



The Cathay Pacific Incident under Public Opinion Monitoring: A Case Study of Discrimination against Mainland Passengers and Public Opinion Leadership

Kexin Jing

Henan University of Technology, Zhengzhou 450001, Henan, China

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Abstract: This thesis analyzes the Cathay Pacific Airways incident in depth, and reveals the important role of public opinion monitoring in corporate crisis management in the new media era through a detailed analysis of the background of the incident, the mechanism of public opinion monitoring, and the response of the enterprise, with a view to providing theoretical guidance and inspiration for the practice of public opinion monitoring in the future through an in-depth analysis of the case. Through the revelation and reflection of the incident, the thesis emphasizes the positive impact of public opinion monitoring on corporate information transparency, public relations team building and staff training. The Cathay Pacific incident provides valuable experience for enterprises, emphasizing the importance of strengthening interaction with the public, responding quickly, and building a professional team in crisis management. In the era of new media, the power of public opinion monitoring cannot be ignored. Enterprises need to treat the public opinion environment with prudence and continuously improve their crisis management level in order to ensure sound public relations and sustainable development of the enterprise.

Keywords: public opinion monitoring, Cathay Pacific, case study

1. Case background

The Cathay Pacific incident occurred in May 2023 when a passenger reported on social media that Cathay Pacific flight attendants discriminated against non-English-speaking passengers on board an airplane, involving issues such as language discrimination and inappropriate service attitudes. Subsequently, the incident aroused widespread concern on social media, triggering public indignation and criticism. Hong Kong's Chief Executive, Mr. Lee Ka-chiu, said he was very saddened by the disrespectful words and actions of the Hong Kong Cathay Pacific Airways crew in question towards the mainland passengers. Cathay Pacific Airways issued a number of apologies after the incident had festered and took dismissal measures against the flight attendants involved.

2. Overview of public opinion monitoring

Public opinion supervision means that the public and the media use the power of the mass media to disclose and criticize the improper phenomena in society and the dereliction of duty of state organs and public officials in the process of fulfilling their powers, so as to form a public opinion, urge the relevant personnel to make corrections and realize the constraints on public power.

2.1 The significance of public opinion monitoring

2.1.1 Monitoring the environment: a "watchtower" for society

Public opinion monitoring is a manifestation of the public's evaluation of various social phenomena, which can reflect the problems existing in society at a certain period of time and also provide a basis for governmental decision-making. Public opinion monitoring is precisely the role of social "watchdog" to monitor all social trends, and promote the healthy and harmonious development of society.

2.1.2 Social control: an important form of people's political participation

Public opinion monitoring empowers the public to express their opinions in public affairs and control social processes to a certain extent. Especially in the new media era, the decentralization of discourse and the decentralized nature of the Internet have prompted the return of the public as the subject of public opinion monitoring. Active participation in public affairs through independent agenda-setting and other means has become an important form of political participation[1].

2.1.3 Social regulation: the public's "sounding board" and "exhaust valve"

On the one hand, public opinion supervision can reflect the voices of the masses and play a monitoring and restraining

function on society; on the other hand, public opinion supervision can also play the role of catharsis of public emotions and psychological balance, thus regulating social opinions, channeling social emotions and forming a harmonious and healthy social atmosphere.

3. Case studies

In the Cathay Pacific incident, public opinion monitoring played a key role in bringing the incident to the public's attention, dealing with it swiftly, as well as triggering a deeper reflection on the airline's internal problems. This article will analyze the role of public opinion monitoring in the Cathay Pacific incident and examine its impact on society, the company and public opinion.

First, as a social "watchtower", public opinion monitoring played a role in the Cathay Pacific incident. The rise of social media has made it possible for information to come to light instantly, allowing netizens to quickly spread the word by posting text, pictures, videos, etc. This demonstrates the function of public opinion monitoring as a social "watchdog", monitoring social trends and promoting fair and harmonious social development by exposing misconduct.

Second, public opinion monitoring plays an active role in social control. On different social media platforms, users can express their views on events in a variety of ways, including commenting, liking and forwarding. Such diversified forms of expression help form a more comprehensive and three-dimensional public opinion field. The Cathay Pacific incident triggered strong public indignation, and by reflecting public sentiment, public opinion monitoring has promoted social concern and discussion of related issues.

Thirdly, public opinion monitoring plays a key role in social checks and balances. After the incident came to light, Cathay Pacific issued its first statement of apology, followed by a number of successive statements indicating the importance it attached to the incident. By exposing improprieties and prompting the company to take measures to respond quickly, public opinion monitoring has achieved a check on public power[2]. Public opinion monitoring has a unique value in exposing corruption, advocating clean government and strengthening law enforcement, making it difficult for bureaucracy and corruption to escape and helping to build a just and harmonious order in society.

Fourthly, public opinion monitoring has played a positive role in social regulation. The new media have made public opinion monitoring no longer the dictatorship of the traditional media, but more integrated with public participation. In the Cathay Pacific incident, public opinion monitoring was not only reflected in media reports, but also in the extensive public participation, which pushed the incident to develop continuously. The public expressed their concern and indignation over the Cathay Pacific incident through public opinion monitoring, which is both a manifestation of public opinion monitoring reflecting the voices of the masses and a contribution to social regulation. Public opinion monitoring vents public emotions, balances social psychology, regulates social opinions, and ultimately creates a harmonious and healthy social atmosphere.

