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Option 3: Coach and an Environmental Incident

As an organization, Coach has the responsibility to own up to any environmental damage and establish a line of clear and honest communication with the public. While my boss may want to try and ignore the problem, minimizing attention, I disagree. Ignoring a problem does not make it any less prominent, and, if anything, it makes the company appear more culpable and fuels greater outrage.

One of the values of the PRSA Code of Ethics is honesty, which includes disclosing information that the public needs to carry out responsible decision-making. Public relations is about fostering a mutually beneficial relationship between stakeholders and the company. The public has a right to know what is happening, especially if exposure to the environmental contamination could potentially cause harm to both humans and animals. While being transparent about the information we have on the current situation may damage Coach's reputation, having animals or people physically suffer from our mistake would be far more detrimental. If we aren't honest with the public in addressing and resolving the issue, the company will not only face irreversible damage to its image but also potential legal action.

Furthermore, here at Coach, one of the defining pillars is its commitment to environmental sustainability. The company launched Coachtopia in an effort to reach sustainable circularity. Failing to address the environmental incident would call that very commitment into question. Even if my boss disagreed, I would insist that it is in the company's best interest to maintain open, honest communication with the public.

However, I must be able to find a balance between having an honest line of communication while avoiding unnecessary alarm. It is important to present information that the public needs to stay informed and protected but not release details to the media that could be exaggerated and cause mass panic. It is my role to determine what information should be publicized and what information should stay internal within

Coach. This responsibility aligns with the expertise value in the PRSA Code of Ethics, which requires public relations professionals to responsibly use specialized knowledge and expertise to build credibility and relationships between Coach and the public.

The PRSA Code of Ethics also emphasizes a responsibility to safeguard confidences. It is essential to make sure that everyone at Coach is keeping information confidential within our organization unless our public relations team determines it needs to be shared. While I will not ignore media inquiries, it is my responsibility to use my expertise to choose which media outlets will be best suited to provide the public with accurate information about the incident. We must also get ahead of viral notice to avoid appearing secretive. I will collaborate with the media to communicate not only what Coach is doing to fix the incident but also what permanent changes will be implemented to ensure it does not happen again.

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The following information is not intended to be factual but is a class writing assignment from August 2025 to December 2025 at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University. All information is intended to be sourced appropriately.