

Kids today represent an important demographic to marketers. Kids play dual role in market. They act as the buyers or the influencer. They not only buy for themselves but influence their parents' decision also. So, for marketers, kids are a target group which has tremendous purchasing power.

Certain products are simply child products for which kids are the primary users/buyers. Kids either purchase these products themselves or select the product of their choice when parents are there to buy. For other products, which are used by the entire family, kids may influence the decision of purchase made by the parents, by specifying their preference.



Marketing & Kids

Surveys have shown that Decision-making in households changes with the mere presence of child. From the decision of buying cars to cell phones and even grocery, kids are deciding which brands their parents should or should not buy.

Marketing and Kids

Marketers across the world and in India have been targeting children because a child can influence his/her parents' buying decisions and kids are the consumers of the future. Moreover, Parents today buy more for their kids because trends such as smaller family size and dual income have lead to high spending.

Today a child prefers toys, apparels, toothbrush and even stationary which have characters printed on it. Many companies admit that their sales have surged after they started printing characters on their brands. It is the influence of marketing that kid buy textbooks and notebooks which have character printed on them. Marketing has affects kid so much that they wear branded shoes like Reebok or Nike to go to school.

Marketing to children is all about creating pester power. "*Pester power*" refers to children's ability to nag their parents to purchase items, parents may not otherwise buy. Kids use Pester power to get themselves new toys, video games, decide on places to eat out, the clothes they would buy, choice of holiday destinations, etc. Kids even influence decision of buying the stuff like TV, music system, computer, mobile phones, car etc. They also decide what their parents should wear and the places they should visit.

Marketing Techniques:

Many factors can directly influence children's decision making skills and behavior. Marketing comes to kids from all directions, twenty-four seven. Family can be one of the most influential environmental factors. TV, Internet and schools are some factors which affects child decision to buy a product. Marketers use some other techniques also to influence kids buying behavior. Advertisers now have access to in-depth knowledge about children's emotional and social needs.

Marketing on TV:

In spite of the growing popularity of the Internet and computer games, television is still the main electronic medium with which children engage most. Children are usually alone when they watch television. It is the reason that advertisement on television has done wonders for the companies.

Advertising and marketing experts also believes that if a child has a role in an advertisement then obviously it helps the brand. Products that are not meant for kids have also achieved immense success because of kids being part of the brand advertisement. Even banks and insurance companies have roped in kids in their advertisements to send a message to their target audience.

Marketing in Schools:

Marketers have slowly but steadily utilized school systems around the country. Ads are now appearing on school buses, on book covers, etc. Marketers have realized the power of the school environment for promoting their name and products. They are using this medium in a number of ways such as, Sponsored educational materials.

Many marketers advertise their products by sponsoring sports events or cultural events in schools. They also organize competitions for example Camel has been conducting drawing competitions in schools for decades where they advertise their products.

Marketing through Brand licensing:

Marketers also use *Brand licensing* to influence the kids. When an image or logo is used on products other than the one for which it was created, it is said to be Brand Licensing. Marketers design these techniques to lure children to select their products. These techniques continuously remind children of brands when they go to purchase.

Marketing on Internet: The Internet is an extremely desirable medium for marketers looking to target children. The surfing habits of young people make them an ideal target group. Marketers on websites, try to entice children to generate sales.

Marketers see children as a future market and hence brand loyalty at a young age helps for future sales.

The Article has been written by Pankaj Bathla of Welingkar Institute of Management Development and Research.