Brand Analysis: MAC Cosmetics

Writing Assignment 2 Final

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**Brand:** MAC Cosmetics

**Brand History and Mission**

MAC Cosmetics was founded in 1984 by “makeup artist and photographer, Frank Toskan, and beauty salon owner, Frank Angelo” in Toronto, Canada, who collaborated to create makeup products full of color and boldness that would photograph well for their photography shoots and professional interests (“Our History,” n.d.). The plain black sleekness of the packaging, formulations of the products, strong customer relationships, and impudent attitude captured the industry’s leading brands’ interests. The Estee Lauder companies purchased a significant share of the company in 1995, expanding the brand overseas, and later bought the remainder of the company in 1998 (“Our History,” n.d.). MAC Cosmetics stands by its mission: “All Races, All Sexes, All Ages,” which is to embrace and attract all consumers (Coleman-Lochner, 2013). MAC aims to be the world’s paramount makeup sovereignty among makeup professionals and the average consumer by meeting customers’ need for “superior quality, service, and to provide secure and challenging work environment for all employees” (Samson, 2014).

**Product Category, Partnering Firms, and Sales Venue**

MAC Cosmetics falls into the cosmetics product category and its website can be visited at [https://www.maccosmetics.com/](https://www.maccosmetics.com/). MAC Cosmetics also has many partnering firms including Macy’s, Nordstrom, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Neiman Marcus just to name a few. The type of sales venue is Brick-n-Click, meaning people are able to shop in physical store and online. Some locations include the MAC Counter at Center City Macy’s, the MAC Store in The Gallery in Philadelphia, the MAC Counter at Nordstrom’s in the Cherry Hill Mall, the MAC Store in the Cherry Hill Mall, and the MAC Store in the King of Prussia Mall.

**Target Market & Website Analysis:**

Based solely on MAC Cosmetics’ website, the brand’s target market is Millennials. The brand presents a range of different ways to express oneself through their homepage including an array of new collections, photos of creative and “out-of-the-box” makeup looks, a “chosen for you” section, lips posed with materials other than lipstick linking to their Instagram campaign, and a mixture of different blog posts from multiple
celebrities, while embracing its clean black and white style. Together, these attract Millennials, especially because of the sleekness of the brand’s style with the splash of colors and individuality. Besides the homepage, MAC lists “What’s New,” Products, Bestsellers, Artistry, Culture, and Stores at the top of the navigation bar, making it easy for its users to interact and use the website. MAC also separates each product line with sub-links so it can persuade its users to take a look at all of the different makeup, primer, and skincare products; brushes and tools; fragrance; and gift card options. Although MAC “celebrates diversity and individuality” and that they “are for ‘All Ages, All Races, All Sexes,’” their website speaks highly to the younger demographic (“What Makes Up M.A.C,” n.d.).

**Demographics and Geographics**

**Age Range:**

Although the brand’s website targets mainly Millennials, MAC Cosmetics does not specifically target one generation or age range, but rather Millennials and Generation Xers. Through the use of female celebrities including Lady Gaga, Rihanna, Miley Cyrus, and other young cultural stars, it is believed that its target market age ranges from teens to mid-fourties, particularly Generation X and Generation Y (Millennials). MAC also celebrates individuality, and female Millennials look towards cosmetics and other beauty products to express their originality and creativity (“Millennials and Beauty: Serving the Eye of a New Generation of Beholders,” 20014). According to MRI Reporter, women ages 18-49 is the largest demographic that uses MAC Cosmetics (“MRI+: Welcome,” n.d.).

**Gender:**

MAC Cosmetics does not limit its products and services to any particular gender, but rather celebrates every gender and sexuality, whether the person be male, female, genderqueer, transgender, heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, transsexual, pansexual, and others, which is seen by the brand’s tagline: “All Races, All Sexes, All Ages,” (Coleman-Lochner, 2013). However, the MRI Reporter shows that women are the primary users of this cosmetic company with over 51.8% of the total user population, though men also purchase products from this brand by representing 48.2% of MAC users (“MRI+: Welcome,” n.d.).
**Education Level:**

According to the MRI Reporter, those who have not attended college make up the largest percentage of MAC users with over 42.6% of the total MAC users, but those who graduated high school come close with 29.8%. This suggests that many of the MAC users do not necessarily value an education, but prefer experimentation and/or make up artistry, heading straight to the workforce, and/or are currently enrolled in high school. However, those who “graduated college plus” make up 28.9% of total MAC users, which suggests that males and females in the professional world also consume this product. Households with an income between $75,000 and $149,999 make up the largest consumer of this product, accounting for 28.7% of the total user population (“MRI+: Welcome,” n.d.). This can suggest that the primary purchasers of this brand are parents who continue to provide for their children.

