



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

University of Wollongong
Research Online

University of Wollongong in Dubai - Papers

University of Wollongong in Dubai

2011

Protecting from brand burn during times of crisis: Mumbai 26/11: A case of the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower Hotel

Melodena Stephens Balakrishnan

University of Wollongong, melodena@uow.edu.au

Publication Details

Balakrishnan, M. Stephens. 2011, 'Protecting from brand burn during times of crisis: Mumbai 26/11: A case of the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower Hotel', *Management Research Review* (previously *Management Research News*), vol. 34, no. 12, pp. 1309-1334.

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library:
research-pubs@uow.edu.au



**Preventing Brand Burn during Times of Crisis:
Mumbai 26/11- A case of the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower
Hotel**

Journal:	<i>Management Research Review</i>
Manuscript ID:	MRR-Sep-2010-0129.R1
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	Brand Architecture, Brand Components, Crisis Management, Communication, Case Study

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

Protecting from Brand Burn during Times of Crisis: Mumbai
26/11: A case of the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower Hotel

Need for Research on Managing the Impact of Terrorism on Brands

Terrorism: A Crisis with Ripple Effects

Crises, like terrorism, are one-off events with five characteristics (1) the onset of the event is sudden; (2) it is not easily predictable; (3) there is a high potential for loss and threat to survival; (4) the decision time for actions is short; and (5) it has a ripple effect on the brand, organization, industry, customer, community and place (Keown-McMullan, 1997; Mendonça *et al.*, 2009:25). The impact of a crisis is magnified through – traditional, social media and citizen journalism (Smallman and Weir, 1999). The impact of a terrorist risk leads to a drop in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of up to 5% of GDP (Abadie and Gardeazabal, 2007) affecting the competitive advantage of the industry and place (Day *et al.*, 2004).

The impact of a terrorist crisis like 9-11 (*see Figure 1*) shows that it has the ability to send ripples across countries even after a decade affecting governments, economies, industries, societies and perceptions. The crisis led to the War on Terror: cost estimation- over 1 trillion (Thompson, 2008); contribution to increases of oil price (BBC, 2008); affecting domestic and international airline and travel industry (Gill, 2008); and hurting the perception of ‘Brand America’. The death toll of nearly 3000 people during 9/11, has escalated to an additional 4500 American military personal; 33,000 injured (Powers, 2010); 2540 American civilian contractors and another 66,450 injured (Overseas Civilian Contractors, 2011). The returning wounded USA

1
2
3
4
5 soldiers are suffering from mental problems and hearing loss (Carter, 2008) which will further
6
7 tax the US economy in terms of continued benefits. Research in the Terrorist crisis management
8
9 is needed since the spillover effects are high
10

11
12 According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, a US government security
13
14 organization, terrorism prevention measures are limited (2003b:1-1) which makes this area of
15
16 research an important field of study. Unfortunately, there is a general perception that
17
18 organizations are more immune to terrorism as they are not considered likely targets (Then and
19
20 Loosemore, 2006) nor is terrorism considered as the top ten risks most business leaders reflect
21
22 upon for prevention (Global Risk Management Survey 2009); indicating there is both a practical
23
24 and potential theoretical significance to this research (Elliot *et al.*, 2005).
25
26
27
28
29
30

31 ***Terrorism can erode Organizational Performance through Brands***

32
33 A brands' current level of functioning affects organizational performance (Aaker, 1995). Within
34
35 the luxury hotel industry; brand loyalty, brand awareness and perceived quality positively affect
36
37 an organisation's performance (Kim and Kim, 2005). Pre-crisis loyalty and familiarity acts as a
38
39 buffer against product-harm crisis, though this resilience decreases over time (Cleeren *et al.*,
40
41 2008). Firms with good reputation suffer more than those with a poor reputation when they make
42
43 mistakes (Rhee and Haunschild, 2006). The way in which brand crisis is managed may
44
45 influence the brand value (Day *et al.*, 2004) and may result in a 73% drop in market share
46
47 (Jensen 1993) and/or a 22% difference in market capitalization (Knight and Pretty, 1997).
48
49 Effective crisis responses can help stock price recover quickly (Knight and Pretty 1997). The
50
51 management of brands requires a current audit and ongoing assessment of brand capability in
52
53
54
55
56

order to withstand brand burn for multiple scenarios. Studies on spill-over describes this as a phenomena where information influences beliefs that are not directly addressed in communication resulting in transference across attributes and brand portfolios (*see Ahluwalia et al., 2001; Balachander and Ghose 2003*). These findings strongly indicate that brand crisis cannot be easily contained. The commonly used communication strategy of denial, affects the brand negatively when there is no spillover (Roehm and Tybout, 2006) which means organizations should also predict multiple scenarios when managing a brand crisis.

Research in crisis management

Most crises studies do not focus on the “soft” sectors of the economy (that is, service sector) (Mostafa, *et al.*, 2004: 399). A review of 223 articles from 8 journals on the hospitality and tourism sector published between 2002-2003 by Oh *et al.*, (2004) finds that only 0.9% of the total articles addressed brand related studies; 1.8% addressed image and 2.2% focused on public relations and crisis management. There are very few scholarly peer reviewed journal articles available within the database when searching using the key words “crisis” and “brand management” (*see Table 1*). There is “scant international literature relating to brand management during crisis situations” (Eagle *et al.*, 2005: 310).

Subsequently, there are few articles on managing brands during a time of crisis. Tew *et al.* (2008) presents a holistic approach on how to manage the SARS crisis through effective communication and brand positioning; however, not much details are provided on how this is to be done. Dahlen and Lange (2006) studies brand contagion during a publicity crisis and finds that brand crisis affects the category and perception of attributes negatively. A few articles

1
2
3
4
5 discuss reputation which has a strong communication overlap (*see* Coombe and Holladay, 2009;
6
7 Gertsen *et al.*, 2009; Vassilikopoulou *et al.*, 2009). Dawar and Lei (2009) reports that brand
8
9 associations and hierarchy and their impact on brand for a crisis response through an experiment.
10
11 Eagle *et al.*, (2005) find that a crisis impacts brand and category loyalty. Manning (2007) and
12
13 Kahuni *et al.*, (2009) find crises have a spillover effect on associated brands. Keller and
14
15 Lehmann (2006) do not identify brand management during crisis as an area of research in their
16
17 recommended areas of future brand research. Additionally, there are no brand management
18
19 models for application during a crisis.
20
21
22

23
24 Few articles focus on terrorism and its management practices. Lerbringer (1997) looks at
25
26 acts of malevolence and suggests reducing vulnerability, gathering intelligence, managing
27
28 security, encouraging law enforcement and damage control but again these are not brand
29
30 management specific. Then and Loosemore (2006) studies the preparedness for a terrorist attack
31
32 and finds it low. Mendonca *et al.*, (2009) looks at wild card planning or scenario planning
33
34 highlighting 9-11. Abadie and Gardeazabal (2007) presents findings on large-scale impact of
35
36 terrorism on economy. Malhotra and Venkatesh (2009: 72) say, “*Effective pre-crisis planning*
37
38 *thus emerges as an essential responsibility of the hospitality and the tourism industry as a whole*
39
40 *and it is hoped that this account has helped to make the point that pre-crisis planning is an*
41
42 *essential step in preparing for the unexpected.*” “*Moreover, scholars must give additional*
43
44 *attention to emergent phenomena in the crisis, preparedness, damage limitation and recovery*
45
46 *phases of an organization*” (Paraskevas, 2006:904). Hence, this is an area of research that has a
47
48 theoretical gap.
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56

Research Objective and Methodology

This research is exploratory (Cresswall, 1998) and the objective is to propose a framework for strategic brand management during a terrorism crisis by addressing the research question: ‘How do you protect a brand impacted by terrorism?’ The sub questions are: ‘What are the various stages of a crisis you need to protect a brand through? What are various methods that can be used to protect a brand?’ Since the study is exploratory, qualitative case study methodology using a single case was used (Yin, 1993). Darling (1994) stresses that each case is unique. Carroll (2009: 67) highlights, “*Newer case studies need to be researched, so that a deeper understanding of the dynamics and nuances of communicating during a crisis can be obtained....*”. Single case methodology was used to study crises like the Asian Financial Crisis (Ang *et al.*, 2000); Cadbury Salmonella effect (Carroll 2009); the effect of recall on medicine (Eagle *et al.*, 2005); the 2007 Formula One spying scandal involving the Vodafone McLaren-Mercedes Formula One team (Kahuni *et al.*, 2009); financial restatement and their impact on reputation (Gertsen *et al.*, 2009) and GlaxoSmithKline’s Ribena case (Jaques 2008). This type of methodology is suitable for a case with multiple dimensions and large spillover.

The paper begins with a detailed literature review of the key stages of a crisis. From a branding perspective, the focus of the study is brand architecture and brand components. Database search using keywords like communication, crisis management, organizational perception, reputation management, scandals, impact management, brand strategy, brand image, brand reputation, reputation damage, terrorism, product recalls, public relations strategy, disaster management and trust was used to identify relevant literature (Pollard and Hotho, 2006). Based on the comprehensive review, a series of propositions is developed.

