

Title : UNDER ARMOUR

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INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC RELATIONS

**PAIRWORK ASSIGNMENT
(UNDER ARMOUR)**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Under Armour, a widely-known clothing company that specializes in manufacturing sports apparel. Based from Logomyway.com, (n.d.), Under Armour is founded in Baltimore, United States, but it also runs worldwide through online and retail. Kevin Plank has established it since 1996. Previously, he was a 23-year-old captain for the University of Maryland football team. His surprising inspiration for Under Armour's creation was after realising that his compression shorts remained dryer than the shirts he wore while playing football.

Consequently, Plank designed a shirt made of synthetic fabric that would wick away fluid and began selling the attire on his grandmother's basement. Interestingly, Under Armour's name was formed by accident where Plank revealed the idea of "Body Armor" but his brother Bill misheard it as "Under Armor". It remained like that with the application of British spelling. Today, Under Armour has advanced with various apparel such as cold-weather kit and sports equipment. Indeed, it continually provides essential gear to athletes as well as improvising them.

2.0 ROLES AND FUNCTION OF PR PRACTITIONER

The first role of PR in Under Armour is the Public Relations manager. A Public Relations manager works to expand understanding of the organisation's business, performance and strategy (as cited by Salary.com, n.d.). They develop and implement policies and procedures for the relations between the public and the organisation. They also serve as the company spokesperson, which they prepare summaries of media activity for senior management. The Public Relations Manager manages through subordinate managers and professionals in larger groups of moderate complexity and capable of resolving escalated issues arising from operations and requiring coordination with other departments.

The next role of PR in Under Armour is the project manager. A project manager requires someone to lead the planning and implementation of project plans which they are to own the execution of a project from start to finish. They are accountable for ensuring key milestone management and risk management for each project. A project manager is also responsible for change management and communication plans throughout a project and able to provide evaluation and assessment of results.

The following role of PR is a brand marketing intern. Based on VelvetJobs (n.d.), a brand marketing intern needs to support the needs of a PR agency with enquiries relating to media coverage, reporting, asset delivery and events. Besides that, they require to track and report Under Armour's local media coverage on a weekly and monthly basis. Next, collating all essential product info and imagery for PR product sell into media. Then, they need to monitor competitor coverage and looking at the media landscape.

3.0 CHALLENGES OF PR PRACTITIONER

The first challenge faced by PR practitioner is the crisis during the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. Rodriguez (2016) states that Under Armour developed the US 'Mach39' which is declared to be the fastest speed skating suit ever created. However, it did not live up to its expectation, and athletes posted slower times. The speculation around saying that the outfit had a design flaw. What is supposed to be the most high-tech speed skating ever made were blamed for the United States' lacklustre performance during the Winter Olympics.

The second challenge is the accusation of promoting a male-dominated workplace culture. Based from Lieber (2018), as reported by the Wall Street Journal, Under Armour consists of women that make up almost half of its workforce. But the company's website reveals that the entire executive team is male that cause the leadership promotes a culture of machismo. Another issue about this matter is that the sports apparel company is allowing employees and executives to expense at strips clubs for adult entertainment. This has caused the women around Under Armour to found it demeaning and seen as objectifying women.

The last challenge is the CEO comment regarding Donald Trump. CEO of Under Armour, Kevin Plank has called Donald Trump "a real asset to this country" which has cause to spark a storm which he did not intend (as cited by McGrath, 2017). As he praised the president, he has been publicly criticised by Under Armour celebrity endorsers as the fallout was swift. A few days later, Under Armour was under fire as it was the subject of stocks downgrade that point to Plank's comment as a negative impact for the company.

4.0 IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS FOR PR PRACTITIONER

Firstly, the practice of social media over old-fashioned media. This is based from Leers (2014). Nowadays, social media is a pivotal medium. PR practitioner can easily monitor customers' development based on their sites which can be accessed effortlessly. Plus, it offers a virtual-friendly avenue to communicate among themselves, particularly in sharing their feedbacks that old-style media cannot propose. Similarly, Under Armour's social accounts provide adequate floors to share your feedback and interact with them directly. Henceforth, the utilisation of social media by PR practitioner is vital to preserving their status.

