Chapter 3
Integrated Marketing Communications and Power Imbalance: The Strategic Nature of Marketing to Children and Adolescents by Food and Beverage Companies

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Context and Introduction

This chapter seeks to complement others in this book by highlighting the public health concerns associated with the use of the relatively new business practice of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) to promote energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and beverages to children and adolescents, and the power imbalances inherent in this situation. Seeking to encourage international awareness and relevance of this issue we have attempted to take a global approach, while still recognizing the Australian context in which both authors work. To this end, we include three case studies of branded food products that target children as a means of demonstrating the reach and complexity of IMC in a contemporary marketplace.

Before we address this topic specifically, it is first important to briefly explore the broader social context in which both IMC and childhood obesity are situated.

Childhood Obesity and Marketing: The Social Context

During the past 40 years, global rates of overweight and obesity have risen dramatically (Withrow and Alter, 2011). In 2010 more than 155 million children worldwide were overweight (more than one in ten) and of these approximately 30–45 million were obese, or between two and three per cent of the world's 5–17-year-old children (Polmark, 2010, p. 3).

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In exploring causes for the childhood obesity epidemic, researchers have turned their focus to environmental factors. Attention has been given to sociocultural and economic changes that occurred during the 1980s and 1990s, coinciding with the pronounced increase in childhood obesity during this period (Anderson and Butcher, 2006). Highlighting the role of 'obesogenic' environments in the obesity epidemic is significant as it positions obesity as a consequence of our social environment, rather than an individual, medical problem (Swinburn 2009; Economos et al., 2001, p. S41). This has consequences for the way obesity is managed and prevented. Reframing childhood obesity as a social issue also places greater pressure on governments, industry, and policy makers to address the underlying factors that contribute to the obesity epidemic (Schwartz and Puhl, 2003; Economos et al., 2001, p. S41). Some, such as Wadden et al. (2002, p. 512) display elements of critical theory in their assertion that the root cause of the problem lies in "powerful social and cultural forces that promote an energy-rich diet and a sedentary lifestyle."

To be effective, marketing needs to engage with, and situate itself appropriately within, the broader social context (Groom and Biernatzki, 2008, p. 7). During the past 10 years, public health and related research has consistently and repeatedly pointed to parallels between changes in marketing and increases in childhood overweight and obesity rates during the past 40 years (e.g., Harris et al., 2009; Hastings et al., 2006; McGinnis et al., 2006; Mehta et al., 2010).

Coincidence or Consequence? Parallels Between Childhood Obesity and Marketing

The Institute of Medicine's systematic review of literature *Food marketing to children and youth: threat or opportunity?* establishes that there is a relationship between adiposity, diets and diet-related health, and marketing (McGinnis et al., 2006, p. 378). The World Health Organization similarly drew upon this report, and a review conducted by Hastings et al. to declare "a robust evidence base to support the fact that exposure to the commercial promotion of energy-dense, micronutrient poor foods and beverages adversely affects children's diets" (World Health Organization, 2006, p. 26). They highlight evidence of significant amounts of food and beverage promotion targeting children – children's awareness and engagement with this promotion – with the majority of this promotion being for unhealthy foods and beverages. The report argues that such promotion influences children's awareness, attitudes, behavior, and consumption (World Health Organization, 2006, p. 13). Within an Australian context Metha et al. (2010) similarly determined that the types of foods marketed towards children were primarily unhealthy, and that such marketing was perceived to have an influence on children's preference for branded and unhealthy foods.

Marketing to children as a subspecialty emerged in the business context in the 1980s (Mehta et al., 2010) and since this time there has been significant growth in products, especially food products, which specifically target this audience. Marketers

can potentially benefit not only by promoting products specifically designed to appeal to children, and their parents and caregivers but also in establishing the foundations of longer term brand relationships (Asquith, 2009).

Changes have also occurred to the nature of messages and creative appeals that marketers use in reaching target consumers. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, marketing appeals targeting children underwent a shift from focusing on product attributes towards increased use of symbolism, classic archetypes, and appeals to cultural values (Schor & Ford, 2007, p. 15). For example, Schor and Ford (2007) highlight the increased role of 'cool' in marketing a variety of products and services to children and adolescents. In this way, marketing food products to children – and the growth of this subcategory as a whole – relies less on the nutritive or functional qualities of food, and more on the symbols and signs that create and reflect meaning in a child's world (Schor & Ford, 2007).

Indeed, children are recognized as a significant consumer force—whether making their own consumer decisions or through influencing those of their caregivers or family members (McGinnis, Gootman, & Kraak, 2006, p. 5). While using such appeals is effective in reaching children and establishing brand relationships, it also plays a broader role in engendering children and adolescents' role as independent consumers and legitimate members of a consumer society (Schor and Ford, 2007, p. 10; Cook, 2000).

