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Emotional Brand Attachment: Marketing Strategies for Successful Generation

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EMOTIONAL BRAND ATTACHMENT: MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL GENERATION

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Abstract

Modern society is structured around consumption. The climate of the current consumer culture is one of intense competition. In order to differentiate their brands and products, companies are beginning to focus on differentiating their brands on the basis of distinctive emotional, rather than functional, characteristics. Emotional brand attachment is defined as the bond that connects a consumer with a specific brand by involving feelings of affection, passion, and connection. When established, emotional brand attachment is a powerful tool for building brand equity and influencing the purchasing decisions of consumers. This paper explores the marketing tactics utilized by Dove brand and Nike, Inc. Although the means were different, both companies successfully generated emotional brand attachment between their products and modern consumers.

Chapter I:
INTRODUCTION
Consumer Culture: An Evolution

The current consumer culture in America is a direct reflection of an intricate

series of historical events. The chronological ebbs and flows of the economy have

resulted in the inextricable connection between consumption and modern society. The

Industrial Revolution was a catalyst that began to irreversibly change the cultural

landscape of the country. Prior to this period, lifestyle and consumption were dictated by

natural scarcity and unquestioned social tradition (Williams, 1982). People consumed

within the realm of what they produced for their families. During this time, innovations

in industries with textiles, steam power, iron smelting, among others led to industrial

advancement and economic progress. As the epicenters of commerce and society began

shifting towards the cities, traditional agrarian lifestyles became increasingly

marginalized. The creation of industrial complexes necessitated manpower and thus

began the exodus from the countryside to the urban centers. Both economically and

socially, Americans were entering uncharted territories.

The mass migration towards the cities meant a new way of life. Many

traditionally held values became erroneous accompanying set of new morals and ideals to

align with these new lifestyles. Life no longer revolved around the family as a unit and a

new sense of individualism was born. Independence and individuality came to define the

Industrial Revolution as a movement. People working in factories enjoyed greater

economic freedom and thus greater individuality. No longer were roles and schemas

inherited; individuals had the capacity to reinvent and redefine their identities. With

individualism came the ability to make choices and decisions about their lives; for the

first time in history, individuals had the facilities to make choices about their

consumption.

Industrialization marked the beginning of the modernization that continued

throughout the twentieth century. Modernization fostered individuality while

simultaneously consolidating "a new 'national character' keyed to the exigencies of

expanding capitalism" (Ewen, 1976, p. 190). Industrialization provided the framework

upon which the nation could build a sustainable and booming economy. The advent of

the assembly line that was implemented and perfected by Ford Motor Company

irrevocably altered the face of industry. Never before had such mass production been

possible. Production speed increased while necessary manpower decreased. Decreased

costs of production were carried over to the consumer, allowing the price of an

automobile to drop substantially. Greater affordability made automobiles attainable to an

entirely new segment of the market. The assembly line gave rise to an interesting

paradox. Those that worked on the assembly lines were subject to limited freedom and

monotony while consumers were able to enjoy varied choices. More than ever before

were individuals encouraged to partake in the new wave of consumption:

> Just as rural populations were indoctrinated in the nineteenth century into
> industrial labour, the production sector, the masses are socialized in the
> twentieth century into the consumption sector. In consumer society,
> consumption has replaced production as the central mode of social
> behavior. Consumption is a mode of being, a way of gaining identity,
> meaning and prestige in contemporary society. (Sarup, 1996, p. 107)

Consumption allowed individuals to carefully mold their identities through their

purchasing decisions, a mode of expression that was not feasible prior to the Industrial

Revolution. The rise of consumerism created a new market in which advertising found a natural home. Companies aimed to strategically seize the consciousness of these new consumers. They hoped to cajole consumers into incorporating their product into the customers' personal identity. Commercial propaganda did not act as the determinant of change, but in many ways as a reflection and agent of transformation (Ewen, 1976).

The initial bubble facilitated by the formation of American industry met its demise on October 29, 1929 when the Stock Market crashed. During this period, the extravagance and liberalism that characterized the pre-crash period came to an abrupt and screeching halt. Frugality and thriftiness replaced opulence and luxury. The national mentality, particularly in the middle and lower classes, was one of unity in hardship (Ewen, 1976). Scarcity perpetuated this notion of solidarity; people found solace in the fact that their neighbors were also struggling to get by.

Eventually, with the help of Roosevelt's New Deal, the American Economy corrected itself and consumerism regained its place in 1950s society. The communal struggle felt during the Depression gave way to an intensified desire to consume. The culture of the fifties reiterated the notion of class delineated by those who could and those who could not buy their way to happiness (Ewen, 1976). Increasing population migrations further heightened this newfound sense of competition. During the Industrial Revolution, individuals flocked to the cities; from 1950 to 1960, "14 out of the 15 cities with more than a million inhabitants actually decreased in size while the suburbs blossomed at astonishing speeds" (Whiteley, 1987, p. 6). Possessions such as a house or car communicate both an individuals' place in society and their desired public persona.

Ford's Model T, the lauded product of the assembly line, began to represent cheapness. The fact that it was obtainable by the masses, originally its main selling point, made it less desirable to the 1950s consumer. A car quickly became a prestige commodity to possess with pride, rather than just a service to use (Whiteley, 1987). Concurrently, there was an explosion of products onto the market that indicated the resurgence of a disposable income. The latest radio, television, or vacuum cleaner became a clear indicator of economic and social superiority. Conspicuous consumption became a dominating force within society. People acquired goods primarily to attain, maintain, or feign membership to a particular rung on the social ladder.

