

Preparing for Tomorrow's Crisis

SAVING YOUR MUSEUM'S REPUTATION AND BRAND

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Today

- Real-life, museum crisis examples
- Strategic communication before, during and after a crisis situation
- What you can do



Navigating Museums' Public Expectations

Expect engaging experiences, safety, service, transparency, responsible action, good reputation

Museum high profile = Added public/media scrutiny



Anticipate and prepare



- A crisis is a “when” not an “if”
- Prepare and respond as a team
- Utilize communications tools

Real life crisis: Case study #1

Staff ask a mother breastfeeding her baby to leave the museum restaurant because guests were upset.

She leaves. Blogs about the experience. Sparks a national, online campaign against the museum.



What makes a crisis worse



- Lack of communication:
 - internal and external
- Failure to get worst news out quickly
- Delayed corrective action
- Incomplete disclosure
- Putting economic interests first
- Slow to express compassion



A lie gets halfway
around the world
before the truth has
a chance to get its
pants on.

Winston Churchill

Museum crises can stem from...

- Safety problems
- Operations
- Financial issues
- Systems or facilities
- Natural disaster
- Digital (social media or data breach)
- Violent incident
- Leadership or staff conduct



Case Study #2: Allegations against institution staff member

An employee, who assisted school groups visiting the aquarium, is accused by an adult guest of having molested him as a youth.

Accuser does not tell aquarium staff, but instead contacts local TV station's investigative reporter.



Case study #3: Stolen artifact
Working with your PR agency

Book from *Titanic Exhibition*
at Chicago's Museum of
Science and Industry
discovered missing



Proactive, transparent communications

San Francisco Chronicle

A Titanic Theft of a Little Black Book

Museum guard charged with lifting ship artifact

more than 300 relics recovered from the site of the sunken ship.

The book — about 5½-by-2¼ inches with the words “Maryland Club Rye” — had been in a clear display case secured by two screws.

John Norman, a senior vice president of exhibit producer SPX Family Entertainment, said he was satisfied with the museum’s efforts to increase security at the exhibit.

He said the address book originally was brought up from the wreckage of the Titanic in 1912, went down in the Atlantic in 1912.

The book, stamped with the words “Maryland Club Rye” and a small trunk owned by Howard Irwin. As his would have been, Irwin did not recall.



ALBANY

Democrat-Herald

NATION

IN BRIEF

Address book stolen from Titanic exhibit

CHICAGO (AP) — A “priceless” address book from the Titanic has been stolen from an exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry, police said Thursday.

Museum officials reported the theft about 8 p.m. Wednesday, said Officer Joseph Bourgeois, 2

Charge in ‘Titanic’

Friday, August 4

Museum guard took book from case, cops say

By FRANK MAIN AND NANCY MOFFETT Staff reporters

A museum security guard removed two screws, lifted a protective glass case and snatched the little leather-bound diary that disappeared last week from the Titanic exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry, police said Thursday.

Jordan Jackson, 22, who had worked for a month at the museum, removed the book from a room he was hired to watch and later reported the book missing, said Anna’s police Chief, Walter Coon. The book was recovered at a apartment.



Joseph Jackson, police chief


Irwin was a young man traveling the world with his friend, Henry Sutherland, who died when the ship went down. The diary contained Irwin’s notes on travels through the United States with his father in 1910, the year both 30-somethings set off west for an extended world journey.

It shows “who they visited each city and exactly what they did and their wages were, what they ate and what they wore.”



Henry Sutherland

MILWAUKEE · WISCONSIN JOURNAL SENTINEL



Museum of Science and Industry spokeswoman Amy Ritter talks about an address book reported missing from the museum’s Titanic exhibit. It had been in a glass display case that was secured by two screws.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Recovered from Titanic, book vanishes in museum

Associated Press

Chicago — A “priceless” address book from the Titanic has been stolen from the museum’s Titanic exhibit, it was reported Wednesday morning.

Investigating

Case Study #4: Facebook post ignites crisis for zoological park





Monday afternoon, June 8,
Posted to Brookfield Zoo's
Facebook page:

“At work serving these
rude (expletive) white
people.”



