

Simulation Week #8

Media Relations

The organisation

Tourism in Bobaland is a significant part of Bobaland's economy, contributing to 3% of its GDP and generating many jobs, investment and growth opportunities across the country. Tourism Bobaland is a government-established entity whose vision is to make Bobaland the most desirable (for first-time visitors) and memorable (for repeat visitors) destination on Earth. Its main objectives are to:

- To influence people to travel to Bobaland
- To influence people visiting Bobaland to also travel throughout Bobaland
- To influence domestic travellers to travel throughout Bobaland
- To help foster a sustainable tourism industry in Bobaland
- To help increase the economic benefits to Bobaland from tourism.

The scenario

In November 2019, dozens of fires erupted across Bobaland. The fires rapidly spread across drought-impacted areas in all states, becoming some of the most devastating on record. At least 33 people have lost their lives, including at least three volunteer firefighters, and more are missing. Around 3,000 homes have been destroyed or damaged. There has been widespread media publicity about the severity of the fires and both domestic and international visitors have refrained from traveling to and around Bobaland. The damage to the industry has been estimated to be close to \$1 billion. Even areas which were not affected by the fires recorded more than 60 per cent of cancelled bookings.

In addition to the negative media coverage, misinformation has also been gaining traction online including some conspiracy theories about the causes of the fires and exaggerated claims about the "whole country being on fire". Social media users, including international celebrities (with a lot of followers), have shared fake bushfire images and inaccurate fire maps when in fact most of Bobaland's top travel destinations have not been affected.

The solutions?

As Bobaland Tourism's in-house PR team, you are asked to present to the executive management team your plan to respond to the misinformation and let tourists know Bobaland is safe to visit, outlining:

- Identify why the scenario presents a PR problem (i.e. why is PR needed in this scenario?)
- Identify and categorise the issue (i.e., is it a PPR or OPR problem?)
- Identify the key publics and justify why they have been chosen
- Present your solution, for example:
 - The key message you want to present
 - The further research you would need to conduct
 - The channels you would recommend using
 - The tactics you would use
- Discuss how your solution will address the PR problem and support the organisational goals