KARELIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Degree Program in International Business

Tran Viet Thang 1101612

PUBLIC RELATIONS IN ENHANCING BRAND VALUES: CASE STUDY VIRGIN ATLANTIC AND VIETNAM AIRLINES

Thesis

October 2014

Author(s)

Thang Tran Viet

Title

PUBLIC RELATIONS IN ENHANCING BRAND VALUES: CASE STUDY VIRGIN ATLANTIC AND VIETNAM AIRLINES

Abstract

The ultimate purpose of this dissertation is to evaluate the Public Relations (PR) activities of Vietnam Airlines and give the airline some recommendations to improve its PR performance. In order to achieve this purpose, there are three issues needed to be solved: 1) how PR helps to enhance brand personality and brand values 2) the differences in PR activities between Vietnam Airlines and Virgin Atlantic and 3) what approaches Vietnam Airlines should implement to improve its PR performance.

This thesis tackles significant differences in the PR activities between Vietnam Airlines and Virgin Atlantic in many aspects. It also clarifies that PR activities in Vietnam Airlines are obsolete, reflecting the poor reputation of the company in passengers' minds. In order to regain customers' trust and loyalty, the airline should consider implementing new approaches, which are identified in the theoretical part.

The main research methodology used in this study is secondary data collected and examined. Relevant information were extracted from credible literature and exclusive materials from Vietnam Airlines.

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

Global aviation is under a lot of pressure after two recent accidents involving Malaysia Airlines aircrafts. Those incidents have hit the business which is always proud to be the safest form of transportation on Earth, ringed the alarms for aviation safety and brought negative effects to travellers' minds when it comes to flying. In this context, airlines must adapt to the uncertainty and reassure wary travellers by implementing the right communication methods as well as increasing the quality of services and customers relationship. To do that, the contribution of Public Relations (or PR) is the major key.

This thesis will concentrate on examining the PR activities of Vietnam Airlines in middle of the global aviation recession. Unfortunately, in many cases, the role of PR is often disregarded by Vietnamese companies in general, mostly because the companies usually do not recognize the advantages that PR provides or they do not implement the activities in ways that exploiting all the effects of a PR campaign.

The thesis consists of four main sections. Each section has specific objectives but still connect intimately to elucidate the ultimate purpose.

2   THE AIM OF THE THESIS

This thesis aims to evaluate and scrutinize the PR activities of Vietnam Airlines in comparison with the case of another airline, Virgin Atlantic. The questions to answer and

the objectives that the author would like to withdraw afterward can be specified with the following statements:

- How can PR campaigns help to increase the brand values?
- What are the differences between Virgin Atlantic and Vietnam Airlines in terms of implementing their PR activities?
- Suggestions for Vietnam Airlines to improve its PR campaigns performance.

The theoretical section contains comprehensive source materials to demonstrate the hypotheses. In the first part of the theoretical section, the definition of brand values and brand personality will be discussed, along with the method to enhance them. In the second part, the definition of PR and the differences between PR and other communication tools such as advertising will also be clarified. The effect of the Internet on PR activities will also be examined in this part.

The research section provides a comparison between two airlines Virgin Atlantic and Vietnam Airlines in term of implementing their PR activities.

3   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section provides insights and a literature review about brand concept and its associations including brand personality and brand values. In addition, the methods to increase the personality and values of the brand are also discussed in these paragraphs.

3.1 Brand Concept

According to the American Marketing Association, "a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers, and to differentiate them from those of competitors". (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, and Van den Berg 2010, 50.) Mark Batey (2008) indicated that a brand is a cluster of associations concerning attributes, benefits and values. "These associations are created or enhanced by every contact or experience the consumer has with the brand". (Batey 2008, 47) De Pelsmacker et al. (2010, 53) displayed the differences between a brand and a product as illustrated in the table 1:

Table 1. Differences between a product and a brand. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2010, 53.)

Product	Brand
You buy a product for what it does	You choose a brand for what it means
A product sits on retailer's shelves	A brand exists in customer's minds
A product can quickly be outdated	A brand is timeless
A product can be copied by competitors	A brand is unique

The core of brand strategies is to differentiate the product. A brand is an excellent vehicle by means of which a product can be differentiated from the competitor. The most frequent strategy used is called a line extension, which means "sticking to existing product

categories and using the same brand name for all new product introductions in a product category".(De Pelsmacker et al. 2010, 58.) The objective of this strategy is to expand the variety of the offerings, to try to accommodate the needs of new consumer segments and to react to successful competitive products. Examples of this strategy are Diet Coke, Vanilla Coke or Surf Excel.

Another strategy is called brand extension, or brand stretching, implemented when an existing brand wants to market its products in different categories. Brand extension strategy helps to increase a company's profits by allowing manufacturers to enter new markets and create diversity in their inventory. A special case of extension strategies is **corporate branding**. In this case, the name of the company is used for all of its products. Banks or airlines often use this strategy for their services since the reputation and the endorsement of a reliable company is very important.

In fact, potential customers have more faith in a long-established and experienced company with a good reputation, which will be able to offer consistent high-quality support in the future.(De Pelsmacker et al. 2010, 59.) The biggest advantage of corporate strategy is it captures more market share while requiring less advertising. On the other hand, the disadvantages are the risk of the new product might not fit with the brand image or brand dilution while attaching with many different categories. Therefore, corporate branding strategy is relatively inflexible. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2010, 61.)

In attempt to build a strong brand, marketers certainly take emphasis on creating brand equity. Brand equity represent a set of assets that attached to the brand and each asset create variety values in different ways. In the next sections, each equity asset of a brand will be examined how they generate the brand values.

3.1.1 Brand Equity

Brand equity is a concept used to indicate the values of a brand. It is the value added to a product by virtue of its brand name. There are five components to evaluate brand equity: Brand Awareness, Brand Image/feelings, Brand Performance or Perceived Quality and Brand Loyalty. In Brand feelings, brand personality is an important factor in order to define the brand in customer mind.

3.1.2 Brand Awareness

According to Investopedia, brand awareness is "the likelihood that consumers recognize the existence and availability of a company's product or service". (Investopedia 2014.) There are two form of brand awareness: deep awareness means that brand comes to mind easily and enjoys high top of mind awareness and the broad brand awareness refers to the customers' approach to the brand more often in different situations. Brand awareness is not only just customers being aware of the brand but more of knowing what its attributes and characteristics are, such as the brand logo, the manufacturing company, functional, situational and symbolic characteristics, and price, quality, performance and advertising characteristics. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2010, 63.)

Brand awareness has numerous effects on customers' perceptions, including those of quality, presumption of availability, brand name recall and niche identification as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Brand Awareness affects customer's perception. (David Ingram 2014.)
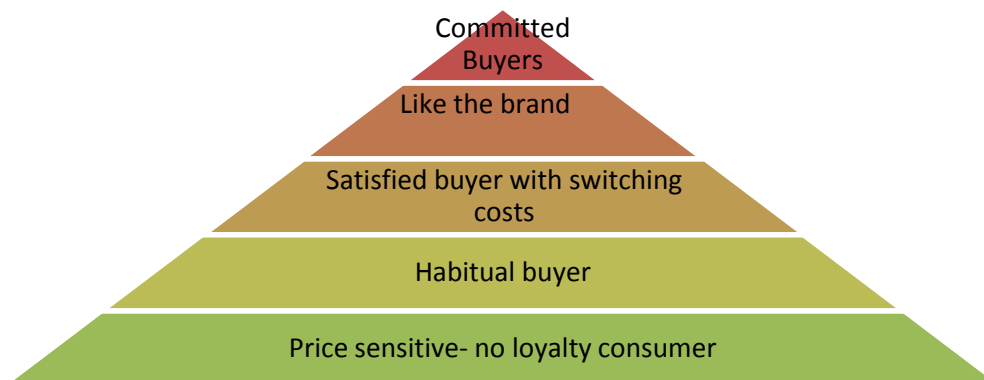
Perception of Quality	Customers perceive that highly advertised brands are of better quality than brands they have not seen before
Presumption of Availability	Highly advertised brands are more likely to be encountered, creating a psychological assumption of a well-known brand in a wide range of outlets for customers, making them decide to purchase specific brands before they even enter a store.
Brand Name Recall	For each product category, a consumer can instantly recall some brands, remember several others with assistance, and fail to recognize many that they have likely encountered before. Therefore, being on the top of customers' minds is the ultimate goal of brand marketing
Brand Identification	Brand Awareness is important to identify and distinguish a brand to competitors. It also create and enhance Brand Loyalty

Researches have shown that brand awareness has significant impact on common, repeat purchase products. Macdonald & Sharp (2000) stated that subjects who are aware of one brand tend to sample fewer brands across a series of product trials. Moreover, in some purchase situations involving common, habitual purchases, consumers tend to choose the brand on the basis of awareness heuristic. (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000, 11-12). In another research, Tuskej, Golob, and Podnar (2011) claimed that consumers who psychologically identify with a brand will form a committed and meaningful relationship with the brand, and create positive words of mouth. The stronger a consumer identifies with a brand, the more commitment he/she feels to this brand and more likely he/she will generate a positive relationship with this brand. (Tuskej et al., 2011, 57.)

3.1.3 Brand Loyalty

Apparently, every strong brand contains a group of loyal customers. The levels of brand loyalty can be distinguished in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Loyalty Pyramid. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2010, 70.)

Committed
Buyers

Like the brand

Satisfied buyer with switching
costs

Habitual buyer

Price sensitive- no loyalty consumer

In fact, many companies perceive brand loyalty as the company's real asset, not the brand itself. The marketers and the committed buyers can build brand community when the brand experience is shared. The committed buyers not only will repurchase the brand, they will also be ambassadors for the brand when they introduce it to their friends and even defend the brand against any negative comments. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2010, 71-72.)

Take Apple as an example; every six months Apple releases a new model of the latest IPhone with very few improvements compared to the previous one. However, there are always a lot of "die-hard" IPhone fans willing to camp outside of the Apple stores for days just to be the first one possessing the latest IPhone. These people will also be the most enthusiastic defender against many criticisms on the lack of innovation and redundant applications of Apple products.

