

Crisis communication. Case study: Cadbury worm controversy

Claudiu COMAN

*Transilvania University of Brasov, Brasov, Romania,
claudiu.coman@unitbv.ro*

Victor-Alexandru BRICIU

*Transilvania University of Brasov, Brasov, Romania,
victor.briciu@unitbv.ro*

Cristel IOȚU

*University of Craiova, Craiova, Romania
iotucristel@yahoo.com*

Maria Cristina BULARCA

*Transilvania University of Brasov, Brasov, Romania,
maria-cristina.bularca@student.unitbv.ro*

Denisa Alexandra ANGHEL

*Transilvania University of Brasov, Brasov, Romania,
denisa-alexandra.anghel@student.unitbv.ro*

Abstract. *Living in the age of technology, organizations, companies or public persons have to face multiple challenges. From time to time, the way an organization carries out its activities is disturbed either by events outside the organizations or by events happening inside. Thus, when certain events manage to damage and affect the way an organization functions as well as its image and reputation, the organization is facing a crisis situation. In this regard, essential for solving the crisis is the process of crisis communication and the activities that it entails. Crisis communication is an important component of public relations, and public relations play a vital role in establishing an effective communication plan that can help the organization restore its image and regain the trust of the public. Taking into account these aspects, the purpose of the paper is to assess the way Cadbury India handled its image crisis, in order to extract some guidelines that could be used as a frame of reference by organizations or companies for preventing or solving similar crises. In order to fulfil the purpose, specific objectives referring to the identification of the impact that the crisis had on the company, its activity and image, and of the strategies and tactics used by Cadbury India while trying to solve its crisis, were also established. In order to conduct the research case study was used as a method, and the necessary information about the crisis situation was gathered while analysing and consulting websites that addressed the subject and articles published online by various news channels such as BBC or The Times of India. The results of the research revealed that Cadbury India effectively solved its crisis by adopting a well - structured and consolidated communication plan. By having clear goals and objectives, by communicating concise messages, by collaborating with the media and public figures, Cadbury managed to rebuild its image and to repair the damage caused by the crisis. Even more, its communication plan involved both an internal and external response as well as an evaluation stage. Thus, the paper provides relevant information for the field of crisis communication and the research conducted*

allowed us to extract some guidelines and aspects that other organizations or companies can use as a frame of reference whenever they find themselves in similar situations.

Keywords: crisis, communication, public relations, strategy

Introduction

In the era of speed and technological development organizations or public persons have to face many challenges, one of them being the management of image crises. Efficient crisis communication and crisis management are essential for every brand, company or organization and public relations play an important role in the process of solving such crises.

The way an organization unfolds its activity together with the behaviour of employees can contribute to building its image and reputation but they can also damage them. Even more, while sometimes the negative effects of certain actions and behaviours of the members of the organization may be anticipated, most of the time, crises appear suddenly and the organization must focus on adopting the right communication strategies and tactics in order not only to reinstate its image, but also regain the respect and trust of the public.

In this context, crisis communication is one of the most important areas of public relations (AlSaqr, 2018, p.76). Specifically, crisis communication is the part of public relations that consists of activities meant to defend a person or an organization whose image or reputation is affected, activities that are conducted while focusing on elements such as responsibility or transparency (Irimieş, 2016, p.118). Considering this aspect, in the process of crisis communication attention must also be paid to the image of the organization and to finding the appropriate ways to restore it and to make the stakeholders of the company (customers, investors, partners, and mass media) trust that the company is still offering qualitative products or services. Thus, the concept the crisis communication process revolves around is the image of the organization. In a broad sense, the image of an organization is represented by “the perception that the public holds about the organization” (Vid, 2016, p.27). In a similar way, image consists of “perceptions, structures and beliefs of people towards the organization” (Lievens, 2017, p.2). In this regard, three types of images can be considered: a real- objective image, a gained-subjective image, which the organization has managed to obtain over time, and a desirable image- that refers to the way an organization wants to be perceived (Vid, 2016, p.27).

