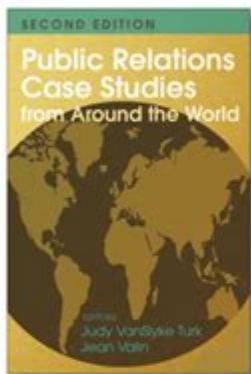


# Public Relations Case Studies Examples



## Public Relations Case Studies from Around the World—2nd Edition

JUDY VANSLYKE TURK AND JEAN VALIN | 2017 | XX, 386 PP.  
USD \$64.95 | 978-1-4331-3454-8 (pb) | 978-1-4331-4551-3 (ebook PDF) | 978-1-4331-4552-0 (ePUB)



The case studies in this book, many of which have won national or international awards, represent an impressive scope of public relations practice—from public diplomacy to corporate social responsibility to crisis communications to social justice issues and special events. These chapters take a significant step toward overcoming the dearth of published case studies in public relations beyond North America. Written by established scholars and professionals who had access to some of the world's most intriguing and influential cases of organizational communication, these studies will be of tremendous interest to all who teach, study, and practice public relations around the world.

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"It builds on the success of the first edition, which has been used in several universities throughout the world to teach how public relations is practiced."  
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"The editors set out to uniquely provide a text solely dedicated to international case studies. They have been highly effective in doing so, and their second edition brings fresh, contemporary content."  
—*Sandra Duhé, Ph.D., MBA; APR; Fellow, PRSA*

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**Public relations case studies examples** provide invaluable insights into how organizations manage their communication strategies, especially in times of crisis or when launching new products. Through these case studies, we can learn about the effectiveness of various PR tactics, the importance of audience engagement, and the impact of media relations on brand perception. This article explores notable public relations case studies across different industries, highlighting successful strategies and lessons learned.

## Understanding Public Relations Case Studies

Public relations case studies are detailed analyses of specific PR campaigns or initiatives carried out by organizations. They often showcase the goals, strategies, challenges, and outcomes of the communication efforts. By examining these case studies, PR professionals

can glean insights that help shape future campaigns and refine their overall communication strategies.

## **Key Elements of a Successful Public Relations Campaign**

Before diving into specific case studies, it's essential to understand what makes a public relations campaign successful. Here are some key elements:

1. **Clear Objectives:** Establishing measurable goals helps in evaluating the success of the campaign.
2. **Target Audience Identification:** Understanding who the message is intended for ensures that the communication is relevant and effective.
3. **Strategic Messaging:** Crafting clear, concise, and compelling messages is critical to capturing audience attention.
4. **Media Engagement:** Building relationships with journalists and media outlets can amplify the campaign's reach.
5. **Crisis Management Plan:** Having a plan in place allows organizations to respond quickly to unforeseen challenges.
6. **Evaluation and Measurement:** Analyzing the effectiveness of the campaign through metrics helps in refining future strategies.

## **Notable Public Relations Case Studies**

### **1. Starbucks and the “Race Together” Campaign**

In 2015, Starbucks launched the "Race Together" campaign aimed at fostering conversations about race in America. The initiative encouraged baristas to write "Race Together" on cups, sparking discussions with customers.

**Objectives:**

- Start a national dialogue about race relations.
- Position Starbucks as a socially responsible brand.

**Challenges:**

- The campaign faced backlash for perceived insensitivity.
- Many customers felt uncomfortable discussing race while ordering coffee.

**Outcome:**

- The campaign was short-lived, ending after just a week. However, it sparked significant media coverage and discussion about racial issues in America, compelling Starbucks to focus on internal diversity training instead.

**Lessons Learned:**

- Authenticity is crucial in social campaigns. Brands must be prepared to back up their initiatives with genuine actions and not just marketing gimmicks.

## **2. Dove's "Real Beauty" Campaign**

Launched in 2004, Dove's "Real Beauty" campaign aimed to challenge the beauty standards perpetuated by the media. The campaign featured real women of various shapes, sizes, and ethnicities.

Objectives:

- Promote body positivity and self-esteem among women.
- Differentiate Dove from competitors in the beauty industry.

Strategies:

- The campaign included advertisements, social media engagement, and workshops aimed at boosting self-esteem.

Outcome:

- The campaign resonated with millions, resulting in increased sales and brand loyalty. It transformed Dove into a leader in the beauty industry focused on real beauty.

Lessons Learned:

- Brands can effectively engage audiences by aligning their messaging with societal values. Authenticity and relatability can lead to increased consumer trust and loyalty.

## **3. Coca-Cola's "Share a Coke" Campaign**

In 2014, Coca-Cola launched the "Share a Coke" campaign, replacing its iconic logo with popular names on bottles. The campaign aimed to personalize the consumer experience.