Motivating customer loyalty is a cost-saving strategy since the cost for attracting new customers is six times greater than the cost of retaining customers. However, in the era of Internet marketing, the old strategy to make a brand's superiority in order to gain customer loyalty is no longer efficient. Geoffrey James, a columnist from the website Inc.com, believes that marketers nowadays face a more difficult task than ever to gain the loyalty of millennial consumers. He stated two reasons why the Internet has weakened brand loyalty. Firstly, the availability of user reviews and competitive data on the Internet have made the brand lose its guarantor of quality value. In the past, consumers had to base their previous usage experience to assume that they would have a good experience with another product by the same brand. However, in today's market, powerful search engines like Google or Bing provide thousands of reviews to show whether or not a product is worth investing in or just a plain disappointment. The second reason is that the World Wide Web provides the infrastructure for outsourcing to supply chains in the developing world; it turns out that most products are not much different, regardless of what brands they are. (James 2014.)

After the recession that hit the global economy, consumers now are more price aware, and mainly only children still buy into the heroic story behind the brands that companies try to build. A study conducted by Ernst & Young in 2011 showed that only 25% of American consumers are brand loyal, while price (89%) and quality (82%) had a very high score as factors impacting the buying behaviour (Olenski 2012). In the same situation, according to a new report in 2013 from VERITAS Communication and Northstar in Canada, approximately 75% of Canadians polled said that they have switched from a "preferred brand" to another in the past year, and 69% said that they are planning to switch from a "preferred brand" in the upcoming year. Another research conducted by Bond Brand Loyalty founded that 29% of consumers said that they would not be loyal to a brand unless it has loyalty program. (Krashinsky 2014.)

In order to cope with the massive change in customer loyalty, companies have had to switch their strategy from creating heroic symbols for their brands to attaching the experience while using their products for customers. Ernst & Young suggested that firms

should consider making their service personal and learn to talk directly to customers. They pointed out that while traditional broadcast and print media may still be the best way to communicate with larger groups, digital media can be more targeted, effective and personal when it comes to communicating with a community. (Ernst & Young 2011, 6.)

However, launching a YouTube or Facebook page is not enough; in order to engage effectively with customers, a corporation must use the language and content that truly connects with them. The best and most efficient universal language, according to one Ernst & Young survey, is that which resembles conversation. A controversial topic makes people have opposite opinions and keeps them communicating every hour, every day on Facebook, for instance. Thus, with the right customers and in the appropriate situations, marketers could effectively stimulate this style. (Ernst & Young 2011, 7.)

Another aspect that Ernst & Young emphasized is that corporations should make their service personal. The intimacy between companies and customers should be strived for from beginning to the end of a customer's experience. This includes varied actions from identifying and connecting with different groups in an appropriate language via the right media for each occasion, to offering individualized call centres, flexible delivery options and enabling people to pay what they want. (Ernst & Young 2011, 7-8.) Lonely Planet is an excellent example of "hearing a customer's voice", when it offers downloadable digital .pdfs of individual country chapters in its regional travel guides as well as full guides in Kindle and tablet formats for backpacking travellers. Customers whose preferred payment and delivery methods have been remembered are likely to be more loyal because they feel closer to the brand.

Some iconic brands, such as Apple or Coca-Cola, implement unprecedented methods to gain brand loyalty by delivering a flawless consumer brand experience that makes customers feel valued and special. Apple emphasises the design concept of the IPhone to bring an unprecedented manner of using a smartphone to their customers, while Coca-Cola focuses on the happiness when sharing a Coke with others. Another example of a great

marketing campaign is Nike's "Risk Everything" campaign taking place alongside with the football World Cup 2014. The campaign featured numerous YouTube videos before the event started. It has been a huge success ever since. The video "Winner Stays On" featuring some of biggest football stars in the world, e.g. Neymar Jr, Cristiano Ronaldo, has gained more than 87 million views since it first upload to YouTube in April. The animation short video "Risk Everything" uploaded right before the World Cup kicked off has been watched by over 64 million viewers. Nike has successfully turned their business storytelling into content marketing so naturally that viewers do not realize they are watching ads. In the last scene of the video "Winner Stays On", a young lad pushes super star Ronaldo aside to take the game winning penalty shot, a perfect way to stimulate customers to actually take the action to follow the brand's slogan. (Daniel Newman 2014.)

3.1.4   Brand Feelings

Brand feeling reflects the emotional responses to the brand. The feeling of warmth, fun, excitement, self-respect, social approval and security are important types of brand feelings. These feeling might be built through marketing communications of the brand or the experiences the consumer had with the brand. (De Pelsmacker et al. 2010, 69.)

Consumers' feelings toward the brand can be escalated by the brand's attributes that consumers perceive the brand can deliver. This relation is described through the "means-end chain". (De Pelsmacker 2010, 69.)

3.1.5   Brand Personality

Brand personality is an important aspect in brand equity in term of defining the brand in customer's mind. Academically speaking brand personality is "human personality traits

that are both applicable to and relevant for brands". (De Pelsmacker et al. 2010, 68.) Customers view the brand personality as a way to express their own personality and defines their lifestyles through material possessions. From a company's point of view, brand personality works as a communication tool to deliver the benefits associated with its products or services. Additionally, brand personality is used to distinguish the brand from other competitors. Hence, it is very important for a company to understand how to measure the brand personality. In 1997, Jennifer Aaker developed the Brand Personality Scale with five personality dimensions to measure the brand personality. These five dimensions are included in Figure 1.
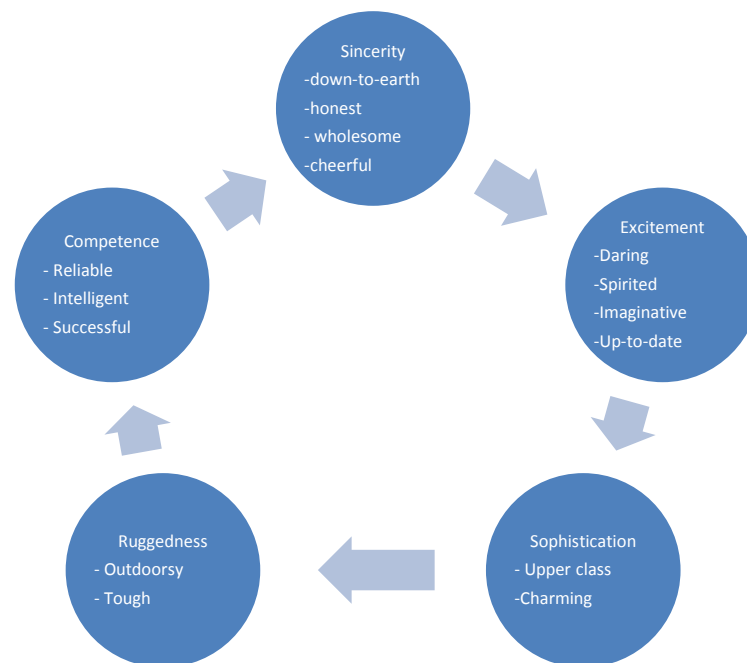

Figure 1. Aaker's Five Brand Personality Dimension. (Aaker 1997, 17.)

However, the personality of a brand can be perceived differently throughout the world due to cultural differences. Therefore, a new measurement was conducted to solve the foregoing shortcomings in the modern global market. The new measurement also consists

of five dimensions, but displays more affinity with the Big Five of human personality than Aaker's dimensions do, as illustrated in Figured 2.
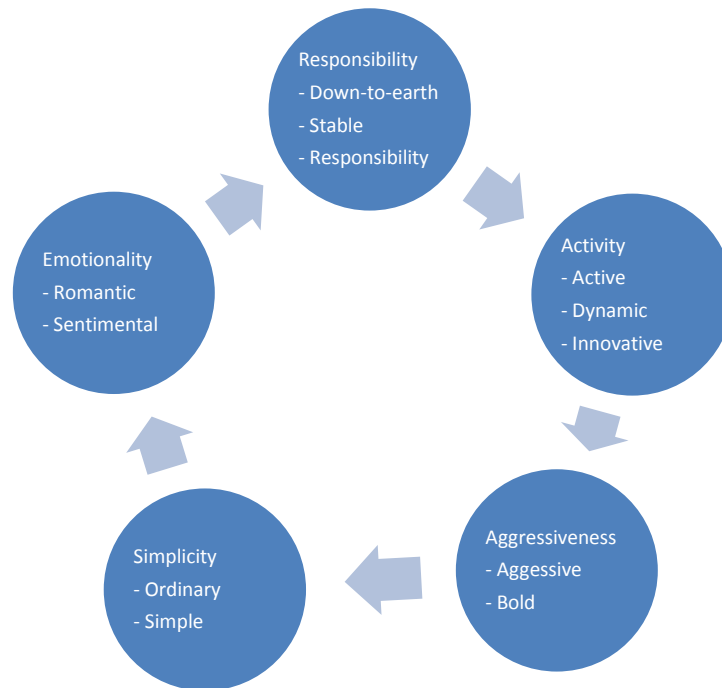
Figure 2. New Five Dimensions of Brand Personality. (De Pelsmacker et al., 2010, 68.)

As stated above, brand personality can be different in different countries. Millward Brown- a brand research company- conducted a research in 2012 asking over 500,000 people to describe brands using a set of 24 adjectives chosen to cover a wide range of personality characteristics. The research showed that the differences in how people appreciate brand personality can be explained by the cultural dimensions theory. In countries with a high Power Distance, low uncertainty avoidance and individualism, such as in China; people tend to look up to authority and plan for long term orientation; that is why brands with a *wise* or *trustworthy* personality dominate in this market. In contrast, brands that are considered to have rebellious, assertive or playful traits are less likely to be widely accepted by society. On the other hand, countries like the UK have a low Power Distance and emphasise individualism, tolerance and respect for equality. The personality traits with

the most consistent relationships with strong brands are *friendly* and *generous*. (Millward Brown 2012.)

