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## **The Great Advertising Campaign: The Effectiveness of British Petroleum's Post-Oil Spill Campaign**

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The University of Southern Mississippi

The Great Advertising Campaign: The Effectiveness of British Petroleum's Post-Oil Spill  
Campaign

by

Brianne A. Painia

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Honors College of  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
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## **Introduction**

On April 20, 2010, one explosion on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Rig in the Gulf of Mexico caused the greatest oil spill disaster in United States history. The effects of the spill were realized almost immediately. Seafood fishers lost jobs and product, the Gulf was tainted, and people around the nation realized the damage was not going to go away any time soon. The question asked around the nation was, “What are they going to do about it?” The “they” being British Petroleum, the owners of the ill-fated oil rig. BP did do *something* about it; they advertised. The corporation spent an estimated 93 million dollars on advertising alone. The purpose of this grand advertising campaign was to make people, more specifically those most directly affected by the spill, feel better about the damage and to make those affected know that they, BP, were indeed ‘getting things done’ in regard to the aftermath of the spill. All this effort and money put into advertising would surely ensure the success of the campaign with viewers. Or did it?

In my thesis, I conduct an analysis of the responses of people in the Mississippi and Alabama Gulf Coast, New Orleans, and Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

I intend to answer the following research question:

1. How effective was BP’s campaign in improving the attitude towards of those in areas affected by the spill?

I argue that although millions of dollars were spent on the advertising campaign, BP’s ads did not, and still do not, positively change the attitudes of consumers in the region of the disaster. The sample consisted of people who either worked or lived in areas affected by the oil spill, specifically the Mississippi and Alabama Gulf Coast, New Orleans, and Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

I assume the following:

1. Most of the surveyed will have negative or biased reactions to the ad campaign because of the sensitive nature of the topic.
2. The goal of BP's campaign was to put the corporation in a positive light with the affected.

I am conducting this study because BP invested so much money into the advertising campaign. As a business major, it piques my interest to question the effectiveness of such a large investment. Ultimately, I would like for those reading this thesis to be able to determine if all the capital invested into the post-oil spill campaign was worth the great amount of effort. I believe this study is extremely interesting because the source of the research is a relevant and recent event. Since my target population for this study are people who live in the region affected by the disaster, I believe that their attitude toward the company will be negative.

## **Literature Review**

### BP Oil Spill

The Deepwater Horizon Oil Rig was owned by British Petroleum and was located about 40 miles from the coast of Louisiana. On April 20, 2010, an explosion on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig caused a fire, which in turn caused the rig to sink two days later. The explosion triggered a flow of crude oil from the depths of the Gulf. Although attempts were made to stop the flood of oil by cutting off the pipe from which it flowed, the blowout preventer-the device used in case of emergency-failed to operate properly once the rig was enflamed. The oil flowed constantly from beneath the Gulf floor until a well cap was put on

the well on July 12, nearly three months later (British Petroleum, 2010). It is estimated that about 4.8 million barrels of oil were wasted in the oil spill (Hoch, 2010). The oil slick caused by the explosion covered approximately 28,958 miles of water (Cleveland, 2010). Of the 126 workers on the Deepwater Horizon rig, 11 were killed.

### “Beyond Petroleum”

In 2000, BP began an advertising campaign that presented the company as one that believed in eco-friendly practices and operations. This “green” campaign was headed with the motto “Beyond Petroleum,” a play on the company’s initials (Cherry & Sneirson, 2010, p. 21). John Browne, CEO at the beginning of the campaign, said that BP’s image needed to indicate that the company was “a competitively profitable force of good, which valued top-class safe operational performance, innovation, progress and environment leadership” (Cherry & Sneirson, 2010, p. 21). The campaign was very successful, and the corporation was praised as a “prescient model of corporate social responsibility” (Little, 2010). As a result of the “Beyond Petroleum” campaign, BP’s stock price doubled. Browne’s memoirs speak of the sustainable goals of the company. The vice president and chief strategist at Calvert, a mutual funds company known for its social responsibility, once said in an interview that she went out of her way to use BP gas to support the firm’s environmentally-conscious ways of doing business.

