

Chipotle: The Burrito Blog

A PR analysis

By: Vanessa Turner



Chipotle Logo

A company that I believe best captures the definition of public relations is Chipotle. [The Public Relations Society of America](#) (PRSA) defines public relations as, “a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.”

As a consumer, I appreciate that Chipotle is thorough and consistent in their communication efforts, up to date on social media trends, social justice movements and responds well to crisis. Our country could be in a [national lettuce shortage](#), but I only know that because of Chipotle. I would love to know why I think so highly of this company and why I choose to go back despite knowing there is a risk given their [food-handling reputation](#). In this blog post, I will be researching and evaluating Chipotle’s public relations strategies.

A loyal fanbase

On social media, Chipotle has a very Gen-Z, laid-back and humorous tone. With 1.1 million followers on [Instagram](#), Chipotle has comment section upon comment section full of people expressing their grievances, praising a retail location for a job well done, or simply just people reacting to memes. The social media team at Chipotle take this a step further and personally replies to each comment under every post and signs them with a signature. This is optimal because a company’s audience is going to want to see that someone on their team is caught up on pop culture trends and knows how to communicate to all age groups, as well as handle difficult situations online. Establishing a personal relationship with a consumer via social media is important because consumers want to know that their concerns are addressed by a real person, rather than being given an automated response.



Chipotle Instagram Post

Chipotle takes this a step further and has a separate Instagram account dedicated to the [People of Chipotle](#), where they highlight different team members from their retail locations in each post. They also use this account to post more about company achievements, employee promotions, their business values, goals and more. This is a great account to have for a company because it furthers that relationship and trust between a company and their audience. Consumers love to see that companies care about their business, service and employees.

Influencers and collaborations

Chipotle has established themselves as a company that knows what their consumers want by staying on top of trends and implementing new strategies and products to promote themselves. A popular strategy is ‘[influencer marketing](#),’ which is where a company uses a popular social



David Dobrik with the Dobrik Burrito

media personality or public figure as a temporary representative. These figures are typically working with these companies for a limited amount of time under a contract for a short amount of time. In November of 2020, Chipotle reached out and partnered with popular social media/YouTube star [David Dobrik](#) to promote the ‘[Dobrik Burrito](#).’ Dobrik is known for being an avid Chipotle fan, and has spoken frequently about how he eats Chipotle so often that his local restaurant knows his order. This promotion was done to allow Dobrik’s audience the chance to order her exact meal through the Chipotle smart phone app for a limited amount of time.

This is just one instance that Chipotle has used a social media star to launch new products, although they’ve also done collaborations with other companies. In late 2021, Chipotle partnered with [e.l.f Cosmetics](#) to create makeup products inspired by Chipotle ingredients. The launch was done to ‘customize your makeup look the same way you customize your go-to Chipotle order.’ The launch came with a discount code for free Chipotle chips and guacamole.

When in doubt, talk it out

It’s important for a company to be verbal and transparent about crisis management. Chipotle has been adamant about their efforts to [help minimize COVID-19](#). Through their website, social media campaigns and advertisements about vaccine incentives, this company knows how to work through a pandemic. Regarding other company issues and crisis, it’s no secret that Chipotle deals with a seemingly semi-annual [E.coli outbreak](#) due to faulty lettuce. This is (rightfully) a reason why people tend to stay away from new Chipotle locations when they pop up in a new place. When searching through old press releases and looking for official statements, there wasn’t much from Chipotle themselves about this specific manner. Other news outlets and blogs covered outbreaks dating from 2015 to 2018, but there seems to be no coverage in more recent years.

This company’s public relations activities somewhat reflect the PRSA definition of public relations. Through their marketing strategies, constant and creative social media use, product launches and use of influencer marketing, I would say that Chipotle checks almost every box. I enjoy that this company is appreciative of their retail employees, but I do not approve of their silence and lack of communication on certain matters.



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About the author

Vanessa Turner is a senior at the University of North Texas. Born and raised in Dallas, Turner is studying journalism and anthropology with plans to graduate in May 2022.

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