



### Leading Through a Crisis



I spoke at the Colorado Business Protection Summit last Friday which focused on helping businesses create contingency plans in case of a sudden evacuation or other emergency.

As with other parts of the country, fires, floods, and natural disasters have emphasized the necessity for people to analyze what they need to do in crisis situations.

During any difficult situation, whether caused by Mother Nature or a hostile business takeover or a company reorganization, the need for strong leadership is critical. A lack of leadership during a crisis that is glaringly evident.

How can we best lead through a crisis?

First, acknowledge the problem. Make sure that you, as the person in charge, understand the real issues and the true nature of the crisis.

Second, articulate the possible courses of action and potential outcomes so everyone understands what is at stake. Ask the "what if?" questions and get factual answers.

Third, calmly figure out your strategy with your team. Ask for input. Map out what you need to do. Look at your policies. Have you already planned for this situation? Has

### Mary's Updates

Today is Veteran's Day. Please take a moment to honor a veteran. Hire one.

The latest issue of National Speakers Association's Speaker Magazine featured veterans. I contributed an article called, "10 Military Principles to Grow Your Business." [Read it here!](#)



### Mary's Book of the Month



[Privacy Means Profit: Prevent Identity Theft and Secure You and Your Bottom Line](#)

by John D. Sileo

Target, Home Depot, the government's health care website, and thousands of other homes and businesses have had their data hacked. Smart businesses think defensively when it comes to safeguarding their systems and information. John Sileo shows us how.

One of the misconceptions I had was that hackers would not want my information

someone else already worked through what needs to happen?

Fourth, keep your family and team informed. Provide information as soon as it is available. People crave information during times of uncertainty. They want to know that you, their leader, know what is going on and that you have a plan to handle whatever happens. You have to support and protect your employees and that means giving them good information when you know it.

Fifth, implement your crisis communication action plan. Have a plan to provide communication updates when normal channels maybe disrupted. Have backups. During 9/11 and the Colorado and California fires, cell phone coverage went down, and people worried for hours without news.

The time to create a business communication plan is before the crisis, not during. The time to learn to use Twitter is not when you are trying to figure out if your house is in an evacuation area. Communication methods are only effective if they are already in place and people know where to go to learn more.

Do you have a way to get information quickly to everyone in your organization? The military uses recall rosters and telephone trees. You can use a Twitter hashtag, Facebook notifications, or an email macro, but whatever you decide to use, it has to be a method that reaches your people. You can also hold briefings, whether in person or online, such as a Google Hangout, Skype, or a teleconference. Have a way for people to ask questions and get reliable answers.

When communicating to your employees or to external audiences, be specific, stick to the facts, be honest, and be timely. We just saw this happen with Virgin Galactic's accident. Sir Richard Branson, the face of the company, acknowledged the loss when he said, "We are grieving." He said they did not know what happened (he appeared honest) and he promised to investigate the problem. He gave people his message and he did it right away. If you are not in control of your message, who is?

Leaders respond to crises right away. Providing information, such as "your neighborhood is in an evacuation area" a few hours too late renders it useless. Being timely and proactive enhances trust.

Leaders know that people need them the most during a crisis. Great leaders step up to control the reactions, reduce uncertainty, and solve problems.

*Please share your feedback on this article on [my blog](#).*

## How Can We Help?

because I am too small. Wrong. Hackers know that small businesses and homes often don't take protective steps that large organizations do, and that makes us more vulnerable. We all have to think like a big company to guard against security breaches in the cyber world.

Helpful in *Privacy Means Profit* are the checklists. Pages 61 and 70 have checklists for those of us who thought we were doing everything right. Chapter 16 is an entire system of checklists to create a privacy plan that works.

Helpful tips heading into the shopping of the holidays include only buying online from reputable, well-known merchants, keep identifying documents out of the glove compartment in the car (identity thieves prey on busy parking lots) purge your wallet of your social security card and other cards that may contain your identifiable data, and turn off the WiFi and locations functions on your phone.

While it is sad that we have to think about identity theft as we head into the holidays, John Sileo gives us a terrific resource and tools to protect our businesses and homes.

## Twitter and Social Media

Did you know you can opt out of Facebook ads? If I "like" a business Facebook page, then Facebook can show my profile photo and a tagline that says something along the lines of "Your friend Mary likes XYZ! Check out the XYZ Facebook page to learn about our latest special."

To block Facebook from doing this, go to the "Ads" section of your "Account Settings." Go to the section that says "Ads and Friends," click edit and select "No One" where it says "Pair my social actions with ads."

## Pet Tip

Sanitize or replace pet beds! Just like human beds, pet beds need cleaning and replacing. If the padding is too flat or the fabric cannot be cleaned anymore, it is time for a new bed. I am always amazed by how dogs head right to the new dog beds and plop down for a nap.



We don't assume, so here is a brief list of what Productive Leaders do:

1. Motivational business keynote and breakout speaking for conferences, conventions, banquets, and events
2. Emcee corporate events and fundraisers
3. One-on-one business consulting
4. Strategic business planning

Call Mary at 719-357-7360 for a free initial consultation.

## Thank You for Reading this Newsletter



Know anyone planning a conference who needs a motivational leadership speaker, or a business that needs a push forward? Please [contact me](#). I greatly appreciate your referrals!

*Mary C. Kelly*

### Connect with Mary



---

*Would you like to use any of these articles in your newsletter or website? You can, as long as you include this at the end: With over twenty years of leadership experience and a diverse background leading teams in the U.S. and abroad, Dr. Mary Kelly makes leadership a reality for all levels of an organization. Register for her free newsletters at [www.ProductiveLeaders.com](http://www.ProductiveLeaders.com)*

---