1
2
3
4
5 Data was collected through secondary research sources using first-person account
6
7 narratives and key decision maker interviews broadcasted live on television (TV) through
8
9 transcripts, articles published in the popular press, academic journals, industry or organization
10
11 reports, briefings, and presentations (Tew *et al.*, 2008; Eagle *et al.*, 2005; Jaques, 2008; Kahuni
12
13 *et al.*, 2009; Gertsen *et al.*, 2009). In addition, data was collected through social media such as
14
15 blogs, Twitter and Flickr. This allows for cross verification with theory (Yin 1994:21) and cross
16
17 verification of the multiple responses providing “a lens through which the apparently
18
19 independent and disconnected elements of existence are seen as related parts of a whole”
20
21 (Polkinghorne, 1988:36). In addition, for triangulation, four independent reviewers verified
22
23 whether the propositions were supported: one from the hospitality industry; two from the
24
25 reputation/crisis management industry and a practitioner who managed an organization that was
26
27 subject to a sudden macro-environmental crisis to validate findings. Finally, a conceptual model
28
29 is presented and discussed.
30
31
32
33
34
35

36 **Literature Review: Protecting from Brand Burn**

37 *Deconstructing a Crisis for Brand Management*

38
39
40 There are three chronological stages in the crisis management model. Theory from crisis and
41
42 brand management are combined to develop a holistic timeline for response (*see* Darling, 1994;
43
44 Day *et al.*, 2004; Elliot *et al.*, 2004; Elsbach, 2003; Fink, 1986; James and Wooten, 2005;
45
46 Keown-McMullan, 1997; Malhotra and Venkatesh, 2009; Meyer, 1982; Ritchie, 2004:674; Tew
47
48 *et al.*, 2008; Wang 2009). Different stages require different responses and by understanding the
49
50 three stages, it is possible to build theory on how to manage brands during a crisis.
51
52
53
54
55
56

Stage I: Prodromal stage (early warning signals). In the Prodrone crisis stage, the objective is to take control quickly and effectively in order to resolve the crisis by finding a turning point that can make a crisis an opportunity (Darling, 1994; Fink, 1986; Lerbinger, 1997). This stage is proactive (Meyer, 1982; Ritchie, 2004). At the brand level, it requires preventative planning, creative thinking and teamwork at organizational, industry, regional and national levels (Tew *et al.*, 2008).

Stage II: “The Crisis”. This stage is comprised of four sub-stages. First, the jolt which is the actual point at which the crisis hits. Second, the acute stage when the full impact of the crisis is felt. This is immediately followed by the point of no-return, a stage after which an organization cannot use conventional management tools to deal with the crisis and must engage in reinvention to survive. Lastly, is the chronic (clean-up) stage where the immediate objective becomes to contain and effectively manage the crisis and minimize damage and impact.

Initially, the response often takes the form of reactive strategies, however if there is a good pre-crisis plan which can be more proactive. The decisions adopted during a crisis are very different from routine decisions because of the lack of information, the uncertainty of impact and the complexity of the decision process (Dearstyne, 2007). This type of scenario which is unique, threatening, and a stress-inducing decision-making environment, must be dealt within a timely and consistent manner through knowledge management (Garcia, 2006; Wang 2009); by focusing on ending the crisis through (Darling, 1994); keeping the information flowing (Day *et al.*, 2004) and by using organizational values as guidance (Smith, 1999). Information flows must

1
2
3
4
5 take into account key stakeholders (Mateja, 1987) especially as a crisis destroys the formal
6
7 structure and the individual takes precedence (Smallman and Weir, 1999).
8
9

10 Early warning signals though recognizable are not always actionable till the chronic
11
12 stage. At this stage, crisis management literature strongly points at (1) working with the industry
13
14 (Elliot et al., 2005) (2) not pointing fingers (Kahuni *et al.*, 2009) and (3) using media as a
15
16 communication tool to restore confidence (Tew *et al.*, 2008). Part of stakeholder management is
17
18 moving away from blame (not how it happened but making sure it does not happen again),
19
20 ensuring there is no public conflict, protecting key sponsors and partners and ensuring that there
21
22 is an appearance of a crisis task team in charge (Kahuni *et al.*, 2009: 60).
23
24
25

26 In terms of branding, the impact of the crisis can be relooked in terms of brand
27
28 components: functional (loss of life; property; business) and symbolic (loss of information;
29
30 psychological impact; impact on market perceptions – loss of reputation affecting
31
32 brand/corporate value; loss of stakeholder confidence – media/suppliers) which bridge credence
33
34 and experience attributes leading to reputation and closer relationships (*see* Keller, 1995; Mowle
35
36 & Merrilees, 2005; Sirgy & Su, 2000). The classification from functional to symbolic can change
37
38 based on the perspective given (Balakrishnan *et al.*, 2011), so reframing becomes important.
39
40 During a crisis, a brand should be managed from an integrated point of view, considering the
41
42 public perceptions and not just key stakeholders (Tew *et al.*, 2008). Life, property and business
43
44 are functional brand components which are tangible and intrinsic to the brand. Information,
45
46 psychological, perceptions and stakeholder confidence are symbolic as they can also impact
47
48 consumers and affect higher order motives (emotions, relationships, experiences). The control
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56

over communication, working with stakeholders, and quick and effective decision making are vital at this stage (Meyer 1982; Ritchie 2004).

Stage III: Audit Stage. The final stage is the aftermath which includes the chronic (audit) stage. This is technically the end of the crisis stage. It presents an opportunity for an organization to learn and prepare for future crisis, heal and move forwards (Loosemore, 2000; Ritchie, 2004). Speed and managing public relations are still important which increases the need for constant understanding of the customer perception of reality (Ashcroft 1997). Positive media information, more than negative media, has a greater impact on showcasing organizational social responsibility, influencing customer’s general impressions and their future buying intentions (Vassilikopoulou *et al.*, 2009). The perception of indifference is often the largest contributor to the aftermath of a crisis and can cause the public to become unforgiving (Garcia, 2006). Authenticity through communication plays a key role in building, sustaining, and defending reputation through credible responses in the form of behavior and by restoring trust, authenticity rescues a brand in crisis (Greyser 2009). These actions can build a “reputational reservoir” through reinforcement from experts and by acknowledging customers as key stakeholders (Elliot *et al.*, 2005). Reputation reservoirs that add to brand image come from the process of healing and moving on (Garcia, 2006) and by being perceived as voluntary actions (Souiden and Pons, 2009). This is a continuous process and must extend long after the crisis has come to some conclusion. During review, preventative plans must be seen in the larger context (Tew *et al.*, 2008) of industry, nation and region completing the 360⁰ cycle of crisis management. The key crisis management steps identified in the above literature are illustrated in Figure 2.

Proposition 1: Managing the reputational reservoir needs proactive actions and information management to prevent brand burn.

Understanding the Brand Scenario

A brand which is “a promise” comes under doubt during a crisis. The spillover of the impact of the crisis on the brand affects the brand associations (product, personality, organization, symbol); perceived brand benefits (functional and emotional) (Wallström *et al.*, 2008); and the product category (Eagle *et al.*, 2005). The crisis impact is determined by the relevance of the crisis to the brand where the crisis occurs in the brand association hierarchy (Dawar and Lei, 2009); the prior reputation of the organization (Carroll, 2009) and customer relationship history (Coombs and Holladay, 2001). This research paper will focus on two aspects of the brand strategy: the brand architecture and brand components.

Brand Architecture: Crisis management perspective

Brand architecture has multiple facets (Aaker, 2004) and cannot be separated as an independent concept from brand extension studies or halo effects (Balachander and Ghose, 2003; Broniarczyk and Gershoff, 2003; Meyvis and Janiszewski, 2004; Simonin and Ruth, 1998). Brand architecture is described as a: specification of brand roles with respect to each other (Anandan *et al.*, 2006); structure of brand relationships in a corporate portfolio (Aaker, 2004; Keller and Lehmann, 2006; Petromilli *et al.*, 2002); transference of image (Uggla, 2006); taxonomy to help organize multiple data points (Cleverdon, 2003; see methodology used by Glenn and Fabricius,

2000); strategy to leverage competencies (Douglas *et al.*, 2001); and a strategy to remain customer focused and increase organizational value (Kumar 2003). Brand architecture plays a role in crisis management (Dawar and Lei 2009). By managing multi-brand platforms, brand architecture can help gain financial and operational synergy (Sköld and Karlsson, 2007: 557) and reduce customer confusion (Petromilli *et al.*, 2002).

The importance of brand architecture is highlighted in both destination marketing and management of brand portfolios (Dawar and Lei, 2009) but there is no research on the use of brand architecture for managing brand burn. Organizations must identify potential brands that have potential positive spillover effects in their portfolio (Simonin and Ruth, 1998). An endorser brand creates a halo effect on the other brands within a portfolio (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000; Kapferer, 2002). Theory indicates that when choosing an endorser brand as a “face” for crisis management, it is important to ensure the perception of this brand is as that of an “empathetic” brand or one “having the human touch”, with more “maturity”, or at least a perception of an older, more responsible action oriented person (Neurofocus 2009; Entine and Miller, 2007). This suggests when managing brand architecture from a crisis point of view, brand protection must be chosen so that the endorser brands has an image of clarity and solid structures like family rather than chaos.

Proposition 2: During a crisis, the endorser brand in the brand architecture can help in preventing brand burn.

Brand Components: Crisis Management Perspective

Brand components are of two types: symbolic and functional (Keller, 1993). Functional brand components are associated with Maslow's lower order needs and are tangible, intrinsic, basic and satisfy primary need (Bhat and Reddy, 1998; de Chernatony *et al.*, 2000; Hankinson, 2004; Keller, 1993). Symbolic brand components are associated with Maslow's higher order needs which are mostly intangible (Keller, 1993; Mowle and Merrilees, 2005; Sirgy and Su, 2000) and include social needs (Bhat and Reddy, 1998); relationship needs (Hankinson, 2005); emotional and psychological needs (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997); and experiences (Gross *et al.*, 2008).

