

#### CASE STUDY 29.1

##### YouTube—Macquarie Bank, a Model, and Internet Fame

Australia's Macquarie Bank found itself at the center of unwanted global media attention in February 2010 when David Kiely, a midlevel client adviser, was inadvertently captured on live TV ogling seminude photos of Australian supermodel Miranda Kerr during a live cross to the bank trading room (Figure 29.1). Kiely, who had been opening up the photos of the scantily clad Kerr on his work PC, and Macquarie Bank quickly became Internet sensations.

The episode, which zoomed around the world in hours, is again an example of how quickly a company can face a media crisis when material goes viral in the social media age. As soon as the video was uploaded to YouTube, the footage was seen by millions within days; and as with the Domino's rogue employees' case, the effect was rapidly multiplied by the impact of sharing via Facebook and Twitter.

Not only was the video quickly picked up by the traditional media around the globe, but the e-mail address for the bank's media team was shared across the world when a London-based Web effort was launched to save Kiely's job.

A London-based Web site for financial markets, Here Is the City News, called on its readers to e-mail Macquarie Group headquarters



**FIGURE 29.1** Screen capture of Macquarie Bank worker David Kiely, in the background, left, was the subject of a global viral campaign after he was seen viewing pictures of a seminaked supermodel. (The video went viral February 2, 2010, on YouTube with millions of hits. See YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfX0yHTztNg>. Retrieved December 15, 2010.)

in Sydney with the words "Don't fire David Kiely" as the subject title.\* Needless to say, their Web site attracted more than its fair share of commentary, too. Here are some of the comments published on their Web site:

- Macquarie will be making a PR mistake if David Kiely is sacked.
- Hopefully management at Mac Bank will see this for what it is—trivial. And think about all that free publicity!
- I used to work with Dave, and he is definitely a good bloke. The pics were harmless, and Mac Bank should stand by him.
- This country is becoming more like the Bible Belt in America. For God's sake, give the guy a break.
- I'm not a banker, but I have joined the campaign regardless. The guy doesn't deserve to be dismissed!†

Not surprisingly, Facebook support groups also sprang up, calling on the bank not to sack Kiely. His voyeurism also made it to Digg,‡ the social media platform that enables you to post your articles, where others can vote on whether or not they like your story. More fuel was added to the media frenzy when Miranda Kerr offered to sign the petition to save Kiely's job. The supermodel was quoted in the *Herald Sun* as saying, "I am told there is a petition to save his job and of course I would sign it."§

The bank launched a forensic internal investigation; Kiely got to keep his job. Whether it was the groundswell of very public support for the banker, a prank gone wrong, or Macquarie Bank showing its heart, we may never really know.

What we do know is that if you are going to be on TV, please look at what is behind you! That is the number one golden rule. Second, have a policy or two in place that guides behavior of your employees, particularly as it relates to social media; and third, expect compelling content to make its way on to the Net very, very quickly.¶

One final point—content is king, just like on successful TV shows. It is the drama, the clever, and the comedy that go viral. Crisis is the stuff of

\* "Help Save Macquarie Banker's Job—Join Our Campaign," Here Is the City News (London), [http://news.hereisthecity.com/news/business\\_news/9902.cntns](http://news.hereisthecity.com/news/business_news/9902.cntns), February 4, 2010.

† Ibid.

‡ Digg, <http://digg.com/news>.

§ Fiona Byrne, "Supermodel Miranda Kerr Speaks Out in Support of Embarrassed Bank Broker David Kiely," *Herald Sun*, [www.heraldsun.com.au/entertainment/confidential/supermodel-miranda-kerr-speaks-out-in-support-of-embarrassed-bank-broker-david-kiely/story-e6frf96o-1225826947714](http://www.heraldsun.com.au/entertainment/confidential/supermodel-miranda-kerr-speaks-out-in-support-of-embarrassed-bank-broker-david-kiely/story-e6frf96o-1225826947714), February 5, 2010.

