



CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS:

How to Think, Advise and Respond During Tough Situations

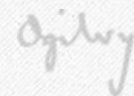
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LESSONS LEARNED

2.1K SHARES   ..

INSIDE A PR DISASTER

THERE ARE TWO MAJOR TYPES OF PR DISASTERS, BUT WHAT IT TAKES TO BOUNCE BACK FROM THEM IS THE SAME: SPEED, TRANSPARENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

BY JESSICA HULLINGER

One of the world's largest restaurant chains is weathering a public relations disaster. Last week, authorities raided the home of Subway spokesperson [Name] in connection with a child pornography investigation. The company dropped 245

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-- Jennifer Risi

There are two kinds of PR disasters, Mahdawi says:

1. **A brand is guilty by association.** A spokesperson or ambassador does something bad and it rubs off on the brand's image. Fogle and Subway fall into this category.
2. **A brand is culpable directly.** As in the case of the 2010 BP oil spill, for example.

The latter of the two situations requires a bit more cleanup, but the rules are the same for both: come clean, apologize, and make amends. Oh, and at least try to sound sincere if you're hoping to regain the public's confidence. "Ultimately your brand is about people's trust," Mahdawi says. "If you don't have their trust in you, you don't have anything."

Jennifer Risi, head of media relations for Ogilvy Public Relations in North America, says being proactive is key. "A lot of people are sometimes too slow to act," she says, "or they could think they're making too much of this too soon. But it's better to be safe than sorry, better to be proactive and really get ahead of what's going on, as opposed to letting the issue drive the news."

COME CLEAN ASAP

When a crisis is unfolding, the brand must get ahead of the news, or at least catch up to it. Silence breeds speculation. "I think the most important thing is speed of response," Mahdawi says. "Journalists are obviously looking for a story, and there will be speculation. You just have to go out as soon as possible to feed that appetite for news and end any speculation."

SILENCE BREEDS SPECULATION.

Subway handled this pretty well, quickly tweeting that it knew and was "shocked about" the news. But in the wake of the 2010 oil spill, BP's failure to respond quickly to the crisis

Managing a Crisis

apilay

A Crisis Takes Many Forms

Mashable

The Patriots' deflated balls: Sizing up a Super Bowl scandal

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People

Bill Cosby admitted to getting Quaaludes to give to women

CNN

delity site Ashley Madison hacked as attackers demand total shutdown

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TIME

Managing “Negative” News: A Crisis Management Playbook

Preparation

(Message/ material development, resource/asset mapping)

Monitoring & Identification

Assessment

(Validate, identify additional materials needed, increase monitoring)

Recommendation & Communication

(Determine action plan, tailor, leverage third parties)

Track

(Implement communication plan, continuous team communication, analyze message impact)

Review & Adjust Incident Response

(Communicate to stakeholders, monitor/correct inaccuracies, revise messaging as needed)

10 Commandments of Crisis Management

1 *Team members must be notified immediately of the incident.*

PR team to draft relevant messages and corresponding statement in addition to appropriate talking points. **2**

3 *The predetermined spokesperson and, when necessary, back-up spokespersons are the only people authorized to be quoted.*

PR team and client are aligned and stick to media communication plan. **4**

5 *Press conferences are not an efficient or effective way to communicate to key audiences in a crisis situation in the Americas.*

PR team will facilitate interviews for the spokespersons with media. **6**

7 *Statements developed by the PR team will serve to mitigate the crisis while reinforcing the leadership role of the client.*

Information will be distributed in a timely fashion and regularly until the issue passes. **8**

9 *Every communication opportunity will emphasize the actions that are being taken to address the situation and be integrated into related projects underway for the client.*

PR team to provide daily news updates in tone of media coverage to client. **10**

The Bottom Line

Be **PROACTIVE**.

*No comment is **NOT** a comment.*

TAKE CONTROL of your own narrative and define it...
If you don't, someone else will.

NO REST
FOR THE
WORKED

agility