

Communication Networks & Managing Information

Topic: Charlotte Beers at Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide

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Background of Ogilvy & Mather:

In the case of Charlotte Beers at Ogilvy & Mather the authors Ibarra and Sackley pen out the entire evolution of this world-renowned advertising and marketing communication agency. Ogilvy & Mather was started by David Ogilvy in 1948 who ran a small tobacco shop in Pennsylvania with just \$6000 in his bank and nothing but big dreams in his eyes. The story is justice to all the curations that David Ogilvy bought after he created a buzz with his series of campaigns that gave Ogilvy & Mather the first-class tag in the advertising and media industry. When one sees the evolution of the advertising industry and Ogilvy leading the pack it does make them believe that this agency wasn't - "the most local of the internationals, but the most international of the locals." With worldwide offices being opened and spearheaded from the world capital New York at the time it completely defined in every aspect as - "the class act of Madison Avenue" (Ibarra & Sackley, 2011).

Situation Analysis when Charlotte Beer's stepped in as CEO:

But like they say every tide does subside and has to build up again to rise the boats again. Most often we forget that after subsiding the boats that rose with it require some patching. In this very vulnerable state that Ogilvy & Mather was in the year 1989 came in Charlotte Beers as the newly elected CEO of the firm after being hostilely takeover by the WPP Group. The firm was bleeding with its major clients departing due to the beleaguered title and poor budgeting techniques of the firm. Charlotte Beers also was known to have built her career from being a cowboy's daughter in Texas to the first women ever as the chairman of the American Association of Advertising Agencies. She was an "outsider" like the few of the firm's orthodox executives said but she had a knack for advertising and a very sharp business acumen that help her bring a fresh perspective in the firm.

Core Problems that made Ogilvy "beleaguered":

After being appointed as the CEO the first thing Charlotte took up was to address the employees who had snuck into the shells of paranoia and sluggish ways of working after the takeover. But the major issue with her "Hello" video that she released that it lacked a plan of action. Although she intended to bring the change for good, her approach of seeking help from the internal team members was a big debacle. In my opinion the major problems for Charlotte were -

- i. **Lack of internal support** - There was no support from the existing C-suite and executive employees to Charlotte and her new endeavors as their CEO. One can move mountains if he has the right support and foundations but that is what Charlotte was deprived off at Ogilvy.

- ii. **Working in fiefdoms and not as a team** - When Charlotte visited their clients personally to reassure their faith in Ogilvy, thanks to Ogilvy's goodwill they opened up to her about the disinvolvement of their senior managers and directors. The entire firm was working as separate entities and not one which was a major setback too
- iii. **Lack of understanding about brand stewardship** - After she created the "Thirsty for change" group to cater to the regional offices and evaluate their problems which included no title rewards and including only those who she thought understood. It was really essential to spread that understanding amongst the rest of the employees.

Her initiative for brand stewardship is what hit Ogilvy's ball out of the stadium and cleared off their smeared reputation of "beleaguered Ogilvy." But the main issue is to penetrate the understanding of brand stewardship and map out the clear distinction between what a brand print and advertising strategy.

Goal:

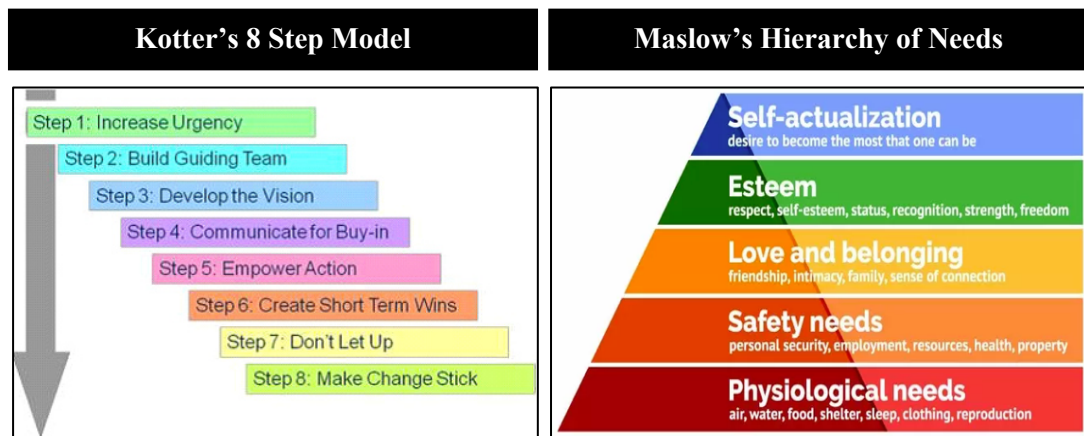
The main goal is to induce the process of implementing brand stewardship among each and every employee at Ogilvy. Apart from the Thirsty from change group it is extremely essential to make each and every employee at Ogilvy well versed with what "Brand Stewardship" is and how one must implement the same for their clients.

Strategies and Objectives:

Now, the whole crux of the matter is to communicate these strategies to the last branch of Ogilvy's widespread family or fiefdoms to be precise. In order to implement these strategies few necessary objectives are to be laid down. As per Charlotte there were 3 most important strategies that needed to be implemented to build brand stewardship and as her Director of Communications below are some primary objectives for each strategy -

- i. **Client Security** - The fact that it takes almost 3 years to recover the loss of one client it is extremely important to focus on client security. Below are some objectives to retain clients and keep them secure -
 - a. Tighten the grip of multinational clients: This can be done by regular check-in or townhall meetings with the clients and regional team by Charlotte herself
 - b. Focus on client engagement: Previously clients complained about the disinvolvement of managers and executives in their projects. We need to ensure maximum participation by all employees on the project by mandating certain meetings and engagement activities with the client

- ii. **Better Work More Often** - Like David Ogilvy said either - “We Sell or Else,” ((Ibarra & Sackley, 2011). Hence, only one primary objective must be implemented but withal its specifications i.e., -
- a. Fulfilling the employees needs/giving ample credit - Working better is an individual task that can be achieved when one is provided with the right motivation. We can use Maslow’s Hierarchical Needs or John Kotter’s 8 step change model for the same. Details for the further implementation of these theories can be customized as per the region and type of projects.

