

Social Media & PR Campaigns

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Abstract:

This research paper examines the relationship between social media and public relations (PR) through an analysis of Nike's notable failures in managing online brand reputation. In the digital age, effective PR campaigns are pivotal for sustaining brand integrity and consumer trust. Nike, as a global powerhouse in athletic apparel, serves as a compelling case study due to its mixed record in leveraging social media. This paper explores a comprehensive literature review to trace the evolution of social media's role in PR, drawing on theoretical frameworks such as the Two-way Symmetric Model and Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). It highlights the critical components of successful social media PR campaigns while exploring common pitfalls and challenges faced. The analysis focuses on four key failures in Nike's social media strategy: the #AirMaxDay controversy, the Colin Kaepernick endorsement backlash, and the Nike Women's World Cup ad critique, and the Zion Williamson "Shoe Explosion." Each case study delves into contextual backgrounds, public reactions, media coverage, and metrics of social media engagement. The study identifies internal factors like corporate culture and decision-making processes, alongside external factors such as the rapid dissemination of information and the influence of social media influencers, as significant contributors to these failures. From these analyses, the research shows actionable lessons for PR professionals and brands alike, emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity, diversity in campaign development, and agile crisis management strategies. It concludes with practical recommendations for enhancing future PR campaigns, including proactive social media strategies, authentic audience engagement, robust crisis management frameworks, and leveraging data analytics for continuous improvement. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how brands can effectively

navigate the complexities of social media to better their reputation and resonate positively with diverse global audiences.

Introduction:

Public Relations (PR) campaigns serve as pivotal strategies for organizations aiming to shape public perception, enhance brand image, and achieve strategic objectives. In the dynamic landscape of communication, the effectiveness of these campaigns often hinges on their ability to resonate with target audiences amidst the ever-evolving realm of social media. This research explores the inner workings of successful and failed PR campaigns, delving into the factors that contribute to their outcomes and the evolving dynamics in PR and social media today. In recent years, PR has undergone a transformative journey, propelled by the digital revolution and the ubiquitous presence of social media platforms. These platforms have not only amplified the reach of PR efforts but have also democratized communication, empowering both brands and consumers with unprecedented levels of engagement and influence. The intersection of PR and social media presents both opportunities and challenges. Successful campaigns leverage the viral potential of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to create impactful storytelling moments that resonate deeply with audiences. Missteps in PR strategy can quickly escalate into full-blown crises in the digital age, where misinformation spreads rapidly and public sentiment can shift in a matter of hours. The current landscape of PR is characterized by a heightened emphasis on authenticity, transparency, and real-time responsiveness. Brands are expected to engage in meaningful dialogue with their audiences, addressing concerns promptly and authentically. This shift has necessitated a reevaluation of traditional PR tactics, with an increasing focus on building long-term relationships rather than pursuing short-lived publicity gains. Moreover, social media platforms continue to evolve, introducing new features and

algorithms that impact how content is shared and consumed. PR practices and social media dynamics aim to uncover actionable insights that can guide future PR efforts in navigating the complexities of today's digital landscape.

Literature Review (Secondary Research):

The effectiveness of social media and public relations campaigns hinges on several key elements, as detailed in Grunig and Hunt's work, *Managing Public Relations* (1984). They emphasize the importance of two-way symmetrical communication, which involves engaging in open, balanced dialogue with audiences. The two-way symmetrical model shows balanced communication, where organizations not only disseminate information but also actively listen and adapt based on audience feedback. Successful social media campaigns like Nike's effective use for their "Dream Crazy" campaign, featuring Colin Kaepernick showed what solid understanding of what this model is can do for your brand. The campaign sparked intense dialogue about social justice issues, with Nike actively engaging with both supporters and critics. Nike's approach fostered a genuine conversation about race and equality, aligning with their brand values and demonstrating a commitment to listening to diverse perspectives. The campaign's success was evident in increased sales and heightened brand loyalty among its core demographics. On the other hand, Nike's "Air Max Day" campaigns have sometimes faltered in applying the two-way symmetrical model. While the campaign celebrates the iconic Air Max line, it has occasionally been critiqued for being too brand centric, focusing more on product promotion than engaging with the community. In some recent years, the campaign's social media content appeared heavily scripted and lacking in authentic interaction with sneaker enthusiasts and other customers. This approach can alienate consumers who expect more genuine

engagement and dialogue. Seeing both ends of the approach not only fosters trust but also encourages active participation and feedback, which are crucial for maintaining audience engagement.

