

Lush vs Social Media: It Can Cost to Stand by Your Values

MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

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Management Decision

16 November 2021

On the 16th of November 2021, Lush released a press-statement titled: “Lush is becoming anti-social”. In this statement, they announced that they will take their Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and TikTok accounts offline, while maintaining their YouTube, Twitter and Pinterest accounts. The motivation behind their decision can be attributed to the Facebook whistleblowers who revealed the harm that young people are exposed to through the social media algorithms and poor regulations. Lush states that they will not return to these platforms unless they provide a safer environment for their users.

Lush further details the motivation behind their decision in their press-statement:

“In the same way that evidence against climate change was ignored and belittled for decades, concerns about the serious effects of social media are going largely ignored now. Lush is taking matters into its own hands and addressing the issues now, not waiting around until others believe in the problem before changing its own behavior.

We wouldn’t ask our customers to meet us down a dark and dangerous alleyway – but some social media platforms are beginning to feel like places no one should be encouraged to go. Something has to change.

We hope that platforms will introduce strong best practice guidelines, and we hope that international regulation will be passed into law. But we can’t wait. We feel forced to take our own action to shield our customers from the harm and manipulation they may experience whilst trying to connect with us on social media” (Lush, 2021).

Further reinforcing their decision, Mark Constantine, co-founder of Lush stated: “I’ve spent all my life avoiding putting harmful ingredients in my products. There is now overwhelming evidence we are being put at risk when using social media. I’m not willing to expose my customers to this harm, so it’s time to take it out of the mix” (Lush, 2021).

Jack Constantine, CDO and product inventor, released the statement: “As an inventor of bath bombs, I pour all my efforts into creating products that help people switch off, relax and pay attention to their wellbeing. Social media platforms have become the antithesis of this aim, with algorithms designed to keep people scrolling and stop them from switching off and relaxing” (Lush, 2021).

Both the statements made by Lush and its co-founder highlight the emphasis that Lush places on their core values, vision and mission, specifically in taking an activist approach to their business activities. The company refers back to its essence, in which

they aim to give more than they take from society and the environment. They sum up their decision stating that “we’re ready to start a digital revolution”.

The social media policy was applied to all 48 countries that Lush is currently present in. The company recognizes that they will risk the \$13 million in sales generated across their social media channels. However, they vow not to be completely ‘anti-social’, mentioning that they will still be found on YouTube and Twitter while also focusing on trying to find new ways to engage and connect with their consumers.

In place of social media in the marketing mix, Lush details that they are “planning a series of initiatives, including growing its Youtube presence, using Twitter for customer care, producing email newsletters for campaigns and tapping Pinterest for inspirational content. Offline, it will invest in more physical events, community activations and maybe even old-fashioned postal catalogues” (Webb, 2021). Lush has stated that the social media accounts will be offline for one year.

26 November 2021

Following their press-release, Lush deletes all of their Instagram posts across all country accounts on the 26th of November 2021. They then proceed to post a collage of 9 pictures across all Instagram accounts that spell out the words: “BE SOMEWHERE ELSE”. The caption of the posts encourages customers to stop scrolling on Instagram and be present somewhere else.

December 2021

In December of 2021, Jack Constantine, CDO and product inventor at Lush commented on what would happen if the revenues were to significantly drop due to the underestimation of the impact of social media in terms of branding and sales. He responded: “[w]e will be keeping a close eye on the metrics we have put in place to ensure we can move forward with new strategies confidently and creatively. Our brand is inherently social and we are building engaging new ways for our fans to interact with us” (Constantine, 2021).

References

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Webb, B. (2021). Lush is quitting social media. The start of a trend?, Available online: <https://www.voguebusiness.com/consumers/lush-is-quitting-social-media-the-start-of-a-trend-facebook-instagram-snapchat-tiktok> [Accessed 22 February 2022]