Next, Leers (2014), stated that social media makes business cost-effective. Undoubtedly, social media can be reached swiftly just by our fingers thus extremely useful. Therefore, PR practitioner could exploit the perk of attaining consumers rapidly with some expenses on marketing which is significant. Accordingly, PR practitioner could enlarge their revenue in other areas instead of challenging advertising techniques like magazine commercials. Likewise, Under Armour administers great ads through numerous platforms such as Instagram, Youtube and Facebook as their cost-effective implementation.

Finally, clients' satisfaction escalates through social media. (Leers,2014). Considerably, it permits clients to address their matters to Under Armour head-on. Hence, promising PR practitioner a prospect to solve the problems in a delightful manner which will positively improvise consumers approval and also trust. As a result, customers have no uncertainty to purchase in the future and stay loyal. For instance, Under Armour welcomes its customers to personally inform them through direct message on Instagram or Facebook if they have any complaints about their products. From there, PR practitioner will take their part in fulfilling customers' needs.

5.0 SELF-PRESENTATION OF PR PRACTITIONER IN SOCIAL MEDIA

First of all, Facebook. Currently, Facebook is among the utmost spot specialised for their sharing platform. It is valuable for Under Armour due to its Facebook that often shares topics on athletic and health. (Mickle, n.d.). To illustrate, “ProjectRock” is a Facebook page showcasing Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson which delivers motivational fitness support. (appendix 1) Therefore, users who are attracted to these types of contents tend to utilise it by sharing them through Facebook. Consequently, it will lead to a good reputation for PR practitioner apart from promising an added value towards the digital society.

Pinterest is an advantageous means for Under Armour. Commonly, people will seek for fitness matters and clothing segment. These categories are what Under Armour are made of yet they have provided pleasing essentials on their Pinterest account. Hence, maintaining a virtuous image is granted for a PR practitioner. Mickle (n.d.), stated that Under Armour website plays a part in sustaining its prosperity by progressively targeting women and youth instead of typical men. It can be seen on appendix 2. Not only that these two clusters are lively online but undeniably an auspicious social presence in the future.

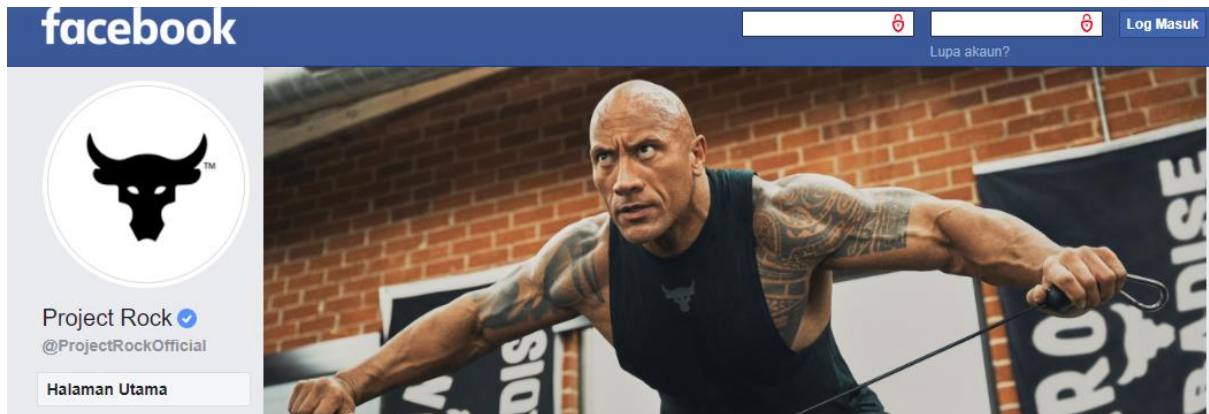
Finally, Twitter. Raising awareness and sharing information have become its forte. (Mickle, n.d). Everything on Twitter is concise yet precise but enough to grab people's attention. The usage of hashtags is fundamental, specifically when speaking about one's brand and product. For instance, Under Armour has created a hashtag “#TheOnlyWayIsThrough” as one of the ways to enhance their standing. (appendix 3) Aside from working to catalyst spirit on athleticism, it also spreads positive vibes around the world. Assuredly, this creativity might be simple but potentially an excellent outcome for Under Armour involuntarily.

