



CBN CRISIS CASE STUDY

PR AGENCY:

Image Merchants Promotion Limited

CLIENT:

Central Bank of Nigeria

TITLE:

CBN Not on Fire, WhatsApp to the Rescue 2018/2019

SUMMARY

After a strong social media speculation that the Headquarters of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) was on fire, on a public holiday, the management of the bank immediately unleashed an inspiring, timely and effective crisis communication strategy through the use of social media to counter the trending negative narratives on the incident. Within the few hours, the social and conventional media reflected the correct perspectives that 'CBN Was Not on Fire' as disclosed by the spokesperson of CBN, Isaac Okorafor who coordinated the campaign from outside the country.



CBN Building engulfed in smoke in the afternoon and in bright light at night on May 1, 2018 after the rumoured fire incidence in the building

PROBLEM/OPPORTUNITY

Problems/Challenges:

An electric generator in the Headquarters of Central Bank of Nigeria was malfunctioned and emitted heavy smoke in the evening of May 1, 2019; it was on a public holiday; Most officers had travelled out of the city some abroad on holidays and assignments; images and video of smoke from the CBN building from afar, as if it was heavy inferno were shared on social media, especially the WhatsApp by passer-by, amateurs and professional photographers.

Define the Problem

While some still hold the notion that working hours, Monday to Friday should be 8.00am to 5pm, with the advent of Social Media, the jobs of public Communicators and PR people has changed to 24/7 using the latest tools of public engagement. Meanwhile, as it is, the social media in Nigeria is unregulated and saturated with charlatans claiming to be reporters and social media influencers who propagated fake news with unverified images and unsubstantiated reports that are not fair and objective are easily and widely spread. In fact, most of the reporters on the alleged fire outbreak in CBN in the social media did not contact the official spokesperson of the organisation.

Opportunity:

Realising the importance and relevance of social media, especially the WhatsApp which was used to share the message, the spokesperson of CBN who was then in London for a programme, issued a short and straight forward message and followed up with videos and photos to debunk the allegation of smoke in the building. Staffs in CBN and well-wishers continue to share and distribute the counter narratives from CBN



OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the Programme:

The campaign was structured to respond timely, responsibly and strategically to the damaging information that could have negative effect on the image of Central Bank of Nigeria which is the nation's Bankers' Banker and the major monetary regulator.

Geographic Location:

The rumoured fire incident occurred in the Headquarter of Central Bank, Abuja Nigeria, while the creative contents and counter-narrative were issued by the spokesperson in London through WhatsApp Message.

Targeted Organisations

Monetary institutions at home and abroad,
Media, investing public and Nigerians



**CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele and
CBN Spokesperson Isaac Okorafor**

ENDORSEMENT/SPONSORS

Endorsements

The spokesperson of Central Bank of Nigeria, Isaac Okorofar, used the affordability of Whatsap Messaging system to reach out to the major stakeholders including Image Merchants Promotion Limited, the Publisher of PRNigeria and Economic Confidential through WhatsApp call, video and Short Messaging to provide the counter narrative. The campaign also involved the active participation of personnel in Corporate Communication Department, their friends and well-wishers in sharing and redistributing the messages.

Sponsors/Support:

Central Bank of Nigeria.



CAMPAIGN THEME/FOCUS

Theme/Focus of the Campaign:

The theme of campaign was “There Was no Fire Outbreak in CBN Building” to deny the negative reports.

Communication Tactics

Team Work, Media Relations, Social Media, Crisis Communication



Campaign Executions

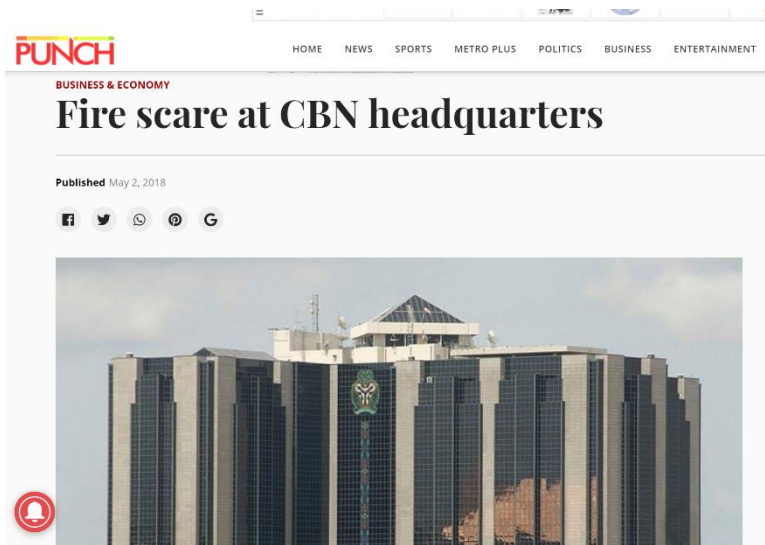
Orientation Stage: Since most of the officials are not on the ground, the spokesperson reached out to technicians and security personnel within and around the building for briefing and also other corporate affair officials to move to the scene to confirm and provide updates

