



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## The evolution of crisis communications in the era of global disinformation: New reputation management models for multinational corporations

Iuliia Dolmatova \*

*Expert in the field of data-driven strategic communications and international business development. Russia.*

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2026, 29(03), 1249-1252

Publication history: Received on 06 February 2026; revised on 15 March 2026; accepted on 18 March 2026

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2026.29.3.0638>

### Abstract

The article analyzes the transformation of crisis communication strategies of multinational corporations in the context of global disinformation. The purpose of the study is to identify and systematize new models of managing reputational risks that are adequate to the modern challenges of the information environment. The work addresses objectives such as studying the impact of disinformation on crisis dynamics, evaluating the effectiveness of traditional and digital communication protocols, and developing practical recommendations for corporate structures. Based on the analysis of international cases and academic research, it is demonstrated that successful management of reputational crises requires the integration of advanced media analytics, preventive monitoring of digital platforms, and strategies for proactive dialogue with stakeholders. The results of the study have practical significance for professionals in the field of corporate communications and reputation management.

**Keywords:** Crisis communications; Reputation management; Multinational corporations; Disinformation; Media analytics; stakeholders; Reputational risks; Communication strategies

### 1. Introduction

The modern environment of multinational corporations is characterized by increased vulnerability to reputational crises, the intensity and scale of which are exacerbated by the phenomenon of global disinformation. The speed at which unverified information spreads and the ability of disinformation to cross national borders and form negative narratives create at which unverified information spreads and the ability of disinformation to cross national borders unprecedented challenges for traditional crisis management systems. The relevance of the topic is determined by the need to adapt the theoretical foundations and practical tools of crisis communications to the new digital reality, where outdated linear models prove ineffective. The purpose of this article is to analyze the evolution of crisis communications and to develop a structural model of reputation management that is resilient to the impact of coordinated disinformation campaigns.

### 2. Theoretical Fundamentals and Challenges of Disinformation

Classical theories of crisis communications, such as Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory, were focused on analyzing the type of crisis and determining the corresponding response strategy [1]. However, in modern conditions, the initial crisis trigger often recedes into the background, giving way to a constructed disinformation narrative that spreads significantly farther, faster, and deeper than truthful information, which is explained by its often sensational and emotionally engaging nature [2].

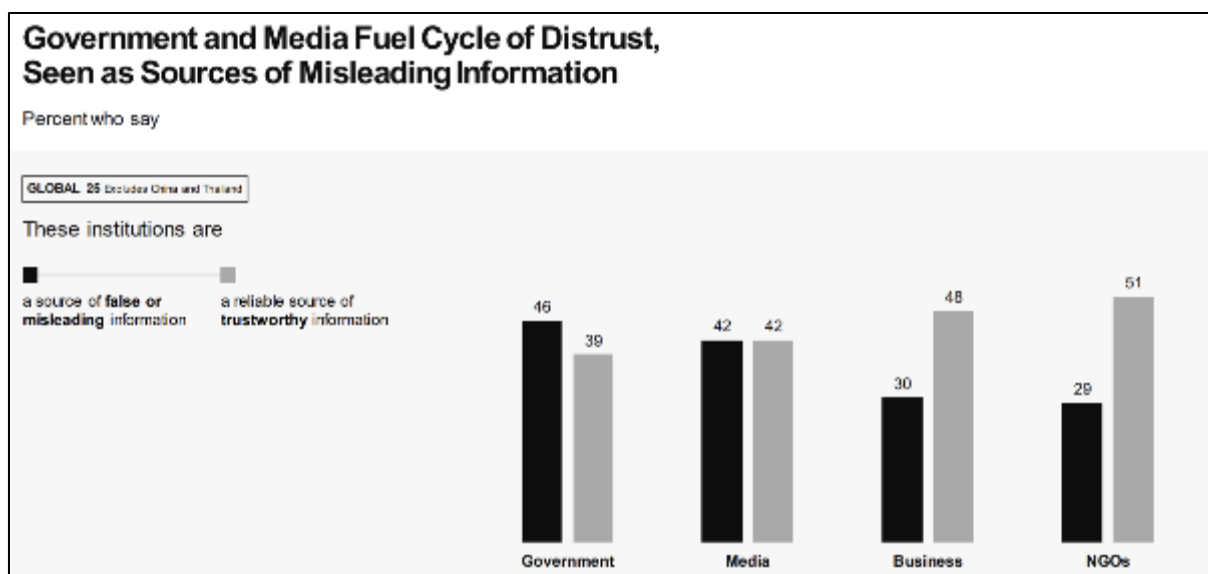
\* Corresponding author: Iuliia Dolmatova

