Case study: mtv networks' the arabian challenge

In this case, analysts felt that the Middle East would prove to be Mint's most ambitious and challenging venture, however MET still decided to launch here due to proactive reasons (growth opportunities), but recognized that their success was contingent upon a tactical lancing between being mindful and respectful, and without diluting what MET stood for (delivery of international quality music); as well as being able to deal with all issues discussed in this memo (anti-American sediments prevalent; stiff competition; culturally sensitivity).

Fundamental Management Issue: Paradoxes of Cross cultural management (Sense- Making Model) Sense-making Involves placing stimulus Into a framework that enables people to " comprehend, understand, explain, attribute, extrapolate, and predict". By noticing cues about the situation, egg nature of people, relationship, topic, location, ROR events; the sense-making model allows us to index context, and thus make attributions based on identity and experiences.

MET Arabia (Meta) recognized their context of attempting to launch into the culturally sensitive Arab world environment, where anti-American sentiments prevail due to Cultural History. In this case, Meta has so far been successful through selecting the appropriate schema, which not only results in self confidence and effectiveness, but prevents them from making serious and costly mistakes.

Manta's success is also contributed to their recognition of the influences of cultural values, and their understanding beyond sophisticated stereotyping-Although the Arab world's high Uncertainty Avoidance dimension reveals a

highly rule-oriented society that does not readily accept change and Is very risk adverse, Meta was able to recognize the paradox of value trumping, where certain sets of values take precedence over others in certain contexts.

This not only allowed them to make sense of contradictory behavior, such as the Arab world's acceptance of their programmer despite prevalent issues, but also allowed them to preferential individual and group values, and work through unresolved cultural issues accordingly. Analysis Issue #1 : prevalent anti-American sediments Meta also had to overcome the influences of unresolved Cultural History where they faced potential resistance due to the latent and overt anti-American sentiments In various parts of the world (US Invasion of Iraq, questioned America's motives In Lebanon, and its support to arch enemy Israel).

However, MET felt that although the Ran puddles are opposing us Torrent polices, tenet eager consumption AT commercialism will see them simultaneously embracing yet another American brand. Although analysts felt this would be a major problem as MET carried with it an image of open and explicit Western culture (through its sexually explicit and provocative programmer), MET did not face too many difficulties, once they explained that they were not in the business of exporting American culture.

MET recognized the importance of acceptance and respect, where MET Networks Chairman and MITT President, Reedy, drew on his past experiences where he had previously met with the political leaders of countries where they felt market entry was difficult, egg China, Israel, Cuba; to explain the networks initiatives to them.

Thus Mats preparation for the Arab world also involved conducting an extensive survey of the region to understand what the target group (18-24 year old school/university students) wanted, as well as spoke to the elderly/parents and figures of authority (leaders, governments) to assure them that they were there to entertain people within the limits of Arab traditions and had no intention of showing disrespect to the local culture-that Meta is a show made by Arabs for Arab youth, and is dedicated to their self-expression.

Mats research actually showed that the majority of respondents Hough MET to be a European or Indian brand.

The Arabian world's global reach of media technology allowed them to be aware of the latest trends, gadgets, news and American shows, and even though the masses of Arab youth can not afford them and feel more strongly about their Arabian identity, MET chose to appeal to these masses, targeting " normal Arabs" instead of the educated, private school people who although are more connected to the Western culture, comprise only 10% of the population.

Mats recognition that although all cultures express preferences for ideal behaviors, people do not always act consistently with these ideal behaviors and values, prevented them from falling into the paradox of confusing individual values with group values. In this case, MET recognized that for the youth in this specific context, certain sets of cultural values take precedence over others, where the youth's desire to be cool also transcends any social, cultural and financial boundaries.

Through comprehending the interrelationship among values, MET were then able to gain a true understanding of the logic of this culture. This value trumping paradox allowed Meta to select a creative schema that emphasizes the best of both worlds. Rather than being an overt American channel that merely airs western shows and songs, Meta is aired with a local flavor that would suit the Arab mindset.

Issue #2: Culturally sensitive environment prevalent in the Middle East region Mats explicit hip-hop music culture directly conflicts between the conservative social cultures prevalent in the Middle East.

Meta had decided early on to not export Just one product for the world but to generate a very different experience for their brands depending on the local cultures. MET thus adopted a localized strategy and decentralized structure, giving commercial and creative autonomy to the local staff, which allowed innovation and rapid expansion to occur. Manta's programming line-up actually features more local content in comparison to other localized MET ventures, with about 40% Arabian music, and local versions of the channel's popular international non-music shows appropriately edited by culturally sensitive editors.