Brainstorming Stage: The management considered the best option to correct the trending stories on the social media, after the fire service put off the smoke which was triggered by a faulty electricity generator within the CBN premises,

Decisive Stage: With the consent of the management, the CBN Spokesperson decided to issue a well-crafted press release that late evening of public holiday as most appropriate public relations strategy

Implementation Stage: The press release was disseminated through WhatsApp and other Social Media. The campaign was sustained with effective media relations strategies of phone Call, Video calls/Chats and live streaming of video on the CBN building without any damage or smoke. Media tour of the building was also undertaken for third-party endorsements.

Feedback Stage: Most of the social media platforms that posted initial reports updated their platforms with the statement from CBN while the mainstream media reflected the true perspective based on the official information.



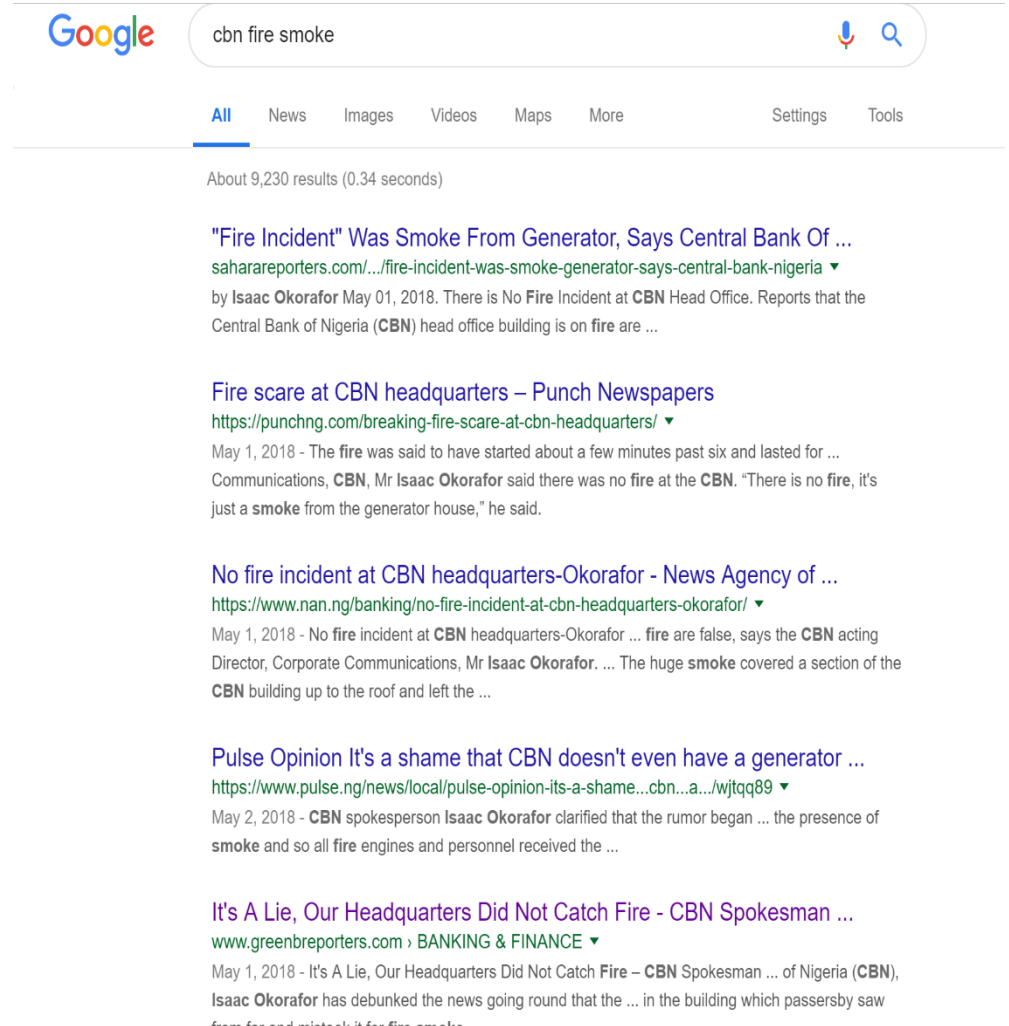
CREATIVE SOLUTION

Creative Solution

The timely release of the press release through the most effective social media tool was most desirable and timely than other PR strategies. In addition, the appeal to well-wishers to share the statement and videos was also cost-effective without recourse to advert payment.

