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Rebranding for any organization carries with it substantial risks such as the loss of customer loyalty, loss of revenue, and damage to brand identity. These risks can be minimized if cause-related marketing is employed as part of the rebranding process. Cause-related marketing is defined as “a type of marketing involving the cooperative efforts of a for-profit business and a non-profit organization for mutual benefit” (Kau, 2015) and is a strategy that can help mitigate risks by maintaining customer loyalty while broadening and diversifying the existing customer base. Jocelyn Daw describes it as being used to “create shareholder and social value, connect with a range of constituents, and communicate the shared values of both organizations” (grantspace.com). Cause-related marketing has proven to be a successful strategy as 91 percent of global consumers are motivated to switch to a brand or organization “associated with a good cause” (Kau, 2015). It should be noted there is a distinction in cause-related marketing and corporate philanthropy in that money raised through cause-related marketing is not considered a gift to the non-profit on behalf of the for-profit partner (grantspace.com). Through insights from this class, seven lexicon terms have been chosen to explore this marketing strategy and they are identity, character, process, participatory, communication, connections, and convergence.

The creation of the term “cause-related marketing” is attributed to the American Express credit card company, which used it to describe its campaign to help fund restoration of the Statue of Liberty in 1983 (grantspace.com). The strategy generated revenue in two ways, the first being that every time a customer charged their card, one cent was donated to the restoration of the Statue, and, second, \$1 was donated for every new card issued, raising a total of \$1.7 million (Hessekiel, 2010). It was a very successful three-month campaign for American Express as card usage increased by 28 percent and cardholder membership increased by 45 percent (grantspace.com). While the monetary and business successes are clear, American Express clearly benefited in other ways by creating an image of itself as a socially conscious, patriotic company that is a steward of our national heritage.

Lee National Denim Day is another successful cause-related marketing campaign that was initiated in cooperation with the American Cancer Society for breast cancer research in 1996. For consumers to engage in this campaign, employees of a

participating business each contribute \$5 to the cause to wear jeans to work on the first Friday of every October. This is an ongoing campaign and to date, Lee has raised over \$91 million for breast cancer advocacy and research (Lee National Denim Day). It is effective because the campaign takes place during the month of October, which is Breast Cancer Awareness month, and strikes an emotional chord with anyone who has been afflicted by this disease, by first-hand experience or as a family member or friend. It personalizes the brand of Lee, and also compels people to buy Lee jeans to wear on Lee National Denim Day. Not only are people contributing \$5, they are also potentially buying the product separately to wear as part of their participation. This has also helped Lee, a company with a traditionally male consumer base, broaden its product appeal to women (Hessekiel, 2010).

While Lee National Denim Day is a campaign that has been active through and adapted to the age of electronic media, Panera partnered with Feeding America to create the “Food Chain Reaction” campaign “to provide soup for the hungry” (Lauren, 2013). This campaign is one that relies on a Facebook application created for it on which people invite their friends to join circles. Each circle requires five people join it before it is considered complete, and for every completed circle Panera donates one bowl of soup to Feed America (Lauren, 2013). This requires no cost to participants, engages participants in continual creation of the campaign, creates a larger community for participants to be apart of, and furthers Panera’s identity as a socially conscious business that gives its product away to those who cannot afford it in addition to selling it to those who can.

At the core of cause-related marketing is the issue of *identity*, which centers around an organization’s self-definition that influences whether consumers will be compelled to define themselves as part of the organization’s community based upon consumers’ emotional responses. The most prevalent components of this self-definition are how an organization identifies itself within its industry visually (logo, colors, merchandise design, etcetera), through its name, and by its message describing why it has adopted its name and visual imagery and its purpose. Deuze defines identity through the discussion of convergence, writing of the professional versus amateur identity encouraged by industries that need strong relationships with their consumers (Deuze, p. 471-473). In today’s media-scape, the identity of each individual is fashioned within

one's own uniquely crafted personal information space (Deuze, p. 468). A consumer's choice to identify with an organization within the consumer's own personal information space can be influenced by organizations as they engage with the consumers in cause-related marketing because consumers' personal information spaces are multi-dimensional. They are physical, virtual, logical, and emotional spaces and some people may participate in cause-related campaigns through their spaces for sincere reasons, or to be apart of a phenomenon.

The participation in such a campaign by a consumer within his or her personal information space is another component of identity and one that can be motivated by cause-related marketing. It demonstrates whether or not that consumer identifies with the organization and whether or not they will be loyal to it. Those outside of the existing consumer base, such as potential consumers, the general public and politicians, also emotionally identify with an organization through its brand. A cause-related marketing strategy can shift an organization's identity so that it is reinvented or enhanced and engage these potential consumers who identify with the new image or championed cause.

