

The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge: The Good, the Bad, and the Money

Cheryl B. Ward, Middle Tennessee State University
Diane R. Edmondson, Middle Tennessee State University

Abstract

“C’mon, c’mon...” Josh muttered anxiously as he checked his social media, “maybe someone challenged me today.” Josh Bryant was a typical teen who had been waiting impatiently for someone to issue him the “ALS Ice Bucket Challenge.” Not being challenged brought back bad memories of being picked last in gym class. Josh didn’t understand why some people were challenged multiple times while others were not invited to participate.

The ALS Association had challenges to deal with as well. Having no way to anticipate the immense popularity of the Challenge, the organization was not prepared for the overwhelming response of the social campaign. The ALS Association realized they needed to evaluate the pros and cons of the Ice Bucket Challenge, acknowledging they were not exactly sure how to handle this success. Where did the organization go from here? Could they continue to build on the success of this social media campaign?

Learning Outcomes

In completing this assignment, students should be able to:

1. Analyze why people participate in viral marketing campaigns.
2. Evaluate the pros and cons of the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge campaign.

Application

This critical incident is most appropriate for courses in marketing, social media, consumer behavior, promotion, non-profit, and social responsibility.

Key Words

marketing, social media, consumer behavior, non-profit, social responsibility

Contact

Cheryl B. Ward, Department of Marketing, Middle Tennessee State University, Box 40, Murfreesboro, TN 37132. Email cheryl.ward@mtsu.edu. Phone 615.898.2433.