Over time, people develop certain perceptions or opinions about the organization, and whenever there is a discrepancy between what the organization desires to be, how it wants to be seen, and the way people actually perceive it, an image crisis appears.

Thus, a crisis can be understood as “a phenomenon that causes damage to the organization, both in terms of financial losses and in terms of social prestige (Coman, Cr., 2009, p.15). When situations that affect the image or the reputation of the organization appear, communication is a key concept in the process of solving the crisis, and crisis communication involves actions such as “collecting, processing and disseminating the necessary information in order to find solutions to the crisis” (Coombs, 2010, p.20).

Taking into account the aspects previously mentioned, while addressing the subject of crisis communication, an assessment of popular image crisis cases can be relevant and important for understanding the process of solving them.

Thus, the paper focuses on identifying and presenting the communication strategies used by the chocolate brand Cadbury India, in order to solve their image crisis

generated by the presence of worms in their Dairy Milk chocolate bars. In other words, the purpose of the paper is to assess the way Cadbury India handled its image crisis, in order to extract some guidelines that could be used as a frame of reference by organizations or companies for preventing or solving similar crises.

In order to fulfil the purpose of the paper, firstly we considered necessary a brief literature review on the concept of public relations, public relations activities and practices, the concept of crisis communication and strategies used in the process of solving image crises. After the literature review, we present the research methodology, the results of the research- obtained after the analysis of the Cadbury India crisis, as well as a discussion regarding the results, followed by conclusions, limitations of the research and future research directions.

Literature review

The concept of public relations and its role in crisis communication

Due to its complexity, the concept of public relations has been defined over time in multiple ways, and so far no universal definition has been formulated regarding the concept.

In a broad way, public relations can be understood as a “set of management, supervisory, and technical functions used to develop the ability of the organization to listen to, appreciate and respond to the people with whom it needs to maintain mutual beneficial relationships in order to fulfil its objective and its vision” (Heath, 2005 p.680). Public relations activities are usually carried out by public relations specialists or practitioners, whose role is to communicate, solve problems, or offer advice to the management team of the organization, in order to help the organization maintain favorable relationships with the public (Heath, 2005,p.680).

A similar definition was formulated by the Public Relations Society of America, in the context of its 2012 initiative entitled “Public Relations Defined”. In this context, public relations were defined as “as a strategic communication process that builds mutual beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics” (Corbet, 2012).

Even more, public relations are viewed as a “strategic effort that helps the organization achieve its objectives “ (Seitel, 2017, p.4), but also as a “sustained and planned effort to maintain favorable relationships with the customers and secondary target audiences” (Nechita & Briciu, 2013, p.98).

Thus, often public relations are considered to be a “management function that is in line with other essential functions of an organization, such as the marketing function (Rensburg, 2003, p.151), and their focus is not restricted to only keeping positive relations with the public, but they also concentrate on neutralizing or preventing negative information or negative attitudes towards the organization (Nechita & Briciu, 2013, p.98).

Public relations can also be seen as an essential dimension in the context of activities carried out by both organizations and public persons, which aim to win not only the trust of the public, but also its sympathy and support (Șerbănică & Brătfălean, p.15). Moreover, from the above mentioned definitions some key concepts and characteristics of public relations can be identified. Such concepts include: organizational character- they refer to organizations and the behaviors of their members, they are deliberate- public relations activities are planned in order to inform or influence the public, they are a management function- which means that the management team is responsible for the way such activities are carried out, they focus on performance, two way communication, reputation, building trust and promoting a positive image of the organization (Șerbănică,& Brătfălean, pp.13-15).

The aspects previously mentioned highlight the important role of public relations in solving crises and in the process of crisis communication, and this role is emphasized by the need to deal with the crisis in a professional way and to have specialists who are able to communicate information about the causes of the crisis and about the way the organization positions itself and responds to the crisis (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005, p.46).

In this regard, we further present the practices of public relations, the main activities that they involve.

