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Marketing a better world - Pimp My Cause

For many charities and community groups marketing is one of their areas of work that gets left out. More often than not they don't have the budget to spend and even if they do it's hard to commission with confidence someone to help. Yet in this increasingly competitive world good marketing is even more important to help charities stand out from the crowd and ensure their stakeholders get to hear what they have to say and offer.



With this in mind a new service has evolved and it's called **Pimp My Cause**. Essentially an online forum that brings together marketing companies and professionals that want to give their time for free to help charities.

Communications agencies have often been willing to undertake pro bono work, but unable to easily find the right opportunities for them. Pimp My Cause makes it quick and easy for them to find a great cause to get involved with, giving them a chance to make new connections, address new challenges and build their portfolio and reputation.

The first project done through the site was done by Alex Epstein, of the BBC's Apprentice, for UK Youth, producing a new marketing strategy based on participatory campaigns and youth development initiatives.

To find out more and to get involved or to get help for your project go to the [Pimp My Cause website](#).

Comments


jcravens42
 11th October at 17:58

You have got to freakin' be kidding me! There is NOTHING cute or funny about the word "pimp". A pimp is a slave dealer, someone who traffics humans for sex. And there has never been a time in human history when there have been more slaves on Earth than *right now*. Why in the world would any company create something called "Pimp My Cause"?! What's next - "Reach Kids Like an Internet Pedophile!"? Commemorative IYV+10 "wife beater" t-shirts? "Learn to Screw the Competition and Get That Foundation Grant!"?

I'm all for being edgy but, please - this is just wrong on every level!


Nic
 11th October at 20:05

You are simply overreacting here. The fact is that the word Pimp has been common parlance quite clearly for many years, with all readers knowing that it used differently to its initial usage. Anybody involved in marketing needs to brand themselves in a way that suits their cause and you may not like it but that is fact. There is no way any person with half a brain could seriously have read 'Pimp My Cause' as meaning that they are going to sell sex for a 'pimp'. The point that you seem to have missed here is that this gives people an incredibly valuable opportunity to get hands on experience in an extremely tough labour market and, concurrently, give invaluable time and skills to their favourite charities. This is very clearly a win for all

Post Info

Date Published
6th October at 16:34

Tags

marketing/PR

Ratings

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concerned, whether you are happy with their chosen parlance or not!

 jcravens42
11th October at 20:33

So, Nic, it's now okay to say, "That is so GAY" when you find something strange or unusual, despite the outcry from the gay community?

It's now okay to call all your female colleagues "Bitches" - because, the word "has been common parlance quite clearly for many years," with all your female colleagues "knowing that it used differently to its initial usage."

Really?

Which one of the following is something that a company actually thought was a great name for a product, event or service?

Here's some equally great ideas for names of services for nonprofits:

Market to Kids Like an Internet Pedophile! Reach Any Kid With Your Message!

Women's Shelter Wife Beater T-shirts (fundraiser!)

Nonprofit Marketing: How to Sell Yourself Like a Whore (but not get screwed over!)

Just because *you* don't find it offensive doesn't mean other people don't. What you seem to have missed here is that this service is extremely poorly named, it's name is offensive, and its noble cause does NOT excuse that.

Here's my blog that explains more why this is oh-so-wrong:

<http://coyoteblog.posterous.com/a-stupid-name-for-a-service-for-nonprofits>

 NewsHound
11th October at 20:34

Sorry if this has offended you @jcravens42 We can understand your sentiments - "pimp" has retained it's original meaning so casual use of the term would be quite offensive if you were an anti-slavery campaigner or a support worker for trafficked women and children or sex workers. That said, context is everything and it's clear that the creators of the Pimp My Cause platform have deliberately chosen to adopt a controversial name making use of the secondary meaning of "pimp" (and continuing the theme in the rest of the site as evidenced by the Find a Pro section - when "Pro" is an abbreviation for both professional and prostitute) so as to attract attention and a youthful edge that will presumably appeal to the marketing industry but less so to the traditional charity sector. In marketing terms sex sells and erotic capital is simply a commodity so the branding may be offensive to some but Pimp My Cause are simply trying to stay in tune with the language of our times and for this reason we are happy to promote them.

 jcravens42
11th October at 20:44

"but Pimp My Cause are simply trying to stay in tune with the language of our times"

And so, to all of the millions of women and children currently being sold and traded for sex, you say, "Ha ha! Lighten up! Language of our times"?

