

Idle No More: A voice for First Nations
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The Idle No More movement is a great example of an activist public relations because indigenous people have a goal to reach out and inform publics on issues including sustainability, sovereignty, and national identity. They also show a great example of crisis management when dealing with a crisis during what was supposed to be a peaceful protest.

The Idle No more Movement is a prime example of activist public relations and shows a great example dealing with crisis management with the push for indigenous populations to inform people on issues such as; sustainability, sovereignty, and national identity. After learning about the Idle No more Movement we get to see how important activist public relations and crisis management is to public issues campaigns. “The Idle No More campaign, which has seen mass protest, blockades and solidarity actions across the world, was sparked by changes to the treaty rights of First Nations people. These include easing regulations on the commercial leasing of reservation lands, many of which are already suffering from polluting industry such as the tar sands.” (New Internationalist. 2013.) On November 29th, 2012 the first nations got across Canada got a voice, and this means the Idle No more Movement was founded. “Idle No More was started by four First Nations women as a peaceful Canadian grassroots protest against the passage of C-45, a bill that dilutes tribal sovereignty and environmental protection.” (activistpr.com.) With a number of political actions, strikes, and various other activist movements Idle no More Movement aimed to inform and change the laws regarding sustainability, sovereignty, and national identity. Indigenous populations were taken from their homes, and children were not entitled to land that was supposed to be to them. The Idle No More movement wanted the indigenous populations to have back their land and what was originally theirs, instead of the land being used for using the land and all of its resources up.

After looking up information movement, the information included all being great examples of activist public relations. And With seeing the results is how we see it is such an important aspect activist public relations is to public issues campaigns. According to the activist P. R website The biggest voice of the movement was that of “Theresa Spence, Attawapiskat First Nation Chief, who went on a six-week hunger strike to force a meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper about indigenous treaty violations.” Considering activist public relations includes protesting as apart of its concentration, there is one the first good activist public relations action by the First Nation chief. Since after 6 week, which is not too bad she finally got her short term goal of meeting with the

Canadian prime minister. The same website also tells us that these indigenous people want to show the world that Canada is more than just “ an extraction pit for the world.” These people wanted their land that they deserved, and they needed a way for the world to also become aware of the situation and start making decisions in favor of the environment and the indigenous populations. As with all good public relations campaigns the RACE method had to have been implemented. They had to Research what was going on to the lands, and how it was affecting the environment, and the people who the land belonged to in the first place. They then had to analyze that research and decide what actions they had to take in order to make a difference and reach the goals and missions they had for the movement. The leaders then must have known the best way to make a difference is by allowing people everyone to be knowledgeable on the situation, and with the knowledge they can make better choice and decisions based on way to help save the land. Communication the C in the RACE model was the the biggest used tool since the communicating is the number one resource in an activist movement. Another great way the movement decided to communicate and was also connected to strategic communications was by embracing social media and using online interactivity strategies. (activistpr.com.) Although the movement is still ongoing with protests they have been evaluating their results and deciding where they must get better and ways they can improve and get more people involved and in return getting more people to be knowledgeable and get them aiming for the same goals and missions as the idle no more movement. According to the Idle No more Website and facebook the mission that the movement is aiming towards is; “TO Support and encourage grassroots to create their own forums to learn more about Indigenous rights and our responsibilities to our Nationhood via teach-ins, rallies and social media. •Build relationships and create understanding with allies across Canada. •Take steps to contribute to building relationships with international agencies such as the UN to raise awareness to the conditions Indigenous people have been subjected to and assert our sovereignty in the international arena. •Acknowledge and honor the hard work of all grassroots people who have worked, and continue to work towards these goals – you are our inspiration.” The Facebook was filled with

people extremely interested in the movement, and constantly involved.

More recently in October the Idle No more Movement began a peaceful protest against gas exploration in New Brunswick, Canada. The protest was suddenly turned much more violent than the protestors of Idle No More are used too, when police dressed in military attire came at the protestors with pepper spray and rubber bullets. The violence went as far as police vehicles being torched and 40 protestors arrested. Due to this issue crisis management had to come in affect to correct and make the issue better, especially since the Idle No More Movement is known for being peaceful in getting their message across. According to CA.News.Yahoo.com this “Anti- fracking clash could lead to Idle No More`s next big moment.” This big moment is expected to be much more peaceful, and guaranteed without violence. The Idle No More website has many protests lined up for this “big moment” and the organization says “...In attempts to alleviate the crisis we can predict these protests will be much more peaceful and chaotic.” Crisis Management needed to show the public that violent protesting is not what they do, and they just want to peacefully get their message out on the importance of sustainability, sovereignty, and national identity. Social media also played a big part in all of this as well as many crisis management situations. In the hours after the chaos broke out in Canada people took to social media on what had happened spreading the negative image of the Idle No More Movement, however the movement also took too social media in assuring their publics that this would not happen again.

Crisis management is extremely important to any type of public relations because no matter how it may happen, issues come up with organizations, and crisis management must come in and handle the issue as soon as possible. The longer the crisis goes, the more damage it will do to the organization. Especially now with social media everything gets out to people much faster thus fixing the issue must be just as fast. Take the issue with the Idle No More Movement, immediately after people were tweeting about the chaos that occurred, making it known to people everywhere that they had a violent and chaotic protest, which gives them a negative image... not good for gaining followers, which is a very big and important aspect of activist PR.

In my opinion the campaign is very successful and the activist actions they take are very crucial and make a difference in the results that they get. I think this is very important to public campaign issues because it is a peaceful way to in a way let people make their own decisions but by being informed they tend to make much better and conscious decisions. Thus crisis management is also very important to have and practice to keep the campaign so successful, and assure their publics know they are a peaceful group that just wants to inform people on issues dealing with sustainability, sovereignty, and national identity.

References

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