

CHARACTER MARKETING

- UNDERSTAND FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF CHARACTER MARKETING, INCLUDING THREE DIFFERENT FORMS.
- LEARN BASIC PRESENTATION SKILLS BY PRESENTING A PROPOSAL TO YOUR CLIENT.

Before You Read

I Work in small groups. Draw from your own experience to answer the following questions.

1. Have you ever collected any figures like Hello Kitty, Chibi Maruko Chan or Pokemon? Why did you want to collect them?
2. What is the craziest collection you've ever had or heard of (e.g. spending thousands of dollars just to get a limited edition product)?

II In the box below are some key words from the reading. Work in pairs and check whether you know what they mean; if necessary, consult a dictionary.

brand image
license

brand awareness
turnover

design house
tailor-made

packaging
merchandise



Reading

Character Marketing: Open Chan

Doraemon, Hello Kitty, Mickey Mouse, and Winnie the Pooh are all popular characters with children and adults, thus marketers are able to use them to **drive** sales and build **brand image**. This strategy is called character marketing, and it is becoming increasingly popular. Instead of using models or celebrities to advertise or **represent** products and services, many companies are now using fictional characters, which have the advantage of never aging, arguing over **contracts**, or **misbehaving** in public.

There are three forms of character marketing:

- Companies design and license characters to other firms, e.g. Sanrio and their Hello Kitty character.
- Other companies buy a **license** from a design house to use characters, which they then put on their products or services. For example, Makoto Bank bought a license for Hello Kitty from Sanrio to use on its credit cards. Another example, Family Mart, bought a license for Crayon Shin Chan from Futabasha to use on their **giveaways**.
- Companies can also develop their own characters to endorse their products or services, e.g. Coca-Cola's Qoo and 7-Eleven's Open Chan.

No matter which form the company adopts, the key to effective character marketing is when the character appropriately matches the brand image, products or services.

7-Eleven's Open Chan is one of the most popular and **profitable** characters used in marketing. How successful is Open Chan? The sales figures may give us some clues. First, according to Business Weekly, popcorn in Open Chan **packaging** sold twice the amount of that in ordinary packaging. In addition, at the beginning of 2010, 7-Eleven **launched** a promotional campaign to give away small plastic figures of the character. At the end of the campaign, more than 1.4 million figures were given to consumers who had collected the necessary stamps. Most amazingly, the sales of Open Chan's **merchandise** had a **turnover** of over one billion NT dollars in 2009.

Though the success of Open Chan is striking, merely having an attractive character is not enough to launch an effective character marketing campaign. It costs a lot and is very risky to **implement** this strategy. It requires a long term marketing plan, which can formulate **integrated** marketing strategies with the self-developed character. For example, it took

7-Eleven several years to devise Open Chan, from the initial idea to the complete Open Chan Family and the story behind each character. In addition, although Open Chan is now famous and popular, 7-Eleven spent a great deal of time to build up this popularity over several years. The company also continues to invest a lot of resources in Open Chan. For instance, every year

35 7-Eleven spends NT\$50 million to develop new merchandise related to the character.

7-Eleven's Open Chan was **tailor-made** for the corporate image, so consumers can easily associate Open Chan with the company. First, most consumers are familiar with 7-Eleven's **catchy** slogan "Always open, 7-Eleven." Second, the message 7-Eleven attempts to communicate with consumers focuses on friendliness and fun, which corresponds with Open

40 Chan's image.

In addition, 7-Eleven's marketers creatively used character marketing strategies to integrate Open Chan into the firm's corporate image. They used i-cash cards as a starting point, because they are only used at 7-Eleven. In addition, the firm did not start with tie-in campaigns with their **best-selling** items, since every product has its unique image for consumers. For example,

45 Oden represents "warmth" and Big Bite (hot dogs) represents "sports," and so the character, Open Chan, is not used to sell hot dogs. As mentioned above, not every character can succeed and last. Take 7-Eleven's competitor Hi-Life as an example, they also developed a character, "Nosong Punk," for their iced products. This figure expresses negative emotions, so the connection between Nosong and Hi-Life's warm image is relatively weak. Consequently, this

50 figure failed to draw consumer **attention** and soon disappeared from the market.

Besides communicating the corporate image to consumers, it is also crucial that a character raise **brand awareness**, brand loyalty, and **brand recognition**. To fulfill these functions, marketers may promote the characters through extensive media exposure. However, 7-Eleven has not done this, but instead organizes unique public events for Open Chan once a year.

55 The results have been surprisingly effective. For example, when Open Chan was three, the character released an album with the pop band May Day. It was a limited release of only ten thousand copies, but the album sold out in two weeks. In conclusion, it was the effective character marketing campaign, and consumer identification with Open Chan, that promoted brand loyalty and **boosted** sales of related merchandise.

