



STARBUCKS

“Sparking Social Engagement”

For over four decades, Starbucks has been serving communities with great products and exceptional service around the world. Through their various integrated marketing campaigns, they've developed a following that has remained loyal and developed into brand ambassadors.

History

Founded in 1971 in Seattle's Pike Place Market, Starbucks was originally a roaster and retailer of whole bean and ground coffee, tea and spices. Since its original opening, the brand has expanded to include over 20,000 stores in 65 countries worldwide.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Since the beginning, Starbucks has remained a public figure and example of cause marketing. Though they are a for-profit business, they have always portrayed their causes through their marketing and promotions. Their mission? "To inspire and nurture the human spirit - one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time."

If you were to stop and ask anyone on the street what Starbucks stands for, I'm sure you would get a few different answers that all seem to fall fairly neatly into a couple of categories: quality and a concern for the environment. One of this company's biggest successes is its focus on the community and customers, rather than a blatant desire to make money. As I'm sure this \$15 billion a year business still cares about profits, it is quite obvious that they have a few other things in mind as well.



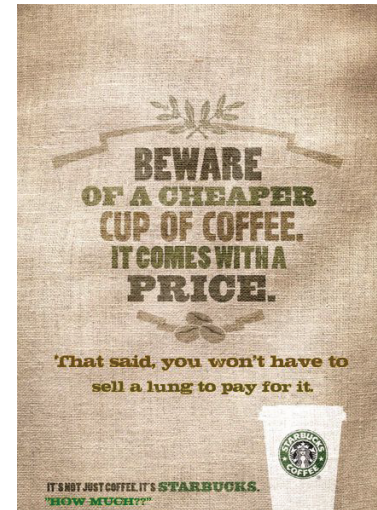
Each year, the company releases a Global Responsibility Report that outlines what they have done in the last year to continue working towards their goals of: ethical sourcing, environmental stewardship and community involvement. These reports are posted on the company's website and have been a part of the process since 2001. Through these efforts and various partnerships across the globe, it has become apparent that the company is in support of many of our most fundamental rights, something that most people can relate to with ease.

ADVERTISING

Though much of Starbucks's original success can be attributed to print and media advertisements, it has become more and more clear that they are not the primary focus of the company's marketing efforts. These mediums are also where the lines between advertising and PR start to blur. One of Starbucks' biggest advertising tools is the inclusion of their social responsibility initiatives. With these initiatives integrated into paid advertisements, what do they become?

PRINT

In magazines, you will see a variety of types of ads. They vary from cause marketing to fun and cheerful illustrations. However, no matter what the content is, there is a constant brand voice. The Starbucks voice is like your "hippy" best friend who is fun and playful, but has a cause that they are excited to speak out about.



TELEVISION AND VIDEO

The company hasn't been huge into TV commercials in the past. Every once in a while you will see a spot with a new release, like the addition of Teavana teas to their stores, but they usually stick to print and social media. That being said, their video marketing is quite relatable. It is also simple and easy to follow, focusing on the product and what it is, not on why you have to "buy it". Another way the company uses videos to market to their consumer is through videos that promote their cause. These videos showcase the work they're doing and allows consumers to see the lives that are being touched.

Environmental Ad:



<http://bit.ly/1tvQogV>

General Ad:



<http://bit.ly/1u3e8rx>

Combination Ad:




<http://bit.ly/1vRSFEf>

*Click on link to view videos

SOCIAL MEDIA

This is where Starbucks excels in their marketing and is where they build relationships with their customers that instills an unwavering sense of brand loyalty. Coffee drinkers have always been notorious for their brand loyalty, but Starbucks drinkers are especially loyal. But is Starbucks really that great? Let's take a look at the numbers. Currently, the company has 37,393,065 likes on Facebook and 6.61 million followers on Twitter. If you compare these numbers to their main competitors, it's easy to see how much better they're doing:



 12,239,640 likes
 729,000 followers



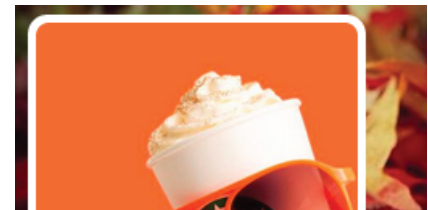
 32,032,236 likes
 2,510,000 followers



 476,641 likes
 72,800 followers

So how do they do it? Instead of just focusing on getting new followers, they work hard to maintain relationships and keep their existing followers active and engaged with their brand. Through things like Starbucks Rewards and "My Starbucks Idea", the company can personalize marketing and they encourage consumers to join the company's creative process. They also integrate their social responsibility efforts into their cross-promoted social media posts to continue to show their involvement in issues that matter. This helps make these channels seem less like advertisements.

Their newest campaign is proof enough that **they know what they're doing**. Each fall, Starbucks highlights a few seasonal drinks that are usually brought back as the weather cools down. This year, they decided to bring the coveted Pumpkin Spice Latte back in beginning of August and accompanying its release was the company official twitter handle @TheRealPSL. Created just under a month ago, this campaign is sure to be one of the fastest growing ideas with over 90,000 followers. This handle rivals major brands like Pillsbury (92,000 followers) and Cinnabon (63,000 followers) who have been active since the end of 2009. This campaign is a perfect example of the company's constant efforts to personalize the customer's experience. What better way to engage your audience than to take their favorite product and allow them to interact with it?



Pumpkin Spice Latte

@TheRealPSL

THE OFFICIAL TWITTER FOR FALL'S OFFICIAL BEVERAGE ☕ From

@Starbucks

📍 Seattle, WA

🌐 therealpsl.tumblr.com

So what does all this mean? Starbucks is about so much more than a refreshing drink on a hot afternoon or a midday pick me up after a long night of studying. They've developed a brand voice that echoes across the globe and that has touched many lives. This brand has cracked the code on what works and how to communicate with consumers in an effective and engaging way. As strategic communicators, we would do well to take a chapter of their book and apply it to our efforts.