

Using celebrities in an ad campaign is a poor way to stimulate brand appeal

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Using celebrities in an ad campaign is a poor way to stimulate brand appeal. Using celebrities as brand ambassadors has become very popular and is one of the more common communication strategies employed by companies today in order to market their products. Marketers pay millions of dollars to celebrities in the hope that their star magic would make the product more appealing and successful. But all celebrities glitter is not gold. There are many reasons as to why using celebrities in an ad campaign can turn into an ugly affair, sometimes enhancing attitude change towards the product altogether.

In this report, I will list the disadvantages of using celebrities in ads and the reasons behind why they are a poor way to stimulate brand appeal. 1) Price It is very expensive for companies to hire a celebrity as its brand ambassador. It is important for companies to note that when they do decide to take the brand ambassador route, they should be willing to shell out millions of dollars, and sometimes even lose it. Nike signed Tiger Woods on a 5 year \$ 125 million contract, Reebok signed Venus Williams for \$40 million and more recently, Pepsi teamed up with Shaquille O'Neal for a reported \$25 million.

For big companies such as Nike, Reebok and Pepsi, the financial implications of the deals involved would probably not affect them as much as smaller ones. With this in mind, it is also important to note that consumers today are becoming more advertising savvy. They read about the multi-million dollar deals as well. This leads to more consumers asking, " Are we buying the product, or the celebrity? " 2) ' Vampire Effect' A common marketing term,

this refers to the point where the celebrity in question overshadows the brand itself.

Marketers face this problem when they pick an extremely popular star, and the audience's attention is drawn to the celebrity rather than the product. A very popular example of this scenario occurred when Cable Association used Dawn French. They soon had to abort their entire campaign when she got in the way of effective communication. 3) Credibility & Inconsistency One of the main reasons as to why using celebrities in an ad campaign is poor for brand appeal occurs when the personal credibility of the celebrity involved drops.

This has occurred several times over the past couple of years. When Kate Moss, a well known model, was pictured snorting cocaine, three of her sponsors immediately pulled out. After all, imagine how a mother who has lost her daughter to drugs would relate to the brand. Another example was when Kobe Bryant, a leading basketball star, was accused of rape in 2003. His celebrity brand partners, Nutella and McDonald's, chose not to renew contracts with Bryant, even though he was subsequently acquitted of all charges. Many companies also resort to sports stars when choosing a celebrity.

While the personal credibility of the sportsman remains intact, his performances in the arena may sometimes suffer lapses. A famous example of this occurred when Sachin Tendulkar, one of the best cricketers in the world, went through a prolonged lean patch. This led to Pepsi dropping him as its celebrity face and they instead opted for a younger generation of

cricketers instead. The credibility of the celebrity involved is vital because when the company decides to use one, they are not only buying a channel via which they intend to sell their product, but also an image. 4) Multi-Brand Endorsement

At the end of the day, when a celebrity decides to endorse a product, it does not guarantee that they are actually using the product itself. More likely than not, they are endorsing the product purely for the monetary benefits, and this might sometimes lead to complications, especially when one celebrity appears in many ads in a short p of time. Take for example, MRF (tyre company), one of the early sponsors of Sachin Tendulkar. With its logo embezzled on his bat, the partnership between celebrity and brand was strong. Consumers could relate to the star, and in turn, the product.

Today, however, Tendulkar endorses a mirage of products, and the novelty of the original partnership has died down significantly. Consumers are often left disillusioned and are sometimes forced to ask the question, “ If the endorser can’t stick to one product, why should I? ” . Celebrity overexposure can often undermine the authenticity of the message. Another form of multi-brand endorsement might occur when the celebrity endorses one brand but is publically seen using a competitor’s. For example, when Britney Spears was pictured drinking Coca-Cola (pictured left), while employed as the face of Pepsi.

Or when David Beckham shaved his head soon after becoming the face of Brylcreem. Consumers notice this and often realize that celebrities need not

have any relation to the product itself, and hence the entire essence of using celebrities in ads is questioned. 5) Marketing Mismatch When celebrities are used in ad campaigns, they display a certain special persona for the audience. The entire point is that they are able to influence the thought process of the consumer and create a positive perception of the brand. An approving nod from a famous actor or sportsman can directly lead to a 1000 more sales.

With this in mind, it is paramount that companies use celebrities who they know can relate to and sell their product. Take a bad example, pictured right, of Ronaldhino (football legend), selling Konica Minolta printers. Not only did the picture lead to consumers questioning the connection between celebrity and brand, but also put the brand in bad light. In conclusion, while the use of celebrities can sometimes prove beneficial, especially to the profitability of a relatively unknown product, there are several points that need to be taken into consideration.

Marketers, especially in today's cluttered mediaenvironment, resort to celebrities if they lack an original idea, or want to take the 'easy way out'. Consumers too are becoming aware of this and are starting to notice the fact that celebrities need not necessarily support their brands. Furthermore, celebrity endorsements cannot change the entire thinking process of the consumers, and as such, does not justify the high cost involved either.

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