An organization's identity is one of the most influential elements in creating its *character*, which has tangible and intangible properties. Jenkins (2011) discusses the results of experiential learning children have through role play as virtual characters in video games, learning what it is like to live in different cultures and time periods, coming to emotionally identify with their characters while incidentally using skills acquired from other areas during time spent in characters' fictional lives (Jenkins, 2011, p. 28-31). In regards to cause-related strategy, character can be defined as virtual or physical experiences that influence the emotional identity of a consumer with an organization, as well as the abstract traits of an organization's activities that influence perception of it by the public or other industries. Cause-related marketing can also play off of people's previously had experiences so they feel compelled to participate in it, and in their participation, have the opportunity to create their own characters that are informed by learning and/or living in other environments.

Character is unique for every individual person, entity, or marketing campaign and leads to public and personal perceptions based upon association with other organizations, causes, or people. It is desirable to have a good character as that, in

addition to identity, creates consumer loyalty, and also strengthens an organization's position politically, publically, and within its own industry as trustworthy and upstanding. This links back to identity and the autonomous creation of personal information spaces, the character of which in the virtual world is curated as per the individual owner's definition of self within that space. An organization can curate its character within virtual and physical information spaces by linking itself to another organization through cause-related marketing.

The word *process* is important in the discussion of cause-related marketing and it can be defined as the series of interdependent steps taken to successfully accomplish an objective, which may span any given period of time. Lüders (2008) discusses the idea of process as a series of "communication sequences" in the realms of mass and personal media that must respond to each other in order for the communication process to be successful (Lüders, 2008, p. 689). McLuhan (1967a) writes of environments being processes that change by evolving out of their preceding environments, leading to the revelation of social patterns enabled by the quickened pace of electronically distributed information (McLuhan, 1967a, 165).

In cause-related marketing, the sequences, or steps, and environment(s) of the process need to be deliberately chosen so they are as efficient and well calculated as possible. The organizations partnering in the campaign need to be prepared to create the communication sequences and environments and controlling them so they benefit from them. If the process of creating a cause-related marketing strategy does not include a pre-planning phase, which then results in the plan itself, risks of a poorly rolled out campaign will result in damage to both the non-profit and for-profit's identity and character. The process of cause-related marketing in a rebranding effort is one that can redefine the identity and character of the organization so that it comes out stronger, with more universal support, and a better professional and social image. But, in order for cause-related marketing to reach maximum potential in regards to success, it must be *participatory*.

Participatory is the adjective used to describe optimal involvement on behalf of the consumer or partnering organizations in any social media activity so that their participation leads to continued creation of that activity and, ultimately, success in

reaching predetermined goals. McLuhan (1967a) discusses participatory culture, saying, “as the audience becomes participant, involved in the total electric drama, it can become a major work force” (McLuhan, 1967a, p. 167). It is not only this “electric drama” that allows a greater number of consumers to participate in a cause-related marketing campaign through social media than traditional media, but also the elimination or reduction of barriers that social media has accomplished (Jenkins, 2011, p. 2). The success of the American Express campaign would probably be substantially greater today than the \$1.7 million it raised in 1983. Lee National Denim Day is an example of a campaign that has evolved through the rise of social media. It raised \$1.4 million in its first year in 1996 and has seen contributions over 18 years total more than \$91 million (Lee National Denim Day). It can be assumed that by opening up an accessible and participation friendly website along with other social media platforms to distribute information has accelerated the campaign’s earnings. Panera and Feeding America’s campaign is one accessible anywhere at anytime through social media, involving participants as the workforce that continues the campaign on its own accord.

*Communication* of the cause-related strategy’s objective must be as concise as possible. Communication itself can be defined as the exchanging of information, ideas, and experiences, or in this case, a message, character, and identity. In cause-related marketing, the methods and mediums of communication need to be logical, emotional creative, and sincere. Or, they need to at least seem sincere, because it must be acknowledged that this strategy is at times undertaken for rather anti-philanthropic reasons by the for-profit company as a means to make money, improve image, and benefit an organization in a profitable way. The methods of communication are just as important as the precise message being shared, particularly in this day of participatory social media in which content is created and disseminated repeatedly through multiple channels, leading to the idea that “the ‘content’ of any medium is always another medium” (McLuhan, 2010b, p. 8), thus the medium becomes the content. The methods used are chosen and crafted to appeal to certain people, just as a message is. It is now the method of communicating that is as important as the message being communicated. This is important in cause-related marketing because the campaign must be conducted through channels that have avoided controversy and are trustworthy through content previously

generated. Or, in social media, both organizations partnering in the campaign must have trustworthy pasts with their own content creation and media platform use, or else they will have an added layer of complexity to overcome in order to be successful with their plan to raise funds.

