

# PR PLAN FOR KAYS FRESH MARKET



---

Iwatutu Joyce Adewole

## Executive Summary

The public relations strategy emerges from a crisis, from a video spreading false accusations about improper produce handling at Kays Fresh Market, which serves its community through affordable fresh food. Such unconfirmed content can rapidly destroy digital trust in present-day public perceptions (Coombs, 2015). The main priority is to restore confidence in consumers through actions that show transparency and confirm product quality while immediately controlling negative information worth of public attention before it becomes too widespread (Macnamara, 2016). The strategic plan uses reactive and proactive communication channels through official statements combined with Freshness Guarantee initiatives and community outreach to prove authenticity and provide accountability (Gregory, 2020). According to best practices in crisis communication, you need to become the owner of your story by staying visible while engaging in dialogue with stakeholders (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). Therefore, Kays Fresh Market will strengthen its reputation and customer trust by implementing transparent response measures, which will help it emerge better than before.

## Situational Analysis

Kays Fresh Market maintains a strong local market position by delivering freshly prepared products at affordable rates to its community. Combining fresh products at affordable prices creates unique customer appeal, which helps Kays Fresh Market develop a loyal brand following (Kotler et al., 2019). In response to rising living costs, customers receive affordable pricing from Kays Fresh Market, while the same brand focuses on offering fresh, unprocessed food items (Mintel, 2022). However, Kays Fresh Market's internal strengths do not address its weaknesses regarding digital crisis management capabilities. Modern social media demands immediate reputation threat detection alongside transparent crisis management to prevent widespread damage to reputation (Coombs, 2014). Quick response to each negative review or piece of false information protects brand credibility from significant decline.

reputation (Coombs, 2014). Quick response to each negative review or piece of false information protects brand credibility from significant decline.

Externally, business competition continues to evolve outside the organization. Consumer behavior now prioritizes food origin transparency, environmental stewardship, and ethical procurement following the growth of sustainable organic markets and farmers' markets (Mintel, 2022). Also, the COVID-19 pandemic created more cautious consumers who now monitor food quality alongside assessing supply chain transparency and corporate responsibility (NielsenIQ, 2021). The market changes among consumers and competitive escalation create both dangers and prospects for Kays Fresh Market. Thus, the brand must foster digital excellence, honest information sharing, and sustainable quality excellence to keep itself relevant and regain consumer trust (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

### Strengths

- Loyal customer base across multiple locations
- Affordable pricing model
- Community-rooted brand identity

### Weaknesses

- Weak digital PR/crisis response strategy
- Inconsistent social media engagement
- Lack of real-time feedback collection tools

### Opportunities

- Use digital storytelling to promote freshness commitment
- Partner with local farms for credibility
- Host community “Fresh Days” for education & sampling

### Threats

- Negative online buzz harming brand trust
- Viral customer complaints gaining traction
- Rising competition from premium organic alternatives

Strategically addressing weaknesses while seizing opportunities will enable Kays Fresh Market to recover and emerge stronger.



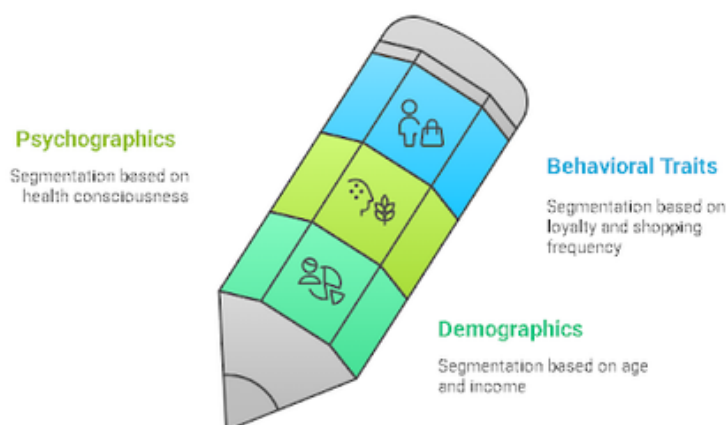
## PR Objectives

- To restore consumer trust within 60 days.
- To increase positive brand sentiment by 40% in key social channels (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook).
- To secure three media features on Kays Fresh Market's quality assurance and sourcing process within 3 months.

