

Analysis of Celebrity PR in India

(A case study of PR Strategies of Priyanka Chopra)

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Abstract:

In recent years, public figures have been looking more and more to Public Relations professionals to present them to the public with style and panache and cover up a thousand misdemeanors. The PR strategist carefully plans positive publicity for the celebrity. PR keep celebrities in the spotlight and get good press twenty-four to seven. Good public relations are necessary for convincing the public to reclaim and consolidate one's position. This is not unique in international scenario but India celebrities are no exception to this rule. Many well-known faces from the Hindi film industry have used public relations tactics in recent years to rise from "much ignored" to "much renowned." Film personalities have occasionally sought the helpful assistance of their public relations staff to generate a positive buzz about them and make the public forget their unethical behavior. Public relations strategy is now referred to as public relations machinery, PR team, promotion, and public relations. This paper tries to analyses the public relations strategies of Priyanka Chopra.

Keywords- Celebrity PR, Media Relations, Promotions, Image.

Introduction:

Public relations are the art and science of controlling communication with an organization's major stakeholders in order to establish, maintain, and enhance organization's favorable reputation. A two-way conversation takes place between an organization and its audience. You can't escape the fact that public relations have a profound impact on your life, whether you choose to ignore it or accept it. Public relations view people from the standpoint of their goals where they are now and where they aspire to be. Effective public relations can elevate common people to limelight. A positive mental image is something that is difficult to create and maintain, and on the other hand, is easy to lose. Therefore, building and improving a mental image requires organized and continuous efforts and well-informed programs prepared by specialists who are able to remove all obstacles or problems that lead to distortion of this image (Chen & Chen, 2014). Effective creative public relations can benefit any organization and celebrity across all industries. Publicity is no doubt a free advertising but it's also actual news. It can encourage media coverage to cover everything from the opening of a new

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boutique to the release of a new coffee table book by informing about interesting events, products, services, and people.

Public relations has changed from its early focus of only on media relations to a sophisticated range of communications where it is now not just an afterthought but a crucial component of the overall communications strategy. It is the practice of shaping public opinion for personal gain in today's globalized society and a tool used to spread your message and develop your brand. The media is currently persuaded to disseminate news and information that promotes an organization or any celebrity by PR professionals. The inclusion of research, measurement and evaluation as essential tools that have been fundamental of marketing and advertising is a major factor in the shift in how public relations is perceived in the communications industry. To establish positive, healthy, and productive relationships with others, one might engage in a variety of activities known as public relations. It is always intended to build long-term goodwill, which will benefit the person in the end. It's all about communicating with people, whether it is verbal or non-verbal, or by any other method. Public Relations always focus on the target audience who will receive the communication as the most crucial part of communication.

In a concise mode Public Relations is the profession of relationship building between public and organizations to foster relationships. It is a conduit, a facilitator and a manager of communication, conducting research, defining problems and creating meaning by fostering communication. It is a strategic conversation. Hence, the importance of public relations clearly shows to carry out systematic, planned, and continuous efforts to gain the masses' trust, sympathy, and to establish effective communication channels that ensure a mutual understanding between clients of public relations companies and their masses (Chege, 2014).

What is Celebrity PR?

Olivier Driessens (2013) talks about the importance of popular persona as a possible route to celebrity. Part of the role of public relations is the creation of a persona that is portrayed to the public as who the celebrity is and what they stand for. This can include aspects of their real personalities and traits or a character that is completely different from their real self. This aids in influencing the public's opinion about the celebrity. PR profession is not so easy. Limelight is the lifeline of a celebrity. To be in limelight and in daily gossips they need several tools like fake news, scandals. To make a celebrity's life looks glamorous, the PR person has to do all the exercise to put spotlight and public attention on them. We have seen the celebrity's poster in Salon, Malls, Clothing shop etc. This activity helps the brand to grow but simultaneously it also adds value to celebrity status. This task has been planned by the celebrity PR in the background. The PR person has to deal with all the incoming opportunities to the celebrity, if not the PR has to generate or search the opportunity for him. If a celebrity is hidden from his audience from a couple of weeks, possibly the audience will no longer be remembering him/her and the identity which the particular celebrity has earned over

years will be gone. To ensure the success of the work of these celebrities and to create mass value, which helps them achieve many gains, it is necessary to work on creating positive impressions and feelings about them. This integration between the beliefs and feelings known as the mental image of the masses, which refers to the trends, perceptions, beliefs and feelings towards them. The formation of a positive mental image is critical to ensuring business continuity and success, due to its impact on the behavior of the masses and their satisfaction with these works and assessing their ability to meet their needs (AL-Rhaimi, 2015).

