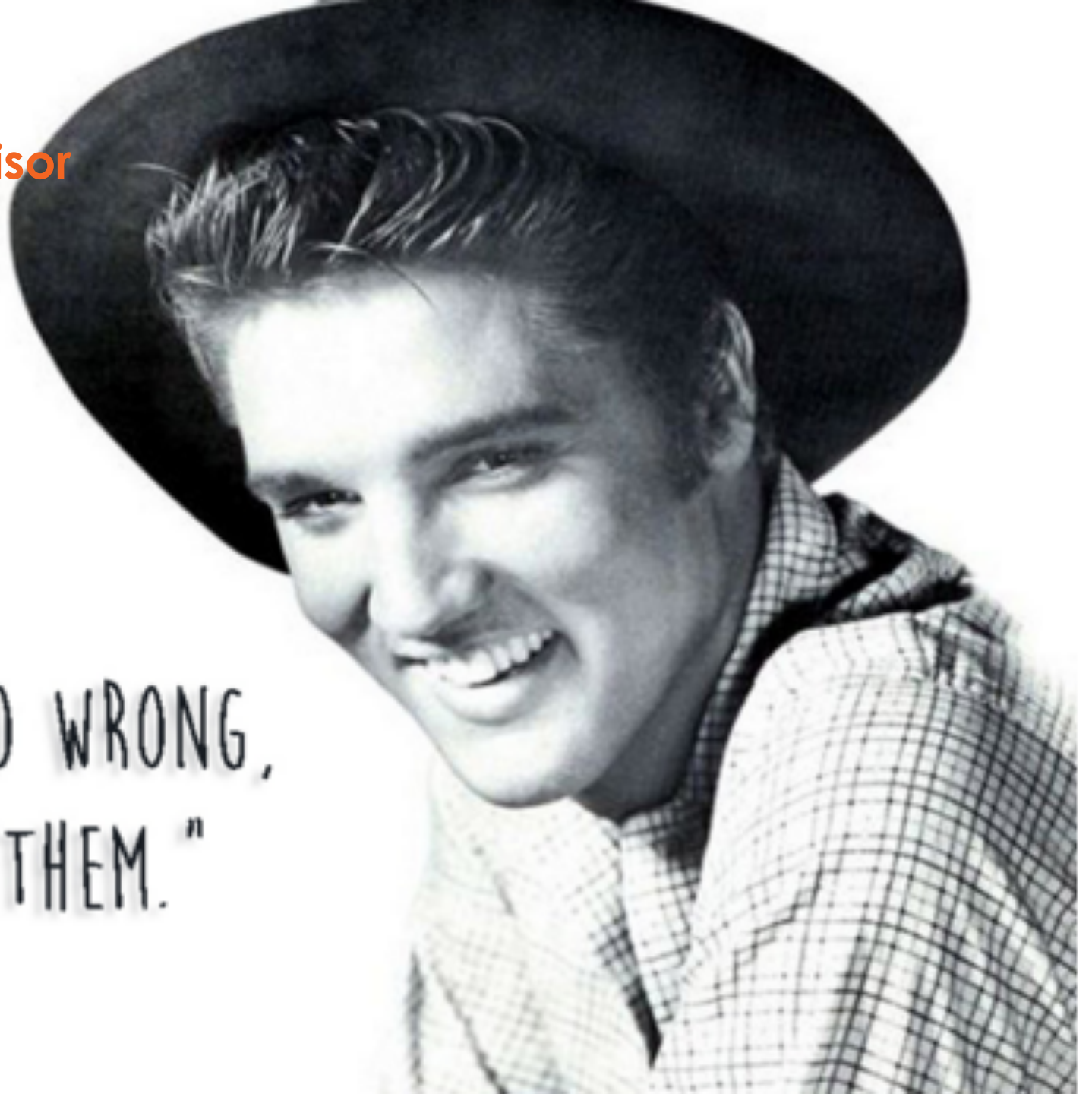


Sheena Thomas  
Senior Communications Advisor  
Z Energy

"WHEN THINGS GO WRONG,  
DON'T GO WITH THEM."



# What we'll cover



1. Why reputation is important
2. Building a strong foundation
3. Managing risk and being prepared
4. Managing negative PR
5. Managing a reputational crisis

# VW sales drop 20% in UK as diesel emissions scandal hits carmaker

New car registrations in November for carmaker's brands such as Audi, Seat and Skoda all tumble year-on-year in best gauge yet of scandal fallout



📷 VW brands have suffered a big fall in new car registrations, despite a rise overall in UK sales. Gareth Fuller/PA

Volkswagen sales in Britain tumbled in November in a clear sign the emissions scandal has hit the German brand.

