

SOCIAL MEDIA, CULTURE AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION:
IMAGE RESTORATION EFFORTS OF SELECTED CASES
IN THE UNITED STATES AND SPAIN

By

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ABSTRACT

Every organization will face a crisis at some point, but its crisis communication response can often make or break its reputation. This paper uses Benoit's Theory of Image Restoration to analyze strategies used by three organizations or individuals in the United States and three in Spain. Insights gained through ethnographic research and analysis of these cases revealed cultural frameworks used by organizations in each country and their roles in crisis responses. Evaluation of real-time social media responses from the selected six organizations and individuals helped analyze the interactions with their publics. The purpose of this qualitative research is to not only compare the crisis communication responses in these countries, but to explore the implications of public relations and social media use in a cultural context. In addition, Benoit's image restoration strategies create a framework for organizations' attempts to regain traction and credibility, as well as to stabilize reputation, during crisis situations.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Although the definition of crisis is widely debated, many scholars agree that certain central factors contribute to its meaning. Not only is a crisis surprising, but it also escalates quickly due to lack of information and requires immediacy of response. Fearn-Banks describes a crisis as “a major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting an organization” (2010). Examples range from natural disasters to human error, falling into personal, social, economic, political and environmental categories. Communication is key in the wake of a crisis and can often lead to the demise or success of a response strategy. In turn, this affects the overall image and reputation of an organization.

Crisis communication is considered a subspecialty of the public relations profession designed to protect and defend an individual, company or organization facing a public challenge to its reputation. Coombs defines a crisis as “the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization’s performance and generate negative outcomes” (Coombs 2007b: 5). Often, reactive crisis communication is mistaken for proactive crisis management. In fact, crisis management is a set of factors designed to combat crises and to lessen the actual damages inflicted. During a crisis, all stakeholders are affected. Stakeholders are the internal and external groups with an interest in the organization, and the organization is largely dependent on their support. Therefore, the strategic execution of crisis communication to stakeholders can make or break an organization’s or person’s image.

Crises have been on the forefront of the public’s mind due to recent high impact crises. For example, the Paris terrorist attacks in November 2015, Belgium attacks in 2016 and Istanbul nightclub attacks in January 2017, shook not only Europe, but the United States and other nations as well. Due to safety risks and related issues, communication is vital. So, cultural discrepancies and proliferation of crises have turned the spotlight on crisis management and communication. There is extra responsibility placed on these communicators, especially in a crisis-a-day era.

The interconnectedness of the world has become more evident after a semester spent in Seville, Spain, in 2016. The March 2016 Brussels terrorist attacks, the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis and the April 2016 earthquakes in Japan and Ecuador show a heightened need to communicate effectively to mobilize people to achieve the highest level of safety, and ultimately trust in the role of the respective communicators. Now more than ever it’s a top priority to build and maintain stakeholder trust in order to survive and thrive in any crisis.

This paper explores and compares crisis communication responses utilized in three cases in Spain and three cases in the United States. It further analyzes the image

restoration strategies and tactics used to regain and retain stakeholder trust. The paper focuses on real-time messaging through social media channels.

Purpose/Justification

This paper explores the crisis communication responses and image restoration strategies used in six different cases involving organizations and individuals. Three cases were set in Spain and three cases were set in the United States.

I purposefully chose crises from both the United States and Spain for three reasons including an acknowledgement of relativity, as crises in each country may not be heightened in the other countries. Secondly, each party has/had a reputation to uphold as “business as usual” was interrupted by a dividing event. In addition, the involved parties, to some extent, utilized Benoit’s Theory of Image Restoration.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the social media and communication patterns from the three crises in Spain? From the organization? From the public?

RQ2: What are the social media and communication patterns from the three crises in the U.S.? From the organization? From the public?

RQ3: How are these patterns similar or different, for the organizations and from their publics?

RQ4: How might these varieties of actions in the three cases inform crisis responses in Spain? In the United States? In both countries? In the world in general?

RQ5: What lessons may be learned from the variety of actions during these six crises responses?

Research Limitations

It’s impossible to capture the full gravity of crises and the transience nature of social media. Also when analyzing crisis in a cross-cultural setting, as with the Spanish crises, it is likely that some cultural and linguistic nuances would be missed.

The study uses qualitative research, which provides more depth and insights, including personal observation, but lacks complete objectivity and is difficult to replicate. It does not permit the use of inferential statistical analysis to be projected to a larger population, but rather provides explanation to an ongoing narrative.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Relations

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) defines public relations as a “strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics” (2012).

A company’s reputation and image is at the heart of every organization. Crisis communication is an important component for these organizations’ strategic plans, as crises are inevitable. It’s critical to have a crisis plan in place to be as best prepared as possible. This aids the process of image restoration and quick responses.

According to the International Public Relations Association (IPRA), “The impact of a crisis and how you are perceived to have managed it will be shaped by previous history and the context in which the incident occurs” (Hemus, 2014, ¶ 19). The IPRA affirms, “When multiple parties are involved in responding to an incident, a clear understanding of their respective crisis management roles and responsibilities is essential. Expectations set early on will save valuable time in a crisis and reduce the risk of message duplication or, even worse, conflicting messages” (Hemus, 2014, ¶ 7). So, public relations professionals are now expected to take a proactive role in crisis management and communication, as they guide the messaging before, during and after a crisis.

Further, social media use is growing in the public relations world. It has changed the landscape of communication in general. It provides constant two-way communication between an organization and its stakeholders. Organizations are now forced to use social media during crisis situations to communicate real-time updates and receive real-time feedback. Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger found that the movement toward a global economy and global media interconnects the world, so crises have a domino effect across continents (2015). This implies the need to stay in tune to current events and the need to research a country before engaging in it. Not only are public relations professionals now expected to be social media experts, but they are expected to be culturally competent as well. Cultural competency allows people to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

Though public relations differ between countries, the overall foundation remains the same: to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.

Reputation Management

Experts agree that during crises, reputations are maintained or tarnished based on how well or poorly the organization responds to the crisis. Riley (2015) posed four reputation management questions that organizations should ask themselves before a crisis occurs:

1. What is your objective during a crisis?

2. Does your communications team have experienced crisis managers?
3. Which of your brand's attributes are most sacred?
4. How does your communications team safeguard the organization's integrity?

Many online forums, such as PR Daily, provide public relations professionals with a place to keep up with the latest public relations trends and practices, and give them a chance to contribute as well. Dietrich, a contributor on this website, lists nine steps to defuse a crisis (2015):

1. Act swiftly.
2. Address the problem.
3. Communicate the story.
4. Use the right platform.
5. Hire a crisis communications expert.
6. Think before you act.
7. Empower your team.
8. Say you're sorry.
9. Back down when you're wrong.

Although these specific steps may differ, experts generally agree on the framework behind crisis communication in managing an organization's reputation. So, preparing "golden hour" statements in advance and scenario planning helps organizations take a proactive preventative role.

Social Media

Social media is a constantly changing landscape, set with unwritten rules of behavior for users and guidelines for marketers to maximize its use. In the same way, there is room for both success and failure. Not only do trends change among the users in social media world, also creators have the power to change algorithms to which users must adapt. If organizations are not fully aware, these changes can harm marketing or other strategic efforts. In addition, organizations are now competing with the voices of user-generated content, so it's vital to manage a real-time view of these dialogues.

The Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) presents the idea of the aesthetic dimension of communication (Persuit & Marinchak, 2016). This explores the idea of creating content to fit a particular image, thus creating a public experience and social construction. The tone of an organization's image can create an atmosphere for the type of interaction it desires through social media. Persuit and Marinchak state that "Like all meaningful experiences, aesthetic experiences point into the future opening and closing possibilities" (p.89).

Furthermore, communicating with stakeholders before a crisis builds trust and allows the organization to prevent and detect an upcoming crisis (George & Pratt,

2012). This holds true for social media channels as well as through building trust and favorable views on these platforms. According to a Corporate Social Media Use study, 76% of U.S. companies use social media for reputation monitoring (Useful Social Media, 2013).

The social media landscape changes on a daily basis. Some recent changes include:

- Changes in the Instagram algorithm: “posts will appear in your feed based on the likelihood you’ll be interested in the content, your relationship with the person posting and the timeliness of the post” (Romero, 2016).
- Facebook and Instagram live video feeds
- LinkedIn gains more traction.
- Facebook launches “Branded Content” to verify brand users and create a special tag for them.
- Interaction on Twitter with consumers proves profitable.

According to an excerpt from *Book of Crisis Management Strategies & Tactics, Vol. 8*, Vanden Hurk recommends six ways to integrate social media into crisis situations:

- Don’t censor content.
- Don’t use a corporate tone, but a more friendly tone.
- It’s okay to bring order to an organization’s online space.
- Listen to concerns and respond quickly.
- Each channel should communicate the same message, but conform to the style of the channel.
- Update platforms 24/7.

Source Credibility

Source and credibility perception of different publics play a role in the effectiveness of crisis communication responses, yet social media has changed the landscape, lacking traditional gatekeeping qualities. For example, Twitter posters can be perceived as lacking credibility due to different motivations behind posting (Russell, 2015). What is the agenda for posting certain content? Further, employees were found to be trustworthy sources of information, which can be crucial in online management (Helm, 2011). They act independently, though still affiliated with the organization (Russell, 2015). To gauge public perception, an organization must know how different publics assess it to effectively execute crisis communication content by Coombs’ SCCT theory.

Moreover, with increasing dependence on social media, questions about relevance, newsworthiness and credibility also arise. Users personally assess believability of the communicator and communication (Russell, 2015). According to Sundar, “authority” (prior reputation) helps consumers take mental shortcuts in assessing the validity and credibility of the message (Russell, 2015). However, the organization itself is “at a credibility disadvantage for being involved in the crisis” (Veil & Ojeda, 2010, p.415). So, organizations must be aware of the importance of the messages in crisis situations, as they can increase content and source credibility or be

detrimental to itself. The effectiveness of communication strategy on reputation during the crisis is regulated by perceptions of credibility, which will affect post-crisis reputation as well.

The credibility of social media channels in a crisis is an important factor for communicators to consider before attempting to execute image restoration strategies and tactics. Maintaining mutually beneficial relationships at all times with internal and external stakeholders will aid in this process.

Crisis Communication Theories

Crisis communication theories help public relations professionals and communicators understand the implications of their stakeholders and messaging during a crisis (George & Pratt, 2012). Some of these theories include:

The Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), also known as Coomb's attribution theory, states that the more responsibility stakeholders attach to the organization, the more they hold the organization accountable (George & Pratt, 2012). So, responsibility is attributed based on perception of who is responsible for the crisis, history of the crisis and prior reputation of the organization (Russell, 2015).

The Blog-Mediated Crisis Communication Model is a descriptive model that implies that public relations professionals should foster relationships with influential bloggers, knowing they are influenced by user-generated content, which could influence their perceptions. This model helps identify issue involvement and self-involvement (George & Pratt, 2012).

The Stakeholder Theory places stakeholders at the center of strategic thinking, to assign ranks to stakeholders and to develop a rational view of the organizational communication (George & Pratt, 2012).

Situational Theory of Publics (STP) describes how stakeholders will behave if they recognize a problem, perceive their involvement in the problem or if they think they are constrained in resolving the problem (George & Pratt, 2012).

Rhetorical Stasis Theory provides strategies of self defense. These strategies include denying, bolstering, differentiating and transcending (George & Pratt, 2012).

Lastly, the Theory of Image Repair Discourse, which is used in most of this paper's analysis, is described below.

Theory of Image Repair Discourse

Image is one of the most crucial aspects of a functioning organization. Benoit's image restoration strategies include denying, evading responsibility, reducing offensiveness, taking corrective action and apologizing (George & Pratt, 2012). This implies that the messages an organization uses could change stakeholders' perceptions during a crisis, therefore changing the image or "face" of the organization. According to George & Pratt, "Benoit's image restoration theory holds that, because image and reputation are essential to organizations and individuals, any (offensive) act that undermines an organization's standings with its stakeholders could be addressed through an image restoration discourse to develop and understand images that respond to such an image crisis" (2012). Strategies include:

1. Denial:
 - a. Outright denial
 - b. Shift of blame
2. Evasion of responsibility:
 - a. Provocation: Another organization, person, etc. deliberately tried to elicit a response
 - b. Defeasibility: Claim to lack information, so claims should be void
 - c. Accident
 - d. Good intentions
3. Reduction of offensiveness
 - a. Bolstering: Strengthen positive feelings
 - b. Minimizing: Minimize negative feelings
 - c. Differentiating: Differentiate between acts of others' offensive acts
 - d. Transcending: Put the act in a more favorable context
 - e. Attacking the accuser
 - f. Compensating
4. Corrective action
 - a. Restore state of affairs existing before
 - b. Say it won't happen again
5. Mortification: Confess and beg for forgiveness

The application and definitions of strategies and tactics differ, as strategies guide the tactical execution. These strategies, for example, guide the overall messaging plan, while tactics are the actual means to attain the strategic goals.

Role of *Kairos*

Kairos can be defined as a “supreme moment”, or seizing an opportunity at an opportune time. Through a public relations lens, this means strategically using a crisis as an opportunity to one’s advantage. Lambiase states, “When this timing and circumstances fell into place, then a rhetorician who understood *kairos* could use that opportunity to arrange words, images and delivery for communicating messages. Across these definitions, *kairos* also indicates understanding of the audience’s frames of mind and reference at a particular moment in time. If competing speakers vie for the attention of the same audience, then one of those speakers could gain an advantage by grasping that cultural moment through use of the rhetorical situation, in which timing, message, channel and style of delivery meet with an audience through *kairos*” (2012).

For example, *kairos* moments were used in 2009-2011 by activists supporting anti-government protests, gaining support via social media (Lambiase, 2012). Advocates in Moldova, Iran, Tunisia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Libya employed tactics to mobilize protesters to act at a time when emotions were particularly heightened. These advocates addressed freedom in their message content and objectives. Government reactions varied, many discounting any idea of two-way conversation. In some of the following cases, *kairos* is used to explain how stakeholders turned a crisis into an opportunity.

Culture and Communication

Because crises are relative to various cultures, organizations should take culture into account before strategically responding to crisis situations. Values and beliefs play a role when determining an appropriate crisis management strategy. For example, what is considered respectful in one country may be considered inappropriate in another country. According to Clauss-Ehlers (2010), “Culture can influence what type of threat or event is perceived as traumatic, how individuals interpret the meaning of crisis and how individuals and communities express traumatic reactions” (p. 338). Culture is impossible to ignore, especially in transboundary cases like the Toyota crisis in Japan, where the context of a culture impeded the pre-crisis stage, eventually leading to a crisis (Fuse & Lambiase, 2012). Toyota’s failed attempt to genuinely apologize directly opposed Japanese values and rituals, leading to miscommunication.

Another important factor is the dynamic nature of culture and the ongoing effort needed to understand it (Alaimo, 2017). In addition, cultures are not homogenous or necessarily congruent with respective countries, so assumptions can undermine crisis communication efforts. The author continues, “Yet, even despite the difficulty of understanding a culture and the diversity to be found within a single culture, learning about cultural differences remains one of the key ways—in fact, I would argue it is the most effective way—for you to successfully adapt your public relations strategies for international audiences” (Alaimo, 2017, p.27).