The concept of Brand Personality is usually identified for both product brand and corporate brand personalities. However, corporate brand is distinguished from product brand to the extent that a corporate brand encompasses a wider range of associations based on for instance, relationships between people, values of programs, and corporate credibility. Keller (2006, 2) demonstrated that while the product brand personality represents a user's perception of a particular product, a **corporate brand personality** emphases the human characteristics of employees of a corporation as a whole. Consequently, a corporate brand personality reflects the values of the works of the employees, individually or collectively.

Corporate brand personality highlights the role of employees inside the corporation. The employees are now the brand "ambassadors". They establish the interface between the brand's internal and external environments and contribute a powerful impact on consumers' perceptions of both the brand and the organisation. (Fiona and Leslie 2001, 3.)

Due to the fact that the corporate brand personality involves how employees see themselves inside a corporation, the best way to measure the brand corporation personality is in terms of a tripartite view of attitudes, which includes affective (feeling), cognitive (thought) and conative (actions). According to Keller (2006, 3), specific attitudes can be grouped into three dimensions related to the "heart", the "mind" and the 'body". These dimensions demonstrate three distinct sets of personality traits that influence how the company can be viewed by others.

The "heart" dimension consists of *Passion* and *Compassion*. An employee must feel passionate about what he/she is doing so that he/she can want to contribute more to the work. In addition, when a person finds interest in his/her current job, he/she will likely feel sympathetic with the organisation. The passion of employees should be extended from their specific roles in the company to the whole set of business, the industry in which it competes and the products and services which it offers. (Keller & Richey 2006, 4.)

The "mind" includes creativity and disciplined. In the 21st century, the most fundamental challenge for marketers is to reconcile many potential trade-offs that can occur in making marketing decisions. To be more precise, creativity and innovation approaches tend to overcome the marketing dilemmas. Firms must find a way to solve an old problem but with new solutions. However, these creativity and innovation approaches must be focused on a certain level. A successful company must be disciplined in the ways to grow its business; it should concentrate on maintaining the position in its core business and leveraging its competences rather than chasing just any business opportunities that arise. (Keller & Richey 2006, 4.)

The "body" part consists of "agile" and "collaborative" factors. A firm should quickly adapt to the latest changes in the business environment. Shifts in consumers' behaviours, strategies of competitors, or legitimate issues can profoundly have effects on the business. Hence, effective brand management is to maintain or even enhance the brand equity even in difficult conditions. In order to do that, companies should be able to move forward to take advantages of new opportunities in the market. Finally, a company first encourages employees to collaborate with others and it also first must strengthen the collaboration with its business partners. (Keller & Richey 2006, 5.)

Consequently, the key goal is to create a strong connection and endure relationships with people involved in the business in order to directly or indirectly contribute to the success of the corporate brand. (Keller & Richey 2006, 7.)

Apparently, companies desire to create a strong emotional brand connection with customers. In some cases, especially in cosmetic advertisements, cosmetic firms often attach superior images or invite endorsers to promote their products in order to create the illusion for consumers that they can be attractive and be closer to the ideal vision of themselves (ideal self).

However, there is a shift in consumer behaviour about the self-image perspective recently, which originated with the marketing campaign of Unilever Dove's "Real Beauty". In this campaign, Dove invited models who have "average" appearances and closer to how the majority of consumers actually see themselves (actual self). The campaign actually set a new era when consumers started seeking reality and authenticity in marketing messages.

(Gilmore and Pine 2007, 2.) Lucia Malar (2011) suggested that consumers more likely form strong emotional connection with brands which generate the actual self than the brands that promise to help them achieve the ideal self. Harter (2002) also demonstrated that a person feels more confidence if he/she believe his/her acts reflects the nature "true self" but discouraged when he/she knows that these acts were influenced by others . Moreover, a relationship involving two parties that all express the "genuine" to other will create strong bonds and emotions based on trust and intimacy. (Lucia Malar 2011, 4.)

The research of Lucia Malar (2011) indicated the effect on the level of self-esteem, product involvement, and public self-consciousness to the connection between consumers and brand personality. According to that, consumers who have high self-esteem are often likely to form a strong connection with the brand that is congruent with their actual-self to the extent that has help them feel positive about themselves. On the other hand, consumers with low self-esteem would find the brand that provides the ideal-self more attractive because of their desire to become better by association. In addition, the moderation role of product involvement between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment is also discovered. When involvement is high, the consumer tends to form connections between the brand and his or her true self. Then the consumer will elaborate the emotion connections with the brand when they find these comparisons are congruent, leading to stronger emotional brand attachment. (Lucia Malar 2011, 5.)

 In conclusion, the ideal images still prove their efficiency with specific customers under certain conditions, especially when the involvement, self-esteem or public self-consciousness is low. However, in order to build brand loyalty and create a close relationship with clients, companies should shift to introduce a more congruent and down to earth personality.

3.2   Public Relations

This section aims to provide insights about PR in business today, its definition, activities and differences between PR and regular marketing activities. Additionally, in this part, the link between PR activities and brand associations is also discussed.

3.2.1 What is PR?

The definition of PR has changed relatively throughout its hundred years of history. While the earliest definitions emphasized press agency and publicity, modern definitions embrace the concept of "engagement" and "relationship".   According to the latest definition initiated by the PR Society of America, "PR is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics". (PRSA 2011.)

This definition underlined the basic concept of PR as a communication process and aims towards mutually beneficial relationships. (PRSA 2011). Another definition from the PRCA stated the substantial role of reputation in PR, which is the result of what the company does, what it would say, and the perspective of others toward it. The main aim of PR is used to "gain trust and understanding between an organization and its various publics-whether that is employees, customers, investors, the local community-or all of those stakeholder groups". (PRCA 2014.)

In 1984, James Grunig and Todd Hunt published the Four Model of PR in their book *Managing Public Relations*. The models described four types of communication between an organization and its stakeholders, namely: publicity and press agent, the public relations

information model, asymmetric persuasion, and finally the two-way symmetrical model-which has become accepted as a formal definition of best practice for communication in Western markets. (Waddington 2012, 2.)

Table 5. James Grunig and Todd Hunt's Four Models of PR (1984) (Stephen Waddington, 2012, 3-4.)

Model	Type of communication	Characteristics
Press agent or publicity	One-way communication	Use persuasion and manipulation to influence audiences to behave as the organization desires
Public Information model	One-way communication	Use press releases and other one-way communication techniques to distribute organization information. The public relations practitioner is often referred to as the in-house journalist
Two-way asymmetrical model	Two-way communication (imbalanced)	Uses persuasion and manipulation to influence audiences to behave as the organization desires. Does not use research to find out how stakeholders feel about the organization
Two-way symmetrical model	Two-way communication	Uses communication to negotiate with the public, resolve conflicts and promote mutual understanding and respect between the organization and its stakeholders.

As displayed in the table, PR has evolved from one way communication method which focused only on persuading and manipulating the attitude of audiences by press media into a two-way communication line which creates interaction between an organization and its public. This is an essential change since businesspeople realized that with the development of the Internet and global social media, audiences can easily access and evaluate the information through different kinds of sources. In 1994, Jame Grunig again gathered a team of six members, collected data from more than 300 organizations in Canada, the UK, and the USA and then invented a theory called The Excellence Theory in order to determine the value of communication in PR. According to this theory, the determination is based on the four levels presented in Table 6

Table 6. Four levels of communication value analysis in PR by James Grunig (Stephen Waddington, 2012, 5.)

Program level	Effective organizations must empower public relations as a critical management function
Functional level	Public Relations should be an integrated communication function and separate from other management functions including marketing
Organization level	Effective organizations should base internal and external communication and relationship building on a two-way symmetrical model
Societal level	Effective organizations recognize their impact on other organizations and the public. They must be socially responsible

3.2.2 The development of PR

The origin of PR can be traced back to ancient civilizations. According to Bernays, "The three main elements of PR are practically as old as society: informing people, persuading people, or integrating people with people. Of course, the means and methods of accomplishing these ends have changed as society has changed". (Bates 2002, 4.)

In the past, the forerunner of PR could be found in the works of rhetoricians, press agents and other promoters. Since early times they provided such communication services as speech-writing, speaking on behalf of clients, training for difficult questions, and persuasive skills. (Bates 2002, 6). Then, in the seventeenth century, the creation of the Congregratio de Propaganda by the Roman Catholic Church is a keystone in the development of PR (Bates 2002, 6). The term "propaganda" was originated by then.

When it came to the mass production era, along with the rise of the industrialization as well as the rapid rise of urbanization, governments, businesses, and public institutions felt the need to communicate with a mass audience in order to "humanize industry". In a desperate bid to live up to the expectations of a fast-growing middle class, the businessmen gradually realized that they must coincide their private interest with public goods the inevitable realization followed that private interest must coincide with public good. (Grunewald et al. 2008, 3.)

PR in the modern era was first established in the United States. At first, businesspeople did not pay attention to the public; they cared more about profits than the health and safety of the employees and saw nothing to justify it. The disregard attitude toward publicities was expressed clearly through the exclamation of the railroad tycoon Colonel William Vanderbilt: "The public? Why, sir, the public be damned". However, the pressure from groups of authors or journalists who threatened to unveil their shady practices made the frightened industrialists have to take the public into account or else find their survival in jeopardy. (Grunewald 2008, 3.)

In this scenario, Ivy Ledbetter Lee stepped in as a pioneer in the PR profession. Lee suggested that businesspeople implement an honest and open interactive relationship with workers. "The public", he insisted, "was no longer to be ignored, in the manner of the press agents". Then, the new policy of the public be informed was introduced to replace the perspective of the public be damned at the moment He developed a new policy of "the public be informed" to replace the hitherto perspective of "the public be damned". This milestone had opened a new era for PR to be considered as a real profession. The First World War further underscored the value of PR "as a tool to enter dialog with people". (Grunewald 2008, 5)

 The birth of the Committee of Public Information exhibited the power of organized PR to enlist people's support for a cause. At this organization, Edward Bernays, a nephew of Sigmund Freud, was the first to apply Freudian and modern psychological perspectives to

PR. He also wrote the first book on PR, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, in 1923. The Great Depression and then the outbreak of World War II brought a new challenge as well as an opportunity for the fledging profession. People did not believe in businesspeople, and wealth became evil during the great economic crisis. (Grunewald 2008, 5). But at this dawn, business began to realize that it was not enough to sell its products, it had to sell itself in order to survive in an increasingly hostile atmosphere. (Grunewald 2008, 6.)

