

Brand Republic

Some might ask themselves what went wrong when Heinz released a new ketchup – not in the traditional red colour – but in blue!

The official statement from the company stated that the release of this new blue Heinz ketchup was a move to secure attention among a younger audience – but is this really what kids want?

Recently I happened to purchase a bag of candy in Los Angeles – it was named: Garbage Candy – and looked like any other bag of candy we purchase frequently in the local store. However when opening and tasting the candy it had one major difference from any other candy I've tasted so far – it was simply disgusting. I personally managed to keep the candy in my mouth for less than 5 seconds – which I later on could conclude, from reading the back of the bag – meant I was an absolutely chicken. A friend, which no longer is a friend after this test trail, told me that this was the worst experience she ever have had so far – she managed to keep the candy in her mouth for 3 seconds in total! The instructions on the back of the bag told the user that keeping the candy in the

mouth for 60 seconds would make you to the hero of the day!

And the price of this bag of candy was even higher than any other candy I've purchased over my life so far – despite this Garbage Candy has turned in to be come one of the most successful candy names in the U.S. over the past year.

But what makes kids adore products like green ketchup and Garbage Candy ... is our next generation colour or taste blind, is it the group pressure making them distinct different from any other generation or is it just pure coincidence?

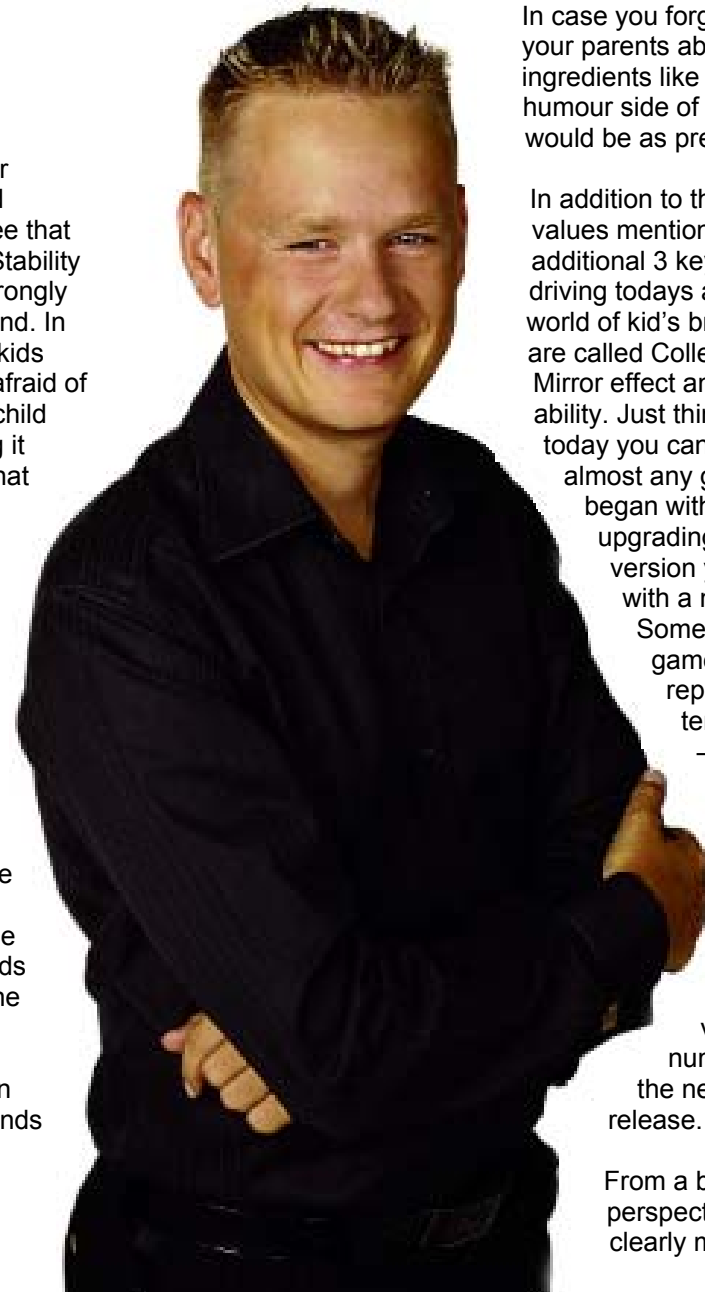
Based on the worlds largest study on kids and their relationship with kids called BRANDchild, a research study creating the basis for my latest book of the same name. From the BRANDchild study I've had a sneak preview into the true world of tweens. What do turn them on – and off for that matter?

