Food Risk Communication Plans, Planning, and Social Media

Tools for today’s food risk communication plan

Amy Philpott and Donna Rosenbaum
How Social Media is Changing Communication Plans

**WHO**
- Communication Teams Need Flexibility
- Moving People and Resources

**WHAT**
- Keep Up with New and Changing Information
- Constantly Modify Strategy, Policies, Guidelines

**WHEN**
- Increasing Pace of Media Cycle
- Decreasing Time for Decision-Making

**WHERE**
- Wherever Can Have Conversations with Audience
- Choices Seem Overwhelming

**WHY**
- Modernize Because Communication Has Evolved
- Goal is Building Relationships
- Convinced? Let’s Look at Crisis Statistics...
Containing a crisis in a digital age

More than one-quarter of crises spread to international media within an hour and over two-thirds within 24 hours. Despite six out of 10 cases providing days if not months of notice, it still takes an average of 21 hours for companies to respond, leaving them open to ‘trial by Twitter’.

- Social media plays a significant role in spreading the story
- 28% of crises spread internationally within 1 hour
- On average, it takes 21 hours before companies are able to issue meaningful external communications to defend themselves
- ...and more than 48 hours in 18% of incidents
- 69% of crises spread internationally within 24 hours and on average reach 11 countries
- 53% of companies had not seen share prices regain pre-crisis levels
- 1 year later

50% of communications advisers surveyed believe organisations are not adequately prepared to handle a crisis

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP
Preparation: a mixed bag

Organisations seem to be much less prepared for dealing with the social media aspects of a crisis than they are with overall crisis planning.

Harald Spruit
Partner, Freshfields, Netherlands
Food Risk Communication Planning is Very Challenging

- **Fact:** Food risk differs from other risk issues because of the many emotional and cultural issues involved
- And, vulnerable populations...children, the elderly, pregnant women, pets...intensify these emotions
- **Fact:** Most organizations are not as well prepared for a crisis as they should be
  - And, A Crisis is a Perpetual Reality
- **Fact:** Social media not only ramps up response time but also amps up response volume
  - And, What happens in social media stays on Google FOREVER!
- It’s easy to feel paralyzed and not know where to start
There is a Silver Lining: The Social Cloud

• What if...
  • All of a sudden, your business or organization were offered a tool that allowed you to listen and respond to the casual conversations of current, potential, and past customers and audiences?
  • Wouldn’t that be too incredible to pass up?
  • Well, it’s actually here and sitting right in front of you every day.
  • Social media used intelligently as part of food risk communication planning offers companies and organizations of every size an incredible opportunity to gain business insight through social interaction.
Need More Convincing?

What has caused the tremendous surge in the local or locavore food movement? The locavore movement is popular because consumers want to have conversations with those that produce their food.

• “Unselling”, the new trend in marketing, is based on relationship building in order to develop trust and social capital.
  • It’s hard to build relationships without conversations and audience interaction
  • Social media platforms make this possible
  • For both B2B and B2C
• Excuses abound for not starting social media activity.
  • No control – BUT you never really had control!
  • People always complained - BUT now everyone hears it
  • No time or ROI – BUT what financial risk do you face by not participating?
  • Will you to able to communicate effectively during a crisis?

If people are talking about you, your brand, your organization,
...You NEED to be part of the conversation!
Two Features Drive Social Media Success

1. **Invest in Social Listening**
   - The insight gained in social media conversations can fuel the success of your entire Food Communication (FRC) Plan and add value to your organization.
   - A modern FRC Plan means deploying staff time so that you allot as much budget to listening and talking to your audience as you do in creating content....social media is just that, SOCIAL, so get out there.
   - Social listening is part science and part art and it is evolving quickly, so invest in training.

2. **Focus on Your Website as a Hub for Activity**
   - The goal of social media is not to push content and hope that someone will find it.
   - It’s to pull your audience to you to quickly find the content they need, and come back again.
   - Ensure your website is user-friendly and interactive—can your audience ask questions and have them answered in a timely fashion?
   - Start small and ramp up your social media program as you gain experience.
   - Start a Blog on your website (even once a month is okay)—have staff respond to posts.
   - Experiment with different social media platforms and link to and from your website.
Jumpstart Success

• Understand the primary goal of brand-centered communication plans (selling) differs from that of issues and crisis communication plans (building trust and social capital)
• Doing well with social media communication takes a different skillset and a different attitude than traditional media communication.
• To succeed, carefully choose the right people to engage your audience and have them doing the right thing at the right time.

Where to Start?
Start by Looking at Evolution of Media Communication

This was Then - Before Internet & Social Media

- Life was simple
- The universe was your brand
- Create and push content
- Broadcast (radio & TV) and print

Marketing Communication Plan for Brand

- Issues & Crises were handled by satellite teams pulled in on as need basis
This is recent past + Internet & + Social Media

Marketing Communication Plan

Social Media Team: Tactic, Audience

Issue & Crisis Communication Plan
This is recent

Marketing Communication Plan

Issue & Crisis Communication Plan

Social Media Plans: Strategy, Tactic, Audience
This is now!