Following a period of economic strain, Ronald Reagan came into people's homes and told them that it was "morning again in America." In his 1984 campaign video, Reagan promised the American people they had entered a stage of renewal. Unemployment was at an all-time low and it was time for people to become active participants in the economy once again. The concurrency of this neo-liberal renaissance and the crumbling of Marxist regimes in the east and west caused consumerism to be framed in a unique way. Consumer culture was seen in terms of the freedoms of the market and therefore as the facilitator of both individual freedom and economic progress (Slater, 1997). By 1985, Americans had hit their stride once again. The same year, Madonna's single "Material Girl" was released in which she aptly states Americans were "living in a material world." Americans found themselves engaging in the greatest spending spree since the boom that followed World War II, causing journalist Tom Wolfe to refer to Americans in the 1980s as "the splurge generation." Shopping quickly became

the favorite leisure activity of many Americans. In his *The Malling of America* (1985),

William Severini Kowinski described the American mall as a cathedral of the postwar

culture, likening it to the modern equivalent of the Garden of Eden. Consumerism was at

the core of the smoothly expanding prosperity that characterized this period. It acted

simultaneously as an engine of growth and as a reward. Consumption was the preeminent

tool for managing economic and political stability while concurrently perpetuating

prosperity (Slater, 1997).

It is essential to understand the historical progression of consumerism in order to

fully comprehend the intricacies of the current consumer culture. Over time, the role of

consumerism in society has fluctuated greatly, but its presence or absence has

undoubtedly carried society through each decade and influenced the formation of both

collective and individual identities. One's self-concept is inextricably linked to

consumption choices and patterns:

> The Empirical Self of each of us is all that he is tempted to call ... me. But
> it is clear that between what a man calls me and what he simply calls mine
> the line is difficult to draw. We feel and act about certain things that are
> ours very much as we feel and act about ourselves. ... In its widest
> possible sense, however, a man's Self is the sum total of what he can call
> his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his
> house, ... his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and
> bank account. (James 1890, p. 279-80)

Modern consumers are aware that their consumption choices reflect outwardly on their

persona. Items become an extension of who they are. Clothes, home, furnishings and

other activities are read and classified in terms of the presence and absence of taste

(Featherstone, 1987).

Understanding the world of goods and their structuation is essential to comprehension of contemporary society (Featherstone, 1987). This requires an understanding of the relationship between commodities and the economy on two different levels. There is the cultural dimension of the economy in which goods value extends beyond the material, creating symbols that communicates a message. Simultaneously, there is an economy of cultural goods in which market principles operate within the spheres of lifestyle and commodities (Featherstone, 1987). Modern advertisers and marketers generally cater to the cultural dimension of the economy:

> It is increasingly expected that consumer goods shall be distributed principally according to their symbolic value. They are more 'services' and 'symbols' characterized by brands than 'utility values' or bare exchange values; they are most valuable with a capacity to satisfy the potential user's evaluated 'symbolic needs' and even desires; they are most desired when they give a promise of joy, happiness and pleasure. (Ahponen, 1990, p. 347)

Now, lifestyle and identity are carefully crafted reflections of the choices made by the consumer. The consumption and subsequent display of consumer goods and experiences greatly exceeded conceptions of exchange-values and calculations (Featherstone, 1987). The true value of an item cannot be measured by its utility because much of its value is derived from intangible sources. Consequently, the importance of products and consumption activities exponentially increases. Consumption becomes the channel through which individuals can develop (or in actuality, purchase) their selves (Ahponen, 1990).

Ultimately, freedom of the consumer acts as the crucial link that lends purposeful rationality to the system. Companies understand that individuals have free will and can

choose to consume or not to consume their product. It is the job of a brand to make themselves attractive to the consumer and make consumers want to incorporate the brand into their personal definition of the self. In order to successfully do this, companies employ a wide array of psychological tactics to develop brand resonance and have consumers establish lasting and meaningful relationships with their products.

Chapter II:
CORPORATE BRANDING
Distinguishing Oneself from the Pack

The conceptualization of a brand signifies much more than its name. A brand embodies an entire set of physical and socio-psychological attributes and beliefs (Simoes & Dibb, 2001). The amalgamation of these psychological associations with a brand influences a consumer's purchasing decisions. Because of this, it is vital for organizations to establish a strong brand identity. However, before a company can begin to appeal to consumers, they must establish a clear mission.

The mission of a company is defined as the purpose of a company or organization. The mission statement is synonymous with the vision. It should direct the actions of the organization, state its overall goal, and guide decision-making. There must be internal consistency of what the company considers to be its vision. Corporate branding requires a holistic approach in which all members of the organization unite behind a single vision of what the brand identity should be (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). According to the International Corporate Identity Group, corporate identity is defined as an organization's ethos, aims and values that create a sense of individuality and differentiates a brand (van Riel & Balmer, 1997). Building off of previous research pertaining to the importance of brand identity, de Chernatony (1999) formulated a model for narrowing the gap between a brand's identity and its reputation. Brand identity is composed of six distinct but interrelated elements: brand vision and culture, positioning, personality, relationships, presentation, and reputation. In order to align a brand's identity with its reputation in a favorable way, members of the organization must carefully

manage each element in order to ensure congruence.