Difficulties eliminated

Timely release of official Press Release eliminated difficulties in delay reportage.



The screenshot shows a Google search interface with the query 'cbn fire smoke'. The search results are displayed under the 'All' tab. The first result is titled '"Fire Incident" Was Smoke From Generator, Says Central Bank Of ...' from saharareporters.com, dated May 01, 2018. The second result is titled 'Fire scare at CBN headquarters – Punch Newspapers' from punchng.com, dated May 1, 2018. The third result is titled 'No fire incident at CBN headquarters-Okorafor - News Agency of ...' from www.nan.ng, dated May 1, 2018. The fourth result is titled 'Pulse Opinion It's a shame that CBN doesn't even have a generator ...' from www.pulse.ng, dated May 2, 2018. The fifth result is titled 'It's A Lie, Our Headquarters Did Not Catch Fire - CBN Spokesman ...' from www.greenbreporters.com, dated May 1, 2018.

Google

cbn fire smoke

All News Images Videos Maps More Settings Tools

About 9,230 results (0.34 seconds)

"Fire Incident" Was Smoke From Generator, Says Central Bank Of ...
saharareporters.com/.../fire-incident-was-smoke-generator-says-central-bank-nigeria ▼
by Isaac Okorafor May 01, 2018. There is No Fire Incident at CBN Head Office. Reports that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) head office building is on fire are ...

Fire scare at CBN headquarters – Punch Newspapers
https://punchng.com/breaking-fire-scare-at-cbn-headquarters/ ▼
May 1, 2018 - The fire was said to have started about a few minutes past six and lasted for ... Communications, CBN, Mr Isaac Okorafor said there was no fire at the CBN. "There is no fire, it's just a smoke from the generator house," he said.

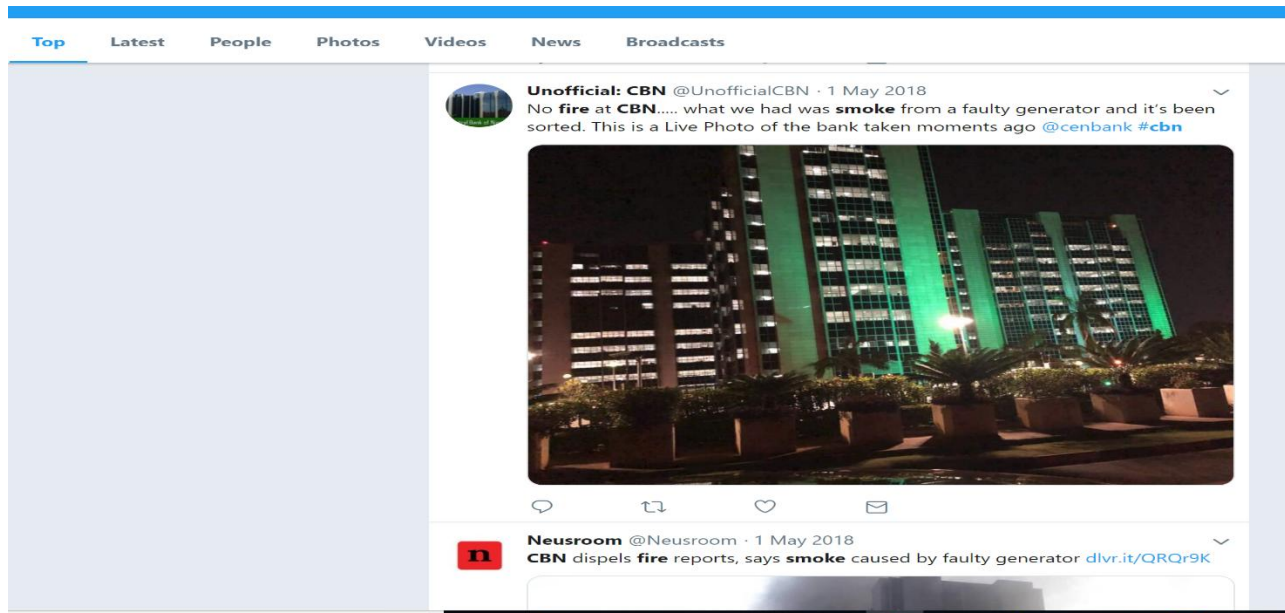
No fire incident at CBN headquarters-Okorafor - News Agency of ...
https://www.nan.ng/banking/no-fire-incident-at-cbn-headquarters-okorafor/ ▼
May 1, 2018 - No fire incident at CBN headquarters-Okorafor ... fire are false, says the CBN acting Director, Corporate Communications, Mr Isaac Okorafor. ... The huge smoke covered a section of the CBN building up to the roof and left the ...

