

■ ■ ■ Developing an International PR Campaign: Pepsi and the Black Eyed Peas on Mexican vs. Russian Markets

Olga V. Novoselova, Enoc Salim Ruiz Gomez

Ural Federal University, Yekaterinburg, Russia.

Abstract. Applying the circuit of culture model in analyzing Pepsi campaign with the Black Eyed Peas in 2007 case study uncovers the differences in perception of the brand and PR campaign in Mexico and Russia, which shows the importance of a culture-centred approach to public relations and communication. At the same time, it reflects how unique symbols were created and used in implementing in two culturally varied countries. The challenge of Pepsi was to create a universal campaign for reaching many kinds of diverse cultures including Russia and Mexico that should have enough symbolic values and common messages which could be understood by different nationalities in order to bring success to the brand. Analysis of this case study attempts to contribute to building knowledge in this area. While focused on two countries, this case builds a stronger argument for considering cultural approaches in developing universal public relations practice.

Keywords: Pepsi PR campaign, international public relations, communication in Mexico, Russian communication style, universal symbols, international brand

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Inf. about the authors: Novoselova Olga Victorovna, senior lecturer at the department of integrated marketing communications and branding, Ural Federal University; Enoc Salim Ruiz Gomez, graduate student, Ural Federal University. Address: 620002, Russia, Yekaterinburg, Mira st. 19. E-mail: novoselova@uralbrand.ru; e.noxander@gmail.com.

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When a brand has international goals and plans to reach new markets, its opportunities to seduce new audiences depend, to a large extent, on how well the target people are known. The understanding of people's behaviour towards the product and Brand can only be accessed through investigation of ethnographic (Spradley, 1979) and cultural aspects as a basis (Babbie, 2004).

Once the mind of the consumer is known, the brands are in a race against time, because no matters whether brands are new and original, they will not be alone in the battlefield of marketing (Shankar, Elliot and Goulding, 2001), and if they fail to penetrate the unconscious in an effective, creative and forceful way, the competitor will.

In the international market, the communication possibilities of a business help companies to build bridges with their audiences and to manage a dialogue between consumer and brands in order to transmit benefits and interesting stories at any level that can offer products and services [Hall (1999)], or concrete messages from other

spheres of communication. For such effects, one of the most important actors is the PR practitioner, because only through the communicative and directing abilities of this singular individual can one understand unique properties to save a brand from drowning in the noise of conventional advertising, even though we are talking of a personal brand.

The value of relevant truth that public relations can provide is to solve real problems of strategy and communication of virtually any brand, organization or image (Yaverbaum, Bly and Benun, 2006), and surpasses the requirements of visual creativity. Once a company has known the target audience in foreign spaces, the PR practitioner must choose the means to transmit its message in the right moments, rhetoric and formality, since in practice, the understanding of the communication obtained from Public Relations will be a result of knowing, but mainly, the target culture, taking into account that the greatest challenge is when such scenario maintains significant differences with the sociohistorical and cultural context to which the PR practitioner or the company belongs.

In spite of everything, the investigation of audiences is not entirely in charge of the Public Relations expert. Although the discipline requires he/she to have persuasive communication skills, one of the most recurrent public relations problems in the international field is when the elements are not relevant due to weak connections with the foreign culture (Morley, 1999), and therefore, the messages could be seen irrelevant, or when the globalized contexts keeps the publics used to daily advertising noise, and news stories and convincing messages of public relations are confused with conventional advertising efforts, and the role of the PR practitioners as cultural intermediaries (Bourdieu, 1984) is blurred. In this way, the activities carried out by these characters are as relevant as any other director involved in a campaign, since success is defined by the way in which the PR experts understand that their skills as intermediary culture [Hall (1997)] are based on the convergence of the image, public relations and advertising at the midpoint of cultural exchange, because the complexity of social constructs, conventions and symbols are the elements that shape the exchange of thoughts, memories and history in a foreign country.

The purpose of this research is based on the strategies that the PR experts should have before trying to conquer an unknown cultural context, because despite the responsibility that they have, they do not always know where to begin to investigate or talk to a foreign culture to transmit it information. For this, it appears the urgency to know if there is any unique strategic guideline in the exercise of public relations that is effective and that can be applied to all countries before starting a public relations campaign.