Symbolic Brand Components

Coombs and Holladay (2001: 332) reiterate the importance of looking at the crisis through the symbolic approach and stress that it "*can be used to protect the organization's reputation and to affect stakeholders' future interactions with the organization.*" The symbolic approach is part of the reframing technique popularized by Bolman and Deal (2003) where the focus is to get legitimacy, external confidence and faith and it works in non-linear situations of uncertainty by creating and giving interpretation to experiences; weaving a cultural tapestry of myths, stories, heroes and heroines, ritual and ceremonies to give a purpose and passion. The reframing technique is useful as the analysis of existing conditions determine the adoption of brand up to 33-65% of the time (Palumbo and Herbig, 2000). Symbolic components create differentiation between places (Hankinson 2004), a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Mowle and Merrilees, 2005) and play an important role in luxury brands (Jamal and Goode, 2001).

Emotional components are symbolic and easier to translate through word of mouth (WOM), as they have more relevance and greater appeal in times of crisis, giving maximum

variance to the personality of a place (Hosany *et al.*, 2007). Emotional connections, an ignored research area, is more effective for communication as it synergizes all five senses though Lindstrom (2005) finds 99% of brand communication focuses on two senses – sight and sound. WOM’s importance is highlighted from the findings of a survey of 25,000 people which reports that 90% of the people trust recommendations from people they know (Nielsen IAG, 2009). Even social media works as internet users trust online recommendation (Nielsen Media, 2007) and blogs (NeuroFocus, 2009). Positive WOM builds brand image (Grace and O’Cass, 2002; Gremler and Brown, 1999; Wangeheim and Bayón, 2004). During a crisis, WOM based on past positive emotions can be used to protect a brand from burn especially as the system is in a dynamic in rapid flux.

Proposition 3: During a crisis, when functional components are affected, the key to resolution will be to change focus to symbolic components to minimize brand burn.

Proposition 4: The use of WOM of past positive experiences can help reframe to a symbolic context preventing brand burn.

Brand Communication during a crisis

Studies on recession show that consumers believe when a company does not advertise during recession, its business must be struggling (Ad-ology Research, 2009). Similarly, a Nielsen IAG study (2009) finds that when there are investment concerns due to market conditions, the confidence in an organization can be increased by communicating regularly using advertising,

mail, email offers, internet advertising and positive press stories. Positive press stories build confidence more effectively than the rest of the communication channels (44% of the respondents approved versus 25-20% for other channels).

Memory for information about the companies would decay after one week, hence potentially sticky situations can be avoided if contained with a flood of positive articles instead (Payne, 2006). This finding indicates that during a crisis brands must keep on communicating with customers to ensure that its brand value does not corrode. This leads to the third proposition. Traditional media like newspapers, TVs, magazines and radios are considered more trustworthy than on-line forms of advertising (Nielsen Media, 2007). A common message reduces uncertainty and manages a brand during a crisis (Tew *et al.*, 2008).

Proposition 5: The brand needs to proactively engineer positive media stories with a common message so that brand burn is minimized.

26/11: Understanding the Crisis in Mumbai from the Taj Case Study Perspective

On 26 November 2008, Mumbai, the commercial capital of India was under a terrorist attack that paralyzed the city for over 60 hours. This ordeal was televised live, with real-time images posted on Flickr and tweets sounding around the world. Terrorists attacked five star hotels and other landmarks taking 163 lives (Nair, 2008a) who were mostly Indians (83%). Over 350 people were physically injured. The crisis affected 'Brand India' – with hotels at the national level facing a

60% cancellation in bookings and Indian economy loosing USD 100 billion immediately after the crisis (knowledgeindia@wharton.com, 2008). Society was affected by fear psychosis and survivors guilt.

Though all hotels had been warned of a potential terrorist attack months in advance and many precautions may have been in place, the attacks still came as a surprise and the overall administrative and police response was slow. The information overload hampered with security operations. The 60 hour live television coverage (all 30 of the Indian channels and other international channels) described the details of the commandos operations. This was reinforced by real-time citizen journalism (Gauravonomics, nd). Twitter reports appeared before major TV networks picked up the story and social media became the source of later TV coverage.

The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower: Pre-crisis Brand Context

The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower (Taj) had a high brand value pre-crisis. The parent company, (Indian Hotels Company) IHCL stock was performing in line with the market. (Tata Investor, 2010). On 26th November, Taj had some 1000 guests including high profile events like a global Unilever Board Member Meeting, a wedding and two other key corporate events (Perumal, nd).

Brand Architecture: The brand architecture of Taj is complex. The Taj is the 107 year old flagship hotel of The Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces which is composed of The Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) and its subsidiaries. The Taj was the first 5 star hotel in India and played a significant role in Indian history.

The Taj group is the largest Indian chain of hotels in South Asia with internationally acclaimed palaces and hotels like The Pierre, on New York's Fifth Avenue and the Blue, Sydney in its' portfolio. In terms of brand architecture, IHCL uses the hybrid model where there is a strong corporate brand (Taj) but some flexibility with individual divisions to position themselves against competitors in their respective niches (Anandan *et al.*, 2006). The Taj brand, infrastructure and service are considered key competitive advantages as it is a pioneer in the Indian food & beverage experience (Annual Report 2009:23). In 2003, the Taj group of hotels restructured the brand architecture and restricted the use of the brand name "Taj" to the luxury segment which contributes about 70% of its revenues (Zachariah, 2008).

In the bigger schema, Taj is a part of the Tata house of brands which acts as endorser. There is a halo effect from the house of Tatas, a 140 year old brand: total revenues of USD 70.8 Billion (2008-09) with an international contribution of 64.7%. This international recognition was enhanced with Tata's high profile takeover of Jaguar Land Rover in 2009. In addition, Ratan Tata, the Chairman of Tata and Sons adds his personal brand aura to the hotel (Kneale, 2009; Harvard Business School, 1995; Brand Finance, 2009). Taj is embedded in the Indian context of the "Incredible India" campaign, which was said to have had the highest brand recall worldwide for travel and leisure making India a leading destination according to the World Travel Awards and Condé Nast Traveller (Annual Report, 2009). The brand context of Taj is shown in Figure 3.

When the crisis hit, two key questions emerged, what is the perceived relevance of the crisis with the Taj brand and the customer's familiarity with the Taj brand? Since the attack was in the Hotel, the perceived relevance was strong as a key functional benefit of any hotel is

security. Since the brand familiarity of Taj locally, nationally and internationally was high, the challenge was to minimize the damage and reframe.

Brand Components: Being a luxury brand, Taj’s 2008 brand campaigns focused on symbolic elements (Analyst Meet, 2008). “*The Taj brand will strive to deliver to its guests a sense of discovery. We recognize the importance of the human spirit and the human soul in caring for others... Our commitment is to make the Taj a byword for luxury and the Taj Mahal a synonym for splendor*” (Bickson, 2003). The media mix was magazines like Condé Nast Traveler, Travel & Leisure, Forbes, Fortune, Business Week, the Economist and airport departures terminals symbolically representing luxury, travel and business customer segment.

Brand Management During the Crisis

Phase 1: Prodromal Stage: Before November 26, 2008

Preventive strategies are important in the prodromal stage. Taj implemented the following preventive measures. They had security systems which prevented cars from parking in front of the entrance, had scanners and security checks at entrances, CCTV and sniffer dogs at the back entrance. Ratan Tata (2008) emphasized the measures would have been inadequate since the terrorists entered from the back alleys. Experts say that for this level of terrorism, there are very few measures that can be taken (FEMA, 2003). In the hospitality and tourism sector, the challenges in planning for such crisis is that an outward show of security can demoralize prospective guests (Balakrishnan *et al.*, 2011). At this stage, brand components focus is

functional in addition to the symbolic elements depicted in Figure 4 with a discrete emphasis on security.

Phase 2: Crisis Phase: November 26, 2008-November 29, 2008

Managing information and Proactive damage control

The Taj management reacted by immediately creating a war room in the office behind the Taj. It posted updates on a newly established microsite and manned 24/7 to keep the community informed of all the happenings (Annual Report, 2009). Dr. Leslie Gaines-Ross, Weber Shandwick's Chief Reputation Strategist commented on her blog that the microsite was the "*best practice of how web sites should communicate after tragic events befall them*" (2008). All senior managers were on hand to minimize collateral damage, save lives and help Indian intelligence since the security crisis needed collaboration with civic, state and national governments.

