

Komentarz wymyślony napisany w całości przez Kingę Nurską, w imieniu Katarzyny Zaremby (Legend Group), na potrzeby serwisu UtalkMarketing:

Comment – CSR Lessons marketers can learn from the BP oil spill crisis

Involvement of business in social responsibility issues becomes a sign of our times. Apart from altruism, it is clear that a consumer, when chooses from similar brands, will take a more “balanced” one.

It is simple – socially responsible brands are seen as more trustworthy and fair. Even if actual enterprise of the company is dangerous for the environment.

Without CSR strategy, companies may find it difficult to create emotional relationship with their brands.

However, it is worth noticing, that’s very tempting to create only “green” brand – with no integrated CSR strategy, which is called “greenwashing”.

Such problem is being faced by BP at the moment. Many of the media and internet community groups complain about focusing their effort much more on "green" advertising and "green" branding, rather than taking appropriate action to address the negative consequences of their business to the environment. To make the matter worse, it was revealed that BP made big savings on securing the drilling area, which could prevent a catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico.

It should be acknowledged that after the incident, BP seriously approached the problem - the company quickly claimed their responsibility, took care about the ecological crisis, and offered help to those who suffered from the disaster. All the news about it maybe found on the perfectly positioned site for the phrase "BP leakage“.

But that’s all, unfortunately. The company did not establish a consistent presence in the media, didn’t use social media to communicate a crisis. As a consequence of not creating online communities (which could be used as information center), BP can now observe spontaneous "avoid BP."-like news groups. The company behaved like an unprepared student making a mess. Even many years of building a "green" brand didn’t help. Now BP is seen as a pretender.

Looking at this company, we realize that only a “green” logo or “green” campaigns cannot replace long-term plan of corporate social responsibility. Managing brands, deciding to incorporate socially responsible business activities, should start answering some questions: What is our value? For whom do we create values? How is value created? What should be the value of business in society? When answers come, they must be more integrated into daily practice and business strategy. Thinking about promotion of the brand as socially responsible, you should approach this holistically. And remember cohesion: image = action. This is a basic condition under which a company is not considered a "green washer”.

This also allows to attract loyal customers, that can be easily converted to prosumers. Previously mentioned social media may be very helpful here. We can say that companies can no longer afford to absence of social media and avoid the discussion.

The old concept of CSR (CSR1.0) assumed that brands helped to build relationships with communities and supplied the tools for taking socially involved actions. Today, thanks to the enormous popularity of social media, we can talk about something more – about CSR 2.0. CSR 2.0 not only facilitates communication with a consumer (quicker and easier to open a dialogue), but also allows decentralization– transforming few big to many small. This often happens through consumers, not only with their support and applause. Using social media also allows to monitor and report company's impact on society and the environment. Social media is an excellent field to discuss and investigate the real opinion about the brand. Using them gives a great chance to improve company image. According to Ethical Corporation *, CSR has the potential to fully exist only in the P2P world. On one condition –when it is not hiding anything.

* from: <http://www.ethicalcorp.com/content.asp?ContentID=5009>