The Impact of Advertising Social Justice Issues on Consumer’s Brand Perception

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OVERVIEW

- Recently, more and more companies have been taking a stand via advertisements/announcements on social justice issues.
- Controversial social issues pose a new threat to companies' reputation and bottom line.
- Social Justice issues include racism, sexism, ageism, etc.
- Many believe these advertisements will become more prominent because they generate awareness for the social justice issue and brand while having little to no effect on their bottom line.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Do advertisements/announcements that address social justice issues make a difference?
- What works and doesn’t work in regards to advertisements/announcements commenting on social justice issues?
- Why were these specific advertisements/announcements successful or not and how can their example be applied on a broader scale?
- How do customers react to brands that do decide to take a stand?
- What should companies do when going about making these types of advertisements/announcements?

SPROUT SOCIAL SURVEY

Conversational Top Emotional Reaction to brands Using Social Media to take a Stand on Social/Political Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors Consuming Boost Brand Credibility on a Social/Political Issue</th>
<th>Social Justice</th>
<th>Corporate Social Responsibility</th>
<th>Marketing Efforts</th>
<th>Brand Identity and Values</th>
<th>Overall Consumer Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Injured Brand</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injured Brand’s Business Operations</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Marketing Efforts</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Financial Support</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various Top Executives</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Specific Revenue</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FACTORS CONSUMING BOOST BRAND CREDIBILITY ON A SOCIAL/POLITICAL ISSUE

- Injured Brand's Customers: 67%
- Injured Brand's Business Operations: 55%
- History of Marketing Efforts: 52%
- History of Financial Support: 52%
- Various Top Executives: 52%
- No Specific Revenue: 52%

LIT REVIEW

- Silence on an issue can engrage customers, while handling an issue can distance employees.
- 2/3 of CEOs state that their company would not be ready to take a stand on a social justice issue.
- The quantity of advertisements addressing social justice issues will continue to increase.
- Use of celebrity endorsement is common, but brands must select and retain the “right” celebrity.
- Social Media “firestorms” are a risk to brand perception, especially if the firestorm includes visual aids or is lengthy.
- Woke washing: term used to describe companies that appear to be politically, socially or environmentally aware in attempts to increase profits.

METHOD

- Conduct a literature review
- Analyze data composed of the public’s reaction
  - Social: YouTube and Facebook reactions
  - Content analysis: Word Clouds and Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) based on Facebook and YouTube comments

IMPLICATIONS

- Advertisements about Social Justice Issues ➔ Dialogue ➔ Awareness ➔ Possible Change
- Companies must make the initiative to take a stand on issues. Consider the issue you are tackling, proper use of celebrity endorsement and the degree to which it forces your customers to inwardly reflect.
- Addressing issues ➔ More Brand Loyalty with core customer group
- Failed attempts at creating these types of advertisements/announcements can result in customers getting angry or viewing the brand as inauthentic.
- Companies have a HUGE platform for generating awareness around an issue. However, companies must be mindful that the message aligns with their brand identity and established values.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prepare your company to take a stand.
- Know your customer base.
- Choose an issues that is relevant to your company.

SPROUT SOCIAL SURVEY

- Kaepernick: Nike
- Starbucks: Starbucks
- Gillette: Gillette
- Pepsi: Pepsi