## Recently, I watched the Netflix docuseries *Pepsi, Where's My Jet?*, which is about a student who [found](https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2022/nov/16/pepsi-wheres-my-jet-netflix-documentary-student-who-sued-pepsi-for-jump-jet) a loophole in a '90s Pepsi commercial that would allow him to buy a $23 million harrier jet for just $700,000 worth of "Pepsi points." I won't spoil it, but the story is surprisingly captivating. It got me wondering what other big mistakes companies have made over the years.

## Redditor [u/LeatherFruitPF](https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/13ocrm8/what_are_some_of_the_worst_corporate_blunders_or/) asked, "What are some of the worst corporate blunders or PR disasters in history?"

## Here are 15 of the top responses:

## 1. "Gerald Ratner [the former CEO of the British jewelry company Ratners Group, which is now Signet Jewelers] [calling](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/aug/22/gerald-ratner-jewellery-total-crap-1992-archive) his own company's product 'total crap.' The company’s value fell by millions, and he had to [resign](https://apnews.com/article/d83efb5f3e36d5224d7089238270c48c)."

"Few bits of context — Ratner's chain of shops were aimed at lower class people, offering affordable jewelry and trinkets — it was the place working class boys bought rings for working class girls.

The joke was something like, 'How can we afford to sell [a particular trinket] for 4.95? Because it's total crap!'

Everyone knew it wasn't Tiffany's. Nobody was fooling themselves thinking they were getting crown jewels at Ratners. But having the owner of the company dismiss his own products as worthless, poorly made junk guaranteed no working class boy could ever buy anything for his working class girl from there ever again.

It's one of the most impressive modern failures. He imploded his entire business with one joke."

## 2. "When the singer Susan Boyle [had](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/shortcuts/2012/nov/22/twitter-susan-boyle-susanalbumparty) a new album out [in 2012], they got the hashtag #Susanalbumparty trending to promote it. It was supposed to say 'Susan Album Party,' but instead, we all just saw 'Su's Anal Bum Party.'"

## 3. "In Canada, when the Conservative Party merged with the Reform Party, they [called](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-party-changes-embarrassing-acronym-1.240933) themselves the Canadian Conservative Reform Alliance Party, or as all Canadian comedians realized, 'CCRAP.' It was hilarious for 48 hours before they changed it. Never forget CCRAP."

## 4. "The Microsoft crew [having](https://www.businessinsider.com/microsoft-iphone-funeral-2010-9) a 'funeral' for the iPhone and the Blackberry outside of their headquarters to celebrate that amazing Windows phone."

## 5. "DiGiorno [trying](https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/ryanhatesthis/digiorno-whyistayed-you-had-pizza) to make the hashtag #WhyIStayed [which was used by survivors of domestic violence to bring awareness to reasons people stay in abusive relationships] be about making pizza at home."

## 6. "Can't believe the Hoover free flights promotion from the early '90s hasn't come up yet. They [offered](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/great-financial-disasters-of-our-time-the-hoover-fiasco-1171711.html) a pair of return flights to America [or Europe] if you spent £100 or more on their stuff. Turned out people thought £100 for a return flight with a free vacuum cleaner was a hell of a deal, and it was a disaster that cost the company millions."

## 7. "When [*Game of Thrones*](https://www.buzzfeed.com/karltonjahmal/house-of-the-dragon-full-targaryen-civil-war-history) [botched](https://www.wired.co.uk/article/game-of-thrones-too-dark-to-see) the most anticipated episode of one of the biggest shows in history by making it in borderline pitch black. Then explaining themselves by saying people need better TVs."

[*GOT* cinematographer Fabian Wagner told [Wired](https://www.wired.co.uk/article/game-of-thrones-too-dark-to-see), "A lot of the problem is that a lot of people don't know how to tune their TVs properly. A lot of people also unfortunately watch it on small iPads, which in no way can do justice to a show like that anyway."]

## 8. "[When Pepsi first began selling its products in China, they used the] slogan 'Come Alive with Pepsi,' which was [mistranslated](https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelzakkour/2014/10/02/chinas-national-day-golden-week-a-good-time-to-make-sure-you-dont-bite-the-wax-tadpole/?sh=1eef1530560f) in Chinese as 'Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the dead.'"

## 9. "When the US Army [tweeted](https://www.npr.org/2019/05/27/727254720/a-u-s-army-tweet-asking-how-has-serving-impacted-you-got-an-agonizing-response), 'How has serving impacted you?' [and many service members and veterans in their replies shared their experiences with trauma, mental health issues, and assault]."

## 10. "Have you heard of the [Osborne Effect](https://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia/term/osborne-effect)? In 1981, the Osborne Computer Corporation [had](https://medium.com/strixus/the-osborne-effect-why-the-timing-of-your-new-product-announcement-is-essential-to-its-success-74717d0c1ca) one of the first home computers on the market. It sounded fantastic and everything. At the launch, the CEO said the next version will be so much better... So, everyone decided, 'Why buy this version if the next version will be better? We'll wait for V2.' So V1 sold terribly, the company folded, and there was no V2."

## 11. "Blackberry [thinking](https://www.forbes.com/sites/parmyolson/2015/05/26/blackberry-iphone-book/?sh=5919d66b63c9) that they are the top in the mobile market so they didn't need to innovate to compete with those new iPhone things from Apple."

## 12. "Target's expansion into Canada [in 2012]. [Collapsed](https://archive.canadianbusiness.com/the-last-days-of-target-canada/) in two years and cost $7 billion."

"I still remember how annoyed my town was when our Zellers (what Canada had before Target) was closed down because Target was rolling into Canada. In the time it took for them to renovate the two-story mall location and convert it to a Target, THEY PULLED OUT OF CANADA. So, for about a year, we lost our only Zellers location, and we didn't even get a chance to experience it as a Target because they went tits up before it had a chance to open."

## 13. "Sears dominated the mail order industry for over a century with their catalog. In 1993, they decided that mail order was on the decline and [discontinued](https://www.nytimes.com/1993/01/26/business/sears-eliminating-its-catalogues-and-50000-jobs.html) the catalog. Less than a year later, Jeff Bezos [founded](https://www.businessinsider.com/jeff-bezos-amazon-history-facts-2017-4) Amazon."

"It's even worse than that. Sears had a stake in an [internet access company](https://www.nytimes.com/1996/02/22/business/sears-moves-to-shed-stake-in-prodigy.html) (Prodigy) and their own [credit card](https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-04-25-fi-12317-story.html) (Discover). They had everything they needed to dominate online shopping."

## 14. "The BP Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion was pretty bad on many levels. One of the [largest environmental disasters](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/gulf-oil-spill-exxon-valdez_n_591840) in history."

"Wasn't this the one with BP's CEO going on camera and [saying](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/bp-ceo-tony-hayward-video_n_595906), 'I'd like my life back' that made this 1,000 times worse?"

—[u/IAmDan2311](https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/13ocrm8/comment/jl3z3uj/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web2x&context=3)

## 15. And finally: "When [U2](https://www.buzzfeed.com/briangalindo/things-that-happened-in-2014) [made](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/free-u2-album-how-the-most-generous-giveaway-in-music-history-turned-into-a-pr-disaster-9745028.html) us all have their album on our iPods [and iPhones]."

[Consumers were so irritated with the automatically downloaded music that Apple [had](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/free-u2-album-how-the-most-generous-giveaway-in-music-history-turned-into-a-pr-disaster-9745028.html) to release a special tool and instructions to help them get it off their iTunes accounts.]