Will you now start calling things that are strange or unusual as "Gay" - because, after all - language of our times!

And when will you be marketing your book "Nonprofit Marketing: How to Sell Yourself Like a Whore (but not get screwed over!)", because I really want to be sure to blog about that as well.

You need to spend about an hour looking at the anti-sex-trafficking sites I linked to on my blog. You need to read about this horrendous human rights violation. And then you need to go look in a mirror.



Nic
11th October at 20:55

Frankly life is too short for a self righteous lecture! I don't intend to waste my time waving my PC credentials around or discussing my extensive professional experience in the areas you are on your soapbox about. In the midst of this rant did you consider what they were ACTUALLY DOING and what you thought of that? To be honest I find your attitude excessively aggressive and offensive and wonder whether this is the appropriate place for you to making such inappropriate assertions and self promoting. For my part I am no longer interested in engaging with you - I prefer rational exchanges.



Nic
11th October at 20:58

PS - I very much appreciate ivolunteer.org.uk bringing to my attention such an excellent programme and I hope that you will keep us posted on their activities and successes.



jcravens42
Profile thumb for
jcravens42
11th October at 21:17

Oxford English Dictionary editor at large Jesse Sheidlower:

"This is not a word where its original sexual meaning has largely been forgotten," said Sheidlower. "Pimp still has that main meaning, and there is no question what it's supposed to imply."

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/Vote2008/story?id=4274500&page=1>



jcravens42
Profile thumb for
jcravens42
11th October at 21:19

What they are "actually doing" does NOT justify glorifying the selling of women and children for sex. No cause, however noble, gets a pass on using the word for a slave trader as a name for its service to nonprofits. I'll continue to stand up for exploited women and girls against people like you who just shrug their shoulders and say, "no big deal."



PaulPMC
Profile thumb for
PaulPMC
12th October at 10:42

Thanks everyone for your support!

Obviously the name Pimp My Cause is a gentle ironic subversion of modern "bling" culture. We are taking the concept of Pimp My Ride – in which old bangers are transformed and re-vamped by top mechanics much to their owners' delight – and asking what would it look like if professional marketers chose instead to offer their talent to something more worthwhile – such as the charity or social venture of their choice?

We've had a number of volunteers on Pimp My Cause who have participated in the BBC's Apprentice show, and a similar question could be asked there. What could be achieved if instead of fictional case studies, the candidates were from time to time asked to contribute their professional insights and energy to supporting a good cause as one of the tasks on the show?

Or how might a "green" Dragon's Den work where funding is allocated to the projects most likely to generate not shareholder returns, but social and environmental benefits?

We are relentlessly positive in our approach and believe that the best way to help ourselves is to help each other. When marketers contribute their considerable expertise and talent (many of our marketers are multi-award winning) to causes that build social and environmental value, isn't there a chance that they will learn something in the process of relevance to the demands placed on them at a time when we are struggling to find ways

to develop sustainable business approaches and good corporate citizenship?

We've built Pimp My Cause by donating ourselves and our own funds and after a very short period are already supporting over 200 charities and social ventures. We also do not charge either the causes or the marketers for access to this service. We hope that most marketers will either feel inspired to see the difference they can make, or simply wish us well while they pursue their own approaches.



NewsHound

12th October at 10:43

From the same quoted text, 'Barry Popik, a contributor to the Oxford English Dictionary, told ABCNEWS.com that he doesn't believe the word packs as much punch as it used to.

"In my opinion, 'pimp' has certainly been watered down from what it once was," Popik told ABCNEWS.com in an e-mail. "But it's all in the context -- the same with 'bitches' and 'hos.'

