

# Crisis management and resolution of tylenol contamination case

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In 1982 the Johnson and Johnson company faced serious trials when seven people died from Extra Strength Tylenol capsules laced with cyanide. In 1982, Tylenol medication commanded 35 percent of analgesic market and garnering 15% of the company's profits. When the contamination was made known, panic arose with people wondering how widespread the contamination might be (Companies in Crisis, 2007). . Luckily, the crisis, which was of no fault of the company who had three tamper-resistant seals, was contained through the quick action of Johnson and Johnson.

“ It acted quickly - ordering that Tylenol should be recalled from every outlet - not just those in the state where it had been tampered with. Not only that, but the company decided the product would not be re-established on the shelves until something had been done to provide better product protection” (Companies in Crisis, 2007). As a result, Johnson & Johnson developed the tamperproof packaging, which had three different levels, that would make it much more difficult for a similar incident to occur in future and vowed to exchange capsules (which can be opened) with a new form called the caplet (Norman, 1986).

Sadly, a similar incident occurred four years later. The 1986 Tylenol contamination case was originally said to be a non-incident by the F. B. I. which later reversed its findings that the Johnson and Johnson product had been tampered with. The FBI was initially involved upon the death of Diane Elsworth who died after consuming two laced capsules. "We were puzzled all along as to how someone could have breached the three safety seals on the

bottle and carton without being detected” said a J & J representative (Norman, 1986).

Still, the company responded to the crisis by immediately pulling the products from the shelves, speaking openly to the media, and “ not waiting for evidence to see whether the contamination might be more widespread” (Companies in Crisis, 2007). This earned them the trust of the public because they were willing to take short term profit losses in order to make sure their customers were safe. Companies in Crisis - What to do when it all goes wrong. (2007). Mallenbaker. com Retrieved 4-12-2007 from <http://www.mallenbaker.net/csr/CSRfiles/crisis02.html> Norman, M. (1986). Bottle Tampering in Tylenol Found. New York Times. 27 February