In examining the dynamics of successful and failed social media campaigns, Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) provides a major framework for understanding organizational responses to crises. Authenticity in messaging ensures that communications are perceived as genuine and trustworthy, while cultural sensitivity prevents misunderstandings and offenses that could exacerbate a crisis. Timing is another critical factor; campaigns must be carefully timed to resonate with current events and audience sentiments. Poorly timed messages can appear tone-deaf and lead to public backlash (Coombs, 2007). For instance, Coombs highlights how rapid and appropriate responses during a crisis can protect and even enhance an organization's reputation. By examining successful campaigns, such as those that have effectively utilized real-time engagement and culturally aware messaging, alongside failed ones that suffered from insensitivity or poor timing, we gain valuable insights into best practices for digital communication (Coombs, 2007). SCCT emphasizes the importance of selecting appropriate communication strategies based on the type of crisis, stakeholder perceptions, and the organization's crisis history. We see this model in successful social media campaigns, such as Nike's "Dream Crazy" featuring Colin Kaepernick. This demonstrated effective use of SCCT principles. Nike anticipated the controversy and strategically framed the campaign around its core values, embracing a "values-driven" approach. This strategy, grounded in SCCT, helped Nike to mitigate potential backlash by aligning the message with the expectations of its key stakeholders, ultimately resulting in increased brand loyalty and sales. These elements of audience engagement, message authenticity, cultural sensitivity, and timing,

are essential for crafting campaigns that build and maintain a positive public image, navigate crises, and achieve communication objectives in today's fast-paced digital landscape.

There is also a major need to plan and manage these campaigns businesses employ. I analyzed Anne Gregory's book "Planning and Managing Public Relations Campaigns: A Strategic Approach," to show the importance of strategic planning and the importance planning in general. Gregory emphasizes that successful campaigns are typically characterized by clear objectives, audience analysis, and strategic message development (Gregory, 2010, pp. 45-47). Gregory also points out that failure often stems from a disconnect between the campaign message and the target audience's values or perceptions (Gregory, 2010, pp. 48-50). Structure for a strategic campaign plan involves meticulous research, stakeholder engagement, and continuous evaluation. This literature underscores that the success of social media campaigns is heavily reliant on strategic planning and a deep understanding of audience dynamics.

When you look at audience dynamics also must take into account for social landscape evaluation, especially in social media. Andreas M. Kaplan, Michael Haenleins, "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media," provide an extensive analysis of the evolving landscape of social media, outlining both the challenges and opportunities inherent in its use for marketing and public relations. They argue that the success of social media campaigns hinges on understanding the unique characteristics of each platform and engaging authentically with users (Kaplan & Haeleins, 2010). Successful campaigns are often those that leverage the interactive nature of social media, fostering a sense of community and dialogue among users (Kaplan & Haeleins, 2010). Failed campaigns typically stem from a lack of genuine engagement or a misunderstanding of the social media environment. It is majorly highlighted and expected the importance of transparency, consistency, and responsiveness in building and

maintaining trust with audiences (Kaplan & Haeleins, 2010). The necessity for organizations to be agile and adaptable, responding swiftly to both positive and negative feedback is critical to success. The study underscores the potential of social media to amplify brand messages and reach a broad audience, but it also cautions against the risks of missteps that can lead to rapid dissemination of negative publicity.

Aspects of crisis management play a major role in social media and PR campaigns. I saw this in Yan Jin, Brook Fisher Liu, and Lucinda Austin's "Examining the Role of Social Media in Effective Crisis Management: The Effects of Crisis Origin, Information Form, and Source on Publics' Crisis Responses," study. Their study shows the critical role of crisis origin, information form, and source credibility in shaping public responses. They found that crises originating internally within an organization often manifest more intense public scrutiny compared to those with external origins (Jin et al., 2014). They highlight that the form of information, whether it is presented in a narrative or factual manner, significantly affects public engagement and perception (Jin et al., 2014). Narratives tend to foster greater empathy and emotional connection, which can be pivotal in swaying public opinion. These findings are instrumental in understanding why some social media campaigns succeed while others fail. Campaigns that fail, often neglect the importance of source credibility, or fail to present information in an engaging narrative form. Successful campaigns adeptly manage these elements, ensuring that their messages resonate more effectively with the public. This solid understanding is essential for organizations aiming to leverage social media in mitigating crises and fostering positive public relations. The credibility of the information source, such as whether it is disseminated by official channels or third-party entities, plays a crucial role in public trust and the subsequent response to the crisis and its imperative businesses follow those guidelines laid out by this study.

