Research on the Crisis Public Relation of Hotels in the We Media Era—Taking the Cases of Female Attacks in Heyi Hotel as an Example

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Abstract. On the basis of understanding the we media and crisis public relations (PR) and its relations, taking the cases of female attacks in Beijing Heyi Hotel as an example, through the investigation of the events in the fermentation process and the diffusion process of Weibo, this article analyzes the information dissemination channels, the speed of dissemination and the scope of dissemination from the we media era. On this basis, combined with the current situation of Heyi Hotel crisis PR and compared the trend of the events afterwards, this article analyzes the new situation and new challenges faced by hotel crisis RR in the current situation, and through investigation and analysis, sums up the handling procedures of hotel crisis public relations from the we media era and provides constructive suggestions for the future crisis management in the hotel industry.

Introduction

With the continuous development and application of network technology, the sources of information are becoming more and more widespread [1]. It is hard for traditional media to cover the coverage and dissemination of news events, so the new media network was born. With the continued evolution of new media on the Internet, the speed and breadth of information spread by individuals on the network are expanding, thus the we media comes into being. The so-called “we media” is a way of understanding how the general public provides and shares their own facts and news after the public is connected with the global knowledge system through digital technology. It has the characteristics of civilians and personalization, easy operation with low threshold and strong communication and fast broadcasting. In 2003, the term “we media” was put forward in the United States, which was translated in Chinese as “self media”. In 2005, “Blog” entered China and began to be recognized on the public level, which was regarded as the official formation of media in China. With the launch of Weibo in 2009, it had officially come from the we media era.

The continuous development of the we media has also led to the development of the hotel industry, which has a positive impact on the hotel’s image and brand communication. This way of media transmission is fast and convenient, and everyone can become an information source. Hotel activity information, employees’ work experience and customer experience feedback may become the source of information and widely spread. It has strong timeliness, fast propagation speed, strong interactive function, large customer group and group effect, thus enhancing the effect of communication. At the same time, it also has the characteristics of the autonomy of information release, the pertinence of publishing content, low cost, high efficiency and so on. But the we media is a double-edged sword. It is precisely because of the characteristics of the we media that the hotel industry is facing the difficulty of public relations and the control of accidents and emergencies, which is widely concerned and supervised by the public opinion. It will seriously damage the hotel brand and image if not handled properly, which has put forward a new test for the hotel’s crisis PR treatment.
The Hotel Crisis PR Overview

Crisis PR

Crisis PR refers to the crisis response mechanism, which has the characteristics of accidental, focused, destructive and urgency [2]. Specifically, crisis public relations refers to the organization or enterprise organized, planned study, formulation and implementation of a series of management measures and coping strategies to avoid or mitigate the serious damage and threats caused by the crisis, such as avoidance, control and resolution of crises and revival after crisis settlement. In the rapid development of information technology, both individuals and organizations often need to face crisis PR. The quality of crisis PR management, on the one hand, reflects the overall management level and strain response ability of the parties concerned. On the other hand, it directly affects the credibility and interests of the parties involved in the crisis.

The present situation of hotel crisis PR

With the development of China’s tourism industry, the hotel industry is also growing, which industry structure continues to optimize and upgrade, more and more diversified, humane, personalized. The hotel has made great progress in both hardware and software services, but the crisis PR remains in the traditional crisis response mode. First of all, the awareness of the crisis within the hotel is poor, and the hotel management departments tend to focus on improving the hotel’s revenue while neglecting the training of crisis awareness and lacking the ability to judge the crisis. Secondly, after the crisis, due to the weak sense of crisis public relations, the hotel cannot control the development of events in time, and take incorrect measures to make things worse. Finally, due to the lack of internal and external communication and coordination mechanism, the hotel interior response speed is slow and inefficient processing, collaboration between departments is poor, while lack of communication and exchange with the outside media and crisis management experience.

Relationship between Media and Hotel Crisis PR

Overall, the advent of the we media age will change the hotel industry’s crisis PR model. Since the era of the media, with the increasing attention of individual information, various problems existing in the hotel, especially the conflicts involving the interests of consumers, have been thrown into the network and continuously enlarged. The relationship between the hotel PR team and the we media determines the transparency of the hotel, even affects the customer's impression. On the one hand, the hotel can actively seek cooperation with the we media propagate the positive professional information, publicize and promote the operation of the hotel through the strength of the PR team, making the we media as the window of the hotel's external marketing to create a good image and brand. On the other hand, the speed and breadth of the we media will be possible to expose the problems of management and service in the hotel, which will cause widespread concern in society. The case of the Beijing Heyi Hotel involved in this article created a serious brand crisis for Home Inns Group.