PR gradually being recognized as high professional excellence and started being taught in university throughout the United States. The wave of PR soon spread to Europe and it was first visible in the UK 1911 through the National Insurance Act of the Insurance Commission. Then in 1948, the establishment of The Institution of Public Relations played a significant role in the development of the profession. (Grunewald 2008, 6.)

There was an interesting difference when PR activities in America were generally implemented for businesses, while in Britain they came primarily from the government. PR has developed dramatically with the rise of emerged countries and the development of the Internet in the 2000s. The growth of new societies in all these countries as well as the growing diversity of people required greater skills in counselling management to formulate an appropriate message through suitable channels to reach the audiences. (Grunewald 2008, 7.)

After hundreds years of formation and development, from its first uncertain steps in the United States to the full-fledge development in the 2000s, PR grew into a major force and was practiced at the international level as much as national public relations due to the growth of many new economic and the complexity of the global situation after the collapse of Soviet Union and the end of The Cold War. (Grunewald 2008, 9.)

3.2.3 Brand Building through PR

The role of Public Relation in Brand Building has recently been recognized even more important than advertising activities. As Rise stated in his book *The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding*, "the birth of a brand is achieved with publicity not advertising" (Al Rise, 1998, 2). In addition, he also gave the example of Anita Roddick, the founder of The Body Shop brand, as the proof for his hypothesis. Instead of spending loads of money on advertising, Roddick chose to travel the world on a relentless quest to talk about her ideas and her motivation toward the environment. Her effort paid off when the brand Body Shop was promoted by so many newspaper and magazine articles, plus radio and TV interviews. (Al Rise 1998, 2.)

There are some reasons for the rising power of PR compared to advertising campaigns. Many marketers have agreed that consumers nowadays are fed up with the amount of advertising and they are seeking another way to connect with the brand. According to William Daddi, senior vice president at Magnet Communication in New York, information overload in television or internet ads makes it very difficult to capture a client's attention and raises scepticism from customers about the honesty of the ads. On the other hand, PR delivers brand messages mainly in editorial content which consumers willingly access, so this method is considered to be efficient and effective. (Karolefski 2003.)

Pundits agreed that third-party endorsement in PR campaigns make customers believe in the brand more than advertising campaigns. Jerry Schwartz, President of G.S Schwartz & Company in New York, claimed that people tend to believe the restaurant or movie reviews more than the ad by the restaurant or motion picture companies. "Many disciplines of PR can break through the wall of scepticism. PR built third-party credibility and can ignite grass roots word-of-mouth endorsement-always the best form of publicity, but even more effective in today's Internet environment" he concluded. (Karolefski 2003.)

3.2.4 The power of message in PR

In every PR activity, messages often play a key role in defining what PR practitioners attempt to communicate with audiences. Courtright and Smudde (2010) proposed that a "key message" consists of two fundamental elements which are "a theme, thesis or slogan that is the single idea around which all communication revolve" and "copy points that serve as the basic proof or substance for detail arguments that support the theme, thesis, and slogan". (Melanie J., 2011, 1.)

For long, PR practitioners have recognized the power of message in PR activities. Moloney (2006) demonstrated that messaging will change the attitudes and behaviours of the audiences towards a product; Pratt (2004) also stated that good messaging strategies may help to narrow the distance between firms and the public domain, to gain the goodwill of primary stakeholders, and to maintain organizational reputation (Melanie J.2011, 2). But how can a message drive people's behaviours and attitudes?

Simone Sinek, in his presentation at the *How Great Leaders Inspire Action* conference, established a hypothesis on how a clear message can take effect in an audience's mind. According to his study, a human brain comprises three major components that correlate with the golden circle. And the limbic brains which are responsible for feelings such as trust and loyalty are also accountable for all human behaviours and all decision making. In other words, despite all the facts and figures, if the message only affects the outside of the brain, it still does not affect the buying behaviours or decision making process. On the other hand, a successful message communicates with people from the inside, to the part of the brain that controls behaviours, and then allows audiences to rationalize it with the tangible things like products and services. (Sinek 2009.)

Sinek (2009) also suggested that if the message expresses the core reasons of the business, it will attract people who believe in the same thing. Dean Goldman, the president of Goldman & Associates Public Relations agreed on the perspective that the PR message conveys precisely what the company and its future is all about. In addition, he suggested that the message should only be one or two specific sentences. This statement also should be included in all of the firm's press materials and all speeches by the CEO to the media, public, customers, and importantly, to employees. Because in the end of the day, only the employees who believe in what they are doing and understand why they are doing it could create the brand values and deliver them to customers at the fullest. (Goldman 2014.)

3.2.5 The new rules of PR and new challenges from the Web

The tradition PR approaches

From the beginning, PR activities have attached to the relationship between the PR practitioners and the media. There are three traditional PR activities which practitioners implement which are:

Press Release

Press Release is the most common technique used in PR. A press release is an article written by PR practitioners of the company to promote a new product, organization, a person or new achievements. The press release later will be sent to the reporters or editors, while the PR practitioners cross their fingers wishing that the press release will eventually be published. However, there is no guarantee that the reporters or editors will appeal to this particular press release. At the end of the day, only the PR practitioner who had a personal relationship with the reporters or editors will get his/her press release published. (Tanner 2012, 379.)

Nevertheless, the impact of Press Releases onto PR activities is undeniable since they create chances to tell stories about the brands and companies. Secondly, if those stories are spread by prestige Journals or newspapers, the credibility of the brands or companies will be strengthened. Thirdly, press releases can also be used for controlling the damages. The process called "**crisis communication**" is used to counter the negative effects when a company suffers bad publicity. For instance, in 2009, Domino Pizza suffered severe negative reaction from the public after two of its employees uploaded a YouTube video which clearly showed they two were seriously violating food safety codes. Eventually, in order to reassure the clients, Domino Pizza had to hold a public press conference where the president openly apologized for the act. (Tanner 2012, 381.)

However, this kind of method still holds a lot of risks when the editors/ reporters make the decision whether to publish the press releases or not. In addition, in many typical cases, since only a handful of media people gets a steady stream of the press release from the company, and since the journalists are only experts in some specific fields, the news may be interesting for one journalist and may be irrelevant for the rest. For instance, a news piece involving an automobile company invested in developing the new navigation system may be significant for a journalist whose expertise is in technology, but it is just plain complicated for others. (Scott 2007, 10.)

Sponsorship

Alongside with publishing press releases, companies also participate in public events or charities by sponsoring them in order to draw the attention of the media and audiences. Sponsorship may come in many different occasions, such as: an event, superstar apparel, a sport occasion, an exhibition or a non-profit charity. (Tanner 2012, 384.)

One of the most common types of sponsorships nowadays is cause-related marketing, which involves a profit company cooperating with a non-profit organization to organize events for particular causes (Tanner 2012, 384). For example, Coca Cola partnered with

the World Wildlife Fund to launch the campaign Coke' Artic Home to raise awareness and funds for preserving polar bears. (Coca Cola Artic Home 2012.)

Sponsorships help companies to strengthen their corporate image, enhance brand awareness, differentiate the products and reach the target audiences. The types of sponsoring to non-profit organizations also have positive PR impact for corporations by complementing the corporate social responsibility. The biggest drawback of sponsorships is that this method requires large resources.   (Tanner 2012, 385.)

Product Placement

Product Placement is another PR method that features products be appeared in movies, TV shows, video games, special events, or books. In most cases, corporations pay the producers to have their products placed or they are the main sponsors of the events. (Tanner 2012, 385.) For instance, Samsung was the biggest sponsor of the 86th Oscar Academic Award, and as a part of its sponsorship, the Korean giant required its product would be displayed in the show. Then, as a stunt the host Ellen DeGeneres took a selfie with a bunch of movie stars in the middle of the show by a Galaxy Note 3, which brought back massive success for the company when the selfie photo was uploaded to Twitter. It has become the most tweeted picture in the history of the social media. In order to achieve this, Samsung spent $18 million (approx. 14 million euro) on ad time this year. (The Wall Street Journal online 2014.)

Product placement improves brand awareness and exposure and likely to help to boost the sales. However, in some cases, product placement can provoke negative response from audiences since they find it irritated. In addition, like in the case of Samsung, the cost for product placement is significant so that it requires corporations to have excessive resources. (Tanner 2012, 385.)

Even though these previously mentioned methods have been long recognized as the core activities of PR campaigns, they still have many flaws such as the fact that corporations do

not have the final decisions regarding when their releases would be published, the editors/journalists may intercept the content and affect the initial purposes, and that the releases may not reach the target audiences. Moreover, the high cost for sponsoring and product placement is also a major issue for companies to launch a PR campaign. (Tanner 2012, 386.)

The new PR approaches

In the book "New Rules of Marketing & PR", Scott (2007) discussed that a corporation may want to drop these old methods to apply new PR implementations which exploit the possibilities of the World Wide Web. According to him, the rising power of the Internet and social media offer corporations several news communication bridges via for instance plugged in bloggers, social media sites, online news sites, micro publications, public speakers, analysts, or consultants which reach the exact target audiences who are looking for the solution the companies offer. In addition, Scott also suggests PR practitioners to consider changing their perspective about "press release is just about the relationship with the media", to a more pragmatic, customer-oriented perception that aims to reach audiences directly. Alongside with the development of the Internet, there are several direct ways corporations could utilize the approach to new target audiences in the web. (Scott 2007, 30.)

