



Community Foundation  
Virtual Workshop Series:  
Managing damage to your  
brand during a downturn



# Agenda

- Quick introduction
  - Branding matters
  - Help you understand how to recognize and respond to a crisis at the business level
  - How to avoid damage to your brand during a crisis:
    - How a PEAR can guide your response
    - How to tailor your messages for the press and social media
  - Offer tips that you can put into action today to help manage your brand reputation and minimize the damage from this downturn
  - Lots of Q&A – let's share ideas!
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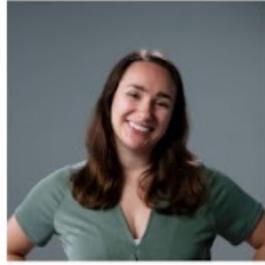


# Quick Introduction











SUNY POLYTECHNIC  
INSTITUTE



#### CAPITAL REGION

# NanoCollege deal is for kids

Troy Children's Museum getting \$5M from UAlbany to become high-tech hub for young minds

#### SCHENECTADY COUNTY

## Scotia-Glenville, SUNY-Poly museums to merge

The Scotia-Glenville Children's Museum is merging with SUNY Polytechnic Institute's Children's Museum

# Kaloyeros and seven others indicted in federal corruption suit



What's keeping you up at night?







That was SO 2020...



**FLU**

**RSV**

**COVID**

**BREAKING NEWS**

**'TRIPLEDEMIC' FEARS GROW AS CHILD VIRUS SURGES**



# A Truly Remarkable Crisis

- Global Health
- Economic
- Social/Civil
- Political
- Workforce

# And local unexpected challenges

## THE DAILY GAZETTE

### Capital Roots cancels key fundraiser



# Branding? Now?



I don't know who you are.

I don't know your organization.

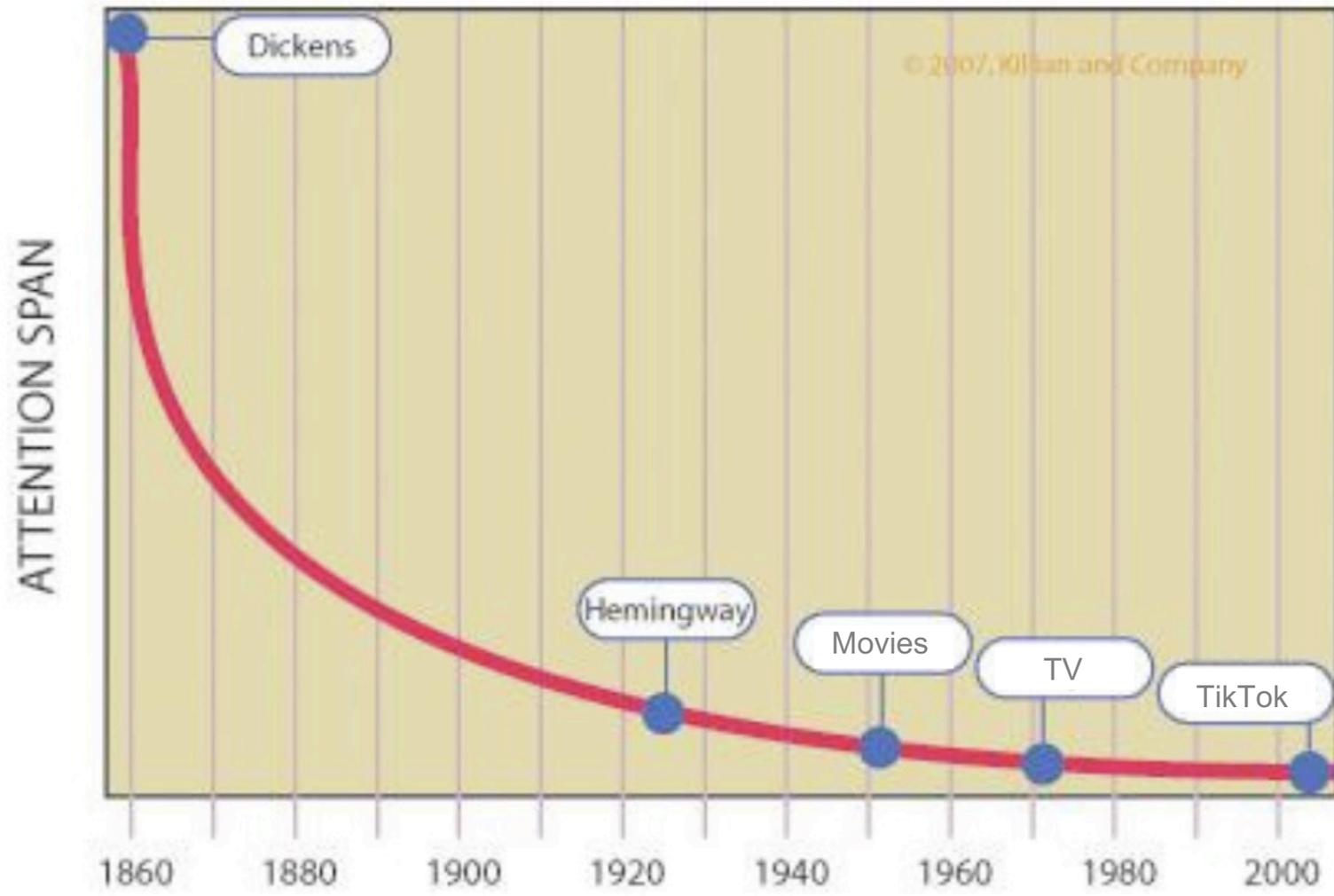
I don't know your services.

