

## **“Listen, Engage, Respond: Using Social Media in a Crisis”**

**CoSIDA Convention, St. Louis, Tuesday @ 9:00 a.m.**

Chris Syme, Principal, CKSyme.org/ Dr. Bill Smith, Northwestern State Director of Marketing/Branding

Contact: [chris@cksyme.org](mailto:chris@cksyme.org) [smithb@nsula.edu](mailto:smithb@nsula.edu)

On Twitter: @cksyme @Doctor\_BS

### **1. Introduction of Research: Numbers Never Lie**

[2012 Case/CKSyme.org Using Social Media in a Crisis](#) (Sr. Communications Directors)

[2012 CoSIDA/CKSyme.org Using Social Media in a Crisis](#) (same)

Jeremiah Owyang/Altimeter: [2011 Social Media Readiness: How Advanced Companies Prepare](#) (144 businesses with over 1000 employees)

### **2. Important Numbers from the Research**

Have social media policies

83% (Owyang), <40%(CoSIDA), 85% (Higher Education)

Crisis Communications Policies:

51% (CoSIDA), 59% (Higher Education), N/A (Owyang)

Of those with a plan, how many address social media in crisis communications plan:

44% (Owyang), <40% (CoSIDA) , 59% (Higher Education)

How many have registration or training for company use of social media?

15% (CoSIDA), 17% (Higher Education), 26% (Owyang) --72% of advance companies had this component

How many have a triage or protocol for handling comments/posts in social media?

48% (CoSIDA) - negative posters, 70% (Higher Education) - negative posters, 44% (Owyang)

How many social media accounts representing your brand?

Majority did not know (CoSIDA), Majority did not know (Higher Education), Average of 178 (Owyang)

Use a Social Media Management System (SMMS) or monitoring dashboard to listen:

42% (CoSIDA), 56% (Higher Education), 64% (Owyang separate report)

### **3. Five Takeaways from the research:**

**1. Implement a social media monitoring system.** A social media monitoring system can help you keep track of what is being said about you in the social media universe, alert you to issues you may not be aware of, and help you gauge public understanding and sentiment around an issue. There are many good social media management systems (SMMS) that include monitoring as a component. An adequate monitoring system can be pieced together with little or no cost using several applications. . Here is the most extensive list of monitoring systems available (<http://wiki.kenburbary.com/social-media-monitoring-wiki>). Jeremiah Owyang of *Web Strategy* has put together a more [extensive and research-based review of enterprise level tools here](#).

**2. Develop a social media policy.** There is a misunderstanding among many that a social media policy is a prohibitive document. The best social media policies operate as guide rails that empower people to use social media channels responsibly in a way that builds the organization’s brand. In [Owyang’s research on social media readiness](#), every top-rated company in the report had a social media policy. Those companies with social media policies were also the most successful in crisis and reputation events. The policy should include a training or on-going education element as well.

**3. Implement a social media management system (SMMS).** An effective SMMS should have multiple functions that may facilitate monitoring, publishing, lead and conversion tracking, measurement, and customer relationship management, depending on what your institution’s social media strategy is (see [Jason Falls’ report on management systems](#)).

**4. Establish registration or affiliation of department social media accounts.** Organizations would be well-advised to develop a training program or best practice guidelines for anyone representing the brand in the social media space. Also, establishing a database of account administrators and passwords held by a community manager allows you to remove old accounts or delete or post to any department-related account in an emergency.

**5. Establish a community manager for all your social media.** This doesn’t imply that one person should handle all the social media, but that there should be a centralized resource that acts as a hub to the department “spokes” so there is continuity in branding and messaging, especially in the event of a crisis. This insures that silos won’t be set up around specific departments, etc. Checks and balances.

**Listen**

An effective listening strategy has several benefits:

- Discover early warning signs of negative or false information that can trigger a crisis, if left unattended.
- Identify your key critics and watchdogs; key influencers and advocates.
- Identify which social media channels best suit your organizational culture, and which ones your stakeholders frequent.
- Follow your competitors and discover what is engaging and trending in your sector.
- Uncover ethical blind spots your organization may have.



There are six key conversations you should monitor to begin your crisis communications strategy.

Conversations	Brand: New Media	Brand: Traditional Media	Core Influencers	Internal	Competition	Sector
Listen	What is being said in the digital space about your brand? It’s important to track sentiment (do people	What is being said in print, radio, TV and other traditional channels about your brand? Again, tracking	Identify people who sing your praises, come to your defense, or simply recommend you to	What do your employees think about you? Do they have the freedom to speak on your behalf? Identify	What is your competition up to? Who is recommending them or criticizing them? How are they handling that?	Who are the leaders in your sector? Are they saying anything or recommending resources that can help

	<p>Speak positively or negatively about you?) as well as key messages.</p>	<p>Sentiment is important.</p>	<p>Others. This is your influence graph. Know your enemies as well.</p>	<p>Internal constituents that can become ambassadors.</p>	<p>Are they talking about you?</p>	<p>Do you follow your sector's news and influencers?</p>
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- **Tools: Free, Low Budget, Enterprise Level**
- **Learn how to do a basic sentiment analysis and spot patterns**

**Engage**

There are several benefits of developing engagement strategies that complement crisis strategies:

- Develop a culture of listening to and enabling the public
- Build a corps of invested ambassadors that will advocate for your brand in the event of a crisis
- Identify and cultivate goodwill conversations with key influencers and watch dogs who can extend your reach in a crisis
- Develop working relationships with media representatives in the social space
- Develop an experienced social media strategy and staff before crisis hits so the brand won't appear a novice or "pretender" in the social space in the event of a crisis. Communities don't mind doing you the favor of advocacy in crisis if you have nurtured the relationship already.