Blogging

Blogging might be the most direct method that PR practitioners can apply to push the information of the brands or companies and get instant reply. Blogs provide the independence with web-based journals which contain opinions about everything. Additionally, blogs are where either experts or ordinary people can share their view points about matters so it is useful for companies to discern how the public reacts to their brands. In his book, Scott (2007, 45) discussed three steps companies can make to utilize the power of blog which are:

- Monitoring what other bloggers are saying about the products, the marketplace, the organizations through the help of search engine
- Actually participating in the conversation by commenting on these blogs
- Starting new conversations by creating and writing blogs. Companies should encourage their employees to write blogs as well by setting up clear guidelines about what the employees should and should not do regarding information confidentiality. Thereby, companies can stimulate the attitude of their staff members about the corporate values and create an open working environment where everyone can have a voice. (Scott 2007, 45.)

Podcasting

Alongside with the development of the Internet, podcasting is a new way that people can create and share the audio files to millions of other web users. Technically, a podcast is simply an "audio content connected to an RSS feed" (Scott 2007, 75). This feature enables users who subscribe to an audio feed to always be updated on the latest audio clips when they are released. Moreover, podcasts are available in mobile devices so that users only need a medium such as an Ipod or any type of smartphone which connects to the Internet. They can commute and listen to the podcasting channels they subscribe to in the car or on a train.

The convenient characteristics of podcasting now allow PR practitioners to create and deliver the audio contents to the target audiences who are willing to receive. Furthermore, they can even develop a show and particularly deliver updated content that is useful to their target buyers. By delivering the content that audiences choose to hear, a company will be the first choice for listeners when they are looking for a purchase. (Scott 2007, 76.)

Nevertheless, the role of the main media is so critical that corporations could not just abandon the tradition PR communication methods since they are still proved to be effective. However, instead of investing loads of financial resources to news channels in

order to approach the audiences through mass media, companies should consider to adjust their PR activities to target to the niche market where the audiences are willing to receive their messages and information. Thanks to the development of the Web, PR practitioners can use several communication bridges such as blogs, forums, or podcasts to construct a community where both customers and employees collectively share their opinions. By directly communicating with the buyers, companies can distribute the brand awareness, build up a relationship with customers and gain their trust by expressing authenticable images. (Scott 2007, 77-78.)

In conclusion, the rise of PR happens alongside with the shift in customers' minds from exaggerated advertising which represent the unrealistic "ideal-self" of products and brands reflecting the "true-self" as making customers feel good about themselves and have a strong emotional bond with the brands.

In the next chapter, we will discuss the challenges in the current global aviation industry, challenges which will require many changes in communication methods between airlines and passengers. The cases of two airlines will also be scrutinized in terms of their PR activities implementations for later comparison.

4   INTERNATIONAL AVIATION AND THE CALL FOR SAFETY

2014 has been considered as a tragic year for global aviation due to the fact that many accidents have happened during the year, especially with two incidents both coming from Malaysian Airlines. On 8 March 2014, the flight MH370 scheduled from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing incomprehensibly lost contact with the air traffic control just one hour after take-off. After the airlines announced the airplane was missing, the search for it has involved

authorities from 6 countries in 5 international sea areas beginning in the Gulf of Thailand and shifting to the Indian Ocean, west of Australia. Until now, the search for the airplane as well as the reason why it disappeared from radar, moreover, the destiny of all 12 Malaysian crew members and 227 passengers from 15 nations still remains unknown. The question asked for Malaysian Airlines was why it took so long to make an announcement about the missing of the airplane associated with several last-minute actions as many pundits believed could have major impacts on identifying the actual routes of the plane. (CNN 2014.)

The MH370 incident has already added to the bad reputation and financial situation from a long time before but even worse than that, another accident related to another Malaysia airplane has shocked the whole world. On 17 July 2014, Flight MH17 scheduled from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was shot down by an air defence rocket while flying over the disputed area in the Ukraine. The crash took the lives of all 283 passengers and 15 crew members on board.

The crash of the Flight MH17 was recognized as one of the most terrible aviation disasters in the history, and needless to say the consequences it has brought not only to global aviation in general but also Malaysia Airlines in particular. Many airlines have had disasters but none of them has experienced two large tragedies such as these within four months. The airlines already recorded a big loss of $1.6 million a day; it even has been in the red for the past 3 years. After the disappearance of Flight MH370 with many Chinese passengers on board, sales in China have dropped 60% in March and the second quarter net loss was up to 307.04 million Malaysian ringgit ($97.6 million) (CNBC 2014), not to mention the huge compensation for the relative of the victims.

However, the loss in finances does not compare to the loss in the airline's reputation, and brand trust has made the situation more miserable. Even though the recent tragedies were not totally the airline's faults, its reputation has been ruined so badly that now customers would have the negative sentiment of "I would rather not fly with that". In an effort to win back customers, the airlines doubled the commission rate to travel agents, for example in Australia from 6% to 11%, but it may be too late as many photos of passengers on long-haul flights have posted on social media about empty cabins and departure lounges. (news.com.au 2014.)

Apparently, the tragedy of Malaysian Airlines has sounded the alarm for global aviation that is always proud to be the safest transportation in the world. Several airlines have announced that they will stop flying over the disputed areas in the Ukraine soon after the accident of Flight MH17 in order to reassure the worried customers. Some airlines, such as Qantas or Air Berlin, have circumstanced their routes to avoid Ukrainian airspace several months ago after the fighting started. However, the question asked for global aviation is whether or not to have independent guidance on airspace safety. (Neat & Glenza 2014.)

Airlines have called the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) to have a bigger role in opening or closing airspace. These recent incidents have shocked the whole world and might bring about many major changes in global aviation. However, they also bring new opportunities for airlines in enhancing their brand values..

4.1 VIRGIN ATLANTIC

4.1.1 About the company

Virgin Atlantic was established in 1984 by Richard Branson, who was universally famous at that time as a leading light in the world of pop and rock music. The company started with only one single leased airplane associated with one simple aim "To provide the highest quality innovative service at excellent value for money for all classes of air travellers", (Virgin Atlantic Mission 2014) the airlines has become Britain's second largest carrier, following only the mighty British Airways, with the possession of 38 aircrafts in its fleet and operates long haul services to thirty destinations across the world. (Virgin Atlantic 2014.) The airline's principle of success comes from the customer driven service which emphasizes quality, fun, and innovation. Virgin Atlantic was the first airline that introduced just two flight classes: the Economy class with a choice of Premium Economy and Economy and Upper Class Suite for business class, which featured the longest flat bed and seat and several first class service at business class fare. In addition for the outstanding

service quality, the PR activities play a major part in attracting customers and keeping the brand on top of customers mind. (Marketing Society 2011.)

4.1.2 Company mission

At Virgin Atlantic, the mission statement is stated concisely and simply "To embrace the human spirit and let it fly" (Virgin Atlantic Mission 2014). On one hand, Virgin aims to offer the passengers seamless experiences from the time they book the flight to when they depart for the destination associating with outstanding services and decent attitudes of the flight attendants. On the other hand, Virgin also focuses on building solid, competence staff members who understand the principles of the airlines which are fun, dynamic, and innovative.

4.1.3 An analysis of the PR activities of Virgin Atlantic

Strengths

For long, the company has been a widely recognized brand due to its excellent services. Besides, the investment for PR and marketing campaigns is substantial which are implemented by a strong and dynamic marketing and PR team including people who understand the corporate values and are always willing to apply new communication procedures to attract the audiences. The company has created strong social hubs via several social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Its Virgin Atlantic Blog earned the Best Leisure & Travel Website awards from the Online Retail Awards and a Digital Impact Bronze Award for best use of digital in the travel and leisure sector (Lithium Case Study 2013). Another asset of the brand comes from its owner- Sir Richard Branson. With his prolonged experience in the entertainment industry, Mr. Branson understands deeply how

to interact with the media and take advantages of the news to enhance Virgin brand values. The simple origin of the airlines also makes the brand more down-to-earth and brings intimate feeling for clients.

Weaknesses

Virgin Atlantic does not belong to any airline alliances. This could be a disadvantage for the airline to expand its market and advertise its brand alongside with other airline giants. Besides, the major focus of the airline is still limited to the London market, while flights to the rest of Europe are underdeveloped. This could be the biggest drawback for the airline to promote its brand toward European passengers.

Opportunities

The tourism industry is constantly growing despite the recent incidents. For Virgin Atlantic, with its long recognized brand values about quality services, cheerful flight attendants and responsible customer service, the airlines could take the chance to expand by promoting those values to Asian markets which inherently suffer many flight mishaps and disruptions such as unannounced delays, emergency landings, and inappropriate behaviours of the flight attendants.

Threats

The global airlines are now under scrutiny after the two horrible accidents of Malaysian aircrafts, and Virgin Atlantic is not an exception. The airline has to reassure wary passengers and simultaneously guarantee to strictly follow all regulations regarding air safety, especially over the disputed zones. Moreover, the threat of terrorism is also a major obstacle that the airlines should deal with in order to regain the customer trust. Other factors such as delays due to natural causes or increases in price also need to be tackled smoothly to not affect the brand values.

4.1.4   Communication Objectives

In every PR campaigns, Virgin Atlantics always set up clear objectives to express the messages as well as assure the consistency of all activities. The communication objectives base on three pillars:

- Maintain the image of the brand in public consciousness alongside British Airways.
- Implement unique communication that defines the attitude as well as the personality of the Virgin Atlantic brand
- Provide all passengers whether flying in the Upper Class, Premium Economy or Economy, reasons to choose Virgin Atlantic over competitors.

Objective 1: Maintain the image of the brand in public consciousness alongside British Airways.

The tasks to secure the brand position in the public consciousness is quite challenging for Virgin Atlantic while it is still under the shadow of British Airways. Its budget is also one-third of the enormous rival. Therefore, PR campaigns must be highly visible for getting full attention so that they might be talked about later on. Virgin Atlantic and especially Richard Branson have beautifully implemented the stunts that provide the wow factors needed as well as generated the PR values within an affordable cost. For instance, in 1999, while the British Airways sponsored London Eyes was having technical problems and could not be erected, Richard Branson hired a blimp to fly directly to the location with the message "BA can't get it up". The daredevil act of Richard Branson stole the media coverage at the moment and may still be one of the best stunts of the airlines. (Marketing Society 2011.)

