

# The potential and pitfalls of linking products to celebrities

Linking a product to a celebrity or TV show can work well, but can be problematic if the popularity of the celebrity or show falters – or in the case of some celebrities, goes from hero to zero. And that applies in Africa as much as it does anywhere else – in this case, the UK.

In an attempt to further interact with fans of the popular television show, 'the X Factor' producers Fremantle Media, in conjunction with ScentsUp, has released a His and Hers fragrance range in the UK market.

Based on the show, the fragrances named 'X Factor His and Hers' and priced at the lower end of the market are aimed at tapping into the growing UK celebrity fragrance market as well as brand influenced consumers. However, perceptions towards celebrities are not immune to change and this could impact the performance of the fragrance range. The press releases that have supported the launch have failed to mention if the products will be released in the US.

Fragrance endorsement by celebrities in the UK has increased

The UK fragrance market was valued at £1.61 billion by Datamonitor, a leading provider of online data, analytic and forecasting platforms for key vertical sectors, in 2006, and witnessed a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 2.8% from the period 2001-2006. The market saw premium fragrances outperform the mass market sector with a CAGR of 3.1% during the same time frame. This growth in part can be attributed to the increasing popularity in celebrity fragrances, although the premium market is now being diluted with celebrity offerings at the lower end of the value market. Indeed, in August 2007, retail outlet The Perfume Shop reported that there had been an increase of 2000% in sales of celebrity endorsed perfumes since 2004. Celebrity fragrances endorsements have previously been limited to elite entertainers such as Jennifer Lopez and Celine Dion.

## At the mercy of public perception

However, the increased demand in the UK market has led to a surge of celebrity endorsed fragrances from less prestigious, D list celebrities such as Jade Goody and Katie Price.

Michael Hughes, a consumer market analyst at Datamonitor comments "While the X Factor fragrance range differs in the sense that it is associated with a television show rather than a celebrity, it is the latest fragrance to be aimed at a young audience which aspires for premium fragrances but cannot afford the price they command."

Celebrity endorsed fragrances are at the mercy of changes in public perception

Manufacturers choose celebrities to endorse fragrances because it offers the opportunity of instant brand awareness and

heightened appeal among the celebrity's fans. Indeed, manufacturers recognize that consumers purchase celebrity fragrances with the aim of differentiating themselves from others by incorporating the desirable qualities that they recognize in their favourite celebrity into their everyday life. In 2006, Datamonitor asked UK consumers "To what extent have you sought to differentiate yourself from others through the products you buy?" The response saw 39.1% of consumer's aged 18-24 (who make up the core audience of television shows like 'the X Factor') state that they had done so with greater intensity in the last 12 months.

## **No stranger to controversy**

However, Datamonitor advises manufacturers planning to release fragrances in conjunction with a celebrity to do so with caution. Hughes explains the reason for this: "Associating a fragrance with a particular celebrity or popular television show can lead to potentially lucrative sales, especially if the endorser is currently the flavour of the month. However, manufacturers have to remember that celebrities are not immune to changes in public perception, and these changes could hit sale levels." The X Factor show is no stranger to controversy, with the integrity of the show having been questioned by a number of media sources. While these accusations appear yet to have damaged the show, ScentsUp should always remember that reality television shows are not immune from a public backlash.

The PR releases that have supported the release of X Factor His and Hers have also failed to mention whether the range will be released in the US. Despite being valued at \$19.7 billion by Datamonitor in 2006, the US fragrance market has declined in terms of value by a CAGR of 0.5% from the period 2001-2006, and this has not been helped by the saturated celebrity fragrance market. Like the UK, fragrance endorsement in the US is also no longer limited to an elite list of celebrities, with reality television stars such as Stacie J also endorsing products. Furthermore, consumers appear to be losing interest in the celebrity fragrance market because of the amount of products that have been released.

Despite the success of the X factor television show in the US it appears, at least for the time being, that the range is being confined to the UK market.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>