

did they feel this way, and how did this event influence the relationship between them and the gift giver?

- 3-44 How might the rise of peer-to-peer music sharing influence the structure of the music CPS? One guess is that this method erodes the dominance of the big labels because listeners are more likely to access music from lesser-known groups. Survey your friends to determine whether this in fact is happening. Do they listen to a wider variety of artists, or simply download more from the big-time groups?
- 3-45 Read several romance or action novels to see if you can identify a cultural formula at work. Do you see parallels among the roles different characters play (e.g., the hero, the evildoer, the temptress, etc.)?
- 3-46 Watch 12 hours of TV and keep a log of all product placements you see. What are the dominant products that shows insert?
- 3-47 Collect a sample of ads that appeal to consumers' values. What value is being communicated in each ad, and how is this done? Is this an effective approach to designing a marketing communication?

- 3-48 American television inspires knockoffs around the world. But to be fair, many U.S. viewers don't realize that American reality show hits such as *Big Brother* and *American Idol* started out as European concepts that U.S. producers imported. In fact, the U.K. version of *Big Brother* briefly went off the air after a fight broke out and housemates threatened to kill each other. The German version attracted accusations of "shameless voyeurism" after a female contestant had her nipple pierced on live TV—without anesthetic.¹⁸⁹ In contrast, a Malaysian show that borrows the *American Idol* format is called *Imam Muda* (Young Leader). Contestants debate religious topics and recite passages from the Koran. The winner doesn't get a recording contract. Instead, he receives a job as an imam, or religious leader; a scholarship to study in Saudi Arabia; and an all-expenses-paid pilgrimage to Mecca, Islam's holiest city.¹⁹⁰ See if you can identify foreign versions of familiar reality shows. You should be able to find them online. How have the creators of these programs adapted them to appeal to local customs?

Case Study

CHEERIOS

Cheerios has topped the list of breakfast brands since it was introduced as the first ready-to-eat cereal in 1941. Originally called CheerioOats, the product's positioning was boosted in 1992 when the Food and Drug Administration claimed that Cheerios and other oat products could lower the risk of heart disease. With that news, Cheerios became heart healthy!

Millions of Americans include Cheerios in their daily rituals, whether it's breakfast or a snack bag for a toddler. Cheerios' success relies, in part, on an advertising message that focuses on one prominent American value: family. Although the brand stuck with their formula, they sparked a national dialog about modern racism when they used a biracial family to advertise the heart healthy benefits of the cereal in a television commercial.

The ad that sparked the conversation, "Just Checking," opens with a happy girl eating breakfast with her Mom, who is white, and learning about the heart healthy benefits of Cheerios. In a later scene you see the girl's dad, who is black, wake up to find that his daughter had placed Cheerios over his heart to make him healthier. The ad was aired nationally on television and posted on the Cheerios' YouTube channel. A small, but vocal group used the comments section of YouTube to harshly air their dissatisfaction with the casting in the commercial. Cheerios quickly disabled the comments section of the online commercial, but not before a portion of the four

million viewers read the racist comments and became engaged in the discussion.

The commercial was the topic of countless blogs, television shows, radio broadcasts, and news outlets. With research supporting the growing number of interracial families, most critics applauded General Mills for the ad. General Mills executives said they were genuinely surprised to see the negative reactions as they felt they were just reflecting the changing face of the American family.

Fueled by the negative responses to the commercial, online producers Benny and Rafi Fine, known as The Fine Brothers, produced their own video related to the Cheerios commercial. In their video, kids are asked to react to the ad and speculate on why it is controversial. The kids have no idea why the biracial couple is controversial; all they see is a happy and loving family. This response is certainly an encouraging reflection on the values of our youngest generation. The Fine Brothers video received over 10 million views, more than twice the views of the original ad.

Overall, most advertising critics would agree the video has helped the Cheerios brand. Online data company Kontera is reporting that Cheerios beat the average content views of their competitors by 137 percent with this commercial. Others say this might be more attention than Cheerios would like to see directed to their brand. Time will tell whether Cheerios continues their attempts to bring more realism to its advertising.