Social Media Risk and Crisis Communication Plan 2017

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Purpose

This plan seeks both to protect and to improve Chick-fil-A 's reputation. Social media plays a critical role in building reputation and is the main vehicle of communication between our stakeholders and Chick-fil-A (Morgan, Week 2, slide 9). Chick-fil-A 's crisis communication strategy is informed by situational crisis communication theory and Vincent Covello's work. This plan is a living document and will be revised and improved as experience is gained.

Objectives

- To prevent crises from developing, wherever possible, by monitoring for paracrises and taking action to address them
- To monitor for and respond to developing paracrises
- To respond swiftly with a united message across channels to protect reputation
- To improve reputation by increasing social media communication
- To build on the learnings gained from previous crises

Stakeholders

Internal
- Restaurant owners, managers, and employees
- Corporate management and owners

External
- Customers
- Partners such as Jim Henson Company
- Supported charities
- Christian community activists
- LGBTQTS community activists
- Loyal social media community

Reputational Risks

- Public statements or actions made by internal stakeholders that place Chick-fil-A in the center of a social issues debate
- Christian heritage remains an integral part of Chick-fil-A 's organizational identity
- Changing public opinion surrounding social issues such as same sex marriage
- LGBTQTS activism
- Christian activism
- Quality or customer service issues

Strategy & Theory

Using Situational Crisis Communication Theory to Maximize Reputation Repair
Communication impacts stakeholder perception of a crisis (Coombs, 2007, p. 171).
Stakeholder's perceptions form their future beliefs and their future interactions with an organization (Coombs, 2007, p. 171). This plan applies situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) to react quickly and appropriately to a paracrisis or crisis. To maximize the repair of reputation, SCCT dictates that different types of crises warrant different types of responses (Coombs, p. 14, 15). The crisis and response identification worksheet (Appendix A) is used to guide decision making.

Attribution theory underpins SCCT. Attribution theory suggests that when a crisis occurs, people attempt to determine who is responsible for the crisis (Coombs, p. 14). The stronger the attribution of crisis responsibility is, the greater the reputational damage (Table 1). The greater the attribution the more the responsibility must be accepted in the crisis response strategy (Table 1).

Crisis		
Mild Reputational Threat		**Severe Reputational Threat**
Less Attribution of Responsibility		**More Attribution of Responsibility**
Decreased reputational damage		Increased reputational damage
Increased purchase intention		Reduced purchase intention
Decreased anger		Increased anger
Decreased likelihood of negative word-of-mouth		Increased likelihood of negative word-of-mouth
Crisis Response Strategy to Mitigate Reputational Damage		
Accepts little responsibility for crisis		Accepts greater responsibility for crisis

Table 1. Responsibility Attribution (Coombs, p. 14-15)

Message Maps
Message maps are the key tool Chick-fil-A will use to disseminate information. They allow for more efficient crisis communication during times of high stress (Covello, p. 27). Message maps are beneficial because they:
- Focus theory into effective and compelling communication (Covello, p. 25)
- Allow all Chick-fil-A representatives and messages to speak with a unified voice (Covello, p. 26)
- Minimize the possibility of "speaker's regret," either by omission or through inappropriate content (Covello, p. 26)
- Help to anticipate stakeholder questions in advance (Covello, p. 29)
- Allow for advance preparation of messaging (Covello, p. 27)
- Help Chick-fil-A to identify where strategies and policies may need to change (Covello, p. 27)

These benefits are achieved by identifying stakeholder groups, identifying questions and concerns for each group, and by uncovering common categories of concerns (Covello, p. 28-33). Once this process is complete, key messages and their supporting points can be developed (Covello, p. 33). As a starting point, this plan includes Chick-fil-A 's overarching message map and the same-sex marriage message map. Further message maps will be built to anticipate and address other possible paracrises.

Key Messages
Covello's application of mental noise theory is critical to building messages that will achieve their intended purpose. When people are upset, they have difficulty "hearing, understanding, and remembering information" and their ability to process information can be reduced by up to 80% (Covello, p. 33). Messages will be created according to Covello's suggestions by (Covello, p. 33-38):
- Limiting the number of key messages to 3
- Limiting the duration to nine seconds and word count to 27
- Creating messages with a sixth to eighth grade readability
- Conveying messages from most to least important
- Increasing credibility by citing authoritative third-party sources
- Addressing risk-perception and outrage factors
- Expressing authentic listening, empathy, caring, and compassion
- Using graphics, analogies, and narratives
- Recognizing anxiety and fears by offering 3 constructive solutions for each negative message
- Avoiding the negatives such as no, not, never, nothing, and none
- Telling, telling more, and telling again to cut through mental noise

Prevention
The best approach to crisis management is to prevent a crisis from happening. Before the 2012 crisis, some stakeholders had expressed their concern with the Chick-fil-A standpoint on some social issues (Coombs, 2014, p. 190). This was the time to act. Not responding to the same sex marriage paracrisis in 2012 led to a full-blown crisis that continues to receive coverage today.

