

for MTV's *Jersey Shore*. In this video, a stereotypical New York/New Jersey young male in his 20s is shown in a variety of situations. He brags about his lifestyle, how awesome he is and professes his love for alcohol, particularly Heinekens and Jagerbombs. The Heineken brand is mentioned overtly twice in this video and is shown in the background for a significant portion of the video. The product placement in this video is the antithesis of the image that Heineken attempts to convey in its advertising. It would not desire to be associated with out-of-control, crass youths such as the one portrayed in "My New Haircut." Through its marketing communications, Heineken wishes to be perceived as a brand for those with a greater degree of class and sophistication (as seen here, here, here and here).

3 Although many of the ads are aimed at different global markets, they are tied together by the theme of Heineken being an upscale brand for the discerning palette. It is clear that Heineken has disassociated itself from the type of consumer portrayed in "My New Haircut," a strong strategic move given its history and positioning in the beer market.

4 Alcohol isn't the only product category that is referred to in pop culture. In 2004, hip hop artist Juvenile scored a huge hit with the song "Slow Motion." Juvenile makes a reference to Victoria's Secret with the lyric, "I like how that Victoria Secret sit in that (rear end)." In this situation, Victoria's Secret could not take the same approach as Heineken and completely disassociate the brand from the reference. Victoria's Secret has long been known as a lingerie brand that accentuates the sensual aspects of a woman's figure. As a result, the brand positioning was aligned with the meaning of the lyric. This pop culture reference was utterly inconsequential for the brand and Victoria's Secret never clearly addressed it. It continues to have the same positioning in the market and charges a price premium for this positioning as compared to underwear brands like Hanes and Playtex.

5 Brands in the upper end of the pricing spectrum are regularly mentioned in hip hop. Luxury brand references are as ubiquitous as inexpensive beer brands at frat parties. Gucci and Prada are common targets. In general, luxury brands try to distance themselves from hip hop culture for fear of damaging brand equity. Luxury brands will never use marketing communications messages to appeal to hip hop artists and their ardent community of followers. In fact, Burberry once refused to let rapper Ja Rule wear any of their clothing products for an *Esquire* magazine photo shoot.

6 All of these brands all have to deal with these references in one way or another, as pop culture references can influence how these brands are perceived by their target markets. Brand managers at each of these brands were able to successfully steer their brands away from any potential negative repercussions. An approach of distancing the brand's communication messages from the pop culture reference and focusing on advertising to strengthen the brand's positioning has repeatedly proven to be the correct strategic approach.

RESPOND TO THE BLOG:

What do you think? How does pop culture "brand" certain products? Do you find that you gravitate toward one product over another, similar one because of the pop culture branding associated with it? Explain.

TOPICAL CONNECTIONS

GROUP PROJECTS

1. Working in a group, develop a slogan and advertising campaign for one of the following products: sneakers, soda, a candy bar, or jeans. How would you apply the principles of advertising language to market your product? After completing your marketing plan, "sell" your product to the class. If time permits, explain the reasoning behind your selling technique.
2. With your group, think of some advertising campaigns that created controversy (Camel cigarettes, Calvin Klein, Carl's Jr., etc.) What made them controversial? What was the impact on sales?

WEB PROJECTS

1. Access the websites for several popular soft drinks, such as www.pepsi.com, www.coke.com, www.drpepper.com, etc. How do the websites promote the product? Who is the target audience, and how do the sites reflect this audience? What techniques do they use to sell? Write an essay on the differences between online and paper advertising for soft drinks. Will the web be the next great advertising venue? Will paper ads become obsolete? What considerations are unique to each? Is advertising on the web a passing fad or the wave of the future? Consider the information on advertising provided in this chapter when developing your response.
2. *Adbusters* addresses the unethical ways advertisers manipulate consumers to "need" products. However, if we consider ads long enough, we can determine for ourselves the ways we may be manipulated. Write a paper in which you consider the techniques of advertising. Support your evaluation with examples of advertising campaigns with which you are familiar. Make an argument for the effectiveness or exploitative nature of such campaigns. You may draw support from the articles by authors such as Rushkoff, Barber, Cave, and Lutz, as well as from your personal experience as a consumer.