



## The Professors guide to Crisis Management and Social Media



**The Professor**

Economics, Corporate Strategy, Business Modelling, Social Media, CEO  
pro.manchester, Professor MMU Business School,  
Manchester, United Kingdom | Financial Services

Current: CEO, PhD., Professor MMU, economics, corporate strategy, social media, business modelling at pro.manchester

Previous: jkaonline, Coloroll Group PLC

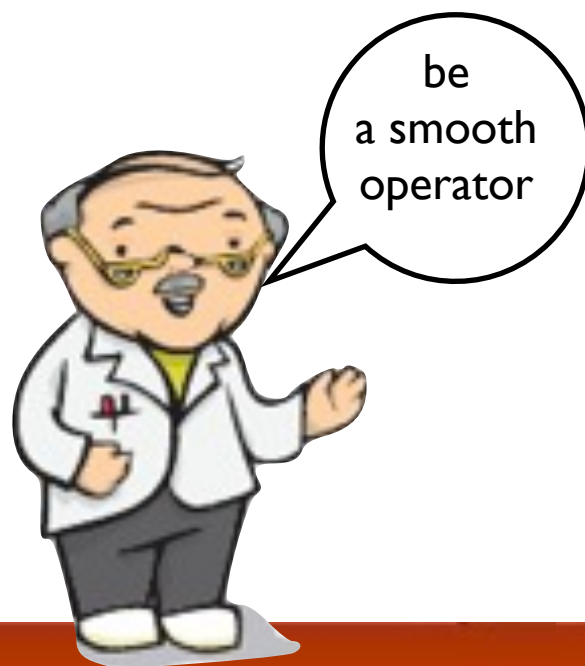
Education: PhD, Economics at The Manchester Metropolitan University

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## 1 Plan your crisis and practice the drill.

Remember the mantra is SMOOOTH.

Social Media, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Open, Truthful, Honest.



## 2 Establish the Chain of Command

Be very clear on the chain of command and the hierarchy of command in all situations.

Define the limits to authority, decision parameters, floors and ceilings.

A crisis can occur any time. Make sure those who need to know, are always contactable and the chain of command is established.

Ensure, access hot lines, emails and mobile phone numbers are in the system.

Make ready the batch of email addresses for instant mail out to everyone in the crisis group.

Use textlocal or similar to batch text messages to the crisis group.

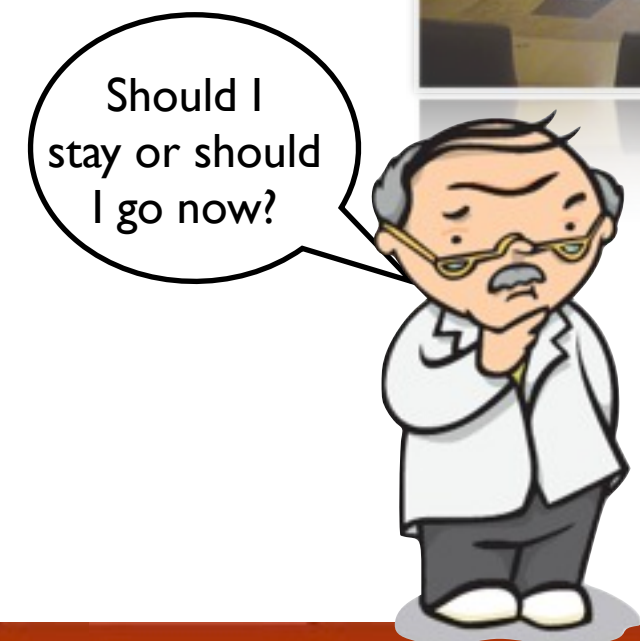


## 3 Define your Crisis Group or COBRA group.

Define your Crisis Group or COBRA group in advance.

The UK government uses a COBRA committee as a tag name for the crisis team. Sounds dramatic, until you realise it stands for a group of people who meet in committee briefing room A. Not really that exciting.

Whatever the tag term, make sure people know who is in the crisis group and what is expected of them.

