



CONWAY



**SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS**



**Are you a social media  
novice? expert?**

## Social media for crisis communications



You may know social media as a way of doing the following:

- **Networking** and keeping up with friends, colleagues
- **Sharing** photos/messages around major events
- Serving as a “**highlight reel**” of all your best moments!

## Social media for crisis communications

For the purposes of this training, we're only going to examine social media as a tool in our toolkit that allows us to do two very important things:

- 1) **Amplify.**
- 2) **Listen.**



In times of crisis, these two tools can be incredibly helpful in surviving the event with your organization's reputation as intact as possible.



## What is a crisis?

Crisis is defined 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**”.

- It's (relatively) unexpected.
- It threatens your ability to fulfill your constituents expectations.
- It could negatively affect your organization's performance.
- It has the potential for a negative outcome.

Source: Wikipedia



Let's review some **crisis planning basics**.

## What are the components of an effective crisis response?

“Reputations are won in times of crisis.”

How you handle a crisis can **make** or **break** public perception of you.

Your main goal is **damage limitation**. To this end:

- **Effective, speedy communication** is the single most important way in which damage limitation can be implemented, and
- **Social media** is an excellent way to **reach out** to constituents with life saving details, provide access to **resources**, **listen** to what people are saying about you, and to help **communicate** all the positive things you’re doing to resolve the problem.



## A recap on some crisis planning basics:

### Auditing and planning for possible threats:

- Creating tip sheets, basic handouts with important information, drafting statements, creating special webpages (kept offline until necessary) in advance

### Types of crises to plan for:

- Internal operations issues
- Loss of service
- Emergencies
- Boycotts
- Weather related events and their aftermath
- ‘Citizen journalism’

A rapid response will **limit damage** to business, to reputations, and help restore regular order as soon as possible.



## Now back to social media

**Social media** can be an especially effective tool for government organizations:

- Allows direct access to constituents and their raw **opinions** in real time
- Keeps people **informed** of public services you're offering and the good things you're doing for your constituents and stakeholders
- Helps provide potentially life-saving information and access to **resources** in real time

## Now back to social media

But also a potentially **challenging** one:

- **Situations escalate quickly** on social media. Misspeaking, poorly worded comments, etc. can take on a life of their own and 'go viral.'
- **Negative opinions can proliferate rapidly** on social media as people who agree will find one another and be able to commiserate on a bad experience with your business, organization or service. All it takes is one hashtag or key word mention and negative perceptions can spread like wildfire.



**Crisis happens. What now?**



## Four stages of crisis, and what to do in each stage.

### ***1. Before crisis:***

Use social media to keep people informed of oncoming challenges, safety tips. This can save lives, limit property damage, and allow you to appear prepared, informed, in control, and ready to handle the situation.



## Four stages of crisis, and what to do in each stage.

### ***2. During crisis:***

Use social media to post safety information in real time as well as fact sheets, important phone numbers, resources, etc.

Also use social media to conduct listening which will allow you to identify what people are saying about the event and shed light on anything you may have missed.



## Four stages of crisis, and what to do in each stage.

### ***3. Immediately after crisis:***

Use social media to amplify statements, continue to post timely resources and information (safety related or otherwise, and to keep people generally informed about the response efforts.

**Listen!**



## Four stages of crisis, and what to do in each stage.

### ***4. Once crisis has passed:***

Share positive stories about how the crisis was managed – resources, rebuilding efforts, numbers of people saved, rescued, etc.

Respond to negative commentary sparingly, if at all. Do not engage trolls (you will never win), but do generally listen.

Amplify positive messaging.

## Do's and Don't's

### *Do this:*

- **Plan!** Assess current plans, audit prior responses, and tweak as necessary.
- **Be clear and objective** on the facts of the situation from the outset. Don't downplay or exaggerate them, but do correct inaccuracies in media coverage.
- **Be assertive, clear and firm** in stating how your organization is planning to solve the problem, both in the short and long term.
- **Strongly state support** for the affected stakeholders and community members from the outset. (This is not the same as taking blame! But if there is responsibility to take, doing so from the outset could save you from a world of criticism going forward. So be honest.)



## Do's and Don't's

### *Whatever you do, don't:*

- Use social media to 'spin' a potential crisis. **Instead, amplify positive stories to help bring an objective view of your organization and its performance.**
- Take too long to issue a statement and amplify its reach on social media. **Instead, plan ahead. Prepare various drafts of messaging, plan for various scenarios, and have key spokespeople fully informed and prepared.**
- Forget to share resources and information in a timely manner on social media channels, or treat social media as an afterthought. **Plan for regular updating of social media channels with accurate, timely information during a crisis.**
- Forget to include social media listening in your crisis plans. **Delegate the task of social listening to a member of the crisis team and make it a priority.**

## Social Listening

**Social listening** is a super important part of a social media presence.

It's not just about the content that goes out, but what you're able to learn about your constituents via social media, especially in times of crisis, that matters.

### **How to conduct social listening:**

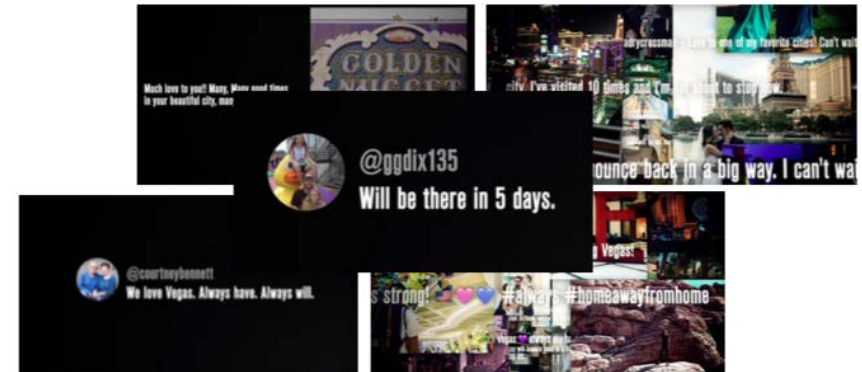
- Search for your organization's official name and any colloquial names or abbreviations by which it may be referred to.
- Search and keep track of any hashtags people may be using to speak about the event or your organization.
  - And take it a step further, if possible: **catalog these as positive, neutral or negative**. This will give you a raw barometer for public perception on any one given subject or issue.
- Social listening tools such as Sprout Social are helpful for more in depth listening.

## Case Study: Las Vegas Convention and Visitor's Bureau

In October 2017, the largest mass shooting in American history took place in **Las Vegas, Nevada** during a heavily attended concert.

The **Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Bureau** was able to quickly navigate through the completely unforeseen event as they had a strong crisis plan in place which accounted for heavy social media use from the outset.

Via the hashtag **#VegasStrong**, positive messaging and images surrounding the crisis were amplified in order to limit the negative impact on tourism to the city.



## Case Study: Las Vegas Convention and Visitor's Bureau

Las Vegas was ready to respond.

- Had pre-drafted statements for various scenarios
- Had a fluid crisis plan that they reviewed and adapted regularly
- Performed constant monitoring of media mentions and social listening
- Created hashtags and logos to share on social networks
- Were ready to connect with and communicate updates to global community of supporters throughout the crisis



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Q&A

THANK YOU!