

Taylor Swift and branding: the end of an era?

William Shibuya
Alfred University

ABSTRACT

This case examines the negative publicity that affected Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour after a fan died during a concert in Brazil. Taylor Swift is one of the most successful stars in pop music and created the Eras Tour to represent her achievements. However, the Eras Tour became unfortunately and surprisingly associated with the death of at least one fan. The tragic event raised questions about managing brand crises, the responsibilities of people and organizations involved, and how to prevent further incidents. Is any publicity good publicity? Can we take positives out of negatives? This case challenges the students to examine a real case of negative publicity and consider what actions professionals in marketing, public relations, and communication could take. Another issue examined is the role of those professionals in music or the arts in general.

Keywords: Taylor Swift, marketing, public relations, brand crises, music marketing, branding



Copyright statement: Authors retain the copyright to the manuscripts published in AABRI journals. Please see the AABRI Copyright Policy at <http://www.aabri.com/copyright.html>

INTRODUCTION

Taylor Swift is one of the biggest stars in pop music, and she was promoting her Eras Tour in November 2022 with the expectation of making more than \$1 billion in ticket sales when the tour wrapped in December 2023. In November 2023, the Eras Tour was already a triumph. However, some mishaps during the Rio de Janeiro, Brazil concerts showed trouble in paradise. Ana Clara Benevides, a fan of Taylor Swift, died of cardiorespiratory arrest after losing consciousness during the show (Borunda, 2023). The tragedy devastated and overwhelmed Taylor Swift (Ryan, 2023).

Taylor Swift started her career as a country singer at 16 and released her first album in 2006. She expanded her repertoire, and in 2023, she was 33 years old, a megastar in pop music, and winner of 12 Grammy Awards. She released ten studio albums by 2022, but her discography is much more extensive and important than that number shows. Taylor Swift also released four official live albums and, more strikingly, re-recorded three studio albums, with another one expected in 2024 (Donica, 2023). Taylor Swift's decision to re-record her older albums was a bold move. She believes artists should retain the full rights to their recordings, but she signed away the copyright to her master recordings when she was an inexperienced musician (Andrews, 2019).

After an astounding career of 17 years, Taylor Swift decided to tour again. The Eras Tour became more than a musical; it was the biggest tour ever. The Eras Tour was a stadium arena experience to pay homage to Taylor Swift's career and life, covering each of her albums. According to Forbes, Taylor Swift's net worth reached \$1.1 billion with the Eras Tour, making her the first person to become a billionaire solely based on music sales and performances (McGraph, 2023; Murray, 2023). The Eras Tour revised its projected gross revenue to reach \$2.2 billion in North America alone. A study by QuestionPro released in June 2023 estimated that Taylor Swift was bigger than the economy of 50 countries, with an economic impact of \$5 billion in direct spending by fans. However, the total economic impact, including indirect spending, could be more than \$10 billion (Kopstein & Espada, 2023; QuestionPro, 2023).

The Eras Tour includes several countries on different continents. In November 2023, Taylor Swift performed in South America before going to Asia, Oceania, and Europe. In Argentina, Taylor Swift rescheduled a show because of the chaotic weather, and she was afraid of endangering her fans and fellow performers and crew (Josephs, 2023).

Brazil initially welcomed Taylor Swift. Using a projection effect, the famous Christ the Redeemer statue wore a T-shirt like the one used by Taylor Swift in a music video. On November 17, 2023, the situation was darker. Taylor Swift was performing when she paused the show to throw a water bottle into the crowd and point at the audience to say, "there's people that need water right here." The local authorities had issued an excessive heat warning. According to Reuters, the heat index, a measure of how the temperature feels, reached 138.7 degrees Fahrenheit or 59.3 degrees Celsius that day, even worse the next day. One thousand people fainted because of the heat, but concertgoers could not bring water bottles to the show (Ayres & Olivares, 2023; West, 2023).

Ana Clara Benevides was one of the fans at the concert. She also fainted during the show while Taylor Swift was, ironically, singing "Cruel Summer." After being revived and taken to the hospital, Ana Clara Benevides died of cardiorespiratory arrest. The death of Ana Clara Benevides left Taylor Swift with a "shattered heart," "devastated," and "overwhelmed." The singer could not even discuss the incident (Ryan, 2023).

However, what should Taylor Swift do under those circumstances? Should Taylor Swift, the production behind the concert in Brazil, her marketing team, or some other person and organization be blamed for what happened? If not, do they still have some responsibility for the incident? Can they still do something to prevent similar tragedies in the future, for Taylor Swift's concerts or performances by other artists? Regardless of the answers to those questions, the team managing the marketing, public relations, and communication of Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour needs to decide what to do after the death of a fan in Brazil.

TAYLOR SWIFT – LIFE AND CAREER

The life and career of Taylor Swift are filled with impressive numbers and achievements, making it very difficult to have a general picture of the artist. The list below describes some of the key events and aspects of her life and career (BBC, 2020; Castro, 2015; Cooper, 2012; Dailey, 2022; Donica, 2023; Grammy, 2023; Huff, 2019; McGraph, 2023; Media, 2022; Molina-White, 2023; O’Kane, 2019; Schneider, 2023; Scott, 2015; Timberg, 2015; Tinoco, 2023; Willman, 2007).

