

Deception and persuasion in propaganda

Sociology



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Tricks of the Trade: Deception and Persuasion in Propaganda

Tricks of the Trade: Deception and Persuasion in Propaganda British Petroleum (BP) was the precursor of the largest accidental oil spill known in the world. In April 20, 2010, BP's Macondo well in the deep water of the Gulf of Mexico blew-out, which is greater than both the Ixtoc blowout in Mexico and the Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska. The accident killed eleven crew members of the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig and left several others injured. Thousands of fishermen were greatly affected due to the destruction of many marine animals and organisms. Several marshes and beaches in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida were fouled because of the spill (Griggs, 2011). The media became dominated with news coverage of the BP oil spill, which went on until the blowout was finally capped in July 15, 2010. Joint Investigation of the US Coast Guard and the Department of the Internal assessed the damage and provided an approximate amount of oil discharged reaching over 4. 4 million barrels (Griggs, 2011). One of the most talked about issue is the culpability of the company involved. Several TV and news propaganda have circulated throughout several channels in the attempt of BP to influence the community and the public about what have happened in the deep water of the Gulf of Mexico. In response to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, BP had undergone several activities that were considered by many as mere propaganda to save the face of the company. They tried to do everything within their capability to make it look to the federal government and 93% of Americans that the oil spill is under control (Remmers, 2010). BP clearly strategized ways to divert the attention of the media and people from the actual progress of the rehabilitation of the gulf. One of the blunt moves is when the company turned off the submersible cameras that was supposed to

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be the avenue for transparency of the company's efforts is alleviating the crisis. The extent of the damage was also not determined right out back in 2010 and the chemicals that were sprayed on to the oil to disperse it had also added to the mystery of how severe the environmental and ecological impacts can turn out (Remmers, 2010). In addition, BP has also appointed Bob Dudley to head the oil spill recovery. He also took seat as the CEO on October 2010. This decision of the company was done to put a fresh and credible face on the company's clean up and restoration efforts (Remmers, 2010). BP also attempted to contract all possible professionals and scientists in the Gulf State University to testify on the company's behalf (Remmers, 2010). This can be associated with the use of functionalism in their propaganda. By hiring a new person to lead the clean up and restoration, the company provides a notion of having a clear purpose. After which, the company collaborates with institutions and they started hiring experts and scientists to focus on the full restoration of the Gulf, thus showing the need in highly technical and knowledgeable people to conduct research and testing (Sociology Website, 2005). Within the context of the principle of functionalism, BP was able to establish the perception of goal attainment, adaptation, integration, and Latency (Sociology Website, 2005). In 2012, BP has continued its efforts to patch the catastrophic event in 2010 by releasing ads that they claim to be beneficial for the Gulf in terms of its seafood and tourism industry. However, many locals, especially fishermen, see these ads and activities as BP Propaganda. According to them, the company is just showcasing the positive side of the actual condition of the area, while hiding the real story of areas that are still closed up to now due to oil contamination. The company even announces that the ecology of the area

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was not severely damaged and that they are seeing the positive economics signs at the Gulf (Burdeau, 2012). When BP launched its campaign for the seafood industry of the Gulf, they hired professional chefs and distributed fish tacos and seafood-filled jambalaya to hundreds of thousands of tourists and fans that were there to watch the Sugar Bowl and Bowl Championship Series to promote the Gulf Seafood. They also hosted pre-game parties and had vacation giveaways (Burdeau, 2012). This move employs the principle of interactionism. By getting good interpretation and meaning to their actions from the social world, the company is able to gain the acceptance of the majority of the society undermining, in a way, the groups that are greatly affected by the oil spill. Many locals have considered BP media ads as propaganda since it is misleading and manipulative. It may have been the last resort of the company to save its name and to survive, but still the actions had deceived and persuaded people that there is nothing to worry about the condition of the environment and ecology in the Gulf when in fact the problem is really staggering and its long term impact is not yet fully understood. References Burdeau, C. (2012). BP Ad Campaign Following Gulf Oil Spill Deemed ' Propaganda' By Some [Web blog]. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/08/bp-ad-campaign-gulf-oil-_n_1192600.html Griggs, J. W. (2011). BP Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill. *Energy Law Journal*, 32(57), 57-79. Retrieved from http://large.stanford.edu/courses/2011/ph240/mina1/docs/14_57_bp_gulf_of_mexico.pdf Remmers, J. K. (2010). BP Winning The Propaganda War: Out of Sight, Out of Mind [Web blog]. Retrieved from <http://themoderatevoice.com/81536/bp-winning-the-propaganda-war-out-of-sight-out-of-mind/> Sociology Website <https://assignbuster.com/deception-and-persuasion-in-propaganda/>

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