## Key Audiences

Kays Fresh Market effectively implements the Segmentation Targeting and Positioning model to connect with its target audience. Market segmentation enables companies to recognize consumer groups through shared characteristics (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Kays's audience segmentation covers age groups ranging from 25 to 55 years, middle to lower-middle income earners, and consumers who show health concerns and prioritized personal values. Behaviorally, these audience segments exhibit intense brand devotion and multiple shopping sessions, making them central stakeholders for normal messaging and crisis times. During reputation crises, the health-focused families and families representing Kays's core customer base need transparent and consistent messaging approaches (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). Hence, the consumer base considers affordability vital but requires complete assurance regarding product quality, safety measures, and responsible sourcing practices.

Kays Fresh Market Audience Breakdown



Furthermore, Kays needs to expand its communication outreach to reach a wider audience consisting of digital consumers. The digital acquisition strategy must target young consumers who seek sustainable products and quality goods combined with authentic store policies. However, a value messaging approach that shows how Kays Fresh Market delivers quality products at fair prices while sustaining the local community will appeal to this consumer segment (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Local media platforms and food influencers maintain essential roles as the secondary audience members. Through Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations theory (2003), these select individuals can lead public opinion and expedite brand trust recovery in times of crisis.

Therefore, Kays Fresh Market's reinforcement of its ethical market positioning helps the company uphold emotional audience connections and reach more consumers within the health-focused fresh produce market.

## **Key Messages**

To develop authentic trust, public relations messages need to match the organisation's core values (Cornelissen, 2020). The primary messages at Kays Fresh Market express “Freshness You Can Trust – Always and Locally Sourced”, “Carefully Inspected”, and “We Hear You And We’re Raising the Bar”. The brand identity, which emphasises freshness, transparency, and community connection, is the foundation for key messages. Through this statement, Kays Fresh Market intends to deliver factual information and emotional reassurance about its dedication to quality assurance and timely response (Heath and Johansen, 2018).

## Strategies

Kays Fresh Market implements a reactive crisis strategy that reflects Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) principles (Coombs, 2015). The “rebuild” posture under SCCT applies to this situation because Kays Fresh Market shares responsibility or needs to recover trust by showing accountability and taking corrective actions. Kays undertakes a necessary action as it vows to conduct a comprehensive investigation while openly confronting the situation. Transparency is vital in food crisis management (Coombs and Holladay, 2007).

The brand needs to adopt two simultaneous responses to reduce damage to its reputation while remolding how customers perceive it. Kays launched the “Freshness Guarantee Campaign” to teach consumers about product origins alongside food pathway tracking systems and health quality measures. The campaign will deliver visual-based education with in-store and online content to show how Kays aligns with Freshness, health, and ethical consumer values (Smith, 2020). The strategy flawlessly aligns with post-pandemic customers who seek transparent operations from their food retailers (NielsenIQ, 2021).

The second pillar involves community engagement and media relations. Using Grunig and Hunt's two-way symmetrical communication model (1984), Kays will lead local events between farmers, nutritionists, and consumers to promote open dialogue and restore public trust. Kays constructs an authentic reputation by teaming up with respected media platforms through articles, documented statements, and insider information exposure (Macnamara 2016) to solidify their message dissemination while receiving independent verification (Macnamara 2016).

Together, these strategies build a reliable framework that uses clear communication while teaching audiences about the brand and involving stakeholders to preserve public trust when brand reputation faces difficulties.

## Tactics

Tactical precision is essential for practical PR because it enables strategic message delivery, stakeholder engagement, and brand recovery after a crisis (Gregory, 2020). Kays Fresh Market employs digital, interpersonal, and media-based approaches to achieve maximum engagement with its audience.

*The table below outlines key tactics and their strategic rationale:*

Tactics	Rationale
Social Media	Real-time updates will be distributed through an apology video featuring customer engagement, creating transparency and immediate communication (Solis, 2011).
Email Campaign	Direct communication enables customers to trust the company and become loyal to its brand through receiving information about reforms, offers, and frequently asked questions (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).
Press Release	Fresh Market should present its official statements to local media outlets because this strategy grants control over storylines while enhancing its credibility (Gregory, 2020).

Influencer Partnerships	Brand relatability through its content allows customers to build parasocial trust, accelerating brand recovery (Freberg et al., 2011).
Crisis Response Hotline	The company provides instant help while resolving any issues that customers encounter. By implementing these measures, organisations can minimise wrong information and improve customer interactions (Coombs 2015).

