

Using Traditional Media & Social Media in a Crisis



2018 MAM
Summer
Workshop



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League

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Overview



- My background
- Traditional Media in a Crisis
- Social Media in a Crisis



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My story



- 25+ years media experience:
 - 18 years as a journalist at newspapers Greenville, Howell and Flint (also spent time in Grand Rapids, Alpena and Cass City)
 - Nearly 8 years in public relations/media relations/communications – Flint CVB, MML
- Director at the League for 8 1/2 years
- Focusing on Communications and Media Relations
- Increase footprint of the League and League members





Both sides of a crisis:

As a reporter:

- Kayla Rolland school shooting
- Suicides in Grand Blanc schools

As a PR professional:

- Flint CVB





0 comments

Thanks to Facebook, Flint Journal's Matt Bach leaving for new job with Flint Area Conventions and Visitors Bureau

By Matt Bach | Flint Journal
Follow on Twitter
on February 02, 2009 at 2:30 AM, updated February 02, 2009 at 2:33 AM

Print
Email

-
-
-
-
- 0 shares



Matt Bach,
Flint Journal
columnist
• [Read more by him](#)



READY TO CHECK OUT?
WE PROMISE LOW PRICES

MOST READ

- This Detroit home up for auction looks like a great fixer-upper, but there's one problem
- More than a cool name, WR Eddie McDoom ready to bring speed and precision to Michigan
- Lions DE Ezekiel Ansah getting love from J.J. Watt, and the NFL

The post was short and sweet: "Matt is looking for a job, will work for money."

It was supposed to be another funny post on Facebook (an online social network), but at the same time I was looking for something new professionally.

Much to my surprise, I had a job offer -- within 48 hours.

Hard to believe, but it's true.

All thanks to a Facebook friend. She saw my post, knew of an opening and passed





Social media maven jump-starting PR in hard-times Flint

By Lindsey Miller | Posted: January 25, 2011

Print E-mail

0 0 0
Tweet Like Share G+ Pin It

Keying on Facebook, he takes on all comers in burnishing image of GM's birthplace

The new PR manager and social media guru for the Flint Area Convention and Visitors Bureau has a tough job.

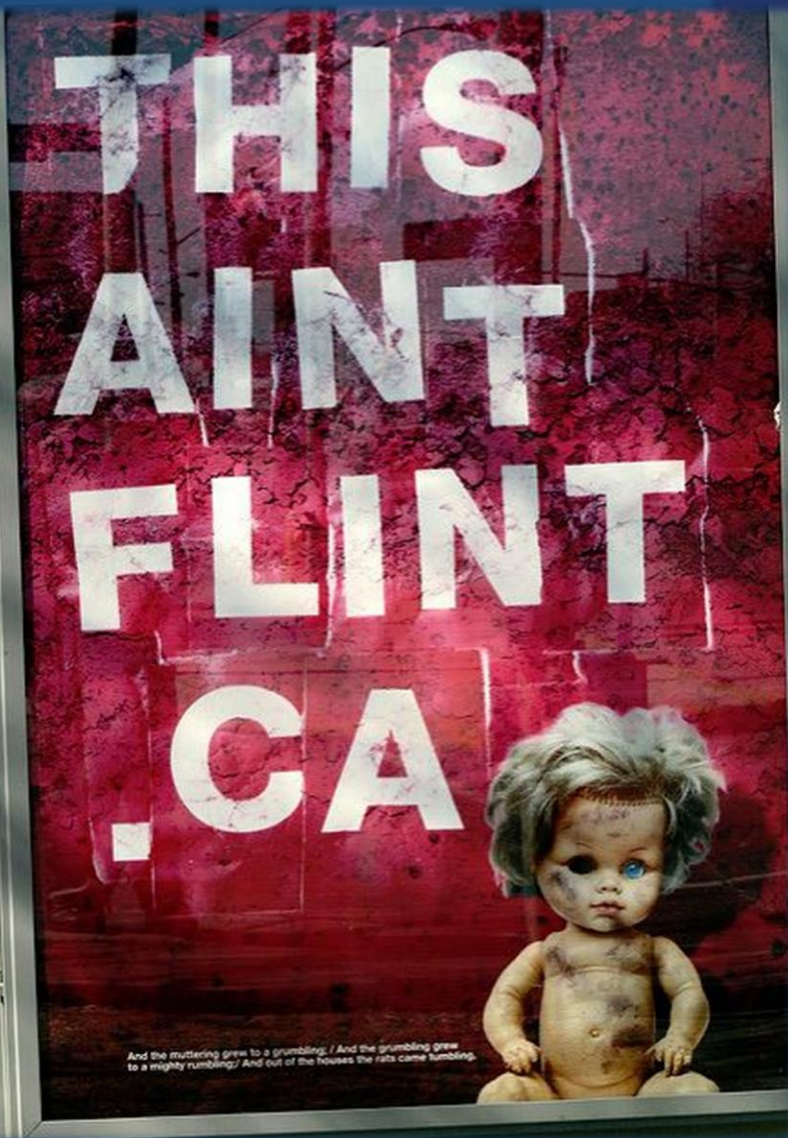
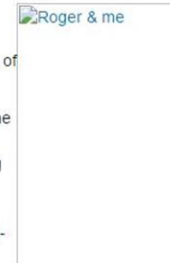
Already facing the mounting problems with the auto industry, Matt Bach recently fired back at an Ontario radio station that had launched a "This Ain't Flint" advertising campaign. The video focused on Flint's problems — in 1989! — in order to highlight the relative success of greater Ottawa today.