I Nell Key to tans meal-content strategy was Tanat ten packaging, Attlee, Ana language, should reflect the country; as well as preventing too much localization from eluting what the brand stands for.

Although adapting content to suit local tastes also prove challenging because of many different countries comprising the region ' e one thing may be acceptable in some parts but unacceptable in another city, Meta has

successfully used cultural stereotypes by acknowledging their limitations of constraining individual perceptions of behavior.

Meta recognized that sophisticated stereotyping reduces a complex culture to a shorthand description, and that there will be differences between individual and group values, egg the value of being cool rumps the Arab world's high Uncertainty Avoidance (Hefted: 68). MET took into consideration the specific conditions for this cultural measure, and the impact of their organizational culture, allowing them to open up rather than prevent opportunities for learning and exploration.

Issue #3: Competitive Environment MET did recognize the difficulty of being a western company venturing into the highly regulated and complex business arena of the Middle East on its own- not Just the cultural sensitivity, but complexity in the way business is done and regulatory halogens- thus Meta used their extensive personal experience of initially tying up with a local music channel, and eventually acquiring them; egg Austere for MET Australia.

Well prepared and equipped with innovative and enthusiastic personalities, MET first looked for a local partner in the Middle East, saying that would provide the audience in the region content that would be very different from that offered by popular Arab music channels, and in November 2007, launched Meta in partnership with Arab Media Group (OMG), an established player in the Arab media industry with eight radio stations and three daily newspapers.

Analysts felt this a beneficial partnership where their compatible strategic goals and objectives will result in synergies, and result in complementary skills, products and markets: MET would earn an estimated IIS$mm annually in licensing fees from OMG for 10 years; whereas OMG was able to access the Mats world class resources to enhance its visibility in the Arab media as well as across the globe.

Furthermore, MET recognized that there is already great music in Arabia, such as Rotate and Melody, who had already created a niche for themselves in the region, where some popular

Arab music stars had already signed exclusive deals with some local channels. This could pose a big competitive threat to MET, whose challenge would be to not only find the right content but also ways to connect and captivate the Arabian youth. Although the Arab market was crowded with more than 50 channels, only one of them airs primarily western content, and none of them provided a global platform to export the musical talent of the local youth. Meta thus planned to project itself as unique and different by being the first program to really reflect the youth culture.

This was stemmed by favorable demographics, where about 65% of the Arab population consists of youth under 25.

Besides international MET shows, Meta also designed new shows in Arabic to cater to pan-Arab youth audiences, establishing itself as a platform wherefrom the Arab youth could voice their local concerns as well as advertise their music talent. Meta would not only provide entertainment but

would also leverage on Its global reach to averters Ana celebrate ten musical TA of Arab youths.

This differentiation was critical to their success, where Meta is the first international TV network to offer channels in local languages with localized intent egg Hip Hop An, where MET guides local rappers, so that they don't Just mirror what they see and hear in the western world. This encourages Arabs to indulge in western forms of expression, as well as making their music relevant to their world, where they sing about meaningful social issues.

Meta thus has acted ethically; by taking up social issues as well as trying to contribute to Arab society (encourages education, look for solutions to problems such as unemployment).

The launch of MET Arabia was also expected to act as a culturally unifying force by propelling Arabia Music to the global forefront and vice versa-exporting the voice of the Arab youth and culture to the international stage through Mats global networks, thus providing a chance to correct misconceptions of the region which has been associated with stresses and political tensions.

Insights MET have grown into the world's largest TV network by becoming part of the fabric of youth culture, and by respecting audience diversity and different cultures. Their success in using a Cultural Sense-Making model where they recognized that the Cultural History between Arabians and Westerners are impacting perceptions now, ND that the influences of trumping Cultural Values lead to contradictory behavior, and that to be able

to interact with the Arabian market and population, had to select an appropriate schema that uses a decentralized structure and a localization strategy.

So far, there have been no complaints about the channel's content. Meta also claims that they are " doing very well in the region, and for a young channel, are very happy with its performance so far" (AAA Marquis, Meta channel manager, 2008).

Meta was able to understand the Arab culture through attributions knowledge, here they were aware of contextually appropriate behavior.

This was through their personal experience of first entering into a new market through partnership, then later acquisition; as well as their extensive research and surveys in order to formulate hypotheses, strategies, and schemas. Furthermore, Manta's use of hiring local culturally-sensitive editors not only allowed them to gain greater understanding of the Arab culture, and increase their effectiveness in this market, but allowed them to avoid faulty and expensive business decisions based on partial understandings.