The context here is clear and it is not meant to offend.



Dazzle

Profile thumb for Dazzle

12th October at 13:57

Just because the Oxford English Dictionary (or any other dictionary) says that a word has a particular meaning does not mean that we have to switch off our brain cells.

It's quite clear that 'pimp' in this context does not have the repellent connotations it has in other circumstances - as most people posting on this site realise.



uncollectiveconscious

Profile thumb for uncollectiveconscious

14th October at 11:33

First and foremost in the words of Voltaire...Whilst I may not agree with what you say, I will defend to the death your right to say it.

This is in respect of all of the previous comments, and those which may follow my posting.

Free speech after all, is something Men and Women have fought and died for; and by enlarge the ability to speak freely and voice an opinion, is a mark of a civilised society.

And so...my comment/observation is this.

As any linguist would tell you, English is and always has been a living language, and what words are offensive today will not be tomorrow.

Equally, the meaning and inference of words change, probably the most obvious of which to most is the word "gay", which in English/UK culture, according to dictionaries of the time, and historic context/use meant happy, bright and jolly, and "Gay" had no connection whatsoever, in respect of a persons sexuality.

So when someone says you are "gay"; an older person i.e. Octogenarian, may still mean you seem happy, joyful, etc. So we need to be mindful of our own bias, based on for example our age, and what we understand and deem a word to mean.

Or do we say to older people who may use the word to mean joyous, that they are wrong, and homophobic!?

The word pimp seems to be undergoing a similar linguistic change in respect of its common use, (such changes take time), and certainly in England/UK; pimp is now often seen to mean and represent making something better, improving, enhancing; as such we now see on mainstream TV, programs such as, as been mentioned, "Pimp my Ride", again referring to the

customisation/improvement of vehicles, and not darker things.

Of course "Pimp my ride" could quite easily be read and seen in a different way, as such as with much of English language, it's often more about context than the word itself.

Examples of the importance of context can be found all over the place, no more so than interactions between people, often close friends, where words often seen as being generally negative are used in a positive friendly way, i.e. upon meeting a friend in the UK, one might say, "How you doing you old xxx", or in the main Women rather than Men, may refer to each other, or indeed themselves as a "Silly Cow", (accompanied buy laughter).

Equally, gay Men may call each other an old Queen, etc; and all said in a friendly way; again, one of the strange but endearing qualities of the rich English language.

I could if I was so inclined be offended by jccravens use of the word freakin; "You have got to freakin' be kidding me!"

Why, because the word "freakin", is a derivative of Friggin/ing, which in England/UK is historically not a word one would use; as it means to Masturbate.

This again not only demonstrates context, but also highlights that what words/phrases that are deemed acceptable in one part of the world, are not always acceptable and or appropriate in other parts, and as a result an American may feel perfectly fine in using freakin, and not give it a second thought, but this is not a word I would use, another example may be Butt/Arse

So am I to be offended at jccravens use of the word "feakin", na' friggin!?

NO! Why?

Well firstly, because of the context in respect of its use, and secondly that fact that unfortunatley we always seem to be accommodating people who are "offended", about everything, and at every opportunity, The so called "professionally offended", PC brigade, and who if they were not offended at one thing they would look until they found something to offend them.

However, I am more likely to be offended at the fact that jccraven only mentions females in the context of pimp/ing, harm, abuse etc, and makes no specific reference or mention of similar in respect of Boys and Men, and/or the fact that Women are also perpetrators of "pimping" etc, in the sense she means; which of course, is equally abhorrent!

To that end, unfortunatley, jccravens words come across more as an increasingly hostile, anti Male feminist, rant, rather than an objective considered balanced argument, and one which takes into consideration linguistics, context, environment and culture in respect of the written word; as such I think the argument and message, however valid, has been lost as a result of this stance/approach.