Literature review

The international PR experts' position as cultural agents cannot only be considered as catalyst for specific messages, but also as producers of information that, in turn, develop and express language symbols that can help to optimize the understanding of messages through the guidance they provides. In this sense audiences can better understand how to think and how to feel about a situation [Curtin, Gaither (2005, 2007)].

For PR practitioners it is a prevailing objective to shape and correct the perceptions of brands, because consumers are not worried about which companies are partners, or about the creative agencies involved, for they are only aware that in the world advertising has an giant impact on their lives. This is why brands redouble their efforts to introduce their messages in any space available in the urban market (Mark Tungate, 2007). However, the effectiveness of public relations and advertising campaigns is debatable, and not always harmonized properly in a specific cultural environment (Douglas Torin, 1984).

Practitioners and scholars have been interested in whether PR theories and concepts are universal and which factors can influence the practice of PR in an international context.

Several studies have focused on the practice of twoway symmetrical communication in a country-specific context, trying to demonstrate the universal use and adaptability of Grunig's model. The approach that deals with the roles of public relations representatives regarding decision making and organizations is the one focused on Excellence; led by James E. Grunig and his colleagues (Grunig, 1984), based on other mid-range theories and tested through surveys and professional interviews and CEOs in the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada. This framework represents a theoretical and empirical reference point for organizational decision-making and corporate strategy, because a main function of public relations managers is to define limits to help organizations to obtain external support for the company in order to work hand by hand with their audience. But despite the fact that this approach presents empirical evidence in several nations, many scholars warn that this approach may result in ethnocentricity (Choi and Cameron, 2005; Wakefield, 2010).

One of the most prevalent debate is which approach to apply devoted to standardisation or adaptation strategy. Standardisation means a uniform approach in the different countries, while adaptation is a culture-specific approach. Objectives of a campaign, messages, channels of communication, tactics and evaluation can be placed on a continuum, full standardisation (the same objective, messages in each country) and full adaptation (the environmental factors determine them) being two extremes.

The approach to international PR based on critical/cultural theory provides a flexible framework to avoid imposing on indigenous culture [Curtin, Gaither (2007)]. This theory would be a good option to analyze a case study on an international scenario because it deals with the exchange of ideas and agreements between PR practitioners/organizations and the target publics. It also explains that it is necessary to analyze how meanings are produced, consumed, symbolized and regulated to form identities.

Culture influences communication and communication influences culture as in two way communication the main aim is to build trust and mutual understanding. For many scholars (Verčič et al. 1996; Banks 2000; Sriramesh 2000; Sriramesh and Verčič 2003), however, culture is important only insofar as programme effectiveness is concerned and culture is often restricted to a simple variable.

To understand culture's influence on the communication function of PR, American communication scholar, Zaharna (2001) summarises the basic components of IPR

based on intercultural communication. Using Hall's concepts of 'in-awareness' he identifies culture's influence on the practice of PR. In-awareness refers to the explicit and observable of a culture. Hall distinguished between high-context and low-context cultures, depending on the degree to which meanings come from the settings or from the words being exchanged [Hall (1976)]. Hofstede investigated the differences in collective behaviour and found five dimensions of societal culture: power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long/short-term orientation.

Some researchers have added to the study of relationships: media between companies and audiences. Wright (1998, 2001) said that the internet represented a promising opportunity to establish strong relationships between the organization and the public, so for this purpose, one of the main instruments that the Public Relations expert has to disposal to analyze cultural texts or artifacts is the circuit of culture model, devised in 1997 by a group of cultural studies scholars (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, & Negus, 1997). According to Du Gay, one of the developers of this theory, in the field of modern studies of texts and cultural discourses the analysis must go through this framework to be properly studied.

The framework considers five moments to analyze the process of a communication and its discursive parts: regulation, production, consumption, representation and identity. These moments allow to visualize a structure that contributes to the social construction of meaning, therefore, they illustrate an integral scenario in which one can observe the shared cultural spaces where the meaning is created, shaped, modified and recreated [Curtin, Gaither (2007): 38].

