

**OMG! He Said What? (A&E's Duck Dynasty Situation)**

*Barbara Schuldt, Southeastern Louisiana University*

*Jeff Totten, McNeese State University*

**Abstract**

This incident deals with the controversial interview in *GQ* magazine with Phil Robertson, founder of West Monroe, Louisiana -based Duck Commander and family patriarch on A&E's "Duck Dynasty" reality television show. Robertson, a devout and conservative Christian, made some highly inflammatory comments about homosexuals and African-Americans in the pre-Civil Rights era. The A&E network suspended Robertson amid lots of PR, social media, and print commentaries and then reinstated him. The student is asked to assess how A&E handled the PR controversy and to provide suggestions for how the network should have handled the situation.

**Learning Outcomes**

In completing this assignment, students should be able to:

1. Assess a public relations controversial situation for implications to the firm's reputation.
2. Prepare several strategies for minimizing damage to a firm's reputation and relationship with all publics involved.
3. Conduct a stakeholder analysis of the A&E/Robertson situation.
4. Discuss the best practices that should be followed by a firm when dealing with an outspoken celebrity.

**Application**

This critical incident is appropriate for the Public Relations component of an Integrated Marketing Communications course and specific Public Relations Management courses. It may also be used in a Principles of Marketing course after the chapters on the Promotion Mix have been covered.

**Key Words**

*Duck Dynasty*, controversy, A&E network, public relations, social media

**Contact**

Jeff Totten, MMBA Department, Box 92135, McNeese State University, Lake Charles, LA 70609. Email [jtotten@mcneese.edu](mailto:jtotten@mcneese.edu). Phone 337-475-5534.