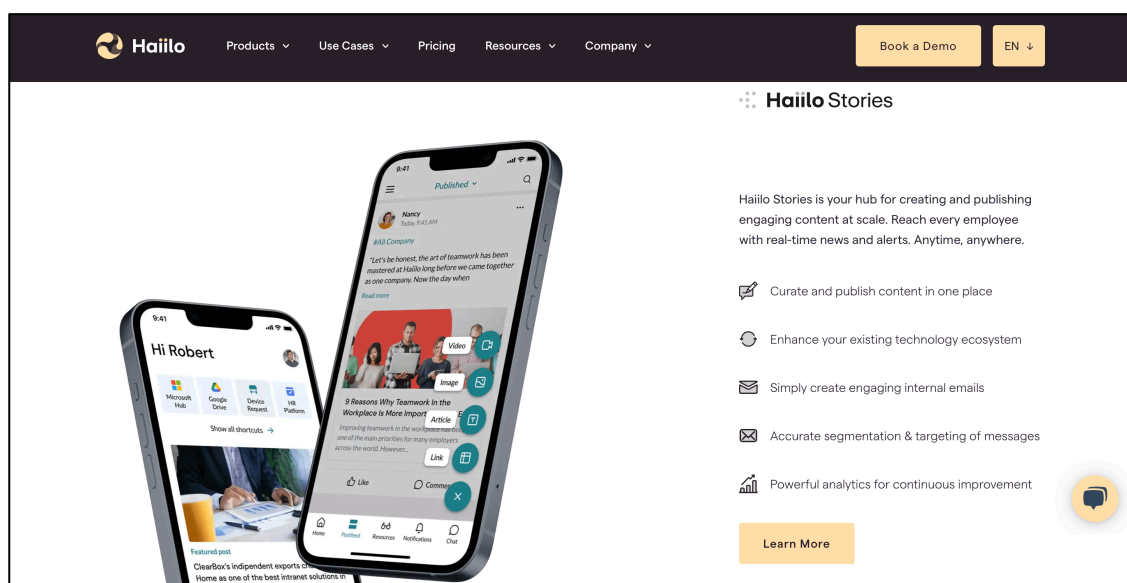


- iii. **Financial Discipline** - Ever since Charlotte stepped into the firm everybody treated her as an outsider and always had one complain with her and that is that she would not pay attention towards the “financial minutia” of the clients. When the entire firm along with some not so supportive executives could feel that Charlotte was not okaying heed to the financials. This is a mandatory change that can be implemented by -
- a. Reduce operation costs - This is possible by increasing the efficiency of providing services and reducing insurance costs of the organization at a bleak stock market level.
- b. Reduce liquidate assets that are futile - This may not be the best approach but if there are certain fiefdoms that are worth being pulled to a major center then the offices can be liquidated to free some money.

Recommendations and Tools:

When it comes to using the necessary tools to activate the “Brand Stewardship” - Charlotte wanted everyone in their firm to be able to conduct a “brand audit”. After all, that was what helped Ogilvy come up with their Brand Prints for clients like Jaguar, Dove etc., Below are some other recommendations apart from the 4 implications that Charlotte has implemented. These suggestions are to mitigate their biggest problem of insufficient communication -

- i. **Charlotte on World Tour** - This involves Charlotte travelling to every country where Ogilvy has its presence and holding workshops/townhalls which facilitate direct interaction of the employees with her. As she had the depth of understanding and Ogilvy lacks missionaries like her.
- ii. **Making Email Communications Interactive** - Ditching the old school posters and newsletters in order to enhance the internal communications the easiest way is to definitely use the email - but with a twist. There is an Employee Engagement app called [Hailo](#) that enables people to curate creative content and update the latest changes just like Instagram but just for the organization. It even has an insights tab which gives you a brief report of the employee engagement to take necessary steps for future communications.



- iii. **Social media giveaways by using brand merchandise** - We all know that every person in today's world uses at least 2 social media platforms. By using these very platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, TikTok. We can create activities that force employee to think creatively and engage online while they are just browsing through their phones. Creative and fun giveaway contests that just might involve scanning and keeping track of their client's social media engagement, social shares etc., and making reels or creative content around it. We can announce winners and best performers and even accord them with some brand merchandises because we all know how much we love company gifts.