### “Beyond Petroleum and the Oil Spill”

It took BP ten years to build its reputation as the one oil company that cared about the environment and that was “beyond petroleum.” It took a matter of seconds and one explosion to tarnish that very same reputation. Negative media coverage has had a substantial effect on the company’s image. The BP “beyond petroleum” image is one of the past. After the oil

spill, the company lost customers that took a decade to gain (Little, 2010). BP's stock lost close to half of its value by June 2010.

### BP "Making Things Right" and Reactions

Soon after the Deepwater explosion, BP began an advertising campaign focused on its initiative to repair the damage created by the catastrophe. Plungis stated that "BP spent \$93.4 million on television, print, and internet ads from April to July, more than three times the amount in the same period a year earlier" (Plungis, 2010). BP also expanded the number of markets in which it advertised from two states and Washington D.C. to 17 states and 129 cities. BP claimed to have scaled back its advertising in other countries to further promote and fund its U.S. campaign. BP gave \$89.5 million to help promote tourism to the states directly affected by the spill: Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, and Louisiana (Perez, 2010). BP critics believed the company spent too much time repairing its image and not enough "repaying its liabilities" (Perez, 2010). BP's campaign motto has been "Making Things Right." One advertisement ended with the phrase, "We may not be perfect, but we will make this right" (Walker, 2010). Florida Representative Kathy Castor stated that "BP's extensive advertising campaign that is solely focused on polishing its corporate image in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon blowout disaster is making people angry" (Alpert, 2010). BP's choice to run ads on national television as opposed to only regional markets significantly increased its costs. BP chose to advertise on national cable networks as opposed to local (Gulf-area) networks. This action suggests the company was trying to appeal to national government officials, as opposed to those actually affected by the spill (Stein, 2011). The original TV spots featured current BP CEO Tony Hayward, but later Hayward was replaced by other BP employees speaking on behalf of the company (Plungis, 2010). In June 2010, President

Obama reprimanded BP for its expensive advertising campaign. He reminded BP of its “moral and legal obligations...in the Gulf for the damage that has been done.” BP also paid out \$10.5 billion dollars in quarterly dividends in June 2010 (Jackson, 2010).

### Institutional Advertising

Two types of advertising exist: commercial and institutional. Commercial advertising is used to market a company’s product in order to create revenue. Institutional or corporate advertising is used to “create a favorable environment in which to function for the firm.” The four types of institutional advertising are: image, special opportunity message, issue or advocacy, and financial purposes advertising (Chu, 1997). Special opportunity institutional advertising also is described as crisis management advertising because it is used when a company is trying to turn a negative perception by the public into a positive one. There are four functions of corporate advertising: public relations, institutional advertising, corporate identity advertising, and recruitment purposes (Chu, 1997). The purpose of the public relations function is to show the public what the company believes in, and depending on the audience, the company also may want to reaffirm certain values and principles to the recipients. British Petroleum used crisis management institutional advertising in order to change oil spill victims’ possibly negative attitudes about the company and to regain consumers’ faith in the company.

### Corporate Reputation

Corporate (or company) reputation is defined as “a stakeholder’s overall evaluation of a company over time. This evaluation is based on the stakeholder’s direct experiences with the company, any other form of communication and symbolism that provides information about the firm’s actions and/or a comparison with the actions of other leading rivals” (Gotsi

& Wilson, 2001). Gotsi and Wilson also found that most people believed corporate image and corporate reputation are bound, meaning that a company's corporate reputation is dependent on the things people see everyday regarding the company. If a company's image is not trustworthy, its reputation is at risk. The two main sources of a company's reputation are experience and information (Harrison, 2009). People will base their opinion of a company on what they have heard about the company and what they experienced with the company.

### Importance of Reputation

Alsop states how companies "must make reputation management a fundamental part of the corporate culture and value system" (Alsop, 2004). Alsop's article states the importance of a reputation to a corporation. It takes one flawed decision to create a flawed reputation for the company, and the rest of the companies in that industry, for the remainder of their existence. The giant disasters of Texaco in the Amazon and Exxon in Prince William Sound had given the petroleum industry a bad name. The Deepwater Horizon incident has not only undone BP's previous "clean" image, but also created a stigma for the company in the future. Chevron has received flack following the Deepwater disaster. In October 2010, petroleum industry protestors launched a large-scale prank in which Chevron was portrayed as agreeing with everything BP said. A spoof was created, and imitation Chevron e-mails were sent to media outlets. The point of the prank was to make Chevron appear to be exactly the same as BP and to suggest that all petroleum companies are the same.