I have also found that it is important to build on the foundational elements of effective social media and public relations campaigns through dialogic relationships. Through Kent and Taylor's research on dialogic relationships emphasizes the necessity of fostering genuine interactions through digital platforms. Their study highlights the five principles of dialogic communication, mutuality, propinquity, empathy, risk, and commitment (Kent & Taylor, 1998). These principles can significantly enhance audience engagement when applied to web-based public relations efforts. These principles encourage organizations to move beyond mere dissemination of information and towards creating meaningful, two-way interactions with their audiences. By incorporating mutuality and empathy, brands can establish trust and rapport, demonstrating that they value and understand their audience's perspectives and needs (Kent & Taylor, 1998). We also have seen this interactivity recently with world crisis events. In Smith's analysis of social media interactivity during the Haiti earthquake crisis, we further see the power of interactive communication. He argues that platforms like Twitter enable real-time engagement and the social distribution of public relations efforts, allowing organizations to respond swiftly and effectively in times of crisis (Smith, 2010). The use of social media for immediate, interactive communication helps in disseminating crucial information, mobilizing support, and demonstrating organizational responsiveness and accountability. We see this going back to the Haiti crisis, organizations that utilized Twitter effectively were able to coordinate relief efforts, share real-time updates, and engage directly with both affected individuals and global supporters. These insights underscore the importance of leveraging the interactive capabilities of social media to build and maintain strong relationships with audiences (Smith, 2010). By prioritizing dialogic principles and using the interactive nature of digital platforms, brands can strengthen their public relations strategies, leading to higher levels of engagement, trust, and loyalty. This

approach not only strengthens everyday communication efforts but also has proven to be crucial in navigating crises, ultimately contributing to a more positive and solid public image.

In addition to dialogic engagement and interactivity, the role of social media influencers and effective image repair strategies are critical components of successful public relations campaigns. Karen Freberg's study highlights the significant impact that social media influencers have on public perceptions due to their authentic and relatable personalities. Influencers serve as trusted intermediaries who can humanize a brand and foster deeper connections with audiences. Their ability to engage followers through personalized content and endorsements can amplify a brand's message, creating a ripple effect that extends the reach and impact of a campaign (Freberg, 2011). This underscores the importance for brands to strategically collaborate with influencers who align with their values and resonate with their target audiences. By integrating influencer partnerships and robust image repair strategies into their social media and public relations efforts, brands can enhance their ability to navigate the complexities of modern digital communication. These approaches not only bolster everyday engagement and loyalty but also provide crucial mechanisms for maintaining and restoring trust during crises, ensuring sustained business growth and a resilient public image.

When we analyze all the theories and studies laid out in this research paper, we then take a deeper look at specific examples of how these campaigns are managed or not managed. A notable success as, previously mentioned, is Nike's "Dream Crazy" campaign featuring Colin Kaepernick. Launched in 2018, this ad not only captured significant media attention but also sparked widespread social media discourse, leveraging Kaepernick's controversial stand against racial injustice to create a powerful narrative. The campaign won an Emmy, underscoring its

impact and effectiveness. According to The Guardian Sport, despite initial backlash and calls for boycotts, Nike's bold move resulted in a 31% increase in online sales, illustrating how aligning brand values with current social issues can resonate deeply with audiences and drive commercial success. This campaign contrasts sharply with others that failed to connect authentically with their target audience, highlighting the importance of genuine, value-driven engagement in social media marketing (The Guardian Sport, 2019). On the subject of Kaepernick, Nike also had follies while endorsing him that they missed the mark on in terms of effective campaign management and successes. When Nike partnered with Kaepernick, while polarizing, provides insight into the dynamics of social media influence. In an ad video for The New York Times by Robin Lindsay, showed that Nike's decision to feature Kaepernick, known for his protests during the national anthem, sparked both intense support and significant backlash. According to the video, the campaign's success in terms of engagement and sales highlights how aligning with social movements can boost brand loyalty among certain demographics, despite potential risks (Lindsay, 2018). This shows the importance of understanding audience segmentation and the impact of taking a stand on controversial issues. It also illustrates how social media can amplify both positive and negative reactions, influencing a campaign's overall success or failure (Lindsay, 2018). The mixed reactions to Nike's campaign reveal the complexities of leveraging social issues in marketing strategies.