Heyi Hotel Female Attack Event

Event process

On April 3, 2016, a woman booked the Beijing Wangjing 798 Heyi Hotel, a subsidiary of Home Inns Group, through Ctrip’s website. In the evening, she was hijacked by a stranger in the hotel and dragged forcibly. The whole process lasted 6 minutes. Hotel security staff and cleaning staff witnessed but did not stop, but fortunately a passed by female tenant helped. After the incident, the woman had a complaint with the hotel, the reservations and the police station.

Event fermentation process and dissemination process

The first stage: start-up period. The woman uploaded video in the early morning of April 5th, and released 13 micro-blog, put in the Heyi Hotel attack report and complaints by subsection
statements, but until the 20:00 that evening, the 13 micro-blog did not attract a lot of attention, comment and forwarding number, sound more from the female relatives and friends.

The second stage: The proliferation period. At 20:10, the woman retweeted microblogging and linked the video with the long Weibo, which brought about 937,000 retransmissions, 283,000 comments and 168 million readings. Followed by a network of ultra-high-flow and fans joined the ranks of web celebrity, the event pushed to the hot topic, causing more media attention.

The third stage: the outbreak period. On April 6, as more entertainer’s forwarding comments, more netizens participated in the discussion of the event, and stated their own problems encountered in the consumption process of the hotel, the resonance of the network peaked. At the same time, Home Inns Group was pushed to the cusp, how to deal with the event of the hotel became the focus of public concern.

The event is mainly disseminated through forums, blogs, micro-blog, WeChat and so on. From the time and occasion of the incident spread, the event occurred during the Qingming holiday. Netizens were on vacation. There was enough time and energy to catch up with the hot spots of public opinion. In addition, many consumers, like this woman, were traveling outside and had the same hotel stay procedure, which would resonate more.

Event impact

In addition to triggering social thinking, the occurrence of the women’s attack in Beijing Heyi Hotel has had far-reaching effects on Home Inns. From the public point of view of the network, most netizens are standing on the consumer’s point of view, condemning the hotel service staff inaction, security management loopholes and post-processing attitude, forming the “halo effect” of psychological, which extends to the entire group management level, quality of service and its brand image.

Heyi Hotel Crisis PR Process

Heyi Hotel crisis PR deal. After the event, with the increasing attention of the network, the netizens gradually transferred the discussion from Heyi Hotel to the Home Inns Group. Therefore, the Heyi Hotel did not reply the relevant questions, Home Inns Group had a unified response.

From the reaction speed, the Home Inns Group responded faster. In the early morning of April 6, 2016, the first response was made by Home Inns Group. It was informed of the progress of the event. The client concerned had been contacted, and the progress of the survey was explained. But at this time, the netizens were more excited. The statement was officially, but it did not solve the substantive problems, nor did it respond to the hot topics discussed by the netizens, and did not apologize to the client. Therefore, the statement had caused greater discontent. Immediately afterwards, the Home Inns Group issued a second statement stating the course of the event, emphasizing the treatment of Heyi Hotel, explaining the behavior of hotel managers and service personnel, failing to recognize its own safety management issues, and not engaging the client apologize. Because of the discrepancy between the declaration and the video, the netizens were less recognized and the network discussion was worse. In view of this, the hotel issued a third statement, to apologize to the client and public, and recognized their own management issues. In the afternoon, Home Inns Group held a brief press conference. A few days later, Home Inns Group CEO released an official statement emphasizing the hotel’s determination to deal with the event.

