

The Role of Media Relations in the Brand Image: Case Study in Three Brands of the Automobile Industry

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Abstract : Marketers are aware that media relations is an important touch point, which is also cheaper, to bring their products and their brands to the consumer. They recognize the role of journalists as moderators and transformers of public opinion, and they realize their influence on brand image. And also, they know that readers, listeners, viewers and internet users "believe" more what they read, hear and see in the news than in an advertisement. The study is focused on the automotive industry and analyses the news published about three brands that share industrial facilities and components. We wanted to understand the role of the information created by the brand's media team in the journalists' work, and the impact on management, activation and differentiation of brands and their products' attributes and benefits. Based on a qualitative methodology, the analysis focused on press news, making comparison between media coverage and their "narratives" about the three cars from different brands. The results point to the fact that journalists easily integrate speech from the marks on their products. In the case of this study, we found that apart from the description of the many similarities between the three cars, the average speech also "struggled" for revealing the attributes that differentiate them. This interpretation of the results helps us to understand the "marriage" between branding and media. We believe also this paper let us to understand how journalists, through news, join the speech of the brands.

Keywords : brand management, media relations, differentiation, positioning

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