## Handout: Gauging a Crisis

Here are some simple steps to gauging a crisis when it occurs:

1. What happened? Sometimes the initial reports are inaccurate and sketchy. Your goal here is to determine what actually happened. Ask several resources and contacts. Take notes and compare the information. If you see discrepancies then the crisis has not been clearly assessed yet. Continue until you obtain consistent answers.
2. Why did it happen? The reasons for the crisis may not be easy to determine. However, gaining this information could avoid more problems to occur and reduce further damage.
3. Who is impacted? This is essential to obtain because anyone involved in the crisis will need some form of communication management to happen. If customers are affected, then you may need to make an announcement to the public. If employees are involved, you may need to contact their families. Identifying who is impacted is essential and this demonstrates your caring of others.
4. What are the ramifications? Once you obtain the first three pieces of information, you will need to sit down and determine the ramifications. Here are some things to consider:
   * What is the legal or liability involved.
   * What is the cost of correcting or dealing with the crisis?
   * What damage to the company image will occur?
   * What affects does the crisis have with the ability for the company to run normally?

Who is liable? Determine if your company or someone else is liable and seek legal counsel as soon as possible.