"Regulation" consists of conditions on what is permissible or expected in a culture. The moment of "production" is the process by which the creator of cultural products communicates them with meaning. This is a process also called encoding [Hall (1973)]. "Consumption" is analyzed according to the decoding of messages by audiences. This moment is part of discursive practices because they become a form of production [Curtin, Gaither (2005)]. Consumers actively create meanings when using cultural products in their daily lives, because we are not exempt from the sociocultural influence that facilitates and qualifies the decisions generated from the social spheres to which we all belong (Roger Bartra, 2006). The "representation" is the way by which the producer provides specifically meaningful language socially constructed for a single target audience. In this process of representation, media such as language and image intervene, because in this way symbols are used to represent virtually any idea, and the symbolic meaning depends on how they are depicted (Panofsky, 1927).

"Identity" refers to how it is internalized by the receiver or audience. Our identity is shaped by our culture, which creates a range of viable and non-viable identity options that are presented, refined and renegotiated through our communication and exchange of cultural objects.

Based on this theoretical frames given, the aim of this work to analyze the Pepsi campaign will be more effective by using the research method of "case study" (Stake, 1995) and the circuit of culture model. The other frameworks will not be used since in the international PR practices it is impossible to cover all aspects that can define

the success of a campaign considering financial, language, cultural, artistic, social or historical elements in one single index. The model is a theory that easily adopts information in a generalized and flexible way that has helped to answer the research question:

- Is there a unique symbolic element that PR practitioners can possibly use in all countries in a further data collection activity (Dooley, 2002) before triggering any message of any kind to the public in order to make a campaign successful?
- What symbolic elements may be used for developing standardised PR campaign?

Case study

In 2007, the Black Eyed Peas worked in conjunction with Pepsi to promote the soft-drink brand through a campaign that included mainly the production and publication of one commercial (Daryl Easlea, 2012), in which the USA band appeared describing diverse styles and musical resources to give as result a new song, written exclusively for this campaign, titled “More”.

In the commercial appears a young man trying to buy a Pepsi can from a vending machine, but it does not give him the product, and the man jumps to try to move the machine, but instead the floor breaks and the young man falls to the floor below, where the Black Eyed Peas are in a recording studio. Then the group falls as well floors down with different atmospheres and people until finally they reach a basement where the vending machine falls as well. The Pepsi can finally comes out and the protagonist drinks from it while the words “CREATE, REMIX, SHARE” appear alternately on the screen, the last word is “MORE”, it has the main iconographic symbol of Pepsi replacing the circumference of the “o”, and below the words the website pepsimore.com is shown.

Pepsi conducted a very ambitious project with the Black Eyed Peas, and in mid-2007, the band performed the Black, Blue And You Tour, broken down into 24 dates. It started in Israel and then continuing in Ethiopia, Sweden, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Venezuela, South Africa, Nigeria, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, China, Malaysia, and the last date was held in Sydney on October 30. The tour was sponsored by Pepsi in partnership with its Dorito corn-chip division, reported as the largest multi-million dollar sponsorship the Black Eyed Peas had obtained so far, and MTV was the official music channel for the event. For the aim of this analysis, only the marketplace of Mexico and Russia are considered, because of the cultural differences that both countries have and the opportunities obtained in the results to help developing the skills of PR practitioners.

To advertise the tour, Pepsi created a logo with abstract shapes of the musicians, in a black & white composition, and putting the name of the tour in a linear-style font. The secondary information in this logo was the text “Pepsi – The Black Eyed Peas”, “2007”, the main graphic symbol of the company and also a logo of the musicians’ official website.

The band carried out a lot of photo sessions with the Pepsi products, and those advertisements were used in the Pepsi website as the principal place to arrive for the

public. This was the purpose the commercial was made for, because through that was conveyed a single call to action, which was to visit pepsimore.com. There the people had the chance to make their own remix version of "More". Of course the song and the ad could be downloaded as well.

