

**Djerf Avenue's Pajama Fight:
A case of online duplicates**

TEACHING NOTE

The authors prepared this case solely as a basis for class discussion and not as an endorsement, a source of primary data, or an illustration of effective or ineffective management. Although based on real events and despite occasional references to actual companies, this case is fictitious and any resemblance to actual persons or entities is coincidental.

Teaching plan

The leading purpose of this teaching note is to serve as an exhaustive set of guidelines for the Djerf Avenue's Pajama Fight case. It delineates elements necessary for delivering an intriguing presentation that fuels constructive discussion. The teaching note begins with a case synopsis which gives an overview of the background information and managerial decisions. Subsequently, it outlines learning objectives together with the theoretical concepts connected to the case, followed by discussion questions. Further, it provides suggestions for instruction and insightful discussion followed by a time plan overview. The final element of the document is a reflection that includes the main takeaways from working with the case, encountered challenges, and collected insights.

Case synopsis

The journey of Swedish influencer Matilda Djerf, from a young traveler with a passion for sharing her adventures and outfits on social media, to the founder of a multi-million dollar fashion brand, Djerf Avenue, is a testament to her entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to authenticity. Her impeccable style and commitment to minimalist elegance connected with her audience, whom she lovingly calls "Djerf Angels". Matilda's brand, Djerf Avenue, enjoyed great success as an influencer-driven fashion label, celebrated for its commitment to authenticity and community. However, in October of 2023, the brand faced a significant challenge when dupes of its coveted items flooded online platforms, particularly a popular fruity pajama set. These lower-quality and price replicas gained traction on TikTok, threatening Djerf Avenue's reputation and market position. The case presents a critical moment for Djerf Avenue, prompting strategic decisions to maintain brand reputation and community trust amidst the challenges posed by viral duplicates.

Learning objectives

The Djerf Avenue case carries substantial implications in terms of brand identity, brand personality, crisis management, communication strategies, and crowd control. In order to provide the audience with a comprehensive understanding of these aspects, all pertinent concepts will be explored in the following section. The primary objective of this case study is to empower the audience with knowledge and insights through the case presentation and discussions afterward. Subsequently, participants should be capable of applying these concepts to similar scenarios.

Brand Identity & Brand Personality

To foster business growth, build a strong reputation, and establish your brand within the market, the company needs to have a defined identity and a deep understanding of its fundamental principles (Urde, 2022). With this established, effective communication aligned with the company's values and objectives becomes achievable. Utilizing the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM) allows us to understand how a brand has constructed its identity across nine building blocks, classified into internal, external, and hybrid components.

In the case of Djerf Avenue, it is essential to emphasize the vital role of Djerf Avenue's community and the brand's distinct personality. Accordingly, the application of the Corporate Brand Identity Matrix (CBIM) to Djerf Avenue is presented in Figure 1, offering an overview of the nine building blocks that form the foundation of the company's identity, with a particular focus on its brand core.

Matilda Djerf's influence on Djerf Avenue's personality is unmistakable. Her personality permeates the brand, making Djerf Avenue an extension of Matilda herself. This influence is especially evident in the building blocks that integrate internal and external elements (expression and personality), highlighting the Scandinavian vibe, supportive and kind environment, and community-oriented focus. Developing a strong brand personality triggers consumers to easily identify with the brand, allowing them to use the brand as an instrument for self-expression and build long-lasting and emotional relationships with it (Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). In Djerf Avenue's situation, this played a significant role during the dupe crisis, although they did not respond in the most correct way. Most of their true fanbase, known as 'Angles,' forgave them, recognizing that everyone can make mistakes. However, without a strong personality and community, the crisis could have spelled the end of its expanding and successful story.