Brand vision and culture

At the core of a brand identity are the brand vision and culture. Vision defines the

company's permeating purpose and values. The vision should be clearly manifested at

every level and in every department of an organization. It is the overarching force that

guides all decision-making. The vision needs to be clearly communicated to all

employees in order to ensure that a consistent message is conveyed to the public. Culture

encompasses the values and attitudes of all employees. Because of this, managers need to

be attentive to the organizational culture in order to ensure the culture is in alignment

with the brand's values. Inconsistencies can weaken the public appearance of an

organization. Corporate culture can act as a source of strength for an organization. A

strong, healthy corporate culture reflects well on the brand as a whole, making people

more inclined to consume.

Positioning

A brand's positioning determines what the brand is, who it is for, and what it offers

(Rositer & Percy, 1996). Using the brand's core values, marketers can identify a market

niche for the brand and begin utilizing traditional marketing placement strategies.

Positioning is the aggregate perception the market has of a specific organization in

relation to their perceptions of its competitors.

Personality

The personality of a brand stems from its core values and culture. It is further developed

through associations and interactions with consumers. The exchanges between employees

and customers color the personality of a brand for consumers, illustrating the importance of clearly communicating the values of the company to all employees as they will aid in the construction of its public persona. There needs to be internal and external congruence of the brand's personality and the brand's values.

Relationships

As the brand establishes and nurtures its personality, relationships begin to form with consumers. It is these relationships that are vital to the continued success of a brand. As individuals see congruence between their values and the values and personality of the brand, they begin to incorporate the brand into the formation of their own identity. Consumer-brand relationships are reciprocal, evolving to meet the needs of both parties (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001).

Presentation

Presentation is essential in establishing enduring relationships with consumers. Appropriate presentation strategies should reflect the consumers' aspirations and self-images (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). People respond more favorably to brands they consider to be consistent with their self-concept. Brands can act as a tool, helping individuals further define and express themselves to others.

Reputation

Successful brand management can lead to a favorable brand reputation, the ultimate end goal for all organizations. Fombrun and Rindova (1996) define reputation as a collective representation of the brand's past actions and results that describe the brand's ability to deliver desired outcomes to stakeholders. As opposed to its image, which reflects current,

changing attitudes, a brand's reputation is more stable, representing a distillation of images over time (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). The overall reputation of a brand is often a representative indication of performance because it is the amalgamation of all evaluations.

The brand vision is the origin while the reputation is the final output. The goal is to make these two entities congruent. The gap between identity and reputation should be as small as possible (de Chernatony, 1999). As the gap closes, the strength of the brand increases.

Each of these elements plays an important role in the formation and maintenance of the brand strength. Brand building is, however, a reciprocal process. While the brand is engaging in the activities described above, it is concurrently interacting with and adjusting to the consumer. Through advertising appeals and constant reiteration companies attempt to influence consumers into believing a particular conviviality attached to their brand (Balmer & Gray, 2003). This process has been both eased and cluttered thanks to the ubiquity of technology. Television and the Internet allow the modern consumer to be constantly bombarded by different marketing efforts. This pervasiveness has heightened competition between brands while simultaneously decreasing the competitive advantage of a leading brand over other market participants. Because of this, businesses are beginning to focus on differentiating their brands on the basis of distinctive emotional, rather than functional, characteristics (de Chernatony et al., 2001). Establishing an emotional connection with a consumer is central to the continued success of a brand. Brand-consumer connections lead to higher levels of consumer

loyalty, which in turn increases company financial performance, making it the desired goal for all companies (Park et al., 2010).

By choosing to use a particular product, consumers are choosing to incorporate that given brand into their own personal identity. While organizations rely on individuals to buy their products in order to strengthen their reputation and brand, consumers realize that brands are also vital in the construction of their individual identities (Balmer & Gray, 2003). Post-modern society presents individuals with numerous internal conflicts; feelings of fragmentation, powerlessness, and uncertainty pervade individuals as they struggle against commodification (Giddens, 1991). Brands combat these feelings by allowing individuals to define who they are, who they wish to be, and how they wish to be seen. Consumption becomes a method for extracting symbolic meaning that aids in the construction, maintenance, and communication of identity (Elliott, 1998). This notion gives rise to a new framework of consumer choice procedures that focuses on emotional processes rather than cognitive evaluations.

Emotion-Driven Choice

Traditionally, the predominant model for consumer choice was centered on cognitive responses. This framework assumes that cognitive activity is followed by emotional evaluation in the form of an attitude that eventually manifests itself as a behavior (Elliott, 1998). This framework fails to capture the idea that emotional preferences can precede cognition. Mittal's "Affective Choice Mode" (1988) attempts to explain the logic behind emotion-based choice. Expressive products (products with symbolic meaning) require an affective choice mode rather than a traditional information

processing mode. The psycho-social nature of the product makes an affective choice mode more likely which suppresses information processing (Mittal, 1988). Rather than separating out individual attributes of the product, consumers form an overall impression (Elliott, 1998). These emotional rulings are the result of snap judgments, reflecting basic subjective feelings that lack a specific verbal description. Because of this, emotion relies more heavily on non-verbal channels of communication (Elliott, 1998).

One facet of the conceptualization of emotion that is often overlooked is the fact that it is often more of a social than an individual phenomenon. Interpersonal communication theory suggests that emotion is actively constructed simultaneously with encounters between people. This indicates that emotion does not occur in a vacuum; it is colored by real-time interactions with people. This makes emotions more than simply internal events but communicative acts addressed to specific audiences. Emotions are partly defined according to a set of conventional cultural representations (Elliott, 1998). The social constructionist theory of emotions views emotions as more than just a response to the natural features of a situation but as the sociocultural constructions serving a specific social function (Elliott, 1998). In effect, the self is a symbolic project that the individual creates by selecting symbolic materials to construct a narrative of self-identity. This evolution of the individual self-identity is intertwined with the simultaneously evolving collective social-identity (Elliott, 1998). These entities are mutually reinforcing, each providing further support for the other. Self-identity receives the validation it seeks through different social interactions. Artifacts of symbols from

one's self-identity found embedded in collective social practices reinforce a feeling of belonging and collectivity.

