**Dannon**

**Public Relations Plan**

**J453: Strategic Planning & Cases**

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**Background**
 The Dannon Company (Dannon) has always had a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility programs (CSR). These CSR programs were mostly internal, but followed the company’s mission of “bringing health through food to as many people as possible.” One of Dannon’s CSR programs was The Dannon Institute, “an independent foundation to promote research, education and communication about the link between nutrition and good health (<http://www.dannon-institute.org/Document.aspx?sectionid=7&documentid=124&table=t3&Link=t3_link1>).

Despite strong CSR efforts like The Dannon Institute, few consumers knew about Dannon’s CSR activities. Michael Neuwirth, Dannon’s Director of Public Relations, wanted to promote Dannon’s CSR activities in conjunction with Dannon’s healthy products to help improve the recognition and public opinion of the brand and hopefully increase sales of Dannon products.

Yoplait, Dannon’s top competitor, has its own CSR activities that are more well-known than Dannon’s, particularly the “Save Lids to Save Lives” Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign. This campaign asks consumers to send in lids from Yoplait yogurt; for each lid sent in, the company will donate 10 cents to breast cancer research. Yoplait also uses Facebook to encourage virtual sharing of lids while promising to donate money for each lid shared to a friend (<http://www.yoplait.com/Slsl/default.aspx>).

**Research**:
Financial Value of Corporate Social Responsibility:
 Although Dannon executives worried that the investment in promoting CSR programs could be better spent on improving Dannon’s products or in direct promotions for Dannon’s products, research has shown that investing in CSR programs has a positive effect on the bottom line. According to Orlitzsky et al.’s analysis of CSR programs, “According to the reputation perspective, an organization’s communication with external parties about its level of CSP (Corporate Social/Environmental Performance) may help build a positive image with customers, investors, bankers, and suppliers (Fombrun and Shanley 1990) (Orlitzky et al. 407).” By having a positive image with not just customers, but also investors, bankers, and suppliers, “Furthermore, firms with high CSP reputation ratings may improve relations with bankers and investors and thus facilitate their access to capital (Spicer 1978) (Orlitzky et al. 407).”
 These findings show that a positive association with financial growth exists with investment in CSR programs. Orlitzky’s analysis also that found that “there is a positive association between CSP and CFP across industries and across study contexts (Orlitzky et al. 423)” and that “market forces generally do not penalize companies that are high in corporate social performance; thus, managers can afford to be socially responsible (Orlitzky et al. 426).” Orlitzky’s cited many authors and found that “a company with strong CSR programs “may also attract better employees (Greening and Turban 2000; Turban and Greening 1997) or increase current employees’ goodwill, which in turn may improve financial outcomes (Davis 1973; McGuire et al. 1988; Waddock and Graves 1997) (Orlitzky et al. 407).”

Research by Du et al. found in a 2007 study comparing Dannon’s CSR efforts to Stonyfield’s CSR efforts that companies positioning themselves as socially responsible brands had more loyal customers who became advocates for the brand. Significantly, the study also found that “perceptions of mainstream attributes such as quality and value can be favorably influenced to a greater extent when social responsibility is an integral aspect of what the brand represents to consumers (Du et al. 237).” In addition, “because CSR positioning truly reveals the fundamental values, or character of a brand, it is more unequivocally associated with the coveted deeper, more long-term relationships with consumers than other [corporate ability] b-based positioning strategies such as product leadership (Du et al. 237).” In this study, they found that Stonyfield had better CSR programs than Dannon did. Dannon primarily markets itself on its corporate ability (CA), or its “beliefs regarding a firm’s expertise in producing and delivering products/services (Du et al. 226),” and the study found that marketing itself this way was not very beneficial to its CSR efforts. The study also found that “awareness of a brand’s CSR initiatives is a key prerequisite for CSR beliefs (Du et al. 238),” and that many companies need to do more to increase awareness of CSR programs.

**Situation Analysis**

Dannon wants to implement a plan that will increase awareness of CSR efforts both internally and externally in commitment to their company values. Dannon has genuine CSR involvement but few know about these efforts. Dannon has an opportunity to strengthen its relationship with its employees and consumers by promoting its CSR efforts. Research by Du et al. in a 2007 study shows that when consumers believe a brand is socially responsible, they are more likely to be loyal to the brand and to perceive the quality of the brand’s products as superior to others in the market.

Dannon has a growth opportunity. However, it faces three distinct challenges:

1. Dannon must distinguish its CSR efforts from other yogurt brands; specifically Yoplait.
2. Dannon must show that its CSR efforts are not driven by desire to boost sales, but instead are genuine and based on its mission of “bringing health through food to as many people as possible.”
3. Dannon must display the causal relationship between increased CSR promotion and increased ROI, which will be a challenge to initially prove since the promotion of CSR efforts are a long-term investment.

