



Case Study:

Alex Awad
Group Project Leader

Website:

www.alexawad.com

Course:

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The Story

Since first opening their doors in 1986 Party City has been a leading competitor in the costume and party supply sales space. Selling a wide variety of costumes, decorations, snacks, favors and much more, Party City is a one-stop shop for all dress-up and partying needs. A recent Party City marketing campaign is their “You Boo You” campaign. This campaign included a commercial that promoted the versatility of their costume selections. It highlights the fact that customers can do anything they want with Party City’s costumes and accessories, “you boo you.” Party City’s large inventory in a single retail store is a compelling and motivating factor for viewers to shop there.

Campaign Evaluation

Party City's "You Boo You" commercial introduces several critical factors identified including a lack of face or body in the costumes, a punny slogan, and various promotional tactics on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest. The lack of a face or body in the costumes as an advertising approach works especially well for Party City because it highlights the costume, as opposed to the person donning the apparel so that all of the focus goes to how cool and unique their costumes are rather than how great the models look in them. This allows viewers to easily picture their family and themselves in the costumes. Though this isn't all positive as the lack of faces might make this ad hard to connect to emotionally. Facial expressions on models can often improve the tone of the ad, and influence the viewers opinion of the ad. The slogan also benefits the campaign by increasing positive brand awareness. "You Boo You" not only appeals to the audience through a sense of humor, but it is catchy and allows viewers to recall it with ease. The promotional tactics on social media using the hashtag #YouBooYou means Party City was able to distinguish themselves from competitors. The hashtag was used on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest. More specifically, the brand promoted themselves using 'How to Mix and Match It' instructional tutorials on Facebook and Instagram Live. Through these live videos, the consumer may be inspired and seek to create a costume using the resources identified in the video. All in all, the campaign was effective and included pivotal elements to attract the audience but certainly has areas they can improve on in the future.

The Challenge

One reason for the strategic marketing plan not being as effective as it could have been was because the target audience, which was parents of young kids, was misunderstood. The timing of this campaign was in the middle of COVID-19, yet nothing was mentioned in the campaign about being careful during a pandemic. Parents who weren't concerned about Covid likely weren't very concerned about allowing their kids to go trick-or-treating or to a Halloween party, while parents who were more cautious about Covid may not let their children do any of these things. Advertising masks that go with costumes would bring these people back into the mix and emphasize that children could dress up while being safe. This would also streamline the brand's messaging, as there were resources on their website about safely Trick-or-Treating that weren't highlighted in the campaign.

Alternative Solution

While the pandemic may not be as large of a consideration for future campaigns, not thinking to advertise face masks for families who wanted to be extra cautious was a missed opportunity. It also could help to start or end with actual models and then transition into costumes that don't have people in them to establish a connection that makes customers feel personally prioritized and valued by Party City. According to a study from Cone Communications and Echo Research, more than 90% of consumers are more likely to trust and be loyal to socially responsible businesses. So, while the decision to take Covid safety into consideration may seem inconsequential in the long run, it actually would have created a positive sentiment among consumers.