When driven by emotion, the process of choice is non-linear in that choices are made in a holistic manner, rather than with careful cognitive consideration. Once made, these snap judgments tend to drive out rational evidence as emotional responses overpower objective evidence and guide behavior and future choices. The concept that snap judgments can overwhelm thoughtful choice reemphasizes the importance of careful brand management. Companies are in constant battle for attracting new segments of the market while still retaining existing customers. By adopting a more strategic approach to branding, organizations can ensure they retain a competitive edge while coping with constantly fluctuating market and environmental forces (Simoes & Dibb, 2001). In order to remain competitive, businesses must produce unique offerings to differentiate them from their competitors.

The means for achieving this competitive advantage often boils down to the incorporation of basic psychological principles. It is the feelings generated by a brand that have the potential to strongly differentiate it from its competitors. This fact gains increasing importance as consumers only become emotionally attached to a limited number of brands (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). This limited number of potential attachments in individuals makes emotional brand attachment the ultimate goal of all marketing.

In psychology, attachment is an emotionally weighted link between a person and an object (Bowlby, 1979). In a marketing context, emotionally charged relationships can

occur between a person and a particular brand. Thus, emotional brand attachment is defined as the bond that connects a consumer with a specific brand by involving feelings of affection, passion, and connection (Malär et al., 2011). Emotional brand attachment is mediated by three forces: product involvement, self-esteem, and public self-consciousness.

Product Involvement

The degree of product involvement for consumers has proven relevant to the success of various marketing campaigns (Malär *et al.,* 2011). A consumer's level of involvement with a product is proportionate to the degree to which he or she perceives it as personally relevant (Celsi & Olson, 1988). The more a product engages and interests a consumer, the greater his or her involvement. When a product engages a consumer, memories and emotions are aroused that facilitate greater brand salience. Because of this, product involvement is perceived by the consumer, rather than being inherent in the item itself; involvement resides within the individual but is awakened by the product (Malär *et al.,* 2011).

Self-esteem

Self-esteem refers to a person's overall evaluation of worth as a human being (Rosenberg, 1979). Generally, self-esteem is conceptualized as a one-dimensional construct, falling high or low on a single spectrum. People with high self-esteem value and accept themselves for better or for worse. Those with low self-esteem, however, hold an unfavorable view of themselves. People are more inclined to engage in behaviors that

raise self esteem. One manner of enhancing self-esteem is through consuming brands that are congruent with the self-view (Malär *et al.,* 2011).

Public Self-Consciousness

Public self-consciousness can either be conceptualized as the awareness of the self as a social pawn or the awareness that others are aware of the self (Malär *et al.,* 2011). People with high public self-consciousness are hyper-aware of how they are perceived by others and make a concerted effort to construct a favorable public image (Scheier, 1980). This ties into their consumption choices. Products consumed become integrated into the self-concept. People who are publically self-conscious are particularly cognizant of how their consumption choices reflect who they are and how these choices are projected outwardly.

Companies must be mindful of the degree to which their products engage or fail to engage these elements. Successfully connecting to the consumer through product involvement, self-esteem, and public self-consciousness generates emotional brand attachment. Emotional brand attachment creates a unique relationship between product and consumer, leading to an increased likelihood of future purchases.

Chapter III:
IDEAL VERSUS REAL
Marketing to the Self

One of the first questions marketers must ask when designing a new marketing campaign is what part of the consumer's psyche they are trying to appeal to. They must decide whether they want to target the consumer's ideal self (aspirational) or real self (actual). Many marketing programs aim at capturing the ideal self. Some consumers prefer to purchase products that do not align with their reality, but rather with their aspirations. But in modern society, there appears to be a general shift in the direction of authenticity. Consumers are now looking for authenticity and reality in marketing messages (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Individuals are beginning to place greater value on their actual self rather than their aspirational self.

The goal of most marketing appeals is to facilitate self-congruence for the consumer. Self-congruence is achieved when the consumer's self and the brand's personality or image match (Aaker, 1999). Research suggests that successful self-congruence can enhance "affective attitudinal, and behavioral consumer responses to a brand" (Malär et al., 2011). Self-congruence plays an especially important role in emotional brand attachment because of the close relationship between self-congruence and the self-concept. Because of current trends, alignment with the actual self is becoming the goal for many marketers.

The importance of self-congruence can be explained by cognitive-constancy theories. Cognitive-constancy theories suggest that people strive to achieve consistency between their beliefs and their actions (Festinger, 1954). When these two entities do not

align, cognitive dissonance arises, producing feelings of tension and unpleasantness. In order to avoid this, people tend to act in predictable ways that support their current set of beliefs. In this context, it means purchasing and using brands with personalities that match their own (Malär et al., 2011). Partaking in this kind of consumption reinforces the self-concept. Feelings of personal connection to the brand grow increasingly prominent the more the brand reflects an individual's self-concept. Two specific types of cognitive constancy theories, self-expansion theory and self-verification theory, can provide a powerful foundation for attachment.