Concerns and Responses

Rising concerns about the childhood obesity epidemic has led to regulatory and voluntary responses in many countries, and policy development by international organizations such as the World Health Organization (McGinnis et al., 2006, p. 362). In particular, there has been mounting pressure to regulate unhealthy food marketing to children (Hawkes, 2007, p. 1962). Among both public health and marketing literatures there is evidence that these industries are feeling threatened by the prospect of statutory regulation, taxation, fines, and restrictions regarding food marketing to children (Wansink & Huckabee, 2005, p. 1; Grimm, 2004, p. 44; Lewin, Lindstrom, & Nestle, 2006, p. 343). The food industry, and to a lesser extent the marketing industry, have attempted to defend their actions by suggesting calls for action within the sector that do not necessarily reduce their capacity to generate profits (Grimm, 2004; Wansink & Huckabee, p. 11). Wansink and Huckabee, for example, emphasize the importance of a laissez-faire approach favoring market-driven strategies that stimulate consumer desire for healthier food options (Wansink & Huckabee, p. 12).

In addition, food companies have sponsored research and worked to reformulate existing products to increase their health benefits; examples include the removal of trans-fats, reductions in sugar and salt, increased use of whole grains, and fortification of products with vitamins and minerals (Brownell & Warner, 2009, p. 283).

These initiatives form part of a broader repositioning of food and beverage companies and the industry as a whole. Public health professionals such as Brownell and Warner are critical of the way industry has framed their responses to childhood obesity issue, drawing similarities between the food and beverage industry and the prior actions of other threatened industries, most pointedly the tobacco industry (Sharma, Teret, & Brownell, 2010, p. 240; Brownell & Warner, 2009).

Self-regulation has emerged as a common response to this issue. Yet the majority of resulting self-regulation measures only target advertising (Hawkes, 2007, p. 1962). Advertising has historically been a dominant and influential technique in marketing, but in the face of media and audience fragmentation, technological advancements (especially the proliferation of digital technologies), and more sophisticated measurement and evaluation techniques, advertising is now one of an ever-increasing number of promotional techniques used by companies to reach their targeted audience segments. McGinnis, Gootman, and Kraak (2006, p. xiv), highlight that virtually all of the published scientific research has "focused on advertising—and television advertising in particular" but also caution that "advertising does not exist or operate in isolation from other aspects of marketing activities" (McGinnis et al., 2006, p. 21). Packaging, sales promotion, use of cartoon characters, and celebrity endorsement have also all attracted varying levels of attention from public health advocates (Hawkes, 2009; Hawkes, 2010).

The public health literature reviewed for this chapter reveals strong dissatisfaction with the current situation. Brownell and Warner (2009) and Nestle and Jacobson (2000) emphasize what they believe to be an irreconcilable situation for the food industry: profit generation rests on the increased sale of food, and similarly foods which generate the most profit for the food industry are not those that provide the healthiest options for consumers.

Method

In developing this chapter, we have synthesized information from academic databases, published reports, and professional literature. In our search, we have included databases such as Ebscohost Research Databases, Academic OneFile, Academic Search Complete, APA Full Text, Business Source Complete, Expanded Academic ASAP, Factiva, and Google Scholar. Within these databases search terms (and combinations of these terms), such as childhood obesity, marketing to children, unhealthy food marketing, Integrated Marketing Communication, and IMC, were used to identify relevant materials. Professional literature such as Stanmark Child Exposure to Food Marketing News, The International Association for the Study of Obesity Newsletter, the Rudd Center Health Digest, Croakey Health Blog, mUmbrella, and brandchannel were also consulted for items relevant to the research question as were published reports and documents from organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), Which?, Flinders University, Choice, the Polmark Project,

Stanmark, Consumers International, the International Association for the Study of Obesity (IASO), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Information search and review was conducted between November 2010 and July 2011. Publication dates, quality of publishing source, and frequency of citation (where available) were considered in reviewing sources in addition to the primary criteria of relevance of content to the research question.

We acknowledge the limitations inherent to a narrative literature review, such as subjectivity and potential for bias in selecting and reviewing sources and the lack of guaranteed breadth of coverage of available literature.

The Evolution and Growth of Integrated Marketing Communication

What Is IMC?

In broad terms, marketing's evolution can be charted through four distinct phases, corresponding to broader socioeconomic eras, viz., production orientation, product orientation, sales orientation, to marketing orientation (Lancaster & Massingham, 2011). Earlier phases are associated with the broader socioeconomic concept of modernity, characterized by mass production and consumption, dominant ideologies, order and progress (Van Raaij, 1993, p. 544; Christensen, Torp, & Firat, 2005). Marketing was typified by a focus on the product and its characteristics, and a reliance on relatively few mass media channels to deliver marketing messages to broadly segmented audiences. Marketing functions were clearly segmented, conceptualized, and implemented.

By contrast, postmodernity (which by its very nature defies definition) can be broadly characterized as a rejection of modernity, resulting from post-war economic and social transformation in the West (Ross, 1988) in (Firat & Venkatesh, 1993, p. 227). In contrast to modernity's mass production, centralization, and sense of dominant style, postmodernity is characterized by qualities such as plurality, eclecticism and inclusion, pastiche, and decentralization (Van Raaij, 1993, p. 543).

The concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) emerged as a result of a shift towards consumer-focused marketing during the 1970s and 1980s (Groom & Biernatzki, 2008). Despite generating significant discussion among marketing academics and practitioners, less than a decade ago IMC was regarded as being in its conceptual infancy, lacking an established academic or professional definition, and with its theoretical underpinnings still in development (Kitchen, Brignell, Tao, & Jones, 2004, p. 23).

Several attempts have been made to define IMC, with results varying in complexity (see definitions provided by Kitchen & Schultz, 2009; Keller, 2001; Duncan

& Caywood, 1996; Shimp & Shimp 1997; Smith et al. 1999). The definition of IMC adopted by the American Association of Advertising Agencies, and consequently one of the most frequently cited by academic and marketing industry professionals in the decade following its development, was devised by Duncan and Caywood in 1996 (Kliatchko, 2005, p. 14). This definition states that IMC is

"a concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines—general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations—and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact" (Duncan & Caywood 1996 in Kliatchko, 2005, p. 14).

Shimp and Shimp alternatively chose to identify five distinguishing features of IMC: 'start with the customer or prospect; use any form of relevant contact or touch point; speak with a single voice; build relationships; affect behavior,' (Shimp & Shimp, 1997, p. 20).

Shultz and Kitchen proposed four stages of marketing communications integration within an organization. The first and most rudimentary stage of IMC focus simply on coordinating different tactical elements of promotional campaigns (Schultz & Kitchen, 2000). Stage two involves gathering extensive information about markets, but not necessarily using that information in a sophisticated way for targeting. The third stage, "applying information technology," relates to the application of information technology to more effectively analyze and manage information, then using this information to target and communicate with audience segments (Schultz & Kitchen, 2000, p. 26). The final and most sophisticated stage is "financial and strategic integration" in which IMC is evaluated on an ongoing basis in terms of its return on investment (Schultz & Kitchen, 2000, p. 26).

Echoing ideas of postmodernity, some authors argue against a single definition of IMC claiming that the concept itself is not static, but has evolved since the term was coined (Fill, 2001; Kliatchko, 2005, p. 21; Schultz & Patti, 2009, p. 76). Kitchen, Kim, and Schultz (2008) proposed that IMC should be perceived more accurately as a three-dimensional model, as opposed to uniform definition. Christensen, Torp, and Firat (2005) extend the idea of plurality to warn of the risks associated with applying modern structures and restrictions to postmodern concepts and contexts (Christensen et al., 2005).

Acknowledging the concepts of flexibility, fluidity, and polyphony, we prefer to describe IMC based on its characteristics, and on descriptions provided by Shimp and Shimp (1997) and Schulz and Kitchen (2000), thereby at least recognizing the potential for movement, discussion, and change as to what comprises this concept.

IMC as Marketing Modus Operandi

Despite its theoretical challenges, IMC has been embraced by commercial marketing practitioners. IMC represents a paradigmatic shift in the way marketers view

marketing communications (Gould, 2004). In the context of marketing communications, IMC has been declared "*the* major communications development in the last decade of the 20th Century" (Kitchen, Brignell, Tao, et al., 2004) p. 20.

IMC proponents argue that shifting from individual, autonomously managed marketing communications strategies (such as advertising or sales promotions) to an IMC approach means individual communications tactics no longer stand alone, but become part of a broader, synergistic communications whole designed around the consumer. In applying IMC, marketers must select the best combination of different tactics to achieve maximum effect (Keller, 2001, p. 819). IMC thus encourages broader consideration of the opportunities afforded by different marketing communications disciplines in a systematic way. Having a broader, and ever-growing, range of tactics and possible combinations at their professional disposal also enables marketers to more effectively reach audience members—combining the unique advantages of different communications mediums to achieve different objectives.

IMC has become increasingly recognized as effective, especially in the face of reduced marketing budgets, the decreasing effectiveness of traditional tactics such as television advertising, media proliferation, and changing consumer preferences (Kitchen, Brignell, Tao, et al., 2004, p. 20). In a study of senior advertising executives, respondents reported that IMC improved the effectiveness of creative ideas, offered increased consistency of communication, greater communications impact, and offered overall improved return on client investment (Kitchen, 2005, p. 74).

Earlier this century critics raised concerns that IMC was little more than a management fad (Cornelissen, 2001; Cornelissen & Lock, 2000; Kitchen, Brignell, Tao, et al., 2004). However, its supporters have countered these attacks by referring to the concept's popularity and longevity (Kitchen et al., 2008). Indeed, IMC's evolution into branding and management applications seems to offer arguments that the technique is here to stay (Kitchen, Brignell, Tao, et al., 2004). More broadly, IMC's expansion and influence is illustrated by the degree to which marketing and culture are becoming increasingly intertwined (Taylor, 2009).

IMC as Strategic Business Approach

IMC takes an 'outside in' approach by placing the customer at the core of business functions; its point of difference is that it is grounded in communications (Christensen et al., 2005). Relationships with the customer are key (Kitchen, Brignell, Tao, et al., 2004).

