

### Suggested answers

#### **1. Why was Diesel's controversial product marketing campaign 'Be Stupid' successful or unsuccessful?**

The 'Be Stupid' product marketing campaign was launched by Diesel with the aim of creating product and brand awareness. As product branding can contribute to the redefinition of the company's attitudes and values, the company was successful in achieving this within its strategy. Diesel defines its products as hip, revolutionary, provoking and innovative fashion targeted toward teenagers and young adults. The company communicated its product's image to its consumers through the 'Be Stupid' campaign as having a philosophy of freedom, taking life easy and having more fun through the use of the Diesel product.

The desired product and brand awareness was successfully created, as the campaign caused massive public disputes and even legal action by the UK government. Diesel's multimedia approach focused specifically on the youth market. The strong interaction through and usage of social media brought the products closer to the customer, whilst at the same time creating an image of hipness and bravery for the brand.

So even though the adaptation of the controversial marketing campaign may have caused massive objections, it certainly was successful in bringing Diesel's products back into the focus of the targeted consumer group by using various communication channels and a thought-provoking and challenging marketing message.

#### **2. How well did Diesel manage to target its customers?**

Looking at Diesel's different customer groups, one can say that this campaign solely targeted the youth market with its products. But the company's product portfolio also includes upscale fashion and luxury fashion products that have been designed and developed specifically for higher income customers aged 20–30. The 'Be Stupid' product marketing campaign however does not match the niche and product image of the luxury consumer lines that Diesel sells. As the Diesel campaign aimed to define brand awareness, it targeted customer groups rather poorly. The upmarket customers would have been alienated by the message of the advertisement as they would not want to purchase a product which is associated with stupidity and mass idiocy. Diesel seems to have miscalculated its target demographic as the group which is attracted by the campaign, teenagers, would struggle to have the purchasing power to procure the upmarket Diesel products.

**3. From a cultural perspective, are Diesel's products applicable to the general world market that Rosso insists on addressing with the global marketing strategy?**

Even though Rosso views the world as a single, borderless macro-culture, and insists on launching products with a generally controversial international marketing strategy, the 'Be Stupid' campaign may detract from promoting the product as it is not applicable to all marketplaces. The campaign for the Diesel products was developed according to the cultural norms and standards of western cultures and does not consider cultural values of other regions of the world, and how this might impact upon product entry strategies.

Even in a country with a western culture, the product's promotional campaign received objections and was banned partially in the United Kingdom. Notwithstanding this, it was quite successful and well-perceived by the younger target audience. This will not be the case in other cultures which are less individualistic, and particularly those cultures that have a greater respect for authority. If they were to see the Diesel product advertisements, which would have been highly unlikely in many countries, the targeted youth market, due to cultural differences, would not be as fascinated by the philosophy of the campaign. It is likely that potential consumers in some cultures, such as that of those of the Middle East and China, might have found it even more disrespectful than in western cultures. Furthermore, the campaigns for Diesel's products were based on intensive, state-of-the-art technology, as well as social media which are highly advanced and popular in most western countries.

**4. Discuss the various objectives that Diesel may have sought when using the internet as part of its integrated marketing communication strategy in targeting the youth market. Provide examples of how Diesel pursued each.**

A number of communications objectives as well as marketing objectives may be sought through the use of the internet. These include:

- Diesel firstly aimed to **create awareness**—for many companies, both large and small, the internet may be an effective tool for creating awareness. The ability to search creates an opportunity for companies such as Diesel to generate awareness at a much reduced budget. Go to Google, and search for 'travel'. Notice the companies that come up offering travel services, travel insurance, etc. Some are well known while others may be companies you have never heard of.

- Diesel has **generated interest**—numerous companies such as Diesel use the internet to generate interest. You have had the opportunity to visit the Diesel site, and notice the number of things that can be done on the site to keep you there. Many internet companies refer to this as the ‘stickiness’ of their site. For extra research you may like to also visit the Coca-Cola site and see just how interactive it is.
- Diesel has used it to **disseminate information**—perhaps the major advantage of the internet over other media is the ability to provide a lot of information, and to keep it current. You have seen a variety of Diesel’s fashion campaigns disseminated to various target groups in this case. Other institutions such as government agencies, non-profit organisations and most for-profit companies provide much information on their sites for consumers to use.
- Diesel has **created an image**—by visiting the various Diesel sites and those of other clothing companies (such as Louis Vuitton and Nike) or women’s accessories companies, you will immediately understand the use of the internet to create an image.
- Diesel has developed its **branding**—marketers are now beginning to understand how to use a website to brand a product. You have had the opportunity to see how Diesel has also used electronic mediums to co-brand with both Mercedes Benz and Sony.
- Diesel has its own **sales** online—and any company that is not selling online is missing out on a considerable consumer opportunity as this area of sales grows. Have a look at other sales specialists (Amazon.com, eBay) and other sites that are designed specifically to generate sales.

5. Find two Diesel ‘Be Stupid’ advertisements that you have seen and read about and that you think make poor use of the perception process. Justify your selection.

The advertisements you have chosen will vary; however, it is likely that in relation to the perception process, evaluation of the Diesel 'Be Stupid' campaign will revolve around a few key issues:

**Exposure:** exposing inappropriate messages to the wrong audience; for example, Diesel saying to 'be smart is to be stupid'.

**Attention:** using disturbing or offensive images and language to gain attention; for example, Diesel's band UK advertisements.

**Interpretation/comprehension:** making it unclear to the audience and being misleading; for example, advertisements designed to look like stupid acts while aiming to seek the attention of the youth market. These advertisements could in fact lead to serious harm to those who interpreted them incorrectly.