Figure 1: The Corporate Brand Identity Matrix of Djerf Avenue (Urde, 2022)

External Internal / External Internal	<p>Value Proposition</p> <p>Offering clothing pieces that capture the 'Scandinavian' fashion style</p>	<p>Relationships</p> <p>Close connections with ethical producers and strong relationships with its fanbase ('Angels')</p>	<p>Position</p> <p>Fashion brand that captures the newest trends to showcase the 'Scandinavian clean girl style'</p>
	<p>Expression</p> <p>Cottage core inspired pictures, girly expressions, and supportive body-positive messages</p>	<p>Brand Core</p> <p>Designing the newest 'Scandinavian' fashion with the focus on its community and ethical production facilities</p>	<p>Personality</p> <p>Authentic, community-oriented, kind and trendy</p>
	<p>Mission & Vision</p> <p>Creating an inclusive and diverse fashion community that relies on ethical production</p>	<p>Culture</p> <p>Environment characterised by kindness, inclusivity and respect</p>	<p>Competences</p> <p>Inclusive ethical fashion community based on the newest 'Scandinavian' trends</p>

Crisis Management & Communication

Effective brand communication plays a pivotal role in shaping a brand's reputation (Roper & Fill, 2012). However, during times of crisis, communication becomes even more critical as it can either salvage or endanger the firm's standing. Crises have the potential to rapidly tarnish a company's brand image and reputation, especially if stakeholders perceive that the company mishandled the situation.

In crisis management, effective communication is regarded as paramount, with the primary objective being the implementation of the appropriate response to an issue. Cornelissen (2008) identifies four key response strategies that companies adopt when faced with an issue. Hereby it is important to note that an issue is distinct from a crisis, but if left unmanaged, it has the potential to escalate into one (Roper & Fill, 2012).

Regarding the Djerf Avenue case, the emergence of pajama duplicates constituted an issue for the company, which unfortunately escalated into a crisis due to inadequate handling. The initial response strategy employed by Djerf Avenue, involving copyright strikes against small content creators, deviated from the response strategies outlined by Cornelissen (2008). This defensive and disrespectful approach aggravated the situation, leading to significant online backlash. Subsequently, Djerf Avenue adopted the silence strategy, both in the short-term and long-term. They refrained from issuing any public statements or apologies, even going as far as deactivating

Matilda Djerf's private TikTok account. This silence strategy, although often employed to buy time and mitigate further damage, ultimately backfired, as it fueled speculation and intensified public scrutiny.

Analyzing the situation through Benoit's image restoration theory (1997), it appears that Djerf Avenue opted for a strategy of simple denial. By deflecting responsibility onto a third-party IP firm, they essentially denied accountability for the issue. In summary, effective communication and crisis management are integral components of maintaining a brand reputation. Djerf Avenue's mishandling of the pajama duplicates issue underscores the importance of employing appropriate communication strategies to mitigate crises and preserve brand integrity.

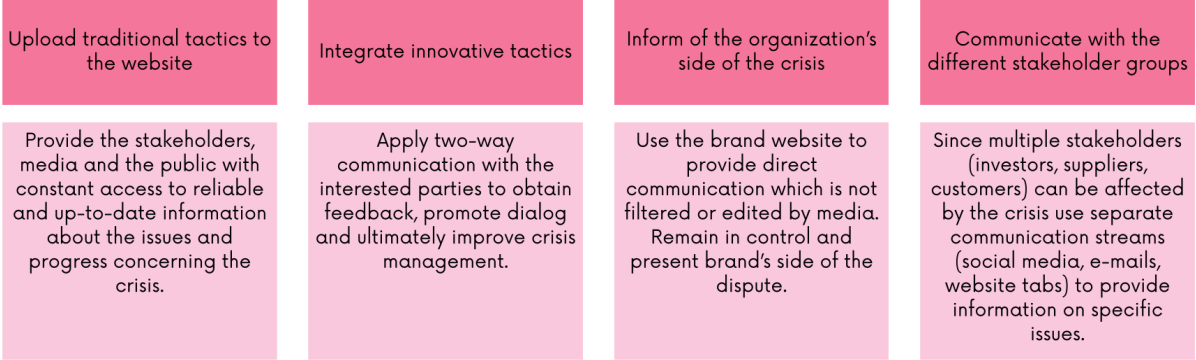
Crowd Control

To understand the importance of managing stakeholders and any interested parties on an everyday basis, and in the face of a crisis, several theoretical frameworks can be applied. In this particular case, it is recommended to emphasize the issue of public relations along with crisis communication.

Maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders on a daily basis necessitates a company's involvement in public relations practices. Public relations (PR) can shape stakeholders' perceptions of the brand which can become significant in the future. Engaging in sponsorships, publicity, or events can project brand identity onto the general public. According to Roper and Fill (2012), organizations with a strong reputation are more likely to recover from the crisis. It underlines the importance of projecting brand identity onto the stakeholders to manage the brand image and keep these two concepts aligned. Therefore, underlining the importance of PR for crowd control is recommended.

In the face of the crisis, the crowd control aspect gains even more importance. A theoretical framework that can be used as a guideline for organizations on how to respond to crises (especially on social media) is Taylor & Kent's (2007) study into how companies use the Internet within their crisis communication. They identify six areas for best practice, of which we believe at least four can be applied to the case of Djerf Avenue.

Figure 2: Best-practice crisis communications (Taylor & Kent, 2007)



Djerf Avenue could have used its online platforms to transparently communicate with the stakeholders and general public. They could have provided reliable and up-to-date information about handling the duplicates producers, engaged in the dialog with the brand community, and presented the brand’s side of the dispute, for example, the significance of trademarks. Instead of choosing the silence strategy, Djerf Avenue could have come up with virtual communication streams with affected stakeholders. Such an approach hypothetically could have the power to resolve the issue before it turned into a crisis.

Overview of key learning objectives

When teaching a case, it is crucial to establish clear learning objectives as they serve as guiding lights for both the case presenters and participants. Moreover, it ensures that everyone understands the case’s purpose. Our aim, with the case of Djerf Avenue, is to underscore key learning objectives pertaining to Brand Identity, Brand Personality, Crisis Management, Communication, and Crowd Control. To provide a structured overview of these objectives, we employ a Revised Taxonomy of Bloom’s Taxonomy, as it offers a more dynamic classification of objectives (Anderson et al., 2001; Bloom, 1956). Unlike the Traditional Taxonomy, this revised version employs action verbs to articulate cognitive processes involved in engaging with knowledge, arranged hierarchically from remembering to creating. By the end of the presentation and discussion, participants should have achieved these learning objectives. Figure 3 depicts the action verbs participants are expected to address and enhance.

Figure 3: Key Learning Objectives

<p>REMEMBERING</p> <p>...that the brand is bigger than you</p>	<p>The Djerf Avenue brand extends beyond Matilda Djerf's personality alone. While it is influenced by her vibe and charm, its scope surpasses her individual personality.</p>	<p>ANALYSING</p> <p>...market trends, novelties, happenings and competition</p>	<p>If Djerf Avenue conducted a thorough and innovative market analysis, they likely would have identified the duplicate products before the small content creators did, thus averting the entire crisis.</p>
<p>UNDERSTANDING</p> <p>...that a small decision can have big consequences</p>	<p>The choice to target small content creators and subsequently maintain silence on the matter sparked public outcry and backlash.</p>	<p>CREATING</p> <p>...your managerial decisions and their consequences</p>	<p>Concerning Djerf Avenue's subsequent response, they could have been more transparent and introspective. By acknowledging their mistake and offering an apology, their reputation might have been preserved more effectively.</p>
<p>APPLYING</p> <p>...a consumer centric approach</p>	<p>If the brand identity relies on the idea of community, such an approach should be reflected in the brand's behaviours toward consumers. They should be prioritized, taken care of, and never attacked.</p>	<p>EVALUATING</p> <p>...possible responses to crises</p>	<p>Djerf Avenue could have developed a crisis management plan. A predetermined response would make the brand better equipped to handle such problems. The presence of duplicates in the fashion industry is common.</p>

Discussion questions

In order to facilitate a well-organized and engaging class discussion, this section of the teaching notes focuses on the crafted discussion questions. These questions are made to initiate discourse while aligning with earlier outlined learning objectives. Since the Djerf Avenue case can be segmented into two primary aspects, each part is addressed by a main question posed to the audience. Supplementary sub-questions are then provided to guide the conversation and encourage active participation from participants. Overall, these inquiries aim to cultivate an intellectually stimulating discussion characterized by openness and objectivity. Lastly, optional questions are also provided if the discussion comes to a complete standstill.

First main question

How can Djerf Avenue strategically respond to the appearance of dupe videos online?