After You Read

Scan through the reading and then read the following statements. Write *A* if you agree, and *D* if you disagree. Work in a small group to discuss your answer.

- _____ 1. Developing the company's corporate figure in-house is more effective than buying a license from a design company.
- _____ 2. Figures developed by firms in-house are always popular with consumers.
- _____ 3. Companies should develop and design as wide a selection of merchandise as possible featuring their corporate figure to maximize profits.
- _____ 4. Developing corporate figures and implementing character marketing requires a long-term marketing scheme, which may be quite costly.
- _____ 5. Character marketing is a growing trend.

Vocabulary Comprehension

ESP Vocabulary

This vocabulary is commonly used in the field of business.

drive	<i>v</i>	to force something to act or change in a particular way
brand image	<i>n</i>	the impression a consumer has of a brand's personality and qualities
contract	<i>n</i>	a written legal agreement between two people or businesses that says what each must do for the other
license	<i>n</i>	an official document that gives someone permission to do or use something
giveaway	<i>n</i>	a gift that a company gives you to try to persuade you to buy things from them
profitable	<i>adj</i>	making money
packaging	<i>n</i>	materials, such as boxes, bottles and plastic, etc. used for wrapping products
launch	<i>v</i>	to start a major activity, such as selling a new product or service
merchandise	<i>n</i>	goods that people buy and sell

turnover	<i>n</i>	the value of the goods and services that a company sells in a particular period of time
implement	<i>v</i>	to make something such as an idea, plan, system or law start working or begin to be used
tailor-made	<i>adj</i>	designed for a particular person or group
best-selling	<i>adj</i>	a lot more popular and successful than other products that are being sold at the same time
brand awareness	<i>n</i>	customers' ability to recall and recognize the brand under different conditions and link the brand to logo, characters, etc.
brand recognition	<i>n</i>	a brand that is widely known in the market place has this

General Vocabulary

This vocabulary is used for general purposes.

represent	<i>v</i>	to stand or speak for
misbehave	<i>v</i>	to do things in an incorrect manner and annoy or upset people
integrate	<i>v</i>	to connect or combine two or more things so that together they form an effective unit or system
catchy	<i>adj</i>	if a tune or phrase is catchy it attracts your attention and is easy to remember
attention	<i>n</i>	the ability to focus on something
boost	<i>v</i>	to help something increase, improve, or become more successful

Exercise

Try to match the following verbs with appropriate nouns.

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ 1. raise | A. a brand image |
| _____ 2. implement | B. a strategy |
| _____ 3. promote | C. sales |
| _____ 4. launch | D. a product |
| _____ 5. build | E. a marketing campaign |
| _____ 6. boost | F. attention |
| _____ 7. draw | G. a contract |
| _____ 8. sign | H. brand awareness |

Language Focus

Collocation

The table below shows important **Verb + Noun** collocation patterns from the reading. Pay careful attention to these verbs.

Verb + Noun

Verb	Noun	Example
buy	license	Companies buy a rights license from a design house for characters, which they then use on their products or services.
develop	character	Some enterprises in Taiwan have developed their own characters , of which 7-Eleven's Open Chan is one of the most popular and profitable.
launch	promotional campaign	In addition, at the beginning of 2010, 7-Eleven launched a promotional campaign to give away small plastic figures of the character.
draw	attention	The connection between Nosong and Hi-Life's warm image is relatively weak. Consequently, this figure failed to draw consumer attention and soon disappeared from the market.
raise	awareness	Besides communicating the corporate image to consumers, it is also crucial that a character raise brand awareness , brand loyalty and brand recognition.
fulfill	function	To fulfill these functions , marketers may promote the characters through extensive media exposure.
boost	sales	In conclusion, it was the effective character marketing campaign, and consumer identification with Open Chan that promoted brand loyalty and boosted sales of related merchandise.

Exercise

Work in pairs and brainstorm some verbs that collocate with **sales**. An example has been done for you.



Corpus Tutorial: TIME

In this section, you are going to review the corpus **TIME** introduced in the previous lesson. Repeat steps 1-4 in Corpus Tutorial of the previous lesson to find the verbs that frequently collocate with **sales** as a noun.

Next, click on the verbs that collocate with **sales**, for example **boost**, and you will see a list of concordance lines below. Please pay attention to the usage of prepositions after **sales**. You may notice the following pattern.

1.	boost sales	of	an item/product (e.g. boost sales of his magazine)
2.	boost sales	from	number (e.g. boost sales from the 1990's record high)
3.	boost sales	to	number (e.g. boost sales to \$3,000,000 a month)
4.	boost sales	from	number to number (e.g. boost sales from 25% to 50%)

Exercise

Use **TIME** and repeat the steps above to find the **verbs** that frequently collocate with the nouns **awareness** and **response**. Select a verb from the search results page and click on the verb to see the usage of prepositions after **awareness** and **response**. An example has been done for you.

