



JACKSONITES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

DATE OF EVENT: Nov. 10, 2021

Jacksonites Professional Development Series Seminar

Theme:

CRISIS SURVIVAL IN TODAY'S VIRAL WORLD:

The Communication Conundrum

Rapporteurs: ▼

• **OGHENEWARHE ADOGBEJI**

• **IFEANYICHUKWU DINWOKE**

SECOND EDITION ►



JACKSONITES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

TABLE

OF

CONTENTS

JACKSONITES PDS CHAIRPERSON'S
WELCOME ADDRESS

Pg 4

THE KEYNOTE SPEECH

Pg 5-7

- ▶ UNDERSTAND WHAT CONSTITUTES A CRISIS
- ▶ HOW TO PREPARE FOR A CRISIS
- ▶ BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER CRISIS
- ▶ DOS AND DON'TS
- ▶ MOVING ON FROM A CRISIS
- ▶ NEXT STEPS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

Pg 8

COMMENTS SESSION

Pg 9

CLOSING REMARKS

Pg 9

2nd Edition

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES
DATE OF EVENT: Nov. 10, 2021

Jacksonites Professional Development Series Seminar

Theme:
CRISIS SURVIVAL IN TODAY'S VIRAL WORLD: The Communication Conundrum

Rapporteurs:
• OGHENYINWA ADORCHI
• IFIANYI OKEKE ENVOKE



JACKSONITES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

*an initiative of the alumni of the
Department of Mass Communication, University of Nigeria*

Presents its next seminar titled

Crisis Survival in Today's Viral World: The Communications Conundrum



**NOV. 10TH,
2021**



**3PM - 5PM (GMT+1)
9AM - 11AM (EST)**

Speaker:

Obi Emekekwe,
President of DelReeve Konsult Ltd,
and a former Director & Global Head of
Communications and Event Management
at Afreximbank.

Moderator:

Marcel Mbamalu (PhD)
A veteran journalist, and Editor-in-Chief of
Prime Business Africa, (PBA)

FURTHER ENQUIRES:
jacksonitespdseries@gmail.com



<https://bit.ly/jacksonitespdseries2>



@jacksonitespdseries



@jacksonites_pdseries



<https://bit.ly/jacksonitespdseries>



JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES



JACKSONITES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

4



YOU ARE WELCOME TO THE

2ND
EDITION
OF THE

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Introduction ▼

The second edition of the **Jacksonites Professional Development Series (PDS)** started with an introductory remark by the moderator, veteran journalist **Dr Marcel Mbamalu** who drew the attention of the participants to the previous edition of the seminar held on 30th July, 2021 with the theme, 'Captured' Media in an Insecure Nation' presented by Prof Nduka Otiono.

The Chairperson of Jacksonites PDS Steering Committee, **Prof Chinedu Mba** took off from him with her welcome address and explained that the seminar is a capacity-building initiative of Jacksonites Worldwide—the alumni association of the Mass Communication Department, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Elaborating on the choice of theme for each series of the seminar, she explained that the group is intentional in choosing a theme in line with the pressing need of the town and gown. Just like the previous edition which was chosen at a time when the freedom of speech of Nigerians was threatened, this session's focus on crisis survival in a viral world is chosen in light of the global pandemic and its attendant crisis. She further explained that communication is a vital tool in relationship management, and just like change, crisis is an integral part of life and mastery of how to manage it as it comes is a key to trudging on despite it.



CHINEDU MBA
JPDS Chairperson



JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES



THE KEYNOTE SPEECH



Obi Emekekwe

Understand What Constitutes a Crisis

The speaker for the seminar, Obi Emekekwe, a global crisis communication strategist with over 25 years of experience started his presentation by noting that a crisis is a situation that one cannot predict but should expect to happen. In fact, he stated emphatically that a crisis is not a matter of 'if' but when and although a corporate crisis may be a difficult situation to handle, adequate preparation is the best strategy to manage it effectively.

According to him, a “crisis situation can disrupt operations, damage reputation, destroy shareholder value, and trigger other threats, therefore, effectively managing your crisis and protecting your brand reputation is ultimately about safeguarding your entire operations.” However, irrespective of how huge a crisis may be, adequate preparation and consistency in communication are keys to mitigating its impact on a brand.

