

## Crisis Communications Amid a Pandemic of Crises



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## Back to School Safely: Communicating Effectively Amid A Pandemic



Two school years unlike  
any we have experienced  
in our lifetimes.

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## What We've Seen – So Far...

- Reopening
- COVID reporting
- Game on?
- Social tension



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## Who Needs to Know

- Teachers
- Staff
- Students
- Parents



Communicating with your key school stakeholders – your teachers, your staff, your students, your parents – is more critical than has perhaps ever been the case.

The hunger for information right now is almost overwhelming.

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## The Damage Control Playbook

**Rule #1: Tell the truth**

**Rule #2: Tell it first**

**Rule #3: Tell it all\***

**Rule #4: Tell it fast**

**Rule #5: Tell it to the people who matter most**



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## Communicating Your Way Through a Pandemic



- **Overcommunicate**
- **Communicate regularly**
- **Tell what you know when you know it**
- **Tell what you don't know**

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# Communications in the Age of Outrage



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## Five Steps to Managing Outrage

- 1: Validate valid concerns
- 2: Acknowledge past mistakes
- 3: Acknowledge current problems
- 4: Give credit
- 5: Share control



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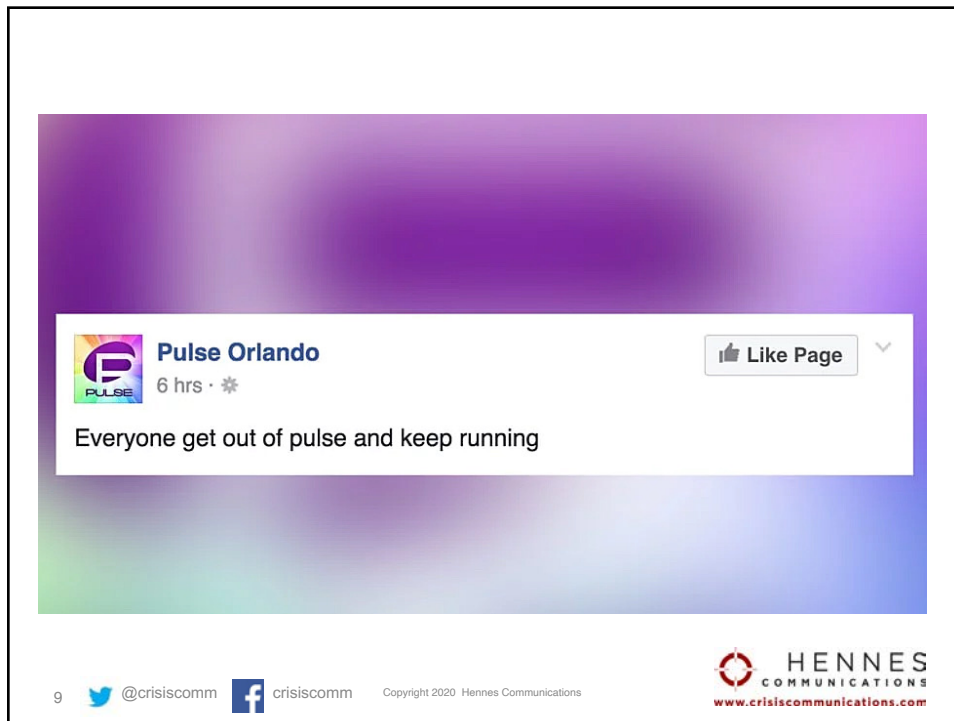


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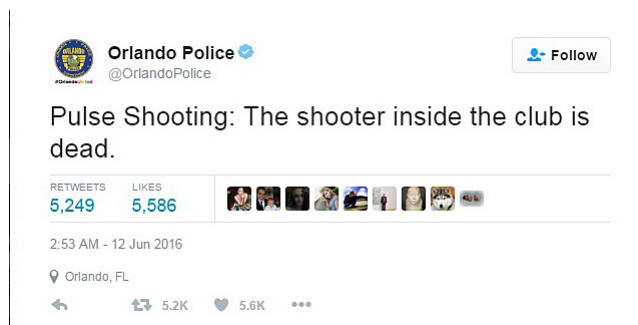
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## Why Social Media Matters During a Crisis

Because that's where the newsmakers are.