- Taylor Swift was born Taylor Alison Swift on December 13, 1989, in the city of Reading, Pennsylvania. She played a few times with James Taylor, as her parents named Taylor Swift after the singer. She grew up on a farm, but her mother worked in Finance and used to be an opera singer, and her father was a stockbroker for Merrill Lynch.
- Taylor Swift won a national poetry contest when she was 10. At that age, her mother also took her to sing at karaoke competitions.
- Taylor Swift had her first songwriting deal at 14. She joined Sony/ATV, the youngest artist to do so when she was that age.
- Her self-titled album, "Taylor Swift," charted on the Billboard 200 for over 227 weeks, the US's longest run in the 2000s.
- Taylor Swift went from country to pop music during her career, and she was nominated in both genres in 2013 for her album "Red" during the AMA (American Music Awards). A successful young girl was particularly uncommon in country music.
- Taylor Swift donated \$1 million to help victims of the floods in Louisiana in 2016.
- Taylor Swift was the first and only female solo artist to win the Grammy Award for Album of the Year thrice, with "Fearless" in 2009, "1989" in 2015, and "Folklore" in 2020.
- "1989" also made Taylor Swift the first woman to have three albums sell more than 1 million copies in a week, according to Business Insider.
- Taylor Swift became the most-awarded artist of all time at AMA (American Music Awards) in 2019 with 28 wins, surpassing Michael Jackson, who has 24 wins. She won in categories like Favorite Pop/Rock Album (beating Ariana Grande and Billie Eilish) and Artist of the Year.
- She moved record labels from Big Machine to Universal Republic. Taylor Swift was involved in a feud at Big Machine and accused music mogul Scooter Braun

of manipulative bullying. Braun acquired the rights to Taylor Swift's masters when she was still a young and inexperienced musician, unaware of her rights.

- "Midnights," released in 2022, became the most-streamed album in a single day on Spotify.
- Taylor Swift had four albums simultaneously in the top 10 on the Billboard 200 in 2023.
- Taylor Swift would love to get involved with acting, and she started as a producer.
- Taylor Swift's impact was not limited to her commercial success in music; she influenced artists' rights, fashion styles, marketing, and economics.
- Some business lessons from Taylor Swift's career are to knock on the opportunity's door, be confident in the product offered, connect with the audience, be a branding genius, and deliver on promises.
- Forbes recognized Taylor Swift as one of the world's most powerful women in 2023, with a \$1.1 billion net worth.

THE ERAS TOUR – THE BEST WAS YET TO COME

In 2022, Taylor Swift earned an honorary doctorate at NYU; she was a filmmaker with the film "All Too Well" and an honored guest at the Tribeca Film Festival and the Toronto International Film Festival; she had recently released the record-shattering album "Midnights;" she was the top winner at the VMAs (Video Music Awards) and the EMAs (Europe Music Awards); and she was the songwriter of the decade according to NSAI (Nashville Songwriters Association International). Taylor Swift would top all that with the launch of the Eras Tour (Grady, 2023).

In November 2022, Taylor Swift announced her new tour. The Eras Tour was a 44-song epic concert lasting more than three hours, leaving the audience wanting more (Kornhaber, 2023). The list of songs covered the soundtrack of the whole lives of a big part of the audience, and Taylor Swift decided to cover all her ten studio albums during the concert. No big tour had done that before: going through an entire catalog, one album at a time. Covering all her albums also means including several different styles during the show. For example, electronic music from the album "Midnights," an acoustic piano song from "Taylor Swift," and the forest background of "Folklore" and "Evermore" (Lipshutz, 2023)

The Eras Tour was the first proper tour of Taylor Swift in five years and happened with the return of shows to action after the pandemic (McCormick, 2023). The songs presented during the Eras Tour remained considerably faithful to the albums. The songs were reimagined visually for the concert, with an extremely high level of effort dedicated to producing the design, costuming, and choreography of the Eras Tour. Taylor Swift had been involved with poetry, musicals, and filmmaking for some time, which showed during the concert (Petrusich, 2023). The center platform of the show was Transformer-like, given the technological marvel involved. The show itself was "Broadway-ready." She was to follow the new pop star rule that they are something new every time they show up, in a big way (Willman, 2023).

The Eras Tour was not only about celebrating the past of Taylor Swift. It was a forward-facing show, constantly rewritten by a mastermind at the peak of her creative powers. The presale of the tour filled 2 million seats, breaking the record for most tickets ever sold in a single day. The ticketing process was chaotic, and the company responsible for it, Ticketmaster, apologized publicly, saying that its Verified Fan platform had never sparked that level of

attention and traffic before, disrupting the system (Travis, 2023). The Eras Tour made Taylor Swift a billionaire, and its economic impact reached billions of dollars in the US alone because of the money spent by fans on travel, hotels, restaurants, and retailers. The Eras Tour was the most ambitious, spectacular, and charming show ever. And very successful. The show was unbelievable, and Taylor Swift was a superhuman.

