Brand Management in Times of Crisis: Lessons from an Interconnected World

Eric Yorkston
What was their response?

This is an upsetting event to all of us here at United. I apologize for having to re-accommodate these customers. Our team is moving with a sense of urgency to work with the authorities and conduct our own detailed review of what happened. We are also reaching out to this passenger to talk directly to him and further address and resolve this situation.

- Oscar Munoz, CEO, United Airlines
Dear Team,

Like you, I was upset to see and hear about what happened last night aboard United Express Flight 3411 headed from Chicago to Louisville. While the facts and circumstances are still evolving, especially with respect to why this customer defied Chicago Aviation Security Officers the way he did, to give you a clearer picture of what transpired, I've included below a recap from the preliminary reports filed by our employees.

As you will read, this situation was unfortunately compounded when one of the passengers we politely asked to deplane refused and it became necessary to contact Chicago Aviation Security Officers to help.

Our employees followed established procedures for dealing with situations like this. While I deeply regret this situation arose, I also emphatically stand behind all of you, and I want to commend you for continuing to go above and beyond to ensure we fly right.

I do, however, believe there are lessons we can learn from this experience, and we are taking a close look at the circumstances surrounding this incident. Treating our customers and each other with respect and dignity is at the core of who we are, and we must always remember this no matter how challenging the situation.

Oscar

- **Summary of Flight 3411**
- On Sunday April 9, after United Express Flight 3411 was fully boarded, United’s gate agents were approached by crew members that were told they needed to board the flight.
- We sought volunteers and then followed our involuntary denial of boarding process (including offering up to $1,000 in compensation) and when we approached one of these passengers to explain apologetically that he was being denied boarding, he raised his voice and refused to comply with crew member instructions.
- He was approached a few more times after that in order to gain his compliance to come off the aircraft, and each time he refused and became more and more disruptive and belligerent.
- Our agents were left with no choice but to call Chicago Aviation Security Officers to assist in removing the customer from the flight. He repeatedly declined to leave.
- Chicago Aviation Security Officers were unable to gain his co-operation and physically removed him from the flight as he continued to resist - running back onto the aircraft in defiance of both our crew and security officials.
What was the world’s response?

Hey @united, I liked it better when you just broke guitars. Have you changed your social media strategy from ignore it and hope it goes away?

6:40 AM - 11 Apr 2017

22,692,500,000,000
Vietnamese Dong
How could things have gone so awry?
Traditional Crises Response

• Address Personally
• Don’t Spread the News
• Circle the wagons
• Let it die
Fundamental Misunderstanding of the World
Cognitive Surplus

- US Population 321 MM
- 63% over age of 18 202 MM
- 33% have college degree 67 MM
- 5 hours 4 minutes (TV/day)
- 1 weekend of TV. 670 MM hrs.

Shirky and Wattenburg, 2008
Act First
Moving to a World of Complete Information
6 Parts of an Effective Apology


1. Expression of regret
2. Explanation of what went wrong
3. Acknowledgment of responsibility
4. Declaration of repentance
5. Offer of repair
6. Request for forgiveness
This is an upsetting event to all of us here at United. I apologize for having to create the situation that led us to re-accommodate assault, injure and publicly humiliate these customers this human being. Our team is moving with a sense of urgency to work with the authorities and conduct our own detailed review of what happened the things we did.

- Oscar Munoz, CEO, United Airlines
Should United Have Known Better?

www.davecarrrollmusic.com
United Continental Holdings Inc
NYSE: UAL - Jun 12, 6:55 PM EDT

77.73 USD +1.10 (1.40%)
After-hours: 77.90 +0.22%

1 day | 5 day | 1 month | 3 month | 1 year | 5 year | max
---|---|---|---|---|---|---

Open 79.02
High 79.08
Low 76.00

Mkt cap 23.56B
P/E ratio 11.24
Div yield -

Google Finance - Yahoo Finance - MSN Money
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