



Brand Resilience Through Tough Times

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This is your brand now...



This could be your brand tomorrow...



- “The damage to reputation trustworthiness when something goes wrong is mitigated by two things. One is the way the company responds to it, and the other thing is prior reputation...you can clearly see how trust is impacted by the way brands respond. But if you have a strong reputation prior to the event, and a strong relationship, then the good will from stakeholders will mean they will be more forgiving.”

- *Dr Nicole Dando, head of projects at the Institute of Business Ethics.*



Branding is a promise kept, not a promise made.

Your brand is a reflection of your products and assets and a commitment to a mission and a set of values by which you deliver the “brand experience.”

Your brand is your platform.

- If your brand is solid and has an established, positive customer perception, it can more easily withstand glancing blows, strong winds, heavy surges and shaky ground.
- If your brand has an established, negative customer perception, this will color but not necessarily defeat a brand recovery operation.
- If your brand is undefined in customer perception, a situation can provide you the opportunity to “perform” to brand values.
- If the brand is not established, others will define you.

Brand Management, Mitigation & Recovery

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Tips & Tools to Guide Your Preparedness & Response

#1. Think of all the ways it can go wrong...

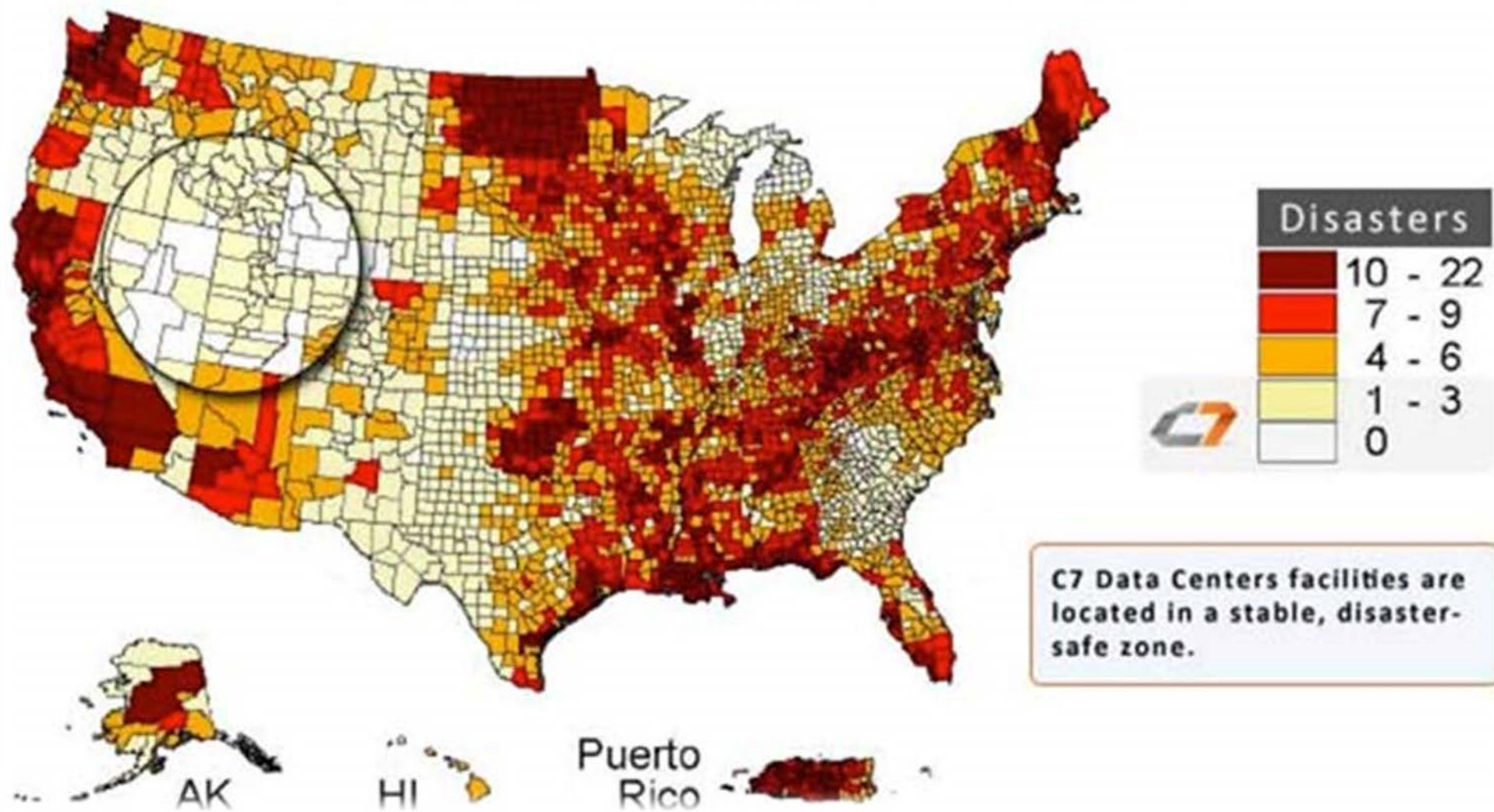


Be prepared.

