

## **Superman: Man of Steel! . . . Or . . . Man of Boycott?**

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### **SYNOPSIS**

In February 2013, DC announced a special anthology of Superman stories that would be co-written by Orson Scott Card, who had actively spoken out against gay marriage. In response to the announced hiring of Card, over 16,000 people signed a petition to boycott the anthology (Truitt, 2013). Further, a few comic book retailers had refused to carry DC's iconic Superman comics (Sieczkowski, 2013).

The Superman franchise was one of DC Comics most profitable assets. At stake were not only graphic novel sales, but also movies and memorabilia. The concerns over how the boycott could affect movie revenues were particularly troubling since DC would be introducing a new Superman movie into theaters in June 2013. DC was counting on this movie being one of the summer blockbuster hits. Executives at DC Comics needed to determine the best course of action in light of the negative publicity surrounding Orson Scott Card's position as a writer on the anthology.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this case, students should be able to:

1. Interpret the effect of negative publicity on products and services.
2. Use cognitive dissonance theory to identify dissonant cognitions regarding a controversial issue.
3. Recommend and support a course of action for DC Comics.

### **APPLICATION**

This decision case is appropriate both for graduate and undergraduate marketing courses such as Principles of Marketing or Consumer Behavior and in communication courses such as Persuasion and Public Relations.

### **KEY WORDS**

Cognitive Dissonance, Publicity, Promotion

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