

Applying social influence theories



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Using Theories of Social Influence Question The product idea chosen here is a line of organic snacks that are made from sustainable products only. The preservatives used are also organically derived; and the snacks have a shelf life only marginally lesser than their regular counterparts. Product pricing is competitive; and just over the mean price of products presently available in the market. This product is aimed at environment conscious youth and young adults who may not have the skills or desire to cook regularly. A secondary audience is the householder with children who needs products that are healthy and yet tasty for the children. The message chosen to advertise this product is based on people's need to confirm to their self – assigned roles of conservationist, environment conscious person; green warrior; or providing care-giver. It would go something thus: “ You are amongst those people who are attempting to help the environment in so many small and big ways. You love the planet; and so do we. You want to make the world a better place; and so do we. Our little contribution is this range of organic snacks; developed from sustainable products all through. These recipes draw inspiration from age old traditional snacks across ethnicities. Our snacks are healthier, more nutritious, while being just as tasty as other competing brands. And as a bonus; they will help you protect the environment as well. Even the wrapping is eco-friendly! Yes, they have a shorter shelf life; but that won't matter sine they will be long gone before that date. So help us help you make this world a better place. Question 2

Social influence is the process of affecting the opinions, attitudes, behaviors and desires of a number of people through the use of persuasive messages. This influence need not always be exerted in the first person; and can be done through the media in order to reach a large number of people. Various

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types of social influence work at different times on people, depending on the circumstances. Conformity works on people when there is a need to fit in; or when the individual perceives that they may be isolated for being different. Compliance occurs when the individual targeted finds it useful to give in to the request; or when the person feels obligated in some way to respond to the message. This could be due to friendship, a feeling of being ingratiated, a need to reciprocate, or a belief that there is a scarcity of the resource in question; and compliance with the message of persuasion is the best way to gain the said resource. Social influence may work through creating a situation where the individual perceives a command that needs to be obeyed; or when there is fear of a negative outcome. An individual who has knowledge of all these theoretical concepts is able to choose the right way to influence someone, given the situational factors. Such a person would be able to choose from a number of ways in which the same message can be delivered; and select the one that would have the most impact on the targeted individual. Depending on a number of factors; different types of messages appeal to different people. Young couples, for example, would respond better to off – season holiday plans; then would older couples with school – going children. Messages of status symbols would appeal more to those with more resources; while a message about affordable yet utilitarian luxury would appeal to the middle class. When the target audience is known, and their needs are known, and the various techniques available are known; it is possible to choose the right technique of applying social influence that would work on a majority of the people. Thus, the message would have maximum reach with a minimum of input, since it would be targeted at the audience using techniques that would create the maximum appeal with

them. In context to the message stated in response to the previous question; it was believed that the self - assigned roles of the target audience that were being focused on would be very important to them. The said roles are governed by the passions the individuals have for the world around them. The target emotion is one they deem important openly. These are people who would find it more difficult to deviate from behavior that leads to their goals as environment conscious individuals and as house holders; than from behavior expected by others. Since this is an area of passion; they would be internally driven. Thus, when the message asks them to confirm to behaviors that would affirm their passions; and would help their causes; it would be most difficult for them to completely ignore the message. They would be motivated to test the products and then make long - term choices, at the very least. This ensures sales and possible returning customers. References: Baron, R. A., Byrne D. E., Branscombe, N. R., (2006). Social psychology. Pennsylvania: Pearson. Gass, R. H., Seiter, J. S., (2010). Persuasion, Social Influence, and Compliance Gaining. Canada: Pearson.