Regulation

The social and cultural reality of Mexico and Russia has managed to define the most important figures of which individuals receive greater influence, and grant obedience in a situation of reciprocity of collaboration in various dimensions of personal benefit, on the social, political and political-academical dimensions (Bent Flyvbjerg, 2001). This fact is justified in Mexico and Russia because the Uncertainty Avoidance index they have is very high (82 and 95 respectively), with which it is deduce that societies there are trying too hard to minimize the effort to uncertainty, although in Russia this reality is more accentuated. Therefore, both nations are immersed in a tendency to adopt norms, laws, radical policies and strict protocols as procedural guides, with an importance comparable to the objectives that follow these processes. Therefore, the figures with the greatest symbolic weight in society are elite public service authorities, the protectors of the laws; but not the public protectors of the order, and the people of high political spheres, because for Mexico and Russia this type of figures represent a potential help to eliminate the unexpected, and to control everything to avoid changes and great risks.

The messages and ideas that are generated and shared within mexican and russian societies do not consider openness to unstructured thoughts or situations, and it is difficult for new meanings to be accepted. This scenario was an advantage for the Pepsi campaign with the Black Eyed Peas, since the company has more than one hundred years in the Mexican market, and knows its tastes, interests and values, and therefore each visual and discursive election was accepted for being known elements within the Mexican symbolic communication. Factors for Mexicans such as the iconic mix of elements like pop music, the symbology of advertising strategies of the United States plus the acceptance of soft drinks as part of daily life in regular consumption were factors that helped the success of the Pepsi campaign.

In Russia, the preference for this product is not based on the cultural interaction with the drink in the same way as it happens in Mexico, but the company has worked hard since the introduction to the market of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1959, and since then, the appearance of the drink has been shaped according to the situation of the country, a fact that reveals that Pepsi has understood the discursive elements that can be heard with greater acceptance in the current Russian market, as happened in 2010, when PepsiCo acquired 66% of Wimm-Bill Dann for 3,800 million dollars¹, an agreement that was indirectly supported by Vladimir Putin, who was Prime Minister at the moment.

¹ Netroba P. (2006). Ministry of Finance and FSB Blamed for Alcohol Shortage. Kommersant, Moscow.

As to the regulatory laws to produce soft drinks, in Mexico there is the norm NOM051-SCFI / Salud1-2010, which is described as general specifications for the labeling of prepackaged foods and non-alcoholic beverages that gave the requirements for labeling them for direct sale to consumers in the country. It became effective in January 1st, 2011 by replacing NOM-051SCFI-1994, and applies to all products including pre-packaged foods. The labeling requirements for food and non-alcoholic beverages is controlled jointly by the Federal Agency for Consumer Protection (PROFECO), which is part of the Ministry of Economy and COFEPRI, and they regulate the products guarantees to matching them with the respective Mexican Official Standard (NOM).

Even though Russia was in the last ten years a good option, this country was not welcoming investments of just any kind or at any cost, for companies must prove that their products are good for the public health. This is why there's a very strict control protocol almost for every product since 2005, in which via the Hygiene Certificate the russians established standards, known officially as the Sanitary-Epidemiological Conclusion. In this sense, products for eating and drinking must present such document in order to import them¹.

The process of entering the russian market has to be divided in two parts. First of all, the product has to cross the Russian border and pass through the customs clearance procedures of custom clearance. Secondly, the product needs to be delivered in the retail outlet for the customers to purchase it. In a last stage, the registration of a Russian legal entity can be considered in that quality for the foreign company can transport and clear the goods itself, and thus offer its partners or clients an Incoterm like Delivery Duty Paid (DDP) that includes transport and custom clearance. Hence, the seller pays for the customs duties. For all purposes, the documents that accompany the goods are fundamental as any small difference can delay the products being cleared or even make customs clearance impossible altogether. For "alcoholic drink and soft drinks" are considered the following: 5-100 (import duty) and 18% (value added tax).

Production

The decision about the meanings of the campaign here explained was based on universal symbols and those owned by the two brands that were presented in the media Deely, J. (1990), for example the main icon of Pepsi and its colors, the band and its members in an objective way to maintain their style as a brand that is "always" innovative, of versatile styles. This strategy kept the graphic lines of the two brands in harmony at all times, and therefore the significance that was generated in the communication of the campaign had two important moments, the first one, in which the Black Eyed Peas was marketed in order to promote the new single "More", and

¹ Bureau Veritas (2006). Hygiene Certificate (Sanitary-Epidemiological Conclusion) [access mode]: <https://www.bureauveritas.fi/2edc28804db0bfc98dfacf10c0640809/VOC-Russia+Hygiene+certificate.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=2edc28804db0bfc98dfacf10c0640809>.

the second one with the purpose of the tour which came almost in parallel. From the agreement with the band, "More" was created with several purposes linked together, the main one was the derivation of all the communication towards the users to the web pepsimore.com, assuming that on that page there is "more" of everything related to the musical event, the campaign, the Black Eyed Peas and the tour. That site was the main meeting point.

