

BREAST CANCER: THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF A DISEASE

In 2014 we cannot deny the fact that breast cancer has been gradually and successfully colonised and commodified as a global pink enterprise over the past two decades by the corporate world.

Since the corporate branding of breast cancer with the colour pink in the early 90s, commercial interests of every kind have benefitted from what appears to be their benevolent association with the cause of breast cancer, by dedicating a percentage of pink-product sales to breast cancer research, while, in fact gaining huge market advantage in terms of public regard and guaranteed profits..

Over two decades on and there seems to be no limit to the range of pink consumer products flooding the market as more and more businesses compete for a profitable position under the pink banner.

The small print on pink-related products reveals the percentage of sale price each signed-up business will give to breast cancer research and also the total donation limit set by each business. That these donations limits vary greatly, company to company, should not be surprising. What might be surprising is the number of businesses which continue to profit from pink sales well beyond their pre-set donations limit.

Despite diversion of funds from cause to company, the amount of money raised from pink sales on a global scale is by now, beyond calculation, making breast cancer the best-funded of all the cancers in terms of research and support.

From a purely business viewpoint this is an outstandingly successful model of **'cause related marketing'**.

WHAT IS CAUSE RELATED MARKETING?

Cause related marketing (CRM) is a marketing-style option which might appeal to companies wanting to gain market advantage, improve their market position, improve their standing with customers, increase sales and profits, by linking their products to a particular cause.

Example: Australia

Under its logo **FUNDING RESEARCH FOR PREVENTION AND CURE** the largest breast cancer charity and fund-raiser for breast cancer research in Australia, the National Breast Cancer Foundation's website provides some insight into CRM.

'This involves companies who wish to align their business and the direct sale of their products or services to raise funds for the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

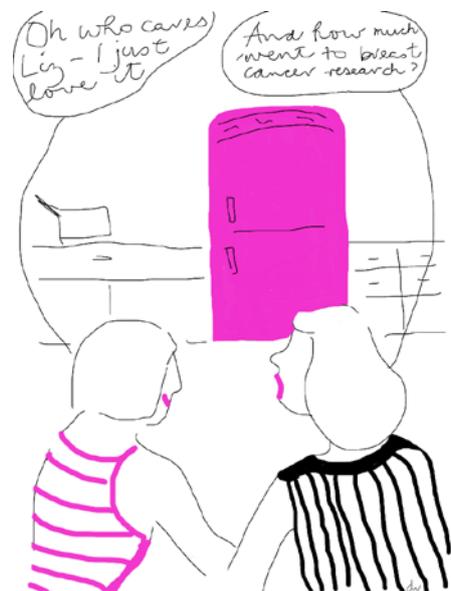
Cause related marketing (CRM) allows companies to uniquely position their products in the market to achieve product differentiation and increased sales. A CRM campaign with the National Breast Cancer Foundation can provide:

- *A valuable marketing opportunity to develop a unique selling proposition*

- Opportunity to acquire new customers through customers' affiliation with our cause
- A public demonstration of your commitment to breast cancer research
- An opportunity to build trust, customer loyalty and connect your brand more strongly with your target market

The National Breast Cancer Foundation is engaged in a range of national CRM campaigns and currently have existing partners in a number of sectors. At present NBCF are not accepting applications for CRM partners in the areas listed below.

- Beauty products (various products)
- Bottled water
- Bread/wraps
- Cake mix
- Car accessories
- Chocolates
- Copy paper
- Crockery
- Dish gloves
- Electric hair straightener
- Flowers
- Hairspray
- Kitchen appliances/accessories
- Lingerie
- Olive oil
- Real estate
- House Removals
- Sports equipment
- Umbrellas
- Vitamins
- Watches & jewellery
- Workwear
- Writing pens



<http://www.nbcf.org.au>

THE GLOBAL COMMERCIAL REACH OF PINK – See *Pink Ribbon Inc (Canada)*

For how this plays out in North America – watch **Pink Ribbons, Inc.** This will also give insight into the globalization of the Pink Ribbon as it takes off around the world. A short clip from the film below explains the origins of the ribbon – and what happened to it.

https://www.nfb.ca/film/pink_ribbons_inc/trailer/pink_ribbons_inc_trailer
Clip from PINK RIBBON INC - background and interview

In 1990 Charlotte Haley set out to promote among her friends the idea of wearing a pink ribbon in order to raise awareness about limited government spending on cancer prevention research. Once in the hands of skilled marketers following the unwelcome corporate take-over of her idea in 1991, the original message about prevention was replaced by a corporates-driven fundraising campaign for breast cancer research from a % of sales of 'pink' products.

From Pink to Prevention
www.frompinktoprevention.org