Pulse Opinion It's a shame that CBN doesn't even have a generator ...
https://www.pulse.ng/news/local/pulse-opinion-its-a-shame...cbn...a.../wjttq89 ▼
May 2, 2018 - CBN spokesperson Isaac Okorafor clarified that the rumor began ... the presence of smoke and so all fire engines and personnel received the ...

It's A Lie, Our Headquarters Did Not Catch Fire - CBN Spokesman ...
www.greenbreporters.com › BANKING & FINANCE ▼
May 1, 2018 - It's A Lie, Our Headquarters Did Not Catch Fire – CBN Spokesman ... of Nigeria (CBN), Isaac Okorafor has debunked the news going round that the ... in the building which passersby saw from far and mistake it for fire smoke

Outcomes of the Campaign

- 1. Reputation Protected:** The prompt actions mitigated the likely financial repercussions and damage to reputation which uncontrolled negative rumours and gossips could have done to as CBN which is charged with the overall control and administration of the monetary and financial sector policies of the Federal Government of Nigeria.
- 2. Fair and Objective Media Coverage:** Over 75% of the media mentions in social media and conventional media were objective, fair and mostly favourable with most of them updating their initial news contents with the official CBN's narratives. The CBN's press statement and video were not only shared on the WhatsApp but were widely posted on other major social media platforms.
- 3. Robust Stakeholders' Engagement:** The respective stakeholders in the public and private sectors who were adequately informed on the true position, showed greater commitment with their active involvement in ensuring the crisis was not exacerbated.
- 4. Enhanced Skills of PR Officers:** The realisation of importance of Social Media groups, encouraged staffs in Corporate Communication Department to join different relevant stakeholders WhatsApp groups that could facilitate distribution of vital information.



References and Media Links

MEDIA COVERAGE: over 80% Fair & Favourable to CBN

- Google Search: <https://goo.gl/qgiYF7>
- Yahoo Search: <https://goo.gl/LsvxFK>

SOCIAL MEDIA: Over 70% Fair & Favourable to CBN

- Twitter: <https://goo.gl/yHdXur>
- Facebook: <https://goo.gl/TVPVoT>

Images of CBN Headquarters During the Crisis

- https://io.wp.com/newsdigest.ng/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/img_4599-1.jpg?w=1392&ssl=1

Smoke enveloped the CBN Building

- <https://www.vanguardngr.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CBN-FIRE.jpg>

Night view of CBN building after the incident

- <https://thewillnigeria.com/news/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CBN-Responds-To-Incident-696x522.jpg>

Widely Syndicated Opinion Article

- CBN on Fire, WhatsApp to the Rescue – Yushau A. Shuaib
- Read: <https://prnigeria.com/2018/05/27/cbn-fire-whatsapp-rescue/>

VIDEOS COVERAGE

- Video on Fake news and ill-informed commentary
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgt3Nid4uww>
- National Television: CBN Was Not on Fire
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAXQIVYHbl8>
- Facebook Video:
<https://www.facebook.com/ReportYourself/videos/10155413262472703/>

Major Media Reports on CBN Incident

NEWS DIGEST: CBN Hq on Fire (The First online media Report)

- <https://newsdigest.ng/news/2018/05/01/cbn-on-fire/>

BLOG: Fire Outbreak Hits CBN Abuja (with Fake Image)

- <https://www.cheepowersblog.com/fire-outbreak-hits-cbn-headquarters-abuja/>

NIGERIAN NEWS: Fake Pictures of CBN on Fire

- <https://www.nigerianews.net/pictures-of-cbn-burning-faked/>

THE CABLE: Fire outbreak at CBN headquarters

- <https://www.thecable.ng/just-fire-outbreak-cbn-headquarters>

SAMPLE OF FAIR AND POSITIVE REPORTS

DAILY SUN: Panic as generator smoke envelopes CBN

- <https://sunnewsonline.com/panic-as-generator-smoke-envelopes-cbn-headquarters/>

THE GUARDIAN: CBN explains cause of smoke at head office

- <https://guardian.ng/news/cbn-explains-cause-of-smoke-at-head-office/>

THE PULSE: It was a false alarm - Spokesman

- <https://www.pulse.ng/cbn-fire-it-was-a-false-alarm-spokesman/de52vst>

VANGUARD: No fire at CBN head office – official

- <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/05/cbn-denies-fire/>

THE NATION: Update: Fire scare at CBN headquarters

- <http://thenationonlineng.net/update-fire-scare-at-cbn-headquarters/>

NIGERIAN TRIBUNE: No Fire Incident At CBN Head Office

- <https://www.tribuneonlineng.com/144232/>

GREEN REPORTERS: It's A Lie, Our Headquarters Did Not Catch Fire – CBN Spokesman

- <http://www.greenbreporters.com/business/banking-finance/its-a-lie-our-headquarters-did-not-catch-fire-cbn-spokesman.html>