However, it should be noted that although public opinion monitoring has played a positive role in the Cathay Pacific incident, it has also revealed some problems. On the one hand, excessive public scrutiny may lead to a "trial by public opinion" phenomenon, which may affect fair judgment. On the other hand, over-expression of public opinion may lead to an over-reaction by the company, which may have a negative impact on its image and operations. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain rationality, fairness and objectivity in public opinion monitoring in order to avoid possible negative effects.

4. Case Insights and Reflections

In the new media environment, the main content of public opinion supervision is characterized by more extensive, rapid and diversified. The Cathay Pacific incident provides us with a profound case reflecting the opportunities and challenges of public opinion monitoring in new media, as well as providing inspiration and reflection.

4.1 Opportunities and challenges

4.1.1 Rapid dissemination of information and monitoring by public opinion

The immediacy of new media allows public opinion monitoring to spread more quickly and widely. This provides a powerful tool for exposing problems and promoting solutions. The rapid dissemination of information on new media is also accompanied by difficulties in verifying authenticity, and the potential for the proliferation of false information that can be misleading to both the monitored party and the public. The incident, which was exposed by a passenger through social media, sparked widespread concern. This highlights the fact that the public has a powerful monitoring power in the new media era, and the collective attention of public opinion becomes an effective constraint on misbehavior. The success of public scrutiny also brings with it the challenge of information authenticity[3].

4.1.2 Expression of multiple voices, accurate public opinion response

Social media platforms have become a key channel for the dissemination of information, driving the rapid spread of

events. This suggests that new media platforms have provided the public with opportunities to express their views more broadly and quickly, promoting the in-depth development of public opinion monitoring. The various voices emerging from different social media reflect diverse social opinions. This has contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of public expectations and concerns. At the same time, the expression of public opinion on social media tends to be more emotional and polarized, which may lead to over-exaggeration, over-interpretation, and excessive pressure on the party being monitored. Public opinion is diverse on new media platforms, and public attention is guided by expressions of speech and emotion. Enterprises need to be more sensitive to capture the diversity of public opinion in order to respond to different voices more precisely.

4.1.3 Promoting problem solving and balancing public participation

Public opinion monitoring through the new media can draw public attention to a problem and compel the parties concerned to take action. In the Cathay Pacific Airways incident, the company issued several statements and took actions such as dismissing the employees involved, demonstrating the effectiveness of public opinion monitoring in promoting problem solving. Companies should pay more attention to public opinion orientation in crisis management, understand public concerns and respond to hot issues in a timely manner. Failure of public opinion orientation may lead to negative public evaluation of the enterprise, further worsening the crisis. The theory of public opinion monitoring emphasizes public participation, but enterprises need to maintain a balance in participation. Excessive emotional catharsis and excessive condemnation may lead to imbalance and affect the rational resolution of events. In the new media environment, public opinion can easily evolve into a kind of "judgment", which may lead to excessive moral evaluation and weaken objectivity and fairness.

4.2 Insights and reflections

4.2.1 Enhancing information transparency

Reflections on the Cathay Pacific incident have reminded companies to pay more attention to timely responses to public opinion monitoring and to establish a more flexible crisis management mechanism. In the era of new media, information transfer is almost real-time. Therefore, it is necessary to be more agile in responding, releasing public information in a timely manner, proactively sharing the real situation, reducing the uncertainty of the information, and winning the trust of the public in order to effectively curb the spread of undesirable public opinion. Through timely and candid communication, companies can build closer ties and enhance their ability to handle the situation collaboratively in times of crisis. Such transparent communication helps to build a positive corporate image, maintain public confidence and provide stronger support for crisis management.

4.2.2 Strengthening public opinion risk management

The Cathay Pacific Airways incident has provided enterprises with a profound practice of public opinion monitoring, and the inspiration and reflection on the incident have become an important experience for enterprises to adapt to the public opinion environment in the new media era and to improve their crisis management level. Enterprises should establish a more effective public opinion risk management mechanism, monitor public opinion trends on a regular basis, and formulate comprehensive response strategies to minimize public opinion risks. Through continuous monitoring of the public opinion environment, potential sound fluctuations can be more keenly captured and timely responses can be made. This comprehensive management mechanism not only focuses on responding to public opinion crises, but also on building a positive corporate image through active branding and social responsibility fulfillment in normal times, so that it can better safeguard its reputation and reduce negative impacts when a crisis occurs.

4.2.3 Building a superior public relations team

Enterprises should focus on public relations and train professional teams to deal with public opinion monitoring in order to better handle the impact of similar incidents. Through continuous simulation drills and training, companies can improve the level of response of team members in times of crisis, ensuring that effective measures can be taken calmly and decisively at critical moments. A stronger crisis communications experienced team should have excellent communication skills, be adept at understanding public sentiment, and be able to respond and answer concerns in a timely manner. By establishing strong communication channels, the team is better able to listen and respond to public concerns, and enhance the relationship of mutual trust between the company and society. In times of crisis, such a public relations team will be an important supportive force in stabilizing public opinion and protecting a company's reputation.

5. Summary

This thesis highlights the importance of public opinion monitoring on corporate crisis management in the new media era through an in-depth analysis of the Cathay Pacific Airways incident. Through a detailed discussion of the background of

the incident, the mechanism of public opinion monitoring, and the response of the enterprise, it reveals the positive impact of public opinion monitoring on the transparency of corporate information, public relations team building, and employee training. In the era of new media, the power of public opinion monitoring cannot be ignored. Enterprises need to deal with the public opinion environment prudently and continuously improve their crisis management level, so as to ensure the soundness of public relations and the sustainable development of enterprises.

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