

Suggested answers

1. **Explain how Proctor & Gamble has, through the use of corporate vision and strategic marketing, begun to re-educate the Chinese community in relation to the use of their product—Pampers disposable nappy?**

According to Hofstede's cultural framework, it can be said that in China, collectivism dominates; consequently Chinese people need to feel that they belong to a group and their purchasing habits are driven by these strong beliefs in group decisions. The Chinese parent will align to group attitudes in terms of making a decision to purchase Pampers, rather than making their own individual choice. It is therefore evident that parents' individual thinking about whether or not their babies should wear disposable nappies will be influenced by the collective with whom they associate. It is important therefore for Proctor & Gamble to not only market to the individual but more importantly to the whole community of parents. In order to reinforce this collectivist behaviour, Proctor & Gamble has introduced group meetings, shopping centre gatherings and online photographic competitions. The parent (consumer) is anxious about humiliation if not seen to be conforming to societal collectivist norms. As a result, it has taken a long time for the Chinese people to accept the use of disposable nappies for their babies because it firstly had to be considered acceptable to the collective community. This could be one of the reasons why in rural settings the idea of disposable nappies is not yet as acceptable and in many instances has been rejected. However, as now more Chinese parents from urban cities like Beijing or Shanghai begin to use them, the entire community is likely to follow the trend.

2. **From a marketer's perspective, what is the most important thing for the Chinese consumer when they are buying a disposable nappy for their child?**

It is said that the most important thing that Chinese parents value when they buy disposable nappies is quality. They are looking for a premium nappy which is soft and

comfortable for their baby. Therefore, they are prepared to pay for this premium product quality, particularly in more economically developed areas of China.

3. What can Procter & Gamble do to improve Pampers disposable nappies for their future consumers?

Pampers disposable nappies are already totally functional, so major players such as Procter & Gamble should think about improving the nappy's aesthetics. Making it more fashionable could be perceived as a differentiator and would continue to give them comparative advantage. Procter & Gamble should also think about green nappies (more environmentally friendly) because there is a huge opportunity for greener nappies in emerging markets such as China.

4. Do you think that the choice of the Shunya Communications Group was an appropriate choice by Procter & Gamble to promote Pampers in China, and if so, why?

The choice of Shunya Communications Group in China instead of Saatchi and Saatchi, which is Procter & Gamble's global marketing agent for Pampers, was most appropriate. It is evident that this local agency is more suitably equipped in terms of cultural understanding to handle Pampers' promotional campaign in China. The agency is in a much better position to analyse and adapt to the significant cultural differences in determining the best strategy for marketing to the Chinese. It appears that Shunya Group Communications was a good choice for Procter & Gamble, as this agency has developed a good reputation through affiliation with the Omnicom Group Inc., which is the world's leading global advertising and marketing communications services company. Indeed, Procter & Gamble could have saved costs by doing its marketing on a global scale, as Pampers is a global brand, but the promotional campaign could have failed because of a lack of adaptation to the collective needs of the Chinese consumer.

5. What aspects of the Chinese culture could Procter & Gamble have used more to engage its potential consumers when it launched its Pampers marketing strategy? How could this have been improved?

In its promotional Pampers strategy Procter & Gamble had the following marketing messages: 'Baby Sleeps with 20% Less Disruption' and 'Baby Falls Asleep 30% Faster'. The strategy of these messages is to imply that the cognitive development of Chinese babies can be improved by the extra sleep generated by the nappy. Furthermore, it appears that the pressure on parents to guarantee their child's academic success has been driven by the one child policy and is part of the Chinese culture. Consequently, Procter & Gamble should have used this argument in order to engage more Chinese customers and generate a more creative promotional message. It can be said that there is everything to be gained by Procter & Gamble getting the Chinese customers more engaged with the essence of the disposable nappies that it is selling.

6. Define strategic planning. How does strategic planning for Procter & Gamble differ in the Chinese domestic market to the international market?

Strategic planning is a systemised way of relating to the future. Procter & Gamble systemised the way that they introduced Pampers to parents in China in order to slowly create demand over a period of time. This was done by appealing to the collectivist nature of the culture. Strategic planning is an attempt to manage the effects of external uncontrollable factors to attain a desired end. Procter and Gamble employed the knowledge and skills of a local marketing and advertising firm to design promotional tools that appealed to the collectivist sensitivity of the locals. Further, strategy is a commitment of resources to a country market to achieve specific goals. Procter & Gamble invested extensively in local Chinese research and development in order to produce a locally manufactured product that met the needs of the Chinese parent, particularly in relation to quality and price.

The principles of strategic planning are not in themselves different between global and domestic marketing, but the intricacies of the operating environments of the MNC such as Procter & Gamble (host country, home and corporate environments), its organisational structure and the task of controlling a multicountry operation create complexity in the processes of international strategic planning. Procter & Gamble is aligned to strategic planning on an international level, which allows for rapid growth of the international function, changing markets, increasing competition and the ever-varying challenges of different national markets such as those found in China.