Early in the twenty-first century IMC was recognized as having moved beyond a communication process to being associated with management and brands (Kitchen, Brignell, Tao, et al., 2004). Effective marketing communication is no longer built on the assumption that a loyal and receptive mass audience will accept company-sponsored messages. Instead, companies recognize the need to deeply understand consumer and stakeholder decision making, and through the use of IMC, craft integrated messages that position products and brands appropriately within the minds

of consumers (Proctor & Kitchen, 2002). Underlying brand values and attributes should likewise be reflected across all levels, channels, and behavior within an organization to further ensure consistency.

In the context of tobacco marketing, Dewhirst and Davis analyzed the extent to which Canadian company Imperial Tobacco Limited applied a sophisticated IMC approach to successfully build brand equity and shareholder value in the face of legal and political challenges (Dewhirst & Davis, 2005, p. 81). In the 30-year period to 2000, the firm grew its market share to 30% (Dewhirst & Davis, 2005). Further, in this case the authors found that "the legal and political environment facing the firm further facilitated ITL's adoption of an IMC mindset and structure." (Dewhirst & Davis, 2005, p. 81). Although only a handful of organizations apply IMC to the most sophisticated levels (Schultz & Kitchen, 2000, p. 26), this example demonstrates the power of IMC in not only establishing brands, but its potential as a sophisticated business strategy.

IMC: Associated Ethical Challenges and Power Imbalance

Potentially Problematic Aspects of IMC

Despite its widespread use, exploration of the ethical issues or considerations associated with IMC remain limited (Kliatchko, 2009). This is not to say that ethical issues associated with traditional forms of marketing do not apply to IMC—as part of the broader marketing discipline, IMC is subject to many of the existing ethical concerns surrounding marketing. By reviewing consumer behavior, marketing, public health, and ethics literature, the following aspects of IMC, as used to promote energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and beverages to children and adolescents, have been identified as problematic (e.g., Nairn & Fine, 2008; Grimm, 2004; Harris, Brownell, & Bargh, 2009; Kliatchko, 2009; Powell, Dodd, & Langlands, 2010; Preston, 2004; Schor & Ford, 2007; Stanley, 2007). The first two are characteristics of marketing more broadly, while the last three have been drawn from marketing, consumer behavior, ethics, and sociology literature:

- Challenges caregiver authority
- Exploits cognitive development and processing
- Engages with target customer using multiple communication channels (Shimp & Shimp, 1997).
- Engages target consumers in co-creation
- Leverages subtlety, whereby tactics are increasingly being integrated into traditionally non-promotional opportunities.

In addition, we argue that the power disparity between individuals and industry is an underlying theme of all marketing activities, and incorporate this element in our overall model, and discuss it later in this chapter. As outlined in Fig. 3.1, taken
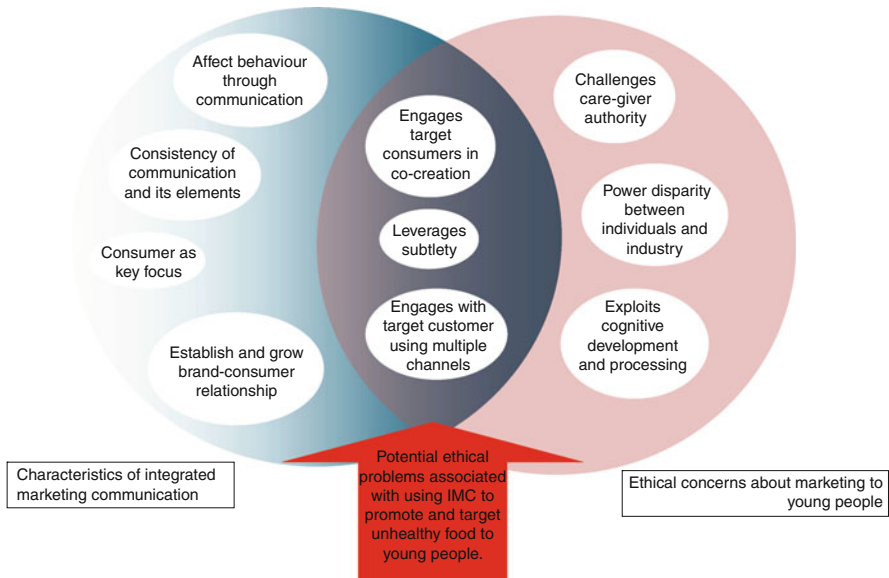
Fig. 3.1 Ethical risks associated with the use of IMC to promote unhealthy food to young people

together these characteristics represent ethical challenges unique to IMC as it is used to promote energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and beverages to children and adolescents. The ethical implications of these characteristics are discussed below.

IMC Challenges Caregiver Authority

Parents and caregivers hold responsibility for the wellbeing of their children. We argue that this aspect of parents' role is undermined by marketing activities that seek to challenge caregiver authority; one form of which has been termed by mainstream media as "pester power." Pester power refers to children actively influencing their parents purchasing decisions and can include techniques such as nagging, as well as appeals using logic and emotion (Powell et al., 2010). Research reveals that children as young as 3 years of age successfully use pester power, and by age eight children have learned which techniques produce the best results (Powell et al.).

