**An Analysis of National Disability Theatre’s “30 Days of Racial and Disabled Justice”**

**Summary**

Starting September 20th, 2021, National Disability Theatre started their “30 Days of Racial and Disabled Justice” campaign. This campaign was created through a partnership between the organizations of National Disability Theatre, Sound Theatre Company, and Calling Up Justice. The overarching goal of this campaign is to have publics learn about issues affecting people of other races and people with disabilities, reflect on their own internal biases, and advocate for change. National Disability Theatre was founded on the mission of improving casting of Disabled people, advocating for accessibility across industries, and fighting the stigmas around disability and the perceived lack of success that comes with it. The campaign came about because of recent, national surges in advocacy of racial equity. At the time of writing, this is a recently completed campaign so some parts of this analysis may be assumptions.

**Research**

The formative research for the overall campaign seems to be non-existent. I assume that the members of National Disability Theatre, Calling Up Justice, and Sound Theatre Company met together to decide what topics they should discuss, and called upon personal experience to determine the specific messaging. In my opinion, they should have held focus groups with members of their publics to gain insights into what topics are important to them. The organizations also could have conducted qualitative research to see statistics relating to employment disparities relating to People of Color, Disabled people, or both.

Research for the campaign programming was almost entirely qualitative and secondary research. In fact, at first glance it seems that all the research was done by Calling Up Justice. Regardless, the formative research mainly consists of content analysis. While specific sources are not credited on some posts, it can be assumed that Calling Up Justice compiled articles, book excerpts, and other similar writings relating to the topic of the day. There are some direct quotes from activists, but these quotes do not seem to be given for the purpose of this campaign. I would suggest to National Disability Theatre to do more primary research themself instead of solely relying on one of their partners’ research. This could include interviews or direct quotes from advisory members on how these topics have affected their lives or career.

The publics targeted by this campaign were people involved with or aware of National Disability Theatre; however, they seem to be covered by a wide range of demographics, which makes sense considering National Disability Theatre tried to educate as many people as possible. While their formative research practices need improvement, National Disability Theatre did encourage stakeholders to leave comments or send messages to them so they could receive feedback and improve their campaign.

**Objectives**

As stated before, the main goal of this campaign was to educate publics, cause them to identify biases in themselves and the world around them, and change their behaviors. In other words, the objective of “30 Days of Racial and Disabled Justice” was to turn aware publics into active publics. This is so close to being a S.M.A.R.T. objective! It is measurable because National Disability Theatre can track the number of likes, comments, and shares of their social media posts. It is attainable and relevant because, due to the recent calls for racial justice across the country, people are more willing to learn about discrimination and advocate for change. Finally, it is time-bound because the campaign lasts 30 days.

Despite meeting the other parameters of a S.M.A.R.T. objective, the call to action could be more specific. How can these people become new advocates? All of the posts invite National Disability Theatre’s followers to share their posts, but that can only go so far. I would suggest including information about similar advocacy groups, so the near-active publics can start to take action.

**Programming**

The “30 Days of Racial and Disabled Justice” campaign consists of slideshows made by National Disability Theatre, Calling Up Justice, and Sound Theatre Company.The slides are easy to digest, often consisting ofa definition and an example of the topic of the day, occasionally including a quote referring to the topic as well (Appendix A). Some topics relate more to disability like disability justice, ableism, access intimacy, forced intimacy, and crip time. Others are more specific to race such as racial solidarity terms, white supremacy culture, and racial justice. Some concepts apply to both including intersectionality, cross-movement solidarity, culture, supremacy culture, pleasure activism, and intrusive identification demand. These were then posted to National Disability Theatre’s Instagram and Facebook, as well Calling Up Justice’s website. The reason I would not consider these different tactics is that the only difference is Calling Up Justice directly links to further readings, while National Disability Theatre links to Calling Up Justice; they would add the same further reading links in the captions of later posts.

“30 Days of Racial and Disabled Justice” provided a platform of two-way symmetrical communication. Throughout the campaign, National Disability Theatre encouraged publics to share their thoughts and experiences on each post. National Disability Theatre hosted a panel to reflect on the campaign on the last day: “Theatre at the Crossroads of Racial and Disabled Justice” on Wednesday, October 20th. I was unable to attend the event, but I assume it provided an opportunity for publics to learn personal experiences from artists affected by the topics previously mentioned in the campaign. More reasoning why this followed the two-way symmetrical model will be included in the “Evaluation” section.

**Evaluation**

Despite all of the formative research being qualitative, the summative research consists of a mix of both quantitative and qualitative research. National Disability Theatre can see the number of likes, comments, and shares through social media analytics; they are also able to see the number of people that attended the panel discussions. Qualitative summative research is the key part of their evaluation. National Disability Theatre will most likely take comments on posts or comments made in the discussions and apply them to the organization, as well as watch other theatre companies to see if “30 Days of Racial and Disabled Justice” influenced those companies to implement changes; however, there was more that could have been done in the middle of the 30 days. While they did have a post at the end of the first week, a more effective strategy would be to hold Q&A discussions—or more formal focus groups—throughout so publics can give their opinion to the organization in a face-to-face fashion, as opposed to the more ambiguous comments method since there is no way to know whether National Disability Theatre actually listened to the comment.

As much as I love this cause and personally enjoyed the posts, based on my understanding of public relations, National Disability Theatre’s “30 Days of Racial and Disabled Justice” campaign could have been improved. In order to better complete their S.M.A.R.T. objective, including more transparent, primary research could have encouraged publics to learn more about these topics, and uplifting other advocacy groups could have enticed publics to become advocates themselves. Also, presenting more direct opportunities to feedback could have allowed these potential advocates to see their work take effect in front of them.

References

Links to Campaign

<https://www.instagram.com/nationaldisabilitytheatre/>

<https://callingupjustice.com/blog/>

Appendix A

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