



Case Study - Sarracco Mechanical Services Inc.

When Sarracco Mechanical Services Inc was asked to perform emergency boiler repair during the school's winter break, it put into play a series of events that would affect the company for over six years. The request for services was followed-up by another call from the same individual, demanding a "referral fee" from the company. Having no experience with such a request, the company followed the individual's advice to pay the "referral fee" and add it to the bill they submitted to the City of Waterbury. As a result of an ongoing investigation of the City of Waterbury, the payment was discovered by the United States Attorney's Office and charges filed. The company arrived at an agreement with the United States Attorney's Office to settle the matter with a guilty plea and a fine.

Sarracco Mechanical Services had a long history of quality and integrity in providing technical solutions in mechanical contracting, HVAC, plumbing and security systems. It was important to employees of the company that the public understand the situation as an isolated incident and not a reflection of its character. They changed their procedures, created a Code of Code of Conduct with a nationally recognized firm and instituted a training program to help each of their employees deal with difficult situations in the future.

Tactics included:

- o Strategic direction in consultation with legal counsel
- o Letters to employees and customers
- o Statement for the media
- o Media training
- o Pro-active press relations and interview set-up
- o Key message development and delivery coaching for the president for customer and employee meetings

Summary of results:

- o Two years after the settlement, Sarracco is a strong company with over 100 employees providing plumbing, electrical, heating, cooling security and fire alarms in Connecticut, New York and Massachusetts
- o No customer relationships were disrupted as a result of the settlement
- o The story of the settlement disappeared from the media in 48 hours.