Using appeals such as fun, entertainment, and happiness enables marketers to build a desire amongst children and adolescents for products their parents may view as not the best choice in the long term. By targeting children and adolescents, who themselves have more limited purchasing power than their parents, marketers in essence are using children to overcome parental, and in many cases purchaser, resistance to their products. It can also be argued that marketers are taking advantage of the emotional connection between young people and their parents, and the effectiveness

of word-of-mouth message delivery used by children and adolescents to present persuasive messages to their parents.

IMC Exploits Cognitive Development and Processing

Several studies have examined the cognitive abilities of children and adolescents at different ages and stages of development (for example, see Nairn & Fine, 2008; Wadden et al., 2002; Kliatchko, 2005; Hawkes, 2007). Although there is debate in this field, Piaget's theory of cognitive development and information processing models have provided popular foundations for researchers to examine when children are able to distinguish marketing and advertising content, and when they can recognize advertising's persuasive intent (Livingstone & Helsper, 2006, p. 562; Harris et al., 2009).

According to McGinnis, Gootman, and Kraak (2006), children start to develop a basic ability to recognize the persuasive intent of television advertising at around 7 or 8 years of age, but additional time and maturity is needed for children to consistently apply this skill. Young children are not fully able to view circumstances from a perspective other than their own—hence they cannot understand a marketer's perspective in promoting different products or brands (John, 1999). So while a child as young as two may be able to recognize logos (Harris et al., 2009, p. 229), they may not understand meaning behind them or the intent with which they are used.

Criticisms have been made of an age-based approach however, and of public policy that is based on a "magic age" at which children can understand advertising and thereby become better able to manage its persuasive influence (Nairn & Fine, 2008, p. 183). Some researchers argue that the notion of rational cognition and the capacity of young people to reflect upon the influence of advertising should be revised in light of our understanding of dual processing models. Fine and Harrison (2007), for example, point out that advertising targeted at children (and also that which is not) will influence children's implicit attitudes towards advertised products, and consumption, in general. From an ethical perspective, marketers and public policy makers need not only to consider whether marketing exploits children and adolescents' cognitive development but also whether it seeks to bypass these cognitive processes once they have developed (Nairn & Fine).

IMC Engages Target Consumers in Co-creation

Drawing on aspects of Marxist theory, co-creation refers to a management technique whereby marketers rely on the active participation of now allegedly "empowered, entrepreneurial, and liberated" consumers, encouraging a form of political power associated with the emergence and exploitation of creative and valuable labor (Zwick, Bonsu, & Darmody, 2008, p. 164). By positioning the consumer as being in charge, co-creation recognizes consumers' competence and consequently puts them to work. Co-creation is valuable not just in that it offers labor costs savings, but

encourages deep brand engagement among both brand advocates and resisters, and enables marketers to sell value-added products at a premium (Zwick et al.).

Within the context of using IMC to market unhealthy food to children and adolescents the ethical risks of co-creation are magnified for two reasons:

1. The issue of unpaid labor becomes increasingly problematic when the creative work is performed by children and adolescents.
2. The product category children and adolescents are engaging with is a product that is implicated with the current childhood obesity epidemic.

Marketers may argue that co-creation is voluntary, therefore nullifying arguments regarding exploitation of labor. However, the voluntary nature of co-creation still stands at odds with the profit-seeking motives of the organization's that employ this technique (Zwick et al., 2008).

IMC Leverages Subtlety and Increasingly Integrates Marketing into Traditionally Non-promotional Contexts

Consumer cynicism to traditional forms of advertising and overt marketing has increased (Zwick et al., 2008; Harris & Whalen, 2006), while advertising has also been criticized for encouraging unnecessary purchases, use of harmful products, and increasing prices (Harris et al., 2006). To maintain the interest and favor of an increasingly jaded audience, marketers have developed a multitude of marketing tactics and channels that blur the once clear lines between editorial and advertising, information and entertainment (Zwick et al.). So, while marketers seek to minimize drawbacks associated with traditional advertising, consumers of all ages may be less likely to identify and be reflective when they are being marketed to, in turn making them potentially more receptive (at an implicit, rather than explicit level) to marketing messages. In a 2004 survey of marketing professionals, Grimm found that 91% believed their colleagues were "marketing to kids 'in ways they don't even notice'" (Grimm, 2004, p. 15).

Subtle messages are often designed to work on affective or implied associations, bypassing rational modes of thinking that as discussed earlier is not even fully developed among young children (Nairn & Fine, 2008; Fine and Harrison 2007). Yet research also shows that once a relationship between a brand and consumer is established, consumers who are exposed to stimulus about that brand, automatically retrieve relevant associations and information stored in their memory (Harris et al., 2009), providing a shortcut to previous brand or product experiences.

In this way, there is a gap between what consumers think they are seeing and may believe is noncommercial content, and what in fact is being delivered as marketing to a largely unknowing, and therefore more receptive audience. This point is compounded by the previously discussed argument that children are not as capable cognitively at distinguishing advertising from noncommercial content, and enhanced by the ethical risks highlighted in the next section, where we consider the volume and diversity of marketing messages.

