NAVIGATING A PR CRISIS IN A 24/7 CONNECTED WORLD

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Eyes on the Prize!

The aim of public relations is to win understanding and support from, and to influence the opinions and behavior of your key audiences. When a crisis hits, this is especially important and the ultimate goal.
4 RULES FOR EFFECTIVE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

- Transparency - Always be truthful and timely.
- One face/one voice - Believability, credibility and delivery matters.
- KISS - Keep it short and simple for effective messaging.
- 5 W's - Who, what, when, where and why - fall back on the fundamentals.

4 RULES STAGES OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- Mitigation - Do a SWOT analysis and FL-EX.
- Preparation - Plans, policies and parameters.
- Response - Be swift, accurate and thorough.
- Recovery - Reassess, adapt, debrief, and shift
Social media doesn't sleep
Social media doesn't sleep just because you do. A crisis can go viral on social media at any time.

Real-time communications
With the continuing sophistication of digital devices, cameras and microphones are constantly recording leaving more room for errors, lapses in judgement and targeted victimization – key ingredients for a crisis.

History repeats itself
People now expect respect from companies and brands regarding diversity, equity and inclusion, as well other societal factors. Previous comments made on air and/or social media posts can be resurrected and stir a present-day crisis.
CRISIS SCENARIOS

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOUR NEXT, "WHAT IF...," MAY BE!
DID YOU KNOW?
This Tweet from Burger King UK was published on International Women's Day.

DID YOU KNOW?
The original tweet, plus additional context, could have fit in a single tweet.

INSENSITIVE COMMENTS
This kind of crisis comes from saying something insensitive, out-of-touch, or offensive.

Women belong in the kitchen.
INSSENSITIVE COMMENTS

The Response

Burger King @BurgerKingUK · Mar 8, 2021
We hear you. We got our initial tweet wrong and we’re sorry. Our aim was to draw attention to the fact that only 20% of professional chefs in UK kitchens are women and to help change that by awarding culinary scholarships. We will do better next time.

Burger King @BurgerKingUK · Follow
We decided to delete the original tweet after our apology. It was brought to our attention that there were abusive comments in the thread and we don't want to leave the space open for that.

4:41 PM · Mar 8, 2021

Becca @BeccaBeckery · Follow
Proof this could have even fit in one tweet

Please don't use sexism as clickbait. The men in my mentions proves the damage you're causing by doing this.

Women belong in the kitchen.

If they want to, of course. Yet only 20% of chefs are women.

We're on a mission to change the gender ratio in the restaurant industry by empowering female employees with the opportunity to pursue a culinary career. #IWD
DID YOU KNOW?
A hot mic moment can happen anywhere. Whether TV, radio, or online; in politics, sports, and cars - yes, even private cars!

DID YOU KNOW?
The fallout from comments caught on a hot mic can occur within seconds or minutes of it happening. And there you have it, you've gone viral for all the wrong reasons.

RULE OF THUMB: WHERE THERE'S A MIC, ASSUME IT'S HOT!

HOT MIC
A microphone that is turned on, in particular one that amplifies or broadcasts a spoken remark that is intended to be private.
ROGUE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

DID YOU KNOW?
Usually, when there is an error, the first excuse companies say is "the account was hacked."

DID YOU KNOW?
Depending on the type of rogue post, it will be mentioned by users for years to come.

Rogue posts are not only classified as a disgruntled employee posting, but also as errors or mistakes.
Rogue Social Media Posts

American Red Cross
@RedCross
Ryan found two more 4 bottle packs of Dogfish Head's Midas Touch beer.... when we drink we do it right #getngslizzerd
HootSuite · 2/15/11 11:24 PM

McDonald's
@McDonaldsCorp
@realDonaldTrump You are actually a disgusting excuse of a President and we would love to have @BarackObama back, also you have tiny hands.

riaglo Gloria Huang
Rogue tweet frm @RedCross due to my inability to use hootsuite... I wasn't actually #getngslizzerd but just excited! #nowembrassssing
HootSuite · 9:16 AM - 16 Mar 2017
Rogue Social Media Posts
The Response

@RedCross
American Red Cross

We've deleted the rogue tweet but rest assured the Red Cross is sober and we've confiscated the keys.
57 minutes ago via Twitter
Retweeted by stefsealy and 51 others

