Candy Clash:
M&M's caught in the crossfire

TEACHING NOTES

Introduction

This teaching note provides instructors with a comprehensive guide to leading classroom discussions on the M&M’s case study, which focuses on the exciting interplay between resistance to M&M’s brand assets’ change and the unforeseen outrage of political extremists against the brand. Its goal is to equip educators with important tools to create an engaging and insightful learning environment focused on the intricacies of the case.

Case Synopsis

In 2022, M&M’s redesigned its iconic spokescandies, a move intended to reflect changing social norms and promote inclusivity. However, the redesign, which contained supposedly minor adjustments, sparked unexpected controversy, drawing criticism from right-wing groups and famous online commentators. The case delves into the complexities of managing a beloved brand in the face of societal shifts and polarizing reactions.

The scenario begins with M&M’s decision to update the appearances of its spokescandies, detaching gender stereotypical attributes like high heels and giving them a more modern and comfortable look. This move, aimed at fostering inclusivity, met with immediate pushbacks from critics like Tucker Carlson, a prominent figure associated with the right-leaning Fox News network, who condemned the changes as emblematic of societal decay. Moreover, the introduction of a new purple spokescandy further fueled controversy, with accusations of politicization leveled against M&M’s.

The perspective of the case centers on M&M’s brand management team, unexpectedly being thrown in the spotlight of right-wing backlash and extensive media attention. The team has to deal with a polarized political environment and faces a critical moment in deciding how it will affect the company’s branding initiatives. Key issues at hand include assessing the impact of conservative criticism on brand perception and consumer trust, strategizing to mitigate potential damage to M&M’s reputation, and making critical decisions regarding the future direction of the spokescandies redesign. As the team grapples with these challenges, they must consider the delicate balance between honoring and maintaining brand assets and responding to backlash from right-wing groups that are evolving into an anti-community. Furthermore, the case prompts reflection on the role of corporate responsibility and navigating contentious social issues. Through careful analysis and decisive action, the brand management team seeks to safeguard M&M’s standing and reputation in an increasingly polarized landscape.

Keywords: reputation, crisis communication, corporate brand management, brand identity, stakeholder relations, anti-brand communities

Learning Objectives

The following chapter on learning objectives provides a roadmap for the knowledge and skills students could acquire through their engagement with the M&M's case study.

Focusing on areas such as brand reputation, anti-brand sentiments, and stakeholder relations, this chapter outlines the specific learnings teachers should strive to deliver to the students. Beginning with a detailed presentation of key learning objectives, readers gain insight into concrete possible learning outcomes the work with the case offers. Following this, a broader overview explores underlying theories essential for understanding and addressing the complexities of brand management in real-world scenarios and their practical application in the context of this case study.

Key learning objectives

Building on the updated version of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom et al, 1956), **Table 1** outlines the key learning outcomes achievable through the case study. These objectives are hierarchically organized and link general obtainable learning outcomes with the specific content of the case. It is imperative that the teacher leads the case with the aim of transferring those key learnings.

Level	Learning outcome	Case Specifics
Remember	After working on the case, students will be able to recall the risk that accompanies any change of corporate brand identity elements.	Being associated with right-wing groups by them forming anti-brand movements after implementing minor changes to a brand asset (spokescandies).
Understand	After working on the case, students will be able to explain the formation of anti-brand communities and the associated risks.	Vocal dislike (of prominent figures) about alleged wokeness and loss of traditional values, coming together and using M&Ms as a projection for right-leaning ideas.
Apply	After working on the case, students will be able to use the underlying corporate brand management models of the case.	Social Identity Theory and Negative Identity Formation, Image Repair Theory, Stakeholder Identification and Salience Model.
Analyze	After working on the case, students will be able to illustrate different kinds of stakeholders and their relationship to the corporate brand.	Right-leaning groups forming anti-brand community prominently opposing M&M's.
Evaluate	After working on the case, students will be able to contrast a brand's specific situation to comparable incidents, identifying commonalities and differences, and thereby build on these to find solutions.	Right-leaning backlash to change in M&M's brand assets in comparison to similar cases like political backlash to Nike's campaign and Bud Light's video or general backlash to brand asset changes of Instagram and GB Glace.
Create	After working on the case, students will be able to develop responses to anti-brand campaigns of (dangerous) stakeholders.	First: Ignoring the negative reactions. Then: Using a creative stunt to show the world how ridiculous the reactions are and shifting the narrative back to the brand, taking the spotlight of the brand opponents.

