

Global Marketing Practices that Created Controversies and How They Could Possibly Be Avoided

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Abstract

This research paper is aimed at highlighting various controversies created by certain global marketing and advertising practices by several organizations including leading multinational corporations. Before showcasing the actual controversial marketing campaigns and advertisements, this article deals with introductory aspects of marketing and advertising, the impact of marketing on customers' behaviours and offers an overview of global marketing. This paper describes the marketing mishaps including Pepsi's advertisement campaign featuring Kendall Jenner, IKEA's Saudi Arabia product catalogue, Audi's car commercial in China, Dove's social media campaign, Boden's catalogue and more recent Surf Excel India's Holi advertisement. All these campaigns and advertisements landed the respective companies into controversies drawing serious public flak and online uproar against them. This article also largely examines the underlying causes behind these controversies and offers broad guidelines and thumb rules to avoid such controversies. Finally, this research article concludes by summarily outlining the key contours and takeaways of the entire research paper.

Keywords: Marketing, Global Marketing, Marketing Mishap, Advertising, Consumer Behaviour, Culture, Culture Marketing, Stereotype Marketing, Diversity Marketing.

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Introduction

Marketing and advertising practices play a crucial role in our daily life. They have the power to shape our society and influence the way we see, think, understand and act (Terkan, 2014). *“Marketing has the amazing ability to catch our attention, to make us feel an array of emotions, spark widespread buzz, and even shape our perceptions”* (Tully, 2018). Advertising and marketing is a powerful tool which is why it has been widely and successfully used by the organizations globally and how this powerful tool should be used to create positive social change (Tully, 2018). Even more profound than influencing our consumption behaviour, marketing a brand, has the ability to shape our aspirations. However, a great deal of damage can be done if care and caution are not exercised while designing and executing marketing campaigns and advertisement strategies.

In order to understand how marketing works, the research paper goes through different theoretical concepts, starting from defining marketing and advertising and considering various influencing factors associated with it. The role of marketing in decision making and in influencing our purchasing decisions has also been explained. It also attempts to analyse extensive changes taking place in the global market that are directly affecting brands, organizations and society in general. Furthermore, it explains the importance of understanding local cultural values and a range of other racial, ethnic, gender-related and religious sensitivities and how these value systems and sensitivities should not be ignored or underestimated during design and implementation of marketing strategies and campaigns.

Based on the relevant examples, several marketing mishaps are mentioned to showcase global marketing failures. Marketing mishaps are prone to happen and there is no single answer to what leads to them. The reasons can range from a simple lack of understanding of consumers and a missing consumer-centric approach to a failure to understand local cultures and values. It is rightly said that understanding your consumers is the only marketing strategy you need. Consumer-centric marketing focuses on ensuring that the consumers are thoroughly understood and are getting exactly what they are looking for through personalized messages, products, services and content. However, a consumer-centric approach is not restricted to marketing. It involves creating a “consumer-centric organization, and not just a functional marketing department.

Moreover, Companies with a global reach operate in multicultural contexts. In such scenarios, ‘one size fits all’ approach is rarely the case. What may be acceptable and appreciable in one country and one cultural setting may be inept and even completely unacceptable in another. Marketing mishaps also occur when companies step upon what can be called as racial, ethnic, gender-related and religious “landmines”. When marketing to specific segments, mishaps may also occur due to rampant stereotyping. Stereotype marketing is an informal concept that refers to marketing campaigns based off of generalized studies or common perceptions about behaviours and values of certain demographic groups (Kumar S. , 2017). While companies often rely on demographic qualities to target specific customer segments, uncertain or offensive stereotypes in ad campaigns don't work and may lead to a negative public backlash.

The examples mentioned showcase how companies across the globe landed into serious controversies through their seemingly “normal” marketing campaigns and advertisements, drawing massive backlash and online uproar from people. The examples also highlight how the same companies responded to the controversies. Furthermore, the paper also outlines the general concepts and practices to be considered while designing effective and “controversy-free” campaigns and advisements before drawing out the conclusion.

Marketing and Advertising

Marketing refers to the process through which businesses or organizations promote themselves and their products by using mass media to communicate with their potential customers. *“Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large”* (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Marketing is restless, always evolving and could be defined as a dynamic business activity (Shatanawi, Osman, & Halim, 2014). Marketing executives are trained to gain the attention of target audiences using creative advertisements to attract and build relationships with consumers through advertising. Advertising is a form of communicative activation that can be informative and persuasive in nature; utilizing the mass media to induce the targeted audiences to purchase the particular goods and services that are being widely advertised (Kumar & Raju, 2013).

