

**\*Note\*** Example communications writing only. Public and Media relations. I did not work for Rogers or any organization associated to Rogers Communications.

## Rogers Communications

On July 8, 2022, the Canadian telecom company, Rogers Communications, accidentally shut off its customers' cell phone, Wi-Fi, and cable service for 16 hours, resulting in a PR crisis. They did not communicate directly to the public for 24 hrs. Instead, they opted to send out social media updates using Twitter Tweets; which most of their customers could not access during the outage.

The media jumped on the story, publicizing and providing the majority of content and speculation as to what went wrong. Rogers lost a lot of credibility and respect with their customers and the Canadian public. Their inability to fix the outage quickly and their poor communication of what was happening during the crisis may have had a direct effect on the Government of Canada's reluctance to approve of their bid to take over Shaw Communications.

On April 3, 2023, Rogers completed its acquisition of Shaw after the Federal government gave its final approval. Website: <https://www.rogers.com/>

## Audiences

### External

**Rogers customers:** Should always be first in communicating a crisis concerning an outage, as it directly affects their ability to communicate using Rogers products such as cell phone, internet and Wi-Fi. An outage could seriously impact their lives in an emergency situation such as not being able to call 911 or communicate with their children and/or other family members who need their support. Businesses using Rogers to run their digital systems would not be able to provide services to customers.

**General public:** This audience is full of potential future Rogers customers. Why should they sign up with Rogers services? They need to feel confident that Rogers will do everything they can to assist customers during a crisis and that it is a trustworthy business for their telecommunication and internet needs. They may also be friends, family, teachers and work colleagues of Rogers customers. This would draw them into the crisis more keenly as they try to communicate with those directly impacted.

**Government agencies and organizations:** The CRTC is a branch of the Canadian Federal Government and oversees regulation of Canadian telephone companies and telecommunication carriers such as Rogers Communications. If Rogers is unable to uphold legal obligations in providing safe and secure telecommunications to Canadians, it could have future impacts regarding oversight from the federal government. Website: <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/phone/>. Other government branches such as Provincial, Regional and Municipal governments and private businesses may re-think Rogers carrier agreements if trust and confidence is not restored.

**Media:** In the event of an outage, the media can be potent ally if approached in a respectful, truthful and tactful way. They are able to communicate immediately and directly to the public through media broadcasting channels, websites, radio, newspapers and their social media channels. With pre-scripted initial crisis messaging, and a well-trained Rogers spokesperson

giving frequent updates, Rogers could have better ownership and control of the situation. This may allow for more public trust and less scrutiny initially.

## Internal

**Staff:** Those most affected by the outage such as technical teams and communication and customer service teams should have a strong plan of action already in place to alleviate fears and anxiety. Pre-scripted messages for communication teams will allow for calmer and more confident messaging. Staff need to feel that during a crisis, senior management and crisis communication teams are confidently handling the situation and they have the necessary tools to assist.

**Senior management team:** They need to know what to do and who to notify. Flow of information needs to be continuous and frequent. They may be called upon to provide an update to staff, the media or other external partners. Some staff may need to work continuous shifts and be rotated, depending on position and severity of the crisis. Management needs to understand their teams' responsibilities.

**Board of Directors and investors:** The Board will need to be informed during the crisis as they provide governance to the Rogers organization and would have concerns about damage to the legitimacy of the organization. Senior management and the crisis communications team should provide updates as needed to keep them in the loop. Investors will be nervous and worried about Rogers stock losing value during the crisis and need to be informed of any pertinent and relevant information to aid in their decision-making processes and financial strategies.

## Key Messages

**Our first priority is to you, our Rogers customers.**

- We are committed in providing you safe, secure and reliable services so you can stay connected to those you care about.
- We're working continuously to provide you answers to questions, help you find your way and continue making connections that count.

**We have the best customer service staff and technical teams a business could ask for working around the clock to keep our systems safe and secure.**

- Our dedicated and expert staff is working hard to provide solutions and prevent future issues.
- You inspire us to improve and provide continuous opportunities for growth and innovation.

**We're committed to giving you factual, confirmed and up-to-date information.**

- Rogers believes in clear, consistent communications and will keep providing updates even if there is no new information.
- During this challenging situation, we will continue to provide answers based on the facts we have.

## Official Statement (example only)

Our customers are our first priority and inspire us in everything we do. We take full responsibility for the service disruption and delays in communicating what was occurring to you, our customers, our fellow Canadians, and our business partners and stakeholders.

We were wrong in thinking that communication updates to Rogers customers, partners and the Canadian public could wait until more technical information was available. Trust in us is valued and deeply appreciated and we feel that we initially let you down. We are deeply sorry for any distress, worry, and confusion the outage caused to you, your families, friends and colleagues. We never intended for anyone to feel unsafe or unsupported in their ability to stay connected.

Our dedicated and expert staff are working hard to ensure that there's systematic alternatives and consistent communication in place in the unlikely event of another service outage. We will continue to provide you with consistent updates by all means possible; radio, broadcast media, news releases, social media, our website, and our customer engagement team, even when there's no new information available.

Your feedback is welcome and lets us know we need to do better in keeping you informed, immediately and into the future. This challenging incident serves as a reminder to us that there's always room for improvement and we will be more mindful and diligent in communicating to you.

Thank you for believing in us and choosing us as your telecommunications connection to your community, friends and family.

Sincerely,

Rogers Communications