## Timeline

The timeline structure below ensures coordinated rollout and consistent engagement:

Week	Activity
1	Public statement, hotline launch, manager apology video
2–3	Influencer engagement, press outreach
4	In-store community event with farmers
5–6	Sustained digital engagement, feedback monitoring

This staged approach aligns with best practices for crisis lifecycle management—beginning with resolution and ending with reflection (Coombs, 2015).



## Budget

A well-allocated budget is essential for executing an effective PR plan, ensuring maximum impact while maintaining cost efficiency (Gregory, 2020). The \$8,000 budget reflects a balanced distribution across key communication pillars: content, community, reach, and media.

Category	Cost (USD)	Justification
Influencer & Content Creation	\$3,000	The program deploys micro-influencers who deliver a high return on investment to regain audience trust and promote connection (Freberg et al., 2011).
Event & Materials	\$1,500	The initiative supports scheduled farmer events alongside direct community contact that strengthens genuine authenticity (Grunig, 2009).
Paid Social Ads	\$2,500	This approach provides precise visibility features, particularly on Facebook and Instagram (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).
Media Outreach & PR Tools	\$1,000	Provides solutions with distribution tools and performance analytics functions to track information delivery results.

Total: ~\$8,000 – an affordable yet strategically sound investment in brand repair and stakeholder re-engagement.

## Evaluation

The success of any public relations strategy depends on an effective evaluation system for measurement purposes. Kays Fresh Market's reactive PR plan's evaluation system implements multiple metrics that integrate quantitative and qualitative measurements. According to Watson and Noble (2014), PR campaigns require an assessment of audience reach and depth of impact to determine their success. This evaluation tool incorporates sentiment analysis along with social media engagement statistics, earned media reports, in-store customer traffic, and received customer feedback to track both short-term responses and long-term impact from Kays Fresh Market's crisis communications. Public sentiment analysis will monitor consumer reactions to Kays Fresh Market using sentiment analysis across social media platforms to identify changes in consumer perception (Macnamara, 2016). Thus, social media engagement measurements based on shares, likes, and comments will additionally demonstrate audience behaviors regarding message propagation.

Furthermore, the quantity of earned media coverage is a reliable indicator for assessing the effectiveness of PR messaging in attracting third-party reviewers and media organizations. For example, Mention is the medium that monitors the spread and sentiment of Kays' brand messages across multiple platforms (Fawkes, 2018). Additionally, the evaluation of digital engagement receives assistance through Google Analytics, which provides website and user behavior data to support assessments. Customer feedback surveys offer direct links between the PR plan and Kays' core value of transparency so the brand can assess audience reception of its openness promises. Therefore, Kays Fresh Market uses mixed assessment techniques that enable necessary PR strategy adjustments to improve performance while maintaining transparency and trustworthiness (Grunig and Hunt, 1984).

## Contingency Plan

A well-structured contingency plan is essential for businesses to safeguard against unforeseen threats and reputational risks. The contingency plan for Kays Fresh Market relies on hiring independent professionals to verify their procurement and distribution practices. A quality assurance specialist performing audits enables the company to prove transparent cooperation and accountability. The independent assessment findings will become publicly accessible to give customers an authentic disclosure of the company's operational practices. The company applied the "stealing thunder" technique from crisis communication (Coombs, 2015) by releasing negative information before it gained wide recognition. Thus, by proactively dealing with potential issues, the company will improve its credibility toward stakeholders and reduce rumors among them.

In addition, Kays Fresh Market's plan includes supporting communication through Q&A events to allow them to interact with their customers closely. The company plans to conduct sessions where customers can speak their minds regarding their worries so officials can explain corporate stances and procedures. Building trust requires this action during critical crisis periods. According to Grunig and Hunt's (1984) two-way symmetrical model of public relations, stakeholder confidence depends on developing dialogue that promotes understanding between stakeholders. Hence, Kays Fresh Market organizes direct public engagements to restore its relationship with its community through displays of both concern response and dedication to public input.

**Table 1: Contingency Table**

Contingency Action	Description
Independent Audit	Engage a quality assurance specialist to audit sourcing and handling practices and make the results publicly available. This will increase transparency and accountability (Coombs, 2015).
Stealing Thunder	Proactively disclose negative information to prevent rumors and maintain credibility (Coombs, 2015)..
Community Q&A Sessions	Organize interactive Q&A sessions with customers to address concerns and maintain direct communication (Grunig and Hunt, 1984).
Two-Way Symmetrical Communication	Foster dialogue with stakeholders through feedback mechanisms, ensuring their concerns are heard and addressed, reinforcing the company's commitment to transparency (Grunig and Hunt, 1984).