Practices and activities of public relations

While being a complex concept, public relations involve multiple and diverse practices. According to the Public Relations Society of America (2021), public relations refer to the action of anticipating, analysing and interpreting public opinion, to actions of counselling the management team of an organization regarding its communications strategies, especially in times of crisis, managing and defending its reputations as well as developing and implementing evaluation programs of the actions carried out to maintain a favourable relationship with the public.

In this regard there are many activities that public relations specialists and professional must carry out in order to help the organization maintain its image, its reputation and its relations with the target audience. Thus, public relations specialists must possess information and a certain amount of knowledge about the human behaviour in certain situations and to combine this knowledge about the persons within the organization with the knowledge about the persons outside of it, with whom the organization has relationships with (Newsom & Haynes, 2011, p.25). Even more, a good public relations specialist is aware of the opinion that the public holds about the organization and is able to predict the effects that the opinion can have on it and the way it functions (Newsom & Haynes, 2011, p.26).

Thus, a public relations specialist has the role of a mediator between the institution and the public, and its ability to assess and interpret private points, allows the specialist to transform those private points into acceptable policies and activities (Gezihagne, 2018, p.28). In a more specific way, public relations practices involve creating press releases, product or service publicity, lobbying (Rivero & Theodore, 2014, p.21), and also maintaining relationships with mass media. Thus, since mass media is characterized by fast spreading of information, formulating thorough conclusions and affirmations about certain subjects and a constant need for new information (Coman, 2007, p.29), media relations are essential in the practice of public relations, and together with the media, public relation specialists can develop tactical and strategic approaches in order to influence public opinion or change the behaviour of the public (Alhadid & Qaddomi, 2016, p.310).

In this context, there are three parties involved in the communication process: the organization, mass media, and the public, and the importance of keeping a favourable relationship with the media is highlighted by the fact that, the organization is not able to effectively communicate on its own with its various types of public: other institutions, or the hundreds of individuals that it targets (Șerbănică, & Brățfălean, p.117).

The activities of public relations specialists also involve creating and implementing strategies for the organization, and an efficient public relation strategy must be developed while taking into account four aspects: the identification of the attributes of the brand, company or organization, the assessment of the perception of the stakeholders- all the types of public that the company has, corporate communication must also be made internally and it should use the attributes of the company in order

to inform employees about the way it positions itself in regard to certain issues, and the creation of an annual public relations plan with the aim of influencing the public perception about the way the company builds connections with the customers, or about its corporate responsibility actions (Mikáčová & Gavlakova, 2014, p.839).

Moreover, another important activity that public relations specialists carry out is crisis communication. When, an organization is going through a crisis, the public relations specialists can develop crisis communication plans in order to help them solve the situation in a fast and efficient way. Thus, according to Gîrboveanu & Pavel, (2010) a communication plan should firstly focus on identifying the necessary steps that need to be made so as to obtain all the relevant information on the situation, then a crisis communication team can be established, the team should have a spoke person- an individual that will keep the relationship with the media and will step out and make declarations about the matter, and last but not least, the plan should concentrate on identifying the target audience- whose perception does the organization wants to change, with whom it wants to improve its relationships: customers, employees, investor, partners, media (Gîrboveanu & Pavel, 2010, p.7).

The process of crisis communication

Crisis communication is an important public relations activity that has been defined in many ways in the literature. In a broad way, crisis communication is represented by the action of collecting and disseminating information, action made by the members of the management team of an organization (Coombs, 2005, p.221). Crisis communication can be seen both as a method of information- of gathering relevant information during a crisis and as a strategy- which refers to the way the organization communicates and sends messages to its stakeholders in order to solve the crisis and have favourable relationships with them (Coombs, 2005, p.221). Thus, it can be inferred that communication is an essential element in the process of elaborating a strategic plan (Fall, 2004, p.238), and that organizational communication is the type of communication managed by the members of the organization and by communication specialists (Grunig, 2013, p.5).

Since crises are inevitable, from time to time, organizations find themselves in crisis situations and must find ways to efficiently cope with and overcome the situation. A crisis is then considered, any situation that threatens to harm people, organizations, to damage the way organizations or businesses function and that has a significant and negative impact on their reputation (Bernstein, 2013).

