

A Study on the Problems and Strategies of Brand Communication in Public Welfare Organisations: Based on a Case Study of Ronald McDonald House

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ABSTRACT

With the development of the economy and the progress of civilisation public welfare communication has become an indispensable proposition in modern material life, different from the public welfare communication, public welfare organisations communication scope is relatively more targeted, but nowadays and public welfare organisations are faced with the dilemma of poor communication effect. This paper focuses on the analysis of the problems encountered by public welfare organisations in the process of brand communication, as well as the analysis of suggestions based on specific problems. The paper analyses the brand communication history and strategy of Ronald McDonald House through a case study of the organisation, uses in-depth interviews with the management and audience representatives of the organisation to understand their views and experiences of public welfare brand communication, and collects the official accounts of public welfare organisations and uses textual analysis to analyse the symbolic information and communication strategy they contain. The study concludes that the systematic application of the 'brand as symbol' theory to build a unified brand image and establish brand trust by improving professional competence, transparency and emotional connection is an effective way for public welfare organisations to break through the communication dilemma.

KEYWORDS

Public interest organisations; Brand communication; Brand trust

1 Introduction

Public interest organisations will be concerned about the plight of the disadvantaged, but also involved in human development-related issues, in the current society plays an increasingly important role. Public interest communication is a non-profit activity, not only in the attitude of concern, but also through active participation in public interest action to promote social development ^[1]. China's research related to advertising communication of public welfare organisations began with public service announcements (PSAs), and the earliest scholar to pay attention to this aspect is Ni Ning, who believes that PSAs are still essentially an advertising activity, and its purpose includes maintaining social morality and solving public interest problems ^[2]. With the depth of subsequent research, the problems faced by public interest organisations have been analysed from multiple perspectives, but there is still a research gap in how to systematically build a brand effect for public interest organisations, and win widespread public recognition and participation. In this paper, we will find out what are the problems and countermeasures of brand communication for public welfare organisations and how to build a brand for public welfare organisations to gain brand effect and brand trust through case study method, in-depth interview method and text analysis method. It proposes how to build the brand effect and brand trust of public welfare communication organisations as well as letting more people recognise and join public welfare organisations, and effectively guiding public welfare organisations to carry out practical activities.

2 Analysis: dilemmas and theoretical analyses of communication in public interest organisations

For this issue, scenario analysis can be conducted from multiple perspectives. According to the analysis of Zhang Shangjuan and other scholars, the author has made a general classification and elaboration of the problems encountered by public welfare organisations. Firstly, there is more enthusiasm than reason, but not enough rational thinking. The Ronald McDonald House was founded because the founder, Fred's daughter, Kim, was sick. Many public welfare organisations have been started because the founders saw some difficulties with a passion or a kind heart, and the viewpoint that is recognised is that these founders or initiators have good intentions, but after the public welfare organisations have been created, with the gradual complication of affairs, the gradual penetration into the situation of the people to be helped, and the gradual expansion of the breadth and depth of the help, various problems are encountered because of the failure to take into account the real details and the unexpected situations. They may encounter various problems because they have not taken into account the real details and unexpected situations. Secondly, some public welfare organisations do not pay attention to communication, are not good at communication, and even exclude contact with the media, resisting some positive communication in the spirit of good intentions. Thirdly, they are not good at building up their credibility, and they do not make their organisations' information open and transparent. The public is very sensitive to negative news about public welfare organisations, and any negative news about any organisation in the public welfare and charity sector will make the public distrustful of charities. Therefore, in

order to enhance credibility, charitable organisations should make their information transparent, so that donors or volunteers can understand where the funds and material help are really going. Fourth. Not with other public welfare organisations exchange and cooperation, public charity is essentially a platform to gather a variety of forces, all the forces cooperate with each other, charity organisations can maximise the benefits. Fifth, taboo commercial factors some organisations believe that the public welfare should be pure, should not have any behaviour with the profit side. But in fact, the public welfare organisations and commercialisation linked to this thing will produce negative problems, is the risk of this thing itself, not necessarily happen, the public welfare organisations have to do is how to maximise the risk of reducing this risk rather than because of the risk of this thing will not do ^[3].

2.1 Mechanism of brand trust

According to Xie Yi and other scholars on the impact of brand trust and brand emotion on word-of-mouth communication, the authors summarise the relevant points. First of all, it is clear what brand trust is, and the exploration of the relationship of trust between consumers and brands in the field of brand management is based on the theoretical foundation of the rich research results on trust in the field of social psychology and sociology ^[4]. Brands play an important role in the consumer culture of modern society, Fournier ^[5] pointed out that consumers tend to regard certain brands as partners and friends in life, as an extension of their self-image or as an external display of their self-concept ^[6], therefore, brands are an effective target for consumers to establish a relationship of trust ^[5]. The viewpoint of Mayer et al ^[7] is very representative and widely accepted, they believe that ability, benevolence and integrity determine the level of interpersonal trust in an organisation. So according to Xie Yi's quantitative experiments, he pointed out that both brand trust and brand emotion can significantly improve consumers' overall attitude towards the brand and the certainty of brand attitude.