For Taj, the stakeholders were employees, customers and key investors. Information was managed first at organizational level (staff trapped within were in touch with Taj management), then at the stakeholder level (Taj management was in touch with key stakeholders, customers, government and quasi government authorities and media). Of the 1710 staff, 592 of them were on duty on that day (Moreton, 2008; Perumal, nd). Considering the loss of life (31 people) and the dramatic situation in which it happened, Taj minimized blaming others but strongly insisted that a crisis plan needs to be in place from state and national authorities. It took the National Security Guards 10 hours to arrive after the crisis started. It took over 3 hours for the fire station to reach water to the 6th floor to extinguish flames by which at this time the general manager's (Karamveer Singh Kang's) family (wife and two kids) were burnt to death in the bathroom. At

1
2
3
4
5 this point, citizen journalism was rampant and unmanaged. From the company viewpoint, Taj
6
7 telephone operators systematically called each room informing guests to lock their doors and not
8
9 stand by the windows. A help line was established in Wellington Mews (serviced apartments)
10
11 indicating some non-traditional media to manage panic. Here we can incur some support for
12
13 Proposition 1. Taj was proactive in keeping the information flowing, enhancing their reputational
14
15 reservoir despite being constrained by some external stakeholders' lack of preparedness.
16
17
18
19

20
21 *Brand Architecture*
22

23
24 Though the IHCL group was involved, the brand linkage was India, Mumbai, Taj and Tatas . A
25
26 strong show of solidarity was seen through the involvement of the Tata patriarch, Ratan Tata
27
28 who was constantly in touch with RK Krishna Kumar, the Vice President, IHCL. At this stage
29
30 reframing was taking place – making it a national security crisis; with a unified message
31
32 emerging from IHCL, Taj group and Tatas through Ratan Tata and R K Krishna Kumar as key
33
34 spokespeople. Official channels were used for communication and messages focused on
35
36 empathy, what Taj/Tata were doing to help and reinforcing relevance. By using the Tata endorser
37
38 brand, the focus on Taj security became refocused on Indian security. The endorser brand and
39
40 the empathy showed helped to further cement the bonds with the public. This was in spite of a
41
42 negative media story circulating that speculated about how the terrorists seemed to know the
43
44 layout of hotel very well. By keeping limited spokespeople and flooding the media with positive
45
46 stories; it is evident that Taj avoided a potentially tricky situation, therefore there is much
47
48 support for proposition 1 (building the reputational reservoir through managing information), 2
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56

(using the endorser – Tata, Ratan Tata) and some support for Proposition 3 (refocusing away from Taj to Nation).

Symbolic Reframing: The Human element and Distancing from the Event

Most Mumbaites lived vicariously through the ordeal by TV coverage hence there was a need to get the stakeholders to move away from functional components (security, loss of life) to symbolic frames. Interviews to media was provided by official spokespersons who were very experienced and highly regarded in society. The common message was that this attack was an attack on India and the strength of the Taj group was its people who were willing to lay their lives down for the patrons. Press releases were on the history of Taj, its role in the Indian independence, the Founder's indomitable spirit and his contribution to Indian industrial development and similar inspiring stories. Personal stories from Ratan Tata's childhood and his personal commitment to rebuilding the Taj added symbolic value. Tata said "*I can only say that it (Taj) somehow epitomizes the will of my great grandfather, because it stood up to all the abuse it has. And we will have it in shape, hopefully for another 100 years*". By 29th November, stories of staff heroics like the bravery of the GM who lost his entire family during the crisis and continued to work even after a visibly moved Tata requested him to stop, were in the media.

The Tata group with every press statement reinforced that this was an attack on India. That it was a fight against terrorism. "*We cannot replace the lives that have been lost and we will never forget the terrifying events of last night, but we must stand together, shoulder to shoulder as citizens of India, and rebuild what has been destroyed. We must show that we cannot be disabled or destroyed, but that such heinous acts will only make us stronger. It is important that*

we do not allow divisive forces to weaken us. We need to overcome these forces as one strong unified nation.” Tata said (2008b). This cry seems to be carried by most media in their headlines and the representation of this crisis was often the picture of Taj Mahal Palace which symbolically represented the war on terror. Therefore, it is evident that there is support for Proposition 3 (symbolically making this a national and international issue of terrorism), 4 (WOM – stories of staff and historical anecdotes) and 5 (constant positive media releases).

Phase 3 Crisis Resolution and Review: November 29 onwards

Managing information and Proactive damage control

A search through the newspaper reports and blogs finds no staff interviews or comments other than the official communication, which indicates that Taj took a unified stance in communication (supporting proposition 3). Leaders like Ratan Tata standing by through the entire 60 hours, added to the credibility to the communication (Smith 1999). Taj and Tata became proactive and instead of taking a defensive stance, they firstly thanked all security, police, fire, hospital and other personal and secondly, set up a welfare fund, “Taj Public Service Welfare Trust”, which benefited all victims of the Mumbai Terror attack, not just the ones connected with the Taj. Donations were used for providing medical support and relief to victims. This increased goodwill and strengthened the bond with the endorser brand, the Tata group which gave the Taj Mahal brand an anchor. The Tatas are well established industry spearheads in India and known for philanthropy. This also established a positive link with Mumbai. There is strong support for Proposition 1 (proactive and constant information flow), Proposition 2 (using the Tata as

endorser), Proposition 3 (reframing to national issue of terrorism and public support); and Proposition 5 (positive media stories – donation and relief for victims).

Brand Architecture: We see the House of Tata through Ratan Tata acting as a strong Halo brand on Taj. This helped in reaching out and highlighting issues in the minds of people like Patriotism for Indians, the Fight Against Terror for international guests and drawing on the 100 years of history. Ratan Tata and senior managers met every staff member and their families affected by the event (Economic Times, 2009). There is continued support at this stage for Proposition 2.

Brand Components and Communication: Though there was some emphasis on functional components, the message was symbolic – we deliver the best service. A guest outreach program was put together by Taj to contact each and every guest who was staying there making sure that all luggage was retrieved and delivered (Annual Report, 2009). Emotional advertisements like the “I will Prevail” and “Welcome Home Again” (see Figure 5) were released in public media (adfaq.com, 2008); and for the re-opening invitations were sent to the 200,000 database (Annual report, 2009). Not a single staff member was retrenched during renovations (Tata Media release, 2008); all salaries paid (Perumal, nd) and employees provided psychological support through group and individual counseling, town hall meetings, workshops, meditation programs and professional training on a regular basis (Economic Times, 2009; Moreton, 2008; Perumal, nd). Psychological support is neglected in crisis management (Day *et al.*, 2004; Everly, 2000). Employee welfare tools extended the context of brand architecture to reframe the situation away from brand performance (functional) into symbolism (emotional) and create a highly empathetic

and caring outreach program adding to the reputational reservoir through authenticity (support for Proposition 3).

Another interesting point was that the Taj refused to use a burning Taj image in any of its communication contrary to what was being used by popular press. All communication showed the Taj in its entire splendor and words alone were used to represent the grief. The “*I Will Prevail*” advertisement (Figure 4) was released immediately after the crisis as a full-page ad in Indian newspapers and across the world. The media partners showed their support by either heavily discounting the advertisements or running it free. This strategy seems to have prevented brand burn as it emphasized the direction and commitment Taj had and their “*Can Do*” spirit of fighting against all the odds. This rallied the public and even shareholders. This shifted the focus from the 31 fatalities to the 1000+ guests saved. The proactive and voluntary approach that Taj took added to its brand image.

IHCLs' vice chairman RK Krishna Kumar said, "*In those three terrible nights, they defined new standards for the industry. The evil and death inflicted on us have been redeemed by the extraordinary spirit shown by our staff*" (Tata Media Release, 2008). Within 23 days the Taj Towers was re-opened. Symbolically this was an indication that they would overcome. This was an industry effort with the Oberoi's re-opening Trident, another terrorist attacked hotel. The best international designers and experts were used in restoration (Annual Report, 2009:29). A multi-religion ceremony and a memorial marble slab with the inscription ‘For now and forever you will always inspire us’, bearing a list of the victims found a permanent place in the lobby (Kripalani, 2008; rediff.com 2008). A bronze statue of the tree of life that had survived a bomb attack on the burnt, gutted 6th floor was kept next to the memorial as a symbolic representation

that Taj will go on and prevail. For the re-opening, over 1200 staff served the 1600 guests who came, and all restaurant bookings were sold out in a show of solidarity (Economic Times, 2009; Nair 2008b; Tata Media Release 2008). There is further support for Propositions 3 (symbolism),⁴ (WOM brings Mumbai, staff and survivors together) and 5 (media stories of each step forward).

Epilogue: Brand Burn Contained

The insurers paid for the first installment of the USD 2.2 Billion without the company claiming it (Tiwari, 2008). The 565-room property was fully reopened in 2010. All phased opening are seeing an overwhelming number of bookings especially for restaurants (Baggonkar, 2009). No traces remain of those horrible 60 hours. But the spirit lives on in the stories, the tales and most importantly the people (like the GM) who are the living personification of the Taj brand. The Taj share price continues to move with the market (TataInvestor, 2010), indicating that the brand did survive brand burn. Hence we conclude that Brand burn can be prevented using proactive actions and information management focused on building a reputational reservoir, finding an older, empathetic endorser brand in the brand architecture to lean on, reframing from functional to symbolic components, actively engineering WOM and keeping a common message.

There are areas for future exploration. Taj did not interact with the social media and citizen journalism was left to censor itself. Using these additional data points it is possible to propose the following framework (Figure 6). Areas of potential improvement in similar context are: management of social media; greater collaboration with industry, civic, state and national

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

organizations; and using the opportunity to bring potential new leaders to the forefront as there is nothing like a test of fire to prove leadership.

Challenges & Future Research

The main challenge with this study was sorting through secondary data. This required cross verification and substantiation from multiple sources. Greyser (2009) states that information on reputation is rarely available from within a company. Data is cross-verified through official media releases. Since there is a dearth of theoretical information on this topic, research findings were extrapolated from general branding, crisis management, communication and product recall literature. More research is required on management of social media and applicability of this model in other contexts. This indicates there is a potential for future research studies within this field of research area. For example, future research is ‘how to contain spillover to the organization and not industry since in normal product crisis the spillover is dependent on the similarity of the brands’ (Roehm and Tybout, 2006). This study provides a theoretical framework and a practical guide on how to protect a brand through a crisis like terrorism.

References

Aaker, D. A. (2004), *Brand Portfolio Strategy: Creating Relevance, Differentiation, Energy, Leverage, and Clarity*. Free Press, Glencoe, IL.