Lastly, “Through appropriately designed training, personnel deployed in crisis management operations can better meet the challenges posed by culture and use them as opportunities to implement improved interventions that impact positively on the lives of local populations, learning from, and working with, the people” (Adahl, 2009). So, a crisis can be used as an opportunity to connect with stakeholders, rather than burn bridges. Cultural awareness should be on the forefront of organizations’ minds. If prepared, culture should not be an obstacle for effective crisis communication.

Hofstede’s (national) cultural dimensions provide a framework for cross-cultural communication, showing how values relate to the behavior of a country. These are important concepts to keep in mind when communicating with a different culture:

- Power distance: How different national cultures cope with inequalities in society and their effects on the workplace.
- Uncertainty avoidance: Need to avoid uncertainty
- Individualism vs. collectivism: The relations between the individual and others
- Masculinity vs. femininity: The division of roles, and achievement/service values in society
- Long term vs. short term orientation: Connection of the past to future action; development
- Indulgence vs. restraint: Measure of happiness and fulfillment

Hofstede also mentions a Spanish dimension of “passion.”

Hofstede’s dimensions will guide analysis and cultural comparisons dealing with reactions to the select six cases (Alaimo, 2017).

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Structure

This paper examines public relations crises in the United States and Spain. First, the context of public relations in each country is provided, followed by a timeline of the three crises in relation to each other. Then, the three cases are explored within each country. The background, incident, timeline, official initial statement, social media response strategies and tactics, key messages, outcomes, observations and conclusion of each case are investigated.

In Spain, I chose three different organizations and individuals with various stakeholders. They include the Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad (MSSSI)'s Zika Virus scare, matador Francisco Rivera Ordóñez's controversial photo and Erasmus' fatal bus crash. In the United States, I chose Chipotle's E.coli scare, UCLA's campus shooting and death of Cincinnati Zoo's gorilla Harambe. Although there are many channels of communication involved in crisis communication responses, my research focuses on social media responses and related PR responses.

Primary and Secondary Sources

First, I collected secondary information to understand public relations and crisis communication concepts. Then, I collected information for six crises as they occurred within my timeline, starting Fall 2015: three from the United States and three from Spain. The information included capturing social media snapshots (i.e. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc.) and following hashtags during crises. These snapshots were taken during and after the various crises.

To receive news about Spain, the United States and public relations updates, I utilized Twitter. For example I followed accounts such as CNN, PR Daily, *ABC de Sevilla*, *Correo de Andalucía* and *Diario de Sevilla*. I also followed the six respective organizational accounts to track the crisis communication responses during the respective dates. The main accounts included the Cincinnati Zoo, UCLA, Chipotle, MSSSI, Francisco Rivera Ordóñez and Erasmus Student Network. I subscribed to Chipotle's emails to further gather the latest updates about the crisis. In addition, I briefly located the organization's website and affiliated sites for news releases and other outputs to compare it to the reality of the situation.

Observations and Qualitative Research

I gathered pertinent information by using ethnographic techniques. By watching for specific social media interactions, I could pair my observations with the happenings in the respective digital spaces. By observing bigger environmental contexts along with social media channels, such as Twitter, I could understand real-time sensations, sentiments and observe the unfolding crises.

I collected information from Spanish organizations and individuals while studying in Spain for five months (2016), since search engines differ based on location, altering perspectives and results. My immersion in the culture and access to locals aided my understanding of crises in Spain. I could also understand the local and national newspapers through my improving Spanish skills. In the same way, I collected information from the United States while residing there as well. By observing and collecting qualitative data in this way, I could grasp the relativity and context for each crisis, and understand the broader social context as a whole.

For each organization and person in the two countries I analyzed what worked and what didn't work, analyzing patterns and creating a narrative timeline of events for the purpose of comparing public relations practices. By systematically monitoring social media outlets, I collected real-time information during and after crises.

Personal Interview

During my semester in Spain, I interviewed César Correa, the general manager of Ogilvy Public Relations (Ogilvy & Mather), Spain, which has a 20-year presence in the country. Through the interview, I gained an important perspective on current public relations practices, especially crisis communication, in Spain (Appendix A).

Cases and Analysis: USA

Context of Public Relations

Public relations in the United States keeps adapting to changes brought about by a crisis-rich and fast-paced culture. According to IbisWorld, "During the past five years, public relations (PR) firms have achieved a greater share of clients' marketing budgets. With an evolving digital media landscape, clients have shifted their budgets away from traditional mass media, such as TV, print and radio, toward more below-the-line, or niche-focused strategies in an effort to reach targeted audience groups. Consequently, industry operators have focused on social media outlets such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and blogs as areas of growth for PR campaigns" (Blau, 2015, p.7). With this changing landscape, the challenge of fragmented audiences shifts the focus to more targeted campaigns. This implies the need to know one's audiences better than ever. It continues, "Public relations agencies have harnessed social media as a way to target specific customer groups and stakeholders" (Blau, 2015, p.7). This tool provides opportunity for relationship management.

Furthermore, there is an increasing trend toward domestic expansion with a global reach: "More agencies are trying to provide fully integrated campaigns and services on a global scale, as corporate and government clients increase their international presence" (Blau, 2015, p.8). This change in the industry clearly justifies a comparison of crisis responses in two different cultures, and countries, the United

States and Spain. Major companies in the United States include Omnicom Group Inc., with industry brand names including Fleishman-Hillard and Porter Novelli.

Timeline

Crisis #1: Cincinnati Zoo and the killing of Harambe, the gorilla

Crisis #2: University of California Los Angeles's (UCLA) shooting on-campus

Crisis #3: Chipotle E.coli toxin outbreak

Crisis #1: Cincinnati Zoo and Harambe, the Gorilla

Background

The Cincinnati Zoo was home to a 17-year-old male gorilla named Harambe, an endangered Silverback Western Lowland Gorilla. Harambe was born and raised in captivity, and came to this zoo in 2015 with the intent to reproduce.

According to the Cincinnati Zoo's website, the zoo was founded in 1873 (n.d.). It specializes in captive breeding and was rated one of the best zoos in the nation. Core values include collaborative relationships, positivity & energy, accountability/mutual trust/respect, progressive thinking and pride, passion and sense of ownership.

Incident

In May 2016, a 4-year-old boy fell into Harambe's enclosure at the zoo by going under the rail while his mother was allegedly distracted with her other children. Witnesses said the scene was filled with screams, yet it seemed like the gorilla was trying to protect the boy. Then, the gorilla threw the boy 10-feet in the air. A special team responded quickly at the scene, using a rifle to shoot Harambe as the boy was in "imminent danger" (Visser, 2016).

This event spurred much debate over whether the gorilla should have been killed or if other means could have been used to save both the boy and the gorilla. An online petition appeared, calling for "Justice for Harambe" through criminal charges, as Western Lowland gorillas are endangered. Some even called for a boycott of the zoo. In addition, videos of the incident surfaced. The Cincinnati Zoo fell under immediate scrutiny, sparking the blame game. It did not press charges of negligence on the mother.

Timeline

May 28, 2016	A young boy fell into a moat, the gorilla's enclosure at the Cincinnati Zoo.
May 29, 2016	The Cincinnati Zoo's team updated statements and counter-shared visuals as more facts arose (Steinberg, 2016).
May 30, 2016	Director Thane Maynard holds a press conference.
June 7, 2016	The gorilla exhibit reopens.
August 20, 2016	Someone hacks into Cincinnati Zoo director Thane Maynard's Twitter account.
August 23, 2016	Cincinnati Zoo deletes its Twitter account, responding to the memes.
October 2016	The zoo's exhibit barriers are improved.
November 2016	Harambe jokes remain prevalent.

Stakeholders

The boy: His life was at stake in the gorilla enclosure.

The family: In danger of losing the boy, the family was also in danger of losing credibility, failing to keep the boy from danger. Many blamed the family for the incident.

The special team and zookeepers: They decided whether to kill Harambe with a special rifle, rather than use a tranquilizer, which was at the center of the controversy.

The Cincinnati Zoo: Its whole image was at stake, in danger of losing credibility in sight of the public, institutions and professionals

Lowland gorillas: As an endangered specie, the loss of one gorilla was detrimental to its overall survival.

Animal rights activists: With much effort to protect endangered species such as the Lowland Gorilla, Harambe's death gave them a reason to voice their opinions.

Official statement/initial response

The zoo updated its website on the day of the incident stating (Cincinnati Zoo, 2016):

A 4-year-old boy climbed through a public barrier at Gorilla World at around 4 pm today at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden and fell into the exhibit's moat. The two female gorillas in the exhibit were recalled immediately, but the third, a male, remained in the yard with the child. The Zoo's Dangerous Animal Response Team responded to the life-threatening situation and made the difficult decision to dispatch the gorilla (Harambe). "The Zoo security team's quick response saved the child's life. We are all devastated that this tragic accident resulted in the death of a critically-endangered gorilla," said Zoo Director Thane Maynard. "This is a huge loss for the Zoo family and the gorilla population worldwide." The child was alert when transported to Children's Hospital Medical Center. The hospital is not releasing details on his condition. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and little boy," said Maynard. The Zoo will be open tomorrow, but Gorilla World will be closed until further notice.

The website was continually updated as facts surfaced (Cincinnati Zoo, 2016). Updates included:

- *Cincinnati Zoo Devastated By Death of Beloved Gorilla* (May 29, 2016)
- *Honoring Harambe* (June 1, 2016)
- *Cincinnati Zoo Plans To Reopen Gorilla World Next Week* (June 2, 2016)
- *Cincinnati Zoo's Gorilla World Reopens* (June 7, 2016)
- *An Open Letter to the Greater Cincinnati Community from Director Thane Maynard* (June 16, 2016)

Response: Social Media Strategy and Tactics

The Cincinnati Zoo used an array of image restoration strategies and tactics to defend its image after the death of Harambe. Though the activists and facets of the public blamed the mother for neglecting to pay attention to her child, the zoo did not blame her. The nature of the incident called for accusation overall, which is why the zoo was the first to be held responsible for the offensive act.

The zoo did not ask for forgiveness, but rather fervently defended its decision to shoot the gorilla in order to save the boy's life. Director Maynard stated in a conference, "The idea of waiting and shooting it with a hypodermic was not a good idea. That would have definitely created alarm in the male gorilla. When you dart an animal, anesthetic does not work in one second, it works over a period of a few minutes to 10 minutes. The risk was due to the power of that animal" (Cahillane, 2016). Experts such as Jack Hanna and Jane Goodall agreed.

Overall, the zoo evaded responsibility by claiming provocation and good intentions. The boy's fall was also positioned as an accident, though the mother should have been more aware. Further, the zoo attempted to reduce offensiveness through minimizing negative feelings. This was executed through evading the responsibility by its defending actions. Lastly, corrective actions, such as redoubling gorilla conservation efforts, were made post-incident.

Key Messages

Hashtags:

#Harambe;

#JusticeForHarambe

Twitter: @CincinnatiZoo

May:

Cincinnati Zoo Devastated by Death of Beloved Gorilla.



Details on sad incident at Cincinnati Zoo:



June: @ThaneMaynard

Retweet: "Harambe will not be forgotten. And we will work to make sure his death will not be in vain."

Facebook:

The Harambe crisis also gained more media attention after "trending" as news on Facebook, encouraging users to click to read more.

May:

 **Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden** May 28 at 4:42pm · 🌐

Details on sad incident at Cincinnati Zoo today.



Media Update: Gorilla World

CINCINNATI, OH (May 28, 2016) – A 4-year-old boy climbed through a public barrier at Gorilla World at around 4pm today at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical G

CINCINNATIZOO.ORG

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

👍👎👍 14K Top Comments ▾

9,177 shares

 **Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden** added 2 new photos — with Elizabeth Stratford and 8 others. Yesterday at 11:38am · 🌐

Cincinnati Zoo Devastated by Death of Beloved Gorilla

CINCINNATI (May 29, 2016) –The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden family is in mourning today and trying to process the death of 17-year-old gorilla Harambe. The gorilla was killed yesterday in order to save the life of a child who climbed through a public barrier at Gorilla World and dropped fifteen feet into the exhibit's moat, which contained a foot of water.

"We are heartbroken about losing Harambe, but a child's life...

[Continue Reading](#)



The full text was included in the post from May 29, 2016 on Facebook, rather than only linking the information.

Social media users:

The public quickly took to social media to participate in online debates with other social media users about the controversial subject. Some praised the zoo's actions, while other criticized it. Due to the sheer amount of commentary, many unique perspectives on the situation surfaced. For example, many blamed the boy's mother and some went as far as claiming the Cincinnati Zoo should not be in the "zoo business." One social media user compared the Harambe case to the May 2016 case involving Disney and a young boy being killed by an alligator, commenting on a similar crisis. News outlets joined the conversation, inviting the public to engage opinions on social media

A few months after Harambe's death, the incident turned into a public joke. Memes, fake Twitters, BuzzFeed quizzes and other jokes surfaced. In addition, the hashtag #dicksoutforharambe surfaced, while #Harambe also became a joke.



Kairos Moment

Harambe's death gave animal rights activists the perfect opportunity to assert their opinions and voices against the killing. Wayne Pacelle, CEO of the Humane Society of the United States stated, "The killing of Harambe saddened the nation, because this magnificent creature did not place himself into this captive setting and did nothing wrong at any stage of this incident" (Rivera, 2016). Harambe's death was considered a win for animal rights activists as it received widespread media coverage from high-profile media vehicles. This coverage and social media changed the way the public engaged in these controversial issues.

Animal rights groups, such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), not only debated the killing, but also questioned the reasoning for Harambe's captivity in the first place. *The Scientific American* asserts, "This moment can be turned into a movement that is concerned with the plight of captive animals" (Bekoff, 2016). Other animal behavior experts stated that the gorilla was investigating, not attacking the boy (Gutierrez, 2016). The killing weighted the value of a child's life over a gorilla's life.

So, leveraging the incident supported animal rights activists' views, giving them the opportune moment to make a point that could resonate with the public as a hot-button issue. It gave the public a chance to weigh in on an issue they previously may not have cared about, as ordinary people felt saddened by the event.

Outcomes

The Cincinnati Zoo's reputation took a fall after the death of Harambe as the public searched frantically for someone to blame. Though the zoo evaded some of the direct responsibility through the public's blame of the mother, the zoo still took a reputational and financial hit. In addition, animal rights groups guided the conversation through their use of the *kairos* moment to discuss issues pertinent to the groups. Months after the incident, the cycle of media sensationalism still stuck around, further giving the organization unprecedented positive public image.

Instead of offering condolences to the zoo, many social media users offered condolences to the gorilla and criticized the zoo for its course of action. Harambe's death drew immense public outrage, more so than the possibility of the child's death.

