



Improving crisis communication at Drivego

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This thesis postulates that crisis communication must improve to reduce the risks suffered as a result of any crisis that may occur in an organisation. Crisis management is a critical factor in any organisation; hence this research is motivated by the need of how organisations can prepare and deal with any crisis that may occur to such an organisation. Some of the crises that are known to affect any organisation are health-related crisis, economic crisis, violence, technical crisis, organisational crisis and any crisis related to crime or the slightest disruption which organisation has immunity of them.

The theoretical foundation of this study based on corporate apologia, image repair theory, situational crisis communication theory and organisation renewal theories. The theoretical framework gives guidance on the different strategies and approaches that have been used by organisations in response to the crises that occurred to them.

The research methodology used while conducting this thesis is a qualitative approach and an interview as a way of conducting the research findings. Information collected from the staff and students of the organisation by way of the interview focusing on crisis communication and management. The findings of this thesis confirm that, just like any other organisation, they are at a high risk of being affected by the crisis. Furthermore, at the end of the finding, it was noted that there is no crisis communication plan nor crisis management team in this organisation. Therefore, a final framework was developed by suggesting that crisis management can be possible by a creating crisis communication plan for the organisation. The plan will revile on how the organisation will handle a crisis. A crisis management team should be created, which will be able to communicate and manage any crisis upon its outbreak.

As a concluding remark, this thesis recommends the organisation should have crisis communication before any crisis happens, there should be proper training on how to treat and deal with the crises once they occur and how should the crisis be communicated to the public and stakeholders

Keywords: Crisis, Crisis communication, Crisis management

Contents

1	Introduction	6
2	Literature review for crisis communication	7
2.1	Crisis	7
2.1.1	Types of Crisis.....	8
2.2	Elements of Crisis Management	9
2.2.1	Emergency preparedness.....	9
2.2.2	Crisis communication	10
2.3	Crisis Management	14
2.3.1	Theory of Crisis Management	14
2.3.2	Crisis Management Planning and Crisis Management Team.....	16
2.3.3	Phrases of Crisis Management	17
3	Research methods	20
3.1	Qualitative Method.....	20
4	Results	22
5	Conclusion	24
5.1	Reliability and Validity	24
	References	27
	Figures.....	30
	Tables.....	30
	Appendices.....	31

1 Introduction

The term crisis originates from the Greek word *krisis*; translated into English, and it would be similar to decision or choice (Paraskev, 2006).

Every organisation is vulnerable to crisis; it is better to be prepared for it as it is never known when it will hit the business. A crisis comes in many forms such as property destruction, crime, weather, reputation crisis, financial, health. Therefore, a crisis management plan is a critical organisational function. Failure can cause serious harm to stakeholders, loss of the organisation or make it survive. It is right to say that no organisation, public or private, is immune from crises because a crisis can strike in any organisation. Crises may happen in different forms of organisations, regardless of size that this why every organisation must have an already prepared crisis communication and management place.

It is crucial to be prepared and figures out the solutions which help the organisation. To be able to respond to a crisis effectively and confidently in all crisis phases during or after crisis occurrence, failing to do such, organisations will view it as unprepared, disorganised, and poorly managed (Institute for PR, 2007).

There are five chapters in this thesis, where the first chapter begins the introduction of the topic and brief information about the case study - Drivego.eu. As mentioned above, every organisation is vulnerable to crisis regardless of its size and nature. Also, a crisis can unexpectedly occur, so organisations need to prepare for it. For understanding the crisis communication in an organisation, it is also essential to get familiar with some fundamental concepts of the research. Chapter 2 covers a general overview of crisis communication, crisis and crisis management, which are the basis of this thesis as they offer theoretical framework models which can, later on, be adapted on a practical level as well. The following chapter discusses the theory of crisis and its management as well as crisis communication. Organisational crisis communication and crisis management create the main framework for this research on which basis also the interview questions have been built to be carried out throughout this research.

Answer to the research question will help to reach the objective of the research goal, which is to investigate crisis communication and crisis management in the organisation. Furthermore, the main aim of this research work is to examine, analyse and compare some of the existing crisis communication practice, to help Drivego improve their crisis communication within the organisation.

Therefore, the first of the main questions are: What is crisis communication and what is the importance of crisis communication in an organisation? When these fundamental questions are answered, through literature reviews, someone can get a deep understanding of the term crisis. Also, It will be possible to get answers to more of the questions such as What is the crisis that could happen at Drivego, How it be prevented?" or "If happened, how they have been managed?"

Organisation background

Drivego.eu is an international, friendly and professional driving school based in Espoo Finland, Drivego.eu is genuinely an international, multinational driving school that provides professional driving training for customers and serves them in their native languages. The corporate aim of the company is "to train safe, social and ecological drivers of the future" (Drivego, 2019) Drivego.eu offers both theoretical and practical training. The theoretical training program of the company assist students in understanding the self-study packs quickly and as well allows them saves money (Drivego, 2019). Although the company is relatively new, it has changed the face of driving for the better and still determined to take it further.

2 Literature review for crisis communication

2.1 Crisis

Scholars and academics have offered countless definitions about a crisis, yet there is no universally accepted definition of crisis. A crisis was initially defined as an unusual situation or unexpected event that can affect individuals or organisations, which may cause financial and reputational damage, or can threaten stakeholder relations (Heath, 2003). (Bernstein, 2013) defined crisis as "any situation that is threatening or could threaten to harm people or property, seriously interrupt business, significantly damage the reputation or negatively impact the bottom line".