We see another campaign where it appears to start of well but, takes a turn because the aforementioned tactics and models are not followed. In Nike's World Cup campaign that celebrated women's achievements but failed to address pay inequality, highlighting a common issue in social media campaigns where brands miss the mark on significant social issues. The campaign, launched to coincide with the Women's World Cup, featured inspiring narratives of

female athletes and emphasized empowerment and success. In an article from Adweek by Justin Tobin “Nike’s World Cup Spot Celebrated Women but Sidestepped Addressing Pay Inequality,” shows that this eventually would miss the mark. It notably sidestepped the contentious issue of gender pay disparity, a critical topic in women's sports to this very day. This omission sparked criticism and discussions on social media, where audiences expected Nike to use its platform to advocate for equal pay (Tobin, 2019). This article shows that the campaign's success in generating engagement was undermined by its failure to address a core issue pertinent to its audience, illustrating how overlooking critical social issues can turn a potentially successful campaign into a controversial one (Tobin, 2019). This shows why the balance between celebration and advocacy is crucial for social media campaigns.

Primary Research:

In my primary research on social media campaigns, I examined notable successes and failures social media and PR campaigns. I have analyzed them extensively based on the literature I have reviewed, and the models of communications studied. I focused on Nike's Air Max Day. Air Max Day initially was aimed to celebrate Nike's iconic sneaker line but has faced criticism and waning enthusiasm over the years. It was especially not helpful that during the COVID-19 pandemic, they were posting extensively about the shoes which at that time appeared “tone deaf,” to the issues at hand. The campaign, which once generated significant social media buzz and consumer engagement, struggled to maintain its momentum and relevance, which is why I believe they decided to post abruptly and untimely during a global health crisis. The campaign's release and styles became predictable, with repetitive releases and marketing strategies that no longer excited customers based on the comments and reviews on posts from their social media platforms. This decline illustrates how even initially successful campaigns can falter without

innovation and adaptation to audience expectations. My analysis of Air Max Day and past days, underscores the importance of evolving marketing strategies to sustain long-term interest and engagement in social media campaigns.

I have also researched a recent Nike social media and marketing debacle with the “Zion Shoe Explosion.” Nike faced a significant crisis during a highly publicized college basketball game in February 2019. Duke University star Zion Williamson experienced a shoe malfunction or an “explosion,” where his foot literally ripped out of the sneaker and destroyed it. The malfunction resulted in an injury that went viral on social media almost instantly. This incident not only led to a decline in Nike's stock price but also sparked widespread criticism and jokes across various platforms (Instagram, Twitter, YouTube etc.). Nike's response included issuing a statement and reinforcing their commitment to quality and safety. Nike recovered well after acknowledging fault and fixing their product. This serves as a crucial case study in crisis management and having a solution to mass product concern or problem. The company's ability to quickly address the issue and control the narrative demonstrates the importance of timely and transparent communication in mitigating the negative impacts of social media backlash.

Joe Rogan’s podcast is one of the biggest media platforms out today for his guests and featured experts. I watched a podcast where he featured entrepreneur and investor Naval Ravikant. Ravikant’s interview with Joe Rogan shed light on crucial factors influencing outcomes. Ravikant emphasized the pivotal role of authenticity and resonance in campaign success, noting that genuine engagement with the audience fosters deeper connections and amplifies brand impact. He also stated that, campaigns that prioritize superficial metrics over meaningful interaction often falter, failing to establish lasting impressions or cultivate loyal followings. Ravikant’s analysis underscores the importance of aligning campaign objectives with

audience expectations, emphasizing substance over spectacle in social media strategies. By prioritizing authenticity and relevance, brands can navigate the volatile landscape of digital marketing, social media, and PR more effectively, mitigating the risk of campaign failure and maximizing opportunities for sustained engagement and growth.

