The MIT-Harvard Public Disputes Program announces a two-day program

Public Relations, Communications & Media Strategies for

Dealing With an Angry Public

How to restore relationships and respond to community and consumer groups, potential litigants and concerned stakeholders

In difficult times, your skill as a negotiator can be the difference between success and failure for you and your organization.

For Senior Agency, Public Relations, Community Affairs, Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement Managers, and key members of their staff

April 30-May 1, 2009

November 12-13, 2009

in Cambridge, Massachusetts

"... more than thinking 'outside the box'.
You learn to stand on top of the box."
Confronted by the need to take effective action in the face of public anger (e.g., over a devastating accident, the failure to regulate products or services adequately, or the siting of a controversial facility), many private and public sector managers make the mistake of turning to a flawed public relations approach to dealing with stakeholder concerns.

They retreat behind a shield of expert testimony or big-name endorsements and fail to seize control of the situation by building better relationships and negotiating directly with those who are upset.

Too often, they lose the chance to convert a potential disaster into an opportunity to build understanding, to enlist the support of would-be detractors and to substantively enhance their agency’s or organization’s image.

At the MIT-Harvard Public Disputes Program, we have developed a powerful and proven process for dealing more effectively with people who are upset or angry – from consumers, abutters and environmentalists to potential litigants and investors – and for using the media to get messages across.

Based on mediation and negotiation techniques developed at The Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, these innovative crisis avoidance and conflict resolution strategies can dramatically improve your ability to achieve positive and productive outcomes, whether your objective is to respond to stakeholder discontent or avoid adverse reactions by engaging concerned groups before problems develop.

The process has been designed for use in both government and corporate arenas. It will help you, quickly and at minimal cost, to regain credibility and restore lost faith with people who have been adversely affected, or with those who challenge you in a regulatory context.

You’ll learn a framework for working with angry publics and for positively affecting public perceptions by better understanding the other side’s interests, turning confrontation into problem-solving and inventing options for mutual gain.

About The Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School

For 25 years, the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School has been one of the world’s outstanding negotiation training institutions, and through the innovative research of its faculty has helped to evolve the field itself. It was founded as a collaborative effort among faculty at Harvard, MIT, Tufts and other Boston-area universities to design, implement and evaluate improved dispute resolution practices. A dynamic, interdisciplinary research center, PON serves a unique role in the world negotiation community by developing new thinking on negotiation theory, creating new material for negotiation education, and nurturing a new generation of negotiation teachers and scholars. Each year, business and government leaders, corporate trainers and corporate counsel are among the 2,500 people who participate in PON’s negotiation training courses.
how to employ a mutual gains approach to resolving important differences with angry publics, whether they are:

Groups of people who are angry because you've let them down:
- you failed to live up to a promise
- the service you delivered was inadequate
- you said something that wasn’t true

Advocacy groups who want to embarrass you publically:
- citing unfair employment and hiring practices
- with charges of corruption or incompetence
- claiming malpractice or failure to act

Neighbors and abutters up in arms over:
- the siting of a new facility
- perceived health or safety risks
- changes you are bringing to their town or neighborhood

Environmental groups threatening you over:
- the use and disposal of toxic materials
- packaging, manufacturing or recycling practices
- land use changes

Those affected by an accident which could lead to:
- a threat of catastrophe
- demands for restitution
- boycotts of a company’s products

At this Program you will learn . . .

Who Should Attend

Public Sector: Heads or Members of Federal, State and Local Regulatory Agencies and key staff members, Heads and key staff of NGOs and Foundations, Judiciary staff, and Legislators and their legal staff.

Private Sector: Chief Executive Officers, Senior Vice Presidents, General Counsels, Vice Presidents of Public Relations and Corporate Communications, Regulatory Affairs Officers, Consumer Affairs Executives and Environmental Officers.

“Great program. Very relevant to my current role, and I will be able to use some of the strategies right away.”
Lisa Ross,
Director, Corporate Communications,
Wyeth Pharmaceuticals

“A fun-packed, knowledge-filled two day course that leaves you feeling energized and armed with strategies to resolve real-world crises in your workplace.”
Linton Johnson,
Chief Spokesperson,
BART
The Program

Using specially developed exercises, simulations and case studies, we have designed a unique executive briefing and workshop. The following is an overview of the agenda for this intensive two-day program:

Day One

1. Understanding the Problem: What’s Wrong with the Conventional Approach to Dealing With An Angry Public?

The traditional approach to deflecting the concerns of angry publics may work in some situations, but it won’t work when you are confronted directly by an angry public which perceives unacceptable risks and impacts. The traditional approach won’t help when someone:

- stands in the way of acquiring the mandate you need to do your job
- is trying to turn public groups against you

Using staged media events, expert testimonials or one-shot town meetings won’t solve the real problems. In this segment you will take part in a simulation highlighting the key elements of the “mutual gains approach” in a case involving the delayed marketing of a pharmaceutical product and the adverse effects caused by delay.