Self-expansion theory proposes that people have an inherent inclination to incorporate other people into their conception of the self (Aron et al., 2005). In this case, brands fill the role of another individual. By expanding the self through the incorporation of brands, individuals begin to foster an emotional attachment. The more a person identifies with a brand and believes that it reflects who they are, the stronger the emotional bond becomes.

Self-verification theory provides a different angle on the concepts suggested by self-expansion theory. While self-expansion theory implies that individuals incorporate brands into their concept of the self, self-verification theory states that people seek out brands that verify, validate, and perpetuate the self-concepts that they hold (Swann, 1983). One method of achieving this is by consuming products that market themselves in a manner that appears to match one's own self-concept. People gravitate toward products and experiences that affirm their sense of self and avoid those that might threaten it (Malär et al., 2011).

Cognitive constancy theories, specifically self-expansion theory and self-verification theory act in concert, urging consumers to buy products that align with their self-concept. This positively reinforces the consumer by facilitating the formation of greater emotional brand attachment. Research indicates that feelings of congruence with the actual self, rather than the ideal self, generates higher levels of emotional brand attachment. The success of this school of thought was illustrated in Dove's "Campaign for Real Beauty."

Dove: Campaign for Emotional Attachment

Unilever is a multinational corporation and the leading manufacturer of household products worldwide. With strong sales in Asia, Africa, North America, the Middle East, Western Europe, and Latin America, Unilever is a pervasive force with products reaching every corner of the globe. The company is comprised of global brands such as Calvin Klein, Lipton, and Dove. In 2003, the company began a concerted effort to slim down its product portfolio, in order to streamline marketing efforts and focus on a smaller number of global brands (MarketResearch.com, 2004).

Dove is Unilever's largest personal care brand. Dove's origin can be traced back to World War II, where it was developed and marketed as a non-irritating skin cleaner for pre-treatment of burns and wounds. Over time, its brand positioning evolved from a product attribute (mildness) to a psychological positioning (authenticity) by the 1990s, when Unilever diversified the brand, introducing Dove shampoos, moisturizers, deodorants and body washes (MarketResearch.com, 2004).

In 2001, Silvia Lagnado took the reins as Dove's global brand director. At this point in time, the Dove sales were growing 20% annually – primarily due to expansion in new Asian markets (Wasserman, 2005). Rather than rest on the existing trajectory of growth, Lagnado recognized that it was an opportune time to push the brand further. Teaming with international advertising, marketing and public relations agency Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide, Dove launched the "Campaign for Real Beauty." The campaign featured a collection of women of all shapes and sizes posing in their underwear. The hope was to include a sample of women that reflected the majority, rather than the minority. The campaign, released globally in early 2004, aimed to celebrate the natural physical variation embodied by all women and inspire them to have the confidence with their bodies. It emphasized a type of beauty that is often overlooked, rather than unrealistic and unrepresentative ideals often used by the media. Almost immediately, Dove sales rose by double digits in the countries that ran it (Wasserman, 2005), indicating that the "Campaign for Real Beauty" contained a message that resonated with consumers.

A defining characteristic of the Campaign for Real Beauty was that it appealed to a different part of the psyche. Dove decided to take a risk by boldly appealing to the actual self. The models featured in the campaign more closely corresponded to the way women actually see themselves, rather than how they dream to look one day. The approach struck a chord with many consumers, causing them to form a strong emotional connection with the brand (Malär et al., 2011). The resonance of the campaign illustrates the growing importance of the actual self in marketing.

Much of the success of the campaign can be attributed to Dove's calculated incorporation of the elements of that foster emotional brand attachment. The feelings of attraction to the "Campaign for Real Beauty" were further amplified because product involvement, self-esteem, and public self-consciousness, described above, were high.

In Dove's "Campaign for Real Beauty," product involvement was deliberately designed to be high. The American version of the campaign included many technological and media-centered elements to encourage participation from the public. Almost as soon as the campaign entered the U.S., marketers incorporated new-media factors to the campaign such as real-time voting via cell phones and live tabulation on electronic billboards in public areas (Rothenberg, 2007). Dove's internet campaign was critical because it created a dialogue with consumers rather than approaching the public in a pedantic manner. Dialogue raises product involvement and enfranchises consumers. Individuals then view the product as personally relevant and engaging; consumers saw Dove as a brand that they could connect to.

Ultimately, the "Campaign for Real Beauty" specifically catered to enhancing self-esteem. Dove utilized models that were not models at all. By featuring women that more closely resembled a best friend or neighbor rather than the woman on the cover of a magazine, Dove was highlighting the fact that beauty has many different faces. It showed women that beauty has many difference faces and definitions, a notion often sidelined by the rigid structure of modern beauty conceptions. Self-esteem can be enhanced through consuming products that agree with the individual's self-view. The message encased in Dove's campaign was one of self-love and acceptance – something that resonates with

women worldwide. Because of this, it is no surprise that the campaign enjoyed such an immediate and favorable response.

The concept of public self-consciousness was also factored into Dove's campaign. People with high public self-consciousness are sensitive to the perceptions of others and thus, are careful in the construction of their public image. Consumption choices reflect on the individual. Those that chose to support the "Campaign for Real Beauty" demonstrated their support for the concept of inner beauty, a notion endorsed by many.

In this campaign, Dove seized an opportunity to participate in an important international debate concerning beauty. They did much more than market in a conventional sense by entering the realm of social advocacy. Dove made a very public effort to change the status quo and offered a broader, healthier, and more democratic view of beauty in its place (Neff, 2004). Their methods and means for achieving this were strategic and purposeful. They utilized basic theories of cognitive constancy in order to foster feelings of emotional brand attachment. The emotional brand attachment felt by consumers was reflected in Dove's financial success following the campaign's release.