Debate has occurred about whether a company's reputation or public image can affect stock prices. Some investment professionals believe that image management does not have a significant impact on stock prices; yet others believe that the impact of reputation on stock is

so strong that a system should be constructed in order to measure how great an impact a company's reputation has on its earnings and stock prices (Engardio & Arndt, 2007).

There is a growth in amount of time and effort being put into researching the effect of corporate reputation on business earnings and stock prices. Echo Research found that a correlation existed between unfavorable articles written about the company SABMiller PLC and stock prices. In 2002, SAB, a South African brewing company, took over Miller Brewing Co. Echo found that there was a 57% increase in unfavorable articles written about the company and the weakness of the company's stock (Engardio & Arndt, 2007). Marketing researchers Low and Cohen criticize that although there is much research on the "visibility and credibility of a company's reputation," there are no data about how reputation explicitly adds or takes away from a company's value. Communications Consulting Worldwide (CCW) estimated that "public relations alone could move Southwest's stock up or down by 3.5%" (Engardio & Arndt, 2007). Many market analysts still believe that public image alone cannot have that much of an impact on a company's earnings.

#### Determining Effectiveness and Hypotheses

The support for the assumption that a company's image is important to the company can be found in the aforementioned literature. The aim of this study is to determine whether commercials in the BP "Making Things Right" campaign were effective in changing respondents' attitudes toward the company. In order to determine effectiveness, I used three scales: believability of the information, attitude toward the advertiser, and credibility, and I formed the following hypotheses for the study:

H<sub>1</sub>: Respondents will have a negative attitude toward BP prior to viewing the commercial and will have either no change or a negative change after viewing the commercial.

H<sub>2</sub>: If there were a positive change in attitude after viewing the commercial, it would be in the survey containing the family commercial.

Attitude toward the ad is “defined as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner toward the sponsoring organization (Mackenzie and Lutz, 1989).” Ad credibility consists of three constructs: perceived ad discrepancy, adviser credibility, and advertising credibility. Adviser credibility is “the perceived truthfulness or honesty of the sponsor of the ad (Mackenzie and Lutz, 1989). Since I wanted to know how consumers felt about the company funding the ad campaign, both of these scales seemed appropriate. Believability of the information has been used in previous research to test whether respondents believed what information was being told to them (Gurhan-Canali and Maheswari, 2000). The three scales combined would indicate whether a consumer found a company trustworthy or credible and how the consumer felt toward the company sponsoring the advertisement.

## **Methodology**

### Overview

I seek to determine whether BP’s post-oil spill campaign was effective in positively changing respondents’ attitude toward the company after viewing one of the company’s crisis management commercials. The goal of this study is to find whether attitudes toward the company changed after viewing a commercial regarding the cleanup effort of the oil spill. Survey research seemed to be the best method to use for the thesis because it allowed me to

determine what participants thought about the oil spill that affected the lives of so many people in the Gulf Coast area.

### Details

Participants for this study are residents of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Alabama Gulf Coast, Hattiesburg, Mississippi and New Orleans and the surrounding low-lying parishes. Participants needed to be at least 18 years to participate in the study. I obtained data from 109 participants because I believe this number was sufficient to use in order to infer an appropriate conclusion. The 109 respondents were contacted and asked to participate in the survey via email. The participants responded to an email that asked for their participation in my survey.

### Instrumentation and Procedures

I collected data through use of an online survey. Participants gave their consent by clicking the continue button on the first page of the survey. In the survey, the participant views a BP commercial and gives his/her response to it. Every participant sees one of three different commercials. Three commercials were chosen because I wanted to see not only if the commercial advertising campaign was effective, but also if a certain type of commercial was more effective than others.

After watching various commercials found on BP's YouTube channel, I noticed there were three categories of commercials: ones that featured BP employees, one that featured the then-CEO Tony Heyward, and ones that featured people affected by the spill speaking on the company's behalf. There was only one commercial featuring Tony Heyward, and I picked two commercials from the other categories that I believed would appeal to most consumers. The commercial featuring the BP worker involved his apologizing and promising to continue

working in the Gulf until the problem was fixed. I believed this commercial would resonate best with consumers because it featured someone committing to helping fix their area. The third commercial I chose featured families and business owners giving testimony to how BP has helped them rebuild their lives and how the Gulf beaches are open for tourists. I believed this commercial was appropriate because it clearly shows what BP wants consumers to believe about the improved state of the Gulf. One commercial features the then-CEO of British Petroleum Tony Heyward apologizing, the second features a BP employee promising a quick clean-up effort by the company, and the third features residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast telling people that BP has made good on its promise and has cleaned up the Gulf.