Citing a Price Water Coopers (PwC) study which revealed that business

leaders experienced an average of 3 crises between 2014 and 2019, explained that the public relations department in an organization saddled with the responsibility of creating lasting positive relationships with the organization's public should step up and take leadership to handle the company's reputation during a crisis.

To do this effectively, the department is expected to put together an effective crisis communication strategy and detailed plan that allows them to manage the crisis, move quickly, avoid pitfalls with their brand reputation intact or even improved.

Although organizations should address every issue that could affect their reputation, Mr Emekekwe believes that not every disturbing situation qualifies as a crisis. To help participants understand what constitutes a crisis, he explained that a situation can be classified as “a crisis when it is severe enough to affect a large number of your stakeholders to negatively impact your brand reputation, your operations and or the bottom line of your business.”

In fact, he went further to outline the following questions that could guide a crisis manager in determining if a situation should be given crisis level treatment:

1. Who is most likely to be affected by this issue? E.g. which key stakeholders and how many of them?
2. Who is talking about the issue? E.g. top influencers, mass media, members of the public
3. Will this issue critically affect the

- company's operations?
4. Is it likely that these issues will result in significant financial losses?
5. Will this issue damage the company's brand reputation?

Crisis takes different forms, and in a 2019 global crisis survey covering 25 countries, 43 industries, PwC discovered a large diversity of crises which showed that 140 of the respondents had experienced at least one crisis between 2014 and 2019. The study revealed that the top three forms of crises were:

“ **Crisis is not a matter of 'if' but when... adequate preparation is the best strategy to managing it effectively.** - Mr. Obi Emekekwe. ”

- Financial liquidity (23%)
- Technology Failure (23%)
- Operational Failure (20%)

While these are the top three crisis situations within the years under study, he noted that the type of crisis an organization is likely to experience depends largely on its industry, target audience and whether it has tech as a competitive advantage.

Similarly, he classified crisis based on their origin to include the following:

Internal crisis - including a product recall, corporate misconduct or scandal, a data leak or a legal issue.



JACKSONITES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

6

External crisis - damage to your brand by association, a natural disaster, or a global pandemic that could put a major pause on your business.

Public statements - covers negative reviews, customer complaints, and other external negative public statements.

Mr Obi noted that these different forms of crisis require different approaches to addressing them and further quipped that while some may appear less significant than others, failure to promptly address them may allow them to fester into a full-blown crisis situation. He buttressed this point with the story of a bakery located in Onitsha Nigeria which closed down on the strength of a widespread rumour that the colour used in production and its taste is because human blood is used in production.

Irrespective of the nature, or origin of the crisis, he stated that the most critical asset for crisis management is data-driven preparedness, response and post-crisis analysis. He suggested that the PR manager can acquire requisite data that will guide crisis management campaigns through media monitoring and PR analytics tools that enable him to detect when a crisis is brewing and pursue warning signs so as to know when to deploy his strategies.

Beyond these tracking tools, he stated that a crisis communication manager should equally follow through the PR Crisis cycle by launching a campaign, tracking the execution to observe what's working and what needs to be tweaked as well as analyzing to uncover areas that the strategies excelled and/or failed.



Dr. Marcel Mbamalu (PhD)

How to Prepare for a Crisis

Typically, an organization may not be able to predict when a crisis situation

“A situation can be classified as 'a crisis' when it is severe enough to affect a large number of your key stakeholders to negatively impact your brand reputation, your operations and or the bottom line of your business.”

may erupt; however, it can prepare ahead of a crisis to effectively minimize the damage. In fact, in the words of a PwC partner, Christiana Rivera, “Crisis can happen to anyone, anywhere and at any time. Being ready is vital to mitigating its impact on customers and your organization.” Furthermore, the guest lecturer, Obi Emekekwe stated, “The best way to prepare for a crisis is to invest in crisis response management programmes” Unfortunately, PR Use reports that only 2% of US companies have crisis management plans and there is no certainty that their plans are regularly updated.

He noted that the reality of the new media era is that situations that could typically take days or weeks to blow into a full-blown crisis now take a few hours. This makes having a crisis response plan indispensable. Crisis communication plan shouldn't just be designed for external stakeholders such as customers, governments; but equally internal stakeholders like employees, partners and teammates.

Since most crises break out without premonition, managers are left with little time to think or start preparation. To ensure good results, Mr Emekekwe prescribed a crisis management checklist

that should guide one in preparation.

