

Chapter 5

Building Organizations Image: How to Control a Public Relations Crisis and Communication

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ABSTRACT

It is crucial for a company to maintain its image and reputation, and public relations (PR) plays a vital role in doing so. This study investigates strategies that help an organization rejuvenate its image after damage from ineffective PR. It is important to know which PR strategies engage stakeholders because it is critical for the survival of a company that it maintains healthy relationships with all entities. A case study was conducted to explore what ruins a company's image and what role a PR department plays in rejuvenating it. To gain valuable insights into this topic, interviews were conducted with fourteen PR professionals including people who are working in the mentioned case studies places and organizations that faced some crisis in this chapter. Results suggest PR plays a critical role during crisis management; through PR teams, organizations can turn adverse situations to their favor and reconstruct reputations that would otherwise be tarnished.

INTRODUCTION

According to Al-Jenaibi (2015) a research conducted in crisis management, public relation plays a very crucial role. With help of different teams of PR and social media organizations can seize opportunities to turn all possible circumstances in its favor and protect its reputation which could be destroyed or stained because of the current situation. During crisis the public relations team should make certain that what reason and parties were accountable and liable, and they should provide their aid to managers when compulsory. By seeing the impact of crisis abruptly, proficiently and expertly companies can mitigate the impact of crisis in eyes of stakeholders and during crisis media communication plays a crucial role in enhancing positive results of the company.

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Kirat (2007) stated that reputation of a company is priceless for company at the same time it is also related to its stakeholders and customers. Customers only purchase products of the company that they think it have some kind of value, quality and honestly. So if the image is tarnished, it means the sales of company also decreases with the passage of time. A company gets increasing number of opportunities with good image and reputation but when this image is tarnish the whole business come to an end.

According to Al-Jenaibi (2014) a study in which 20 UAE organizations were test for using internet for PR it was investigated for both public and private organizations. She found that public relation members are fulfilling its role but when it comes to public relations through internet, PR staff is failing to fulfill their roles. The staff is not able to control the information that is transmitted to public through internet. It is a common perception that what is online indicates and what is going on traditional media about the organization.

To survive, people engage in many activities to satisfy both primary and secondary needs. During this satisfaction, crises arise whether among employees, employees and internal stakeholders, employees and external stakeholders, employees and managers, or managers and consumers. Organizations compete for higher profits and market shares, and that competition leads to crises. No day passes without interventions from religion or industry that arouses crises, and a proper set of activities is required to manage them. The role of PR is important during crisis. During crises, organizations must tell the truth, tell it all, and tell it fast (Briguglio, 2004). According to Shaw (2006), crisis management is:

...the coordination of efforts to control a crisis event consistent with strategic goals of an organization. Although generally associated with response, recovery and resumption operations during and following a crisis event, crisis management responsibilities extend to pre-event awareness, prevention and preparedness and post event restoration and transition. (p. 66)

When examining site of different UAE companies, a large number of sites indicated to have municipal welfare. For instance, a huge space in ADNOC'S website has been left to show its commitment to environmental protection so basically it is using internet and its site as a tool for public relations. In public sector Dubai municipality also indicates that it is applying good deal of environmental protection. These companies have also made use of some high quality educational items and pictures in order to attract viewers to make more visits. Some other services involve posting good quality picture, stories related to children reports that make people aware of different things, declaration related to public service, advantageous links of sites, manual regarding different training programs, and internet services (Al-Jenaibi, 2011).

Crises are negative events, not welcome by organizations worldwide. Some negative functions associated with crisis management include ushering many types of competition, both healthy and unhealthy. They destroy life and property, and they ruin images of organizations and countries since investors become skeptical easily regarding investments. The role of public relations (PR) is important when overcoming crises. If an organization or country wishes to prosper during or after a crisis, it must focus on the importance of PR during this critical time.

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