This case illustrates an application of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). Given that the zoo was considered mostly at fault (in addition to the mother), higher attribution was applied. The boy's fall in the enclosure could be considered both an accident but also as preventable by the mother, attributing moderate to high fault. The killing of Harambe was considered preventable by activists, while the zoo maintained that its team made the right choice. The zoo was forced to deal, rather than deny or diminish the crisis. It demonstrated high levels of concern for boy and the gorilla overall. However, it still failed to fully take responsibility, which could have contributed to a loss of stakeholder trust.

The Situational Theory of Publics (STP) also deals with how stakeholders respond if they recognize a problem. This specifies a level of involvement and influences how publics process and seek out information. So, the zoo needed to assess strategic responses, yet failed to address the specific needs of each. For example, though it produced consistent messaging, maintaining its stance on the decision to save the boy, it did not address animal rights groups' specific concerns.

Observation/analysis

Maynard's transparency and quick response contributed positively to the zoo's crisis communication response (Renfree, 2016). By recognizing the loss of the endangered specie but also the saving of the child, Maynard addressed both sides of the story. He also addressed the rarity of the situation, the decision to shoot instead of tranquilize and the barrier concerns in the zoo's lengthy Facebook post.

The zoo's decision to delete its Twitter account in late August, responding to the arising Harambe memes and hacking of the account, was a mistake. It removed social media communication with the public during a dire time. It tried to erase the problem by erasing its account. *PR Daily* asserted, "The Harambe meme isn't a reaction to the actual event. It's more of a reaction to the outrage that followed the event" (Allen, 2016). However, giving into the "cyber bullies" by deleting the account sparked new news, rather than letting the crisis subside over time. The zoo stated, "We are not amused by the memes, petitions and signs about Harambe. Our zoo family is still healing, and the constant mention of Harambe makes moving forward more difficult for us. We are honoring Harambe by redoubling our gorilla conservation efforts and encouraging others to join us."

The zoo could defend its actions because the Dangerous-Animal Response Team acted quickly and is certified every year by the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office (Winchel, 2016). Displaying the credibility and qualifications of the team helped its defense strategy to shift blame, evade responsibility and reduce offensiveness. The zoo's efforts to sympathize with the public in mutual devastation failed since the action of killing the gorilla was pinned on the zoo.

Conclusion

The Cincinnati Zoo not only dealt with a life-and-death crisis, but also with a media frenzy crisis (Harambe's "second life" online). The utilization of groups' *kairos* moment and creation of memes dis-positioned the zoo's control over its message. The organization's image restoration strategies were appropriate for the multiple features of the crisis, but were at times lost in translation. Messages were also lost amid the sheer amount of surrounding discussion. The zoo's defense of its actions by evading responsibility and reducing offensiveness could not fully restore its public image due to the finality of the death of Harambe.

Crisis #2: UCLA Shooting

Background

University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), located in Westwood, California, "is known worldwide for the breadth and quality of its academic, research, health care, cultural, continuing education and athletics programs" (2016). Founded in 1919, it is

now one of the top ranked universities in the world. Enrollment constitutes of 43,301 students, including 29,585 undergraduates, 12,323 graduate students and 1,393 medical/dentistry interns and residents according to UCLA's numbers. The institution is known for the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center on campus as well as 113 NCAA team championships. The university also takes pride in its diversity.

Incident

On Wednesday, June 1, 2016, an active shooter entered UCLA's engineering school, prompting panic and an all-school lockdown around 10 a.m. The situation was contained by noon, and classes were cancelled the rest of the day. The shooter proceeded to murder Professor William Klug, a professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering, in a small office in the building and concluded by killing himself (Mossburg, 2016). For a time, information about student deaths was unknown, adding to the uncertainty of the situation. Authorities such as SWAT officers were quick to investigate and search for more active shooters. Investigators found that the shooter had been Klug's student at UCLA. The shooter's estranged wife was later found dead at a Minnesota home, along with a kill list.

Timeline

May 18, 2016		Bruin Alert test
June 1, 2016		Murder-suicide on UCLA's campus (UCLA Newsroom, June 1, 2016)
June 1, 2016	10 a.m.	First reports of shooter
June 1, 2016	11:15 a.m.	Two people are confirmed dead.
June 1, 2016	12: 05 p.m.	Lockdown lifted; classes cancelled
June 1, 2016	12:30 p.m.	UCLA Police Chief James Herren spoke to the media.
June 1, 2016	1:40 p.m.	News conference with Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Scott Waugh
June 1, 2016	3:30 p.m.	Counseling services offered

June 1, 2016		Message from chancellor
June 2, 2016		Classes resume.
June 10, 2016		UCLA establishes campus task force to address campus violence.
October 2016		Campus security improvements

Stakeholders

Students: They were in direct line of potential danger, with lives at stake.

Parents: Scared for their kids' safety and on high alert, parents had the potential to lose a child amidst an unknown crisis.

Faculty, staff and visitors on campus: They were in direct line of potential danger, with both their lives and students' lives at stake.

Victim and his family: Professor Klug was murdered amidst the crisis.

Los Angeles: Affecting the security of the whole city, the shooting could have had damaging effects on both the people in Los Angeles and the area itself.

UCLA: The institution not only had lives at stake, but a responsibility to respond correctly in a time of crisis, contingent upon its own students and stakeholders.

Official statement/initial response

Message from the chancellor on his website: June 1, 2016

[Message From Chancellor Block About Today's Tragedy](#)

Chancellor Block joins the campus community in mourning and provides information about available grief counseling for students, faculty and staff.

To the Campus Community,

Our hearts are heavy this evening as our campus family mourns the sudden and tragic deaths of two people on our campus earlier today. The thoughts and prayers of our entire UCLA family are with the victims' families and the students, faculty and staff of UCLA Engineering.

Most of us have never experienced a day like today, and this incident has been enormously stressful for everyone. UCLA's [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) is available for any member of our community who wishes to speak to a trained counselor about their feelings about the incident. Phone counseling is available for students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at 310-825-0768, or students may visit CAPS in person, on the second floor of John Wooden Center West.

Staff and faculty may seek services at the [Staff and Faculty Counseling Center](#), at 10920 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 380, or by calling 310-794-0245.

The safety of our students, faculty and staff is our top priority, and UCLA emergency personnel train for emergency situations, always with the goal of protecting our campus community. All of us are deeply grateful to our UCLA Police Department, UCLA Fire Department and other emergency responders. Thank you for all you do to keep all of us safe.

Thanks also to the Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles Fire Department and the numerous other agencies who came to our assistance this morning.

Please check [UCLA Newsroom](#) for further updates as they become available.

Our UCLA family has indeed been shaken, but we will rely upon the strong bonds of our community and our faith in one another as we begin the process of healing.

Sincerely,

Gene D. Block
Chancellor

June 1, 2016

UCLA (@UCLA) and UCLA Newsroom's (@UCLANewsroom) initial Twitter response on June 1, 2016:



Response: Social media strategies and tactics

UCLA did not use Benoit's image restoration strategies because it was held responsible for the offensive shooting. The nature of the attack suggested fault of the shooter, yet still left some responsibility to UCLA to essentially make it right. In this light, implied evasion of responsibility was present as the event was framed as an accident. UCLA also reduced offensiveness through bolstering positive feelings, such as school pride (#BruinStrong), toward the organization and through some compensation. However, these strategies were not at the forefront of usage.

UCLA sought to communicate corrective action through its social media messages to alter stakeholders' perceptions. Though the attack was not its "fault", the institution still sought to restore the state of affairs to what existed before. Its timely response and tangible actions represented this strategy well.

Key Messages

Twitter accounts: Number of day-of (June 1, 2016) responses


- @LAPD - 2
- @UCLA (and retweets) - 18
- @UCLABruinAlert - 10
- @UCLAEngineering - 4
- @UCLANewsroom - 11

Hashtags:

- #uclashooting
- #UCLA
- #BruinStrong


Twitter:

UCLA Athletics Retweeted


 **UCLA Bruin Alert** @UCLABruinAlert · 8h
BruinAlert: Lock down continues. Do not go outside unless instructed by UCPD! Do not come to campus. If outside go indoors and lock down.

↳ 465 ❤️ 290 ⋮



UCLA Athletics Retweeted

 **UCLA Bruin Alert** @UCLABruinAlert · 10h
BruinAlert: Shooting at Engineering 4. Go to secure location and deny entry (lockdown) now!

↳ 1.9K ❤️ 983 ⋮

 **UCLA Engineering** @UCLAengineering · 8h
This is an ongoing situation. For news updates from campus Please check w [@UCLAnewsroom](https://twitter.com/UCLAnewsroom). [Newsroom.ucla.edu](https://newsroom.ucla.edu)
Thank you for thoughts.

↳ 2 ❤️ 4 ⋮

 **LAPD HQ** 
@LAPDHQ [Follow](#)

#LAPD News UPDATE: #LAPD is on a citywide Tactical Alert. Please stay clear of the #UCLA campus area.

1:06 PM - 1 Jun 2016

↳ 333 ❤️ 132

Facebook:

 **UCLA**
4 hrs · 

To the Campus Community,

Our hearts are heavy this evening as our campus family mourns the sudden and tragic deaths of two people on our campus earlier today. The thoughts and prayers of our entire UCLA family are with the victims' families and the students, faculty and staff of UCLA Engineering.

Most of us have never experienced a day like today, and this incident has been enormously stressful for everyone. UCLA's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is available for any member of our community who wishes to speak to a trained counselor about their feelings about the incident. Phone counseling is available for students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at 310-825-0768, or students may visit CAPS in person, on the second floor of John Wooden Center West.

Staff and faculty may seek services at the Staff and Faculty Counseling Center, at 10920 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 380, or by calling 310-794-0245.

The safety of our students, faculty and staff is our top priority, and UCLA emergency personnel train for emergency situations, always with the goal of protecting our campus community. All of us are deeply grateful to our UCLA Police Department, UCLA Fire Department and other emergency responders. Thank you for all you do to keep all of us safe.

Thanks also to the Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles Fire Department and the numerous other agencies who came to our assistance this morning.

Please check newsroom.ucla.edu for further updates as they become available.

Our UCLA family has indeed been shaken, but we will rely upon the strong bonds of our community and our faith in one another as we begin the process of healing.

Sincerely,
Gene D. Block
Chancellor

Instagram: (@UCLA)**Outcomes**

UCLA's tactical messages highlighted important information for stakeholders involved. The Twitter platform served as channel for communicating during the crisis, whereas Facebook and Instagram were used to communicate a consistent message after the crisis was contained. For example, the play-by-play tweets relayed information to students on campus, prompting them to lockdown and telling them when the situation was contained. Direct links in the messages to the UCLA Newsroom, its own media source, established a consistent integrated marketing communications (IMC) message. Also, each account that responded retweeted other accounts as well, passing the messages along and guiding the audience to view the most vital messages at the time.

UCLA maintained its reputation and arguably bolstered it through its crisis communication response. Though the shooting hurt the institution internally, its image remained intact. One possibility of losing credibility during this shooting was stakeholders viewing the university as unsafe. However, the unpredictable and uncontrollable nature of the attack minimized this view. UCLA's actionable and timely response gained the trust of stakeholders immediately involved and those reading the crisis communication responses. UCLA's strong community base before the shooting added the element of support to the situation, resulting in an outpouring of support from alumni, celebrities, LAPD and others on social media. So, by maintaining and gaining stakeholder trust, UCLA maintained its valuable reputation.

Observation/analysis

UCLA's quarterly tests of the Bruin Alert system ensured that during an actual crisis, such as the shooting, the students were familiar with the system. The timely and informative execution of the alert system succeeded in relaying the necessary information to understand how to proceed on campus, such as locking down. One UCLA student wrote about her experience on campus during the shooting and the role

of technology: Bruin Alert provided time-sensitive warnings, wake up calls, communication, reassurance and awareness (Lewis, 2016). The parameters of the Bruin Alert system are outlined in UCLA's crisis response. It is important to note that the plan was last updated in 2008, signaling a time for a current revision (General Services Department Emergency Management Office, 2008). However, UCLA's Emergency Management department contains updated information on its website pertaining to campus shootings, updated in 2014.

Though the campus shooting sparked some campus carry debate across the United States, utilizing a *kairos* moment, the attention strayed from debate to focus on the victim and UCLA's corrective action.

The post-crisis messages were equally as vital to UCLA's reputation as the crisis responses. For example, the chancellor's response communicated a priority for the community. It also gave information for vigils, counseling services and updated news about the crisis (see below). Links and phone numbers were available. These messages cultivated a spirit of condolences for the victims, but also a time to take action against violence in the community, turning a crisis into a *kairos* opportunity to take action. A "Go Fund Me" was set up for the victim's family as well.



Conclusion

UCLA's strategies to evade responsibility and reduce offensiveness supported its strategy to take corrective action after the crisis. Combining these elements produced coherent social media messages throughout the process. No message was wasted during the crisis; rather, they were used as tactics that clearly supported UCLA's goal to relay information quickly and follow up with necessary actions.

Moreover, UCLA's commitment to business continuity illustrated through its corrective actions, helped to return the campus to its normal state of affairs. According to the UCLA Newsroom, Scott Waugh, UCLA's executive vice chancellor and provost stated, "We want to resume normal operations as quickly as possible so we will resume scheduled classes tomorrow morning. Faculty, staff and students should show up

tomorrow and go through their regular routines and complete the quarter as planned” (2016). This showed commitment to moving forward in the face of a setback.

UCLA was pleased with its response, but was more than willing to learn from the crisis. For example, it promised to review safety procedures. Waugh further stated, “We’re pleased in the way notification went out, troubled by some reports of unlocked doors, but we want to review everything” (Mossburg, 2016). Taking key lessons from a past crisis is vital to future crisis communication responses.

So, UCLA’s comprehensive crisis communication response retained stakeholder trust and its reputation by following its crisis plan and executing it in a relational, timely manner.

Crisis #3: Chipotle and E. coli

Background

Chipotle Mexican Grill opened its doors in 1993 in Denver, Colorado, specializing in tacos and burritos. Claiming to be in the business of “good food”, the company states, “Over 20 years later, our devotion to finding the very best ingredients we can—with respect for animals, farmers, and the environment—is shown through our Food With Integrity commitment” (n.d.). *Food with Integrity* is a mission statement that highlights its efforts to use naturally-raised ingredients, etc. Publicly traded and widely known, Chipotle has over 2,000 locations internationally.

Incident

Beginning in October 2016, a series of major E.coli breakouts traced back to Chipotle Mexican Grill left many people in the Pacific Northwest infected and the company struggling to regain its reputation. Other pathogens such as norovirus and salmonella were also present in some of the cases. As a result, the company braced for lawsuits and accusations.

Timeline

July 2015	E.coli outbreak reported in Oregon, thought to be related to the later outbreaks.
August 2015	Norovirus and salmonella caused illnesses in Simi Valley, CA and Newport, MN.
October 2015	At least 22 people infected with E.coli.

	Chipotle closed stores in Oregon and Washington as precautionary measures while an investigation began.
November 2015	Cases of known E.coli increased to 50. Cases spread among other states, though the exact source of the outbreak was unclear.
November 20, 2015	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued updates on the spread to six states and Chipotle's stock drops.
December 2015	Further hospitalizations occurred, including 120 college students in Boston. Steve Ells became the sole CEO, as co-CEO Montgomery Moran left. The company braced for lawsuits. Chipotle took proactive steps to kill germs by using methods such as dipping onions in boiled water before chopping and used a centralized location for testing (Carlin, 2015).

