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EPI TEA: A Social Revolution

Tea culture is undeniably becoming more prominent in America. Now more than ever, with Starbucks purchasing Teavana for six hundred and twenty million dollars, tea is bursting onto the American beverage scene. Looking to make a prominent mark on this new tea movement is the revolutionary tea company, Epi Tea. Epi Tea was created in junction with the rising tea culture and social media to introduce a new way of socializing with tea. Utilization of social media is rapidly becoming a necessity not only for individuals, but for companies as well. Epi Tea's brand is created around innovating a new path in the social media world by giving product influence to the consumer. Giving the consumer power over which new tea blends are introduced into the company's inventory not only integrates the use of social media but also helps identify the consumer's wants.

Epi Tea's big idea is socialization. The company is striving to introduce drinking Epi Tea as a new accessory to socializing. This big idea focuses on the advertising appeal of social integrative needs, the need to feel belongingness and apart of shared experiences that can be satisfied by experiencing Epi Tea. In order to communicate this appeal, several distinct media will be utilized. They consist of one

transit advertisement, two magazine advertisements, two online advertisements, one television spot, and one billboard. With these media, Epi Tea will be exposed in many different formats to assist in creating a position in the consumer's evoked set through repetition. Epi Tea embodies individuality through its refined flavor secured responsibly in ecofriendly biodegradable pyramid sachets. No other company is connected to the consumer's wants like Epi Tea. Epi Tea can be shared amongst friends through social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and many more. These outlets provide opportunities for tea lovers to voice their opinions and be heard by other tea lovers. No other company is connected to the consumers' wants like Epi Tea. Already providing four unique blends for sale, Epi Tea looks to the consumer to elect a fifth blend to the Epi Tea family, as determined by the consumers themselves.

Epi Tea offers tins of twenty-five pyramid sachets for sale on their website for \$9.99 each. Each tin exemplifies the essence of Epi Tea with its quaint and modern appearance. The flavors, Irish Breakfast, Berry Rooibos, Lavender Earl Grey, and Serene Chai, each have their own identity expressed through a unique color on each respective tin. Prospective locations for distribution consist of high-end technology retailers such as Apple and Sony due to Epi Tea's association with technology, but currently Epi Tea is only distributed through its online store. Among Epi Tea's main competitors are other tea companies like Tazo, Republic of Tea, Revolution Tea, Two Leaves and a Bud, Yogi Tea, Tetley Tea, and chain retailers like Starbucks, Barnes and Noble, and Dunkin Donuts, as well as local coffee shops and breweries. These competitors occupy the same market sector as Epi Tea:

bookstores, boutique coffee shops, department stores, and technology stores, especially those with café sections.

The slogan for Epi Tea is “Make Friends with Epi Tea”. This slogan combines the separate associations of socializing implied by Epi Tea. “Make Friends” refers to the act of expanding friends and followers on social media sites as well as physically making new friends through socializing while drinking Epi Tea. This slogan encourages consumers to fully engage in the total social experience Epi Tea offers its tea drinkers. This advertising campaign’s modern and calm colors are representative of the Epi Tea website. This campaign also centers on a common theme of “clinking” together cups. This action symbolizes the interaction between tea drinkers as they communicate over a mutually enjoyed cup of Epi Tea.

Epi Tea’s target market has been carefully formulated to pinpoint the most compatible consumer with the Epi Tea brand. The demographic consists of socially active men and women between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five with middle to upper level of income and refined taste buds. The target market’s psychographic focuses on a generation of educated and sophisticated opinion leaders who wish to occupy a new social outlet. These individuals will most likely have shared interests in modern technologies. Finally, the geodemographic consists of prospective stores in the Northeastern United States, but also has the potential to become a national brand through the possibilities of social media and the Internet.