Overall, combining independent audit findings and open, transparent communication through community engagement provides a robust approach to managing crises and protecting the brand's reputation.

## Key Performance Indicators

This table outlines the key performance indicators (KPIs) for the proposed public relations strategy and how each element will be assessed over time. By setting clear targets and establishing success and failure indicators, Kays Fresh Market can efficiently measure the impact of their efforts and take corrective actions if necessary.

**Table 2: KPI Table**

Measurement Area	Target/Goal	Timeframe for Assessment	Success Indicator	Failure Indicator
Sentiment Analysis	Quarterly Review	Positive increase in positive mentions, reduced negative mentions.	A decrease in positive sentiment and an increase in negative mentions.	Reassess communication strategy, engage with influencers, and address negative feedback through additional crisis communication efforts.
Social Media Engagement	Engagement rate increase of 15% by the end of the year.	Monthly Monitoring	Increase in shares, comments, and overall interaction with campaign posts.	Low interaction or a decline in engagement metrics over time.
Earned Media Coverage	10 media mentions per quarter (focused on credibility restoration)	Quarterly Review	Positive media mentions reflecting transparency and accountability.	No media coverage or mentions concentrate on negative aspects.



In-store Foot Traffic	5% increase in foot traffic over 6 months.	Monthly Monitoring	Increased foot traffic during campaign periods or post-crisis communications .	There was a decline in foot traffic, indicating poor reception of the crisis management plan.
Customer Feedback & Surveys	80% positive feedback from customers on transparency and response.	Bi-annual Feedback Surveys	Most of the feedback was positive regarding transparency, crisis response, and overall satisfaction.	Negative feedback regarding transparency or dissatisfaction with crisis management efforts.

## Conclusion

The PR plan positions Kays Fresh Market to rebuild its reputation by using the crisis to develop new growth opportunities. The brand defends its core foundation by highlighting fresh products, community connections, and open management practices. Through strategic media planning, Kays can assert control over the story to build genuine trust among its stakeholders.

If effectively executed, the approach will achieve more than reputation damage mitigation by building brand loyalty while elevating customer trust, which positions Kays Fresh Market as an enduring community-first grocer in an active market (Gregory, 2020).

## References

Coombs, W.T., 2014. Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing, and Responding. 4th ed. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

Mintel, 2022. Mintel Announces 2022 Global Food and Drink Trends. [Online] Available at: <https://www.mintel.com/press-centre/mintels-2022-global-food-and-drink-trends/> [Accessed 12 Apr. 2025].

NielsenIQ, 2021. Impact of COVID-19 on consumer behavior. [Online] Available at: <https://nielseniq.com/global/en/insights/commentary/2021/impact-of-covid-19-on-consumer-behavior/> [Accessed 12 Apr. 2025].

Grunig, J.E. and Hunt, T., 1984. Managing Public Relations. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Kotler, P. and Keller, K.L., 2016. Marketing Management. 15th ed. Pearson Education.

Rogers, E.M., 2003. Diffusion of Innovations. 5th ed. Free Press.

Cornelissen, J., 2020. Corporate Communication: A Guide to Theory and Practice. 6th ed. London: Sage.

Heath, R.L. and Johansen, W., 2018. The International Encyclopedia of Strategic Communication. Wiley-Blackwell.

Smith, A., 2020. Consumer Behaviour and Ethical Food Choices. Journal of Consumer Marketing, 37(4), pp.478–490.

Chaffey, D. and Ellis-Chadwick, F., 2019. Digital Marketing. 7th ed. Pearson Education.

Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K. and Freberg, L.A., 2011. Who are the social media influencers? Public Relations Review, 37(1), pp.90-92.

Gregory, A., 2020. Planning and Managing Public Relations Campaigns. 5th ed. Kogan Page.

Solis, B., 2011. Engage! The Complete Guide for Brands and Businesses to Build, Cultivate, and Measure Success in the New Web. Wiley.

Macnamara, J., 2016. Organisational Listening: The Missing Essential in Public Communication. Peter Lang.

Watson, T. and Noble, P., 2014. Evaluating Public Relations: A Guide to Planning, Research and Measurement. 3rd ed. Kogan Page.