

#LikeAGirl

## **Final Case Study**

Alessa Beal-Lopez & Emily Rogers

Department of Journalism & Public Relations

JOUR 478: Public Relations Case Studies

Dr. Trevor Bell

5/10/2022

## **Background of Organization**

Always is an American brand of menstrual hygiene products founded in 1983. Its parent company is Procter & Gamble which was founded in 1837.

The company seeks to provide women with information regarding menstruation and make it possible for women to obtain the products they need in order to maintain their hygiene. Their menstruation products are attainable to women all across the globe. The brand goes under different names depending on the region, but all products fall under the same parent company Procter & Gamble.

In 2021, the number of employees at Procter & Gamble were 101,000 from a peak of 127,000 in 2010. As of 2021, the company was worth 76 billion dollars (U.S. currency). This information covers statistics for P&G, which Always falls under these statistics along with other brands under this corporation (Statista, 2022).

\* no statistics reported under the Always brand

## **Organization Mission and Values**

**Mission Statement:** *“Always has been championing girls’ and women’s confidence for more than 35 years through puberty & confidence education, providing access to period products and driving societal change #LikeAGirl.”*

The Always brand and its parent company, Procter & Gamble, inspire community-service-driven values surrounding health and wellness.

The goal of parent company Procter & Gamble is to “use every opportunity we have- no matter how small- to set change in motion” and “to be a force for good and a force for growth”.

- P&G has conducted multiple campaigns dedicated to contributions toward health, hygiene, and cleaning products. Various campaigns include:

- Lead With Love
- Children's Safe Drinking Water Program
- Always has conducted multiple PR campaigns for women's health including:
  - #LikeAGirl
  - #KeepHerPlaying
  - #EndPeriodPoverty
  - The Always Puberty and Confidence Education Program

They are dedicated to improving the lives of young women by empowering and educating prepubescent girls on the changes they'll go through at puberty. Empowering girls to manage their menstruation safely, hygienically, with confidence, and without shame is one of the most important goals of the brand (Always, 2014).

### **Synopsis and Timeline**

#### A. The Situation

- a. June 26, 2014 — Always launched a three-minute long video on YouTube entitled #LikeAGirl to end the negative connotation surrounding the saying "like a girl." It's widely been used as an insult which has been responsible for the damage in the self-confidence of young girls. Always' goal was to spark a movement based on raising the confidence and self-esteem of adolescent girls embarking on their journey to womanhood. Through puberty, girls have to learn how to battle societal limitations and judgments based on their sex, and 56% of girls lose confidence while entering puberty.

- i. The inspiration behind the video came from an Always social experiment; the brand tested the theory of the negativity surrounding the saying “like a girl”.
- ii. To test their theory, Always held a fake casting call conducted with more than 100 women and men, boys and girls. Always asked them to perform and behave in the ways ‘like a girl’ would. Examples included:
  - Running like a girl
  - Fighting like a girl
  - Throwing like a girl

The women and men behaved in ways that were silly or self-deprecating; they participated in enforcing the stereotype that women are not strong. The prepubescent girls performed in a completely different way. They ran as fast as they could, fought as hard as they could, and threw with confidence and pride. They displayed incredible self-belief and performed the best they could; they had not been influenced by the ‘rules’ that define womanhood (Always, 2014).

When Always began their campaign, they asked girls if they felt like society limited them, and 72% of the respondents said society did. Pressured to conform to expectations, 7 out of 10 girls feel like they don’t belong in sports (Always, 2014).

- b. January 29, 2015 — Always launched a 60-second version of the campaign video #LikeAGirl during the Super Bowl which over 114.4 million people viewed.

- c. July 7, 2015 Always #LikeAGirl Confidence Summit was held in 10 different cities worldwide and revealed the Always Confidence Teaching Curriculum partnered with TED. The summit featured leading confidence and education experts to empower young girls to smash limitations and raise their confidence.

Due to the success of the campaign, in just three months, Always achieved a 96% positive association with the phrase “like a girl”; previously the phrase received only a 19% positive association (Always, 2014).

## B. Campaign Mission and Objectives

### **Their epic battle: #LikeAGirl**

The campaign centered mostly around their three-minute-long YouTube video. Always drove relevance through social media platforms by paid advertisements from celebrities on Twitter and Facebook. The brand utilized the hashtag #LikeAGirl to spark participation amongst women everywhere.