January 2016	Chipotle planned to launch its new marketing strategies that included improving internal communications and clarification of events to the public. Chipotle was hit with a federal subpoena and public relations pros took to Twitter to offer advice.
February 1, 2016	Outbreak "appears" to be over, according to the CDC.
February 8, 2016	Stores close for crisis management and meetings about food safety were held.

	Chipotle pledged \$10 million to help local farmers meet new safety protocols, while its stores remained closed. The company began a “Raincheck” campaign, which encouraged customers to use text to receive a burrito coupon, albeit, Chipotle gave out the wrong number (Fuhrmeister, 2016).
March 2016	E.coli is thought to have caused new infections. Norovirus was confirmed.
April 2016	Chipotle reported its first-ever quarterly loss: \$26.4 million (Garcia, 2016).
May 2016	Chipotle blamed the CDC.
July 2016	Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) Mark Crumpacker placed on leave after indictment involving a drug ring (Bradley, 2016).
Fall 2016	Activist investor William Ackman set out to restore the brand.
January 2017	Chipotle is sued for using a photo without permission.

Stakeholders

Consumers: Those infected risk and risked major health repercussions and possible death, while those still choosing to eat at the chain risk infection.

Employees: Not only do they incur a risk of infection, but the possibility of job cuts if there is a need to shut down operations. Reputations may be at risk here as well.

Suppliers: Those supplying the “fresh” ingredients risk business loss and investigations/litigation to eliminate contaminants.

Chipotle: The organization overall is negatively affected by the crisis, resulting in loss of market share and profit, in addition to consumer trust.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Some responsibility resides with the CDC to control the infections at hand.

Official statement/initial response

An excerpt from the CDC's initial press release on November 4, 2015:

As reported by Washington and Oregon, 39 ill people have been reported from Washington (29) and Oregon (10) as of November 4, 2015. Fourteen total ill people in Washington (11) and Oregon (3) have been hospitalized. There have been no reports of hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) and no deaths. Washington and Oregon report that most of the ill people ate at several locations of Chipotle Mexican Grill before getting sick. The investigation is ongoing to determine if the ill people ate a common meal item or ingredient that was served at the restaurant locations. Chipotle Mexican Grill voluntarily closed all of its locations in Washington and multiple locations in the Portland, Oregon area until more information is available. At this time, CDC does not have any information to suggest that Chipotle Mexican Grill locations in other states are affected by this outbreak. FDA is testing several different food items collected from Chipotle Mexican Grill locations in Washington and Oregon for the presence of bacteria. Results of this testing will be reported once it is available. CDC and state and local public health partners are continuing laboratory surveillance through PulseNet to identify additional ill persons and to interview them. Updates will be provided when more information is available.



Chipotle @ChipotleTweets · Nov 9

We've taken a number of steps to ensure our food is safe to eat in Oregon and Washington. Read more: chipotle.com/update



137



306



On November 20, 2015, Chipotle issued another press release updating investors and the public on investigation updates (Appendix B).

CEO response: A Letter from Chipotle Founder Steve Ells (December 2015):

(Appendix C)

Chipotle @ChipotleTweets · Dec 16

"Nothing is more important to me than serving my guests food that is safe" - Chipotle founder Steve Ells

A LETTER FROM CHIPOTLE FOUNDER STEVE ELLS

Comprehensive Food Safety Plan
chipotle.com

Read more

8:00 AM · 16 Dec 2015 · Details

502 1K

Response: Social media strategies and tactics

Chipotle utilized promotional tactics to encourage business and win back customers. For example, Chipotle offered free items such as guacamole, burritos and chips (“Chiptopia”), to students, nurses and kids at different times during the year. Free food offers were available on mobile devices or through direct mail. The company also combined efforts by partnering with music festival event “Lollapalooza” and band “Echosmith” appearance via Periscope, a live video application. The company used social media channels such as Instagram, Twitter, Vine and Periscope to post about these offers and to display food safety information as well. Email and web sources provided further information and promotional efforts.

In addition to Benoit’s image restoration strategy, Chipotle also used the Rhetorical Stasis Theory (RST) to defend its brand, bolster its food safety commitments and differentiate its image, redefining facts of a larger context with suppliers. Lastly, the company used transcendence to persuade stakeholders to look at the crisis from a bigger perspective and focus on Chipotle’s overall strength.

Chipotle used a number of Benoit’s image restoration strategies at different points during the crisis. Overall, the company did not fully deny the charges or fully try to reduce the severity of the offense, though it did attempt to bolster positive feelings about the brand. It evaded responsibility through its good intentions and defeasibility (claiming lack of information). However, it mostly focused on taking corrective action and mortification.

The December 2015 founder’s letter set the tone for corrective action by outlining eight tangible steps Chipotle would use to live up to its safety standards. The CEO’s apology reflected Benoit’s strategy of open mortification. The CEOs issued an apology on the web and in full-page national ads, as well as appeared on The Today Show and on CNBC’s Mad Money with Jim Cramer.

Choosing to close stores in February 2016 for a safety meeting showed the company’s efforts to regroup, internally communicate and proactively take corrective action to prevent more infections.

In May 2016, Chipotle evaded responsibility by shifting blame to the CDC, disagreeing over outbreak updates, claiming the agency misled consumers via web information (Shaffer, 2016). The organization continued to take corrective action by establishing more proactive safety protocols to test and ensure food quality, which also served as preventive measures. It also added food-handling procedures to earn back loyalty and become the industry leader in food safety. Further, it pledged \$10 million to local farmers.

In September 2016, Chipotle released a short video called “A Love Story” with CEO Steve Ells explaining new food safety procedures (Renfree, 2016). This served to divert attention away from the E.coli crisis to “sunnier” themes. Renfree asserts, “You

can't change the conversation about a brand without first addressing what people are talking about right now." So, Chipotle addressed consumer fears head-on.

Key Messages

Hashtags:

#Chiptlenorovirus

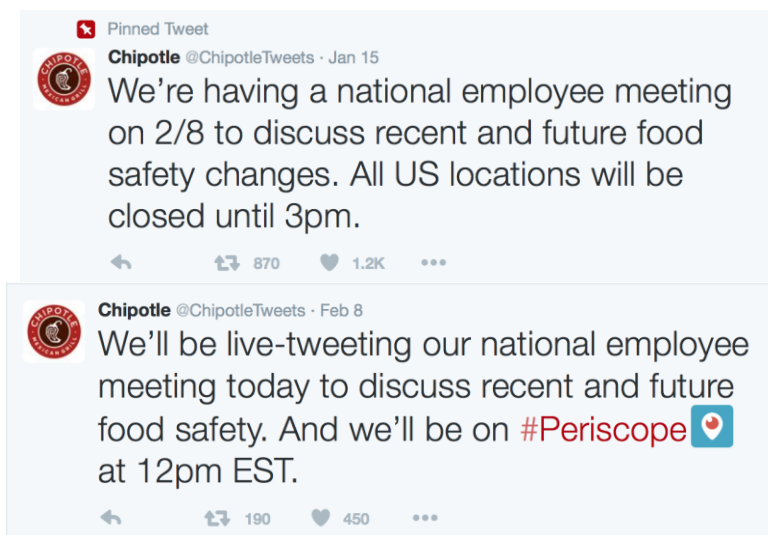
#Chipotle

Other account:

Instagram @chipotlemexicangrill

After the above initial responses, Chipotle responded in the following ways:

Twitter: @ChipotleTweets




Chipotle suggested Periscope usage for the food safety meeting and to watch an exclusive performance by the band Echosmith.


However, Chipotle did not tweet March 8 - 11 after norovirus creates another crisis.

Food safety messages further surfaced in September 2016 on Twitter and Facebook.


Pinned Tweet

 **Chipotle** @ChipotleTweets · Sep 21

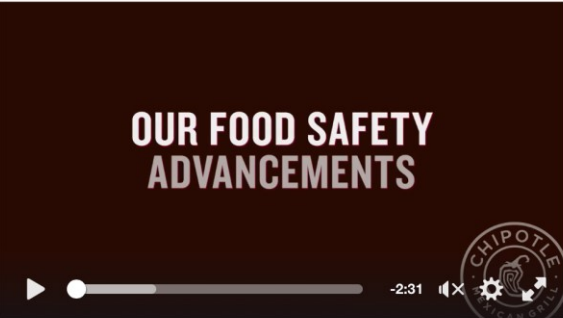
Chipotle Delivers on Food Safety. Watch Chipotle founder Steve Ells explain the program.



151 437

 **Chipotle Mexican Grill** September 21 at 10:00am · 🌐

Chipotle Achieves Major Food Safety Milestones—watch Chipotle founder Steve Ells outline the details and read more here:
www.chipotle.com/foodsafety



47K Views

Like Comment Share

👍👎🤔 752 Chronological

Outcomes

Overall, Chipotle's reputation took a negative hit, as the crisis spanned over a year. Though the company reacted in a timely manner to acknowledge the crisis, it failed to assuage consumer concern and identify the source of the viruses. Stakeholder trust also plunged, as seen through loss of business and perception of desperate attempts to offer free food.

Less Cheese

The value of Steve Ells's Chipotle holdings has dropped by more than \$60 million since September

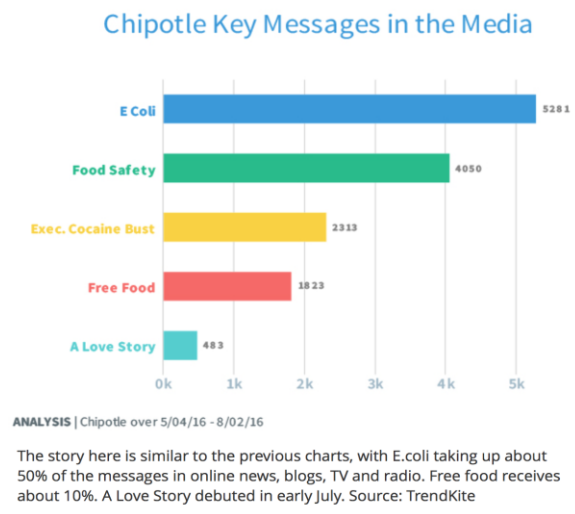


Source: Bloomberg

Free giveaway results were mixed, because some customers still had the fear of eating food from the chain. Though the incentive helped to repair customer relationships and bring people back to the restaurants, it was not the ultimate savior of the brand.



In this case, public spotlight and extensive media coverage contributed to the company's downfall as the crisis quickly drained the loyalty it had built up over many years. PR Daily asserted that Chipotle fell short early on because it lacked authentic human concern by choosing a lecture-like tone. A defensive tone continued to fuel the crisis (Working, 2015).



Chipotle implemented business continuity efforts via Twitter, although this effort was not always visible. For example, the company still suggested product usage and responded to complaints and other comments. However, on social media, the public continued to blame Chipotle for the smallest negative experience they may have had. E.coli jokes surfaced on social media and became a source of cultural reference in society. Chipotle maintained its witty and culturally relevant tone on social media even through the fire.



According to Comcowich (2015), Chipotle failed in a few areas: focusing on investors rather than customers, explaining too much and the CEO’s absolute statements such as claiming Chipotle was the “safest place to eat.”

Observations/analysis

One discrepancy that hurt Chipotle's image was the crisis that directly contrasted with its mission statement, "food with integrity." By failing to align its values and customer expectations with reality, the brand partly contributed to the decline of its image. Chipotle set to out reclaim this value mostly through corrective action and mortification, though other image restoration strategies were also used.

Denise Lee Yohn, a consultant who works with restaurants and retailers on brand strategy, asserts, "Communications that tell a positive story about the brand without getting into weeds of food safety would work best to reach customers who may have stayed away after hearing about the recent problems. Chipotle should not resort to discounting or heavy promotional activity as it would likely do more damage to the brand long-term" (Wohl, 2016). While crisis experts have analyzed Chipotle's response, the criticisms and public comments may have temporarily dented the brand's image.

CEO Steve Ells' involvement in communicating important messages to the public offered a new source of credibility and care. His voice also created consistency for the new brand image. Due to the gravity and intensity of the crisis, his response was necessary.

By creating a culture of food safety and focusing on corrective action, Chipotle proved to the public it was dedicated to changing the current situation for the long term. With many changes, new information and moving parts, the company struggled to keep up and maintain its image but managed to launch a cohesive campaign to repair its reputation.

Conclusion

Though Chipotle's year of crisis took a toll on the brand's reputation, the company is well on the road to recovery. In this case, it took more than an apology to mend customer relationships; it took corrective actions to right the wrongs. In the future, the company can improve its crisis plan to be ready in the wake of more food - borne illnesses. Proactively seeking solutions showed concern for people and its mission statement, though lack of answers continues to hurt these efforts.

Crisis and Analysis: Spain

Introduction

Studying in Seville gave me a front-row seat to examining the lifestyle and culture of Spain. I took classes in Spanish to learn the language while living with a host family and eating traditional Spanish dishes, watching Spanish game shows and participating in local festivals. I researched in Spain, as search engine perspectives can differ between countries. By following news organizations such as *PR Daily* (Europe), *ABC de*

Sevilla, *Correo de Andalucía* and *Diario de Sevilla*, I stayed up-to-date on the respective crises. Additionally, I conducted an interview with the general manager at Ogilvy Public Relations in Seville. I closely followed three different crises, each distinct, containing different timelines, reputations and stakeholders.

Timeline

Crisis #1: Zika Virus and Spain's Ministry of Health (MSSSI).

Crisis #2: Famed Spanish Matador Francisco Rivera Ordóñez's social media crisis

Crisis #3: Fatal Erasmus bus crashes in Spain

Context

Spain offers a sharp cultural contrast to the United States, including execution of public relations strategies and tactics. With 17 autonomous communities that share cultural traits, and 50 provinces, Spain offers much diversity. First, there is a lack of Spanish public relations information online. Even when found, the term "public relations" is not always used. Most agencies are concentrated in large cities, such as Madrid and Barcelona, that are considered business centers. For example, The Association of Consulting Companies in Public Relations and Communication (ADECEC) is an umbrella organization in Madrid that includes 32 of the largest national and multinational PR agencies that represent 65 percent of the consultancy billings in Spain (n.d). The ADECEC is similar to the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), providing professional development opportunities and setting best practice standards (Sullivan, 2011). Some of the top agencies include Finzel Public Relations, which operate in Madrid and Barcelona and consists of "senior consultants (who) are fully bilingual in either English/Spanish and French/Spanish, and are able to provide clients with a fully objective view and understanding of Spain's business and consumer markets" (2013). Marcode Communications is an agency that specializes in crisis communication, stating, It also specializes in social media in digital PR, desiring to inform, mobilize, survey and interact. Lastly, Edelman Spain, part of the global network of Edelman Communication and Marketing, with headquarters in the United States, is considered a highly respected public relations agency.

