

SAIS Fundamentals Conference

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Navigating the Minefield of Reputational Risk

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**What we'll cover ...
(And what we most certainly won't cover.)**

PART ONE:
LET'S TALK ABOUT
REPUTATIONAL RISK

**Different business functions define
“crises” through different lenses.**

Reputational crises may be the widest.

- **What are NOT *necessarily* a crisis?**

- Negative media coverage
- Rumors and misinformation
- Noise

Simply put,

Reputational crises negatively affect the attitudes and behaviors among our stakeholders.

PART TWO:
THE MOMENT IN WHICH
WE FIND OURSELVES

*We are in a moment of
extraordinary cultural
divisiveness.*



Why would we expect our school communities to be any different?



We must adapt to the new cultural landscape within our school community.

We must work purposefully to rebuild trust.



PART THREE:
PRINCIPLES FOR
COMMUNICATING
IN THE MOMENT

(Re)define success.

□ What are NOT indicators of success?

- Silence
- Screaming louder than those appearing to be at odds with the school
- “Getting ahead of it”
- “Telling our side of the story”

□ **What are indicators of success?**

- A community that converges around a mission, even if we disagree on the tactics
- A clearly defined channel for raising concerns and knowing they will be heard
- Demonstrated, intentional listening
- A Board steadfastly focused on governance (not one that serves as an appellate body)

Know our audience.

- **Success is sensitive moments is determined by the strength of our relationships**
 - Positive
 - Negative
 - Ambivalent
 - Nonexistent

□ **There is no such thing as “the general public.”**

- Board of Trustees
- Faculty/staff
- Students
- Families
- Alumni
- Prospective Families
- Donors/prospective donors
- Elected officials
- ... and more.

Separate noise from impact.

- **Noise is not impact**

- When internal discourse attracts external attention, our only obligation is to our community.
- Resist the urge to swing at every pitch.

**Answer logic with logic
and emotion with emotion.**

Lead messaging with mission.

Emphasize outcomes, not tactics.

Demonstrate listening.

How inviting is this?

“We value the feedback of our community and we stand ready to listen. We encourage you to reach out to us with questions or concerns, or to email Feedback@LukachAcademy.edu.”

**Use disruptive channels
of communication.**



Flip it ...

***Could that email
have been a meeting?***

**Harness the power of the
unanticipated phone call.**

**Speak to individuals,
not coalitions.**

**Set precedent.
Limit debate.**

**Be decisive.
When you reach an impasse,
make the difficult choice.**

Thank you!

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Session Evaluation

*Scan the QR code or go to
www.sais.org/23FCcl
to complete the session evaluation.*