¶ With thanks to Neil McMahon, journalist with The Media Skills Network for his initial report and research. McMahon is a Sydney-based freelance journalist.

human drama: Compelling content *will be shared*. "Hey you've got to see this" is the prevailing mantra in YouTubeLand.

## BLOGGING

Blogging is another very effective tool in a crisis, if for no other reason than the technologies that enable blogs, including the Internet and text messaging, tend to be more resilient. For example, during 9/11, the text-messaging capability of the BlackBerry proved to be one of the most effective sources of information exchange between individuals.

According to research on the use of blogs during Hurricane Katrina by the University of Georgia, BlackBerries are effective because uploading and downloading of Web content can occur wirelessly. During prolonged power outages, the BlackBerry can run 24 hours a day for up to a week off a single charge, making blogging a very viable tool in a crisis or emergency.\*

Blogs are one of the established social media and have evolved from online diaries, where people would keep a running account of their daily lives. We have seen that they have huge influence, and they number in the millions! More than 130 million blogs have been indexed by Technorati since 2004.†

Blogs are useful to:

- Share ideas and solutions.
- Get information out quickly.
- Send messages.
- Share news.
- Post news releases and other direct-to-consumer information.
- Push out pertinent information.
- Dispel rumors; correct information.
- Give a voice and access to "average" people, and provide an outlet for expressing public emotion about tragic events.
- Anchor your social communication efforts (see Innovis case study).

\* Wendy Macias, Karen Hilyard, and Vicki Freimuth, "Blog Functions as Risk and Communication during Hurricane Katrina," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Vol. 15, No. 1, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01490.x/abstract>, October 2009.

† Leslie Gandy, "Majority of Internet Users Still Don't Share," Technorati, <http://technorati.com/state-of-the-blogsphere/#ixzz18D8GFTdS>, December 28, 2001.

Blogging is most acceptable and commonly used in the United States, but may be less common in other countries. For example, forums are more popular in Australia, according to the Conference Report from the 2nd Annual Crisis Communication and Social Media Summit.\*

Following are some tips to help you navigate your way through a crisis in the blogosphere:

*Plan*—Preparation and detailed planning are crucial to developing a corporate blog that successfully carries you through the good times and the bad. Plan to start your blog *before* a crisis occurs. This gives you ample time to develop relationships and build trust with your key audiences, who will be more likely to believe what you say when a crisis crops up.

Blogs should be part of any communicator's distribution list for press releases and other announcements, taking their place next to journalists, partner organizations, and stakeholders in receiving communication messages.

*Who*—Appointing the appropriate person to be the official blogger is a critical decision. Anyone can blog, but it takes more than just words. What is important is that the person genuinely wants to connect with others, understands that time is of the essence during a crisis, and has been trained on what to say and what not to say during a crisis.

It does not necessarily have to be the CEO or the official spokesperson. It could be another senior executive; a midlevel manager; or someone in PR, corporate communication, or customer service.

The person does not even need to be a prolific writer. CEO Bill Marriott dictates his posts into a digital recorder, which is transcribed word-for-word by someone on his staff. At Hewlett-Packard, a senior executive calls his posts into a voice mailbox. The posts are then transcribed by staff for posting (see Section III, "Spokespeople—Speed Matters and Perception Is Everything").

*What*—During a crisis, your official blogger needs to communicate the who, what, why, when, and where as quickly as the information is

\* Craig Pearce, Conference Report from the *Second Annual Crisis Communication and Social Media Summit* (Frocomm), Sydney, Australia, [http://craigpearce.info/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Crisis-Comm-and-Social-Media-09\\_Conference-Report\\_FINAL4.pdf](http://craigpearce.info/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Crisis-Comm-and-Social-Media-09_Conference-Report_FINAL4.pdf), August 12–13, 2009.

known. If the facts are not known at the beginning of Stage One, some kind of statement such as, "We know an incident occurred today. We do not know any details yet, but we are doing everything we can to get to the bottom of the situation." That can also be posted on Twitter. It is only 28 words, or 137 characters, within the 140-character limitation. Mind you, on your blog you can say more!