According to the Swedish Emergency Management Agency (SEMA, 2008) crisis can occur on several levels; therefore, they defined the crisis as "an event that affects the lives of many people and large parts of society" (SEMA, 2008). Issues such as floods, gas leaks, power cuts, radioactive fallouts or breakdowns are some of the factors that can trigger crisis—also, deliberate attacks such as terrorism, boycotts, sabotage or hacking (SEMA, 2008). A crisis when occurred is capable of undermining the operations of the organisation or of posing a significant economic, environmental, reputational, or legal liability to the organisation. According to (Coombs W. T., 2014) What is known as a crisis is "the acuity of an irregular event that threatens significant expectancies of stakeholders related to safety, health, economic, environmental issues, and can have a consequential effect on the performance of

the organisation and produce undesirable consequences". Considering the number of pressures facing today's organisation in our society, one would concede that crises are not unexpected, even though they are sometimes unpredictable, however, in the event of crisis organisation's image is always at risk. The element of crisis: crisis can create three related threats: which are public safety financial loss as well as reputation loss. (Institute for PR, 2007)

2.1.1 Types of Crisis

Health-related crisis	A health-related crisis is a crisis which once they occur, they will affect the health of personnel. Many factors can result in health-related crisis artificial factors example low working environment, poor diet. Etc. Pandemics are huge-scale outbreaks of infectious disease such as Influenza. And up to date, one went on Covid-19.
Financial crisis	Financial crisis can happen in any organisation; this sort of crisis occurs when an organisation get into sudden loss of the enormous amount of cash or products and should result in bankruptcy, loss of revenue or inflation. This type of crisis is complicated and damaging to the entire organisation. These varieties of crisis make the negative reputation of the organisation, loss of trust of consumers and investors if the financial crisis is not managed carefully and quickly it could permanent halt the business.
Violence	Crises occur when an employee commits violence or discrimination actions against other employees, or customer against an employee on organisational grounds.
Technical crisis	In this contemporary world, most organisation depends on technology to work; any breakdown or shortage in technology might cause a lack of service. To mitigate the technical crisis, Management should attempt to minimise the losses and ensure an idea to induce things back to normal as soon as possible.
Natural disaster crisis	Most of the time natural crisis are not directly influenced by the human factor, caused by the occurrence of natural events like floods, earth quick, volcano, storms or other acts of nature these calamities are classified as a natural crisis. Most straightforward thanks to catering to such crisis are by planning for them beforehand because such a crisis is often on a large scale. And

	challenging to handle. Preparation like, providing training to employees for what to try to and to not do under such circumstance, building an earthquake-resistant building, making stairs doors Etc.
Rumour	It could be a piece of information which is from the corporate to the public. For a rumour to become the reason behind crisis must have negative details or any negative impact on a company. Such crisis controlled by providing correct information such give a written or verbal statement through trusted media channel or platforms.
Human error	The character of an organisation and its daily activities but human error crisis is also caused by lack of experience or knowledge. Misuse of machines or machine breakdown all this could result in differing types of accidents
Managerial crisis	Such kind of crisis Could happen when an organisation does or handle the matter by without following the law and regulation, also called organisational misconduct.

Table 1 Types of Crisis (Holla, 2018)

2.2 Elements of Crisis Management

Crisis management comprises various phases: preparedness before the crisis, response to limit damages during the crisis and feedback after the crisis. Before a crisis, preparedness consists of developing knowledge and capacities in order to anticipate, respond and recover from a crisis effectively. However, there are four essential elements involved which are useful in crisis management, and they include emergency preparedness, emergency notification, crisis communication and crisis recovery.

2.2.1 Emergency preparedness

According to World Health Organization, (WHO, 2007) defined emergency preparedness as "a program of long exercises whose objectives are to reinforce the general limit and ability of a nation or a network to oversee a wide range of crises productively and achieve an efficient progress from alleviation through recovery, and back to the supporting turn of events" (WHO, 2007). It necessitates that crisis plans be created, the staff at all levels and in all areas be prepared, and networks in danger be taught, and that these measures be checked and assessed routinely (WHO, 2007). Preparing for crisis has traditionally consisted of developing

capacities and tools to prepare for crises that occurred in the past. Preparing for the new landscape of crises requires adapting approaches that enable preparation for response to the unknown (Baubion, 2012). In preparing for a crisis, organisations carry out what is called risk assessment.

Risk assessment is the foundation of crisis and emergency preparedness. Analysing hazards, threats and vulnerabilities through risk assessment enable response planning. Risk assessment approaches and methodologies can hardly be decoupled from their purpose: while risk assessment for traditional crises aims at developing emergency response plans, novel or trans-boundary crises need more flexible and adaptable capacities for responses, thus implying a more holistic and dynamic approach to risk assessment.

2.2.2 Crisis communication

Little understanding of communication is needed in explaining crisis communication. Communication as defined by (Griffin, 2009) "is the relational process of creating and interpreting messages that elicit a response". He emphasized the importance of people in communication, noting that that "words do not mean things; people mean things". This mean communication has no value if words are not received and interpreted by people (Griffin, 2009). In addition, crises communication can be described as communication that is used by organisations before the crisis, during the crisis and after a crisis. It is critical for organisations to ensure they manage their messages, manage and control their communication and manage and control the crises; therefore, it is always dangerous and fatal for any organisation failing to communicate appropriate messages competently during crises (Abu Farha, 2015). SEMA (2008) argued that information shared by and between public authorities, the media, organisations, groups and affected individuals before the crisis, during crisis and crisis in an organisation are related to the discourse of crisis communication in an organisation. The ability to communicate before, during and after a crisis occur is required for effective communication during a crisis (Abu Farha, 2015).

In order to encourage trust and reliability, the crisis communication strategy of organisations must provide room for listening to the public. The trust people have in an organisation prior to a crisis will remain intact even during the crisis as their faith will grow more significant in the organisation's ability to resolve the issue without any serious problems. Rather than calming stakeholders' concerns, the objective of crisis communication is simply to provide the stakeholders with the information and decisions made during the crises, so they are acquainted with adequate concerted efforts and decisions taken by the organisation in curtailing the effects of the crises. Crisis Communication is necessary because if stakeholders are not provided with insufficient information about the crisis, it will put their trust in the organisation to test. What makes an organisation succeed in the period of crisis is essential,

notwithstanding understanding and empathy are also crucial in crises communication (Brønn and Berg, 2005).

