**Case Study**

**Situation:**

Vibe Magazine is a premier destination for urban entertainment, media, and music founded by producer Quincy Jones. The publication predominately features R&B and hip-hop music artists, actors, and other entertainers. Since the shutting down of its production in Summer 2009, Vibe was purchased by InterMedia Partners, a private equity investment fund, and is now issued bi-monthly. Since this exchange of ownership, Vibe has begun establishing a large online presence. The target audience of Vibe Magazine is predominately young, urban followers of hip-hop culture. As of June 20, 2012, Vibe had a circulation of 300, 943, of which 202,439 were paid, and 98,504 were non-paid.

Within the past few days, ads for Vibe magazine’s newest hair care line entitled Natural Curl Therapy have began appearing online through media outlets such as Facebook which attracts an audience of nearly one billion people worldwide. The ad features a Caucasian woman with curly extremely curly hair. However, two major issues have aroused from the release of this advertisement campaign. The first issue that came about was an arousal of questioning on what qualifies a media group and magazine to start their own hair care line and assist with the maintenance of hair. In addition, the presence of a Caucasian woman on the first ad created an uncertainty as to where the loyalty of Vibe now lied. With the presence of the Caucasian woman on their new ad, it appears as if the urban culture/community is no longer the focus of Vibe.

Vibe Magazine needs the assistance of a public relations program in order to strategically and professionally respond to and handle the backlash from the Natural Curl Therapy ad. The negative responses to the presence of the Caucasian woman on the first ad for Natural Curl Therapy as well as the attempt for a media company to launch a hair care line have the potential to impact future sales and the overall welfare of their company.

**Objectives:**

* To decrease negative media attention about Vibe’s Natural Curl Therapy’s first ad featuring a Caucasian woman by 15%.
* To promote Vibe’s loyalty to its initial urban audience primarily consisting of African Americans.
* To confirm the knowledge and qualifications that Vibe possesses in order to create a quality hair care line.

**Target Audience:**

The target audience of this public relations program is African American women with curly hair between the ages of 18-30. These women have a heightened conscious for music and entertainment especially when it comes to the hip-hop culture. These women show an interest in media, gossip, entertainers, music, and current news. They frequently read magazines geared toward the African American community such as Essence, Ebony, and Jet. They also enjoy magazines related to music specifically the hip-hop culture including magazines like Vibe and XXL. This audience can be located all across the United States; however primarily in urban communities.

**Strategies:**

* Release statements from their management including their apologies for offending their primary audience and confirming their commitment to their target audience.
* Feature more African American women in the ad campaign.
* Book interviews with magazine and television outlets to speak on the new hair care line.

**Tactics:**

* Release statements from their management including their apologies for offending their primary audience and confirming their commitment to their target audience.
  + The statements will explain why the Caucasian woman was chosen to be the face of this new hair care line started by an African American ran magazine with a African American target audience.
  + The statement will be released to Vibe, Ebony, Essence, Jet, Black Hair, and other media outlets with African American women as their target audience.
  + The press release will also be posted on Vibe’s website.
* Feature more African American women in the ad campaign
  + The campaign will hire a host of African American women models to be featured on the upcoming ads to be printed and released to different media outlets.
  + Vibe will send out letters to numerous African American women in the entertainment and music industry in order to receive celebrity endorsements.
  + These celebrities will endorse the product via their personal social media handles as well as through ad campaigns in magazines, television commercials, etc.
* Book interviews with magazine and television outlets to speak on the new hair care line.
  + In these interviews we will involve the team responsible for creating the new hair care line to describe the thought behind the hair care line and the creation process in depth.
  + In these interviews we will also include product testimonials from African American consumers to attest to the product’s success.
  + These interviews will be targeted towards television outlets such as The Oprah Winfrey Show and Wendy Williams. They will be targeted towards magazines such as Ebony, Essence, Jet, and Black Hair. Finally it will appear in Vibe’s magazine as well as it’s website.

**Evaluation:**

* Counting how many outlets report on Vibe’s public apologies and calculating their circulation will measure the efforts of the public relations campaign. The total circulation of all magazines reporting Vibe’s apology will be compared to the total circulation of all magazines reporting on the displeasure of Vibe’s target audience of the ad campaign.
* To measure the success of Vibe’s effort to display its loyalty to its target audience through African American, celebrity endorsements and African American presence in the promotion of this product, we will create a survey on the product’s personal website that will collect data of the people visiting the site as soon as you log on including questions such as age, race, gender, and their opinions on the campaign.
* We will measure the audiences’ faith in Vibe to create a hair care line through the sales of the product and the amount of people that actually purchase the products in store and online within the first month prior to it’s launching.