Taylor Swift also released the Eras Tour as a movie with the AMC theaters (Sheffield, 2023). She bypassed Hollywood studios to do that and did not use traditional (i.e., paid media) marketing. The estimated earned media (e.g., free publicity and word of mouth) for Taylor Swift during the two years before was more than \$130 billion. So, she did not need to resort to traditional marketing actions (McGrath, 2023). In January 2023, the movie became the highest-grossing concert/documentary film of all time, with \$261.6 million at the global box office (Kaufman, 2024). The movie was not a passive experience. It made the audience sing, scream, and cry even if they were not seeing the show in person (Sheffield, 2023).

Taylor Swift was touring the world. She would wrap the South American of the Eras Tour soon, then move to the Tokyo Dome in Japan, and move to Australia next. However, the South American leg of the tour would go differently than planned.

THE ERAS TOUR – THE WORST HAPPENED

The Eras Tour started with a 17-state-wide US Tour, to continue with nine dates in Latin America from August 24 to November 26, 2023, first in Mexico, then in Argentina, and finally in Brazil. The tour would continue in Japan, Australia, Singapore, France, Sweden, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Netherlands, Germany, Poland, and Austria. The Eras Tour was certainly a massive international project. However, the weather started to be a problem during the concerts in Argentina before Taylor Swift went to Brazil. Taylor Swift postponed the show from Friday to Sunday due to the chaotic weather, saying it would be unsafe to try and put on the concert (Holpuch, Milhorange, & Coelho, 2023; Josephs, 2023; Mier, 2023; Sanzo, 2023; Thompson, 2023).

The schedule for the Eras Tour included two cities in Brazil: Rio de Janeiro (November 17, 18, and 19) and Sao Paulo (November 24, 25, and 26). Taylor Swift arrived in Brazil on November 16. A projection made the Christ the Redeemer statue appear to wear the T-shirt from Taylor Swift's music video "You Belong With Me" to welcome the artist. Symbols from her songs decorated the statue (Dailey, 2023).

Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world. Many fans traveled long distances to see the shows in only two cities in the Southeast. One of those fans was Ana Clara Benevides, a Federal University of Rondonopolis psychology student. According to Google Maps, Rondonopolis is about 1,050 miles or 1,700 kilometers from Rio de Janeiro, the concert place. So, Benevides had to face a long journey to go to the Eras Tour. However, as a fan, she was excited by the opportunity. She had been sending photos of her outfits for the concert to her friends for over a month, posted about going to the concert on social media, and arrived at the stadium hours before the concert started (Folha de Sao Paulo, 2023a).

However, Ana Clara Benevides died just after the concert started amid sweltering temperatures. She was 23 years old. Before the concert and still outside the stadium, the real temperature was already 95 degrees Fahrenheit or 35 degrees Celsius, according to a social media post by Benevides. However, the temperature was much worse during the concert. The

feels-like temperature reached 138.7 degrees Fahrenheit or 59.3 degrees Celsius that day (Ayres & Olivares, 2023).

About a thousand fans fainted during the show. Fans could not bring water bottles into the stadium. They started to chant for water, and Taylor Swift stopped the show several times to ask for water for the fans and even threw a water bottle at the audience. Taylor Swift appeared to struggle to breathe during the show, too. The stadium is usually airy, but fans said the venue was closed. Even the vents were covered to prevent people without tickets outside the stadium from seeing the concert, making the heat worse. Fan videos indicated that some of the stadium's sides were closed off. During the "Bad Blood" performance, the pyrotechnics made the vision and heat sensation hellish (Goffe, 2023; Malleret, 2023; West, 2023).

Heat was not the only problem: humidity was also very dangerous. The heat expert Daniel Vecellio from George Mason University explained that the still and stagnant air, heavy with humidity, shuts off the physiological mechanism that allows humans to cool themselves down. The situation makes the heart pump harder to move blood around, hoping that shunting blood toward vessels near the skin will contact cooler air. However, sweat cannot evaporate due to the humidity, so the mechanism is ineffective, putting more stress and pressure on the heart and the body. That is very dangerous, no matter how accustomed the person is to heat (Borunda, 2023).

Benevides fainted while she was in the front row watching Taylor Swift perform "Cruel Summer," was resuscitated at the stadium, and suffered a second cardiac arrest on the way to the Salgado Filho Hospital, where she died shortly after arriving, about one hour after feeling unwell (Finn, 2023; Malleret, 2023). Taylor Swift wrote a letter about the death of Benevides, saying that was the last thing she thought would happen when they decided to tour in Brazil. She wrote about having a "shattered heart," being "devastated," "overwhelmed by grief," feeling the loss deeply, and being unable to talk about it (Ryan, 2023; Santaflorentina, 2023; Zhan, 2023).

