

Diploma Unit 2.2 Planning Assignment (issued – September 2007)

Aims: to encourage students to demonstrate their ability to apply planning theory acquired in Unit 2.2 to practical public relations activities

Objectives: to produce an action plan and rationale for a major organisation facing a crisis addressing key issues and developing a strategy for restoring reputation for the longer term.

Scenario: you are the newly appointed Director of Communication for the world's leading sportswear manufacturer, **Nice**. Your company has recently been under fire in the national and international media about low pay and poor working conditions in the factories manufacturing your products in developing countries around the world.

Your team has been handling the criticism well and the media is starting to focus its attention on other manufacturers of fashion clothing. Other sportswear manufacturers are highlighting their ethical manufacturing credentials.

On your third day at work you receive the following email:

Dear Bob,

Congratulations on the new job!

The good news - we have been paired together in this weekend's veterans' golf tournament and the weather is set fair. Now for the bad news. We have been contacted by someone calling himself "a representative of all the factory workers in the world currently paid low wages by Nice to make sports shoes". He claims that the performance sports footwear worn by your celebrity sports endorsers is hand made, personally fitted and bears no technical resemblance to similar products that you sell to the public. He says that we are the only news organisation he has contacted to date.

We have checked this out confidentially with some of our sports agent contacts and have found it to be true. Fernando Torres of Liverpool FC in the UK and Adriano Luiz of Shakhtar Donetsk in the Ukraine are two of the major players affected.

There is no way I can let this story drop, so we will be leading the evening news bulletins with it this evening from 21.00hrs EST.

I hope you can sort something quickly. Sorry about this Bob, but you know how it is...

Alan Foster
Editor-in-Chief
Cloud News Network

You are required to provide:

- A step-by-step plan to manage communication during this crisis, providing a clear list of actions in order of priority and a summary of content for any written communication outputs (e.g. internal staff memos, letters to representatives of celebrity endorsers, response to Editor-in-Chief, Cloud News Network)
- A proposal to establish an issues management group, to monitor opportunities and threats, build and maintain the brand's reputation in the longer term.
- A rationale for each step of your approach.