Implementation and Effects –

- i. **Social Media at their disposal** – Social media is that tool in today's date that cannot be overlooked by companies if they want to stay ahead in their advertising and marketing. As per Lynn, C (May 2020) social media is nothing, but the extension of external marketing and Employee advocacy is a powerful tool to increase company efforts on social media. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok etc., were all used personally which then was made public and companies started using it for their benefits as well. For example – If Harry Reid (CEO of O&M - Europe & London) would have had a Twitter account where he became popular because of his personal tweets or thoughts it will have significant impact on people's view about O&M. Therefore, employees directly affect the social image of a company and Charlotte must focus on guiding her team to keep an eye for what is called the 'social minefield'. (Lynn, C. May 2020). One way could be to conduct their own brand audits internally in order to make Ogilvy "redder" as Charlotte suggested.
- ii. **Guidelines not Strategies** - Next is to implement guidelines coming straight from our "quintessential Charlotte". The approach is not to implement another set of policies but guidelines. The approach is to lay down guidelines and not strategies or policies. Policies are meant to be mandatory and are more like rules that are imposed. However, when we say there are certain guidelines to be followed more people tend to inculcate it in their ways of working. Therefore, Charlotte can focus on providing guidance and not imposing policies to improvise their client relations or brand audit techniques. Also, according to Lynn, C (May 2020) social media guidelines are the bridge between internal communications and social media and that is exactly what Charlotte quotes she wanted to be - "It was my job to be the bridge" (Ibarra & Sackley, 2011). Ogilvy can imbibe the usage of social media platforms for their benefits not as an imposition but as in a way of their own that makes them unique thus making them the brand ambassadors for the brand. Its only when a leader shows the bigger picture to the employees will they know how their actions will contribute to achieving that goal.
- iii. **Creating Consumer like Experiences for Employees** - At the end of the day employees and customers are humans and each employee is also a customer to another company/brand. Hence, another way to enhance the employee engagement in the firm is to treat each employee also as customers. For example - employees expect - much like the products they buy – that the brand should work to sell them the company's "exceptionality", which can often be seen on their social media accounts like Instagram or Twitter. It's become less about the product and more about the brand personality. (Musso, A. 2022).
- iv. **Enabling Horizontal Working** - One of the best advantages of using social media is that it eliminates the hierarchy of communications. Let's take LinkedIn for example. Although the platform is meant for professional networking there is a certain relaxed feeling about using the same because it is social media and that is how all the other platforms also feel. One would feel it easier to message someone on LinkedIn than

email them regarding some work or campaign. The point is that communication gets easier and barrier free enabling the horizontal structure of working. As for Ogilvy, Charlotte was promoting the brand audit that involves boosting the brand name of the client. My suggestion is that why not create that passionate and engaged workforce within the organization and encourage the fact that your employees can be your best brand ambassadors.

Gantt Chart –

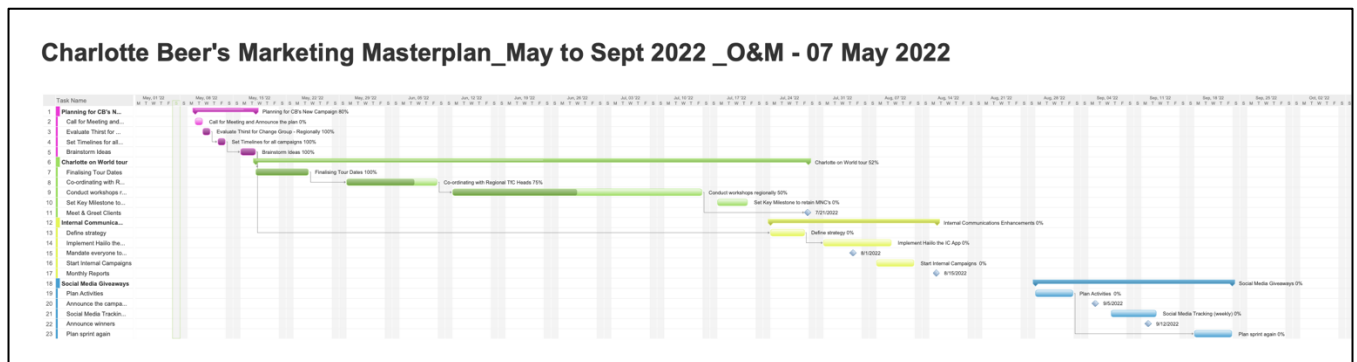
- Gantt Chart made on Project Manager - (Invite to collaboratively see and work on the project has been sent to s.gresh@northeastern.edu) -

<https://software.projectmanager.com/project/plan/M>

- Attached is the excel of the Gantt Chart ----



- **Timeline Allotment for Charlotte Beer's 6-month Communication Plan -**



Conclusion -

In a nutshell, internal communications require the same level of care and planning as customer, partner and recruiting communications do. There's no such thing as traditional or new media. All there is media and marketing, and both require a constant state of tactical evolution. Hope that this 6-month camping works best for Charlotte Beer in regaining her internal company support and bounce back into the market creating a niche yet again by being the best at "Brand Stewardship".

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