

Marketing to kids

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Marketing is not only the lubricant of supply and demand, it is sometimes the driver, and that is a powerful position to hold and when in the hands of a child, you have a fully loaded emotional weapon aimed in the direction of your store.



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I have first-hand evidence of this. It was a rainy Monday as the small hand pulled me across the road and into the shop, with an urgency that could only find solace at the foot of an angry red bird, next to a bug-eyed green pig with a mean smile and a skew crown.

“Please can I get one” pleaded the small person alongside me.

“Why?” I asked her puzzled, wondering why would anyone want these clearly emotionally dysfunctional characters?

“Because they are sooo cute.”

Silence followed this last comment as the small child continued staring lovingly at the angry, Frida Kahlo looking bird.

“Look mom, it says if I collect four stickers I can get one for only R89.99!”

Someone please come up with an app that allows parents to change the copy on certain posters and ads. Or at least make it unreadable, better still replace it with some educational material, some maths sums perhaps?

“Not exactly. To get one sticker you need to spend R150. So that fluffy toy actually costs R689! It’s all in the small print.”

“Yes, but you were going to do your shopping here anyway so....it’s like for free” said small person pushing the trolley ahead triumphantly.

Show of hands. How many of you have driven just that much further to go to a Checkers, Spar or Pick’n Pay? How many have...

“It’s not FAIR!!!... I just need one more, pleaaassssse!” the high pitched wail of a boy in aisle three broke my chain of thought as the red faced mom threw back a stern: “Because I don’t need it” while taking an item out of her trolley.

Boy: 0 Mom: 1

My daughter shrugged her shoulder in mock horror as I stared at her with the ‘see, told you look.’

What marketers need to understand is that behind every fluffy toy, are a hundred angry no’s from parents. Behind every collectors card is a worn out parent having to negotiate 150 ‘because’, closely followed by the tears of children too small to understand. And that’s the bone truth, hidden in the messy fine print of life. Adults are able to pick and choose between the bull and truth of ad land, we have the cognitive ability to see through outrageous claims and actual benefits. Kids can’t. We need to help them navigate through this grey speak and equip them with the skills they need to understand the difference between ‘want’ and ‘need’, because marketing and branding is here to stay; it’s part of life and it doesn’t have to be all bad.

As I got to the till the enthusiastic cashier handed my child a leaflet for the collection running in store and asked her if she knew how it works... When I asked her for a pack of U-turn cards she looked at me blankly.

“They are vouchers for the homeless – it comes in a pack of five... green and white looking cards?” I offered.

“No, I don’t think we have that...” she said looking about her.

“But I usually get them here...perhaps your manager knows where they are.”

Manager came up and after some scratching about, pulled out a small pack from under her counter.

“Sorry, mam – I didn’t know about them.” The cashier offered apologetically.

“Maybe you could put a poster up next to Red so people know about the vouchers!” offered my daughter excitedly.

“That’s a great idea”, I said, as the manager smiled and walked away.

We’re working on the poster....until then, here’s the fine print.

U turn vouchers are a hand up to many street people and also a constructive way to show children how to help others, without expecting anything in return.

Each voucher entitles a street person to second hand clothing or one meal. They are R40 for a pack of 5 and a great alternative to handing out cash, which if you’re like me I never have when I need it.

To find out more visit www.homeless.org.za or ask for them at Rosmead Avenue SuperSpar, Westerford KwikSpar, Claremont Main Rd, Engen, Wynberg Engen and Guys Service Centre in Plumstead.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>