



PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL

Apple's New Line of Ergonomic Furniture
RFP Response from The Lamore PR Company

CLIENT OVERVIEW

Brand Research: Historical Perspective

Apple sees itself as a usurper: rebelling against the technocratic, position-of-power image, it sees itself as creative, rebellious, a democratizing agent as well as a celebration of the individual (Kahney, 2002). Apple's 1984 branding campaign defined its counterculture image—even though Apple specifically created this image to sell computers that sold at a higher price point than its competitors, it did so using the platform of an elite club comprising the principles of rebellion and creative thinking in direct contrast to the technocratic image portrayed by IBM and its competitors at the time; indeed, the era was redolent with domination and masculinity, with all the hard angles and technological barriers to entry that those

qualities imply (Lusensky, 2014). The overarching principle of democracy was especially evident in the Apple slogan of the time: "the computer for the rest of us" (Kahney, 2002, Paragraph 36).

CLIENT OVERVIEW

Brand Research: Current Perspective

In the present day, Apple's branding may have changed subtly, but the underlying message is still the same: exclusivity based on creativity and pushback against technological norms, again reinforcing the principle of democracy. Consider the award-winning "Get a Mac" campaign (Nudd, 2011): the campaign featured the perceived (or rather, Apple's desired perception of) personifications of PC and Mac. Apple positions the Mac character as laid back, creative, friendly, and "better at life" (Paragraph 2), i.e., lifestyle uses such as photos, movies, and music. In contrast, the staid, duller (literally, as the clothes are a muddy brown) PC persona is mired exclusively in business applications, much more concerned with spreadsheets and pie charts.

Apple actively positions itself as a partner in life, whereas Microsoft and its derivatives are subtly disparaged as partners in business (Kahney, 2002). The "Get a Mac" campaign effectively sabotages even this aspect by portraying itself as far more adept at networking, building cultural consciousness and diversity into its image using a conversation with a Japanese woman—Mac is able to converse fluently and easily with this new component, whereas the PC persona stutters and stalls, unable to find the correct drivers to do the same Nudd, 2011). Considering that networking is an essential part of any business endeavor, this tactic appears slightly underhand and sly... but still very effective.

CLIENT OVERVIEW

Brand Position

Microsoft's branding approach has been a different narrative of democratization to Apple's: Microsoft positions itself as listening to its audience and implementing what its stakeholders say they need or want (Mui, 2011). Microsoft focuses on bringing its operating systems, products, and features to as many manufacturers as possible in order to cut the widest swathe through the market (White, 2017). Microsoft also deploys its operating system on a range of price points, from entry-level devices all the way through to higher-end machines, again to corner as much of the direct market share as possible.

In contrast, Apple's byword is still exclusivity: it sees itself as an exclusive club of rebels, rejecting mass-marketed, customer-driven universal appeal in favor of higher-end, superior quality (and therefore naturally higher-priced) products that liberate the consumer from having to make design decisions (White, 2017). Apple dictates design by not focusing on what features a customer says he or she wants, but by evaluated needs and overall design and usage, and then implementation those features, regardless of public opinion and outcry. Apple designs for what the consumer needs, not what he or she thinks he or she wants (Mui, 2011).

Brand consciousness is not the sole reason for this insistence on exclusivity: with a smaller, tighter ecosystem and much more rigorously controlled pipeline, Apple made its machines popular with corporate IT staff nationwide, who find it simpler to deploy updates and to secure Apple machines (White, 2017). In an age where a virus can bring down multinational corporations and cripple all manner of businesses, it is difficult to dispute that Apple holds a significant advantage in this regard, and it is equally evident why Apple would want to both reinforce this image and publicize it.

CLIENT OVERVIEW

Gap Analysis

There is definite audience segmentation for those who are contemptuous of Apple; this is partly made up of those who rail against Apple's closed systems in favor of the relatively less restrictive Android or PC platforms, which can also be "rooted" much more easily and perhaps more efficiently (Federico-O'Murchu, 2015). This audience views Apple's higher prices and restrictive operating systems not as fueling higher quality and safeguarding said quality, but as competitive barriers to entry and a reinforcer of exclusivity. They simply do not see the value in Apple, especially since many Android and Microsoft products now mimic—at least superficially—Apple products in looks and sometimes in specifications. There is also some evidence now that Apple's exclusivity ethos has backfired slightly:

Android has gained some share in the "techy" "geeky" market (Paragraph 22), going so far as to call Apple enthusiasts "sheeple" (Paragraph 21), willing to trade status for true functionality. It should be noted, however, that Apple will want to explore the possibility of co-opting the users of other brands as a soft entrance to those market segments, and thus further reinforcing its image as a democratic and accessible brand.

CLIENT OVERVIEW

New Product Characteristics and Authentic Voice

Ergonomic furniture is a complement to Apple's existing products. Technology companies generally have been accused of contributing to poor posture and other related musculoskeletal issues, including pain, numbness and tingling in the hands, neck, and back (The surprising side effects from using technology, 2018). Ergonomic furniture would help alleviate some of these concerns, and would contribute to the healthier consumption of technology. Apple already owns part of the niche for health technologies (Apple Watch has health and fitness applications (Buhr, 2015), as does iOS); with ergonomic furniture, Apple can cement its commitment to the health and fitness of its stakeholders. In doing so, Apple may be able to win some of its Android converts back by once again positioning itself as the democratic choice for

technology—the concerned, creative friend who revels in the betterment of communities (Nudd, 2011).

Apple's general voice of rebellion and fighting back against the commonplace (Lusensky, 2014) will be key in this campaign as well. Rather than falling prey to the well-publicized hazards of technology (The surprising side effects from using technology, 2018), Apple can reinforce its image as personable, authentic, creative, and a rule-breaker by enabling its adopters to enjoy technology in a healthful manner.

Apple's penchant for sleek and superior style (Kahney, 2002) will also serve them well when it comes to voice: assuming that Apple infuses its ergonomic furniture with the same level of design principle as applied to its existing products, the design will reinforce Apple's image of simplicity, Zen sensibility, and beauty (Lusensky, 2014). More specifically, Apple's "Get a Mac" slogan (Nudd, 2011) can be adapted to its ergonomic furniture line: "Live with a Mac" is an option that evokes simplicity and beautiful design of all that surrounds an Apple computing system, incorporating ergonomic furniture. "Think different"—another well-known and well represented slogan (Evans, 2015) can similarly be co-opted: as Apple will go up against established, well known designers of ergonomic furniture such as Herman Miller, it is