

# Idiom by Lon Yan

## 名不符實

*ming2 bu4 fu2 shi2*

A passenger was hurt while being dragged off a United Airlines plane, said to be overbooked. Online pictures and videos of the forcible removal with the passenger's bloody face triggered worldwide disbelief and outrage.

The airline's CEO Oscar Munoz said the passenger "defied" authorities and "compounded" the incident, words that seemed to at least partially blame the passenger, as The Standard reported.

The response apparently didn't help matters. So it was followed by calls for boycott and protests by minority groups. The White House spokesman called the video "troubling" and a US congresswoman thought there should be law to stop airlines from dragging passengers off planes.

The company's share price fell. And amid public furor and ridiculing, Munoz made a second statement, apologizing unequivocally this time.

Faced with an unmitigated PR disaster, you would want to mitigate its backlash. Munoz's initial reaction, however, have clearly did the opposite. Ironically, he was named "Communicator of the Year" by public relations industry magazine PR Week just weeks ago!

It reasonable to question whether this isn't a case of "名不符實" (*ming2 bu4 fu2 shi2*), at least as far as this case is concerned.

"名" (*ming2*) is "a name," "fame," "不" (*bu4*) "no," "not," "符" (*fu2*) "to tally with" and "實" (*shi2*) "true," "real," "reality." "名不符實" (*ming2 bu4 fu2 shi2*), literally, is "fame not tally with reality," "the name does not correspond to reality." "名不符實" (*ming2 bu4 fu2 shi2*) means a person doesn't live up to his or her reputation.

The opposite is "名副其實" (*ming2 fu4 qi2 shi2*), meaning "the name matches the reality," "to be worthy of the name."

### Terms containing the character "實" (*shi2*) include:

現實 (*xian4 shi2*) – reality; down-to-earth; realistic

實驗 (*shi2 yan4*) – an experiment; experimentation

實施 (*shi2 shi1*) – to carry out

實力 (*shi2 li4*) – strength