

CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN THE SITUATION OF COVID - 19 SPREADING: A CASE STUDY OF GOLDEN JUBILEE MEDICAL CENTER

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine ways of communications and the development of communication methods within the organization of Golden Jubilee Medical Center, in the midst of the COVID - 19 pandemic. The researcher has used the qualitative research guidelines, which include unofficial communications methods, as well as in-depth interviews with 26 participants. The survey shows that, 1) there are mixtures of communication methods to make use of via online and also on-ground to optimize communications both outside of and within the organization. 2) To emphasize each questions that are relevant to problem-solving, as well as to find solutions for new ways of communication within the organization to make parts of each questions essential to the development of COVID - 19 contagion prevention, and 3) Reconstructing the communication cultures of treatments and management within the organization to enhance the speed of communications by introducing new and improved methods so each staff members can communicate efficiently, thus being able to stay on-topic and is informed with current events.

Keyword: Communications, Crisis communication, COVID - 19 epidemic, Golden Jubilee Medical Center

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus has spread all over the world which impacted many countries, causing the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare the contagion of the virus a Pandemic. The virus has rapidly spread all throughout every region of the world (Center for Disease Control, 2563), and despite many countries declaring the virus an endemic, the pandemic continues to circulate just as rapidly and severely.

Thailand must be prepared to handle the new variant, in which this crisis has put the country, the organizations within, and its citizens at risk, and therefore proper management is required. In an era of which information sharing is crucial, communications are the key to accessing data which can be promptly shared to organizations and its staff members. Organizations should therefore do its best to screen all passing data to make sure that it is safe, accurate, helpful, and relevant to be used as Organizational Communication. It is essential to every organization that its communication methods are clear, concise, and efficiently used in terms of information exchange as well as sharing of perspectives from those who have different expertise experiences. Additional objectives set in place is to also monitor personnel behavior

and actions toward communicating and sharing information, by motivating staff with personal as well as organizational incentives to encourage acceptance of goals and operations within the organization if information received is accurate. It is essential that members of the organization are content with their work, and the success can be measured by monitoring the increase in quality of corporate communications, thus optimizing productivity if the organizational communication method is used efficiently. On the other hand, faced with obstacles and issues in communications effectiveness, productivity will be greatly reduced. It is imperative that the executives strategize to optimize corporate communicating efficiency for operational success.

The Golden Jubilee Medical Center considers themselves to be at the frontline in combatting against the coronavirus crisis. All Thai citizens in each region are informed that the COVID - 19 pandemics is a situation which requires caution in communications and services in all sectors, therefore the researcher has developed interests in studying Crisis Communication in the midst of COVID - 19 i think the Golden Jubilee Medical Center. This is to examine the outline, method, and development of its corporate communications structure within the organization, which will result in building credibility as well as creating awareness for how the general public operates day-to-day activities. The researcher extends gratitude to the Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for the support in funding of the creating and developing of this case study, which will subsequently be beneficial for further educational purposes.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative research, utilizing Purposive Sampling via Key Information Interview, divided into 3 sections which are 1) 2 Organizational Executives, 2) 4 Public Relations personnel, and 3) 20 General Staff Members; in total, 26 individuals were interviewed. All interviewees have in-depth knowledge and experience from having worked in the Golden Jubilee Medical Center, therefore they were able to provide insights guided by a series of questions which are open-ended and gives those being interviewed the freedom to express their perspectives and opinions to be used in further developments of this research.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

1.) The Golden Jubilee Medical Center there is a mix of communication method to emphasize the use of converged media in both online and offline formats for maximum efficiency within the organization. This correlates with the statement made by Surasit Wittayarath (2002) on the continuance of media development, and that although there are many new media introduced, there has to be a balance of old media in the mixes as well. This is because in certain situations, contents from new media may not thoroughly reach all audiences and citizens, including Coombs' Crisis Communication Concepts and Principles (Coombs, 2012), stating that a crisis is the perception of unpredictable events that can have great impact various stakeholders and can be detrimental to an organization's performance, ending in negative results. That being said, crisis communication is something that an organization should prioritize, because of high risks that can effect the organization's image and all who is involved, whenever unpredictable crisis occurs. If members within that organization lacks

communication and coordination, this will pose as a threat to negatively impact the operations, therefore, every organizations should prepare themselves.

Coombs (Coombs, 2012) has proposed that contents, channels, and methods must cover information management and public relations during a crisis as part of crisis management, which also effects an organization's reputation, image, and credibility. When a crisis occurs, the state of the situation does not only depend on the event itself, but it also resonates with the public, in which the Golden Jubilee Medical Center have considered these various principles to create a layout for its crisis communication plan as well.

The Golden Jubilee Medical Center has revised and updated their information, and new knowledge has been introduced to resolve any communication obstacles within the organization. It is concluded that there is more than one way to stay coordinated and keep employees informed (Crandall, Panel, and Spillam, 2014). These various channels will become new media that can be accessed anywhere, anytime, and are beneficial to everyone during the COVID - 19 crises (Somdech Rungsisawat, 2014); the viral video with the audible "Wuhan Fighting!" demonstrates solidarity and has shown to give encouragement to all sectors.

2.) Highlighting the important questions that will lead to finding relevant solutions to deal with each problem, and also develop communication methods and changes to assist in handling the crisis during COVID - 19. Also, to create beauty in the language; there are new options for better quality of life during the COVID - 19 pandemics that many parties consider to be impossible, but the Golden Jubilee Medical Center has proven them otherwise by prioritizing questions and concerns made by staff within the organization as well as outsiders. These questions were tested, revised, and has been used to develop many communication methods, until a working alternative method was found. With that, asking questions is considered to be important because it creates a drive for the Golden Jubilee Medical Center to take actions, as well as introducing new solutions for corporate communication which will benefit the handling of crisis during COVID - 19.

3.) The traditional culture of corporate communication has been reconstructed to optimize the acceleration of information sharing by creating a new communication culture which will reduce operational hierarchy, so that staff can efficiently maintain and manage their responsibilities. Associate Professor Dr. Teera Kolladarungkri, M.D., Director of the Golden Jubilee Medical Center (Interviewed date: November 15, 2022) has stated that the culture which is an essential part of the organization is to bring all the experiences of the past, current knowledge, and new innovations to apply to increase the safety of those receiving treatment. Most importantly, tracking each inspection will help to improve the communication system and service of the Golden Jubilee Medical Center. Real-time monitoring system benefits services like air filtering measurement, which indicates the state of sterile air level, by being able to get checked on in a timely manner; this is helpful especially during the situation of the COVID - 19 pandemics. Citizens of Thailand should have the rights to receive information and monitor closely on which vaccines they can choose for themselves, with information provided by the government through news outlet and other media on the options and benefits about the subject regarding their health, thus, communications have to be clear and concise, and regularly updated.

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