Advertising has immensely evolved over the past two decades (Burnett, 2008). Back in the olden days, people used symbols, and pictorial signs to woo their consumers and written advertisements were produced at a limited scale for promotions. Later on, this phenomenon gained strength more intensively for promotional purposes. Modern marketing began in the early 1950s when businesses started to utilize digital media rather than just print media to endorse their products and services (Forsey, 2019). Today, in the era of technology, advertisements have become one of the major sources of the communicational tool between the manufacturer and the consumer (Kumar & Raju, 2013). The internet has restructured advertising in the most surprising way. Not only has it changed the way ads are telecasted, but it has also changed the way consumers show their interest level towards them (Gallegos, 2016). Advertising and marketing plans are specifically designed and targeted to promote a new product or an existing ones; marketing includes all types of advertising, ranging from social media, websites, television commercials, printed hand-outs, road shows, and outdoor billboards (Terkan, 2014). Organizations spend a substantial amount of money on marketing to increase their sales. Be it an existing or a new product, marketing a product, has become increasingly popular as more and more business firms turn to it as a tool for getting their products or services known by their consumers (Ramya & Ali , 2016).

In addition to that, there are basic features for marketing a brand, that is, it creates an awareness of consumers, it is informative and also, it can persuade the targeted audiences. According to a survey by (Kumar & Raju, 2013), advertisements are the strong means of communication media to convey the intended message to the product users. Advertisements are likely to change the opinion of the customers about the product. Marketing service or a product benefits society as a whole in several key ways. For

instance through different strategies and tactics, it educates consumers on different products and services that particular company has to offer, the ultimate goal however for marketing strategies is to convince consumers to attract and make a purchase. Such marketing strategies are essential for business marketing as it does not only help organizations to sell their goods and services but it also affects their product price as well as its quality (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Through marketing products consumers gain detailed information about them. Advertising is important for healthy competition among businesses in order to drive them towards offering better quality product and services to their consumers (Terkan, 2014).

Furthermore, advertising helps to speed up the introduction of new inventions, promotion of innovation, process of industrialization and expansion of businesses. It also helps to increase the productivity of companies and generally raises the standard of living in society by creating jobs for people. Consumers define the product and service in their mind according to the advertising of a brand. However, it is also important that quality should not be compromised in the blind race for advertising as these two factors act complementarily. It is obvious that the attitudes and behaviour of the people targeted may be significantly affected by marketing ultimately influencing consumers buying behaviour. Moreover, creative marketing and advertising also enable businesses improve their market share.

The impact of marketing on customer's behaviour

Marketing has a number of positive as well as negative effects on a consumer's buying behaviour. Since the late 1800s, psychologists and scholars have been studying the ways in which such marketing and advertising can affect a person mentally as well as emotionally. The impact of marketing and advertising has on society is a long and heated debate with a wide array of opinions on the issue (Hayko, 2010). On a positive note, marketing encourages businesses to compete and provide new products which ultimately encourages more and more consumers to make a purchase because these products and services meet the needs and wants of such consumers. Hence the economy is positively affected. Usually, marketing has a persuasive intent, but it generally begins when a company identifies a customer need and seeks to explain how its product and service could meet that particular need. For instance, an urban boy has different wants and needs than a suburban man, so both are likely to use different criteria when it comes to footwear, clothes, food or smartphones. For the urban boy and the suburban man, both are with clearly defined needs, therefore it encourages businesses to come up with new products that are designed to satisfy the needs of a consumer. One of the best ways in which marketing benefits society is by informing and educating consumers and making them aware of a particular brand, product, service and so on (Burnett, 2008). On the other hand, marketing and advertising may overrule cultural differences and contribute to those in a positive way by putting everyone on the same level. Expanding globally into new markets has become a priority for budding businesses. It has become a central pursuit for some of the country's largest consumer brands to connect with diverse and integrated consumers (Pozin, 2015). However, targeting international markets is not only a linguistic challenge but sharp distinction in cultural values which can present an additional barrier to success. *"Brands that are serious about engaging with consumers in foreign markets need to offer a more culturally relevant connection with their audience."* a statement found in a study

commissioned by CMO Council (Williams , 2016). Culture creates social and economic value because it constructs our beliefs. As such, marketing continues to impact the daily lives of consumers significantly by acting as the source information for various products and services as well as by influencing the way they think and perceive. Marketing also has an impact on their beliefs, thoughts, attitudes and buying decisions. However, this is a two-way street. Like marketing has an impact on consumer behaviour, consumer behaviour also controls the type of marketing strategy companies employ.