1. Outline the types of crisis an organization is likely to face—technology related, community-related or employee-related.
2. Expect the unexpected
3. Listen, Listen, Listen!
4. Develop and circulate a crisis management plan

He went further to outline the steps for developing a crisis management plan:

- 1. Crisis Management Protocol**
Access the facts, identify key response members and advisory, set out review and approval, and assign role and workflow
- 2. Contact people likely to be needed in managing the crisis.**
This could include CEO, executive team, spokesperson, marketing executive, subject matter expert. Social media managers and legal team.
- 3. Details of Your Communication**



JACKSONITES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

7

“**Irrespective of the nature or origin of a crisis, the most critical asset for crisis management is data-driven preparedness, response and post-crisis analysis**”

Channels

Depending on your industry and business, he advised that a manager should decide ahead of time the right channels to reach his key stakeholders with his message during a crisis. Relying on one channel is not the best approach; a mix of channels will ensure you meet all your touchpoints. You could use newspapers, radio, TV, email, social media.

4. Media Monitoring Solution

This helps in crisis management preparedness by identifying negative trends and potential issues before they blow out of proportion.

5. Draft Message and Content Guidelines

There are hardly two crises that are exactly the same; thus, they require different approaches. However, having templates that can be easily adopted when a crisis breaks out will prove useful when time is of the essence. This should be augmented with content guidelines and policies that provide clear instructions for crisis communication.

6. Create and Train Crisis Response Team

Managing a crisis often requires multiple talents, departments and tools to be executed timely and effectively, hence the need to build a

crisis response team. This starts with identifying the key tasks in a typical crisis situation and selecting talents to match the tasks. The team should be given media training and armed with talking points and right artwork for execution.

7. Keep Your Plan Up to Date and Practice Often

It's not enough to develop a plan; it should be kept up to date and different possible scenarios simulated to every team member prepared for prompt response in the wake of a crisis. This may be tasking; but the benefit was captured in the words of Mr Obi, “The difference is feeling confident during a crisis as opposed to making a knee jerk reaction in the heat of the moment.” He further emphasized the indispensability of this step by quoting a PwC report which states that organizations that have up to date crisis management plans and implement lessons learned are four times more likely to come out tops on the other side.

Before, During, and After Crisis

At every stage of crisis, information is key although there are scenarios where action works better than information. Data based strategy and execution

“**Crisis communication plan shouldn't just be designed for external stakeholders such as customers, governments, but equally for internal stakeholders like employees, partners and teammates.**”

will prove valuable in making a right decision on the ratio of information to action to use per time.

Moreover, you should have a means of measuring the performance of your campaign/programme during a crisis situation. Listen, assess the situation and get the facts straight.

It's important to get the facts straight before giving your response in a crisis situation and nothing is wrong with telling the public that you are still working on getting all the facts before addressing the situation. At that point, acknowledging the situation will suffice.

When a crisis situation affects more than one of your stakeholders, be sure to address the needs of all the stakeholders, not just one. A goal is to maintain control over the situation rather than allowing the media or other influencers to hijack it. He buttressed this point with the recent case of singer Tiwa Savage leaked sex-tape scandal. The singer took control of the brewing situation when someone wanted to extort her such that when it was eventually released, it didn't have as much damaging effect on her as it would have if she did not control the narrative.

Respond with honesty, clarity and responsibility.

State what happened, what you are doing to address the situation and what you would do in the future. Honesty is key to responding in a crisis situation because people buy from companies they trust.

Empathize with Stakeholders

By making empathy a priority in your communications, it will further contribute to building trust in your



JACKSONITES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

8

audience.

Measure your Impact as Event Unfolds

In measuring the impact of your activities, media trend, social amplification, coverage of your competitors, message resonance and brand sentiment metrics for measuring the impact.

Dos and Don'ts

Don't avoid a crisis. Avoiding a crisis creates a vacuum in which the media, influencers and competitors could fill in the gap with their opinion.

Don't Go Extreme. One extreme is managing a crisis at the expense of running the organization while another is running the organization as though the crisis never happened. A balance is key!

Don't be Unavailable. Don't respond too quickly or too slowly. A No comment response does not elect trust from your stakeholders; so prepare to answer. In the face of a crisis, the media and stakeholders are eager to hear from you. Even if you don't have all the details, restate the facts and what you are in the process of doing.

