GEN Y-ERS AS CONSUMERS OF GOOD CAUSES
Examining Student Attitudes, Beliefs, And Behaviors on Cause Marketing
by: ANNIE PAUL - UNIVERSITY OF UTAH (@MsAnniePaul)

INTRO
1. CSR is how companies self-regulate and take accountability for their social and environmental impacts on their communities (Wood, 1993).
2. CM is how companies promote their socially responsible acts.
   WHY? To help worthy causes and improve a firm’s performance (Vasudevan & Mccormick, 1998).
3. If CM’s objectives are good, does it mean Gen Yers and students like my classmates and I view it positively?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. How do stakeholders react to CSR initiatives?
2. How can CM align with ethical business practices?
3. How do CM efforts impact the long-term success of a company?
4. How can CM integrate with the broader mission of a business?
5. How can CM initiatives contribute to the sustainability of a business?
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BUT WE DO CARE!

1. We pay more attention to CM campaigns (Cui, 2003)
2. Upon hearing about a company-charity partnership, 80% of 18- to 24-YOs (younger Gen-Ys) would switch to a cause-supporting brand (Cone, Inc. & Duke U., 2008)
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WHAT ABOUT MILLENNIAL STUDENTS?

1. Biz students kind of flunked out of being socially responsible.
2. One study even found that while they’re equally knowledgeable about, say the environment, as students of other majors, they’re less willing to act in environmentally friendly ways (Benton, 1994).

**Would “tomorrow’s business managers” (Benton, 1994) (i.e. business students) currently support both CM campaigns and the company-nonprofit partnerships they promote?**
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RELEVANCE
(Brief Summary)

"Businesses have been entrusted with society’s resources. Therefore, students must understand the social consequences—not only the economic consequences—of business decisions because they will have important [societal] implications later on. Business students’ values will be instrumental in the introduction of appropriate products and services" (Synodinos, 1990).
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METHOD

Surveys to students in four upper-div WRTG classes
  • Professional-Tech
  • Environmental
  • Business
  • Social Sciences
Why WRTG classes?
  Assumption of shared backgrounds
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SOME SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Goodness Cloud

- Goodness: Goodness is a measure of how positively consumers perceive a company's actions. Higher Goodness scores indicate more positive perceptions.
- Companies with higher Goodness scores are more likely to attract customers who value sustainability.

Their Comments Re: CM

- Most Common Positive Comments:
  - Companies should be transparent and honest with their customers.
  - Businesses should be more environmentally conscious.
  - Customers appreciate when companies make an effort to reduce their carbon footprint.

- Most Common Negative Comments:
  - Companies should be more transparent about their sourcing practices.
  - Businesses should be more socially responsible.
  - Customers feel被骗 by misleading marketing practices.

Comments, Continued

- "[Many] companies should use CM to help society and the bottom line of the businesses involved." (BRK)
- "Businesses do it, because 'nobody' wants to gain image/ade even through some see it as that way." (BRK)
- "CM can be 'dangerous'" (BRK)
- "Instead, some companies should work on making their products healthier and more environmentally friendly..." (BRK)
I would be willing to stop buying products from companies whose policies or actions work against social issues, even though it might be inconvenient.
work against social issues, even though it might be inconvenient.
It bothers me that businesses don’t do more to help society.
do more to help society.

Tech WRTG: 15% 33% 51%
Soc. Sci. WRTG: 13% 28% 56%
Env. WRTG: 9% 9% 77%
Biz WRTG: 20% 36% 44%
What do you think a company’s motives might be for partnering with a nonprofit organization?

[Top 3]

- Combat negative publicity: 79%
- Gain a better image: 98%
- Earn more profits & sales: 81%
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Goodness Cloud

GE Adidas Albertson's AMEX Coca-Cola Aquafina AT&T General Mills Barnes & Noble Beans & Brews “Grocery Stores” Best Buy Blindside Co.

Yoplait Blizzard Entertainment BP Brick & Mortar Arby's Brighton Resort Champion Cheerios Delta Airlines NFL Disney DMV Dollar Zions Bank Tree REI Dove ESPN Facebook Patagonia Finish Line Flying J "Fraternities" Fresh Market Starbucks Frito Lay Fruit Snacks The Price is Right Utah Jazz Gap GM Johnson & Johnson Nike Target Jordan Credit Union K2 NBA Keebler Kellogg’s

Kitchenaed Kraft "Local news stations" Lowe's Wal-Mart Macy’s Dell Megaplex Theatres MLB Murdoch Hyundai Nestlé Newman’s Own "Newspapers"

Tom's Nike Microsoft Nordstrom Odwalla Palmolive Smith's Patagonia Pepsi Petco Petsmart Whole Foods Phillip 66 Prosper Shell Sony Sprint Apple St. Jude's Hospital Student Lawn Services Subaru T-Mobile Home Depot The

Berrill's & Street League McD Jiffy Lube The Biggest Loser Toyota Tyson UPS Harmon’s USPS Verizon Wells Fargo Wendy's X96
Their Comments Re: CM

Most were Negative & Mixed:

- It “makes everything more expensive” (WSS)
- It’s more worth it to “support our local economy than anything else [by buying local]” (WSS)
- CM is “disingenuous, “manipulative,” and “leads to corruption” (PTW)
- “Businesses [that engage in CM] pry on people's emotions and it works” (PTW)
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Comments, Continued

• “[More] companies should use [CM] to help society and the bottom line of the businesses involved” (BW)
• Businesses do it because “sadly, [they] want to gain image/sales even though some are not that way” (BW)
• CM can be “dangerous” (WES)
• “[Instead, some] companies should work on making their products healthier and more environmentally friendly…” (WES)
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DISCUSSION/IMPLICATIONS
(Why this fascinates me)

1. The differences observed may be related to students’ areas of study.
   E.g., WES and BW students’ responses were more likely to differ.

2. Millennial university students (incl. Business students--thank goodness!) DO tend to support CM and CSR initiatives!

3. Just think of the potential for businesses AND business schools!
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