Conclusion:

The examination of Nike's social media and public relations campaigns through the lens of the two-symmetrical communication model, situational crisis theory, and other professionally advised best practices reveals crucial insights into the dynamics of successful and failed strategies in the digital age. Nike's adept use of social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter has consistently amplified brand visibility and engagement, leveraging influencers and user-generated content to foster a community-driven narrative. The importance of balanced interaction between Nike and its audience, where active listening and responsive engagement contribute to sustained consumer loyalty and positive brand perception is all but paramount. Instances such as the controversy surrounding the Air Max Day campaign highlight the risks inherent in modern digital campaigns. We see how theories like SCCT, show how missteps in communication and crisis management can escalate issues, leading to reputational damage and consumer backlash. Nike's swift crisis response strategies, however, have often mitigated potential fallout, demonstrating the strategic importance of preparedness and transparency in navigating turbulent public relations scenarios. The evolving landscape of social media demands continuous adaptation and innovation from brands like Nike. Embracing emerging platforms, refining communication strategies, and prioritizing ethical considerations will be pivotal in shaping future campaign successes. This study underscores the multifaceted nature of digital

communication and crisis management in contemporary marketing, offering valuable lessons for practitioners aiming to navigate the complexities of the digital age effectively.

Appendix A: Annotated Works Cited

- Grunig, J. E., & Hunt, T. (1984). *Managing Public Relations*. Wadsworth Publishing Company. Grunig and Hunt's "Managing Public Relations," (1984) is a foundational text in public relations, introducing the two-way symmetric model. This model emphasizes balanced communication between organizations and their publics, promoting mutual understanding and benefit. The book's insights into strategic PR management and its advocacy for ethical, dialogue-based practices are crucial for modern PR professionals. This work's significance lies in its shift from one-way communication models to more interactive, reciprocal approaches. For research on successful and failed social and PR campaigns, this text provides valuable theoretical underpinnings, highlighting the importance of engaging with audiences and fostering genuine, two-way communication.
- Coombs, W. T. (2007). Protecting organization reputations during a Crisis: The development and Application of Situational Crisis Communication Theory. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10, 163–176. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.crr.1550049> Coombs' journal article on situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) in "Corporate Reputation Review", (2007) explores strategies for protecting organizational reputations during crises. SCCT provides a framework for selecting appropriate communication responses based on the nature of the crisis and stakeholders' perceptions. Coombs emphasizes the importance of tailoring messages to the specific crisis context to mitigate reputational damage effectively. This work's significance lies in its guidance for crisis management, helping organizations navigate various crisis scenarios with strategic communication. For research on successful and failed social and PR campaigns, this article offers insights into crisis response strategies, enhancing understanding of effective reputation management during challenging times.
- Kent, M. L., & Taylor, M. (1998). Building dialogic relationships through the World Wide Web. *Public Relations Review*, 24 (3), 321-334. Kent and Taylor's 1998 study, "Building Dialogic Relationships through the World Wide Web," explores how organizations can use the internet to create and maintain dialogic relationships with their publics. They propose five principles for effective online communication: ease of interface, usefulness of information, conservation of visitors, return visit incentives, and dialogic loop. This research is valuable for analyzing successful and failed social media campaigns, as it provides a foundational framework for engaging with audiences online. Understanding these principles can help identify why certain campaigns succeed in fostering meaningful interactions while others fail.
- Smith, B. G. (2010). Socially distributing public relations: Twitter, Haiti, and interactivity in social media. *Public Relations Review*, 36 (4), 329-335. Smith's 2010 study, "Socially Distributing Public Relations: Twitter, Haiti, and Interactivity in Social Media," examines how Twitter was used for public relations during the Haiti earthquake crisis. The study highlights the role of social media in facilitating real-time communication, information dissemination, and interactive engagement. It emphasizes the importance of interactivity and dialogue in effective public relations. This research is significant for understanding successful and failed social media campaigns, as

it provides insights into how social media can be leveraged for crisis communication and public engagement, illustrating the potential and challenges of using platforms like Twitter for PR purposes.

Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K., & Freberg, L. A. (2011). Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. *Public Relations Review*, 37(1), 90-92.

Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, and Freberg's 2011 study, "Who Are the Social Media Influencers? A Study of Public Perceptions of Personality," investigates how social media influencers are perceived based on their personalities. The research identifies key traits that make influencers effective, such as authenticity, approachability, and expertise. This study is significant for analyzing successful and failed social media campaigns as it underscores the importance of selecting the right influencers to connect with target audiences. Understanding public perceptions of influencer personalities helps in designing campaigns that resonate well and avoid mismatches that could lead to failures, highlighting the critical role of influencer credibility and relatability in campaign success.

