulen Agency. The Rhulen Agency, working with agents like Sobel, built the largest insurance program for camps in the country and assisted camp owners in managing their specific risks and exposures.

After spending decades in the insurance industry defending and managing thousands of claims and crises as attorneys and insurance executives, I, along with my brother Harry Rhulen and Jim Satterfield, founded Firestorm Solutions, LLC in 2005.

Firestorm® is the nation’s leader in crisis management, vulnerability analysis/threat assessment, and business continuity. **Firestorm empowers people to manage risk and crises.** Firestorm renders these services through its experienced staff and Expert Council, with extensive skills and experience in crisis communications & response, grief counseling & psychology, security, epidemiology & communicable illness, social media risk, media management, and much more.

We created Firestorm in order to help businesses like yours prepare before disaster strikes, thereby mitigating or preventing the impacts to life, reputation, brand, property and your bottom line, and also to provide immediate, insightful, and targeted responses following a disaster. Over the years we’ve learned that the difference between a disruption and a disaster rests on having a crisis management plan in place. While you as a camp owner/director can’t predict when a problem will occur, you can predict the type of incidents that are possible. Once identified, you can plan for them, train on the response, and be ready to protect your campers, staff and reputation when the time comes.

Today, you need to be able to engage quickly, as crises are magnified due to the instant transmittal of information and news. A fire, a drowning, sex abuse, an episode of bullying— can be transmitted instantly in myriad ways: cell phone, TV, radio, print media, social media – you know them all!

So how can you best prepare for the summer season?

PREDICT. PLAN. PERFORM.®

- **PREDICT:** Every camp owner needs to do a comprehensive analysis of the exposures they face at their camp. In other words, what can go wrong?
- **PLAN:** Then, there needs to be an appropriate plan developed for what the response will be to each event. The plan needs to include who needs to be notified, what the messaging is that each party will receive, who will deliver the messages and how.
- **PERFORM:** Everyone needs to be trained—campers, staff- as everyone has a role in a disaster or crisis. The camp owner needs to identify a spokesperson and make sure that that person has been media trained as well.

When Firestorm responded to the shootings at Virginia Tech, by the time we arrived, there were 140 satellite trucks and over 1500 reporters. The school was completely unprepared for this type of onslaught. The school, like every other entity caught in this type of situation, believed “*it can’t happen here.*” Any time anyone catches themselves saying that, they should take a step back. That is what we call *disaster denial*. The reality is unfortunately, yes it can.

What Should You *Not* Do?

- *Don’t panic.* Don’t try to make decisions which are outside of your pre-established plan.
- *Do not make any statements* to families, law enforcement, campers, staff, etc. without appropriate assistance and direction from Sobel/Firestorm. Much of what you hear in the first 24 hours following an event *will turn out to be wrong.*
- *Do not speak to the press.* You do not have to respond to them on their schedule. You can ask for their deadlines and if appropriate a timely response will be given. We can teach you how to handle this situation. Remember, in today’s world, everything you say is permanent and instantly available to everyone. We have a saying in Firestorm- - “*When you are explaining, you are losing.*” You can’t explain your way out of the situation.

In the coming weeks and months, in conjunction with Sobel Affiliates, we will have free webinars that will help assist you in this process. If you are interested in attending such an on line webinar, please let your Sobel Account Team know.

Sobel and Firestorm are working together to make this camp season a lot more enjoyable for everyone, and give our camp directors a little more reason to sleep comfortably at night. We are available to 24/7/365.”



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