	Verb + awareness	Prep.	Words after
1.	<i>raise the</i> awareness	<i>of</i>	<i>the disease</i>
2.	_____ awareness		
3.	_____ awareness		
4.	_____ awareness		

	Verb + response	Prep.	Words after
1.	<i>provoke a</i> response	<i>from</i>	<i>the presidential election</i>
2.	_____ response		
3.	_____ response		
4.	_____ response		

Tasks

Target Communication Skill—Outlining a Presentation

Propose an Endorser to the Advertiser

Using celebrities to endorse a product has become a common practice in marketing campaigns.

When selecting a public figure to associate with a good or service, the advertiser has to evaluate their appropriateness and relevance by appraising the celebrity's level of public awareness, appeal and existing image. Most important of all, it is essential to ensure that the celebrity is compatible with the brand image. The main parameters for using celebrity endorsement are as follows:

1. The endorser matches the brand image, product positioning, and target consumer.
2. The endorser's image with regard to public awareness, popularity, attractiveness and credibility should be taken into consideration.
3. The celebrity's actual use of the product or service, and the effects of any of their prior endorsements should also be considered.

In other words, qualified endorsers should be able to be positively associated with the brand image, attract consumer attention, and create a positive response to the advertising.

Exercise

Imagine that you are working in an advertising agency and a client asks you to suggest a celebrity to endorse their product. Please select one of the following three industries, all major users of celebrity endorsements, and make a proposal to your advertiser to explain why you think the celebrity is the most appropriate candidate.

1. Cosmetics: e.g. SKII/Clarins/Kanebo/Shiseido
2. Soft drinks: e.g. Coca Cola /Pepsi/C.C. Lemon
3. Sporting goods: e.g. Adidas/Nike/Puma

Work in a small group and decide which brand you will work with and which celebrity you are going to propose, and note down the reasons for your decision, based on the ideas in the reading above.

Brand	
Celebrity	
Reason 1	
Reason 2	
Reason 3	

Make an outline for your proposal. Look at the example and phrases that you can use below. First, study the outline and practice using the phrases in your group. Second, create an outline for your own proposal.

- Beginning: A clear introduction which states the objective of your presentation

Greetings:

- ✓ Good morning, everyone. I'm _____ from _____ (company).

Stating your objective:

- ✓ The purpose of this presentation is to ...
- ✓ Today we're going to take a look at...

- Middle: Elaborate on your topic and emphasize the important points

Stating the outline of your presentation:

- ✓ There are three distinguishing features of _____. First, ... Second, ... Third, ...

Elaboration:

- ✓ I'd like to give further explanations about...
- ✓ I'm going to talk more about...

Emphasizing:

- ✓ Let's take a closer look at...
- ✓ Please note that...

Making a transition:

- ✓ Let's turn to the next point.
- ✓ Next, I'm going to talk about...

- End: A brief summary of what you've just said, plus a strong conclusion

Concluding a presentation:

- ✓ To summarize, ...
- ✓ In conclusion, ...

Rehearse your presentation. Later you will be asked to present it to the class.

Excerpts from a Sample Presentation:

Please pay attention to the underlined expressions in the excerpts. You may use them for your presentation.

Section1: Beginning

Items	Example
Greetings	Good morning, everyone. I am the account manager, Jessie Gray, from Bright Advertising Agency.
Stating your objective	<u>Today I'm here with my team to present our proposal on the celebrity endorsement for City Café.</u> Before I get started on our proposal, I'd like to introduce our team to you. This is our creative director, Tim Moore. (A creative team includes creative director, copywriter and art designer.) And on my right is our account director, Michelle Carter. (An account team includes account director, account manager and account executive.)

Section2: Middle

Items	Example
Stating the outline of your presentation	Right, let's get into our proposal. First, I'll analyze the characteristics of Guey and second I'll present an analysis of how these qualities match the image of City Café. Finally, I'll give you an outline of how Guey's endorsement is going to benefit City Café.
Emphasizing	Alright, the first part, Guey's characteristics. Guey's got an artistic character. Also, she's got a fresh look and spontaneous manner. <u>Let's take a closer look at</u> her personal traits that can be connected with the image of City Café. (Continue presenting her characteristics, her bright personality, her experience and details of rival coffee ads.)
Giving a transition	Next, I'm going to talk about how her qualities match City Café's image...
Elaboration	OK, after having a look at how Guey's personality makes us think she should be the endorser for City Café, <u>I'm now going to explain</u> some of the economic benefits she can bring to City Café. (In this part, the presenter can continue by making a comparison of Guey's endorsement fee and those paid to other celebrities, and of the related economic returns.)

Section3: End

Items	Example
Concluding a presentation	<u>In conclusion</u> , as you have seen in our presentation, we're proposing Guey for her perfect match with your brand image and also the possible economic benefits. Thank you for your attention. Do you have any questions or suggestions?