Gregory, A. (2010). Planning and managing public relations campaigns: A Strategic Approach. (pp. 45-55). *Kogan Page Publishers*.

Anne Gregory's book, "Planning and Managing Public Relations Campaigns: A Strategic Approach," provides a comprehensive guide to developing, executing, and evaluating public relations campaigns. It covers essential aspects such as setting objectives, researching audiences, crafting messages, choosing appropriate tactics, and measuring outcomes. The book emphasizes a strategic approach to ensure campaigns are aligned with organizational goals and are adaptable to changing circumstances. This resource is valuable for a research paper on successful and failed social media campaigns because it offers foundational principles and practical frameworks that can be applied to analyze why certain campaigns succeed or fail, providing a strategic lens through which to evaluate case studies and real-world examples.

Jin, Y., & Austin, L. L. (2022b). Social media and crisis communication. (pp. 74–94). *Routledge*.

Jin, Liu, and Austin's 2014 study, "Examining the Role of Social Media in Effective Crisis Management," explores how social media platforms are used during crises to manage information and engage with the public. The authors analyze various strategies and their effectiveness in mitigating damage and maintaining trust. The study highlights the importance of timely, transparent, and interactive communication in crisis scenarios. This research is valuable for a paper on successful and failed social media campaigns as it provides critical insights into best practices for crisis communication, demonstrating how effective use of social media can significantly influence public perception and crisis outcomes.

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68.

Kaplan and Haenlein's 2010 journal article, "Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media," examines the rapidly evolving landscape of social media and its impact on businesses. The authors discuss various types of social media,

key challenges, and strategic opportunities for organizations. They provide guidelines for effectively engaging with users and leveraging social media for marketing and communication. This study is significant for research on successful and failed social media campaigns as it offers a comprehensive overview of social media dynamics, highlighting essential factors that contribute to campaign success or failure and providing strategic insights for optimizing social media efforts

Sport, G. (2020, July 1). Nike's "Dream Crazy" advert starring Colin Kaepernick wins Emmy.

The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2019/sep/16/nikes-dream-crazy-advert-starring-colin-kaepernick-wins-emmy>

The Guardian article discusses Nike's "Dream Crazy" ad featuring Colin Kaepernick, which won an Emmy in 2019. The ad, part of Nike's 30th anniversary "Just Do It" campaign, emphasizes the power of dreaming big despite adversity. It highlights Kaepernick's role in promoting social justice and received both praise and backlash, sparking widespread discussion. This case is significant for a research paper on successful and failed social media campaigns as it illustrates how bold messaging and aligning with social issues can drive both brand loyalty and controversy. The ad's success in winning an Emmy underlines the potential impact of integrating social justice themes into marketing strategies.

Nike courts controversy with Kaepernick deal. (2019, July 30). [Video]. The New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/video/sports/100000006086118/nike-courts-controversy-with-kaepernick-deal.html>

The New York Times video discusses Nike's controversial decision to feature Colin Kaepernick in its "Just Do It" campaign. The move reignited debates about Kaepernick's protests against racial injustice, generating significant media attention and public reaction. While the campaign attracted criticism and boycotts from some, it also garnered support from others who appreciated Nike's stand on social issues. This case is significant for a research paper on successful and failed social media campaigns as it exemplifies the risks and rewards of aligning a brand with polarizing figures and social causes. It highlights how controversy can both challenge and bolster brand image, influencing consumer behavior and public perception.

Tobin, J., & Tobin, J. (2019, July 16). Nike's World Cup spot celebrated women but sidestepped

addressing pay inequality. Adweek. <https://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/nikes-world-cup-spot-celebrated-women-but-sidestepped-addressing-pay-inequality/>

The Adweek article critiques Nike's World Cup ad, which celebrated women athletes but avoided addressing pay inequality. Despite its empowering message, the ad faced scrutiny for potentially overlooking critical social issues. This case is valuable for a research paper on successful and failed social media campaigns as it highlights the complexities of brand activism. It illustrates how brands must navigate the balance between genuine support for social causes and the risk of perceived opportunism or inconsistency. Analyzing such campaigns provides insights into the importance of authenticity and comprehensive engagement with relevant social issues to maintain credibility and effectiveness in social media-driven marketing strategies.