There were no particular determinants for who saw what commercial. Each commercial was sent out to three different major colleges-Honors College, the department of Sociology and Anthropology in the College of Arts and letters, and the College of Business at the University of Southern Mississippi. I am member of each college and knew the department heads would be willing to send out my survey to the students. The commercials were sent to the colleges because the email chain was the easiest and quickest way to obtain respondents. I used convenience sampling to obtain responses. I also sent the survey to relatives and friends in the New Orleans area. Since it is impossible to gauge how a person may have felt before the oil spill happened two years ago, I chose to try to gauge how the respondent felt about the company before they viewed the commercial and then asked how the respondent felt after viewing the commercial. The respondents were given answer choices on a 5-point Likert scale with the most positive response as the first option, a neutral response as the third option, and the most negative response as the fifth and last option. The

participants were asked to judge the commercials on the scales of believability of the ad, credibility of the spokesperson, and attitude toward the brand.

The three scales have been used in previous research and have been tested several times for reliability. The believability of the information scale originated by Gurhan and Maheswarm (Gurhan and Maheswaran 2000). The attitude toward the advertiser scale has been believed to have been originated by Mackenzie and Lutz, and the credibility scale originated with Mackenize (1989). The attitude toward the advertiser and the credibility scale were both used in a previous study to examine consumers' affective reactions to advertising stimuli (Mackenzie and Lutz 1989). The believability of the information scale was used in previous research on consumer boycotts of products and the social factors that led to the boycotts(Gurhan and Maheswaran 2000). After viewing the commercial and answering questions about it, the participant answered whether the commercial was effective in changing his/her attitude toward British Petroleum. Demographic data were collected at the end of the survey that asked for the gender, age, area of residence, and highest level of education.

## **Findings**

The alphas for the scales [believability, credibility, attitude toward the endorser] when tested for reliability were .952, .938, and .976 respectively, which indicate an acceptable degree of reliability. In order to gauge whether a change in attitude toward the company occurred attributable to the advertisement, I examined the attitudes toward the company prior to and subsequent to viewing the commercial. The means for responses for the three commercials prior to viewing the commercial were 3.4141 for commercial 1, 3.4152 for commercial 2, and 3.6548 for commercial 3. The means for attitudes after viewing

the commercials were 2.9237, 2.9453, and 3.5341 respectively. The attitudes changed for all three commercials, with more respondents having a positive attitude toward BP after viewing the advertisement.

In order to determine whether the advertisements of BP were effective in changing a person's attitude toward the company, I ran an independent T-test to find differences in the three groups between the respondents' attitude prior to and subsequent to viewing the commercial. I ran an analysis of variance on the three scales: believability of the ad, credibility of the spokesperson, and attitude toward the endorser. This method for testing my data was appropriate because an ANOVA is a proven technique to determine whether statistically significant differences on means occur among three or more groups. The survey contained three scales: believability of the ad (commercial featured in survey), credibility of the spokesperson (person featured in the ad), and attitude toward the endorser (BP). All three scales were tested to ensure reliability using the SPSS Statistics Program. All the data were analyzed and run through the SPSS Statistics Program. The commercials were coded as 1 (Tony Heyward Commercial), 2 (Worker Commercial), and 3 (Family and Business Owners Commercial).

Of the 109 respondents, 42 had no change in attitude toward the company from prior to viewing the commercials. When analyzing the credibility scale, the means of responses were 3.1758 (1), 3.1250 (2), and 3.1383 (3) with a mean of 3.0 indicating neutrality. Inconsistent with H<sub>3</sub>, respondents were generally neutral or found the person in the advertisement to be credible and trustworthy. The results for the believability of the information were 3.4609 (1), 3.5000(2), and 3.6907(3), which show that respondents found the commercial to be believable. A mean of 3.0 indicated neutrality for the believability

construct so the means all being greater than the neutral mark shows respondents found the information in the commercials to be believable which does not support H<sub>2</sub>.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effects of type of commercial on respondents' attitude toward BP. There was not a significant effect of type of commercial on respondents' attitude toward BP [F (2,110)=2.991, p=0.054]. After running the test for the post-attitude responses, the p-value between groups was above 5% (.05), which indicates the difference between the groups was not significant. The ANOVA test showed me the difference between the means of the three groups. There were mean differences between the groups, but not enough to support that one commercial was more effective in changing respondents' attitude.

