Joseph M. Klinker

Crisis Management Consultant and Trainer | Former U.S. Coast Guard Lieutenant Commander

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SUMMARY

I spent 12 years in the U.S. Coast Guard on the hardest days people have. I started on overnight watches in Miami command centers, directing boats and aircraft and talking scared boaters and families through it on the radio and phone. Later I moved to the podium, helping the public understand what was happening while it was still happening: Deepwater Horizon, Hurricane Sandy, the Boston Marathon bombings and the 2014 Ebola response. Since 2015 I've helped organizations get ready before something goes wrong: writing their crisis communication plans, playbooks and response templates, and training the people who will be in the middle of it. My approach fits in two lines. Know the facts. Tell the truth well.

EXPERIENCE

Crisis Management Consultant and Trainer

Jun 2015 to Present

CommPrep, Orlando, FL

- Founded CommPrep to help first responder, government and nonprofit organizations get ready before a crisis: crisis plans, practice exercises and crisis communications training.
- Write crisis communication plans, playbooks and response templates such as holding statements, built on the plans I wrote in the Coast Guard.
- Trained military public information officers in crisis communications (2015 to 2017), and spoke to crisis communicators in Boston, Orlando and the Space Coast, including PRSA Orlando and PRSA Space Coast.
- Led external communications and public outreach for the Diocese of Orlando as a client (2016 to 2017). I use AI tools every day to draft, edit and check the work.

Public Affairs Officer and Chief of Media Relations

Dec 2010 to Jun 2015

U.S. Coast Guard, Boston, MA and Washington, DC

- At Coast Guard Headquarters I ran media relations for the whole service and advised senior leaders on what to say, when to say it and when to hold.
- Lead public information officer for Hurricane Sandy, part of the Boston Marathon bombings joint information center, and led the media side of the 2014 Ebola response. During Sandy I pushed us to explain why a reopened port matters: fuel at gas stations and food on shelves.
- Press aide to Admiral Thad Allen, National Incident Commander for Deepwater Horizon (2010), running his press briefings alongside the White House and DHS.
- The Coast Guard's chief crisis communications trainer. Wrote its Northeast cruise ship crisis communications plan, a template launched after the Costa Concordia grounding, and developed its first national-level mass rescue crisis communications plan. Taught corporate communication at Boston University (2013 to 2014).

Command Center Duty Officer and Spokesperson

Nov 2003 to Jul 2009

U.S. Coast Guard, Miami, FL

- Stood overnight and around-the-clock watches at Sector Miami and the District Seven Command Center, directing boats and aircraft on more than 1,500 search and rescue cases. That's where I learned to keep the facts straight and get the right information to the person who can act on it.
- Helped plan waterside security for a 2006 presidential visit to Miami and coordinated the statewide response to a cruise ship bomb threat.
- Wrote incident reports and operational summaries and trained new watchstanders.
- As Sector spokesperson, got safety information out through 14 hurricanes and handled media after the Chalk's Ocean Airways Flight 101 crash.

SKILLS

Crisis Communications | Crisis Communication Plans | Crisis Management and Planning | Crisis Communications Training | Media Relations | Public Speaking | Incident Reporting | Watchstanding (24/7 Operations) | Radio Communication

EDUCATION

MA, Journalism and Mass Communication 2010

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

BA, Philosophy 2003

Belmont Abbey College