IMC Engages with Target Customer Using Multiple Communication Channels

IMC encourages the use of multiple channels to reach target audience members. This approach makes logical sense; to close the gaps between communication "moments" essentially increases the chance of your target audience seeing your message. However, media fragmentation, and the rate at which new and potential promotional channels are being developed have resulted in media exposure overdrive (Nairn & Fine, 2008). Promotional messages are so prolific in our society that they have become a form of "social wallpaper" (Preston, 2004, p. 365).

It could also be argued that the volume of marketing for energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and beverages continually primes children and adolescents for unhealthy food consumption of varying forms. The adverse outcome of this 'perpetual priming' is that individuals are less likely to rationally consider their choices, because this requires processing capacity and energy (Strack, Werth, & Deutsch, 2006). Therefore, the ability to maintain willpower is likely to be reduced when individuals experience ego depletion and become fatigued or stressed (Fine and Harrison, 2007). Exposure to large numbers of promotional messages contributes on some level to mental fatigue, thereby increasing our susceptibility to impulse purchasing (Strack et al.). To complete the equation, unhealthy food items are frequently placed in physical locations favorable to impulse purchase, such as supermarket checkouts, vending machines at train stations, and counters at gas stations.

Finally, as we become ever more culturally conditioned to the frequency of such messages there stops being 'a lot' of marketing material; it just becomes the norm. The number of channels being used to deliver marketing messages and resulting constant exposure to promotional messages for unhealthy food both reflects and helps to reinforce the power and legitimacy that unhealthy food marketing has come to occupy within our society.

Power Disparity as an Underlying Theme in the Ethics of IMC

The concepts of power as a concept are often referred to, yet less seldom defined. As stated by Allan, "social scientists understand that power makes the human world go around, but they have a devil of time defining it or determine where it exists" (Allan, 2006, p. 223). Accounting in part for this dilemma is the simultaneous universality and diversity of forms that characterize power.

According to Kotler (1986), marketing is increasingly becoming associated with the management of power. Within a marketing context power is manifest in both 'upstream' and 'downstream' circumstances. Upstream refers to the macro-level conditions or circumstances leading to the marketing activities of an organization, while downstream refers to the development, implementation, and evaluation of consumer-directed marketing activities. Working to influence the 'upstream' environment—a concept that Kotler refers to as *megamarketing*—are five foundations of power that marketers can influence, viz., coercion, rewards, information and expertise, prestige, and legitimacy (Kotler, p. 121).

The food and beverage industry is a well-established and powerful institution within contemporary western culture. The industry involves thousands of companies and stakeholders and millions of products, and because of its size and complexity, it is difficult to establish precisely the size and worth of this sector (Brownell & Warner, 2009, p. 263). In 2006, the World Bank estimated the worth of global food and agriculture industry at $4.8 trillion. In 2007, Euromonitor International estimated the packaged food industry alone to be worth an approximately $1.6 trillion (Murray, 2007, p. 4).

The food industry is highly diversified and fragmented but also organized and politically powerful (Brownell & Warner, 2009). Food—what, when, and how we eat—is also a key element of culture and commerce. The cultural meanings attached to food are communicated through a system of culturally interpreted signs and symbols. Marketers occupy a powerful position as cultural 'brokers', as they help contribute sociocultural meaning to goods beyond their functional purpose (Zukin & Maguire, 2004; McCracken, 1986). Within the context of marketing to children this role of marketers becomes troublesome when appeals such as cool, fun, or popularity are associated with functionally innutritious products (Hastings, McDermott, Angus, Stead, & Thomson, 2006).

The current socioeconomic climate is also associated with ideas of neo-liberalism and individualism, and consumer culture, the latter of which critics claim has entered our mindset and influenced our self-conceptualizations and identity (Knuttila, 2005). Marketing has been implicated as promoting consumption, hedonistic behavior, and undermining ethical values (Lee, Pant, & Ali, 2010).

Influential in this capacity is the mass media, which plays a critical role in delivering messages that positions food and its role within our society (Economos et al., 2001). Marketers therefore play an influential role in not only shaping the symbolic content of food through food marketing, but as buyers of media space, ensure these messages are communicated throughout society. Producing and delivering these messages requires significant resources, as the marketing budgets of food and beverage corporations attest.

Consumers not only purchase the products being advertised but also "consume" the marketing material and embedded cultural messages. Conflict theory, which claims that society is characterized by conflict and that the capitalist class who holds economic power is in a position to dominate and exploit others to maintain its position (Knuttila, 2005, p. 240), helps to frame issues around power disparity in this context. Ethical queries around power are raised when resources available to marketers and consumers are compared. Marketers have at their disposal significant budgets, staff, and technology to collect, manage, and apply this information. By comparison individuals must rely on their own initiative, the work of concerned advocacy groups and limited, and often summative, information that is publicly available through annual reporting and shareholder obligations. While individual, or even groups of, consumers can produce and deliver their own messages, a process made easier through technological advances of the last 30 years, the resources available to them are likely to pale in comparison to their corporate counterparts.

