



Case Study: Le Massif's Social Media Crisis

1. STATUS

The Canadian ski resort, Le Massif, found itself in a middle of a stormy crisis in March 2011. The season was low due to a lack of snow. Le Massif began to eagerly entuse customers to enjoy their services after a weather forecast predicted a snowy weekend. However, a series of wrong decisions, as well as a lack of a crisis management plan, turned into a crisis that was needing a fast resolution.

2. ISSUES

The director of operations released the staff that was supposed to work during the night on making sure that the chairlifts were in proper working condition as there were predicted ice storms. On Sunday morning when all the visitors were supposed to enjoy their weekend of skiing, the chairlifts were not in operational mode. The staff of Le Massif didn't update the resort's website nor any of its social media profiles to inform customers of these changes.

People were coming to the resort only to be told that they can not enter. This resulted in a series of negative comments on Le Massif's Facebook wall. The director of operations was off that day and the staff didn't know how to respond, thus they remained silent.

When the situation got worse, the management team drafted a message, thanking their customers for their questions and feedback, asking them to send their queries to the info mail. Clients were not happy to be redirected to an email by an automatic message.

The management team decided not to tell customers the reason underlying the crisis. Le Massif employees were also unaware that the chairlifts were not functional because of the director of operation's decision to release some staff members.

Le Massif's Facebook statement was not clear and honest. It kept people wondering why the resort didn't update their website and social media profiles to inform customers that chairlifts were not working, considering the fact that the day before they have informed every one of the possibility of an ice storm.

3. ACTIONS

The series of wrong decisions of the management team, the lack of communication and the fact that there was no crisis management strategy made the situation escalate from bad to worse in just a few hours. On Monday, after a long day full of negative comments and annoyed customers, Le Massif came clear with an honest apology for its mistake. It was much appreciated by the ski resort's customers.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

It is vital to act quickly and adequately in a crisis situation. BEYOO ONLINE can help you construct a strong risk and crisis management strategy, which can guide you what the best approach can be:

✓ **Prepare a crisis management strategy**

Even if you trained your staff how to react in a crisis situation offline, you must be aware of the fact that everything that happens in the physical world goes instantly online.

✓ **Train your staff how to respond to a social media negativity**

Drafting a message that has been mechanically sent to each comment on Le Massif's wall didn't save the day. Actually it made it worse. That is why it's always better to rely on real-time talk instead of copy-pasting a draft.

✓ **Be honest & transparent**

Don't hide anything from both your customers and employees. Lying and simply suppressing the important information and the reason why a similar situation has occurred will simply exacerbate the situation.

✓ **Apologize**

Don't wait too long to take full responsibility, apologize and actually explain why the crisis happened.

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