

PRL 319 Case Study on Rare Beauty's Social Media Campaign

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PRL 319: Social Media & Society for PR

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December 7th, 2024

Introduction

Rare Beauty founded by Selena Gomez launched its "Makeup Made to Feel Good In" campaign with a mission to redefine beauty standards and foster mental health awareness. This campaign used social media as a platform to amplify messages of empowerment, authenticity and inclusivity, reflecting the brand's dedication to creating a positive impact in the beauty industry. Rare Beauty seeks to help people feel good about themselves unlike many celebrity beauty brands. According to Time magazine, rather than selling an unattainable image, the brand promotes mental health and supports initiatives to reduce stigma and provide resources. The campaign fostered a sense of community and encouraged open conversations about self-love and mental health. The campaign included a variety of promotional materials, such as press releases, a website, social media posts, advertising campaigns and partnerships with influencers. The campaign's innovative approach to messaging, platform optimization and public engagement serves as a compelling case study for understanding the intersection of social media and public relations. This analysis will explore Rare Beauty's strategic objectives, target audience, social media platforms, PR strategies, ethical considerations and the overall success and impact of its campaign, providing insights into the practices that positioned Rare Beauty as a socially conscious brand.

Primary Objective and Target Audience

The primary objective of Rare Beauty's campaign was to redefine traditional beauty standards by shifting focus away from unattainable ideals and promoting diversity and self-expression. The campaign sought to encourage individuals to embrace their natural beauty and prioritize mental health, creating a space where authenticity is celebrated. Rare Beauty

addressed societal issues like mental health stigma and exclusivity in the beauty industry by emphasizing self-acceptance and advocating for representation.

Rare Beauty's target audience primarily consists of Gen Z and Millennial consumers, demographics known for their social consciousness and demand for corporate social responsibility, transparency and equity. These individuals often feel excluded by traditional beauty marketing and are drawn to brands that align with their values. Rare Beauty's emphasis on mental health, self-care and diversity resonated strongly with this audience. Selena Gomez's transparency about her mental health journey further enhanced the brand's connection with consumers as her advocacy lent credibility and relatability to the campaign's messaging.

Social Media Platforms and Optimization

Rare Beauty effectively utilized Instagram and TikTok as primary platforms to reach its audience, leveraging their strengths in visual storytelling and audience engagement. Instagram served as the hub for influencer partnerships, product showcases and community engagement. The platform enabled Rare Beauty to visually express its inclusive messaging through curated posts, engaging stories and professional content. It also encouraged the use of hashtags such as #RareBeauty and #MakeupMadeToFeelGoodIn, fostering a sense of belonging and participation among followers. User-generated content amplified this message, showcasing a diverse community of individuals using the products and reflecting the brand's ethos.

On the other hand, TikTok provided Rare Beauty with a space for short-form, relatable content that resonated with younger audiences. The platform's algorithm designed to boost authentic and engaging content allowed Rare Beauty to reach a broader audience organically. Rare Beauty leveraged TikTok's unique strengths by participating in viral trends, creating

entertaining and educational videos, and sharing relatable beauty moments. The campaign prioritized mental health and self-confidence over the pursuit of perfection, a message that resonated deeply with the platform's users.

Selena Gomez's substantial following on both platforms—over 400 million Instagram followers alone—further magnified the campaign's impact. Rare Beauty was able to create a campaign that felt both personal and accessible by integrating her personal advocacy for mental health with the brand's narrative. This multi-platform approach ensured that Rare Beauty reached its target audience effectively, building a loyal and engaged community.

PR Strategies and Engagement

Rare Beauty employed several public relations strategies to enhance engagement and influence public perception. The campaign relied heavily on influencer partnerships, collaborating with a diverse group of beauty influencers to reach various demographics. These influencers shared their personal experiences with Rare Beauty products, aligning their narratives with the brand's values of authenticity and positivity. This approach not only increased visibility but also reinforced the campaign's commitment to belonging and representation.

The use of user-generated content was another significant strategy where Rare Beauty encouraged followers to share their stories and experiences with the products, creating a sense of community and authenticity. This strategy helped the brand connect with its audience on a personal level, as consumers saw themselves represented in the campaign. Rare Beauty showcased the diverse range of individuals who found joy and confidence in the brand, reinforcing its inclusive image by amplifying user stories.

Central to the campaign was Selena Gomez's openness about her mental health journey. Her personal story provided a strong foundation for the campaign's focus on mental health awareness. Rare Beauty created a narrative that felt genuine and impactful by integrating her advocacy into the brand's messaging. Partnerships with mental health organizations further demonstrated the brand's commitment to meaningful change, aligning its mission with actionable support for mental well-being.