- Marketing Communication Plan
- Issue & Crisis Communication Plan
- Social Media Teams: Strategy, Tactic, Audience
Of Teamwork & Avatars

Social Media Team Core Functions:
1. **Community Manager** - spends time online with customers, fans, perspective audiences, your industry/issue influencers
2. **Strategist** – decides on targets, audiences, what platforms to use and how often to post
3. **Analyst** - tracks what competitors doing, best practices and opportunities, tactics and creates measurements/reports
4. **Content Creator** - messaging specific to context, audience, platform

Consider Using Avatars:
1. **Coax out your issues** by doing specialized audience research and role-playing
2. **Avatar** character description **write-ups**
3. **Avatar role-playing**
4. **Bonus** - Avatars can help find more similar customers/audience for marketing
Benefits of Social Media

- Makes decision-making easier
- Develops marketplace insight
- Increases exposure & traffic
- Develops trust and loyal fans
- Increases search rankings
- Establishes thought leadership in an issues space

- It takes people and organizational resources to be effective.
- Outsource your weaknesses and things your organization doesn’t like or isn’t good at, but do not outsource relationship building.
- A modern communication plan based on developed social media skills will better prepare you for whatever issue or crisis comes your way.
Social Media
Triage Response Plan

Skills
Staff
Strategy
Style
Shared Values
Structure
Systems
Social Media Triage Response Plan

- Integrated into issue and crisis communication plan
- Include a SM Community Manager AND an alternate on the crisis communication team
- Be realistic about the corporate (SM) culture
- But push those barriers as far as you can. Work to bring them down.
- One size doesn’t fit all
Social Media Triage Response Plan

- Identify the role of SM and how it may impact your response:
  - To instigate
  - To accelerate
  - To extinguish
Which is it?

The Need for Speed

Think Before You Act
When is it too late?

DEAR SANTA
IS IT TOO LATE TO BE GOOD?

MinionsQuotes.com
Social Media Triage Response Plan

• Identify activities and assign responsibility
  o Have a process for monitoring, approving platform-appropriate messages, replying and providing feedback

• Messages should be consistent with rest of crisis communication

• Identify resources (human, financial, technical) in advance
Social Media Triage Response Plan

• Guidelines for using people, not logos, as the face of your social media accounts during a crisis
• Identify roles your various communities may play in a crisis
• Make a list of everywhere your brand appears on SM.
Planning without practicing is not a complete waste of time...just mostly.
Tell me and I’ll forget;
Show me and I may remember;
Involve me and I’ll understand

-- Chinese Proverb
Suggested Tools & Templates in the SM Triage Plan

• Social Media (Digital) Policy
• Social media triage response diagram
• List of social media handles (usernames) with administrative information (passcodes)
• List of issue-specific search terms to be monitored
Suggested Tools & Templates in the SM Triage Plan

- List of social media audiences and their potential roles (influencers in your space, bloggers, x-reference w/ non-social media communication list)

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# SM as an Audience or a Tactic?

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Remember…

- **Stay grounded** in crisis communication principles
- Use resources and decision-making structures to **adapt** to changing circumstances
- **Be a regular** social media community member
- **Get support** from throughout the company – and especially from top management
- **Update** the triage plan - at least annually
- **Practice** the triage plan in order to remain ready
Social Media Reality

Social media doesn’t fix anything. It just amplifies things. If your restaurant sucks, it just sucks harder in social media. It doesn’t make your chicken fingers taste better or your beer taste bolder. Social media is not a good place to go if you’re terrible at what you do.

Scott Stratten @unmarketing
Resources*

Material Specific to Food Risk Communication:
• A Handbook on Risk Communication Applied to Food Safety, WHO/FAO, 2015
  http://www.foodinsight.org/foodsafetyguide
• Best Practices for Crisis Communicators: How to communicate after food or feed safety incidents, EFSA, 2016

Social Media & Marketing Advice & Tools- articles, white papers, toolkits, podcasts, videos, webinars:
• MarketingProfs.com
• SimplyMeasured.com
• SocialMediaExaminer.com
• Particularly useful: 2016 Social Marketing Planning Guide, Simply Measured
  http://get.simplymeasured.com/2016-social-planning.html#sm.000117lgf61byte2trzc9tg52xwm

Toolbox for Social Media Marketing
• http://www.marketingprofs.com/smarttools/tool/18
  Caveat 1- This is a membership site ($) - need to join to access the tools
  Caveat 2- They do not differentiate between social media brand management and social media issues management. That being said, the tools are very helpful and easy to use; numerous forms for tracking detail work
Resources


*These resources are provided as references only. Neither Food Safety Partners nor Watson Green endorse or work with or for any of the resources provided.
Resources*

- Social media triage response diagrams

- Social media policy

- Case Studies in Food Protection: Why Utilizing Social Media as a Risk Mitigation Tool is a “Must Do”

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Thank you

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