

Oink Outings Case Study Analysis

The Minnesota Pork Producers Association's (MMPA) campaign aimed to promote and create transparency between Minnesota Pork Farms and consumers. The main objectives of the campaign were to change the perspective and stigma against pig farms to gain support from customers. However, in order to complete these objectives, MMPA had to gain trust and establish itself as a reliable and ethical company. To address customers' concerns and reduce the stigma against pig farms, the Minnesota Pork Company launched an "Oink Outings" campaign, which showcased the ethical upbringing of its pork products through individual and collaborative farm-related events. Developing a relationship between the customers, company, and suppliers was crucial to the success of the campaign and yet was the main challenge. The campaign aimed to earn customers' trust in the company and the product, encouraging them to purchase and donate their purchases to families in need.

The key audience for MMPA's campaign was educated suburban mothers with financial means to purchase food without budget constraints. The campaign targets "well-educated" mothers- in the sense of their presumed knowledge and passion for healthy foods. Defining this audience with, "higher than average incomes and pets," implies that they can buy pork products beyond their family's needs and consumption (Public Relations Society of America, 2013). It was important for MMPA to specifically adhere to customers who had the finances to purchase and a passion for nutrition to ensure the sale of its products. The subgroup of educated, well-off, suburban mothers is categorized within the "latent" audience. Latent audiences are a subgroup of the general public that are socially conscious and can be persuaded to support a company (H. Hether, Personal Communication, October 12, 2023). Latent audiences may not be initially aware of the product, but they share similar values and take notice of issues regarding their

beliefs. In this case study, the organization of Minnesota Moveable Middle Moms (4Moms) contains the demographic of educated suburban mothers with well-off incomes, similar to the desired key audience of the campaign. By including 4Moms in MMPA's campaign, the company would gain a set audience that is more likely to support their business. The main success of the campaign would be its ability to impact a consumer's decision to buy more pork products while simultaneously reflecting the customers' values and moral needs to support charity. Therefore, establishing a relationship between the Minnesota Pork Company and the customers is necessary for the success of this case study.

According to Freberg, a good relationship encapsulates all "personal, emotional and cultural in nature" (Freberg, 2021, p.193). To establish good relationships, the Public Relations team must create and maintain an image for the client that is ethical and transparent. In the case of "Oink Outings", the campaign's goal was to create multiple relationships between the client, consumer, and product itself. One of the first relationships that the campaign aimed to organize was between MMPA and its customers. MMPA's campaign team set up booth events and farm tours for suburban families to visit, meet, and communicate with the farmers. This experience significantly impacted customers and allowed families to gain insight and exposure to pork farms. During the booth event of "Ask a Farmer. Feed a Family," customers can exchange questions with pig farmers and clarify possible doubts about the pig farms. Through each clarifying answer, customers began to trust the handlers of their food and alter their perspective of pork farms. When asking a question, customers were simultaneously donating pork to feed families. Through this opportunity, customers felt that they could create an impact for the greater good. The campaign reached satisfaction between the company and its consumers, as customers gained clarity, free gifts, and accomplished a good deed to contribute to those in need. As

customers' trust in the company increased, MMPA gained a large percentage of pork donations. It was significant for the campaign to include donating to "feed families in need" to boost its reputation. Engaging in social issues adheres to the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility- meaning that the company appears trustworthy and concerned for its community. Depicting Minnesota Pork as a company that cares for its community- heightens its reputation as an ethical company. In addition, by implying to customers that through their donation- MMPA can support families facing food insecurity, customers feel more inclined to continue donating to feel a part of the company's good deeds. Feeling important and vital to the company creates an equal and mutual power dynamic between the consumer and the company. The campaign establishes mutual control between the customer and company by depicting that each customer matters- not only to the company but also to families in need. Showcasing how each customer's decision "made an impact" influences each customer to continue to donate pork to feel a sense of accomplishment. By ensuring that their purchase contributes to a greater cause, Minnesota Pork Company gains more donations and a trustworthy image. From the campaigns' success rate, MMPA found it worth continuing the campaign's procedures. As customers are committed to supporting the company, Minnesota Pork Company continues to engage customers through events and transparency to maintain trust and further sales. Maintaining a good relationship with the customer is essential for the customer to purchase and continue to support MMPA.

MMPA's campaign strategies involved cultivating multiple relationships between suppliers and consumers to support relational maintenance. The campaign team provided customers access to farmers and pig farms through farm tours and fun farm events. As mentioned earlier, the exposure and conversations with the handlers of pork products established openness and transparency among customers. In addition, event success came from networking and

collaborating with 4Moms and the Minnesota Zoo to attract customers. 4Moms reflected the key audience of the campaign, while Minnesota Zoo offered an interactive experience for the whole family. The MMPA grew its network with companies of similar values to appear more reliable and trustworthy for all ages. If customers feel their values are continuously reflected within the company, they will continue their support. From MMPA's networks, customers experienced family-friendly events such as farm tours, cooking demonstrations, and zoo visits. These experiences positively impacted the customer's perspective of the brand and created a positive association of fun and happy memories with the company. At the end of the donation process, MMPA shared that 5,000 pounds of pork were donated to the Second Harvest Heartland in 2012 (Public Relations Society of America, 2013). By informing customers that their donation helped families, the MMPA allowed customers to play a crucial role in the company's efforts. Similarly to a team-based effort, customers and Minnesota Pork Company shared tasks to accomplish the goal of donating to charity.

The "Oink Outings," case won an award from PRSA because it effectively addressed the multifaceted problem of changing views regarding the ethical concern of buying and supporting pork products. The Minnesota Pork Company gained more profit and donations than expected with 5,000 donations of pork, and an increase of 50-57 percent in trust (Public Relations Society of America, 2013). The company established a strong relationship between the consumers, buyers, and suppliers. The main reason for the campaign's success was its ability to alter the customer's perspective by reflecting customers' values. In reference to the Four Models of PR, MMPA used the two-way asymmetric model. This model involves organizations being very adamant in persuading and changing the audience's opinion- the power dynamic is often off-balanced (H. Hether, Personal Communication, October 5, 2023). In the case of "Oink

Outings,” Minnesota Pork Company was persistent in persuading the customers to change their perspective of pig farms. By fostering the relationships through exposure to farmers, farms, and sharing values, Minnesota Pork Company successfully gained the trust of their customers. In technical terms, the case contained the vital factors in PR of, “establishing strong and lasting relationships,” (Freberg 20, 2021). Overall, “Oink Outings” successfully impacted their audiences' beliefs and convinced them to donate their pork purchase to other community members.

If this campaign were to run again, a suggestion would be for the company to consider including families from low-income communities. Despite the possible decrease in assets and donation amounts, showcasing the knowledge of pig farms to a wider audience could incentivize more purchases of Minnesota Pork’s specific brand. By excluding families outside of suburban neighborhoods, the campaign gives the impression that sales are more important than knowledge sharing. However, by being inclusive toward families of all economic situations, the campaign will appear more trustworthy and better aligned with its values of eliminating the stigma against pig farms and bettering the community. Expanding its audience will allow MMPA to further demonstrate the company's ethics and persona of being a reliable, trustworthy, and recognizable product for future consumers.