Crisis communication and the methods used to communicate have an impact on the organisation's reputation and survival as well as on people affected by the crisis. Crisis communication may save an organisation's image, or it can worsen it. Also, improper communication in time of a crisis may even put the public or employees in danger. The main goals of crisis communication are to provide information about the crisis as quickly and accurately as possible. Transparency and taking responsibility for managing a crisis are essential in the process of crisis communication. (IATA, 2014) Crisis communication can be seen to serve as a crisis management tool that has many purposes and functions in the different stages of crises. Thus, crisis communication can be seen as an ongoing process starting from the preparation for crises continuing to the overcoming of a crisis and learning from it.

Crisis communication before, during, and after a crisis is invaluable among the stakeholders to activate the solution. Communication of crises may consist of several aspects, and according to (Ogrizek and Guillery, 1999) they suggested that "Crisis communication consists basically of a set of concepts, principles, analysis, and working methods that apply especially to the very particular situation known as a crisis". In this, they are suggesting that a crisis is a specific event and that there is a type of communication suitable for such an event.

Handling crisis situations is careful preparation, development and execution of a crisis communication plan. With such a plan, it can be assured that an organisation will get a fair hearing with the media because of its ability to react quickly to situations that may arise (Wheeler A. , 2018). The critical component in crisis management is communication, In (Coombs W.T, 2009) he described communication is the essence of crisis management, and a crisis or threat of a crisis creates the need for information. The reality of crises, he adds, leads to the need for preparation and readiness to respond. Coombs continues to say that through communication, data is collected, processed into knowledge, and shared with others. This chapter reviews related works of scholar, academics and research on crisis communication as well as the theoretical and practical aspect of crisis communication.

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Numerous works have been carried on organisational crisis management and communication. (Wekesa, 2013) studied team effectiveness in crisis communication, using the Benoit Image Restoration Strategy and Situational Crisis Communication Theory. He established differences between a group, a team and when the two terms are being used interchangeably by researchers. He referred to a group as "merely a collection of individuals" which might be within an organisation, a club, a family, or among friends.

Conversely, a team defined as a "coordinated group of individuals organised to work together to achieve a specific common goal". He argued that members of crisis communication team members might function as a team belonging to an organisation. Working hard and using relevant information and procedure available to them skillfully by team members is a necessity if crisis communication team must cope with a crisis. According to Wekesa, certain features of a group such as its organisation, norms, composition, leadership and size are factors determining a team's effectiveness. He, therefore, highlighted that prior interaction, team composition, task knowledge, leadership ability and organisational culture as factors capable of influencing the point of a team in crisis management and communication (Wekesa, 2013).

According to (Turney, 2003), crisis planning is like buying insurance. He argued that people who never witness organisational crisis usually say it is a waste of time developing a crisis plan because it involves doing much work getting ready for something that may never happen (Turney, 2003). Although, statistically, the likelihood of an accident occurs lesser than the possibility of having one, yet many people purchase automobile accident insurance. No rationally thinking driver would abandon car insurance, so also crisis communication plan can never be neglected by any wise communicators. After deciding to prepare a crisis communication plan, another sensible precaution is to prepare for the worst-case scenario. Turney added that perceptive communicators should plan to handle the worst possible crisis that could strike their organisation. That is the way their preparedness to withstand bigger disaster or incident with lesser problems. He came up with six steps to tackle the issues of crisis communication plan. These include clearly stating the communication team's mission in a crisis; identifying organisation's most critical public and themes to emphasise in communicating with each of them; determining where crisis communication team members will be needed and the location of any special operations centres defining task-related communication roles required in a crisis; preparing a crisis communication team roster showing "starting line-up" with contact information, and disseminating the plan and regularly updating (Turney, 2003).

According to Bernstein, he offered necessary steps that must be followed by every organisation serious about effective crisis communication. According to him, the days of playing ostrich are gone. Organisations that failed to prepare for the crisis will undoubtedly incur severe damages when a crisis occurs. Bernstein argued that the leadership of many organisations usually was unable to address many issues related to crisis/disaster response in their organisations. According to him, the use of best-possible channels to reach each stakeholder group without adequate internal and external communications will usually result in a breakdown in operational response; stakeholders will quickly become confused, angry and react negatively. Due to lack of knowledge of the situation; at best, the organisation will be seen ineptitude, and at worst, criminally negligent; and there will be a dramatic extension in the length of time required to restore the crisis altogether. Bernstein, therefore, proposed ten steps to effective crisis communication. These steps are categorised into two (2) stages viz; the pre-crisis and post-crisis. During the pre-crisis Bernstein argued that an organisation must anticipate the crisis, identify crisis communications team, identify and train spokespersons (to have right skills, positions and training), spokesperson training, establish notification and monitoring systems, identify and know stakeholders, and develop holding statements. Activities during the post-crisis must be an assessment of the crisis, finalise and adapt critical messages, and perform post-crisis analysis (Bernstein, 2013).

2.3 Crisis Management

Crisis management is a systematic attempt to prevent or control interruptive events that may occur in an organisation and may lead to a negative impact. It is essential to have a crisis management team which will be dealing with the reviewing of the crisis, understanding their impacts and ways to prevent or control create them by creating a crisis management model/ plan which is suitable and functional for the organisation if the crisis may occur.

Crisis communication planning and analyse phrase of crisis management which are pre-crisis phase it is concerned with prevention and preparation, during crisis phrase, this is when management must respond to a crisis and after crisis phrase (Wheeler A. , 2018).

