LUR
LIGHT UP RACING

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE: BRIDGING & MESSAGING

Purpose:

Help spokespeople and industry supporters confidently navigate difficult interviews or public questions by bridging back to facts, empathy, and progress.

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CORE MESSAGING FORMULA

Every strong message in a crisis should contain four elements:

1. Empathy: Acknowledge emotion and concern
2. Facts: Use real data, not vague generalities
3. Responsibility: Show accountability (even if indirect)
4. Progress: Explain what's changing or improving

Example:
"We completely understand why people are upset; we are too We've already implemented [specific action], and we're working with [stakeholder or expert] to ensure this doesn't happen again by [insert folllow-up]."

BRIDGING PHRASES

- *That's a valid concern, and it's something we take very seriously. What we're doing about it is…*
- *While I can't comment on specifics until we have all the information, what I can tell you is…*
- *What's important to remember is…*
- *Let's not lose sight of the fact that…*
- *That's part of a much larger commitment we've made to…*
- *What we know for sure is…*
- *I understand where that perception comes from, but what's also true is…*
- *Let's take a step back and look at the bigger picture…*
- *That's one way to look at it — but what I see is…*
- *We hear that, and here's how we're addressing it…*

KEY MESSAGE PROMPTS

- *Our top priority is always the welfare of the horse.*
- *Here's what we've already done to improve this issue…*
- *We're working with independent vets and regulators to…*
- *This is about making progress, and here's how we're doing that…*
- *The data shows we are heading in the right direction, even though there's more work to do…*
- *We know there's still work to be done, and that's exactly what we're focused on, by…*
- *This has sparked important change, and that's something we're committed to driving further…*
- *We don't shy away from criticism; we use it to be better by…*
- *Every horse matters, and we've implemented systems to ensure they're protected, such as…*
- *Our actions speak louder than our words, here's what we've already done:*

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WHAT ARE SHARED VALUES?

- Shared values are 3–5x more important than competence in building trust
- We believe people who believe what we believe
- The public doesn't want information first, they want alignment with their expectations

Industry issue	Shared public value	How to connect
Racehorse safety	Love and protection of animals	*We love these horses too, and that's why we…*
Aftercare	Responsibility beyond sport	*Their career might be over, but our care isn't…*
Fatalities	Preventable harm	*Even one is too many, here's what's changing…*
Transparency	Honesty and accountability	*We're working hard to ensure progress is made. Here's what we know…*

VALUE-FIRST MESSAGE TEMPLATES

Empathy + Alignment + Fact:

We understand why this issue matters, it matters to us too. That's why **[action or fact]**.

'Someone like you' approach:

As riders, as owners, as people who love animals, this hits hard. And that's exactly why we've done **[reform/change]**.

Transparency + Trust:

We don't expect blind trust, we expect questions. That's why we're making everything public and backing it with independent data.

Progress with shared belief:

Like you, we want a world where **[ideal scenario]**. We're not there yet, but here's how we're moving toward it…

CRAFTING A VALUES-ALIGNED MESSAGE

Step	Prompt
Identify the public value	*What does the audience care about emotionally?*
State your shared belief	*What do we both want to be true?*
Show how your action reflects that value	*What are we doing because of that belief?*
Add proof or example	*What can we point to that backs this up?*

REFRAMING TOUGH ISSUES THROUGH VALUES

Concern	Fact-only reply (weak)	Values-first reframing (strong)
Why do horses die?	Fatalities are rare and declining.	*It's heartbreaking, and that's why we've invested in safety reform.*
Whips are cruel.	They're padded and don't cause pain.	*No one wants to see a horse mistreated. That's why rules have changed.*
They only care about money.	The industry generates jobs and revenue.	*While horse racing is an enormous contributer to the economy through employment and investment, most people do this for love, not money, and the care shows.*
They go to slaughter.	We have rehoming programs.	*Every horse deserves a life after racing - and we're making that happen.*