Brookfield Zoo



Published by Steve Pine [?] · June 9 at 9:35am · Edited ·

Yesterday, we became aware of the actions of a single employee which we agree are unacceptable. This employee's statements in social media are in violation of our policies and do not reflect our institution's values. We have zero tolerance for these kinds of divisive behaviors. We treat all employment matters confidentially but please know that we took prompt action to remedy the situation this morning.

We hope you continue to hold Brookfield Zoo in high regard and not let the actions of one individual overshadow the longstanding good work of the Chicago Zoological Society.

1,198,592 people reached

[Boost Post](#)

Like · Comment · Share · 26,519 3,168 3,649



Illinois zoo investigating employee's controversial photo being called 'racist'

Online post brings swift response against Brookfield Zoo employee

© WRITTEN BY STEFANO ESPOSITO POSTED: 06/09/2015, 03:10PM



An employee's racial comment about her customers at Brookfield Zoo brought swift response from management. | File Photo



NEWS

BROOKFIELD ZOO RESPONDS TO 'RUDE' 'WHITE PEOPLE' POST BY EMPLOYEE



[U.S.](#) | [WORLD](#) | [CRIME](#) | [THE WEEK](#) | [NEWS PICS](#) | [BLOGS](#)

Chicago zoo employee fired for complaining of serving 'rude ass white people' says she regrets comments but backlash is unfair

BY JOEL LANDAU



/ NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

/ Published: Wednesday, June 10, 2015, 10:56 AM

/ Updated: Wednesday, June 10, 2015, 3:39 PM

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SHARE THIS URL

nydn.us/1BYPxWt

Shana Poohpooh Latrice at Brookfield Zoo

4 hrs · Instagram · 🌐

Wassup y'all?

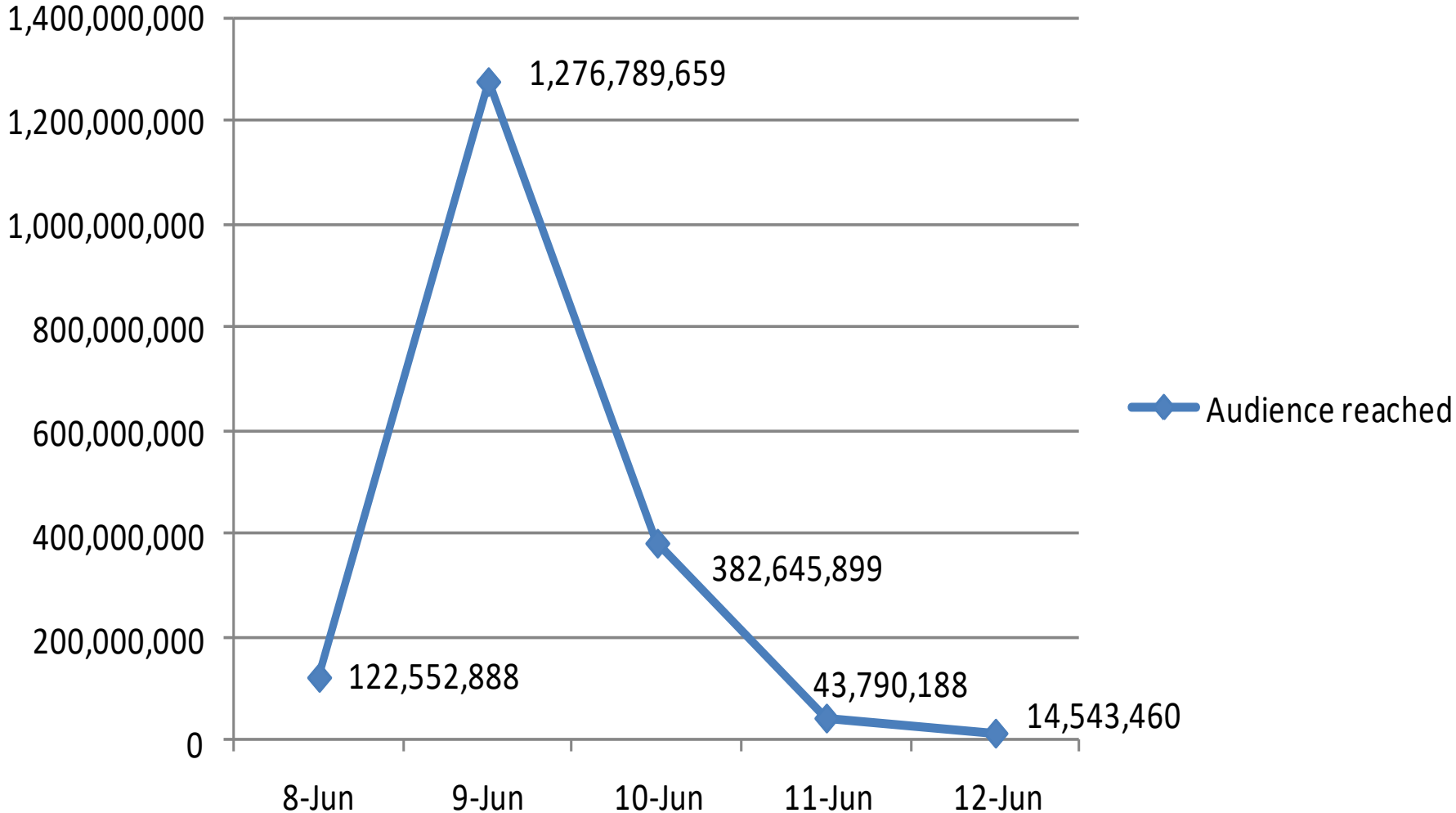
At work serving these rude ass white people