As the facts unfold, your blogger should continually communicate updates to prevent misinformation from spreading, avoid possible panic, and protect the company's image.

When writing your blog, it is worth keeping in mind that your headline is key. It is the first and perhaps only impression you make. Keep it short and sweet. Tell the story in five to seven words. And remember search engine optimization. You need to think about how you want "Lord" Google people to find you in a crisis. And remember, what appears on the Internet stays on the Internet—forever.

*Feedback*—Your blogger needs to be ready to interact and receive good and bad feedback. Blogging is a two-way street. It is not the corporate brochure, although there may be times when you can communicate the company perspective *after* you have built enough credibility. You have to be prepared for and ready to deal with the good, the bad, and the downright ugly.

During a crisis, people will post eyewitness accounts, potentially false, and ask questions. It is important to be monitoring your blog during this time, so you can quickly communicate accurate information and demonstrate relevant concern and compassion. You need to be able to post fast updates.

*Regulations*—Your blogger should be mindful about the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) and regulations to avoid trouble with the authorities, which could cause yet another crisis. There are certain topics that are simply off limits.

Sun Microsystems CEO Jonathan Schwartz does blog about Sun's business, but he is savvy enough about SEC regulations and avoids writing anything that would cause trouble. A *Wall Street Journal* article sums it up nicely: "Blogs and tweets can run afoul of SEC regulations on corporate communications. But sanitizing such posts risks hurting credibility with online audiences."<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> Cari Tuna, "Corporate Blogs and 'Tweets' Must Keep SEC in Mind," *The Wall Street Journal*, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124078135070257099.html>, April 27, 2009.



*Statistics*—Eighty-one percent of Fortune 500 companies sponsor public blogs, including Walmart Stores Inc., Chevron Corp., and General Motors Corp., according to the Society for New Communications Research.

*Monitoring*—You should regularly monitor your blogs during a crisis, not only in the traditional mode of PR surveillance but also to aid rescue and recovery efforts through an important alternative communication channel. And put the influential blogs in your industry very high on the radar scale during a crisis. The blogosphere will be smoking.

Blogs are the anchor for your social media efforts. Treat them as your hub where you can direct and drive your communication efforts. Not only that, but they can easily and quickly become the official news channel, particularly in emergencies when other more traditional channels are thwarted for whatever reason. In March 2009, blogs (and Twitter) became a lifeline for Innovis Health (and, to a great extent, the community of Fargo, North Dakota) during the record-setting floods in March 2009. As Kris Olson, VP of Marketing, Quality, and Physician Services, says, "We became the media."

### **Blogs Are a Must Have in Your Crisis Media Toolkit**

#### **CASE STUDY 29.2**

##### **Innovis Health—"We Became the Media" (March 2009)**

Wet, floods, roads closed. The other main hospital evacuated. A state of emergency. Panic for many.

Innovis Health was fully operational, but few knew. The media were not mentioning their name. The media were isolated, too, and could not get to Innovis.

So, Kris Olson, VP of Marketing, Quality, and Physician Services, jumped into action and onto the social media bandwagon, blogging and tweeting. They had to get their story out—and fast. Lives were at risk.

"We needed to be the media,"<sup>†</sup> says Olson. The mainstream media, which Innovis had relied on in the past to get critical news out, were overwhelmed, understaffed, and not mobile.

\* Kris Olson (Vice President of Marketing, Quality, and Physicians, Innovis Health, Fargo, North Dakota), interview with author, March 12, 2010.

<sup>†</sup> Ibid.

The advertising agency came to the rescue. They turned Olson's "brain-dump, a stream of consciousness" of what was happening at the hospital into a newsworthy, fact-finding blog.

"At 5:15 P.M., the blog went live, and by 5:30 P.M., 1,500 media outlets were monitoring us," says Olson. In 15 minutes, Innovis had become an important member of the citizen-journalism force.

"The scope blew me away,"<sup>†</sup> says Olson. Not only did the blog inform key media and stakeholders around their affected community and the country, but it allowed the staff to get on with their critical jobs, too.

