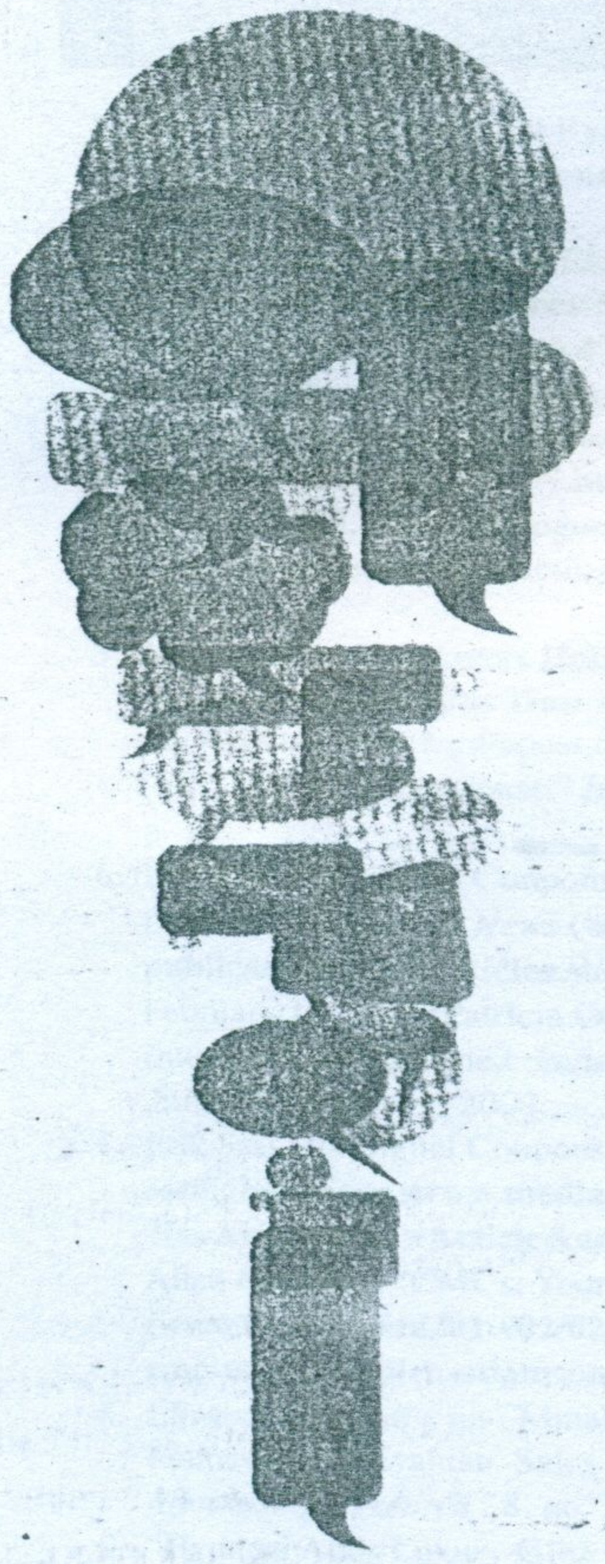
PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS

From Chapter 13 of *Integrated Advertising, Promotion, and Marketing Communications*, Sixth Edition. Kenneth E. Clow and Donald Baack.
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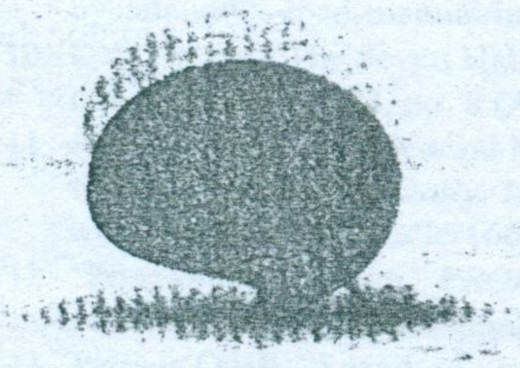


PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to answer the following questions:

1. What relationships exist between public relations and the marketing activities performed by a company?
2. How can the public relations functions help to build better relationships with all internal and external stakeholders?
3. What types of positive, image-building programs can be used by companies as part of a public relations program?
4. What steps can companies take to prevent or reduce image damage when negative events occur?
5. How can marketers tie sponsorships to public relations efforts to strengthen a customer base?
6. What role can event marketing play in creating customer excitement and brand loyalty?
7. Can public relations programs, sponsorships, and event marketing be adapted to international settings?



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INTERSTATE BATTERIES

WINNING COLORS

What's in a color? In the world of sprint racing, Interstate Batteries has achieved major notoriety using the colors green, red, and white. When combined with effective sponsorships and other marketing activities, brand recognition, brand loyalty, and brand "fans" have become the result.

Two decades ago, Interstate Battery Chairman Norm Miller and Joe Gibbs began a journey that has taken his company and their partnership to racing victories and marketing success. Interstate Batteries is the number one replacement brand battery in North America. The company consists of three groups: Interstate Battery



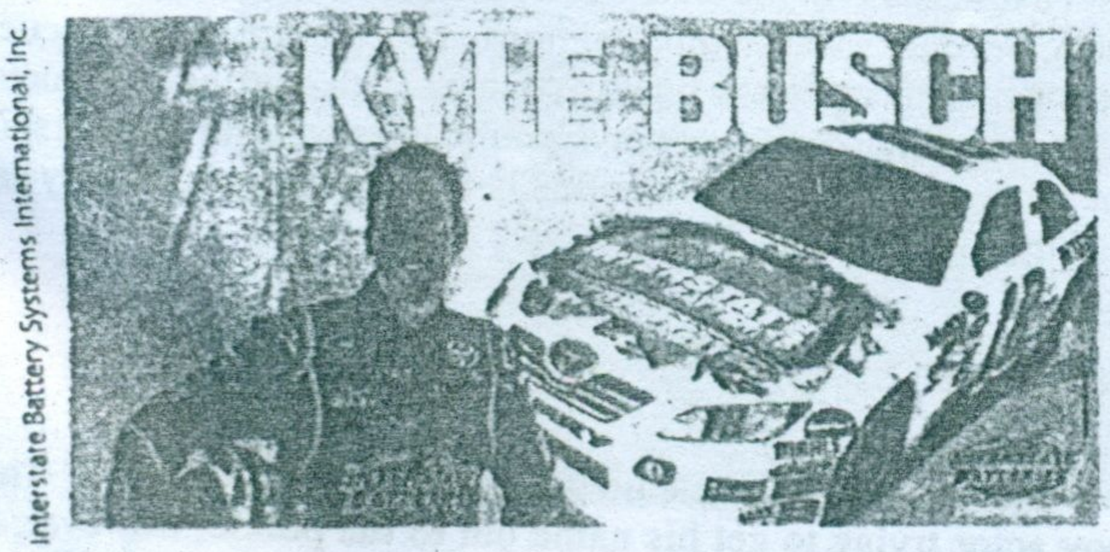
Interstate Battery Systems International, Inc.

System of America, Inc., Interstate All Battery Centers, and Interstate PowerCare. These organizations deliver over 16,000 products related to batteries and battery usage. Automotive batteries represent the Interstate's primary product lines.

The Miller/Gibbs journey began following the sponsorship of the Interstate Batteries Great American Race, which achieved considerable attention as a cross-country driving event designed to build the company's reputation. Stops along the way in 44 cities led to contacts with distributors, dealers, consumers, and media, with the goal of building the brand in the consumer marketplace as a "a real grassroots media program," according to Charlie Brim, Interstate's Manager for Advertising and Sponsorships. Interstate had achieved a favorable rating from *Consumer Reports*, and famous radio commentator Paul Harvey had made note of the rating during one of his programs. Interstate eventually became one of the sponsors of Harvey's show lending additional credibility to the product as a nationally-advertised brand.

As the Great American Race began to wind down, Miller began considering entry into another arena: NASCAR. At first, the races were in smaller venues, with the goal of reaching the target audience of mechanics and part store dealers, which were mostly male.

At that point, Joe Gibbs had achieved the pinnacle of football coaching prizes—two victories in Super Bowl with the Washington Redskins; however, he had always maintained an active interest (actually a "passion" according to Charlie Brim) in racing. The introduction of Miller with Gibbs led to the highly successful partnership. The team first moved to the Sprint Cup level, which is the top level of NASCAR racing. A relationship with championship driver Dale Jarrett resulted in numerous victories on the track, including an early victory at the Dayton 500, the most famous NASCAR race. The publicity associated with having a successful NFL coach involved in such a win generated substantial positive publicity for the team and for Interstate.



Interstate Battery Systems International, Inc.

To stand out on television and at the track, the Interstate Battery car was wrapped in a bright, florescent green color with the bright red number 18 featured prominently. Green had been a primary color on the company's batteries. At the time the color green had been associated with bad luck in racing, so the decision was indeed a bold move. In 2000, a new driver, Bobby Labonte, won the Sprint Cup series championship for the season. Later, Kyle Busch became the primary driver for the team, an affiliation that continues. Busch has become one of the highest winning drivers in the sport.

Interstate participates in NASCAR events through a hospitality tents near the racing venue that will house up to 650 guests. Interstate dealers, wholesale distributors, national account guests such as Honda, Toyota and other automobile manufacturers, retailers such as Firestone and Costco, prospective Interstate All Battery Center retail franchisees, the company's employees, and other company partners are invited to enjoy food, drinks, and mingle with Interstate executives and racing officials. Interstate employees and volunteers manage the tent—it is not farmed out to independent vendors, which is common practice in professional sports. Photos and autographs with Joe Gibbs and Kyle Busch are part of the event. At Texas Motor Speedway, Interstate's home race track, almost 100 guests can watch the race from the company's penthouse level luxury condominium with roof access for a bird's eye view of

the event. Joe Gibbs Racing sponsor partners with Mars, FedEx, Home Depot, and Toyota to tie-in with an Interstate promotion at various tracks, including accommodating each other's customers and guests.

When other racers began using similar green colors, Interstate shifted to a white car with a powerful company graphic in order to recapture attention. The decal displays a battery bursting through the hood, as if the battery is the primary source of the car's energy. The image now appears in a variety of company marketing materials, including route truck back decals; calendars, brochures, retail point-of-purchase signage, business cards, banners at various events, advertising, the company's Web site, and on a show car that travels around the country. If the Kyle Busch number 18 Interstate car wins a race, an e-mail blast is sent out offering an 18 percent discount on various pieces of merchandise at more than 200 Interstate All Battery Centers and on interstatebatteries.com.

Charlie Brim noted that Interstate reached the point at which it made marketing sense to cut back on the number of racing events and repurpose sponsorship dollars to continue building the brand. Interstate reached an agreement with Mars, Inc through Joe Gibbs Racing to divide the number of annual races between the two companies. For some events, the white hot Interstate Batteries wrap appears on the car; for the others, the same car will be wrapped with an M&M's, Snickers, Doublemint or other Mars' designs. Interstate diverted some of the funding that it saved by cutting back on races into national advertising on TV, radio, digital and mobile media to reach non-NASCAR fans and customers. Other sponsorships include a small position in JGRMX's motocross and super-cross team (owned by Joe Gibbs' son, Coy Gibbs) to target younger patrons and one in NHRA's Pro Stock division with former Champion, Mike Edwards.

Effective sponsorships and event marketing take advantage of the key strengths of a company and its partners. In the case of Interstate Batteries and NASCAR, the personal connection between Joe Gibbs and Norm Miller has helped the company to grow and achieve success over two decades.

OVERVIEW

The traditional promotions mix consists of advertising, sales promotions, personal selling, and public relations efforts. The first three elements in the mix have been presented. This chapter covers the fourth—public relations. Sponsorship and event programs are also examined.

Public relations efforts, sponsorships, and event programs contribute to the overall IMC approach. The same unified message appears in every marketing endeavor, from the appearance of the company's letterhead and stationery to advertisements, promotional items, information in press releases, and in any sponsorship program. Making sure that each component of a firm's IMC plan speaks with one voice remains the goal. Extending this objective to public relations and sponsorships constitutes an important task for the marketing team.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the nature of a public relations function within an integrated marketing plan. Second, sponsorship programs and event marketing tactics are outlined to show how the company can make quality contacts with existing customers, new prospects, vendors, and others. Successful positive public relations and sponsorship programs enhance the firm's image, and its brands become better known, because they are perceived more favorably in the marketplace.

Public Relations

OBJECTIVE

What relationships exist between public relations and the marketing activities performed by a company?

In Hollywood, one well-worn phrase is "There's no such thing as bad publicity." This may be true for a bad-boy actor trying to get his name out to the public; however, in the world of marketing and communications bad publicity can be worse than no publicity. Many business organizations spend countless hours fending off negative comments while trying to develop positive and noticeable messages and themes.

The public relations (PR) department manages publicity and other communications with every group in contact with the company. Some of the functions performed by the public relations department are similar to those provided by the marketing department. Others are quite different. The two may cooperate with and consult each other, yet each has a unique role. To illustrate, consider the two-pronged approach used by the Mexico Tourism Board to increase tourism. The first component of the campaign was a branding effort carrying the tagline "The Place You Thought You Knew." Second, public relations efforts designed to counter the drug- and violence-related U.S. media take place. Both are necessary to change Americans' perceptions of Mexico.[1]

Some marketing experts argue that public relations should be part of the marketing department, just as advertising, trade promotions, and consumer promotions are under the jurisdiction of the marketing manager. Others suggest that public relations activities are different and cannot operate effectively within a marketing department. Instead, a member of the public relations department should serve as a consultant to the marketing department. Still others contend that a new division, called the "department of communications," should be created to oversee both marketing and public relations activities.

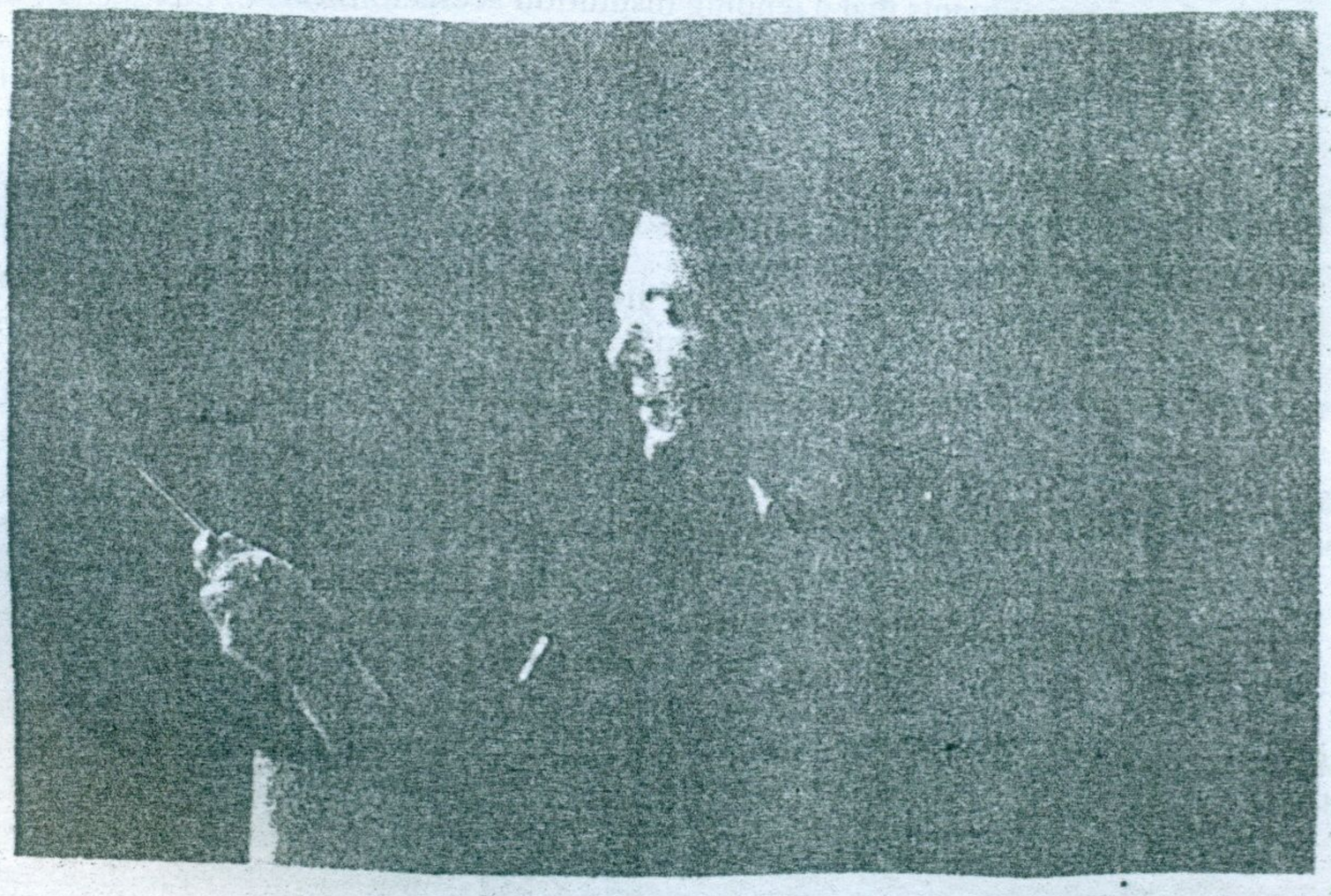
INTERNAL VERSUS EXTERNAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

Deciding who will handle various public relations activities constitutes the first major decision company leaders make. They can be managed by an internal public relations officer or department. Other companies hire public relations firms to complete special projects or all public relations functions. When a company retains a public relations agency, normally an internal company employee takes charge of internal public relations, because most public relations firms deal only with external publics.

The decision criteria used in selecting advertising agencies can be applied to selecting a public relations firm. Developing a trusting relationship with the public relations agency and clearly spelling out what the firm expects from the agency are high priorities.

PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLS

Public relations employees can utilize a number of tools. These include company newsletters, internal messages, public relations releases, correspondences with stockholders, annual reports, and various special events. Even the bulletin board in the company's break room conveys messages to internal stakeholders.



© micro10x/Fotolia

◀ Company leaders decide who should handle the public relations activities.

Capturing **hits**, or mentions of a company's name in a news story, constitutes one common goal of a public relations firm. Hits can be positive, negative, or neutral in terms of their impact. Each improves the chance that consumers will see the name of a company in a news-related context, which can increase brand or company awareness. This may be true; however, the agency also considers the type of image being portrayed. It may be a more prudent strategy to seek fewer hits and to make sure that each mention of the company in a positive light that reinforces the firm's IMC theme.

When employing a public relations firm, the agency's personnel should be familiar with the client's IMC approach. Then, members of the public relations firm can work on ideas that reinforce the theme. Special events, activities, and news releases may be developed to strengthen the company voice.

Public Relations Functions

OBJECTIVE 2
How can the public relations functions help to build better relationships with all internal and external stakeholders?

Public relations activities are not standard marketing functions. The marketing department concentrates on customers and the channel members en route to those customers, such as wholesalers and retail outlets. In contrast, the public relations department focuses on a variety of internal and external stakeholders, including employees, stockholders, public interest groups, the government, and society as a whole.

Figure 1 displays five key public relations functions. These tasks are completed by public relations personnel, whether they are internal employees or members of a public relations company hired to perform those functions.

Identifying Stakeholders

Each recipient of company communications is important. Any constituent who makes contact with a company should receive a clear, unified response. A **stakeholder** is a person or group who has a vested interest in the organization's activities. Vested interests include:

- Profits paid as common stock dividends
- Loan repayments that a lending institution seeks to receive
- Sales to the company or purchases made from the company
- Wages paid to employees
- Community well-being
- A special-interest topic

In essence, a wide variety of items can cause people or other companies to believe they hold a stake in the firm's activities. These stakeholders will be monitored and, when appropriate, become targets for public relations communications. Figure 2

▸ FIGURE 1
Public relations functions

- Identify internal and external stakeholders
- Assess the corporate reputation
- Audit corporate social responsibility
- Create positive image-building activities
- Prevent or reduce image damage

▸ FIGURE 2
Stakeholders

- Employees
- Unions
- Shareholders
- Channel members
- Customers
- Media
- Local community
- Financial community
- Government
- Special-interest groups

identifies the primary internal and external stakeholders that the public relations department monitors.

Communications to each of these stakeholder groups are crucial. To ensure consistency, the company develops a clear communication strategy that fits with the IMC plan and corporate image. The overall message to each stakeholder stays the same. Then, each message can be tailored to meet the different expectations of the various audiences. By customizing the content, style, and channel of communication, each stakeholder group receives a message that best resonates with it, yet it remains consistent with other messages.

In addition to sending communications to individual stakeholders, the public relations department closely monitors the actions and opinions of each group. When changes in attitudes, new views, or serious concerns develop, the public relations department remains ready to respond. The public relations department will be responsible for making certain all communications to each of these publics will consistently present the firm's message and image.

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Company leaders know the value of quality internal communications. Employees provide a powerful channel of communication to people outside the organization. They can either enhance or damage a firm's reputation. What employees say to others has a much higher level of credibility than what a company says about itself. Word-of-mouth communications, including informal statements by employees, impact purchasing and investing decisions.[2]

Employees receive a constant stream of information from the company. The same holds true for other internal stakeholders, such as corporate shareholders and labor unions. Many of these individuals are away from the marketing and public relations departments. They should still be aware of what the company seeks to achieve with the IMC program, even if this means presenting only basic information. Those closest to the marketing department, such as employees serving customers, will be more acutely aware of the nature of the IMC plan, including how the company's message theme should be transmitted to constituents.

The Motorola advertisement shown in this section states that the company's "Wireless Communications Centers help you stay connected." Employees who are aware of Motorola's theme can communicate the same message when dealing with customers, vendors, and other publics.

To communicate effectively with employees, the public relations department works closely with the human resource (HR) department. Publications and communications aimed at employees should be consistent with the image and message that the firm espouses to customers and others. When a firm advertises that its employees are always ready to assist customers, the public relations team makes sure employees are aware of the message. Employee behaviors should reflect the advertising theme being conveyed to customers. The HR department looks for and hires workers who are attracted to that approach. Performance appraisals and rewards can be structured to favor those who buy into the company's IMC approach. This emphasis on providing quality information about company activities extends to every public relations event and sponsorship program.

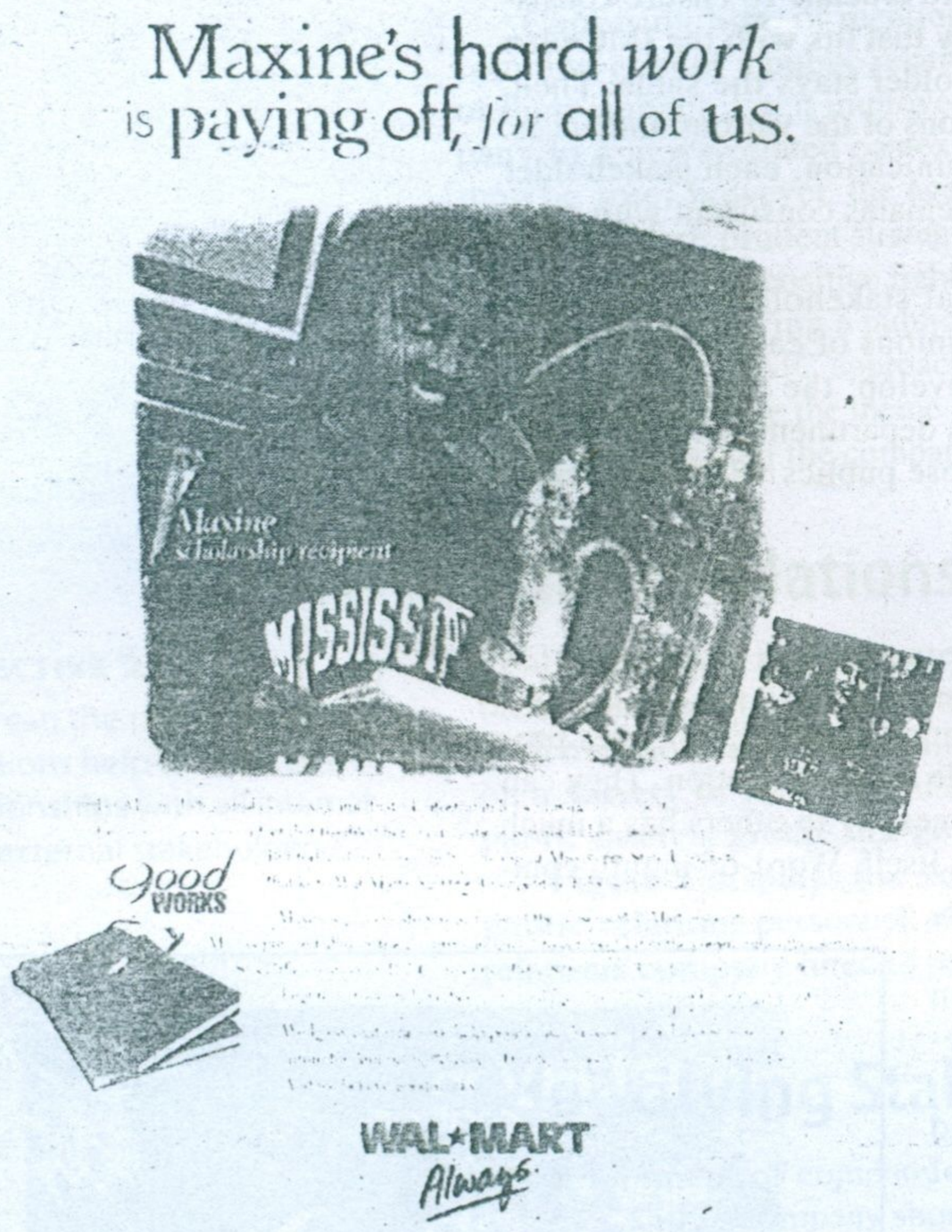


▲ Communications by the employees of Motorola should match the message conveyed in its advertising.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Overseeing external communications continues to be a daunting task, because the company has little or no influence over how external publics perceive organizational activities. External stakeholders include groups such as the media, the local community, the financial community, the government, and special-interest groups. The company has no control over what these groups say or how information about the company will be interpreted. The public relations agency continually disseminates positive information and quickly reacts to any negative publicity or complaints.

A totally integrated communications program accounts for all types of messages an organization delivers to internal and external stakeholders. Every contact point provides the opportunity for a quality message to be sent. The marketing department tends to create contact points with customers and potential customers. To complement this effort, the public relations department deals with the myriad of contact points that are not created or planned, yet may be just as critical. An unplanned contact point such as a news story or an individual talking to an employee of the firm at a social gathering allows the firm to build a positive image or minimize the impact of any negative messages that are circulating. Dealing with unplanned contact points will be challenging. Constant monitoring of what goes on around the firm is one key to keeping constituents satisfied while insulating the firm from negative publicity.



Courtesy of Wal-Mart.

▲ A Wal-Mart advertisement directed to employees, the local community, and other stakeholders.

Assessing Corporate Reputation

A corporation's reputation is both fragile and valuable. Well-received corporate and brand names enhance businesses during the good times and protect them when a crisis or problem occurs. Consumer decisions regarding which brands to purchase are influenced by a company's reputation. People also decide where to invest based on corporate reputations. Potential employees choose where to apply and work based on an organization's reputation.

Corporate scandals, accounting fraud, and the 2008 economic and financial crisis reduced the consumer confidence in the business community. The Edelman's Trust Barometer reported that 56 percent of individuals surveyed said they do not trust businesses to do the right thing.[3] Company actions as well as actions of individuals within an organization impact a firm's reputation. Figure 3 identifies activities that can harm an organization's reputation and activities that can enhance a firm's reputation.

▶ FIGURE 3
Activities that affect a company's image

Image-Destroying Activities	Image-Building Activities
• Discrimination	• Empowerment of employees
• Harassment	• Charitable contributions
• Pollution	• Sponsoring local events
• Misleading communications	• Selling enviromentally safe products
• Deceptive communications	• Outplacement programs
• Offensive communications	• Supporting community events

Assessing and managing a company's reputation will be as important as promoting its products. Yet, with all that is at stake, fewer than half of the companies in the United States have someone assigned to monitor corporate reputation. As a result, many company leaders have little idea what consumers, investors, employees, and the public think or say about the firm. A company cannot effectively pursue a public relations program when company leaders do not know what people believe about the organization.

Assessment begins when surveys and interviews are conducted to reveal perceptions of an organization. Monitoring of online chatter, tweets, and social networks produces additional information. These efforts can be completed internally or are performed by an outside company, such as a public relations firm. Examining both external and internal views of the corporation's reputation produces a complete view of the organization.

Auditing Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the obligation an organization has to be ethical, accountable, and reactive to the needs of society. It means companies align values for the greater good of society and take actions that have a positive effect. Globalization and increased pressures from the public for corporate transparency have led to an increasing emphasis on social responsibility. Bradley K. Googins, director of the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship, stated that "Quality used to be the difference between brands, then it was technology. Now, it really comes back to reputation. It's really the question of who you want to do business with and that relationship with the consumer and the product."[4]

Business experts agree that socially responsible firms are more likely to thrive and survive in the long term. Companies engaged in positive activities generate quality publicity and engender customer loyalty. Firms that work to eliminate unfair practices, pollution, harassment, and other negative activities are more likely to stay out of court, and the company suffers fewer negative word-of-mouth comments by unhappy employees or consumers. Managing these activities properly can lead to a positive corporate image.

The organization's top management team works in conjunction with department managers to oversee the corporate social responsibility audit. Often, external agencies provide guidelines. A social responsibility audit makes sure the organization has clear-cut ethical guidelines for employees to follow and that the company serves the interests of all publics. Guidelines include use of a corporate or professional code of ethics, specifying activities that would be construed as being unethical, and statements about the positive activities a company can pursue. Many firms also offer access to "ethics hotlines," where employees can call or e-mail to discuss specific ethical dilemmas. A firm found to be deficient during a social responsibility audit should take clear steps to resolve the problems.

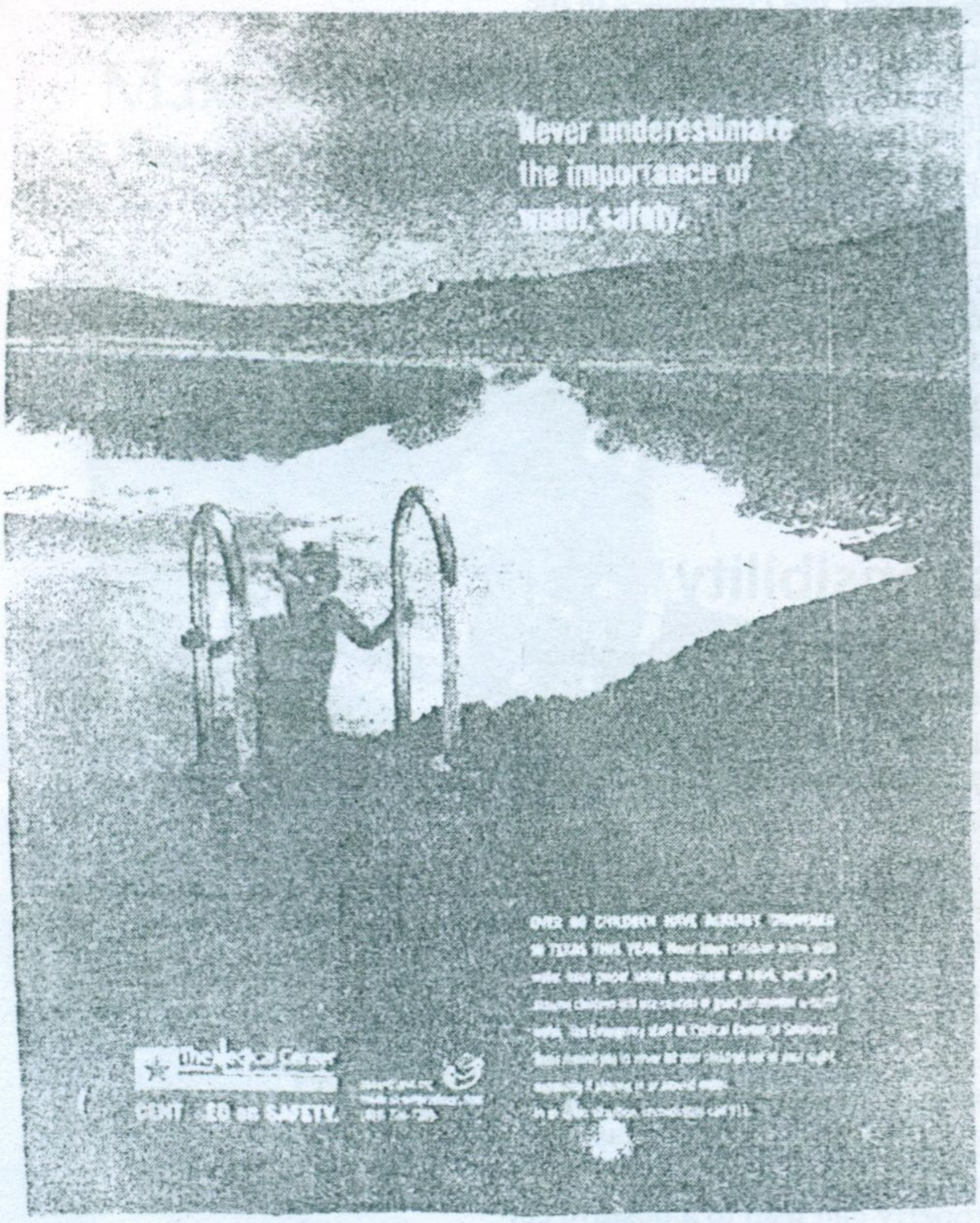
The public relations department makes sure internal publics are aware of a corporation's social responsibility efforts. The department then informs the general public about these activities while seeking to enhance the firm's image.

Creating Positive Image-Building Activities

In an effort to positively influence the views that consumers and other stakeholders have about a company, many firms engage in cause-related marketing and green marketing. These planned events draw positive attention to the organization as a solid corporate citizen, one committed to social responsibility. The public relations department sends out messages in the form of press releases and holds press conferences to highlight these positive, image-building activities.

OBJECTIVE

What types of positive, image-building programs can be used by companies as part of a public relations program?



Courtesy of Alliance One Advertising

▲ This ad for the Medical Center of Southeast Texas emphasizes water safety.

CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING

A **cause-related marketing** program ties marketing activities with a charity in order to generate goodwill. U. S. businesses pay over $1.5 billion each year for the right to use a nonprofit organization's name or logo in company advertising and marketing programs.[5] This type of partnership agreement between a nonprofit cause and a for-profit business assumes that consumers prefer to purchase from companies that seek to support a good cause. Marketers engage in cause-related marketing to develop stronger ties and to move consumers, as well as businesses, toward brand loyalty. A Cone Communications and Roper Starch Worldwide survey revealed that:

- 78 percent of consumers are more likely to purchase a brand associated with a cause they care about.
- 54 percent would be willing to pay more for a brand that is associated with a cause they care about.
- 66 percent would switch brands to support a particular cause.
- 84 percent indicated that cause-related marketing creates a more positive image of a company.[6]

In the past, some companies donated to causes with little thought to the impact or benefit of such gifts. These philanthropic efforts were expected of big business. Today, most companies try to achieve some type of benefit. Although company leaders view a charity as worthwhile, supporting that charity ought to, in some way, produce a tangible benefit. Possible benefits include:

- Additional customers
- Increased profits
- Consumer goodwill for the future
- Better relations with governmental agencies
- Reduced negative public opinion

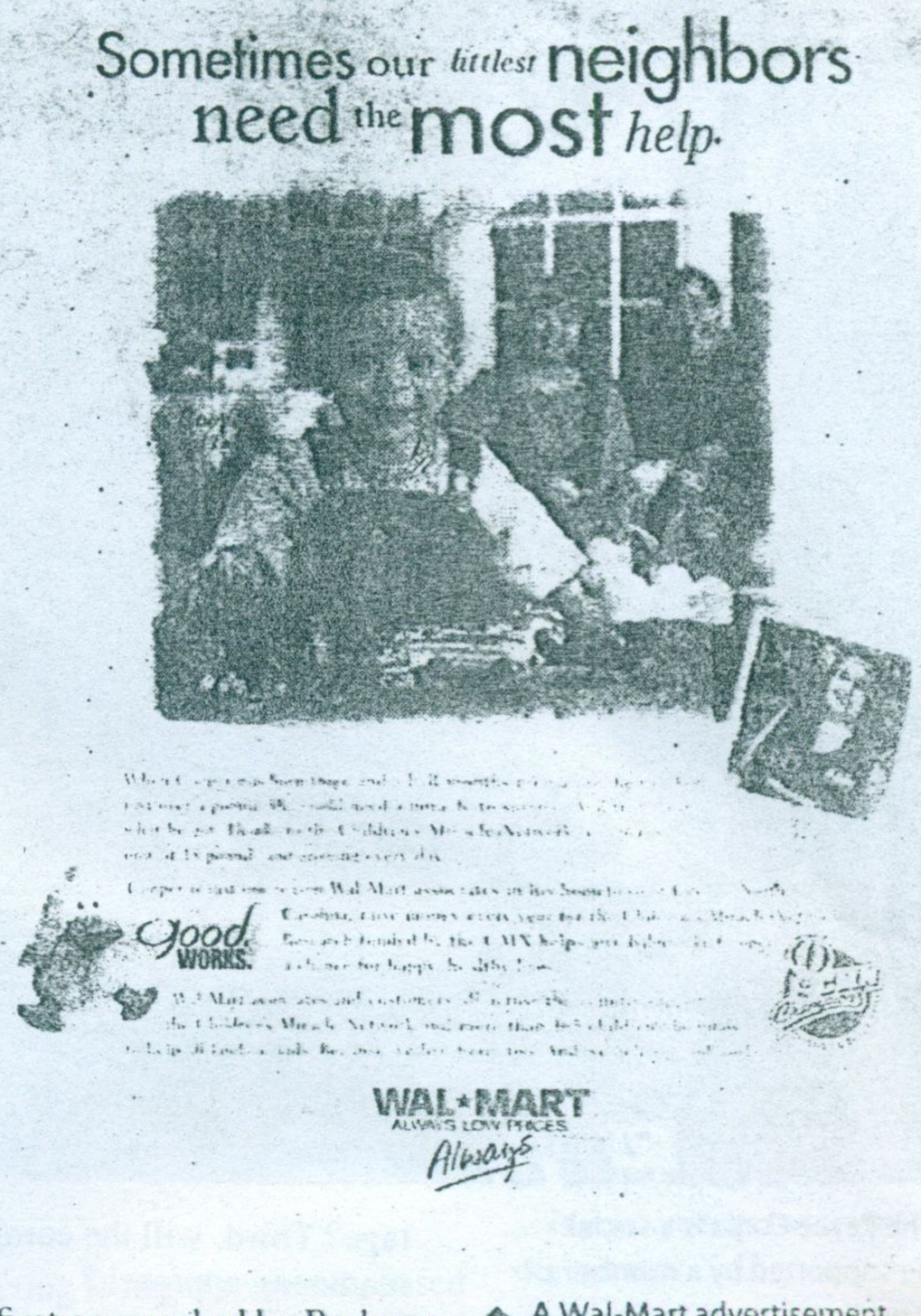
These benefits lead companies to get involved. Relationships that do not yield positive benefits to the business sponsor do not last long. In choosing a cause, the marketing team focuses on issues that relate to the company's business. Supporting these efforts makes the activity more credible to consumers. When the company supports an unrelated cause, consumers may conclude that the business merely seeks to benefit from the nonprofit's reputation. This may lead some to stop buying the company's products or to believe the company wishes to cover up unethical behaviors. Many consumers have become even more skeptical about the motives behind giving to various charities. Even though most people understand that a business must benefit from the relationship, they still tend to develop negative views when they believe that the business exploits a relationship with a nonprofit.

When a fit exists, positive reactions emerge. Purina One placed QR codes on the front of select dry cat and dog foods. For each person that scanned the code, Purina One donated $1 to feed shelter pets. The company also placed a 4-question quiz on its Facebook page, challenging people's negative perceptions of adopting shelter pets. For each person that completed the quiz, Purina One donated one bowl of food to a shelter in need.[7]

In addition to social media-based cause-related marketing programs, companies also use games. Social gaming company Zynga produces games such as Farmville, CityVille and Mafia Wars that reach over 230 million players a month. After the earthquake and tsunami hit Japan, Mark Pincus, CEO of Zynga, incorporated cause marketing into 10 of the company's games by creating a virtual fan to blow virtual air. Players could purchase the virtual fan for $5, with all of the proceeds going to relief efforts in Japan. The campaign lasted one week and raised $600,000.[8]

Benefits to Nonprofit Organizations Cause-related marketing also assists nonprofit organizations. Competition has increased in both the business world and the nonprofit world. An increasing number of nonprofit organizations compete for contributions and gifts. Strategic relationships with businesses can boost contributions to a nonprofit organization. A General Mills Yoplait campaign recently raised over $10 million for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Featuring the slogan, "Save Lids to Save Lives," General Mills donated 10 cents for each Yoplait lid that was returned by consumers.[9] The relationship resulted in direct increases in revenues for Yoplait and positive publicity for the foundation.

Most of the time, corporate leaders select the nonprofits they wish to support. Occasionally, the reverse occurs. Alice Berkner, founder of the International Bird Rescue Research Center, obtained a small grant to test major dish soaps for cleaning birds harmed by oil spills. Procter & Gamble's Dawn detergent worked the best. When first approached by Berkner about supporting the cause, P&G turned her down. Then, during the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, volunteers used Dawn on the oil-covered birds to remove the black crude. Media coverage was extensive. Now Dawn donates around $100,000 annually to the research center. A television commercial created by Kaplan Thaler Group shows a baby duck, penguin, and seal being washed by Dawn. There is no voice-over, just the song "Wash Away" sung by Joe Purdy. The copy on the screen states that Dawn has helped save *thousands* of animals caught in oil spills.[10]



▲ A Wal-Mart advertisement highlighting a social cause.

Courtesy of Wal-Mart.

A complex linkage exists between public relations and cause-related marketing. To benefit from cause-related marketing, company leaders want publicity. Yet, if the company publicizes too much, people think the cause is only being used for commercial gain. In a survey of British consumers, the vast majority said a company should spend funds on communications about cause-related efforts. The same survey indicated that two-thirds also said the amount spent should not be significant. The majority of those surveyed said their purchase decisions are influenced by the causes a company supports. This makes informing people about a company's activities; however, doing so involves walking a thin line between publicizing and what might be viewed as corporate self-aggrandizement.[11]

GREEN MARKETING AND PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Green marketing is the development and promotion of products that are environmentally safe. Most consumers favor green marketing. One recent survey indicated that 58 percent of Americans try to save electricity, 46 percent recycle newspapers, 45 percent return bottles or cans, and 23 percent buy products made from or packaged in recycled materials.[12]

Although consumers say they support green marketing and environmentally safe products, actual purchases of such products only occur when all things are considered



Courtesy of Scott Lowden Magnum Photos; Peace Corps.

▲ The Peace Corps is a social cause supported by a number of companies.

equal. Most consumers often will not sacrifice price, quality, convenience, availability, or performance for the sake of the environment. According to David Donnan, a partner with consulting firm A.T. Kearny, "Every consumer says I want to help the environment. I'm looking for eco-friendly products. But, if it's one or two pennies higher in price, they're not going to buy it. There is a discrepancy between what people say and what they do.[13]

To benefit from green marketing, the company identifies the market segments that are most attracted to environmentally-friendly products. In the U.S., consumers can be divided into five segments based on their propensity to use green products and their attitudes about environmental issues. Only 9 percent of American consumers are classified as "True Blue Greens," and another 6 percent are classified as "Greenback Greens." The True Blue Greens are active environmentalists who support environmentally safe products and shop for green brands. The Greenback Greens purchase environmentally safe products, but are not politically active. The other three groups, Sprouts, Grousers, and Basic Browns, are less committed or not committed to environmental protections.[14]

Company leaders choose the green marketing strategy that matches the target market. In making a choice about the degree of emphasis to place on green marketing, managers ask three questions. First, what percentage of the company's customer base fits into the green marketing segments? Second, can the brand or company be differentiated from the competition along green lines in such a way that it can become a competitive advantage? Third, will the company's current target market be alienated by adopting a green marketing approach?

Promoting Green Activities Almost all firms say they are pro-environment and provide information on company Web sites about environmental activities. The amount of effort given to publicize these activities varies widely.[15] Coca-Cola tries to protect the environment, but most people are unaware of the company's efforts. Coca-Cola has invested in various recycling programs and recyclable package designs but does not publicize the activities, because of concerns that doing so might reduce the product's appeal to some of the company's audience or hurt sales.

Promoting the direct, tangible benefits of a product first, with the environmental benefits presented as secondary factors, can be an alternate approach. The Toyota Prius was launched with an emphasis on fuel efficiency. Consumers were told they would spend less on gas. The fact that the Prius was an environmentally-advanced, fuel-efficient hybrid vehicle was mentioned, but not stressed. The idea was that strong environmentalists would believe buying a hybrid car is important. For those who were not strong environmentalists, it did not matter, because the car delivered fuel efficiency.

For some companies, environmental activities are integrated into the company's business design and marketing approach. This occurs when the primary customer base consists of True Blue Greens and the Greenback Greens. Examples of these types of companies include The Body Shop, Patagonia, Honest Tea, and Seventh Generation. Honest Tea embeds social responsibility into every company activity, from the manufacturing process to the marketing of products. The company features biodegradable tea bags, organic ingredients, and community partnerships. Honest Tea's marketing program focuses on concern for and support of environmental and social issues.

Seventh Generation has produced natural-ingredient cleaning products for 21 years. Although well-known to environmentally-conscious shoppers, including its 27,000 fans on Facebook, few people had ever heard about the Seventh Generation brand. To increase awareness, the company's leaders hired Minneapolis-based Carmichael Lynch to develop a series of print and television commercials about the brand's safety and green ingredients. Print ads appeared in *Good Housekeeping* and *Parents*. TV ads were aired on Bravo, the Food Network, the USA Network, as well as on the *Today Show* and *Ellen*. Video preroll and banner ads appeared on Web sites such as Hulu, iVillage, Yahoo!, Facebook, Lifetime, and Good Housekeeping. The campaign's goal was to educate consumers about the products and the importance of protecting the environment.[16]

Greenwashing Most business leaders believe their companies should be involved in protecting the environment and creating green products; however, the marketing emphasis varies. Some companies that have claimed to make green products have been exposed by bloggers who point out that the efforts are not truly green. Faking green, or **greenwashing**, damages a company's reputation when such information appears on blogs and other social media. Honesty and transparency are important ingredients in an environmentally-friendly IMC program.



Courtesy of Scott Lowden Magnum Photos; Peace Corps.

▲ This Peace Corps advertisement asks young adults to join the organization.

OBJECTIVE 4

What steps can companies take to prevent or reduce image damage when negative events occur?

Preventing or Reducing Image Damage

One important public relations function, **damage control**, is reacting to negative events caused by a company error, consumer grievances, or unjustified or exaggerated negative press. Bad publicity and negative events quickly damage corporate and brand image. A strong company image that took years to build can be rapidly destroyed. British Petroleum (BP) continues to suffer from the negative publicity surrounding the 2010 spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Bad news travels fast and hits hard. A Jet Blue incident in which passengers were essentially forced to sit in a plane on the ground for many hours due to bad weather damaged the company's reputation for quality customer service. Company leaders tried to respond rapidly in order to limit the harm to Jet Blue's image.

The media does not generate all negative publicity. Sometimes it comes from word-of-mouth communication from customers, employees, or other individuals connected with the company. With the Internet, bad experiences and negative comments can be posted and spread to thousands in a very short time through social networks, blogs, and Twitter.

Damage control applies to two situations. The first occurs when the firm has made an error or has caused legitimate consumer or public grievances. The second takes place when unjustified or exaggerated negative press appears. Defending an organization's image and handling damage control takes two forms: proactive prevention strategies and reactive damage-control strategies (see Figure 4 on the next page).

PROACTIVE PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Proactive prevention means that rather than waiting for harmful publicity to appear and then reacting, many firms charge certain employees with minimizing the effects of any future bad press in advance. These approaches may prevent negative publicity



Fotofreundin/Fotolia

▲ Companies such as Honest Tea and Seventh Generation have demonstrated a concern for the environment.

from emerging in the first place. Two proactive prevention techniques are entitlings and enhancements.[17] **Entitlings** are attempts to claim responsibility for positive outcomes of events. **Enhancements** are attempts to increase the impact of the desirable outcome of an event in the eyes of the public.

Entitling takes place when a firm associates its name with a positive event. For example, being the official sponsor of a U.S. Olympic team that wins a gold medal ties the company's name to the athletic achievements of people who do not work for the firm, yet the firm can claim responsibility for some aspect of their successes.[18]

Enhancements occur when the marketing or public relations department suggests that something relatively small is a bigger deal. Many products that are fat free create the impression that they are diet foods. In fact, many fat-free products have just as many calories as do those that contain fat. Still, a fat-free label might convince customers that the company has tied to help them by offering healthy food that will allow them to watch their weight.

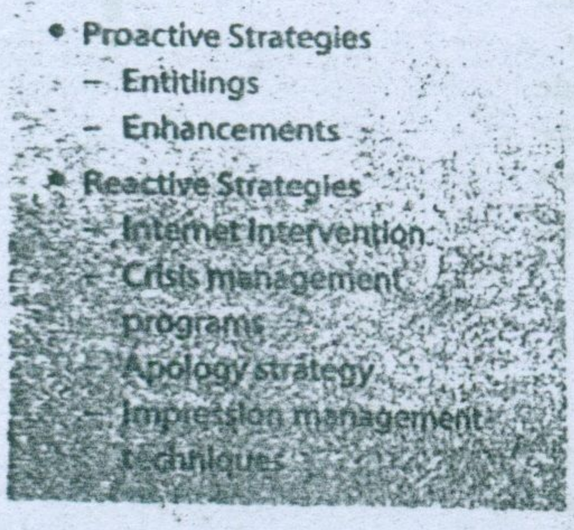
REACTIVE DAMAGE-CONTROL STRATEGIES

Company leaders often must react to unforeseen events. In these instances, managers work diligently to blunt the effects of unwanted bad publicity by every means possible. Crisis management and other techniques help the firm cope with circumstances that threaten its image. Reactive damage-control strategies include Internet interventions, crisis management programs, apology strategies, and impression management techniques.

Internet Interventions Firms combat negative online word-of-mouth with **Internet interventions**. Many new forums for consumers to share negative word-of-mouth and spread bad experiences have emerged, including e-mail, social networks, blogs, and Twitter. Consumers from around the world share horror stories about companies or products. Individuals can say anything online, even when it unfairly portrays various industries, companies, or brands.

These outlets create many venues for people to vent emotions, which can injure a company's reputation. Companies such as Ford, Pepsi, and Southwest Airlines use software and assign employees to monitor Internet postings, blogs, and tweets. Even with these technological tools, monitoring everything said about a company remains a daunting task. It can involve hundreds of posts per day. Employees must quickly decide which to investigate further. Marcus Schmidt, a senior marketing manager for Microsoft suggests, "If you start seeing a lot of people retweeting it, then you know to pay attention."

Last year, Coke's software identified a Twitter post by a frustrated consumer who was not able to redeem a prize from the MyCoke rewards program. The consumer's profile indicated that he had more than 10,000 followers. Adam Brown, Coke's head of social media, posted an apology on the individual's Twitter profile and offered to help. The consumer received the prize. He later changed his Twitter avatar to a photo of himself holding a bottle of Coke. Brown noted, "We're getting to a point if you're not responding, you're not being seen as an authentic type of brand."[19]



▲ **FIGURE 4**
Damage-control strategies

Not every activity warrants a formal reaction. Still, monitoring the Internet keeps the company's leadership informed about what people are saying and thinking.

Crisis Management A company can either accept the blame for an event or offer an apology or refute the charges in a forceful manner in a **crisis management** program. A crisis may be viewed as a problem or an opportunity. Oftentimes, a crisis contains the potential to improve the firm's position and image.

When PepsiCo encountered claims that hypodermic needles were being found in its products, the management team quickly responded with photographs and videos demonstrating that such an occurrence was impossible, because the bottles and cans are upside down before being filled with any soft drink. Next, footage of a con artist slipping a needle into a bottle was shown. This fast and powerful answer eliminated the negative publicity, and Pepsi was able to make a strong statement about the safety of its bottling methods.

Unfortunately, some company leaders only make matters worse, as was the initial reaction of Toyota to quality problems with vehicles. Continual denials of quality problems were not received well when new problems kept emerging. Many consumers became angry when it was revealed that Toyota was aware of the problems for a long time without seeking to correct them. Eventually, the president of Toyota Motors, Akio Toyoda, was summoned to Washington to testify before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.



Courtesy of PepsiCo

▲ When reports surfaced of hypodermic needles in Pepsi products, Pepsi quickly reacted by showing the public how cans and bottles are filled.

Realizing its image was quickly eroding and the outcry against the company was building, Toyota launched a full-scale public relations campaign with print, television, and social media networks. Full-page newspaper ads and several television spots were quickly created in which Toyota announced a temporary halt in production followed by an apologetic, but reassuring, message that Toyota would pull through the crisis.

Toyota's errors in handling mainstream media were apparent to many marketing experts. At the same time, the company did manage social media outlets more effectively. Toyota created a social media response room staffed with individuals who monitored online conversations and responded to consumer concerns. Consumers received answers on Toyota's four Facebook pages and Twitter. Finding brand loyalists online, Toyota asked if they could repost their tweets, blogs, and videos on the Toyota social media outlets. The company then created a series of videos with customers and employees telling their stories that were posted to its YouTube channel and other social media sites. The social media PR effort may have helped save Toyota's brand image, at least in the online world.[20]

Apology Strategies Another reactive form of crisis management and damage, an **apology strategy**, occurs when an investigation reveals that the firm was at fault. First, a sincere apology should be offered quickly. An apology contains the five elements shown in Figure 5.[21]

Apologies are most often used in situations in which the violation is minor or in which the firm or person cannot deny responsibility. It can become an effective strategy

FIGURE 5
Elements of an apology strategy

1. An expression of guilt, embarrassment, or regret
2. A statement recognizing the inappropriate behavior and acceptance of sanctions for wrong behavior
3. A rejection of the inappropriate behavior
4. Approval of the appropriate behavior and a promise not to engage in inappropriate behavior
5. An offer of compensation or penance to correct the wrong

for creating a strong emotional bond with the public. Consumers are less likely to remain angry with a company that admits a mistake. When customers believe the apology was sincere and heartfelt, they normally forgive the company and feel more positively toward the organization afterward.

Impression Management Trying to project a certain type of image, or **impression management**, includes "the conscious or unconscious attempt to control images that are projected in real or imagined social interactions."[22] In order to maintain or enhance an image, individuals and corporations attempt to influence the identities they display to others. Each can be projected in a manner that maximizes positive characteristics while minimizing any negative elements.

Any event that threatens a person's image or a company's desired identity creates a predicament. When faced with one, concerted efforts are made to reduce or minimize the negative consequences. When the predicament cannot be avoided or concealed, then an individual or company engages in any remedial activity that reduces the potentially harmful consequences, including expressions of innocence, excuses, justifications, and other explanations.

An *expression of innocence* approach means company leaders provide information designed to convince others (clients, the media, and the government) that the company was not associated with the event that caused the predicament. In other words, they say, "We did not cause this to happen. Someone (or something) else did."

Excuses are explanations designed to convince the public that the firm and its leaders are not responsible for the predicament or that it could not have been foreseen. Thus, they should not be held accountable for the event that created the predicament. They say, "It was an act of God. It was totally unavoidable. It was the random act of an individual."

Justifications involve using logic designed to reduce the degree of negativity associated with the predicament. Making the event seem minor or trivial is one method. Making the argument that the firm had to proceed in the way it did ("We outsource some of the production process because if we don't we'll be out of business, and our other employees will lose their jobs") is another form of justification.

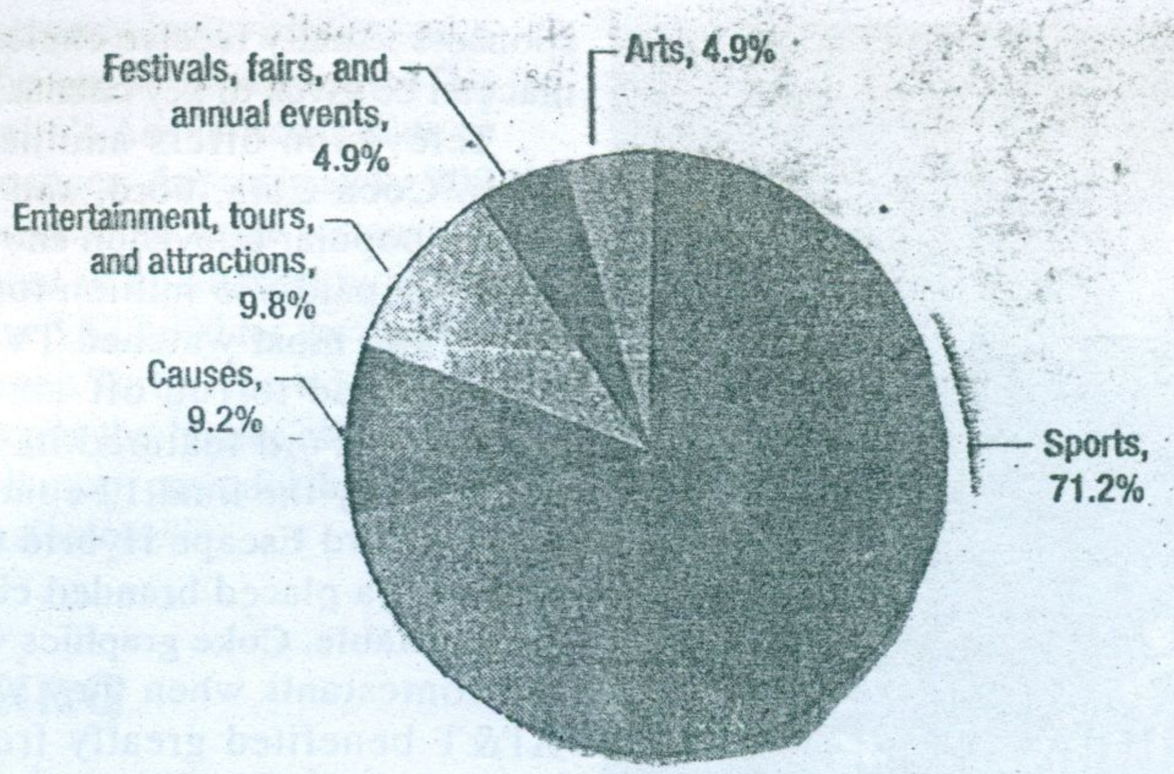
Other explanations may be created to persuade individuals that the cause of the predicament does not truly represent what the firm or individual is really like. In other words, the case was the exception rather than the rule, and customers should not judge the firm too harshly. You will hear comments such as "This was a singular incident, and not indicative of the way we do business."[23]

Each company's management team, marketing department, and public relations specialists should be acutely aware of the speed with which events can cause great damage to a firm's image. Both proactive and reactive measures can be taken to make sure the firm survives negative publicity with less long-term damage.

Sponsorships

OBJECTIVE 5
How can marketers tie sponsorships to public relations efforts to strengthen a customer base?

To build brand loyalty and other positive feelings toward a company, many marketing leaders utilize sponsorships and event marketing. These programs make it possible to meet with prospects, customers, vendors, and others in unique situations. People who attend sponsored activities or special events already have favorable feelings about the activity taking place. These positive attitudes are easily transferred to a company that has provided funding.[24]



◀ **FIGURE 6**
Marketing expenditures on sponsorships

Sponsorship marketing means that the company pays money to sponsor someone, some group, or something that is part of an activity. A firm can sponsor a long list of groups, individuals, activities, and events. For years, firms sponsored everything from local Little League baseball and soccer teams to national musical tours, NASCAR drivers, and sports stadiums.

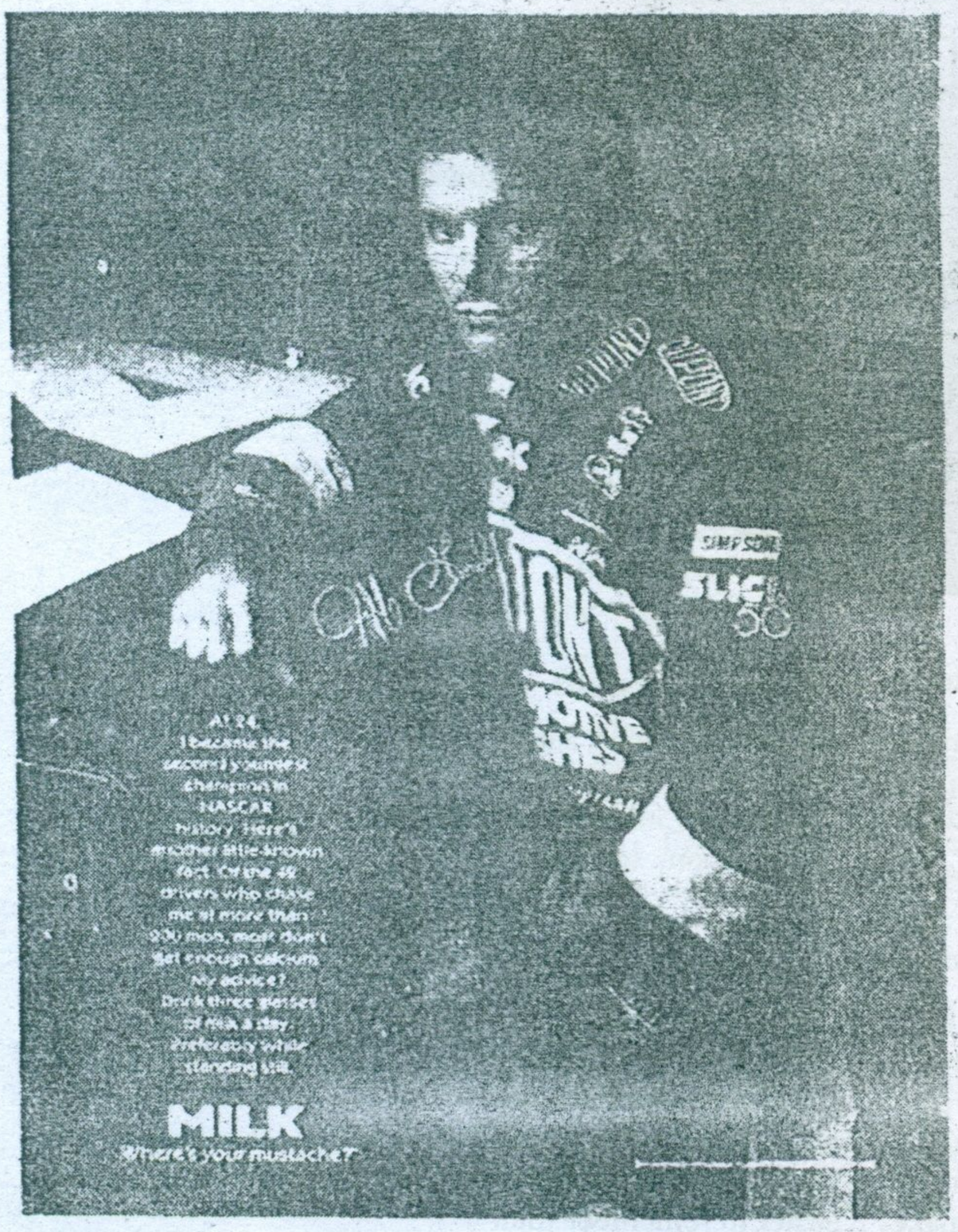
FORMS OF SPONSORSHIPS

In North America, companies spend approximately $16.3 billion each year on sponsorships and events.[25] Figure 6 provides a breakdown of the spending. Sports represent about 70 percent of all sponsorships. Sporting events are popular and often attract large crowds. In addition to the audience attending the game or competition, many more watch on television. Popular athletes can be effective spokespersons. If possible, the firm should be the exclusive sponsor of the person or team, which makes it easier to remember than when there are multiple sponsors.

Sponsorships were a major part of Ford's integrated advertising and marketing push for the Ford F-Series Super Duty pickup trucks. Although the integrated campaign included television ads, print ads, and online chats, the central component of the campaign was the sponsorship of Toby Keith's concert tour, entitled "America's Toughest Tour." The Ford F-Series trucks were highly visible at the concerts, with truck-themed set pieces on stage and at least one F-Series truck actually on the stage. In addition to the concert tour, Ford also sponsored a Monster Jam truck show and individual professional bull riders. The company sponsors the Future Farmers of America, the American Quarter Horse Association, and the Dallas Cowboys.[26]

Speedo used sponsorships to build customer loyalty and capture over 60 percent of the competitive swimwear market in the United States. Swimmers wearing Speedo's revolutionary LZR Racer swimwear design broke 38 world records. The full-body suit was created with the help of NASA and is worn by competitive swimmers all over the world. By sponsoring the U.S. Olympic trials and athletes, Speedo's market share grew rapidly until it became the swimwear brand of choice for even noncompetitive swimmers.[27]

Some organizations have moved away from sports sponsorships toward cultural events, such as classical music groups and jazz bands, visual art exhibits by noted painters, dance troupes, and actors for various theater performances. Cultural sponsorships are not the best match for every firm. They are most effective for products sold to affluent consumers. Consequently, financial institutions are primary sponsors of these types of performers and performances. In the past, many institutions provided funds without receiving much recognition. Now firms leverage philanthropic efforts by having the name of the company strongly associated with the cultural activity. This includes printing the name of the firm on programs and regularly mentioning the brand or corporate name as being responsible for arranging for the artist to be present at the event. Also,



Courtesy of Boxel Worldwide, Inc.

▲ In addition to milk, notice all of the corporate sponsors on Jeff Gordon's NASCAR uniform.

sponsors usually receive choice seats at performances that can be given to key clients.

Television offers another option for sponsorships. Coca-Cola, Ford, and AT&T chose to sponsor the popular television show *American Idol*. Each company paid $35 million for the right to be part of one of the most watched TV shows, to post online content, and to run off-air cobranded marketing programs. Ford featured its vehicles in music videos sung by the final 12 contestants. Ford also gave away a Ford Escape Hybrid to the top two finalists. Coca-Cola placed branded cups in the center on the judges' table. Coke graphics were also visible behind the contestants when they were being interviewed. AT&T benefited greatly from the sponsorship by being responsible for the text-message voting tabulations each week. AT&T also featured *Idol* downloads, ring tones, and videos of bad auditions and poor performances.[28]

Social Media and Blogs The newest format is sponsoring bloggers. Colleen Padilla, a 33-year-old mother of two and author of the popular Web site Classy Mommy (www.classymommy.com), has reviewed nearly 1,500 products, including microwave dinners, Nintendo Wii, and baby clothes. Her site attracts 60,000 unique visitors every month. Companies eagerly send her products to test and; if she likes them, to post positive comments on the site. When she does not like an item, nothing will be posted. Padilla tells her readers if the brand was sent to her. She also includes videos of brands, including Healthy Choice, labeled as "sponsored posts."

For some bloggers, such as Drew Bennett, product sponsorships have become a lucrative business. Bennett began with a photo-a-day blog that mushroomed into sponsored products at his site BenSpark.com. He has written more than 600 posts for firms such as X-Shot, a telescope camera extender. Bennett typically earns between $5.35 and $10 per post. Most product sponsors pay Bennett between 11 and 68 cents each time a reader moves from his site to the brand's site.

K-Mart used a similar approach to generate positive buzz. Through 800 blog posts and 3,200 Twitter messages, K-Mart reached 2.5 million people. The campaign began with six popular bloggers receiving a $500 gift card to shop at K-Mart and then writing about their experiences.[29]

SPONSORSHIP OBJECTIVES

It may be hard to measure the direct impact of a sponsorship program. Sponsorships can be designed to accomplish a variety of objectives. They can be designed to:

- Enhance a company's image
- Increase a firm's visibility
- Differentiate a company from its competitors
- Showcase specific goods and services
- Help a firm develop closer relationships with current and prospective customers
- Sell excess inventory

The Green Turtle restaurant built visibility and a positive image through the use of a sponsorship. The company sponsored Amelia's Ace of Hearts Ride to raise money for breast cancer. Approximately 200 of the 400 bike riders registered at the restaurant, and 300 people celebrated at an after-party in the restaurant. The event raised $28,000 for the charity. Leho Poldmae of The Green Turtle reported, "These events and sponsorships put the human aspect into marketing. They are much more powerful than ads in touching and reaching customers."[30]

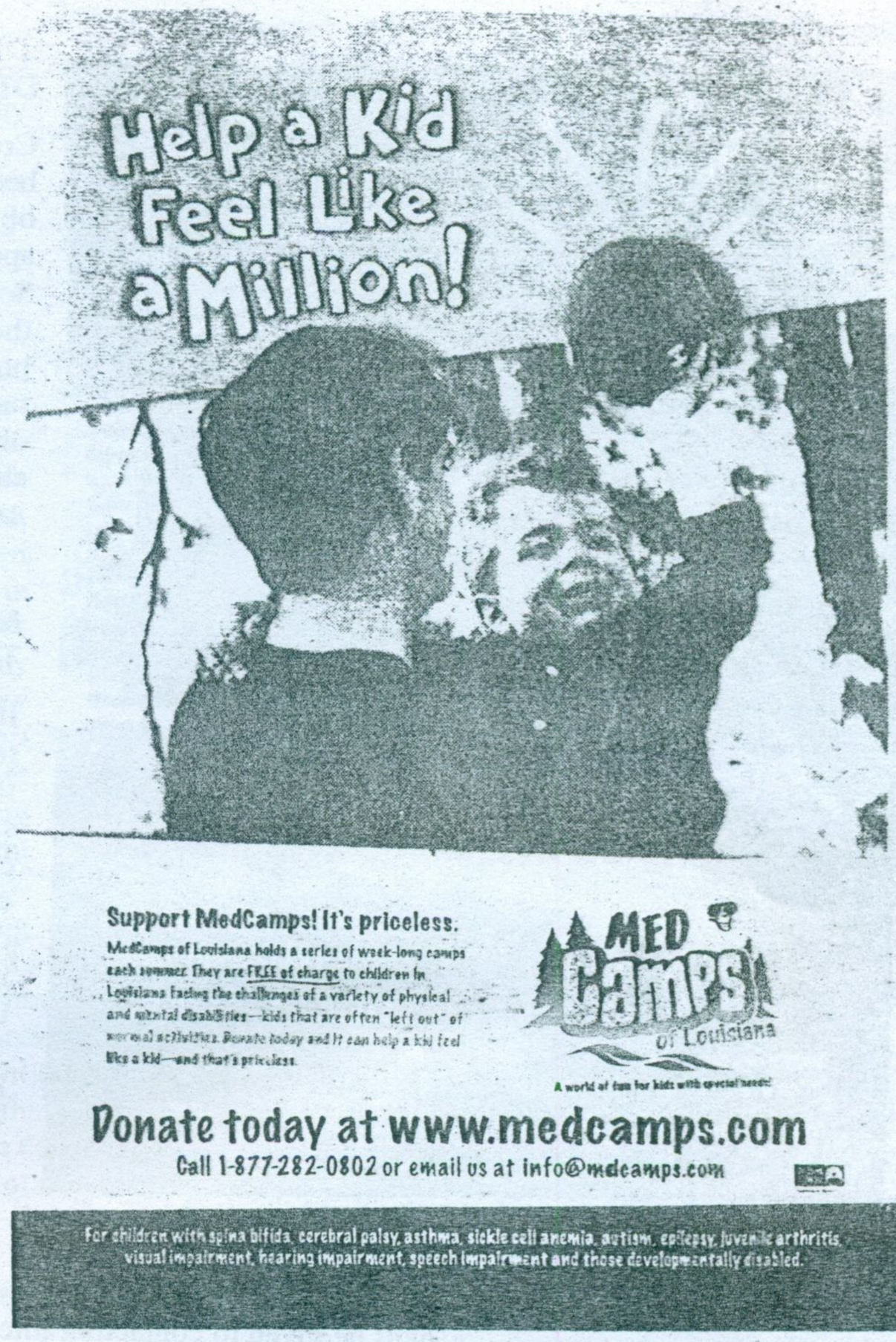
Event Marketing

Event marketing and sponsorship marketing are similar. The primary difference is that sponsorship marketing involves a person, group, or team. **Event marketing** involves a company in supporting a specific event. Event marketing and lifestyle marketing are closely related. Both often include setting up a booth or display and maintaining a physical presence at an event.

Sponsoring the right event provides a company with brand-name recognition and to develop closer ties with vendors and customers. Events also help boost morale for the employees who participate in or attend them. Sponsoring local events such as the Special Olympics provides a company with the potential to generate free publicity. These events can also be used to enhance the company's image in the local community.

As is the case with sponsorships, many event marketing programs feature sports. Other events are more related to lifestyles. A rodeo sponsored by Lee Jeans, a music concert put on by a local business, or a health fair conducted by a local hospital are all examples of event marketing.

Event marketing has proven to be especially successful with Hispanic consumers. It can be an excellent method of building brand awareness and building brand loyalty. Renata Franco of Cox Communications notes that, "Hispanics are much more community-centered. Events do really well." When Cox Communications sponsors a Hispanic event, the company employs bilingual brand ambassadors who can personally speak to attendees.[31]



Courtesy of French Creative

▲ Non-profits such as Med Camps of Louisiana often pursue corporate sponsors.

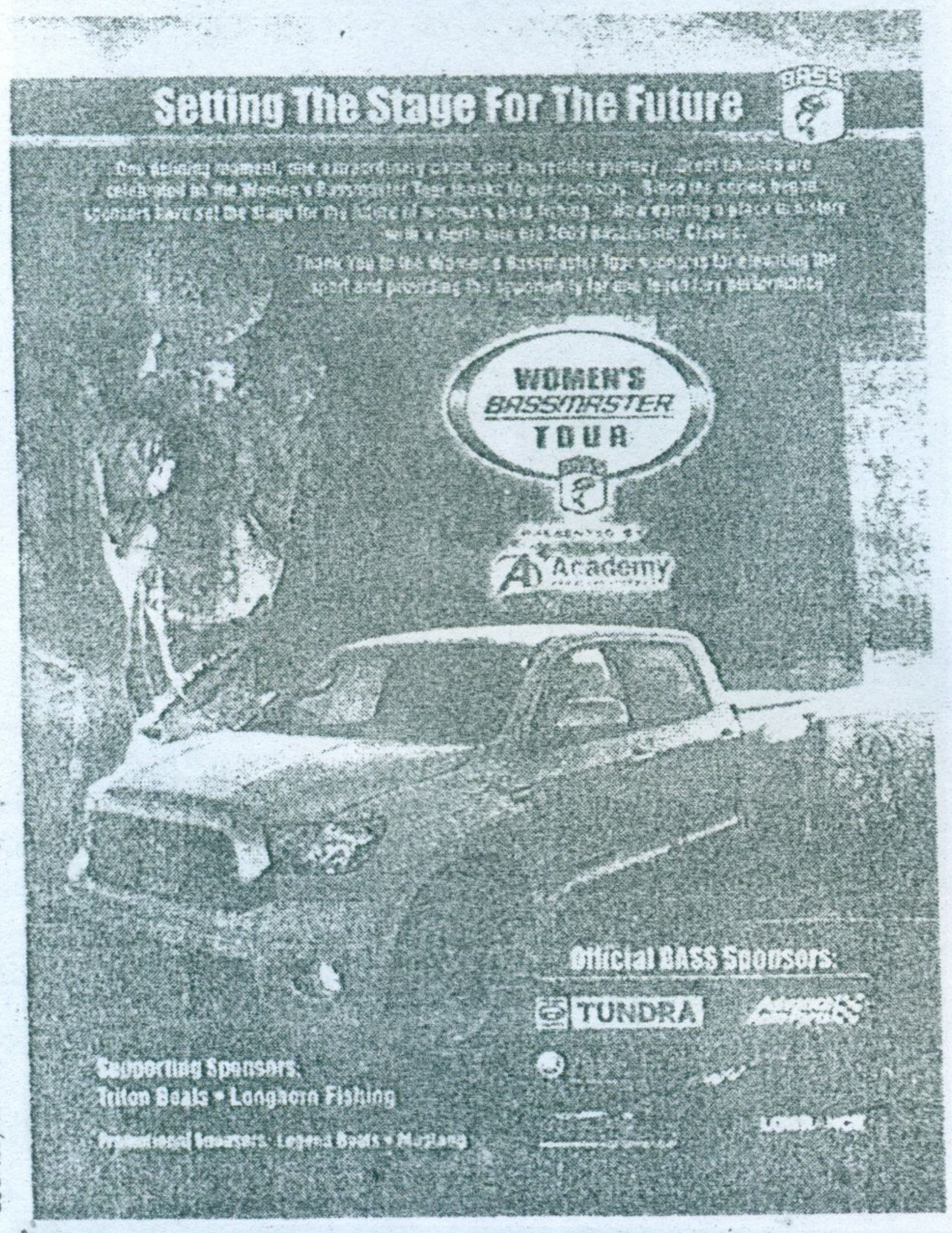
OBJECTIVE 6

What role can event marketing play in creating customer excitement and brand loyalty?

Selecting Sponsorships and Events

Several key steps are involved in selecting a sponsorship or an event. To ensure the maximum benefit, companies should:

- Determine the objective(s) of the sponsorship or event
- Match the sponsorship or event with the company's customers, vendors, and employees
- Promote the sponsorship or event
- Make sure the company is included in all event advertising and brochures
- Track results



Courtesy of Newcomer, Morris & Young, Inc.

▲ Matching the audience profile with the company's target market is important when selecting sponsorships.

DETERMINING OBJECTIVES

Companies outline communication objectives before becoming involved in a sponsorship or an event. For an objective of rewarding customers, marketers look for sponsorships or events that major customers would enjoy. Some objectives are more internally oriented, especially those designed to increase employee involvement or to boost morale. These can be achieved by finding opportunities internal members will like. Externally-oriented objectives include maintaining market share, building a stronger brand presence, enhancing the product or firm's image, and increasing sales.

MATCHING AUDIENCE TO THE COMPANY'S TARGET MARKET

In choosing a sponsorship or an event, the marketing team matches the audience profile with the company's target market. A firm sponsoring a singer at a music show attended mainly by women works best when the company's primary customers are female. Marketing executives also consider how the individual participant or group image relates to the firm's image. A contestant in an upscale event, such as a piano competition, may be sponsored by a tuxedo or formal gown company. The sponsors of the Women's Bassmaster Tour shown in the advertisement in this section are a good match with the participants in the Tour events.

PROMOTING THE EVENT

Advertising and public relations releases promote sponsorships and events. Special effort will be given to contacting interest groups that would benefit from the event. An event such as a local Special Olympics requires commercials, contacts with the press, and finding ways to reach parents and relatives of those who might participate. Sponsorship of NASCAR by Interstate Batteries involves highlighting the partnership in advertising and public relations efforts.

ADVERTISING AT THE EVENT

Sponsors insist on placement of the company's name and logo and other product information in every advertisement and brochure for the event. Many attendees of games and events keep programs as souvenirs. Placing the sponsor's name and message on the program generates an advertisement with a longer lifespan. The sponsoring business can maximize brand-name exposure by connecting the firm's name with the event's marketing program. The marketing team works closely with the event management team to make sure the company's name receives prominent attention in all materials associated with the occasion.

TRACKING RESULTS

Some events and sponsorships turn out better than others for the sponsor. To determine the best opportunities, the marketing team tracks results. In addition to sales, employees can monitor how many pieces of literature were given to attendees, the number of samples distributed, or the number of visitors to the sponsor's display booth. Further,

marketing research measures brand awareness or brand image before and after the event to see if any new level of awareness or higher image emerged.

Tracking results helps the business evaluate its investment. Company leaders and marketing managers then decide if the sponsorship or particular event was beneficial and whether to sponsor the event or similar events in the future.

When Victoria's Secret launched the brand Pink, it was coupled with a unique event marketing promotion during spring break. The goal was to reach 18- to 24-year-old females. The event began with a three-story pink box set up on a beach in Miami. Advertisements, Internet postings, street teams of employees giving out fliers, aerial signs, posters in nearby hotels, and public relations press releases built excitement during the 5-day countdown. Many spring breakers showed up at the pink box. They were treated to a fashion show and a live concert by No Mercy. After the concert, Victoria's Secret Pink gift cards were passed out and the company hosted nightclub parties. The unique marketing event spurred sales of the new Pink brand and the Victoria's Secret brand. The Victoria's Secret marketing team completed the evaluation stage and discovered a big increase in Pink brand sales in the Miami area and that the other Victoria's Secret brand sales also rose dramatically.[32]



Courtesy of Gremillion & Pou

▲ Note the sponsors of the Louisiana Fair listed at the bottom of the Web page screen.

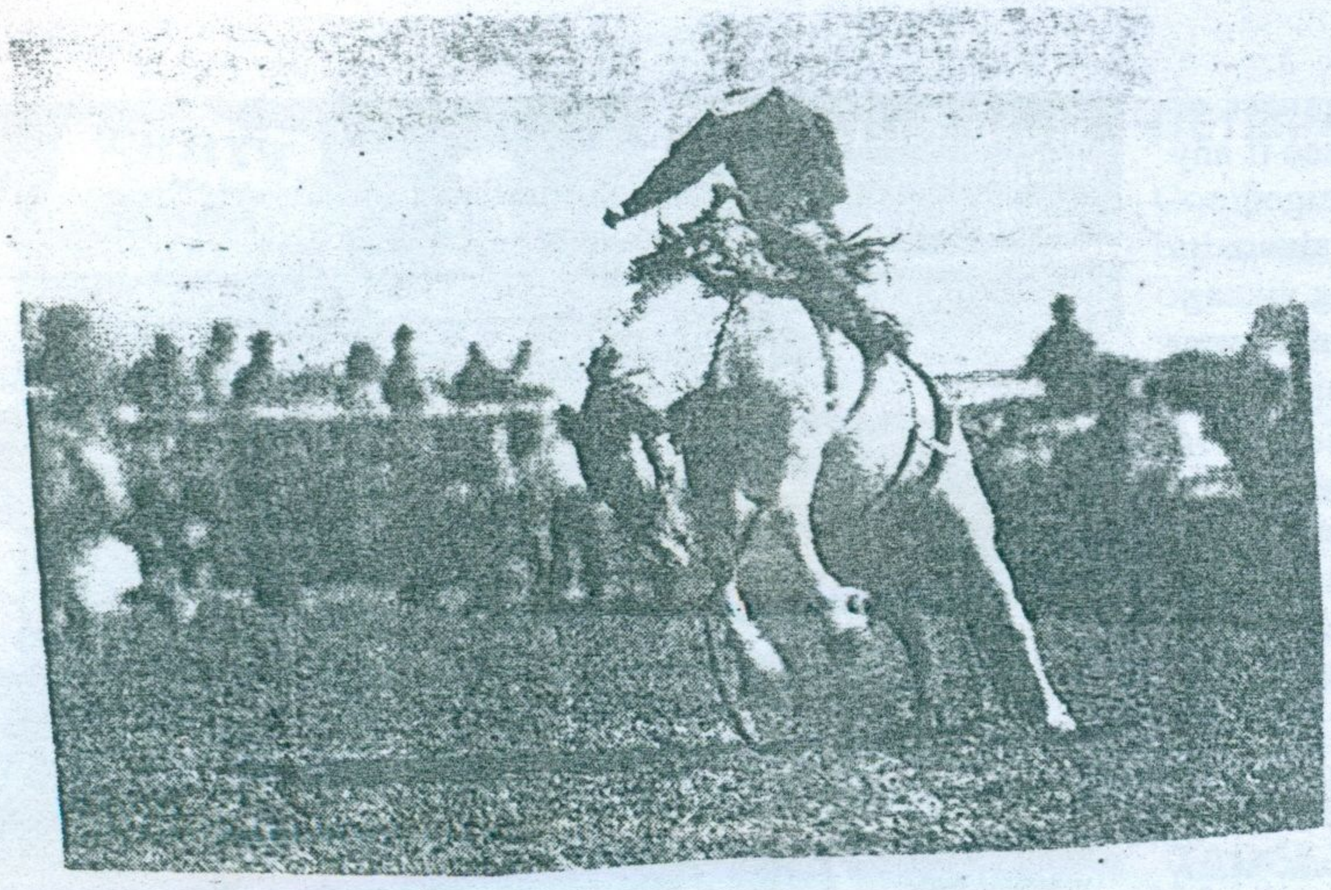
An Advertising Research Foundation study revealed that intentions to purchase a branded product increased from 11 to 52 percent among consumers who attended a brand-sponsored event. Further research suggests that purchase intentions translate into sales about half the time. The Advertising Research Foundation study investigated events sponsored by Frito-Lay, State Farm, and Coca-Cola. Sports-related sponsorships and events tended to have the best results.[33]

CROSS-PROMOTIONS

Cross-promotions with the event sponsor or other companies involved are often used to boost the impact of the sponsorship. A **cross-promotion** is a marketing event that ties together companies and activities around a specific theme. Recently, eBay partnered with Sony and Baskin-Robbins to create a unique event called "Camp eBay." During the summer months, consumers are typically outdoors enjoying the warm weather and are not logged onto the Internet, so eBay's marketing team decided to go to consumers. Camp eBay was eBay's first attempt at event marketing. The aim was to create awareness in and to educate people who do not use eBay. The program was also designed to encourage existing buyers and sellers to be more active in the summertime.

The Camp eBay program began with the purchase of a refurbished school bus that was sent out on a mobile marketing tour to six high-traffic areas: the Indy 500, CMA Fan Fest, eBay Live, Taste of Chicago, the Ohio State Fair, and the Minnesota State Fair. The school bus classroom drew 52,000 people who attended 30-minute sessions on how to use eBay. Participants earned badges redeemable for prizes that were furnished by Sony and Baskin-Robbins. The prizes were worth a total of $85,000. In addition, eBay pitched tents at 20 Clear Channel Entertainment venues that hosted nearly 400 concerts. The impact of the event marketing program was that 45 percent of existing users increased purchases, leading to an overall increase in sales of 2 percent during the promotion and 9 percent after the event.[34]

Sponsorship programs and event marketing have increased in popularity during the past decade due to the potential to reach consumers on a one-to-one basis. In the future, sponsorships and event marketing tie-ins with other media, especially the Internet, will



Tyler Olson/Fotolia

▲ Sponsoring events such as a rodeo allows companies to reach consumers in a less cluttered environment.

rise. Rock concerts, boat shows, music fairs, and a wide variety of other, more specialized programs are likely to be featured by various companies. Many marketing experts believe that making contact with customers in personalized ways that do not directly involve a sales call are valuable activities. Event marketing and sponsorship programs create that type of contact.

International Implications

The public relations function has become increasingly valuable in the international arena for several reasons. First, the growing number of international firms creates the need to make sure the company will be viewed in a positive light in every country in which it does business.

Second, the impact of terrorism and war over the past decade has heightened sensitivities between many nations. Any company conducting business in a foreign land will have a public relations officer in charge of monitoring news stories and other events so that the firm can react to negative press.

Third, whenever there are differences among cultures, the potential exists to offend without intending to do so. In 2008, when Rocco Mediate was involved in a valiant effort to win a playoff in the U.S. Open golf tournament, sportscaster Johnny Miller made a joke that Mediate looked more like "the guy that would clean your pool" than a professional golfer. A number of Italians took offense, believing it was an ethnic slur. Miller apologized, stating he was referring to the "every man" quality Mediate possessed.

Corporate social responsibility also has no national boundaries. Many heated debates have taken place regarding outsourcing. Critics argue that nations other than the United States have enjoyed the advantages of unfair wage rates and the ability to pollute freely, thereby cutting costs and attracting businesses to them. Any multinational corporation or company conducting business in foreign lands should be aware of these criticisms and find effective ways to respond.

Many sponsorships now include an international events. Some of the more visible ones are found in sports, most notably automobile racing and soccer. Sportswear brand Adidas signed an agreement with the NBA to be the league's official supplier in Europe and worldwide. The sponsorship represents a major effort by Adidas, because NBA merchandise is sold in more than 100,000 stores in 100 countries on six continents.[35]

OBJECTIVE 2

Can public relations programs, sponsorships, and event marketing be adapted to international settings?

The principles that guide the development of sponsorships domestically apply equally well to any international involvements. To fully prepare an effective sponsorship program in an international setting, the marketing team will employ a cultural assimilator to ensure correct usage of a foreign language, the legality of the sponsorship, and that it does not violate any local cultural norms. As the world continues to become smaller, with increasing interactions between countries, companies, and individuals, the growth of multinational sponsorships should continue.

INTEGRATED CAMPAIGNS IN ACTION

Curb It

Pratt Industries makes cardboard boxes from recycled paper. The company invested $160 million in a wastepaper recycling mill in Shreveport, Louisiana. Demand was not a problem for Pratt Industries. Wal-Mart, Target, and other large retailers were willing to purchase recycled boxes almost as fast as Pratt could make them. The problem was that Pratt needed recycled materials with which to make the cardboard boxes.

Pratt Industries hired the Gremillion & Pou advertising agency to create an integrated marketing campaign to encourage citizens of Shreveport to recycle their trash. Research showed that people did not like sorting trash and were not willing to go out of the way to drop trash off. The challenges Gremillion & Pou faced were:

- To communicate the ease of curbside recycling
- To leverage environmental concerns to create a desire to recycle materials
- To teach the public how easy it was to recycle



Courtesy of Gremillion & Pou.

▲ An advertisement encouraging people to recycle.

To meet these challenge, the agency created an animated green frog named "Curb It." This character was used in ads, in PSAs, and on recycling bins. The campaign caught the interest of city officials and the town's citizens. Soon recycling became the easy and popular thing to do.

The Curb It campaign can be found at the Pearson Instructor's Resource Center (www.pearsonhighered.com). The campaign includes a PowerPoint presentation outlining the details of the campaigns and examples of the collaterals including ads and television commercials.

MyMarketingLab

Go to **mymktlab.com** to complete the problems marked with this icon.

SUMMARY

The public relations department plays a major role in an integrated marketing communications program, whether the department is separate from marketing or combined as part of a communications division. Public relations efforts are oriented to making sure that every possible contact point delivers a positive and unified message on behalf of the company.

Any person or group with a vested interest in the organization's activities is a stakeholder. Internal stakeholders include employees, unions, and stockholders. External publics include members of the marketing channel, customers, the media, the local community, financial institutions, the government, and special-interest groups.

To reach all intended audiences, the public relations department has a series of tools available. These include company newsletters, internal messages, public relations releases, correspondence with stockholders, annual reports, and various special events. A bulletin board in the company's break room can be used to convey messages to internal stakeholders.

In the attempt to build a favorable image of the company, the public relations department develops special events such as altruistic activities and cause-related marketing programs. Care must be taken to make certain that these acts are not perceived with cynicism and skepticism. This means being certain that any good deed matches with the company's products and other marketing efforts. A natural fit between an altruistic event and the company's brand is more readily accepted by various members of the public.

The public relations team tends to damage control when negative publicity arises. Proactive and reactive tactics help maintain a positive image for the company. Damage-control tactics include Internet interventions, crisis management programs, and impression management techniques.

Sponsorship programs enhance and build the company's image and brand loyalty. A sponsorship of an individual or

group involved in an activity—whether a sporting event, a contest, or a performance by an artistic group—can be used to link the company's name with the popularity of the player involved. Sponsorships should match with the firm's products and brands.

Event marketing occurs when a firm sponsors an event. A strong physical presence at the event is one of the keys to successfully linking an organization's name with a program. To do so, the firm determines the major objective of the sponsorship, matches it with company customers and publics, and ensures that the firm's name is prominently displayed on all event literature.

Managing public relations, sponsorships, and event marketing programs requires company leaders to assess the goals and the outcomes of individual activities. A cost–benefit approach may not always be feasible, but the marketing team should be able to track some form of change, whether it is increased inquiries, the number of samples passed out at an event, or a shift in the tenor of news articles about the organization. The public relations department serves as the organization's "watchdog," making sure those who come in contact with the company believe the firm is working to do things right and to do the right things.

Key Terms

public relations (PR) department A unit in the firm that manages items such as publicity and other communications with all of the groups that make contact with the company.

hit The mention of a company's name in a news story.

stakeholder A person or group with a vested interest in a firm's activities and well-being.

corporate social responsibility An organization's obligation to be ethical, accountable, and reactive to the needs of society.

cause-related marketing Matching marketing efforts with some type of charity work or program.

green marketing The development and promotion of products that are environmentally safe.

greenwashing Activities that are presented as being green or environmentally friendly that are not.

damage control Reacting to negative events caused by a company error, consumer grievances, or unjustified or exaggerated negative press.

entitlings Attempts to claim responsibility for positive outcomes of events.

enhancements Attempts to increase the impact of a desirable outcome of an event in the eyes of the public.

Internet interventions Confronting negative publicity on the Internet, either in Web site news releases or by entering chat rooms, blogs, or social networks.

crisis management Either accepting the blame for an event and offering an apology or refuting those making the charges in a forceful manner.

apology strategy Presenting a full apology when the firm has made an error.

impression management The conscious or unconscious attempt to control images that are projected in real or imagined social situations.

sponsorship marketing When the company pays money to sponsor someone or some group that is participating in an activity.

event marketing When a company pays money to sponsor an event or program.

cross-promotion A marketing event that ties together companies and activities around a specific theme.

Review Questions

1. Describe the role of the public relations department. How is it related to the marketing department? Should both departments be called the "department of communications?" Why or why not?
2. What is a stakeholder?
3. Name the major internal stakeholders in organizations. Describe each one's major interests in the company.
4. Name the major external stakeholders in organizations. Describe each one's major interest in the company.
5. What is corporate social responsibility? How is it related to public relations activities?
6. What is cause-related marketing? How can company leaders create effective cause-related marketing programs?
7. What is green marketing? How do different companies promote environmentally-friendly activities?
8. What reactive damage-control techniques are available to the public relations team?
9. What four forms of impression management are used to combat negative events?
10. What is sponsorship marketing? Name a pro athlete, musician or musical group, or performer of some other type who has been featured in a sponsorship program. Was the program effective or ineffective? Why?
11. Describe an event marketing program. What must accompany the event in order to make it a success?
12. What are cross-promotions? How are they related to event marketing programs?
13. How are public relations programs and sponsorship adapted to international companies?