2. Key Elements of the Alternative Approach to Dealing With An Angry Public

How to avoid or minimize damage by turning confrontation into constructive negotiation. Key strategies for managing conflict and for:

- identifying appropriate stakeholder groups
- finding effective stakeholder representatives
- meeting face-to-face
- determining interests

Take the Program on Negotiation home with you after the course is over.

Negotiation is an award-winning monthly newsletter published by the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School. This newsletter provides expert advice and practical tips that help you continue to develop your negotiation skills – from showing you how to avoid common pitfalls to helping you get results that meet your interests. We think you will find that it makes an invaluable supplement to the program you choose to attend through the innovative ideas, strategies and case examples it offers. For more information about Negotiation newsletter, go to www.pon.harvard.edu.
• inventing options for mutual gain
• transforming informal agreements into implementable solutions
• jointly agreeing to monitor results – on a regular basis
• using neutral mediators

3. Dealing with Resistance to a Calculated Risky Decision

Participants will apply the mutual gains approach in the context of a multi-party interactive role-play: Dealing With Potential Risks of a New Technology. Participants must formulate a problem-solving strategy through multi-party, multi-issue negotiation facilitated by a neutral convener. Different from a crisis which arises as a result of a mistake or an accident, you’re in a proactive situation because you’ve made a conscious decision to go ahead in the face of risks and strong public opposition.

The risks may involve potential environmental damage, threats to public health or a loss of community safety. But you believe there are legitimate reasons to proceed. What are your options? How do you decide with whom you should talk? How can you best satisfy the concerns of an angry public? What do you do about individuals who are totally unrealistic or who seek to manipulate the situation for their own gain? Includes lessons on the use of neutral mediators and on ways of uncovering the real interests of the other side.

Day Two

4. Dealing With Disagreements Over Values

How can you work things out with an angry public when you have fundamental disagreements about what’s right and what’s morally acceptable? How do you give weight to the values or ethical arguments of each side? You will be placed in a group situation where you must reach a policy decision involving a community dispute over a sensitive health care issue. The case will explore the most effective ways of talking about and dealing with value differences.

“Because common sense is profoundly uncommon, this program reminds us of how to get our clients back in touch with their desires to be honest and fair.”
Beth Masterman, Senior Vice President, Liberty Square Group

“A great program! I’m walking away with a principled approach to deal with an angry public.”
Col. Boykin Jordan, Jr., Commander, 55th Communication Group, U.S. Air Force

About The MIT-Harvard Public Disputes Program

This research group of the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School sponsors action-research projects that use negotiation, mediation and other out-of-court approaches to settling public policy disputes involving federal, state and local governments, business and consumer interests in the U.S. and abroad. Faculty research addresses the creation of practical ways to resolve public sector disputes over land use, labor, human services and environmental issues.
“A refreshing approach to engaging divergent groups in developing effective solutions.”
Susan Massengale,
Public Information Officer,
North Carolina Division of Water Quality

“Breathe. Listen. Check your moral compass, and then respond honestly to questions; what great advice, and what needed advice this is!”
Patricia Villafranca,
Special Agent and Media Representative,
U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation

5. Media Strategies Consistent With the Mutual Gains Approach

Dealing with the critical issue of media strategy. How do you work with the media to shape public acceptance of the mutual gains approach? What new techniques can you use to counter unfavorable media coverage? In this small group exercise, you will be asked to formulate a media/public relations strategy, focusing on how media/pr fits with the mutual gains approach to dealing with an angry public. You’ll learn:

- criteria for deciding when and when not to use the mutual gains approach.
- where negotiation responsibility fits within the context of your organization chart. Is it a line function? Is it a staff function? Is it the CEO’s job? Who to involve?
- what homework you must do to be prepared to negotiate effectively.
- various forms that negotiated outcomes can take, including joint press releases, legally binding contracts, public policy statements, permit conditions and others. How do you decide which option is most desirable in a given situation?
- how to increase the odds of being able to implement an agreement.

