




# Managing a **Brand in** **Crisis**

In today's connected world, brands can easily face crises that put their reputation and success at risk. These problems can stem from product issues, bad customer service, public backlash, or unexpected incidents. How a brand reacts during these critical times is very important. A good response can help keep customer trust, but a poor one can cause lasting damage.

In this article, ReZultz Advertising will look at how brands like Nestle Ghana, Marwako Fast Foods and Snapchat handled serious challenges.





**Nestle Ghana Limited**, producers of popular products such as Milo, Ideal Milk, Carnation Tea Creamer, Chocomilo, and many others, faced a crisis in January 2022.

Their products Ideal Milk and Carnation Tea Creamer were recalled by consumers across the country due to spoilage concerns. In total, 57,938 cans of the affected products were retrieved nationwide. Customers discovered that the milk had coagulated inside the packaging despite not having reached its expiry date.

Coagulation is when milk separates into solids and liquids, typically caused by compromised packaging or an issue during production. Customers expressed dissatisfaction and as a result, stopped purchasing those products.

Following this, the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) launched an investigation and concluded that while the issue was not a food safety risk, the coagulation occurred due to poor heat stability in the raw materials used.

To manage the situation, Nestle promptly removed the affected products from store shelves and temporarily halted production at their Tema factory. Additionally, they opened channels of communication to engage with customers and address any lingering concerns.



### **Marwako Fast Foods,**

a Ghanaian fast-food chain with branches in La, East Legon, and Abelemkpe, faced a crisis when its East Legon outlet reported cases of food poisoning among customers on May 8th, 2022. Over thirty customers suffered from abdominal pain, diarrhea, and vomiting, and were hospitalized.

Edward Elohim, a customer who experienced food poisoning, took to Twitter to share his experience, posting: "Mawarko fast food gave me and many others in the hospital the worst food poisoning ever. The incident drew significant public attention and prompted the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) to investigate.

The restaurant was sued for GHC 345,000 by three victims, who were siblings, and faced additional damages of GHC 1 million. Following the FDA's investigation, poor sanitation, hygiene, and a heavy microbial load were found to have caused the food poisoning, leading to the restaurant's closure.

Marwako Fast Food accepted responsibility, issued an apology to the victims, paid their medical bills and damages, and cooperated with the FDA's investigations.



## Snapchat

"You spent money to animate something that would intentionally bring shame to DV victims and made a joke of it! This isn't about my personal feelings, because I don't have much of them... but all the women, children, and men that have been victims of DV in the past and especially the ones who haven't made it out yet... You let us down! Shame on you. Throw the whole app-ology away."

This was the comment posted by pop star Rihanna on her Instagram Story on Thursday, March 15, 2018, in response to an advertisement run by Snapchat.

Snapchat, a product of the technology company Snap Inc., faced a major backlash after running a game ad for the mobile app "Would You Rather?" The ad asked users to choose between slapping Rihanna or punching Chris Brown, a disturbing reference to the highly publicized 2009 domestic violence incident involving the two artists.

The ad sparked outrage among users and was widely condemned for making light of domestic violence. Rihanna's public condemnation drew further attention to the issue, amplifying the backlash. Following her criticism, Snap Inc.'s stock dropped by 4.7% on that Thursday alone, and the company reportedly lost around \$1 billion in market value that week.

Snapchat quickly removed the offensive ad from its platform and issued a public apology to both its users and to Rihanna, describing the ad as "disgusting" and a "terrible mistake" that should never have passed through their review process. Snapchat banned the "Would You Rather?" game company from advertising on its platform.

The company took steps toward improving its content oversight by reaching out to the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV). Snapchat invited a representative from the organization to join its board in an advisory capacity. The expert's role was to educate Snapchat staff on domestic violence issues and to help guide the development of appropriate content policies going forward.





## Key Takeaways

At ReZultz Advertising, we believe a crisis doesn't only ruin a brand, but how the brand also responds also has an impact on its reputation. Whether it's a service failure, a social media backlash, or a product recall, these moments test a brand's leadership, values, and readiness. What stood out across the cases of Nestlé Ghana, Marwako Fast Foods, and Snapchat is that the first response always matters.

Silence or defensiveness often causes more harm, while honesty, empathy, and swift corrective action can help restore trust. That's why we always advocate that brands must have a comprehensive crisis communication plan in place. This should include clear communication guidelines, well-prepared response teams, early risk detection pro-

both online and offline.

But more importantly, brands must be proactive. Constant engagement with feedback, regular quality checks, and ongoing staff training go a long way in preventing crises from escalating. From our lens, the most effective responses are those rooted in accountability. The brands that survive and come out stronger are those that admit fault, show remorse, and take visible steps to fix the issue and make sure it doesn't happen again.

Again, a crisis when handled with clarity and courage, can become one of a brand's greatest turning points. A perfect example is KFC's "no chicken" saga, where they turned the situation into an opportunity with a bold apology ad featuring an empty KFC bucket with the letters rearranged to "FCK" instead of "KFC." By owning the mistake and injecting humor, KFC diffused the crisis and garnered goodwill.

