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Question 1

What do you think about consumer boycotts? Are they unhealthy attempts to infringe on the speech rights of others? Or are they healthy sign that consumers can take action against the ethical lapses of advertisers?

Consumer boycotts are the way for the public or advertisement viewers to respond or give feedback. Buy boycott sounds to be harsh way of doing it because they will almost attempt to influence others. This means, when one person dislike the advertisement and he might announce boycott. His decision will be explained with her logic reason on why he dislike our advertisement or in which sense our advertisement mean ho hurt or insult him or others. If others are convinced with his logic reason and this might cause the person to stop buying our products. When large number of peoples is influenced by the boycotts, the company might loss his sales revenue. This is where all the firms are concern on “sales” to gain “profit”. The advertisement will be produced by them in motive of helping the sales to gain and the firm could earn more profits. But, how if the situation happen is reverse? I mean to say, what will happen if after the advertisement produced and showed to viewer then the sales drops eventually lower than before? This is why all the firms are very sensitive to boycott issues. They will try their best to avoid from being boycotted. Getting back to the question, this way of consumer boycotts is a healthy sign that consumes can take action against ethical lapses of advertisers. I would say it say the best practice or respond to an advertisement that public are unhappy of. When the public is unhappy on any advertisement, it won't benefit anyone if they keep their opinion with themselves. But if they output their opinion of unhappiness on that advertisement to other by name of “boycott” then it will benefit the others too. This boycott can alert or open the mind of others. For example, when a firm is using tiger skin to product pant belt, we all know that using wild life's skin as our wear is unethical. And how to inform that firm that we care for wild life? The best way is to boycott. Make other also aware that we should protect wild life such as the tiger rather than using its skin for our clothing. By this, when most people are aware of the firm's mistake or unethical deed then they can avoid using that particular product. As result of it, the firm will understand that customer's do not interested in killing the wildlife while

we are more interested on saving the wild life. This will be a direct warning which sends to the firm with message “we don’t like it”. If you wrote a letter to the firm expressing you “don’t like it” and you almost receive no reply from the firm because they just don’t have time to take care of your feelings. But if you boycott a product, and you will able to see the reply from firm because this is the real power of boycott whereas you have indirectly send the message “we don’t like it”. So in the next product of the firm, they will definitely not use wild life skin anymore if only the firm cares about boycotts. There are still firms who simply ignore the boycotts because they do not care much about their branding or company image in the public. Besides this, boycotts also helps to firm to be more ethical. Honestly, if I am an advertiser, I will only focus on how much profit I can earn in return by spending on the advertisement. The ethically issue rarely comes into the mind of an advertiser. Main motive of advertisement is to attract and convince the viewers to purchase our product which will benefit us in term of increasing profit level. Where goes the ethics? The advertisers will often keep it behind of the profits. Profits are important than being ethical in advertising. But the boycott idea had cut through the era of focusing profit and now days the advertisers are ‘forced’ to consider ethical issue in the advertisement or product. I used the work ‘forced’ because in general most of advertiser won’t be so concern of this ethical issue if the boycott never existed. Existence of boycott activities forces everyone to be careful and fulfill the ethical needs before the advertisement send to public viewers. Conclusion of my text is, boycott is excellent way of expressing dislike over a product or advertisement which will benefit others too. It is healthy sign to show and express that ‘consumers also concern’.

Question 2

How should a company respond to the threat of a boycott? Consider the different responses of Nike, Subway, Lowe's, Proctor & Gamble, and Pepsi. How well do you think each of these companies reacted to boycott pressure? Did any of the companies hurt their brand because of the way they reacted to boycotts?

Companies should be aware of not letting this boycott goes beyond the range which will drastically affect the revenue or image of the company. I would rather say that the companies can react to the boycott based on the seriousness of the boycotts and how far it will bring damage to the business if the boycott continues. In considering the reactions of companies such as examples given in the case study: Nike, Pepsi, Proctor & Gamble (P&G), Subway and other companies, I would define that they reacted based on seriousness of the boycott issue. How I am defending my answer? The Pepsi and Nike faced serious boycott situation due to its careless or unethical deeds while the P&G and Subway do not faced serious boycotts as just some of peoples do not like the way they advertised. Pepsi used wrong person in their advertisement and this was brought to serious situation when Bill O'Reilly outspoken the issue in a cable show. Most of the public did hear the words from the program host Bill O'Reilly that Pepsi should be ripped off for using Ludacris in their advertisement or promotion campaigns. The seriousness pushed Pepsi to immediate get into negotiation and solve out this problem from continues boycott. Similar happen to Nike because they create humorous ad out of disabled persons. Although it was make to be humorous, on the other end of it, it is indirectly hurting feeling of disables and brought into concern of public viewers. And finally Nike also gets down to the negotiation and solved this issue by obeying to the rules given by the boycotter. This 2 situation sounds like boycott is very sensitive issue. But P&G and Subway made their move against boycotts by ignoring it. This did not tarnish their image or revenue. When we question and analyze what is the different between both situations, this P&G and Subway boycotts was not brought into major public attention and yet good reason for both of that firms to ignore boycotts and continue their regular activity. Pepsi and Nike image was almost spoilt if the boycotts do not solved while the P&G and Subway image did not spoilt at all although they simply ignored the boycotts. When

