

Crushed in a Crowd: Crisis Communication in Concert Tragedies

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Overview

- Research question
 - Literature Review
 - Concert 1
 - Concert 2
- Crisis Management
 - Improvements
 - Conclusions



**How can we learn from
past tragedies to avoid
future mistakes in
concert management?**



Literature Review

- Causes of Past Tragedies (France, 2021)
 - Overcrowding
 - Stampedes/Surges
 - Terrorist attacks



Literature Review

- Crowd Surges
 - “A large group of people tries to move into a space at once” (Allen, as cited by Miller, 2021, para. 10)
- Ideal Concert Management (Ellis, 2021)
 - Relaxed atmosphere
 - Breaks between sets
 - Entertainer power
 - Specific layout and training (LinkedIn Community, 2023)



Travis Scott & Astroworld 2021



Public Opinion of Travis Scott

- Before crisis
 - Known for crazy concerts (ABC News, 2021)
 - Major brand deals (Cusick, 2021)
 - Astroworld 2019
- During crisis
 - Scott's and management's fault (Brisco, 2021)
 - Too crowded with little staff
 - Loss of fans (Holtermann, 2021)



Public Opinion of Travis Scott

- Immediately after crisis
 - Lost major brand deals (Harris, 2021)
 - Removed from Coachella 2022 lineup (Harris)
 - Received civil lawsuits (ABC News, 2021)
- Later after crisis
 - Maintenance of sales (Sisario, 2023)
 - Gain of major brand deals (Carter, 2022)
 - Concert ticket scandal



Crisis Management for Travis Scott

- Posted Instagram Nov. 6, 2021
- Timely
- Informed stakeholders (Ulmer et al., 2023)
- Focused on law enforcement instead of stakeholders
- Seemed to show lack of interest

OUR HEARTS ARE WITH THE ASTROWORLD FESTIVAL FAMILY TONIGHT –
ESPECIALLY THOSE WE LOST AND THEIR LOVED ONES.

WE ARE FOCUSED ON SUPPORTING LOCAL OFFICIALS HOWEVER WE CAN.
WITH THAT IN MIND THE FESTIVAL WILL NO LONGER BE HELD ON
SATURDAY.

AS AUTHORITIES MENTIONED IN THEIR PRESS CONFERENCE EARLIER, THEY
ARE LOOKING INTO THE SERIES OF CARDIAC ARRESTS THAT TOOK PLACE.
IF YOU HAVE ANY RELEVANT INFORMATION ON THIS, PLEASE REACH OUT
TO @HOUSTONPOLICE.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AT THE HOUSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT,
FIRE DEPARTMENT, AND NRG PARK FOR THEIR RESPONSE AND SUPPORT.



Crisis Management for Travis Scott

- Refunded all tickets
 - Ensured that stakeholders felt secure (Ulmer et al, 2023)
- Kylie Jenner
 - Posted November 7, 2021
 - Offered an emotional aspect
 - Overcoming without would have been difficult (Carter, 2021)
- Interview on *The Breakfast Club*
 - Mixed public opinion



Improvements in Crisis Communication for Travis Scott

- Stronger focus on informing stakeholders
 - Engagement after first weekend
 - Involvement on social media
- Stronger crisis leadership
 - Should be open and honest (Ulmer et al., 2023)
 - Previous reasons for distrust
 - Early reports ignored (ABC News, 2021)
 - Measures before concert & social media monitoring



David Cassidy & White City Stadium 1974



Public Opinion of David Cassidy

- Before crisis
 - Pop icon (Walsh, 1999)
 - First tour sold out (Oppenheimer, 1974)
 - Official fan club (Oppenheimer)
 - Ridiculed by males and rock fans (Thompson, 2016)
 - Australian concert
 - 200 injured
 - Calls for deportation



Public Opinion of David Cassidy

- During crisis
 - “Suicide concert” (Walsh, 1999, para. 5)
 - Compared to the Blitz
 - Melbourne concert
- After crisis
 - Ended pop idol career (Murphy, 2017)
 - Changed branding (Geraldo’s Vault, 2020)
 - Pushed into adult career



Crisis Management for David Cassidy

- Considered cancellations
 - Low attendance
 - Sense of threats (Ulmer et al., 2023)
- Public statements
 - “Shocked him deeply” (Dey, 2021, para. 6)
 - “Totally brought him down” (Walsh, 1999, para. 7)
 - Should have listened to the public (Ulmer et al.)



Crisis Management for David Cassidy

- Expressed regret for not attending funeral (Miller, 2017)
- Refused responsibility
 - Faked injuries (Thompson, 2016)
 - Whalen's heart defect (Thompson)
 - "Feel responsible...yet don't" (Walsh, 1999, para. 7)
 - Avoiding certain answers to the media (Ulmer et al., 2023)



Improvements in Crisis Communication for David Cassidy

- Stronger reaction
 - Waited until after Whalen's death
 - Possible public statement
 - Provide useful and practical statements (Ulmer et al., 2023)
- Accept responsibility
 - Maintain relationship (Ulmer et al.)
- Interaction with the media
 - Used it to save face
 - Interact more directly



Crises Comparison

- Scott wins this round
- Similarities
 - Personal statement
 - Little interaction with stakeholders
 - Considered cancellations
 - Failure to learn from past experiences
- Differences
 - Scott's utilization of media
 - Delayed but effective
 - Cancellations



Conclusion

- Musical careers in jeopardy
- Both recovered differently
- Scott's team managed better
- Information for a better understanding



Thank You!



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