Table 1: *Key learning objectives according to Bloom's Taxonomy (1956)*

Key theoretical concepts

The following section introduces and describes the overarching academic theories relevant for the case. Three key theoretical concepts are essential for interpreting the problems stated in the case study and effectively developing potential solutions:

- Exploring the dynamics of consumer-brand relationships through the interconnected lenses of Social Identity Theory and Negative Identity Formation Theory, understanding how anti-brand sentiment are formed and how they can influence brand perception and reputation. Through this analysis, students gain insights into the complexities of brand identity management in diverse consumer landscapes and strategies for navigating crises stemming from public criticism and backlash.
- Understanding that identifying and categorizing stakeholders is crucial for developing solutions based on that process, while applying the Salience Model for Stakeholder Analysis to evaluate stakeholder relationships and prioritize engagement efforts. By understanding the nuances of stakeholder management in the context of brand reputation, students will be better equipped to navigate complex stakeholder dynamics, coming to well-informed strategic decision making and safeguard brand integrity.
- Students will explore strategies for managing brand reputation in response to crises and public scrutiny, drawing on Benoit's Image Repair Theory. By evaluating the appropriate image repair tactic to restore brand trust and credibility, participants will develop critical skills in crisis communication and reputation management.

In the following, the interconnected theories of Social Identity and Negative Identity Formation, the Stakeholder Salience Model, and the Image Repair Model are explored in depth.

Social Identity Theory and Negative Identity Formation

The M&M's case study offers the opportunity to delve deeper into two key theories regarding consumer responses to brand initiatives: Social Identity Theory and Negative Identity Formation Theory. The concept of Social Identity Theory proposes that individuals derive a significant part of their self-identity from the social groups to which they belong. This theory highlights the tendency for individuals to categorize themselves into "in-groups" and "out-groups" based on shared characteristics, leading to a sense of belonging or differentiation (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The theory is also used to explain people coming together over their shared admiration for a brand of any kind. Conversely, Negative Identity Formation Theory, as conceptualized by Erikson (1968), offers a contrasting perspective on identity development. This theory suggests that individuals may construct their identities by rejecting societal expectations – or, applied to brands, form a group based on their shared disliking of a brand.

In the context of the M&M's case study, Negative Identity Formation Theory (Erikson, 1968), provides a valuable framework for understanding the emergence and development of anti-brand communities. The brand's decision to implement minor changes to its spokescandies, such as altering their appearance, evoked strong discomfort among certain consumers. These changes were interpreted as signals of "wokeness" and left-wing and therefore served as triggers for influential individuals such as the popular conservative commentators and news anchors Tucker Carlson and Nick Adams to express outrage, leading to the formation of a larger anti-brand community in protest against the changes. This community became a platform for expressing discontent, finding solidarity with like-minded individuals holding right-wring views as well as projecting political and ideological views onto a shared 'opponent' – M&M's.

The evolving anti-community grew in size, visibility and intensity over time, fueled by prominent figures such as Tucker Carlson. This accelerated growth was enabled by widespread engagement on social media platforms such as Twitter, where many individuals voiced their discontent and mobilized against M&M's perceived ideological stance – enabling like-minded people to add their opinion as well. Additionally, the increased anti-M&M's sentiment was further boosted by extensive media coverage, with numerous articles discussing the incident and panel discussions devoted to the incident. Through the substantial audience of Fox News and key personalities like Tucker Carlson, the narrative gained traction and resonated with a broad spectrum of right-wring individuals. Thereby the rejection of M&M's was further manifested and the debate around the brand was utilized to promote right-wring ideology.