2009's Still Red Hot campaign marked another success in splashing across the media coverage and gaining customers' attention. There were extensive positive coverage on the media, on TV for instance, the campaign appeared on the BBC 6 o'clock news, Radio 1, the Alan Titchmarsh show and Loose Women. Brand buzz increased 11% points in the first two weeks of the campaign. The campaign was so successful that it was listed as one of the top ten marketing moments of 2009 by Campaign Magazine. (Marketing Society 2011.)

Generally, Virgin Atlantic gradually closed the gap at the top of mind awareness with British Airways from 54% Virgin Atlantic versus 87 % British Airways to 74% vs. 73% in 2009 respectively. Communications does not claim sole responsibility for this, but there is no doubt it has played a key role. (Marketing Society 2011).

Objective 2: Implement unique communication that defines the attitude as well as the personality of Virgin Atlantic brand

The brand personality was defined as 'Virginness', which is attributed by six elements: stylish, helpful, up-to-date, dynamic, innovative, and fun.

Objective 3: Provide all passengers whether flying in the Upper Class, Premium Economy or Economy, reasons to choose Virgin brand over competitors

By implementing a customer-driven strategy, Virgin Atlantics aims to provide the best services for all clients in all cabins. Moreover, the passengers in business class also experience several first class services such as: in-flight beauty therapists, a sleeper service or "Snooze zone", which has a Clubhouse offering flexible meal options, in 2012, the airline introduced the new Upper Class Dream Suite with larger seats and space, individual 12.1 inch TV screen with wide a range of in-flight entertainments. (Virgin Atlantic 2012.)

Thanks to Virgin Atlantic's dedication to customers, its brand preference has significantly increased relatively to BA. According to statistics, 54% of the people said that they would consider Virgin Atlantic in the future, while only 28% had actually experienced flying with the airline. It showed that the positive response of the customers has not necessarily been driven by the on-board experience but also from effective communication.

For instance, Figure 5 illustrates the impact of Still Red Hot Campaigns on the brand preference of Virgin Atlantic among audiences in compared with British Airways.

	January 2008(%)	January 2009 (%)
First/business travellers		
Virgin	47	64
BA	63	63
Premium economy travellers		
Virgin	55	72
BA	61	64
Economy travellers		
Virgin	24	47
BA	35	38

Figure 5. Brand preference for Virgin and BA in Jan /Feb 2009 vs. 2008 (Marketing Society, 2011.)

The figure above showed that the brand preference of Virgin Atlantic in all three class passengers was higher than that of British Airways in 2009, soon after the launch of the Still Red Hot campaign.

In conclusion, after setting up a clear set of communication objectives, Virgin Atlantic starts to build up particular campaigns to express itself as an innovative and dynamic

brand. A distinctive voice and iconic impressions were adopted as the main chain of consistency. The messages were clearly set for each cabin, audience, route and channel associated with wow factors to express the brand personality as maverick, challenging, fresh and innovative. All combined to help Virgin Atlantic stand out from competitors. The effective communication approach has helped the airline to maintain its position and even coincided in record sales for Virgin Atlantic in 2009 while the market was still in the middle of the recession.

4.1.5 Delivering the brand values

In Virgin Atlantic, all employees must understand the corporate personality of the company. As stated by Alex Merrylees, Head of Resourcing, a Virgin Atlantic employee must be "talented, self-motivated, enthusiastic, and customer-centric" in order to contribute to the company's legacy as well as to ensure the delivery of supreme level of service that the airlines is attached with. (Lumese 2014.)

Simultaneously with building up a clear corporate personality, the airline developed itself to be a true "customer brand" symbolising both the quality of the services and the customer relationship. The airlines pioneered in constantly upgrading its cabin flight, designing new seats and investing in longer flatbeds to bring the ultimate comfort to Premium Class travellers; moreover, Virgin Atlantics stepped ahead with the decision to re-design the airline uniforms to "challenge the norm and stand out from the crowd" according to Branson (Skift.com, 2013). All the efforts were to make consumers, even with limited opportunities or budgets or those who have not yet experienced the brand, still choose Virgin Atlantic because of the values the brand provides.

In conclusion, customers often regard Virgin Atlantic as a distinctive, energetic and highly innovative brand while the airline guarantees its passengers both quality services as well as a warm-hearted, friendly and intelligent attitude from the staff members.

The foremost brand value created by Virgin Atlantic acts to provide the best possible service at the best possible value at all times. The airline guarantees the passenger is foremost at all times and this is apparent in all aspects of its service. At the same time, consumers regard it as a distinctive, fun-loving and highly innovative brand which is admired for its qualities of friendliness, intelligence and integrity.

4.1.6 The use of Social Media

With over 351K Facebook fans, 304K Twitter followers, and 2.5K followers in Google Plus, Virgin Atlantic surely is a leader in social media. Its owner, Sir Richard Branson- who formerly worked in the music industry, apparently has a clear vision on the power of social media. His personal Facebook page has more than 1.5 million followers, and his Twitter page has 4.45 million followers who constantly be updated by the latest news involved the airlines as well as PR campaigns. Indeed, the main page of the Virgin Corporation features a blog page where Mr. Branson blogs about ordinary things. (thinkwithgoogle.com 2010.)

For instance, in 2011, the airlines made a post on social media sites to solicit the public regarding whether or not to replace the iconic pepper and salt pots; this created a big wave of responses and eventually, the airline made the decision based on the client requirements that brought the lovable pots back to the menu. Ultimately, Virgin foremost strives to create a direct communication bridge upon which clients can take action to contribute to

develop the quality of the service from the simplest one, and they have done a terrific job of building up the relationship with customers.

Virgin Atlantic's "Looking for Linda" social media campaign

In 2011, in order to stimulate the customer engagement with the brand in the context of the global downturn, Virgin Atlantic used Wildfire Social Marketing Suite by Google to create the interactive "Looking for Linda" social campaign to offer clients exclusive rewards. The media objectives were to accumulate 15,000 entries and extend its social audience by 8,000 people.

- Objectives

- To capture the social media users' attention and engage them to participate by offering a particular company's products as rewards
- Appeal to social media users to visit Virgin Atlantic's social media pages
- Advertise the airline's most popular destinations

- Methodology

- Firstly, the airlines cooperated with Wildfire to launch the "Looking for Linda" sweepstakes on social media sites
- Then, a fictional flight attendant named Linda was created. Linda would share her world travels and every week 6 lucky contestants who identified correctly Linda's whereabouts won six pairs of free tickets to one of Virgin Atlantic's destinations. One lucky winner would get upgraded to Upper Class.
- Besides, Linda also had a personal Facebook page; therefore, her fans could get engaged in dialogue directly with her. During the six weeks of the campaigns, Linda got compliments about everything from her red hot Virgin-designed high heels to her choices of destinations.

- Result

By the end of the campaign, the airlines had received 15,499 sweepstakes entries and grown its social media users to 8,282 new followers. Linda's personal Facebook page had over 1,900 friends in six weeks. (Wildfire Press Release 2011.)

The "Looking for Linda" campaign was successful from a marketing point of view since it yielded nearly ten thousand new connections which could be leverage for marketing purposes. The campaigns accomplished the objectives to spread the brand awareness to social media users who did not interact with the brand before, to build the brand image, and to engage customers.

4.2 VIETNAM AIRLINES

4.2.1 About the company

Vietnam Airlines was originally established in January 1956 under the name of Vietnam Civil Aviation Department by the government to primarily serve domestic flights from September 1956. In April 1993, Vietnam Airlines was officially appointed as the country national flag carrier, and on the 27th May 1995, Vietnam Airlines Corporation was formed by gathering 20 domestic aviation enterprises. (Vietnam Airlines booklet 2012, 5.)

After 20 years of operating in the market, Vietnam Airlines has become a major competitor in the Asian aviation market with the possession of several Airbus and Boeing planes

controlled by well-trained pilots. Nowadays, the company has operated in 21 cities throughout the country and in 28 international destinations in Asia, Europe and Australia. Its network extends to 26 countries and territories. In 2006, the Corporation was awarded the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) certificate, and in 2010, Vietnam Airlines became a member of Sky Team, the world's second largest global airline alliance, ensuring the position of a carrier in global market. (Vietnam Airlines booklet 2012, 5)

4.2.2   Company mission

As a national flag carrier, Vietnam Airlines perceives its mission as "to represent the Vietnamese image, to create a cultural bridge with other countries in the world and to bring the finest Vietnamese cultural to all passengers" (Vietnam Airlines booklet 2008). Thereby, Vietnam Airlines aims to create the image of the best airline in Vietnam by offering full quality services as well as well-trained, flight attendants with good attitudes, as with all airlines staff members.

4.2.3   An analysis of the PR activities of Vietnam Airlines

Strength

Vietnam Airlines is the national airline, so it gets huge financial support from the government and always seems to be prioritized in providing service for important occasions. Moreover, because of its wide range of routes and full services, it is reasonable that the brand is always on top of customers' mind. On account of its leadership in the market associated with the strong financial situation, the airline's coverage easily dominated domestic media whenever news relates to aviation matters. In the international market, the participation in the Sky Team Alliance helps Vietnam Airlines to cooperate

with several prestigious and top airline corporations in the world, such as KLM, Korean Air or Air France in order to spread the routes through the codeshare agreement.