2.3.1 Theory of Crisis Management

There has been a different framework that tried to explain crisis management theory the theories that are applied in crisis communication research. Corporate Apologia, image repair theory, situational crisis communication theory, and organisational renewal theory, which are described below are examples of crisis management theory.

Corporate Apologia

Corporate Apologia is the oldest of all the theories of crisis communication which provide a foundation through which other theories of crisis communication are built. According to (Ulmer R. R., 2015), corporate Apologia offers several communication strategies that can be used by organisations to respond to wrongdoing accusation. It is a defensive theory that gives room for the organisation to account for its actions when found guilty of wrongdoing (Sellnow, 2011).

Image repair theory

Image repair theory introduced in 1997 as a suggested approach to crisis response and communication in an organisation by (Benoit, 1997). Issues such as blame, responsibility and liability are the focus of common image repair theory. Image Repair Theory focuses on analysing crisis and accusing the event responsible for the crisis. According to (Benoit, 1997) responsibility of the offensive action must be taken by any organisation that is at the fault of it, but such obligation can be communicated through corrective action, minimisation, mortification, bolstering, and so on. While the crisis response strategies can be communicated by organisations not responsible for the act from denial, shift of blame.

Situational crisis communication (SCCT)

The situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) goes beyond just image repair after an accident to supporting organisations and choose the most effective crisis response strategies method based on community crisis perceptions and the goals of the organisation. The first thing usually to do is to understand the crisis type the organisation in which they are dealing. Organisation goals can then involve changing the perception of the crisis or the organisation itself. It is also essential to study an organisation's crisis history, and its reputation before the crisis event (Robert R. Ulmer, 2010)

Off from (Benoit, 1997) 's image repair strategies, Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) was developed by (Coombs W. T., 2007). The SCCT focuses on how an organisation's reputation can be protected through crisis communication from an evidence-based perspective. (Coombs W. T., 2007) argued that the crisis manager has the responsibility to examine three factors related to the crisis, which are initial crisis responsibility, crisis history, and prior relational reputation in a process involving two steps. The identification of the crisis type is the first step, which, according to Coombs, are victim, accidental, or preventable. How much crisis responsibility stakeholders will attribute to the organisation at the beginning of the crisis can easily be predicted by crisis manager through the identification of crisis type; hence initial crisis responsibility level is established (Coombs W. T., 2007). Assessing the threat to the reputation of the organisation and adopting the appropriate crisis response strategy through methods such as bolstering, denial and victim age is the second step in the process proposed by Coombs.

According to the SCCT theory, response strategies are in four groups (what it refers to as postures); denial, during this stage, the organisation or museum to solve the crisis, distance itself from the crisis by attacking the accuser and scapegoating. Diminishment is a strategy to reduce the effect of control attributions or negative impacts, including, excusing the museum's behavior and justification or reduction of the perceived damage (Benoit, 1997).

Rebuilding simply is an effort to improve the organisation's reputation by compensating victims who were involved in the crisis by acknowledgement and taking responsibility for what happened. Lastly, bolstering is a blend of three supplements which improves the relationship between an organisation and its stakeholders. It reminds them of prior good works, praising stakeholders, and victimizing the organisation as well (Coombs W. T., 2012) SCCT, identifies the most common response strategies in crisis communication strategies making it easier for an organisation to use its strategy while choosing carefully when attempting to repair reputational damage.

Organisational Renewal Theory

Organisational Renewal Theory is the final theory in the discourse of crisis communication. ORT focuses on renewal based upon stakeholder commitment, commitment to correction, and core values. According to (Heath, 2003) "Renewal replaces the discourse of apology and defence with a more optimistic discourse of rebuilding and renewal, focusing on strong value positions, the responsibility to stakeholders, and as well as growth due to the crisis". According to the tenets of this theory, reputation and image two crucial concepts of the organisation, and not always assume the central role in determining crisis in the organisation. This notion, according to (Olsson, 2014), makes ORT outstanding from other earlier theories. For organisations to succeed in contemporary society, such an organisation must be focused on rebuilding and learning from a crisis. Organisation Renewal Theory suggests that a crisis can be a turning point for an organisation to create renewal, growth, and new opportunities for the organisation and its publics (Ulmer R. R., 2002).

This thesis has attempted to review crisis communication from different angles of the academic framework. The study provides conceptual understanding for both crisis and crisis communication, thereafter, reviewed related literature on crisis communication as well as a theoretical discourse that best explains crisis communication.

2.3.2 Crisis Management Planning and Crisis Management Team

Crisis management planning is the process of developing organisations guidelines, means to manage and respond to critical events that may occur to an organisation; as a result, they may pause as a threat and lead to the negative impact to the. (Saleh, 2016)for a successful crisis management plan should incorporate risk management, business continuity planning emergency responding plan.

The crisis management team is a management structure created responsible for protecting the organisation from the dangers of crisis; the team helps the organisation mitigate the risk of the crisis by being responsible in identifying the parts of the organisation where problems might be, they also help in detecting crisis before the hit and making implementing actions needed and making decisions during and after a crisis (JIGAR, 2008).

As mentioned above, crisis management is vital for any organisation, but its structure might change based on organisation scale and its activities. According (Saleh, 2016) common elements of crisis management team structure, for medium- large scale organisation includes.

The security manager is responsible for reviewing the situation and leads the team on how to manage the situation based on each member of the team and monitor the situation and handle internal crisis communication and documentation.