In this context, crisis communication plays an essential role in solving the generated crisis and establishing positive connections between the organization and its public. While being a complex process, crisis communication can also have multiple goals, but generally its goal is to diminish the harm created by the crisis (Seeger, 2006, p.234), and to restore the reputation of the organization as well as the trust of the public (Utz, Schultz & Glocka, 2013, p.41).

Thus, the development of the internet can facilitate the process of crisis communication, due to the multiple communication channels that can now be used in order to send messages to large audiences. However, the internet might also create some issues regarding the information that is being sent and the way it is being sent. In this regard, professionals must pay attention to the issue of copyright, and must develop copyright literacy, that is the capacity to identify materials that are protected from copyright, to obtain permissions or licenses whenever it is necessary and also to “recognize infringement of copyright law when it happens and to use copyrighted materials in an ethical way” (Todorova, Kurbanoglu, Boustany et al., 2017, p.325).

Even more, it is important for people involved in the process of crisis communication to be information literate people, who possess the ability to understand not only how to look for information, but also understand the limitations of the process and the importance of assessing the way they use information (Repanovici. 2009, p.341).

In the context of organizational crises, not only the period of the actual crisis is important, but also the period before and after it. The management of crisis involves then: pre-crisis activities that include actions meant to prevent the situation, then crisis activities that include the responses of the organization, and post-crises activities that include evaluation and extracting some lessons from the crisis that took place (Coombs, 2010, p.20). According to Hale, Dulek, & Hale (2005), the response stage has great importance in the process of crisis resolution, because the actions that managers carry out at this stage, influence peoples' opinion about the crisis and about the ability of the organization to overcome it. Usually, crises are generated by events from either the inside of the organization (technical issues that affect how the organization works, the impossibility to achieve the goals set, the death of the leader) or outside of it, and solving them requires many actions and a large amount of time (Fink, Beak,& Taddeo 1971, p.17).

In the process of crisis communication, establishing effective strategies and tactics is essential for managing and overcoming the crisis. Thus, there are multiple strategies that public relations specialists can adopt in order to properly solve crises.

When referring to strategies, response strategies can be classified in three categories: *denial*-which comprises simple denial, or blame- when the organization tends to blame people outside of it for the crisis, *evading responsibility*- which includes provocation, the act of responding to other people's actions, or good intentions, when the action that caused the crises was not meant to hurt the organization, and *reducing offensiveness strategies*- that include compensation, offering goods or money, reparatory actions and apologies or admission of guilt (Coombs, 2011, p.32).

While selecting the best response strategy, a manager or a public relations specialist firstly identifies the type of crisis the organization is facing. Thus, this action helps the specialist evaluate the ability of the organization to control and handle the situation, and how responsible it really is for generating the crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2002, p. 167). Next, the assessment of the situation must be made by taking into account two other factors: severity- the damage caused by the crisis, and performance history- which shows the way the organization behaved in the past (Coombs & Holladay, 2002, p.169).

The strategies used in the process of crisis communication, according to Smith (2013), can also be separated in proactive and reactive strategies. The proactive strategies are subdivided into two types: action and communication, and they are adopted and implemented by taking into account the planning of the organization. Thus, they can be very effective strategies because they do not involve the need to respond to events, expectations or pressure from outside the organization. Even more, the proactive action strategies include: certain events, sponsorships or alliances and partnerships, while the communication proactive strategies refer to publicity and adopting a transparent communication process (Smith, 2013, pp.113-114).

The second category, the reactive strategies involve responding to events outside the organization, and are usually used when accusations were made regarding the organization, or when it face critical situations. In this regard, the purpose of this strategies is to regain the public's trust, to repair the reputation of the organization and one of the most used reactive strategies is apologia, which is more than an apology,

and includes explanations offered by the organization in order to express its position and defend itself (Smith, 2013, p.144).