Moving on From a Crisis

At the end of every crisis, harvest all your learning to enable you to secure future success in a similar scenario. There are a number of questions to guide you in your evaluation efforts and they include:

What are the key takeaways that you can use to secure future success in a crisis situation?
What worked well during the crisis?

“**When a crisis situation affects more than one of your stakeholders, be sure to address the needs of all the stakeholders, not just one. A goal is to maintain control over the situation rather than allowing the media or other influencers to hijack the narrative.**”

What should we repeat in the future?
What did not work during the crisis?
What should we change or improve going forward?
How well did we handle the crisis as a team?
Is the crisis really over? Or do we still have issues to address?
How do we repair what has been damaged, such as brand reputation?

While there are a number of metrics to measure during post-crisis evaluation, Emekekwe believes that the most important is brand sentiment. “Brand sentiment analysis stands out in the post-crisis because it is one of the best metrics of your brand reputation. Crisis often takes time to subside. Some crises could lie dormant for a while and then start up again. Continuing to monitor your brand sentiment will give you an in-depth view of how your brand reputation is doing following your crisis. It will also tell you whether there is still some work to be done.” he said.

Next Steps

He said that crisis response has become more scientific than in the past and being a good storyteller is not good enough. He admonished PR managers to not just use more tools in preventing and managing crises; but equally master data analysis, interpretation and application in planning and managing crises.

He charged every organization to develop a crisis communication plan and regularly update if they must effectively handle a crisis, which is almost inescapable. “If there is any take away from our discussion today, it is that every organization, every company, and every business must have in place, a well thought out, well prepared, timely, and frequently practice **Crisis Response and Management Plan** in order to be ready and to withstand that inevitable crisis that is sure to happen sooner or later. If you do not already have a plan in place, I strongly encourage you to make it your priority to develop one today.” said Mr Obi Emekekwe.

“**Every business and every organisation must have in place, a well thought-out, well prepared, timely, and frequently practiced Crisis Response Management Plan, in order to be ready, and able to withstand that inevitable crisis that is sure to happen sooner or later.**”



JACKSONITES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

9

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

Q1. Dr Marcel Mbamalu.

At what point would you say a combination of the internal and external crisis will make it very difficult or easy to apply the principles of crisis management?

Response: At the end of the day, the real issue is not the source of the crisis whether internal or external. The important thing is that everyone recognizes that a crisis will occur sooner or later. It's inevitable, but having the right strategy in place will help you deal with the crisis effectively when it occurs.

Q2. Moshood Isamotu

If a really serious mistake was committed, how does the organization manage this with a view to mitigating the impact of the crisis?

Response: The first step is to acknowledge what has happened, describe what you are doing to resolve it, and what you will do to avoid it from recurring. If the error was intentional, you should indicate how that individual was punished for their conduct, but the most essential thing is to communicate with your stakeholders on time.

Q3. Izuchukwu Epueke

What are the implications for organizations if they move fast when a crisis occurs. Is moving fast from a crisis the best way to solve it?

Response: Before moving fast from a crisis; there are some basic questions you should ask yourself. Is the crisis endangering the organization's operations and existence, is it affecting your brand's reputation, or threatening your bottom line? If the answer is yes, you must act, but the sooner you act to address a crisis, the better; the sooner you act, the more



likely you are to emerge from it without too much of a problem.

Q4. Ugo Onuoha

Can money be used to solve a crisis?

Response: Money on its own does not solve the crisis. There are various aspects of implementing a crisis management plan that will require payment, such as advertising. The real issue is not to throw money around. What you need to do is assess the problem, create a crisis management plan, and a crisis team to assist you in dealing with the crisis when it arises.

Q5. Dr Marcel Mbamalu

What should be the response of a crisis manager to blackmail?

Response: Evaluate why you are being blackmailed; assess what you are doing that isn't right and is causing you to be blackmailed, as it is difficult for someone to blackmail you if you have no loopholes. If there is, take care of it.

Q6. Jeremiah Agada

At what point do professionals go beyond talking, issuing press releases and statements and just take visible actions when it comes to crisis management?

Response: Beyond issuing press releases

and statements, crisis response management entails a lot more. When a crisis threatens the organization's core values, you must act to address the cause of the crisis and, most importantly, communicate your action plan to your various stakeholders.

Q7. Jeremiah Agada

At what point does silence become a tool in crisis management?