Prior reputation is an intensifying factor in responsibility attribution. Previous history of similar crises is also an intensifying factor. Since Chick-fil-A now has a social issues crisis in its history, more aggressive action must be taken to prevent future incidents.
Social media monitoring is the main method to identify paracrises. This is accompanied by correction of the contributing causes of the 2012 crisis.

Channels

The channel selected for crisis communications should be the channel that the target audience is using (Morgan, Week 2, slide 15). Video, graphic, and text messages will be

utilized. Chick-fil-a.com will be utilized for major crisis press releases. It is important to be present on the channel prior to the crisis (Morgan, Week 2, slide 16). Chick-fil-A has a strong presence on the following social media channels:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- YouTube
- LinkedIn

Pre-Crisis Prevention

Listening
Environmental scanning is used to detect anything new that could impact Chick-fil-A such as changes in stakeholder sentiments or complaints (Morgan, Week 4, slide 4-5). Hootsuite Pro will be used to centrally monitor social media streams and review sites. Since breaking news can ignite a social media debate, Google Alerts will be used to listen for mentions of Chick-fil-A outside of social media. Ideally, a paracrisis will be caught at the listening stage before a full crisis develops. Paracrisis will be handled outside of the public eye (Morgan, Week 2, slide 19). Monitoring of alerts generated through the listening tools will be performed from 6 am to 12 midnight daily. Social media staff will be on rotation and will be assigned a cell phone attached to the listening tools.

Identifying a Social Media Crisis
A crisis threatens stakeholder expectations as they relate to health, safety, environment or economic issues. A crisis has the potential to significantly damage Chick-fil-A 's performance and cause negative outcomes. A social media crisis may originate on social media or may magnify a harmful event (Morgan, Week 2, slide 10). Findings are triaged using Table 3. When a crisis or paracrisis is identified, enact a crisis response.

Signs	✓	Non-Crisis	✓	Crisis
How many customers affected?		Under 300		Over 300
Is revenue impacted?		Under $5,000		Over $5,000
Potential for reputation damage?		Minor		Significant
Attribution of responsibility?		None		Strong attribution
How fast are posts appearing?		Easily responded to		Faster than team can respond to
Is the issue spreading across channels?		No		Yes
Are we already aware of the issue?		Yes		No
Significant change from normal sentiment?		No		Yes
Unexpected trending?		No		Yes
Identification:		No crisis checkmarks		Crisis: More than 3 ✓

				Paracrisis: 3 or less ✓
	Action:	Activate social media policy		Activate crisis response

Table 3. Crisis Identification Triage (Agnes, 2012; Rignite, 2013, Morgan, 2017)

Engagement

Prior reputation can intensify or mitigate during a crisis. Community engagement is critical to Chick-fil-A's success during a crisis. Prior to the 2012 crisis, Chick-fil-A already had a significant community of support in social media. When the crisis hit, 600,000 Facebook users supported the "Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day" (Coombs, p. 192). This crisis plan works alongside the social media communications plan to support continued engagement and reputation improvement.

Pre-Crisis Preparation

Crisis Management Team (CMT)

- Public relations and crisis communications (PCCR) manager with executive decision-making power (Morgan, Week 5, slide 10)
- PCCR manager administrative assistant
- Social media manager
- Social media team lead
- Legal department manager
- Organizational leaders, depending on the crisis. See Appendix C for guidelines on when leaders should become involved in crisis communications

Crisis Management Team Roles (Morgan, Week 5-6)

- Creation and revision of this social media crisis communications plan
- Testing the plan through an orientation seminar, drills, tabletops, functional exercises, and full-scale exercises
- Responding to crises that were not predicted
- Seek vulnerabilities and address through revision of this plan
- Prepare and execute message maps
- Annual review
- Practice runs
- Post-crisis review

Key Messages (Based on areas of identified risks)

Table 4 outlines the overarching message map to guide all crisis communications. Appendix B holds the revised message map developed after the initial response to the 2012 crisis. Further message maps will be developed by the CMT in anticipation of vulnerabilities and stakeholder concerns.