Therefore, taking into account the aspects mentioned above, crises that have negative effects not only on organizations but on whole industries occur very frequently (Ham, Hong & Cameron, 2012, p.19), and public relations specialist are implementing diverse strategies and tactics in order to solve them. The literature provides and describes many examples of such crises and the efficient practices adopted by the organizations such as: the British Petroleum who had a problem with oil spilling that affected its reputations and determined the company to rethink its relation with employees and the public (Bundy, Pfarrer, Short, et al., 2017, p. 1662), Toyota motor corporation, when it had problems with the Prius hybrid car model in 2010 (Ogunleye, 2014, p.111), or Cadbury India, when it had a crisis generated by the existence of worms in its Dairy Milk chocolate bars (The times of India, 2003).

Thus, since example are important in order to understand and have a more clear perspective on the strategies that one should use in order to solve organizational crisis, next we present, analyse and describe the crisis of Cadbury India and the way the company managed to successfully overcome it.

Methodology

Purpose and objective

The purpose of the paper is to assess the way Cadbury India handled its image crisis, in order to extract some guidelines that could be used as a frame of reference by organizations or companies for preventing or solving similar crises.

The objectives of the research include:

- Identifying the impact that the crisis had on the way Cadbury India carried out its activity
- Identifying the strategies and tactics used by Cadbury India in order to overcome the crisis
- Identifying the way the crisis was presented by mass media channels
- Identifying the impact of the communication plan adopted by Cadbury India in terms of financial gains and public trust

Methods and instruments used

The method used in order to conduct the research and analyse the company's response and reactions to the crisis is case study. Case study is a qualitative research method that comprises more data collection techniques (Coman, 2018). Thus, information about the crisis was gathered from online sources such as websites that addressed the subject, websites of TV channels: BBC, as well as previous studies that mentioned the crisis. In this regard, we analysed the context of the problem, the purpose and objectives of the company's actions, the activities it carried out to assess the damage caused by the crisis, and the audience that was targeted by the company. Then, we analysed the activities and strategies implemented for restoring its image, the responses of the company, as well as the results and outcomes of its actions.

Results and discussions

The context of the crisis

Cadbury is a very popular chocolate brand that produces chocolate and chocolate based products. Cadbury was founded in 1824 when John Cadbury opened its

chocolate shop in Birmingham. Today Cadbury has a variety of products, one of its most appreciated products being the Dairy Milk chocolate bar, that was launched in 1905 (Cadbury, 2020).

Cadbury India, which is now part of the Mondelez International group, started its chocolate production in 1948. Its Dairy milk chocolate, positioned as a premium brand, is one of the most popular chocolates in India. In 2003, near the start of India's light festival called Diwali, the company had to face an image crisis caused by the fact that worms were found by consumers in the Dairy milk chocolate bars (Casereads, 2020). Thus, the context of the crisis is represented by the fact that, in October 2003, little before the start of the Diwali festival, the festival of lights that takes place in Mumbai, people reported that they have found worms in the chocolate bars produced by Cadbury India (Puri & Clark, 2012,p.3). Since at that time, Cadbury India was considered to be "India's best managed company" (Business Today, 2003), the presence of worms in its products represented a serious issue for Cadbury India, that negatively impacted its image, reputation and relationships with the customers and other stakeholders.

In October 2003, The Food and Drug Administration registered complaints about a worm infestation in two bars of Dairy Milk chocolate (Guerard, 2016). Following the complaints, the FDA visited the Cadbury factory localised in Thane, and one depot and froze stocks of Cadbury's chocolate and the news about the crisis spread fast, with approximately 1000 articles in newspapers and 120 TV spots broadcasted in ten languages (Puri & Clark, 2012,p.4).

Research actions developed to assess the crisis situation

Taking into account the nature of the problem and the context of the crisis, Cadbury India immediately became aware of the severity of the situation and started to take action in order to solve the crisis and restore its image. Since the crisis was discussed and presented by various media channels, the sales of the company went down by 30%, in a period in which, normally Cadbury India would have registered a 15% rise on sales due to the Diwali festival (Guerard, 2016). Thus, before implementing a communication plan, the company wanted to assess the impact that the crisis had until that moment on its customers. In this regard, the company conducted a research survey on 200 consumers in 7 cities, research that revealed upsetting results which stated that 69% of customers included in the study no longer agreed to let their children buy Cadbury products, and 58% of them were not willing to buy it for their children (Puri & Clark, 2012,p.5).

