

SOCIAL LISTENING AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT



cogent infotech

The unprecedented rise in the **popularity of platforms** has seen more and more brands using social media to reach, connect and engage existing and prospective customers, distribute relevant content, advertise products and services, and ultimately drive sales. A 2019 **digital report** counts more than 3 billion active social media users.



3 Billion
active social media users

As social media platforms have helped businesses expand and scale their brand-building activities, organizations must periodically engage in social media crisis management.

CONSUMERISM AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

With the rise of consumerism in virtually all industries, the crisis-management game has changed. Customers and the general public have certain expectations of how brands should respond to public relations (PR) disasters and blunders. Those expectations include open dialogue, honest communication and swift response across all online touchpoints.

With the power and reach of social media giving people the ability to react instantly to blunders and PR gaffes, it has become more important than ever for brands to monitor the disposition and reaction of their followers and customers to crisis-level issues. According to an **ODM study**, 55% of respondents think that social media makes it easier to deal with the aftermath of a crisis while 65% thought that it just made the crisis worse.

Over the years, there have been lots of cases in which brands faced a social media crisis. How they handled such events was critical to the way customers perceived their brand after the event. Let's look at a couple of examples of organizations that were faced with a potential disaster on social media and how they were able to diffuse and resolve the situation.

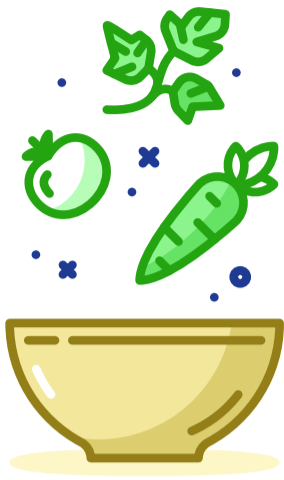
GITLAB'S DATA CRISIS



In 2017, a **software developer** accidentally deleted data from Gitlab's primary database server. Although several backup attempts were made, they didn't work and the company lost a huge amount of data. That was a serious issue considering the company's clientele included well-known organizations such as Sony, Alibaba, IBM, CERN, O'Reilly media and NASA. As expected, the gaffe caused a huge uproar on social media.

One admirable thing about Gitlab was its complete honesty. When it discovered the issue couldn't be resolved quickly, it quickly informed its clients and asked the professional community for help. It also informed its social media audience and gave a detailed explanation of how it intended to fix it. Gitlab created a hashtag #HugOps to cover the social media end, made live-stream Youtube videos to discuss the issues and problem-solving process, and maintained open, honest communication during and after the crisis.

TACO BELL



While some social media crises occur as a result of a company's action or inaction, in the case of Taco Bell, it occurred because an individual accused it of wrong-doing. In 2011, **Taco Bell was sued** for using just 35% of beef in its meat, the other 65% consisting of maltodextrin, wheat oats, water and other such "fake" ingredients. The story was shared on social media and quickly went viral.

In reaction to the resulting crisis, Taco Bell didn't just publish a quick statement countering the claim. After denying it, the fast-food chain created and launched an **advertising campaign** around the story, posting videos on YouTube and Facebook showing its CEO educating the general public about its products' ingredients. Print ads were also created to educate consumers about Taco Bell's recipes, going so far as to thank the individual who sued them for giving it the opportunity to do so.

MANAGE YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION

With the threat of social media disasters cropping up at any point, **managing reputation** has become indispensable in the current age of consumerism. It requires brands to have a plan in place to avert or reduce the impact of an online crisis before it escalates. With the right social media crisis management strategy in place, you can contain issues before they spiral out of control and wreak permanent, irreversible damage on your company's brand.



PREPARE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA DISASTERS



Social media disasters may crop up with little or no warning. Most have warning signs long before they go into full-blown crisis mode, though. Thus, you should prepare for product-related issues (leading to recalls), data leaks, erratic or interrupted service delivery because of bad weather and other unforeseen situations.

Don't forget that low-level problems may be just under the radar. They can simmer for a long time before they eventually escalate and do irreparable damage to a firm's reputation.

IDENTIFY POTENTIAL ISSUES WITH SOCIAL LISTENING

The first part of any robust social media crisis management strategy involves identification. With social listening, consumer-facing organizations can identify smoldering issues and potential sources of conflict long before they hit the mainstream media.

Leveraging **Cogent Infotech's** social listening solutions, gives businesses the vital time they need to put in place for preventative or remedial measures to avoid damaged brand reputations.

Social listening informs the brand of any immediate developments, whether they be negative comments and discussions, or viral content that could have an adverse impact on your brand.



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