



elevationmarketing

Apache Nitrogen

CASE STUDY

Elevation Marketing helps agricultural chemical manufacturer build community-approved proactive crisis communications and management plan.



BACKGROUND

Crisis Communication Plan Boosts Apache Nitrogen's Community Relations, Disaster Preparedness

When you're in the business of making explosives and volatile chemicals, the threat of an explosion is a constant, and disaster preparedness is always top of mind.

When another company's distribution and storage plant suffered an ammonium nitrate explosion in West, Texas, that killed 15 people, leveled 500 homes and caused \$1 billion in damages, a senior manager at Apache Nitrogen Products, Inc. realized he and his team needed to be prepared in case anything ever happened at Apache.

An explosion or chemical leak would spark massive inquiry from the media and community, one that could easily swamp his small team. He needed to develop a proactive crisis communications and management plan, as well as emergency preparedness and response plans. A tenet of Apache Nitrogen is corporate responsibility, and the manager wanted to ensure they are always prepared.

Headquartered at St. David in southeastern Arizona, Apache Nitrogen's roots extend to the 1920s as a maker of dynamite. Today, its main products are two chemical mixtures that can be volatile: Ammonium Nitrate (AN) and Nitric Acid (NA), both used for mining and in agriculture. **Its plant south of Benson, which has a population of some 5,000, is one of the area's largest private employers.**

ANPI Crisis Communications Plan
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Apache Nitrogen reached out to Elevation Marketing to help develop a proactive crisis communication plan as part of their mission of corporate responsibility.



CHALLENGE

Create Effective Two-Way Crisis Communication Plan in Conjunction with Federal Agencies, while Maintaining Positive Relations with the Surrounding Community

Top of mind for the Apache Sr. Manager was how to handle a potential disaster like the one in West, Texas. **To help create a proactive plan of action, he turned to Elevation Marketing for its extensive experience creating and delivering crisis communications plans across specific industries,** including in the industrial manufacturing and agribusiness spaces. Elevation Marketing's team has developed and implemented crisis communications plans for healthcare, oil and gas, and military sectors related to production facilities, supply chain management, and end-user issues. The B2B marketing agency appeared to be a great fit.

Based on their vast experience, Elevation knew the very nature of Apache's manufacturing operations – making volatile mixtures – requires a sensitive, strategic approach to alleviating some of the fear the community might have about a chemicals company operating in their town. The team understood the magnitude of a potential event and the cohesive crisis communications plan required if something were to happen.

In addition to developing a crisis communications and emergency plan, **Elevation Marketing was asked to provide guidance for effective two-way communication in public and media relations support, and to build an in-house Apache Community Relations team** for continuous support. The B2B marketing agency was asked to help proactively manage the company's public image as it relates to perceived risk. Maintaining positive community relations inside Cochise County was an important goal, and Elevation consulted Apache Nitrogen on how to foster communication and collaboration among target audiences – the effective delivery of organizational information to stakeholders.

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"I have never met a better company that wants to be a great neighbor, employer and community rock than Apache.

They have to communicate with a variety of stakeholders in an authentic and trustworthy way."

*- Scott Miraglia,
President, Elevation Marketing*



Crisis communication plan
WILL SAVE CRITICAL TIME
& mitigate some chaos in the event of an emergency

Mock drill staged with local law revealed a potential flaw with cellular service that was
INSTANTLY REMEDIED

STRATEGY

A Three-Pronged Comprehensive Plan Including Public Information Access, Strategy for Incident Response, Media Relations, Messaging, Follow-Up and More

Elevation created a plan based on a three-stage, crisis management model that carefully considered the pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis stages. To develop a comprehensive crisis communication plan, they worked with multiple agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), Local Emergency Preparedness Committee (LEPC) and local sheriff and law enforcement.

Understanding that the media and community would visit Apache's website for instant information, Elevation created an entirely new website-in-waiting for the company that could go live when needed to communicate in case of a critical incident. The "dark" site includes company information, maps, news releases and other information important to communicate during an incident. It can replace the company's homepage or link from the homepage, depending upon the severity of the incident.

