Discussion

Sociology

February 4, Branding for the Soul Klein defines branding as a process of defining the product's and/or company's distinctness in an ocean of mass-produced objects or similar firms that can hardly be differentiated from one another (3). Branding is the process of expressing the " soul" of the company that evokes emotions, beliefs, and sometimes, even spiritual arousal, among consumers, so that they become emotionally involved with the brand (Klein 4). Klein further says that companies make products, but consumers buy brands, and she is right because branding is personal and collective to consumers. Brands mean something relevant to people as individuals as it reflects their aspirations, fears, and desires, and it can also mean something valuable to their group or culture as it connects to their group identity, goals, and values.

Brand logos and identities shape consumer culture because they represent something that people can connect to, either as part of their existing identity, or as something they want to pursue and have someday. Klein provides the examples of Body Shop, Nike, and Starbucks, who became popular since they formed brand logos and identities. Starbucks, for instance, relies on establishing " emotional ties," so that customers will continue buying its products despite, or perhaps because, of their high cost (6). People who buy Starbucks feel that they have an upscale lifestyle that is still down-to-earth because of Starbucks' philanthropic ideals. It is one example of brands that resonate with personal meanings and associations that consumers identify with.

Two brand names that I find interesting are Google and Apple. They are both constructed with respect to the image of coolness and innovation. Apple, however, especially for developed countries, is constructed to appeal to the

rich or those who think they are rich. Apple preserves this image through having a material culture that has meanings based on coolness and originality, so that it can have a high price premium for all its products. Google is a brand for the innovators and rebels who want to oppose evil companies because of its " Don't be evil" motto. Google has then carefully maintained this brand of creativity, goodness, and openness through creating new products and systems that are fresh and engaging to customers. These are examples of branding that are successful because they connect to the innermost emotions and dreams of their consumers.

Work Cited

Klein, Naomi. " New Branded World." No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies. New York, NY: Picador, 1999. 2-26. Print.