“SEE WHAT HAPPENS”

HOW A COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN SAVED UBER BILLIONS

2016 Arthur W. Page Society/Institute for Public Relations Case Study Competition

This case study was submitted on January 15, 2016, to the Arthur W. Page Society and the Institute for Public Relations.
# Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................... 2  
SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS .................................................................................................................. 3  
COMPANY BACKGROUND ................................................................................................................ 3  
  History of Uber in the U.S. .............................................................................................................. 3  
  Corporate Culture and External Presence in New York City ....................................................... 3  
COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN ...................................................................................................... 5  
  Campaign Stakeholders ................................................................................................................. 5  
  Campaign Objectives ..................................................................................................................... 5  
  Campaign Messages ....................................................................................................................... 5  
  Campaign Channels ....................................................................................................................... 6  
  Campaign Result ......................................................................................................................... 9  
PUBLIC RESPONSE ....................................................................................................................... 10  
MEDIA RESPONSE ....................................................................................................................... 10  
INDUSTRY RESPONSE .................................................................................................................. 10  
BUSINESS PERFORMANCE AND REPUTATIONAL IMPACT ......................................................... 11  
OVERALL STRATEGIC RESULTS ............................................................................................... 11  
APPENDIX: TIMELINE OF UBER COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN ............................................... 12  
REFERENCES .................................................................................................................................... 13
ABSTRACT

Directly connecting campaigns to enterprise business value is something with which communicators across sectors and industries often struggle.

The communications campaign undertaken by Uber in New York City in 2015 is a notable exception to this difficulty of quantifying the value of effective communication. In June 2015, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said he would support legislation that would cap the growth of Uber in the city. Uber undertook an intense public relations campaign in order to avoid losing its ability to grow its driver base, and therefore limit its access to the large source of revenue in New York City. The month-long campaign combined strong digital storytelling, strategic advertising, grassroots activation, and public affairs outreach and effectively secured Uber’s access to a $4.4 billion industry.

Keywords: Uber, Mayor Bill de Blasio, lobbying, advertisements, digital storytelling, advocacy, yellow taxi cabs, grassroots activation, public affairs, New York City
SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Uber is a ride-hailing application that connects private drivers with people who want rides, and the app arrived in New York City in 2011 (“Uber NYC,” 2011). By June 2015, Uber had established a strong presence in New York City. The company was operating and growing by roughly 2,000 additional drivers per month (Isidore, 2015) and was operating approximately 15,000 cars in the city (Hawkins, 2015). As Uber grew, it posed a significant business threat to existing New York City yellow taxi cabs and other car services; from 2011 to 2014, the number of yellow taxi trips taken in New York City fell by 11 percent (Rubinstein, 2015). Since its arrival in New York City, Uber has provided approximately 82,000 rides per day (McAlone, 2015).

Citing concern about congestion on New York City streets, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced on June 30, 2015, that he would support a bill by the city council that would cap Uber’s growth at 1 percent annually (or no more than 2,000 additional cars a year) until studies on the company’s impact to city traffic could be completed (Miller, 2015). Uber reacted immediately, claiming the legislation was a political façade intended to protect the “big taxi owners” (Campanile et al., 2015).

Uber then began an intense month-long advocacy campaign aimed at defeating the bill, utilizing strong digital storytelling, strategic advertising, grassroots activation and public affairs outreach.

COMPANY BACKGROUND

History of Uber in the U.S.

In March 2009, Travis Kalanick founded UberCab in San Francisco after coming up with the idea for a low-cost version of a black car service at a tech conference (McAlone, 2015). After compiling a team that included the soon-to-be CEO Ryan Graves, UberCab launched in San Francisco in June 2010 to huge success, garnering millions of dollars in additional seed funding by the following February (“Uber Crunchbase,” n.d.). In May 2011, the company changed its name to Uber and launched in New York City (Uber NYC, 2011). By 2015, Uber had expanded to other major cities like Washington, D.C. and Paris (“Cities,” n.d.). Uber has been immensely successful, and was valued at $41 billion in 2014 (MacMillan, 2014).