I don't know what you stand for.

I don't know your members.

I don't know your reputation.

Now - what was it you wanted me to do?



So, how can I manage consistent, positive experiences and engagements in an increasingly competitive, fragmented and cluttered world?

# Manage your Brand

# Manage your Brand

## What is a brand?

More than just a logo

Not something reserved for mega-corporations

Every company, product and even people have a brand

# Manage your Brand

## What is a brand?

A strong consistent message about the *essence* of your company, product or service. A promise.

Consistency is key.

# Manage your Brand

**Back to the original question: Why do I need to think about branding?**

A strong brand:

- will help you articulate the values of your nonprofit and explain why you are competing in the market.
- shapes customer/donor experience
- influences customer/donor decisions
- makes the donor's support decision easier
- can command a premium price
- stakes a claim to the exclusion of competitors

# Manage your Brand

## The benefits of a strong brand.

Dominant Brands:  
Can you name another  
brand in these categories?

Imagine how powerful  
that would be to your  
nonprofit!



# Manage your Brand

OK, this is all very interesting. But, what value does a brand have?



**PAN AM**

*Sara Lee*

*Campbell's*

The essence of your brand?



People.

Services for people. (“Who need people...”)

Driven by people. (“Are the luckiest people...”)

Earned respect, support, carved out a space for yourselves – that’s your brand.

Brand needs to be protected as much as your tangible assets.

Avoiding damage to your brand  
during a downturn



# Sound Familiar?

Keep the event or cancel?

Are we contributing to the hype?

What are the other guys doing?

Are we being tone deaf if we...?

But we need the revenue.

What will happen to our employees?

What will happen to the people we serve?

When should we resume business as usual?

# Why is it so important?

- People remember how a crisis was handled longer than the details of the crisis
- Long-term damage to a brand is done before and after a crisis more than during it
- Proactive crisis communications helps minimize damage, improve morale, encourages healing
- Need for communication grows the longer the crisis lasts (*tip for today's crisis!*)
- News media has significant long-term impact on public perception and organizational reputation

# Defining Crisis

A crisis is any event, issue or situation that **threatens to undermine the relationship between your nonprofit and one or more of your stakeholders**; or any event, issue or situation that may negatively affect your business and/or reputation.

# Two types of crises: sudden and smoldering

# Two Types of Crises

**Sudden (30%)** – (*e.g., Mass shooting, fire*)

- Initial chaos; then “aftershocks”
- Hard to prepare for
- Establish the facts and use consistent messages
- Speed is essential (possibly full-time coverage)
- Updates every 30 minutes for first few hours, then hourly thereafter even if it means telling them there is nothing new to report (on social media, too)

*“When the eagles are silent, the parrots begin to jobber.”*

*- Winston Churchill*



# Two Types of Crises

**Smoldering (70%)** – *(e.g., Coronavirus Pandemic, financial struggles)*

- Much more likely to occur
- More difficult to identify in early stages
- Leaders often avoid, ignore or misunderstand the potential severity
- Mismanagement or human errors are sometimes involved
- Sometimes go away on their own
- Reflect on the quality and ability of leaders



CAPITAL REGION

# Cops: Bookkeeper steals \$835,813 from Albany's Zone 5

Preparing



# Manage Your Brand: Preparing for a crisis

- **Plan** proactively with your staff and board
- Consider communications logistics, who does what
- **Anticipate** the need for extra staff
- Communications toolkit: Email, social media, press releases, etc.

# Preparing for media during a crisis

- May learn about the crisis before you (or maybe social media)
- Will be on-site before you are ready
- May be adversarial
- See spokesperson as the “spin doctor”
- Want to assign blame

I promised a PEAR



What, when, in what order?

# What, when, in what order?



P

E

A

R

**P - People**

**E - Environment**

**A - Assets**

**R - Reputation**

# PEAR lessons learned from others



# Lessons learned



ENVIRONMENT JUNE 2, 2010 / 2:43 PM / 10 YEARS AGO

## BP CEO apologizes for "thoughtless" oil spill comment

The BP chief had remarked "I want my life back," to several news organizations, including Reuters, in recent days.