BUSINESS | AUTOS & TRANSPORTATION | AUTOS

## Volkswagen Sales Drop for First Time in 13 Years

Auto maker's global sales fell 2% in 2015 as emissions-cheating scandal hit company



BloombergBusiness



News

Markets

Insights

Video

## Volkswagen of America November Vehicle Sales Down 24.7%

by David Welch and Dana Hull



# How's your foundation?



Is your organisation built on rock or sand?



# What are your values? *Use them*



**Share everything**



**Have the passion**



**Be bold**



**Be straight up**



**Back our people and  
help them grow**

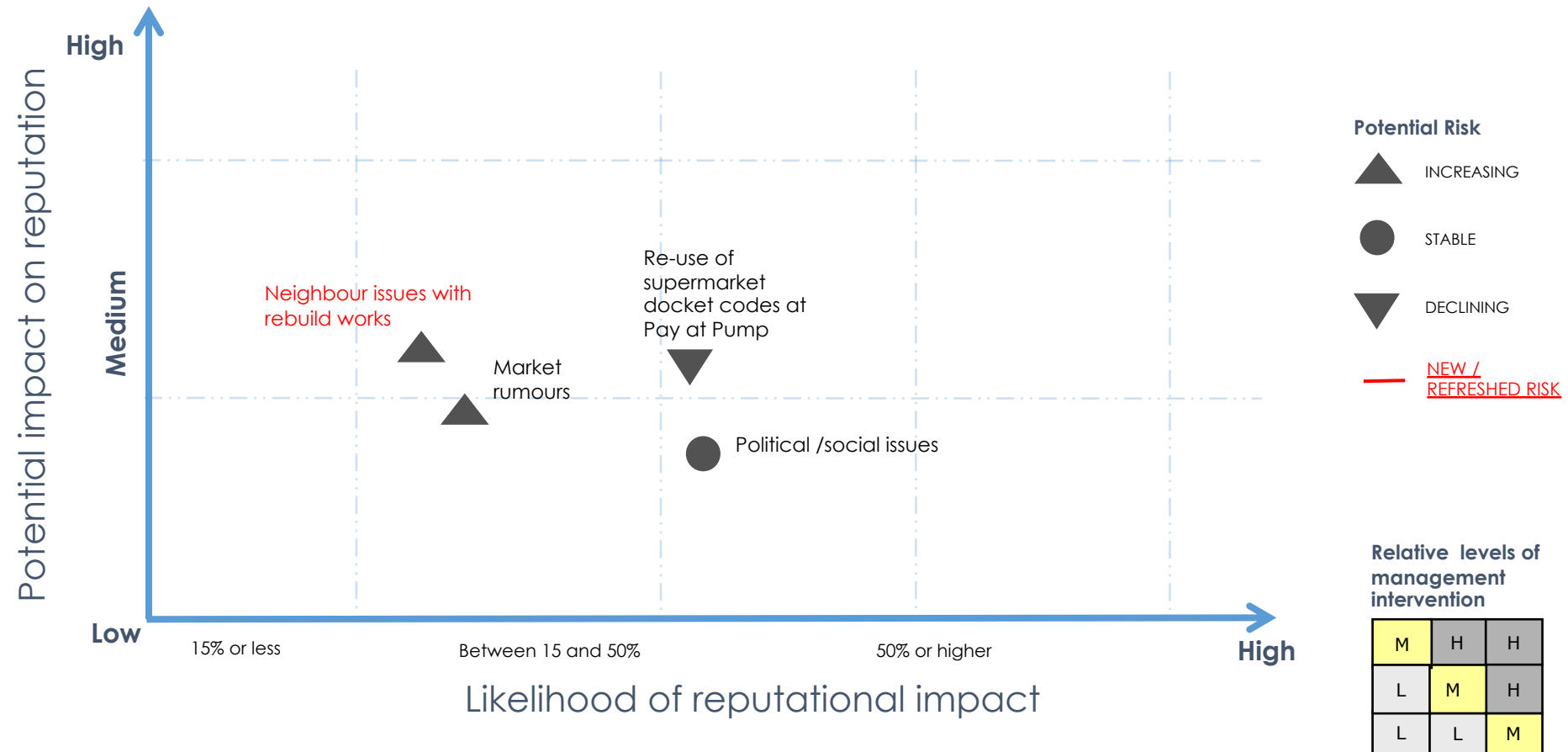
# Manage your risks



How to identify issues before they go wrong publicly

- Empower staff and volunteers to raise issues
- Look for “weak signals”. *Pay attention to the niggling voice*
- Seek feedback regularly, from customers, from staff, volunteers, stakeholders, funders
- Monitor what people are saying (i.e. media, **social media** particularly relevant), i.e. media monitoring, google alerts (free)
- Avoid group think
- Keep a risk register and make it part of your governance framework