These strategies generated organic conversations about Rare Beauty's products and values, strengthening brand loyalty and driving engagement on social media. The campaign's emphasis on community and mental health differentiated it from traditional beauty marketing, making it a standout effort in the industry.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations of Rare Beauty's campaign were multifaceted, encompassing both positive practices and potential criticisms. Rare Beauty's commitment to mental health advocacy and acceptance was a cornerstone of its campaign. The brand fostered a culture of self-empowerment and prioritized well-being by integrating mental health awareness into its messaging. Additionally, its diverse representation in marketing materials and accessible product packaging demonstrated a strong ethical commitment to inclusivity.

However, the campaign also faced challenges related to its ethical positioning. Some critics questioned whether the focus on mental health was entirely altruistic or a strategic move to enhance brand image. Others argued that despite its progressive messaging, the campaign still operated within a consumerist framework that could perpetuate societal pressures around beauty.

For instance, the promotion of the “clean girl” aesthetic, while seemingly inclusive, may still reinforce certain beauty standards.

Rare Beauty addressed these concerns by maintaining transparency and aligning its efforts with reputable mental health organizations. Selena Gomez’s involvement added credibility to the campaign, as her advocacy for mental health is well-documented and deeply personal. Rare Beauty strengthened its ethical standing and demonstrated a genuine commitment to its mission by taking actionable steps to support mental health initiatives.

Success and Impact

Rare Beauty's campaign was widely recognized as a success, achieving its objectives of promoting individuality, mental health awareness, and community engagement. The brand’s social media platforms saw significant growth in followers and engagement, with millions of users participating in the campaign through likes, shares, and personal testimonials. The widespread use of campaign-specific hashtags created a vibrant online community, further amplifying the brand’s message.

The campaign also translated into substantial sales growth, with Rare Beauty’s products becoming highly sought after in major retailers like Sephora. The expansion of its product line and the recognition it received, such as awards for innovation and quality, reflected its impact in the beauty industry. Rare Beauty gained a reputation as a socially conscious brand that prioritizes values over mere aesthetics beyond financial success.

However, the campaign faced some criticism regarding the commercialization of mental health advocacy. Some individuals expressed skepticism about the sincerity of a for-profit brand

addressing such issues while Rare Beauty's messaging was impactful. Others critiqued the beauty industry as a whole, arguing that even inclusive marketing ultimately serves to drive consumerism. Rare Beauty's approach to addressing these concerns helped mitigate negative perceptions and reinforced its commitment to meaningful change despite these critiques.

Challenges and Overcoming Obstacles

Rare Beauty faced several challenges during its campaign, including skepticism about its authenticity and the difficulty of standing out in a crowded beauty market. As a commercial entity, the brand's focus on mental health and accessibility was scrutinized by some who questioned whether its messaging was genuinely altruistic. Rare Beauty overcame this challenge by centering its narrative around Selena Gomez's personal story, which added authenticity and credibility to the campaign. Collaborations with mental health organizations further demonstrated its commitment to supporting its stated values.

Another challenge was distinguishing itself in an oversaturated beauty market. Rare Beauty's emphasis on individuality, mental health, and accessible design helped it stand out from competitors. Rare Beauty was able to build a strong emotional connection with its audience, ensuring its messaging resonated amidst the noise of the industry by maintaining a consistent and authentic brand voice.

Best Practice Model

Rare Beauty's campaign serves as a best practice model for PR efforts in the beauty industry and beyond. Its strategic use of social media platforms, coupled with authentic messaging and a commitment to ethical practices, provides valuable lessons for engaging with

socially conscious consumers. The campaign demonstrates how aligning brand values with meaningful causes can foster loyalty and drive impactful change.

However, the success of Rare Beauty's campaign may be challenging to replicate in industries without similar celebrity backing or a direct connection to social advocacy. The campaign highlights the potential of combining social media strategies with authenticity and integrity to create a lasting impact despite these limitations.

Conclusion

Rare Beauty's "Makeup Made to Feel Good In" campaign successfully leveraged social media to challenge traditional beauty standards, promote mental health awareness, and foster inclusivity. By using platforms like Instagram and TikTok, the brand reached its target audience with messaging that felt personal and impactful. Despite ethical concerns and industry challenges, the campaign's success in building a loyal community and driving social change makes it a valuable case study for public relations professionals. Rare Beauty has set a strong example for how brands can use their platforms to create meaningful societal impact while achieving business objectives.

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