Global Marketing

Global marketing can be described as the process of adapting the marketing strategies of an organization to adjust to the conditions of different countries. The increased rate of technological advancement of communication and transportation, the world has become a smaller market for businesses to tap. It involves the four P's of marketing- planning, producing, positioning, and promoting business products or services in a global market (Williams , 2016). According to the reports by (Nielsen, 2015), multicultural consumers' population has immensely transformed the U.S mainstream. Its buying power has grown at an exceptional rate, increased from \$661 billion in 1990 to 3.4 trillion in 2014. As mentioned above, expanding businesses globally has become a priority for some of the largest consumer brands. Businesses are attempting to understand the global culture and connect authentically with consumers. But unfortunately, building that connection with consumers around the globe is sometimes easier said than done. There have been numerous marketing mishaps usually resulting from some large businesses constantly trying and failing to gain a foothold in a global market because their marketing strategies lack an understanding of local culture, manners and etiquette. On the other hand, mostly managers associated with the marketing failure tend to leave the firm or are moved to other areas (Burt, Dawson, & Sparks, 2003). The lessons learned from certain marketing mishaps are likely to be lost through the turnover of personnel. However, this does not solve the problem, rather organizations should learn from such failure and avoid making similar mistakes in future.

Recent Global Marketing Mishaps to Learn from

The today's world is an era of technology and organizations are exploring new media channels to market their brand. As the competition is getting intense. Marketers make mistakes as they tend to miss a certain tactic or a strategy that ultimately leads to a marketing fail. In fact, even the biggest, most recognizable brands make biggest of mistakes and these blunders can be incredibly costly. For instance, below mentioned are some of the recent yet biggest global marketing fails to learn from.

Pepsi Attempting to Use Counterculture and Protest Movements to Sell its Product.

Arguably one of the most spectacular marketing fails in recent years is Pepsi's advertisement campaign. Pepsi seemingly started on the right foot by featuring one of the most well-known celebrities around the globe, Kendall Jenner. Pepsi tried to project a global message of unity and peace as they wanted to equate their product as a culturally unifying force (D'Addario, 2017). In this two and a half minute ad campaign video,

celebrity Kendall Jenner is seen busy photo shooting somewhere at the roadside, and she comes across this scene of people protesting along the road, holding protest boards with a message of “peace”. Soon after she leaves the photo-shoot, wipes away her lipstick and rips off her blonde wig to join the protesters that approach a line of police officers. As the political impasse continues, Jenner picks up a can of Pepsi, offers it to the police officer which defuses the whole situation into smiles, cheers, and hugs. Not a bad idea to bring people together to peace and love. However, the result was outrageous because the gesture of the celebrity in the advertisement, approaching the police officer, explicitly references the icon gesture of a black woman ‘Ieshia Evans’, as seen in (The Guardian, 2016), the lady has taken a stand in the face of heavily armoured riot police during a “Black Lives Matter” protest following the fatal shooting of African Americans in 2016. The moment this ad campaign was launched, Pepsi was ridiculed for co-opting protest movements of Black Lives Matter in Baton Rouge. It continued to be heavily mocked and condemned across all popular social media platforms as people demanded a response from the global drinks company (Sanghani, 2017). Later, in an apology, Pepsi said “*Pepsi was trying to project a global message of unity, peace, and understanding. Clearly, we missed the mark and we apologize. We did not intend to make light of any serious issue*” (D’Addario, 2017). One of the real-life protester’s daughters posted an image of her father ‘Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’ who is literally being pushed back by a police line and she tweeted: “*If only Daddy would have known about the power of #Pepsi.*” that tweet of hers drew scorching criticism on social media. Pepsi later replied to the tweet “*We at Pepsi believe in the legacy of Dr. King & meant absolutely no disrespect to him & others who fight for justice*” (Smith, 2017). Pepsi doesn’t seem to be the only multinational brand attempting to use counterculture and protest movements to sell its product. Back in 1971, Coca-Cola made a similar blunder to its iconic song “I’d Like to Teach the World to Sing,” and that advertisement rode the wave of flower-power movement (Ati, 2014). Flower-power movement is basically a slogan used as a symbol of passive resistance and non-violence ideology, which had emerged in opposition to the Vietnam War during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Such marketing campaign failures prove that businesses that plan to have a strong global image for their brand should be sensitive to the cultural factors in their target markets.