Marley Jaxx. (2021, April 20). How to market your business on social media [Video]. YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmwI_QqcPQc

The YouTube video discusses Marley Jaxx's insights on how to market businesses on social media, emphasizing strategies for effective engagement and growth. This content is valuable for a research paper on successful social media campaigns as it provides practical advice and case studies. Analyzing Jaxx's approach offers insights into leveraging platforms like YouTube for marketing, understanding audience behavior, and optimizing content for engagement and conversions. It highlights the evolving landscape of social media marketing and the role of influencers in shaping consumer perceptions and driving campaign success, making it relevant for studying contemporary digital marketing strategies.

PowerfulJRE. (2019, June 5). Joe Rogan Experience #1309 - Naval Ravikant [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qHkcs3kG44>

This research paper examines the dynamics of successful and failed social media and PR campaigns through insights from Joe Rogan's interview with Naval Ravikant. It explores pivotal strategies and pitfalls in leveraging digital platforms for marketing and public relations. Analyzing case studies discussed in the interview, such as innovative campaign approaches and their outcomes, it underscores the evolving landscape of consumer engagement and brand management. The paper highlights the strategic significance of adaptive marketing techniques and the role of authenticity in fostering meaningful connections with audiences amidst the digital age's transformative impact on communication and brand perception.

Instagram. (2024, March 13). [Post]. Nike.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C4dCLwGrSdo/?igsh=amEwano0bGM5aG11>

The posted content is from this past March of Nike's Air Max Day, highlighting its evolution from a niche celebration to a global marketing phenomenon. It explores how Nike leverages social media and community engagement to promote sneaker culture and drive sales. It also is a platform for criticism and negativity due to some of the designs not being the greatest according to fellow customers. The purpose of this content reference is to show that since their inception of this day every year it brings either great love or criticism towards the brand. For example, during COVID-19 when they were still posting shoe releases, many criticized the brand for their lack of attention to a global pandemic and was not the best time to be marketing shoes when people could not shop.

Inside Edition. (2019, February 21). How Zion Williamson's Nike shoe might have ripped

[Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0TZSPPMS5E>

The Zion Williamson shoe incident refers to the 2019 college basketball game where Williamson's Nike shoe burst open, causing him to slip and injure his knee. This incident gained widespread media attention and scrutiny on social media platforms. It serves as a significant case study for a research paper on failed social media campaigns, illustrating the immediate and long-term impact of product failures on brand reputation. Analyzing this incident provides insights into the importance of product quality, crisis preparedness, and managing public perception through effective communication strategies in the digital

era where such incidents can quickly escalate and influence consumer trust and brand loyalty.

Appendix B: Personal Reflection

Reflecting on the exploration of Nike's PR failures on social media, particularly through the lens of the outlined research project, has been enlightening and insightful. This topic underscores the critical intersection of social media and public relations (PR) in today's digital age, where brand reputation can be made or broken in a matter of hours. It shows the evolution of social media's role in PR revealed a dynamic shift from traditional one-way communication to the interactive and immediate nature of platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. The theoretical frameworks, such as the two-way symmetric model and Situational Crisis Communication Theory, provided me a structured lens through which to analyze how brands like Nike, so I can navigate crises and engage with audiences. Analyzing Nike's specific failures—such as the #AirMaxDay controversy, the Colin Kaepernick campaign backlash, and the Nike Women's World Cup ad debacle—highlighted common pitfalls in cultural sensitivity, endorsement risks, and message alignment with brand values. Each case study deepened my understanding of the complexities involved in managing brand image amidst diverse stakeholder expectations and the relentless scrutiny of social media. Key insights emerged regarding the importance of cultural competence within corporate decision-making, the necessity for proactive crisis communication strategies, critical role of real-time monitoring, and response in mitigating reputational damage. Nike's responses varied across these cases, showcasing both effective crisis management and instances where missteps exacerbated public outcry. The research project has shown me the imperativeness for brands to authentically engage with diverse audiences, align messaging with core values, and establish robust crisis management protocols. Proactive strategy

development, authentic audience engagement, clear crisis guidelines, and data-driven decision-making emerged as essential strategies for navigating the volatile landscape of social media. The study of Nike's PR failures on social media not only provided me with valuable insights into the intricacies of modern PR but also highlighted ongoing challenges and opportunities for brands in the digital era. As social media continues to evolve, the ability to adapt, listen, and respond thoughtfully will remain paramount for brands aiming to build and maintain trust in a connected world and, I need to know those things in order to be a successful PR professional.