While this action was a very helpful one in elaborating a communication and strategic plan, the first reaction of the company was a defensive one, Cadbury India making a statement in which it emphasized that the problem was most definitely caused by the way the chocolate was stored by retailers, and that it wasn't a problem caused by the production of the Dairy Milk products (Bejoria, 2003).

The purpose and objectives of Cadbury's India strategic plan

After assessing the impact of the crisis on the customer's perception regarding its products, Cadbury India, elaborated a communication plan in order to solve the crisis. Thus, the immediate objectives was to send clear and concise messages regarding the problem, then the company focused on building and winning back the trust of the public, and on improving its image and reputation, so as to be seen again as a trusting company that produces qualitative chocolate products.

The public targeted by Cadbury India in the context of the crisis

Since the public of a company or organization such as Cadbury India is not only represented by customers, but also by other stakeholders such as investors, partners, or even mass media, the company had to focus, while implementing their strategy, on multiple categories of public.

Thus, the company concentrated on both the internal and external public. Externally, the main target audience was represented by its customers, but the company also tried to communicate and cooperate with mass media, and internally, the public was represented by the employees of the company, who were also affected by the crisis.

The crisis as presented by mass media

From the beginning, mass media negatively portrayed the situation of Cadbury India, highlighting in a negative manner, the way the company first reacted. Information about the crisis appeared in various publications such as BBC, The times of India, or local newspapers. The article published on the BBC website, states that the company denied that there was an infestation in their chocolate products, and emphasizes the fact that Cadbury wanted to defend itself by putting the blame on retailers and the way they stored the chocolate (Bejoria, 2003). The times of India, in one of its articles entitled "Some more worms in Cadbury chocolate", mentions the flood of complaints that FDA received from people who claimed to have found worms in their chocolate bars (The Times of India, 2003). However, despite the way mass media presented the situation, the strategic plan for solving the crisis included communication with the media, and constantly offering to media representatives, information about the way the situation is being handled.

Strategies and tactics used in order to overcome the crisis

In the first ten days since the crisis had begun, Cadbury India decided to face every attack that came from mass media or the FDA. The company managed to meet with the FDA commissioner and also with the media, and decided that the best way to approach the situation is by telling the truth and by having a transparent communication process.

In this regard, the company realised that in order to solve the crisis, the messages it sends have to be clear, and it established three important messages that were meant to offer customers a better understanding of the situations. The messages included: the affirmation that the worm problem was caused by improper ways in which the Dairy Milk chocolate bars were stored, the affirmation that it was still safe to consume the products produced by the company and that consumers must pay the same amount of attention when buying chocolate products as they pay when they buy other products from other categories (Annor-Antwi, 2016).

Thus, when analysing the strategies and tactics used by the company to resolve its crisis, they can be separated into two categories: strategies regarding the internal response and strategies regarding the external response.

The internal response

Since employees themselves can play the role of brand ambassadors, Cadbury India also focused on reinstating employees trust regarding the way the company functions and produces its products. Thus, before starting to direct its actions towards the external public, it was necessary for Cadbury to ensure that employees are properly informed about the crisis and that they are aware of what to do in such situations. Cadbury India, formulated three principles according to which its strategic

management plan was elaborated and implemented. The principles were: consumers come first, always tell the truth, and dare greatly, act quickly (Annor-Antwi, 2016). These principles were next communicated to all the employees by letters, and the doubts and worries of the sales team were removed when the company challenged it to go buy Cadbury chocolate, people being able to see for themselves if any of them were infested. In this way, they found that none of the chocolates purchased were contaminated, convincing themselves that there was nothing wrong with the products made by Cadbury and that they therefore had nothing to hide from consumers (Annor-Antwi, 2016).