Weaknesses

PR activities of Vietnamese companies in general and Vietnam Airlines in particular are mainly about "paying" journalists to write articles for the brands. There is at least a connection with customers, but solely it is all about the relationship between companies and media. This issue prevents firms from taking full advantage of PR activities as well as increases the risks of bad news whenever competitors pay more for journalists for articles that lower another's reputation. In addition, despite the big advantages of the national airlines and the wide range of routes, Vietnam Airlines still has a bad reputation regarding flight delay and cancelations, high prices or inappropriate behaviours of flight attendants. The airlines had antecedents to solve arguments with customers by violation. For example, in 2011, on the Flight VN1169 from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City, one passenger had an intense argument with a flight attendant that the pilot had to land the plane in Da Nang and then call airport security to escort the passenger out of the aircraft. The incident went out of hand after the passenger then accused the airlines of abusive violation and required compensation. Associated with the poor recognition about flight attendants before, the incident seemed to add fuel to the fire of bad publicity even though the airlines made several announcements to clean its name. To some extent, the bad behaviour of the flight attendants has cost the brand not one but several times. In March 2014, a Vietnamese stewardess was arrested in Tokyo, Japan after being suspected of transporting stolen clothing items on a bus for flight crew from a hotel to Kansai International Airport last September (Vietnamnet 2014). The arrest has disclosed an ugly truth that the transportation of foreign items in the international airport of Vietnam Airlines crew members has been going on for many years and in general, the social perspective about flight stewards/stewardess is not positive. Those matters are affecting the brand values and corporation brand personality dramatically.

Opportunities

The recent incidents in global aviation have raised an alarm for airlines safety and Vietnam Airlines could take advantage of that since the airlines has been recognized as one of the safest airlines since the beginning. The airlines also hit the spotlight when the media revealed that the airlines had changed its international routes to avoid Ukrainian airspace several months before the crash of MH17, making it one of the earliest airlines concerned about the thread of aircrafts being taken down over the conflict areas. Additionally, Vietnam Airlines and VietJet Air ran a test along "the Golden Routes" over Cambodia and Laos, the new routes hopefully will help the airlines save more energy and flight time than the traditional ones.

Threats

The accidents of Malaysian aircrafts have brought both opportunities and threats to Vietnam Airlines in particular. Passengers nowadays raise more concern about the safety of the flights aside with traditional factors such as price or time. Regarding to this matter, people may consider shifting to other transportations like train or car so that the airlines need to aim its public relation activities toward reassuring the customers. Besides, the threat of the rising competitors such as VietJet Air or Jetstar Airlines is also critical since these two airlines aim to perform as low-cost airlines that usually offer huge price promotion to gain the market shares. Hence, Vietnam Airlines should rotate the focus on other factors such as quality services, the state of having safety and comfort during the flights in its marketing and PR strategies.

4.2.4   Communication objectives

- Establish the brand as the national flag carrier which offers full service flight and possesses the most direct flights either domestic flights or international flights in Vietnam
- Represent the Vietnamese culture toward international passengers
- Introduce new model aircrafts that will be complemented to the fleets from 2015 to 2018

Objective 1: Establish the brand as the national flag carrier which offers full service flight and possesses the most direct flights either domestic flights or international flights in Vietnam

Thanks to the financial strength and the wide coverage in media of the airlines, Vietnam Airlines is always on top of customer mind in Vietnamese market. Moreover, because of its characteristics, Vietnam Airlines is the exclusive option for diplomacy travels in the market. Hence, in order to strengthen the brand awareness, the airlines aims to focus on the relationship with the media via the press releases, television news and other traditional communication hubs. In the airport, the airlines also set up billboards and standees to attract the passengers. In the international market, Vietnam Airlines concentrate on organizing roadshows, promoting Vietnamese tourism by cooperating with tourism agencies, emphasizing the advantages of being one member of Sky Team Alliances to appeal the international passengers. (Vietnam Airlines Board of Director Proposal, 2013)

Objective 2: Represent the Vietnamese culture toward international passengers

As a flag carrier, Vietnam Airlines carries the duty to represent the country toward international passengers by displaying a friendly image of all flight attendants and airlines staff members. All flight stewardesses compulsorily wear the traditional Vietnamese dress "Ao Dai" while working and there are always two options inflight meals including one Vietnamese meal. The airlines also publish the exclusive bilingual magazine "Heritage" in

every flights to update the Vietnamese lifestyles, national heritage, and natural scenic… for international passengers to have a glimpse perspective about the country. However, the recent incidents such as flight stewardess was arrested in Japan or violence enforcement toward passengers along with the inherently weakness of the airlines such as long unannounced delays, emergency landing, or poor behaviours of the flight attendants has affected the brand image dramatically and caused frustration to the passengers.

Objective 3: Introduce new model aircrafts that will be complemented to the fleets from 2015 to 2018

According to plan, Vietnam Airlines will receive 12 new aircrafts by the end of 2018, meanwhile, by the end of 2015, 4 new 787 models will be delivered in attempt to renovate the fleets as well as increase the direct international flights to the USA and Europe. The information will be released through the press and advertisements in television and newspapers. (Vietnam Airlines Board of Director Proposal, 2013)

4.2.5 Delivering the brand values

Vietnam Airlines aims to build a fleets with professional flight staff members and full quality services. The airlines pilots are sent to training in the United States for 1 year to master the flight monitoring procedure. In fact, Vietnam Airlines is holding a good record about flight safety as the airlines never be involved in any airway accidents that led to tremendous casualties. On the other hand, the behaviours of the flight attendants in some cases are indicated as "inappropriate" and this is the common problem not only for Vietnam Airlines but for other domestic airlines operating in the country. The approach strategy relating to PR of Vietnam Airlines mainly through traditional communication hubs and its main website. There are very least direct interaction between the airline's PR campaigns and the customers.

4.2.6 The use of Social Media

The use of social media is extremely insignificant. The company do not build up any of its social network sites. Main information of the flights come from the tourism agencies and its official website.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Final Results

After carefully scrutinizing, the thesis provided the answers for the questions asked before. The objectives of this thesis could be tackled through 4 matters:

- Thanks to the abundance of advertisements on media channels, audiences now fed up with exaggerated, over the top advertising that make unrealistic image of the brands. People are looking for the authenticity, down-to-Earth brands which reflect more about their "true-self". In addition, consumers prefer the brands which possess clear trait of personalities and feel attached to it. Therefore, the direct interaction between the brand and customers plays an important role in building relationship, enhancing the brand loyalty as the clients feel they can contribute to strengthen the brand values.

- PR is the direct method to react to customers. To some extent, PR provides the authenticity that the audiences are looking for after the advertising propaganda. Moreover, PR also has the credibility since the information come from the press

releases and several types of "news", which eventually ignite word-of-mouth endorsement.

- Although the traditional PR methods still prove their efficiency in many cases. However, these methods seem to be obsolete in modern business since those depend immensely in media hubs but provide very least communication toward customers. PR practitioners should remember that PR is about "building mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics" not to cooperate only with the media. Thanks to the development of Internet, PR practitioners now can create several communication hubs such as blogs, podcasts, and forums to connect with their audiences. In general, communication between the companies and their customers is the key for success in nowadays business and it should be the main goal of a PR campaigns.

5.2 PR activities comparison between two airlines

After scrutinizing the PR implementations between Virgin Atlantics and Vietnam Airlines, the authors indicates the differences of two airlines in four aspects:

- Virgin Atlantics targets their PR objectives both internal and external. On the one hand, the PR team always attempt to gain the target audiences attention by creating stunts with amazing wow factor. The communication objectives are clear and straightforward which centred the customers as well as distinguished the brand personalities from the competitor British Airways. On the other hand, the company also tends to create a strong, dynamic and determined staff members. All flight attendants and ground staff understand fully the brand values and the business objectives. Collectively, they create a corporate personality known as "Virginess" and set an identity for the airlines. Meanwhile, Vietnam Airlines also attempt to establish its brand as a national carrier with excellent services and flight attendants. However, the staff members does not fully commit with the brand communication objectives as there is no clear set of procedures

aims to guide them. The communication objectives entirely aims to connect with the media whereas there is no significant attempt to communicate with the target customers.

- Virgin Atlantic is the pioneer in applying the social media into its PR campaigns to exploit the fullest effective of those hubs regarding to the communication with audiences. Customers can find information about the flights, promotion and activities the airlines involves on a daily basis. Furthermore, in some cases, clients can actually involve to some decision making process. On the other hand, Vietnam Airlines does not activate on any type of social media as well as Web-based blogs or podcasts except from its main website. It limited the chances for customers who want to get attached more with the brand.

- The message of Virgin Atlantics is simple but yet straight-forward so that the audiences as well as the employees can understand fully the business idea of the company and people feel more attached with the brand. On the other hand, Vietnam Airlines expresses its mission statement so vaguely that employees barely take attention to the message and do not find it essential to improve the quality of the service.

- In general, PR activities of Vietnam Airlines are still considered simply "buying coverage in the media". Hence, there is no clear strategy of implementing the correct PR campaigns to enhance the brand values as well as brand personalities. On the other hand, Virgin Atlantic could be considered as role model for any airlines in term of utilizing PR communication tools to strengthen the brand.

6 SUGESSTIONS FOR VIETNAM AIRLINES

In the previous sections, the author discovered and pointed out many obstacles Vietnam Airlines is now facing with in term of maintaining its market position which including:

- The rising of domestic competitors: with the abundant financial resources and ambition of the owners, VietJet Air is an uprising force to challenge the market share with Vietnam Airlines. The attempt of VietJet Air to create an image of young, fresh, and dynamic airlines in associated with many price incentives compete directly with Vietnam Airlines. In addition, the ambition of VietJet Air to expand its fleet and flight connections by purchasing latest aircraft models as well as examining more direct flights certainly gets the attention of the media, eventually will enhance the brand awareness of the airlines.

- Threats from international competitors: There are many international airlines tend to expand their flight connections to Vietnam like Emirates, Qatar Airways, and Etihad Airways. In addition, the development of airlines alliance between Europe and South East Asia will stimulate more international airlines to approach and operate in Vietnamese market.

- The negative attitude of passengers toward Vietnam Airlines: As stated earlier, Vietnam Airlines are holding too many problems relating to poor behaviour of flight attendants, unannounced delays, obsolete aircraft models, and deficient services at air cargos. All combine and make passenger feel the airlines unfavourable.

All these problems the airlines is facing at the moment highlight the essential of implementing a new communication method to redefine the brand in customer's mind as well as enhance the brand values.