# Reputation risk register [EXAMPLE]



## Potential Impact Assessment.

**High:** Potential for regulatory intervention, criticism by Ministers, customer boycott, sustained negative national media coverage, enduring damage to brand / reputation

**Medium:** Some negative national media coverage, public criticism by key stakeholders, customer complaints on site

**Low :** Regional criticism, local media coverage over a short period of time, negative story mitigated by positive developments

# Be prepared



Some practical things to think about:

- Do you have a media policy and social media policy?
- Who are your spokespeople and have they had media training?
- Do the rest of your staff and volunteers know what's expected of them if contacted by the media?



# When things do go wrong



**DON'T  
PANIC**

# Let your values guide you



- Try to deal with it *before* it becomes a PR situation
- Deal with everything in a way that aligns with your values
- Being seen to be true to your values gives you the best chance of coming out stronger at the other end

# Be clear and consistent



- What do you want to leave your audience thinking / feeling?
- What are the facts?
- What are the key messages that will directly support how you want to leave your audience thinking / feeling?
- Take the time to gather your facts and your thoughts



# Be straight up

- People will tolerate an honest mistake but they won't tolerate lies
- Don't be afraid to say sorry
- If something's wrong, fess up early





# A recent example: Z's Vegan Pie



## Z admits fowl-up on vegan pie pastry

SUSAN EDMUNDS

Fancy some ground poultry feathers in your vegan pie?

Petrol station chain Z Energy is in hot water after it was discovered that its new "vegan" Mexican pie contains a pastry conditioner E990 which is made from

day, will contain this product. To demonstrate how seriously we take this, a production run of these pies using this ingredient is now being donated to charity rather than sold

containing feathers was in their food at all.

"If you look closely at what goes into food, there are a multitude of things,"

### Feathers ruffled over pie

Z Energy's new vegan pie offering has ruffled feathers over one decidedly non-vegan ingredient.



the post read. "This was an honest mistake which



Sara Bailey ▸ Z Energy

January 7 · 🌐

Its a shame about the feathers thing but still totally supporting your effort and look forward to more pies! Everyone I know feels the same



👍 You, Cyle Zezotarski, Rachael Hill and 4 others

1 Comment



Like



Comment



Share



Deidre Koolen-Bourke ▸ Z Energy

January 7 · 🌐

just wanted to say that despite being really bummed about the feathers in the pie!! I'm actually really impressed by how up front Z has been in dealing with the problem and how quick you've been to remedy the issue. Vegans have this kind of thing happen a lot to us as you can imagine, and so many animal products are hidden in additives and E numbers. Its actually a breath of fresh air to find a company take it seriously (most just say tough luck vegans!).

Anyway thanks for fronting up to the mistake, and sorting it fast!!



You, Cyle Zezotarski, Sally Mubarak and 11 others

2 Comments

# Crisis Management



When is it considered a crisis?

*Ultimately, we are managing a crisis when our license to operate is at risk – Z Energy Crisis Plan*

# Crisis Management



## Some practical advice

- Have a crisis plan that aligns with your values
- Who needs to know? (i.e. stakeholders. Board, funders, **staff**)
- Bear in mind the 3 C's

**Concern** (or compassion – be human)

**Control** (you are aware of the situation and have things under control or are taking steps)

**Competence** (you know what you're talking about, confident, without being defensive)

And a fourth – **Consistency** (key messages are consistent, your “label” for the situation is consistent etc).

- Don't lie or try to avoid the truth!

# Crisis Plan



Your crisis plan should cover:

- A reminder of your values
- Who you need to involve
- Who you need to inform
- Who will deal with media, social media and stakeholders (incl internal)
- Who your spokespeople are
- Who will make decisions and who needs to be involved
- How you will ensure consistency
- Important contact details



# Go forth and conquer



Remember the following and your organisation will be all set to “stand firm” when things go wrong

- Values – have them, use them FOR EVERYTHING
- Keep an eye on your risks – actively solicit feedback, monitor what people are saying, look for weak signals, include reputational risk in your board / governance processes
- Be prepared for things going wrong – identify and train spokespeople, have a media policy, have a crisis plan
- Don't forget your most important audience (staff, volunteers and stakeholders)
- Never, ever lie

# Let's chat



Questions?

Comments or anything to add?

Examples you want to share?

A problem you'd like to unpick?

# Volkswagen and saying “sorry”

John Oliver sums it up perfectly



<https://youtu.be/Cdif-zK4z14>