Looking at the case through the lense of Negative Identity Formation Theory can demonstrate how individuals' expression in opposition to perceived threats can merge into anti-brand communities. The case indicates that the impact of these anti-brand communities can be severe, potentially resulting in a significant reputation damage to M&M's. When left unaddressed, the negative sentiments and criticism from these groups can potentially escalate, leading to widespread public backlash, loss of consumer trust, and diminished brand credibility. The case is also a good example that social media can amplify the influence of anti-brand communities, spreading negative perceptions rapidly, enabling people to come together over their shared belief and undermining M&M's efforts to maintain a positive image. The case shows that it can be crucial to give attention to anti-brand communities for protecting brand reputation and mitigating the potential threats on brand equity and market share.

Despite the prevalent focus on nurturing brand communities, the significance of anti-communities tends to be often overlooked in brand management strategies. These anti-communities can exert a significant impact on brand perception and reputation, yet their influence is frequently neglected in brand management strategies. Therefore, by raising awareness of negative identity formation and its implications for brand management, students are better prepared for future work in the field. Students can learn to address consumer concerns and objections effectively, develop more nuanced strategies for brand management and marketing, and navigate the complexities of consumer-brand relationships in today's diverse marketplace.

Stakeholder Identification & Salience Model

The M&M's case presents an ideal opportunity for students to engage with the Stakeholder Identification and Salience Model developed by Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997) as illustrated in **Exhibit 1**. While numerous stakeholder models exist, this renowned framework provides the opportunity to also classify stakeholders who may be distant from the company but might wield significant influence through their vocal presence. At its core, the model revolves around three key variables: Power, Legitimacy, and Urgency. These dimensions facilitate the classification of stakeholders into seven distinct groups, providing a nuanced understanding of their importance and impact.

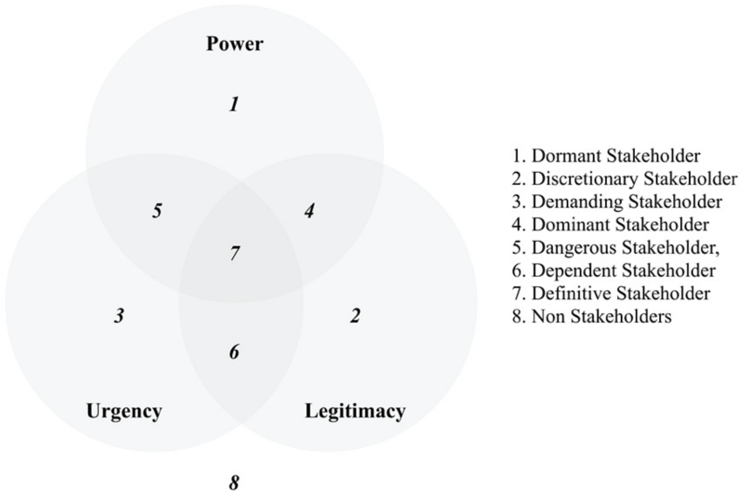

Exhibit 1: *Stakeholder Identification and Salience Model (adapted from Mitchell, Agle & Wood, 1997)*

Applying this model to the M&M's case can spark compelling discussions among students because decisions regarding where to place stakeholders within the framework carry significant implications for solving the case. Firstly, students must classify the individuals expressing disdain toward M&M's and its redesigned spokescandies. Subsequently, this classification informs students' decisions on whether and how to address the criticism directed at M&M's. By determining the salience of various stakeholders, students can devise tailored strategies for engaging with each group effectively.

The classification process involves students considering whether the group exhibits the attributes of power, legitimacy, and urgency. Different perspectives and interpretations among students may lead to varying classifications of the stakeholders involved. In the following, possible arguments are presented.

Power

Arguments for assigning power to the group opposing M&M's changes highlight their substantial following and media presence, which provide them with the means to exert pressure on the brand. Their ability to influence a significant audience raises concerns about potential damage to M&M's image and sales.

