

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE SOCIAL MEDIA AFTER A CRISIS

The crisis is finally over... Now what?

Ultimately, crisis management is about repairing a city's long-term well-being and preventing a recurrence. What worked, and what didn't? How can you improve your crisis plan? How do you move forward?

Social media is a valuable tool for tracking the progression of a crisis and the effectiveness of your city's crisis communications plan as perceived by those affected: your citizens.

ANALYZE THE RESPONSE

Following a crisis, your crisis communications team should conduct an online analysis of your city's response. Using keywords and hashtags you previously identified, you can analyze what conversations took place at each phase of the crisis. Online tools are available to help you with sentiment analysis and key trends over time.

Using this data, you can determine the effectiveness of the digital portion of your crisis communications plan, so your city will be better prepared when the next crisis happens. Were the responses you drafted before and during the crisis useful to the public? Were you in control of the online conversation surrounding the crisis?

REPAIR YOUR REPUTATION

Once the crisis is over, you will need to assess the extent to which the situation damaged your city's reputation. A review of online conversations and media coverage that took place during and after the crisis is an effective way to determine what steps you need to take next to help repair your city's reputation in the eyes of the public and the media.

CONTINUE "LISTENING" TO THE CONVERSATION

Just because the crisis is over doesn't mean people have stopped talking about it – especially on social media. It's important to continue listening to what people are saying online about your city in the weeks following a crisis. Free or low-priced monitoring services (for example, Google Alerts and Mention) provide real-time alerts when selected keywords are used across several online and social media channels.

BE PROACTIVE

In times of crisis, negative backlash is inevitable. What matters is how you respond while it happens, and after. Rather than letting the negativity drive the conversation, you should take a positive, proactive approach to influence how the public views its local government. Use social media to promote the ongoing good work your city performs and remind the public about the positive aspects of your city government. Be transparent – explain what steps you're taking to help the city recover from the crisis and the preventative actions you're putting in place to try to make sure it doesn't happen again.