So, it's very necessary for a celebrity to be in limelight every time either way. Sometimes the messages from the celebrities are not as per the expectation of the audience and it goes wrong and creating negative impression, here again PR job start to make damage control and create positive feelings for the celebrity.

Review of Literature:

According to Naresh (2013) "Celebrity PR in India: A Closer Look at Salman Khan's PR Strategies", a holistic representation is done of how a public figure with an image of a "Bad Boy" is turned over to become a "Poster boy" through extremely rigorous PR strategies and campaigns. It was clear from the different secondary sources that celebrity public relations have come a long way since its early days. It is no longer that simple, cheap or easy. It is a complex process of time-consuming strategist, to enable celebrities gets the best for the money they invest in this. From the newspaper articles on celebrity PR and publicity it is evident that actors are beginning to exploit the field of PR to the maximum, to avail of all the benefits. Good public relations can receive a great deal of positive vibes from people since PR is a field that enjoys a certain amount of credibility compared to other tools of promotion. From the focus group discussion, it was clear that actor Salman Khan has a great fan following among the young Hindi film viewers. The little negativity that existed in the past has been removed through his PR oriented activities. The focus group participants remember and recall Salman Khan's charity, his Good Samaritan moves, rather than his wild behavior. The viewers are aware of Salman Khan's controversial image. They do not give too much credence to it in the light of his box office success. They love him for what he is on screen. His roles are liked and relished. So convincing has been his PR that they no longer pay attention to the controversies. It seems to be adding to the rustic flavor of the actor. He is like any one of them- talented and tainted, yet endearing. They go to see a Salman Khan film for his sake. The expert interview drives home the importance of PR tactics in enabling an actor to start afresh and build a new image. This has certainly happened in the case of Salman Khan. The turnaround that has come about in Salman Khan's career is clearly due to the PR initiative of his team. Through a carefully orchestrated strategy of PR the actor has become the darling of the masses. His success owes a lot to the changed public persona exhibited by media. His career graph till 2006 was erratic at best, with Being Human Foundation established in 2007 and his many a philanthropic work his career has gone on

an upswing proving that PR works. Through choice interviews, media placements and events the actor has succeeded in making people forget his murky past. This turned around from being the ‘Bad Boy to Poster Boy’ has indeed been made.

Bhutda & Naresh (2019) “Changing Trend in PR in Building Celebrity Image: A Case Study of the Movie Sanju focuses especially in the Indian Showbiz the prevalence of PR is always on a high tide, from Amitabh Bachchan to Amir Khan- their advertisements, the television shows they host and the events they attend are all regulated largely keeping in mind their image in front of their audience.

Prakash (2020) “Power of celebrity public relations- a closer look at ‘brand M.S.Dhoni’” analyses celebrity – Mahendra Singh Dhoni and the PR tools and strategies that have been used in building and maintaining his brand. From being the highest run scorer in One Day Internationals to guiding India to the victories of 2007 ICC World Twenty20, the 2010 and 2016 Asia Cups, the 2011 ICC Cricket World Cup and the 2013 ICC Champions Trophy, “Captain Cool”, as his fans usually address him, has always been in the good books of the public. The current research contextualizes the power of public relations that is used to build people as brand.

Case study of Priyanka Chopra:

Priyanka Chopra has indeed forged her own path, from winning a beauty pageant at the age of 18 to becoming India's highest-paid actress, to receiving the Padma Shri award from the Indian government, to being listed in Time magazine's list of the 100 Most Influential People in the World, and the list of accomplishments goes on. There are many prizes and distinctions in her name for her work as an artist and entrepreneur, but she is more than that; her legacy is more than that. Priyanka's decisions over the years are evidence of her way of living. But her personality is what makes her the most aspired-to person for many people around the world. Despite wearing two different scents, she exudes confidence and charms everyone she meets. Chopra is expanding her empire with each move she makes, but the road to get there hasn't been smooth; it's been difficult, filled with failures and rejections.





