

Beyond Empathy: How Corporate Responsibility Signals Amplify Stakeholder Outrage During Crises

Dan Muravsky
University of the West of Scotland

Cite as:

Muravsky Dan (2026), Beyond Empathy: How Corporate Responsibility Signals Amplify Stakeholder Outrage During Crises. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 55th, (133845)

Paper from the 55th Annual EMAC Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, June 2-5, 2026



Beyond Empathy: How Corporate Responsibility Signals Amplify Stakeholder Outrage During Crises

Abstract

CSR signalling has traditionally been viewed as protective during organizational crises, yet little research examines how CSR commitments affect stakeholder reactions when external constraints eliminate strategic flexibility. Analysing 182 firms' market exits following Russia-Ukraine sanctions, we measure local stakeholder responses through sentiment analysis of over 525,000 reactions across social media platforms and news outlets. We test how CSR signalling strength affects company-directed public outrage and whether empathetic communication moderates this relationship. Results demonstrate that stronger CSR signalling amplified negative reactions during constrained withdrawals. Empathetic communication reduced overall stakeholder backlash but did not moderate the amplification effect for high-CSR-signalling firms. Results establish CSR signalling as a double-edged mechanism that builds trust during normal operations yet creates vulnerabilities during externally constrained crises.

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics