

When Brands Remember 9/11, Is it Memorializing or Advertising?

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This past Thursday saw the 13th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center. News organizations and politicians took the time to look back and discuss where America's headed as people held emotional memorials.

But, unsurprisingly, some maybe-less-than-scrupulous brands tried to capitalize on the memory of this tragedy.

So Mike Monteiro, a designer for Mule Design Studio, set out to expose brands that exploited the holiday's anniversary. Around 7 a.m., he sent out the following Tweet as bait:



Mike Monteiro @monteiro

Follow


Happy 9/11 to all my favorite brands. Please send out your [#neverforget](#)/discount code tweets.

6:53 AM - 11 Sep 2014

114 124

What happened next was a series of Tweets in which Monteiro satirized all the various ways brands were using the anniversary as a way to promote themselves.

Some of the original Tweets were relatively tame, for example:



Hallmark Cards hallmark Follow

We remember. We honor. We pay tribute. And we will never forget.

7:00 AM - 11 Sep 2014

42 28

But many Tweets went beyond the pale, offering discounts, coupon codes, and special 9/11-related merchandise.

Never forget 9/11! Just remember stay strong as a great country and stay fit!
Keep an eye out for the free shipping promo this morning!

— TBL NUTRITION (@TBLNUTR) **September 11, 2014**




Create Asian Vegan @SauceressBrand Follow

In honor of 911 today and those who serve this country, Trusted Debt Solutions will be offering a 20% discount to...fb.me/3uKv6Qphv

5:31 AM - 11 Sep 2014

18 10



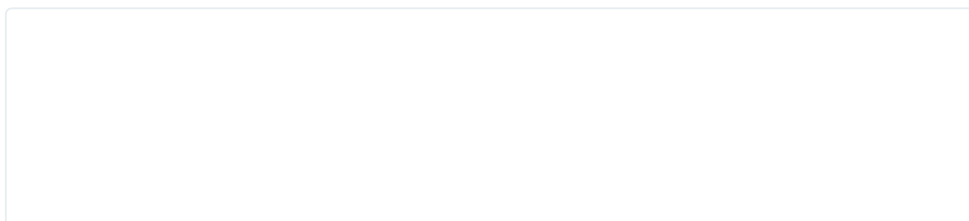
Johan Scholte @johan_scholte Follow

Get your BYU tickets online for a sweet price with promo code "9-11". [#HOUvsBYU](#) [#BYUFootball](#) [#imsofriggenexcited!](#)

11:30 PM - 10 Sep 2014

34 20

Meanwhile, others went big with images ranging from absurd to outright offensive:





White Castle WhiteCastle

Follow

God bless America. #NeverForget911

6:30 AM - 11 Sep 2014

336 235



Perkins® Restaurants @EatAtPerkins

Follow

Never forget.

7:10 AM - 11 Sep 2014

4 2



Medieval Times MedievalTimes

Follow

We Will Never

Forget! #911Anniversary #NeverForget911#September11 #NeverForget

7:58 AM - 11 Sep 2014

238 157

Monteiro spent the day mocking brands for their attempts to keep their company names in front of people's eyes.



BERETTA @Beretta_USA

11 Sep 14

For every victim. For every hero. For every person who was lost but never forgotten. Beretta Nation is United.pic.twitter.com/Z1F4kLjAMj



Mike Monteiro @monteiro

Follow

9/11 wouldn't have happened if every airline passenger was armed, right, @Beretta_USA? Got any discount codes?

[#neverforget](#) [#neverreload](#)

9:30 AM - 11 Sep 2014

22 40



Weber Grills WeberGrills

11 Sep 14

Take time to enjoy your family and friends on this day when we remember those we lost. [#NeverForget911](#)pic.twitter.com/UH050Hk08E



Mike Monteiro @monteiro

Follow

Hi [@WeberGrills](#), do you have any discount codes for today? I lost my brother in the towers. Could use a new grill.

10:48 AM - 11 Sep 2014

18 62



ICEE [@Official_ICEE](#)

11 Sep 14

[#NeverForget](#) [#Remember911](#) [#Honor911](#) [#unitedwestandinstagram.com](#)



Mike Monteiro [@monteiro](#)

Follow

The terrorists can take the icees from our cold, dead hands, am I right, [@Official_ICEE](#)? I mean fuck those dudes!

Icee me, bro. Discounts?

10:02 AM - 11 Sep 2014

11 22

Something good, at least, came of all this insanity. It prompted a Twitter conversation on the role companies have when it comes down to memorializing tragic events.

Monteiro retweeted others who pointed out that the people running the social media accounts are, in fact, people. And yes, if the companies didn't say anything, they ran the risk of being labeled 'anti-American'.



iain [@iainspad](#)

11 Sep 14

.[@monteiro](#) even if it's out of respect with little to no brand placement whatsoever?

Okay then. Let's hinder freedom of expression.



Mike Monteiro [@monteiro](#)

Follow

They're free to say it, [@iainspad](#). And I'm free to mock them. Freedom is wonderful!

10:53 AM - 11 Sep 2014

2 35

But in the end, he reasoned that this was a day of remembrance and mourning, and the best way companies can show their respect is by not doing anything.

Well, not in so many words, but you get the picture.



Mike Monteiro @monteiro [Follow](#)

The ONLY problem with 9/11 brand tweets is their existence. The only “brand strategy” you need today is to shut the fuck up.

10:44 AM - 11 Sep 2014

258 341

What do you think? When brands remember 9/11, is it memorializing — or just plain unscrupulous advertising?