Post Attitude ANOVA results						
(I) Gro up	(J) Gro up	Mean Difference (I- J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-.58878	.28750	.106	-1.2718	.0943
	3	.02158	.22790	.995	-.5199	.5630
2	1	.58878	.28750	.106	-.0943	1.2718
	3	.61036	.25932	.053	-.0057	1.2265
3	1	-.02158	.22790	.995	-.5630	.5199
	2	-.61036	.25932	.053	-1.2265	.0057

An ANOVA on responses regarding attitude toward BP prior to viewing the commercial, believability of the information, and credibility of the information showed there was no significant difference (p>.05) between the group responses. The survey which had the largest change in mean (-.4904) contained the Tony Heyward commercial. This finding is inconsistent with H<sub>2</sub>, in that I believed the family survey would have the largest affect.

My sample size included ages 18 and older with 33 respondents falling between the age of 18-25, 17 between the age of 26-34, 17 between the ages of 35-54, 40 between the ages of 55-64, and 3 respondents were over the age of 65. The majority of my sample had completed at least some college experience with 62 respondents having completed some college, 7 completing high school or acquiring a GED, 18 having completed a 2-year college degree, 23 having a 4-year college degree, and 4 having completed a Masters Degree. Eighty-nine of my respondents identified as Caucasian, 20 as African American, 1 as Asian, 1 as Pacific Islander, and 3 as other.

The data were cross-tabulated on the basis of location because I felt this was the strongest factor in affecting the respondents' attitude. The majority of the respondents either worked or lived in New Orleans, the Mississippi Gulf Coast or Hattiesburg with 57, 26, and 24 participants from those areas respectively.

Of the 109 respondents, only 1 was unaware of the British petroleum oil spill that occurred on April 21, 2010. Of the 56 respondents from New Orleans or the surrounding low-lying parishes, 20 had neither a positive nor negative attitude toward the company prior to viewing the commercial, and 31 had either a somewhat negative or very negative attitude. There were 25 respondents from the Gulf Coast, and 23 from Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Nine respondents from the Mississippi Gulf Coast and 11 from Hattiesburg had a neither a positive or negative attitude prior to viewing the company. Twelve from the Mississippi Gulf Coast and 11 from Hattiesburg had either a somewhat negative or very negative attitude toward the company. After viewing the commercial, 23 of the New Orleans respondents had no change in attitude, 7 of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and 10 of the Hattiesburg respondents had no change. Nineteen respondents had a positive attitude toward BP before viewing the

commercial, and after viewing the commercial 39 respondents had a positive attitude toward the company. There were negative changes in attitude also with 26 New Orleans respondents, 10 Mississippi Gulf Coast respondents, and 11 Hattiesburg respondents having negative changes in attitude toward the company. Of the total 109 respondents, 53 respondents had a change in attitude that was either more positive or more neutral. Overall, 61 respondents felt that the commercial was not effective in changing their attitude toward the company even though only 42 had the same attitude prior to and after viewing the commercial. This finding of more respondents having a neutral or negative change in attitude is consistent with H<sub>1</sub>.

One of the questions required respondents to comment on any BP advertising they had seen prior to taking the survey. One respondent noted the commercials they saw as a “reparation for the oil spill and specifically targeted the tourism industry of the affected states” and another stated, “BP was trying to save face.” Another respondent noted that one particular advertisement featured an “African American woman to be the face of recovery on the coast,” and went on to add “They would take advantage of this lady’s loyalty and use her as a pawn in the game of trying to dodge responsibility?” Another respondent said that the advertisements were “condescending, not sincere, making light of the situation, not truly helpful to the Gulf Coast.” “BP was taking great strides to clean up the gulf after their incompetence and greed nearly destroyed a biosphere, killed several and economically decimated a region struggling after Katrina,” was another respondent’s description of previously viewed ads. These comments by participants show that there are still hostile feelings regarding both the company and the oil spill.

