

## Crisis Management in Advertising: Trends and Issues

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### Abstract

A crisis is a time of difficulty and danger. It leads to instability of an organization's working environment. Crisis is unpredictable and can occur anytime, so the decision making is very essential. If crisis are not handled in time and appropriate manner, it can turn into a disaster. The decisions must be taken quickly to prevent organisation from damage. Advertisement can be done through mediums like print, electronic or radio. There are certain ads which involve vulnerable or offending and objectionable facts that are disliked by the audience which creates a situation of crisis. The paper highlights the pros and cons of Crisis Management in Advertising.

**Keywords:** Crisis, Advertising, Disaster, Media

### Introduction

A crisis is a time of difficulty and danger. It leads to instability of an organization's working environment. Crisis is unpredictable and can occur anytime, so the decision making is very essential. If crisis are not handled in time and appropriate manner, it can turn into a disaster. The decisions must be taken quickly to prevent organisation from damage. Every single step is very important as it can affect the organisation both internally and externally. Generally, in an organization crisis may occur due to technological breakdown, failure of machines, errors in passwords, software corruption. Crisis may occur when the employees do not agree to each others' decisions and fight amongst them, strikes, violence at workplace, ignoring minor issues in the beginning can lead to major crisis in future.

### Crisis in Advertising

We have seen a lot of ads that were appreciated by the audience but there were few of them that got negative response from the public for not being appropriate and ethically immoral. In this competitive world it is very important for a brand/company to have its positive image in the market and a name that is called out by the public. For the promotion of the brand/company, advertising is a great tool. Advertising creates awareness and recall among the customers. Advertisements create a very huge impact on the audience as it is a great influencing tool. Advertisement can be done through mediums like print, electronic or radio. There are certain ads which involve vulnerable or offending and objectionable facts that are disliked by the audience which creates a situation of crisis. Such crisis cause a great harm to reputation of the brand/company as the ads are being watched by large population. So it is very important to build back the repo of the brand that was ruined due to some objectionable content which is also done by advertisements. This is the point where crisis management comes into action.

### Crisis Management

Crisis Management refers to the steps taken by any organization dealing with a sudden and unpredictable risky incident which may prove to be a threat. It management includes managing both employees of an organisation and the target

audience. This is an untold situation, so establishment and practising a crisis management team is the most important aspect of it. It is very important to be patient and respond effectively to the changes in the organisation. Being too rigid at the time of crisis will create adverse conditions. One should adapt well to changes and new situations. It is very important for the management to be in regular touch with the employees, external clients, stake holders as well as media.

### **Role of Media in Crisis Management**

Media plays a very important role at the time of crisis management as media is the greatest medium to recover the image of the brand/company in the eyes of the audience. It is the fastest and most convenient source to disseminate information and get attention of the public. Here advertisement plays the most vital role out of all mediums. It is the eye that recalls most of the content rather than any other sense. So advertising plays a very important role in handling the crisis and its management. It is the duty of the PR officer of the company to maintain its reputation in the eyes of the audience and continue promoting with the same image as it had before. At the time of crisis the functional head is the crisis management team. It is their responsibility to tackle the situation effectively and control both external, internal department and the audience.

Stephan A. Greyser wrote in his research paper “Corporate brand reputation and brand crisis management” (in 2009) that crisis can come from various sources but the ones that affect the ‘essence of the brand’ are most serious situations. He stated that directly expressing the message and responding in a substantial way to the situation can only rescue a brand in crisis. Giving statements that are true and based on some facts will always be accepted by the audience. And that will help to gain their trust back in the brand/company.

Advertising may be used as a form of crisis communication. It has to be analysed that how the restoration strategies helped to gain back the public but failed to maintain investor confidence. It can be said that advertising campaigns can work as a crisis management plan and provide essential information to the internal and external stakeholders. Ad campaigns generate a positive spark in the minds of the audience and give them information about the situation which induces them to give a chance to the brand/company to get back to the previous place in the market.

### **Social Media and Crisis Management**

Social media is one of the tools for crisis and its management. In a research article ‘Examining the role of social media in effective crisis management’ (2011) presented by ‘Yan Jin, Brooke Fisher Lui, Lucinda L. Austin’ it is written that social media is more consumed by public at the time of crisis and the crisis management people need to understand its use in the situation with the help of social media crisis communication model. Social media is an effective tool that can be used at the time of crisis by the management team to gain the public attention and spread the information. Also, it is a huge platform to interact with them and convince them in your favour by forwarding them some factual data.

### **Analysis and Resolving of Crisis**

Advertising plays one of the major in building or ruining the brand image. So it is important for the brand to convey a message that is morally ethical. And it is the responsibility of the public relations team to go hand in hand with the other department and oversee the activities. An advertisement appreciated by few people can be offending to the others so it is important for the brand to keep every aspect in mind. Another important thing is that one has to be quicker in your responses to the allegations being put on you. One cannot let it go and wait for more than a day; it can turn out to be

disastrous. And your reputation can be ruined within those 24 hours. There are people out who will criticize you on your works so it is essential to have crisis management team. Leniency at one point can cause huge loss to your brand. Most of the time the whole crisis is within no time and the company ensures that there is no mark left that needs to be cleared off. Also we need to be consistent with your responses. Either we apologize and follow what the audience wants or we stick up to your point and let others say what they think. We cannot pick up both the roads. And if we do so we'll create a problem for ourself because that is where we create more complications for our own brand loosening its worth that's what we've analysed through various case studies. As silence is not always an answer. If one brand wants to comeback and maintains its market place apologizing and then taking action is the basic way to get away from the problem and rebuild its market value.

Social media is one of the greatest platforms to rebuild a brand after being into a crisis because it is the most consumed platform by the public. So whatever crisis situation you get into can be sorted to an extent by spreading word on social media. Once we give our word it is spread rapidly by the audience itself. But not to forget this platform can turn against us with the same pace as well so it has to be handled in well planned manner.

Communication is the key. It plays a very important role in the whole process and is necessary that every employee in the organisation is aware about the scenario and has knowledge about the entire situation. Communication of a message through the core members of the organisation to the public is more effective rather than other members at the time of crisis. Also, the other party involved in the advertisement needs to be updated and should be accountable for the situation. Once we have been in a crisis situation and comeback with a winning strike, the hopes of the general public is raised for your future actions and at that point if you end up ruining the same, it is becomes more challenging for the organisation to make people believe in you. For that we need to have a strong plan and a great crisis management team to carry that out so that the negative image is replaced by the positive.

### **Conclusion**

Advertisements can affect the brand image at a great extent and it is more affecting when it is the time of crisis. This further raises trust issues. It has to be discovered that in which ways consumer's brand trust during a crisis is affected through direct experience or through amplified mass media. Media generated content creates more negative effects on brand trust than the actual consumers' experience. It said that media is the key factor for the crisis to get a boost and to manage it too.

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