



## [Being a Trusted Strategic Advisor: An interview with Jim Lukaszewski, part 6 of 8](#)

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**Q: I'm wondering if there are any experiences you can relate similar to the one you mentioned about this gentleman, Rocky, about some of the things we've been talking about?**

**Jim Lukaszewski:** Here's an example: I'm not an attorney but I have a very large litigation-related practice, both civil and criminal.



Today we are prosecuting and persecuting more senior executives as leaders than we have ever in history. I spend a lot of time with senior executives who are caught up in these problems. I was working with a guy a couple of years ago. This is a CEO of a Fortune 500 company who was going to be indicted. On the day he was indicted, we talked.

A lot of things change when an executive is indicted. He technically loses his job, for example. The bylaws of virtually every corporation say, "If you are the subject of a criminal action, you will be suspended with pay but you will no longer serve in a decision-making capacity." Basically, the day he was indicted was the day he went on paid leave.

He called me up and said, "I'm so relieved. I've taken two years to get to this point in time, but now I can finally devote time to the things that really matter to me."

I said, "What could those be, George?"

He said, "For years and years, I've signed checks to The Red Cross, The Salvation Army and the local university. I've chaired their fund drives but I'm not really there. I'm just writing a check. Now I have time to devote to these activities."

I said, "George, first of all, you really, in a sense, don't have a job anymore. You're on leave. I'm coming down later this afternoon to help you clean out your desk, by the way, because you're getting demoted. There's an office away from where you've had an office for the last 24 years. You're going to be off campus. Secondly, your wife and I are coming in tomorrow morning to your new office with you and you're going to sit down and resign from all these places. The United Way, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and

the university cannot have a potentially indicted felon on their board of directors in any capacity whatsoever.

“They might have to return some of the funds for the checks you signed as a result of this, George. Now, George, you have only one concern from this point on, and that is your criminal defense. You could lose your liberty, my friend.”

Now, is that a communicator talking or is that a trusted strategic advisor talking? This is what we’re talking about. It’s beyond communication. It is a very different perspective to have, and you have to know a lot more. One of the reasons I know this stuff is because I do a lot of communications work in criminal matters, and lawyers teach me things because they would rather have me do the communications. They’d rather be lawyers and let me be the communicator. That’s just one example.

I’m working with a company right now that’s suffering enormously destructive rumors. The company is being rumored of going into Chapter 11. The CEO is just going nuts. This is a healthy company. It’s had some troubled times, but one thing is very clear, it is a very viable concern, they have business way into the future, and so on. What we’re talking about here is the difference between a combination of communications strategy and personal strategy. The advice he’s getting from his PR advisors is: “You’ve got to take out some ads, get on the stump, you’ve got to be talking, you’ve got to get the media to talk about this thing.”

So they called me and I said, “Well, I think what you have to do, my friend, is let’s construct a one-page letter and send this letter, which is very straightforward and says, ‘Look, there are some rumors out there you need to know about. Here’s what they’re about. They’re false, and here’s why.’ Send this letter to the 250 people or 150 or 50 most important people in your immediate environment.

“That would include key employees, if not all employees, vendors, suppliers, regulators, overseers and that sort of thing, and you’ve got to put in place a base of truth before you can do anything else, and in my experience, once you put the base of truth in place, there’s almost very little you really have to do after that because it’s really these sort of truths that tend to put these rumors to rest, and they begin to isolate those who are rumor mongering.”

There are a lots of different ways that this is done by a trusted strategic advisor, but it’s all really based on one thing, and that that is maximizing your understanding of what these people do combined with a scenario in which they are going to find themselves, and then preparing yourself to deal with those scenarios.

\* \* \*

*Jim’s new book, [Why Should the Boss Listen to You: The Seven Disciplines of the Trusted Strategic Advisor](#), will be released mid-February. Copies may be preordered at [Amazon.com](#). Jim may be reached at [www.e911.com](http://www.e911.com).*

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