

March 1987

**TO: Executive Addressed**

**FR: James E. Lukaszewski, APR  
Chairman**

**RE: Bad News: How to Assess the Damage; How to Make It Worse**

#### BAD NEWS CORRECTION CHECKLIST:

If you determine that you've been wronged in a news story, you must decide what to do about it. Your decision should be based on the answers to the following questions:

- Is it important enough to correct or would a correction amount to nit-picking?
- Just how damaging is the charge, criticism, or error?
- Will a correction simply give greater visibility to an opposite point of view?
- Is a correction worth a restatement of the entire problem, including the error, to new audiences?
- Is it possible to reach the identical audience originally exposed to the error?
- Did you respond promptly and accurately to the media inquiries that led to the story?

The more of these elements that apply, the more likely it is you should seek correction, clarification, or retraction. However, we recommend that you proceed only if your situation meets at least four of the six criteria above.

#### MAKING BAD NEWS WORSE:

Four sure-fire ways to make bad news even worse are to:

- Lose your temper.
- Call the offending medium and demand a meeting with management at which you threaten everything from withholding advertising to bodily harm.
- Call the reporter and demand a retraction.
- File a lawsuit.

Copyright © 1987, 1989, 1993, James E. Lukaszewski. All rights reserved.

The Lukaszewski Group Inc. ■ Ten Bank Street, Suite 530, White Plains, NY 10606-1952  
Telephone 914.681.0000 ■ Facsimile: 914.681.0047 ■ [tlg@e911.com](mailto:tlg@e911.com) ■ [www.e911.com](http://www.e911.com)