Scenario A

You're the Assistant Director of a small, but growing, museum. It's Friday night, and you're heading home for the weekend, when you'll be working on the final draft of an invitation to the museum's first major exhibit, which will firmly establish its reputation among its peers, and nationally. The Director calls you into her office, appearing upset. As you sit down, she hands you the draft of her resignation and says "By tomorrow, you'll be heading up this place."

You scan the document, and see that she is acknowledging having embezzled more than $250,000 from the Museum, to compensate for her husband's gambling debts. The annual audit – which you'd thought was routine – has uncovered the loss, and it will be public knowledge within hours. She tells you her lawyer has said to speak to no one about this, but she had to tell you.

The upcoming exhibit is now in jeopardy: not only was the prized collection on loan from a personal contact of hers, but it is an outstanding collector who is known for his rigorous moral code, and he is unlikely to continue with the exhibit, to avoid being tainted by scandal.

As you return to your office, your BlackBerry buzzes: you know by the # on the screen that it's the local newspaper, and you let it go to voicemail. When you check the message, the reporter – who has already done several stories about the exhibit – says he's heard about the missing money, and plans to break the story in the morning, but would welcome a quote from you.

What do you do? Who do you call first? What are the potential consequences, and how can you turn this into a positive experience for the museum?

Scenario B

It’s July, peak season for your property, which combines some of the best dining in the area with a good 18-hole golf course and a marvelous pool and water slide, ideal for families throughout the Southwest, who can enjoy a few days at bargain rates before the kids head back to school.

As the General Manager, you’re meeting with your Director of Sales to plan some holiday activities, when there’s a call from the front desk.

There’s a news crew there, who has heard there has been a drowning at the pool: a child who came down the waterslide too quickly, and hit her head on a protruding rock, one of many positioned there to make the setting seem more natural. The news crew was alerted by another guest, who sent an image of the scene on their smart phone to the news desk. Your security staff has prevented them from going beyond the front desk, but they’re getting impatient and grumpy.

Immediately, you contact the Pool Manager, who confirms the sad facts, and says she’s just completed trying CPR on the child without success. She didn’t call you, because she felt it was most important to try and save the child’s life.

Now what? Do you go to the pool, or the Front Desk? What do you say to other guests at the pool, who have watched this tragedy unfold? What do you say to the news crew?

Scenario C

As the Sales Director of a 150-room hotel (the largest in your community), you're anticipating the arrival of the biggest piece of business you've ever booked: 250+ participants (players, parents, coaches and supporters) in a State middle-school softball tournament that's taking place in your town this weekend. It's the first time the town has hosted an amateur sports event of this caliber, which could mean great things for future business, if all goes well.

Three days ago, a wildfire broke out about 10 miles away in a remote area, where it had time to build before being spotted; strong winds and continued warm, dry weather are predicted for this weekend, increasing the possibility that the fire may spread out of control of the firefighters who have been battling the tough blaze since it was discovered. Rural homes are now threatened, and the fire is moving your way. The travel planner for the teams who are staying with you is calling to see what you recommend: what do you advise, with only two days until they arrive?

And of course, the local media is covering both stories, the fire AND the tournament: what will you say to them?