Two Examples of Creative and Shocking Cause-Based Marketing Campaigns
Including one that uses lenticular lenses to create a hidden message for children

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Cause-Based Marketing Defined
Most of us believe the objective of every cause marketing campaign is to mobilize audiences to make a positive impact for social good [social good can be relative qualifier]. This sounds simple enough, right? As marketers, it is ingrained in our jobs to create meaningful connections with our target audiences to communicate not only our message, but the value of our message so they will take action. We understand the need for transparency, authenticity and relevance in both the development and implementation phases of our campaigns. So, how is cause-based campaigning any different from our regular marketing initiatives? The answer is not much different; however there are important considerations to be mindful of when undertaking cause-focused marketing. While the same marketing tactics and elements mentioned above (transparency, authenticity and relevance) must be incorporated into caused-based campaigns, we must also be aware of certain elements that affect the way we communicate social messages.

Cause Marketing Challenges
Cause-based campaigns are inherently emotional, they warrant an explicit requirement for social responsibility and, more often than not, there is an oppositional perspective that needs to be addressed. Another challenge of cause-based marketing emerges from the fact that many times, the crux of the campaigns deal with sensitive or difficult issues which people are hesitant to discuss, let alone take action. These issues must be approached in a delicate way. Cause Marketing, like all marketing initiatives, must resonate with the audience. No duh. However, a truly effective marketing campaign will successfully elicit an emotional response from consumers, and it is this emotional
trigger that activates consumers to take action for a cause. Besides having a deep understanding of your target audience, you must consider the value proposition of your campaign. What is your audience getting out of this? How is it relevant to them? If you want your audience to take action for a cause because it will make them feel well knowing they are helping others, then you must find specific ways to communicate that value to them. In addition, you must tell your audience what they can do. If your campaign is merely informational with no explicit call-to-action, the chances of actually motivating your audience to do anything beyond appreciating your ad are slim to none.

With cause campaigns, the risk of offending people is significantly higher than if you were marketing, for example, products to sell. When is the last time you saw someone offended by a commercial for laundry detergent? You can probably count the number, if any at all, on one hand. Now think of the number of times you heard someone offended by an ad for gun control or abortion? I bet the number is astronomically higher. Of course, I realize I chose two highly politicized issues, but how about advertisements for eating disorders or even child abuse?

The point here is that the issue at the center of your cause marketing campaign is often controversial and uncomfortable. There are two sides to every issue and marketers must take the extra initiative to fully understand both perspectives way before a campaign launch. Marketers must connect with audiences and strategize ways to energize them to make a difference, and that is no easy feat.

Two Examples of Effective Cause Marketing

1. **Shock Factor** – One cause marketing strategy marketers employ to trigger immediate emotional responses from consumers is through the use of shock advertising. A few years ago, *Business Insider* featured an article titled, “26 Incredibly Daring Ads That Were Made To Shock You.” True to its title, the article illustrates advertisements in all areas from children’s rights to animal rights to fashion ads, and each message contains elements meant to shock and awe.

This type of advertising, which often incorporates these scandalous elements, can be extremely controversial. The efficacy of such ads is often threatened by how consumers react to outrageous or shocking elements. Sometimes, these ads are greeted with intense backlash, and other times the shock factor communicates a message that is so powerful that audiences are willing to overlook the scandalous elements. The ad to the right was released by Star Models, a Brazilian modeling agency, and transforms a fashion illustration into a real-life model.
The message attached to the illustration says, “You Are Not A Sketch Say No to Anorexia.” Overall, the critical reception for the ads was relatively positive and many felt they were a huge step in the right direction for combatting anorexia in the modeling industry. On the other end, some critics of the ads felt they could have an opposite impression on women. Some even felt they promoted “thinspiration,” the term used to refer to the promotion of an anorexic lifestyle.

2. Creativity – Everyone knows creativity in advertising is a marketing-must. What I am more interested in focusing on is not so much the how, rather, I’m more interested in the why. So, why is having an ad that oozes creativity so important? It’s simple—creative ads have the potential for great pass-around value. Creativity leads to popularity leads to the opportunity for your ad to go viral. I am not saying that just because you have a creative ad, it will go viral, but I am saying that creativity is an integral element of viral marketing.

The ANAR Foundation, which is headquartered in Spain, is an organization that works to help children and teenagers in risk situations. The foundation recently shared a video describing one of its advertisements against child abuse. Published less than a month ago, the video already has over 7.6 million views and has been covered by multiple major news outlets.

The actual advertisement uses lenticular printing technology, which means that a different message is shown depending on the height of the person. In this case, children and potential victims of child abuse, see a different than message than adults, and consequently, their aggressors. The purpose of the campaign is to communicate to children who may be accompanied by their abusers. The video begins with a young boy walking up to the ad.
Adult Version vs. Child Version

For adults, the message translates, “Sometimes, child abuse is only visible to the child suffering it.” For children, the message translates, “If somebody hurts you, phone us and we’ll help you.”

Lenticular Technology
Video: ANAR Foundation Against Child Abuse

This is an impressive and clever cause-marketing campaign. The advertisement is both visually and technologically creative. Additionally, the YouTube video explicitly states the call-to-action in the title of the video (which has millions of views), which is “Anar foundation against child abuse needs funds urgently.” By all accounts, this is a prime example of a successful cause-based marketing campaign.

References

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