6.0 CONCLUSION

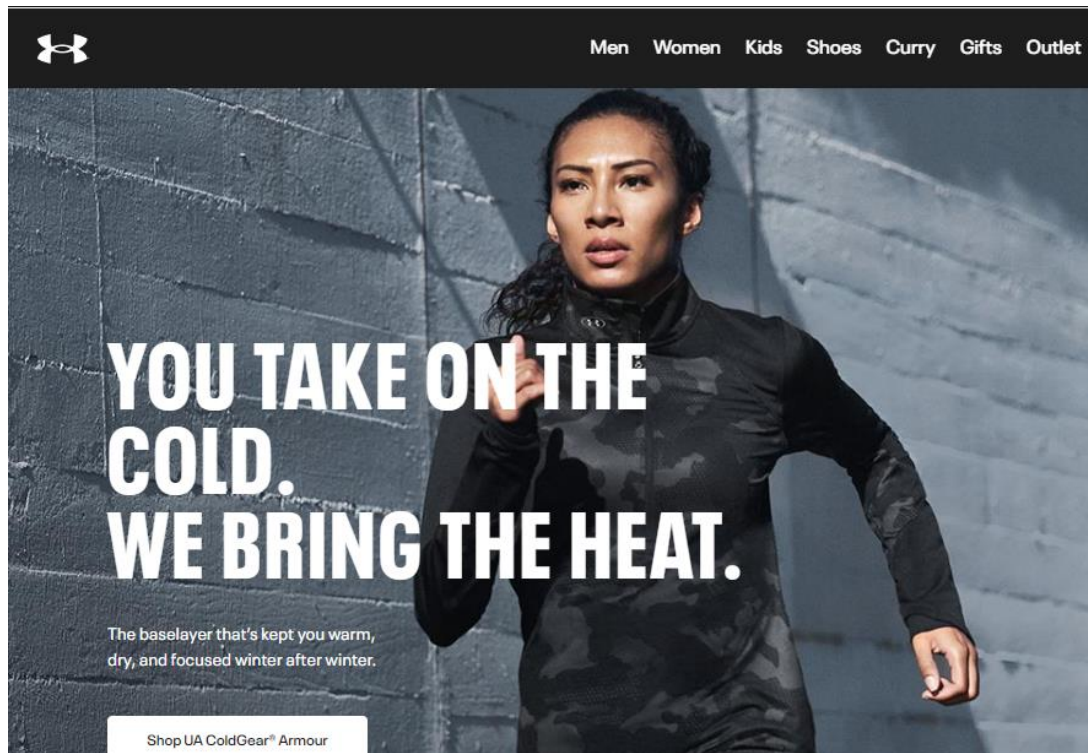
In a nutshell, Public Relations is described as a management function which is fundamental to establish a mutual relationship between the company and the society. Public Relations has a significant role in the business industry as the strong bonding of the companies and customers is the crucial goal of Public Relations. In association with Under Armour, Weise (2014) states that public relations play a significant role in handling crisis such as the Olympic crisis in Sochi. The Under Armour Public Relation department has received good response in handling the Olympics crisis and was awarded Crisis or Issues Management Campaign of the Year 2015 by PR Week website. With good management of Public Relations, it helps the company in coordinate its activities to keep in tune with public opinion in its favour which can improve by shaping public opinion in its favour. Viewing public relations as the key management function of a business is an essential strategy to manage one's reputation will help accomplish important goals.

(1436words)

APPENDICES



Appendix 1



Appendix 2



Under Armour

26.6K Tweets



Follow

Under Armour

@UnderArmour

Under Armour makes you better. [#TheOnlyWayIsThrough](#)

Baltimore, MD [underarmour.com](#) Joined March 2009

879 Following 957K Followers

Appendix 3

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