There were four key objectives Always wanted to achieve through their campaign:

- Drive relevance with an emotional connection to Always
- Drive popularity through top-of-mind awareness
- Increase the effectiveness of the message
- Create cultural change

The Always brand knew that competitors were starting to relate emotionally to their clients, and Always needed to find a way to gain loyalty among a younger age group demographic. By targeting girls going through puberty and being a brand that is aware of social

issues concerning girls and women, they realized they could be agents to social change. This social change would spark brand awareness and popularity among a younger clientele.

### C. Those Involved/Key Publics

Always wanted to reconnect with a younger base of women from the ages of 16 to 24-year-old age group. Research shows that women stay loyal to brands once they find one they like. Millennials also want an emotional connection to brands, including supporting a brand that is socially aware. Simple communication about products like sanitary pads, panty liners, and tampons would not work to further their clientele. They would need a movement, something that women felt like Always would stand for, in order to reach their targeted audience.

### D. Strategies and Tactics

- a. The commercial emphasized what it actually means to do things “like a girl”. For example, in the campaign they demonstrated what individuals thought running, fighting, and dancing “like a girl” looked like to them. Each of their demonstrations made it seem like that girls were pathetic and weak as they flail their arms and acted like they didn’t have the strength to do simple tasks.
- b. In opposition to these actions, they had girls demonstrate what this looks like to them. In the video, the girls made it clear that they don’t act pathetically by essentially expressing the act of being themselves. The girls showed what it means to act “like a girl”.
- c. A condensed version of this campaign was televised during the Super Bowl XLIX in 2015; close to 115 million people watched the game that year.

- d. They established a page on their website that is targeted to young girls. The page provides statistics associated with positive associations to the phrase “like a girl”. Show how girls feel more confident and encouraged to move through society without being judged in this way.
- e. The campaign’s key tactic was using the hashtag #LikeAGirl to reach out to a wider front on the message young girls are receiving versus what society is telling them. It gained attention all over the world on social media.

#### E. Social Media Impressions

The Always #LikeAGirl campaign sparked a lot of social media conversation. The video placed second globally with more than 90+ million views and over a million shares (Campaign Live, 2015). The Always YouTube Channel subscribers grew 4339%, and the video itself gained 213 thousand likes (*Social Media Campaign Case Study: Always #LikeaGirl*, 2015). The Always Twitter account followers tripled in the first three months and earned more than 4.4 billion media impressions in the first three months (Campaign Live, 2015). The hashtag #LikeaGirl has been used in over 40,000 tweets to Twitter accounts and 415,753 Instagram posts as of November 17, 2015 (*Social Media Campaign Case Study: Always #LikeaGirl*, 2015).

#### F. Challenge/Opportunity

The Always brand sought to establish relevance with the 16-24 age group. The brand needed to secure a young consumer base to improve loyalty and brand growth. Competitors of feminine hygiene brands began emotionally connecting to young women via social media platforms, and Always needed to make this move too.

Always assessed that gender stereotypes are deeply embedded in our culture. Language is a powerful form of communication and expressions are created to give insight into who we are as a society. The expression 'like a girl', is widely known to be a pejorative phrase; it diminishes confidence in girls, hinders the achievements and abilities of girls, and exemplifies the contempt our society has towards girls and women. It states that girls are weak, overly emotional, and useless (Always, 2014).

The Always brand recognized that puberty is a fragile time for girls' identities, 56% of girls lose confidence entering puberty, and the phrase participates in the devastating effect. But, the brand saw an opportunity to change the connotation associated with 'like a girl'. The Always social experiment showcased the difference between how prepubescent girls and boys, and young women and men saw themselves when they were told to perform 'like a girl'. While young women and men performed in self-deprecating ways, prepubescent girls performed the best they could. They performed with confidence and pride instead of belittling themselves to perform in the roles society has set for them.

With the results from their experiment, Always took the opportunity to embark on a campaign for girls everywhere. Their goals were to reduce the negative connotation surrounding the phrase 'like a girl', raise confidence and instill puberty education in girls, and bring growth to their brand. As a brand for women, they needed to take a stance for women.

#### G. Key Messages

The key messages the brand was trying to establish and communicate across its platform is that being a girl means stomping out limitations, being proud and confident, and that girls are good enough. They wanted to turn an insult into a confidence movement associated with their brand. They created a campaign centered around the negative association with the phrase 'like a



girl' and challenged the expression by redefining what it meant to be a girl. Their main outlet to spread their message was through YouTube, where they focused on maximizing views and reach. A 60-second video was aired during the 2015 Super Bowl commercials, expanding their audience reach even more. The brand used Twitter and Facebook to spread its message, paying influencers to reach their audiences as well. The hashtag #LikeAGirl was leveraged as a call to action for women to share their accomplishments on social media. (Campaign Live, 2015).