THE EVENTS AFTER

Taylor Swift postponed her Saturday concert the next day due to extreme temperatures. In a last-moment announcement, fans learned the Saturday show would be on Monday. The fans had already filled the stadium when they heard the announcement. They had to leave the stadium and change their travel and accommodation arrangements. However, Taylor Swift said that the safety and well-being of the fans, performers, and crew would come first. The heat index on that day was 139.5 degrees Fahrenheit or 59.7 degrees Celsius. Taylor Swift returned to the stage in Rio de Janeiro on November 19 (Santaflorentina, 2023)

There were reports of unrest nearby when the fans left the stadium. People yelled that there was a raid at a shopping mall and saw desperate people running (Holpuch, Milhorange, & Coelho, 2023). Numerous fans shared on social media that they suffered from second and third-degree burns. Fans went to the hospital because of the metal flooring and fencing used at the show. Other fans posted that the Eras Tour was the worst experience of their lives, as they had to leave the stadium, they did not see the concert, and they left the place full of bruises and burns. With the extreme temperatures and the metal flooring and fencing, the place became an "oven," according to social media (Haigh, 2023).

The mayor of Rio de Janeiro, Eduardo Paes, informed that doors for the concerts would open one hour earlier to keep fans out of the sun, there would be new water distribution points, and there would be more fire marshals and ambulances. Time For Fun, the production company

that sold the tickets for the concert, would also distribute water and allow water and food into the venue. The company said that “the production of the show was very reckless and everything was very poorly managed.” The Consumer Protection Agency and the federal government of Brazil announced they would investigate the “insane and irresponsible” decision to prevent people from drinking water in that heat and the medical procedures adopted to try to help Benevides (Holpuch, Milhorange, & Coelho, 2023; Zhan, 2023).

On Sunday, another fan named Gabriel Mongenot Santana Milhomem Santos died, but not at the concert. He had traveled to Rio de Janeiro to watch the Eras Tour show, but he was stabbed to death before that (Jeantet, 2023). A third fan died, but the circumstances are not well known, and they may be very unrelated to the concert. An unidentified fan died of respiratory arrest near the stadium after being taken to the hospital. He was 23 years old, too (Sharma, 2023).

Taylor Swift met Benevides' family during the concert in Sao Paulo. She posed for a group photo, smiling with the family members, who wore T-shirts featuring Benevides' face (Cardoza, 2023). However, the public criticized the photo shared on social media. The mother, hospitalized after she heard the news about the death of her daughter, was not in the photo. A fan asked how they could smile like that after the death, as that did not seem the photo of an artist who was devastated and overwhelmed by grief. Other fans described the photo as “bizarre,” “sadist,” “creepy,” and narcissism disguised as altruism, but other fans said they should respect and understand the feelings of the family who was trying to see the bright side of what happened (Folha de Sao Paulo, 2023b). The victim’s cousin declared that Taylor Swift’s press team lied when it said they provided support for the family, and the team did not offer any help. The news left Brazilian fans disappointed in the singer (Folha de Sao Paulo, 2023a).

MANAGING NEGATIVE PUBLICITY AND BRAND CRISES

Benevides’ father, Weiny, declared during an interview that he hoped someone responsible would be punished (Dupre, 2023). He also hoped that such a tragedy would not happen to anyone else again. Taylor Swift returned to the stage on November 19, and “Bigger Than the Whole Sky” was a surprise song during the concert. The song appeared to be a tribute to Benevides, but Taylor Swift did not confirm that (Santaflorientina, 2023).

Taylor Swift finished the concerts in Brazil and left the country. However, the negative publicity left a bad taste and left the business unfinished. Some questions remain. The reporter Nadira Goffe asked, "Was there anything else the singer could have done?" Shocked and grieving fans still tried to piece together what happened. Taylor Swift and the event's organizers received many accusations. The reporter said there will always be people who love Taylor Swift and people who hate Taylor Swift, making the discussion very divisive. The inconsistencies and lack of information increased the suspicions about the artist, the producers, and the event (Goffe, 2023).

Deaths of fans in large crowds who went to concerts are, unfortunately, not something new, mentioning the fans who died at Travis Scott's performance during the Astroworld of 2021 in Texas as an example. Constance Malleret, from The Guardian, reminded readers of fans fainting and artists pausing their shows due to the heat in Argentina, Chile, and the US. The scientist Raul Cordero from the University of Santiago in Chile said the problem is happening "all over," mentioning countries like Paraguay and Bolivia too (Borunda, 2023; Goffe, 2023).

The Brazilian reporter Jose Norberto Flesch also explained that the audience has been paying to join a survival show instead of watching a concert. He said fans feeling unwell and fainting during shows are common (Flesch, 2023a and 2023b). Nubia Armond, a geographer from Indiana University Bloomington, informed that enduring the heat is considered a source of pride, as it can signify strength and devotion toward the artist (Malleret, 2023). The difference is that someone died this time. Flesch said that companies organizing shows should reformulate them for the audience's well-being.

So, the questions are about more than what happened and what Taylor Swift and other organizations could have done. What will they do to make things better in the future (Goffe, 2023)?

What happened to Taylor Swift and the Eras Tour is an example of a brand crisis. Professors Li and Wei (2016) from Jinan University explain that brand crises are "well-publicized claims that a key brand proposition is unsubstantiated or false" or "unexpected events that threaten a brand's perceived ability to deliver expected benefits." So, brand crises are related to situations of negative publicity that are particularly well-publicized and threatening. They are some of the worst nightmares a firm can face, with short- and long-term negative impacts on sales, consumer trust, and the effectiveness of marketing instruments.

