Apology Essay: Domino’s

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When an employee misrepresents a company, it is often debated who should apologize. Should it be the employee, the manager, or someone superior? After two Domino’s employees tampered with food in 2009, the president of Domino’s, Patrick Doyle, decided that it was his responsibility to apologize. By using rhetorical strategies such as kairos and pathos, Doyle is able to effectively delivery a successful apology to regain the trust of customers and secure the future of Domino’s.

In Conover, North Carolina in the kitchen of Domino’s, a viral video was made featuring two employees. The pair are seen putting cheese up there nose, farting on salami, and then proceeding to use the ingredients. They also can be seen spitting and sneezing on the food while giggling. The video received millions of views after being posted on YouTube. Forty-eight hours after the incident, the Doyle posted his own video, publicly apologizing for their actions.

Before going into the details of what Doyle said, it is important to note the method of delivery. By posting an apology video instead of another method (such as an apology letter), we are able to put a face to the Domino’s brand. This method of delivery makes the apology seem more sincere and personal to customers. He also posts the video at a time when social media was beginning to really grow in important— and also at a time when Domino’s had little to no social media presence. The Kairos of posting the video online was a smart move for Domino’s, since it was the perfect time to grow their social media presence positively at a time when social media was blossoming. He also posts his apology promptly following the incident— showing that he took the video as a serious issue that needed to be immediately addressed.

Another reason that Doyle’s apology was so successful was because he understood the necessary parts to a successful apology. According to Aaron Lazare in *On Apology*, one way to have a successful apology is to have an “assurance that both parties have shared values” (2005). When Doyle says “nothing is more important than our customer’s trust,” he acknowledges that trust has been broken and reaffirms its importance to both the customers and himself. He also mentions trust again at the end of the apology, recognizing that they will have to work hard to regain the customer’s trust. The repetition of the word implies that trust is a value that they hold to a high standard. In addition, he offers “reparations for the harm caused by the offense” (Lazare, 2005). Doyle comes up with several solutions to not only fix the problem that happened at this one store, but prevent it from happening to any other stores, including dismissing the employees in the video, sanitizing the store, and reexamining their hiring process.

The arraignment of the apology adds to its effectiveness. At the end of the apology, we can see Doyle get passionate when he says that it “sickens” him how their actions could impact the Domino’s system. He even physically moves as he says the word, further emphasizing his emotions and how much he disagrees with what they did. By saving this act of pathos for the end of the apology, the viewers are left feeling sympathetic towards Doyle, making what he says more believable and genuine.

Patrick Doyle understands the key points to a successful apology. By using rhetorical strategies, he is able to regain the trust of customers— which we know since Domino’s is still a prosperous company. His use pathos, kairos, delivery, and arrangement to show how these devices can be used to persuade an audience, and effectively hits two of the necessary parts to a successful apology. By examining this speech, we see an example of how a business can recover from a scandal by speaking punctually and passionately.

References

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