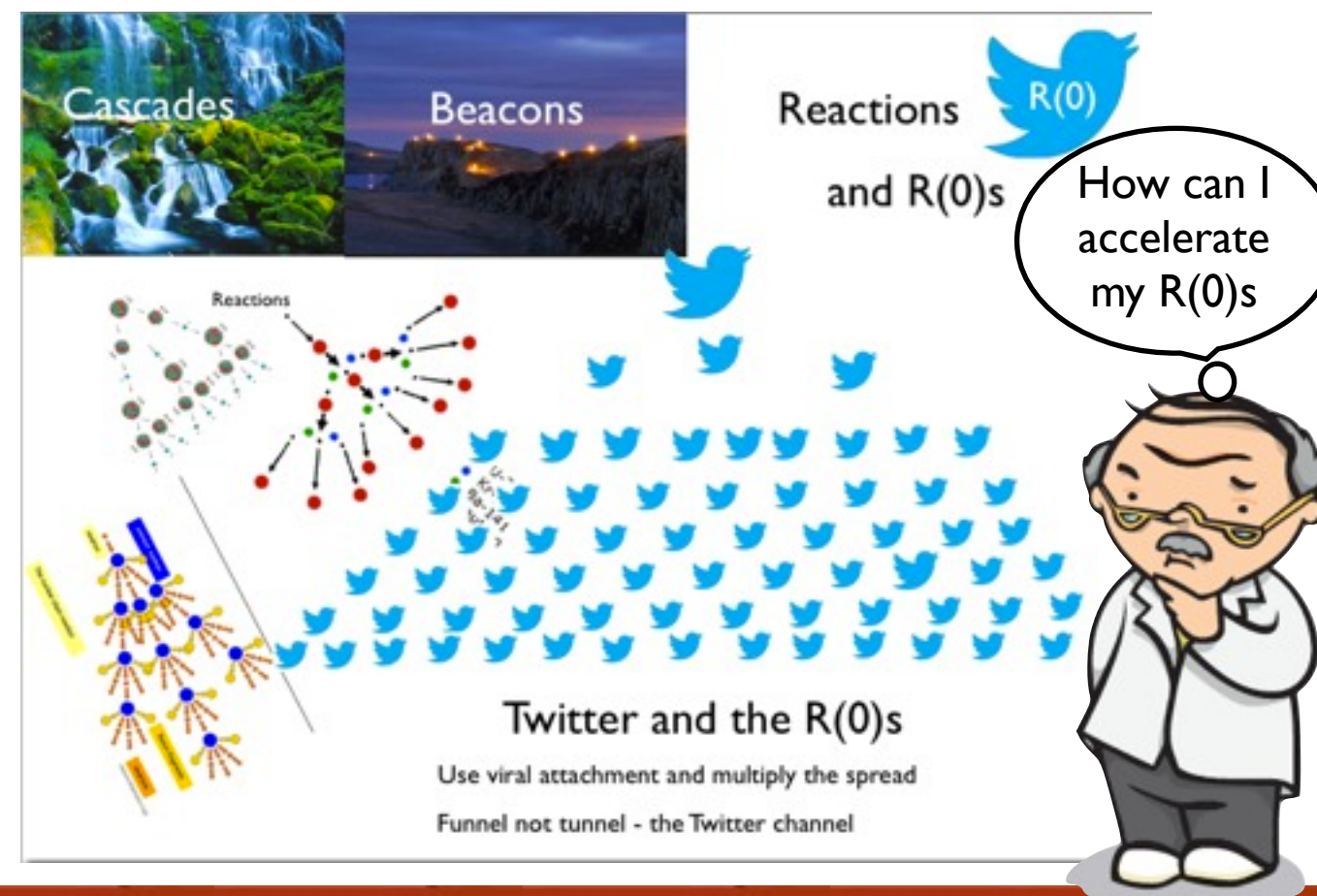
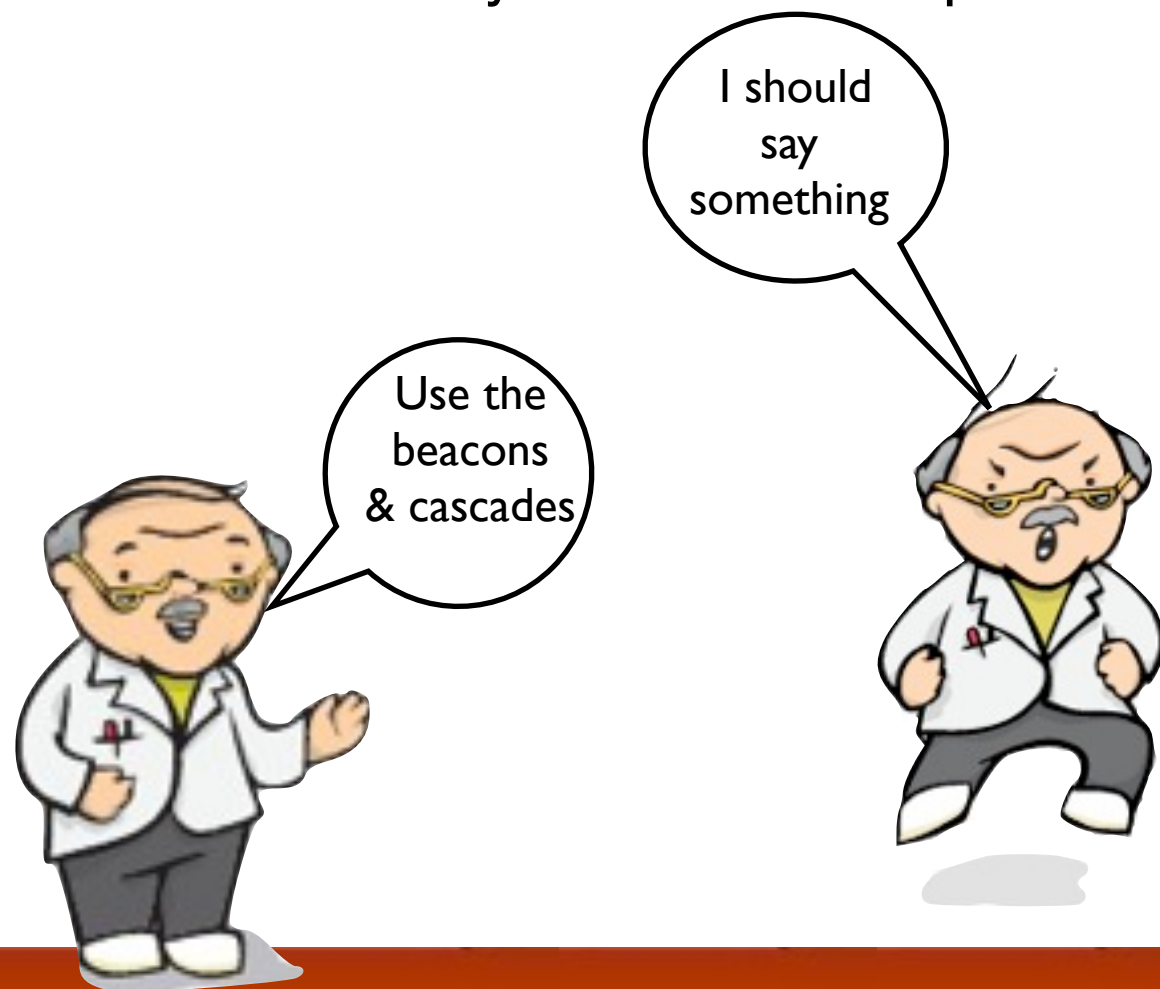




