**PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN**

**Date** - 09/17/2024

**Situation Analysis:** E-cigarette brand blu’s reputation has been negatively affected by increased federal regulations and unfavorable media coverage. In addition, blu does not currently take advantage of existing or available social media channels— the official @bluecigsusa Instagram account has not been updated since 2020.\* Furthermore, though the direct marketing of tobacco products is regulated on social media, regulations on influencer collaborations are often not enforced.\*\* An opportunity exists for blu to improve brand perception and brand awareness, especially among young adults (ages 18-25), by immediately overhauling its existing social media channels, increasing its social media presence, and utilizing influencer marketing—while it is still legally permissible— to bring awareness to the potential health benefits of vaping over cigarette smoking.

**PR Campaign Objective:** To increase revenue and brand awareness within the young adult market (ages 18-25) by launching a new 12-month campaign on social media: “Vaping isn’t cool, but it is *cooler.*” The campaign will focus on the fact that e-cigarettes maintain a lower internal temperature\*\*\* than tobacco cigarettes,\*\*\*\* which could be less damaging to consumers’ lungs. The campaign will utilize ironic language— stating that “vaping isn’t cool,” — to appeal to Generation Z’s dry sense of humor while following federal regulations and improving perceived brand integrity by ostensibly encouraging consumers *not* to start vaping.

**Target Audiences:**

* Young adults (ages 18-25) who are cigarette smokers.
* Young adults (ages 18-25) who do not smoke cigarettes or vape.
* New smokers of any age.

**Goals:**

* To increase blu’s following of young adults (ages 18-25) on Instagram by 25% as reported in the account’s analytics.
* To acquire for blu 30,000 followers on TikTok.
* To collaborate on paid promotions with at least 10 social media influencers that have at least 50,000 followers each.

**PR Strategy:**

* **Emphasize health benefits:** Expose the damaging effects of heated vapor/smoke on the lungs and emphasize blu e-cigarettes’ comparatively lower internal temperature.
* **Reach young adult audience:** Utilize ironic social media target ads as a main outlet for this campaign.
* **Influencer marketing:** Utilize paid promotions with influencers to reach the target audience.

**Tactics:**

* Create an official “@blucigsusa” TikTok account.
* On TikTok and Instagram, post campaign videos as well as informational videos about the comparative temperature-related benefits of vaping over cigarette smoking. Cite recent studies comparing e-cigarette heating coil temperatures and tobacco cigarette internal temperatures.
* Identify “effortlessly cool” young adult influencers with more than 50,000 followers on TikTok or Instagram and secure at least 10 collaboration deals.
* Release paid promotional videos with these influencers on both platforms that utilize ironic and dry humor to appeal to the target audience.
* Include links to purchase relevant blu products on all collaboration videos to directly increase revenue.
* Utilize targeted ads on TikTok and Instagram to increase reach on both platforms and increase blu’s following.

\*<https://www.instagram.com/blucigsusa/>

\*\*<https://tobaccotactics.org/article/social-media/#:~:text=Although%20most%20social%20media%20platforms,as%20that%20promoted%20through%20influencers>.

\*\*\* The heating coil in an e-cigarette reaches a temperature of 100–250 °C. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Construction_of_electronic_cigarettes#cite_note-Cheng2014-8>

\*\*\*\* The internal temperature of a tobacco cigarette is 800–900° C. <https://www.nature.com/articles/247405a0>

*Ethics Discussion*

Though I enjoyed acting as the “devil’s advocate” for a class assignment, it’s a little hard to predict how I would feel about representing blu in the real world. Just two years ago, I watched my grandfather, with whom I was very close, die from a cancer that developed as a direct result of him smoking cigarettes for 50 years. However, the entire time that I knew him, even to his death, he always acknowledged that “he knew better” than to keep smoking. Smoking for that long, for him, was an informed choice that he *knew* could eventually lead to his death. Marlboro didn’t kill him; his choices killed him, and though I miss him every day, I cannot make that untrue.

Perhaps this sounds callous, but it is the fact that smoking/vaping is a *choice*, and in our modern age with its warning labels, disclaimers, and anti-smoking/vaping advertisements, always an *informed choice,* that dispels any guilt I may have about working on a blu campaign*.* Any young person who starts smoking or vaping as a result of my campaign will be fully aware of the risks involved. Because of this, I don’t feel that representing blu would be inherently wrong— as long all federal regulations are followed and warning labels are present and obvious.

Thinking about warning labels has brought my mind to the contraceptive pill. I don’t think I could ethically or morally promote one. It, too, comes wrapped with serious warnings, and yet women everywhere still consume it. This has always felt morally wrong to me, but it’s different from cigarettes in one crucial way: it’s a necessity. Contraceptive pill brands may use similar marketing tactics as I would working for blu— diminishing the negative health effects and emphasizing the social benefits— but no one *needs* to smoke.

I am not sure that I can say I’d be *proud* to work for blu, or that it would be my first choice of clients because the product sure isn’t a *good* thing*.* However, I don’t think that as a PR representative for blu I would be performing any actions that are inherently morally wrong, because, in the end, consumers have to choose what they consume and are responsible for how those choices impact their health.