According to the attribution theory perspective, there are three types of crises. The first is the victim crisis (the public views the brand as a victim of the crisis). The second is the accidental crisis (the brand has minimal responsibility for the crisis, and the negative event was unintentional or uncontrollable). The third is the intentional crisis (the negative event was intentional, and the brand has a strong attribution of responsibility).

The brand equity theory offers another classification for brand crises. Performance-related crises involve defective and dangerous products. The ability of those products to deliver functional benefits is perceived to be lower. On the other hand, value-based crises involve the social and ethical issues defended by the brand.

Responses to brand crises are much more varied and complex, and no standardized typology exists for firm responses to brand crises. Some alternative lists of potential responses are listed below:

- Mitigation-aggravation continuum - Silence, concession, excuse, justification, and refusal.
- Image repair - Denial, evasion of responsibility, reduction of event offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification.
- Accommodative-defensive continuum – attack the accuser, denial, excuse, justification, ingratiation, corrective action, and full apology.

More comprehensively, researchers classify firm responses according to a deny-apology continuum, depending on how much a firm denies or accepts responsibility for the brand crises. Characteristics of the brand crisis, the brand or organization, and consumers influence the brand's strategy to respond to brand crises.

CASE QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSIONS

Questions about the case can be grouped and organized in different ways, and these are some recommendations:

- Questions about what happened, including positive and negative events, help the students analyze the situation using critical reasoning and connect the case with the literature about the different brand crises. For example:
 - Would they classify what happened to the Eras Tour as a victim, accidental, or intentional crisis? Why?
 - Do they think that the case demonstrated a performance-related or value-based crisis? Why?
- The instructor can follow up with questions about what the brand should do to manage the harm to reputation and trust. For example:
 - How much do they think the brand should deny or accept responsibility for the negative events of the brand crisis?
 - What is the goal of managing brand crises?
 - What strategy would they recommend to manage the brand crisis described by the case?
- Questions can also be related to the responsibility (or the lack of responsibility) of different players involved. For example
 - What are Taylor Swift's responsibilities in this brand crisis?
 - What about the responsibilities of the production company Time For Fun?
 - Can they talk about the responsibilities of other people and organizations involved in the case, like the fans, the news media, the government, and the health care professionals?

Those questions are connected, and the discussions may follow a different line. For example, questions about past events usually lead to a discussion about the responsibility of different people and organizations involved. Also, the types of brand crises are not mutually exclusive. Some aspects of the case may be more related to the lack of functional benefits from the performance-based brand crisis, like the high temperature, the lack of water, and the closed vents at the stadium. Other aspects are closer to the value-based crisis, like the values of women empowerment and kindness defended by Taylor Swift and how those values are part of the response strategies of the artist.

TEACHING NOTES

This case examines how the popular singer Taylor Swift was involved in a brand crisis, with widely-spread negative publicity due to the death of her fan Benevides during a concert from the Eras Tour in Brazil in November 2023. The case is used mainly for discussions about the analysis and recommendations of students about brand crises and negative publicity, including the classification of different types of brand crises and possible strategies to manage those crises. Given the context, the instructor can use the case in discussions about the role of Marketing. Many marketers focus on the Promotional aspects of marketing. However, this case can involve other parts of the marketing strategy (e.g., competitive advantage and target audience) and marketing mix (e.g., Place of the venue, hedonic value of the Product). The case is also of interest to art management students.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading and discussing the situation presented in this case, students should be able to:

1. Understand brand crises and why they are relevant for marketing, businesses, communication, or arts.
2. Provide an overview of the major theories to analyze and classify brand crises.
3. Propose some strategies, plans, and actions that different people and organizations involved could do after the event to manage the consequences of brand crises and prevent future tragedies.

CHALLENGES

The case provides opportunities to discuss many challenges marketing, communication, and arts professionals face.

1. Conflicts between arts and commerce are common (Slowinska, 2014). Can Art and Commerce work well together? The Arts often focus on creativity, freedom, and change. Meanwhile, commerce often focuses on profit and shareholders' value. Critics of the combination of Arts and Commerce often believe that pursuing commercial success can damage the creativity and freedom expected to generate great works of art. On the other hand, those who defend the combination of Arts and Commerce believe that Art can better engage and understand the audience and have more resources that are important for art production when they also consider the commercial side. Since Taylor Swift and the Eras Tour are significant for their artistic impact and commercial success, the case is an important opportunity to discuss both fields together.
2. The conflict between negative and positive publicity and brand image (Yu et al., 2018). The negativity bias expects negativity to often be stronger than positivity in terms of impact and longevity, for example. The case also mixes the negative and positive aspects of Taylor Swift, with brand love from the fans and brand hate from many critics. The case can discuss the importance and impact of negative and positive information, not only for this case but in general.
3. The conflict between traditional marketing and societal marketing. Traditionally, marketing has focused on satisfying the target audience and providing superior value. That perspective changed with societal marketing, with the companies also considering the long-term benefits for society. However, teaching materials often focus on learning the tools and theories from traditional marketing, with society needing to be more emphasized. The important role played by Taylor Swift in society, especially younger women, opens opportunities to discuss the societal marketing of Taylor Swift and the Eras Tour - for example, the message of inspiration to women internationally. Taylor Swift is a huge star in music, and she has long crossed the boundaries of being only known by a smaller part of the audience.
4. The conflict between different parts of marketing. Marketing is very broad, but marketers often focus on a narrower part: promoting positive information, especially advertising in digital marketing. However, Taylor Swift even ignored paid media when promoting the Eras Tour movie, given her strength in earned media. Also, Place is often considered a lesser part of the marketing mix, but the place, venue, and

