

OGL 481 Pro-Seminar I: PCA-Choosing an Organization Worksheet

1) Name and describe your organization.

Starbucks Coffee Company was founded on March 30, 1971, at Pike Place Market in Seattle Washington. Since its official organization in 1971, CEO Howard Schultz has emphasized employee benefits, inclusive practices, and progressive business models. Starbucks states, “In everything we do, we are always dedicated to Our Mission: to inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup, and one neighborhood at a time.” The company has faced leadership changes and challenges over the several decades that it has been in operation but has always had founder Howard Schultz to fall back on when times of crisis arise. Among the many challenges it has faced, Starbucks currently is dealing with a push for unionization by Workers United.

2) Describe your role in the organization (it can be an internal or external role).

My role in the organization will be as an HR representative working with a crisis team to develop a strategy to deal with the aftermath of two African American gentlemen being arrested on suspicion of trespassing during an incident at a Philadelphia Starbucks that took place on Thursday April 12, 2018. My team will have to consider this issue from multiple frames (HR, political, symbolic, ethical, and structural) to respond to both public backlash and political fallout for this blunder. Immediate and affective responses are critical when dealing with a publicly traded corporation.

3) Describe the situation, including information you think will help the reader understand the most important elements of the situation. (This will require selectivity: part of the art of case writing is separating the essential facts from the mass of information that might be included).

On Thursday, April 12, 2018, two black men were arrested at the City Center Starbucks in Philadelphia on suspicion of trespassing. The two gentlemen had made a request to use the restroom, which was refused since they had not purchased any Starbucks products, and they were asked to leave shortly thereafter by employees. The gentleman declined the request, and the manager of the location subsequently took matters into their own hands and contacted the authorities to have the would-be patrons removed. It was later verified that they were meeting with another patron, white male Andrew Yaffe. Video was taken by fellow patrons and received millions of views on social media. The public outcry was swift, and Starbucks needed to quickly formulate a plan to deal with the backlash.

References

About us: Starbucks Coffee Company . About Us: Starbucks Coffee Company. (n.d.). Retrieved January 13, 2023, from <https://www.starbucks.com/about-us/>

Starbucks Coffee Company. (2018, April 17). *Starbucks to close all U.S. stores for racial-bias education*. Starbucks Stories. Retrieved January 12, 2023, from <https://stories.starbucks.com/press/2018/starbucks-to-close-stores-nationwide-for-racial-bias-education-may-29/>

Stevens, M. (2018, April 15). *Starbucks C.E.O. apologizes after arrests of 2 black men*. The New York Times. Retrieved January 13, 2023, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/15/us/starbucks-philadelphia-black-men-arrest.html>