Conversely, counterarguments suggest that while influential, the group lacks the direct power to effectuate changes in the spokescandies. Moreover, some may view their arguments as exaggerated or unfounded, diminishing their overall impact on the brand's long-term prospects.

Legitimacy

Arguments against the opposing group possessing legitimacy point out the disproportionate nature of their reaction, their lack of direct involvement with the brand, and their absence of expert status to justify their demands. Conversely, students may argue that certain prominent voices among the critics, such as news anchors or journalists, possess a degree of entitlement to express their opinions publicly. However, it can also be noted that the group's extreme political alignment may undermine their legitimacy in representing broader public sentiment.

Urgency

Arguments against assigning urgency to the opposing group highlight their irrelevance to the company itself and that the public resentment could soon loose relevance in the media. Conversely, students may emphasize the immediate risk to M&M's reputation and sales, suggesting that delaying a response could harm the brand's reputation and sales.

The students' decision regarding the classification of the individuals publicly expressing resentment toward M&Ms' decision hinges on the characteristics they assign to this group. Realistically, they are likely to consider two primary classifications:

1. *Dangerous Stakeholder:* This classification would be based on the presence of power and urgency among the group. If students perceive the critics as possessing significant influence and their criticism as posing an immediate threat to M&M's reputation and sales, they may classify them as dangerous stakeholders.
2. *Demanding Stakeholders:* Alternatively, if students primarily identify urgency in the group's criticism without necessarily attributing significant power to them, they may classify them as demanding stakeholders.

However, students may also arrive at other outcomes based on their assessment of the situation. Ultimately, the classification should be determined by the most compelling arguments.

The application of the Stakeholder Identification and Salience Model offers students several valuable insights and benefits. By comprehensively mapping out stakeholders and assessing their characteristics, students gain a deeper understanding of the complex network of relationships surrounding an organization. This process enables them to grasp the intricacies of stakeholder dynamics and the various factors influencing organizational decision-making. Furthermore, the model helps students to prioritize stakeholders based on their level of salience, allowing them to focus resources and attention on those stakeholders who possess the greatest influence or importance. This prioritization ensures that efforts are directed towards stakeholders who can have the most significant impact on the organization's outcomes.

Additionally, understanding the characteristics of different stakeholders and their varying levels of salience enables students to make more informed and strategic decisions - whether in communication strategies, resource allocation, or organizational strategy development.

Image Repair Theory

The case of M&M's facing (seemingly unreasonable) backlash for its redesign of their spokescandies provides an opportunity for understanding and applying William L. Benoit's Image Restoration Theory (Benoit, 1995). This scenario, marked by strong accusations from conservative critics despite M&M's non-controversial intentions, sets the stage for exploring how organizations can navigate the turbulent waters of public image repair amidst crisis or controversy. Benoit's theory, which outlines five strategies with multiple sub-approaches for every strategy - denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification - serves as a comprehensive framework for understanding these dynamics. The theory can also be applied in situations where the action itself may not be inherently offensive yet is perceived as offensive by certain audiences, therefore it can be seen as a good fit for the M&M's case.

Applying the theory to this case presents a particularly compelling challenge due to the complexity of the situation. The act under scrutiny - minor adjustments to the spokescandies – would most likely not be regarded as problematic by the majority. However, it has elicited a substantial level of outrage, which could be perceived as disproportionate or even absurd by the class. It is critical to acknowledge that the individuals voicing negative opinions about M&M's possess significant influence, commanding large followings, and are distinctly affiliated with a political ideology that diverges from the brand's values. This nuance adds an intricate layer to the case, highlighting the importance of navigating public perception and the impact of influential critics on brand reputation.

In the process of leveraging this framework to develop solutions in the classroom, students might discover that formulating an effective response is more complex than first anticipated. This is largely due to the nature of the criticisms directed at M&M's, which, while baseless and for some surely seeming a little strange, have garnered significant attention. The accusations range from claims of promoting anti-male sentiments to accusations of using body positivity messaging as a marketing ploy to sell more candy. These very public, yet not particularly grounded criticisms, illustrate the intricate task students have in using the framework to decide on an appropriate strategy.

