

Cause Marketing Strategies

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## **Cause Marketing Strategies**

### **Introduction**

Cause advertisement is used by companies to align a brand or product with issues in the society or beliefs that are important and then executing the campaign. Businesses use cause advertising as an opportunity to collaborate with a non-profit organization to promote a social topic that echoes its cultural and organizational values, which in turn boosts brand awareness and corporate image. By its very nature, if appropriately applied, cause marketing is a positive move in the company and advertisement realm. It is a strategy that creates a symbiotic relationship between the business and the society that needs further exploration to reach levels of maximum gains for both parties.

The use of cause advertising can have the effect of bringing huge gains for both the business and the society if the appropriate approach is employed. Choosing the right approach can be the most crucial factor in determining whether the campaign is successful or not and is not an easy task (Ashwini & Suresh, 2018). If a wrong approach is used and the wrong message is propagated to the audiences, there is a great chance of a backlash from the public which would mean a tarnished brand and corporate image. Hence, selecting the right rhetorical approach could be the difference between a successful cause-related marketing and a failed campaign.

### **Agree with Cause Advertising**

Based on the purpose campaign strategy of Lynx's Is it ok for guys (2017), it is evident that cause marketing could bring the desired effects and results to both the company and the society. More importantly, it is an indicator that the open and exploratory rhetorical strategy is the most effective approach towards certain issues of cause marketing such as that of toxic masculinity. It is an approach that allows the audience to immerse themselves into the societal

topic in question and motivate them to form opinions and beliefs that are unbiased or uninfluenced by the preexisting constructions. Lee and Johnson (2019) say that it promotes both de-constructivism and constructivism in a way that seeks the mindset to move towards the ideals in the society.

The campaign by Lynx aimed at using the power of advertisement in reproducing ideals and stereotypes in creating culturally acceptable ideals to address the age-long issue of hegemonic masculinity. The idea of hegemonic masculinity has permeated society for many years in a way that it has constructed an image of an individualistic, self-sufficient, and heroic man. Commercial advertisements have for many years reproduced these stereotypes of masculinity to an extent that it has infiltrated the numerous contexts of society. However, there has been a recent campaign in society and especially corporate advertisement to address the issue of male masculinity specifically challenging the traditional portrayal of the ideal man. Therefore, companies have attempted to harness this need in society by using advertisements to promote this cause (Lee & Johnson, 2019). In other words, businesses are employing their rhetorical strategies to subject the audience into specific positions about the issue and expect a potential transformation while also promoting their brands.

The Lynx campaign uses a collection of both videos and texts to create scenarios that promote the intended message that challenges toxic masculinity. The narrative and flow of the video put the audience in an open and exploratory way into investigating masculinity. The viewers are drawn into contexts that stimulate them to imagine male masculinity in different ways other than the advertisement creating these ideals and locking their minds in them. It gives the viewer the opportunity to investigate masculinity by asking the typical questions of 'Is it Okay to do something?' through various contexts that highlight various factors that constitute masculinity.

**Rhetorical approach**

This approach by Lynx can be considered to be very effective because of the point of view that it creates for the audience. In this case, the camera of the video serves as the eyes of the viewer or the main character in the depicted situations. This is a rather first-person persona that allows the viewer to immerse themselves right into the contexts of the video. This POV creates the aspect of empathy which allows the viewer to see the world through the perspective of another. Similarly, Brita calls on Canadians to get serious about World Water Day is a campaign that allows the audience to feel empathy. Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017) say that empathy is a powerful tool that effective marketing strategies should aim to activate in their campaigns. It has the effect of manipulating and playing with the emotions of the audience. If properly activated by sensitizing the viewer about these issues in the society, cause marketing could be a very significant vehicle for addressing issues of the society. Perhaps empathy is the most crucial aspect of the open and exploratory approach that stimulates the effectiveness of the engagement (Key & Czaplewski, 2017).

Challenging the stereotypes around male masculinity that have been reproduced for many years is not easy and that is why marketers addressing this issue need to be innovative. According to Elliott (2018), it would be easier to liberate the minds of the people instead of trying to reconstruct new ideals of a perfect man. Unlike Lynx, Gillette opted for a self-correction or self-reformation move, which was not received so well by the masses who perceived it as a recreation of another version of the perfect man. Although the message was noble and good, its delivery came short of exciting its target audience by distorting the core objective of the advertisement. Lynx instead freed the minds of the viewers from the constructed expectations of the ideal man and placed them in contexts that encourage other non-stereotypical masculinities. They are encouraged

to become tolerant and supportive of these non-stereotypical identities through positive imaginations.

It is now evident that the choice of style in brand advertisements that marketers choose to address societal issues such as toxic masculinity will determine the marketing goals for the business. Even if the objectives of the campaign are noble, how the message gets to the audience may have a significant bearing on the business gains of the advertisement. This is to say that tying business advertisements with a social issue could be a risky affair that could come back to harm the business (Mora et al, 2021). Huertas-García et al (2017) argue that instead of recreating new ideals to sell to society, a cause-related campaign should focus on supporting the viewers, being sympathetic to them, and giving them the opportunity to view the world from an open perspective. Just like the Lynx advertising was, according to Knudsen and Andersen (2020), open ironic and polysemic. In contrast, the Gillette video attempted to create a representation of the perfect masculinity that did not go well as expected. Nonetheless, both campaigns are based on noble intentions and they influenced some change in the traditional image of male masculinity.

### **Conclusion**

A cause marketing campaign has the potential of bringing many benefits to a company such as awareness, loyalty, and trust among the consumers and the general public. If done properly, both the business and the non-profit partner are set to gain. A proper strategy will develop a communication effect on the society or specific groups to change their perspective on a certain matter in the society. Lynx's 'Is it ok for guys (2017)' campaign used the POV of the viewer to a great effect allowing them to embrace tolerance of certain characteristics about the issue of toxic masculinity. The strategy Lynx employed enabled empathy and openness between different kinds of people, which stimulated liberal minds towards the matter.



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