

ASK FIRST 20 TO BUILD – 5 TO TRASH



The 'Oracle of Omaha', Warren Buffett nailed it on reputation with his line *"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently."*

Think of an insecticide manufacturer which used its iconic bad-guy character to express the company's sympathy after a recent incident in which a young woman was murdered.

Think of an ad that deliberately includes your brand promise while promoting your support of one of Australia's most cherished celebrations. An interesting use of words, maybe, but it also attracted a torrent of adverse consumer and media attention.

Think of a certain airline's luxury in-flight experience social media campaign. A great idea on paper until customer complaints about the airline's poor customer service began flooding through the social media door.

Over the last decade, marketing campaigns have taken on a noticeably 'edgy' approach in terms of both strategies and execution – our [award-winning 'Jack' campaign for client Just Cremations](#) being one of them.

All very well, however, and unlike the pre-internet world, social media platforms like Facebook now provide consumers and key stakeholders of all persuasions with an inexpensive yet powerful platform to vent their opinions, not just to corporations but the entire world.

As much as I hate to say it, it's not the fault of social media platforms or for that matter their users. We all know that social media is the Wild West of media platforms, sans sheriff, and by knowingly using it in business we are unequivocally inviting consumers and stakeholders to tell us what they think (read also: "like" or "dislike").

Ironically, a lot of the damage inflicted on brands and corporate reputation by goof-ups stem from a lack of communication between the core communications specialities within and without organisations.

Do marketing and advertising talk to PR or corporate affairs before unleashing new and 'creative' campaigns? Not a lot from my experience. Deadlines, proximity, perceived interference, fear of rejection, a poor regard for others' competency to contribute to the process – any number of excuses.

Seeking a second opinion from somebody not directly connected to a new campaign but understanding of consumers and stakeholders may delay the process a little. It might even add some dollars to the budget, but as we've noted on numerous occasions to clients and prospective clients - what price do you put on the damage to your company's reputation and thus its brand and sales?

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