

How would an organization develop such a misguided culture?

2. Louis Freeh discovered that a janitor saw Jerry Sandusky abusing a boy in the showers in 2000, but said nothing because he was afraid to “take on the football program.” Why do you think that certain organizational departments and programs develop a mystique such

that their activities and behaviors cannot be challenged nor questioned? What can organizations do to prevent this from happening?

Sources: Belson, K. 2012. Abuse scandal inquiry damns Paterno and Penn State. *The New York Times*, July 12.

Freeh, L. J. 2012. *The Freeh Report on Pennsylvania State University*. Available at <http://progress.psu.edu/the-freeh-report>.

Advertising & Sales Promotion Cases

Pepsi's iPhone App Stereotypes Women

ETHICS CASE

In October 2009, PepsiCo Inc. launched, apologized, and then pulled an iPhone application called “AMP Up Before You Score,” designed to promote its Amp Energy drink. The drink’s target market is males between the ages of 18 and 24. Released on October 8, the app stereotyped women into two dozen groups, including “rebound girl,” “sorority girl,” “cougar,” and “foreign exchange student.” Users could flip through a series of digital cards that provided background information on each type of woman, including how to calculate a carbon footprint to score with a “treehugger,” as well as strategies on how to seduce a “married” girl. It also provided some pick-up lines: “Wasn’t I in Space Academy with you?” for the “nerd,” and for the “artist” it suggested “You know the Mona Lisa has no eyebrows. I wonder what else she shaves.” The app included a “Brag List” so that guys who “scored” could post a name, the date, and any other information on their Facebook or Twitter accounts.

Pepsi was inundated with criticism from blogs, emails, and the media. The app was accused of being sexist because it degraded and objectified women. On October 12,

Pepsi apologized through its Tweeter page: “Our app tried 2 show the humorous lengths guys go 2 pick up women. We apologize if it’s in bad taste & appreciate your feedback.”¹ But not all the feedback was negative. Many males said that they considered it to be funny. Nevertheless, on October 22 Pepsi announced that it was withdrawing the app. “We have decided to discontinue the AMP iPhone application. We’ve listened to a variety of audiences and determined this was the most appropriate course of action.”²

Questions

1. Do you find it interesting that most of the critics were women and the media, but those who considered the app to be funny were young men?
2. The target market of Amp Energy is males between the ages of 18 and 24. If this group of consumers found the iPhone amp to be funny and acceptable, then why did Pepsi withdraw the app?
3. Are advertising campaigns that are in bad taste also unethical?

¹Valerie Bauerlein and Suzanne Vranica. 2009. “Drink’s iPhone ‘App’ Gets Anger Flowing.” *The Wall Street Journal* (October 14).

²Brian Morrissey. 2009. “Pepsi Pulls Amp iPhone App.” *Adweek* (October 22).