Olson explains how the Director of Nursing, with a son in Brazil, a sister in New York City, and another son in San Francisco, was able to point her concerned family to the company blog for information. The director went back to her job with peace of mind that her family knew the facts and what was happening.

The ad agency worked around the clock for 10 days, and not once did Olson make a phone call. Everything was done via e-mail.

This, she says, highlights how incredibly important it is to have a very high level of trust with your service providers. They need to understand your mission, goals, and strategic objectives.

The blog was a very powerful tool that really worked for Innovis and helped other members of the community who didn't have the capacity, including the local shopping malls. Even the competition was getting information from their blog and Twitter account. Innovis used Twitter to push out key information and link to their blog.

Wearing a news director hat, Olson and her team thought carefully about what would be of interest that would also tell the story of what Innovis was doing to help the community. There was also the inevitable "reality TV" moment when they had to build a special landing pad in the hospital parking lot for the Blackhawk helicopters to land. That was a definite photo opportunity, as was the first landing of the helicopter after the rescue of a four-year-old girl and her cat.

Olson's goal throughout the ordeal was to be as transparent as possible and to get the message out that Innovis Health was fully operational and could handle whatever and whoever came in. There were real-time dialog and continuous updates.

It was a 10-day, 24/7 commitment by Olson and her team, and one that not only the Fargo community appreciated, but the wider news media and concerned family and friends of the hospital staff appreciated, too.

\* Kris Olson (Vice President of Marketing, Quality, and Physicians, Innovis Health, Fargo, North Dakota), interview with author, March 12, 2010.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

## WHERE? NEW MEDIA TOOLS

Eventually, the floodwaters receded, but not the social media efforts. Training for employees has been implemented so that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities, and a formal monitoring system is in place to track media mentions of Innovis Health, both good and bad. Social media are also playing a large role in hospital operational management.

Doctors in the emergency room have Flip cameras, and they record what happens over a busy weekend. They edit and send an update to the local TV stations every week. Needless to say, the media love the footage.

But it's the strategy behind the news gathering that's impressive; Innovis can use the information for the benefit of public health. For instance, if there is a spike in the number of people with flu-like symptoms, Innovis can alert patients to go to the clinic. That information is vital as it helps alleviate the overcrowding in emergency rooms. Great community service and an important communication strategy for Innovis Health.

As Olson says, the opportunities for social media—crisis or not—are endless.

## LINKEDIN

LinkedIn,\* you ask? Do I need to think about that as yet another tool in a crisis? Yes!

Remember, LinkedIn is where the professional and business people hang out. "Facebook for business" is one way to describe the fast growing, business-only social networking site. LinkedIn matters in a crisis as it is highly likely that your (potential) reputation-killer crisis will end up being discussed at length in the various news groups, for example, eMarketing Association (over 231,000 members), Marketing & PR Innovators (over 92,000 members), or PR Wise (over 5,000 members), Crisis Communication (over 1,000 members). These groups have influence.

You can also build up a very large network on LinkedIn that will enable you to communicate directly with people who matter to you and your company in the event of a crisis.

"Lord" Google has also recognized the impact of LinkedIn, as LinkedIn is now searchable by keywords in a Google search.

So, put LinkedIn on your watch list, or at least monitor the news groups for active discussion of your brand.

\* LinkedIn, <http://www.linkedin.com/>. (Retrieved December 15, 2010.)



## DIGG

More than YouTube, Digg is another place where your crisis—news, videos, images—could be bookmarked and seen by millions! At Digg, content, which comes from just about anywhere, is voted on. As it says on its Web site, Digg surfaces the “best stuff” as voted on by its users. You will not find editors at Digg—it’s simply a platform where people can collectively determine the value of content.

Once something is submitted, other people see it and Digg what they like best. “If your submission rocks and receives enough Digg, it is promoted to the front page for the millions of our visitors to see.”

Many blogs, and even the traditional media, provide links to Digg, which has more traffic than *The New York Times*, with more than 23 million unique visits per month and more than 4.5 million page views (Technorati). (In comparison, about 25 million people visit Disneyland *every year*; more than 23 million people visit China *every year*. We are talking *per month* for Digg!)

