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Weekly Issue #629 - December 20, 2021

Hi there,

Poor Peloton. And Ryan Reynolds. If you have not seen the news, Chris Noth (who plays Mr. Big) is now officially canceled thanks to two claims against him of sexual assault. Peloton and Reynolds's co-created ad they pulled together in 48 hours to provide a different story to Big's now-viral brand-impacting heart attack ending in And Just Like That - has now been pulled from airing.

The question here most being asked by brands we have spoken to recently is this: How do you safeguard a celebrity-driven campaign to make sure that if absolute chaos of the unexpected happens, your brand stays safe. And my thoughts on how to keep brands... safer.

The Celebrity Impact For Brands

Celebrities are sales drivers who strongly influence consumer engagement. We believe Nike's edition of LeBron James and Michael Jordan shoes will enhance our skills on the court, and how many of us are using Proactiv acne treatment because Jessica Simpson and Katy Perry said so? But just like the crises of Paula Deen and Lance Armstrong, celebrity endorsers and their corresponding brands can find themselves in a publicity nightmare through a bad decision or simple oversight.

However, marketers should NOT avoid investing in a celebrity partnership due to fear of the unknown. These partnerships are incredibly powerful. They get brands noticed. And they trigger major sales. The key here is to not avoid just due to fear - there are absolutely ways you can protect yourself. Besides of course... diving in before the campaign starts to make sure there is nothing already that you should be aware of as a red flag. Talk to their agent. They should know. And build into your contract, just like you have built into any sort of escrow agreement - that the seller (the celebrity) has to provide disclosure about any pending legal issues or problems that exist. Give yourself a chance for a heads-up that allows you to make an informed decision.

Jeep is sure wishing they had disclosure before working with Bruce Springsteen on their Super Bowl commercial - only later to find out later that he had a DUI earlier that year. A big no-no for an automotive brand.

The Perils To Think About Before You Hire A Celebrity

When investing in celebrity talent to endorse a brand, it is essential that the brand manager not only optimize the opportunity with a detailed plan in place prior to activation but also have the forethought to safeguard against potential blunders that could occur.

Prior to making a celebrity hire, there are a few important things to consider.

Authentic + Real Understanding Of Your Brand

First, you want to make sure your chosen endorser actually understands the brand and the ultimate marketing goals of the company they are representing. Having your chosen celebrity actively engaging with the brand management team will equip them with the necessary information and responses to appropriately address media opportunities that come their way - whether in a formal interview or a casual conversation on the street.

There is also a concern of whether or not your brand's endorser actually uses your product in "real life." Your chosen celebrity endorser may have been using a competitive brand before being signed

on. Educating your endorser on the specific benefits of your brand and the elements which set it apart from competitors is not only helpful in establishing consistency, but you increase the likelihood of that celebrity organically adapting it into their personal lives, increasing the chance of their daily use and loyalty to that product.

Exclusivity = Brand Protection

In addition to celebrity endorsements, many brands are investing dollars in event sponsorships and TV and film integrations. What would happen if Pepsi endorser, Beyonce Knowles' next film role called for her to drink copious amounts of Dr. Pepper on screen? With all the potential events and project sign-ons available for your celebrity to join, a conflict of brand interest is likely to arise. Ensure you have exclusivity with your endorser and have a plan in place for what should happen when the celebrity is booked on productions or events that may have partnered with a competing sponsor.

After being secured for different mobile brands, Alicia Keys (BlackBerry) and Ellen DeGeneres (Samsung) both blundered when they tweeted from their personal Apple iPhones, which were obviously different manufacturers than their new endorsement partners. Everyone remembers the 'epic selfie' Ellen took with Samsung's Galaxy phone and how present the brand was on-screen throughout the Oscar telecast. However, if you checked out Ellen's backstage tweets detailing the show, all were sent from her personal iPhone, not the Galaxy phone Samsung paid such a hefty price for her to be seen with. Companies should do a bit of behind-the-scenes investigating to see where any conflicts may occur, now and in the future, and address them immediately.

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Learning Opp!

Are you interested in learning how to successfully partner celebrities to your brand - without spending a million? Watch this short webinar to learn Hollywood insider tricks to create and kick start an entertainment marketing campaign that is the perfect extension for your social media program.

Watch Our Webinar: How To Make A Social Media Campaign SHINE With Star Power

Protecting Your Brand Amidst Your Endorser's Bad Publicity

Just as you've finally completed prepping your endorser, researching and resolving all possible conflicts, and ensuring exclusivity of your brand, a not-so-good news story involving your celebrity pops up on the cover of this week's top tabloid. Bad news in the entertainment industry spreads faster than a wildfire. In today's nonstop-posting, always tweeting, over-sharing world, you must have a crisis plan in place to manage true PR horror stories that will allow your brand to respond in an effective and timely manner.

