

Crisis Management: How 3 Brands Recovered Right Away

Mai Le

Jan 28, 2018
6 min. read

Marketing

Reporting

Share Article



Request a demo →



Unexpected market forces mean that well-conceived campaigns can still rub audiences wrong, but have you noticed that some brand snafus are seemingly short-lived controversies, [while others turn into crises](#)? After reading these examples of brand blips, it bears reminding ourselves that a [brand is ever-evolving in the public eye](#). And having an agile strategy that includes a [media intelligence platform](#) might be the easiest way to [stay \(or get\) out of a crisis](#).

It might be a side effect of how many of us live online, but brand crises seem to be coming at a faster clip than ever before. Uber is a prominent example of a brand that [stumbled, kept stumbling, and has yet to recover](#).

And while [some brands have had a hard time coming up for air](#), others, seemingly poised for a crash, pull back in the nick of time and keep moving along as if nothing happened. By taking a closer look at how brands recovered, we might learn what makes an “almost crisis” peter off and turn into a mere blip.

Even though we believe tracking brand keywords through your media monitoring and social listening tools and keeping an eye out for early warning signs that trouble is heading your way is the best defense against full-scale crisis, it doesn't hurt to pick up a tip or two from brands who were caught off guard.

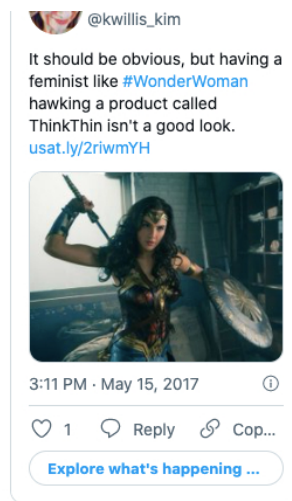
Here Are the Ways 3 Brands Recovered

1. Wonder Woman and thinkThin®

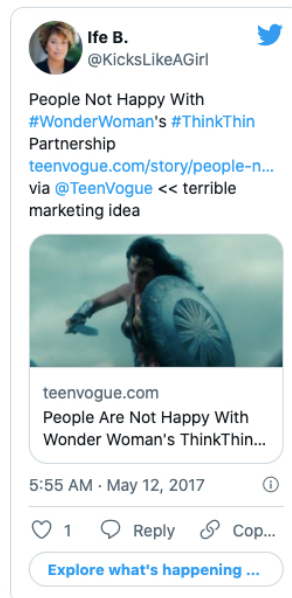


Kim Willis





It isn't an exaggeration to say that [Wonder Woman was one of the most anticipated action films of 2017](#). As consumers discussed the film on social media prior to its premiere, so did brands in conference rooms. Of course, those discussions would inevitably yield cobranded promotions.



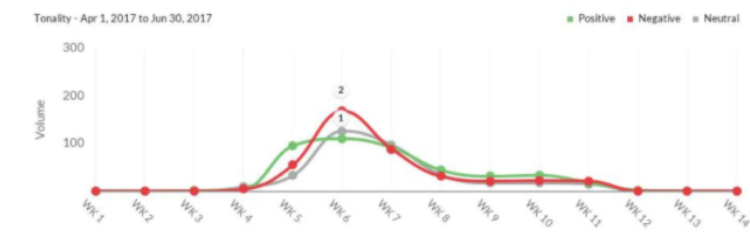
While it's certain that a variety of snack bars were competing to have the right to sponsor a campaign around the movie, the honor went to [thinkThin](#). Unfortunately [for thinkThin](#), [it's their brand name that caused a disconnect with audiences' expectation](#).



Everything else being equal, if the bar were named thinkHealthy, (presumably) there wouldn't have been an almost-crisis. So what ended up happening?

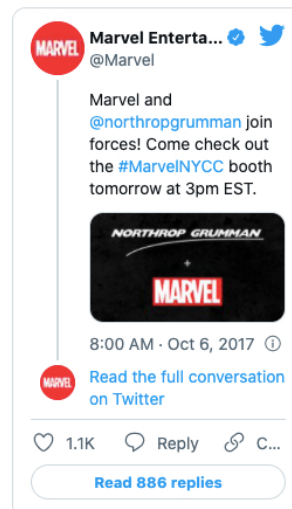
[Condemnation rained from mainstream media and social media](#) for a week or so, and by the time the film was released in June 2017, there was little mention of the ill-conceived partnership. Wonder Woman went on to become a huge blockbuster and neither brand was boycott.