concert design are critical aspects of the Era Tour. The marketing of Taylor Swift and the Eras Tour is not so narrowly focused. So, it is a great example of integrated marketing communication when the brands combine different elements to develop one single voice.

REFERENCES

We recommend the following works as references for the conceptual and theoretical aspects of the case:

Li, M., & Wei, H. (2016). How to save brand after crises? A literature review on brand crisis management. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 6(2), 89-96.

Slowinska, M. A. (2014). *Art/commerce: the convergence of art and marketing in contemporary culture*. transcript Verlag.

Yu, M., Liu, F., Lee, J., & Soutar, G. (2018). The influence of negative publicity on brand equity: attribution, image, attitude and purchase intention. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 27(4), 440-451.

The case was also based on many other sources. However, they are less academic and more related to the public information and opinions about Taylor Swift, the Eras Tour, and the events described in the case. Given the connection between the case and publicity, those sources are important to understand the events, but they are typically less relevant for class discussion. Those references are listed below.

Andrews, T. M. (2019, August 22). Can Taylor Swift really rerecord her entire music catalogue? (2019, August 22). *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/2019/08/22/can-taylor-swift-really-rerecord-her-entire-music-catalogue/>

Ayres, M., & Olivares, P. (2023, November 18). Taylor Swift postpones scorching Rio de Janeiro show after fan's death. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/fan-dies-taylor-swift-show-sweltering-rio-de-janeiro-2023-11-18/#:~:text=On%20Saturday%2C%20the%20heat%20index>

BBC (2020, March 2). Taylor Swift: The record-breaking artist in numbers. *CBBC Newsround*. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51711128>

Borunda, A. (2023, November 21). A fan died of heat at a Taylor Swift concert. It's a rising risk with climate change. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2023/11/21/1214324356/a-fan-died-of-heat-at-a-taylor-swift-concert-its-a-rising-risk-with-climate-cha>

Cardoza, R. (2023, November 27). Taylor Swift poses for photo with family of fan who died at Eras Tour show. *Page Six*. <https://pagesix.com/2023/11/27/entertainment/taylor-swift-meets-family-of-fan-who-died-at-eras-tour-show/>

Castro, V. (2015, February 6). How to succeed as an entrepreneur, Taylor Swift style. *Inc.com*. <http://www.inc.com/vicky-castro/how-to-succeed-as-an-entrepreneur-taylor-swift-style.html>

Cooper, B. J. C. J. (2012, April 15). Taylor Swift opens up about a future in acting and admiration for Emma Stone. *Taste of Country*. <https://tasteofcountry.com/taylor-swift-acting-emma-stone/>

Dailey, H. (2022, December 22). Here are all of Taylor Swift's biggest accomplishments in 2022. *Billboard*. <https://www.billboard.com/lists/taylor-swift-biggest-accomplishments-2022/>

Dailey, H. (2023, November 17). Rio's Christ the Redeemer Welcomes Taylor Swift to Brazil With 'Junior Jewels' T-Shirt: See the Photo. *Billboard*.
<https://www.billboard.com/music/music-news/taylor-swift-brazil-welcome-christ-the-redeemer-statue-photo-1235485907/>

Donica, A. (2023, December 6). Taylor Swift. *Biography*.
<https://www.biography.com/musicians/taylor-swift>

Dupre, E. (2023, November 21). Father of Taylor Swift fan who died in Brazil speaks out on tragedy. *E! Online*. <https://www.eonline.com/news/1390212/father-of-taylor-swift-fan-who-died-in-brazil-speaks-out-on-tragedy>

Finn, N. (2023, December 27). Taylor Swift Eras Tour Tragedy: Cause of Death Revealed for Brazilian Fan Who Passed Out During Show. *E! Online*.
<https://www.eonline.com/news/1392073/taylor-swift-eras-tour-tragedy-cause-of-death-revealed-for-brazilian-fan-who-passed-out-during-show>

Flesch, J.. N. [@jnflesch]. (2023a, November 18). *Isso que aconteceu no show da Taylor Swift deveria ligar um alerta na cabeça de todo mundo. Pessoas da minha* [Post]. X.
<https://twitter.com/jnflesch/status/1725865158545711533>