As a means to ensure the most effective channels were selected for distributing information and meeting the communication needs of target audiences, scenarios were rehearsed on how best to keep audiences informed and expressly tailored to their potential requests. Elevation Marketing took part in a mock drill Apache staged with local law officials to test the communication plan and refine as needed. Mock media members peppered the communications team with questions, and the test revealed a potential flaw that was instantly remedied: the cellular service was spotty with one carrier, making communications difficult, so a new carrier and phone were secured.

DELIVERABLES

- A list of internal and external contacts in case of an emergency
- A phone tree of internal and external people to contact immediately
- List of items and processes to do immediately
- Messaging appropriate for different scenarios
- How and where to set up an incident response center
- A checklist of necessary items to attend to as soon as possible
- How to assess the situation from a communications perspective
- What actions to take, how and to whom to provide essential information internally
- Roles of various team members
- How, what and when to release information to the public
- How to work with the media
- How to monitor external reports and identify trends and issues that need responses
- What to do after the crisis as follow ups and learning opportunities
- Templates, checklists, media list, press release template, emergency response call list and other documents needed in the event of an incident
- list of internal and external contacts in case of an emergency

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“Elevation Marketing’s veteran expertise in crisis management was the critical component in developing a comprehensive response plan should a disaster strike.

We are better prepared with a fully tested plan, which will greatly increase our response time and ability to execute effectively.”

—Lyndon Denton,
Business Development & Public Relations Director,
Apache Nitrogen



Apache Nitrogen is poised to **WORK BETTER WITH LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AND FIRST RESPONDERS** thanks to their inclusion in the planning process

The success of the original plan led to an **INCREASED DEMAND** for Apache Nitrogen informational collateral such as safety videos and an updated website

BUSINESS WINS

There has been a Noticeable Increase of Overall Positive Public Sentiment in the Community Due to Including Them in Outreach

After creating and testing the comprehensive crisis communications and media support plan, Apache Nitrogen executives are much more confident they can execute well during an emergency situation if one arises. They will save critical time if a disaster strikes, eliminate some of the chaos that naturally occurs during emergencies, and maintain corporate responsibility by avoiding mistakes that could happen if they weren't prepared and/or didn't have the correct processes in place. They will also be able to work better with local officials, first responders and government agencies thanks to their inclusion in the pre-planning process.

Being proactive will safeguard the well being of Apache Nitrogen's employees, community, shareholders and operations. All operations are conducted with the safety of the environment and plans are created to ensure that safety. Because they included community members in their outreach when developing the crisis plan, Apache Nitrogen executives have noticed an increase in overall positive public sentiment within the community.

Due to the successful relationship established during the Crisis Communication Plan build out, Elevation Marketing was hired to assist Apache with additional marketing initiatives, which included updating the company website, developing a trade show booth design and creating four safety videos plus a corporate video. Apache Nitrogen continues to be an ongoing Elevation Marketing client.

ABOUT ELEVATION

More Business Wins

Elevation Marketing is a full-service B2B marketing agency, providing exceptional client experiences that result in more business wins.

We go beyond tactics to inspire experiences that build brand believers. From a holistic perspective, we focus on all aspects of operations and strategy to ensure alignment between marketing and sales.

We have a strong command of inbound marketing, and know how to effectively manage, deliver and retain buyers. We offer full-cycle, web development services for the enterprise. We build bridges of communication, streamlining the dissemination of information to targeted entities.

Whether its partner portals, online stores, web apps or microsites, our custom digital solutions help you govern persona data through its entire lifecycle for superior lead generation and nurturing.

If you have a B2B product or service that solves real world problems, then you've done your job. We'll do ours by connecting you to the B2B decision makers that will benefit from what you have to offer.



Scott Miraglia, President

Sales@ElevationB2B.com
1955 S. Val Vista Drive, Suite 101
Mesa, Arizona 85204
(480) 775.8880