Assisting Questions (for the first main question)

- Would you be worried if you were in Djerf Avenue's position?
- Might opting not to respond to the existence of dupes be a good option?
- How can Djerf Avenue prevent the recurrence of dupes in the future?
- Which stakeholders require the most transparent communication?
- Is there a difference between short-term and long-term strategies that Djerf Avenue could use?

Second main question

How should the brand engage with its audience on social media platforms during the discourse to maintain its reputation?

Assisting Questions (for the second main question)

- How does Djerf Avenue's initial response correlate with its reputation?
- What is the probability of Djerf Avenue regaining a strong market position?
- Does Djerf Avenue's competitive advantage remain unchanged following the 'crisis'?
- What risks are associated with Djerf Avenue's initial reaction/decision?
- What impact does the fanbase have in this scenario?

Optional Questions

- Have you witnessed other brands responding to duplicate products online before?
- Do you think that international companies take notice of dupe products in the market?

Teaching suggestions

Teaching suggestions provide a recommended structure for the presentation and course of the discussion. The purpose is to provide the presenter with crucial information on how to approach the case and make it understandable and engaging for the audience.

Preparation Stage

The case relies heavily on the persona of Matilda Djerf herself. Getting to know Matilda and her style is the first step to understanding the case. It is highly recommended that the presenter gets acquainted with the written case, management decision, and teaching note to prepare for the presentation. A helpful tip would be to browse Matilda's social media platforms beforehand to understand her brand better. It could be beneficial to share the written case with the students as well, so they can read it before the case presentation. A file could be uploaded on a shared platform online or sent by e-mail at least two days ahead of the presentation, to ensure that the participants have the basic knowledge to discuss the case solutions.

For the discussion part, a whiteboard is recommended to summarize all of the students' ideas and provide a visual overview of all of the thoughts shared by the participants.

The main tool for delivering the content of the case to the students should be a digital presentation including multiple visual stimuli - pictures, tik-toks, and videos. Such an approach can reinforce the aesthetics of Matilda and Djerf Avenue in the minds of students. This is especially important since the case focuses on the rise of replicas online. It is necessary to provide the audience with pictures of original items, duplicates, and examples of reported duplicates TikTok videos.

Stage 1

Case introduction:

Firstly, the presenter should introduce Matilda Djerf to the audience. A nice idea to engage and enliven the public might be asking them to raise a hand if they know Matilda Djerf and Djerf Avenue. Depending on the number of hands such question can either showcase how popular the influencer is or emphasize the need to reveal background information in detail. Next, the presenter should continue explaining the written case to the participants. Starting with promising beginnings, followed by soaring success until the trouble in paradise. The case introduction should be finalized with a clear explanation of the incident - a clear definition of what the term "dupes" stands for, who were the producers of the replicas, and what was the role of TikTok creators in the whole process. It is more than welcome to provide some TikTok videos as an example.

First question and discussion:

At this point, students are asked to put themselves in Matilda's shoes, ideally imagining that they are Matilda herself. After explaining Djerf Avenue's background story and the headache of the popularisation of dupes online the presenter can ask the first question (How can Djerf Avenue strategically respond to the appearance of dupe videos online?). The brainstorming on the most optimal response to the threat can be organized by putting students' ideas on the whiteboard. Then a quick voting can be conducted on which idea participants like the most. During the process of generating ideas, the presenter should act as a moderator to aid the discussion and give students the right to speak.

Stage 2

Managerial Decision:

At this point, students taking on the character of Matilda should have agreed on the best possible reaction to the appearance of dupes online (in their opinion). The presenter then reveals the actual managerial decision that was executed by Djerf Avenue. Since this decision resulted in huge backlash it is recommended to swiftly move on to the second case question and follow up discussion (How should the brand engage with its audience on social media platforms during the discourse to maintain its reputation?).

Second question and discussion:

Students engage in a second stage discussion on responding to online backlash, managing brand community outcry, and re-establishing reputation. It is recommended for the presenter to moderate the discussion using the following board plan, which can be visualized on the whiteboard to help students navigate ideas and reach conclusions.

Figure 4: Board plan

Main problems	Short-term responses	Long-term solutions

Presenter should be time-aware and dedicate a few last minutes of the discussion for a second round of voting on the best case scenario according to students.

