

Idle No More

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Summary: The Idle No More movement is an act of activist public relations, in which the indigenous populations are beginning a revolution. This revolution honors and fulfills indigenous sovereignty. This protects the land and water while trying to educate the public on issues including sustainability, sovereignty, and national identity.

Background

When Treaties were first created, they were created to settle disagreements between First Nations peoples and the British. When both nations signed the Treaty, they agreed that this document cannot be altered or broken by either of the two Nations. The Treaty agreements meant that First Nations peoples would share their land, but retain their inherent rights to the land and its resources. Before and still after the Treaty, First Nations have experienced a history of colonization which has resulted in outstanding land claims and lack of resources (Activist P.R website). Now, they are taking a stand and it is called The Idle No More Movement. This movement is in response to the Canadian Government trying to pass many laws so that reserve lands can also be bought and sold by big companies to get profit from the resources.

The Idle No More movement is an act of activist public relations, which the indigenous populations are beginning a revolution. This revolution honors and fulfills indigenous sovereignty. This protects the land and water while trying to educate the public on issues including sustainability, sovereignty, and national identity. Idle No More was founded by four First Nations women as a peaceful Canadian public protest against the passage of C-45. C-45 is a bill that reduces tribal sovereignty and environmental protection. The women behind the movement stated, "Though it was the C-45 bill that led to the movement, Idle No More is not just about regulation. It is also a call for restoration of the Indigenous identities and lifeway's" (Caven, 2013). Unlike like the rest of the world, who chooses to be followers of societies "ideal life style", the indigenous people are not asking for much. All they want is their land and water to be as pure as their spirit.

Idle No More's mission calls on all people to join in a revolution which honors and fulfills Indigenous sovereignty which protects the land and water. Will you be a part of this revolution? The purpose of this research is to see if the indigenous people and supporters of the Idle No More protest are actively using public relations and communication theories to advertise their cause? Also, if they are, are they reaching a variety of audiences?

Findings

In understanding how people typically respond to issues, the Idle No More Movement stands as opinion leaders (willing to discuss, open-minded, will drive decisions). Although the Idle No More Movement is relatively new, there presence in media has been made. The media theory refers to the various ways, especially television, radio, newspapers, and magazines, by which information and news are given to large numbers of people (dictionary). Idle No More quickly embraced social media and also used online interactivity strategies. They even created a website that informed the public about the issue. There website seeks to make visible what has often been untold - some of the powerful personal stories of those who have been moved by the spirit of Idle No More. They allowed the public to comment on their opinion of the issue.

Activists such as Shelly Johnson, a UBC assistant professor of School of Social Work, noticed that reading the comments sections on news article about Idle No More showed that people were really trying hard to understand the movement but needed help. In a sense, Idle No More is persuading the public to be aware of the environment. Mainstream media continues to highlight the movement's purpose as well as global expansion; for instance, the story on 2/4/13 Rolling Stone feature frames Idle No More

opposing the tar sands pipelines (NPR, 2013). The Idle No More Movement influenced many other tribes to stand up.

Not only has Idle No More started a revolution but they have supported encouraged others to do the same. In 2008, The Keystone XL pipeline was proposed by the Canadian energy corporation TransCanada to transport tar sands oil from Canada to refineries on the Gulf Coast. The region where the tar sands oil is extracted is home to many indigenous populations. Not only have indigenous communities been forced off of their land, but also those living downstream from tailing ponds have seen spikes in rates of rare cancers, renal failure, lupus, and hyperthyroidism (Friends of Earth, 2013). Idle No More opposed of the Keystone XL pipeline because first, the Canadian energy corporation was manipulating the public making it seem like there was no flaws with this process. Second, because it would increases greenhouse gas emissions, pollute the lands and water sources, and threaten the health and safety of the communities; which overall reduces tribal sovereignty and environmental protection.

Another event which happened most recently that is associated with the Canadian protests is the October 17/18 clash between the anti-fracturing protestors and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This occurred because hundreds of indigenous Canadians opposed yet another agreement that reduces tribal sovereignty and environmental protection, of the energy company SWN Resources Canada (Southwestern Energy) work in the area with the natural gas drilling process. The First Nation peoples became angry because the Company did not inform them before beginning the process. The tribe's main concern like in the other events was about the company extracting shale gas because of the (Hydraulic Fracturing) which would pollute drinking water. Eventually this event

resulted in violence between the protestors and police. All these protests are often regarded as and start off as a peaceful campaign, but emotions run much higher and strategies are becoming more refined.

Crisis responses like Idle No More, depend on three things which are public and political government, culture and inner workings of the organization and human nature. These three crisis responses figure into the Idle No More Movement. Public and political government (more of political science) showing the effects the issue may have on the public and especially the environment, and the way the company responds to the protestors and the efforts to create a positive reputation in the public. Human nature figures in to the Idle No More Movement though the tribe showing the effort to stop this issue of pollution in their water supply and how the company responded.

After taking a look at the four types of crises which are acts of god, mechanical problems, human error and management decisions, actions, or action. I have identified two crises that occurred in the Idle No More Movement which are human error and management decisions, actions or action. Human error (the wrong machine was operated, miscommunication about what to do, etc.) occurred because the Canadian Government is trying to pass many laws so that reserve lands can be bought and sold by big companies to get profit from resources. This will result in poisoned water, land and air. Management decisions, actions, or action (the problem is not serious, nobody will find out) occurred because the Canadian Government did not consider emphasizing with the tribe about the process and probably didn't think anyone was going to find out until the tribe stood up. In lieu of hiding the process or going forward with it "carelessly" the government is promising to share the profits made off the land with the indigenous Canadians. The tribe

views this action an attempt to take away sovereignty and the inherent right to land and resources from First Nations peoples.

Conclusion

In conclusion, what began as a series of teach-ins throughout Saskatchewan to protest impending parliamentary bills that will erode Indigenous sovereignty and environmental protections, has now changed the social and political landscape of Canada. Now, Idle No More has become one of the largest indigenous mass movements in Canadian history, sparking hundreds across Turtle Island and beyond. Idle No More has and will continue to help build sovereignty and resurgence of nationhood. They will continue to reframe the nation to nation relationship. Idle No More started from the bottom and now they are here. By being involved on social media and using online interactivity strategies to reach out to people, Idle No More exposed people to the truth that the government keeps from them but haggles them when it comes to their land. Idle No More is getting people to understand the movement.

Looking at the digital crisis management essentials, social media played a huge role in media coverage of all the protests and their confrontations. As we know social media is the fastest way to get news gets to the public. Basically 100% of the time, before the news hits the television news it's already on social media sites. Once it hits the newspapers it's already considered old news. Since we have the social media sites at our finger tips, we can get the story and footage in that moment. Social Media will always play a huge role in news. Let's be honest, television and online news usual gets the footage from those social media cites.

From my experience with the LGBTQ community, they started at a place where no one thought their cause was important. Now they have so many supporters; states are changing their law for anyone that identifies with LGBTQ can get married. Following up with Idle No More protest would be idle to see the progression of their first nations reestablishing their selves and the lives of others.

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