

# CASE STUDY #3: CRISIS COMMUNICATION

*Due via Brightspace no later than 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 27*

*It is worth 150 points, or 15% of your total grade*

*Please see the [course syllabus](#) regarding the late policy and the use of AI*

## THE CASE:

The history of professional women's tennis has long been steeped in sexism. The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) was formed in 1973 by tennis legend Billie Jean King, with the goal of providing equal opportunity to women in the sport. Until then, women were paid far less than their male counterparts and at tournaments were often cast to the outside courts that did not draw nearly as much attention from fans. Through the hard work and dedication of people like King, women finally won the battle to earn equal prize money in all four tennis Grand Slam tournaments when Wimbledon decided to offer equal prize money to the men's and women's singles champions in 2007 (34 years after the WTA was formed).

Despite receiving equal pay, sexism is still alive in the sport, as evidenced by then-Indian Wells Tournament Director and CEO Raymond Moore's comments at the conclusion of the 2016 BNP Paribas.

"In my next life, when I come back, I want to be someone in the WTA because they ride on the coattails of the men," [Moore said](#). "They don't make any decisions, and they are lucky. They are very, very lucky. If I was a lady player, I'd go down every night on my knees and thank God that Roger Federer and Rafa [Rafael] Nadal were born, because they have carried this sport. They really have."

Moore and his comments drew quick, heavy criticism from many, including from tournament champion Serena Williams (who was number one in the world at the time).

Some critics drew comparisons between Moore and former male tennis player Bobby Riggs, who famously challenged King to a "Battle of the Sexes" tennis tournament in 1973, which King won. Riggs later said, "Billie and I did wonders for women's tennis. They owe me a piece of their checks." Many felt that Moore's comments were reminiscent of Riggs' back in the 1970s.

Unfortunately, Moore was not alone in displaying sexism at the BNP Paribas tournament. When asked to comment on Moore's words, the men's tournament winner, Novak Djokovic, displayed his own sexist views. With regard to equal prize money, Djokovic said, "I think that our men's tennis world, ATP world, should fight for more because the stats are showing that we have much more spectators on the men's tennis matches. I think that's one of the reasons why maybe we should get awarded more."

Adding insult to injury, Djokovic went on to offend women around the world by talking about their hormones, casting women as the "other" or as delicate inferior beings, saying, "I have

tremendous respect for what women in global sport are doing and achieving. Their bodies are much different to men's bodies. They have to go through a lot of different things that we don't have to go through. You know, the hormones and different stuff, we don't need to go into details."

Moore was forced to resign as Indian Wells director and CEO one day after making sexist comments. Nevertheless, these incidents at the 2016 BNP Paribas tournament reflected poorly on the tournament's reputation as well as on Djokovic, highlighting that despite the progress made for equality in women's tennis, sexism is still very much an issue.

**THE STUDY:** You have read the first 11 chapters of the book and we have discussed several current events tying the themes, ideas and situations in the book to current events. You have also completed Case Study #1 and 2. For Case Study #3, however, you are going to go a step farther and dig into CRISIS COMMUNICATION (pp. 328-333).

Individually, you will complete two deliverables:

- 1.) Assume the role of the PR director for the BNP Paribas tournament. You are working closely with Larry Ellison, the owner of Indian Wells, where the tournament is played. Develop the rough draft of a speech or talking points that Ellison should use when discussing Raymond Moore with the media and for when he discusses Novak Djokovic's comments with the media.
- 2.) Next, assume the role of the PR director for the ATP (men's professional tennis). How should your organization respond to Djokovic and Moore's comments? Assume the role of the PR director for the WTA (women's professional tennis). How should your organization respond to Djokovic and Moore's comments?

Those are just some guiderails for the assignment. If there is something else or other questions that jump out to you about this either from the reading or from class discussions, include it!

You will need to research both the BNP Paribas tournament and the ATP. You will need to do the reading in the book and draw from its explicit suggestions and recommendations, including the steps from Figure 11.3.

**THE RULES:**

- Writing matters, so edit yourself. Use editing tools (SpellCheck and Grammarly) and re-read your work for clarity where you ask yourself, "Does that make sense?" If the answer is no, try again. Read it again to make sure you answer the questions.
- Cite your sources. If you use news articles, or other commentary, embed the link and cite it at the end of the paper in a Source List.
- Do not plagiarize or leave the body of the work to AI tools; you need to create it.
- Be on time.