Chapter IV:
CELEBRITY ENDORSERS
Attachment through Endorsement

Celebrity endorsement is another popular channel utilized by marketers for

fostering emotional brand attachment. Endorsement is conceptualized as a type of brand

communication in which a celebrity acts as the spokesperson for the brand, certifying the

claims and positions of the company by lending his or her personality, popularity, stature

in society, or expertise in the field to the brand (Roll, n.d.). Many brands try to capitalize

on this association; about 20 percent of advertisements in the United States feature

celebrities, a 10 percent jump from a decade ago (Story, 2006). This trend will

undoubtedly continue as the public's fascination with celebrities appears to remain

insatiable.

In the current consumer climate, where the market is cluttered by a proliferation

of brands and choices, celebrity endorsement can provide a method of differentiation for

a company. Celebrity endorsements act as an external cue, simultaneously garnering

attention and penetrating commercial clutter (Miciak & Shanklin, 1994). In general,

celebrities create positive feelings towards a brand, connect the user to the brand, and are

perceived as more entertaining (Madan, 2011). Distinguishing a brand from other market

participants provides a competitive advantage and aids in the formation of greater brand

equity. Brand building is positively correlated with beneficial effects on brand

preferences, brand attitude, brand associations, and purchasing decisions of consumers

(Madan, 2011). Celebrities play integral roles in these activities. Brands that carefully

select celebrity endorsers stand to make significant financial gains through the power of association.

The overarching goal that marketers hope to achieve through their use of celebrity endorsers is meaning transfer. The hope is that the positive feelings associated with the individual will be transferred over to the brand and product being endorsed (Amos et al., 2008). Meaning transfer is accomplished by utilizing the associative network model of memory.

The most prevalent conceptualization of memory is that it is composed of an associative network (Martindale, 1991). This model suggests that the brain is made up of a set of processing units and a pattern of connectivity among them. A stable learning rule implies that the patterns of connectivity can be modified based on new experiences. Within this structure, brands and celebrities represent the different processing units. Associative links are formed between them; associative learning provides a mechanism by which links between a brand and a celebrity can be built (Till, 1998). Consistent pairing of the two stimuli establishes and strengthens the association.

Generally, it is easier to establish associative links when the two stimuli are similar or cognitively related in some way. This underscores another important factor for selecting a celebrity spokesperson: there needs to be congruence between the endorser and the product being endorsed. When there is a perceived "fit" between the brand and celebrity, there is a greater likelihood an associative link will take root (Till, 1998). Much of the success of this model rests on the assumed credibility of the celebrity. For a brand-celebrity collaboration to thrive, the personal credibility of the individual is crucial.

Credibility is defined as the celebrity's assumed expertise and trustworthiness (Roll, n.d.). The source credibility model asserts that effectiveness of an endorsement depends on the degree of expertise and trustworthiness of the source (Parulekar & Raheja, 2006). The supposed credibility is a function of the perceived referent and expert power. In their discussion of power bases, French and Raven (1959) describe the five different sources from which an individual can derive power. According to French and Raven, referent power derives from an individual having an overall likability, causing people to strongly identify with them. A person with this type of power generally improves the self-esteem of those around them, translating into a high degree of influence. Another power base described in French and Raven's model is expert power. Expert power is derived from an individual's ability to disseminate information, knowledge or expertise. Unlike referent power, their authority is based off of tangible proficiencies. Because these two power bases originate from different sources, they provide a more complete foundation when coupled together. Celebrity endorsers often possess both referent and expert power. It is the combination of these two forces that cause them to be a powerfully influential force.

Nike: The Endorsement King

No corporation has been able to cash in on the endorser-brand associative link like Nike. Nike, originally known as Blue Ribbon Sports, had humble beginnings. University of Oregon track athlete Philip Knight and his coach Bill Bowerman began selling shoes out of a garage in 1964. In 1971, the pair enlisted the help of graphic designer Carolyn Davidson who for the sum of $35 created the famed "swoosh" design. In the 1980s, Nike adopted the "Just Do It" slogan which solidified its public persona.

The company was founded on the principle that "if you have a body, you are an athlete" (http://nikeinc.com/pages/about-nike-inc). The mission was to develop innovative products that help athletes of every level of ability reach their potential. The message is clear was and the product is good, but what continues to differentiate Nike is its adroit use of spokespeople.

Nike has consistently enlisted athletes who are the best in their field at the peak of their success. Nike has secured the celebrity endorsement of athletic giants such as Andre Agassi, Pete Sampras, Lance Armstrong, Wayne Gretzky, Bo Jackson, LeBron James and Cristiano Ronaldo. Perhaps the two most notable endorsement contracts for Nike, and the market as a whole, have been Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods.

Michael Jordan

In 1984, Nike signed Michael Jordan, the rookie star hailing from the University of North Carolina. Over the course of his career, Jordan has distinguished himself as what many consider to be the greatest basketball player to ever live. Fellow player Magic Johnson famously proclaimed: "There's Michael Jordan and then there is the rest of us." Throughout the course of his 19-year career, the legend of Jordan grew and Nike remained tightly secured to his side. Jordan became embedded in the brand and Nike became synonymous with Jordan.

