

# The Effect of External Events on Online Community Resilience

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## **Abstract**

Online customer-to-customer communication in brand communities has tangible consequences on brand shareholder value, and product category purchases. Online interactions become even more important during brand-related events that can make or break a customer community – such as product-harm crises and investor events. In this study, we assess the impact of external, brand-related events on members' activity in online brand communities, and on the properties of the social networks underlying the communities. In the empirical context of online sport communities, we integrate structural models with social network analyses to show that negative events cause a larger increase in activity than positive events. Furthermore, social networks after negative events appear less fragmented, denser, and with sparser ego-networks. This study supports community managers in maintaining their community in times of crisis, and in creating more value for their members during advantageous times.

**Keywords:** *community engagement ; social network analysis; structural equation modelling*

**Track:** Digital Marketing & Social Media