questioned on how to react to a boycott? The firm must always consider the interest of the firm. This means if ignoring the boycott could cause the business to lose large amount of market share and revenue then they should take this boycott seriously and get down to the negotiation part to solve it. But if the boycott does not affect the firm much and continuing the business as it is will be much benefit rather than stopping it due to boycott fear, then it is wise step to just ignore the boycott and continue the work that we was doing. This is what exactly P&G and Subway did. In business, we should consider the interest of the firm as advertisers are responsible to bring profit to the firm rather than talking about public interest and losing business revenues. My conclusion is, boycott is nothing to fear of but it is something to be alert of. If the boycott might cause the business to lose revenue then it should be solved. On the other hand, if it does not lose the firm much but ignoring it could earn the firm much then it is right to ignore it. The company's interest plays big role in decision making on reaction towards boycott activities.

Question 3

How would you review advertising ideas that you suspect are controversial and might generate a backlash? Is it ever justified to “push the envelope” in the areas of good taste and social responsibility? How would you decide if such approaches are effective?

An advertising might be a controversial if it do not meet to current existing rules as in law and it should also promises to fulfill the requirement of ethical view. Viewers have their own perception on what they may accept and reject. When I am about to review advertising ideas, I would make sure it fulfills the advertisement ethics. Ethics can be separated by 6. First is the ‘Poor Taste and Offensive Advertising’. This refers to how far the advertisement might be offensive to the viewers. Example is, if we included disables in our advertisement then I will consider how far that disability plays role in this ads. If there is no need to use this disables person in the advertisement then it should be fully avoided. I will reject this idea whereas if this was brought in place then the disabled peoples’ feelings might be hurt and can cause the advertisement to be a failure idea. Next ethical issue is the stereotyping. Here is where I will consider either this type of idea is already out in the market or not. If similar type of advertisement idea is already in place and of course there is no point to apply this idea again. This idea which is already in the market won’t profit us much as it won’t attract any new viewers as they will some how bored or tired with these types of advertisements. I will reject the idea. Third ethical issue is the Body and Self image whereas the advertisement should consist of self image. It should have quality and the image of the firm should be secured. Any ads that can tarnish the image of the firm should be highly avoided and I will reject the idea. Next ethical issue is that it is Targeting Children mainly. Children will be our major viewers of the ads if we broadcast it on television because they watch television for longer time than an adult do. Therefore the advertising idea should be safe for children’s view. It should not contain any sensitive idea that might influent the children. If it is sensitive then I will reject it considering its unethical to follow that idea. Next ethical issue is the Misleading Claims which some of the advertisements do. I strongly suggest that advertisement with misleading claims or in other words, false statement advertisements is unhealthy to be used. This is because when later the capability of product being question and if it became

proved that our advertisement only provided false statement then definitely in future, the public will refuse to accept any of our new advertisement in the fear of we are not providing real information. Consumers' fear might cause to lose in business revenue. To avoid this happen in future, I will be rational to reject the advertising idea if it contains misleading claims or false statements. And finally, the Controversial Products should be avoided from being advertised as it might affect reputation of the firm.

On the other hand, if I am given no option to reject the advertisement due to some circumstances. Then in case, I will just 'push the envelope'. My main motive is to make the advertisement a successful regardless on social responsibility. But any how, I admit that each and all the firms should consider social responsibility but yet we must not lose ourselves to the social responsibility. 'Push the envelope' will be effective but at the same time, we will be facing risk. 'Push the envelope' is very risky strategy as the public can seriously boycott it and make the whole idea as big failure and cost large lost to our financial. But if the boycott is not serious and we managed to win the market with that new advertising idea then the whole process and risk taken is beneficial to the firm to earn more revenue. My conclusion is, I would consider the advertising idea from ethical issue and rejects it if it does not meet any of the ethical requirements. But if I am given no option to reject it due to any external reasons then I will just proceed to 'push the envelope' and take the risk bravely. It will be beneficial and the firm must be prepared to face any boycott that will be caused by this new advertising idea.

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Softcopy of this assignment: