

The role of public relations in rebuilding the reputation of the hollywood stars ...

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Communication

When do the PR personnel of a Hollywood star need to consider rebuilding reputation and image?

Entertainment headlines in the news often depict Hollywood stars getting involved in one or two controversies ranging from DUI offense to drugs and marital breakups. The role of PR personnel seriously damaging reputation is to minimize the subsequent effect effects of the controversies. News about Mel Gibson hurling racist and rather sexist remarks on his ex-girlfriend Oksana, or David Hasselhoff's hospitalization due to alcoholism are just a few of the issues that PR personnel are trying to mitigate to preserve the public image of the celebrity involved. On the other hand, rebuilding the reputation and image of a Hollywood star require the PR personnel to consider when they need to exhaust their expertise on the issues. Grove (2013) suggests three important points in considering rebuilding a Hollywood star's reputation. The three rules of publicity suggest that the audience should be put into a priority. In the first place, the audience determines the career of a Hollywood star or a celebrity for that matter. There is an utmost realization in public relations for the stars in terms of understanding the power of every individual in making or breaking one's entertainment career (Marikar, 2013). When a PR personnel was tasked to take control of the matters of publicity, the first thing that comes as a priority is to address the damages that an issue has caused public perception. For example, when Britney Spears had controversial pictures circulating the internet, the public lost sight of the then sweet girl they have seen in the music videos. Such public perception takes a toll on the star's reputation that caused a long and difficult task for

any PR personnel to mitigate. One of the first thing that PR personnel use as remedy is to divert the people's attention to the main issue and introduce a different side of the story that people could easily relate (Weisman, 2012).

The third consideration that PR personnel need to take in rebuilding a Hollywood star's reputation is attention. Attention encompasses three important elements such as buy it, beg for it, and earn it (Grove, 2013).

When it becomes apparent that the audience is no longer buying the publicity to increase the market value of a Hollywood star, the PR personnel would have to resort to beg by assertion of positive values that the celebrity encompasses.

Re-establishing attainment of recognition from the audience constitutes the third element, which is earning the trust of the public. However, in cases where the situation becomes out of control and the press releases is no longer effective in rebuilding the reputation, this is when the PR personnel need to resort to drastic practice diversion. If a particular issue involving the Hollywood star explodes beyond repair, one of the tools needed is to divert the attention of the public by introducing an entirely different publicity. It can be recalled that Justin Beiber has been involved in a series of conflicts with the public authority adding up to the rapidly deteriorating public image of the pop star.

However, the publicists and the PR manager of the young singer see opportunity to turn things around for Beiber in the form of a humanitarian objective. The super typhoon Haiyan that hit the central region of the Philippines caused severe damages to the region including lost of lives.

Team Beiber decided to take the opportunity to rebuild the already-damaged

public image by going to the Philippines to embark on a humanitarian mission. Surprisingly, the global audience reconsidered their thoughts about Beiber, and he earned praises for his actions. Such example encompasses the diversion approach where the outcome of showing the world of the other side of Beiber's character caused for him to earn the trust of the public again. PR personnel consider rebuilding the reputation of a Hollywood star in situations where the celebrity is already losing its grasp for positive attention. Worse may come to worst when the damages to the reputation cause the Hollywood stars their career. In the case of Amy Winehouse, her severe addiction had caused her career to suffer to the point that no one wants to make a deal with her anymore. Such situation calls PR personnel to take actions in reversing the effect of the controversy involving the celebrity.

Should a Hollywood star consider using negative PR for remaining in the top headlines of news?

Publicity whether negative or positive is still publicity, and a certain level of benefit can still be attained. In cases where positive reinforcement is no longer effective, one of the drastic ways of creating noise among Hollywood stars is to get into the news with a rather negative connotation. One example that Ravid (2012) mentioned in his article is creating controversies about the Hollywood stars prior to the release of the project. The entertainment can still recall Aniston and Pitt breakup following the news of Pitt and Jolie affair before the release of the movie Mr. and Mrs. Smith. The news made headlines in the mainstream media and has been the talk of the town for a long time. Residues of the former controversy still emerge from time to time, but the subsequent effect of the issue is surprisingly positive

for the couple because the career of both Pitt and Jolie flourished even more with several projects coming in for both Jolie and Pitt. This is one of the reasons that Hollywood stars resort to negative publicity regardless of the nature of the issue being cooked up.

Cuco (2009) in his study of Hollywood and blockbuster economy, it appears that the publicity is all about the economy of the entertainment business. The more publicity that the Hollywood star is involved with, the greater the attention the celebrity is likely to gain. One of the best example is Britney Spears. The name was declining in popularity until scandals started plaguing the star and her family. The controversy earned the celebrity sudden fame and recognition as a bona fide star in the entertainment industry. Britney Spears encompasses the concept of using negative publicity in earning a ticket in the entertainment world. Britney Spears appears to be using the same tactic to remain at the top of the entertainment headlines such as marrying childhood sweetheart Jason in 2007 (Lewis, 2014). The day-long marriage ended up with a bit of bad taste for the star's followers earning the celebrity a reputation similar to that of Michael Jackson.

However, the question remains whether Hollywood stars and their PR personnel should use negative publicity in order to remain in the limelight. Going back to the Britney Spears argument, it can be recalled that the after the controversy; the celebrity earned attention and even got her clothing and perfume line. It can be assumed that the negative publicity earn the most attention in the entertainment world, and the more attention one gets the more the celebrity becomes a valuable business investment. Despite the economic value attributed to receiving several earning opportunities as an

outcome of publicity, a dilemma still remains whether or not Hollywood stars should use negative publicity in PR. The use of negative publicity encompasses similarity to an author idealizing a negative depiction of a suburb that that is of the complete opposite of the truth in order to see a novel (Rosen, N. D.). Therefore, using negative publicity in PR to increase popularity only exacerbates the fact that distorted reputation will remain on the public's memory like a stain that won't budge regardless how many times it got soaked in bleach.

Can a badly tarnished image and reputation of a Hollywood star be ever rebuilt?

As mentioned earlier badly established reputation can remain in record even with numerous refurbishing. It can be assumed that badly tarnished reputation of a Hollywood star cannot be rebuilt. Despite the tainted reputation, someone in the entertainment industry has to sign a deal and leave the celebrity's reputation out of the question for investment reasons (Eliashberg et al., 2005). The advent of computer technology greatly enabled several opportunities for Hollywood stars to recreate their reputation despite being in the state of beyond repair. Technology and the Internet acts as a mainstream media substitute that PR personnel uses to refurbished a Hollywood celebrity's tainted image (Faden, 2001). Considering the power of the social media today, the flood of news and contents contributed by independent individuals makes it easier for PR personnel to re-establish a bad image of the Hollywood stars. One bad publicity about a star can be easily defected by a flood of positive reviews published online.

What could be the best reputation rebuild strategies for a star suffering from

a tarnished image for creating a long-term comeback?

Hollywood's dominance in global entertainment gives rise to numerous stars, but only few are able to keep hold of their place at the top of the A-list because of their highly established legacy (Silver, 2007). A tainted reputation can still be mended with a lot of tools derived from technological sources. For one, social media constitutes the effective tool for the PR personnel to create a desired image. Even non-celebrities can make themselves popular in the virtual world through social media utilization. Having said that, cleaning the mess of a bad image can still be used by Hollywood celebrities to their advantage. The only thing that remains is the strategy to conceal the traces of the bad past and keep the current flow positivity. The scars that bad image had created is likely to remain on record, but the actions that follows in mending the broken reputation is critical in keeping the bad marks away from public awareness (Geddes, 2011).

Frameworks and standards are needed in order to effectively recreate a tarnished image. However, standards, metrics, and applied standards may only work if the goal is clear and if the Hollywood star is determined to cooperate. The other strategies that PR personnel can utilize in rebranding a Hollywood star is to make use of available technological platform in disseminating positive images and do so constantly until the bad reputation slips out of the public's memory.

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