Crisis communication team members with the right skills and position every team member work on assigned duties. The team includes Spoken person who is usually one-person appointment by crisis communication team, and his/her work will be to speak on organisations behalf to the public during and after crisis event occurs and the link between the crisis control and response centre. Human resource manager acts as employee representative with a role to access the employee data for the site, contact the local employee for support based on their skills or responsibilities assigned to them. Legal personnel stand as government official his role is to make sure organisation is making the decision that is within the law, legal personnel will be notified outside legal counsel make sure they are available all time when needed. Health personnel serves as in case of any health-threatening situation the health personnel is responsible for conducting and planning human health, impacts and contact the local emergency department. The spoke person serves in the crisis team due to unstable situation during the crisis public relation personnel is the official person who will be releasing, update the information to the public through media or other platforms without compromising the privacy of neither employer nor employee. The security and safety personnel deals with more than physical security of an organisation; it includes premises such as monitors access within the organisation and its properties as well as information security. Financial personnel role is to assess economic-related damages/ implications as a result of the crisis (Saleh, 2016).

Importance of crisis management planning for an organisation:

It helps to maintain a company's outstanding reputation in the industry; it builds trust with customers and prevents competitors from use crisis to tarnish organisation image. It improves health and safety as well as the well-being of everyone who works for and does business with the company (organisation staff and customers). It provides peace of mind for the management will be readily prepared for the crisis that comes it is way also, it enhances protects the reputation of an organisation. It gives clarity on how to manage a crisis, distribution of responsibilities between it stimulate increase productivity during and after a crisis.

2.3.3 Phrases of Crisis Management

Refer to the beginning of chapter two, section 2.2 explains crisis management being a pre-established process, and guidelines to manage a crisis, this section explains all the necessary steps, procedures used in conducting crisis management planning. Procedures are divided into three phases which are described below according to (Saleh, Yunus D., 2016)

Pre-crisis

This phrase involves four steps of crisis management planning,

Step 1

They are establishing a crisis management team of the organisation, based on the scale and nature of the organisation. Refer to this chapter, section 2:2.2 elements an structure of crisis management says that the team is composed of people from a different department who will share roles and responsibilities according to their positions. Example: Human resource manager is responsible for taking care issues that affect employees.

Step 2

During this phase, the crisis management team identifies and predicts crisis related to an organisation and categorise them based on crisis type. Example crisis such as outbreak diseases is categorised as health-related diseases. Step two also involves identification of stakeholders or any other business affiliates.

Step 3

After categorising, identification and assessing of risks and threats, crisis management team focuses on developing ways to mitigate and respond to various crisis scenarios by developing an actual crisis management plan and crisis response plan by creating emergency preparedness used during crisis based on its category. As well as preparation of business continuity planning of the organisation. (Saleh, Yunus D., 2016)

Step 4

Implementing, evaluating and testing the maturity level of created crisis management plan against the desired objectives of the organisation.

During crisis

This stage is the response to an ongoing- crises; it is the real crisis management. Crisis response is the countermeasures methods that the management takes after the crisis hits. This stage is characterised by short decision time, complexity, and ambiguity because of the damage occasioned by the crisis. Every effort must be geared towards curtailing and minimising the effect of the crisis as quickly as possible. According to (Hale, 2005), the organisation navigates through the process of observation, interpretation, choice, and dissemination—repeating the process steps several times. Thus, assessing the situation and gathering as much accurate information as possible is required.

According to (Baubion, 2012) he pinpoints that after assessment, the crisis management team must mobilise the necessary resources, i.e., information technology experts would be required if the crisis involved the computer system. The scope of the crisis will also be

determined to know which category of stakeholder is affected in order to assess the capacity of a crisis team to be mobilised (Baubion, 2012).

Another step to take in this stage is to communicate the situation to stakeholders and the public. This is because the stakeholder's perception at this point is critical as they would expect an immediate response and a need for reassurance also (Coombs W Timothy., 2011) asserts that communication is effective if accurately, directly and quickly disseminated to stakeholders and the media at this stage thereby preventing the spread of inaccurate information and assumption about the causes of the crisis. (Coombs W. T., 2012) further opines that communication should include sympathy and empathy for victims and where necessary, rehabilitation and compensation of those and things affected.

Post-Crisis

During this phase, the organisation learns from the experience. Post-crisis phase is also known as crisis recovery phase, which is defined as the period when an organisation is resuming back to its normal operations after a crisis event. This is an important stage for an organisation as it makes or breaks the whole existence of an organisation during this stage. The goal of the recovery phase is not only returning to normal operation, also continuing to rebuild the organisation's confidence and trust. (gfdrr, 2017). During this phase, the crisis is no longer the focus of management's attention but still needs attention. Evaluation is made, the situation is analysed to know the remote cause of the crisis, and the lesson learned. There is important follow-up communication that is required. First, crisis managers often promise to provide additional information during the crisis phase. The crisis managers must deliver on those informational promises or risk losing the trust of the public wanting the information. Second, the organisation needs to release updates on the recovery process, corrective actions, and investigations of the crisis (Institute for PR, 2007). The amount of follow-up communication required depends on the amount of information promised during the crisis and the length of time it takes to complete the recovery process (Coombs W. T., 2007). One important attribute of this stage is that it helps the organisation to learn. Hence, mistakes that led to a previous crisis will not be repeated. Measures to avoid further crisis would have also been known and put in place. Subsequently, the organisation comes out better and stronger and affirms that the seriousness of a crisis could serve as a source of learning and motivation to the organisation. The reputational repair will be initiated or continued at this stage by following up on communication processed (Coombs W. T., 2011).

3 Research methods

The third chapter of this report contains the research methodology and research methods used in carrying out the research work. In this chapter, the methods, materials, procedures and tasks that describe the general means used in achieving the goals of this study. (Merriam S. B., 2015), defines research methods "as all those techniques that are used for conduction of research. It must, however, be noted that there are several methods to conduct research; most common ones are quantitative and quantitative research methods. A quantitative method this method of enquiry "describes, infers, and resolves problems making use of numbers. Quantitative research focuses on the collection of numerical data, the analysis of those data and the drawing of inferences from the data" (Coldwell, 2004).

