

Challenges and opportunities in Crisis Communication

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Abstract:

Crisis communication, a subspecialty of public relations it also extends a massive form of knowledge. A crisis can arise from inside or outside the organization. The instant it occurs, subsists may be at threat and the reputation of a people, company or organization may also be at threat as it directly deals with reputation of peoples, companies or organizations. The persistence of this paper is to determine how crisis communications is imperative today. This paper takes a widespread view of crisis communication by examining the varying definitions of crisis and crisis communications. Further this paper will deliver insight on various steps involved in crisis communication. This research paper seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities in crisis communication.

Keywords: Challenges, Crisis communication, Opportunities, Types.

Introduction:

A crisis disturbs daily manoeuvres and can origin numerous glitches like economic losses, destruction of property, security breaches, individual injury, and loss of life and reputation damage. A crisis is also intricate and of mysterious extent. As the crisis reveals in real time,

surroundings can change profoundly, as will the desires, roles and responsibilities of the various individuals involved.[1]

Communication is a vital instinct of living things. Communication can be defined as interchange of information between two entities.

There are number of definitions for crisis communication is a sub-specialty of the public relations profession that is designed to protect and defend an individual, company, or organization facing a public challenge to its reputation.[3]

Crisis communication refers to the technologies, systems, and protocols that enable an organization to effectively communicate during an emergency situation.

Businesses of all kinds must be prepared for a wide range of potential crises, including severe weather, fire, crime, terrorism, product recalls, reputation crises, and PR incidents. Crisis communication ensures that all relevant personnel can quickly and effectively communicate with each other during such crises, sharing information that will allow the organization to quickly rectify the situation, protect employees and assets, and ensure business continuity. Various television channels provide a wide and live coverage 24/7 to the users thereby providing them repeated telecast of news which might have been missed by the people. Undoubtedly it provides the updated and latest news within no wastage of time along with live coverage it has many disadvantages. The impact of watching the violence and actual death scenes repeatedly may cause psychological disturbances and lead to health hazards. (Dr. Geetali Tilak, 2019) [8]

Communicating during crisis is one of the utmost imperative elements of a workplace disaster. It is critical to communicate efficiently with the staff, clients and also with media. Crisis communication helps to protect the reputation by maintaining public image. Crisis can occur suddenly i.e. at any moment and crisis communication is a flawless elucidation for such glitches. It would be greatly cooler if crises arrived with prior warning. But unfortunately it's one of the unbearable things. Generally crises derive when they're least expected. This is the cause why crisis communication plans are stipulations. Crisis communication relieves to come out in crisis and unexpected events. Crisis communication offers a meticulous plan to achieve communication in crisis circumstances. Some of the crises under which crisis communication can be used more efficiently are:

- A fire in a chemical plant
- An E. coli outbreak at a hamburger restaurant

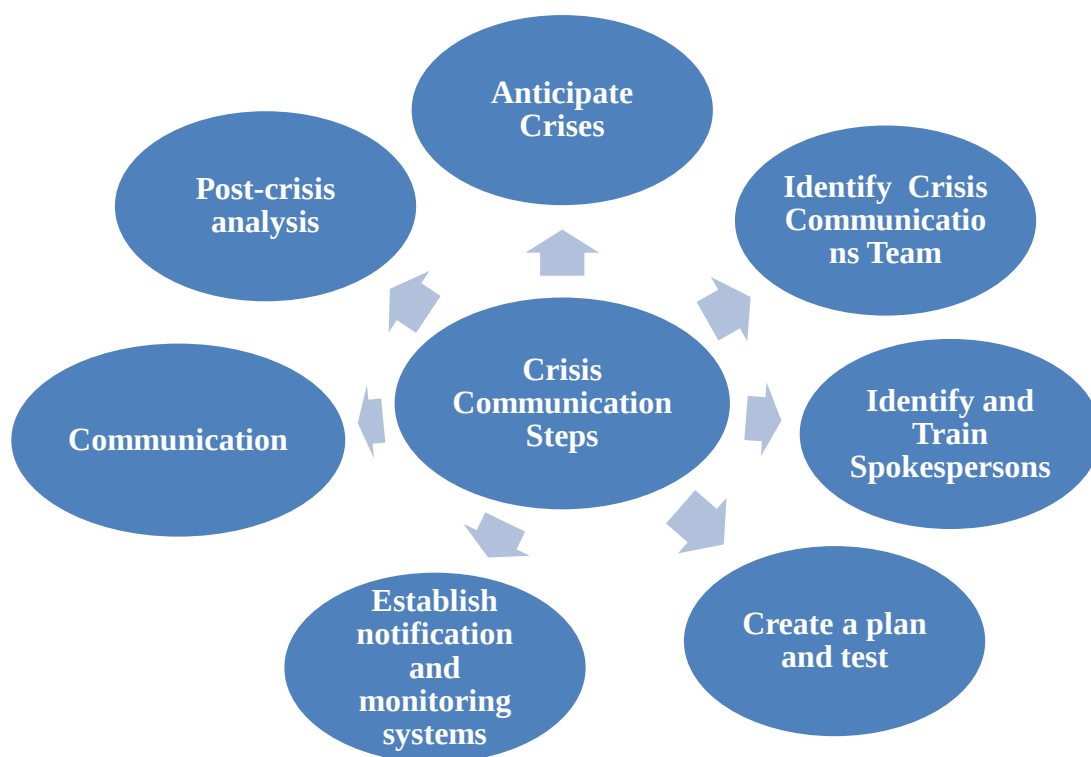
- An executive accused of insider trading
- A school shooting
- Charges of illegal accounting practices
- A politician who uses a racial slur on camera
- A drug that's found to have adverse side effects
- A plane crash