For Mexicans, the strategic communication of these symbols had a successful impact without having taken elements from the Mexican culture or society depiction, because in the dimension of individualism it is revealed as well that this country puts loyalty above many social norms. For Mexicans there is a certain admiration and follow-up to the pop culture that comes from the United States. Mexico is one of the main consumers of products and services launched to the international market of its neighboring country, and this relationship is recognized as loyalty to the culture of a collective society that appreciates and adopts the advertising-and-discursive symbology that comes from the United States.

Because the same communication was carried out in Russia, with the exception of the translations, the same campaign did not have the same impact, but it did provoked action. The Pepsi campaign having the reasons that prepared the way to the tour did not have difficulties to be understood, since the meanings that the brands alliance presented was clear and authentic, and as into the Individualism dimension that Russia presents is a high degree of interdependence for their society, the communication process was adopted relatively easily.

The relatively low score of Russia compared to Mexico with respect to the Masculinity dimension reveals that Russian society could have shown some rejection of messages that derive from informality or irreverence of its style, an important factor to identify with messages of variety and versatility of the band, and only young public felt a connection with the campaign that invited to know more about the tour in the internet.

Consumption

The artistic work done by will.i.am and Fergie since 2006 was crucial to place them as a world phenomena for the year in which Pepsi and the Black Eyed Peas allied, in addition to this, all the hits that were chosen for the concerts and the type of show was always "for the fans", to give them a memorable concert in each of their presentations. And although for Pepsi the alliance was to be a great bet, it did not mean that the company was in crisis, because the productive and successful moment of Pepsi for the year 2007 was quite good, for until 2008 it was reported that the multinational Pepsi Bottling Group (PBG) billed 13 billion dollars worldwide.

In the Mexican territory Pepsi is not the number one drink in sales because Coca-Cola goes ahead. However, it has shown to be a powerful competitor, for one of the most recurrent strategies of Pepsi has been to take all advantages over the celebrity culture for promotion. This dispute is due to the high saturation of flavored drinks in the market. According to the Pepsi report, at the end of 2007 the operating profits of

Grupo Embotelladoras Unidas (GEUSA) grew by 13.4% with respect to the operating income of the Pepsi Bottling Group (PBG) in Mexico in the same period.

In the same year in which the campaign and the tour were launched, there was presented the 2007 Pepsi Cup Activate, a football tournament that aimed to promote physical activity to provide good notes in favor of its characteristic as a socially responsible company. For this other campaign Pepsi used the professional football player of the Barcelona club Giovani Dos Santos as its main face. In Mexico, the consumption of soft drinks is extensive and demanded, and even Pepsi has at its disposal more than just its main drink to the consumer, but it looks for other businesses to diversify the income and compensate the variability of the moderate growth of soft drinks.

The commercial situation of Pepsi in Russia was not very different than in Mexico in 2007, but it was in one of its best moments, because it reported solid revenues in the Federation despite an unexpected increase in raw materials, such as aluminum and corn, and at the end of the third quarter that year Pepsi achieved an increase of 16% in Russia. This fact is an indicator that an investment as great as the one made with the Black Eyed Peas had the expected success, because in a certain way they had made a pact with one of the most listened bands globally, and at the same time they both the drinks company and the musicians coincided with a single target; a young, avant-garde, rebellious public with its own style and crossing a process of transition towards the digital era.

The main commercial where appears "More" is directly presenting an appearance of general features of the audience. In these scenes people are found in the different floors by the members of the Black Eyed Peas who, in a symbolic way, illustrate the interests of the target when interacting with the can of the black drink. In the commercial two main figures are presented: the musicians and the guy who tries to get the can out of the vending machine, and in a forceful way he is depicted as a person with two unique aspects of interest: the first one is the consumption of Pepsi, and secondly the musical taste for the Peas. In a figurative sense, the act that initiates the commercial is the attempt to buy Pepsi and derived to a narrative dimension, the main message of the commercial was not to want "more" of the drink or the music, but the very fact that the experience of taking a can of Pepsi is as exciting as unique, and that enjoying the drink is the reward and the final frame for experiencing musical energy.