As highlighted by Preston, commercial entities are keen to keep such customer information tightly held, for both political and competitive reasons (Preston, 2004). In this way it appears that the extensive information marketers have about their consumers (Preston, 2004; Cook, 2000). their preferences, tastes, values, lifestyles, spending habits, and a range of other demographic and psychographic information far outweighs that which is available and able to be processed by individual consumers.

The issue of power disparity can also be extended to the legitimate position of the food and beverage industry in our society. From a Weberian perspective, legitimacy theory helps to explain why people consistently and voluntarily submit to authority (Humphreys, 2010a, p. 4). Legitimacy moves beyond obedience to support or acceptance by those under authority (Humphreys, 2010a, p. 3). Mechanisms used by organizations to gain legitimacy within a society can be explicit, such as offering rewards or incentives, or implicit, such as positioning products or brands within everyday cultural contexts (Humphreys, 2010b, p. 492). In exploring how organizations establish legitimacy within the casino industry, Humphreys explains legitimacy as a process in which the social world is shaped by collective stakeholders (Humphreys, 2010a). Through this process organizations facilitate social acceptance. Within the context of this discussion, legitimacy helps to explain the situation in which society permits the marketing of unhealthy food to children and adolescents and why children and adolescents, who without even representation from government, are in a relatively powerless position to oppose.

From a legal perspective, the USA offers protection for both corporate and commercial speech at differing levels under the First Amendment. Historically, corporate speech was offered full protection under the Constitution so long as it dealt with issues of public interest and importance, whereas commercial speech that sought to 'promote commercial transactions' was entitled only to limited protections (Fitzpatrick, 2005, p. 95). Commercial speech was regulated by the Federal Trade Commission and under state laws. More recently, protections offered to commercial speech seem to be expanding, as evidenced by cases such as Nike v Kasky. In light of these changes, public health advocates have remarked that regulators appear defensive in the face of aggressive attacks on First Amendment protections (Piety, 2010, p. 17). Samantha Graff and Tamara Piety discuss the role of the First Amendment in more detail in chapter 5 of this book.

Elsewhere, such as the UK and Australia countries have moved to recognize the concept of 'fairness' in consumer legislation, particularly in relation to the notion of power between two parties entering into contractual agreements. *The Australian Competition and Consumer Act* (Australian Government, 2010), a cooperative reform of the Australian Government and the States and Territories, through the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs and legislated in January 2011, specifically bans contracts with "unfair" terms. This, in effect, means that a consumer can argue an unequal balance of power between him or herself and a corporation, may lead to an unfair relationship. Similarly, consumer legislation in the UK protects consumers against unfair standard terms in contracts that they may make with traders. The UK Government (1999) protect consumers from terms that reduce their statutory or

common law rights to impose unfair burdens on consumers. Although both these legislative terms refer to contracts, it is arguable that the notion of fairness in exchange between consumers and their purchasing behavior is somewhat translatable to the overwhelming influence of IMC in the food marketing context.

Despite the broader power dynamics and resulting imbalances discussed above there are examples that demonstrate consumer backlash to unethical or unfair practices of marketers. The possible effects of these ethical implications for marketers are highlighted when examples involving consumer backlash of any one of these elements are explored—Nike with regard to exploitation of labor (Proctor and Kitchen, 2002), the tobacco industry when the product itself is associated with public health risks, growing consumer resistance and mistrust of traditional advertising (Stanley, 2007), and in Australia examples such as the "Cash for Comment" affair that highlights consumer anger at undisclosed promotion in the guise of editorial comment.

However, the efforts of consumer advocates such as these, while admirable, again pale when compared to the combined elements that form a significant power imbalance between children and adolescents and the organizations that market unhealthy food to them. Society is structured in such a way to have legitimized this power imbalance, and through marketers' role as cultural interpreters, to ensure products such as energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and beverages come to occupy a place within popular culture. IMC benefits marketers through increased effectiveness and efficiency, yet it is clear that its integration extends to the possible magnification of ethical risks that under traditional marketing models may not have come into as close contact with each other. In the next section of this chapter, we examine three cases that demonstrate a significant and often misunderstood strategic approach to IMC. Through examination of IMC in practice, we highlight how prolific and complex the IMC approach to communication is in relation to consumer exposure to multiple, integrated connections to branded products.

IMC in Practice

The following three case studies demonstrate the use of highly integrated marketing communications towards the target segment of children and young adults.

Cadbury Freddo Frog

Cadbury Australia's Freddo Frog chocolate was invented in 1930 as a part of then MacRoberston Chocolates children's range (Cadbury Australia, 2010) and has since become one of Australia's most popular children's chocolates (Superbrands Australia 2010). Freddo has attracted children for more than 80 years as an adventurous, fun, loveable character. Importantly for Cadbury, Freddo provides a method of recognition early in a child's cognitive development, long before they can recognize the word "Cadbury."

Fig. 3.2 Freddo Frog
Packaging

The cartoon frog character and red color of the Freddo logo is likely to attract attention, encourage favorable brand associations, and enhance memory of the advertised benefit claims (Neeley and Schumann, 2004; Childers and Jass, 2002). Spokes-characters have also been shown to act as visual cues to represent a brand's attributes and result in more favorable brand attitudes (Garretson and Buton, 2005). Freddo is portrayed as likeable, active, sporty, and adventurous (Figs. 3.2 and 3.3).