We can see that six core values today are driving kids and not to forget kids communication in a way we never have seen before.

These six values are: Mastery, Fear, Love, Stability, Humour and Fantasy.

In particular due to our current unstable world situation you would see that values like Fear and Stability more than ever are strongly present in any kids mind. In fact 96 per cent of all kids across the globe are afraid of terrorism the BRANDchild study reveilles making it obvious to conclude that more and more kids communication over the next months and years most likely will be based on conquering these fearful values.

However Mastery and Humour might be the two values describing why Ketchup is turning blue and candy is turning sour – as you show the world – and your friends that you among anyone is mater enough to conquer a un-eatable candy – by leaving it in the mount for 60 seconds or eating ketchup with the colour blue.



In case you forgotten to warn your parents about ingredients like this – the humour side of this naturally would be as present as ever.

In addition to the six core values mentioned above an additional 3 key drivers are driving todays and the future world of kid's brands. They are called Collection Values, Mirror effect and Gaming ability. Just think about it – today you can collect almost any game, it all began with Microsoft upgrading its software version year by year with a number. Some computer games today represents its tenth generation – in fact any clever boy would never purchase a brand today without knowing its current version number – and the next likely release.

From a brand perspective this clearly means that

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brands most likely in the future will turn into up-gradable brands. You could even imagine that any brand with respect for it selves will be supported by a version number – making kids aware of its current status in the world.

The two other values, mirror effect and gaming ability is interesting. No need to say more than Barbie or Match Box cars and we can all agree to that “mirror effect” is an essential element in almost any successful kids brands platform. However the gaming has turned kids into become gamers – across almost every product category. A success can no longer be measured in feelings – like “I like this” but in a concrete rational decision – like “keep this candy in your mouth for 50 seconds – and you will become a hero”.

From the BRANDchild study it is clear to conclude that any brand appealing to kids in the future would need to include at least 2 if not three of the core 9 values in its marketing strategy to secure ongoing loyalty. In fact we can see that almost all kids brands today are appealing to at

least 3 values – probably explaining why Blue ketchup might be a strategic move not totally off the track.

Will all this mean that healthy “normal” food is forever unfashionable? Probably yes – unless this doesn’t manage to base it selves on the above 9 values. In fact it has become clearer and clearer for me that the taste of a product has become less and less important – what counts is the packaging and branding of the product - at least when we talk about kids.

A Danish candy brand was based on a rather un-traditional naming strategy turning the product into one of the best selling products in Scandinavia. Names like Dog Farts, Seagull Droppings, Big Boobs and Duckweed turned a rather traditional candy into a bestseller in weeks. If you happened to ask the kids about the taste of this product – I’m sure they wouldn’t remember – what they remembered though were the unusual names – breaking the limits, provoking, and not to forget – making peers laugh.

More than ever we can see from the BRANDchild study the label on the product has become more prominent and important in the kids mind that the content. Yes the content needs to represent a high and good level of quality – however that said – in most cases the value of the actual product – beside the quality factor might only count for 1/3 of the total experience. The brand has turned into just being a nice logo to be a totally experience – for whom the kids find essential when picking their brand and bonding with future brands. Sad trend – yes for some – but if you happened to ask the kids I’m sure they would argue against you at any point – and if you still disagree they might even place one of these Garbage Candy in your mouth – and I promise you – this will make you shut up for a while!



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