This phenomenon requires a reconsideration of fundamental principles. The concept of “golden hours” for preparing a response has been reduced to “golden minutes.” The model of one-way public information is being replaced by the necessity of continuous dialogue in a multichannel space. The threat is not only the fact of disinformation itself but also the decline of trust in traditional institutions, including large businesses, which complicates the restoration of reputation even when comprehensive evidence is provided.

### 3. Practical Implementation of New Communication Models

The response to these challenges involves the implementation of comprehensive digital monitoring and analysis systems. These systems use artificial intelligence and machine learning to track emerging narratives in more than 100 languages in near real-time. The goal is not only to detect direct mentions of the brand but also to identify indirect discourses that could later develop into targeted attacks.

Universal press releases are being replaced by micro-targeted communication strategies. Different audience segments — direct consumers, investors, legislators, employees — receive tailored messages through the channels most optimal for them. At the same time, the focus shifts from refutation to positive positioning and the engagement of third parties — industry experts, opinion leaders, and loyal customers — whose voices carry greater credibility.



**Figure 1** Perceived trustworthiness of information sources: Government and media as leading sources of misinformation (Global survey results)

Proactive publication of data, including internal documentation and investigation results, becomes a tool to counter accusations of opacity. This strategy, known as “preemptive transparency,” deprives a disinformation campaign of the information vacuum it seeks to fill.

### 4. Effectiveness of Approaches in Modern Conditions

Analysis of specific cases illustrates the effectiveness of these new approaches. Crises related to alleged manipulations demonstrate differences in approaches. Initially delayed and technically complex responses exacerbate reputational damage. From a historical perspective, it can be noted that companies later began using social media platforms more actively for direct communication with customers, creating targeted sections on corporate websites to update customers on crisis resolution progress and engaging independent auditors to verify reports. This allowed partial stabilization of trust in certain markets.

The study of pharmaceutical corporations' communication strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed a correlation between the speed and transparency of communications about vaccine development and public trust. Companies that regularly published clinical trial data, even intermediate and imperfect results, and openly commented on potential risks ultimately faced a smaller volume of disinformation directed against their products [3].

Industry reports from communication agencies, such as the annual Edelman Trust Barometer review, record a steady increase in the importance of the CEO as the public face of the company during a crisis. According to 2023 data, 68% of respondents expect the CEO to publicly comment on controversial social issues that are in some way related to the company's business [4]. This indicates a personalized approach to corporate responsibility.