Put Digg on your watch list.

## FLICKR

Not the first with online picture sharing, but probably now the dominant force, Flickr has more than 4 billion images on its site.

As they say on their Web site, “Share your photos, watch the world; we want to help people make their content available to the people who matter to them.”<sup>†</sup> And they do. The image-sharing Web site, which has only been around since 2004, has played a major role in various crises. Harrowing and sometimes graphic images are shared. These images often tell the real story of what is happening, as they did in the deadly Victorian bushfires.

Flickr is like a giant message board or memorial wall with people’s feelings expressed through images, defined by Wikipedia as “an image hosting and video hosting Web site, web services suite, and online community.”<sup>‡</sup> It is widely used by bloggers to host images they embed in their blogs and other social media.

Flickr enables you to “get photos and video into and out of the system”<sup>§</sup> in as many ways as you can—from just about anywhere, including mobile

\* Digg, <http://about.digg.com/about>. (Retrieved December 15, 2010.)

† Flickr, <http://www.flickr.com/about>. (Retrieved December 15, 2010.)

‡ Wikipedia, “Flickr,” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flickr>. (Retrieved December 15, 2010.)

§ Flickr, <http://www.flickr.com/about>. (Retrieved December 15, 2010.)

devices and home computers, and from almost any software you are using to manage your content. Flickr in return will push out your images by many methods including the Flickr Web site, RSS feeds, and e-mail, posting to outside blogs.

Know that it will be used in a crisis. Have someone monitor it, as that is where the victims' stories will be told, and that is where the media will look, too. You can also post relevant images there and embed them in your blog.

### WIKIPEDIA

If you are not looking at Wikipedia, then you need to! That is the opinion of Marcia Watson DiStaso (Pennsylvania State University) and Marcus Messner (Virginia Commonwealth University), who have been studying the impact of the socially generated encyclopedia on corporate reputation since 2006.

Wikipedia is important, if for no other reason than its influence over search engine results. The free encyclopedia that anyone can edit has gained search engine prominence, essentially dominating Yahoo!, MSN, and Google searches. According to KDPaine's PR Measurement Blog,\* in one year, an average of 780,053 people viewed articles about 10 of America's most visible companies: Walmart, Exxon, General Motors (GM), Ford, General Electric, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Citigroup, AIG, and IBM.

Wikipedia is worth watching because if you are in the headlines, the degree of edits and users will increase—significantly. GM and AIG, for example, had a significantly higher number of edits and GM had more than 1.6 million views (as of March 2010).

On the other hand, companies that have embraced social media and engaged in conversations in the marketplace, such as Ford and Walmart, have seen a decline in both the number of edits and the number of users. (At the time of writing, Walmart was facing a massive antidiscrimination lawsuit, so the edits and visits may jump dramatically.)

Some question the reliability and accuracy of Wikipedia. It appears that it is self-editing and has a higher degree of accuracy than one may think. The Web-based encyclopedia quickly became the go-to news source after the tragic shootings at Virginia Tech.

\* "Wondering about Wikipedia? You Should Be," KDPaine PR Measurement Blog, [http://kdpaine.blogs.com/kdpaines\\_pr\\_m/2010/03/wondering-about-wikipedia-you-should-be.html](http://kdpaine.blogs.com/kdpaines_pr_m/2010/03/wondering-about-wikipedia-you-should-be.html), March 24, 2010.

## SOCIAL MEDIA RELEASE

We have come a long way since Ivy Lee, considered the father of modern PR, wrote the first press release for Pennsylvania Railroad after a crash that killed 50 people. The afternoon of October 8, 1906, changed the media landscape.

One could argue that May 23, 2006, almost 100 years later, changed the landscape again when Todd Defren introduced a template for the social media release (SMR).

If you are playing in SocialMediaLand, then you will need to consider using an SMR to disseminate information in a crisis. As Ane Howard from the United Kingdom-based Rush PR says, "SMRs are not just pretty conversational announcements, they have a real mission."