2.2 Theory of brand as sign

According to Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, the "signifier" is the form of the sign, which is the image, object or sound itself ^[8]; "signified" is the concept expressed by the sign and the meaning of the sign. Charles Sanders Peirce, an American philosopher, explains symbols as the relationship between representamen, object and interpreter ^[9]. Strategy of brand communication In the process of brand communication, the meaning of symbols and the cognitive characteristics of the audience should be fully considered. Select appropriate symbolic elements and communication channels to ensure that the brand message can be accurately and effectively conveyed to the target audience. Emphasise the consistency and coherence of brand symbols. In different communication channels and situations, brand symbols should maintain a unified style and meaning to enhance brand recognition and memory.

3 Discussion

According to the two points discussed above to match the communication dilemma of charitable organisations. Firstly, as mentioned above, one of the problems faced by charitable organisations is that they have more enthusiasm but not enough rational thinking and lack of professionalism. In order for charitable organisations to have a better development, we need to realise that it is not only the love and touching but also the power of more professionalism that makes organisations grow, organisations need to sort out their own direction, philosophy and values, and combine them with the theory of "brand as sign". Combined with the theory of "brand as sign", the charitable organisation will become a commodity, fully consider the characteristics of its own charitable field, and choose the appropriate symbolic elements as well as dissemination channels. Based on the case of Ronald McDonald House, the founder Fred Hill finally decided to use Ronald McDonald to name the "home away from home". Not only because of the financial support from McDonald's restaurants, but also because he believed that Ronald McDonald's optimism, positivity, and cheerfulness would bring encouragement to the sick children struggling with their illnesses. Since 2014, Ronald McDonald's red and white striped socks have been the symbol of Ronald McDonald House Charities around the world, and for the first time at the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, young ball kids from all over the world, selected by the McDonald's World Cup Ball Kids programme, wore Ronald McDonald's red and white striped socks as they walked onto the pitch alongside the players. Ronald McDonald's red and white striped socks represent the optimistic, positive and cheerful image of Ronald McDonald, as well as the warmth, warmth and joy of the Ronald McDonald House. This not only ensures the accurate selection of audience groups, but also finds the specific publicity channels suitable for the audience groups, ensures that the information of the charity organisation can be accurately and effectively conveyed to the audience, and over time forms the consistency and coherence of the brand symbols, which can deepen people's impression of the charity organisation, and also allow more groups to pay attention to the charitable field, and achieves brand recognition and memory increase. As for the fourth question, if charities have a clear understanding of their own positioning areas, they can more clearly and conveniently screen and cooperate with their own organisations in the same field, and the difficulty of this matter will become smaller. For example, the China Ronald McDonald House Charitable Fund ("China McFund") is a China-based charitable fund co-

funded by the public and corporations, aiming to promote the health and welfare of children in China. The Fund was created by McDonald's (China) and the China Soong Ching Ling Foundation with the common goal of enhancing and improving the living and growing environment of children in China. This kind of co-operation certainly brings good influence to such charities. For the third question, charities do not build credibility, this question can be combined with brand trust, as mentioned above, consumers tend to regard certain brands as friends in their own lives, as an extension of their self-image or as an external display of their self-concept, so if we deepen the trust in the charity's brand, and often disseminate the charity's information, so that the group has a good impression of the charity, not only will the crowd participate in the charity, but also the charity will have a good impression of the charity. Not only will the proportion of the public participating in charities increase greatly, because for the public, joining charities is also a conceptual external display of their own ideas, and the public will also take this charity organisation as a friend of their own, increasing the stickiness of the public to charities is an effective goal to allow consumers to establish a relationship of trust, and can significantly improve the overall attitude of consumers towards the brand and the brand's brand. Consumers' overall attitude towards the brand and the certainty of the brand's attitude. If charities can achieve the above mentioned brand trust and make good use of the "brand as sign" theory, then the second problem, charities are not good at, do not want to go to the publicity of this problem will also be solved, but these two theories for the commercialisation of charities will have some requirements, which will also be discussed to the fifth question is whether it is possible to commercialise a charity and to what extent it would be reasonable to do so. For the case of Ronald McDonald House, from 1974 Fred Kill's daughter Kim Sick, the United States local McDonald's restaurant, also through the sale of products to launch a fund-raising action, and actively participate in raising funds for the construction of sick children and families "Home Away from Home (Home Away from Home)" activities. In 1974, the first Ronald McDonald House was opened in Philadelphia, with seven rooms, including a living room, kitchen, laundry room and other amenities. In 2007, the "China McFund Charity Dinner and Golf Tournament" was organised, with all proceeds going to the fund for charity, greatly improving the facilities of the charity. Therefore, it can be found that a certain degree of commercialism does bring positive influence to charitable organisations. Ronald McDonald House, on the other hand, provides an example of successfully balancing business and public welfare, as it relies on the powerful resources of the McDonald's corporation but effectively avoids the risk of public trust through independent fund operation and transparent information disclosure."

4 Conclusion

This paper firstly combines previous academic analyses to make a series of analyses of the dilemmas faced by public welfare organisations nowadays, and summarises five key issues: lack of strategy, lack of communication, lack of credibility, isolated operation and commercialisation taboos, and concludes that the transformation of public welfare organisations lies in the combination of professional management and the theory of brand management.

Specifically, this study draws two core conclusions: first, building brand trust is the ultimate goal of communication for public interest organisations, which depends on the organisation's sustained performance in the three dimensions of competence, benevolence and integrity. Secondly, the application of "brand as sign" theory** is a key means of achieving this goal, requiring organisations to carefully design and manage their brand symbol systems to ensure consistency and effectiveness of communication.

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