

Harnessing the power of AI for crisis management: A new paradigm

By Katherine McInnes, issued by Meltwater

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We saw a lot of bad press in 2022, with influencers and fashion houses scandals surfacing left and right. In light of a year of sensational headlines galore, it is becoming increasingly important for brands to optimise how they navigate through future crises. Praying for a crisis-free year is surely one approach, but the smarter way is harnessing the Power of AI and technological advancements.



In the past few years, we have witnessed what almost feels like a wave of public scandals, ranging from prominent fashion brands to social media personalities. In common for these brands in crisis is the fact that their scandals and incidents quickly gain media attention. A quick keyword search in Meltwater reveals that the amount of media mentions for these brands and celebrity names skyrockets as soon as the word is out, demonstrating the far-reaching influence that digital media has on modern brands' images and raising the crucial question: How can brands better utilise technology when the crisis hits?

AI to the rescue

With social media as one of the [top marketing channels](#) for business-to-consumer (B2C) marketers globally, social media has become an increasingly important platform for businesses to connect with their customers. Therefore, it is needless to say that a thorough social media understanding and the ability to act fast is crucial for today's companies - which is why AI, in an era where the PR disaster is just a stone's throw away, is the untapped goldmine of crisis management.

With the help of social listening, brands can identify online conversations at an early stage, track journalists' reporting, and follow the peaks and troughs of conversations to design optimal crisis responses and messages. There is no doubt that a good understanding of the origins of a crisis is the first and potentially most important step in a brand's crisis management regardless of the industry. This is where AI technology, which is able to collect vast amounts of data comes in, from platforms like TikTok and Instagram to podcast episodes, becomes our indispensable right hand.

Once a thoughtful message has been communicated to the audience, it is crucial to carefully monitor how it is received. Is there a change in tone? Does it differ between different channels and platforms? Are further statements and interviews needed, or has the storm subsided? Answering these questions is a lot easier with the help of social listening, and allows the company in question to focus on what's important, namely the analysis rather than manual monitoring.

Restoring or reinventing the brand image?

Analysis is a critical element, in order to report to management teams and potential investors. Especially in order to determine whether it is more appropriate to try to restore or reinvent the brand image after the crisis; two options that always need to be weighed carefully.

Many rebranding attempts after a PR crisis fails. Why? For the simple reason that it's incredibly difficult to win back the trust of today's consumers. Especially Gen Z, a generation [Forbes](#) describes the fastest boycotting generation. This is a new challenge for brands because it requires brands to focus on in-depth consumer understanding. The lack of such an understanding makes any attempts at post-crisis recovery a guessing game, with the outcome likely to be another PR disaster. Therefore, It is crucial for brands to find a way to restore their brand image, by thoroughly analysing, understanding and effectively communicating with their consumers.

Despite branding being a top priority on the agenda for most organisations today, [recent data](#) shows that just under one-fourth of organisations use brand reputation as a key metric. This means that companies have a whole lot of room for improvement in terms of analysing and measuring - for branding in general, but also for crisis management.

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