SMRs can quickly help you disseminate critical content that can be easily shared and bookmarked. Another key advantage is that you can embed links (e.g., a YouTube video, Flickr, Facebook) to a variety of media outlets, both your own and other key audiences, such as your all important allies and friends.

MediaShift defines an SMR "as a single page of Web content designed to enable the content to be removed and used on blogs, wikis, and other social channels."<sup>†</sup>

SMRs typically feature multiple embedded links and blocks of text similar to those found in traditional news releases (e.g., quotes and contact information). (See sample SMR in Appendix C.)

## Social Media Newsroom

The social media newsroom is yet another tool at your disposal in helping to effectively manage communication in a crisis.

Ian Capstick, a Canadian media consultant, writing in a MediaShift blog,<sup>‡</sup> says that social media newsrooms are more comprehensive than the SMR. "They allow an organization to host all of their social media releases, contact information, and links to social channels in one place."

Social media newsrooms also allow for that all important search engine optimization (SEO). You must be able to track news coverage,

\* Ane Howard, "Debunking the Social Media Release," Rush PR News Blog, <http://www.rushprnews.com/2009/11/03/debunking-the-social-media-release-smr>, November 3, 2009.

† Ian Capstick, "Social Media Releases Must Evolve to Replace Press Releases," MediaShift Blog, <http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2010/04/social-media-release-must-evolve-to-replace-press-release113.html>, April 23, 2010.

‡ Ibid.

regardless of where it is, in a crisis; and keyword searches help you do that.

As Robyn Sefiani, managing director of the Australian-based Sefiani Communications Group and respected PR and crisis consultant, says:

Today, a newsroom isn't simply about posting press releases on the company website. Organizations need to incorporate functionality to support SEO, multimedia content, and the option to share content through social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.\*

### Social Media War Room

Every major crisis has a war room. You have seen the vision of the BP (oil spill) war room with videos, whiteboards, computers, and a virtual Army of people, literally working around the clock—in shifts—to fix the problem.

Now you need a *social media war room*—one that is set up before you need it. It does not have to be in an underground bunker, but it is best to be in a specified room—a room that you have tested before the crisis hits—tested with well thought out and creative scenarios. Your team needs to know the drill.

I advise my clients to run annual exercises, at a minimum. If you are in a high-risk industry, like an oil refinery, the airline industry, or public transportation, you will need to be validating your training and planning at least every six months.

In the digital age, as Ari Newman says, "You need to activate personnel and procedures with a single tweet."<sup>†</sup>

Newman's questions will help guide you in establishing a social media war room:

- Who will "live" in the war room?
- Whose job is it to engage with social media on a daily basis, and who is empowered to respond to emerging situations?
- Which other stakeholders will be pulled into the war room in the event of a crisis? Every man and his dog will want to get involved in the drama—it is exciting for many people. As Ari says, that is a "sure path to chaos."
- Who will sign off on your response?

\* Robyn Sefiani, Sefiani Communications Group, personal e-mail with author, March 5, 2010.

<sup>†</sup> Ari Newman, "Social Media War Rooms [and Why You Need One], iMedia Connection Blog, <http://www.imediaconnection.com/content/26607.asp>, April 28, 2010.

- What is the plan? What is the first thing that happens when a crisis is detected, and what steps follow as you rally the team and form your plan? What are the rules of engagement? Which social media critics will you respond to, and how?
- Who has access to the social media monitoring and messaging systems that power the war room, and what are they allowed to do with them? (You do need to decide exactly who is authorized to tweet and post on the company's behalf, and this needs to be well understood *before* a crisis hits.)\*

### WHAT TOOL TO CHOOSE WHEN?

So we know social media tools have their place in crisis media management. How do you decide which one to use when?

First things first! Like any good, professional communicator, you need to establish goals for your social media outreach. You need to know who is out there. What are the social media habits of your key audiences, and how do they connect with you *and* the traditional media in a crisis.