Epi Tea’s campaign embodies several concepts of Integrated Marketing Communications. The main way Epi Tea’s campaign does this is through product differentiation. Epi Tea is striving to spark a tea revolution and provide a medium

for tea drinkers nationwide to develop a culture pioneered by the drinkers themselves. No other company is connected to the consumers' wants like Epi Tea. The campaign also makes use of IMC practices by having a clear identification and understanding of its target audience. The demographic, psychographic, and geodemographic components necessary for success are all clearly defined through intensive research and consideration. Epi Tea also recognizes not everyone is fortunate enough to experience the luxury of enjoying tea socially. The company pledges to donate 5% of post-tax profits to organizations committed to improving quality of life not only in the United States, but also around the world.

Advertisement: Billboard

The billboard designed for Epi Tea's advertising campaign is simplistic while effectively communicating key concepts to its audience. This billboard contains no copy, only images, the Epi Tea logo, and a QR code. The top half of a single white cup is shown contrasting on an all black background with a pair of fingers lowering a tea bag full of apps into the cup. The Epi Tea logo and QR code appear in the upper left and upper right corners of the billboard, respectively. The apps appearing in the tea bag area social media outlets used to share content on the Epi Tea website. The tone of this billboard is warm, simple, and clean; the audience's eye is drawn to the apps by their popping colors on an otherwise softly colored background. Our campaign slogan, "Make Friends with Epi Tea", does not appear on the billboard in order to maintain its fresh and clean appearance.

Epi Tea's billboard would be placed in an urban setting in areas of high reach. Since our target audience is likely to reside in the Northeastern United States, New York City, for example, would be an ideal placement for this ad because of the high volume of young and professional potential viewers.

This advertisement is centered on our big idea of integrating social media and tea drinking. The presentation of a consumer literally drinking a tea made of apps is an abstract concept that will force a comprehension process, increasing the likelihood of resonating in the viewer's mind. The goal is for the audience to perceive the billboard as perplexing and trendy. Additionally, the familiarity of the apps' logos and colors will attract the audience's eyes to the advertisement. The appearance of these already familiar images all grouped together will create associations in the audience's mind and suggest that Epi Tea is already a popular entity that they are missing out on, tapping into the need for belongingness on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Associating Epi Tea with already successful entities such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Blogger, Google, Gmail, and Tumblr will increase Epi Tea's brand equity, supplying notoriety that would otherwise not exist with Epi Tea in a standalone advertisement. Co-branding this billboard creates a symbiotic relationship between Epi Tea and the displayed social media outlets. Establishing a growing company like Epi Tea with already well-established companies creates a higher word-of-mouth advertising buzz as well as brand interest, while also reinforcing the prominence of the aforementioned social media outlets.

The QR code present in this advertisement provides a multitude of distinct benefits. Primarily, the QR code serves as an immediate method for tech savvy members of the viewing audience, which exist in Epi Tea's target market, to be provided with more information on the product. QR codes can be processed through most smart phone devices and link the consumer directly to Epi Tea's website. The presence of a QR code also closely resides with Epi Tea's overarching theme of being fully technology proficient. QR codes are rapidly becoming a uniform standard across many different media and if Epi Tea did not include one it could be perceived as not delivering on its brand image.

Overall, Epi Tea's billboard is eye-catching, modern, and perplexingly abstract, making it a strong candidate to survive the selective perception process in a chaotic urban setting. A weakness of this advertisement is the absence of Epi Tea's slogan, which is present on all other advertisements in this campaign. Without a slogan, the impact of the campaign as a whole cannot be communicated. Yet, sacrificing the slogan for a more attractive advertisement is a necessary risk. The utilization of social media apps generates positive associations for Epi Tea whose brand equity is yet to be totally fulfilled. Epi Tea's big idea is also strongly projected through combining the product, tea, with social media.

Epi Tea is a brand designed around the future of tea. Epi Tea's refined product in junction with social media has promising potential to spark the revolution of tea culture in America. Tea drinkers will undoubtedly make friends with Epi Tea, both online and offline.