## 4 Beacons, cascades and $R(0)$ s

Understand the concept of beacons, cascades and  $R(0)$ s. Ensure the channels of your twitter cascade are clear and the relay beacons for thought transfer via LinkedIn groups, Facebook friends or Google+ circles are established.

Identify crisis champions, respected independent authority figures on whom you can call to speak out during the crisis.



## 5 Know your POTUS and your weak point.

In a crisis, the focus is on the leader, either the President of the United States (POTUS) in a national crisis, or Mayor Bloomberg in New York during the terrorist attack in 911.

Identify your POTUS. Don't let your POTUS play golf or go sailing during the crisis. He may think he deserves a break but any victims may not be so understanding. Remember the mantra is SMOOTH.

Social Media, Omnipresent, Open, Truthful, Transparent, Honest.

Make sure your POTUS is comfortable with media! and the media with him



## 6 Understand all eyes are upon us

Eyes are everywhere, fingerprints, footprints and photographs. Smart phones and snap cameras can enable an embarrassing picture to be uploaded to the Internet in seconds, then relayed or “e- layed” with alacrity. The eyes have it!

Don't let your POTUS be caught on camera where he or she would not like to be.





## 7 Understand the social media channels, capacities and what can be achieved

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, email strategy, blogs, video channels, YouTube and Vimeo, photo galleries like Flickr, Press releases and press comments. Understand the capacity and out reach of each and how to use them to best advantage.

Check out the latest developments on Facebook such as threaded replies for fan pages.

