



Research on Public Relations Strategy at Public Safety Incident Scenes: Case Analysis Based on Fire and Rescue Scenes

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Abstract: The popularity of mobile Internet makes the public security incident scene instantly enter the public view. As the scene where the fire and rescue team is closest and most directly contacted with the masses, the public relations management faces unprecedented challenges. Based on the theory of public relations, this article clarifies the maintenance type of public relations in fire and rescue scenes, with the core goal of maintaining and strengthening the public's positive perception of fire and rescue teams through professional rescue operations in highly tense environments. The study combed the dual characteristics of the rapidity and transience of on-site information dissemination in the mobile Internet era, and analyzed the problems existing in the current on-site public relations management, such as coarse-grained operations, insufficient control of collateral damages, lack of humanistic care, and rigid management and control methods. To address these issues, we propose a combination of physical isolation and information control strategies based on communication characteristics, on-site communication and translation strategies based on empathy theory, rescue detail care strategies based on the full cycle concept, and public security force linkage strategies based on collaborative governance. Research has shown that the essence of on-site public relations in public safety incidents is to achieve the integration of professional rescue and warm image. The research results can provide operational guidance for frontline personnel at the grassroots level and provide theoretical supplements for on-site public relations research in the field of emergency management.

Keywords: fire and rescue, maintenance oriented public relations, on site communication, image management, fire and rescue team

1. Introduction

The rapid iteration of mobile Internet technology, especially the popularity of short videos, has profoundly reshaped the underlying logic and pattern of social information communication, and the media, content and audience are characterized by diversified and fragmented development. The number of short video users in China has exceeded 1.05 billion, with an average daily usage time of 154 minutes per person[1]. The every move of the fire and rescue team at the scene of fire and rescue is no longer just a professional rescue behavior at the technical level, but has become the core material for the public to perceive the image of the fire and rescue team[2].

Current research on fire public relations mainly focuses on responding to public opinion after crisis events and promoting fire safety education in normal environments. There is limited research and systematic exploration on public relations management in the context of fire and rescue operations. On site public relations management is different from the remedial nature of post crisis public relations, as well as the predetermined nature of daily propaganda and education. It has immediacy, irreversibility, and high uncertainty[3].

Systematically studying the public relations management strategy of fire fighting and rescue scene is the practical need of the capacity building of fire fighting and rescue teams in the mobile Internet era, and can also promote the application and expansion of public relations theory in the field of emergency management. Based on the core theory of public relations, this paper clarifies the theoretical orientation of public relations on fire fighting and rescue sites, combs the core characteristics of on-site information dissemination under the mobile Internet environment, analyzes the common problems existing in the current on-site public relations management, and improves the management optimization strategies that adapt to grassroots practice. Provide practical guidance for on-site public relations management of grassroots fire and rescue teams, and improve the theoretical chain of research on the full cycle of fire public relations[4].

2. Characteristics analysis of public relations at fire and rescue sites

2.1 Theoretical positioning of maintenance oriented public relations

Public relations studies classify public relations into basic types based on organizational development cycles and public

interaction relationships, such as construction oriented, maintenance oriented, defensive oriented, and offensive oriented. Maintaining public relations is suitable for periods of stable organizational development[5], with the core goal of consolidating the public's positive impression of the organization through continuous information dissemination and relationship maintenance. After long-term construction, the fire and rescue team has established a good image of "loyalty to the Party, strict discipline, willingness to go through fire and water, and dedication to the people" among the public, which is an important foundation for on-site public relations of the fire and rescue team. Although the fire and rescue scene is a crisis scene, the fire and rescue team is the responders rather than the creators of the crisis.

2.2 Core communication characteristics in the era of mobile Internet

The information dissemination in the mobile Internet era is characterized by immediacy and exponential diffusion. The behavior of onlookers taking pictures of the fire rescue scene and uploading them to social media platforms has almost synchronized the on-site information with the rescue operation into the online space, bypassing the traditional media era's information release shutdown mechanism. Every action taken by the fire and rescue team on site, whether it is demolition, rescue, or command and dispatch, may be captured and disseminated by the camera. Touching actions can quickly gain widespread dissemination, strengthen the overall image of the team, and enhance positive effects; Improper behavior or misleading images can also be infinitely magnified, causing damage to the team's image and resulting in negative effects. The immediacy of communication compresses the control space of organizations over information, and fire and rescue teams cannot release information to the public after internal review like in the traditional media era, where the scene is the medium and action is the information. Frontline commanders must realize that they have become the direct carriers and disseminators of the organization's image, and their behavior choices are not only related to rescue efficiency, but also to the transmission of the team's image.

3. The main problems in public relations management at current fire and rescue sites

3.1 Lack of refinement in professional operations

Rapid response and efficient disposal are the lifeline of fire and rescue operations, and target oriented rescue actions can easily lead some commanders to develop a mindset of prioritizing results over processes. The blind pursuit of rescue efficiency is often accompanied by extensive characteristics, which cannot safely complete tasks on the basis of fully reflecting the professional image of the fire and rescue team, and is easily interpreted as barbaric rescue or lack of respect for public property. The coarse-grained operations is a relative lack of refinement concept in the training system. The current training focuses more on the standardization of technical operations rather than the appropriateness of presentation methods, and on the time required for task completion rather than the quality of interaction with the public during the task completion process. The principle of minimum resistance also applies to tactical decision-making in rescue operations, while the image cost and public emotional cost in cost-benefit analysis are easily overlooked.