## **Discussion**

My hypothesis was that respondents' attitude toward the company would either not change at all or would change negatively in response to the commercials. There was a change in means for each commercial. The attitude toward the company scale and the credibility scale were measured on a scale from 1-5 with 1 being most positive attitude, and 5 being most negative. There change was a positive one with means moving from approximately over 3.0 prior to viewing the commercial to approximately over 2.0 after viewing the commercial, but majority of respondents had a more negative change after viewing the commercial. Only 42 out of 109 respondents had no change in attitude toward the company. This result is interesting because the data show that the company's advertising campaign was effective in changing some people's attitude, if even by a small margin, positively toward the company after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. There were more people who responded positively to the company after viewing the commercial, but there were still a large number of people who were indifferent to the change. After cross tabulating my data on the basis of whether the respondent felt the advertisement was effective in changing his or her attitude about BP and the respondent's location, I found that in each area the data responses seemed to be split almost evenly with half of the sample from each area answering yes and half answering no. This split decision shows that some people did feel that the company was effective in changing their attitude in some way, and the change in means for each scale suggest that the change was positive.

My research and findings have indicated that there is value in conducting crisis management institutional advertising. The positive image BP portrayed in its advertisements was effective in changing some respondents' attitude even though most respondents had

negative comments and attitude changes about previous BP advertising they viewed regarding the oil spill. After analyzing my data and viewing the comments on the survey, I found that my respondents still have negative feelings toward the British Petroleum Company as a result of the oil spill, but the advertising campaign was effective in changing people's attitude toward the company-some for the best and some for the worst.

#### Areas of Further Research and Limitations of Research

A major limitation of my study was my sample size. Only 109 respondents completed the survey from start to finish. Majority of respondents were from the Worker survey with 56 respondents, as opposed to 53 respondents total for the Tony and Family surveys. I believe that proximity to the spill also played a role in how positively or negatively respondents reacted toward the company and the advertising campaign as a whole, since most of my respondents either worked or lived in the Gulf Coast, Hattiesburg or New Orleans area. People who lived farther away from the spill may not have felt so strongly about the company or the spill. The advertisements were clearly aimed at residents of these areas because one included people claiming to live and work in the region and the other two spokespersons were addressing the Gulf Coast region.

There was an uneven number of respondents to each survey, with the worker survey receiving the most respondents. There was no limit set on how many people could answer each survey so the sample sizes are uneven. There were 109 respondents to the survey. A weakness of using survey research is that it did not allow to obtain richer information about respondents' attitudes toward the company as an interview would.

Another factor that affected respondents was time since the oil spill has passed. The survey was launched in March of 2012, almost two years since the April 2010 oil spill

disaster. Attitudes toward the company would have probably been stronger closer to the spill. If someone were to re-conduct this survey years from now, attitudes would possibly be even more neutral or positive. After reviewing the data, I also noticed that most people chose either a neutral or somewhat positive/negative response. The survey may have better reflected the respondents' attitude if they were given only three choices instead of five. Lastly, although there was a slight change in attitude toward the company, the change was not statistically significant enough to warrant a strong claim that the advertising campaign completely changed people's attitude toward the company. The major addition to my methodology would be interviews with fishermen and Coast business owners who were directly affected by the spill in order to add even more depth to whether the ad campaign had a positive effect.

### Conclusion

Finding how effective the BP Post-oil spill advertisements were has shown that there is value to crisis management institutional advertising. Since my study was so limited, and I defined effectiveness only by how consumers in the Gulf Coast region responded to commercials, it is hard to tell if the campaign as a whole was effective in changing consumers' attitudes. The amount of money put into this, and millions of other corporate campaigns, suggests that there is a purpose to such extensive advertising. My study has shown that the advertisements do, even if to a small degree, have a positive effect on some consumers, even those closely affected by the disaster. This methodology could be used to examine the response of consumers who were affected by other corporate disasters.

Research has already shown that a company's image is important to how successful and favorably viewed the company is with consumers. My study sought to show if a

company could improve its tarnished image with crisis management advertising. I once believed that millions of dollars shelled out to create advertisements could never change the attitudes of those affected by a company's mistakes but after conducting my research, it appears advertisements are somewhat more influential than I initially thought they were.

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