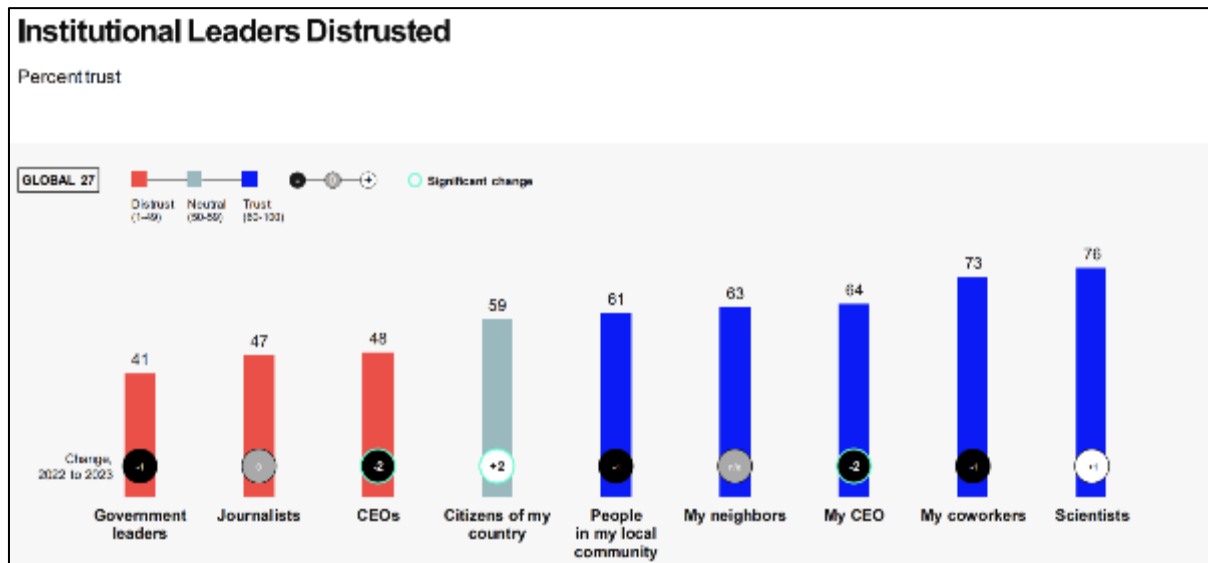


Figure 2 Global trust levels across institutional and personal leaders (2023)

## 5. Reputation Management Model in the Context of Disinformation

The synthesis of theoretical developments and practical experience allows us to propose a multi-component model of reputation management in the context of disinformation. This model includes a continuous cycle of actions: predictive threat scanning based on big data analysis; preventive preparation of content for likely scenarios; immediate activation of a cross-functional crisis team; implementation of a multi-platform and segmented communication campaign; and subsequent analysis of the effectiveness of measures taken to adjust future protocols.

A critical element of the model is engagement with digital platforms to limit the viral spread of false information, which requires established legal and operational interaction procedures. At the same time, traditional media retain their importance as channels for disseminating verified information and providing in-depth analysis for audiences that continue to trust institutional sources.

The effectiveness of the model depends on the depth of integration of the communications function into the corporation's strategic management. Communication departments must have the authority to influence business decisions that could trigger reputational risks, which implies close collaboration with the legal department and the operations unit [5].

The analysis allows us to conclude that the evolution of crisis communications is a direct consequence of the transformation of the global information landscape under the influence of disinformation. Multinational corporations can no longer rely on strategies developed for the era dominated by traditional media. The new paradigm requires a shift from rapid public response to proactive management of the digital ecosystem in which the corporation exists.

The proposed model, which synthesizes advanced analytical tools, preventive monitoring, and strategic transparency, provides a foundation for building a resilient reputation management system. The universality of the model allows it to be adapted for corporations across different industries and geographic regions, taking into account the specifics of their stakeholders and regulatory environment.

## 6. Conclusion

This study shows that the growing deficit of trust in institutional sources, combined with the increased speed and fragmentation of the digital information environment, requires a shift from universal press releases to data-informed,

audience-specific communication supported by continuous monitoring. The proposed framework integrates AI-enabled detection of emerging narratives, structured segmentation of stakeholders, and targeted messaging, while emphasizing the role of credible third parties to strengthen legitimacy and reduce reputational risk. Overall, the approach improves early identification of potential attacks, supports timely response planning, and enhances consistency of strategic positioning under uncertainty. This study will benefit society by supporting more reliable, transparent, and evidence-based public communication and reducing the spread and impact of misleading narratives, and the way forward is to validate the framework through empirical case studies across industries and to develop clear ethical and governance standards for AI-assisted communication.

---

## References

- [1] Coombs, W. T. *Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing, and Responding*. – 5th ed. – Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2019. – 312 p.
- [2] Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., Aral, S. *The spread of true and false news online* // *Science*. – 2018. – Vol. 359, № 6380. – P. 1146–1151.
- [3] Finset, A., Bosworth, H. *Effective health communication – a key factor in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic* // *Patient Education and Counseling*. – 2020. – Vol. 103, № 5. – P. 873–876.
- [4] *Edelman Trust Barometer 2023: The Collapse of Government and the Implosion of Media* [Global Report]. – Edelman, 2023. – 40 p.
- [5] Falkheimer, J., Heide, M. *Strategic Communication in a Global Crisis* // *Routledge Handbook of Strategic Communication*. – New York: Routledge, 2021. – P. 345–360.