Aaker, D. A. (1995), *Building Strong Brands*. New York: Free Press.

Aaker, D. and Joachimsthaler, E. (2000). The brand relationship spectrum: The key to the brand architecture challenge. *California Management Review*, 42(4): 8 – 23.

Abadie, A. and Gardeazabal, J., (2007), *Terrorism and the World Economy*. Retrieved from <http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~aabadie/twe.pdf>. Accessed 27 December, 2009.

Adfaq.com. (2008), *I will prevail. Welcome home*. Retrieved from http://www.afaqs.com/perl/advertising/creative_showcase/index.html?id=7887&media=Print. Accessed 4 January 2010.

Ad-ology Research study, (2009), “Study: Reduced recession advertising = negative consumer perception”, *Business Week*, June 15, Retrieved from <http://bx.businessweek.com/brand-marketing/view?url=http%3A%2F%2Fjgordon5.typepad.com%2Fblog%2F2009%2F05%2Fstudy-reduced-recession-advertising-negative-consumer-perception.html>. [Accessed 11 September, 2009].

Ahluwalia, Rohini, H. Rao Unnava, and Robert E. Burnkrant (2001), “The Moderating Role of Commitment on the Spillover Effect of Marketing Communications,” *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 38 (November), pp.458–70.

Analyst Meet (2008), *Results for the Nine Months ended December 31*, Raymond Bickson, Anil P Goel, Ajoy Misra. January 28. Retrieved from http://www.tajhotels.com/AboutTaj/InvestorRelations/pdf/Taj_Analyst_Meet_Q3_FY2008.pdf#zoom=100. Accessed 4 January 2010.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Anandan, C., Prasanna M., Raj M. and Ravichandran, K., (2006), “A conceptual framework on brand architecture in the Indian framework”, *SCMS Journal of Indian Management*, Jan-March. Retrieved from http://74.125.155.132/scholar?q=cache:jWMppo6_uHsJ:scholar.google.com/+C.Anandan,+Prasanna+M.,+Raj+M.+%26+Ravichandran,+K.&hl=en&as_sdt=2000. Accessed 3 January, 2010.

Annual Report, (2009), *The Indian Hotels Company Limited*, Retrieved from http://www.tajhotels.com/AboutTaj/InvestorRelations/pdf/IHCL_Annual_Report_2008-2009.pdf#zoom=100. Accessed 3 January 2010.

Ashcroft, L., (1997), “Crisis management – public relations”, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 12, No. 5, pp. 325-332.

Balachander, S. and Ghose, S. (2003), “Reciprocal spillover effects: A strategic benefit of brand extensions”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 67, pp. 4–12.

Balakrishnan, M. S., Nekhili, R., and Lewis, C., (2011), “Destination brand components”, forthcoming in *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 5, No. 1.

Baloglu, S. and Brinberg, D. (1997). Affective images of tourism destinations. *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 35, No.4, pp.11-15.

Baggonkar, S. (2009), “*Taj exorcises ghost of terror*”, 27 November. Retrieved from <http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/taj-exorcises-ghostterror/377812/>. [Accessed December 12, 2009].

BBC (2008), Why the oil price keeps rising, Available: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7431805.stm>, [Accessed: 10 January, 2011].

Bhat, S. and Reddy, S.K. (1998), "Symbolic and functional positioning of brands", *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 32-43.

Bickson, R. (2003), Interview, *Tata Press Release*, Retrieved from <http://www.tata.com/media/interviews/inside.aspx?artid=M9pA90uRlBs=>. June. [Accessed 27 December, 2009].

Bolman, L.G. and Deal, T.E., (2003), *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership*, 3rd Ed., Jossey Bass, John Wile & Sons, San Francisco, CA.

Broniarczyk, S.M., and Gershoff, A.D., (2003), "The reciprocal effects of brand equity and trivial attributes", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 40, pp. 161–175.

Carroll, C. (2009), "Defying a Reputational Crisis – Cadbury 's Salmonella Scare: Why are Customers Willing to Forgive and Forget?", *Corporate Reputation Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 64–82.

Carter, C.J. (2008), "*Hearing loss is epidemic among combat troops*", *Army Times*, Available: http://www.armytimes.com/news/2008/03/ap_hearingloss_030608/ [Accessed 10 January, 2011].

Cleeren, K., Dekimpe, M.G. and Helsen, K. (2008), "Weathering product-harm crises", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 36, pp.262–270.

Coombs, T.W. and Holladay, S.J., (2001), "An Extended Examination of the Crisis Situations: A Fusion of the Relational Management and Symbolic Approaches", *Journal of Public Relations Research*, Vol.13, No. 4, pp. 321–340.

Creswell, J.W. (1998), *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among 5 Traditions*, Sage Publications, CA.

Dahlen, M. and Lange, F. (2006), “How A Brand In Crisis Affects Other Brands”, *Journal of Advertising Research*, December, pp. 338-397.

Darling, J.R., (1994), “Crisis Management in International Business”, *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 8, pp.3-8.

Dawar, N. and Lei, J. (2009), “Brand crises: The roles of brand familiarity and crisis relevance in determining the impact on brand evaluations”, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 62, pp.509–516.

Day, B., McKay, R.B., Ishman, M., and Chung, E., (2004), “It will happen again: what SARS taught businesses about crisis management”, *Management Decision*, Vol. 42, No. 7, pp. 822-836.

de Chernatony, L. and Riley, F.D., (1997), “Modelling the components of the Brand”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 32, No. 11/12, pp. 1074-1090.

Dearstyne, B. (2007), “The FDNY on 9/11: information and decision making in crisis”, *Government Information Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 29-46.

Eagle, L., Hawkins, J., Kitchen, P.J. and Rose, L.C., (2005), “Brand sickness and health following major product withdrawals”, *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 14, No.5, pp. 310–321.

Economic Times, (2009), “Rebuilding Scarred lives, the Tata way”, 26 November. Retrieved from <http://www.tata.com/media/reports/inside.aspx?artid=gLY0ntTFhjI=>. [Accessed 24 December, 2009].

Elliott, D., Harris, K. and Baron, S., (2005), “Crisis management and services marketing”, *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 19, No. 5, pp. 336–345.

Entine, J. and Miller, R., (2007), "Managing Brands under Siege", *The Licensing Book*, American enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Retrieved from <http://www.aei.org/article/26980>. [Accessed December 7, 2009].

Everly, G.S., (2000), "Crisis Management Briefings (CMB): Large Group Crisis Intervention in Response to Terrorism, Disasters, and Violence", *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health*, Retrieved from <http://www.icisf.org/Acrobat%20Documents/TerrorismIncident/cmb.pdf>. [Accessed 1 January, 2010].

Fall, L., (2004), "The increasing role of public relations as a crisis management function", *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 238-252.

Fall, L.T. and Massey, J.E., (2006), *The significance of crisis communication in the aftermath of 9/11*. In Laws, E and Prideaux, B. (Eds.), *Tourism crises: management responses*. 77-90. NY: Hawthorne Hospitality Press.

FEMA (2003), *Reference manual to mitigate potential terrorist attacks against buildings*. Retrieved from <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/plan/prevent/rms/426/fema426.pdf>. [Accessed December 12, 2009].

Fink, S., (1986), "Crisis forecasting", *Management Review*, Vol. 75, No. 3, pp. 52-7.

Gaines-Ross, L. (2008), *Communicating from the Taj*. 13 December. Retrieved from <http://reputationxchange.com/2008/12/13/communicating-from-the-taj/>. [Accessed 10 January 2010].

Garcia, H.F., (2006), "Effective leadership response to crisis", *Strategy & Leadership*, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 4-10.

Gartner, W.C., (1993), *Image formation process*. Ed.Uysal, M., & Fesenmaier, D. Communication and Chanel systems in Tourism Marketing: 191-217. NY: The Hawthorne Press Ltd.

Gauravonomics nd. *Social Media & Citizen Journalism in the 11/26 Mumbai Terror Attacks: A Case Study*. Retrieved from <http://www.gauravonomics.com/blog/social-media-citizen-journalism-in-the-1126-mumbai-terror-attacks-a-case-study/>. [Accessed 5 January 2010].

Gill, K. (2008), "Five years after 9-11, By the Numbers, About.com, US Politics", Available: http://uspolitics.about.com/od/antiterrorism/a/9_11_numbers.htm, [Accessed 9 January, 2011].

Grace, D. and O'Cass, A., (2002), "Brand Associations: looking through the eye of the beholder", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 96-111.

Gremler, D.D. and Brown, S.W. (1999), "The loyalty ripple effect: Appreciating the full value of customers", *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, Vol.10, No. 3, pp. 271-293.

Greyser, S.A. (2009), "Corporate brand reputation", *Management Decision*, Vol. 47, No. 4, pp. 590-602.

Gross, M.J., Brien, C. and Brown, G. (2008), "Examining the dimensions of a lifestyle tourism destination", *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 44-66.

Hankinson, G. (2004), "The brand images of a tourism destination: a study of the saliency of organic images", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 6-14.

Hankinson, G. (2005), "Destination Brand Image: A Business Tourism Perspective", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 24-33.

Harvard Business School Alumni Achievement Awards, (1995). Retrieved from <http://www.alumni.hbs.edu/awards/pastwinners.html>. [Accessed 2 January 2010].

Hosany, S., Ekinici, Y. and Uysal, M. (2007), "Destination image and destination personality", *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol.1, No. 1, pp. 62-81.

Ibrahim, E.E. and Gill, J. (2005), A positioning strategy for a tourist destination, based on analysis of customers' perceptions and satisfactions, *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 172-188.