The Flint public relations effort has been an uphill climb, Bach says, ever since Michael Moore released the 1989 documentary *Roger & Me* about General Motors' Flint-area plant closings in the mid-1980s, which put tens of thousands out of work.

"Part of my job is to shape public perception," Bach says. "If you tell anyone you're from Flint they say, "Oh, *Roger & Me*, Michael Moore, skinning rabbits." A portion of the film features a Flint resident who ekes out a living selling rabbits — as pets or as cheap food.

"Unfortunately that's what we're known for," Bach says, "and it's a 20-year-old movie, but that's the stigma that's attached to us. So, my job is to change perceptions one blog, one Web site, one Internet comment at a time."

Most of us don't have to combat perceptions that are decades deep, but Bach's initial efforts in social media, from blogger interaction to Facebook to Twitter, teach some lessons in transparency that can apply to anyone with a brand to maintain.



Meridian Township Situation: Options



1. Do nothing, hope it doesn't come out
2. Deny
3. Admit, but say case is closed, no comment
4. Admit, apologize and fix it



Meridian Township Situation:



- They did option 4 *eventually*. For multiple months, at the request of the attorney general's office, they did not release the 2004 police report and denied multiple FOIA requests.

“We looked like we were hiding everything and it didn't get better until we went public. We wanted to do the right thing.”

- Frank Walsh



Meridian Township Situation:



- Friday, January 19, 2018 – 4 p.m.
- Against the recommendation of insurance carriers and attorneys, Walsh picked up the phone and called Brianne Randall-Gay to apologize.
- Driven by two goals – Make it right for Brianne, protect/restore the credibility of the police department.
- Rolled out three-step plan.



Meridian Township Situation:



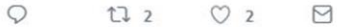
Eric Lacy
@EricLacy

Following

Meridian Township to release findings of sexual assault cases from 2000 to 2017 today at 10 am. Follow [@lsjnews](#) for updates. Also will provide updates regarding CSC training and a community-wide program. This all stems from Nassar case.

9:40 AM - 2 May 2018

2 Retweets 2 Likes



Tweet your reply



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Meridian Township Situation:



Three-phase plan:

- Revisit all CSC cases back to 2000: 598 cases in total, 7 were reopened
 - Do training for police officers
 - Public awareness campaign with Brianne
- Result: 25-35 cases, on track for 100 cases; praise for how they handled it



Meridian Township Situation:



Eric White is with Frank Walsh.
February 2 · 🌐

Frank Walsh and Meridian Township have demonstrated how to properly respond to such a terrible situation. Frank is a total class act and the Township is fortunate to have his leadership. Michigan State University needs to follow suit.



MLIVE.COM
Nassar 'duped us ... we were wrong' township tells victim from 2004

Marie McKenna-Wicks, Chris Yonker and 101 others · 43 Comments · 6 Shares

Like · Comment · Share

The Firecracker Foundation ✓
May 5 · 🌐

Meridian Township is reviewing all sexual assault cases going back eighteen years.