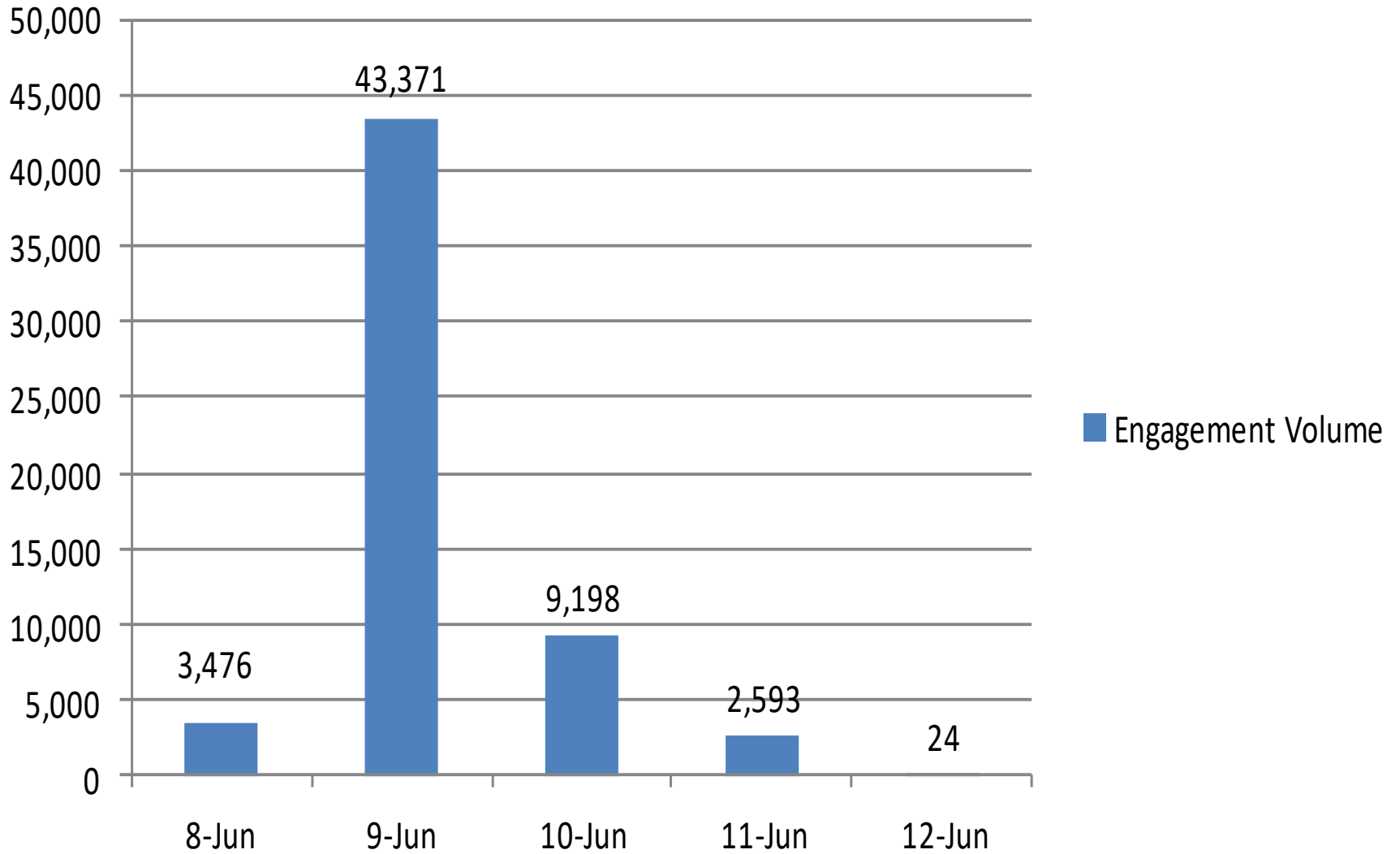
A 22-year-old black woman who was fired from her job at a Chicago zoo after she complained on Facebook of serving "rude ass white people" told the Daily News she regrets her comments and said it during a moment of frustration.

