

ACTION plan

It's not good;
It's all over social media;
It's all about your organization;
What do you do?

A

Acknowledge
the incident



Get out in front and acknowledge the incident using bite-sized information. You may not know all the facts yet but it's not about the facts; it's about establishing timely and honest communications processes. Commit to timely updates as more facts become known. Use empathy if required and apologize right away if you know you're in the wrong.

C

Determine the
social media
context.



Don't play a game of social media whack-a-mole by responding to every comment. First, determine the context; assess the severity. What is the volume of negative sentiment online? Who is voicing in and how much influence do they have? What does this mean for your reputation, relationships and the bottom line? Determine if a full-scale SM response is appropriate.

T

Talk through
your existing
channels



Use all the tools at your disposal. Don't ignore your other channels just because your organization is on social media. Carry out crisis communications using traditional media channels while also updating social media audiences on critical information about the incident. Use all tools to correct any misinformation. In other words, don't let the social media response become the panacea, forgetting other proven methods.

I

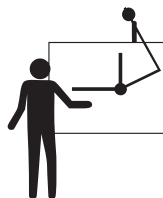
Involve your
organization @
the #hotspots



Don't just communicate about the incident using your social media home pages - participate where people are actively talking. Go to blogs, hashtags, online forums or chatrooms. Correct all factual inaccuracies, address rumours and concerns and demonstrate the corrective actions taken.

O

Determine all
communications
Options



Just as you strive to use traditional and online tools to address a crisis, you should also consider all additional communications options including: community relations, investor relations, government relations, internal communications and media relations. You need to have a full suite of resources to address what may arise through social media.

N

Nurture the
relationships



Don't engage people and then leave them hanging. Continue to nurture your relationships with online communities, detractors and third-party advocates. Continue providing context about the incident, acknowledging concerns, strengthening existing relationships and rebuilding trust. This is proverbial money in the bank.