Social media and social messaging in Spain support a different landscape than in the United States, though use of technology has grown at a slower pace compared to other parts of the world (Rios, 2014). However, Spain is the European country with the highest number of smartphone users (Rios, 2014). For example, "WhatsApp" is a mobile application used for messaging without the use of SMS. When exchanging numbers, it is implied that the numbers will be used to locate another's WhatsApp username. Other social media channels such as Twitter and Instagram are widely used in Spain as in the United States.

Tuenti, known as “Spanish Facebook,” is a social media networking site geared toward Spanish users. In 2013 the company was sold to Telefónica, a Spanish mobile operator and experienced massive decline in use afterward. Tuenti opened up its membership to Latin American countries and continues to innovate Tuenti Movil, though many youth have switched to more mainstream channels such as Facebook.

When Spaniards think of the word “crisis,” their minds automatically jump to the economic crisis, which peaked in 2012. Though the country has an unemployment rate of over 21 percent, the youth unemployment is over 30 percent and rising. The economy remains on the rebound, as children move back home with parents and grandparents who become caretakers (Jordi, 2016). Predictions for growth and recovery are in the near future. In addition, current Spanish conversations are closely connected to global conversations, especially through participation in the European Union (EU). For example, the 2016 Syrian refugee crisis and global terrorism has had direct effects upon the EU, including safety threats and diversion of tourism. Amidst global crises, Spain’s political landscape also suffers instability. Outside the deep corruption and Catalonia’s call for independence, political deadlock beginning December 2015, left Spain with inconclusive general elections, and thus without a proper government. Without a governing majority, tensions between political parties Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE), People’s Party (PP), Podemos and Ciudadanos are high. The June 2016 repeat elections still left the country with an imbalance of power. Many agree that a strong leadership is needed to aid the economy’s recovery.

Spain’s culture is filled with historical, professional, political, economic and cultural contexts. Historically, Franco’s dictatorship (1939-1975) prevented the use of public relations from a professional stance due to his tight control and censorship of the media. In the 1970s, the public relations profession was established along with democracy and free flow of information. The 1990s also proved to be a turning point for Spain as the world began to pay attention to its practices. The Public Relations Journal, “Hosting Expo '92, the international, 100-country business exposition, the 1992 summer Olympic Games, and serving as the current European Cultural Capital - as well as celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Columbus “Age of Discovery” journey from Spain to the New World means that Spain is very much in the news in 1992” (Josephs & Josephs, 1992).

Professionally, according to Weber Shandwick, when dealing with public relations in Spain, a few key practices are important: face-to-face interaction, looser interpretation of time management, socializing before discussing business and longer “siesta” breaks (2012). Spain’s public relations challenges relate to cultural differences such as speed of work and living in a social media rich world. According to a Spanish survey, the top issues in Spain include management of the digital revolution and growth of social media, followed by the challenge of handling the speed and volume of information flow (Berger & Meng, 2014). Further, “The active participation of the

audience in the communication process, increasing exposure to reputational crisis and the obligation to respond to the demands of transparency and dialogue are the main challenges for public relations leaders in Spain” (Berger & Meng, 2014).

Spain has suffered much political and economic turbulence, first from the Franco regime and subsequent economic crisis beginning in 2012. Aira states, “From a political standpoint, Spain has been a country in political, societal and economic transition. Without a doubt, in the political level, this condition has intensely affected public relations profession, particularly with the emergence of the profession of political consultants which, with most trained at American universities, has become one of the most sought after professional areas given the high number of elections held in Spain: European, national, regional and local” (2009). The structure of Spain’s parliamentary monarchy includes a king, who acts more as a symbol of power and president, who work off the framework of the Constitution of 1978 that established a democratic state. Despite the country’s economic crisis rebound, Spain still has one of the largest GDP’s in the world.

Culturally, Spain has many diverse components. From the importance of gastronomy to the annual religious festivals and fiestas, Spain is deeply rooted in its culture. According to Angel Mario Jordi Sánchez, professor of social anthropology at the Universidad de Pablo Olavide in Seville, although over 70 percent of Spaniards claim to be religious, but only 56 percent are active, as religion has transformed to aesthetics (Jordi, 2016). Moreover, bullfighting holds a controversial place in society, as some consider it art and others as animal cruelty. So, Spain continues to be in a tension of transition: from traditional to modern. Hofstede recognizes an extra dimension for Spain: passion (n.d.). I observed some important cultural elements during my five months stay in Spain: political correctness is not of the highest value, careers are not at the forefront of conversation and the people live to enjoy each other. Spaniards have a “living in the moment” mentality as well.

Overall, Spain’s changes in the past century have contributed to internal transformations and have helped shape the modern version of public relations in this country.

Crisis #1: Zika Virus

Background

The Zika Virus, transmitted via mosquito bite, especially affects pregnant women with the potential to cause birth defects. The virus not only widely penetrated Europe, including Spain in 2016, but was/is considered a global risk and crisis. According to the World Health Organization’s situation report, as of July 6, 2016, 65 countries and territories have reported evidence of vector-borne Zika virus transmission since 2007. At this time, Spain was the latest out of 11 countries, to report Zika infection through

person-to-person transmission. In September 2016, the Zika Virus was still reported in national and global news. For example, leading up to the Summer 2016 Olympics held in Rio de Janeiro, there were talks about moving the Olympics due to the safety risk of athletes and spectators. Puerto Rico cases were also set to skyrocket during summer 2016 (McNeil, 2016).

Spain's Ministry of Health, known as "Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad" (MSSSI), and headed by health minister, Alfonso Alonso, is charged with proposing and implementing health guidelines, as well assisting consumers to protect their health (MSSSI, n.d) The ministry was established in 1977 and is located in the Spanish capital of Madrid.

Incident

Amidst the 2016 global Zika emergency, Spain was surprisingly one of the hardest hit countries (Castro, 2016). The Ebola scare of 2014 served as a precursor to Spain's desire for rapid responses and investigations (Castro, 2016). By early February 2016, 23 cases were confirmed after some Spaniards visited affected countries, mostly due to close relationship with Latin America (El Correo de Andalucía, February 2016). Eight cases were diagnosed in Catalonia, among them two pregnant, five in Madrid, three in Castile y León, two in Aragon, two in Asturias, and one in Andalusia to Murcia and Navarra. By Mid-March, the Zika infection count climbed to 43 cases, among five pregnant women (Press, 2016). Even with a global effort to stop transmission, cases and surveillance cases in Spain continued to climb, affecting numerous provinces and autonomous communities. In July 2016, the number climbed to 190 cases in Spain, including the first Zika microcephaly birth in Europe (BBC News, 2016). By late September, the total confirmed cases by National Epidemiological Surveillance Network rose to 283. Forty-two of these women were pregnant at sampling (MSSSI, September 2016).

Timeline:

March 2015	First signs of the virus in Brazil
December 2015	Detection of Zika
December 16, 2015	MSSSI posts PDF document on site containing a Q&A.
January 28, 2016	MSSSI begins relaying Twitter messages about Zika.
February 2016	WHO declares the outbreak a Public

	Health Emergency of International Concern and 23 cases reported in Spain,
February 4, 2016	Spain reports first (known) European case of pregnant women infected (Channel NewsAsia, February 2016).
March 15, 2016	MSSSI has tweeted 13 times referring to Zika Virus.
Mid-March 2016	43 cases in Spain
July 25, 2016	Spain registers first Zika microcephaly defect birth in Europe; 190 confirmed cases at this time
September 19, 2016	83 confirmed Zika cases, according to MSSSI.

Stakeholders

World/global health agencies: Agencies, such as the World Health Organization and CDC, must follow up talk with action in a global health emergency, responding quickly to provide necessary actions to preserve human life.

Spain: With the rising number of Zika cases, Spain could potentially lose lives, travelers and credibility in failing to control the transmission of Zika.

MSSSI: The agency is expected to plan accordingly (risk management) and act quickly to execute a strategy to control the virus. Failure to do so could lead to severe credibility loss.

Victims (mothers and unborn child): Stakes were high for those infected, especially for pregnant women, with the risk of possible birth defects in unborn child.

Potential victims (i.e. travelers): Risk of possible infection in area of visitation.

Official statement/initial responses

In January 2016, after the detection of Zika in late 2015, Spain's health minister Alfonso Alonso urged his country to stay calm because there was a "very low" risk of spreading (*The Local*, 2016). He proceeded to warn pregnant woman about travel risks involved. MSSSI also posted PDF documents online containing comprehensive recommendations. On February 10, the MSSSI produced a press release containing information regarding protocol, information on early detection, preparedness and

response, vector control and recommendations to passengers (MSSSI, 2016).

Preparedness and response include:

- Improving epidemiological surveillance systems.
- The development of a program that includes integrated vector management at the stage of diagnosis, management and evaluation to minimize the risk.
- Supporting the development of regional and local response plans.
- Strengthening communication to the public.

On February 15, 2016, the MSSSI posted an additional press release containing a monitoring protocol for pregnant women (MSSSI, 2016):

- Approved by the Commission on Public Health
- Pregnant women with a diagnosis of Zika virus must undergo ultrasound every two weeks.
- Pregnant women with symptoms compatible with the virus after traveling to affected areas must undergo urine and blood analysis to rule out the presence of the virus
- The recommendation to pregnant women or those who intend to become pregnant was to postpone, if possible, travel to affected areas.

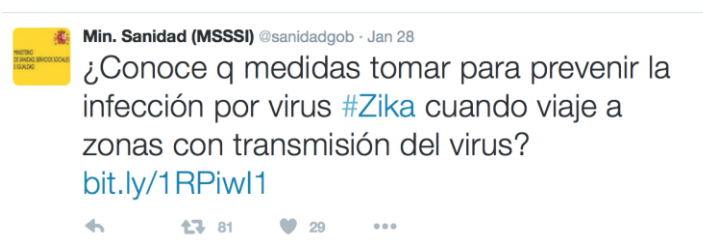
First Twitter messages (@MSSSI): January 28, 2016

These snapshots have been translated to English.

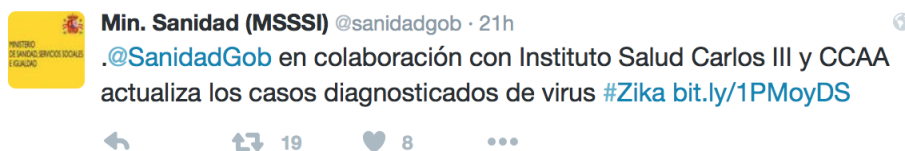
1. Retweet of the World Health Organization (@WHO) containing a Q&A about Zika



2. Do you know the steps to prevent the infection of Zika when you travel to zones with transmissions of the virus?



3. @SanidadGob in collaboration with Health Institute Carlos III and CCAA update the cases diagnosed with the virus.



It is important to acknowledge MSSSI's efforts to inform the public via website, as many of the social media responses were linked back to the site.

Response: Social Media Strategy and Tactics

Overall, MSSSI offered preventive information to the public and used Benoit's strategy of corrective action to regain face. With the perspective of restoring Spain's health to its existing state, MSSSI did not need to spend time defending itself, blaming others or asking for forgiveness. In this light, it was crucial for quick action. Though MSSSI was not held responsible for the virus itself, the expectation of the ministry was to identify the problem, educate individuals and prevent further spread through action. MSSSI also evaded responsibility for the virus by focusing on its foreign origin.

So, MSSSI had the expectation of a strategic plan and follow-through to correct the Zika crisis in Spain. MSSSI set into motion its strategy through tactical messaging on its social media channels, mainly Twitter.

Key Messages

Key Messages after January 2016 (@MSSSI):

Hashtags:

#Zika

#ZikaVirus

Twitter:

February 2016:

1. @Sanidadgob will update each week the confirmed cases by the National Center of Microbiology



2. Updated information about Zika on site of @Sanidadgob
3. @SanidadGob and sports will produce a guide and recommendations about Zika facing the Olympic Games @rio2016_es

- a. Retweet from “Deporte y Salud” (Sports and Health) @AEPSADDys
4. Health and Spanish Society Gynecology and Obstetrics agree Protocol follow-up concerning the Zika in pregnancy
5. @Sanidadgob New public update about cases of diagnosed #ZikaVirus in our country

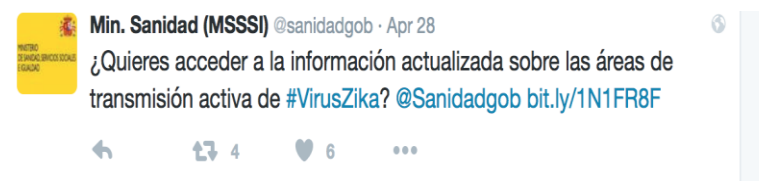
March 2016:

1. @Sanidadgob has updated the site with the number of cases of diagnosed #ZikaVirus in our country
2. Updates on the website of @Sanidadgob with diagnosed cases of #ZikaVirus in Spain
3. Updates in cases of #ZikaVirus diagnosed in Spain
4. Retweet from CSS (@deportegob): Depicted here are updates of @Sanidadgob with information for passengers about Zika Virus



April 2016:

1. Already you can consult the weekly update of @Sanidadgob of diagnosed cases of #ZikaVirus in Spain.
2. Do you want to access the updated information about the areas of active transmission of #ZikaVirus?



May

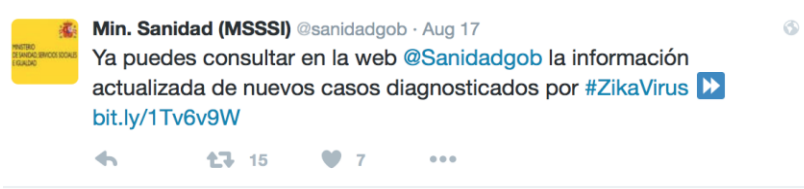
1. Updates are available of cases of #virusZika sickness. Do you know how to protect yourself if you travel in affected zones?



2. Already you can consult the weekly update of @Sanidadgob of diagnosed cases of #ZikaVirus in Spain

August

1. Already you can consult the weekly update of @Sanidadgob of diagnosed cases of #ZikaVirus



September

1. Updates are available of cases of #ZikaVirus sickness. Do you know how to protect yourself if you travel in affected zones?



MSSSI also utilized its Facebook page for updates in Zika cases, etc. (Appendix D). However, there was less engagement than Twitter.

Outcomes

Spain's spike in outbreaks showed a failure to prevent or contain the virus in the country. However, it may not have been due to lack of execution, but audience follow-through. This implies a need to tailor the programs and prevention efforts to reach its audience in a meaningful way to encourage adherence. Here, the Stakeholder Theory applies, as segmenting publics for specific forms of communication addresses different concerns, interests and demands (George & Pratt, 2012). Though no one person in Spain is of more importance when dealing with health, ranks could be assigned to likely affected areas.

Spain failed to acknowledge the full extent of the crisis through its evading responsibility strategy. According to Channel NewsAsia, "Spain's health ministry

nevertheless sought to ease concerns, pointing out that all seven patients had caught the disease abroad. 'Up to now, the diagnosed cases of Zika virus in Spain ... don't risk spreading the virus in our country as they are imported cases'" (5 Feb 2016). This gave MSSSI a way to paint a picture of the accidental spreading of Zika, as well as initial defeasibility. However, the timeline of the crisis implied a need to act immediately, providing information to the public. MSSSI's February Twitter messages began with simple updates of number of cases and eventually led to guides, recommendations and protocol to educate the public well.

