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PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSIGNMENT

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" We need a VP of Propaganda... errr I mean Public Relations!"

Elon Musk (via Twitter)

1) My Opinion of the Tweet Itself

Elon Musk- CEO of Tesla, SpaceX and now Twitter, used his newly acquired social media platform to make the above tweet about Public Relations. His twitter statement caused an uproar in the comments, but twitter is notorious for having unfiltered arguments and "debates". Whether you agree with his statement or not one thing is for sure- the tweet got engagement. Musk's initial tweet, although a mere 11 words long, garnered 12.5 K retweets and was viewed 17.3 M times. He succeeded in gaining traction and his tweet, seems to me, as harmless fun in means to make a joke or "Troll Twitter". Personally I believe that his tweet does hold some merit, but it depends. A PR officer's job entails making their client likeable, which will make them and their statements biased. To differentiate between a good PR officer and bad, in my humble opinion, no matter how biased you are, a good PR officer will not lie to deceive the public but would find a way to allow the truth to benefit them. A bad PR officer, however, will do what it takes to come out seemingly on the good side of things no matter what lies or deceptive roots they must take.

An example would be if two PR officers had a client that recently came out in support of Pro-life. With the recent Roe V Wade law being overturned, backlash ensues on the client and people who are Pro-choice begin to boycott the client. A good PR officer *might* make a public statement saying that choosing Pro-Life for the client is due to the religious background of the client, as well as the belief that all lives deserve a chance, but this does not mean that the client would ever impose or force their own morals and values on others. A bad PR officer *might* fabricate a story talking about how abortion personally affected the clients marriage and how the client refuses to stand by and allow it to affect anyone else's and it being against the client's religious beliefs only adding as more reason. While both statements can have good and bad feedback from the public, one is more honest while the other is a lie- in the end it all depends on how willing you are to put out false statements to stay on top and what ethical beliefs the PR officer chooses to stand by. Whether or not the false statements can be proven as false its never ideal to lie. Sticking with the clients beliefs is enough of a reason to give without having to create a sob-story to garner sympathy points with the public, who in turn can spin it and say that the client does not care about the mothers in the situation who are the ones directly affected by the Roe V Wade law being overturned- calling the client apathetic, selfish or whatever else.

Although I understand what Elon Musk's tweet is insinuating, I believe that good PR is honest and bad PR is propaganda, and I choose to take his tweet to mean to generalize PR as being a biased form of deceiving the public, by any means necessary, in which case I do not agree with that statement whatsoever.

2) My Opinion of the Peoples Reaction Towards it **(Supporting Vs. Opposing)**

Despite my personal opinion, Twitter is full of people who aren't shy in sharing their own. Whether taking the tweet seriously and being offended or building onto the joke, many have brought up scenarios to Musk where a PR team would be ideal to handle tackling these situations- touching on the fact on how truly crucial PR is. Public Relations is under the umbrella of marketing, its sole purpose is to make the client come out of any situation in a better light and to garner the public's favor. Countries, celebrities and corporations all have PR, whether its a dedicated department or a designated officer.

Some of the responses garnered by the above tweet did not take Elon Musk's words too kindly, fueled by anger, commenters that opposed his tweet played into the hands of Musk by engaging with it and boosting it for more to see. However, those who agreed with Elon Musk's words, also played into the hands of boosting the tweet and engaged in debate within the comments. Both sides have their points, in which I agree and disagree with; Public Relations can be the most crucial thing to have in any business- when done right. However, it has harbored a bad image as being deceitful and a manipulation tactic, which is ironic to me that PR has a bad public image.

People agreeing with Musk view PR like a fictional novel where the client is the protagonist and this novel tells the tale of the heroic triumphs and achievements, making any collateral damage created in the process seem for the greater good and making this protagonist seem like they can do no wrong. A pure work of fiction in their eyes.

Those opposing with the claims, however, see PR more as a necessary evil or the antihero. They claim that everyone, be it countries, celebrities or corporations, needs to have someone designated for damage control. Countries need to garner loyalty from their following, companies want profit and need to win public favor, and celebrities rely on the publics perception to stay relevant and continue to earn money and gain work. If they were to falter or have a scandal arise, a PR Officer would help diffuse the situation, coming out better on the other side; being more well perceived and having minimal loss/damage.

3) My Personal Opinion Towards "The General Public's View" of the Science of Public Relations

A good public relations officer is like a lawyer, in the sense that he/she must know everything good and bad about the client so they are not surprised and must portray their client in the best light; whether to the judge and jury or, in the case of a PR officer: to the general public.

They need to know everything about their client in order to stay ahead of any issues that could be brought up and have the proper way of handling it whether it be spinning the negatives to a positive, or compensating and apologizing for faults in the past - taking action and initiative to be better, moving forward.

For some it seems deceitful; a blatant form of manipulating the public, however, if that is the case, then we can argue that everyone who wants to build social connections is a manipulator- when we meet people (new friends, potential employers, even family) we try to portray the best version of ourselves whether we intend to or not. We try to mask any negative feelings we have, never mention mistakes of the past but if they are brought up we either dismiss it and belittle the mistake, or show the growth from it and how we regret it.

So, are we also manipulators for not revealing everything? Are we deceitful for wanting to be liked by those around us and not wanting to dwell on the past?

I don't believe we are.

It's human nature to want to be liked and admired- it fulfills a part of our egotistical desire, which is nothing to be ashamed of but rather used to our advantage. Building connections is a way to survive in this shrinking melting pot of a world, and it's the most ideal to live in peace and seen in a positive light by those around us rather than hated and avoided.

Something to distinguish and truly show that public relations is not as deceitful as we assume: is that PR Officers bend the truth, but never blatantly lie- they touch on accomplishments and things their client has done but they do not make up falsehoods to appear better or in a higher regard. They also never deface or tarnish their clients morals, values and mission to save face, whether the public would agree with this or not.

A prime example is during the height of the Black Lives Matter movement, companies were put on the spot to pick a side and the founder of the online retailer "Dolls Kill" made a public statement on her Instagram posting a picture of the physical store with a row of police and saying "Direct Action in its glory. #blacklivesmatter". Many presumed this was a pro-police post and boycott the brand, which made the company's PR team panic and post something publicly, on their website, to condemn their founder's post calling it tone-deafed while also trying to say it was just poorly worded and was actually a pro-black lives matter post.



DOLLS KILL WHAT'S NEW FESTIVAL CLOTHING PLUS SHOES HOME BEAUTY ACCESSORIES COLLABS BRANDS SALE

We believe in standing up for what's right & we commit to coming clean when we mess up:

BLACK LIVES MATTER

June 2020: Our founder, Shoddy, posted an image on her personal Instagram. It showed the Dolls Kill store behind a row of riot cops with the caption "[Direct Action in its glory, #blacklivesmatter](#)".

"Direct Action" is a term used by political activists to describe the use of public protest to achieve demands. The post was meant to convey support for the BLM movement, but it was tone deaf and interpreted by some as pro-police.

We are deeply sorry about how the message came across and want to be 100% clear. **We condemn racism and stand alongside the fight for justice.**

Shoddy issued a public apology and we support the BLM movement. You can read more about the commitments we made [here](#).

Another example would be the ice cream brand, "Ben & Jerry's", and their response to the war on Palestine. Ben & Jerry's publicly stood for Palestine by halting and putting a stop to sales in occupied Palestinian territories as they did not match the values of the company. Many Israel supporters boycott the brand, but the company still stood with their decision as they did not support such heinous human rights violations.

Ben & Jerry's Will End Sales of Our Ice Cream in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

July 19, 2021

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