AIR & WASTE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION SOUTHERN SECTION ANNUAL MEETING

CONCEPTS IN CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

September 21, 2016

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Issue vs. Crisis?

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Issue

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Crisis

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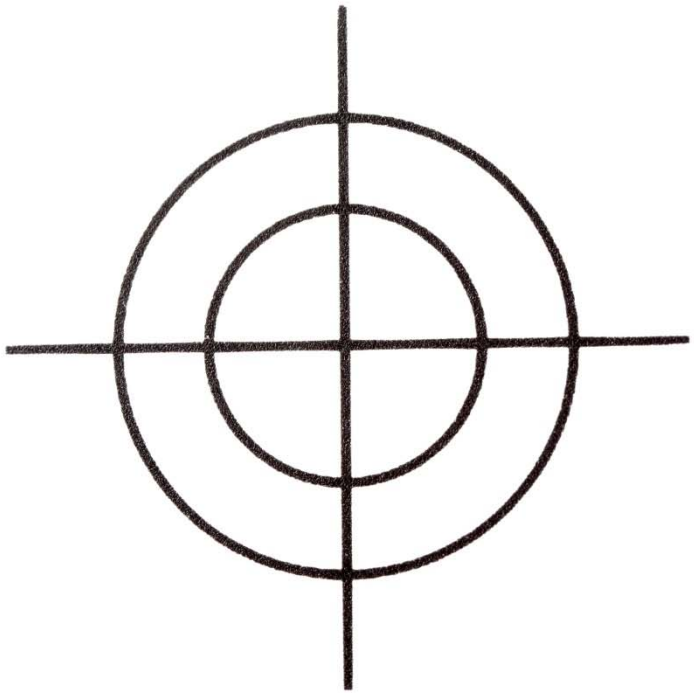
Optics Change Over Time & By Audience



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Communication Concept

- **Theory of Mutual Inattention**
  - Myths
  - Axioms
  - Realities

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Theory of Mutual Inattention

Myths

#1 Can build a reservoir of good will

#2 The truth is the truth is the truth

#3 Facts and data are convincing

#4 Media relations = public education

#5 There are end points

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Theory of Mutual Inattention

Axioms

#1 Transparency is not trust

#2 Message velocity varies by audience

#3 Relying on news media is a recipe for failure

#4 Direct and specific communication increases impact

#5 Influencing audiences requires messages and actions they care about

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Theory of Mutual Inattention