3.1 Qualitative Method

Qualitative research is often associated with inductive reasoning; also, it is based on non-numerical and unquantifiable elements such as feelings, emotions, words, sounds Etc. (Crossman, 2020) noted that when information cannot be analysed by means of mathematical techniques, such information is the fact that and an event does not often occur to allow the collection of reliable data. Qualitative research method mainly focuses on peoples their motives, feelings and thoughts towards specific research on hand (Merriam S. B., 2015) These two methods are the common in social sciences as broad approaches to enquiry.

For this writeup, the qualitative research method is chosen because the primary purpose of the write up to improve crisis communication plan for an organisation mentioned in chapter one. In order to achieve the research goal, the research questions must be answered. The research method will be laid up collecting secondary data from existing knowledge, such as a literature review of books, observation, focus- group interview or documentary analysis.

According to (Merriam S. B., 2015.) they recommend using qualitative research methods to find answers questions based on what? How? Than "how many". For that reason, this method will be useful in this case as the main question to be asked: What is crisis communication? Besides this, the sub-questions like What is the importance of crisis communication for an organisation? Moreover, "How they can be prevented?" applying this method will give me more detailed and describing answers than using a quantitative approach which will provide me with just numbers and statistics.

According to (Merriam S. B., 2015.) research method must contain a research design, sample population, test instrument, validity, reliability and implementation phases, also noted that a suitable research method must include research design, the population of the study, sampling procedure, the sample, instrumentation, data collection, ethical consideration, data preparation, operational definition of research variables, and process for testing hypotheses.

Interview

An interview is a data collection method that involves two or more people exchanging information through questions and answers, and interviews are another unique method of collecting primary data. An interview is a person-to-person interaction, either face to face or otherwise. An interview can be structured formal or unstructured less formal. (Merriam S. B., 2015)

Semi structure interview

In this thesis project, the focus will be on semi-structured interviews combined with analysis related literature and how the interview was conducted. A semi-structured interview is a type of interview considered to be as a mixture of a survey and unstructured interview. In practice, usually, a semi-structured interview offers a flexible approach to the interview process. Characteristics of semi-structured interview usually it contains scheduled list of with open-ended question, this type of interview aims to capture the perspectives of participants, that is why the participants always give answers freely in a dialogue form expressing their views, experiences, beliefs and motivations while focusing on the issue that is relevant to the study. (Alan Bryman, 1994.)

This procedure supports the intentions behind the semi-structured interview, and the plan is to get answers to the research questions; however, it is not clear what kind of responses is expected, and hence, a flexible method is a necessity. Interview, even though questions can be still planned around the same theme. On the other hand, having considered that since crisis management differs depending nature of an organisation explained in chapter 2. Therefore, the structure for the interviews is a focus group interview, but in the interview situation, there need to be marginal for different answers.

Due to the many definitions of crisis management, the interviewees are asked how they first define the term crisis management. What type of crisis can occur at Drivego? The main part of the interview consists of questions based on the PPRR Crisis Management Model that illustrates the cycle of the crisis. The structure of the interview is designed around the same themes as in the model. Interviewees are asked about prevention, preparation, response and recovery of crisis. (Queenland Government, 2020).

Learning is also an important aspect, and through the interview, the writer is hoping to get practical examples of already happened or possible crises in the organisation, which will also give more concrete perspective for the research. See the interview questions in the Attachment appendix section.

Conducting the interview

This research consists of two interviews; the first interview took place in August; this was an individual phone call interview. The main idea of the first interview was to understand the organisational background (Drivego) and being able to book the second interview. The second interview is Group interview, and all Interviewees in this research were purposefully picked on the basis that they need to be familiar with Drivego, management or maintenance. Also, Interviewees were contacted beforehand and being explained why the interview was and agreed to interview time. The interview questions were also sent to the interviewees in advance, offering them an opportunity to prepare themselves for the interview. By doing this be able to prepare themselves. This helped as the interviewees knew what they were talking about because the questions did not come as a surprise. Inter- views were also recorded and transcribed to be able to go through the material more closely.

The second interview was conducted in September 2020. Both the first and second interview were recorded and transcribed into text form for analysing. All the interviews were carried out and examined in English to avoid the language barrier. The average length of the interviews was approximately 55 minutes, the longest being 1r and the shortest being 30 minutes. Body gestures of the interviewees are not in the primary role in this research; the transcribing was done quite freely. All the said sentences were written down, but no special characters were used, and some repetition filler words were left out.

Ethics and Interview limitation

While conducting an interview, it is time-consuming, energy and ability to be able to schedule a favourable time from both parties. During an interview, there are chances to have incomplete recorded data. An interview process could also cause systematic errors. During this research, all the research-related activities are conducted ethically and legally as well as considering the privacy of the research participants. Therefore, the Identity of the respondents will not be disclosed without their permission. The language used in English to avoid language and cultural complication have been considered to prevent barrier (Creswell, 2018)

4 Results

The findings highlight opinions and perception of Drivego management as a result of the interviewees towards crisis and crisis management for the at Drivego organisation which they shared during the interview. As a results interview conducted during the research period. The question presented below will be answered by the results of the analysed interview questions, the interview questions were posed in such a way that they give a possibility for the interviewees to describe different crises based on their opinions.

In your understanding, define what crisis is?

During the interview, all interviewees agreed to define a crisis as anything that may occur and result to adverse impacts, or interactions for an organisation or other activities that maybe be taking place in someone's life.

Types of crisis at Drive go.

Like any other organisation, there is more crisis that may occur such as natural disaster, an organisational crisis such dishonesty, personnel crisis such misuse of power, a technical crisis such as servers going down can also happen. It may cause to customers question their reliability or tarnish their reputation. Liisa Anti of Drivego

Drivego is a multicultural organisation with employees from different background, ethnic groups of both gender male, female and LGBTQ group. Due to this reason, there is a high chance for discrimination or violence crisis. Liisa Anti is an employee of Drivego.