Why crisis communication?

Business without crisis??? Can you imagine it? No, it's extremely impossible thing. Any business will face some kind of crisis in its epoch. The tactic you used to respond in such crisis can offer you a desired image enhancement or significantly harm your brand, impede your customer base and eventually your business partners. As we all are awake about the modern age, when news goes viral rapidly due to progression in technology and social media. So, it is really very important to adopt the crisis communication.

Steps involved in crisis communication:

Through the literature review done by researcher it is originated that, steps involved in crisis communication are diverge in nature. But, eventually what they mean is same. Here in this paper researcher has tried to intricate some collective and necessary steps.

Fig. No. 1: Crisis Communication Steps

Source: Designed by researcher

1. Anticipate Crises:

Here brainstorming sessions will be delivered on all the latent crises that could ensue at corresponding place.

Benefits:

- Help to identify preventable situations with little modification in existing operations.
- Correspondences originate to deliberate affirmative responses.

2. Identify Crisis Communications Team:

Crisis communication team can be found within the organization with the help of senior executives. Generally top management will lead the team. In certain cases it's not possible to form the team with in-house adherents in such cases organizations can pursue help from external agencies.

3. Identify and Train Spokespersons:

During crisis it's really very significant that only lawful persons should speak. For this one should have proper policies. The peoples involved in crisis team should be suitably trained and verified. They should have right skills , positions along with training.

4. Create a plan and test it:

The crisis plan should contain operational and communicational components which help to determine one will do and what will one say. These plans should be tested. Media training is also one of the important parts for the one who could give the statement and interviews.

5. Establish notification and monitoring systems:

Likewise, monitoring feedback from stakeholders during a crisis situation allows you to accurately adapt your strategy and tactics. Furthermore, your organisation should have the means to reach the internal and external stakeholders as soon as possible. [2]

6. Communication:

This is the first rule of crisis management. Here you need to tell about aware thing about crisis; also need to enlighten about steps used to unravel the problem.

7. Post-crisis analysis:

This is one more significant activity for any crisis communications team. Subsequently a crisis, proper analysis is obligatory to analyse the belongings like what was done well, what could be done better in future and how to improve various elements of crisis preparedness. At the same time it is also essential to scrutinise impact of crisis on employees, organisation brand and its reputation. Further with the help of this analysis company need to take steps if it found any impact during this crisis.

Many of the study reveals that designing a crisis plan is very he toughest chores. It's not only because of the threats are so high or it deals with reputation of the individuals /organisation – but because it's impossible to make a meticulous plan before knowing precisely what you're planning for. In some cases a crisis doesn't certainly end because of how well it was handled.

It is believed that the peoples,organization,company or business that endures a crisis well apprehends that difficulty is a hidden opportunity for growth or change. If we look at the wider definition of crisis, it means any situation that is nasty or could threaten to extremelydisturb business, ominouslyharm reputation or affect the bottom line.

Crisis communication helps to figure out various challenges associated with crisis and provide opportunities to well plan for those crises in advanced. Prior planning during crisis gives an opportunity to the peoples or employees or organizations/business to sustain in critical situations.