Subsequently, after evaluating the PR activities of the airlines, here are some recommendations for Vietnam Airlines in order to improve its PR performance:

- Shift from the traditional perspective of "buying coverage in the media" to the new perspective of communicating with people: As stated before, the main media hubs are still critical for the company because of its position in the market. However, the airlines

could consider exploiting social media to increase the interaction between clients and the brand. Facebook, Twitter or Google Plus are all excellent channels to communicate with people, especially young passengers. In addition, instead of delivering all the press releases to editors and wait languidly, Vietnam Airlines can create and publish its releases via blogs with open comments. Those processes will take time, effort and resources but if they are being done completely, not only will costs be saved, but the relationship between the airlines and customers also will be improved.

- Identify the brand personalities: as a national flag carrier, sometimes Vietnam Airlines creates an image of one distance and solemn brand to passengers. This perspective of the company also negatively affects the attitude as well as the behaviours of the staff members. The airlines should put customers in the centre, build a brand personality which is friendly, gentle, and open- this represents the characteristics of Vietnamese people.

- Set a clear communication objectives guideline and help the staff members understand the company codes: the airline represents the image of the country and one flight attendant also reflects the image of the airline. Hence, appropriate behaviours, friendly and always energetic are the compulsory characteristics of one Vietnam Airlines staff member. The airline must set a clear trait of moral standards and apply it from the recruitment to assure the quality of the staff. Moreover, issues such as unannounced delays or emergency landings must be tackled directly and openly in front of the public. The lately proposal of the airlines to set up sleeping cabins in Noi Bai Airports for delayed customers is an example of attempt to solve the problems. However, the solutions also should be examined carefully to be effective.

- Simplifying the message: The message should be straight-forward as well as easy to understand for everyone. It should emphasize how the airline represents the country and in which aspects. The employees should be the first people who understand this message. It should be included in all company press materials and speeches of the CEO.

- Emphasize the advantage on flight safety: Vietnam Airlines shows a good record of flight safety and this is a massive advantage for the airlines regarding the recent airway situation. The PR activities still should be built around this factor to firstly enhance the

brand reputation comparing with competitors and other neighbour airlines, then to reassure the wary passengers who are willing to switch their favourite airlines to others because of safety.

To conclude, the current situation of global aviation bring many challenges but also opportunities for Vietnam Airlines to improve the services quality and brand awareness. By implementing the PR efficiently and attempting to communicate with customers, the airline will certainly strengthen its leading position in the domestic market as well as increase its influence toward international passengers in foreign markets.

7   REFERENCES

Aaker J. (1997), *Dimensions of Brand Personality*. Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 34, No.3, pp. 347-356.

Bates D. (2002), *To Inform and Persuade: Public Relations from the Dawn of Civilization*, available from http://engine.koduleht.net/templates/kajatampere/files/mdl_files.php/HistoryofPublicRelationInstitute.pdf[20 July 2014].

Batey M. (2008), *Brand Meaning*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

CNN (2014), *MH370 series*. CNN.com.

CNBC (2014), *Malaysia Airlines posts Q2 net loss of $98 mln.* CNBC.com. available from http://www.cnbc.com/id/101954028. [20 July 2014]

Ernst & Young (2012), *This Time is Personal: from Consumers to Co-Creator.* Available from < http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/This_time_it_is_personal_-_from_consumer_to_co-creator_2012/$File/Consumer%20barometer_V9a.pdf> [20 July 2014].

Fiona H., Leslie C. (2001), *corporate branding and corporate brand performance.*

European Journal of Marketing. Vol. 35, Issue 3/ 4, pp. 441-456.

Goldman D. (2014), *Your PR Message: For Biggest Impact, Keep it Short.* Goldman & Associates Public Relation. Available from http://goldmanandassociates.com/thought-leadership/authored-articles/your-pr-message-for-biggest-impact/. [29 September 2014]

Gilmore James H, Joseph Pine B. (2007), *Authenticity: What Customers Really Want.* Boston Harvard Business School Press.

Grunig J. & Hunt T. (1984), *Managing Public Relations*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Grunewald D., Dua G., Petrausch R. (2008), *Public Relations: A Primer for Business Executive,* iUniverse, available from http://books.google.com.vn/books?id=XT4LbwcjgAYC&source=gbs_navlinks_s [20 July 2014].

Harter S. (2002), *Authenticity*. Handbooks of Positive Psychology. Oxford University Press, Vol. 382, pp. 94.

Ingram D. (2014), *How Brand Awareness Affects Perception.* Chron.com, available from < http://smallbusiness.chron.com/brand-awareness-affects-perception-11388.html > [20 July 2014].

Lithium. (2013), *Virgin Atlantic Case Study.* Lithium Case Study Report.

Lumese. (2014), *Virgin Atlantic uncovers the best talent and cuts time to hire by 20%.* Lumese customer report. [20 July 2014]

James G. (2014), *Brand Loyalty is (Almost) Dead*. Inc.com, available from http://www.inc.com/geoffrey-james/brand-loyalty-is-almost-dead.html> [20 July 2014].

Karolefski J. (2003), *PR Stirs It Up.* Brandchanel.com, available from < http://www.brandchannel.com/features_effect.asp?pf_id=166> [20 July 2014].

Keller K.L, Richey K. (2006), *The importance of corporate brand personality traits to a successful 21st century business.* Journal of Brand Management, Vol. 14, pp. 74-81.

Krashinsky S. (2014), *Why marketers need to adapt to fading brand loyalty*. The Globe and Mail, available from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/marketing/brand-loyalty-the-battle-to-make-products-meaningful/article19007892/ . [20 July 2014]

Macdonald E. & Sharp B. (2000), *Brand awareness effects on consumer decision making for common, repeat purchase products: a replication*. Journal of Business Research. Vol. 48, pp. 5-15.

Marketing Society. (2011), *Virgin Atlantic: Still pioneering after all these years.* Marketing Excellence Publications.

Malar L. (2011), *Emotional Brand Attachment and Brand Personality: The Relative Importance of the Actual and the Ideal Self.* Journal of Marketing, Vol. 75, pp. 35-52.

Melanie J. (2011), *Ready, Aim, Fire: Key Message in Public Relation campaigns*. Prism Online Journal, Vol. 8, No.1, available from http://www.prismjournal.org/fileadmin/8_1/James.pdf. [24 August 2014]

Neate R. and Glenza J. (2014), *Many airlines have avoided Ukrainian airspace for months.* Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/18/airlines-avoid-ukraine-airspace-mh17. The guardian.com. [20 July 2014]

Newman D. (2014), *Risk Everything: Nike Does for World Cup 2014, And Wins.* Forbes.com

News.com.au, *Higher commissions, and fewer passengers: the struggle to save Malaysia Airlines deepens.* Available from http://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-updates/higher-commissions-fewer-passengers-the-struggle-to-save-malaysia-airlines-deepens/story-e6frfq80-1227032981979 [28 August 2014].

Olenski S. (2013), *Only One Quarter Of American Consumers Are Brand Loyal.* Forbes Magazine, available from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/marketshare/2012/03/26/only-one-quarter-of-american-consumers-are-brand-loyal/>. [20 July 2014].

PRSA. (2011), *What is Public Relations? PRSA's Widely Accepted Definition.* Available from http://www.prsa.org/aboutprsa/publicrelationsdefined/#.VA7ZEPmSxnA. [20 July 2014].

PRCA. (2014), *What is PR?* Available from http://www.prca.org.uk/What_is_PR. [20 July 2014]

Pelsmacker D. P., Geuens M., Van den Berg. (2010), *Marketing Communication: A European Perspective.* Pearson Education Limited.

Rise A. (1998), *The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding*. HarperCollins Publishers.

Scott D. (2007), *The New Rules of Marketing and PR*. 1st Edition. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Sinek S. (2009), *How Great Leader Inspire Action*. TED Conference.

Staplehurst G., Charoenwongse S. (2012), *Why Brand Personality Matters: Aligning Your Brand To Culture Drivers Of Success*. Millward Brown, available from < http://www.millwardbrown.com/docs/default-source/insight-documents/points-of-view/Millward_Brown_POV_Brand_Personality.pdf.> [20 July 2014].

Skift.com (2013), *New Virgin Atlantic uniforms to be designed by punk pioneer Vivienne Westwood.* Skift.com, available from http://skift.com/2013/05/02/new-virgin-atlantic-uniforms-to-be-designed-by-punk-pioneer-vivienne-westwood/. [20 July 2014]

Tanner J. and Raymond M. (2012), *Principle of Marketing 2.0*. Flat World Education.

ThinkWithGoogle.com. (2010), *Virgin Atlantic's Social Campaign Attracts More than 15,000 Entries and 8,000 Social Users.* Available from http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/case-studies/virgin-atlantics-social-campaign.html.

Tuskej U., Golob U., & Podnar K. (2011), The role of consumer-brand identification in building brand relationships. Journal of Business Research. Vol. 66, pp. 53-59.

Virgin Atlantic. (2012), *Press Kit*. Virgin Atlantic about us.

Virgin Atlantic. (2014), *About us, mission statement*. Available from http://www.virgin atlantic.com/eu/en/footer/about-us.html. [27 August 2014]

Vietnam Airlines Booklet. (2012), *Vietnam Airlines: About Us*. Vietnam Airlines.

Vietnamnet (2014), *Vietnam Airlines stewardess arrested in Japan.* Vietnamnet.com. Available from http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/society/98424/vietnam-airlines-stewardess-arrested-in-japan.html. [20 August 2014]

Vietnam Airlines. (2013), *Board of Directors Proposal*. Vietnam Airlines.

Vranica S. (2014), *Behind the Preplanned Oscar Selfie: Samsung's Ad Strategy*. The World Street Journal online. Available from http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304585004579417533278962674. [20 July 2014].

Wildfire Press Release. (2011), *Virgin Atlantic Social Campaign*. Wildfire.

Waddington S. (2012), *A Critical Review of the Four Models of Public Relations and the Excellence Theory in an Era of Digital Communication*. Available from http://wadds.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/chartered-practitioner-paper-FINAL.pdf [20 July 2014].