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STC 359

Brand Audit

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Brand Audit: Sun Bum

Who Is the Brand:

Sun Bum is a privately owned, suncare brand that has products in sunscreen, haircare and lip balms. The company was created back in 2010 to protect consumers from the sun. With a “chill” vibe inspired by bearded, surfer employee, Dusty, Sun Bum strives to give their audience the feeling of summer every time their product is used. This is the reasoning behind the tropical scents of their sunscreens, lip balms and haircare products.

The Audience:

Sun Bum’s targeted audience is millennials and young families that typically reside in beach towns. Hinted through the images of young adults and children on sandy beaches throughout their official website and social media platforms, the organization’s three locations of Cocoa Beach, Fla.; Encinitas, Calif.; and Oahu, Hawaii, suggest that coastal living young adults and families are the aimed customers. Further, sunscreen and suncare product sales are said to increase when the weather is warmer, keeping sun protection more on top of mind (“Sun Protection and Sunless Tanners”, 2016). Thus, the company’s drive to push their products towards consumers living in areas where the weather is sunny for most of the year makes sense to assist in increasing their sales despite the season.

In terms of the targeted age group, Sun Bum’s intention to sell to millennials and young families is shown through images on their social media platforms and official site. The first

image seen when entering trustthebum.com, the company website, is a small boy rubbing sunscreen on his back. The photo is then followed by a slideshow of photos containing young adults and children on the beach, in the ocean or with a surfboard. Further, texts from their site include messages such as, “Our refrigerator is full of coconut water and alcohol” or “We bring our dogs and kids to work.” Both phrases encompass interest or themes popular with the millennial age group. Millennials are said to value structure, however prioritize flexibility especially when it comes to work (Farrell and Hurt 2014). The fun, easy-going lifestyle that is hinted through the mention of alcohol and relaxed work environment, is a theme more geared toward adults in their 20’s. Also, the concept of having to take children to work, rather than dropping them off at school leads one to believe they’re young, hence newer families.

Messages Being Communicated:

One of the messages strongly being communicated by Sun Bum is the need to protect every individual’s skin from the sun. The advice is actively suggested, for instance, in a public service announcement. In a short video clip, a young woman kisses a man dressed in a sun costume goodbye, insinuating an intimate relationship. The PSA concludes with text on the screen that reads, “It’s okay to love the sun, just be sure to use protection.” This cleverly created video uses the double meaning of protection, protection from the sun and UV rays versus protection while having intercourse, to communicate effectively to their audience the need to maintain a suncare routine.

Another way Sun Bum advocates for suncare and skin protection is through their information about ultraviolet rays, SPF ratings and reminders provided on their website. Several facts and suggested products are given for consumers to closely look at in order to prevent damage to their bodies from the sun.

Additionally, a second message preached by Sun Bum is their goal to create products that are safe and that they would purchase for themselves, their families or personal friends. When events such as the recent passing of Hawaii's Bill that bans the marketing and sales of sunscreens that contain Oxybenzone and Octinoxate chemicals were implemented, it motivated suncare consumers to rethink the brands that they purchased ("Sun Protection and Sunless Tanners", 2016). Sun Bum took full advantage of the occasion by marketing their mineral based formulas, which are all gluten free, petroleum free, cruelty free, paraben free and PARA free.

Further, they created their own blog posts about the topic, thanking Hawaiian legislation for passing a bill that protects everyday beach goer's and encouraging the sales of their own products. Later, the company created a sunscreen specific for young children and babies with sensitive skin and have also clearly demonstrated their family safe products in their "about us" video, which displays sneak peaks and facts regarding how products are created.

What They're Doing Well to Reach Audience:

To reach their audience, Sun Bum has tried a variety of strategies. One of their best is their Instagram account. Several sunny, beach photos are posted all with young adults and families in the images. The captions and photos truly capture the brand and involve vocabulary tied to summer and their products. Further, they host competitions and offer giveaways on the social media platforms, allowing followers to interact with the brand.

Another way that they reach out to their audience well is through their random, traveling competitions. Sun Bum uses a yellow, brightly colored van to travel around the coasts and to randomly host surfing competitions for whoever is in the water. The winners receive a large medal and \$1,000. The suncare brand actively seeks their audience by going directly to their prime hangout spot and one of the main features of the audience's demographic, the beach.

Weaknesses and Recommendations:

One of Sun Bum's weakness is their twitter account. Though they do produce some great content, it can still be improved immensely. To begin, Sun Bum has marketed themselves as laid back and relatable company, having flexible work habits and striving to always have a good time. Most of their tweets, though in attempt to share this message, almost come across as lazy and repeatedly mention not wanting to go to work or wanting to leave work. They should try sharing more images of the office space or behind the scene videos to demonstrate the company culture, it may prove more effective than complaining about having a fulltime job.

Additionally, one of Sun Bum's best features is it's nonprofit, Protect the Groms. The organization promotes skincare and safety for groms in the area, the surf lingo for kids. They provide suncare, tarps for playgrounds, and other items to protect children from the sun. Although it is a great nonprofit and fits their brand, there should be more PR for it. Sun Bum should host more events or feature more images or videos of being involved with local schools or summer camps. They tell the customers about the nonprofit, but they rarely show a great deal of what they do. Featuring a blog post or two about it, or creating a short video to put on their YouTube account and advertising through their social media would be a great way to not only promote the good they do for their communities, but also encourage families of young children to use their brand more often.

Reference List

- Farrell, L., & Hurt, A. C. (2014). Training the millennial generation: implications for organizational climate. *Journal of Organizational Learning and Leadership*, 12(1), 47-60. Retrieved September 6, 2018, from https://www.leadingtoday.org/weleadinlearning/Spring2014/Spring_2014_Farrell.pdf.
- Sun Protection and Sunless Tanners*. (2016, November). Retrieved September, 2018, from <http://academic.mintel.com.proxy.lib.miamioh.edu/display/799593/?highlight#hit1>