Since its arrival in New York City, Uber has been plagued by various crises that posed threats to its reputation. In 2013, Uber New York manager Josh Mohrer and his team were caught ordering and then canceling thousands of rides from competitor Lyft (Griswold, 2015). In 2014, it was discovered that Uber was able to “spy” on riders by reporting their location information with permission (Whitehouse and Dugan, 2014). In June 2015, right before de Blasio’s proposed growth cap, the Taxi and Limousine Commission of New York City seized 496 cars currently affiliated with Uber’s bases between April 29 and June 15 for picking up street hails, an action not approved for UberX drivers (Harshbarger, 2015). Overall, Uber has struggled through multiple controversies, including assaults on Uber customers by Uber drivers, which led to criticisms of the company’s background check policy (Huddleston, 2014). This, however, has not dampened the company’s success: Uber was valued at $41 billion in 2014 (MacMillan, 2014).

Corporate Culture and External Presence in New York City

Corporate culture refers to “the shared values, attitudes, standards, and beliefs that characterize members of an organization and define its nature” (Corporate culture, n.d.). Uber’s corporate culture is that of a disruptor: a company—usually a startup company—that disrupts existing industries (CNBC’s Disruptor 50, 2014). Uber disrupted the existing yellow taxi cab and limousine services in New York City by offering a more convenient
option. No longer were New Yorkers required to stand out in the street and hail a cab. Instead, they pressed a button and waited for the car to come to them. This disruption is in line with Uber’s corporate mission, namely that Uber “is evolving the way the world moves. By seamlessly connecting riders to drivers through our apps, [Uber makes] cities more accessible, opening up more possibilities for riders and more business for drivers” (About Us, n.d.). Uber effectively disrupted the New York City car service options by providing jobs to private drivers and excellent experiences to consumers. Altogether, Uber’s various offerings (including the low-price UberX, the nicer UberBlack, and even UberSUV) were directly in competition with the green, low-price taxis, the traditional yellow cabs, and even the black car/livery services already working in New York City.

Uber’s business model of providing jobs to private drivers is in contrast to the existing New York City taxi service that artificially depressed the supply of cabs and provided rich profit to taxi moguls (Zuylen-Wood, 2015). To do this, New York City restricts the sale of taxi licenses, known as “medallions,” and the taxi moguls that own hundreds of medallions run lucrative businesses by selling and renting the medallions to taxi drivers.

Disrupting these lucrative industries, however, has required Uber to constantly defend itself from various attacks. New York taxi mogul Gene Freidman called Uber the “nastiest, most morally corrupt company ever” (Zuylen-Wood, 2015). Uber has also impacted the value of having the license to drive a yellow cab in New York City, which is another main source of revenue for the taxi moguls. Zuylen-Wood (2015) adequately described the issue Uber has caused in New York City by looking at the decreasing value of the taxi cab medallions.

To own a cab in New York, you need a medallion—a metal shield displayed on the vehicle’s hood—and there are a fixed number issued by the New York City Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC). Until very recently, medallions were a good thing to have a lot of. In 1947, you could buy one for $2,500. In 2013, after a half-century of steady appreciation, including a near-exponential period in the 2000s, they were going for $1.32 million.

Then came Uber. Since the arrival of the car-by-app service, valued at about $50 billion, taxi ridership is down, daily receipts have declined, and drivers are idling—or going to work for Uber. Add it up, and desperate medallion sellers are trying to fob off their little tin ornaments for as little as $650,000.

Therefore, not only did Uber operate as a major competitor to the taxi industry in New York City at the time of de Blasio’s announcement, it was also a threat to the value of the taxi cab medallions.

Uber’s corporate culture also involves an intense focus on consumer experience. Unlike competitor Lyft, tipping is not a part of Uber’s presence. In response to why Uber does not allow tipping on the app, Uber replied, “With Uber, there is no need to tip (...) Riders choose Uber for a seamless experience—a cashless and hassle-free ride. However, if a rider absolutely insists on providing an additional cash tip, drivers are of course free to accept it” (Riesman, 2014). By focusing on the consumer experience, Uber continues to fulfill the part of its mission that states, “Uber’s rapidly expanding global presence continues to bring people and their cities closer” (“About Us,” 2015). Many Uber customers choose to take Uber in New York City because it is “cleaner, easier, and I don’t feel like I’m being an inconvenience by asking to be driven all the way to Brooklyn” (Author personal communication, 2015).

Uber’s other minor competitors include similar ride-hailing apps, such as Lyft. However, while Uber currently operates six driver bases in New York City and its boroughs, Lyft only operates two (Ruble, 2015; Bhuiyan, 2014).
Any legislation on the cap of Uber drivers would have also likely impacted Lyft, so in the case of this communication campaign, Lyft was not regarded as a competitor.

Additionally, Uber posed a threat to the New York City public transportation system, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). Yellow taxis and other car services are required to pay taxes to the MTA, whereas Uber drivers are not. Rubinstein (2015) predicted that if Uber continued its rate of growth, the MTA’s taxi-derived revenues would decreased from $94 million in 2015 to $91 million in 2019. Overall, Uber entered the New York City transportation market and disrupted major industries not only by pulling from its customer base, but also by decreasing the value of the entire industry and decreasing its tax revenue.

COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN

Campaign Stakeholders

Uber identified many stakeholders in its campaign to defeat the cap legislation. The first and most important stakeholder group was comprised of the politicians responsible for supporting and voting on the proposed legislation. Uber needed to effectively communicate to this group without being accused of improper influence of political leaders, as well as to maintain ethical public relations behavior. The second stakeholder group was comprised of New York City Uber consumers, as they would immediately be affected by a cap on the growth in the number of available Uber drivers. The third stakeholder group was New York City Uber drivers, who would also be negatively affected by a driver cap. Finally, the fourth stakeholder group was Uber’s other U.S. counterparts, including Uber drivers and Uber consumers. Legislation that succeeded in capping Uber’s growth would serve as a warning sign to Uber regarding its other markets – if Uber could be restricted in New York City, it could be restricted anywhere. Therefore, Uber needed to communicate to its global stakeholder group of drivers, consumer and politicians that Uber would not cower before legislation that benefited private interests and harmed drivers and consumers.

Campaign Objectives

Uber’s first objective was behavioral: to stop the advance of de Blasio’s suggested restrictive legislation. Uber’s second objective was informational: to notify its stakeholder groups about the negative effects of the legislation and to ensure their support of Uber’s campaign. Uber’s third and final objective was motivational: to continue to build and maintain positive feelings toward Uber in New York City and around the globe.

Campaign Messages

Uber’s campaign messages focused on the human stories behind Uber. The first key message was that a cap on Uber’s growth would irreparably and seriously inconvenience the Uber consumer. The second key message was that a cap on Uber’s growth would greatly harm the livelihood of the thousands of Uber drivers operating in New York City. The third message used was that the presence of Uber was a net benefit to New York City by providing a way for car owners to make money by helping those who don’t own cars. Finally, the fourth, and more masked message, was that the proposed cap on Uber’s growth was not, as it was advertised, to address congestion. Rather, it was a poorly disguised façade to protect political interests of the taxi/car service lobbies and the MTA.

Uber shared these messages through a variety of channels, but focused on strong digital storytelling, strategic advertising, grassroots activation, and public affairs outreach.
See What Happens: How a Communications Campaign Saved Uber Billions

Campaign Channels

One major channel Uber used to communicate its message that a cap on Uber’s growth would inconvenience the Uber consumer was digital storytelling. In July 2015, Uber implemented a prank “de Blasio” mode on its app (Lapowsky, 2015). When consumers opened the app, they had their usual array of Uber choices—UberT, UberPool, UberX, UberRUSH, and Eats—but there was an addition of a “de Blasio” option. When selected, the consumer would see a longer-than-usual wait time, with an ominous message that said, “See What Happens” (Image 1.a) instead of the traditional “Set Pickup Location” (Image 1.b). When the consumer clicked on “See What Happens,” the original message would disappear, and the consumer would read that there were no cars available to pick them up (Image 1.c). When the consumer clicked on the message, a new window would open that was titled “De Blasio’s Uber.” The message read, “Take Action. This is what Uber will look like in NYC if Mayor de Blasio’s Uber cap bill passes. Email the Mayor and City Council. Say ‘NO’ to de Blasio’s Uber!” The message was then followed with a link to email local politicians. “Keep NYC moving forward,” the message implored (Image 1.c).

This channel was immensely effective. Users took to Twitter and other social properties to express the surprise and frustration about the (hypothetical) wait time. The app feature itself garnered thousands of media placements, including in the New York Times. For New Yorkers that had not heard about the bill, the app feature immediately spurred their interest, and sparked conversation on forums like Reddit. Uber then invited de Blasio to an online debate regarding the cap, which he rejected, saying, "Uber is a multibillion-dollar corporation, and they’re acting like one," (“Mayor de Blasio rejects,” 2015). By using its app to engage in its messaging, Uber effectively targeted one of its main stakeholder groups, New York City Uber consumers. It also served to support all three major objectives, to stop the advance of the legislation (the call to action to contact politicians), to inform stakeholders about the legislation, and to build and support positive feelings of Uber (showing that Uber would no longer be as convenient with a cap in place.)
Another channel Uber used in its month-long campaign against the driver cap legislation was **strategic advertising**. The advertising included television ads, mailers and digital ads, and cost Uber an estimated $3 million (Zuylen-Wood, 2015). The television ads Uber ran in protest of the proposed legislation focused on the human interest stories behind Uber. One advertisement focused on the stories of the Uber drivers (Lapowsky, 2015). “I was pretty much struggling to make ends meet,” one Uber Driver-Partner, Jashiel, says in the advertisement. “When I finally came to Uber, it was probably the best thing that’s happened in my life. It’s been a blessing” (“Uber,” 2015). “I make more money and spend more time with my family,” another Uber Driver-Partner, Lassana, added. The advertisement continued with text that read, “Mayor de Blasio is pushing the agenda of his big taxi donors to limit Uber cars and drivers, killing thousands of jobs around the city.” The advertisement then turned to focus on de Blasio, with another Uber Driver-Partner saying, “He should know the struggles that most New Yorkers go through and embrace the fact that people want to go to work,” while another calls out de Blasio’s political interests as his reason for trying to cap Uber. The advertisement ends with a call to action for viewers to tell the mayor that, “You promised to end income inequality. Don’t put taxi donors ahead of jobs” (“Uber,” 2015).

An additional advertisement that Uber used was titled, “Don’t let Mayor de Blasio strand New Yorkers.” The advertisement, again circulated on local television, still focused on human interest stories, but in this case the stories were of Uber users. The advertisement takes the viewer through various scenarios, like a nurse needing to get to the night shift from the Bronx, a father needing to take his baby to the hospital in Queens and a college student trying to get to the airport from Brooklyn. All of the mentioned areas are New York City neighborhoods that yellow cabs will often “refuse” service to (“Uber,” 2015). The advertisement states that, unlike cabs, “Uber is there, taking more people to and from communities outside Manhattan than anyone” (“Uber,” 2015). The advertisement then ends with a call to action, asking viewers to tell de Blasio not to strand New Yorkers who are not serviced by yellow cabs to serve his own political interest (“Uber,” 2015).

Uber’s television advertising utilized three of its key messages: that a cap on Uber’s growth would greatly harm the livelihood of the thousands of New York City Uber drivers, it would seriously inconvenience Uber consumers and that the cap served only to protect political interests of transportation lobbies that donated to de Blasio. The call to action at the end of the advertisements supported the first objective of stopping the legislation, while the human interest stories of the drivers and consumers supported the second and third objectives of informing stakeholders about the effect of the proposed legislation, as well as to build and support positive feelings toward Uber. Through this advertisement, Uber positioned itself as the savior to many New Yorkers who were employed by Uber, communicating that Uber was
akin to the Robin Hood fighting against New York City’s version of Sheriff Nottingham by stealing from the rich (politicians and taxi lobbies) and giving to the poor (the thousands of predominantly minority Uber drivers and all Uber consumers).

Both Uber’s digital storytelling and strategic advertising contributed to another important communications channel – grassroots activation. While both channels were effective on their own, when combined, they served to energize Uber’s stakeholder base to speak out against the proposed legislation.

Uber drivers and supporters protested in front of the offices of the Taxi and Limousine Commission in New York City, and others took to social media to express their support for Uber. It was not just the everyday New York City Uber consumer who was speaking out on social media. Major A-list celebrities came out in favor of Uber and its campaign against the proposed ban. Kate Upton tweeted to her 2.19 million followers, “.@BilldeBlasio Why do you want to return to days when only those in Midtown & Lower Manhattan could get a ride? #UberMovesNYC” (Edelman et al., 2015) and was retweeted 883 times. New Yorker Neil Patrick Harris also joined the fray, tweeting “.@BilldeBlasio: 25K new residents use @Uber_NYC each week. How is a fixed # of cars supposed to serve this demand for rides? #UberMovesNYC” (Harris, 2015) to his 21.3 million followers, and was retweeted more than a thousand times. Actor Ashton Kutcher tweeted 26 times in support of Uber during the campaign, reaching his 17.3 million followers with messages like “.@NYCCouncil is considering a bill that threatens to destroy 10,000 NYC job opportunities. @deBlasioNYC, oppose ban on new @Uber_NYC cars” (Kutcher, 2015). By having famous actors and actresses speak out in support of Uber, Uber was able to mobilize a stakeholder base that was far larger than just New York City Uber consumers. It is not known whether these 3rd party advocates were enlisted by Uber. However, if their involvement was unprompted, it indicates a massive public relations win for Uber, as Uber’s messaging was shared with a much larger audience through their support.

Another example of Uber’s grassroots activation was its support by outer borough politicians like Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams and Bronx Assemblyman Michael Blake, who both criticized de Blasio’s proposed legislation for reducing job and transportation opportunities for minority New Yorkers, especially in the outer boroughs. Assemblyman Blake said at an Uber-organized event,

If you have been a person of color and you stood out on the sidewalk and a taxi passed you by, if you are someone that is trying to figure out how to make ends meet from our communities, and ‘I just need a job to make sure I have an opportunity for my family,’ if I’m just trying to figure out how to have more justice
in my communities, that’s why you stand on the side of Uber (...) This legislation is wrong, plain and simple (Bredderman, 2015).

By engaging key politicians, Uber was able to exponentially improve its efforts of grassroots activation. Uber also provided free UberPOOL rides to those seeking to attend an Uber-organized rally at City Hall, another instance of grassroots activation to strengthen support for the campaign (Kosoff, 2015).

Finally, the last channel Uber utilized in its campaign was public affairs outreach. Uber hired a large team of lobbyists and communicators to reach out to the politicians that could influence and/or would vote on the proposed legislation. Rubinstein and Nahmias called it “an assertion of political muscularity by a private interest that was unrivaled in recent New York history,” as Uber’s efforts to sway councilmembers in their favor was, “relentless and overwhelming (...) by [the end of the campaign] City Hall and the City Council were ready to give in, even though many participants, including City Hall officials, contend de Blasio had the necessary votes to pass the cap” (para. 40-42, 2015). Working in tandem with its digital, grassroots and advertising channels, Uber’s lobbyists focused on three major rules: “Spend whatever it takes to hire a critical mass of the best operatives in New York City, exploit existing rifts between the mayor and fellow Democrats, spend millions on ads and direct mail, and find a way to create trouble for de Blasio with his base” (para. 9, 2015). Uber’s public affairs efforts led to success, including a statement by Comptroller Scott Stringer opposing the ban, New York City Council member Dan Garodnick saying he planned to vote against the bill, and even New York Governor Andrew Cuomo blatantly opposing the cap in a radio interview (Lapowsky, 2015). Uber’s public affairs outreach can be shown in its pursuance of Governor Cuomo’s support – according to Rubinstein (November 2015), Uber executives had met with Governor Cuomo and essentially asked him to possibly overrule de Blasio’s Uber cap with an executive order if the legislation passed (para. 13). Uber also used other forms of public affairs outreach, including sending mailers to the constituents of the City Council members to encourage them to contact their councilors in support of Uber (Kosoff, 2015).

Uber’s public affairs outreach, while operating out of the spotlight, likely included all four of Uber’s key messages to convince councilmembers to rise up against the mayor. This channel also served two of Uber’s objectives. First, it went to the source of support for the bill to stop the advance of the legislation by de Blasio. Uber also informed the city council members, an Uber stakeholder group, about the negative effects of the legislation in order to stop the legislation from advancing.

**Campaign Result**

On July 22, 2015, de Blasio’s office capitulated to the growing pressure to abandon the proposed legislation, and instead announced the city would conduct a study in partnership with Uber on New York City traffic congestion to further illuminate whether Uber and other ride-hailing apps were contributing to congestion (Lapowsky, 2015). The city had approached Uber with a revised plan the week before, which the company rejected because the plan still proposed a cap; however, the day before de Blasio announced the agreement with Uber, Uber called for a closed-door meeting with the administration to discuss a deal (Bhuiyan, 2015).

A statement from New York First Deputy Mayor Anthony Shorris said that the agreement “sets in motion a plan to guide a comprehensive and fair public response, driven by data, to the increase in for-hire vehicles. And it ensures that the future growth of this industry matches the values and the interests of New Yorkers” (para. 3). Uber responded with a statement of its own through its general manager of New York City, Josh Mohrer. Mohrer said,
We’re pleased to have reached an agreement with Mayor de Blasio’s administration and the City Council to collaborate on a joint transportation study and to work together on ways to continue expanding economic opportunity, mobility and transportation access in the city (…) Together, we can build an even better, more reliable transportation system. This is great news for all New Yorkers, including Uber riders and drivers (para. 7).

Uber also agreed to more widely share its rider and trip data to assist in the study, and the deal allowed the city to re-visit a cap on Uber’s growth in the future (Lapowsky, 2015).

PUBLIC RESPONSE
In response to Uber’s campaign, New Yorkers sent nearly 50,000 emails to the mayor’s office and the City Council, and posted more than 18,000 tweets in support of the company, with more than half of the tweets using the hashtag #UberMovesNYC (Nichols, 2015). When the mayor’s office announced it was dropping the cap legislation, many New Yorkers lauded de Blasio’s decision to drop the legislation and shared their opinions on social media.

MEDIA RESPONSE
The media extensively covered the month-long Uber campaign. The campaign generated thousands of articles, including significant coverage from the New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and other top-tier outlets. Much of the coverage focused on aspects related to Uber’s key messages, noting the public opinion that de Blasio’s proposed legislation was related to donations to his campaign from taxi/transportation groups, and that a cap on Uber would hurt both Uber New York City consumers and drivers. Overall, coverage was neutral; however, a few high-profile pieces focused on Uber’s excessive lobbying and use of corporate muscle to pressure New York City politicians to capitulate to Uber’s demands. Mayor Bill de Blasio also published an op-ed in the New York Daily News addressing his proposed Uber cap – however, the op-ed was widely regarded as weak (Palagashvili, 2015).

INDUSTRY RESPONSE
Ride-sharing services similar to Uber lauded de Blasio’s decision to drop the proposed growth cap, as the cap would have seriously limited them, as well. In a statement, Lyft, an Uber competitor, said in a statement, “We thank the City Council for listening to our concerns about removing carpooling options, which we see as part of the solution to traffic congestion (…) We will continue working together with the City Council and the TLC to build a more sustainable future for New York” (Lapowsky, 2015).

Statements from taxi-related associations were less laudatory. Bhairavi Desai, the executive director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, said the mayor “just basically caved” (Flegenheimer, 2015). Gene Freidman, taxi mogul, expressed frustration with the politics behind the legislation. Zuylen-Wood reported that Freidman had stopped going to City Council, calling the council “irrelevant” (2015).
BUSINESS PERFORMANCE AND REPUTATIONAL IMPACT

Since Uber’s campaign ended, the ride-hailing company has grown its number of Uber drivers from approximately 13,000 drivers in March 2015 to 30,000 drivers in October 2015. Fare revenue for Uber drivers also increased 6.3 percent, from $36.96/hour in 2014 to $39.30/hour in October 2015 (Hawkins, 2015). Overall, Uber’s reputation improved in New York and in other cities, as its victory effectively showed any effort to block Uber’s entrance and growth was ill-fated. In summary, by engaging in proactive, powerful communication, Uber solidified its ability to grow in an industry worth billions, both in New York City and around the globe.

