

TMT Case Study: Mirant Corp.

Consistency in Message Delivery Across Continents and Diverse Audiences

The United States is hungry for additional sources of electrical energy, and the demand is growing. Ironically, that growth in demand brings with it a laundry list of obstacles.

Power generating companies are faced with legal and regulatory issues at the local, state, national and international levels. U.S. residents want electricity available at the flick of a switch, but demand that the facility generating that power be located anywhere *except* near their homes and businesses.

Mirant Corporation is one of the world's largest providers of electricity and energy-related products and services with operations worldwide. The company owns or controls more than 20,000 megawatts (MW) of electric generating capacity around the world. It has announced another 7,000 megawatts of development globally.

Early Relationships

TMT began providing media and message development training for Mirant's leaders when the company still operated as Southern Energy, Inc. (SEI), a subsidiary of Southern Company. The relationship has continued to develop as Mirant struggled through the birth pains of becoming an independent company, and the natural challenges associated with expanding operations domestically and globally.

Because of the ongoing nature of the

relationship, **TMT** has contributed to Mirant's ability to frame and deliver its messages to highly targeted audiences across a wide range of issues and geography.

Under its Mirant Americas unit, the company owns or controls more than 17,000 megawatts throughout North American and the



Caribbean, ranking it among the top three owners of unregulated generation and among the top 15 electric producers in the United States.

Those generation assets are strategically located near densely

populated areas in the United States where demand for energy and growth are highest, such as northern California, Washington, D.C., and New York City. And the company plans to bring another 2,100 megawatts of capacity on-line in 2002 to meet the energy transmission and distribution needs of its wholesale customers.

Throughout this growth, Mirant Americas has relied on **TMT's** unique media training processes to guide the leaders of its field teams tasked with positioning facilities in their new communities.

TMT has provided media training for approximately 75 Mirant managers leading the teams of new power generating facilities in Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, California,

Excellent! Best and most applicable training in-house that I've had. Very, very appropriate stuff. Will use it – definitely. Thanks. (Instructors genuinely cared that we learned the material.)

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Massachusetts, Texas, New York, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Curacao.

Deep Research

In each case, **TMT** thoroughly researched the locale, current and past media coverage, and all the issues unique to the location. **TMT** then translated that research into realistic scenarios that formed the basis for role-playing interviews during training sessions.

In day-long training sessions, members of the management teams from these locations worked to learn and apply the **TMT 30-Minute News Interview** planning process, then deliver their messages, even in the face of harsh lights, intimidating cameras and aggressive, even argumentative reporters.

International Issues

Mirant also asked **TMT** trainers to travel to Calgary, Alberta to work with the management team of the company's Canadian energy marketing subsidiary just before its meeting with the Alberta Government's Standing Policy Committee on Energy and Sustainable Development.

TMT prepared those managers to face reporters on the contentious issue of energy transmission infrastructure between Canada and the U.S.

Conclusion

One guiding principle **TMT** teaches in each of its media training seminars is that the best reporting about an organization arises not from sporadic or random contact

with reporters but from ongoing relationships. When company spokespersons and media representatives know each other as persons rather than as titles or positions, the news coverage generated is far more likely to be fair, accurate, and balanced.

The principle also holds true for an organization and its media training provider. **TMT** representatives and Mirant communicators have long-standing relationships. Over the years, this has allowed for the development of trust, mutual professional respect, and a common view of the best strategies and

techniques for delivering messages in a news interview.

As a result, Mirant has achieved a consistency in message delivery across a wide geographic area and among diverse audiences. For companies like Mirant, this consistency and uniformity of message is essential.

The partnership between the presenters worked very well in getting their messages across. This was an excellent seminar: our input was facilitated and the written material provided is very good.