Crisis communication tips concerning Zika include: building trust via social media, educating thoroughly and setting up crisis drills now (Pittman, 2016). MSSSI excelled at the first two, but did not fully develop crisis drills. Recommendations and Q&As can go far to educate the public, but lack tangible warnings such as alert systems. So, though trust in MSSSI remained high, trust to actually deal with Zika directly was low, still damaging the ministry's reputation to an extent.

Observations/analysis

One of MSSSI's strengths included providing direct links to its website and other health agencies' websites to access updated and truthful information regarding the virus, especially at a time when social media could hinder outreach and dissemination of information. Cohn notes that, "The rumors, conspiracy theories and myths about the virus being shared on social media and by word of mouth are seemingly as contagious as the disease" (2016, ¶ 2). Since MSSSI is viewed as a credible source, such rumors were not present in its specific social media dissemination. It also eased concerns by providing up-to-date information.

Being a liaison between information and the public is a big task. The *International Business Times* states, "Urging people to be proactive and protect themselves where and when appropriate, without stirring panic or exaggerating the risks, are part of a balancing act. The trouble with Zika is that lately, the balance has been off, risk communications experts say" (Whitman, 2016). The author explains that people look to specific people within their social network to validate information (Whitman, 2016). This purports the need to disseminate quality current information, which MSSSI excelled in.

Because human life and quality of life were at stake, trust was a necessity when dealing with the Zika crisis, not only in Spain but around the world. Spain's response reflected the overall level of trust in the country's ability to respond effectively to the virus. MSSSI's communication before this crisis set the precedent of trust for the ministry, building support to manage the crisis when it occurred. This can be seen through its consistent social media posts addressing a range of health-related content before, during and after the Zika scare.

By disseminating information via social media, MSSSI gave the public a chance to further pass on the crucial information, making them ambassadors. Though the

responsibility of content creation and synthesization of important information fell on MSSSI, the assumption of social media messages being passed along can be attributed to the audience. In a sense, it is a call for people to help each other. More consistent Twitter postings are recommended so information is not lost between the cracks. For example, two tweets in April and May are not sufficient to fully disclose the updated information to a watching public. The lack of consistent posting could communicate lack of importance, which is not the case in the wake of the Zika crisis.

Further, the steady use of hashtags such as #Zika and #ZikaVirus connected the audience to a larger conversation concerning the virus. By clicking on these, one can view more news, articles and commentary regarding the Zika Virus around the world.

Conclusion

By taking emotion out of messaging, MSSSI communicated only the facts and updated information as needed. However, this could have been an opportunity to capitalize on human relations, using emotion to get through to the audience. In the timeline starting in April, MSSSI began to ask direct questions in its social messaging. For example, it states, “Do you know how to protect yourself if you travel in affected zones?” (MSSSI, 28 January 2016). This challenged the public to understand the virus as a high stakes health concern.

Persuit and Marinchak (2016) suggest an Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) effort for health communications to spur “synchronized movement across the organization toward business goal attainment” (p.114).

By fall 2016, the crisis was still ongoing. The Zika global crisis raises the need for public relations professionals, organizations and agencies to communicate effectively to mitigate the virus’s effects. With the Zika public relations mess in the United States (Whitman, 2016), MSSSI had a challenge to combat misinformation about the crisis, which it did strategically through its Twitter posts, calling for corrective action to restore its image.

Crisis #2: The Matador’s Social Media Crisis: The Instagram Photo

Background

The bull is a symbol of Spain and the bullfight is “national fiesta” mostly associated with the south; however, it stirs much controversy within Spain and internationally. It is ingrained in the culture, classified in different ways depending on perspective such as tradition, sport, art and/or animal abuse. The costumes of bulls and matadors in Cadiz, Spain, during a fiesta called “Carnival” serves as rhetoric for the current conversation. Some use the costumes as a platform for disapproval and to create conversation as well. According to Spain Then and Now, “Protests are held regularly outside many of the larger rings, and animal rights activists and others have

put pressure on the European Union (EU) to condemn it. In 2007 the EU went as far as to urge Spain to end bullfighting, not nearly far enough for animal rights activists. Aficionados have countered calling on UNESCO to grant bullfighting a World Heritage status" (2015). Current sentiments included protests in favor of bullfighting in Valencia (The Guardian, 2016), Spain and petitions opposing bullfighting courses in school (Kassam, 2015).

Though there is frequent bullfighting disapproval, the practice contributes to Spain's economy and employment, treats bulls better than most animals and protects land. Though there are innumerable arguments on both sides, it is important to grasp the big-picture controversy to understand the crisis communication involved in the following case. According to Winter (2016), a new poll shows that bullfighting may be on its way out.

Francisco Rivera Ordóñez is known as "David Beckham of bullfighting" (Molloy, 2016). Stemming from a long line of bullfighters, his lineage helped determine his profession. He is the son of Paquirri (Francisco Rivera), who was a star in the mid 1970s, but died shortly after being gored in the ring in 1984. Spain Then and Now states, "Television captured the bloody moment as Paquirri was tossed around like a doll. Shortly after, a cameraman from the public network (TVE) filmed Paquirri, calmly informing the attending doctor of where and how far the horn had penetrated his thigh. It was a film that was shown repeatedly on TV for months" (2015). Since much of Ordóñez's identity stems from his father and from bullfighting, it shaped his crisis communication response after posting a photo on Instagram showing him in the ring with his young daughter.

Incident

On January 24, 2016, Spanish matador Francisco Rivera Ordóñez posted a photo on his personal Instagram, @f.r.paquirri, depicting him in the bullfighting ring with his five-month old baby in hand. This resulted in widespread criticism, especially over social media, first springing from his 60,000 Instagram followers.

His caption, translated into English, stated, "Carmen's debut. She's the fifth generation of bullfighters in our family. My grandfather was a bullfighter as well as my dad." Later, he posted another photo with a similar image, with his father and he as a baby, identifying the act as a tradition. Part of the caption claimed, "History repeats itself."

A child protection agency investigation was set to follow as well. Alfonso Alonso, the minister of social security, stated, "It isn't right in any circumstance to put a child at risk" (Molloy, 2016). Equality Minister María José Sánchez stated, "A fireman wouldn't dream of taking a child to put out a fire nor would a football player run around with a child in their arms during a match" (Molloy, 2016). Further, on *The Telegraph's* news article, the online news source surveyed readers, asking if the matador should be

investigated. So, though Ordóñez’s intentions may have been pure, honoring bullfighting and his ancestors, his actions stirred a controversy beyond his sole social media post. As critics attacked Ordóñez, matadors and the bullfighting tradition, Ordóñez was forced to communicate and respond to restore his reputation. Critics, supporters and other officials were also forced to speak out to position their point of views. This presented the perfect *kairos* moment, especially for the critics of the bullfighting sport/tradition to make a stance and use Ordóñez’s action as evidence of harm.



Timeline

<p>January 24, 2016</p>	<p>Ordóñez posts a photo on Instagram holding his daughter in the bullring, followed by an identical photo of him and his father.</p>
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January 25, 2016	Ordóñez personally first speaks out, tweeting regarding the incident.
January 24-26, 2016	Ordóñez uses these days to retweet others' tweets and photos of support.
January 28, 2016	Ordóñez posts on his personal blog referencing the upheaval after this photo.

Stakeholders

In this case, not only did Ordóñez's reputation suffer, but the bullfighting tradition as well. Stakeholders affected are as follows:

Ordóñez: His reputation and competence was directly questioned, as a bull-fighter and as a father.

His family: With an impending child protection agency intervention, the family had potential to be torn apart by the viral photo.

Matadors and bull-fighting community: In the long run, this photo put reputations and careers on the line, which is also seen as a threat to the tradition as a whole.

Bullfighting supporters: The photo validated the critics' arguments, giving them a chance to be reactively on the offense.

Spain: The country faced criticism for embracing the tradition, putting it under the scrutiny of outside sources.

European Union (EU): The EU was called to take action after the circulation of the photo, affecting its past, present and future actions against bullfighting.

Kairos moment

Though Ordóñez's photo served as the trigger for anti-bullfighting in Spain, it gave supporters a chance to present their views as well. Influential people in society also spoke out against the photo or in support of Ordóñez. Other bullfighters posted their own photos of their fathers and they as babies inside the plaza (or with their own children), mirroring and supporting Ordóñez (El País, 2016).

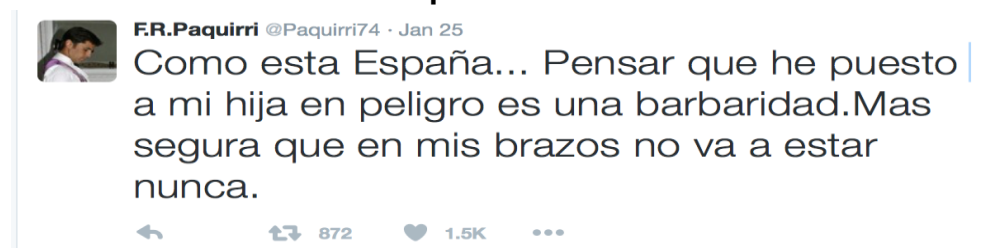
In addition, cartoons and other cultural references arose.



By taking advantage of Ordóñez's photo's controversial nature, critics and animal rights activists could bring up points that may not have been uncovered without the presence of a crisis. The screenshot of PACMA (2016), a Spanish animal rights party response on Twitter: @PartidoPACMA, is indicative of the group's *kairos* moment. Critics could also relate to any parents in this situation, drawing on basic human emotion for support. This incident also brought attention to Spain, where these critics could scrutinize the legality of bullfighting, especially where strong anti-bullfighting sentiment exists, such as in Galicia and Catalonia. By understanding the public's point of view at this precise moment in time, critics could formulate words as rhetoric amidst Ordóñez's crisis. So, this gave the critics an advantage, leaving Ordóñez and matadors in a state of defense.



Official statement/initial response



Ordóñez took matters into his own hands by taking to his Twitter account (@Paquirri74) immediately. He used a defensive tone, justifying his actions. His first response on twitter stated, “Como está España...Pensar que he puesto a mi hija en peligro es una barbaridad. Más segura que en mis brazos no va a estar nunca” (Rivera, 2016). This translates in English to, “As it is Spain... To think I have put my daughter in danger is an outrage. More safe in my arms as she will ever be.”

Ordóñez also keeps up a blog, posting frequently about Spain, bull-fighting and life in general. Though he did not directly respond or defend himself, he wrote a post four days after the incident titled “España,” indirectly referring to but clearly commenting on the reactions to his photo. He calls for a Spain with people full of respect and an enjoyment of tradition, alluding to bullfighting. Translated, he states, “I see a Spain with much hatred, politicized, where anything goes. You prohibit whatever just because, even an elimination of a tradition of hundreds of years” (Rivera, 2016). So, he attacks his critics indirectly on a personal blog. This post in particular received over 100 comments, most in support of the post and even the photo.

Furthermore, in the days after the photo post, he retweeted many things that supported his position and claim:

Retweets supporting himself January 24 - 26: 88

Tweets of defense and commentary January 25: nine original

Response: Social Media Strategy and Tactics

Though social media was the source of Ordóñez's crisis, it was also the source for his image restoration strategies and tactics. He primarily utilized Benoit's strategies of denial and evasion of responsibility. Through tweets and his personal blog, Ordóñez executed these strategies to repair his image. The screenshots below show Ordóñez's first eight original tweets the day after the photo was released:

Key Messages

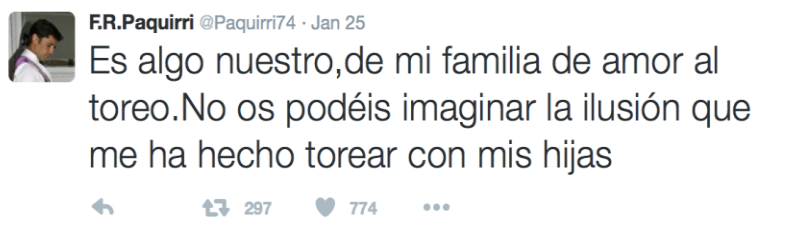
Hashtags:

#paquirri

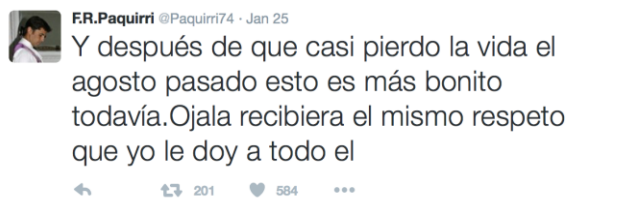
#franrivera

Twitter (@Paquirri74):

1. First words: "Como está España...Pensar que he puesto a mi hija en peligro es una barbaridad. Más segura que en mis brazos no va a estar nunca." This translates in English to, "As it is Spain... To think I have put my daughter in danger is an outrage. More safe in my arms as she will ever be."
2. Translated: "It's something of ours, my family and love for bullfighting (profession). You all cannot imagine the illusion that I have made to (bull) fight with my daughters."



3. Translated: "And after once I almost lost my life last August, this is more beautiful still. I wish to receive the same respect that I give to all."

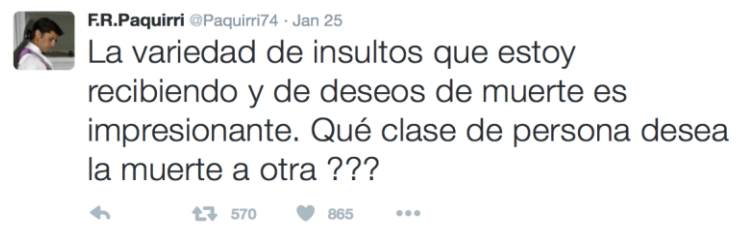


4. Translated: "Never has a daughter been more secure, I am a bullfighter by the grace of God, I live for this and dedicate 365 days of the year and not for one second did I run."

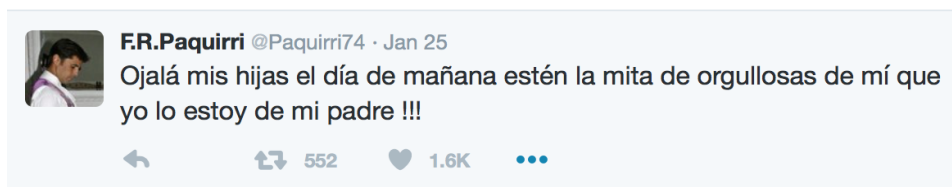
5. Translated: “Minimal danger. There are many other dangerous things that I’m not going into that are related to children.”
6. Translated: “Respect our traditions please.”



7. Translated: “ The variety of insults that I am receiving and the death wishes is impressive. What type of person wishes the death of another?”