IKEA’s Blunder in Saudi Arabia - Lack of Cultural Knowledge

IKEA, the world’s biggest knockdown furniture retailer, had come under scathing criticism in its home market Sweden when it airbrushed women on their catalogues in Saudi Arabia, raising questions about its policies towards gender equality. Several images in their catalogue- both printed hand-outs as well as the published on Ikea's Saudi website, showed women completely absent in a number of promotional scenes (BBC News, 2012), whereby women were clearly shown in the other versions of the catalog. Although, Saudi Arabia is listed as the world’s most gender-segregated nation (National Geography, 2016), and their women live under various restrictions like they need the consent of the male guardian, when it comes to travel or work but the country does not prohibit depictions of women in advertising (Cullers, 2012). She further asserts that it wasn’t clear why Ikea airbrushed women from its catalogue. Most of the marketing mishaps could be avoided if the company focused on staying true to their values (Click, 2015). Had they published an entirely new catalogue for Saudi Arabia, the public wouldn’t have reacted to this extent. Marketing internationally comes with a host of unique considerations that

many marketers take for granted. Ikea could have simply used pictures that were culturally relevant that could have reflected the needs of the local audiences, maybe a woman dressed in black, not necessarily showing her face, would have made a huge difference on their cultural values.

Women Likened to a Used Car by Audi

In 2017, Audi's car commercial in China landed them into hot water for comparing women to used cars. The commercial starts with a couple getting married, where the mother of a groom interrupts the wedding ceremony. She fiercely walks down the aisle, approaching the couple and starts to inspect the bride by grabbing her nose, pulling her ears and peers at her mouth inside out to check whether her daughter-in-law to be, is up to standard. The commercial is promoting used Audis that have been inspected carefully and officially certified for resale. "*An important decision must be made carefully*" says its tagline. As the commercial was released in theatres and on online platforms, it was promptly criticized. Later, Audi apologized and the ad was withdrawn completely (Gao, 2017). According to the reports (Bloomberg Business, 2017), Audi is losing ground to newer models. Their sales have dropped 12% in the first half of the year as they faced dealer discontent all over the country. The woman represented in the commercial is not just stereotypical but unethical and highly offensive representation for likened to a used car. To promote negative images of women makes no commercial sense for advertisers says (Pettersen, Story, & O'Mally, 2009). Two hundred advertisements were analysed for over a 12-year period from 1994 to 2005 (Schaffter, 2006), which revealed that gender stereotyping is still being widely used in marketing agencies. Truth to be told, women attribute strongly amongst the industry's clients and represent a remarkable percentage in the target market.

Racism runs in Dove's History

Furthermore, in 2017, Dove, a personal care brand owned by Unilever, was accused of racism over the online advertising campaign and it later admitted it had "missed the mark" with an image posted on Facebook. The advertisement showed a black woman removing her top to reveal a white woman underneath supposedly after using Dove body lotion, the white woman then removes her top and turns into a Middle Eastern woman. Following the removal of the advert, Dove, which is owned by Unilever, tweeted: "*An image we recently posted on Facebook missed the mark in representing women of colour thoughtfully. We deeply regret the offense it caused.*" In a further statement Dove said that being a part of a campaign for Dove body wash, a three-second video clip was posted to the US Facebook page, the video does not represent the diversity of real beauty which is something Dove is passionate about and it should not have happened (Astor, 2017). Dove removed the post and did not publish any other related content and subsequently apologized for the offense that it had caused. However, the damage was done and the image led to a widespread backlash and a spree of negative comments on the internet of Dove calling for a complete boycott of Dove's products.

