

Ella Baars

Dr. Mark Glantz

Introduction to Public Relations

14 April, 2025

Huy Fong Foods' Sriracha

Situation

Sriracha is a product that almost everyone is familiar with. Most kitchens have that clear plastic bottle with a rooster on it stored somewhere, and the name itself is household. However, Huy Fong foods, the company which makes and distributes their famous sriracha, has never once hired a salesperson or put out an ad to market their most famous product. The company, built from the ground up by David Tran, a Vietnamese immigrant (Bual). In the decades he has been selling his sriracha, he has increased his profits from \$2300 in the first month to a whopping \$150 million dollars annually in 2015, taking up 10% of the United States' hot sauce market (Nuwer). Huy Fong's website is a simple, single page with their three products being the main attraction. The brand has no mission statement, does no marketing, and yet is still beloved by consumers around America. Clearly, the reason they are in business is the quality of their product, a strength that nearly offsets all of their weaknesses related to branding and marketing. The possibilities of how far the brand could go with a small amount of effort put into advertising or public relations are endless, though, and worth being explored.

The social responsibility tied to this campaign will have to do with education. Huy Fong Foods will donate some percentage of their profit to both Vietnamese and United States education departments. The tagline of the entire campaign will be "X percentage of American adults cannot spell sriracha. So let's start by teaching our kids. Huy Fong Sriracha fuels your

food and your community”. This will hopefully be a non-controversial and successful campaign for both the company and for literacy rates across the globe.

To narrow down the plan of action, focus group research would need to be conducted. Within these focus groups, questions asked to get more information about how specifically to make the most of advertising could be as such: Are you confident that you can spell sriracha? Why do you reach for Huy Fong sriracha on the shelves? If you don’t use it, what could help convince you to try it? How important is public education, and why do you think that? Does the Vietnamese on the bottle confuse you or lead you to trust them? If asked to talk to your friends about sriracha, what would you say? I believe that the answers to these questions will assist the team creating the campaign in the language choices used as well as what will motivate people to try or continue to buy Huy Fong Sriracha.

Objectives

The motivation for this campaign would be motivational, while still placing a focus on getting information about the brand out to the general public. As the objective seeks to motivate, though, the goals are based on measurable success for the brand. Below are three objective statements for this campaign.

- Driving sales growth- We hope to increase sales by 20% (about 7.5 million) for Huy Fong Foods over the course of our 6 month campaign.
- Supporting worldwide education- We will donate 5% of our profits campaign-period profits to Vietnamese and American education departments, seeking to help underprivileged families and students.

- Fostering community engagement- Generate over 5 million social media impressions and create entertaining and motivating media kits, while simultaneously partnering with influencers and educators to spread our message.

Audience

This campaign will range over different types of media, hoping to reach the largest audience possible. Obviously, we hope to entertain and sustain our existing consumers, but we also hope to engage new ones as well. Within the scope of this social responsibility campaign, demographics most likely to engage positively with media about the US and Vietnamese education departments, such as immigrants, parents, teachers and professors, and college graduates, will be the priority audience.

As for psychographic factors, we expect that a more left-leaning attitude is to be expected due to the nature of the social responsibility piece of the campaign. However, as not to alienate the rest of America, the advertising will not be focused on politics, but rather the younger generation- and will be humorous in nature. Next to that, millennials and generation z are expected to be large participants, as they are often driven to purchase products with purpose. Finally, foodies and chefs will be likely to engage with this product, if unfamiliar, since they seek bold flavor and food trends.

Strategies

This campaign will aim to show consumers that Huy Fong sriracha sauce is associated with important ideals such as authentic heritage and cultural pride, education equality, community commitment, and trust. I believe that by donating profits to both American and Vietnamese educational institutions, it will foster a sense of belonging and community between the two by mirroring David Tran's own success as an immigrant, while also emphasizing the

investment into America's future as a place where the "American Dream" can still be realized. Also, we will promote accountability and trust by going public with our donations, (offering tracking as well as ways for the public to donate to both causes separately), and sticking to the promises that will be made. Hopefully, influencers and people within the community will also contribute to these themes, making the brand not only appeal to the pantry, but to the values of the people.

