



Crisis Communication

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What is a Crisis?



- **Crisis**

- A major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome

- *Examples*

- Natural disasters, technology malfunctions, confrontations, organizational misdeeds, workplace violence and scandals, rumors, terrorist attacks, and man- made disasters/errors.

What is Crisis Communications?



- “The effort taken to communicate with the public and stockholder when an unexpected event occurs that could have a negative impact on a reputation.”
 - BusinessDictionary.com

When, Not If



- Anticipate Crises
 - Every industry will have different types of crises, but at some point one will occur
 - Must have a prepared crisis communication team and plan
 - Look at other companies to notice any warning signs

Results of a Crisis



1. Company cannot recover and fails
 - ValuJet plane crash
 - Killed all passengers
 - Had to sell out and rename
2. Company survives, but struggles to regain trust and build reputation
 - SeaWorld and the Blackfish documentary
 - Overall loss in tourism and stocks
3. The company thrives and does even better
 - Tylenol (Johnson and Johnson)

Five Stages of a Crisis



1. Detection

1. Look for signs of a crisis occurring or about to occur

2. Prevention

- Strengthen internal communications and community ties

3. Containment

- Keep the crisis from spiraling

4. Recovery

- Begin to fix the issues and keep audiences informed

5. Learning

- Use this crisis as a lesson and figure out how to prevent it from happening again

Do



- Have a crisis communication team
- Have a spokesperson
- Be consistent in messages
- Use notification systems
 - Keep stakeholders and audiences in the know

Do



- Keep employees informed
- Respond quickly and efficiently
- Be honest and transparent
 - Say what you know; the truth will eventually come out
- Apologize and take responsibility
- Monitor feedback
 - Use social media and listen to the community

Crisis Communication Team



- A team specially picked and put in place to handle a crisis
- Typically consists of the top executives, public relations team members, and legal counsel
- Have this team create a crisis management plan beforehand to plan for possible crises

Spokesperson



- Designate and train a primary spokesperson
- They should have strong communication skills
 - In front of a crowd and camera
- Strongly advised to train the CEO of company on public speaking

Lululemon Spokesperson



- CEO, Chip Wilson, made unexpected comments in a Bloomberg interview
- Reversed the PR team's efforts to fix initial crisis
- Created new crisis
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4jIBITIkSk>

Do Not



- Don't say '***NO COMMENT***'
 - Always respond to questions
- Don't ignore the crisis
 - It will not 'go away'
- Don't ignore the media
 - You need them to be on your side
- Don't give exclusive access to certain media
 - No favorites

Do Not



- Don't blame others
 - Take responsibility
- Don't assume a defensive stance
 - Pointing fingers will not work
- Don't ignore the impact of the crisis
 - Understand how stakeholders and the community are affected

Messages



- Understand stakeholders and what they may be thinking or feeling
 - Establish key messages
 - See things from their perspective
- Let the public know you are taking action
- Must be consistent

Social Media



- Vital tool in communication
- Fast and efficient
- Use multiple platforms
- Allows for an open flow of communication
- Respond quickly

Crisis Communication Success

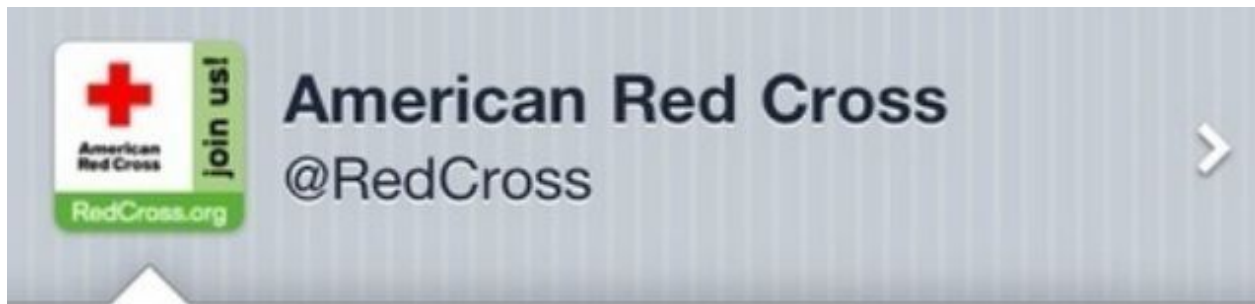


- Whole Foods - 2015
 - Whole Foods was accused of overcharging customers in New York
 - Coined the term “Whole Paycheck”
 - At first they denied it, but then issued apologies
 - CEO’s made a video apology where they were honest and straight up with their audience
 - Outline future changes to ensure it never happens again

Crisis Communication Success



- American Red Cross: Rogue Tweet



Ryan found two more 4 bottle packs of Dogfish Head's Midas Touch beer.... when we drink we do it right [#gettnslizzerd](#)

HootSuite • 2/15/11 11:24 PM

Crisis Communication Success



- American Red Cross Response



We've deleted the rogue tweet but rest assured the Red Cross is sober and we've confiscated the keys.

15 Feb via [ÜberTwitter](#) [★ Unfavorite](#) [↻ Retweet](#) [↩ Reply](#)

Retweeted by [LPARCATL](#) and 100 others



Takeaways



- Act quickly
- Be prepared
- Be consistent and clear
- Be honest and transparent
- Have a designated spokesperson
- Never say ‘No comment.’

Sources



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