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Internal Memos

The latest news in the Dewey & LeBoeuf saga is a good reminder that public relations professionals not only need to write an internal memo for staff and attorneys, but also with the media in mind.

Reuters reported today about the removal of the firm's former chairman as a result of getting an internal memo. The memo reported that the firm's executive committee voted to oust Steven Davis. The firm's management also disclosed in the memo that talks with Greenberg Traurig had ended.

These types of memos usually get to reporters within 15 minutes of distribution. You can't expect them to stay inside the walls of a firm. This includes e-mail or hard copy communications. So think long and hard about the information you are distributing and consider it a press release.

I wrote about internal communications on Friday about how keeping quiet about doing business can do more harm than good. Media is a call, Tweet, e-mail and Facebook post away.

Case in point: The same Reuters reporter who had access to the memo also cited a "a person close to the firm" -- before news of Davis's ouster -- that Dewey was close to securing a 90- to 120-day extension of roughly \$75 million in loan debt due on Monday, providing a temporary reprieve on a default that could trigger a bankruptcy.

Nothing is private anymore, expect possibly attorney client conversations.