Some of the challenges and opportunities in crisis communication are as given below:

Challenges:

The role media plays to formulate, influence and consequently mould the general public perception concerning numerous problems is unexampled. There square measure serious implications for each the media and therefore the youth during a society more and more influenced and managed through the news channels. The profound impact of reports channels on Asian country society has been a motivating subject of analysis within the recent past. However, the impact of recent found freedom of expression within the face of censorship and different suggests that of management on media qualifies more in-depth analysis. (Tilak, 2019) [9]

1. Excessive Information:

The information is news or knowledge received or given. An example of information is what's given to someone who asks for background about something.

Many of the organizations have its own crisis communication team who collects and shares the information.Basically top level management received the information from all angels. But quantity of information is not important in such situation but it's a quality of the information. While collecting the information one should focus on how you'll get information, and who

will deliver it to you. There should be a central place where you can collect and store all the information during crisis; for this one can make use of technologies. It's the management rule that, right information at right time from the right people will make things easy for decision making. So, once you got all the rights in one place, it becomes easier to find and track that unique thread of truth.

2. Less Information

If one has less information it really difficult to come out with the solution. In day-to-day business also communications, dependence on just one can give way to trouble. In crisis to manage it you should have enough information in your hand. Less information may result into wrong decisions which will hamper peoples life, companies reputation etc.

We live in a connected world, so there shouldn't be any excuse on less information. So to collect appropriate and enough information u many use emails, SMS, software's.

3. No Contact Data

Use of advanced technologies and instant messaging services are none of use if you don't have entities to share this with you. Contacts plays vital role to provide information during crisis, because all of the important stakeholders are known well in advance of an emergency situation. Now a days organisations stores the details digitally but at the same time some small scale organizations have not adopt this till the date this may matter in crisis to contact for the data.

By confirming that your contact list is easily reachable and contactable in an emergency. This will help to save a lot of time.

4. Unpredictable Situations

By its precise nature, a crisis is tough to design for. No one knows when they're impending, but for sure we know they're always there. It's challenging to plan a communication without knowing upcoming crisis. But when it arrives it's difficult to communicate. So, companies should be always ready for unpredictable situations.

Unpredictable situations can be identified for some of the business. After identifying crisis you should start drafting for it. These templates will work like a framework in crisis and also it will help to reduce the errors as you are aware about it.

5. No Visibility

Unfortunately, it's not enough in crisis communications to have an up-to-date contact list and message templates sitting ready for deployment. Fast action depends on the right people opening the message in time, and on you being aware that they've opened it. And if they haven't, it's no good sitting around blindly awaiting a response.

With the right communications technology set up in advance of a crisis, you'll be able to monitor who has received your message and who has not with real-time tracking software. And if a key stakeholder either hasn't received a message, or has opened it but not responded, you'll be able to escalate your actions immediately, without wasting any time.

When crisis strikes, time becomes your most precious resource. And by utilizing the myriad tools that modern communications technology puts at your disposal, you can ensure it's on your side when the unexpected occurs.

6. Lack of complete situational awareness:

Many times it has been noticed that employees are unaware about emergencies like earthquake, fire. This results in notifying risks that lead to confusion, incomplete information or being outright incorrect. When people are unaware about complete situations they are not able to make proper decisions and this may harm their own lives.

7. Safety:

Safety is one more upsetting issue during times of crisis is to manage safety of discrete group of employees. Individuals should be aware about safety and precautions to be taken when they are in the organizations. During safety communication is also one of the major challenges because messages need to be sent to diverse groups at the same time.

8. Time is of critical essence during emergencies.

Alerting peoples at the right time or immediately to make them safe is also one of the challenges.

9. Effective use of limited manpower:

In crisis team should know when and how to make effective use of the resources available. Team must be capable to handle crisis with limited manpower.

10. Need for effective follow-up post crisis situation:

It's necessary to take follow-up after post a crisis situation. It helps to safety of the peoples during emergency. It is important for organizations, individuals to be able to recommence manoeuvres at the earliest after crisis situations. It also recommended informing the peoples about crisis times have passed and to start with normal routines.

Opportunities:

Many of the opportunities are described along with challenges mentioned above but in addition to them few are listed below:

Basically, whenever we deliberate about any of the challenge which can be faced by organization during crisis it itself let us know about opportunities hidden into it. Many of the study has proven that whenever crisis team is formed to handle crisis it gives a perfect and knowledgeable combination of the peoples from the organization who can bitterly handle and resolve such crisis condition. So, here organization has an opportunity to get proper solution from the reliable team.

