

Old Strategies for Positioning in a New Market Segment: Co-Branding and Celebrity Endorsement in the Development of New Mobile Apps for Tweens

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tweens is a term used to describe individuals between the ages of 6 and 12 years old and that have a tendency to utilize technology more like a teenager than a child. They are big consumers of music and audio visual entertainment products (music bands and TV series), and as fans, they show a high level of loyalty that leads them to copy the behaviors and consume the same products and brands that their idols do.

This marketing segment is very attractive to companies since they are potential consumers of their products as well as have a great capacity to influence the family decision-making process. Thus, they become a *desired* target for some products, especially those with a ludic-technological nature, such as technological devices, or mobile apps and services.

Disney, *Samsung*, and *Apple* have found an ideal way to achieve a solid positioning segment in the development of co-branding strategies, particularly *Disney* and *Apple*, or *Samsung* who even creates brand notoriety and imagery. Taking advantage of the phenomenon “fan” the TV series *Violetta* has been created. ??TV series, Disney has come from the hand of Apple, Samsung and later??? in the field of mobile applications aimed at this marketing segment. In this article we show how an ancient strategy like brand alliance (or Co-branding) remains effective in the development of products for the next generation; addressing highly demanding segments, both for their high product knowledge, since they are digitally native, and for the level of product’s novelty and performance they require.

We will start by defining the concepts of brand image and positioning, and later we will highlight how the development of branding strategies (specifically brand alliances) enables companies to achieve new market segments. Then we will proceed to analyze the segment of Tweens that are large consumers of music and audio-visual entertainment products, and who are strongly influenced by the fan phenomenon as they imitate behaviors and demand brands that are consumed or sponsored by their musical or TV idols.

Next, we will analyze the case of mobile applications launched in the market by *Disney*, *Apple and Disney*, and *Samsung*, and show how certain brands traditionally targeted at professional markets may occupy a position in the new market segments. We finish the chapter by presenting the main findings as well as offering some recommendations for improving brand management.

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2. LOOKING FOR A NEW MARKET SEGMENTATION: THE TWEENS

The traditional classification of consumers is no longer valid. People with the same age, gender or social class may have radically different tastes and needs. Sociologists and marketing experts have been identifying new consumer groups in recent years. If age or social class is considered before identifying a target, then these criteria do not serve a purpose now. Life stages have been changing and now do not coincide with infancy as youth is being lengthened and maturity delayed. These new groups are demanding products to be adapted to their tastes and needs, and although this presents a challenge for companies, it also creates a business opportunity to exploit.

Tweens are among these groups. “Tweens” is a term used by marketing professionals to refer to the market demographic segment defined as the in-between stages of being a child and a teen. They share some characteristics of both teenagers and children because they are in the middle of both. They have a tendency to consume more like a teenager than a child, but sometimes behave like children. This synthetic market is used to describe the experience of this particular pubertal and hormonal age group who are very susceptible to media influences. In fact, this term in popular media is often used to describe a preadolescent (usually female) who is in the “in-between” stage of development when they are considered “too old for toys, too young for boys/girls.”

2.1. The Tweens Segment: Characteristics

The very term “tween” is something designed to literally define children between the ages of 6 to 12 years old. Kantrowitz (1999) points out that the principle traits of this group are:

1. They are at the early stage of puberty,
2. They have increasing parental absence,
3. They’re computer-savvy, accustomed to a world of information (and a social life based on e-mail) just a mouse click away. They will also probably be the best educated generation in history; a substantial majority expecting to go on to college.

Hymowitz (1998) points out that by tweens taking on a lot of responsibility and causing their parents to see them as miniature adults, parents have taken a step back thinking that their tweens have become self-sufficient. Tweens however, are at a stage of development when they look for guidance, and if they are not getting it from their parents, they are getting it elsewhere.

Fitting in is very important for tweens, and judgments for those who do not fit in are quick and harsh. Appearance has become the key way to fit in for today’s tweens, and having the right brand of clothes or shoes can make all the difference. Tweens are very suggestible, thus they can be easily influenced by different messages or life models that make them be fine. Tweens have always wanted to grow up quickly and leave childish things behind. That is because they associate “coolness” (self-confidence and poise, style and fashion) with adulthood. This desire of sophistication and “coolness” translates into tweens acting and dressing much older than their actual age.

From a marketing point of view, tweens are also a *retailer’s dream*: consumers with a seemingly insatiable desire for the latest in everything. They are also described as a *parent’s nightmare* because they are worried about copying the hair, clothes, and makeup of celebrities twice their age while still throwing tantrums worthy of a two year old. Psychologists worry that in their rush to act like grown-ups; these kids will never really learn to be grown-up, confusing the appearance of maturity with the real

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