Jamal, A. and Goode, M.M.H., (2001), "Consumers and brands: a study of the impact of self-image congruence on brand preference and satisfaction", *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, Vol. 19, No. 7, pp. 482-492.

Jensen, J.M. (1993), *A strategic framework for analyzing negative rumors in the market place: the case of wash & go in Denmark*. In: Sirgy, J., Bahn, K.D., & Erem T., (Eds.). *Proceedings of the Sixth B-Annual Conference of the Academy of Marketing Science*: 559-63.

Kahuni, A.B., Rowley, J., and Binsardi, A., (2009), "Guilty by Association: Image 'Spill-over' in Corporate Co-branding", *Corporate Reputation Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 52-63.

Kapferer, J.-N., (2002), *Brand – product relationships. Strategic Brand Management*. New York: Free Press.

Keller, K.L., (1993), “Conceptualizing, measuring and managing customer-based brand equity”, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 57, pp.1-22.

Keller, L. K. and Lehmann, D. R., (2006), “Brands and Branding: Research Findings and Future Priorities”, *Marketing Science*, Vol. 25, No. 6, pp. 740–759.

Keown-McMullan, C. (1997), “Crisis: when does a molehill become a mountain?”, *Disaster Prevention and Management*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 4–10.

Kim, H-B. and Kim, W. G., (2005), “The relationship between brand equity and firms’ performance in luxury hotels and chain restaurants”, *Tourism Management*, Vol. 26, pp. 549–560.

Kneale, K. (2009), “The Most Influential Management Gurus-Thinkers 50”, *Forbes*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/2009/10/13/influential-business-thinkers-leadership-thought-leaders-chart.html>. [Accessed 2 January 2010].

Knight, R.F. and Pretty, D.J. (1994), *The impact of Catastrophes on Shareholder Value: A Research sponsored by Sedgwick group*, The Oxford Research briefings, Templeton College, Oxford.

Knowledgeindia@wharton. (2008), *Terrorist Attacks Will Further Weaken a Slowing Indian Economy*. December 11. Retrieved from <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/india/article.cfm?articleid=4339>. [Accessed December 2, 2009].

Kripalani, M., (2008), “The healing begins”, December 23. *Business Week*. Retrieved from

http://www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/blog/eyeonasia/archives/2008/12/the_healing_beg_1.html. [Accessed December 15, 2009].

Lerbinger, O., (1997), *The Crisis Manager: Facing Risk and Responsibility*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Leisen, B., (2001), "Image segmentation: the case of a tourism destination", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp.49 – 66.

Lindstrom, M., (2005), "Broad sensory branding", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 84-87.

Loosemore, M., (2000), *Crisis Management in Construction Projects*, ASCE Press, Reston, VA.

Palumbo, F. and Herbig, P., (2000), "The multicultural context of brand loyalty", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 123, No. 3, pp. 116-124.

Polkinghorne, D.E., (1988), *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Powers, R. (2010), "The cost of war", About.com, US Military, Available: <http://usmilitary.about.com/od/terrorism/a/iraqdeath1000.htm> [Accessed 5 January, 2011].

Malhotra, R. and Venkatesh, U. (2009), "Pre-crisis period planning: lessons for hospitality and tourism", *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 66-74.

Meenaghan, T., (1995), "The role of advertising in brand image development", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 23-34.

Mostafa, M.M., Sheaff, R., Morris, M. and Ingham, V., (2004), “Strategic preparation for crisis management in hospitals”, *Disaster Prevention and Management*, Vol. 13, No. 5, pp.399-408.

Moreton, A., (2008), “Back in business”, 28 December. Available: <http://www.luxique.com/blog/2008/12/back-in-business/>. [Accessed 6 January, 2010].

Mowle, J. and Merrilees, B. (2005), “A functional and symbolic perspective to branding Australian SME wineries”, *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 220-227.

Meyer, A.D. (1982), “Adapting to Environmental Jolts”, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 27, pp. 515-537.

Mateja, P., (1987). *Marketing News*, Vol. 21, No. 10, pp. 1–3.

Mendonça, S., Pina de Cunha, M., Ruff, F. and Kaivo-oja, J. (2009), “Venturing in preparing for wild cards in civil aircraft and asset-management industries”, *Long Range Planning*, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 23-41.

Meyvis, T., and Janiszewski, C., (2004), “When are broad brands stronger brands? An accessibility perspective on the formation of brand equity”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.31, pp. 346–357.

Mowle, J. and Merrilees, B. (2005), “A functional and symbolic perspective to branding Australian SME wineries”, *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 220-227.

Nair, V.V. (2008a), India Cuts Death Toll in Mumbai Terror Attacks to 163. December 6. Available:

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=avCjdA14VaQg&refer=home>.

[Accessed 9 December 2009].

Nair, D. (2008b). Comeback day for Taj, Trident. December 21. **Available:**
<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/comeback-day-for-taj-trident/401025/0>. [Accessed January 7, 2010]

Nielsen Media. (2007). *Nielsen Online Global Consumer Study April 2007*. Available:
http://www.nielsen.com/media/2007/pr_071001.html. [Accessed: 28 October, 2007].

Nielsen IAG Study. (2009). *Advertising Builds Confidence for Financial Brands in Crisis*. 9 March. Available:
http://ens.nielsen.com/main/news/news_releases/2009/march/advertising_builds. [Accessed December 20, 2009].

NeuroFocus Inc. (2009), *Money Meltdown, Minds, and Milliseconds*. Available:
<http://www.neurofocus.com/pdfs/MoneyMeltdownsMindsandMilliseconds.pdf>. [Accessed 4 January, 2010].

Oh, H. Kim, B-Y. and Shin, J-H (2004), "Hospitality and tourism marketing: recent developments in research and future directions", *Hospitality Management*, Vol. 23, pp. 425–447.

Overseas Civilian Contractors (2011), "*Contractor casualties on the rise according to DOL's latest DBA figures*", Available: <http://civiliancontractors.wordpress.com/tag/contractor-casualties/> [Accessed 17 January, 2010].

Parsons, W. (1996), "Crisis Management", *Career Development International*, Vol. 1, No. 5, pp. 26-28.

Paraskevas, A., (2006), "Crisis management or crisis response system? A complexity science approach to organizational crises", *Management Decision*, Vol.44, No. 7, pp. 892-907.

Payne, L.L., (2006), "Synthesizing Crisis Communication and Reputation Management", *Journal of Promotion Management*, Vol. 12, No. ¾, pp. 161-187.

Perumal, R. (nd), Meeting with H.N. Srinivas, Senior Executive Vice President, Taj Group of Hotels, Available: <http://toostep.com/insight/meeting-with-h-n-srinivas-senior-executive-vice-president-ta>, [Accessed 7 January, 2010].

Petromilli, M., Morrison, D., and Million, M. (2002), "Brand architecture, building brand portfolio value", *Strategy & Leadership*, Vol. 30, No. 5, pp. 22-28.

Pollard, D. and Hotho, S., (2006), "Crises, scenarios and the strategic management process", *Management Decision*, Vol. 44, No. 6, pp. 721-736.

Rhee, M., and Haunschild, P., (2006), "The liability of good reputation: a study of product recalls in the U. S. automobile industry", *Organization Science*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp.101–117.

rediff.com. (2008), *Taj Hotel memorial mourns terror victims*. 21 December. Available: <http://www.rediff.com/news/2008/dec/21mumterror-taj-hotel-memorial-mourns-terror-victims.htm>, [Accessed January 3, 2010].

Ritchie. B.W. (2004), "Chaos, crises and disasters: a strategic approach to crisis management in the tourism industry", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 25, pp. 669–683.

Sirgy, J.M. and Su. C. (2000), "Destination Image, Self-Congruity, and Travel Behavior: Toward an Integrative Model", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 38, pp. 340-352

Sköld, M. and Karlsson, C. (2007), "Multibranded Platform Development: A Corporate Strategy with Multimanual Challenges", *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, Vol. 24, pp. 554–566.

Simonin, B.L. and Ruth., J.A. (1998), "Is a company known by the company it keeps? Assessing the spillover effects of brand alliances on consumer brand attitudes", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol.35, No. 2, pp. 30–42.

Smith, D. (1999), *Exploring the barriers to learning around crises*. mimeo, Centre for Risk and Crisis Management. University of Sheffield, Sheffield.

Smallman, C. and Weir, D. (1999), "Communications and cultural distortion during crisis", *Disaster Prevention and Management*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 33–41.

Souiden, N. and Pons, F., (2009), "Product recall crisis management: the impact on manufacturer's image, consumer loyalty and purchase intention", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol.18, No. 2, pp. 106–114.

Roehm, M.L. and Tybout, A.M. (2006), "When Will a Brand Scandal Spill Over, and How Should Competitors Respond?", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 43, 366–373

Tata, R. (2008a). *CNN GPS Transcript: Taj hotel owner speaks to CNN*. 30 November. Available: <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/World/asiapcf/11/30/gps.transcript.tata/>, [Accessed 15 November 2009].

Tata, R. (2008b), *Press release: Unified nation Message from Ratan Tata, Chairman, Tata Sons*. Available: <http://www.tata.com/media/releases/inside.aspx?artid=sFSBed3fxIw=>, [Accessed November 20, 2009].

Tata Investor: Share Chart. (2010). Available:
<http://www.tata.com/investordeskExt.aspx?pgUrl=http://www.contentlinks.asiancerc.com/tata/CompanyProfile.asp?CompanyCode=16560007&TickerName=IndianHotels&CompanyName=Indian+Hotels+Company+Ltd%2E&MajorSector=1>, [Accessed 5 January, 2010].