You’ll learn how to produce more productive outcomes when you’re:

(In the Private Sector)                        (In the Public Sector)
1. Defending against the charges that your policies or actions have had adverse effects
2. Dealing with stakeholders who want you to take steps you think are unreasonable
3. Protecting your reputation against malicious charges
4. Fighting for more regulatory flexibility in order to be responsive to consumer needs
5. Trying to communicate effectively with groups that have unfavorable views of your organization
6. Seeking media credit for your successes
1. Facing budget cutbacks while still being responsive to a variety of groups
2. Setting new standards and regulations with the input of many groups
3. Getting the public to accept the scientific basis for what your agency is doing
4. Trying to be fair to people you regulate, but responsive to others who want you to be a tough watchdog
5. Dealing with pressure from higher-ups
6. Not being able to recruit the staff that you need to do the job that your critics expect
Lawrence E. Susskind is one of America’s most experienced trainers. For more than 20 years he has provided consensus building, dispute resolution, and conflict management assistance, training, and advice to public and private clients throughout the world.

He is Ford Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning at MIT, Head of the Public Disputes Program at Harvard Law School, and President of the Consensus Building Institute, a not-for-profit firm that provides mediation services in complex disputes. Professor Susskind was the first Executive Director of the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School. He is the author of more than a dozen books (including Breaking Robert’s Rules, Breaking the Impasse, Environmental Diplomacy, and Dealing with An Angry Public) and a much sought-after speaker.

Professor Susskind has offered tailored training programs for more than 50 major companies in North America and Europe including CBS, Time-Life, Pfizer, American Cyanamid, Guinness PLC, Digital, NYNEX, Credit Suisse, Gemini, Manitoba Hydro, Biogen-Idex, CSX, State Street Bank, Hewlett-Packard, WPP, Edison Electric Institute, Rich Sea-pak, Nabisco, and many others.

Michael Wheeler is the Class of 1952 Professor of Management Practice at the Harvard Business School, where he currently teaches Negotiating Complex Deals and Disputes and a variety of executive courses. He also serves as faculty chair of the Required Curriculum of the MBA program. In recent years he has headed the required first year course in Negotiation and has also taught Leadership, Values, and Decision Making.

Professor Wheeler is the author or co-author of nine books, including most recently, Business Fundamentals in Negotiation, On Teaching Negotiation, and What’s Fair? Ethics for Negotiators. He has written scores of negotiation exercises, cases, and notes, and with colleagues Gerald Zaltman and Kimberlyn Leary, is also investigating emotions and unconscious attitudes that people bring to the bargaining table.

Jeff Ansell is an Associate of the MIT-Harvard Public Disputes Program. He counsels spokespeople, newsmakers and Fortune 500 executives on how best to communicate with media and other important audiences. Formerly a senior executive with a leading international public relations firm, his communications coaching techniques are used by many thousands of people worldwide.

For 18 years Mr. Ansell was a TV and newspaper journalist, working as an investigative reporter, nightly news anchor, business correspondent and talk show host. Mr. Ansell is a past winner of the Radio and Television News Directors Association award for most significant contribution to the improvement of news gathering in Canada.

“Speakers were excellent and on task. They presented information in a colorful, interesting manner.”
Patricia Martin, Director, Government & Community Relations, Saint Joseph’s University

“This session was eye-opening. I’ve been doing media relations for 12 years. I learned a lot and will change accordingly.”
G. Douglas Johnson, Public Affairs Specialist, Bonneville Power Administration
I wish to attend the following session of **Dealing With an Angry Public** (check box below). Sessions have been scheduled to allow you to attend certain programs on successive dates. If you register for more than one program now, you can receive a $300 tuition discount on each additional program you select at this time.

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**The Program on Negotiation for Senior Executives and Dealing With Difficult People and Difficult Situations** are scheduled on successive dates to allow you to participate in both programs at a special tuition price of $2950. Further discounts do not apply.

**Can be attended as individual programs or combined as a 3-day program at the special $2950 tuition price.**

Mr/Ms/Dr __________________________ Title ________________________________

E-mail __________________________________________________________________

Phone ______________________________ Fax __________________________________

City __________________ State/Country ____________ Zip/Postal Code ____________

Organization________________________________________________________________

Title ______________________________________________________________________

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To submit additional registrations, please copy this page. (Please note if addresses of those on team differ.)

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