

# Yamaha fiore 2ne1 – celebrity endorsement

People



Celebrity endorsement is commonly used to market products, it is a strategy which gives a "face" to a brand, to which the consumers can relate and aspire to. Yamaha has decided to promote its Fiore scooter Thailand with widely popular Korean pop group 2NE1. Their strategy was to reach out to urban Thai's who follow foreign trends, music and fashion. While many urban Thai's certainly are fans of the Korean fashion and pop music it remains unclear as to what effect the campaign has had on the purchase decision making and increased market share if any; however the effort did position Yamaha's scooters as a trendy and youthful.

Across European cities scooters are a very popular and low cost means of transportation. In Thailand, and a number of other emerging markets most consumers will aspire to owning their first car and will go to great lengths to acquire one such as extending significant loans, whereas motorcycles/scooter are generally used and perceived as necessity for low income market segment.

Furthermore, in Bangkok it is apparent that there are very few scooters being driven by the middle to upper market segment consumers, some of the reasons being as mentioned earlier and due to the traffic congestion and pollution which is considered to be dangerous to drive a scooter in. Yamaha is one of Thailand's largest motorcycle manufacturers with a market share of 26% - expecting to reach 30% in 2011 (Bangkok Post, May 5, 2008) and Honda leading with an impressive 68% (Bangkok Post, May 5, 2008) market share.

A large portion of this is assigned to rural areas where people use scooter as common means for transportation whereas in urban areas people will rely on public transportation, own a car or other. The key challenge would remain in changing people's (middle, upper segment) perception of using scooters as a way to commute, run errands or go to a nearby store rather than solely relying on using car most of the time. This may be achieved by endorsing a local celebrity which would be ideally living in a modern condominium or a housing village also known locally as moo-ban.

This would be a more "practical" approach to promoting a lifestyle people could more easily relate to rather than pop stars. The end result being many of the middle to upper income market segment might acquire a scooter in addition to owning a car to drive around their housing village or condominium and go to a nearby store or a restaurant. In the sportswear industry celebrity endorsement is used probably more often than in others. It is a great way to establish the brand as it is used by professional athletes and draw the consumer's attention.

Nowadays a great deal of sportswear is also worn as casual wear and not only on tennis courts, golf terrains or running track which has significantly widened and expanded the market. A very successful, charismatic athlete can portray a brand with many positive attributes. However, while there are many encouraging factors in using celebrity endorsements across many industries the marketing and advertising campaign could eventually result in negative or less attractive brand perception. Examples include when athletes are found to be using drugs, misbehaving in public or in competition.

As mentioned earlier these individuals provide a “ face” to the brand and in this light the public will think of a given brand. Tiger Woods has been one of Nike’s endorsed celebrity which has virtually established the brand in the golf industry. It is one of the prime examples of a success when a brand is tied in with a successful and charismatic athlete who also has the “ star” power. It is also a very direct and relevant persona in the golfing industry which has attracted many first time golfers to purchase Nike equipment and other sportswear.

The previously examined case of 2NE1 pop music group would be more fitting and is more commonly used if the endorsement was used to promote fashion, perfume, makeup and other similar products as they are more fitting with feminine attributes of beauty and attractiveness. In this respect Nike has established a firm brand perception with a person who is very relevant in the industry whereas a few years from now most likely very few people will remember the 2NE1 and Yamaha joint campaign.

However it is important to note that there are also certain risks when a brand strongly relies on single celebrity as is in the case of Nike/Tiger Woods who has been through a personal scandal which has dramatically affected the golfers perception in public view and who has suffered a loss of a number of endorsements by energy drink makers and telecommunications company, Gatorade and AT&T. And we are yet to see if the company will continue to carry the golfers name in the nearby future.