WILX.COM
Survivor Works To Prevent Another Nassar
Of the many mistakes made in the Nassar investigation. One of the biggest

Nassar victim accepts Meridian Township's apology

By: Kevin VanderKolk

Posted: Feb 01, 2018 01:49 PM EST
Updated: Feb 01, 2018 01:49 PM EST



Meridian Twp apologizes to victim
3 minutes left

NEWS

WILNS.COM
POLICE APOLOGIZE FOR HANDLING OF NASSAR COMPLAINT
MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP

13°
6.0%

A victim of sports doctor Larry Nassar has accepted a public apology from a police department in Meridian Township, nearly 14 years after officers took a complaint from her but didn't seek criminal charges.

Nellie R @emtfr · Feb 25

Replying to @stutzky @ReclaimMSU

All well **and** good Yet **NONE** of this addresses the actual **#Nassar** case issues, which is quite perplexing since that should be a front-burner topic? Why all the pointing away from the main issues? **Meridian Township** seems to be the only Michigan entity doing the right thing so far.

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Communicating in a Crisis



2015 study of 300 local government officials from throughout the U.S. found:

- 70% surveyed used social media in a crisis and 29% did not use it in a crisis
- Most popular – Facebook - 53%
- Twitter – 27%
- Blogs – 6%
- YouTube – 5%
- GooglePlus – 3%
- Other – 6%

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

Posted on September 16, 2015

by Melissa W Graham, Elizabeth J. Avery and Sejin Park



Communicating in a Crisis



- Smaller communities used it less than bigger communities. As the community's size increased so did the extent of use and number of social media tools engaged during a crisis.
- Social media was used more for crisis communications during public health crisis than for natural disasters, transportation, political, social or criminal cases.



Conclusion of the study:



➤ The extent of social media use and the number of social media tools used by local governments were positively related to the extent of the impact of the officials' crisis management.

➤ In other words ... **IT WORKS!**



Other conclusions:



- It's a trend for local governments
- Most common platforms used: Twitter, Facebook and YouTube
- Social media prohibitions on staff don't work



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Social Media in a Crisis Examples:



- In 2013, Boston Marathon bombings, one-fourth of Americans searched for information on Facebook, Twitter, and other social networking sites.
- In 2008 California wildfires, Twitter was preferred platform and was used by state authorities to share vital information and updates with residents who were potentially impacted
- Asiana Air Flight 214 at L.A. Airport in July 2013, U.S. National Transportation Safety Board made good use of Twitter and YouTube to inform the public about the investigation and distribute information from related press conferences.



Social media in natural disasters:



- Holland storm – Used Twitter extensively
- During flooding in San Marcus, Texas, in 2015, Twitter and Facebook provided forum for posting flood maps, safety notices and even calls for help.
- Facebook main tool used following Haiti earthquake in 2010
- In Hurricane Sandy, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and other elected officials relied heavily on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to reach the public to inform them of threats and dangers. As a result, they were able to conduct very swift and timely evacuations.



Social Media – Emergency Uses



Kurt Dykstra
BPW update (cont.) The BPW gets another third from two other partly-owned plants elsewhere in MI, and the final third either from buying off the "grid" (i.e., the market) or via natural gas & diesel "peaking" units at a couple of locations around town.
Yesterday at 4:45pm · Like · Comment

Steve Simon We got our power back about 2 hours ago. Please thank the BPW crews for their good work!
22 hours ago · Like

Kurt Dykstra Will do, Steve. Thx.
18 hours ago · Like

Write a comment...

Kurt Dykstra
BPW update (cont.) DeYoung Power Plant has sustained some minor damage to some outbuildings. Hopefully in a couple of days all the boilers will be back online. Until then, remember that only 1/3 of Holland's power comes from DeYoung. MORE
Yesterday at 4:44pm · Like · Comment

Kurt Dykstra
BPW update (cont.) Crews from Indiana will be arriving (or have already arrived) to replace the 138 line and poles along Pine Ave. and other places. The sheer size of the poles and lines are such that our crews don't do that work. Again, estimates are at least a couple of days worth of repairs -- and closed Pine Ave. MORE
Yesterday at 4:41pm · Like · Comment

Kurt Dykstra
BPW update. A more formal and complete update will be provided by the BPW, but here is some general information. The main circuits are repaired. Still some customers (in the hundreds probably) without power, but these are largely due to downed trees damaging lines that run into a neighborhood or smaller cluster of customers. MORE . . .
Yesterday at 4:39pm · Like · Comment