Why did it blow over so quickly? Because 2017 was a [hard yet empowering year for women](#). We started the year at the biggest international march in history and finished with large clap backs with the #metoo movement. And while they didn't call off the campaign, neither brand promoted it on social media. There was no press release and the partnership was a trip to the premiere presumably, that continued, but there was no mea culpa or press release announcement of the winner(s). Without increased promotion of the partnership, it faded from social media, as the public moved on to other pressing issues.



According to Meltwater's Insight Reports, negative sentiment around the Wonder Woman and thinkThin® partnership* spiked and disappeared within a week.

2. Marvel and Northrop Grumman



Timed to launch at the NYC Comic-Con, Marvel and Northrop Grumman based their partnership on an existing template: slick, branded superheroes with superpowers that embody their sponsor's corporate values and culture. In this case, it was a new team of "Northrop Grumman Elite Nexus" superheroes fighting alongside Marvel's popular Avengers. The goal was to highlight aerospace initiatives, STEM education, and forward-thinking technology by Northrop Grumman. Turns out Northrop Grumman's reputation as a defense contractor rubbed some comic aficionados wrong. Tallingly, one person pointed out

contractor rubbed comic aficionados wrong. Finally, one person pointed out that Tony Stark's company produced weaponry, forcing him to turn his back on it when he realized its affects on humanity. Within 24 hours of the very vocal outcry on Twitter, the [activation campaign and relationship was canceled](#).

 **Ki...** · Oct 6, 2017
@Kin...
Everyone has a breaking point and while mine should have been sooner, I think this is it. I'm no longer buying or covering Marvel Comics.

 **Marvel Ente...** ·
Marvel and @northropgrumman join forces! Come check out the #MarvelNYCC booth tomorrow at 3pm EST.



 **Zoe! That's Me! ...**
@Blankzilla
Don't know if you saw it, but it's an all-ages promo comic. Disgusting.



12:12 PM · Oct 6, 2017

77 · Reply · Co...

[Read 20 replies](#)

 **Marvel Enterta...** ·
@Marvel

Marvel and @northropgrumman join forces! Come check out the #MarvelNYCC booth tomorrow at 3pm EST.



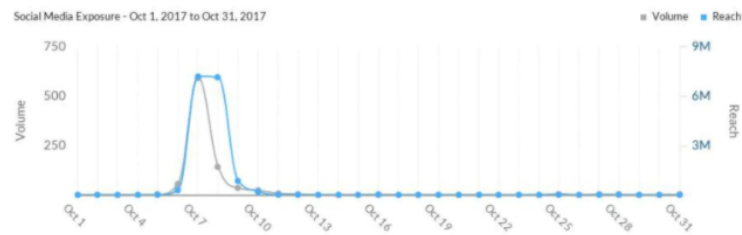
8:00 AM · Oct 6, 2017

 [Read the full conversation on Twitter](#)

1.1K · Reply · C...

[Read 886 replies](#)

Admitting that they didn't think the partnership through, Marvel pulled out. A quick mea culpa made the almost-crisis immediately dissipate and Marvel went on to enjoy their lauded position at the NYCC.



3. Bedrock “See Detroit Like We Do”



Bedrock Detroit launched a campaign whose aim was to empower their namesake city. The tagline was “See Detroit Like We Do” and included images of urban professionals enjoying a downtown life of dining out, entertainment, and work. The thing is, in planning the shoot and booking models, the campaign forgot an essential aspect of Detroit, its diversity.

Considering the levels of planning and approval these images must have gone through before being placed on posters around the metro-area, it’s a wonder that someone didn’t say, “Hey, if we’re using this tagline, should we make sure it includes different aspects of the population, whether that is skin color, age, family structure, or other socioeconomic factors?”



Once the outrage popped up, Bedrock Detroit founder, Dan Gilbert, personally issued an apology and the ad campaign was pulled. Even as the mainstream media covered the issue’s eruption on social media, the general public moved on to other matters. The question that remains is, will Bedrock be more conscientious going forward? Will they show Detroit as “[a city that is open, diverse, inclusive?](#)” Hopefully using the data that their community and audience is sharing with them about their campaigns will guide their future campaigns.