There are six steps to building a social media engagement strategy that complements crisis management.

Step	Identify engagement goals	Engineer personas & engagement levels	Identify channels	Develop content segmentation strategies	Employ appropriate calls to action	Track and measure
Engage	<p>What are your end goals? You should have several that start with reach and extend to building loyalty.</p>	<p>Who are the people you are trying to reach? Build several personas that include demographic, sociographic, and online behavior data.</p>	<p>Using research from your sector and your fan base, identify the channels that best suit your needs. Remember, more isn't always better.</p>	<p>Consider established online fan behaviors when developing content strategies for specific levels of</p>	<p>As people move through the stages of engagement, calls to action need to move them to the</p>	<p>Metrics need to be matched to goals in the first step. Here, you are tracking, analyzing, making mid-course</p>

				engagement and personas.	next stage.	corrections.
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**Three loyalty models:**

- Conversation building
- Crowdsourcing
- Value-Adding

**3 Tips on How to Scale Large Brand Case Studies:**

1. Make sure the case is appropriate for your small brand--do you have the present follower engagement to imitate? Can you build it?
2. Break down the project into big-picture strategies. What are they trying to accomplish? How can you imitate that?
- 3 Make sure their goals match your goals.

**Respond**

There are several benefits to having a crisis communications plan in place **before** a crisis.

- Protocols are defined by best practices, research, and organizational culture, not based on emotions and reactions in real-time.
- Staff roles are defined and delineated for smooth, real-time implementation.
- Staff can be trained and agencies can be contacted so the organization can “hit the ground running” in the event of an emergency.
- Leadership and spokesperson roles can be defined and media training can be provided to ensure confidence in public communication.
- Operations can be integrated with communications so the right and left hand can work together.
- Research shows that organizations that plan and train for a crisis incur less financial and reputation loss and can mitigate a crisis faster than those who do not

[http://www.slideshare.net/jeremiah\\_owyang/social-readiness-how-advanced-companies-prepare](http://www.slideshare.net/jeremiah_owyang/social-readiness-how-advanced-companies-prepare)).



**10 Must-Have Elements for a Crisis Communications Plan**

Successful management of a crisis in social media is more about planning than anything else. Here are ten elements you'll want to include in your crisis communications plan:

1. Current SWOT or risk analysis (done annually or quarterly if enterprise level) - helps you know what to look and listen for, and shows where your blind spots are.
2. Organizational general communication goals and objectives - informs how you plan a triage or flow chart (see #7 below). This also helps you decide how your various social media channels will be used in crisis.
3. Current staff and organizational chart that shows chain-of-command in a crisis.

4. Key stakeholder groups segmented for content - who will you communicate with and what will you share in what order?
5. Communication team/responsibilities and Command Center logistics for on- and offsite
6. Designation of on-site and off-site spokespeople for communications and operations and media training calendar.
7. Social media policy that includes the following:
  - Triage protocol and guidelines for posting to channels during a crisis including who, what, when, where, and how. Make sure to consult your legal department to inform, but not control, this process. You can express sorrow and grief without implicating yourself.
  - List of all social media channels and admins associated with the organization including personal brand channels. Also, outline plans for how each of these should be used during a crisis, and which channels will be the main sources of public information. Remember—it's not a good idea to broadcast the same news verbatim on every social media channel. Each channel has its own culture and should be used accordingly in crisis:
    - Facebook: family/living room where conversations happen. Direct people to a website or live blog for facts and announcements. Facebook may also become a place where people vent or grieve. It may seem awkward, but it's a necessary part of the process. Let them do so—watch for trolls and make sure you have a posting policy in the public view (info section is a good place) that defines what you will and won't allow. My posting policy on Facebook is pretty basic--some are very elaborate. I've posted mine on my "About" page under General Information (<https://www.facebook.com/CKSyme.org.Bozeman/info>) Delete comments and posts that violate that policy, but don't delete comments that you simply don't like. Moderate with care.
    - Twitter: newsroom used mainly for broadcasting and links to website or live blog. Be sure to monitor what people are saying to and about you here during a crisis and respond appropriately. Also, you may want to designate a hashtag as a conversation location.
    - Video channel: If your organization has a video channel on YouTube or Vimeo, you should have a discussion on how or if these channels will be used during a crisis. They can be a place where positive stories are told visually about how the crisis is being resolved or stories of people helped during the event. Be careful not to be promotional with video in a crisis, especially if human suffering is involved (lesson from Kentucky Fried Chicken: <http://on.msnbc.com/ljAdIQ>).
    - Website: main source of all information. Houses press releases, contact information, and other necessary public information that doesn't require interaction.
    - Live blog: functions as a real-time ongoing news source that can be aggregated and accessed in one place. Include any press releases, updates, and schedules for press conferences, etc.
  - Plans for the main website (dark site? Link to news page? Etc.)
  - Message templates for holding messages, press releases, and social media posting
  - Social media team responsibilities that include:
    - Monitoring and posting responsibilities by channel
    - Sentiment monitoring and tracking responsibilities
  - Protocol for message development—who signs off before it gets published. Remember to let your legal department advise, but not guide, the message.

8. Guidelines and schedules for training, table top exercises, and post-crisis evaluation
9. Inventory of all communication channels and how they will be used including signage, website, internal communications, etc.
10. Appendix of all forms, logs, and templates