(Pic- Courtesy- www.google.com)

Methodology:

There are various ways to know the world of public relations, and researchers employ various research techniques to do so. The current study is qualitative and incorporates an in-depth interview and focus group discussions. Since only such individuals were selected for the study those who can provide a better understanding of the theme, the purposive sampling technique was used in the study. According to Etikan, et al. (2016), the main aim of purposive sampling is to focus on individuals with specific characteristics and knowledge of the research theme. This helped the researcher to understand the sample in detail. The participants of the study were selected considering

the maximum level of accuracy in the study. One expert interview with PR professional and focus group discussions of the students of Public Relations were conducted.

Analysis/Findings of the Study

For data analysis, the in-depth interviews was recorded and transcribed and further thematic coding was done to explore the objectives of the study. The expert interview is an effective method of gathering data because it enables the researcher to examine the perspectives and perceptions of the domain/field expert, which are not available to the casual responder. The interview is more than what is commonly referred to as "conversation with a goal." The interview provides the researcher with access to experts in the subject whose opinions add the data's much-needed depth. On rare occasions, the expert can highlight significant details that the researcher may not have noticed or is unaware of the relevance itself. Furthermore, industry experts or representatives of socio-cultural groups have access to knowledge that the general public does not. The expert's assessment supports the findings and conclusions.

Analysis of Expert Interview

Teena Bajpai, Senior Public Relations Consultant spoke extensively about the increasing impact of public relations strategies used by corporate entities and celebrities in recent times. According to Ms. Bajpai, Public Relations is somewhat like investment banking, in that where investment banking takes care of the client's money/finances and tries to double the assets of the said client, PR strategists constantly seek to better the image and public persona of the client. Both the fields put the client first. She says that PR is all about building a brand as in the case of a new company, a new product or an individual who is a fresh face in the field. It could be giving a totally new look to an old existing brand, this can be done to create a shift of perception in the minds of the public about the entity going for such a shift, either to increase the market share or woo a new and younger client base. PR is useful in creating a positive buzz around a company/product/ individual to cover-up past negativities. She stated that over the years most celebrities, especially film stars were making use of PR professionals to promote and market them since PR strategies were long term, subtle, have greater credibility and therefore has a better success rate with the audience. Ms. Bajpai believes that PR has the power to convince people to accept certain facts with greater ease compared to advertisements. As there is no direct money transaction, since PR is not paid for like advertisements, people are more acceptable towards PR messages.

She said the term experiential marketing is often used to indicate PR. Actors may be good; they may be doing good work but unless their audiences are made aware of these things the actors cannot expect long term recall value and without recall value actors lose their presence. Since it's a numbers game at the top only those actors who are in the news, for good or bad reasons, command due attention of the film producers and big studios. It is not possible for actors to reach out to their audience on their own merit. They need the PR team to work towards that goal diligently. The PR team organizes the

press meets and conferences, makes sure the actor gets to interact with fans through a gala or other social event that will capture the attention of millions of film viewers and the curiosity of the media. The PR network will ensure that the media is informed about such planned events and dos. An actor like Priyanka Chopra till a few years ago would shun the media, but with a good PR team to advise her she seems to woo the media these days.

As per said by expert in her interview, she discloses the fact that Midas was hired to deliver an impactful, high profile PR campaign for *Unfinished* by Priyanka Chopra Jonas, starting in November 2020 with widespread media coverage running throughout January and February 2021. Working closely with LZMG PR and the publisher, Midas was tasked with securing blanket coverage for the book across all media platforms to drive sales around publication, as well as supporting Penguin Michael Joseph's sales and marketing efforts to leverage and maximize publicity. Midas secured front cover interviews with Priyanka in Elle Magazine, The Guardian G2, Stylist Magazine, and a digital front cover for Glamour Magazine in the Women of the Year Awards Issue.