Jordan came to embody a particular set of associations. His legendary slam dunk seemed to defy gravity, earning him designations such as "Rare Air." These ideas all played a key role in the formation of his deity-like persona. In 1985, Jordan released his own line of shoes called Air Jordans, athletic shoes intended to cash in on this flying

mythology (Andrews, 2001). To market the new line, Nike took a risk by teaming with the unconventional advertising agency Wieden & Kennedy. The agency hired an edgy young filmmaker named Spike Lee to shoot the commercials they conceived for Jordan. The campaign featured the simple catchphrase: "It's gotta be the shoes!" With this commercial, Nike began to form the associative link between Nike shoes and Jordan (more specifically, his skill). The Air Jordan brand sold nearly $130 million in its debut year. These numbers are among the highest of any debut brand in the history of athletic merchandise. By 1990, Jordan products were generating about $200 million annually for Nike (Johnson, 1998).

Obviously, the value Jordan added to Nike greatly exceeds sneaker and apparel sales. A former company executive describes Jordan as the true embodiment of Nike's image (Johnson, 1998). Jordan's impact on Nike's overall image, and thus on consumers' perceptions of their products, is incalculable.

The Nike-Jordan nexus is a textbook example of successful meaning transfer. Nike was deliberate and calculating in their use of Jordan to build their brand. Successful brand-celebrity collaboration depends heavily on the perceived compatibility of the brand and celebrity in terms of identity and personality (Roll, n.d.). Nike's mission was centered on all athletes reaching their potential. Jordan became the benchmark of what reaching one's potential could look like. He was success personified. Because of this, Nike and Jordan were a perfect pairing. Cognitively, it was easy for the public to link the two. This link was solidified through consistent exposure. Jordan remained an endorser for Nike for the duration of his career, and the Jordan Brand remains a subsidiary of

Nike. The meaning transfer was also facilitated through the credibility of the source.

Jordan was the real deal. His athletic prowess lent him both referent and expert power.

These elements translated into greater brand equity. Proof of longevity and strength of

the meaning transfer is illustrated in the fact that Jordan shoes remain at the top of

bestselling lists, despite the fact that Jordan has been out of the game for numerous years.

The legend lives on, and Nike continues to benefit because the association lives on as

well.

Tiger Woods

Nike executed a similar coup in the sports industry when it joined forces with the

ace golfer Tiger Woods (Roll, n.d.). In August 1996, Woods formalized his entrance to

the PGA Tour with his famed "Hello world" announcement. Tiger Woods signed a

$40 million endorsement deal with Nike. This was at the inception of Woods' career;

since then, his achievements have garnered him the title of the best golfer alive. He

boasts 14 major golf championships and 71 PGA Tour events, more than any other active

golfer.

Nike used Woods as the vehicle to carry them into the golf arena. Upon signing

Woods, Nike introduced an entire repertoire of golf products including apparel,

equipment and accessories. Golf is a notoriously hermetic industry, dominated by a

handful of brands with the advantage of years of tradition and thus, a fiercely loyal

customer base (Park, 2007). It was generally thought that Nike would have trouble

breaking into such an established market (Roll, n.d.). This probably would have been the

case had Nike chosen the traditional path to building its equity in the golfing sphere. But

Nike intelligently secured the world's up-and-coming golf phenom to endorse their brand. In 2000, Tiger signed a five-year, $105 million contract extension with Nike. At the time, it was the largest endorsing deal ever signed by an athlete. Woods' endorsement has been attributed with taking the Nike Golf brand from a "start-up" golf company to one of the premier golf apparel brands in the world.

The Nike-Woods pairing also illustrates one of the potential dangers of celebrity endorsement. The benefits of the meaning transfer associated with endorsement contracts can be immediately and permanently reversed if the celebrity suddenly changes his or her image, drops in popularity, entangles him or herself in a situation of moral turpitude, loses credibility through over-endorsement, or begins to overshadow the products he or she endorses (Madan, 2011). In the case of Tiger Woods, his character came into question following allegations of marital infidelity in November 2009. As the claims proved true and more and more women came forward with similar accusations, Woods found himself in a dire situation. He rapidly fell out of the public's favor as many questioned his moral fiber. Several companies began reconsidering their endorsement deals. His referent power base was effectively wiped out, as people lost respect for him as an individual. Because his persona is so inextricably linked to the Nike brand, there was much speculation over how the company would treat the recent developments. Eventually, Nike made their position known. In a public statement, Nike spokeswoman Beth Gast asserted: "He is the best golfer in the world and one of the greatest athletes of his era. We look forward to his return to golf. He and his family have Nike's full support" (Hoult, 2009). Nike treated the situation by highlighting the qualities that originally

facilitated the link between Nike and Woods: athletic greatness. Underscoring the elemental greatness of Woods as a player, Nike hoped to remind people where their emotional brand attachment originated.

The underlying process that continues to connect consumers to Nike products is emotional brand attachment. Emotional brand attachment is measured by the degree to which a brand mediates product involvement, self-esteem, and public self-consciousness. Product involvement can be simply conceptualized as the degree to which a consumer views a product or brand as personally relevant. The use of celebrity endorsement, specifically Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods, makes people feel closer to their idols. Cognitively, the act of consuming products endorsed by celebrities makes individuals feel more attached to the celebrity and in turn, the brand (Madan, 2011). The measure of emotional brand attachment is the product's effect on the self-esteem of the consumer. Self-esteem refers to the evaluation of worth of the individual. People tend to engage in activities that raise their self-esteem. In this case, consuming products endorsed by a favorite athlete acted as a means of reinforcing the self-esteem. The positioning of the product made individuals feel more capable when using products endorsed by figures like Jordan and Woods. The "gotta be the shoes" advertisement described above effectively attributed Jordan's athletic achievement in part to the shoes he was wearing (obviously, his Air Jordans). The subtext of the ad suggested that consumers could experience similar success were they to wear Air Jordans. The final element of emotional brand attachment lies in the level of public-self consciousness of the consumer. Public self-consciousness plays an important role in the emotional brand attachment felt by consumers to Nike.