**Region:**

Because MAC Cosmetics can be pricier, it is believed that more of their commercial-based stores are in metropolitan areas within the same vicinity as high-end department stores and prestigious outlets. The store is heavily populated in urban areas and MAC makeup counters are heavily distributed around prosperous-community malls and shopping centers. The largest percentage of MAC users live in the South and make up 37.5% of all MAC users, while those who reside in the West make up the second largest percentage, with 22.7% of the total user population (“MRI+: Welcome,” n.d.).

**Psychographics & Behavioral Aspects**

After completing the VALS Site survey to complete the context of the user’s persona, it was found that typical MAC Cosmetic customers are “Innovators,” where they are always seeking and using new information, “confident enough to experiment, make the highest number of financial transactions, are future oriented, are most receptive to new ideas and technologies, and enjoy the challenge of problem solving,” amongst other traits. By using the “My Best Segments” site to get psychographic information by zip code, it was discovered that Closter, NJ 07624 contains citizens who embrace the depiction of a MAC user (“Claritas,” n.d.). Because the average income per household is $113,900, people in this area are more willing to spend money, especially on things that excite them, and this leads to more interests in shopping.
By having the purchasing power available to spend more, hobbies and interests may include other luxury lifestyles other than just shopping, like going out to eat and vacationing. Because they are innovators, they are exciting and more likely to experiment with new things, including technology, and their household incomes suggests they are more receptive to try new and upcoming products and services.

**User Intentions:**

Individuals consume MAC Cosmetics to fulfill the need of superior quality makeup products for a more-expensive, value-based price. This brand fulfills its users wants of feeling beautiful in their own skin while expressing themselves through the brand’s high quality makeup products and vast array of lip, eye, and skin products and colors. MAC Cosmetics gives its users the ability to experiment with the plethora of products and those products’ colors, textures, and finishes to see what best suits their interests and comfortability, while pushing these users to new extremes with their immense collections and lines.

**Competition:**

MAC Cosmetics’ top three competitors include NARS, Urban Decay, and Maybelline. Though NARS and Urban Decay are more expensive, they are comparable to MAC Cosmetics in the products and quality both brands offer. Maybelline, while a drugstore brand, is a major competitor of MAC Cosmetics and this is because of the good quality of the brand for a more affordable price. While NARS and Urban Decay target Gen Xers and Millennials who are willing to spend the money on high quality makeup like eye shadow palettes and oil-free foundation (Sharma, 2012), Maybelline targets the younger average makeup consumer ages 16 to 25 who do not have the funds to purchase high quality cosmetics (Lee, 2008).

**Brand Personality Analysis:**

MAC Cosmetics has a reputation for creating and offering superior-quality products and creating an experience for the consumer. According to Pretty Compact, “the brand’s use of bold colors and intense pigments inspire a confident and fearless attitude” and that is something that MAC celebrates (“Brands: MAC Cosmetics,” n.d.). The Vice President of Global Consumer Marketing of MAC argues that it’s about storytelling rather than just selling products, but to take a consumer to a “whole [new] world” (Silva, 2011).
**User Persona (Millennial)**