Covid19 lead financial crisis, the organisation had to stop its operation for some time due to lockdown, and after they resume back to normal, most students postponed their studies, some families decided to take teaching permit and teach their children instead of taking them to driving school.

After Drivego resumed back to work and continue with drive test session with students, the health of employee was at risk due to the current pandemic even though both employees and students had to take precaution as instructed by World Health Organization (WHO).

As for Drivego management, they had to sanitize car before and after each drive session, wearing a mask throughout the session, rescheduling of the session if students have fever, cough or flu symptoms. However, most students did not follow the given instructions for many reasons; as a result, Drivego employees were still at high risk.

Apart from Covid-19 crisis that took over the whole world Drivego does not have a history of any other event of a crisis. (Liisa Anti of drivego)

How does Drivego respond to a crisis?

Currently, Drivego has neither a proper crisis communication plan nor a crisis management team. Based on the findings during the interview, students and teachers communicate through the most comfortable way of phone calls to address any issue that has been raised. However, the managing Director at Drivego stands as the spoken person, and he handles most of the responsibilities when it comes to crisis management.

5 Conclusion

Crises are unavoidable and as such effective management of crises is essential to the long-time existence of an organisation, hence, crisis communication and management has emerged as a vital field for public relations. The crisis communication process is made up of three (3) significant phases - pre-crisis planning phase, crisis management during the crisis, and post evaluation and learning phase (Gebeyehu, 2018). An essential part of effective crisis communication in crisis preparation, which is made up of crisis management plan development and also training people within the organisation ways to respond to crises when they occur. During a crisis, crisis management can include quick and decisive but yet thoughtful actions, which make crisis management complex. The organisation faced by crisis can adopt different strategies and tactics which could be ethical or unethical to combat the crisis. However, according to the image repair theory, it will be ideal for an organisation to respond to a crisis in a timely and ethical manner to repair and protect its reputation among stakeholders. After a crisis is considered resolved, the post-crisis evaluation begins and involves evaluation on the crisis management decisions, skills and responses of the organisation when it was in crisis. This stage serves as a learning stage for the organisation, as the organisation discovers which crisis management responses that worked and those that did not work and amends for future potential crises. This study examined crisis communication in organisations and found that effective crisis management is an integral part of the organising process. Usually, crises come as a threat to the existence of any organisation, but the accompanying damage with crises can be surmounted by effective crisis management, and in most times enable an organisation to walk through the crisis and come out stronger than before the crisis. A threat, surprise and short response time are often traits of crises, but the management or leaders of an organisation can better respond to them if there exists an effective crisis planning and communication before the crisis. Even though attack to an organisation by crisis can come in any form; however, there are reliable approaches an organisation can adopt to help them transform crisis incidence into an opportunity for improvement. However, the best way to improve an organisation is not through a crisis, but all organisation must have a crisis communication plan because no organisation is immune from a crisis.

5.1 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity need to be discussed when analysing the results of any study; it measures the relevancy of the study. Reliability means that the results are repeatable, consistent results not coincidental. The validity, this means that the used measure those factors that it was supposed to measure methods brings out accurate results (Golafshani, 2003). In a qualitative approach, estimating reliability and validity can sometimes be challenging as all the descriptions involving different people with different opinions and cultures. For this reason, in this research, we have discussed these factors in qualitative

research. For example, I have explained detailed the research process, interview process and its conditions; this will help to increase the reliability and validity and trustworthiness of this study. Based on the interview they were carried out as close to formal interviews as possible, that is why the interviewees were contacted beforehand by email or phone, and they also received the interview questions in advance this increased the validity of the study because the interviewees they were prepared; as a result, they knew what was discussed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering all the aspects of crisis communication and management, the study presents the following recommendations. An essential part of effective crisis communication is preparing for a crisis in the pre-crisis phase of crisis management. Crisis preparation helps in scanning through the environment to detect issues which can transform into crisis. The consequence of a crisis would be reduced because they are identified and solved at an early stage. As a result of the findings, it is recommended to have a crisis management plan in place before a crisis strikes. Therefore, there is a need of a proper crisis management plan for Drivego because, within one-year Drivego has been growing so fast, and the number of students has been increasing; therefore, it recommends improving Drivego's crisis management plan by creating a crisis communication plan for the organisation. Drivego's crisis communication plan will outline and explain how the organisation will handle a crisis, by creating will create crisis communication team which include Internal communications procedures, roles and responsibilities of each team member and how they will communicate during a crisis. Construction of Key messages that will be used to present a company statement during crisis, contacts and media list and post-crisis evaluation form. Crisis preparation also aids the selection and training in advance members of the organisation best ways potential crisis are responded. Organisation's spokesperson is also identified and trained ahead before the crisis to communicate when the crisis eventually happens effectively. Hence, it would be ideal for any organisation, including DriveGo.eu, to have a pre-crisis manual to better respond to crises.

The current theories in crises communication failed to acknowledge the impact of social media on crises communication and management. The inception of social media has moved the communication power from formal to informal and take control of communication away from organisations and shifted it to the public. Irrespective of cultural differences and geographical locations, the world is drifting towards the use of social media as the principal instrument of communication and primary source of information; as a result, there need to be in place all-inclusive and universally accepted practices that would enhance efficient ways organisations utilise social media during crises periods. However, current crisis communication and management theories should be reviewed to portray the new prospects and the unknown

dangers of social media to the power that social media provides and as well as reducing the accompanying risks.

