

Natural PR found in natural disaster

By Craig McGuire

Can a natural disaster make for good PR? When the 18-member crew from the sinking Don Gregorio fishing vessel was plucked from the sea 72 miles off the coast of Chile, Orbcomm communication pros answered the question by springing into action.

The fishing crew had been located the evening of September 5 by rescuers using Orbcomm's low-Earth orbit satellite network and Marine Imaging Systems' S.A. software.

Orbcomm chairman and CEO Scott Webster and PR

director Michelle Ferris sensed a PR opportunity to showcase the technology—especially the system's value to the maritime industry.

To maximize the effect, the PR team at Orbcomm quickly crafted a dramatic press release. With Orbcomm drawing its 300-plus clients from markets spread around the globe, the company distributed various versions of the release internationally over PR Newswire.

According to *The Perfect Storm*-esque narrative of the release: "Water began to rapidly flood the engine room, and the pumps were failing ... the crew of Don Gregorio had taken refuge in life rafts as their vessel began a rapid three-mile descent to the bottom of the Humbolt Trench in



Emotional rescue... *the mission made a splash in South America*

the Eastern Pacific."

Of course, the crew was rescued just in nick of time—and with no significant injuries to report.

At press time the story had already been reported in sev-

eral South American media outlets, with Orbcomm expecting coverage in the States.

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