Flesch, J.. N. [@jnflesch]. (2023b, November 18). *Mãe foi hospitalizada após receber notícia da morte da filha em show de Taylor Swift no Rio de Janeiro. Ana* [Post]. X.
<https://twitter.com/jnflesch/status/1725993574796263755?t=F4CtZPotBT1DIBaayWgUjQ&s=03>

Folha de Sao Paulo (2023a, November 22). Taylor Swift: Family of Fan Dead at Concert Says Singer's Team Didn't Offer Any Help. *Folha de Sao Paulo*.
<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/internacional/en/culture/2023/11/taylor-swift-family-of-fan-dead-at-concert-says-singers-team-didnt-offer-any-help.shtml>

Folha de Sao Paulo [@foolhadespaulo]. (2023b, November 26). *A cantora Taylor Swift recebeu em seu camarim nesta domingo (26) a família de Ana Clara Benevides, estudante de 23* [Photograph]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/C0IXve3N7Z4/>

Goffe, N. (2023, November 20). A fan died at a Taylor Swift show. Then, it all got very confusing. *Slate*. <https://slate.com/culture/2023/11/taylor-swift-brazil-concert-fan-dead-eras-tour-rio.html>

Grady, C. (2023, October 12). The Eras concert movie is Taylor Swift leveling up. *Vox*.
<https://www.vox.com/culture/23905279/taylor-swift-eras-concert-film-image-analysis>

Grammy Awards (2023). Taylor Swift. <https://www.grammy.com/artists/taylor-swift/15450>

Haigh,, J. (2023, November 20). Taylor Swift concert goers struck with 'second-degree burns.' *News.com.au*. <https://www.news.com.au/entertainment/music/tours/taylor-swift-concert-goers-struck-with-seconddegree-burns/news-story/e1a597d52f642c46c1a8f45b5c816fdb>

Holpuch, A., Milhorange, F., & Coelho, L. (2023, November 19). After Eras Tour triumphs, Taylor Swift finds trouble in Brazil. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/19/world/americas/taylor-swift-brazil-concert-eras-tour.html>

Huff, L. (2019, November 24). Taylor Swift makes history as most awarded artist of all time at American Music Awards. *Entertainment Weekly*.
<https://ew.com/awards/2019/11/24/taylor-swift-beats-michael-jackson-american-music-awards-history/>

Josephs, L. (2023, November 11). Taylor Swift's postponed Argentina show prompts airline to waive flight-change fees. *CNBC*. <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/11/11/taylor-swifts->

[postponed-argentina-show-forces-airline-to-waive-flight-change-fees.html#:~:text=The%20popstar%20said%20she%20was](#)

Kopstein, J., & Espada, M. (2023, August 23). The staggering economic impact of Taylor Swift's Eras Tour. *Time*. <https://time.com/6307420/taylor-swift-eras-tour-money-economy/>

Kornhaber, S. (2023, March 18). What made Taylor Swift's concert unbelievable. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2023/03/taylor-swift-eras-tour-review/673438/>

Jeantet, D. (2023, November 20). Taylor Swift's Rio tour marred by deaths, muggings and a dangerous heat wave. *AP News*. <https://apnews.com/article/taylor-swift-concert-brazil-rio-eras-tour-713f3e0051d60c4f280f1f3b242b1569>

Kaufman, G. (2024, January 8). Taylor Swift's 'Eras Tour' Film Sets All-Time Box Office Record, Passing 'Michael Jackson's This Is It.' *Billboard*. <https://www.billboard.com/culture/tv-film/taylor-swift-eras-tour-movie-box-office-record-michael-jackson-this-is-it-1235577518/>

Lipshutz, J. (2023, March 18). The 13 best moments from Taylor Swift's Eras Tour kickoff. *Billboard*. <https://www.billboard.com/lists/taylor-swifts-eras-tour-best-moments-review/ending-with-a-fan-favorite/>

Malleret, C. (2023, November 23). Must the show go on? Taylor Swift fan death highlights danger of live shows as Earth cooks. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/nov/23/taylor-swift-fan-death-concert-climate-crisis-music-industry>

McCormick, N. (2023, March 20). Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour, review: a roaring spectacle of a comeback. *The Telegraph*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/music/concerts/taylor-swift-eras-tour-review-roaring-spectacle-comeback/>

McGrath, M. (2023, December 5). Taylor Swift's power era: Why the billionaire pop star is one of the world's most powerful women. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/maggiemcgrath/2023/12/05/taylor-swifts-power-era-why-the-billionaire-pop-star-is-one-of-the-worlds-most-powerful-women/?sh=36e6b4855c14>

Media, P. A. (2022, October 22). Taylor Swift's new album breaks Spotify streaming record. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2022/oct/22/taylor-swifts-new-album-breaks-spotify-streaming-record>

Mier, T. (2023, November 10). Taylor Swift postpones Argentina show due to "truly chaotic" weather. *Rolling Stone*. <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/taylor-swift-postpones-argentina-show-weather-1234875635/>

Molina-White, L. (2023, August 10). Taylor Swift albums in order - Taylor's Versions and first albums. *Radio Times*. <https://www.radiotimes.com/audio/taylor-swift-albums-in-order/>