Determining the exact strategy M&M's management actually deployed in response to the backlash it faced is not immediately clear. Initially, the brand chose not to react publicly to the first wave of criticism, essentially allowing the storm to pass without direct engagement until those leading the charge against the brand shifted their focus elsewhere.

This response is not specifically classified in the theory of Benoit, so students might come to different answers as the lack of response could be interpreted in several ways: as a form of *Simple Denial*, suggesting a refusal to acknowledge the criticisms as valid, or as *Reducing Offensiveness*, more specifically *Minimization*, attempting to reduce the perceived drama of the issue at hand.

The challenge of pinpointing M&M's strategy becomes even more pronounced with the rise of a second wave of criticism. In this phase, M&M's appeared to adopt a mixed approach with the *Good Intentions* approach of the *Evasion of Responsibility* strategy with the announcement of the spokescandies' retirement, coupled with the strategy of *Corrective Action* by replacing them with a human spokesperson. However, this move was not the actual strategy as it was all part of their advertising and PR campaign. Upon closer analysis, it seems that M&M's predominantly leaned towards a *Denial* strategy throughout the controversy. By not formally acknowledging any wrongdoing or offering an explicit apology, the brand maintained its stance indirectly, opting for a strategy that neither formally confirmed the criticisms nor conceded to their demands. This approach reflects a nuanced attempt to navigate the complexities of public backlash without compromising the brand's integrity or giving the critics more platform.

For students, a key takeaway from analyzing potential image repair strategies in context of the M&M's case is recognizing that these strategies exist on a spectrum. The absence of an obvious solution prior to knowing the actual management decision, and even after it becomes known to the students, highlights the complexity of deciding on an image repair strategy. This complexity necessitates a high degree of sensitivity and meticulous consideration of the potential consequences and implications of each strategy chosen. It reveals that effectively managing a brand's response to controversy or criticism is not a straightforward task. Instead, it requires a nuanced understanding of the situation at hand, an appreciation for the diversity of potential strategies available, and the ability to anticipate how different approaches may resonate with various stakeholders. This learning outcome emphasizes the importance of strategic thinking and careful planning in the realm of public relations and reputation management.

Discussion questions

For an enriching discussion, the main question serves as the cornerstone, guiding the discourse. Students are encouraged to deliberate on this main question, leveraging their insights to offer thoughtful solutions and recommendations. To facilitate a directed discussion, the teacher may employ supporting questions, prompting engagement, and stimulating robust argumentation among class participants.

Main question

How should M&M's respond to the backlash and negative sentiment surrounding the redesign of their spokescandies, particularly in the face of affiliations with right-wing groups and the impending Super Bowl ad?

Assisting questions

The assisting questions serve as helpful nudges, guiding the discussion towards essential perspectives and relevant theories, ensuring a thorough exploration of the case study in class aligned with the learning objectives. Each bullet point below provides an assisting question, along with a brief explanation of its purpose in relation to the learning objectives.

1. Do you consider the opposing and critical statements popping up in media as relevant and why?
   → *Formation of anti-brand community*
2. How might consumer perceptions of M&M's brand image be influenced by the negative publicity?
   → *Evaluating the risks concerning image damage and possible forming of pro-brand community in response to (undeserved) backlash*
3. What are the potential short-term and long-term risks associated with maintaining the changes to the spokescandies in the face of backlash from conservative groups?
   → *Identifying and evaluating reputation risks*
4. What are the concerned stakeholders in this case? Would you consider the opposing right-wring groups as stakeholders?
   → *Applying the Stakeholder Identification & Salience Model*
5. In what ways could Mars Wrigley address the criticism from conservative voices while still upholding their commitment to inclusivity and societal progress?
   → *Balance of addressing criticism and defending/standing up for decision made*

Teaching suggestions

This following chapter offers a structured approach for teachers to effectively navigate through the case study, complemented by recommendations for didactic methods to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Following this, a concise time plan is proposed to ensure efficient time management throughout the session.