Representation

The context of the commercial is, initially, a cold, corporate environment with a filter reminiscent to the 1999 film generation, framing a contrast between a boring and cold reality of what is literally under the surface of that floor. In the short version of the commercial, the first floor in which the protagonist falls has a warm coloration to denote the contrast with the previous image in order to emphasize the emotive activity of the musical team.

First of all the lyrics of the song are allusive to scenes of the commercial, such as the phrase "Non-stop, keep it jumpin' off the floor", or "Warm it up to lil' bit make it drop",

where descriptions are provided in the message that contains the song “More”, that once again indicates the effectiveness with which the musical material was produced for commercial purposes. Pepsi reported that the Black Eyed Peas had thrown themselves into the commercial work and that they collaborated in the development (Daryl Easlea, 2012); a speech where the company tried to erase the perception of a production exclusively to sell the soft drink, to elevate it to a field of artistic content.

Each stage was chosen selectively for the moments in which a Pepsi can could be necessary to fulfill its function of sublimating any everyday experience. For example, in the third scenario, there is a group of men watching soccer; without apparent rivalry, but the appearance of the musicians harmonize with the union and euphoria of the place. In the next room is a lot of women doing aerobics, where a Pepsi does not fit coherently in its symbolic value, but the symbol that rises is the singer of the Peas herself, who at that time is the maximum fan light of the band.

The final scenario of the commercial is a hybrid room between a parking lot and an expositions hall where the arrival of the Black Eyed Peas achieves the perfection of the party in that place. The coloration is dark and cold with a cinematic style of the action genre to describe a night party. And towards the end of the commercial, there remains the exhibition of symbols and messages of the campaign, where the protagonist meets the climax of his goal of the narrative. There, “magically” the design of the can changes to emphasize the swapping of words that appear on the screen at the end of the commercial. In this part, the cold-colored environment works to harmonize with the colors of the brand.

The presentation of the consumer is evident by giving importance to the experience on the communicator side, which in this case was the musical band. It is at this moment you can distinguish the protagonist as a sample person that shows how the product should be used; the example as the maximum action, the “how to use” that Pepsi offers to the audience.

Identity

The producer of the commercial strategy was Pepsi with the objective of seeking and consecrating even more the relationship of common interests that Pepsi consumers have with the listeners of the Black Eyed Peas. The market in 2007 for both brands was established and was increasing audience, on the one hand Pepsi, who through their strategies with the main drink, flavored drinks of another type and mainly bottled water (for the case of Mexico) are gaining more and more ground in both the Mexican and Russian markets, even though in the eyes of most people Coca-Cola is the number one in sales due to its exquisite production advertising campaigns. On the other hand, the Black Eyed Peas, an American hip-hop band. This relationship with the followers of pop is best observed by finding the professional relationship between one of the band’s leaders, will.i.am and Michael Jackson, a clear influence for Will and the prestige of the band. Because of this fact, and everything that happened to benefit the Black Eyed Peas and Fergie during the year prior to the campaign, Pepsi paid serious attention

to the symbol style, top-trending people from the music industry, and finally helped to better position Pepsi's personality in Mexico and Russia.

In these countries, the consumer is between fifteen to forty-five years old, without distinction of gender; It is about people with a certain attitude of independence or even who are recently married. The brand of beverages is not perceived as high price, although it is aimed at the professional sector of its public. In general terms, the behavior that is expected when consuming this product is to go through a simple experience of refreshment and indulgence, which represents a challenge for Russia due to the score it shows in its culturally-restrained nature, because its people do not treat to control their free time and self-gratification, however, the very high score for long term orientation that describes Russians allows to recognize the social adaptability to high-variable living conditions, and therefore, food consumption habits and drinks can also be modified. Given the facts, the coincidence of audiences was an opportunity for Pepsi to invest in a band dedicated to the expression of spirit and romantic interpersonal relationships in a time when it was challenging to conquer the space of music on television and the global trend for healthier life; free from so much sugar consumption, it did not significantly threaten the sales of the beverage as it does now.