Murray, C. (2023, December 6). Every major event in Taylor Swift's record-breaking 2023—From the Eras Tour to Time Person of the Year. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/conormurray/2023/12/06/every-major-event-in-taylor-swifts-record-breaking-2023-from-the-eras-tour-to-time-person-of-the-year/?sh=2efca511308a>

O'Kane, C. (2019, November 25). Taylor Swift tops Michael Jackson for most American Music Awards. *CBS News*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/taylor-swift-ama-singer-beats-michael-jackson-for-most-american-music-awards-2019-performance-artist-of-the-decade/>

Petrusich, A. (2023, June 12). The startling intimacy of Taylor Swift's Eras Tour. *The New Yorker*. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/06/19/taylor-swift-eras-tour-review>

QuestionPro. (2023, June 8). Generating \$5 billion, the Taylor Swift the Eras Tour has an economic impact greater than 50 countries. *GlobeNewswire*.

<https://www.globenewswire.com/en/news-release/2023/06/08/2684710/0/en/Generating-5-billion-the-Taylor-Swift-The-Eras-Tour-has-an-Economic-Impact-Greater-than-50-Countries.html>

Ryan, T. (2023, November 18). Taylor Swift says she's 'overwhelmed by grief' after fan dies while attending Brazil Eras Tour show. *Page Six*.

<https://pagesix.com/2023/11/18/entertainment/taylor-swift-pens-letter-after-fan-dies-while-attending-brazil-eras-tour-show/>

Santaflorentina, H. (2023, November 20). Taylor Swift returns to Eras Tour stage with moving performance after death of fan. *E! News*. <https://www.eonline.com/news/1390142/taylor-swift-returns-to-eras-tour-stage-with-moving-performance-after-death-of-fan>

Sanzo, T. (2023, November 16). Taylor Swift "Eras Tour" Rio De Janeiro dates: Shop last minute tickets here. *Masslive*. <https://www.masslive.com/music/2023/11/taylor-swift-eras-tour-rio-de-janeiro-dates-shop-last-minute-tickets-here.html>

Schneider, M. (2023, October 30). 9 ways Taylor Swift has changed the music business. *Billboard*. <https://www.billboard.com/lists/how-taylor-swift-changed-music-business/>

Scott, W. (2015, June 11). What famous pop star is named after James Taylor? *Parade*. <https://parade.com/404291/walterscott/what-famous-pop-star-is-named-after-james-taylor/>

Sharma, J.. (2023, November 21). Eras Tour turns tragic: Third person dies after Taylor Swift's Rio concert. *Hindustan Times*.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/entertainment/music/eras-tour-turns-tragic-third-person-dies-after-taylor-swifts-rio-concert-101700574032467.html>

Sheffield, R. (2023, October 13). Taylor Swift's "Eras Tour" movie will make you sing, scream, and sob. *Rolling Stone*. <https://www.rollingstone.com/tv-movies/tv-movie-reviews/taylor-swift-the-eras-tour-movie-review-sing-along-amc-evermore-1234853358/>

Thompson, J. (2023, November 11). Travis Kelce attends Taylor Swift's Buenos Aires Eras Tour concert. *Variety*. <https://variety.com/2023/music/news/taylor-swift-travis-kelce-argentina-eras-tour-1235787665/>

Timberg, S. (2015, May 22). Taylor Swift is not an "underdog": The real story about her 1 percent upbringing that the New York Times won't tell you. *Salon*. https://www.salon.com/2015/05/22/taylor_swift_is_not_an_underdog_the_real_story_about_her_1_percent_upbringing_that_the_new_york_times_wont_tell_you/

Tinoco, A. (2023, July 16). Taylor Swift makes history as first woman with four albums in top 10 at the same time as "Speak Now" debuts at no. 1. *Deadline*. <https://deadline.com/2023/07/taylor-swift-makes-history-first-woman-four-albums-top-10-speak-now-debuts-charts-1235439418/>

Travis, E. (2023, January 24). Ticketmaster apologizes to Taylor Swift during Senate hearing after ticket fiasco: 'We need to do better.' *Entertainment Weekly*. <https://ew.com/music/ticketmaster-executives-apologize-to-taylor-swift-and-fans-for-botched-eras-tour-sales/>

West, B. (2023, November 17). 'There's people that need water.' Taylor Swift pauses Eras show in Rio to help fans. *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/music/2023/11/17/taylor-swift-pauses-rio-eras-concert-to-help-fans/71626721007/>

Willman, C. (2007, July 25). Getting to know Taylor Swift. *EW.com*.
<https://ew.com/article/2007/07/25/getting-know-taylor-swift/>

Willman, C. (2023, March 18). Taylor Swift's "Eras" show is a three-hour, 44-song epic that leaves 'em wanting more: concert review. *Variety*. <https://variety.com/2023/music/concert-reviews/taylor-swift-eras-tour-concert-review-glendale-phoenix-1235558467/>

Zhan, J. (2023, November 19). Taylor Swift mourns fan who died before Brazil concert. *Vulture*. <https://www.vulture.com/2023/11/taylor-swift-mourns-eras-tour-brazil-death.html>

