



Using Social Media in the Aftermath of Crisis

Crisis—noun;

- ❖ The stage in a sequence of events at which the trend of future events, for better or worse, is determined; turning point.
- ❖ A condition of instability or danger, as in social, economic, political or international affairs, leading to decisive change.
- ❖ A dramatic emotional or circumstantial upheaval in a person's life.

Make use of a variety of social media tools when a crisis arrives.

1. Make a plan.
 - a. Decide exactly what it is you need to do. Repair your image? Reassure clients? Present your side of the story?
 - b. Decide on a timeline for action.
 - c. Decide if you need outside help.
 - d. Make a to-do list.
2. Share the plan
 - a. With staff
 - b. With key stakeholders
3. Identify key media outlets and contacts
 - a. Local, regional national
 - b. Online, print, broadcast
4. Begin your execution
5. Monitor Feedback and answer questions
 - a. Key locations include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, your blog
 - b. Key tools include Social Mention, Google Alerts, Technorati, Twitter Search
6. Monitor media coverage you receive
7. Decide your exit strategy
 - a. What results do you see versus what you need
 - b. Finite timeline



Tools to Get You Started:

1. PR.com and PRWeb.com—Online press release distribution. You write, submit, and they spread the word for you. Some free services, some for-pay.
2. Mashable.com—A How-To site for social media. Great articles for tools you might need or for a particular task you don't know how to do.
3. YouTube.com and Flickr.com—video and photo submission sites. Pictures speak volumes more than words, the cliché is true. If you can photograph and/or record relevant subjects

Marketing Channels to Use:

1. Your blog
2. Email newsletters
3. Facebook
4. Twitter
5. Press Releases
6. Interviews and/or speaking engagements that integrate with social media (a conference that will be tweeted; an interview that gets posted on social channels as well as another medium)

Examples:

1. In the early days of the financial crisis, Vision Bank used email, their website and snail mail correspondence to reassure their account holders. They were early to respond to the situation, thereby establishing credibility and trustworthiness; they were clear with their message and used facts to back up their message.
2. The oil spill—the Gulf Shores and Orange Beach Tourism department used every marketing channel available to them to apprise their current, future, and potential visitors of the conditions related to the spill. Video and photography played a large role, as did Facebook, Twitter, their blog, and their website, where they developed a special page just for oil spill issues. Their efforts are ongoing. Their social audience has tripled since May 1, 2010.
3. JetBlue experienced a nightmare scenario when an employee lost all control on a flight, hitting a passenger, popping open a beer, and exiting the plane via the emergency slide. JetBlue's response? While legal issues kept them from discussing details of the event, they blogged about it and then posted to their social channels. They kept their ongoing, irreverent personality in place, and then went on to thank their employees—the ones who didn't freak out that day. Nicely done!