Realities

#1 Audiences don't care

#2 Audiences don't know your business

#3 Audiences will accept messages they are prepared to receive

#4 Audience perceptions vary

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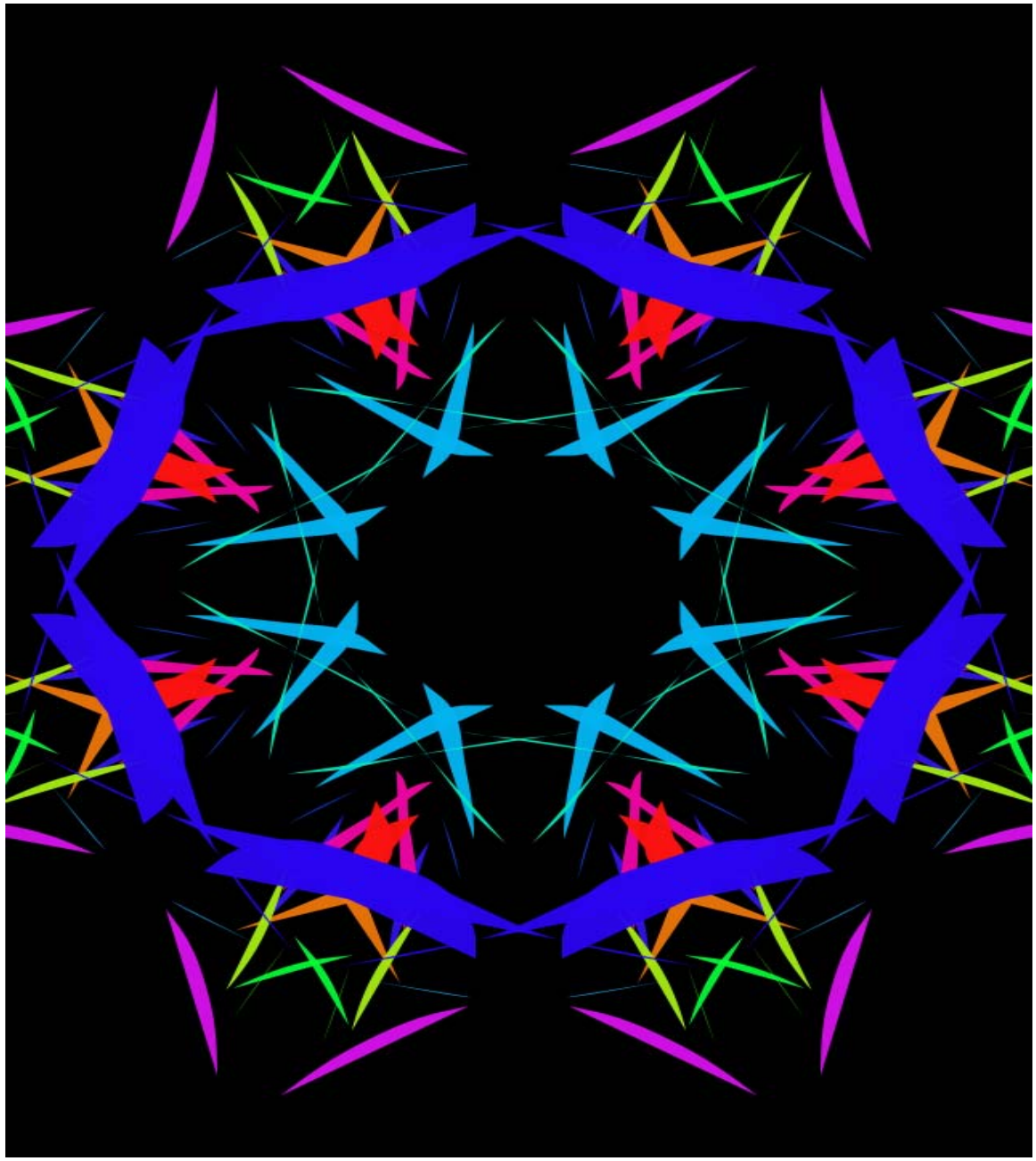
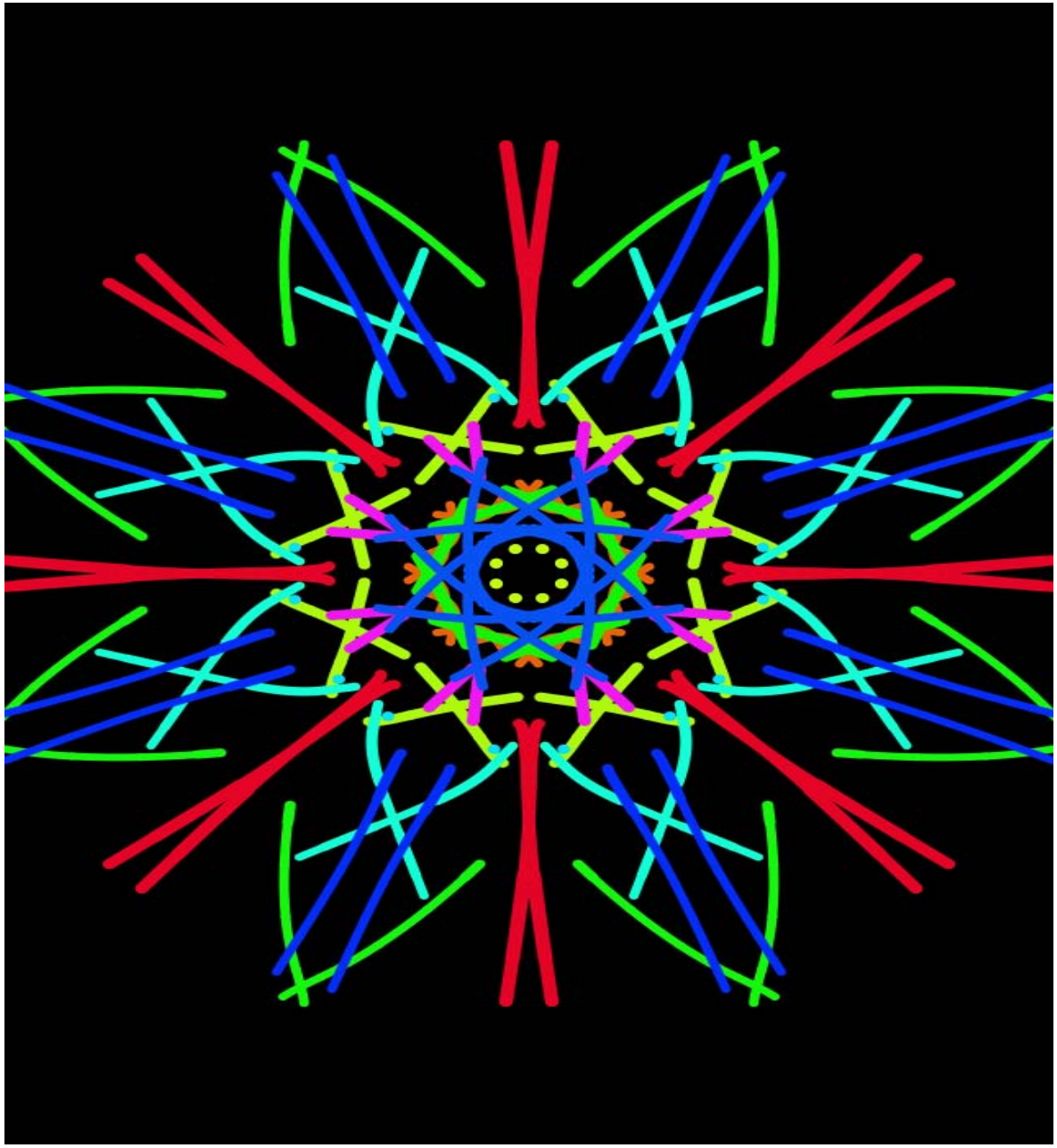
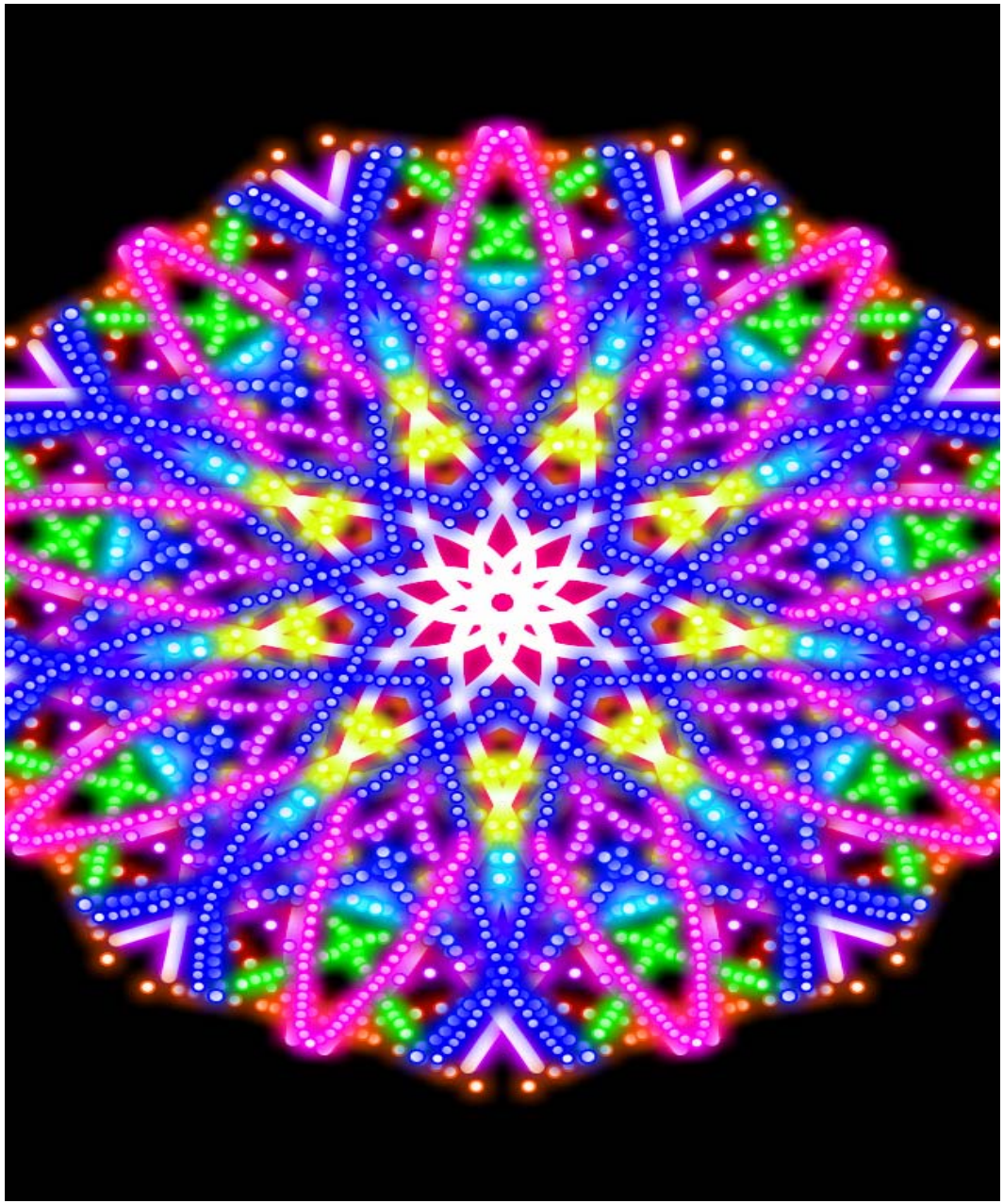
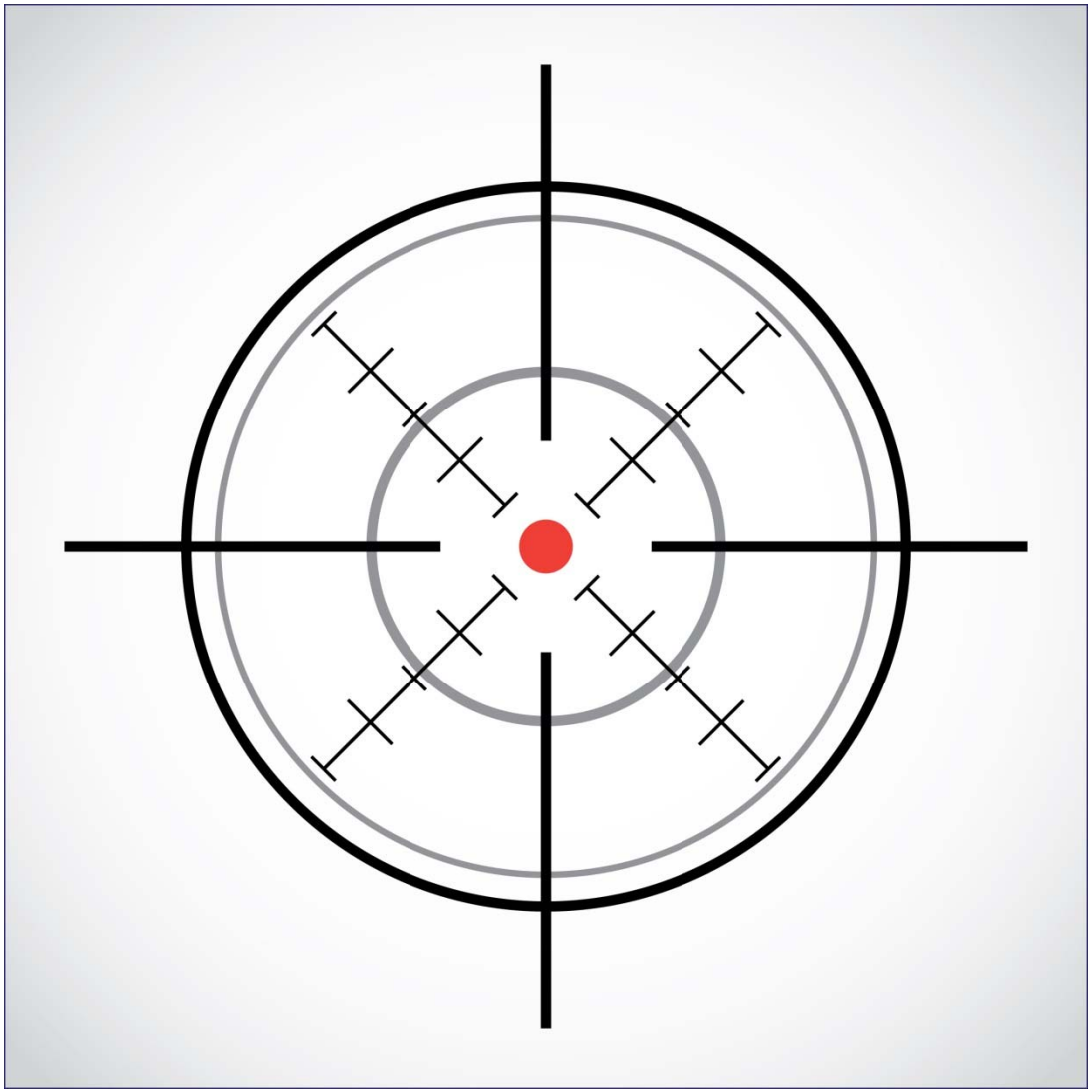
Optics Matter







Control The Optics You Can



Activities & Tools

- ✓ Notification Protocols/Relationship Map
- ✓ Scenario-Building
- ✓ Key Messages & Talking Points
- ✓ Position Statement
- ✓ Fact Sheet(s)
- ✓ Internal Communication Strategies & Tactics
- ✓ External Communication Strategies & Tactics
- ✓ Media/Community Monitoring & Response

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Control The Optics You Can

Identifying A Crisis/Emerging Issue

- Will this go away, or will it escalate, if not addressed?
- Does this have news value or the potential for news value?
- Would the media report this if they knew?
- Does this have possible legal implications?
  - Duty to disclose?
- How would our key audiences react to this?
- Would it make others shy away from us?
- Would this affect our image negatively?
- Will it interfere with business as usual?

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TTD In A Crisis

- PUT PEOPLE FIRST
- Assure proper authorities are contacted
  - Coordinate responses
- Do not respond to rumor or speculate, but issue at least an interim statement
- Publicly state cooperation and diligence as appropriate
  - ***(repeat often)***

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TTD In A Crisis

- State plans to provide continued updates
- Seek legal and corporate communication counsel
- Do not rely on news media to tell your story – communicate directly with key stakeholders
- Monitor coverage and correct serious inaccuracies

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