Tata Media Release, (2008), “*The Taj reopens its door to the World*”, Available:
<http://www.tata.com/company/Articles/inside.aspx?artid=X3e0IFigxtc=>, [Accessed 3 January, 2010].

TataInc. (2005), “*Tata Guiding Values*”, Available:
<http://www.tatainc.com/GUI/Content.aspx?Page=TataCompaniesValues>. Accessed 4 January, 2010.

Tew, P.J., Lu, P., Tolomiczenko, G., and Gellatly, J., (2008), “SARS: lessons in strategic planning for hoteliers and destination marketers”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 332-346.

Then, S.K. and Loosemore, M., (2006), “*Terrorism prevention, preparedness, and response in built facilities*”, *Facilities*, Vol. 24, No. 5/6, pp. 157- 176.

Thompson, M (2008), The \$1 Trillion Bill for Bush’s War on Terror, Time, dated 26 December, Available: <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1868367,00.html>, [Accessed 10 December, 2010].

Tiwari, A., (2008), “*Terror-hit Taj and Trident bounces back to life after 26/11*”, 22 December. Available: <http://www.samaylive.com/news/terrorhit-taj-and-trident-bounces-back-to-life-after-2611/602064.html>. Accessed 12 December 2009.

Vassilikopoulou, A., Siomkos, G., Chatzipanagiotou, K., and Triantafillidou, A. (2009), “Hotels on Fire: Investigating Consumers’ Responses and Perceptions”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 21, No. 7, pp. 791-815.

Wallström, A., Karlsson, T and Salehi-sangari, E., (2008), “Building a corporate brand: the internal brand building process in Swedish service firms”, *Brand Management*, Vol. 16, No. 1–2, pp. 40–50.

Wangenheim, F.V. and Bayón, T. (2004), “The effect of word of mouth on services switching: Measurement and moderating variables”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 38, No. 9/10, pp. 1173– 1185.

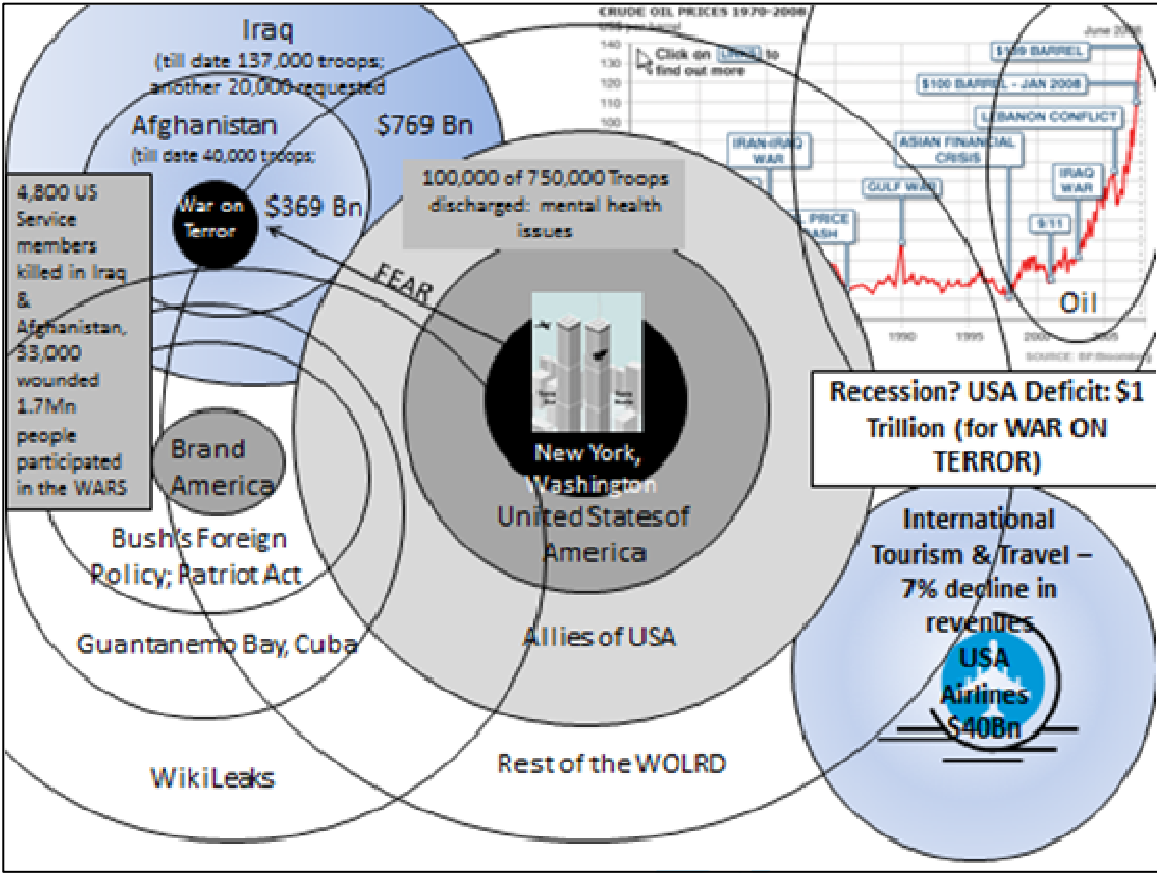
Wang, W-T. (2009), “Knowledge Management adoption in times of crisis”, *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, Vol. 109, No. 4, pp. 445-462.

Yin, R.K., (1994), “*Case Study Research: Design and Methods*”, 2Ed, CA: Sage Publications.

Yu, L., Stafford, G. and Armoo, A.K. (2006), “A study of crisis management strategies of hotel managers in the Washington, DC metro area”, *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 19, No. 2/3, pp. 91-105.

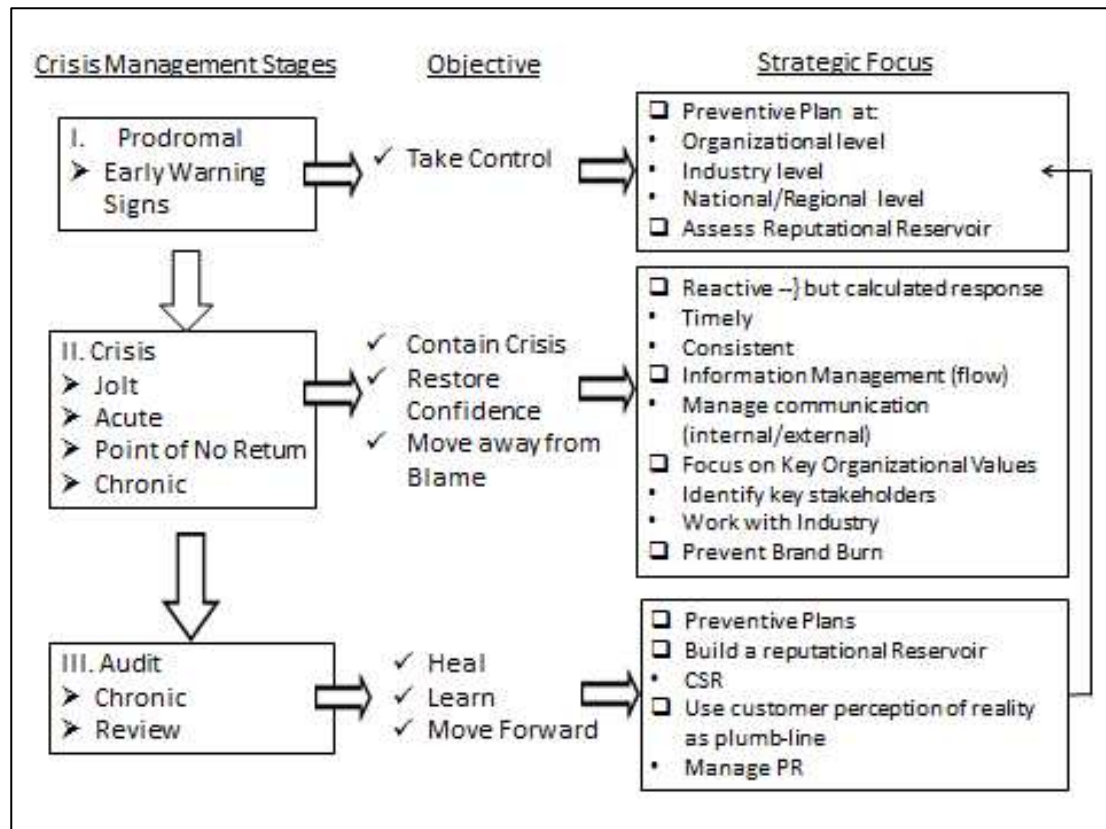
Zachariah, R. (2008), “Taj's brand makeover for premium business hotels”, *TOI*, 15 December. Available: http://findarticles.com/p/news-articles/times-of-india-the/mi_8012/is_20081215/tajs-brand-makeover-premium-business/ai_n39521634/ , [Accessed 3 January, 2009].