The external response

The external response of the company focused on winning the trust of the public and improving its image and reputation. In order to determine the public to believe that the company is properly carrying out its activity and that its products are safe, several actions were taken by Cadbury India. These actions can be divided into two phases. The first phase represents the period from October 2003 to December 2003 (Reddy, 2014, p.68), and one important action during this period was implementing the Vish was project, (the trust project), an educational program whose aim was to educate retailers on the matter of chocolate storage (Puri & Clark, 2012,p.8). The project included 190.000 retailers and in order to conduct the project a series of activities were carried out. These activities consisted in:

- printing a large amount of posters that highlighted the initiative of the company,
- creating a cell line, a free number as well as an email where shop owners could call or text anytime if they encountered any type of issue
- releasing a press advertisement entitled “Facts about Cadbury”, that contained information regarding the process of chocolate production and chocolate storage. The advertisement was published in 55 publications and 11 languages. (Reddy, 2014, p.69; Puri& Clark, 2012, p.8).

The second phase, is represented by the period from January 2004 until March 2004 (Reddy, 2014, p.69).An important strategy adopted by Cadbury India in this period was redesigning the package for the Dairy Milk products. In January 2004, the company decided that the chocolate bars should have a “purity sealed package”, meaning, a package that had an extra layer of metallic wrap in order to protect the chocolate and avoid other infestations. The company spend a huge amount of money on redesign the package, and the process only took eight weeks, showing how efficient the company can be.

Next, in relation with the previous strategy, Cadbury decided to win public trust, to communicate in a transparent way and become credible again with the help of a very popular and appreciated movie star in India: Amitabh Bachchan, that was taught to be at that time, the second most credible person in India, after the prime minister (Puri & Clark, 2012, p.7). Thus, he became the brand ambassador of Cadbury India, because he resonated with the values of the company, and was the protagonist of two TV commercials that took the form of testimonials. The first commercial was entitled “Sincerity”, and in the ad, Bachchan tried to convince people that Cadbury can be trusted, and more than that, he made it known that he visited the Cadbury factory to convince himself of the quality of the products before deciding to support the company. He then described the actions taken by Cadbury to introduce the new type of packaging (Mehta, 2013; Puri & Clark, 2012, p.7).

In the second commercial, entitled “Charm”, the actor is accompanied by its niece, who is slightly worried about eating the chocolate bar for she fears that there might be something wrong with it. However, the actor promptly reassures his niece that it is safe to eat the chocolate and she has nothing to worry about (Puri & Clark, 2012,p.7).

Then, in order to consolidate its strategy, having the purpose of rebuilding trust, Cadbury India, also organized a press conference in Mumbai and other affected cities in order to launch the new package. During the conference, media representatives were encouraged to compare the old and the new package.

Evaluation of the strategies and tactics implemented

Cadbury India’s strategic plan of solving the crisis did not stop at implementing strategies and tactics, but it also involves an evaluation process. Thus, the company examined the impact that the actions it took had on the company from the financial perspective but also from the perception of the public perspective. In this regard, the activities and strategies adopted by Cadbury India proven to be effective and the outcome of its actions was a positive one: people began to trust again the company, their perception about the company improved, their intention to buy Dairy Milk chocolate bars for them and for their children was at 42% percent in just four weeks after the crisis and at 78% one year after the crisis (Puri & Clark, 2012, p.9).

Therefore, the analysis of the way Cadbury India managed to solve its crisis, revealed the company had a complex crisis communication plan. Cadbury India elaborated a crisis resolution plan after conducting a brief research on the impact the critical situation had on the way the company was perceived by its audience, and its plan comprised diverse strategies meant to gain the trust of the public and repair its image and its reputation. Even more, the process of communicating information about the situations and measures taken in order to improve it was characterized by transparency, and Cadbury India constantly inform the media about the activities it carried out.

Thus, from the result of the Cadbury India worm controversy analysis some guidelines can be extracted, guidelines that could be used as a frame of reference by people or organization that find themselves in crisis situations.