With consumers, Dannon may face problems in creating brand awareness and resonating the campaign with the Dannon brand. Since competitors Yoplait and Stonyfield have strong CSR promotion and awareness, consumers may forget what makes Dannon distinguishable. Also, since Yoplait and Stonyfield are also “socially responsible,” consumers may believe that the three brands are equal, making the purchasing choice difficult. Dannon needs to create relationships with its consumers that will build brand loyalty based on the desire to support Dannon’s specific cause. With employees, Dannon may face the challenge of increasing employee involvement in CSR activities since employee CSR involvement is already strong at 85 percent.

**Core Problem/Opportunity**
Dannon has done little to promote its CSR efforts, so customer awareness of these activities is low. Since research suggests a strong, correlated relationship between CSR and brand loyalty, Dannon could lose company value if it does not begin to promote its CSR efforts.

**Goal:** To increase consumer awareness of Dannon’s CSR efforts and build relationships with communities.

**Key Publics:**

*Dannon Employees:*

Dannon employees, also known as “Danoners,” are “committed to an ambitious future, open to learning and sharing with others, doers who deliver results fast, and work towards empowering and developing people” as described in the employee code (Dannon). They include both blue-collar and white-collar positions.

The blue-collar employees are the industrial workers that manufacture the products in the Dannon factories at the four headquarters around the country. These are working class people that are paid an hourly wage. They perform manual and technical labor and are trained in safety and engineering procedures.

        The white-collar employees hold administrative positions that include finance, human resources, research and development, sales, legal affairs, marketing and corporate responsibilities. They are paid on salary and work in office environments.

*Parents ages 25-40 with children 0-18*
 The parents demographic include both single and two-parent homes between the ages of 25 and 40. Householders ages 25-39 account for over 22 percent of families in the United States with at least one child under 18 (United States). They enjoy spending time with their families and almost one in five of the women in this demographic are full-time stay at home moms (Marigny). However, many have secured professional jobs at this point with executive or managerial positions (Brown and Washton).

This crowd likes premium goods at affordable prices and they appreciate sustainable business practices. Aesthetically appealing product designs attract these consumers, especially if the design is something their kids will enjoy and is good for on-the-go (Marigny). Young adults represent more than 60 percent of the purchasing power of the market and they continue to grow (Brown and Washton). They have low brand loyalty, which presents an opportunity for Dannon to establish rapport with the consumers (Brown and Washton).

They are Internet savvy users and in-tune with the social media world. The Internet is an essential component in their daily lives to help them do everything from online banking to product research (Marigny).

**Intervening Publics:**

* Local and national media
* Non-profit organizations
* Teachers
* Community Leaders

**Key messages to employees**
*Primary:* We support you supporting others. Employees are the foundation of Dannon and are the most important asset of the company.
*Secondary:* We will match your donations dollar for dollar. We support your health and well-being through opportunities to grow together individually and as a team.

**Key messages to families**
*Primary:* Dannon is a nutritional choice for your family as well as a socially responsible company.
*Secondary:* Dannon is committed to educating and helping people to live healthy lifestyles. Dannon is environmentally responsible and committed to helping build strong, responsible communities.

**Key Public:** Dannon Employees
Objective 1:

* Have 90% of Dannon employees at corporate locations to participate in one CSR event per quarter over the course of two years.

Strategy 1:

* Reinforce Dannon’s social responsibility values by encouraging community involvement and boosting company morale.

Tactics:

* Send e-mails to Dannon employees about health and service events in their community that they can get involved in.
* Have contests to see which department at each Dannon location does the most fundraising.
	+ Internal e-mail, poster, and flier campaign
	+ Big prize for year-end winner
		- Ex: Nice dinner for team and tickets to a concert or show
	+ Provide smaller prizes for second- and third-place winning departments.
		- Feature winning departments on website and company newsletter.
		- Give gift cards to runner-ups.
* Run contest to decide which employees will staff the Dannon Cares RV, which will tour the country and educate about healthy lifestyles and Dannon's CSR initiatives.
	+ Have contest within company to staff Dannon RV
		- Create internal e-mail, poster, and flyer campaign.
		- Hold company-wide vote on Dannon intranet.
		- Have employees post video to intranet telling the company why they should be a Dannon RV roadie.

**Key Public:** Parents ages 25-40 with children ages 0-18
Objective 1:

* Increase public awareness of Dannon’s CSR efforts by 20 percent within two years.

Strategy 1:

* Communicate Dannon’s CSR efforts to many communities through multiple media campaigns.

Tactics:

* Pitch stories to national and local media about Dannon’s outstanding internal and external CSR efforts.
Local:
	+ Pitch stories of each corporate location’s specific CSR efforts to local media in West Jordan, Utah; Ft. Worth, Texas; Minster, Ohio and White Plains, New York.