"I made a hurtful and thoughtless comment," Hayward said in a statement. "I apologize, especially to the families of the 11 men who lost their lives in this tragic accident. Those words don't represent how I feel about this tragedy."

"My first priority is doing all we can to restore the lives of the people of the Gulf region and their families - to restore their lives, not mine," he added.

# Responding during a crisis

- The first 30 minutes set the tone (sudden) or the first few days (smolder)
  - Gather facts, think ahead, what's the impact?
  - Develop response options
  - Select appropriate point person (not always the CEO)
  - Share information ASAP – staff and board first, stakeholders/elected, then media/public/social media
-

# Managing the Media (and social media)



# Preparing messages for the media

# The #1 Rule

It's not about **answering their questions**,  
it's about **delivering your message**.

*“Does anyone have any questions for my answers.”*

*- Henry Kissinger*



# Preparing messages for the media

## When the media calls you...

- Develop key messages **you** want to deliver
- Find out who else is being interviewed
- Anticipate questions
- Who is the right spokesperson?
- Know and respect their deadline

# Preparing messages for the media

## Strategies...

- Fight emotion with emotion (e.g., anger at those who misbehaved or sympathy for those harmed).
- Put a **human face** on the crisis: Humanize your nonprofit. Make it personal by helping people know why we exist and that we care. Faces, not logos. Not always the CEO.
- Engage third parties. (Associations, Elected Officials, etc.)

# Talking with the media

- Do a quick list of **3 key points**
  - Accent the **positive** do not volunteer the negative
  - Nothing is **off the record**
  - Never say, “**No Comment**”
- Be **confident** in your own expertise
  - **Correct** misinformation
  - **Avoid** hypothetical situations
  - Repeat your **key messages**

# Talking with the media

- Go over the **basics**
  - Simple statements/**avoid jargon**
  - Be **brief** - sound bite
  - Be **interesting**
- Use **analogies**
  - Don't rush
  - **Don't say more** than you have to
  - Stick to your **key messages**

# Talking with the media

## Steering the Conversation

- “Just as important...”
- “We may be overlooking the fact that...”
- “I would describe it differently...”
- “The real issue here is...”
- “But what concerns me even more...”
- “The spirit of what we are announcing today is...”





LinkedIn

FourSquare

YouTube

Facebook

Twitter

flickr

Instagram

myBlogger

Google+

Vimeo

LiveJournal

Skype

# Role of Social Media

- Your social network audiences are not homogenous



ONE

Scott Johnson  
Melanie Quillen  
Marcus Willems  
Jamie Hendricks  
Damien Jones  
Gabriella Little  
Amanda Jones  
Michael Willems

Brent & Abigail

August 20, 2016

Find your seat

THREE

Nina Jameson  
Homer Lillard  
Drew Johnson  
Shania Terry  
Miranda Kramer  
John Spencer  
Martin O'Brian  
Hillary O'Brian

table

TWO

Kendra Wilkins  
Brittany Robberts  
Marcus Antonio  
Carly Fraser  
Maggie Shoemaker  
Hendrik Green  
Shelly Simson  
Michael Jameson

head table

Mr. & Mrs. Browning

Scott Johnson    Jenny Hendricks    Jerry Ryder    Cynthia Johnson  
Melanie Quillen    Carlos Quillen    Amanda Jones    Samuel Wright  
Marcus Willems    Aimee Robbins    Michael Willems    Corey Simons

table

FOUR

Nancy Jameson  
Drake Jones  
Shelly Littleton  
Amanda Jones  
Michael Willems  
Jamis Jones  
Shelly Simons  
Scott Johnson  
Jamie Hendricks

table

SEVEN

Scott Johnson  
Melanie Quillen

table

EIGHT

Scott Johnson  
Melanie Quillen

# Role of Social Media

- Your social network audiences are not homogenous
- Established audience, typically advocates  
(at various levels of engagement)
- You only rent them, push to grow your own databases and own them  
via web/email/phone/events

# Role of Social Media

- Instant connection with the public and media
- Excellent listening tool
- Pause before commenting
- Nobody ever won a fight on Facebook

Thinking Ahead



*“A good chess player thinks  
three moves ahead.”*

*- Paul Fahey*



# Thinking ahead

“This too shall pass.”

What are we saying next week?

Plan now for ramp-up strategies and messages. How do they sound?

So, in summary...



# Summary

- Brand has value. Protect it as much as your tangible assets.
- It's all about people.
- PEAR
- Always remember the **#1 rule**: “It's not about answering questions, it's about delivering your message.”
- Communicate often, even if you don't have anything new to say

Be there for your people. Your staff.  
Visitors. Partners. Friends. Community.  
Constituents. Whatever you call them.

Because they'll remember how you  
treated them long after this is over.



# Questions, Conversation, and Tales from the Trenches

