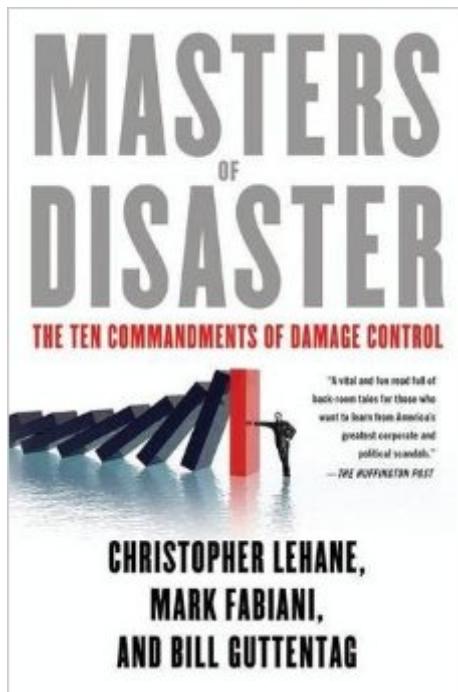


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# Masters Of Disaster: The Ten Commandments Of Damage Control



## **Synopsis**

Whether you're a politician caught with his pants down, an investment bank accused of accounting improprieties, or even a family-owned restaurant with a lousy Yelp review, a crisis doesn't have to be the make-or-break moment of your career. Correctly managed, even the most embarrassing "reply all" can quickly become a thing of the past. In *Masters of Disaster*, Christopher Lehane and Mark Fabiani, reveal the magic formula you need to take control when it's your turn to be sucked into the vortex of the modern spin cycle. Covering the ten commandments of damage control, and based on their work for clients like Bill Clinton, Goldman Sachs and Hollywood studios, the authors outline the strategies that can make real time news alerts, Twitter trend lines and viral videos work for you rather against you. Full of both lively personal anecdotes and hard-knuckled straight talk, this is a must-read for anyone who wants to emerge with their reputation intact.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

It's difficult to write a "how to" book on crisis communications. Each crisis has its own set of unique challenges, and what works well in one case may cause a company's demise in another. But authors Christopher Lehane, Mark Fabiani, and Bill Guttentag--the first two former high-ranking White House officials and the third an Oscar-winning filmmaker--do a wonderful job of arming readers with critical information they need to know to survive a personal or professional crisis. Their book, *Masters of Disaster: The Ten Commandments of Crisis Control*, rightly points out that "we no longer have conventional news cycles but cycles within cycles." In today's media age, they write,

crises "have become the normal state of nature," and that "scandal is an endlessly self-renewing resource." Therefore, preparing in advance for crisis is more important today than ever before. Masters helps readers do that by detailing "Ten Commandments" of damage control, the purpose of which are to help restore trust to companies in crisis. Those rules include admonitions to speak to your core audience, avoid feeding the fire, respond with overwhelming force, and "destroy" opponents who dissemble. But the greatest strength of this book is its case studies. The authors went into great detail on numerous recent scandals--ranging from those affecting Toyota, British Petroleum, Penn State University, Tiger Woods, baseball's steroid users, and a few politicians. The case studies read like good fiction, and I found myself flying through those pages. Even as an author

A crisis is something that puts you or your organization's trust at risk with those audiences whose trust must be maintained to survive. Crises are everywhere and impact everyone - in fact, they're the normal state of nature. Underlying drivers are the vast proliferation of outlets communicating information and the speed with which information moves today. Moreover, during the past 50 years there has been a steady breakdown of public trust in political, business, education, and religious leaders. The public believes we are on the wrong track, wants answers, but lacks faith in the ability of traditional gatekeepers to provide useful and accurate answers. The first rule to remember - 'It's not the crime, it's the cover-up,' a lesson forever imprinted by Watergate. Responses to a crisis must demonstrate that, despite the crisis, you can be trusted. Accomplishing that requires adhering to what the authors describe as the Ten Commandments of Damage Control built around doing no harm, taking a disciplined approach, and preserving your credibility. The Do No Harm principle is often undermined by a desire to blame others (creates new enemies, does not appear forthright), provide instant responses to make 'the problem' go away (usually prove unsustainable and detrimental), and trying to spin the story (excuses, downplaying the seriousness). Taking a disciplined approach requires preparation, mental toughness, and thinking long-term. 'Pivot points' are a key objective, achieved by drawing a line between the past and the future - they must include more than words (eg. a comprehensive and self-critical report, management changes at the top, an apology). Sooner is better. The authors then introduce their 'ten commandments of damage control.

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