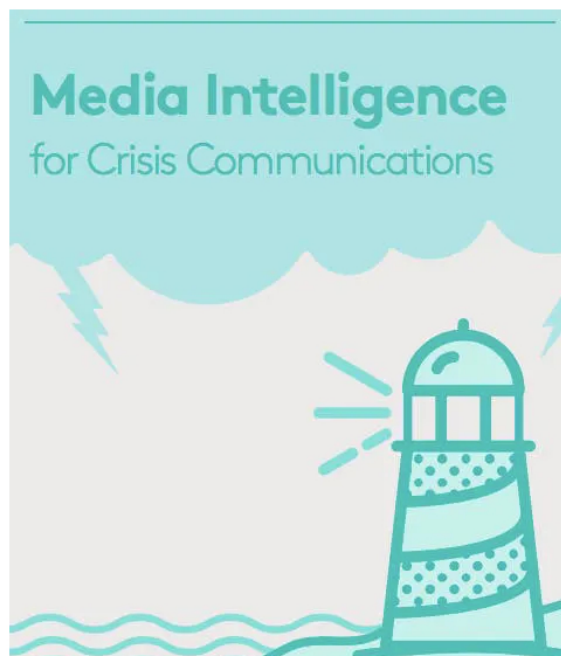


According to Meltwater's Insight Reports, the Bedrock campaign caused tonality (sentiment) to dip negatively for the Detroit realtor, but within two weeks the brand was back in the green.

PR Takeaways

Using a media monitoring and social listening platform likely assisted these brands in quickly responding to their communities. Considering how quickly decisions were made, it looks like Marvel and Bedrock Detroit had crisis plans in place. Springing into action to stem the blood flow with succinct apologies and pulling the campaigns in question requires both an agile and prepared PR team. And while those responsible for the thinkThin partnership can't necessarily apologize for their approach (since it's the product's name that caused the public to react), their ability to keep their cool and step away from the ledge also indicates that a crisis plan was likely already in place. Their decision to not promote (if not quite cancel) their [#thinkWonderWoman](#) campaign resulted in social media moving on by June 8, less than a week after the film's premiere. Every one of these brands was spared a protracted crisis by their quick thinking and prepared comms team.

To make sure you have signposts in place before your brand is mentioned in social media, [download our e-book on crisis comms](#). Being prepared for a crisis well before you'll need it is the easiest way to recover quickly.



First Name *

Last Name *

Email Address *

Phone Number *

Company Name *

Job Title

Country *

United States

Preferred Language

What solution(s) are you interested in? (0)

Through this form Meltwater collects your name and email. Check out our [privacy policy](#) for the full story on how we protect and manage your submitted data.

☐ Please subscribe me to the Meltwater newsletter

Request Demo →

Marketing

Reporting



Continue Reading



Guide

Crisis Communications Guide

Interested in learning
how Meltwater can
help you? Fill out the
form to learn more

First Name *

Last Name *

Email Address *

Phone Number *

Company Name *

Job Title

Country *

United States

Preferred Language

What solution(s) are you interested in? (0)

Through this form Meltwater collects your name and email. Check out our [privacy policy](#) for the full story on how we protect and manage your submitted data.

☐ Please subscribe me to the Meltwater newsletter

[Request Demo](#) →

Products

Custom Reports

Media Monitoring

Social Media Monitoring

Consumer Insights

Social Media Publishing

Press Distribution

Real-time Alerting

Social Media Analytics

PR Reporting

APIs

Newsletters & Website
Newsfeeds

Media Database

Social Media Engagement

Social Influencer Management

Use Cases

Social Marketing

Social Media Management

Media Relations

Market Research

Competitive Analysis

Brand Management

Agencies

Universities

Enterprise

Resources

Newsletter

Customer Stories

Blog

Events

Product Updates

Guides

Reports

On-demand Webinars

Education

➤ [Meltwater Academy](#)

About

About Us

Culture

Management

Investor Relations

➤ [Careers](#)

Open Positions

News

UK Modern Slavery Statement

South Africa PAIA Manual

Contact Us

Mobile Apps

Connect

➤ [Twitter](#)

➤ [Instagram](#)

➤ [Facebook](#)

➤ [Linkedin](#)

Language:

