



To Tweet or Not to Tweet: What Business Can Learn from Social Movements

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Synopsis

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Ben and Jerry's partnered up with the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) in order to get the word out about the organization. WFTO is an organization that celebrates on the second Saturday of May each year. The organization celebrates Fair Trade as a contribution to the fight against poverty, exploitation, and economic crises that impact the most vulnerable populations and climate change. Ben and Jerry's created a Twitter campaign called #FairTweets. The company set up a microsite where users would be able to type their tweets. For every Tweet that did not use all 140 characters, Ben and Jerry's would use the "leftover Twitter characters."

"(Example: The tweet, "Sitting on a sofa watching TV," was backfilled with "I'm sharing my unused Twitter characters to raise awareness for #FairTrade. #FairTweets" and then a link with more information about the partnership and organization.)"

Objectives

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“...our goal was to combine a popular social media tool with our effort to educate about fair trade” -Noelle Pirnie, Senior Global Marketing Manager at Ben & Jerry’s

Objective: create and raise awareness for fair trade practices and Fairtrade International

What is Fairtrade?

“Fairtrade is a global movement to make sure small farmers in developing countries can compete and thrive in the global economy.”

Why support Fairtrade?

Ben & Jerry’s partners with Fairtrade International, a global organization working to secure a better deal for farmers and workers.

Ben & Jerry’s uses Fairtrade certified ingredients in its products. This means that the farmers who grew the ingredients were paid fairly for their produce, and, in return, comply with Fairtrade practices: use environmentally sound farming, implement fair working standards, and invest in their communities. Fairtrade ingredients used by B & J: sugar, cocoa, vanilla, coffee, bananas



Strategies/Tactics

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To bring awareness to their cause, Ben & Jerry's did not purchase any television or print ads. They utilized their Chunksplunker email club, #FairTrade/ #FairTweets on Twitter, and their microsite with external partner, Fairtrade International to promote their campaign.

“Every day, millions of Twitter characters go unused. That’s not very fair. But now you can tweet as you normally would, and we’ll turn any leftover characters into a message about Fair Trade. Now that’s fair.”

Results

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Over a two week period, Fair Tweets picked up 40 million impressions, reached 12 million Twitter users and was picked up by 1,300 blogs and newspapers. The Fair Tweets site received 43,600 visits from more than 100 countries and Twitter users contributed 518, 000 characters. Fair Tweets did not require huge billboards, elaborate stunts or big-name actors to be successful. With an operating cost of only \$29,000, the campaign achieved a tremendous bang for its buck.

Analysis

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Numbers don't lie and the Fair Tweets campaign amassed some pretty big ones. Since the objective was to inform and educate the intended audience, this campaign was a success because of its incredible reach.

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Critique and Recommendations

The Ben and Jerry's Fair Tweets campaign was a success, but the campaign may have reached even more people if the hashtag #FairTweets may have been on the packaging. It's possible that even people who use social media on the regular could have missed the campaign. There was also an opportunity for Ben and Jerry's and the World Fair Trade Organization to raise money for a specific cause. For every #FairTweet, \$1 could have been raised. The campaign already generated a lot of Tweets but if people felt like they were really helping a cause, there could have been even more #FairTweets generated.



Discussion Questions

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1. Who do you think the campaign is benefiting the most? Is it grabbing the attention of Ben and Jerry ice cream lovers, or people who represent the FairTrade organization? Why do you think this way?
2. Do you think the World Fair Trade Organization picked the right company to partner with and the right platform to launch their campaign on?