Figure 1: Ripple Effect of 9-11 Terrorist Attack – 2001-2011



Source: Author

Figure 2: A Model of Crisis Management



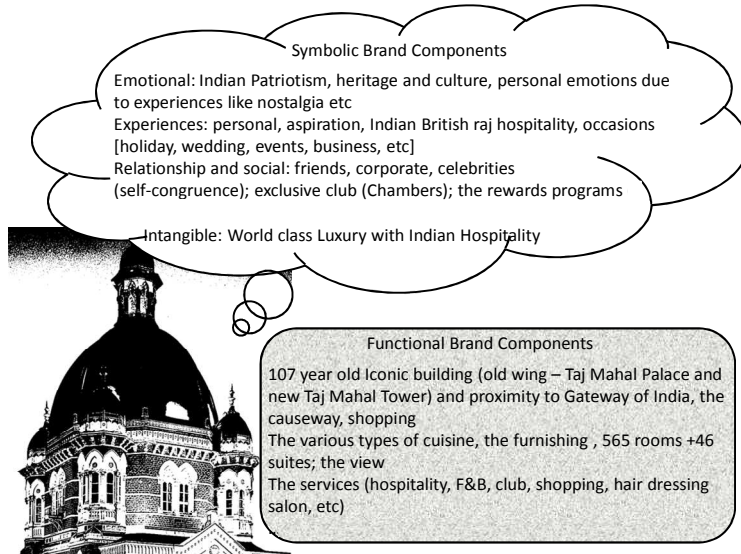
Source: Author

Figure 3: Context of Taj Mahal Palace & Tower Brand



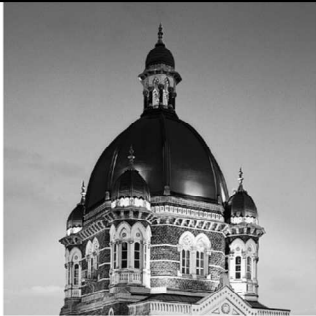
Source: Author

Figure 4: Brand Components of Taj Mahal Palace & Tower, Mumbai



Source: Author

Figure 5: I Will Prevail



"I HAVE HELD MY GROUND AS
HUMAN HISTORY HAS UNFOLDED IN ITS TIMELESS
PROCESSION OF LAUGHTER AND TEARS,
COURAGE AND COWARDICE, GOOD AND EVIL.

I WILL PREVAIL."

The attack on the Taj last week was an attack on the spirit of India. But, like our country, we will never give in.
Now that the smoke has cleared, a different fire is burning within us to reassert the Taj in all its brilliance.


We pay homage to the men and women who were with us through our darkest hour - guests at the hotel, the staff of the Taj, security forces, people who displayed extraordinary courage, selflessly helping others. Many sacrificed their lives.

We will reopen soon. Like India, the Taj will stand tall for years to come.

TAJ
The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower
Mumbai, India
A TATA Enterprise

www.tajhotels.com

Welcome Home Again.



The Taj Mahal Tower has reopened. Mumbai will rediscover its meeting place and play host to the world again.

We're bringing back the clink of champagne flutes, even pile carpets that muffle the footfall of commerce and the perfect sea view.

You will feel the buzz of business as usual and experience hospitality that is quintessentially Taj.

On this special occasion we have introduced exclusive services at The Taj Mahal Tower.

Presenting the private world of The Taj Club, impeccable butler service, luxury Jaguar transfers and splendid suites.

Feel at home once again at The Zodiac Grill, Souk, Masala Kraft, Shamiana and Starboard.

And very soon, expect to discover the inspiration, romance and intrigue of the legendary Palace Wing.

Welcome Back.

TAJ
The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower
Mumbai, India

Taj (+91 22) 6655 5500 or call toll 1306 in Canada, 1 800 891 1 825, India: 1 800 111 825. Online Reservations: 08 000 4 588 1 825
Email: reservations@tajhotels.com or contact your travel consultant

A TATA Enterprise www.tajhotels.com Member of the "Leading Hotels of the World"

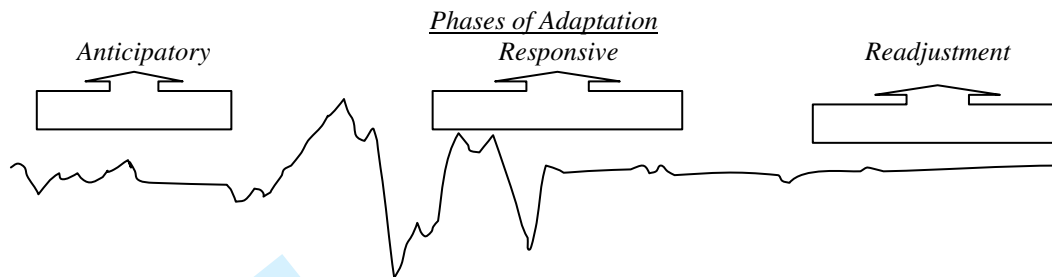
Size: 22.3x21 CM Traveller

Source:

http://www.afaqs.com/perl/advertising/creative_showcase/index.html?id=7887&media=Print

Figure 6: Conceptual Model for Brand Crisis Management

Antecedents, Dynamics, and Consequences of Organizational Adaptation to Environmental Jolts



Prior to Crisis	During and Immediately after Crisis till resolution	Post Crisis: Long-Term Resolution and Review
<i>Brand Strategy:</i> Plan, prevention, creative thinking, teamwork, training, key spokesperson/contact cell <i>Stakeholder Plan:</i> (organization, industry, regional and national).	<i>Integrated Crisis Management Plan:</i> <i>Brand Strategy:</i> reactive strategies, impact analysis); communication centre set-up (24/7); war room, Public brand management: leadership, political and social responsibilities, government responsibilities; industry collaboration.	<i>Brand Emergence:</i> unified approach, effective communication, brand positioning, integrative distribution, paradigm shift.
<i>Brand Architecture:</i> Identify potential endorsers; Halo brands, have a contingency driver role brands.	<i>Brand Architecture:</i> Use Endorser or halo brand to support the crisis affected brand to prevent brand burn. Reframe the context for alignment and influence of crisis minimizes relevance to brand functional performance.	<i>Brand Architecture:</i> use the crisis emotions to generate positive emotions to re-harness loyalty to heritage. It is a good opportunity here to bring out sub-brands and highlight new initiative.
<i>Brand Component:</i> Identify potential symbolic elements from past history, culture, people.	<i>Brand Component:</i> Symbolic: Focus on past credibility, heritage, past and emerging heroes/ heroines, past and potential leaders since this opportunity will showcase potential leaders.	<i>Brand Component:</i> slowly revert to functional and the essence of the brand. Redefine in light of the crisis. If in service industry, the customers will be central to brand theme. Opportunity to highlight staff as competitive advantage.
<i>Brand Position:</i> As designed.	<i>Brand Position:</i> caring, human, confident, mature.	<i>Brand position:</i> caring, confident in addition to original brand promise.
<i>Stakeholder Focus:</i> Identify customer loyalty groups; organizational, industry, regional and national stakeholders that can be also counted as expert and influence/work proactively with media (know which media person to call and give interviews proactively).	<i>Stakeholder Focus:</i> customer/group impacted with crisis event; customers, then staff and public. Simultaneously keep on one-is-one basis keep organizational, government, industry key partners aligned. Media needs to be proactively managed but access managed through key official spokesperson.	<i>Stakeholder Focus:</i> internal (staff affected, families of staff, investors, suppliers, distributors etc); external (industry, government, public service entities, the domestic and international public). Potential leaders need to be allowed to take stage to get back vote of confidence. Since survivor's guilt is common, give public an opportunity to participate and generate goodwill.

Source: Author

Figure 5: Conceptual Model for Brand Crisis Management (continued)

Prior to Crisis	During and Immediately after Crisis till \resolution.	Post Crisis: Long-Term Resolution and Review
<u>Communication</u> : create an plan for official communication channel. Have a policy to restrict unofficial communication and updates. What values do you wish to focus on?	<u>Communication</u> : restricted but continuous. Message must be official and unified. Channels should be official and wide-reaching (plan for press meetings). For investigation, proactive communication & cooperation with authorities. Public communication must be empathetic and authoritative Media- constant feed of human interest stories with brand relevance to heritage.	<u>Communication</u> : updates, continue with human interest stories and proactively feed stories about what the company has done. Keep markets not directly impacted safe using a ‘normalcy’ communication pattern to show ‘business goes on”. Create a memorial/ritual/byline to show that the event is a fabric of culture and how organization survived with great spirit.
<u>Visual</u> : normal brand images.	<u>Visual</u> : Focus on iconic images brand without tainting the image with event (public have short memories and you want to instill hope).	<u>Visual</u> : Show normalcy. There will be enough pictures of what happened so you need to show how you moved on. Also you do not want to taint your association with the brand negatively.
<u>Communication</u> <u>Spokesperson</u> : normal TMT, spokesperson. Identify empathetic people.	<u>Communication</u> - <u>Spokesperson</u> : older, respected, person with a halo effect, possibly a driver role or an endorser. Takes precedence over spokesperson, also require a TMT representative that can connect to media and public to take charge.	<u>Communication</u> - <u>Spokesperson</u> : Slowly decouple and move to TMT and key managers (to create a semblance of confidence). Get heroes/ heroines to speak.
<u>Media</u> : regular as per brand image.	<u>Media</u> : public and national media; Keep an official feed for social media. Use existing media to run press releases.	<u>Media</u> : regular media with press releases. Use customer WOM.

Source: Author

Table 1: Keyword search Findings: key words “crisis” and “brand management” in abstracts

Database	Search Date	Articles Found	Period
Emerald Fulltext	April 17, 2010	7	1994-2010
Business Source Premier	April 17, 2010	9	1994-2010
InformaWorld	April 17, 2010	0; 8 after substituting the word reputation instead of brand	1994-2010
Sage Journals	April 17, 2010	79; without brand management looking at psychology and communication articles 286	1994-2010
Science Direct	April 17, 2010	8	1994-2010
Proquest Social Sciences	April 17, 2010	0; 0 after substituting the word reputation instead of brand	No restriction

Source: Author