Critical Thinking Exercises

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Watch the news on television, read a local news story, or access the Internet for a story about a local or national business. Was the report positive or negative toward the firm? Did the news report or article affect your attitude toward the company? Watch one of the many special investigative shows, such as *60 Minutes*. What companies did it investigate? If your firm was being featured, what would you do to counteract the bad press?
2. One of the vice presidents of a small but highly respected bank in a local community was charged with sexual harassment by a female employee. What types of communications should be prepared for each of the constituencies listed in Figure 2? Which of the constituencies would be the most important to contact?
3. Is the local community important to a manufacturing firm that sells 99 percent of its products outside the area? Does it really matter what the local people say or believe about the manufacturer as long as the firm's customers are happy? Explain your answer.
4. What causes do you support or are special to you? Do you know which corporations sponsor or support the causes? If not, see if you can find literature or Web sites that contain that information. Why do you think the corporations choose a particular cause to support? What benefits do corporations receive from sponsorships?
5. When Starbucks opened its first coffee shop inside a public library, 10 percent of all coffee proceeds went to support the operation of the library. Do you think a public library should allow a for-profit organization such as Starbucks to sell products inside the building? Is this a conflict of interest for government-sponsored organizations, such as libraries? What if the local doughnut shop wanted to sell doughnuts at the library? Should it be allowed to do so? How does a head librarian decide?
6. Managers often are the most difficult group for the public relations department to reach. To entice employees to reach departmental goals, managers often communicate using memos or verbal messages. These messages may conflict with the IMC theme. For example, in an effort to trim costs a manager may send a memo to all employees telling them to use only standard production procedures. Through verbal communications, employees learn that anyone caught violating or even bending the policy to satisfy a customer will be immediately reprimanded. The manager's action suggests that even though he wants employees to provide customer service, in actuality they had better not do anything that is not authorized. Employees soon get the message that management cares only about costs, not the customer. Employees will perceive any advertising message about customer service as a big joke. Write a memo to employees that supports the IMC goal of high customer service, yet alerts them to the need to follow standard operating procedures. Is there anything else you would do to ensure that employees do not receive conflicting messages?
7. Sponsorships are now a major component of professional sports. Football, basketball, baseball, and golf all have sponsors. Many stadiums are now named for companies. Why do you think companies spend millions on these sponsorships? What impact does it have on you? What sponsorships do you notice? Which ones do you not notice? Why?
8. Because of the shortage of state funds for universities and colleges, many are considering using sponsorships as a means of generating revenue. What would you think about your university having the stadiums and different sports being having corporate names? Discuss the pros and cons of your school using corporate sponsors to fund athletics.

Integrated Learning Exercises

1. Although some firms handle public relations activities internally, many firms retain public relations firms to work on special projects and to handle unique situations. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is one of the major associations for PR practitioners. In Canada, the primary association is the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS). Access the Web sites of these two organizations at www.prsa.org and www.cprs.ca. What types of information does each provide? What types of services are offered? How would these organizations be beneficial to various companies?
2. Access the online version of *PRWeek* at www.prweek.com. What type of information is available? How would this site be valuable to a PR practitioner? How could it be used by a firm seeking a public relations agency? How could it be used by a marketing manager?

3. The American Institute of Philanthropy ranks many charities. Access the Web site at www.charitywatch.org. How does the Institute rate the charities? How can this information be used by a company to determine which charities to support?
4. A number of companies offer services to help firms plan and develop sponsorships. One company is IEG. Access the Web site at www.sponsorship.com. Review the site. Identify the various services offered by IEG. If you were the marketing manager for a company that wanted to develop a sponsorship program, how could IEG help? Be specific.
5. Many companies participate in event marketing to accomplish various objectives. Access the following companies that assist firms with event marketing. What type of services does each offer? What is your evaluation of each of the companies? If you were hosting an event, which company would you hire? Why?
   a. Advantage International, LLC (www.advantage-intl.com)
   b. Fuse Youth Marketing Agency (www.fusemarketing.com)
   c. RPMC Event and Promotion Agency (www.rpmc.com)
6. Corporate sponsorships are important to nonprofits. Without the financial assistance provided, many nonprofits would not exist. Look up two organizations from the following list of nonprofits. Who are their corporate sponsors? What benefits do the profit-seeking companies receive from these sponsorships?
   a. American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org)
   b. Arthritis Foundation (www.arthritis.org)
   c. Multiple Sclerosis Society (www.mssociety.org.uk)
   d. United Cerebral Palsy (www.ucp.org)
   e. Alliance for the Wild Rockies (www.wildrockiesalliance.org)
   f. National Wildlife Federation (www.nwf.org)
   g. Trout Unlimited (www.tu.org)

Student Project

CREATIVE CORNER

Circle K Ranch has been selling, training, and boarding horses for almost 20 years. With the recent downturn in the economy, however, Circle K has experienced a decline in all facets of its business. In talking with some marketing students at the local university, the owner of Circle K Ranch, Kathy Kroncke, wondered about using cause-related marketing, sponsorships, and even event marketing to boost the awareness and image of her business. She recently added horseback riding to her list of services and developed a 10-mile ride that goes through a local state park. So far, business has not been what she expected, despite research that indicated a high level of interest in riding, especially by 15- to 40-year-old females. Design a cause-related marketing program, a sponsorship program, and an event marketing program for Circle K Ranch. After you have designed each of the programs, choose the one you think would be the best for Circle K Ranch. Design a newspaper ad featuring the program. What other methods would you use, both traditional and nontraditional, to publicize the program you chose?

CASE 1 OLIVE GARDEN: MEET THE GIRLS NEXT DOOR

Public relations challenges come in many forms, some expected and others that could never be imagined. The Olive Garden has developed a strong brand and corporate image focused on family, friends, and fun. The company was launched as a subsidiary of General Mills as an entry into the casual Italian restaurant marketplace. The initial success and growth led to a spin-off, and Darden Restaurants has directed the chain since the early 1990s.

Olive Garden restaurants are distinctive, featuring a casual Italian decor. The menus have been upgraded to move beyond more basic dishes to include items such as Mediterranean Garlic Shrimp and Capellini Pomodoro. Chefs continue to look for ways to treat regular customers to new and exciting dishes to accompany old favorites. All the while, endless bowls of salad and servings of breadsticks, along with tasty servings of soup, are part of the regular fare.

The wholesome family atmosphere projected in the Olive Garden's marketing communications includes the term "Hospitalino," which suggests the commitment to a warm, comfortable environment for dining. Commercials and advertisements carrying the tagline "When you're here, you're family" have helped Olive Garden establish a strong brand presence in a highly competitive marketplace.

The Girls Next Door has become a popular television program on E! Entertainment Television. The show features three beautiful young women who live in Hugh Hefner's exotic Playboy Mansion. In 2008, over 1.4 million viewers watched the antics of the young women in various stages of dress and settings. One of the three, Kendra Wilkinson happens to be a genuine fan of the Olive Garden. During one program, she mentioned how much she loved the artichoke dip and breadsticks. She quickly became known as practically a "new spokesperson" for the company.

Without question, Kendra's affection for the Olive Garden was sincere. As she noted, "I love the Olive Garden, because I grew up going there. That used to be the place we would go for Mother's Day, for birthdays. My grandpa just died, and right after his funeral, we went to the Olive Garden." She pointed out when asked that she received no compensation for mentioning the restaurant on *The Girls Next Door*.

Ms. Wilkinson did, however, convince Hefner to create a contest. Women were invited to compete for a chance to become one of the "Sexiest Girls of Olive Garden." The winner was to receive a Playboy photo shoot conducted by Kendra Wilkinson for an upcoming edition of the magazine.

Olive Garden's management and marketing team faced a dilemma. On the one hand, a surprising overlap exists between the types of individuals who dine at the Olive Garden and those who watch *The Girls Next Door*. Many are college educated, affluent, and enjoy upscale dining. More women watch the television program than men, and more women dine at the Olive Garden than men.

At the other extreme, protests have been lodged against the television show. The Florida Family Association had encouraged advertisers to stop buying spots for the show. Playboy has long been a source of controversy in the United States.



Noam/Fotolia

▲ The Olive Garden has communicated an image of being a "wholesome family restaurant."

From the Olive Garden's perspective, the publicity generated by the linkage between the two organizations could have been viewed as a blessing or a curse. At first, the company did not make official statements about the contest. Undoubtedly, the marketing and public relations teams believed the company was navigating through some very choppy waters.[36]

1. Who are Olive Garden's internal and external stakeholders that have been affected by this turn of events?
2. For casual observers of media, would the "Sexiest Girls of Olive Garden" appear to be a sponsorship?
3. Is this event an instance in which damage-control programs were in order? If so, which one(s)?
4. Kendra Wilkinson said she believed Olive Garden could afford to appear to be a little "edgy" without detracting from its family-friendly brand. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
5. If you were the public relations agency for the Olive Garden, how would you handle this situation? What steps would you take and what tactics would you use to ensure Olive Garden's image is not adversely affected.

CASE 2

NEW DRUG FACES PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING CHALLENGES

It is unusual for a new product to create a vehement public response with both supporters and detractors. One such product, which was approved by the FDA in 2006 and made widely available in 2007, is Gardasil. The drug was developed by Merck and Company.

Gardasil is provided in the form of a vaccine. It was developed to prevent cervical cancer by blocking infection from human papillomavirus, which is spread through sexual contact. The Food and Drug Administration permits Gardasil to be used by females ages 9 through 26, with the goal of inoculating girls before they become sexually active. Although the vaccine does not prevent every form of papillomavirus, it does treat four of the most common, including 100 percent prevention of the most common type and 70 percent of the four most common types combined.

Nearly half a million women are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year. According to some experts, Gardasil might make it possible to eliminate cervical cancer within a generation. It is also a victory for Merck, the fourth-biggest U.S. drug maker, which has focused increasingly on vaccines and may generate $3 billion in annual sales from Gardasil alone. "It's important from a public health perspective because you're eliminating a cancer," said Les Funtleyder, an analyst in New York for Miller Tabak & Co. "The subtle point is these guys are creating new drugs for important health problems, which is what a pharma is supposed to do."

Gardasil requires three doses to be given over 6 months. In 2007, each dose cost around $120. Consequently, affordability may determine how effective the drug is in quelling cervical cancer. About 80 percent of cases are in poorer countries. "Critical to success will be ensuring that women in the world's poorest countries—where cervical cancer hits hardest—have rapid and affordable access to this lifesaving new tool," said Gabriel N. Hortobagyi, a physician at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston and president of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, in a statement. Human papillomavirus, or HPV, is one of the most common sexually transmitted viruses in the world, and it causes genital warts as well as cancer. About 20 million people in the United States are infected, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Why the controversy? Many social conservatives fear that providing the vaccine may provide subtle approval for young women to engage in sex, much in the same way as providing birth control information and condoms are sometimes condemned. Some of the response was in regard to the recommendations from a panel of experts assembled by the CDC. The panel issues widely followed guidelines, including recommendations for childhood vaccines that become the basis for vaccination requirements set by public schools. The panel recommended that the vaccine be required.



▲ Many young girls could benefit from the HPV virus vaccine Gardasil.

Merck company officials and others noted that research indicates the best age to vaccinate would be just before puberty to make sure children are protected before they become sexually active. The vaccine would probably be targeted primarily at girls, but could also be used on boys to limit the spread of the virus. "If you really want to have cervical cancer rates fall as much as possible as quickly as possible, then you want as many people to get vaccinated as possible," said Mark Feinberg, Merck's vice president of medical affairs and policy, noting that "school mandates have been one of the most effective ways to increase immunization rates." That is the view being pushed by cervical cancer experts and women's health advocates.

Not surprisingly, a major clash emerged, mostly notably when the state of Texas made it a requirement to have the vaccine in order to be admitted to school. The battle lines were primarily drawn over girls being forced to take a medicine, with or without parental consent, along with the concerns expressed about sexual activity.

Company officials from Merck worked carefully with both governmental agencies and other groups to reduce concerns. In 2008, the company began advertising Gardasil in television commercials entitled "One Less" and "Guard Yourself." A powerful point is made: by taking the medicine, one less person will become infected.

1. Describe the stakeholders and the positions of each group involved in this controversy.
2. Outline the positive public relations opportunities available to promote Gardasil.

3. Describe how Merck should respond to negative publicity and complaints about the product.
4. Could Merck use cause-related marketing effectively, or would it be construed as a means of marketing the drug?
5. What sponsorships and event marketing programs should be used to promote Gardasil?

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MyMarketingLab

Go to **mymktlab.com** for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:.

1. When Starbucks opened its first coffee shop inside a public library, 10 percent of all proceeds from coffee sold there went to support the operation of the library. Do you think a public library should allow a for-profit organization such as Starbucks to sell products inside the building? Is this a conflict of interest for government-sponsored organizations, such as libraries? What if the local doughnut shop wanted to sell doughnuts at the library? Should it be allowed to do so? How does a head librarian decide?
2. Sponsorships are now a major component of professional sports. Football, basketball, baseball, and golf all have sponsors. Many stadiums are now named for companies. Why do you think companies spend millions on these sponsorships? What impact does it have on you? What sponsorships do you notice? Which ones do you not notice? Why?
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