

Abercrombie & Fitch

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Public Relations Com 300

Executive Summary

- Abercrombie & Fitch, a clothing retailer, during the mid-2000s.
- The crisis primarily revolved around controversies related to the brand's marketing tactics, corporate culture, and the outspoken comments made by its CEO, Mike Jeffries.
- Some key issues that will be explored in the paper are exclusivity & size discrimination, controversial CEO statements, impact on brand image, and social media backlash that led to sales decline.
- It aligns with course discussions on crisis management, brand image, and the evolving landscape of public relations in the age of social media.



Positioning

- **Abercrombie & Fitch Background:**

- Founded in 1892 as a sporting goods retailer.
- Faced financial difficulties and bankruptcy in 1977.
- Rebranded in the 1990s as a casual, youth-oriented, and aspirational lifestyle brand under CEO Mike Jeffries.
- Positioned itself as exclusive and aspirational, targeting primarily young and attractive consumers.

- **Controversies in the Mid-2000s to Early 2010s:**

- Accusations of discriminatory hiring practices.
- CEO Mike Jeffries' controversial statements on hiring "cool" and "good-looking" individuals.
- Backlash for an exclusive brand image and not offering larger sizes.

- **Response to Controversies:**

- Mike Jeffries issued a public apology in 2013 and was fired.
- Acknowledged the need for change and implemented diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- Met with organizations like the National Eating Disorder Association.
- Shifted marketing strategy to reflect diverse body types.



Positioning



- **Comparison with H&M:**
 - Both faced negative public reactions for insensitivity or exclusionary practices.
 - Similar crises led to public outrage, social media backlash, and damage to reputation.
 - Both companies issued public apologies and took steps to address diversity and inclusion issues.
- **Crisis Response Strategies:**
 - Took responsibility for actions.
 - Widened the issue by partnering with relevant organizations.
 - Efforts to recruit allies and ambassadors.
 - Changes in marketing, corporate culture, and inclusivity initiatives.

Objectives

- Apologize for the discrimination and to re-brand Abercrombie & Fitch.
- New additions to the sizing chart
- Social Media Campaigns to increase social engagement of the company
- The overall goal is to increase the company's sales by 20%.



Strategy

- The audience is Gen-z and Millennials
- The primary goal for the company is to become accessible for all individuals. And one way of doing that is to use the most powerful tool in our generation, which is Social Media.
- The company will use social media platforms - Instagram, Twitter, and Tik-Tok - as their sources.



Tactics

- Addressing the repugnant opinions by the CEO Jefferies through a public apology statement
 - Hard and soft news
- Adding larger sizes from XL to 8XL.
- Inclusivity in photoshoots
- Social Media Campaign
 - PR boxes to Influencers
 - Popular Influencers will be chosen
 - Creation of hashtag #BeyondtheLabel
 - Donation to social organizations
 - BLM, Support Eating Disorders and the Mental Health Foundation

Administration

Minutes

- This rollout will take place over eighteen months with goals in place every six months.
- 1st six months: focus is on the production and development of the new line that will come in along with shooting campaigns with models that represent body shapes of all sizes.
- 2nd six months: grow social media presence by promoting inclusivity and start to post the new #beyondthelabel campaign.
- 3rd six months: clothing line drops and aims for the sales to rise 20% as a result of the rebranding.

Manpower

- Crisis Management team
- Marketing/advertising team
- Social Media team

Money

- People costs: salary for teams and models/photographers will need to be paid.
- Physical costs: production of the new clothing line and paying influencers that are going to be brand ambassadors for A&F. T
- Expenses: expenditures used to promote the new clothing line, costs associated with office materials, and diversity training that all employees

Results

- The company's main objective was to increase profits by 20% over an eighteen-month period. This would have allowed for the social media campaign to have its time to shine, and increase individual engagement with the posts created by influencers and customers.
- As well as, it desired to show brand awareness around social topics - the Black Lives Matter Movement, support for Eating Disorders, and the Mental Health Foundation.
- **Output:** Look into the media coverage
 - Interaction with posts: views, likes, comments, clicks on the hashtag
- **Outtake:** focuses on the awareness and improvement in the attitude toward the company's 'rebranding.'
 - This was done by casting diverse models, increasing the size charts for plus-sized individuals, creating an inclusive work environment, and donating profits to social causes.
- **Outcome:** show the changes in behavior after rebranding the company.
 - Surveys about in-person shopping experience
 - Reviews on the company's website

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