Stakeholder: Social Media Communities		
Question or concern: What principles drive Chick-fil-A's organizational philosophy?		
Key message 1	**Key message 2**	**Key message 3**
Chick-fil-A stands for American values.	Chick-Fil-A is a Christian organization.	Chick-Fil-A actively supports every American's right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
Supporting Information 1-1	Supporting information 2-1	Supporting Information 3-1
We believe that all Americans have the right to freedom of religion and speech.	We close on Sundays to allow employees a day of rest and worship if they choose.	We are all protected by first amendment rights.
Supporting Information 1-2	Supporting Information 2-2	Supporting Information 3·2
We believe that all Americans are created equal.	We are active in charitable causes.	Chick-fil-A selects charities that uphold the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
Supporting Information 1-3	Supporting Information 2-3	Supporting Information 3·3
We believe that all Americans have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.	We are a part of our customer's lives and a part of the communities we serve.	Chick-fil-A works with human rights advisors to be transparent and accountable in selection of our charitable causes.

Table 4. Overarching Message Map (Covello, 2006)

Active Crisis Response

This plan follows the steps outlined by SCCT to define and respond to a crisis (Coombs, 2014, p. 14-17):

1. Collect all information
2. Identify the crisis category and type
3. Identify intensifying factors
4. Choose appropriate responses
5. Respond with an ethical base of instructing and adjusting information (Coombs, p. 15)
6. Respond with the crisis response strategies
7. Respond as soon as possible to posts
8. If very little or no information is available respond quickly with a notifying statement such as "We are aware of the situation and are working on a solution. We will make a statement as soon as more information is available"

Contact Flow
- Listening uncovers crisis or paracrisis
- Social media team performs preliminary crisis identification using Table 3
- Social media team notifies social media manager

- Social media manager reviews and confirms crisis identification and reports to public relations & crisis communications (PRCC) manager
- PRCC manager reviews and confirms crisis identification
- Crisis response is put into action

Post Crisis Revision

Post-crisis revision of the plan develops organizational memory and builds on the successes and learnings of past crisis management experiences (Morgan, Week 1, slide 22). The CMT will review the response after each crisis. Post-crisis tasks include (Morgan, Week 1, slide 22):
- Reviewing the response after each crisis
- Following-up to ensure stakeholders have viewed Chick-fil-A's crisis response positively
- Performing social media listening to ensure the crisis is truly over
- Deciding how long crisis response information will remain visible
- Responding with follow-up information and updates

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Appendix A - Crisis and Response Identification Worksheet

Although this grid is not exhaustive, it is a starting point to work from. It has been adapted from Coombs' work with situational crisis communication theory.

Strategy Grid (Coombs, 2014, p. 14-17; Coombs, 2007, p. 173)		Victim Cluster	Victim Cluster	Accidental Cluster	Accidental Cluster	Preventable Cluster
Crisis Category		**Victim Cluster**	**Victim Cluster**	**Accidental Cluster**	**Accidental Cluster**	**Preventable Cluster**
Attribution Strength		Very Little Attribution	Very Little Attribution	Low Attribution	Low Attribution	Strong Attribution
Intensifying Factors			Intensifying Factors		Intensifying Factors	
Strategy						
Ethical Base	Instructing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Adjusting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Denial	Attacking the Accuser	Rumor	Rumor	Challenge	Challenge	
	Denial	Rumor	Rumor	Challenge	Challenge	
	Scapegoating					
Do not use denial and diminishment together						
Diminishment	Excusing		✓	✓		
	Justification		✓	✓		
Rebuilding	Compensation				✓	✓
	Apology				✓	✓
Bolstering	Reminding	Supplement	Supplement	Supplement	Supplement	Supplement
	Ingratitaion	Supplement	Supplement	Supplement	Supplement	Supplement
	Victimage	✓				

Appendix B – 2012 Same-Sex Marriage Crisis Message Map

Covello's methodology for message mapping (Covello, 2006) was followed to revise the
original response to the 2012 same-sex marriage crisis.

Target Audiences
- Chick-fil-A managers and employees
- LGBTQTS community
- Supported charities
- Partners of Chick-fil-A such as Jim Henson Company

Chick-fil-A Managers and Employees Concerns
- Will we lose business if we support LGBTQTS community?
- Will we have to do things that are against our Christian beliefs and values?
- Will this impact how we do our jobs every day?

