

## Case 11

### “Pesterpower”

John works for an ad agency and has to design an ad campaign for ZazzBrands, a new client that manufactures clothing for teens. In their past campaigns through another agency, ZazzBrands has targeted the intended purchaser of their product, normally teenagers with their own clothes budget or parents of teens. But John suspects that a more profitable and far-sighted approach will be to target even younger kids. He envisions a line of similar styles for children and series of ads that would run on Saturday morning cartoons intended for audiences under eight years old. The ads would feature teenagers in social settings scoring prestige points with their friends because their choice of clothing is so independent, youthful, and because they are comically defiant in the face of the disapproval of parents and teachers. If handled properly, John reasons, the ad campaign could get children from a very early age to connect with ZazzBrands as an emotionally supportive company that truly understands what it means to be a repressed and misunderstood kid in a world dominated by adults.

According to some marketing studies, brand loyalty begins very early, possibly as early as age two. According to a report published on the Media Awareness Network website, by the age of three twenty percent of children make specific requests for name brand products. Furthermore, the Annenberg Public Policy Center reports that forty-seven percent of US children have a television set in their bedroom.

Many groups are trying to outlaw or restrict ads to children, citing several reasons. Small children are not able to distinguish between programming and commercials. Furthermore, because smaller children do not make their own purchases, companies who advertise to them rely on pesterpower to get children to nag and whine until their parent gives in to the demands. Advocacy groups claim that ads brainwash children into becoming eager consumers who increasingly define themselves in terms of the things they own. In many countries, in fact, ads to children are simply banned.

John believes that ZazzBrands products have nothing to set them apart from any other line of clothes, but turning today's children into diehard fans of their product will build a solid, brand-loyal customer base for the future.