Boden's Sexist Marketing Stunt

In February 2019, Boden, a British clothing retailer selling primarily online and by mail order and catalogue, in the latest issue of the fashion brand's Mini Boden catalogue, courted criticism online after characterizing boys as adventurers and girls as flower collectors. One page read: "Boys start every adventure with a bike (or a pair of very fast legs), fellow mischief makers and clothes that can keep up'. The corresponding copy to promote girls clothes said: 'Girls, new clothes are in sight. Fill your pockets (and wardrobe) with flowers and race this way.'" The catalogue was widely criticized for gender stereotyping and for overtly emphasizing the contrast between a boy's stereotypical personality traits and a girl's. There was an online uproar against Boden for running a series of "sexist" print executions that perpetuated gender stereotypes. Responding to a backlash, Boden said: "We're so sorry for blotting our copybook in such style. While it wasn't our intention to ever stereotype the roles of boys and girls, we probably over-egged things a little here. At Boden, we are totally committed to gender equality, and firmly believe in equal roles and opportunities for boys and girls – in fact, we have a male founder and a female chief executive (Bovingdon, 2019). We really appreciate you bringing this to our attention, and will ensure that such a mishap doesn't happen again. Please accept our sincere apologies. And we will ask Don Draper to stop writing our copy." Boden isn't the first brand to land into a controversy over gender stereotyping. In 2016, Gap, an American worldwide clothing and accessories retailer, faced a backlash online over an ad for its GapKids clothing range. The image compared a young boy wearing an Einstein t-shirt, with a caption that read: "The Little Scholar: Your future starts here' with that of a young girl, accompanied with the strapline 'the social butterfly."

Surf Excel's Misinterpreted Ad

More recently, in March 2019, Surf Excel, a Unilever brand that is currently marketed as the counterpart brand of OMO detergent in the India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka markets, in its one-minute ad in India titled 'Rang Laaye Sang' (colors bring us together) featured two kids, a little Hindu girl, and a Muslim boy, enjoying Holi with other kids. The ad shows the girl choosing to get stained with colors to protect her Muslim friend who has to go to a nearby mosque to offer namaaz (prayer). The ad ends with the boy entering the mosque, in a pristine white kurta-pajama (traditional Muslim dress), and promising the girl he'll join in the celebrations soon after. The advertisement drew flak from various Hindu religious groups on several grounds. However, it was also applauded by many for portraying a spirit of religious inclusion and diversity (Sharma, 2019). Marketing campaigns based on religious and minority-related themes have often led to such controversies across the globe as they have a tendency to easily be misinterpreted.

How to overcome the Global Marketing Mishaps

A fundamental part of overcoming a marketing failure is that the marketing team needs to do a survey in order to understand the particular market. As the organizations plan to expand into new global markets, marketing teams are inevitably tasked to construct and establish a customer base through targeted regional campaigns. This can be challenging for a marketing team, especially when team members don't have enough experience working in a host country. Issues of culture, language, data regulation, and other factors create a difficult marketing environment for international brands. But with the right

content strategy that set up localization techniques, brands can easily establish themselves in a foreign market and build a customer base that will ultimately lead to profitable returns. Therefore, organizations should be very careful when going global and they should not underestimate the impact of culture on their advertising campaigns (Athapaththu, 2015). The author further asserts that global marketing is the process which brings a product to the host market. It should be a complex and well-organized process that is able to conceive and then convey an idea to different cultures.

Culture is basically the social behaviour and norms found in human societies, in other words, it is the influence of social, family, educational, and religious systems on people, how they live their lives, and the choices they make. Marketing always exists in an environment moulded by culture. “Culture plays a significant role as it is the opinion of specific groups. The social and cultural effects can affect the business differently from country to country.” (Yeng & Yazdanifard, 2015). Meaning all cultures have their individual sets of customs and taboos. It is very important for business firms to learn about it so that they have a vivid understanding of what is acceptable for their marketing campaigns and what is not. For instance, if a business is targeting a Chinese market in Malaysia, the number four (4) is considered unlucky because it sounds a lot like the word for ‘death’ in their language says (Jaffe, 2015), hence product packages or even price, containing number 4, would be avoided by many consumers. Culture is complex; its influence takes significant time, effort, knowledge, and skills (Athapaththu, 2015). Various features of a culture can create an illusion of similarity, but marketers need to make sure the environment is thoroughly understood before they invest their money and efforts into the business. Marketing across cultures entails a distinctive sensitivity to the diversity of human needs. No doubt, marketers constantly stick to the principles and statements like “know your audience”, the problem arises when they face with a culture completely different than their own, and they simply do not know how to gain that knowledge. Marketing is the control of cultural messages. Therefore, how well a message does in realizing its goals hinges on the fact that how well somebody knows that particular environment.

Moreover, when a brand goes global, most of the business firms adopt international strategies and tactics for their communication message. This proposition may work well when approaching a mass audience but it would be at great risk for the brand to gain an identity into a foreign market. A global retailer might face barriers as it is difficult for retailers to enter foreign markets by acquiring domestic players (Yeng & Yazdanifard, 2015). The key is to localize message in a way that connects with cultural values of the targeted market, this will motivate the consumers to engage with the brand. Also, such an approach may make valuable connections and lead to conversion. This is where culture marketing has been adopted by some companies. Cultural marketing is a kind of marketing where a message is promoted to a certain group of potential customers who belong to a particular culture or demographic.