In this regard to effectively address and solve crises, organizations and public relations specialist should take into account the following aspects:

- Public relations have an essential role in the process of crisis communication
- It is important to firstly establish some principles according to which the crisis communication plan should be elaborated and implemented. Such principles should focus on putting the customer’ s needs first, on telling the truth and on promptly taking actions
- The organization should establish clearly the objectives it desires to achieve and the messages that should be communicated to the stakeholders
- It is important to assess the impact of the crisis on the company from both the perspective of financial losses and from the perspective of the public’s perception
- The response strategies and tactics should focus on the internal public as well as the external public
- Throughout the process of solving the crisis, the organization should constantly communicate with mass media and offer information regarding the activities carried out
- Rebuilding trust is a difficult process but it can be facilitated by offering people the possibility to express their opinion and give feedback about the activities of the company

- Partnering with public figures, and popular persons that have the ability to influence the perception of the public as well as its behaviour can be an effective strategy when trying to win people's trust
- In order to restore its image and reassure the public of the quality of its products or service, an organization can adopt the strategy of rebranding or package redesigning

Conclusions

Crisis communication is an important component of public relations and public relations have an essential role in developing a crisis communication plan. The concept of public relations has been defined over time in multiple ways, but in essence, it refers to all the efforts made by an organization in order to maintain favourable relationships with its publics. Public relations practices involve activities such as lobbying, organizing events, press conferences, offering guidance for the management of the organization, and last but not least, communication in times of crisis. In this regard, crisis communication refers to the actions taken by an organization in order to collect the necessary information and to disseminate that information with the aim of solving the crisis.

Whether we refer to public persons or organizations, crises are inevitable, their causes are numerous and varied, and in order to properly solve them, an organization must carry out pre-crisis activities, as well as crisis and post crisis activities.

In the process of crisis resolution, attention must be paid to all the stakeholders of an organizations: from customers, to employees, investors, partners and mass media, and the organization should take actions in order not only to improve its image and reputation, but also to regain the trust of the public, and to unfold its activity at least as well as in the period prior to the crisis.

Taking into account the aspects mentioned above, the paper focused on the process of crisis communication, on the elements, strategies and tactics that it encompasses while analysing a specific and popular crisis situation: the case of Cadbury India and its worm controversy.

In this regard, considering that an effective way to learn how to cope with crisis and overcome them is by analysing successful examples and cases, the paper aimed at assessing the way Cadbury India handled its image crisis, in order to extract some guidelines that could be used as a frame of reference by organizations or companies for preventing or solving similar crises. While trying to fulfil this purpose, we formulated specific objectives which referred to the identification of impact that the crisis had on the way Cadbury carried out its activity, the identification of the strategies and tactics used in order to solve the crisis and the way mass media presented information regarding the subject.

In order to conduct the research, the case study was used as a method of research, and the necessary information was obtained by analysing various articles published online by news channels with regards to the crisis of the company, as well as other articles that addressed this subject. The results of the research showed the Cadbury India had a complex communication plan in order to repair its image, its reputation, and to win back the trust of the public. The company responded immediately to the complaints about the worms found in Dairy milk chocolate bars, it firmly established its position and clarified the fact that the issue was not caused by the process of fabrication but instead, it was caused by the improper storage in shops. Throughout the process of crisis resolution, Cadbury tried to maintain a favourable relationship with the media, and expressed and presented on media channels every one of its actions.

Even more, the company had both an internal and an external response and its strategic plan involved an evaluation stage.

Since the case of Cadbury India can be considered a positive example of crisis management, the analysis conducted allowed us to extract some guidelines, and aspects that companies could take into consideration when trying to solve similar crisis. The guidelines highlight the importance of public relations in the process of crisis communication, as well as the importance of focusing both on the internal and external public when solving a crisis, of communicating constantly with mass media, and of adopting strategies meant to reinstate the trust of the public.

Thus, even though our paper provides relevant and useful information about efficient practices used in the field of crisis communication, it also has some limitations. One limitation is represented by the fact that the paper analysed only one case of crisis communication and public relations, and in this regard a future research should take into account more case studies in order to make a comparative analysis and extract some more specific guidelines for solving crisis situations.

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