

Create a Popstar Extension Activity

These classroom activities correspond to the **Don't Buy It** game *Create a Popstar* at <http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/entertainment/popstar.html>

Create a Popstar takes you through the musical career of Evan Starr. As his manager, students are able to make decisions to further his career. They can opt to sell his music to be used in a television commercial or to have Evan Starr appear as a celebrity spokesperson for a soda company, among other choices. After students play this game, discuss the techniques they used to promote Evan Starr's new CD.

Objectives

- Develop an awareness of one's media and consumer habits
- Recognize advertising techniques, such as the use of celebrity spokespersons and music

Materials

- A selection of commercials using popular music
- Teen magazines

Procedure

Music in Advertising

Screen several television commercials that utilize popular music. Have the students consider the following questions:

- Do you regularly notice music in commercials?
- How does music affect the way you feel about the advertised product?
- Can the music used in a commercial make a product more appealing?

Advertisers use music in commercials to convey a particular image of the product. Music can also help them appeal to a particular target audience. A target audience is a group of people that is expected to buy a particular product or service. For example, the target audience for diapers is mothers and fathers with babies.

Fans of a certain type of music might relate better to a commercial that features that music. For example, Sprite commercials use a lot of hip hop music. Sprite is hoping that hip hop fans will buy their soda because of that.

Watch the Britney Spears' commercial for Pepsi featured on *Don't Buy It* at http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/entertainment/makingmusic_pg1.html Consider the following:

- Who do you think might enjoy this commercial?
- Have you ever heard any of your favorite musical artists in a television commercial? If so, what product were they selling?
- Do you think the commercial was effective?

Have the students think about one of their favorite musical artists. What would you think if they used their music to sell the following products? Would it be effective? Why? Why not? What kind of music would you use in a commercial for the following products?

- Garbage bags
- Diapers
- Shampoo
- Pizza
- Paper towels
- Video game

Celebrity Endorsement

Look at the advertisements in some popular teen magazines. Count how many celebrities are in each magazine.

- Who do you see?
- What are they doing in the ad?
- What are they selling?
- Why do companies use celebrities in ads?
- Are you more likely to use a product when a celebrity endorses it?

Considering the above list of products, have the class brainstorm possible celebrity spokespersons for each. Who would be a good celebrity spokesperson for each of these products?

Music Promotion

Create a fictitious musical group and have the class create a promotional plan to promote an upcoming concert. Come up with a target audience and a budget.

Have the class consider different ways that they could promote a concert locally (i.e. flyers, newspaper, radio, television, Internet advertising, billboard, posters or publicity stunts). How many ads should they run? What should the ads look like or sound like? What television and radio stations are the most popular for your target audience?

Contact local television and radio stations for costs on running ads. How do these costs vary depending on different times of the day and during different programs?

For one week, have the class keep a log of the amount of television and radio that they consume. How much time did they spend with each medium? How much did they spend combined? Based on this research, which would be the most effective way to reach them?

Additional Resources

Screen the PBS *Frontline* special, “Merchants of Cool.” This program focuses on the consumer habits of teenagers and the different methods marketers use to target this demographic group. This special can be screened online at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/>.

Screen the PBS *Frontline* special, “The Way the Music Died.” This program focuses on the last thirty years of the record industry, through industry consolidation, Internet theft and artistic drought. This special can be screened online at

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/music/view/>.

Alignments

McREL Viewing Standard

Viewing Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media. Level 2 (Grade 3-5)

BENCHMARK: Understands different messages conveyed through visual media (e.g. main ideas and supporting details; facts and opinions; main characters, setting, and sequence of events in visual narratives).

BENCHMARK: Understand techniques used to convey messages in visual media (e.g., animation; different tones of voice in audio production; adjusting messages for different audiences).

BENCHMARK: Understand techniques used to establish mood in visual media (e.g., use of camera angles and distances to create a specific feeling or point of view, tensions heightened by dramatic music, sound effects such as a heartbeat or squeaking chair, use of a deep voice, somber lighting to imply mystery or fear).