Matthew Kaskavitch, new media consultant, says you need to understand what tool is going to give you the most value. Understand the likely return on investment. Just because there is another application on the iPhone does not mean you have to use it! Beware the shiny new object syndrome.

Make sure your social media efforts are "message driven not channel driven ... focus on people when formulating your social media crisis plan"<sup>†</sup> is the advice from the American Public Health Association Expert Round Table on Social Media and Risk Communication during Times of Crisis.

And make sure, too, that your goals are focused on building a strong, active community and authentic two-way relationships based on trust. Creating Facebook and Twitter accounts is just the first step. It is easy to get started in social media, but you need to stay engaged to get the solid return on your investment. The right engagement, no matter how challenging, pays off in a crisis.

Table 29.2 gives a brief overview of what tools might work and when, according to the stage methodology.

\* Ari Newman, "Social Media War Rooms [and Why You Need One], iMedia Connection Blog, <http://www.imediaconnection.com/content/26607.asp>, April 28, 2010.

† Booz Allen Hamilton, "Goodbye Sources, Messages, Channels and Receivers: Hello Network," White Paper from American Public Health Association Expert Round Table on Social Media and Risk Communication during Times of Crisis, [www.boozallen.com/consulting-services/services\\_article/42420696](http://www.boozallen.com/consulting-services/services_article/42420696), March 2009, p. 3.



**Table 29.2** Tips for Using Social Media during Emergencies

Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three	Stage Four
Twitter covers breaking news.	Publish tweets with links to your Web site for more details (remember to incorporate # tags).	Post updates on Facebook to show what you are doing to fix the problem and to ensure it doesn't happen again.	Tweet updates on Twitter.
Video posted to YouTube.	Establish Facebook presence.	Publish video updates on YouTube if needed.	On Facebook, post updates about stories learned, pictures of team meetings, pictures of the memorial service, pictures of the products back on the shelves.
Antifan Club established on Facebook.	<p>Publish messages on Facebook for more personal contact.</p> <p>Manage rumors; provide updates, reports, and context on key social media sites.</p> <p>Post relevant pictures, videos, and footage on Facebook and YouTube, showing the human side of the story.</p> <p>Respond to criticism, demonstrating the action you are taking; tweet and blog.</p> <p>Publish links to interviews with talking heads and apologies on Web site, Facebook.</p>	Tweet updates and links to more information.	Flickr, too, for the all important human interest and to show your people in action.

(continued)

**Table 29.2** Tips for Using Social Media during Emergencies (Continued)

Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three	Stage Four
	Consider publishing a statement on LinkedIn in any groups in which your company or employees are active.		
	Showcase heroes on YouTube, Flickr, Facebook.		
	On Flickr, post relevant pictures that show your actions.		
	Demonstrate care and concern and show employees working. (Flip cameras are an invaluable tool.)		

### INTEGRATE SOCIAL MEDIA INTO PLANNING

Now, how to integrate the Web and social media into the crisis planning, particularly if you have a tiny staff or there is just one of you:

1. Find a partner to collaborate with you. Or have an intern—working to strict guidelines and criteria—from one of the many communication schools work with you to help build your online presence.
2. Partner with an outside agency with excellent Web credentials and have them be part of your crisis drill. It is critical that you have complete trust in them, as Kris Olson of Innovis Health advocates. She did not even speak once with her agency during their 10-day flood emergency in Fargo, North Dakota, in March 2009. They communicated by e-mail the entire time, so the team could get on with their jobs. Olson says they understood the values of the organization and were able to clearly interpret her e-mail “brain-dump.” That type of service is invaluable in a crisis.

\* Kris Olson (Vice President of Marketing, Quality, and Physicians, Innovis Health, Fargo, North Dakota), interview with author, March 12, 2010.

*WHERE? NEW MEDIA TOOLS*

3. Integrate the Web team and social media team into your drills and planning so you know your media relations efforts will run smoothly when the proverbial ... hits the fan.

One thing is for sure: You not only need a technically savvy person but a social media-savvy person working in sync with you in a crisis. You do not want to be figuring this out when the spotlight is on you and you have only hours if not minutes to respond.