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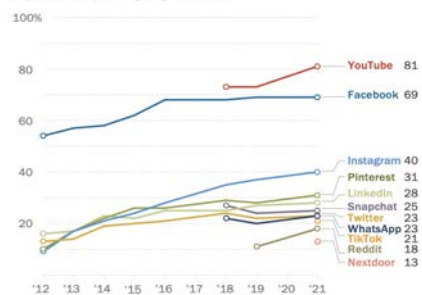


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## Use of Social Media Is Widespread

**Growing share of Americans say they use YouTube; Facebook remains one of the most widely used online platforms among U.S. adults**

% of U.S. adults who say they ever use ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. Pre-2018 telephone poll data is not available for YouTube, Snapchat and WhatsApp; pre-2019 telephone poll data is not available for Reddit; Pre-2021 telephone poll data is not available for TikTok. Trend data is not available for Nextdoor.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 25-Feb. 8, 2021.  
"Social Media Use in 2021"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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**facebook**<sup>®</sup>


2.375 billion Monthly Users



1.49 billion Daily Users

**69%** of all US adults use Facebook

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**Before the Crisis: Be Social**

- Know where your audience lives
- Secure your accounts
- Establish terms of use
- Establish social media guidelines
- Build a following, promote interaction
- Post a variety of content regularly

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## Initial Questions To Ask When An Online Reputation Threat Is Identified

- > Where did the threat originate?
- > Who began disseminating the negative information online?
- > Is the negative information being discussed and disseminated by an increasing number of people as time goes on?

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## Initial Questions to Ask When an Online Reputation Threat is Identified

- > Has the mainstream media begun covering this situation?
- > What is your understanding of the situation which led to this complaint/negative information?

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## Determine the Influence of the Threat

- > Is the person/organization spreading the negative information a public figure or individual, or an entity that is well-known in the community?
- > Does the person/organization have a substantial following across social media?

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## Determine the Influence of The Threat

- > Do the person/organization's posts generate a lot of user interaction?
- > Does the person/organization regularly engage with key people/organizations in your organization or community?

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 **erictucker** @erictucker · Nov 9


Anti-Trump protestors in Austin today are not as organic as they seem. Here are the busses they came in. #fakeprotests #trump2016 #austin




19   16K  14K 

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 They found the buses! Dozens lined...





They found the buses! Dozens lined up just blocks away from the Austin protests.

Anti-Trump protestors in Austin today are not as organic as they seem. Here are the busses they came in. #fakeprotests #trump2016 #austin

Nov 10, 2016 · www.freerepublic.com

 Visit Link  Share  Save

 @crisiscomm  307,616 people have shared this link


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**erictucker**  
@erictucker

# FALSE

Anti-Trump protestors in Austin today are not as organic as they seem. Here are the busses they came in. #fakeprotests #trump2016 #austin



RETWEETS 16,931 LIKES 14,521

21 @cf 8:43 PM - 9 Nov 2016

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## Best Practices to Follow When You Decide to Respond to an Online Threat

- > Don't get emotional.
- > Try to move the conversation offline.
- > Respond and correct misinformation. Resist the temptation to delete negative postings to your official social media sites unless they are offensive (racial, profane, personal attacks, etc.), violate an individual's privacy, or violate your social media usage guidelines.

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## Best Practices to Follow When You Decide to Respond to an Online Threat

- > Save screenshots.
- > Use social media to your advantage.

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## Questions To Ask To Determine if the Threat is Subsiding

- > Is social media discussion dwindling every day?
- > Is online media coverage dwindling every day?
- > Are your relationships with your affected stakeholder groups as strong or stronger than they were before this incident happened?