- Natural Disaster
 - Fire, flood, tsunami, earthquake, tornado, hurricane, ice storm, landslides
- Human-made Disaster
 - Terrorism, shootings, riots, hazardous materials spill, industrial accidents, multiple vehicle accidents, ugly incident, public policy position
- Internet & Social Media “Alternative” Truth
 - Lies, fake news stories, hoaxes, harassment

U.S. Disaster Map

Source: FEMA's National Emergency Management Information System



Be prepared.

- Resolve to think thru and address the “what if’s” with your key staff and leadership.
 - Talk out loud about the implications of each possible situation.
 - Prepare a plan of action.



#2. Know before you go...

Be prepared.

- Know and connect with your key city and county Emergency Response team leaders and first responders.
- Maintain a current contact list for easy and reliable access.
- Establish an external communications protocol to diminish confusion or contradictory information.

Be prepared.

- Evaluate the situation/incident.
- Agree on how to define or describe it and its consequences.
- Assign media channels to trained staff and leadership.
- Provide frequency of updates consistent with the situation/incident.
- Don't lie, exaggerate, diminish or pretend.



#3. The clock is ticking...

Be prepared.

- Everyone on the team must understand what could happen and what to do if it does.
- Each staff person (and volunteer leadership) must know their role to eliminate confusion in a chaotic situation and optimize effectiveness.
- Have a back-up plan – who covers for who if someone cannot make it to work or is unavailable.
- Have all the technology and social media platforms in place to expedite communication.

Be prepared.

- Stay in communication with your key staff.
- Establish the protocol for communicating with volunteer leadership and key stakeholders.
- Prepare for every possible contingency and scenario – construct template messaging in advance and have it ready to add detail.
- Incorporate brand value and brand mission language – not slogans or taglines!
 - “We are known as ‘the city with a lot on the ball’. We are going to prove that now by helping those who are suffering, working with those who depend on us and beginning the re-building process for our citizens and visitors.”
 - “We may be geared for fun most of the year but right now we are geared to dig out and recover.”



#4. The world is watching...

Be prepared.

- Be ready to launch and sustain a crisis management communications program that outreaches the full spectrum of current media channels – print, online, social media.
- Operate and perform to a 24/7 news cycle.
- Employ all local experts, bloggers, and champions to provide local context and credibility.
- Recognize that social media is a viral, double-edged sword: it magnifies and multiplies the worst and best of us within minutes.
- Make photos and videos available – post to your social media channels; encourage media access.

Be prepared.

- Don't be knocked off course by other related or unrelated issues.
 - These are not slogans. This is your way of saying we will not be defeated by this situation. These are “lifelines” to help people survive, rally together and take steps toward recovery.



Be prepared.

- Use your brand's positive energy and perception to advantage.
- Tell the truth, show compassion and display determination.
- Don't apologize for trying to help your community recover!



#5. Stories are being told...

Be prepared.

- Define yourself before others define you.
- Correct and manage false information – repetitiously.
- Manage and mitigate accurate information.
- Don't “spin” – it will not go well if you are not accomplished at it!
- Tell your stories in terms that will emotionally connect with people:
 - Human caring & sharing
 - The triumph of the human spirit
 - Re-building in all its forms
 - Proof of progress
 - Success

Case Studies

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly!

Bowling Green, KY



This is your brand now...



No one was injured, make lemonade!



New Orleans, LA



This is your brand now...

- New Orleans



Human loss and despair demands humility.

- Tell the truth, lead with compassion; don't diminish.
- Hurricane Katrina
 - Rolling recovery - tale of two cities – French Quarter vs. 9th Ward
 - Damage control – define affected areas and share their recovery.
 - “We are down but not out...”
 - “Come back – people here need your help to recover.”
- BP Oil Spill
 - Correct the misperceptions and inaccurate information.
 - Seafood safe to eat, hotels are open, the New Orleans sights and sounds are still here.
 - Come visit - the Gulf Coast and New Orleans are open for business.

Oakland, CA. – this is your brand...



Oakland, CA – this is your brand now...



Real catastrophic impact demands restraint.

- Report what is affected and report what is unaffected.
- Tell your target audiences the right things for the right reasons:
 - You can't impede recovery.
 - You can't "sell" what you don't have.
 - You can't tell them to come and visit or do business if they can't get over the bridge!
- Tell people the truth, mitigate "damage" and your brand will carry you through and into recovery phase.

Ferguson, Missouri



Ferguson, Missouri – this is your brand now...



Don't second guess nature or human nature...

Something will happen. Be BRAND prepared. Be BRAND ready.

Thank you!

Questions or comments:

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