Other coverage highlights included interviews with Priyanka in The Evening Standard, The Sunday Mirror, The Daily Telegraph, Financial Times: How to Spend it, Metro.co.uk, Reuters International, NBC Universal, Press Association, The Daily Telegraph: Telegraph Magazine, ES Magazine, Red Magazine, and Happiful Magazine. Midas secured both book reviews and interviews with Priyanka in Cosmopolitan, Hello! Magazine, Grazia, Closer Magazine, Country & Townhouse, Image Magazine, RTE Guide Magazine, and Evoke.ie .Broadcast interviews with Priyanka included: BBC One: The One Show, ITV 1: This Morning, ITV 1: James Martin's Saturday Kitchen, BBC News Package (across BBC Radio 1, BBC World Service Radio & TV, BBC News TV), BBC Radio 2: Zoe Ball, BBC Radio 5 Live: Afternoon Show, Global Radio, Bauer Radio (Absolute, Kiss, Magic), RTE 1 Today with Claire Byrne, Classic Hits Radio, Ireland AM TV: Breakfast Show, Virgin Radio: Graham Norton, BBC Radio 4: Inheritance Tracks, and BBC Asian Network: Noreen Khan's Afternoon Show.

Podcast interviews with Priyanka included: The Daily Telegraph Imposter Syndrome Podcast, Table Manners with Jessie Ware (20 million listeners), The Hang With Gregory Porter, Open Mind with Frankie Bridge, Fern Cotton's Happy Place, CTRL ALT DELETE with Emma Gannon, Feel Better Live More with Dr Chatterjee, The Mind Valley with Vishen Lakhiani, Paul McKenna Positivity Podcast, BBC World: When Katty Met Carlos Podcast, BBC Beyond Bollywood Podcast, Magic FM Book Club Podcast, and Intelligence Squared Podcast. Midas secured both book reviews and interviews with Priyanka in a range of South Asian media outlets: Eastern Eye, Garavi Gujarat, India Weekly, Asian Voice, Asian Express, British Asian Women's Magazine, Bollywood Spice, Asian Sunday, Desi Blitz Online Magazine, Asian Culture Vulture, Biz Asia, Asian Image, Asian Today, Filmy Shilmy, and I Global News.

Analysis of the Focus group discussion

Twenty media students with knowledge of public relations concepts participated in a focus group discussion. The students loved Hindi movies and had seen several of the actor Priyanka Chopra's movies. They were carefully chosen because, despite not being Priyanka Chopra fans, they were ardent Hindi movie watchers who didn't care who played the lead role. This guaranteed that student opinions were fairly formed. When asked about the general standards of Hindi films today, the group agreed that they had nothing to complain about, that everything was generally fine and that as viewers, they were generally satisfied with the quality. The girl students even discussed some of the best Priyanka Chopra Jonas campaigns over the years such as Support Girl's Education which created a huge social impact on YouTube. The other social campaign such as International Youth Day 2014 – UNICEF, BerokZindagi- Cipla, Say Yes, Forever – Nirav Modi were also discussed.

Conclusion

The final analysis shows that celebrity public relations have advanced significantly since its beginnings. No longer is it that cheap, easy, or simple. To help celebrities get the most out of the money they spend on this, it takes a complicated process and time-consuming strategists. It is clear from media articles on celebrity PR and publicity that actors are starting to take full use of the PR industry and all its advantages. Since public relations are a field that enjoys some degree of credibility in comparison to other techniques of promotion, good PR may generate a lot of positive energy from the public. The focus group discussion made it quite evident that actor Priyanka Chopra enjoys a large fan base among young Hindi filmgoers. His PR-focused activities have eliminated what little hostility there was in the past. Her public relations have been so effective that they are no longer interested in the controversies. It appears to be enhancing the actor's rural appeal. The expert interview emphasizes the value of PR strategies in helping actor reinvent themselves and create new legacies. Public relations companies contribute to provide two-way communication channels, create state of trust, respect, mutual understanding. In addition, they work to justify situations and analyze issues and help its clients achieve their goals (Ghryani & Omar, 2021).

Priyanka Chopra's case is a clear example of this happening. Priyanka Chopra's career has certainly turned around as a result of his team's PR strategy. The actor has gained widespread popularity thanks to a properly planned PR approach. Her success is greatly owed to the altered public image that the media has presented.

Limitations and future scope of research

Since the study was conducted only in one city with smaller sample size, a similar study can be conducted across a bigger universe. A quantitative study of similar nature with a big sample size can be conducted to understand the clear point of view celebrity Public Relations.

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