Undertake a social media audit, regularly. Know your KPIs and KSFs



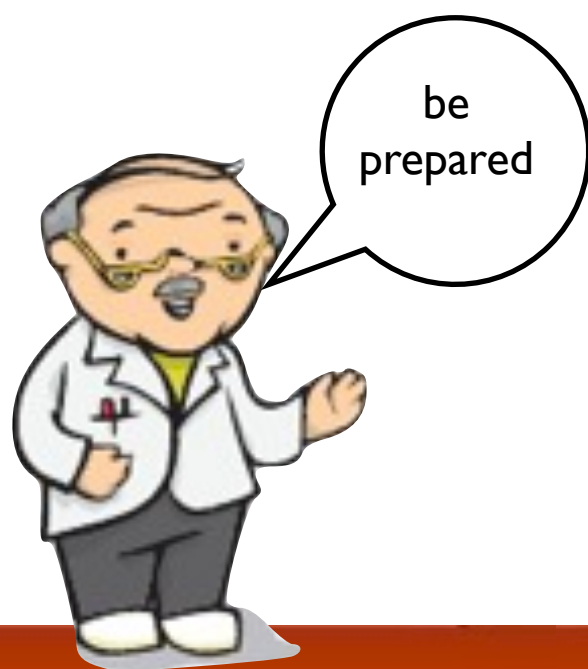


## 8 Be prepared

Ensure the legal department have approved prepared posts designed for specific social media platforms.

They should be ready to be customised and published in case of a social media crisis. A quick response can mean the difference between a bush fire and a fire storm.

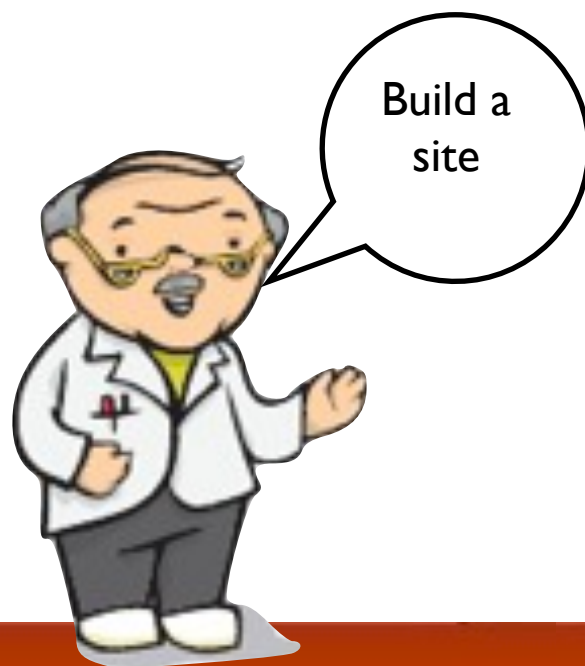
Responding quickly in a sympathetic manner is essential on social media. Complaints cannot be ignored, the smallest issue can go viral. Measure the  $R(0)$ . Remember the mantra is SMOOTH.



## 9 Build a site - create the chaff

Create a special web site dealing with the crisis. An emergency site can be up in hours, especially if elements are prepared. POTUS blogs, informed opinion, special advice, recall action, FAQs, all the essential information needed.

Allow people to subscribe for updates via SMS, RSS, or email. Allow people to post comments, join the forum, it's a great chance to focus, channel and monitor complaints. It's OK, the forum is vetted and authorised prior to publication.



Use photographs, video clips, news clips but always be open honest and truthful. The crisis site is no place for the airbrush or Photoshop, photographic treatment of sandy beaches with no oil pollution can easily be spotted.

Create a hot line



## 10 Define and determine a keyword strategy

Define the keywords and create a series of fingerprints and footprints around the Internet.

Dominate the search engine traffic, with content and keyword density.

Ensure the social media assets especially the crisis blog are SEO enabled and maxed up.

If negative copy is getting traction, counter or deflect the traffic with shadow posts.





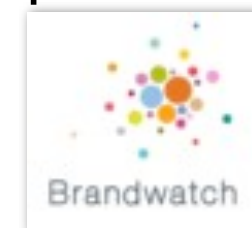
## 11 Track, monitor and listen

“Don't be taken  
by surprise”

Always monitor your product, brand, company and competitors. Monitor also, POTUS, names of VPs and VIPs, your blog name, names of events and any name related to your event or business. Use the keyword strategy.

Watch out for spikes and hikes, check out the source of the surge.

Set up Google Alerts. Google alerts will notify via email when anything is mentioned on the Internet regarding key names or key words . Use additional tools like Tweetdeck, Hootsuite, Social Oomph, Sprout social Brand watch, Salesforce Chatter, tracebuzz and more.



