

Using Public Relations to Leverage a Strong Brand

Intel is the world's largest manufacturer of microchips, and a major player in network and communication products. The company attaches a great deal of importance to the value of its brand. Intel is the fifth most valuable brand in the world, and those ahead of it include Coca-Cola and IBM. In this case, it is not just a matter of brand awareness, but first and foremost of brand value, which is estimated in the case of Intel at 30 billion USD. Furthermore, Intel is the only B2B company on the list of the companies with the most brand value. Most brands belong to a company that focuses entirely or partly on the consumer market.

Corporate PR - Intel Inside

Brand value is fundamental for Intel. It emphasises the quality of the products, which then justifies an appropriate pricing policy. Therefore, all marketing campaigns run by Intel contain a substantial component of promotion of the brand name/value. This strategy results in 'corporate PR'. At Intel, corporate PR focuses on the support of the brand name/value and is rarely driven by a purely commercial vision.

Intel systematically rolls out PR campaigns to send specific messages. So before Christmas, the PC - with the "Intel inside" slogan, of course - is positioned as the ideal Christmas or year-end present. The PR manager has a number of means at his disposal for this purpose: press releases, photos and illustrations, research results about the PC as a present, ready-made customer profiles, etc.

Detailed PR planning

Intel plans all its PR campaigns meticulously in advance. Every quarter, a PR Performance Plan is drawn up, in which each of the various PR categories is assigned a particular weighting. Although the majority of the categories adopt the product as the norm, corporate PR always receives a considerable slice of the attention.

Corporate PR methodology**Objectives:**

- to support and enhance brand awareness;
- to create and maintain brand value;
- to build up a brand preference.

Target groups:

- OEMs (manufacturers of computers and peripherals);
- businesses;
- consumers;
- resellers;
- analysts;
- investors;
- government.

PR resources:

- press conferences;
- press releases;
- interviews;
- customer stories;
- product tests;
- press trips;

Measurement techniques:

- quantitative and qualitative analysis;
- output - articles;
- analysis of the articles.

Return on PR:

- PR Performance Plan;
- market research - brand preference.

The PR Performance Plan also has a score system. Every quarter, the PR activities and the associated budgets are divided up according to the weighting for each category at that time. That results in specific activities (press conferences, press releases, interviews, etc.) and results forecasts are set for those activities. In other words, each category has a percentage weighting, a budget and x number of resources to achieve that objective. That amount must result in x number of press contacts and articles.

The PR objectives, the PR categories and the PR messages are laid down internationally. The specific activities and associated scores are determined locally.

Measurement provides knowledge

Just as with the preparation, Intel works very meticulously when it comes to measuring the results. For every PR category, the total number of articles is counted and the content analysed with regard to the PR messages. Both the quantity and the quality of the articles is compared with the results forecast.

Meticulous measuring system for each action

Kristof Sehmke, PR Manager Intel Benelux : "Spontaneous reactions, a "gut-feeling" or the smooth running of a PR campaign are not enough to establish the success or the return of PR. All marketing efforts are measured, including PR, and only the measurable result actually counts."

For the analysis of the articles, Intel uses an on-line tool which performs both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the reporting. The results are compared per quarter, per product group, etc. and charted against the competition. In terms of content, the overall assessment, reproduction of the core message, etc. is examined. The results are divided even further per press group and even per publication.

About Intel

Intel (NASDAQ: INTC) is the world's largest manufacturer of microchips, and a major player in network and communication products. For over a quarter of a century, Intel has developed the technology that underlies the computer and Internet revolution. Intel started in 1968 with the manufacture of semiconductors for computer memories. Today, the Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor running at 3 GHz contains no fewer than 55 million semiconductors. Intel supplies memory chips, cards and system components for the computer and communication industry. These components form the ingredients for computers, servers and network and communication products. The company generates annual turnover of 26.5 billion USD, and spends 3.8 billion USD of that on research and development. Intel has 80,000 employees at 45 locations worldwide.

Kristof Sehmke: "This kind of system identifies trends in the reporting and shows the results of individual PR campaigns in a simple way."

Of course, the PR Performance Plan does not provide all the answers for assessing a PR policy. Spontaneous reactions from the marketplace and opinions about the PR work from line and product managers and other personnel play an important supporting role.

Example of Return on PR

"Intel becomes fashion conscious"
In February 2002, Intel rolled out a PR campaign to position its solutions for the telecommunication market. During London Fashion Week, the company demonstrated "live video streaming" of the catwalk via a handheld. This action was featured by The Times and resulted in an article with the headline "How Intel became fashion conscious". This immediately received a Triple A rating from Intel, the highest score than can be awarded to an article. In the subsequent days and weeks, the product manager was inundated with information requests from companies and partners. The extra brand value that was created by this is difficult to measure, but is undoubtedly priceless.

Kristof Sehmke: "Internationally, Intel is going another step further and establishing the relationship between the PR and marketing budgets and brand preference. In other words: "How much money are we investing in marketing and how does that relate to the brand preference in favour of Intel?" Corporate PR is an important marketing tool to support that brand preference. This conveys crucial concepts like 'technology leadership', 'quality' and 'reliability'.

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