

Секция «Стратегическая коммуникация (подсекция на английском языке)»

## **The strategic communication of the Carnival Group in crisis: analysis and recommendation**

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In recent years, global tourism has experienced a number of crises and disasters, including terrorist attacks, political instability, natural disasters, economic downturns and the Covid-19 pandemic. A crisis situation is a turning point that can lead to both negative and positive consequences. The decision-making process in a crisis is strictly limited by time and the amount of information that the organization has. The study examines the crisis of the leading corporation in the cruise market - the Carnival Corporation, which was one of the first to be hit by the pandemic.

The Carnival Corporation serves 45.5% of the world's cruise tourists annually and has an annual turnover of \$25 billion. But at the same time, the corporation is conditionally the leader in terms of the number of large-scale crisis situations over the past 10 years, which it does not always manage successfully.

In February 2020, the Carnival Corporation faced a new crisis: the Covid-19 pandemic. On February 1, on the Diamond Princess liner traveling in Asia, it became known that the sick passenger, who had already been landed on land by the time a week had passed, had been tested and had confirmed Covid-19. The liner informed the passengers about this only on February 3 and did not take appropriate isolation measures. As a result, 700 out of 3,710 passengers were infected, 14 died.

In this case, Carnival were able to turn it into a "victim crisis", since at that time the epidemic had just begun to spread and had not been investigated. The scandal would have quickly left, if not for the second Grand Princess liner, which in early March got into the same situation. The company was accused of not following security measures and subsequently the US government even prohibited the disembarkation of passengers. Carnival adopted a defensive strategy, denied the fact of the fault, and tried to make it all on a case-by-case basis, ignoring customer compensation. But the controversial statements sparked even more proceedings, which led to new reasons for negativity. In April, Carnival stopped all its voyages and has not restored them so far, while many other companies, having frozen their voyages earlier, have already been able to restore some destinations.

In a series of these crises, it would be most appropriate to combine support and recovery strategies. The recovery strategy is suitable because the crisis is no longer the first. And the support strategy softens the circumstances and shows the company as the first victim to face Covid-19.

Thus, it would be most appropriate to apologize immediately after the second incident and use the narrative paradigm to induce empathy. To involve several passengers who would tell from the liner how the company is trying to ensure safety and help passengers. At this stage, it is important to give as much information as possible in order to receive fewer questions and rumors.

The next step is to help others: compensation for passengers, assistance to their families, a charity campaign to help fight Covid-19 in the world. Management must communicate the values of the company and demonstrate compliance with safety and isolation measures.

It can be concluded that the Carnival Corporation did not work effectively in this crisis and was not prepared for this crisis. They should have used recovery and support strategies, actively engaging the narrative paradigm in the first phase.

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