

DISCUSSION

CORRUPTION AS A NEW HOT MARKETING TOOL

I would like to respond to the article *“The Growth of Anti-Corruption Attitudes in Czech Marketing Communication and PR Anti-corruption Fight as a Marketing Tool”* by Denisa Kasl Kollmannová published in the previous issue. First of all, **Corrupt Tour is strictly a corruption friendly company**. We are not an anti-corruption NGO or initiative. Corrupt Tour is a normal private company doing business with the purpose to make money. Based on the fact that all of our products have been, from the very beginning, tied with corruption and its public appearance, we must insist on the fact that we need corruption for surviving in the niche market of “Corruption Tourism” we have created. We are definitely against removing corruption monuments and then making history. Corruption has a long tradition in our society and it is surprising for us that nobody has started regularly using it. There have always been, of course, some anti-corruption happenings, but based on J. S. Ewelyn’s quote *“What is happening it is not happening”* (@Corrupt-Tour) there is a huge market gap for creating corruption-based products and services, but as a business not as a one-time event or demonstration. Let’s a look at corruption from the business point of view.

When we were planning to launch Corrupt Tour in February 2012, we decided not to go through the standard “anti-corruption” mechanic, but instead we created a business based on corruption cases, places and people connected with corruption. Our company, in various themes, uses corruption as a product base; we have for example, tours, corruption friendly gadgets, merchandise and also a hot new thing on the market called **“Presidential Pardons”**. This is a sweet candy known to Czechs as “boží milosti” (translated as: god’s pardons candy) packed and **sold in 1+5 FREE or 5+1 FREE packages** based on the premise that we do not know on what pacts the real presidential pardons were sold at Prague Castle. We have used Corruption Tours in a Slevomat sale as proof that corruption can be used to attract a general audience and compare the results with common goods sold on groupon like websites. Our 50% Presidential Sale Tour beats even famous “Tataráček”, the famous raw meet special menu.

According to zIndex, companies with an anonymous organizational structure earn, on average, 70% more revenues

when dealing with governmental institutions compared to those with transparent ownership schemes. Therefore, we decided that we would change our company’s form to that of an anonymous shareholder company in order to get better financial results. Now anyone can become an anonymous shareholder of the Corrupt Tour a.s. and can **“Start making money on corruption – legally”** (www.corrupttour.com/inc). The only condition for share handover from the investor is to come dressed so that it will be recognizable that you are going to become an anonymous company shareholder. All handovers are organized on corruption POIs and they are always well documented by the paparazzi.

The Corrupt Tour company created quite a buzz in the media worldwide. This includes things from the cover page of **The Wall Street Journal** through an article in the respected **Frieze magazine** or **2 Weirdest Cities Tour Award** to a recent **CNN Travel** article where they wrote: *“We’ve covered a lot of startups in our careers, but this one takes the prize for our favorite travel startup ever!”* (CNN Travel, 16 April 2013).

Let’s take a look at corruption from the media planning point of view. The media need exotic topics and corruption fulfills their primal needs. We have put a rule on our tours that **journalists always pay full price for tickets**. No press kits, no free tickets. It is hard but it pays off.

What are the next steps of the corruption business?

While at the World Travel Market, we were asked by travel industry pros about the future of the corruption business. **The future of Corrupt Tour lies in space tourism and showing the Dark Side of Planet Earth** while opening other cities and countries to new tours and using corruption as a marketing tool.

What topics might also be interesting from the other side of marketing? Abortion, racism or xenophobia... they might hit the zeitgeist soon in the chase to reach a target group. We will see what will be the next hot buzz word in communication.

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