LGBTQTS Community Concerns
- Are your efforts just an attempt to get more business?
- Is Chick-fil-A genuinely concerned about the LGBTQTS community?
- Can we trust Chick-fil-A?
- How are you going to prove that you are taking real action and it's not just spin?
- Are you going to put in affirmative action or non-discriminatory hiring policies?

Supported Charities Concerns
- Are we going to lose our funding?
- Is there some way we can still remain in partnership?

Partners Concerns
- How will we confirm that Chick-fil-A has met our demands?

General Underlying Concerns
- Will Chick-fil-A abandon its Christian heritage and beliefs?
- Is this campaign just spin to get more business?
- Is Chick-fil-A using creative accounting to hide their support of anti-LGBTQTS charities?

Six Media Questions & Key Messages
- Did you and other organizations disclose information promptly? Have you and other
  organizations been transparent?
- What is your personal opinion?
- What are you not telling us?
- What lessons were learned?
- Were those lessons implemented? Are they being implemented now?
- Why should we trust you?

Key message 1	Key message 2	Key message 3
Chick-fil-A treats every person with honor, dignity, and respect.	Chick-fil-A will not infringe on the rights of any person.	We are founded on Christian beliefs.
Supporting Information 1-1	Supporting information 2-1	Supporting Information 3-1
A person of any sexual orientation, race, or belief will be served equally.	Personal beliefs of owners, employees, and management will not dictate distribution of donations.	We will continue to honour our Christian beliefs by supporting Christian charities
Supporting Information 1-2	Supporting Information 2-2	Supporting Information 3·2
We support Christian charities that support human (LGBTQTS) rights.	New policies will guide the distribution of donations.	Our human rights (LGBTQTS) advocates will assist us in screening.
Supporting Information 1-3	Supporting Information 2-3	Supporting Information 3·3
We carefully screen our charitable causes.	Human rights (LGBTQTS) advocates are assisting in donation policy development.	Through our commitment to transparency, our charities list will be available on our website.

Key message 4	Key message 5	Key message 6
We are partnering with key human rights advocates.	Chick-fil-A is an honest and transparent company	Relationships with our valued partners are key to our success.
Supporting Information 1-1	Supporting information 2-1	Supporting Information 3-1
Human rights (LGBTQTS) advocates have access to our charitable donations records.	Our charities list will be available on our website.	The implementation of our donations policies will re-open dialogue.
Supporting Information 1-2	Supporting Information 2-2	Supporting Information 3·2
The human rights advocates will act as liaisons with the LGBTQTS community.	Our human rights (LGBTQTS) advocates will liaise between Chick-fil-A and the LGBTQTS community.	Jim Henson company has agreed to re-open our partnership.
Supporting Information 1-3	Supporting Information 2-3	Supporting Information 3·3
Human rights (LGBTQTS) advocates will participate and provide feedback on the development of our charitable donations policy.	Human rights (LGBTQTS) advocates will have access to our charitable donations records going forward.	We are in negotiations with municipalities that had previously expressed concern.

Appendix C – When Should Leaders Apologize

The PRCC manager normally gives apology statements. However, certain scenarios benefit from a leadership apology. This article by Barbara Kellerman outlines when leaders should and should not apologize.

https://hbr.org/2006/04/when-should-a-leader-apologize-and-when-not

Appendix E – Social Media Accounts Access

Account	Url	Login	Password
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/ChickfilA/	ChickF1Lay	hsP$397Q7@@y
Instagram	www.instagram.com/chickfila/	ChickF1Lay	hsP$397Q7@@y
Twitter	www.twitter.com/ChickfilA	ChickF1Lay	hsP$397Q7@@y
YouTube	www.youtube.com/user/chickfila	ChickF1Lay	hsP$397Q7@@y
LinkedIn	www.linkedin.com/company/10768/life/	ChickF1Lay	hsP$397Q7@@y
Website	www.chick-fil-a.com/login	ChickF1Lay	hsP$397Q7@@y

Appendix E – Crisis Management Team Contacts

Contact	Name	Work	Cell
Public relations & crisis communications (PCCR) manager			
PCCR manager administrative assistant			
Social media manager			
Social media team lead			
Legal department manager			
Organizational leaders			
Organizational leaders			
Organizational leaders			
Organizational leaders			
Listening cell phone			

Appendix F – Sentiment Tracking Sheet

Use this sheet to track sentiment before, during, and after a crisis. This will assist in adjusting responses and determining when a crisis is over. Data is found in the sentiment meter in the Hootsuite Insights sentiment analysis tool.

Date	% Positive	% Neutral	% Negative
September 30, 2017 (Sample)	*21%*	*64%*	*15%*