MESSAGING IN THE TARGET/FEED CAMPAIGN: THE INTERSECTION OF CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING AND ORGANIZATIONAL RHETORIC

Cause-related marketing (CRM) relationships are mutually beneficial and occur when a non-profit organization and a corporation partner together for a specific campaign. To research the organizational rhetoric and how well these messaging construction choices influence messaging of the campaign, I conduct a rhetorical analysis informed by the visual analysis approach of the Target FEED cause-related marketing campaign. This analysis examines the different visual and textual components of the campaign, as well as analyzes how these representations portray social issues in a cultural context. This approach focuses on the dialect between text, context, visual components and themes. The main interest in this analysis is to understand the campaign messaging as a whole, but specifically relates to the visual selection choices used in these types of campaigns and contribute to the cultural perception of social issues messaging. Ultimately, it comments on ways this campaign perpetuates commoditization of social issues and stereotypes, masked by the monetary success of the campaign and positive associations with partnership. This research also has significant political and economic implications as the relationship between social issue messaging and commodification are analyzed in the context of a cause-related marketing partnership. This thesis will examine existing cause-related marketing visual and rhetorical strategies in a literature review, analyze the messaging in content and explain the current impact and potential future implications in the marketing partnership world.