

ADVERTISING OVERVIEW

"It's the kids who make purchasing decisions, and they make them differently from adults," says Carol Green Long, president of [Children's Creative Marketing](#) in North York, Ontario, Canada. "These children are savvy, they're sophisticated, they're aware, they're idealistic, they like to belong...This group lives at home and works part-time. Often they have an allowance." While this group is considered fickle because they are willing to try new products, Green Long suggests that they will be "loyal and supportive to a marketer...that consistently delivers what they want."

Manufacturers recognize that teens represent a considerable buying power. Of the 30 million comprising the teenage market, one third is employed, and 55% of those 16 and older earn \$75 or more per week. The items teens shop for most include jeans, shoes, and groceries.

A primary reason for the growing presence of teen shoppers is the increase in dual-income or non-traditional households. In these households, teens are expected to assume more household responsibilities, including grocery shopping. Teens tend to be brand-loyal. In a survey conducted by retail consultant Deloitte & Touche, it was found that 97% of boys and 94% of girls prefer branded shoes, while 89% of boys and 91% of girls prefer branded jeans.

PROBLEMS WITH ADVERTISING

The alcohol industry spends \$2 billion to market their products. The majority of these ads run during televised sporting events that are viewed by both teens and adults. By age 18, the average American teen will have seen 100,000 televised beer commercials. Many experts insist that these ads encourage underage drinking and contribute to the problem of teenage alcoholism. The message of these ads is questionable, especially when it is being received by teenage viewers. Ads show young people, celebrities, attractive spokespeople, and even unusual characters such as the canine Spuds MacKenzie drinking and having a good time. The message is that drinking helps you fit in and have fun.

Alcohol producers maintain that their ads are geared toward adult viewers, and that their purpose is to encourage drinkers to switch to or continue to drink their brand. However, their ads do not specify a target audience, and

they are aired during programs that teens often watch. Therefore, the ads encourage all their viewers to drink, whether they are adults, teenagers, non-drinkers, light drinkers, or heavy drinkers.

Prime examples of beer ads that aim for adults but snag young people are those aired at Halloween, a traditional children's holiday. Beer companies fill their ads with pumpkins, ghouls, vampires, and other images, all of which children associate with the upcoming festivities. Whether the influence of the beer ads shows up in the three-year-old boy who wants to dress as "Red Wolf" (the mascot for a beer of the same name) or in a group of trick-or-treaters who collect their loot in trick-or-treat bags bearing the logos of major beer companies, the presence of alcohol manufacturers is undeniable. Daniel Tomsky of the San Diego-based Institute for Health Advocacy feels Halloween-related beer ads send mixed messages to kids. He held a news conference in San Diego asking beer companies to refrain from using Halloween imagery in advertising. At the same time, a nationwide coalition made a similar plea in a "Hands off Halloween" campaign. Officials at the [Beer Institute](#), a trade group in Washington, responded by saying that Halloween advertising is aimed at adults, not kids. They argue that the holiday is not just for children, and that their imagery is appropriate. However, the fact remains that the ads use colorful, eye-catching promotion with numerous Halloween images, which obviously attract the attention of children who are looking forward to the holiday.

The [American Cancer Society](#) is launching its first-ever paid ad campaign to support government regulation of tobacco and to denounce tobacco companies that target youth. (The "[Joe Camel](#)" cartoon character image is one of the most controversial cigarette icons.) The ads will air on cable TV and will help educate the public about the issues surrounding adolescent tobacco use. Dr. Blake Cady, an American Cancer Society board member and Boston cancer surgeon, states that the average smoker now starts smoking at age 13 and says that the earlier people start smoking, the greater the risk of death. He sees the decision to run the new ad campaign as a way to combat a "pediatric epidemic of smoking."

The tobacco industry claims that its ads are intended to lobby for brand loyalty among existing smokers and disagrees with the claims in the American Cancer Society's ad campaign. They also disagree with the

federal Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) efforts to regulate tobacco through limiting cigarette ads and the bans on vending machine sales.

Anti-smoking advocates claim that cigarette promotion is specifically targeted to youngsters, because if the tobacco industry "can't get our children hooked on nicotine, they won't have adult customers," says Cady. Matthew Myers, a consultant to the cancer society involved in developing the ads, admits that while the society will never be able to match the money that the tobacco industry spends on advertising, he feels that the public will support regulation if the society makes the case.

President Clinton and the FDA proposed several rules with regard to cigarette promotion:

- Cigarette brand advertising would be forbidden at sports events.
- Brand names could not be used on T-shirts and other goods.
- Tobacco billboards would be banned from within 1,000 feet of schools and playgrounds.
- The use of pictures and colors in cigarette ads would be limited.

The authority of the federal government's regulation plans questioned strongly by the tobacco industry.

CELEBRITIES AND ATHLETES

When it comes to making product endorsements, women have pushed past men as the most effective spokespeople. A decade ago, males accounted for nine of the top ten celebrity endorsers. The list included James Garner, George C. Scott, Bob Hope, and Bruce Willis. This year, all but two celebrity endorsers are female. Candice Bergen heads a list including Elizabeth Taylor, Kathie Lee Gifford, and Whitney Houston. The only male spokespeople to make the list this year were Bill Cosby and comedian Jerry Seinfeld.

Advertisers may be turning away from male entertainers in favor of male athletes. David Vadehra, president of Video Storyboard, which compiles TV endorser rankings, says that if you want to sell to men, you need to use an athlete. "Athletes represent something men aspire to: perfection," he says. Vadehra also suggests that women endorsers are becoming more influential because today's more sophisticated consumers are looking for

non-traditional authority figures.

This year, the list of sports endorsers is 100 percent male, headed by Michael Jordan, Shaquille O'Neal, and Joe Montana. Last year, the list of sports endorsers included Olympic skater Nancy Kerrigan, who hit the No. 2 spot with her Campbell's Soup ads.

The following sources were used for this topic discussion:

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