
ABSTRACT

As the Internet constantly brings about changes to crisis communication, two-way communication is increasingly believed to be far more effective for crisis response than the traditional top-down, one-way communication. This study aims to explore a novel crisis response strategy in view of the ever growing corporate blogs, in hopes to determine whether blogs can be adopted as an effective crisis response tool. A two-by-two factorial experiment was conducted, with four kinds of sites manipulated by the types of the crisis response tools (the Website vs. the blog) and the hosts (the company in crisis vs. a third-party news organization). One hundred and twenty Hong Kong students reported their attitudes toward the crisis response posted on the four sites mentioned above. Results supported the following hypotheses: (a) the crisis response posted by the company itself, whether it be the Website or the blog, would get more positive impression from the viewer, leading to more positive attitude toward the company; (b) the crisis response posted on the corporate blog would get higher evaluation than the corporate Website on the interactive features, leading to more positive attitude toward the company; (c) the crisis response posted by an online news organization would have higher perceived credibility than that posted by the company itself. Implications for the selection of crisis response tools and formulation of relevant crisis response strategies are also discussed.