#### H. Outcome

Always succeeded in stating the message that prepubescent girls demonstrate leadership, power, and strength. These qualities are not only for boys and men, but girls as well. Reducing negative perceptions around being a girl would better the 'journey into womanhood' and increase confidence in girls everywhere. Their message established that women should be proud to be who and what they are: unstoppable.

- The #LikeAGirl video has been shared by more than 1.5 million people and has now been viewed more than 85 million times in 150 countries (P&G, 2015).
- Prior to watching the film, only 19% of girls had positive sentiment towards the phrase 'like a girl', after viewing, positive sentiment increased to 76%. After three months of the video being released, this sentiment increased to 96% (the brand's objective was 70%). (Coscia, n.d.).
- Two out of three men who viewed the video said they would "stop or think twice" before using "like a girl" as an insult (P&G, 2015).
- The ad made it to the Super Bowl in 2015, with a possible audience reach of over 110 million (Campaign Live, 2015).
- #LikeAGirl is currently tagged in over 1.7 million Instagram posts (Instagram, 2022).

- The United Nations acknowledged the impact on female empowerment through an award (Campaign Live, 2015).
- Brand preference received a 6.93% overall lift (Coscia, n.d.).
- Purchase intent increased from 42% to 46% (Coscia, n.d.).
- Amongst women 13-34 years old, the message reached 53% (Coscia, n.d.).
- 1,100+ earned-media placements and 4.4 billion media impressions in the first three months (Campaign Live, 2015).

The brand excelled in achieving their objectives: drive relevance with an emotional connection to Always, drive popularity through top-of-mind awareness, increase the effectiveness of the message, and create cultural change.

### **PR Analysis**

The Always #LikeAGirl campaign was extremely successful in influencing the confidence of young girls, changing the stigma surrounding the saying “like a girl”, increasing positive sentiment for the brand, and significantly increasing sales for Always products.

According to Always, #LikeAGirl was the number two viral video globally in 2015 and was viewed more than 90 million times. Three months into the campaign, there was a 96% positive sentiment that had been achieved through social media conversations. The message received praise and love for the empowering brand. Always’ Twitter followers and YouTube subscribers increased along with engagement on social media. Purchase intent and brand loyalty increased significantly, expanding their public in the process.

#LikeAGirl was acknowledged by the United Nations, and in March 2015 the brand received an award for the impact the campaign had on female empowerment worldwide.

## **Our Opinions**

In our opinion, the Always #LikeAGirl campaign sparked societal change like no other. Not only did Always increase purchase intent among their targeted audience, but they were able to transform the negative association with the phrase 'like a girl' into something positive. The campaign was successful in its ability to achieve an overall 96% positive sentiment, increase brand preference and loyalty, create a movement associated with the brand name, and impact girls around the world.

The meaning behind this campaign offers an initial sentiment that girls are powerful, strong, and courageous; these qualities do not only belong to boys and men. Girls are able to accomplish just as much as boys can, and should do so with the pride and confidence they have at pre-puberty. The campaign has allowed girls to stand up for their abilities and know that they can achieve greatness. Always established that being a girl does not mean underperforming, it means performing the best you can under any circumstance and at any age. Always not only dedicated a campaign but has dedicated their brand to improving and empowering the lives of girls and women. Sparking a movement to stomp societal limitations, and educating girls on managing their menstruation safely, hygienically, and without shame is critical to maintaining confidence throughout their lives. We believe that Always has gone above and beyond to reach a wide audience, curate social change, and establish brand loyalty among women.

The one thing we would have done differently is utilize men as a resource to influence other men in their opinions about women's capabilities. The video expresses how men view feminine qualities, performing in silly and self-deprecating ways, but does not reinstate their changed opinion when they see how powerful and capable girls can be. We feel like #LikeAGirl

campaign could have benefitted from adding in the changed views of not only women, but men too.