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Figures

Figure 1: the Numbering button **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Figure 2: The thesis process as a template figure **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Tables

Table 1: Example table **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendices

Appendix 1: The title of the first appendix	32
Appendix 2: The title of the second appendix.....	34

Appendix 1: Interview

Interview Questions	Answers
How do you define a crisis? In your understanding, explain what crisis is?	A crisis is anything that causes disruptive outcome after it occurs. A crisis is an event that may cause harm to people and their environments. A crisis is an event that may have both negative and positive impact on an organization, people and their surroundings.
What are the types of crisis that your organisation might encounter?	Like any other organisation, there is more crisis that may occur such as natural disaster, an organisational crisis such as dishonesty, personnel crisis such as misuse of power, a technical crisis such as servers going down can also happen.
What is the possible crisis that can occur at Drivego?	<p>Possibilities of health-related crisis which may affect Drivego in many different ways example Covid19 lead financial crisis, the organisation had to stop its operation for some time due to lockdown. After they resume back to normal, most students postponed their studies, some families decided to take teaching permit and teach their children instead of taking them to driving school.</p> <p>After Drivego resumed back to work and continue with drive test session with students, the health of employee was at risk due to the current pandemic even though both employees and students had to take precaution as instructed by the World Health Organization (WHO).</p> <p>As for Drivego management, they had to sanitise car before and after each drive session, wearing a mask throughout the session, rescheduling of a session if students have fever, cough or flu symptoms. However, most students did not follow the given instructions for many reasons; as a result, Drivego employees were still at high risk.</p> <p>Apart from Covid-19 crisis that took over the whole world Drivego does not have a history of any other event of crisis.</p>
How does Drivego respond to crisis?	Currently, Drivego does not have either a proper crisis communication plan or has a crisis management team. Based on the findings during the interview, students and teachers communicate through the most comfortable way of phone calls to address any issue that has been raised. However, the managing Director at Drivego stands spoken person, and he handles most of the responsibilities when it comes to crisis management.
How prepared are you for the future crisis?	We cannot say that we are prepared at least not yet, for my knowledge we do not have any crisis management plan available yet usually we handle whatever happens when it happens because there are rare chances for a crisis to occur.
In case of crisis how do you communicate?	Currently, we use phone calls and emails.

Analysis of answers

During the interview, all interviewee agreed to define Crisis, as anything that may occur and result to adverse impacts, or interactions for an organisation or other activities that maybe be taking place in someone's life. Drivego is a multicultural organisation with employees from different background, ethnic groups of both gender male, female and LGBTQ group. Due to this reason, there is a high chance for discrimination or violence crisis. It may cause to customers to question their reliability or tarnish their reputation.

Appendix 2: Planning a Crisis communication plan for the organisation.

Purpose

The purpose of the document is to develop a template to communicate possible crises within the organisation and reduce the impact of the crises. This plan should be able to establish crises response and also help the organisation obtain support in the situation of crises to the public and media.

Objective

Make sure all facts are accurate and relevant to the crises at the organisation.

Make sure that the organisation is found in the media as an association that is open and transparent cares about its public, employees and all partners.

Crises communication team

A crisis communication team is created to protect the organisation from the dangers of crisis, the team helps the organisation mitigate the risk of the crisis. The team focus on identifying the parts of the organisation where problems might be, and they also help in detecting crisis before the hit. The also plays a role in detecting areas of concerns.

Roles and Responsibilities

Crisis communication team is the basis for all crisis activities, because to the extent in which the specialists in this team can cope with the challenges set before them, to enable the organisation to be successful in overcoming the crisis. Crisis communication team is responsible for detecting initial stages of a crisis, determining the problematic crisis difficulties, creating a crisis management plan that assists in the survival of emergencies, encourage staff psychologically to tackle the problems encountered during a crisis and develop future crisis management operations.

Team member	Contact Name	Roles and Responsibilities
Managing Director	xxx	<i>Crisis management team leader is responsible for crisis management plan. Makes decisions and notifies crises team.</i>
Team Member	xxx	<i>Problem detection, communication to Managing Director. Notifies employees.</i>
Team Member	xxx	<i>Problem detection, communication to the crisis team and staff.</i>
Security staff	xxx	<i>Problem detection, review of security-related operations.</i>

Possible crises

Below is the list of crises that could occur during exhibitions and related events.

- Theft/loss/damage
- Accident
- Delays in activities
- Public dispute with another student
- Lay-offs and reduced budget
- Fire, flood, explosion, earthquake, natural hazards
- Terrorist attacks, murder, suicide, sexual harassments,
- Financial fraud by staff
- Construction plan vs neighbourhood
- Sponsor/loan issues
- Malicious press campaign, political dispute

Crisis communication during a crisis

- Crises team should quickly assemble and immediately start logging events happening taken and all communication actions.
- Crises team should verify the possible threats in consideration of the possibility of the risk outcomes.
- Crises team should clarify the objectives in responding to the crisis and then inform the necessary agency (Law enforcement agencies, internal and external stakeholders).
- The safety of human life should be a priority above any other risk.

Crisis communication post-crisis

- All required information should be delivered to stakeholders immediately.
- The organisation must give updates to the stakeholders about the recovery process, the corrective action taken and the investigation of the crisis
- The crisis management team should analyse crisis and draw lessons learned.

Crisis notification

The crises communication team should contact both internal and external stakeholders.

Internal stakeholders	External stakeholders
Crisis team members Employees Interns and volunteers Key management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers • Survivors impacted by the incident and their families • Employees and their families • News media • Community—especially neighbours, living near the facility • Company management, directors and investors • Government elected officials, regulators and other authorities

Crisis management checklist for crisis management team leader

Action taken	Date and Time
Determine if it is necessary to trigger a crisis response plan	
Communicate all members of the crisis communication team	
Make a crisis management team get to the workplace	
Arrange a meeting with crisis management team members	
Adapt and run pre-prepared crisis communication guideline	
Contact all necessary external parties	
Inform all crisis management team members with latest updates through briefings and meetings	

Maintain data logs	
Set up staff to mitigate a delayed incident	
Verify that security measures are in place.	
Inform all employees with the latest updates.	
Inform all external stakeholder with all necessary information	