Raina Cohen is a 24-year old recent graduate from New York University (NYU). She grew up in Closter, NJ, and constantly visited New York City, where she attended many Broadway shows and traveled 5th Avenue while accompanying her mother as she shopped at designer stores. She has always been inspired by the bright colors, busyness, and authenticity of New York City, and could only imagine what it was like to live in the heart of the city. With dreams of working for Vogue, Raina understood the importance of class, style, persuasion, individualism, and self-expression. She used to take her mother’s makeup collection apart and try and experiment with all of the different products and tools at hand. As she grew up, she furthered this interest in beauty and began her own makeup collection at 10 years old, where her mother would give her products she grew away from. While attending NYU to study Journalism and Photography & Imaging, she learned the importance of internships and what it takes to lead the life she has planned. Because she is super interested in appearance, beauty, fashion, and culture, she took it upon herself to build up a professional collection of makeup products for freelance makeup artistry, where she would apply her models’ makeup prior to shooting. She looked towards MAC Cosmetics because of the convenience of the store, the affordable price of their products and tools for her budget, and the vast selection and quality of products, their finishes, colors, and tools for proper application, fearless expression, and artistic experimentation. She built great relationships with the sales associates at MAC Cosmetics in the city and every time she goes back, which is generally once every three weeks, they inform her of new collections and catch up with the intricate details of her life. They continuously teach her more techniques, which she takes in and uses on herself and her clients, and constantly asks for their current favorite products. She loves how professional, yet down to earth the MAC representatives are and believes the friendships she has created over the past few years at this particular MAC store is one of the reasons why she shops there so often. Currently, Raina is working at a women’s designer clothing boutique in the city, where she combines her makeup talent and fashion interest and curates outfits from head to toe with pizzazz. She also dresses models, gives them makeovers, and photographs these women to add to her portfolio and to help advertise the store’s collection. She states that MAC Cosmetics products give off the perfect dimension and pigmentation while shooting and that it is one of the main reasons why she turns to MAC so often. She believes the intense colors they offer allow for a
crossover between “fun and class.” Making $40,000 at the moment and receiving financial help from her millionaire father, she hopes that within the next few years, she will receive the opportunity to work for Vogue and help others with their style and beauty interests, while promoting MAC through her photo-shoots.

**User Persona (Generation X)**

Samara Panzer is a 39-year old lawyer currently residing in Margate, New Jersey. She returned back to her hometown after receiving her undergraduate degree in Sociology from Emory University and after completing her three years of law school, where she studied at Wilmington University’s Law School. She opened up her own law firm where her main focus is on real estate law, and she also helps out at her mother’s family business, which focuses on real-estate development. While she is a professional and must look presentable at all times, Samara turns to MAC Cosmetics for its high-quality makeup and long-lasting wear, besides the affordable price for her $110,000 salary. She particularly admires the brand’s Mineralize Skinfinish Natural line because of the medium coverage, yet natural and conservative look and feel to these products (Taylor and Gao, 2014). Samara is also a fan of MAC Cosmetics’ many eyeliners (pencil, liquid, and gel) and the array of colors each of the products offers. Because she has a very fair pale skin tone and dark hazel eyes, she turns to the prune-colored pencil eyeliner. She feels that when she goes to court, this color is not overbearing to wear on her bottom waterline and towards the outer corner of her upper lash line, and it makes her feel professional, confident, and strong. Married with two young children, Samara makes sure to balance her multiple workloads so she can spend time relaxing and going out with her husband and friends. Even when she goes out, Samara prefers to look more conservative and traditional, but with a bold, muted lip. She claims that MAC Cosmetics has an incredible amount of lipsticks – including the brand’s finishes, textures, and colors. Because she likes to line her lips with the Pro Longwear lip liners for extra color-stay and occasionally apply the Pro Longwear liquid foundation and concealer for days where she is running to drop off her children at school and meeting with many clients, she turns to MAC Cosmetics’ products more so than any other brand. The quality, comfort, and longevity of the products, while colorful but also natural-wear, are the factors Samara looks for while shopping for cosmetics.
**Evaluation of Resources:**

The most useful source in identifying the target market was a mixture of MRI+ Reporter as well as MAC Cosmetic’s website because MRI+ stated the dominant age and gender, while MAC’s website discussed its mission and who the brand targets to. However, MRI+ Reporter was extremely unhelpful in stating MAC Cosmetic’s competitors and the website did not have any information on Urban Decay or NARS. Claritas and VALS were also very beneficial because they made it possible to figure out how MAC Cosmetics think and feel and what area these users reside. The WordPress article and Prezzi presentation that were used, which were written by undergraduate and PhD students, were helpful because they included information that could not be found otherwise and listed sources that were beneficial to conduct the rest of the assignment. All together, it is highly suggested to choose a cosmetic brand such as Maybelline, L’Oreal, or Estee Lauder to complete this assignment because it was difficult finding credible sources to use.
Works Cited