Communication, its forms and content, have evolved significantly with technological advances with one of the most significant changes being that of content length, as messages are now shorter due to the medium in which they are created and disseminated (New Media Consortium, p. 2). This requires that the messaging of cause-related marketing be extremely precise, clearly understandable, and memorable to consumers as their attention is being fought for by multiple sources with different expectations in what constitutes sufficient and efficient communication. Communication still exists in traditional forms such as written, visual, aural, or any combination of the three, but is now offered up in electronic media at a much quicker pace, so both partnering organizations have to be prepared for how much of their resources will be spent keeping up with that pace.

The objective of these previous four words as part of the cause-related marketing strategy leads to the fifth, which is *connections*, and it can be defined as either tangible or intangible pathways of relating to, sharing with, or being associated with people and/or organizations. These pathways are increasingly more interrelated through “boundary-breaking relationships between media companies, media technologies, media producers and consumers” (Deuze, date, p. 470). Deuze also discusses these media industries within cities as ways of understanding how urban spaces function in the post-industrial world (Deuze, p.471), but it should be noted they serve to link people outside of these cities to the culture that is happening within them. While these media industries can be tools for inner-city organization of economy and culture, they can also be tools that motivate people in close proximity to an urban space to physically enter it for certain activities, or become involved with inner-city causes from afar. The same can be said for cause-related marketing campaigns that may have a component of physical involvement, but that does not prevent people from participating if they are not within a certain vicinity of the campaign’s primary location as they can be involved through other media technologies and have the same impact.

Another form of connecting to other organizations or people is social proprioception as discussed by the National Media Consortium (2007). This concept is one that describes the awareness or sense of place within a larger context of nodes, or connections, without directly communicating with those points of connection (New Media Consortium, p. 2). This is applicable to cause-related marketing because a social cause is not always one that directly affects an individual, but the individual is aware of its existence for various reasons, from personal to simply being engaged in the advertisement of a cause in passing. This awareness can spur participation in the marketing strategy, leading to the actual acknowledgement of the points of contact in order to do so.

In cause-related marketing, there are different networks of connections that must be fostered. They are the connections between the two partnering organizations, the connections between each organization and its consumer base, the partnered organizations and their collective consumer bases, and the connections between the organizations and the consumers who are not yet aware of or loyal to them. It is important the organization foster good relationships with its connections so that they are strengthened and the organization receives favorable attention and support within its immediate industry and the surrounding community. There may be some tactile way of nurturing them just as there is virtual.

These connections are what enable communication, leading to *convergence*, which is the coming together of people purposefully or accidentally, in physical or virtual spaces to participate in or create an experience, which Deuze identifies as the convergence of place, identity, and experience (Deuze, p. 473). It would be intended at the outset of the campaign that people purposefully converge, with the possibility of accidental convergence gaining momentum as the campaign progresses outwards from the spaces chosen for the primary marketing channels. The result of convergence is the creation of communities and cultures, known as convergence cultures (Deuze, p. 474), that may encourage or deter others from joining in the campaign. The identity and character of these spaces that is reflective of the cause should be set by the partnering organizations so that they can subliminally control the type of participants who enter them.



Convergence culture (Deuze, p. 474) can also generate communication through connections, or connections through communication, through seamless existence in multiple dichotomies. An organization can encourage certain types of connections that consumers will use to communicate with each other and with the organization, and must be prepared for connections outside of the domain of their marketing strategy to be created as the campaign grows by consumers given today's participatory nature of social media. This can be maintained if the marketing plan is very specific in which channels of participation will qualify for inclusion in raising money for the determined cause.

All of these terms interrelate and feed into a consumer cycle that can theoretically be joined, left, or influenced at any point in time once the campaign is launched. Just as an organization determines its own identity, character, process, communications and connections, so do its fan base and the external media through convergence. However, for purposes of cause-related marketing, a for-profit organization looking to partner with a nonprofit for this type of campaign has the luxury of working out the details prior to launch so that it controls the parameters to the fullest extent possible while ensuring ease of participation by consumers, and ultimately, success. This planning process affords the organizations primary control over their identities and characters that then jointly defines their image through the campaign. The uses communications and connections may also be directly controlled and can be done so that consumer participation reflects well upon the partners. Process is the overarching word that will define success in all of these areas and it is the key to coordinating a successful cause-related marketing campaign.

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