Objectives:

- Increase sales and engagement among younger consumers.
- Foster a sense of community and connection.

Strategies:

- The campaign included a social media push encouraging customers to share photos of their personalized bottles.

Outcome:

- Coca-Cola reported a 2% increase in sales in the U.S. and significant social media engagement. The campaign successfully created a buzz and connected with consumers on a personal level.

Lessons Learned:

- Personalization can enhance consumer engagement. By making products feel unique to individuals, brands can foster a deeper connection with their audience.

## **4. Airbnb's Response to COVID-19**

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Airbnb faced a significant crisis as travel demand plummeted. The company had to act quickly to address the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Objectives:

- Maintain customer trust and loyalty during a turbulent time.
- Protect hosts and guests while ensuring safety.

Strategies:

- Airbnb implemented a flexible cancellation policy, prioritized health and safety protocols, and provided support for hosts affected by reduced bookings.

Outcome:

- The company managed to retain customer loyalty and successfully adapted its business model to meet new safety standards. This proactive approach helped Airbnb rebound faster than many competitors.

Lessons Learned:

- Agility and responsiveness are crucial during a crisis. Brands must be prepared to adapt their strategies to changing circumstances while maintaining transparency and communication with their stakeholders.

## **5. Nike's Colin Kaepernick Campaign**

In 2018, Nike featured former NFL player Colin Kaepernick in a controversial ad campaign, aligning the brand with social justice issues and the fight against racial inequality.

Objectives:

- Position Nike as a brand that supports social justice.
- Engage younger consumers who value corporate responsibility.

Strategies:

- The campaign featured the tagline, "Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything," alongside Kaepernick's image.

Outcome:

- The campaign sparked widespread debate and divided opinions, but ultimately resulted in increased sales and a boost in brand perception among younger consumers.

Lessons Learned:

- Taking a stand on social issues can be polarizing but can also resonate strongly with specific audiences. Brands should be prepared for backlash but stay true to their values.

# **Conclusion: The Importance of Learning from Case Studies**

Public relations case studies offer a wealth of knowledge for PR professionals and organizations aiming to refine their communication strategies. By analyzing both successful and unsuccessful campaigns, brands can better understand the dynamics of audience engagement, the significance of authenticity, and the necessity of being agile in the face of challenges. As demonstrated through the examples discussed, the world of public relations is ever-evolving, and continuous learning from past experiences is key to achieving success in future initiatives.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is a notable public relations case study that demonstrates crisis management?**

One notable case is the Tylenol cyanide crisis of 1982, where Johnson & Johnson faced a major crisis when several people died after consuming cyanide-laced Tylenol capsules. The company's swift action to recall all Tylenol products, transparent communication with the public, and commitment to consumer safety helped to restore its reputation.

### **Can you give an example of a successful rebranding through public relations?**

The rebranding of Old Spice in the 2010s is a prime example. Through a series of humorous advertisements and a strong social media presence, Old Spice shifted its image from an outdated brand to a trendy choice for younger consumers, significantly increasing sales and market share.

### **What public relations strategies were used in the Dove 'Real Beauty' campaign?**

Dove's 'Real Beauty' campaign utilized authentic storytelling, diverse representation, and social media engagement to challenge beauty stereotypes. The campaign included real women in advertisements and encouraged conversations about self-esteem and body image, leading to widespread acclaim and increased sales.

### **How did Starbucks handle the controversy over racial bias in its stores?**

In 2018, after an incident of racial bias, Starbucks responded by closing over 8,000 stores for a day to conduct racial bias training for employees. This proactive approach aimed to address the issue head-on, demonstrating the company's commitment to inclusivity and social responsibility.

## What is an example of effective public relations in the tech industry?

Apple's launch of the iPhone in 2007 is a classic example. The company generated massive anticipation through strategic leaks, exclusive previews, and a high-profile launch event led by Steve Jobs, which positioned Apple as an innovator and significantly boosted its brand image.

## What role did public relations play in the success of the Ice Bucket Challenge?

The Ice Bucket Challenge leveraged social media to promote awareness of ALS. Public relations played a crucial role in crafting a compelling narrative, engaging influencers, and encouraging participation, ultimately raising over \$115 million for ALS research and increasing awareness of the disease.

## Can you provide an example of a nonprofit organization effectively using public relations?

Kiva, a nonprofit organization that provides microloans, effectively used public relations by sharing compelling stories of borrowers through various media channels. This approach not only attracted donors but also created a strong community around the cause, increasing both funding and awareness of microfinance.

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