### **Relation to Cases Previously Discussed**

Always #LikeAGirl campaign relates to Pepsi as they also aired during the Super Bowl. They both had the same range for gaining attention from the media. The only difference was that Pepsi was ineffective in reaching its audiences. Pepsi's approach of taking on a controversial issue about race and police did not fare well for them as it gained widespread attention in a negative way. Their strategy of trying to fix the issue of protests and police brutality with Pepsi backfired completely. Especially since the individual trying to fix the issue was a white woman, Kendall Jenner (Swann, 2018). Similar to the #LikeAGirl campaign, they presented their commercial during the Super Bowl except they only had positive feedback. Unlike Pepsi, they were able to reach their audiences in a positive light. Both campaigns take on social issues but Always was the brand to reach their public and gain majority approval. The tactic to engage with their audiences through the hashtag #LikeAGirl ultimately served to benefit them as they were able to get their message across to several publics in a positive way.

Always #LikeAGirl relates to the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge campaign because it captured the attention of various audiences around the world. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is a disease that attacks nerve cells that control movement, but not cognitive function. The ALS Association gained considerable attention on social media after creating a challenge that would promote ALS awareness in society. The Ice Bucket Challenge asked people to make a choice: donate money or dump a bucket of ice-cold water on the participant's head. The ALS Association encouraged the use of the hashtag #alsicebucketchallenge to help spread their campaign (Swann, 2018). Similarly, the Always' #LikeAGirl campaign used their hashtag to

encourage women to share how they perform 'like a girl'. The hashtag inspired girls and women to showcase their accomplishments and send a message that they're confident and strong. Both campaigns utilized social media to speak on issues in society and assemble a movement with a hashtag. The effectiveness of both campaigns came from a place of engaging with their audiences to spread awareness on an issue that benefits both the organization and their publics.

Chevy's campaign approach fared well for them as they approached the PR issue they were facing with light-hearted fun. Chevy took Twitter by storm after using a verbal trip up from the spokesperson that was showcasing their new truck on live television after an MLB championship. They quickly engaged with their audience on social media as they gained widespread attention through the hashtag #technologyandstuff which was the phrase behind the social media craze. This hashtag helped them gain more online traffic to their website, boosting sales for the new truck that was being released. The attention that social media provides to companies such as this one can either work in your favor or fail completely. Luckily, the message received positive approval as they were able to transform the slip-up into something that would work to their benefit (Swann, 2019). Similar to Chevy, the #LikeAGirl campaign was effective in the same capacity as they both used hashtags that would ultimately benefit them in the outreach efforts of their campaigns. Both used hashtags that would affect them in a positive way moving forward.

A. (2014, June 26). Always #LikeAGirl. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjQBJWYDTs&feature=youtu.be>

*Always® Uses Super Bowl Stage to Redefine the Meaning of “Like a Girl.”* (2015). Procter & Gamble News.

<https://news.pg.com/news-releases/news-details/2015/Always-Uses-Super-Bowl-Stage-to-Redefine-the-Meaning-of-Like-a-Girl/default.aspx>

Battle #LikeAGirl. (2014). Always®.

<https://always.com/en-us/about-us/our-epic-battle-like-a-girl>

CampaignUK. (2016, May 31). Case study: Always #LikeAGirl. Campaign Live.

<https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/case-study-always-likeagirl/1366870Our-Epic>

Coscia, Anna. (n.d.). Changing The Meaning Of Words To Make Girls Proud To Be Girls.

Coscia.

[https://www.marketingsociety.com/sites/default/files/thelibrary/P&G%20Always%20like%20a%20girl\\_0.pdf](https://www.marketingsociety.com/sites/default/files/thelibrary/P&G%20Always%20like%20a%20girl_0.pdf)

Insight & Strategy: #LikeAGirl. (2015). Contagious.

<https://www.contagious.com/news-and-views/insight-strategy-likeagirl>

*Social Media Campaign Case Study: Always #LikeaGirl.* (2015, December 10). Public Relations

Methods. Retrieved May 10, 2022, from

<https://sites.psu.edu/prmethods15/author/meh5662/>

Statista. (2022, February 2). *Total number of employees of Procter & Gamble worldwide*

*2007–2021.* Retrieved May 10, 2022, from

[https://www.statista.com/statistics/244037/total-number-of-employees-of-procter-and-gamble-worldwide/#:%7E:text=Total%20number%20of%20employees%20of%20Procter%](https://www.statista.com/statistics/244037/total-number-of-employees-of-procter-and-gamble-worldwide/#:%7E:text=Total%20number%20of%20employees%20of%20Procter%20)

20%26%20Gamble%20worldwide%202007%2D2021,-Published%20by%20Statista&tex  
t=The%20number%20of%20employees%20of,as%20of%20June%2030%2C%202021.

Swann, P. (2019). *Cases in Public Relations Management: The Rise of Social Media and Activism* (3rd ed.). Routledge.