



Crisis Communication Experts Debate Samsung Galaxy Note7 Global Response

70% of 63 Global Experts in 22 countries say Samsung did not use appropriate communications Channels

ATHENS, GA, USA (Dec. 15, 2016) As holiday shoppers scurry to buy the newest electronic gadget, seven in 10 global crisis communication experts, linked to the global University of Georgia/PROI Worldwide Crisis Communication Monitor, say Samsung, the most well-known global electronics brands, did not use appropriate communication channels when relaying information about the crisis surrounding the Samsung Galaxy Note7 smartphone. More than 80 percent of the polled experts placed responsibility for the crisis squarely on Samsung's doorstep.

The University of Georgia/PROI Worldwide Crisis Communication Monitor recorded the responses of 63 crisis communication professionals in 22 countries to examine the efficacy of the response by Samsung to its crisis surrounding the exploding and burning of its Galaxy Note7 smartphones. Sixty-two percent of the respondents were CEO, president, vice president or director of their organization.

Evaluating Samsung's crisis response, 74 percent of respondents said Samsung failed to manage early information and thereby was unable to stay ahead of the crisis. Seventy percent of communicators said Samsung failed to provide relevant information on the crisis and did not provide information that would help the public understand the crisis. One crisis communicator said a takeaway lesson should be, "Be brave from the beginning – deal with the truth, take bold actions, accept the reality publicly."

Seventy-eight percent of global crisis communication leaders expect Samsung's business to be strongly affected by the crisis. "Samsung needed to be more sympathetic to those impacted by these incidents, and proactive in its response and communications," said a crisis communication expert from Michigan.

The crisis was exacerbated because it was perceived that Samsung caused it and bears sole responsibility for the crisis and its outcome. "Samsung underestimated the danger involved, especially as it relates to its mobile devices on airplanes," said a Georgia-based expert.

Nearly two-thirds (61 percent) of global crisis experts disagreed with the statement, "Samsung took responsibility as appropriate." The drip, drip, drip nature of the response allowed the crisis to grow, according to these experts.

"When every time you board a plane, a flight attendant announces that your brand has been banned from flights by a federal regulatory body, you know that your company is in crisis," said Bryan H. Reber, Ph.D., C. Richard Yarbrough Professor in Crisis Communication Leadership at the University of Georgia and coordinator of the survey.

The Crisis Communication Monitor uncovered 10 insights or lessons learned from these global experts:

- "Corporate culture impacts the ability to identify pending crises in a timely fashion." (Expert from Italy)
- "Get all the bad news out at once... don't have a slow trickle." (Expert from Canada)
- "Use in-country spokespeople to convey concern and empathy and add a human touch." (Expert from the United Kingdom)
- "When in doubt, recall/withdraw the product and test, test, test until you find the solution." (Expert from Australia)

- “Provide more information and deliver it quickly, even if it’s negative. Rip the bandage off and heal sooner.” (Expert from Missouri)
- “Samsung needed to be more sympathetic to those impacted by these incidents, and proactive in its response and communications.” (Expert from Michigan)
- “Express safety and customer satisfaction over regulatory protocols as the reason for action.” (Expert from New York)
- Don’t underestimate the problem. “Samsung underestimated the danger involved, especially as it relates to mobile devices on airplanes.” (Expert in Georgia)
- “Acting promptly and taking responsibility for an issue can help protect a reputation.” (Expert from the United Kingdom)
- “Preparation is key to successful crisis communication.” (Expert from Germany)

The University of Georgia/PROI Worldwide Crisis Communication Monitor is a collaborative project of the University of Georgia Crisis Communication Coalition and PROI Worldwide, the world’s largest partnership of independent integrated communications agencies with more than 120 offices. The Monitor examines global crisis communication incidents to provide insights to consumers and illustrate best and worst practices for crisis communicators.

###

The Crisis Communication Coalition is a project of the C. Richard Yarbrough Professorship in Crisis Communication Leadership at the Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. To learn more about the Crisis Communication Coalition and the Crisis Communication Monitor go to: crisiscommunication.uga.edu

The PROI Worldwide Global Crisis Group, made up of specialists in crisis communications from PROI Worldwide Agencies around the world, provides advice to clients in various industry sectors.

PROI Worldwide is the longest-running global partnership of independent public relations agencies. Since its inception in 1970, PROI Worldwide has grown to encompass 75+ partner agencies with 5,000+ PR professionals across five continents, 50 countries and more than 120 cities.