

Issue Management

Setting topics and reaching goals

On the trail of the issues

Issue management is like a coin – there are two sides to it. On one hand you have to know how to gain ground with positive issues and on the other hand it is important to counteract negative issues and maintain options for action. Companies are per se repeatedly confronted with issues that have a business-relevant effect on them – positive or negative. The earlier the emerging issues are detected, the better they can be influenced thus avoiding them restricting the company's own scope of action in an undesired way. Issue management is there to sharpen the eye for company-relevant topics. It deals systematically with issues from the company's environment, identifies them, analyses and prioritises them and derives strategies for action. However, as part of issue management, companies also put their own topics on the media agenda and actively set agenda to make a name for themselves in opinion markets.

The influences exerted on companies come from very different areas: they may be of a technical nature, develop from social trends or arise from political debate. The important factor is to detect and evaluate topics at an early stage using specific monitoring; thus crisis management, the sister discipline to issue management, is never called into action.

Modules of issue management

Issue management may have several manifestations.

Some examples:

- **ANALYSIS: monitoring and social media audit**

Media – print, radio, TV or Internet – have the power to form issues and opinions. They are on one hand an important voice for companies however in other cases, companies also become their plaything. Monitoring reports deliver the daily media reporting in contracted form. They are an early warning system for impending crises but also check the success of the issue setting initiated by the company itself. Users are increasingly gathering information in blogs and social networks and meet the persons there who decisively shape their opinions. In the social media audit navos supplies an overview of which blogs and social media channels are relevant to a company, which issues are discussed there and which opinion leaders are becoming established.

- **AGENDA: topics and stakeholder mapping**

Selecting relevant topics from a multitude of possible issues for a company is one of the primary tasks of issue management. The basis of the strategic process of analysing the potential of topics is provided by monitoring and social media audits. navos compiles, based on this, issue mapping that prepares all topics visually and shows them weighted according to their relevance. For the selection of the issues, navos then develops a detailed analysis and derives strategies for action. There is also the question of to whom companies actually have to speak to learn about relevant topics or to place their own messages. There is a multitude of persons speaking through many channels about companies and their issues; in this case it is important to know who enjoys particular influence and who does not.



navos thus develops stakeholder mapping of all the relevant players and their issues. For key stakeholders, the agency develops dossiers showing a precise profile of the person and providing points of contact.

• ACTION: agenda setting versus crisis prevention

They exist; the topics about which companies would like to read in the newspaper but which are not taken up by the media and meet with little interest among readers. This is where agenda setting starts: it is a matter of identifying issues, occupying and spreading them so that the media takes them up, politicians discuss them and citizens become attentive. navos develops messages and a dramatic composition for a sustainable communication strategy that is heard by important multipliers due to its creative measures. In this case it is important to detect critical situations at an early stage and to counteract them in a structured manner. Therefore it is

essential to be prepared for crises: is there a crisis manual in the company including processes and language regulation? And has there been any practice for an emergency?

• EVALUATION: media resonance analysis

After a great deal of effort and initiative at the end of the day there is still the question of whether the objectives have been achieved. The success of the communication work is measured qualitatively with media resonance analysis. In doing so it is important that the objectives have already been defined in the analysis phase and their benchmarking parameters specified. In principle, media resonance analysis provides a compacted overview of positive and negative tendencies in the media reporting and compares the actual printed messages with the topic setting broadcast. This concludes a regular communication cycle while at the same time providing the starting point for new strategies and approaches.

navos – Public Dialogue Consultants. Effective PR in dialogue for our clients.

Our communication habits and infrastructures are changing rapidly. What unites this development is that they encourage and demand dialogue. Each and every individual is becoming increasingly significant in communicative terms and thus also relevant for a company's reputation and economic success. For navos, sustainable, serious dialogue with all stakeholder groups therefore provides the basis of communication. We have mastered the art of conducting essential dialogue and are specialised in stakeholder dialogue, crisis communications and public affairs. navos stands for groundbreaking, contemporary and functional communication. With our 50 employees from our offices in Berlin, Düsseldorf and Hamburg, we particularly work on behalf of clients from the energy, environmental, telecommunications and financial sectors.

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