But Rochelle Robinson also said the amount of backlash she received was unfair and quit her job because she was afraid of retaliation.

Audience reached



Engagement Volume



Posts To Page

Like · Comment · Share ·  1  1



Kim Pruum ▸ Brookfield Zoo

58 mins · 

I see that the negative posts haven't quite died down yet, so I shall continue posting more photos as an attempt to distract us from the latest news. 😊 Here are Zenda and Isis "singing" in harmony in September 2014 😊



Unlike · Comment · Share ·  14



Joseph Kerr ▸ Brookfield Zoo

1 min · Fort Wayne, IN · 

I am a big fan of the zoo, and applaud the way you handled the situation. You took time to look at the facts and did what any company should do. To those who think your actions were wrong, they are not looking at the whole picture. No one, while at their job, in the uniform of their job, should be posting controversial statements that the job then has to take ownership of. The fact that she was at work, working, is the reason she should not be on her phone, nor posting hateful messages about the "guests" of the zoo. It was not on her own time. That said, I love the zoo and visit as often as possible.

Like · Comment · Share

Strategy:

A palate-cleansing post to Facebook Friday

 **Brookfield Zoo** at Brookfield Zoo
Published by Steve Pine [?] · 3 hrs · 🌐

The flowers are in bloom and summer is just around the corner.



26,224 people reached [Boost Post](#)

Like · Comment · Share ·  913  9  19

Communication action plan



Bedrock rules for responding to a crisis

- People (health and safety) come first
- Tell the truth – ALWAYS
- Get most complete information available
- Inventory what you don't know
- Decide how to remedy the situation
- Respond quickly but responsibly
- Social media is a discussion
- Listen, analyze, respond strategically



Define crisis: risk/threat analysis

Identifying Priority Risks

Severity of Reputational Damage

High	3 Highly Damaging Unlikely to Occur	1 Highly Damaging Likely to Occur
Low		2 Low Damage Likely to Occur

Low

High

Likelihood of Occurrence

Materials and channels

Succinct, fact-based materials

- Statement
- Talking points
- Email(s)/letter (internal)
- Q&A (internal)
- FAQs (external)

Determine appropriate channel for distribution



Identify your key audiences

Internal and external

Determine who “owns” communication with:

- Authorities
- Board/leadership
- Employees
- Members
- Partners
- Donors
- Visitors
- Media
- Social media followers

Message development & training

- Clear, compelling audience-specific messages
- Storytelling
- Mock interviews
- Prepare for tough questions



Who's on the crisis team?

- Decision makers: CEO, CFO
- Communication “owners”
- Legal counsel
- PR crisis counsel
- Security



Post-crisis recovery



- Post-mortem debrief, analysis
- Follow through on promises to public, members, staff
- Consider organizational, process, leadership changes as needed
- Showcase inspired leadership to renew organizational confidence

Questions

Let's talk.