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## Winning on Social Media: Approach

- Transparency
- Responsiveness
- Speed - Beware “confirmation bias”
- Words + Action
- Professional – and human

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## A Crisis In The Making



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## A Crisis Averted

We've deleted the rogue tweet but rest assured the Red Cross is sober and we've confiscated the keys.

about 11 hours ago via ÜberTwitter  
Retweeted by 86 people



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- [Tower Hamlets MPSVerified account @MPSTowerHam](#)
- FollowFollow @MPSTowerHam
- Please do not contact us about the [#KFCCrisis](#) - it is not a police matter if your favourite eatery is not serving the menu that you desire.
- 6:10 AM - 20 Feb 2018
- **11,864** Retweets
- **19,969** Likes

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## WE'RE SORRY.

A chicken restaurant without any chicken. It's not ideal. Huge apologies to our customers, especially those who travelled out of their way to find we were closed. And endless thanks to our KFC team members and our franchise partners for working tirelessly to improve the situation. It's been a hell of a week, but we're making progress, and every day more and more fresh chicken is being delivered to our restaurants. Thank you for bearing with us.



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A screenshot of a tweet from the official Twitter account of Burger King UK (@BurgerKingUK). The tweet features the Burger King logo and the text "Women belong in the kitchen." It was posted at 3:01 AM on March 8, 2021, via the Twitter Web App. The tweet has received significant engagement, with 58.1K retweets, 59.6K quote tweets, and 198.7K likes.

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An advertisement featuring a red background with the text "Women belong in the kitchen." in a large, white, serif font. Below the main text, there is a smaller line of text: "Fine dining kitchens, food truck kitchens, award-winning kitchens, casual dining kitchens, ghost kitchens, Burger King kitchens. If there's a professional kitchen, women belong there."

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## Winning on Social Media: Action Steps

- Monitor and be prepared to respond
- Don't let mistakes live on
- Don't arm wrestle with trolls
- Pause before hitting "delete"
- Go offline to get back on track
- Know who's running the site
- Remember your audience

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## What To Do on Summer Vacation

- Ask us anything
- Review your website
- Review your social media



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## Keep Refining Your Plan

- Refine communications plan
- Be relentlessly consistent
- Publish everywhere
- Go first



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## Safety

- The overriding concern
- No. 1 value proposition
- How is your school safer?



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## Show Me, Don't Tell Me



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## The Ongoing Challenge: Politics

**Washington Post: Publicly reported over the past four years – average of two incidents per school week of politically oriented bullying or harassment in schools.**



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## Lessons From The Elections

### Southern Poverty Law Center Teaching Tolerance survey:

- 90% - negative school climate
- 80% - heightened student anxiety
- 50% - students targeting each other
- 40% - derogatory language



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## What You Can Do In 2022-23 – And Beyond



- Set the tone
- Double down on anti-bullying
- Encourage courage
- Prepare now for a crisis

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## What You Can Do In 2022-23 – And Beyond

- Review your code of conduct
- Review social media policies
- Review dress codes
- The elections as a teaching moment
- Diversity and critical race theory

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## OSBA Partners with Hennes Communications



- OSBA member school leaders have access 365 days a year to Hennes' crisis communication professionals.
- Hennes works *with* your administrative staff, including attorneys and district or school communications leaders.
- The initial consultation with Hennes consultants on your crisis issue is **free**.
- **OSBA Chief Executive Officer Richard Lewis:** "With Hennes Communications, our members have access to a team of crisis communications specialists at any time on any issue that needs an experienced perspective and specialized talents
- **OSBA Chief Legal Counsel Sara Clark:** "Hennes Communications understands how attorneys think...school districts already in or about to be faced with contentious issues would do well to have Hennes Communications in the room and alongside their lawyers."

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We have a strategy.

Because the  
Court of Public Opinion  
is always in session.

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