Case phases

Intro and Case Presentation

The teaching session ideally begins with an engaging icebreaker question to cultivate a relaxed atmosphere, before smoothly transitioning into the case description. The teacher could ask the class for their favorite M&M's flavor or whether they know the M&M's spokescandies. This not only sets a comfortable tone but also serves to easing participants into the topic.

During the case presentation, incorporating visual aids such as PowerPoint presentations or videos is recommended to enhance comprehension and engagement. Additionally, to reach a storytelling dynamic and clarify the audience's roles, it is advised to allocate specific roles to the participants which they are supposed to take in when solving the case. For instance, participants could embody a communication consultancy, responding to the M&M's brand management team seeking for help. This approach not only fosters engagement but also gives the session a sense of purpose and relevance.

Transition to Case Question

As the presentation transitions to the central case question, it is recommended to maintain a visible slide displaying the case question during the discussion to ensure continuous focus and recall throughout the session. Supplementing this with a projected image of the spokescandies' redesign on the wall is ideal to reinforce the central theme and prompt further engagement.

Discussion

To kick-off the discussion in class it is helpful to actively encourage the students to freely share their thoughts and ideas, fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment. The presenter should guide the discussion in a structured and goal-oriented manner, ensuring that all viewpoints are considered and respected. The presenter is advised to prepare key aspects in consideration of the key learning objectives beforehand. In case multiple presenters are involved, it is helpful to define clear roles and responsibilities in advance to enable a seamless lecture.

If the class is missing very important tasks or perspectives during the discussion, the presenter can ask the provided assisting questions to give some cues leading the students in the right direction so the learning objectives can be achieved. As the discussion unfolds, it is crucial for the teacher to keep in mind the theoretical frameworks previously described and consider their application in guiding clarity and decision-making. For instance, employing the Stakeholder Model can aid in determining whether the anti-brand individuals qualify as stakeholders worthy of response. Similarly, understanding the Negative Identity Formation Theory elucidates the reasons behind the formation of anti-communities, while the Image Repair Theory offers strategies for addressing emerging criticism and potential reputational damage. Integrating these theories into the discussion can provide valuable insights and facilitate informed decisions.

Throughout the discussion, a board plan, manually written on the white board, should serve as a visual roadmap, tracking key challenges, alternatives, and actions explored during the session. Organized into columns – Challenge, Alternatives, and Action – the board plan aids in structuring ideas and facilitating comprehensive discussions. The presenter or another appointed person should actively fill in the board plan based on class contributions, ensuring that all key insights are captured and visually represented which makes it easier for the audience to follow. First, in the Challenge column, the presenter outlines the main challenges or tasks faced by the company in the case study. These challenges could include issues related to e.g., brand perception, consumer backlash, crisis management and more. Next, in the Alternatives column, the presenter encourages the class to brainstorm different options or strategies to address each challenge identified. These alternatives should consider various approaches, such as communication strategies, product changes, or stakeholder engagement initiatives. Once alternatives are identified, the class moves to the Action column, where they determine the preferred course of action for each challenge. This involves outlining specific steps or initiatives to implement the chosen alternative effectively.

As the discussion progresses, the presenter may guide the class to consider the potential consequences or risks associated with each alternative, fostering critical thinking and decision-making skills. At the end of the discussion, the completed board plan provides a comprehensive overview of the case's challenges and potential solutions. This enables the class to make informed recommendations and decisions based on the insights generated during the discussion. The class should now take all information and ideas into consideration and give a profound final decision on how to solve the case.

To further enhance the board plan's effectiveness, the presenter could use color coding or highlighting to emphasize key points or trends emerging from the discussion. Overall, the board plan serves as a valuable tool for structuring the discussion, facilitating collaboration, and ensuring a thorough analysis of the case study. **Table 2** (p.12) showcases an exemplary outcome of the conducted board plan in class. The final content of the table depends on discussion in class.

