Communication Expert: Converse Apology Leaves the Bigger Question Unanswered

Mike Fruciano of Effective Presentations explains why an apology is only the first step in rebuilding trust after a public mistake.


Mike Fruciano, President of Effective Presentations Inc.

LAKEWOOD, CO, UNITED STATES, September 22, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Converse's apology over a sneaker advertisement criticized for evoking racist imagery raises a bigger communication question: What should a company say after admitting it got something wrong?

Converse removed the advertisement, acknowledged that it "got this wrong," and said it would do better. Outlets including CBS News, the Associated Press, and the Los Angeles Times have covered the controversy.

Mike Fruciano, President of Effective Presentations, says this is where many corporate apologies fall short.

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>
> *Mike Fruciano, President, Effective Presentations*

"Companies spend a lot of time trying to get the apology wording right," Fruciano said. "The harder question is what they say next."

According to Fruciano, saying "we'll do better" may sound appropriate, but it immediately creates another question.

"What does doing better actually mean?" he said.

Fruciano says companies dealing with a public mistake should be prepared to answer three questions.

What happened?

Acknowledge the specific problem. Do not make the audience work through vague corporate language to figure out what you are apologizing for.



Effective Presentations, Inc., a corporate presentation skills and executive communication training company.

How did it happen?

That does not mean publicly blaming an employee. But if people are asking how something got approved, leadership needs to show that it understands where the process failed.

What will change?

This is where an apology starts becoming credible.

“An apology acknowledges the past,” Fruciano said. “A credible action plan addresses the future.”

He says the same problem comes up in many types of business communication.

“This is not just an advertising problem,” Fruciano said. “It happens after product failures, customer complaints, employee issues, operational problems and leadership mistakes. People want to know whether the organization actually learned something.”

This is also where leaders can get defensive.

“When people are upset, leaders often want to explain what they meant,” Fruciano said. “But intent is usually not the first thing the audience wants to hear. Start by showing that you understand the impact. Then explain what you are going to do about it.”

Fruciano says companies do not need to have every answer immediately. They do need to be clear about what they know and what happens next.

“If you are still investigating what went wrong, say that,” he said. “Tell people what you know now and when they can expect another answer. That is much stronger than filling the gap with a statement that sounds polished but does not really say anything.”

For leaders, the bigger issue is trust.

“People do not expect organizations to be perfect,” Fruciano said. “They do expect leaders to learn from mistakes. The communication has to give them a reason to believe that learning actually happened.”

Effective Presentations works with companies and professionals on business presentation skills, executive communication, leadership messaging, and message development. The company helps leaders organize difficult messages, communicate important decisions clearly, and respond effectively when audiences have tough questions.

About Effective Presentations

Effective Presentations, Inc. is a Colorado-based corporate training company specializing in business presentation skills, public speaking, executive communication and business messaging. The company provides live, in-person, and virtual training for organizations and professionals across the United States.

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