JamieT
Profile Mumb for JamieT
17th October at 14:50

Hi @jcravens42, thanks for raising this. I do empathise with your view here but I also think that context is key. Words do evolve and we have long seen the word Pimp being used in other contexts, such as Pimp My Ride which has been around for some years, and it's clear to me that Pimp My Cause is intended as a positive venture. But it's an interesting issue. I came across a book at the

weekend called Pimp Your Words, a modern day guide to teen slang, which includes a reference to the use of the word gay which many teens use now to describe something as being rubbish rather than being about sexuality. Some gay people find this offensive - I know I did when I heard my younger sister using it a few years ago, but I accepted it as an example of how words and their meanings evolve over time.



Having wrote a little myself in respect of the use of the word "pimp", I thought it would be good to provide what hopefully is a further independent academic perspective, and evidence as to living language, beyond simple dictionary references, as such the following as been written by my Son who is a graduate in Linguistics, and Japanese culture.

When we look at language it is important to consider that as a species we have evolved to use constructed language through our cultural needs. "Language" is more common amongst animals than people generally accept. But what differs is the human desire to place connotation in order to maintain certain "cultural normality" amongst members. Humans actually have because of this desire for "cultural normality" become the most fragmented language users of any species, the only form of language that remains even remotely closely linked is non-verbal language which is essentially our pre-sentient language and even that has fragmentation.

This fragmentation is caused by cultural splits, and therefore indicates that textual language by which textual in this instance is to mean spoken or written language is driven by the complexity of sentient communication, and in turn hints that our culture is the primary driving force of textual language.

Take for instance if you will. Love amongst the west if your relationship partner never said "I love you" you would most likely become upset.

Whereas in Japan to say "I love you" throughout the 20th century has been one of the biggest causes of concerns amongst partners as it causes much suspicion.

Why? Because the language was placed without the cultural foundation.

During the Meiji period 1867 C.E., Japan suddenly (at cannon point) opened its doors to the west after over 200 years of isolation. Where the west developed renaissance ideals such as romance literature.

The Japanese remained feudal, marriages were often arranged and romance rarely played a part in Japanese life.

Suddenly however when Japan opens it's doors and the literature of romance comes into Japan. Japan is faced with this influx of words such as love it must translate, however although using a word such as "aishiteru" may be adequate it does not hold the same meaning as the connotations of love are not culturally the same.

Only through nearly 150 years of cultural adjustment is a common understanding of love and the west coming into play and the word aishieru is obtaining a connotation similar to the words found in the western languages. This has not come about from changing the word but through changing the culture. That is of course a cross-cultural application of language and culture. But it works on a domestic cultural scale.

Anyone ever remember saying “pink that’s a girl’s colour”? Again cultural change. In fact historically it is the other way around. It is in fact a cultural change in the latter half of the 20th century that has enforced the word “pink” as having cultural connotations as a girls colour.

As many of us were born in the latter half we are unaware of the cultural change and therefore it locks itself in as the cultural norm.

In the same way as the word gay has undergone several cultural changes. Firstly it started its roots as meaning happy or jolly, then goes on to mean homosexual one may presume this was founded from the old words definition being placed on the stereotypical camp gay.

At schools now it is once again shifting to express a disapproval of a situation, i.e. “that’s gay”!

Very few words in any language can be immune from such cultural change. “Dog is a man’s best friend” until more Men like cats.

On that note notice how in popular TV series such as Start Trek, “To boldly go where no Man has gone before” has changed to “no one” since gender equality became the expected cultural norm.

But to the point as said before no words are immune to cultural change. We have to remember traditionally the word “pimp” does indeed have connotations of the sex industry/exploitation. The word has been affected by our “sexed-up” cosmopolitan ideology. The word “sexy” itself is a description of beautiful. And it was the American show “pimp-my-ride” (that this site appears to be basing its rhetoric on) which really decided to push this change that “pimp” should be the new world for make something stylish.

Taking something that is “un-cool” and making it “stylish” “unique” and to make something stand out; which is what cultural change will push the new connotation of pimp to be. As this will be the first connotation many in young generation and generations to come will face, it will soon become the culturally accepted primary definition and it’s old definition will become obscure much as gay meaning happy has become.

Have you got something to say?

or to contribute.