Language is another way to localize marketing message but it’s not as simple as it seems. Language barriers need to be addressed effectively by the advertiser in order to avoid collapses in international marketing procedures (Athapaththu, 2015). Slogans, idioms, funny content or puns often don’t directly get translated between languages. For instance, KFC in China made its consumers a little apprehensive in the beginning when

their slogan "finger licking good" was translated as "eat your fingers off." Also, Coors, a brewing company, translated its slogan, "Turn It Loose," into Spanish, where it is a colloquial term for having diarrhoea (James, 2014). Therefore, it's important for brands to dig deeper in order to avoid such mishaps and may think of partnering with the right translation service provider in the host country. As can be seen, language can be a key factor to make or break that meaningfully connects between a company and its clients. For instance, in 2017 Air Asia, a Malaysian low-cost airline, in its inaugural flight at the Srinagar airport of Kashmir, became the first ever airline that made the flight announcements in the local Kashmiri language instead of the usual norm of making the flight announcements in the Hindi language, which is the official language of India says (Malik, 2017). This unconventional departure from Hindi to Kashmiri was warmly received by the locals and created a widespread positive vibe about the newly launched Air Asia services across the Kashmir valley.

Certain marketing mishaps can also be a result of thoughtless stereotyping. Stereotype marketing is an informal concept that refers to marketing campaigns based off of generalized studies or common perceptions about the behaviours and values of certain demographic groups. While companies often rely on demographic qualities to target specific customer segments, uncertain or offensive stereotypes in ad campaigns don't work and may lead to negative public backlash, for instance, Audi's car commercial in China and the IKEA's campaign in Saudi Arabia. Stereotype marketing usually has two aspects. First, it involves the exploitation of specific groups and/or perceptions to create a product image. Second, a target market segment. Stereotype marketing involves creating stereotyped marketing materials as well as a stereotypical segmentation and approach to the marketplace itself. Stereotype marketing campaigns are aimed at creating a certain image or message. A stereotype marketing campaign may surround the product with suggestive images or information that implies a certain message. Commonly employed stereotypes include based on gender, class, income, origin, etc. Although stereotyping marketing has been used as a vital tool to show customers as individuals with common needs, thoughtless stereotyped images with mechanistic attribute and behaviours have often lead to a marketing mishap than create a personalized connection with the consumer.

Race and ethnic consciousness refer to the awareness of membership in a racial or ethnic group by both group members and the larger society in which they reside. Staying balanced while covering race and ethnicity is vital in avoiding such marketing mishaps. Minority audiences can be particularly sensitive. Diversity marketing has been a buzzword in this regard. Customers of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and religious compositions have different values, experiences, expectations, and ways of interacting. Even within larger groups, such differences will be apparent between different subgroups—not just ethnicity, but also age, gender, profession, religion, family size, physical environment, and more. Diversity marketing involves acknowledging that marketing and advertising must offer alternative ways of communicating to these diverse groups. With that knowledge, diversity marketing thus helps avoid any marketing mishaps by aiming at developing a mix of different communication methods, in order to reach people in each of the diverse groups present in the market.

Conclusion

Marketing is a means to connect a company or an organization with people in general and the prospective clients or buyers in particular. Marketing mistakes do exactly the opposite. They disconnect the people from the company, draw a wedge between the prospective buyers and the company and in several cases can result in disaster, costing the company involved thousands of dollars in lost revenues and other expenses. Therefore, it becomes imperative to ensure such mishaps are best avoided. A better understanding of the targeted audience, taking into due consideration various sensitivities of the people targeted through the campaigns especially their socio-cultural, ethnic, and religious sensitivities. Moreover, choosing the right words fit to the local, regional and national contexts and avoiding rampant stereotypical and rigid world view approaches is also the key in avoiding such mishaps. At the same time, one has to make sure that in an attempt to localize and best suit the content to the local audiences, the international standards, and global values are also not undermined. Newer and casual concepts like culture marketing, stereotype marketing, diversity marketing need to be further explored and understood to develop more inclusive and far-reaching marketing campaigns and advertisements. Despite all the care and caution, marketing mishaps and controversies may still occur. In such cases, post-occurrence management is the key. More importantly, the lessons learned out of such an unfortunate occurrence can ensure such mishaps are not repeated in the future.

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