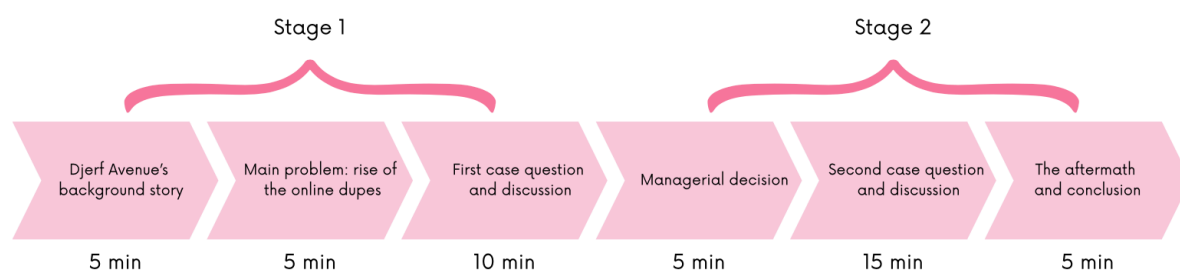
At the very end, it is a moment to reveal the aftermath of the crisis and sum up the discussions. In conclusion, Djerf Avenue has emerged from recent challenges relatively unscathed, with both their sales and Matilda's fanbase showing continued

growth. The presenter and the participants can reflect on the similarities and differences between the class's and Djerf Avenue's approaches. Ultimately, the presenter should thank the discussants for their insights and contribution.

Time plan

A crucial part of a successful case and lively discussion is good time management. Figure 5 presents the suggested structure of the case divided into advisable time slots. Although it is a subjective recommendation, it is important to ensure that all of the teaching elements are covered and that both presentation and discussion are given accurate attention. Since the time frame of the case is 45 minutes in total, the following time plan is recommended:

Figure 5: Time plan



Reflection

The process of writing the “Djerf Avenue’s Pajama Fight” Master case was both engaging and rewarding from the moment we selected the case with the guidance of Mats Urde, the Head of the Corporate Brand Management and Reputation course. The personal interest we each held in the case of Djerf Avenue added a layer of excitement and motivation to our work, driving us to explore Matilda Djerf's influencing journey and the challenges faced by her brand Djerf Avenue amidst the social media discourse. From the very beginning, we established a collaborative approach, holding regular team meetings where we shared ideas, set deadlines, and outlined tasks. This initial planning phase was crucial in ensuring that we stayed organized and focused throughout the writing process. However, we found it was crucial to maintain a balance between sticking to the plan and allowing for flexibility to accommodate necessary adjustments along the way.

As a team of three case writers, we leveraged our individual strengths and expertise to contribute to different aspects of the case, ensuring a comprehensive and well-rounded description and storytelling. Each of us naturally gravitated towards particular aspects of the case that resonated with our interests and skills. Despite our unique roles, we maintained a spirit of collaboration, offering support and valuable

insights to one another all throughout the writing process, ultimately approaching the case with diverse perspectives and multifaceted approaches.

Transitioning from the role of students to that of case writers and teachers required a significant shift in perspective, presenting us with a fresh set of challenges and opportunities for growth. This transition introduced us to a new aspect of academic work, requiring us to not only craft a compelling narrative, but also design a framework for teaching the case effectively. While preparing the teaching note proved to be one of the most challenging aspects of the case development process for us, it also proved to be one of the most rewarding. Through this process, we gained a newfound appreciation for academic instruction and developed a deeper understanding of how to engage students with a real-world brand scenario. Additionally, we encountered the task of connecting management decisions within the case to relevant theoretical frameworks—a process that required us to carefully select and apply theories that best aligned with the context of this case.

We learned to be more perceptive of the various narratives and conversations surrounding a brand online, recognizing how these discussions can significantly impact its reputation. This heightened awareness highlighted the importance of proactive brand management and strategic communication strategies to navigate potential challenges effectively. Additionally, working with the case reinforced the necessity of thorough research to ensure accuracy and relevance in storytelling.

Our journey of writing the Djerf Avenue case has consisted of growth, discovery, and teamwork. As we reflect on the decisions we made and the insights we gained, we are reminded of the transformative power of experiential learning. Moving forward, we will carry a deeper appreciation for the complexities of management decision-making with us and a renewed sense of confidence in our ability to tackle real-world business challenges.

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