3.2 Weak awareness of incidental loss control

It is objectively difficult to completely avoid collateral damages in fire and rescue operations, and some degree of water damage and demolition losses in residential fires are common categories. However, in some rescue operations, there is a weak awareness of controlling collateral losses and inadequate control measures, resulting in collateral losses significantly exceeding the necessary limit. The control of collateral damages typically involves balancing the time and property costs of selecting operational paths. Quick dismantling can save time but cause property damage. Choosing to wait for the key or attempt to enter without damage can preserve property but consumes time and other rescue costs. Time cost often carries a higher weight under the pressure of rescue timeliness, while property damage and the associated image risks are relatively underestimated or even ignored. The deviation of balance assessment is the commander's insufficient recognition of the image risk amplification effect in the mobile Internet era, and his failure to give sufficient priority to the interests of the masses. The negative emotions caused by property losses can easily be amplified through online dissemination as doubts about the overall image of the team, resulting in costs far higher than the property losses themselves.

3.3 Lack of on-site humanistic care supply

The rescued and their families are the main responders in fire and rescue operations, often in a state of fear, anxiety, and helplessness during disasters. The words and actions of rescue personnel directly provide comfort and support to the psychological state of the rescued. There is a lack of emotional recognition and humanistic care for the rescued at some sites, which can easily create a public impression of emotional alienation. During the rescue process, the soldiers' attention was

highly focused on technical operations, and they did not pay enough attention to soft skills such as language comfort and emotion recognition for the trapped, resulting in a lack of confidence and support for the rescued while enduring the pain of the disaster. The phenomenon of absence is related to the professional role cognition of rescue personnel. Some soldiers ignore their important role as emotional supporters and unilaterally believe that completing rescue quickly is the greatest help to the rescued, ignoring the emotional needs of people in disaster situations and the positive significance of psychological rehabilitation for the rescued. The humanistic care of firefighters in fire and rescue operations is often the focus of media reports and public attention, and its value in shaping the image of the team even exceeds its technical value.

4. Countermeasures and optimization paths for public relations management at fire and rescue sites

4.1 Coordinated implementation of physical isolation and information control

The fire and rescue site can use physical isolation and information control measures, and appropriately delineate the on-site warning range. A complete visual barrier can be established by utilizing on-site firefighting vehicles, warning belts, hard isolation fences, and other facilities and equipment to block the filming behavior of onlookers during rescue operations, create a relatively enclosed space, effectively protect and ensure the space for rescue operations, protect the privacy of on-site personnel, and reduce psychological interference for on-site commanders. The physical isolation on site cannot completely eliminate online dissemination, and the information released by the official is still the key to eliminating rumors and dispelling public doubts. On site commanders should establish a sense of authoritative information, collect and organize on-site information in a timely manner, and report it to the higher-level command center.

4.2 On site communication strategy guided by empathy

As a priority battlefield for the public to have a better understanding of the image of the fire and rescue team, good on-site communication is an important way to manage public relations at the fire rescue site. On site communication between firefighters and rescue personnel usually covers three types of objects: trapped individuals, their families, and the surrounding area, all of which can be guided by empathy as a means of communication. In the face of trapped personnel, commanders and fighters should be able to convey the warmth of the Party and the government, use calm and firm language to identify themselves, effectively alleviate the tense fear of trapped personnel, and communicate with them appropriately to cooperate with rescue requirements, inform them of the progress of rescue operations, and convey confidence. When facing family members, the commander should timely synchronize internal and external information, not only to obtain the basic information and underlying diseases of the trapped personnel, but also to promptly inform the rescue progress and fill the anxiety caused by the information vacuum. The surrounding residents have high expectations for the professionalization of the fire and rescue team. The soldiers should use clear and standardized language to explain the reasons for vigilance and cooperation requirements to the masses in a timely manner, guiding them to shift from passive obedience to active cooperation. Empathy orientation can view on-site personnel as part of rescue operations, stimulate the enthusiasm of the public to assist in public safety incidents, and convey a good image of the fire and rescue team adhering to the principle of putting people first and life first while completing on-site rescue tasks and implementing control requirements.

4.3 Rescue detail care from a full cycle perspective

The humanistic care in rescue details is an important carrier for the image accumulation of fire and rescue teams, and should run through the entire cycle of rescue operations. In the rescue preparation stage, the selection of operation paths should adhere to the principle of minimum necessity, such as breaking windows without breaking doors, prying locks without smashing doors, and breaking doors without destroying walls. This respect for the property rights and interests of the masses is not a sacrifice of rescue efficiency, but a rational choice that takes into account both image and emotional costs in decision-making considerations. During the rescue implementation phase, efforts should be made to provide emotional comfort and psychological support to the trapped individuals. While operating the equipment, the purpose, expected results, and necessary cooperation should be communicated, so that the trapped individuals can feel emotional support from the rescuers while enduring the pain of the disaster.

5. Conclusion and Prospect

Mobile Internet technology has profoundly changed the habit of information dissemination of public events, and has promoted front-line commanders to become the main body of public relations management. As the core area where fire and rescue teams have the most direct contact with the public, public relations management is facing unprecedented challenges.

This study focuses on the relatively weak field of public relations management in fire and rescue sites, and systematically conducts theoretical analysis and practical path construction.

The study has clarified the positioning of maintenance oriented public relations in fire and rescue sites. After long-term construction, the fire and rescue team has established a stable and positive professional image foundation among the public. The core goal of on-site performance is to maintain and strengthen the image, which is different from crisis public relations that focus on image restoration. This theoretical positioning reveals the deep meaning of the sinking of public relations protagonists, where frontline commanders become the direct carriers and disseminators of organizational image, and every performance on site directly affects the public's overall understanding of the fire and rescue team.

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