OVERALL STRATEGIC RESULTS

In regard to the communication field as a whole, the case study of Uber’s campaign shows the quantifiable value of the profession. By engaging in consumer and stakeholder relations, Uber gave the public relations field verified insight into the tangible business value of a well-executed communications campaign. By engaging in this campaign, Uber secured its right (at least for the following months) to grow its driver base to gain even more access to the $4.4 billion transportation industry in New York City.

However, Uber will continue to face challenges in 2016. After the congestion study is completed, Uber will need to grapple with the results and any further efforts to cap its growth in New York City. If the congestion report does implicate Uber for increased congestion, Uber will need to engage in further proactive and reactive communication across a variety of channels to continue its access to the New York City consumer base.
APPENDIX: TIMELINE OF UBER COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN

- Uber arrives in New York City: May 2011
- Yellow cab trips had decreased by 11%, which many attributed to Uber: December 2014
- Uber sends out email asking supporters to attend protest at City Hall the next day regarding a cap on Uber’s growth: June 29, 2015
- At City Council meeting, Mayor Bill de Blasio suggests growth cap on Uber/other ride-hailing apps: June 30, 2015
- Uber begins running television ads against proposed cap legislation: July 15, 2015
- Uber debuts the “DE BLASIO” option on its app: July 16, 2015
- Outer borough politicians throw support behind Uber: July 21, 2015
- New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo expresses support for Uber, major celebrities speak out against Uber cap: July 22, 2015

July 22, 2015, 5:15 p.m.

Mayor Bill de Blasio announces he will no longer support a cap on Uber growth until congestion study is completed.
REFERENCES
About Us. (n.d.) retrieved from https://www.uber.com/about.


Harris, N.P. [ActuallyNPH]. (2015, July 22). @BilldeBlasio: 25K new residents use @Uber_NYC each week. How is a fixed # of cars supposed to serve this demand for rides? #UberMovesNYC [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/ActuallyNPH/status/623897793694965760


Kutcher, A. [Aplusk]. (2015, June 29). .@NYCCouncil is considering a bill that threatens to destroy 10,000 NYC job opportunities. @deBlasioNYC, oppose ban on new @Uber_NYC cars. [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/aplusk/status/615680746678661120


Ruble, K. (2015, January 7). Most of Uber’s bases in New York City have been suspended. VICE News, retrieved from https://news.vice.com/article/most-of-ubers-bases-in-new-york-city-have-been-suspended

Uber. (2015, July 15). Mayor de Blasio’s proposal will destroy 10,000 jobs [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFQ6ID6lvk


Upton, K. [KateUpton]. (2015, July 22). .@BilldeBlasio Why do you want to return to days when only those in Midtown & Lower Manhattan could get a ride? #UberMovesNYC [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/KateUpton/status/623909706726125568

See What Happens: How a Communications Campaign Saved Uber Billions


Images (in order)

Title Page


Image 1.a


Image 1.b


Image 1.c


Image 2.a


Image 2.b


Image 3.a


Image 3.b

Upton, K. [KateUpton]. (2015, July 22). .@BilldeBlasio Why do you want to return to days when only those in Midtown & Lower Manhattan could get a ride? #UberMovesNYC #Tweet. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/KateUpton/status/62390706726125568

Harris, N.P. [ActuallyNPH]. (2015, July 22). .@BilldeBlasio: 25K new residents use @Uber_NYC each week. How is a fixed # of cars supposed to serve this demand for rides? #UberMovesNYC [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/ActuallyNPH/status/62389793694965760

Kutcher, A. [Aplusk]. (2015, June 29). .@NYCCouncil is considering a bill that threatens to destroy 10,000 NYC job opportunities. @deBlasioNYC, oppose ban on new @Uber_NYC cars. [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/aplusk/status/61568074678661120

Image 4.a