8. Translated: “ I hope that my daughter the day of tomorrow are half as proud of my as I am of my father.”



So, Ordóñez indirectly denies his actions by shifting the blame to the critics of the photo, and of bullfighting in general. He also denies that the act caused harm to the parties involved, which is his five-month old daughter. He evades responsibility by

articulating his good intentions of honoring a Spanish tradition. It is clear Ordóñez had a clear knowledge of his relevant audiences, as there were two parties that would react to his photo: supporters and critics of bullfighting. By pointing toward the greater issue at hand, the attack of a tradition, Ordóñez continued to bolster his image by denial and evasion of responsibility. His level of denying and diminishing shows an indirect acknowledgement of level of interest of stakeholders. Though he does not represent a larger organization, he serves as an important cultural symbol in a crisis with the great need to repair his tarnished reputation.

Outcomes

Ordóñez's reputation remained intact throughout the crisis by affirming the position of bullfighting supporters. Both supporters and critics remained loyal to the respective sides, affirming their own opinions through social media. It is likely Ordóñez lost some support by presenting his daughter training with a bull, but the overall support and matador sentiment remained constant.

He utilized immediacy of response by concentrating his tweets in the two days after the photo release, and the blog post four days after. The crisis was kept out of the news after he stopped mentioning the event, followed by a decline of critical and supporting engagers on social media. This helped in keeping his image from further tarnishing, minimizing the damage.

Ordóñez has yet to be charged and continues to parent his children. However, two days after the release of the photo, "Defender of Andalusia" agency condemned the actions and asked that they are not repeated again, accentuating the role of rights and protection of children (Defensor del Pueblo Andaluz, 2016). Its statement highlights the severity of the actions and should contribute to Ordóñez's learning to prevent a similar crisis in the future.

Observations/ analysis

By maintaining a consistent message across his social media channels, Ordóñez kept a consistent image throughout the crisis. For example, one of his messages indicates a wish for respect and a call for humanity to respect others. This is the same big-picture theme in Ordóñez's blog post titled "España." However, another message states, "What type of person wishes the death of another?" Critics of bullfighting could leverage this message, pegging Ordóñez as hypocritical. This opens up debate for a greater issue, surpassing that of the viral photo.

Ordóñez's stakeholders were clearly defined during the crisis, implying that he had built a firm foundation of trust beforehand. For example, his personal blog adds a level of personalization by giving the public and stakeholders a look into his life, family and beyond. So, during the crisis these pre-established stakeholders served as an extra layer of support. Ordóñez also led by example by affirming through likes or retweets of

the stakeholders when they voiced their support over social media. This provided the incentive to voice support, mobilizing ambassadors for his personal image and reputation as they attested to his character and profession.

In this case, the Situational Theory of publics helped to assess the communication behaviors of different publics (George & Pratt, 2012). Since problem recognition, level of involvement and constraint recognition influence whether stakeholders will just process the information or seek out more information, strategic responses were necessary. Though ordinary individuals voiced their opinions on social media channels, the ones who truly seized the opportunity to speak were the ones with the most involvement in the issue and who thought they were constrained to solve the perceived “problem” of bullfighting. Ordóñez may have been blind to the risk of his postings, which turned into a crisis, causing disruption in his work and home life.

Conclusion

By denying and evading responsibility, Ordóñez took a defensive stance. To control the image restoration process, he personally crafted his messages about bullfighting to call upon the people of Spain to change their mindsets. By waging this message-based war, Ordóñez slightly isolated himself. Without the help of his social media followers, Ordóñez could have been a one-man army. After posting his sentiments on Twitter and on his personal blog, these followers followed suit, posting similar pictures and message while critics primarily used a *kairos* moment for their debut. So, stakeholder participation was the key element in Ordóñez’s crisis communication response.

In the future, Ordóñez could capitalize on crisis management skills by enlisting outside social media or a public relations agency to manage his accounts. He can evade a future crisis by being proactive.

Crisis #3: Erasmus Bus Accident

Background

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is a European Union exchange program. It is a non-profit international student organization, whose mission is to represent and support international students. Starting in 2014, the European Commission created Erasmus Plus, a program for education, training, youth and sport. Opportunities for international students range from internships to courses to volunteer work abroad, cultivating a diverse learning experience in a fun way. Erasmus programs have numerous locations, including those specific to Spain such as ESN Barcelona.

Incident

On March 20, 2016, a coach bus carrying international students from the Valencian festival, Las Fallas, back to Barcelona, crashed, killing thirteen females. The

crash was described as one of the deadliest in years. The driver apparently lost control at a dangerous stretch near Tarragona. The driver tested negative for drug. The accident took place during Spain's festival-rich Holy Week (called "Semana Santa" in Spanish).

Timeline

March 20, 2016	13 Erasmus students are killed in a car accident on the way back to their program residence in Barcelona.
March 20-22, 2016	Erasmus and respective parties respond to the crisis, including through a press release.

Stakeholders

Erasmus: Hosts of the excursion, Erasmus Student Network (ESN), held the responsibility for the transportation and experience of the students. By tagging the event as an "Erasmus bus accident", ESN's image, reputation and liabilities were directly on the line nationwide. This could cause a future loss in program participation from the fear of danger.

Students and respective countries: Local Spanish officials assessed that those on the bus included students from the UK, Hungary, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, New Zealand, Italy, Peru, Bulgaria, Poland, Ireland, the Palestinian territories, Japan and Ukraine. Each students' life was at stake.

Families: The accident was cause for potential backlash from families of the victims and injured.

Bus driver: The burden of human error as cause for the accident was placed on the driver's shoulders.

Bus company: The accident caused a loss of trust and security in the bus company and hiring of drivers.

Barcelona: Many students attended University of Barcelona, making the accident a more personal loss.

Catalonia: This province, where Barcelona is located, also suffered a loss from the tragedy, causing officials to speak out.

Spain: The country suffered from a crisis, disrupting normal activity to address this tragedy involving international parties.

European Union (EU): The EU as a whole suffered from a crisis, disrupting normal activity to address this tragedy involving international parties.

Official statement/Initial Response

Human error affected the reputations of multiple parties. Further, higher-powered stakeholders were forced to respond to the tragedy.

With multiple stakeholders involved, there were multiple initial responses and statements as well, each portraying condolences and a hope for more information to come. The tragic nature of the crisis initiated formal responses with a somber tone. Many of these responses, such as from the European Commission, were linked to social media sites for access.

Initial statements from respective parties include:

The European Commission (*Erasmus+*, 2016):

The European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor Navracsics, and his colleagues working on the Erasmus+ programme, are deeply saddened to hear the news of the tragic bus accident near Tarragona in Spain, where exchange students of various nationalities lost their lives in the early morning of Sunday 20 March. In this sorrowful time, our thoughts go out to the families and friends of the victims, to students and staff at University of Barcelona and the sending institutions involved, and to the Erasmus Student Network team at University of Barcelona.

ESN Spain (*ESN Spain*, 2016):

Erasmus Student Network Spain is deeply saddened to inform about the traffic accident suffered by a bus in which exchange students and volunteers from the organisation were travelling. The accident took place in the early morning on the AP-7 highway, near Freginals, when the students were on their way to Barcelona coming back from the "Fallas" festivity in Valencia. Unfortunately, there have been several fatal victims and injured students.

The emergency services are currently working in the area and have moved the injured people to the nearest hospitals. Volunteers of the Erasmus Student Network are in close contact with the authorities and work together with them. At this point, the authorities are responsible for the publication of any additional information. Taking into consideration the sensitivity of the issue, Erasmus Student Network Spain would like to request the public for discretion in respect for the families and friends, to whom we send our deepest condolences. In addition, we would like to thank all the volunteers and emergency services for their diligent work in these sad circumstances. The official telephone number of the authorities for further information is 012 from Catalonia or +34 900400012 from other places.

ESN Barcelona (*Burgen & Slawson*, 2016):

ESN Barcelona would like to convey our condolences and join the pain of the families, friends and relatives of the victims. We feel the deep loss. In the same way, we would like to express our sincere willingness to be as helpful as possible with the family, friends or institutions

Response: Social Media Strategy and Tactics

Erasmus presently has a footprint on numerous social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Google Plus. Many specific programs have their own accounts, in addition to the overarching organizational one.

Key Messages

Erasmus (and its numerous facets) made efforts to communicate its efforts. For example, Erasmus, through Erasmus Spain, displayed its efforts in a press release in English, Spanish and Catalan.

March 21, 2016:

Since the accident happened, twelve representatives from the local ESN sections in Barcelona that organised the trip (ESN UB, UAB, UPC and UPF) and the National Board of ESN Spain went to Tortosa from Barcelona, Almería and Valencia. These representatives have been working in close cooperation with the Police to help identify the victims and offer support to affected people. The priority of the Erasmus Student Network has been to collaborate with the police, the authorities and the affected universities, especially the University of Barcelona. The Erasmus Student Network Spain would like to, again, thank the volunteers and emergency services for their diligent work in these sad circumstances, as well as all the members of our Network that have shown solidarity from all over Europe. In addition we would like to thank the University of Barcelona for their collaboration in these unfortunate circumstances. We wish, for all those involved, strength in this moment of deep sorrow and again send our deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims.

Twitter:

Erasmus Plus (@EUErasmusPlus) tweeted three times about the accident since March 20, 2016. In addition, the Catalonia president declared two days of mourning. He populated his own Twitter account (@interiorcat) with over 15 tweets and retweets from emergency services about the accident, showing his stake in the situation. His tweets are written in Catalan.

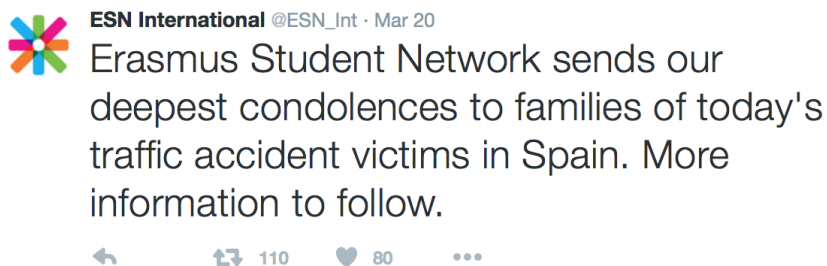
Hashtags:

#erasmusgeneration

#Freginals

ESN International included: @ESN_Int

1. "Erasmus Student Network sends our deepest condolences to families of today's traffic accident victims in Spain. More information to follow."



2. Statement on today's traffic accident in Spain.
3. Minute of silence in Spain today.
4. ESN sincerely thanks all those involved for their efforts and support in these difficult times.



5. Terrible events in Brussels today. ESN International is all-ok. Please stay safe everyone.



Erasmus Plus, EU Commission and EU Erasmus Plus Statement also made statements of condolences on Twitter.

Facebook: Erasmus Student Network

1. ESN sends our deepest condolences to families of today's traffic accident victims in Spain.



2. ESN sincerely thanks all those involved for their efforts and support in these difficult times.

This case illustrates ESN's use of Benoit's theory of image restoration; in this case, evasion of responsibility is the overwhelming strategy of choice. By tagging the fatal car accident as a complete accident, Erasmus shifted the responsibility not to the bus driver necessarily, but to the situation. In addition, although not fully considered compensation when dealing with loss of life, Erasmus's focus on providing services to the families of the victims showed a slight strategic reduction of offensiveness. These actions do not replace loss of life, but rather show support and encouragement through compensational actions.

Erasmus ensured business continuity by restoring the organization quickly back to normal as before. For example, although Erasmus addressed the situation immediately following the crisis, the accident was not mentioned only a few days after it had occurred. This took long-term attention and media away from the crisis.

Outcomes

By offering transparent information, humble condolences and acts of service, Erasmus used its key messages to maintain its reputation and stakeholder trust. The organization maximized the use of its social media channels to address the situation in

a timely manner, yet only disseminated necessary information. Using a sympathetic tone, Erasmus delivered the facts of the accident, while still maintaining emotional appeals concerning the loss of life. For example ESN Barcelona stated, “We feel the deep loss”, showing its stake and care in the accident as well.

Pegged as an accident, Erasmus suffered both human loss and potential loss of credibility. However, its fast response aided the potential loss of face, which could have caused its enrollment to suffer and stakeholders trust.

Many alumni from Erasmus programs expressed condolences over social media, showing loyalty to the program. This implies that Erasmus as a whole built trust and a long-term relationship with these stakeholders. In its time of crisis, the alumni were quick to rally behind the organization, helping uphold its reputations and loss of trust. A Facebook comment read, “We are all Erasmus and should be Erasmus despite this tragic event” (Boris Esteve, 2016). Here, the Stakeholder Theory applies, as stakeholder communication before a crisis enhances long-term relationships, building a foundation of support and trust. In the same way, stakeholders were placed at the center of its messaging strategy, sensitive to each environment at the time of the accident. So, Erasmus developed a relational view of its crisis communication.

Catalonia’s president’s response showed high concern for the student victims who were residing in Barcelona. By showing care at a high level in his tweets, he maintained favorable ties to the international student community. So, his personal social media responses and declaration of two days of mourning positioned Catalonia in a favorable light.

Through the responses of the multiple stakeholders of the accident, each Erasmus program and Erasmus as a whole retained its reputation.

Observations/ analysis

Moreover, Erasmus launched a new blog in 2016, yet made no mention of the accident. Though the organization could have been trying to draw negative press and attention away from its brand, it failed to address the situation at length. The blog could have been used as an opportunity to connect on a more relational, emotional level to readers.

Keen to maintain involvement in international events due to the nature of the organization, Erasmus used its online platform to respond to global crises. For example, it expressed deep condolences and promoted love by responding on Twitter to the November 2015 Paris and March 2016 Brussels attacks. This showed stakeholders that the organization is in tune with current events, displaying the credibility of running its program through Europe. However, Erasmus Plus tweeted four times about the attack in Brussels March 22-23, 2016, a higher number of tweets than during the crucial time of its own Spain accident. With a headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, Erasmus took on crises from different parts of Europe, responding with similar messages of condolences.

Consistency of messaging between channels was key for the organization. For example, many tweets contained links to the official statement and statement of efforts, directing audiences to its website platform. Also, its channels coincided with consistent messaging throughout its Facebook and Twitter. This gave external audiences and other stakeholders a grasp on the situation, without questioning transparency. Through its clear and concise messaging, Erasmus left no loose ends and if it did actually have loose ends, it informed audiences by saying, “more information to follow.”

Conclusion

Erasmus evaded responsibility for the bus accident; rather, it used the crisis as an opportunity to build deeper relationships and connections with its stakeholders through its relational messaging. Further, the organization “walked the walk” and “talked the talk” by acting upon what it said it would do. Its overall consistency of messaging through social media channels and tangible efforts portrayed a favorable image of Erasmus as a whole during the crisis. In addition, each facet of Erasmus responded in a similar way, maintaining its tone. Overall, its image and reputation were positioned favorably during a potentially harmful crisis.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Elements

Many lessons can be drawn from the six cases studied from the United States and Spain, though they may not be generalizable. First, crises are relative to the country. For example, a matador holding a child in a bullring is significant to Spaniards, acting as a cultural mark of a long-held tradition. However, the United States would likely not consider this a crisis as it lacks an understanding of the sport as a whole. Moreover, different topics claim the title of “crisis.” For example, much news or content in the United States revolves around businesses. Yet, Spanish news focus more on political and personal stories, rather than business topics. It is also important to acknowledge the regional differences of each country.