McDonald's Corporation
@McDonaldsCorp · Follow

Based on our investigation, we have determined that our Twitter account was hacked by an external source. Read more: McD.to/60108Zzjy
5:44 PM · Mar 16, 2017
“IT WAS HORRIBLE WHAT YOU SEE, WHAT YOU SAW — TO SEE PEOPLE TREATED LIKE THEY DID, WITH HORSES NEARLY RUNNING THEM OVER AND PEOPLE BEING STRAPPED,” PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN SAID AT THE TIME. “IT’S OUTRAGEOUS. I PROMISE YOU, THOSE PEOPLE WILL PAY.”
DID YOU KNOW?

Perception is reality and seeing is believing? Without context, images like this one can go viral in an instant. How many times have you seen a picture and thought it was something that it was not?

DID YOU KNOW?

The reins in this and other images could be seen flying around fleeing Haitian migrants attempting to enter an encampment in Del Rio, TX. The widely circulated photos sparked outrage at the time because people believed they were being whipped. This also prompted comments by President Biden, to some degree, in error.
OCTOBER 12, 2019
The construction project to build a Hard Rock Hotel in New Orleans suddenly collapsed. The developer, contractor, et.al. offer condolences and vow to find out what happened. No further comments are given.

OCTOBER 12, 2021
The developer issues its first remarks since the incident occurred on the second anniversary of the collapse.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING
How and when you respond is critical to brand sentiment. Keep in mind, social media has changed the news cycle.
PLAN YOUR WORK
WORK YOUR PLAN
The worst thing that can go wrong in a crisis is not having a plan in hand and/or not having that plan understood by all parties. Being prepared is 50% of the response, the other 50 is execution.

ANTICIPATE YOUR NEEDS
Every organization has a culture. Proper planning means having a complete understanding of that culture. What each area requires, who comprises the teams, how they function (I&C), and what are calendar tasks. ID all communications assets, internal/external, and include in the plan, so all audiences are addressed.

ALL HANDS ON DECK
Everyone is vested. Remind colleagues that they all have a PR role, regardless of their job title - especially in a crisis.

SEEING THE UNSEEN
If you fail to plan, then you're planning to fail. Stay ready, so you don't have to get ready!
NO FACE, NO CASE

A CRISIS DOES NOT REQUIRE A VISUAL

- You never want to put a face on a crisis, although there are some cases when it shouldn't be avoided, e.g., death.

- As stated earlier, one face/voice is the standard.

- Limit your response to one news cycle, if possible. If news is still isolated, only respond to individual inquiries.
  - When you can, funnel story as an exclusive to a media friend.

- Why? Because your job is to kill the story.

- The caveat is that this is crisis dependent.
OTHER TYPES OF CRISSES

- Apologies
- Spreading fake news
- Sensitive data breach or leak
- Inflammatory remarks
- Insensitive marketing practices
- DUI/Arrest
SOCIAL MEDIA
PROBLEM VS. CRISIS
WHAT IS A SOCIAL MEDIA CRISIS?
STEPS TO MANAGE A CRISIS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA
IDENTIFY THE SOURCE OF THE CRISIS
STOP ALL AUTOMATED POSTS
ORGANIZE YOUR WORKFLOW
REACT SWIFTLY
ASSESS AND APOLOGIZE IF NECESSARY
REFLECT AND REPORT
STEPS TO AVOID A CRISIS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA
DETERMINE WHO SPEAKS FOR THE BRAND/COMPANY

CHECK/FIGURE OUT THE VOICE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

UTILIZE SOCIAL LISTENING

PLAN FOR CRISIS SCENARIOS
ADDITIONAL TIPS
ACKNOWLEDGE, BUT DON'T ARGUE
DO NOT PREMATURELY DELETE COMMENTS THAT ARE NEGATIVE
DO NOT BLOCK ANYONE WHO DISAGREES WITH, OR IS UNHAPPY WITH YOU
TAKE THINGS PERSONALLY AND LOSE YOUR BRAND VOICE
STAY UPDATED WITH INTERNAL COMMUNICATION
SECURE YOUR ACCOUNTS
ANY QUESTIONS?