Crisis gives an opportunity to the entire organisation to commence new thoughts and implement supplementary procedures the crisis situation which has been publicized. It could be an expedition to change market direction, implement new production, manufacturing or distribution approaches, attract new talent or reinvest in the company.

Crisis communication gives an opportunity to organization to notify the peoples, stakeholders and employees with real information which helps to avoid faulty impressions, misunderstandings during crisis.

It helps to identify real strength of the organization during crisis.

From prior crisis peoples get lessons and be ready with their own plan to be safe during crisis.

It gives opportunities to the people to provide helping hand to the peoples suffered during crisis.

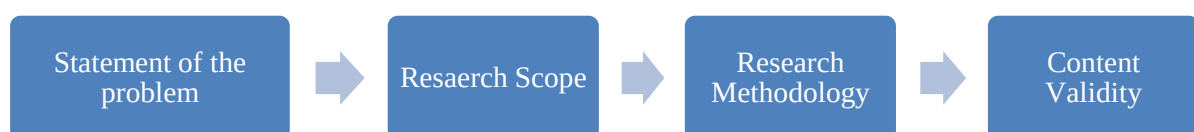
Research Methodology:

Research Methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of research. In this paper the theoretical and philosophical assumptions underlying the research methodology in the crisis communication were reviewed. This paper provides insight on challenges and opportunities in crisis communication. The current paper is basically designed to give general introduction about crisis and crisis communications. Researcher has also focused on why crisis communication is important for any organization or individual. Further in continuation of the same researcher has elaborated various steps involved in crisis communication which is followed by challenges and opportunities in crisis communication.

For this paper researcher has used secondary data. The secondary data related to the proposed study is collected through various local and international journals, articles, web sites and published and unpublished thesis, reports, blogs, articles etc.

Research methodology used in this paper is as shown under following heads:

Fig No. 2: Research Methodology



Source: Designed by researcher

Statement of the problem:

For this paper researcher has focused on crisis communication, why it important and challenges and opportunities associated with it.

Research Scope:

Scope of the paper is limited to identify challenges associated with crisis communication followed by its opportunities.

Research Methodology: This research is based on the secondary data. And the secondary data has been collected from different types of sources as local and international journals, articles, web sites and published and unpublished thesis, reports, blogs, articles etc.

Content Validity:

In this study the content validity of the survey instrument ensured by:

- Printed and digital books related to IoT
- Extensive Literature Review

Though the content are ensured by various ways mentioned above all the content from this paper are own contribution of the researcher.

Data Collection and Analysis:**Collection of the data:**

The data for this paper is collected through secondary method . For the data collection researcher has gone through various newspaper articles, magazines, books, journals, research papers and reports and web sites etc.

Data Analysis:

This paper intended to explore the challenges and opportunities in crisis communication. This paper is comprises of what is crisis, what is communication and what is actually crisis communication. Further it is more focused on various challenges and opportunities in crisis communication. It's a conceptual paper which explains things about how crisis can be handle, who can handle it along with its impact on individuals, organizations or business. So eventually the paper is designed with help of the data which is collected via the secondary source. The data is collected and reviewed by literature review method for explicable form.

Conclusion:

The crisis is unpredictable term which can be faced by any individual, organization or business. Crisis had very huge impact on these entities as it can harm them with any of the way discussed in this paper. Crisis communication has an ability to help the peoples in crisis situation with proper planning. Crisis communication has numerous challenges but those can be handled with prior planning. To handle what required is right people at right time at right place with right information. This paper tells us that it is really important that we create and maintain a comprehensive crisis communication plan because we need an outline to follow when a crisis comes up. Though the various researches studied for this paper researcher of this paper is also believes that every crisis is an opportunity for growth of the organization, business or peoples.

The purpose of this paper was to highlight on crisis, crisis communication, why the crisis communication is needed, steps used during crisis communication, and finally the challenges and opportunities of crisis communication.

Limitations:

The present paper is focused on challenges and opportunities in crisis communication. Due to the precise time period for the paper, it was neither feasible nor obligatory to review the large number of papers and researches based on the primary data, which resulted in this paper as it is more focused/limited only for theoretical understanding of this area of the research.

Topics for further research:

Crisis communication is very searing topic for the research. While writing this paper researcher has observed that extensive work has not been carried out in this area. Researcher of this paper believes that there is more need to focus on various aspects on this topic. The future research can be examined to identify challenges and opportunities with specific areas of business. Researcher would also like to recommend that there should be a framework with solution to resolve the crises under different situations. Also further research can be done on sector wise opportunities for crisis communication.

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