Celebrities can find themselves in hot water through bad decisions. Their mistakes, unlike the rest of us, get broadcast around the world for all to see. Drunk driving, trouble with the law, relationship issues, or negative comments picked up by paparazzi can all derail a campaign if a plan is not in place to respond quickly to the matter.

When LeBron James tweeted negatively about his Samsung phone - forgetting the brand was a key sponsor of the NBA, the crisis was somewhat averted soon after by having him quickly send a follow-up post stating it was a false alarm. If the celebrity blunders and says or does something specifically negative towards the brand, the brand team will need to address it quickly, that day - even that hour.

There's No Such Thing As A Perfect Endorser

So you've found the perfect endorser for your brand, but does your target consumer adore that celebrity as much as your company does? Be sure not to put all your eggs in one basket! Don't let YOUR perfect celebrity be the only representation of your brand. While people realize that celebrities are not actually the brand they are the face of, consumers are less likely to judge or discriminate against a product if there is a mix of celebrities engaged with who they can relate to, aspire to, or emulate versus a single one.

A brand endorsers' job description is not to simply show up and smile for the cameras, it's a partnership that needs to be worked seamlessly into their everyday lives to ensure success for everyone. It is up to the brand manager to make sure the celebrity understands and supports the larger picture of the brand, its current goals, and its future.

The Power Of A Celebrity

Celebrities are one of the global powerhouses - and they can make a brand's sales go sonic overnight with the right campaign elements to support the partnership. These can include TVC's (television commercials), print ads, radio and retail store displays - and nowadays, lots and lots of social media.

In this week's pop culture partnership insights, you will:

- Learn about all the brands that mega-star Post Malone has partnered with, including Postmates, Arnette, and Doritos, and understand why so many companies are drawn to his authenticity. We had a fun partnership with FLIR with him!

- Read some highlights from my interview with Tom Schwab, who is the CEO of Interview Valet, an inbound marketing media agency that helps entrepreneurs and thought leaders leverage podcast interviews to drive sales.
- Understand the hype surrounding South Korean boy band BTS, and discover all the success they have had through partnering with big-name brands such as McDonald's and Samsung.
- Learn about the benefits of partnering your brand with a podcast, and understand what pointers you should keep in mind.

With Covid rearing its head again, many marketers are wondering how their upcoming campaigns will be impacted. Keep in mind influencer marketing is an absolute go-to, as content can be created typically in a very siloed contained environment.

And now...on to our weekly article round-up!

- Stacy Jones, CEO + Founder Hollywood Branded

PODCAST MARKETING 101

By Sam Zikos, December 16, 2021 at 3:29 PM ⓘ

Pump Up Your Pod

Here at Hollywood Branded, we *love* podcasts! We recognize that it's an incredibly powerful tool for all things inbound marketing. And, it's a great way to position yourself as leader in your space. If you're interested in it, we suggest you give it a try!

To help you jump-start your podcasting career, we invited an expert onto our show to tell you all the do's and don'ts of podcasting, and share all the ways that you can better market your interviews. **In this blog, Hollywood Branded shares some key points about podcast marketing from the expertise of Tom Schwab, who is the CEO of Interview Valet.**

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A DEEP DIVE INTO BTS, FANS & BRAND PARTNERSHIPS

By Nikki Fife, December 15, 2021 at 3:35 PM ⓘ

Like Dynamite

The music industry is always quick moving... and for boy bands of all kinds, it's moving in *one direction*, and that is UP. From U2 to N*SYNC, One Direction to BTS, the overwhelming success of "boy bands" brand partnerships and their extreme fan following is something that is not going away. Global artists like the KPOP boy band, BTS (meaning 'Bulletproof Boy Scouts') have created a path for other artists to really take note of by choosing strategic partners when collaborating with brands.

Whether it was U2 and Blackberry, N*Sync and Coca Cola, Jonas Bros and Baby Bottle Pops or most recently BTS and Samsung Galaxy Buds, the opportunities for successful celebrity and product partnerships are endless. Brands have realized and are continuing to realize the strength and reach that these boy bands have created through their fans. **In this blog, Hollywood Branded will discuss the immense fan following of boy bands, BTS specifically, and how brands have found major success in creating partnerships with them.**

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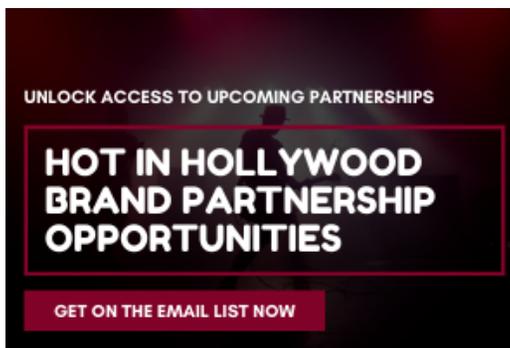
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