Response: If a crisis threatens your company's reputation or bottom line, silence isn't the best management crisis tool. You must act to handle it, and if it has no impact on your operation, reputation, or bottom line, it is not really a crisis. It could be a problem, but not a real crisis. You can choose to ignore it and hope that it will go away on its own. However, ignoring a serious crisis is risky.

Q8. Kelechi Ndieze

It is understandable that every organization or brand should prepare for a crisis. The plan helps to manage pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis. From the last global pandemic, it's obvious that startups bear the consequences of the crisis because of the fragile disposition of these businesses. In what best ways can startups manage crises? Are there alternatives to cost-effective crisis responses or actions?

Response: Crisis does not distinguish between different types of businesses or a company's stage of development. Crisis can strike at any time, from anywhere, and at any stage of a business. So, the most important thing is to have a system in place. Keep in mind that as long as you are in business, you will face crises. Knowing what steps to take when a crisis occurs is the best strategy for crisis management.



JACKSONITES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

10

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

Q9. Ugo Onuoha

Of what use is a crisis response template and a crisis response team for a corporation or government that stumbles from one crisis to the other?

Response: A government and organization have a responsibility to do what it can to avoid situations that lead to crisis. The starting point is to have a crisis response plan in place, and have a system that prevents recurring crises. You also need to take steps to avoid situations that create a crisis in the first place.

Q10. Kingsley Osadolor

The recent collapsed building at Ikoyi caused a great catastrophe with the loss of lives and properties. There has not been any statement from the organization. At what point therefore in a situation where an entity outsources or takes a backstage while the public authorities are the key communicators?

Response: Anyone who is impacted by

the occurrence, regardless of their function, should communicate during a crisis. The company does not need to outsource anything to the state government in the case of a collapsed building in Ikoyi. Regulation is the responsibility of the state government as an institution. They granted the operating permit. As a result, it is the responsibility of the state government to provide accurate information on the situation, what they approved, and what was built, confirming whether everything went according to plan or not. However, the company in charge of the project should have come out and provided detail on what they are doing to manage the crisis from the start, rather than choosing to remain silent.

Q11. Kingsley Osadolor

Would you allow a damaged or compromised person to be your spokesperson?

Response: If your spokesperson lacks credibility and has a damaged reputation, then they are doing you more harm than good. A spokesperson must be credible,

someone people listen to and accept what he/she says.

Q12. Roland Ohaeri

What do you do when a CEO refuses to adhere to the facts or recommends a manner of addressing the media by being rude to them or avoiding difficult questions?

Response: People must understand the role of the media, its obligations, and how to approach the media because of issues like these. If your CEO and management team receive proper communication training, they will understand that disrespecting the media is not a good strategy, and that providing inaccurate information will backfire. This is why it is recommended that the key communications person be a member of the management team so that he can communicate what needs to be done and how the media should operate. In addition, the communication team should always be prepared to act professionally.





JACKSONITES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

11

COMMENTS

Session

Roland Ohaeri; Head Corporate Communications Unit, Landover Aviation.

Money is vital in crisis management to ensure smooth execution of the response and communication plan, mobilize teams especially in major crises but not for bribes nor to be thrown around.

Barr Kingsley Osadolor

Talking points when mismanaged can become propaganda. Instead of repeating messages in various programs and mediums which simply shows a lack of creativity and innovation. It is necessary for an organization's spokesman to be creative while responding to a crisis. It is also necessary to follow up with additional communication after recognizing and handling a crisis.



JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES



JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

CLOSING

Remarks

Mr. Ugo Onuoha, the Deputy Chairman of the Steering Committee gave the closing remarks and the vote of thanks. He went further to appreciate partners, sponsors, members of the steering committee as well as all participants who attended the seminar.

The seminar was attended by over 60 participants from across the globe and they included: Barr Kingsley Osadolor, Mr. Moshood Isamotu, Dr. IjeomaAjaero, Lawrence Ogedegbe, Patrick Egwu, Susan Eshett among many others



JACKSONITES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

12

PICTURES SPEAKS





MEDIA
CAREER
DEVELOPMENT
NETWORK
♦ Training ♦ Mentoring ♦ Coaching



| **For partnership enquiries, contact** |
jacksonitespdseries@gmail.com



JACKSONITES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

JPDS thanks its media partners.