National:

* + News shows on CNN, FOX, NBC, CBS and ABC
	+ Morning television shows including “Good Morning America” and “Today”
	+ Magazines: ex. Businessweek and Time

Online:

* + Pitch to job bloggers.
	+ Pitch to economy bloggers.
	+ Pitch to “sustainability” bloggers.
* Implement a social media strategy for Dannon Cares.
	+ Blog: Create a Dannon Cares blog.
		- Create posting schedule that plans at least one substantial post each week.
			* Have guest posts from authors in many different positions in the company.
		- On an on-going basis, upload photos and videos from company CSR efforts and events.
		- Promote upcoming Dannon CSR efforts with a call to action.
	+ Facebook: Create a Dannon Cares Facebook page.
		- Create posting schedule that plans three to four posts a week that engage in two-way communication.
		- On an on-going basis, upload photos and videos from company CSR efforts and events.
		- Promote upcoming Dannon CSR efforts with a call to action.
	+ Twitter: Create a @dannon\_cares account.
		- Create posting schedule that plans at least one tweet a day that engage in two-way communication.
		- Links to blog posts from the Dannon RV team.
		- Encourage followers to tweet and post pictures about how Dannon products benefit their lives.
		- Promote upcoming Dannon CSR efforts with a call to action.

Strategy 2

* Outreach to communities in the United States through a traveling Dannon Cares education campaign.

Tactics:

* Tour the United States with a Dannon Cares-branded RV to different community centers.
	+ Possible cities to visit: Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, LA, Phoenix, Denver, Austin, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Chicago, NYC.
	+ Go to YMCAs and other community centers in these cities and host a Dannon Day with fun activities and educational events about how to live a healthy lifestyle for all ages.
		- Promote these events in advance of arrival and during event with news releases and media advisories tailored to each location.
	+ Have online contest to decide artwork that is painted on RV.
		- Promote via Facebook, Twitter, website, blog
		- Users vote on favorite design
	+ Recruit community health and opinion leaders to speak and be involved at these events.

Objective 2:

* Secure a two-year partnership with YMCA.

Strategy 1:

* Work with YMCA to build a partnership based on shared company values about promoting healthy lifestyles. The partnership would be mutually beneficial and complementary to each organization.

Tactics:

* Meet with YMCA senior staff to establish partnership.
	+ Show how Dannon and YMCA share company values about promoting healthy lifestyle.
* Promote partnership on Dannon products and on Dannon website.
	+ Implement prominent placement of YMCA logo on Dannon products.
	+ Implement prominent placement of website discussing the partnership.
	+ Create links to YMCA website on Dannon website.
	+ Post pictures and updates on Facebook and Twitter pages about YMCA news.
* Host Dannon Days events at YMCAs with the Dannon Cares RV.
	+ Drive Dannon Cares RV to YMCAs in United States.
	+ Promote these events at YMCAs in advance of the arrival of the RV.
	+ At events, have sports tournaments for prizes, using YMCA facilities for the sports events.
	+ Have multiple workshops with activities for all ages to educate about healthy lifestyles.
		- If possible, recruit local athletes, opinion leaders and healthy lifestyle professionals in the area to teach or attend the workshops.

Objective 3:

* Increase traffic to the Dannon website by 23 percent within two years.

Strategy 1:

* Update the Dannon website so that it better communicates the nutritional value of Dannon products to both adults and children and better communicates Dannon’s CSR programs.

Tactics:

* Redesign the Dannon website.
	+ Update it for a more modern look and feel.
	+ Implement better organization of the site.
	+ Improve the Dannon Cares page to better highlight Dannon’s CSR efforts.
		- Add images
		- Add videos
		- Add media clips
	+ Create web page about Dannon-YMCA partnership.
	+ Create web page to follow the Dannon Cares education campaign and RV.
* Better promote the website on Dannon products, printed materials, and advertisements.
	+ Prominently display the website address on Dannon products, printed materials, and advertisements.
* Use Facebook and Twitter pages to direct user traffic to Dannon website.
	+ Post concise updates and statuses and provide links to website that offer more detailed information.

**Evaluation:**
**Objective 1:** Have 90% of Dannon employees at corporate locations to participate in one CSR event per quarter over the course of two years.

* If 90% of Dannon employees at corporate locations participate in one CSR event per quarter over the course of two years, then this objective was successful.

**Objective 2:** Increase public awareness of Dannon’s CSR efforts by 20 percent within two years.

* If public awareness of Dannon’s CSR efforts increases by 20 percent within two years, this objective was successful.

**Objective 3:** Secure a two-year partnership with YMCA.

* If we secure a two-year partnership with YMCA, this objective was successful.

**Objective 4:** Increase traffic to the Dannon website by 23 percent within two years.

* If traffic to the Dannon website increases by 23 percent within two years, then this objective was successful.

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