

Mtv networks - the arabian challenge

Business



MTV Networks - the Arabian Challenge

Basically, the Arabian nations are largely populated with Muslims who essentially possess strong cultural as well as religious values (Clauss-Ehlers, 2010, p. 115). Arguably, the Middle East countries are way backwards compared to the westernized nations such as America, more so in terms of dressing and traditions. For instance, whereas people from the west have been observed to dress modernly, in suits, T-shirts and Jeans, in the Arabic nations, men have been seen to uphold their traditional dressing methods with women also frequently dressing in veils.

In addition, the Middle East is exposed to diverse political forms of government, most of which excessively use religion as a basis of their governance (Frost, 2008, p. 218). Furthermore, unlike the western nations, the Arabic countries conserves cultural beliefs such as honor, shame, trust, family and socialization among others. It is therefore beyond doubt that the Arabic culture is relatively dominated with the Islamic practices, and thus any new product that aims at penetrating the Arabic nations should be in alignment with these cultural beliefs and practices.

Essentially, there are various matters of concern for MTV's special determination of entering and penetrating the Arabic television market. Even though this company has an outstanding worldwide image, it is entering a market that has individuals possessing strong cultural and conventional ties (Beyer & Beaman, 2007, p. 163). In fact, Baltaji stated that it was quite ironical for MTV, a broadcasting corporation well-known for annoying "religious, political, and conservative" societies, is operating in a region known for negatively reacting to provocative content (qtd. in Centre for

Management Research [CMR], 2009, p. 179). This was therefore a major concern for the management of MTVN since the company was bound to face excessive religious and political opposition.

Besides, MTV being an American brand, thus excessively possessing America's liberal traditional values makes it more challenging to enter a market that hold essential religious beliefs and is opposed to the airing of controversial material. Moreover, the resilient anti-American attitudes that are dominant among many Arabs, arising mostly from factors such as America's support to its arch enemy Israel, and its Iraq invasion, made several Arabs angry and thus this would act as a huge challenge for MTV, an American brand (Cogan & Kelso, 2009, p. 33). However, this problem was overcome by MTV through entering into a partnership with the local based Arabian Television Network (ATN). In fact, Roedy, MTV's Vice President, illustrates that the company would employ a localization strategy since it not only reflected, but also respected the audience culture (CMR, 2009, P. 179). Thus, MTV Arabia would adopt a more localized version of its universal reality TV shows as well as music (CMR, 2009, P. 179). It is however worth noting that maintaining the balance between quality international music and a highly religious and cultural environment would be quite a difficult task. Furthermore, unlike America and other countries from the west, the Arabian market is a complex and a highly regulated business arena (Steers, Sanchez & Nardon, 2010). For these reason, foreign companies such as MTV have to cope with multiple stringent strict rules and regulations in order for them to efficiently operate in the Arabian market. However, by entering into partnerships with other local broadcasting companies such as ATN and

clarifying that the company was not in the mission of exporting American culture (CMR, 2009, P. 181), MTV was able to eliminate this challenge. Comparatively, the targeting of pan-Arab youth audiences was also a matter of concern that MTV had to deal with. Basically, 65 percent of the entire population in the Middle East is made up of youths who are mostly below 25 years (CMR, 2009, P. 183). In addition, the market was crammed with over 50 channels which offered similar services and this would thus result to fierce competition. However, MTV formed various platforms that allowed them to talk to the youth, in a relatively new style. By so doing, MTV realized that none of the stations in existence provided the youths with a global aggregation of musical styles and talent and doing this would thus increase the company's competitiveness.

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