The result and influence of crisis treatment. First, there are management loopholes and problems in Beijing Heyi Hotel, as represented by Home Inns Group, failing to protect the consumers’ own safety. After the incident, the hotel did not actively assist consumers to deal with related issues and provide compensation, making the client have to resort to the network, seeking social attention, in order to exert pressure on the hotel. Second, on April 5, after the client released the relevant Weibo, Home Inns Group did not have any response. Until Home Inns Group made a statement, it had missed the best response time and left itself in a passive situation. Moreover, the contents of the statement and the press conference were not targeted, the words were not rigorous, lacking of sincerity and contagion, which did not get the identity of netizens. The hotel handled the incident inefficiently and did not respond positively to the issue.
According to the survey (within a week of the event), 89% of the netizens thought that the hotel’s crisis PR were not handled properly in the event. The hotel had problems such as perfunctory and arrogant. It didn’t recognize the fault of the incident positively, and apologized to the consumers. 80% of netizens believed that the existence of cheating behavior of the hotel, which cannot face their management problems. 83% of netizens think the hotel lacked the experience of crisis PR and the event handling fails to meet expectations. 75% of netizens said they would not stay in Beijing Wangjing Heyi hotel in the future. 63% of the netizens would not like to stay in various hotels under the Home Inns Group. They didn't have a good impression of Home Inns.

Hotel Crisis PR in the We Media Era

Handling principles

Quick response. After the crisis, the hotel should quickly grasp the source of the crisis, the current situation, the development expectation, the media’s public opinion and so on. It will quickly and accurately respond to the crisis under the premise of full understanding. Fast response requires the hotel should pay close attention to social media and network information timely, correctly judge the potential crisis in the hotel, and promptly deal with various problems faced by the hotel and take preventive measures.

Sincere communication. The hotel should correct attitude, on the basis of understanding the whole story, explain on the controversial issues timely, and describe the cause of the problem in detail. For their own mistakes, it is more important to respond actively, take the initiative to undertake their own faults and responsibilities, and apologize to the clients and the public in time. The hotel should actively seek the liaison and cooperation with the media, increase the channels of communication with the public, answer questions of the public, promote mutual understanding, eliminate doubts and anxieties.

System linkage. The result of the hotel crisis treatment will affect the operation and long-term development of the hotel, and affect the brand image of the hotel. The hotel crisis PR is not only the work of the hotel crisis management department, but also should be cooperated and assisted by all the departments of the hotel. The hotel crisis may come from various departments, which involves the service and management of all aspects of the hotel. It is bound to reduce the efficiency of the crisis treatment and the degree of satisfaction by simply investigating and dealing with the public relations department. Therefore, it need the coordination of the hotel's front office, catering, Kangle, fire safety, personnel, finance and other departments.

Processing program

Hotel crisis PR procedures should follow the response stage, processing stage and feedback stage of the three processes (Fig.1).

Response stage. After crisis, the hotel should be based on the early warning system's instructions, determine the cause and process of the crisis, understand the crisis event, define the relevant departments, Convene the responsible person, quickly understand the event, clear the responsibility, contact event clients, give advices, and timely release of preliminary results.

Processing stage. Under the premise of full communication with the clients, the hotel should grasp the latest trend of public opinion, analyze the direction of public opinion in a timely manner, handle affairs in a coherent way, control the crisis and stabilize public sentiment. Also, the hotel should step by step to show the result of the treatment, take responsibility, solve the problem, correct the attitude, and seek the understanding of the public opinion.

Feedback stage. With the regression of the incident heat, the hotel should continue to complete the crisis concerns and subsequent processing, resolve the incident problems, submit a written report, seek the opinions of the media, the clients and the interior of the hotel to deal with the event, improve the crisis management process and raise awareness of crisis prevention.
Processing mechanism

When dealing with the crisis, first of all, the hotel should establish an effective team. At the same time, they should hire an experienced and media-related external PR team as a guide expert, timely communication and transmission from the media era changes. Secondly, the crisis early-warning mechanism, the crisis handling mechanism and the crisis feedback mechanism should be constructed, the crisis processing procedure is perfected, and the principle of crisis management is optimized. Thirdly, the hotel should be decisively decided and implemented quickly. Under the timeliness of crisis decision making, any vague decisions can have serious consequences. Therefore, the hotel must make the best use of resources, make quick decisions, deploy systems and put them into practice. Finally, the hotel crisis PR cannot let event develop, resulting in more serious consequences, but should be find the right medicine, and solute the crisis.

Conclusion

The crisis PR in hotels has faced more challenges since the advent of the media era. Once handled properly, it will have serious consequences. One of the epitomes was the occurrence of the woman’s assault incident at the Beijing Heyi Hotel. It also shows that even if large-scale hotel groups are not yet able to adapt to the dilemma caused by the hotel crisis from the media era, the hotel industry must follow and improve the principles, procedures and mechanisms of crisis management and find out the right crisis PR method.

References