Top 5 Social Media Crisis Communications Pitfalls to Avoid

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We’ll send out a recording after the event.
Agenda

- Where social media fits in the communications lifecycle
- How to know what social media keywords are important to watch
- 3 message maps specifically designed for social media
- Why practice matters with social media communications
- How to use social media to increase understanding
- Q&A

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**Academic Perspective**

Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue.

Wikipedia

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**Business Perspective**

The purpose of a business is to serve a customer... who creates customers

Peter Drucker amended by Shiv Singh

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**Everyday Perspective**

- I’m eating bacon
- I like bacon
- I have skills including eating bacon
- This is where I eat bacon
- Watch me eat my bacon
- Here’s a vintage photo of my bacon
- Here’s a recipe with bacon
- I work for Google and eat bacon
- I’m listening to music about bacon

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The 5 Social Media Pitfalls to Avoid

+ Not including social media in your crisis communication lifecycle
+ Not listening to the “right things” on social media
+ Not using social media interactively to gather intelligence
+ Not paying attention to social media channel cues
+ Not practicing social media communication strategies pre-crisis
Pitfall 1 - Not including social media in your communication lifecycle

Source: Everbridge Survey
Solution – Include Social Media in Crisis Com Plans

+ Identify the social media platforms that will meet your needs and have the right demographics for your target audience

+ Avoid the “shiny new object syndrome” and don’t adopt every new social media platform that emerges

+ Learn the rules for each platform:
  - Twitter vs. Facebooks vs. Digg

+ Each platform has its own “niche”
6 Stages of a Crisis

1. Warning
2. Risk Assessment
3. Response
4. Management
5. Resolution
6. Recovery

Crisis Lifecycle:
- Incident Occurs
- Crisis Escalates or De-escalates
- Crisis Resolved
- Recovery Initiated

Communication During a Crisis

Dr. Robert Chandler's Six Stages of a Crisis™
Pitfall 2 - Not listening for the right things on social media

Do you monitor social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, etc.?

- Yes: 64.0%
- No: 36.0%

STEP 1 – Listening
STEP 2 – Listening for the right terms

Source: Everbridge Survey
Solution – Listen for what matters most

+ Identify the people, groups, local and national organizations that you want to follow

+ Identify probable key words for crisis situations
  - Different terms for different situations
  - Monitor for miscommunications
How to determine good “key words” can sometimes be challenging:

+ **Core key words:** descriptors of the event in single words such as: explosion, fire, smoke, flood, evacuation, shelters

+ **Long tail key words:** strings of key words that describe what you want to find – location+event+descriptors (e.g. Glendale + Fire + shelters)

+ **Related key words:** words/phrases that are typically associated with the core descriptors or can be combinable with core descriptors such as shelter locations; photos; images; traffic; detour; closures; help

+ **Negative key words:** might typically appear in other uses that might clutter your returns related to your search
Pitfall 3 - Not using social media interactively to gather intelligence

Does your notification plan include using real-time two-way communication via...?

Source: Everbridge Survey
Solution – Take advantage of the real time communication

+ People use social media because they want to; no one is forcing them
  + Take advantage of it
+ Collect rich intelligence from the ‘field’
+ Get help identifying and dispelling rumors or misinformation
+ Get feedback from users in the community
+ Use subject matter experts to help with data collection

TIP – Increase response rates by
• Current, timely and frequent
• Accuracy and credibility
• Principal of reciprocity
Solution – Don’t forget about mobile for real-time interactive responses ‘On the Go’

Capture detailed responses with geographic location information, real-time status updates and rich photos
Pitfall 4 - Not paying attention to social media channel cues

- Channel matters - format less so
- Practice transparency
- Not referring to official sources
- “Now” is too late – waiting for an hour is not recommended
Solution – Prepare social media message maps beforehand

+ Build 3-5 message maps for the scenarios you are most likely to encounter
+ Make sure they *fit* the social media channel
+ Be relevant and *follow* the 3/30/30 rule
  + No more than 3 message points
  + First three sentences/30 words/30 seconds most important
  + Front-load key information into the first 30 words/30 seconds
**Official Introduction**

**This is the Oneida County Sheriff.**

**Core Message**

*There is a fire in your area. Evacuate immediately!*  

*Please leave the area and/or go to the Main Street School.*

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**Official Introduction**

**FEMA Sandy**

**Core Message**

*#Sandy RUMOR CONTROL: The rumor that @fema is offering $300 cash cards for food is FALSE. [http://www.fema.gov/hurricane-sandy-rumor](http://www.fema.gov/hurricane-sandy-rumor)*
Official Introduction

*Flu symptoms from the CDC.*

Core Message

*Symptoms include fever, aches and cough 2-5 days after exposure.*

*Contact your health care provider right away if you believe you have the flu.*
Pitfall 5 - Not practicing social media before the crisis

- Increases the likelihood of miscommunication
- Delays delivery of important information
- Can reduce the effectiveness of communication
- Leaves organizations vulnerable to letting outsiders set the communication tone
- It’s better to start the conversation than to react to it
Solution – Practice using social media

- Practice, Practice, Practice…best practices will emerge
- Choose a few social media tools and develop them well
- Establish legitimacy and connections on these networks
- Evaluate the effectiveness of your social media efforts regularly
Checklist for how to get your social media communications started

1. Have a plan for how you want to include social media
2. Bring together a team of people who already use social media in their personal lives to help
3. Select a few social media platform to focus on initially
4. Learn the rules and norms for each platform
5. Establish connections with people, groups, local and national organizations
6. Monitor key words and entities that are most meaningful
7. Collect intelligence from the ‘field’ with social media
8. Build message maps for top scenarios specific to each social media channel before you need them
9. Keep messages brief, pertinent, and timely
10. Practice using social media before you need it
Additional Resources

Social Media in Emergency Management - Online Course offered by FEMA
http://emilms.fema.gov/is42/index.htm

Dr. Karen Freberg’s presentation at the International Crisis and Risk Communications Conference

Emergency Management, Twitter, and Social Media Evangelism
http://www.igi-global.com/free-content/60612
Use the Q&A function to submit your questions.

Note: Presentation slides are available on our blog at blog.everbridge.com
Thank you for joining us today!

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