Abstract

Title: A Social Media Case Study Analysis Incorporating Benoit’s Image Restoration Theory in Crisis Communications

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This research study analyzed prominent cases in crisis communications with a focus on the traditional crisis response used in each case, derived from Benoit’s Image Restoration Theory, and how that response was incorporated (or not incorporated) into the organization’s social media channels as part of the overall crisis communication strategy. The exploratory meta analysis was conducted utilizing five crises taking place during the rise of social media use in public relations: the Volkswagen emissions test scandal, the NFL domestic violence cover-up, the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the Penn State football Sandusky scandal, and Lululemon’s yoga pant malfunction crisis. A SWOT analysis was conducted for each business or organization with a description of factors that led to the crisis, along with an in-depth examination of the crisis response and public reaction. Recommendations are provided for improved use of social media in corporate crisis situations, including the benefits of social media monitoring.