## 12 Acknowledge the problem

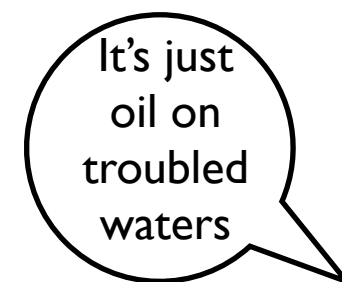
Acknowledge the problem, ensure people know you know. Do not underestimate the dimension of the problem. If necessary and appropriate, apologise to victims, relatives and friends and all those affected in the community.

Confirm and comfort, that all steps are being taken, to identify the problem, the cause of the problem and take what ever steps are necessary to remedy the situation as afar as possible.

Thank everyone involved in the crisis operation, thank friends and families for the sacrifices that have to be taken at this time.



"I will ensure no stone is left unturned to get to the bottom of this problem"



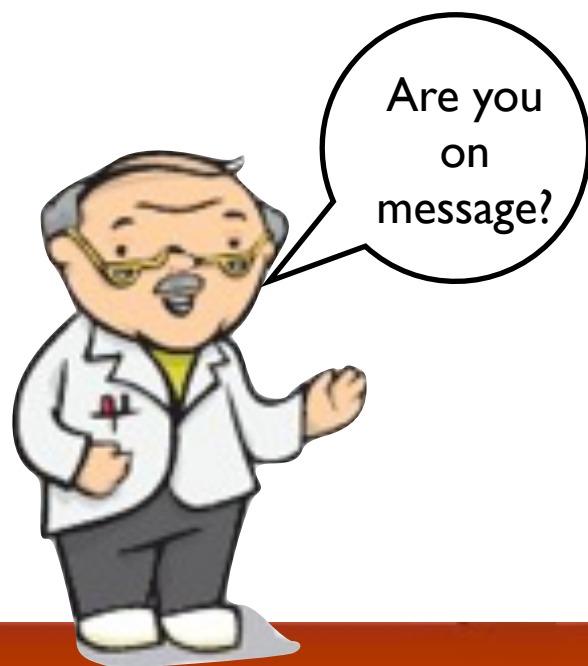
Never minimise



## 13 Communicate with all stakeholders

To ensure employees and all stakeholders are "on message" make sure they have the message. Use the social media channels to communicate to all stakeholders, ensure they know what and where they are and how to gain access. Word of net, is more powerful and effective, than word of mouth. Remember stakeholders, including employees and customers are not just an audience, they are more than a sounding board but a valuable source or reaction, performance and information.

“Avoid jargon, use a common language”



Spread the message  
“Word of net, is more powerful  
than word of mouth”.





## 14 Live and learn

A crisis is for life, not just for Christmas. Collate the information during the crisis to facilitate the post crisis analysis and reconstruction.

Collect, tweets, comments, emails, text messages on line posts. Check traffic and keyword volumes, patterns and sources.

Understand what went wrong and what went right. Learn from the experience.



"A crisis - like a puppy  
Is for life" not just  
for .....



## 15 Social Media - it's huge

Understand the dimensions and potential of social media.

"With more than 200 million active users of Twitter and over 1 billion Facebook users, the news cycle today is instantaneous,".

"With that in mind, emergency managers, both in the public and private sector, must build systems to monitor social media, as well as have policies in place to successfully react to information provided via those sources."

You have been forewarned  
Make sure you are forearmed



## 16 Follow Best Practice

### Burger King

Recently had a potential crisis on their hands when images of an employee standing in lettuce started making the rounds of the internet. People who enjoy eating at Burger King were understandably disgusted by the image, however Burger King took swift action: using internet tools to find the store in question, then locating and identifying the employee by the shoes shown in the photo, then promptly firing the employee and sharing that crisis resolution on social media. Time from crisis eruption to resolution: just over 24 hours.

Burger King did several things right.

They acknowledged the problem, they did not minimise it


They had a crisis response plan in place to act quickly,

They used the internet and social media to identify and solve the issue.

They took swift action to remove the problem and ensure it didn't happen again.

They responded to their customers online quickly and efficiently,

They offered reassurance with a statement :



be  
a smooth  
operator

““Food safety is a top priority at all Burger King restaurants and the company maintains a zero-tolerance policy against any violations.





## 17 Learn from Others

### BP

"The Gulf of Mexico is a very big ocean. The amount of volume of oil and dispersant we are putting into it is tiny in relation to the total water volume." — Tony Hayward, May 14, 2010

There's no one who wants this over faster than I do, I want my life back.  
Tony Hayward CEO NBC Today Show May 30th.



Take the Helm

But not literally during the crisis



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