Jordan's endorsement deal with Nike changed the landscape of professional sports. The way that Nike marketed and packaged their products using Jordan was unprecedented. People who previously did not care about basketball or watch professional sports suddenly had to have a pair of Air Jordans. It became a cultural phenomenon. Jordans became a status symbol within society, even causing reason for theft. Multiple cases were reported of individuals having the shoes literally stolen off their feet (Kappstatter, 2011).

The use of endorsers does, however, needs to be executed in a careful and calculated manner. Nike has experienced such a large degree of success because they choose their endorsers carefully. Haphazard endorsers who do not appropriately match the brand or spread themselves too thin can have adverse affects on the brand (Madan, 2011). When used correctly though, a celebrity endorser is a powerful tool for fostering emotional brand attachment. Endorsers are a simple but valuable way to parlay attachment felt to an individual into attachment felt to a product or brand.

Chapter V:
CONCLUSION
Success and its Implications

Ultimately, each market has a finite number of consumers. In most cases, there is a defined population that is most likely to consume a given product. It is this truth that puts marketers in fierce competition with each other. All companies are trying to secure the largest percentage of the market as possible. With this notion in mind, corporations utilize a wide range of psychological tactics in order to appeal to consumers. The primary goal of these appeals is to create a unique relationship between consumer and product.

In general, it is a fairly even playing field. Intrinsically speaking, most comparable products perform relatively the same function. A body wash will clean a body. A shoe will protect a foot. The difference lies in how a consumer identifies with a brand. This makes the margin of error very small. If a company fails to capture a consumer, they face losing current and future returns. Because people tend to only emotionally invest in a relatively small number of brands, it intensifies the competition between companies.

Marketing campaigns are constructed with the hope of generating buzz and excitement about a product. In some cases, a campaign strikes such a chord or a product is positioned in such a way that it becomes a phenomenon. It is a fine line between phenomenon and commonplace. Many products teeter right on the cusp of exponential and average popularity.

This concept is explored and delineated in Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference.* In the book, Gladwell (2000) analyzes how trends spark and take hold. People have long wondered why certain

products become trendworthy, selling at obscene rates, while others fade into oblivion.

Gladwell argues that these processes and mechanisms can be explained by a set of stable

patterns and factors echoed in nearly every influential trend.

The nature of modern culture is that it is formed and created by a wide variety of

contractors. Trendsetting is a reciprocal process involving both the contributions of

consumers of all ages and the corporations. Some of these achieve a measure of steady,

consistent success, some fail, and some take off on an upward trajectory of exponential

popularity and influence.

Based on his in-depth research spanning a number of different fields, industries,

and scholarly disciplines, Gladwell identifies three key factors that each play in role in

determining whether a particular trend will "tip" into wide-scale popularity. Gladwell's

was able to isolate three elements that act as forecasters of popularity: the Law of the

Few, the Stickiness Factor, and the Power of Context (Gladwell, 2000). At their core,

these elements describe how the people, the product, and the environment affect the

trajectory of a product's popularity. These trends provide a useful lens to view the

development of mass marketing.

The Law of the Few suggests that some people possess a particular and rare set of

social gifts (Gladwell, 2000). In order for widespread popularity to be attained, a few

specific types of people must advocate an idea, concept, or product in order for it to reach

the tipping point. These people are described as either Connectors, Mavens, or Salesmen.

Connectors are people with associations with many different groups and act as a conduit

between them, helping foster relationships. Mavens are individuals who possess great

knowledge and are compelled to help others make informed choices. Salesmen are those

who possess uncanny emotional intelligence, allowing them to be highly persuasive. If a product has people from these groups endorsing it or advocating for it, the product is much more likely to tip into super-success.

In this context, celebrity spokespeople fill this role. Celebrities have extensive networks of fans and contacts. This makes them partially Connectors because they have the ability to communicate with and persuade far-reaching segments of the market. Often, like in the case of Nike, the spokesperson is also highly skilled in the arena they are endorsing making them a partial Maven. Additionally, the referent power they possess makes them an influential force on the public. This causes them to also be an ideal Salesman.

The Power of Context also has resonance in the framework of emotional brand attachment. The Power of Context refers to the concept that people are highly influenced by their environments. In order for a trend to explode, the conditions and circumstances must be favorable for the product. For Dove, the climate was right. Within the realm of beauty industry, the public was ready for a new approach. People were sick of the overwhelming superficiality in the marketing messages. In this context, people were seeking authenticity and reality. Dove's message was clear and genuine.

The initial feelings of emotional brand attachment provide the solid foundation upon which these principles can flourish and allow a trend to explode. Without emotional brand attachment, conditions such as the Law of the Few and the Power of Context enable a trend to happen, but in a superficial way. It is emotional brand attachment that causes people to create lasting and sustainable feelings to a brand. The principles uncovered by Gladwell provide the spark that ignites a trend, but this once the initial buzz

wears off, the success can be a fleeting. Emotional brand attachment creates brand-consumer relationships that provide log-term, consistent gains for a company. These are the activities that facilitate brand building and establish lasting niche in the consumer culture.

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