

ANCYL brand: organisation or person in crisis?

 By [Dustin Chick](#)

11 Nov 2011

The suspension of Julius Malema raises some interesting questions. Sure, let's leave the politics of it all to those who manage politics and focus our thinking about what this means if, as communicators, we were charged with managing the reputation of the ANCYL. But which brand is in crisis...? The organisation or the person?

Following a logical train of thought, crisis communications is nothing new to a seasoned communicator. So, for the sake of this argument, let's look at what this would mean for ANCYL (Pty) Limited.

In this example, the board of directors of the Youth League has requested the communications manager to assist in managing this crisis; the communications manager needs to act and act fast.

Less about people, more about "business"

If the Youth League were indeed a company, the crisis would need to be managed as an organisation (less about the people and more about sustainability of the "business" over the long term). For a communicator, this is an empowered space in which to find yourself, as it equates directly into solid proof of concrete action taken in addressing a crisis, and translates simply into telling a credible and relevant media story, strongly focused on recovering from the crisis.

Crudely enough, it translates directly into the headline media would expect: "ANCYL (Pty) Ltd takes decisive action against CEO". Crisis solved?

As much as the communications manager supports the CEO at all times (often in communicating a vision), the primary responsibility is to the long-term reputation of the brand. However, in this case, the connection between CEO and company is somewhat blurred, to the extent that it is not easy to distinguish between the brand of the person and the brand of the company.

Focus on other reputation drivers

Not something most organisations in crisis are faced with. So, yes, in proactively building corporate reputation, quality of leadership constitutes a major positive driver; in this case, it would require a strategic call to focus on other reputation drivers, such as operational performance or long-term investment value in building a story on which to base a communications programme.

For the board of the fictitious ANCYL (Pty) Ltd, this balanced approach is a key measurement of its responsibility to

manage a sustainable brand and sustainable business.

The path for the ANCYL (Pty) Ltd would be clear. But, this leaves the real ANCYL in a quandary. Its brand is in crisis and should be managed accordingly.

Primary responsibility

Indeed, it's not about the CEO; the primary responsibility remains with the reputation of the organisation, a reputation divorced from any one person.

The first step in this journey is admitting that there is crisis at an organisational level. Following on from this, it's about beginning to communicate towards recovery (and continuing to do so until this has been achieved).

What will be interesting, moving forward, are the efforts made to manage a brand in crisis. The only question which remains will be about which brand gets managed.

ABOUT DUSTIN CHICK

Dustin is Managing Partner of Razor, the PR, reputation and culture and communications agency in the M&C Saatchi Group. Dustin is recognised as one of the top reputation managers and communicators in Europe, Africa and the Middle East - having being named by the Holmes Report / PROvoke Media as one of its top 25 innovators in public relations across Europe, the Middle East and Africa in 2019.

- #BizTrends2023: 5 reasons to look forward to PR in the year ahead - 20 Jan 2023
- "Breaking news" is breaking the news - 6 May 2020
- Tapping into the potential of influence is how PR will matter most - 1 Jun 2016
- [2012 trends] It's not about trends, it's about a reality check - 17 Jan 2012
- ANCYL brand: organisation or person in crisis? - 11 Nov 2011

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>