Tactics

Our advertising campaign will take a mostly online approach, with a series of video ads to be played on television and social media. Within these more traditional commercials and advertisements, I expect there to be a large focus on school settings, perhaps students sitting in a cafeteria in the US as well as Vietnam passing around the iconic sriracha bottle, including the message "Can YOU spell sriracha?" with "sriracha" being spelled multiple ways in children's handwriting. I also plan to boost engagement with the brand by sponsoring content related to the brand, for example being taken to the Huy Fong Foods' website in Google searches like "best hot sauce" or "socially responsible food brands". Going back to social media, I would like to partner with influencers, specifically vietnamese creators, teachers, mukbangers, or cooking accounts by offering to send them a bottle of sriracha for free if they included it in a video with an honest review. We could also ask them to caption the post with information about the campaign, such as "Huy Fong Foods' Sriracha is partnering with me to promote an incredibly important cause: education!" As for earned media, obviously press releases and news features are hopeful opportunities ("Huy Fong Foods Spices Up Education: Sriracha Brand Pledges Profits to Schools"). If willing, having David Tran on news segments like Good Morning America to speak about the campaign could be a major way to spread awareness. Finally, creating engagement

online is one of our goals, so coming up with hashtags like #SrirachaforEducation, #SpiceUpEducation, or #FutureOnFire that community members could contribute heavily to our plan for 5 million impressions.

Schedule and Timetable

- **Pre-launch:** Make concrete decisions as a company (with David Tran, founder) on the focuses, media kits, and numbers associated with the campaign. Draft press releases, try and secure earned media and partnerships
- **Day 1:** Campaign launch! Press releases sent to news networks and papers, go live with hashtags, paid ads, sponsored searches, and make the donation tracker live with updates every few hours or as necessary.
- **Month 1:** Release special “Education Edition” sriracha bottles in stores across the country, David Tran interview on large news network (Good Morning America, The Tonight Show). Begin filming and releasing advertising material and commercials with students as focal points.
- **Month 2:** Huy Fong Foods’ social media accounts all post about and then host LIVE events with celebrity chefs creating recipes with the limited edition sriracha, commentary on the importance of education
- **Month 3:** One-day Huy Fong Foods Festival in Los Angeles (headquarters) with spicy food vendors all promoting sriracha, live music, and cultural exhibits (with a large emphasis on Vietnamese history. Have David Tran speak about the campaign and his personal connections to it. Urge people to post while at the event with one of the hashtags mentioned above for a chance to win merch or a free lifetime supply of sriracha.

- **Month 5:** Continue to push ads and sponsored content, partnering with influencers. Recap campaign highlights (biggest donation days, festival, testimonials). Retarget ads and media to attract more new customers.
- **Month 6:** Post about the final donation announcement on all social media platforms, have David Tran meet with Department of Education and Ministry of Education and Training officials and create media with them shaking hands, perhaps giant checks, and finally announce a recurring commitment to education. (“To show that we are serious about education and community, Huy Fong Sriracha will create a scholarship fund for Vietnamese and American students whose education may be at risk”)

Evaluation

In order to gauge how effective this campaign was for both Huy Fong Foods and for its causes, research will be planned and conducted after the campaign has ended. To gauge consumer impressions of the brand, I plan to conduct additional focus groups with identical questions as the first to see how answers have (hopefully) changed to be more positive. Additionally, looking into statistics regarding the selling performance of our brand versus other hot sauce brands such as Tabasco in the 6 months of the campaign. Looking into how many people clicked on sponsored searches, engagement with hashtags, and asking for testimonials of people at the festival could all help determine consumer opinions. Looking back on our objectives, we will know if we were successful by determining if we met (or exceeded) our goals concerning sales, donations, and impressions. A post-campaign report will be drafted to gauge the effectiveness, taking into account all of the above metrics.

Works Cited

Bual, H. (2025, May 3). *How Huy Fong's sriracha hit \$150 million a year in sales - with Zero marketing*. Vietcetera.

<https://vietcetera.com/en/how-huy-fongs-sriracha-hit-150-million-a-year-in-sales-with-zero-marketing>

Nuwer, R. (2013, April 18). *How a Vietnamese refugee built the multi-million dollar sriracha hot sauce empire*. Smithsonian.com.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/how-a-vietnamese-refugee-built-the-multi-million-dollar-sriracha-hot-sauce-empire-25106345/>