



Urban Outfitters

Crisis of the Kent State Shirt

By Liwei Yi



Urban Outfitters

- Company overview: Philadelphia-based clothing brand
- Controversies surrounding clothing design



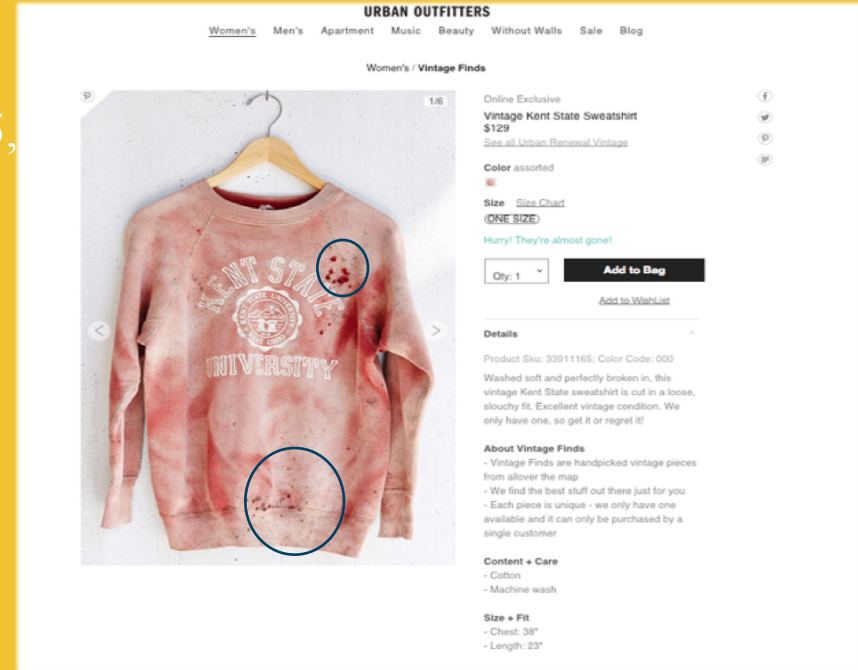
**URBAN
OUTFITTERS**

DROP SHADOW
Initial use 2005



Urban Outfitters: Kent State Sweatshirt

1. Released Kent State Shirt on September 15, 2014
2. Buzzfeed reported the shirt on website
3. Design of the shirt outraged public
4. Removed the shirt immediately
5. Posted public apology on Twitter



Urban Outfitters' "appropriate" response

- Gave quick initial response
- Effectively used social media
- Showed sympathy for victims

Urban Outfitters Features "Vintage" Red-Stained Kent State Sweatshirt

The Ohio university is best known for the 1970 shootings on campus that left four anti-war protesters dead. UPDATE: Urban Outfitters has pulled the sweatshirt from its website and apologized.

Posted on Sept. 15, 2014, at 3:08 a.m.

1.

Urban Outfitters sincerely apologizes for any offense our Vintage Kent State Sweatshirt may have caused. It was never our intention to allude to the tragic events that took place at Kent State in 1970 and we are extremely saddened that this item was perceived as such. The one-of-a-kind item was purchased as part of our sun-faded vintage collection. There is no blood on this shirt nor has this item been altered in any way. The red stains are discoloration from the original shade of the shirt and the holes are from natural wear and fray. Again, we deeply regret that this item was perceived negatively and we have removed it immediately from our website to avoid further upset.

3.

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Urban Outfitters sincerely apologizes for any offense our Vintage Kent State Sweatshirt may have caused. It (cont) [tl.gd/n_1sagorq](https://t.me/tl.gd/n_1sagorq)

RETWEETS
928

LIKES
578



7:01 AM - 15 Sep 2014

[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) 928 [Like](#) 578 [More](#)

2.

“Appropriate” Response Analysis

Coombs:

- Provide a response after crisis occurs
- Use Social Media to reach stakeholders
- Showing concerns helps reputation repair



Urban Outfitters' “inappropriate” response

- Denied design's inspiration
- No promise to fix future problems

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“Inappropriate” response analysis

Coombs:

- Denying shows lack control of surrounding crisis
- Follow-up communication is required



3 Takeaways

1. Admit mistake
2. Give further implementation response
3. Train crisis management group



References

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