Challenge	**Alternatives**	**Action**
Unexpected and "loud" backlash to a minor change of the brand asset spokescandies	- Keep the changes as they are (do nothing) - Switch back to old spokescandies - Compromise and adapt spokescandies to feedback - Further explain reasons for the change - Stop using candies for a while until everything calms down	Put out a public statement that emphasizes how ridiculous M&M's find this vendetta against them and position the brand based on their values in support for inclusivity and diversity.
M&M's getting affiliated with right-wing spokespeople – them using the brand's actions for their agenda by hating on them and their changes to the spokescandies	- Letting it all play out until it is becoming old news - Clear statement that underlines M&M's intent and positions them against the political agenda - Going into (public) discourse with the anti-brand groups	Keep changes and use the spokescandies even more prominently to win back the control of the narrative.
Super Bowl Ad is booked in midst of the reputational chaos	- Go on with planned ad - Use the airtime as a response opportunity - Cancel the spot and "hide"	Produce an ad featuring the new candies.

Table 2: *Exemplary board plan*

Conclusion

To end the session, it is recommended to present the real management decision made in the case, inviting comparison and discussion with the class's deliberations. Summarizing key talking points and learnings can prompt students to reflect on insights gained and reinforce the relevance of the case study to real-world scenarios. Additionally, encouraging students to consider implications and applications of their learnings can promote critical thinking and practical application of concepts.

Time plan

To ensure effective time management during the case study presentation, it is essential to allocate time strategically to each phase while allowing flexibility for engaging discussions. The presenter plays a key role in guiding the session and ensuring effective time management.

For a 30-minute session, the following time plan is proposed.

1. **Intro and Case Presentation: 10 minutes**
   - Engage students with an icebreaker activity (2 minutes)
   - Transition smoothly into the case question using a presentation with visuals (8 minutes)

2. **Discussion: 15 minutes**
   - Presenting the case question and kick-off case discussion (1 minute)
   - Encourage active participation and constructive dialogue and guide discussion (12 minutes, ongoing)
   - Utilize the board plan to organize ideas and guide discussion (ongoing)
   - Use a board plan to visually track key tasks, challenges, alternatives, and actions explored (ongoing)
   - Towards the end urge students to decide on how to solve the case (2 minutes)

3. **Management Decision: 5 minutes**
   - Present the actual management decision and compare with class discussion (2 minutes)
   - Encourage reflection on the management decision (2 minutes)
   - Summarize key points and insights from the discussion (1 minute)

Total: 30 minutes

By adhering to this time plan, presenters can effectively navigate through the case study, facilitate meaningful discussions, and ensure that key learning objectives are achieved within the suggested time frame.

Reflection

The process of developing the written case, teaching note and management decision for this case study has been both fun and challenging at the same time. One of the main challenges was ensuring that the case offered not only an exciting narrative but also generalizable insights that students could apply to other scenarios. This required a balance between crafting an engaging story and presenting relevant theoretical concepts. Additionally, deciding where to cut the case and prompt class discussion posed a dilemma, with multiple possibilities available. Ultimately, we opted for the most insightful decision point that would stimulate robust discussion.

Remaining open to various endings and perspectives, while putting aside personal opinions, was essential, especially regarding the political aspects of the case. Staying neutral was quite challenging due to our own political stance and the perceived ridiculousness of the backlash. Transferring the seriousness of the case to the reader and teacher amidst seemingly banal scenarios required careful consideration. Highlighting the scope and extent of the backlash by showcasing prominent personalities and media coverage helped us to tackle this challenge.

Taking on different writing roles and considering perspectives from the case writer, teacher, and student helped in crafting comprehensive case material. Selecting an appropriate main discussion question involved balancing broad applicability with specificity, allowing students to derive generalized learnings while arriving at practical solutions. Overall, the writing processes deepened our understanding of interconnected themes and underlying theories, highlighting the importance of effective case crafting and teaching methodology.

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