



SMU

SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT  
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**COMM121: FUNDAMENTALS OF MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**

**Individual Paper**

Section: G1

Kandhan Chandrasegeran

01459881

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**AI Declaration:**

AI was used to assist in organizing the structure, phrasing of certain sentences and grammar and spelling corrections, and citation checker for this paper. All ideas, content, sources, language, and writing has been written, edited, and reviewed by me to make sure it is in alignment with course requirements and academic standards.

Dolce Aura is a luxury Singaporean-headquartered MNC that specializes in dessert-scented fragrances. Our goal is delivering high-quality fragrances that bring the public a sense of nostalgia with our scents. Since its opening in 2004, Dolce Aura has created a name for Singapore within the international fashion and fragrance industry. The company was established by Steve Pang and has continued to be the CEO for the last 21 years. In August of 2025, Pang made an internal announcement that he will be retiring from his role as the CEO. Following his announcement, his team of 21 years also followed suit, deciding to also retire with Pang. This prompted Dolce Aura to hire and promote employees for the leadership roles, including the new CEO, Roger Lee, with approval and best wishes from Pang. An official announcement was made about the leadership changes in October once all the positions were filled. However, since then, speculation regarding the changes have surfaced, resulting in rumours regarding the company's motivations, the reasons as to why the shifts happen, and overall misinformation regarding the changes that are untrue. As a senior executive, the main communications strategy that I plan to implement for November 2025 to January 2026 to curb the allegations, is mainly focused on regaining control of the narrative through direct, transparent, and proactive communication with Tier-1 media.

#### Task 1

My overarching strategy to set the general public's perception of Dolce Aura straight would be to directly address any rumours or false allegations being made about the leadership changes, using Tier 1 Media. Through media monitoring (including Tier 1 Media and social media), we have identified that the bulk of the circulating rumours are regarding the abrupt retirement of Steve Pang, the possible shift of creative direction under Roger Lee, and why many of the other key leaders of the company left at the same time. By identifying the main sources of public confusion and what is driving these false allegations, it allows us to respond

in a targeted yet meaningful way. By using Tier-1 media as our main platform to clarify these rumours, it allows us to replace the public's questions and speculations with proper verified facts directly from the main source, Dolce Aura.

We have identified that the escalation of these narratives and false rumours about the changes in the leadership occurred due to our initial announcement of the leadership changes lacking the proper details, leading to the development of an information vacuum, in which our minimal communication allowed for journalists and the general public to occupy the initial space and fill in the gaps with information and interpretations that are not aligned with Dolce Aura's perspective (Pang, 2013). Our team recognizes that by not engaging with the media quickly enough, it will cause more public scrutiny and will encourage journalists to release inaccurate and inconsistent stories, further shaping the public and stakeholder perception in a negative way or Dolce Aura (Zafra & Maydell, 2018).

My strategy proposes that Dolce Aura must leverage off on Tier-1 Media, as it functions as the most credible anchor and the fastest way to get to the public. Media engagement literature highlights that within Singapore, stakeholders and the public still do rely heavily on Tier-1 media outlets which indicates that developing strong ties with these outlets is crucial in shaping how organizations are perceived (Pang et al., 2014). Dolce Aura will be reaching out to the Channel News Asia (CNA) and the Strait Times (ST) as both media outlets have been cited as the most trusted outlets in Singapore with 75% trust rate for ST and 74% for CNA (Tham Yuen-C, 2025). By using these outlets, we are ensuring that our responses and our clarifications gain the proper legitimacy and have the biggest reach.

Once we have reached out to the media outlets and developed a relationship with them, the other portion of my strategy is to create information subsidies for the mentioned media outlets. Information subsidies are pre-packaged news materials such as press releases, fact sheets, and background information that is provided to journalists who are writing stories under tight deadlines and with a lack of resources (Vogler & Badhem, 2023). We at Dolce Aura understand that media outlets and newsrooms are extremely dependent on content that is supplied to them as well as their short deadlines. Hence crafting clear information subsidies from Dolce Aura will make it easier for Tier-1 media journalists to use our narrative and clear facts directly in their news coverages and stories, which leads to the higher likelihood that our shifted narrative with the clear facts is accurately reflected.

## Task 2

Building on the idea proposed by the new leadership, I recommend a multipronged approach to our media engagement strategy where we will rely on two core media engagement tactics: a press conference and exclusive interviews with media outlets. The press conference will serve as the main platform of disseminating information about the leadership changes and will be the first strategy in targeting the allegations being thrown around. With this order of tactics, it allows us to first address the public speculation and narrative at a larger scale, targeting all major media outlets and newsrooms, leading to a higher reach. From there with the one-on-one interviews, we can deepen the media's understanding of the leadership change, which then also leads to building long term relationships with the journalists to see if Dolce Aura experiences any future cases that require the media. This approach reflects Pang's Mediating the Media model, which emphasizes that effective media relations depend on media practitioners understanding journalists' mindsets, routines, and newsroom practices

enabling organizations to build trust with them and influence how they are being farmed and interpreted in the media (Pang, 2010).

The press conference will be the first step in the multi-pronged approach. It will be the most visible tactic as it allows for major news outlets and even smaller outlets to come together in one setting where they will be receiving the same information and they can ask questions directly in real time, all while Dolce Aura controls the narratives that are being provided to the media. This strategy is backed from media relations literature, specifically the case study of the Cleveland clinic face transplant case study, where a carefully managed press conference by Cleveland clinic's media team on their risky surgery, led to consistent positive reporting across the media with the narrative and information given during the press conference (Kruvand, 2010). The press conference will be led by Roger Lee, the new CEO, who will be positioned as the main voice of the brand and will address the direction of Dolce Aura. He will be supported by the Board Chair who will address any questions and clarify on the timeline of leadership and will also explain why the rest of Pang's team left. Steve Pang, the previous CEO, will also make an experience at the press conference and will also clear up any rumours of internal conflict or other false rumours created, also representing the continuity of leadership in the company highlighting how everything was done in good terms. The head of communications of Dolce Aura will also be present to mediate the press conference and the reporters asking the questions. This choice of these 4 leadership figures being the key people at the press conference, is guided by media relations literature, as it is stated that corporate spokespersons should be authoritative, credible and can handle high-stake situations as those are key factors to building trust and reassuring stakeholders and the public during periods of uncertainty (De Waele et al., 2020).

Following the press conference, the next tactic that Dolce Aura will proceed with would be the exclusive interviews with journalists from The Strait Times and CNA as they have been previously identified as the most trusted media outlets in Singapore. As we also plan to target international media, we will also be contacting Reuters as they have been ranked as one of the most trusted news sources globally (Reuters Staff, 2019). Having these exclusive interviews allow for journalists to get a deeper understanding beyond the press conference on more facts and background information that can be written in their stories. This use of exclusive stories was seen in the Cleveland Case where the clinic's media team did in depth exclusive interviews with national outlets beyond the press conference, which helped to get more coverage and reinforced the clinic's credibility and facts of their surgery (Kruvand, 2010). For the exclusive interviews, Roger Lee will also be head spokesperson, as he will be able to clarify the details of the leadership changes as well as reassure the public that Dolce Aura's direction will remain consistent with the work that has been done previously by Steve Pang.

To secure these interviews and news outlets, the communications team of Dolce Aura will reach directly to the journalists of the three newsrooms mentioned: ST, CNA, Reuters. They will reach out to news outlets and journalists who have previously covered Dolce Aura during fragrance releases, as there is already a sense of familiarity. This is consistent with the literature as organizations and practitioners that have an ongoing contact with journalists, tend to understand their interests and past coverage better, leading them to tailor pitches that journalists are more likely to accept (Pang et al., 2014). Some of the suggested story angles that we are planning to pitch to the journalists that helps reclaim the narrative back for us include:

1. "Dolce Aura's New CEO Roger Lee's Promise on Maintaining Dessert-Based Identity in Fragrances"

2. After 21 years, Fragrance Trailblazer Roger Lee retires from Dolce Aura stating, “Dolce Aura will last forever!”

3. “Dolce Aura’s Smooth Senior Leadership Change among New Fragrance Drops”

The combination of press conferences and exclusives puts Dolce Aura at the forefront of reclaiming the narrative regarding our leadership changes as it can subdue public reactions and correct the false allegations effectively.

### Task 3

Aside from Dolce Aura’s Tier-1 media engagement strategies, we will also be utilising owned and shared media channels to reinforce the facts and messages that have been delivered through our press conferences and exclusives, further filling the information vacuum with the proper facts.

Through our media monitoring, we have identified that most of the allegations being made about our changes in leadership are through social media channels (shared media channels) such as Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. We understand due to shared media’s popularity and its uncontrollable nature, it is important to engage with our community quickly to prevent anymore misinformation being spread about our leadership (Slowikowski et al., 2021). Hence, Dolce Aura’s social media and communications team will be interacting with the comments under videos or posts that depict false information or allegations being made towards the company or the leadership. We will also be making statements on our company’s social media accounts such as Instagram, X, and LinkedIn and will be pinning in on all our profiles. Finally, we also collaborated with podcasts such as “The Colin and Samir Show”, and “The Diary of a CEO”, to discuss the leadership transition and the stir it made in the media.

Owned media, unlike shared media, is more controlled as it is mainly focused on our channels and websites, giving us more control over what we post. Even though the relationship we have to our audience is weaker, by using our website and our Dolce Aura's social media channels, we can have more organisational communication and updates that will help to present the true facts of the leadership changes and contribute to stopping the spread of the misinformation (Slowikowski et al., 2021). We will be releasing a public written statement on all platforms to make it clear to our social media community that the leadership changes, while abrupt, were not made due to scandals within the company or any internal disagreements. Steve Pang will also release his own statement, talking about his retirement from the fragrance industry and will also be stating his blessings to the new CEO. Finally, Roger Lee will release a short-form video of his introduction and his new role to the company and how he is excited to live on Pang's legacy and will make him proud as the new CEO of Dolce Aura.

To evaluate the success rate for both our owned and shared media campaigns, we will be evaluating mainly through the performance of the posts and the collaborations, the message accuracy, and whether it reduced or completely stopped the spread of any false facts or misinformation. In terms of performance, we will be monitoring its reach, engagement (likes, reposts, comments) on our social media posts and podcast collaborations. For message accuracy, we will be analysing whether what is said on Tier-1 media, is accurately reflected in what is being said on social media, whether it be on comments or posts made by the public. Lastly, we will be monitoring whether there are any more false allegations being made about our leadership and if misinformation is still being spread.

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