The first scene and the last one of the commercial mark the pattern that separates the reality of the Pepsi consumer from those that are not the target audience. The contrast between the boring and lugubrious atmosphere of the scene with the very-lighted machine that, curiously, only dispenses Pepsi despite having numerous buttons as options. In this way, it is pointed out how the product is not designed for adults over thirty years of age, nor for teenagers. This product is for those who need to relax from monotonous work or recreation routines and have a desire for "more" than a simple living.

Conclusion

Applying the circuit of culture model in analysing this case study, the differences in perception of the brand and PR campaign in Mexico and Russia are demonstrated showing the importance of a culture-centred approach to public relations and communication. At the same time, the analysis reflects how unique symbols were created and used in implementing in two culturally varied countries.

Although the Pepsi campaign prior to the Black, Blue & You Tour did not have a planned segmented strategy that allowed it to reach different cultures at the same time, the opportunity to use the Black Eyed Peas to derive a product with the followers of the band was an idea with excellent results, because Pepsi reported an increase in sales by the end of that year, and even allowed itself the redesign of its main iconographic symbol once again.

The symbology used in the commercial was fundamentally neutral with respect to the age and the audience; with a clear modern approach and a cinematographic style, but with the distinction that the reality of the story would be located somewhere in North America, where the activities that are carried out are only a process of effort

and dedication that have to be crowned with a Pepsi product. The selection of elements of the campaign had positive effects despite its impartial and flexible nature. Given the results, if PR experts wish to penetrate several countries at the same time, it is essential that they remain impartial before meeting the scenarios, marketplaces, stories and activities they want to present; they must find those characters that belong to the global sphere where the product is the protagonist and support on the celebrity culture, thus, this is the unique element to use for international PR campaigns. The opportunities for success will increase by sharing the market and the audience with influencers of any kind to get messages to the public, as long as these celebrities have cultural and actual relevance, and that in the public perception they transcend beyond their own season of "glory" in which they are celebrating alliances between brands.

Theorising in international public relations requires a deeper understanding of cultures, histories and politics especially during attempts to develop universal PR campaign. This case study attempts to contribute to building knowledge in this area. While focused on two countries, this case builds a stronger argument for considering cultural approaches in developing universal public relations practice.

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■ ■ ■ Особенности разработки универсальной международной PR-кампании: Pepsi and The Black Eyed Peas в России и Мексике

Новоселова О.В., Енок Салим Руис Гомез

Уральский федеральный университет, Екатеринбург, Российская Федерация.

Аннотация. Применив модель «контура культуры» при анализе кампании Pepsi and Black Eyed Peas в 2007 году, были продемонстрированы различия в восприятии бренда и PR-кампаний в Мексике и России, что свидетельствует о важности культурно-ориентированного подхода к связям с общественностью и коммуникациям. В то же время анализ показывает, как универсальные символы были созданы и применены при запуске кампании в двух разных странах. Задача Pepsi состояла в том, чтобы создать универсальную кампанию для охвата ряда культур, включая Россию и Мексику, которые обладают достаточным количеством символических ценностей и общих сообщений, понимаемые различными национальностями, с целью успеха в продвижении бренда. С помощью анализа кейс-стади была предпринята попытка внести вклад в развитие знаний в этой области. Несмотря на то, что этот кейс сфокусирован на двух странах, он способствует пониманию применения культурных подходов при разработке универсальной практики связей с общественностью.

Ключевые слова: PR-кампания, международные связи с общественностью, коммуникации в Мексике, русский стиль коммуникации, универсальные символы, международный бренд

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Сведения. об авторах: Новоселова Ольга Викторовна, ст. преподаватель кафедры интегрированных маркетинговых коммуникаций и брендинга Уральского федерального университета; Енок Салим Руис Гомес, магистрант программы “PR и реклама: гармонизация межкультурных коммуникаций” Уральского федерального университета. Адрес: 620002, Россия, г. Екатеринбург, ул. Мира, 19. E-mail: novoselova@uralbrand.ru; e.noxander@gmail.com.

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