RECENT ACTIVITY

Kurt and John Fallon are now friends. · Like · Comment · Add John as Friend

twitter Home Profile Messa

City of Holland
@CityofHolland Holland, Mich.
We are the All-American City with a Dutch accent, and located near the shores of Lake Michigan.
<http://www.cityofholland.com>

Following

Tweets Favorites Following Followers Lists

CityofHolland City of Holland
#HollandMI Wastewater Treatment Plant was w/out power this AM. However, no apparent spills into Lake Mac.
22 hours ago

CityofHolland City of Holland
Mayor Dykstra has been in the emergency operations center all day. He's touring storm damage and posting pics on FB:
<http://ow.ly/5BOZZ>
11 Jul

CityofHolland City of Holland
Use US-31 instead of Pine or River. Also give yourself plenty of "space" to navigate the major east-west streets and roads.
11 Jul

CityofHolland City of Holland
RT @mattswier: Power back on W. 19th street thanks
@CityofHolland
11 Jul

CityofHolland City of Holland
@wzzm13 Holland hit hard by storms <http://ow.ly/5BHlq>
11 Jul



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Social media – Emergency Uses



Holland BPW
@HBPWStorm Holland, MI
We are a public utility offering water, wastewater, electric and fiber services to the City of Holland and surrounding areas.
<http://www.hollandbpw.com>

Tweets Favorites Following Followers Lists

HBPWStorm Holland BPW
Thank you also to Zeeland BPW for their assistance!
3 hours ago

HBPWStorm Holland BPW
Around 500 scattered power outages remain through the BPW system. Estimated complete restoration for all customers is Wed. evening, 7/13.
7 hours ago

HBPWStorm Holland BPW
ELECTRIC CREWS are still working to restore power in Holland. Thank you again for your patience. Please rememb... (cont)
<http://deck.ly/~PBtAk>
9 hours ago

HBPWStorm Holland BPW
RED CROSS UPDATE ONLY FOR PERSON WITH MEDICAL NEEDS 616-396-6545
20 hours ago

About @HBPWStorm
153 Tweets 17 Following 63 Followers 2 Listed

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You both follow this account - [view](#)

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- oldpirate** Craig Pirie - Follow
advertising executive who finds @BPWtweets
- CityFlatsHotel** CityFlats Hotel - Follow
We are a boutique hotel that's LEED Gold
- HollandHosp** Holland Hospital - Follow

Following - [view all](#)

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How to get started:



Step 1: You must be on social media to use it in a crisis. Need to make it a regular part of your organization's daily communication. You need to build a following. This Ain't Flint situation, I had my following and used them.

Step 2: Form a crisis communications plan and include a social media component



Best practices:



- Acknowledge that a crisis exists as quickly as possible. Best example was Johnson and Johnson Tylenol incident in Chicago in 1982.
- Crisis management procedures should be communicated to senior officers. It should follow a top-down approach.
- Initial communication to the public is a must.
- ID specific courses of action. These actions can be preventative, corrective or deterrent in nature. Meridian Township 3-part action plan.



Best practices:



- Establish channels for feedback = social media.
- Be honest
- Respect the media. They have a job to do and so do you.
- Expect the unexpected.
- Show the public you have things under control.



Crisis Communications Plan



Goal: Tell your own bad news first

- Different from Communications Plan
- Types of situations – Legal disputes, natural disasters, manmade disasters, accidents
- Steps – Form a plan, select a team/spokesperson, track it, monitor



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What to do in a Crisis:



Step 1: Ask, is this a crisis?

Step 2: Decide your position

Step 3: Decide how you will communicate your position

Step 4: Prepare your statement:

- Give only facts. Don't speculate
- Give updates

Step 5: Be prompt, be ready to correct rumors

Step 6: For Twitter, select the right hashtag

Step 7: Log and track the coverage

Step 8: Post-crisis analysis

Consider an archive service. Allen Park uses Archive Social



News Conference:



- Select a place
- The media can help
- Treat media consistently
- Control the interview process



Darren Cunningham [@darrenfox17](#) · Feb 1

PHOTO: Meridian Township police chief is now addressing media and Nassar victim who came forward in 2004; another apology for police not believing her [@fox17](#) [#nassar](#)



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Questions?

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Contact me anytime

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Facebook: facebook.com/mattbach

Flickr: flickr.com/michigancommunities



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