César Correa, general manager of Ogilvy Public Relations in Seville, Spain, shed light on some cultural differences during a personal interview. In describing the differences in Anglo versus Latino business environments/cultures, he explained that Anglo cultures “lobby” to defend their own interests, even if in same industry. Latino countries don’t have legal tools to develop and protect themselves in this way against competition. It is considered dirty as well (2016). He also explained crisis communication from his point of view: tell the truth, take responsibility and use the crisis as an opportunity. In light of social media, active listening (i.e. auditing messages) and an internal communications manual are key (Appendix A).

Hofstede’s dimensions are relevant to cases dealing with culture. These dimensions set the stage for different leadership and management roles, as well as behavior in general. For example, the United States has a lower power distance, but the decision is ultimately made by one person (Alaimo, 2017). Moreover, in high power distance cultures, public relations professionals must grow relationships with key influencers in the government. Spain ranks moderately on power distance, as part of the “Latin European cultural cluster” (Alaimo, 2017, p. 269). Awareness of power distance affects public relations messages and an understanding of colleague interactions.

Next, the United States acts as an individualistic society, where identities are seen as distinct from others (Alaimo, 2017), whereas Spain falls more toward the collectivist side. This shows the need to tailor messaging to specific publics, as noted in theories such as the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). Masculine and feminine societies can also play a role in tailoring messages by understanding the values and emotions associated with each.

The United States has low certainty avoidance, though time is still important. So, the unknown is met with a spirit of curiosity, which could coincide with the idea of the American dream. Spain ranks moderately, but still uses elements of hierarchy (Alaimo, 2017). The Catholic Church in this cluster plays a role in Spain’s ranking. Alaimo (2017) states, “Certainty isn’t reached through schedules and policies, but from ascribing to

the predominant religious and social norms” (p. 269). Public relations practitioners can put crises into context by understanding the importance of these norms to societies.

Next, the United States has a short-term orientation, where there is a need to spend money, see quick results and save “face” when meeting social obligations (Alaimo, p. 37). This mentality can mirror public relations functions by understanding the need to restore image or “face” swiftly through crisis communication responses. Alaimo states, “In the business world, achievement, freedom, rights and thinking for oneself are valued” (p. 37). So, public relations can serve as a reputation management function. Lastly, indulgent countries find the need to enjoy life and have fun. For example, Spain has a lower performance-orientation, where they enjoy-life through food and keep work separate from family (Alaimo, p. 269). This was evident during my time in Spain, as business or career aspirations were rarely part of conversation.

Public relations professionals can tailor messaging and diction to appropriately communicate with the target audience by understanding these dimensions. Since public relations is about building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships, these dimensions place an emphasis on understanding the inner working of a people within a culture. This is vital to gain the trust of stakeholders groups within a particular country.

Alaimo poses other questions about culture (p. 48-55):

- What’s taboo?
- What’s being communicated nonverbally?
- Why types of emotion are expected?
- What is considered ethical and unethical in this culture?
- What meanings do particular words, numbers, colors, and other symbols convey?
- What types of personal contact are expected?
- What types of exchanges will be expected by my associates?
- What business practices are prevalent in this culture?
- How do members of this culture build trust?
- How important is it to build relationships before getting down to business?

Analysis: Comparison of Uses of Image Restoration Strategies

Below are charts comparing the image restoration strategies used by the United States and Spain based on the six cases.

United States Case Studies: Image Restoration Strategies

	Denial	Evasion of Responsibility	Reduce Offensiveness	Corrective Action	Mortification
Cincinnati Zoo	x	x	x	x	
UCLA		x	x	x	
Chipotle		x		x	x

Spain Case Studies: Image Restoration Strategies

	Denial	Evasion of Responsibility	Reduce Offensiveness	Corrective Action	Mortification
MSSSI		x		x	
Ordóñez	x	x			
Erasmus		x			

The charts show that each of the organizations in the United States that experienced organizational crises used over three strategies, while the Spanish organizations stuck to two or fewer image restoration strategies. Though it could imply Spain's directness, the cases in the United States could also indicate the need to fight for their image based on the cultural expectations of the stakeholders. In all six cases, reputations suffered because of an unintended crisis, which in turn, affected stakeholder trust.

In the cases of the United States' Cincinnati Zoo gorilla shooting and Spain's matador photo crisis, animal rights activists utilized a *kairos* moment to give their position momentum. Turning another's crisis into an opportunity, these activists spoke out against the perceived inhumane treatment of animals. In a similar manner, UCLA's shooting and Harambe's shooting in the United States paralleled the public perception for value of life. For example, animal rights activists criticized the zoo for valuing the young boy's life in lieu of the gorilla's, as a zoo's purpose is to preserve and protect animals. The zoo stood by its actions, yet failed to appease all groups. At UCLA, communication efforts prioritized the safety of human lives on campus.

Throughout the six cases, social media proved to be a vital asset to communicate between organizations and publics, especially when communicating

crisis-related information. Traditional public relations functions of crisis communication, such as acting and communicating swiftly, apply. However, it may apply to a new and diverse audience. So, there is a need to use appropriate social media platforms for tailored messages. The credibility of these platforms also play a role, as not everyone uses social media. This could affect the perception of the message and even negate it.

Moreover, social media users expect a more dialogic and interactive culture (Russell, 2015). For public relations practitioners, this implies an opportunity to communicate directly with stakeholders first-hand in a crisis to respond to specific needs. However, digital space managers must be literate in the crisis at hand to effectively communicate and meet the needs of the public. After the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings, Bill Braniff, Executive Director of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Response to Terrorism, stated, "Authorities have recognized that one of the first places people go in events like this is to social media, to see what the crowd is saying about what to do next. And today authorities went to Twitter and directed them to traditional media environments where authorities can present a clear calm picture of what to do next" (Gilgoff & Lee, 2013). Without strategy behind this type of messaging, source credibility, and therefore reputation, can be damaged.

Conclusion

Though there may not be one "preferred" method in the six cases, as many of the strategies are used simultaneously, evading responsibility was used in each crisis communication response. This shows a tendency of these organizations to escape the blame by shifting the responsibility on another. However, the tactics differed, ranging from claiming accident to claiming good intentions. In the United States, corrective action was the second most used strategy. Though this paper does not explore the measurement of the case study outcomes in totality, one can assess that more transparency and proactive roles led to more positive stakeholder response. Corrective action and mortification take a proactive stance, honestly reacting and outlining steps to fix the crisis situation.

As social media trends and communication methods rapidly evolve, public relations professionals should evolve as well. By keeping up to be first mover, professionals can understand how audiences consume messages in various channels. With high stakes, social media can communicate critical information, so a multilingual familiarity with multiple applications could make or break a crisis response message.

Though social media may change the landscape of crisis communication responses, traditional principles for crisis communication still hold true and can apply to this medium. For example, getting the word out swiftly is key, and the information is expected to be as complete as possible at the time. From these cases, best practices in social media fit well with the Page Principles: tell the truth, prove it with action, listen to stakeholders, manage for tomorrow, conduct PR as if the whole enterprise depends on

it, realize the importance of stakeholders and remain calm, patient and good-humored (Page, n.d.).

Public relations professionals can learn from organizations in “crisis mode.” Mistakes and successes can propel the industry forward by taking away key lessons from crises. This helps professionals proactively prepare for a crisis when, rather than if, it occurs. If a company has recently emerged from a crisis, it enters the post-crisis stage (Coombs, 2007b). Here, it can recover, moving quickly to declare the crisis over, communicating corrective steps, monitoring the situation and debriefing the crisis team. Also, it engages in the learning and making memories process by understanding how the crisis was covered in the media and continuing to listen to coverage and the public. Recording these lessons is crucial for learning.

Future Research

Future research can focus on social media’s unwritten “culture” and crisis communication. In addition, one can research the preferred image restoration strategies pertaining to different types of crisis situations, such as natural disaster, food contamination and human error, in Spain and the United States. Lastly, comparisons can be drawn for how the United States and Spain respond to the same ongoing crisis.

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APPENDIX A

Interview key points (interviewed in Spanish, translated to English):

César Correa, General Manager

April 6, 2016

- When asked about apologies in Spain: saying sorry doesn't fix things – it goes along with the actual fixing. Tell the truth, take responsibility and use the crisis as an opportunity.
- Difference in Anglo v. Latino culture in business environment: Anglo “lobby” that defends own interests, even if in same industry. Latino countries don't have legal tools to develop and protect in this way. It's considered dirty as well.
- Social media:
 - Hard to control, so listen actively
 - Audit: what are they saying about me? For example, yesterday Panama didn't exist but today it does because of negative media (see current event)
 - Need a manual for behavior on social media (i.e. employees be discrete. This will help keep watch on company image)
 - Social media can initiate a crisis, which is dangerous
 - People may use it to do bad on purpose
 - Everyone knows how to use it, yet no one knows how to use it
- Crisis communication:
 - Know what is happening outside and inside the company
 - Have a good team inside from different departments. Spokesperson should be the same inside and outside to tell the story. Train the manager because not always a good speaker.
 - Act rapidly (i.e. have a “10 commitments”)
 - Have employees only use business modes of communication, not individual means (i.e. don't take a picture of a situation and send to your spouse. Only use business phone to keep consistent message and have control).
 - Make alliances beforehand
 - Good relations with the media beforehand – they may call you to get the real story
- Workings between organization and government: In Spain the government is corrupt. Quality of people and recruitment is vital. Tell the media the truth no matter how much it hurts.
 - Ethics: where is the limit?

- Best way to regain confidence of stakeholders:
 - Know target audiences
 - Clients come before stockholders and suppliers, etc.
 - Need success to regain confidence (money, reputation, etc.)
 - Must make hard decisions to end up dead or alive. For example, Perrier water a few years ago recalled all over world due to plastic but recovered reputation instantly and now is still thriving.
- Other things to note:
 - He helped make the crisis manual for the port that crosses Gibraltar in south of Spain. It assessed risk and all possible situations.

APPENDIX B

Chipotle press release on November 20, 2015:

Chipotle Mexican Grill (NYSE: CMG) continues to work closely with state and federal health officials, as the investigation continues into an E. coli incident initially linked to 11 Chipotle restaurants in Washington and Oregon. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reduced the number of cases connected to Chipotle from 50 to 37 cases on November 18 (with 24 in Washington and 13 in Oregon).

This reduction of nearly 25% was based upon more sensitive testing which revealed the cases were not related to Chipotle. The CDC has informed Chipotle that it identified six additional cases in which initial testing matches the E. coli strain involved in the Washington and Oregon incident.

Although one of the individuals has no known link to Chipotle, five individuals did report eating at Chipotle, including two in Turlock, Calif., one in Akron, Ohio, one in Amherst, NY, and one in Burnsville, Minn. Investigators have suggested that in incidents like this, it is not unusual to see additional cases after the initial incident as the investigation moves forward.

The source of the problem appears to have been contained during a period in late October. Forty-two of the 43 cases linked to Chipotle, reported visiting one of the restaurants in question between October 13 and October 30. One person reported having eaten November 6.

In response to this incident, Chipotle has taken aggressive steps to make sure its restaurants are as safe as possible. There have been no reported new cases in Washington or Oregon since Chipotle put its remediation plan into effect.

Specifically, the company conducted deep cleaning at the restaurants that have been linked to this incident, replacing ingredients in those restaurants, changing food preparation procedures, providing all necessary supply chain data to investigators, and surveying employees to be sure none have had any symptoms of illness (note: no Chipotle employees in any states have been ill related to this incident). Similar actions are immediately being taken in response to these newly reported cases.

Chipotle is also taking significant steps to be sure all of its food is as safe as possible. Specifically, the company is expanding testing of key ingredients, examining all of its food-safety procedures to find any opportunity for improvement, and is working with two renowned food safety scientists to assess all of its food safety programs, from the farms that provide its food to its restaurants.

“We take this incident very seriously because the safety of our food and wellbeing of our customers is always our highest priority,” said Steve Eells, chairman and co-CEO of Chipotle. “We are committed to taking any and all necessary actions to make sure our food is as safe as possible, and we are working diligently with the health agencies.”

“We offer our sincerest apologies to those who have been affected,” said Eells. “We will leave no stone unturned to ensure the safety of our food – from enhancing the safety and quality assurance program for all of our fresh produce suppliers, to examining all of our food safety procedures from farm to restaurant, and expanding testing programs for produce, meat and dairy items before they are sent to our restaurants.”

According to the CDC, there are about 48 million cases of food-related illness in the U.S. annually, including 265,000 cases of E. coli.

APPENDIX C

A Letter from Chipotle Founder Steve Eells (December 2015):

Since I opened the first Chipotle more than 23 years ago, we have strived to elevate fast food, by using better ingredients which are raised responsibly, without synthetic hormones, antibiotics, added colors, flavors or sweeteners typically found in processed fast food. And I’m very proud of that.

But in 2015, we failed to live up to our own food safety standards, and in so doing, we let our customers down. At that time, I made a promise to all of our customers that we would elevate our food safety program. Here are the important changes we’ve made:

1. **Supplier Interventions:** Our suppliers have implemented additional, proven steps that eliminate or dramatically reduce food safety risks before the ingredients ever reach Chipotle.

2. **Advanced Technology:** We are pioneering advanced technologies including using high pressure to eliminate any possible food safety issues without changing the flavor of the ingredient.

3. **Farmer Support & Training:** We are providing funding and training to local farms so they can meet our elevated food safety requirements.

4. **Enhanced Restaurant Procedures:** We deployed robust, industry leading new food safety procedures in our restaurants including new handling procedures for produce, citrus and meats as well as comprehensive sanitizing protocols.

5. Food Safety Certification: We require that our managers and field leaders are certified in food safety by a nationally recognized institution—a first for any national restaurant chain.

6. Restaurant Inspections: We dramatically increased the number, and intensity, of restaurant inspections—both by independent auditors and our internal teams.

7. Ingredient Traceability: We implemented an advanced electronic tracking system to ensure that ingredients can be monitored and quickly removed from our supply if necessary.

8. Advisory Council: We created an independent advisory council comprised of industry experts who continually review our procedures and provide insight into new food safety advancements.

Our commitment to you is that every day, in every restaurant, we will serve food that is safe, delicious, and made with ingredients raised with care. I never could have imagined that one burrito restaurant would become the company it is today. On behalf of our entire team, we look forward to continuing with you on our quest to make better food accessible to everyone.

APPENDIX D



Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad
August 30 · 🌐

Actualización Casos diagnosticados #ZikaVirus.
29 de agosto de 2016.- Se han notificado hasta la fecha 247 casos confirmados de infección por virus Zika.
<http://www.msssi.gob.es/.../saludPublica/zika/casosD.../home.htm>

Update cases diagnosed #zikaVirus.
August 29, 2016.- have been reported to date, 247 confirmed cases of zika virus infection.
<http://www.msssi.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/zika/casosDiagnosticados/home.htm>
⚙️ · Rate this translation

Casos Diagnosticados ZIKA Virus
Casos diagnosticados, Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad
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