Freddo Frog's packaging is well integrated with the overall strategy of the brand (Fig. 3.3). The Freddo product has been adapted to suit a variety of different occasions—such as a Christmas-themed Freddo dressed in red with a Santa's hat (Fig. 3.3). Cadbury has also expanded the original Freddo product range, including:

- A 3D Freddo with one of four surprise candies inside
- Freddo birthday cakes
- Button decorations
- Party share packs
- Christmas stockings
- Share packs (Fig. 3.4).

Cadbury uses point-of-purchase displays to communicate with consumers. These displays make it even easier for the child to recognize the product and are often found at pram or child heights (Fig. 3.5).

Fig. 3.3   variations on Freddo Frog packaging

Fig. 3.4   Product extension

Fig. 3.5   Point of purchase display

Fig. 3.6 Themes of fun, fantasy and adventure

Advertising to children and the use of entertainment as a marketing appeal has been subject to increased scrutiny in light of rising rates of childhood obesity. In Australia, 16 major food and beverage companies have voluntarily committed to the Australian Food and Grocery Council's Responsible Children's Marketing Initiative. Cadbury is one of the companies who have committed to not advertise unhealthy products to children less than 12 years of age (see http://www.afgc.org.au/cmsDocuments/Cadburypercent20CAP.pdf). Despite this commitment, Cadbury has received much criticism for its recent 'Adventures of Freddo' marketing campaign.

The campaign, which ran for five weeks to coincide with Freddo's 80th birthday, encouraged children to go online to interact with Freddo and help him solve puzzles and play games. Themes of fun, fantasy, and adventure were central to the campaign (Fig. 3.6). The television commercial is presented as a movie preview, showing highlights of the 'Adventures of Freddo' and encouraging registration at http://www.freddo.com.au. On the website the child can design their own character, who then joins the adventure with Freddo (Fig. 3.7). This blurring of the fantastical virtual world and reality, what Kathryn Montgomery in this book refers to as immersive and engaging media, is enhanced when the campaign also invites the child to complete real world challenges offline.

In this IMC campaign, Cadbury employed a number of strategies to attract the target audience, including the use of cartoon characters, music, film, interactive educational games, competition, puzzles, and free downloadable activities. The Freddo website (Fig. 3.8) features 17 games, 10 puzzles, and 24 activities. Cadbury also encouraged repeat visits to the website by releasing the first ten episodes of the game over the first ten days of the school holidays. The games and puzzles, as well

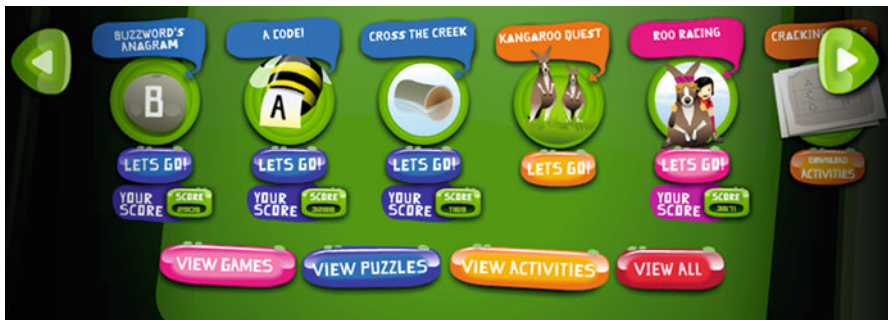**Fig. 3.7** Children can design their own character and interact virtually with Freddo

Fig. 3.8 Games, puzzles and activities featured on the Freddo website

as the take-home and online activities, represent connections between the child and the Freddo brand (Fig. 3.9). The "Adventures of Freddo" campaign encourages children to immerse themselves in the Freddo brand with interactive games and puzzles, videos, and printout offline activities.

Cadbury maintains that the campaign was not targeted at children, and is responsible marketing, because it does not show any unhealthy products, such as chocolate, in its advertising, even though the brand itself is repeatedly referred to. Cadbury also presents itself as a responsible marketer by requiring parental permission via email to use the website, by providing administrative time controls to the register, and by stating its aims are not pernicious, as it seeks "to educate and entertain children using a modern version of the cheeky, loveable frog that we have all grown up with" (http://www.freddo.com).

Commitments such as the Responsible Children's Marketing Initiative have been criticized for promoting a company whilst ignoring the actual strategies used by the company to target children (Jones et al. 2007). In their defence, Cadbury's preteens category manager Kate Watson said, "We don't actively market to children aged 12 and under. We're marketing to parents. Parents are the gatekeepers. Kids can't go on the website without parents registering the kids" (Sinclair, 2009).

Fig. 3.9 An activity from the Freddo website

Fig. 3.10 Jodie Henry, the face of Cadbury Schweppes at the Games, with Freddo Frog and Karak at Luna Park, 2006 Commonwealth Games, Melbourne
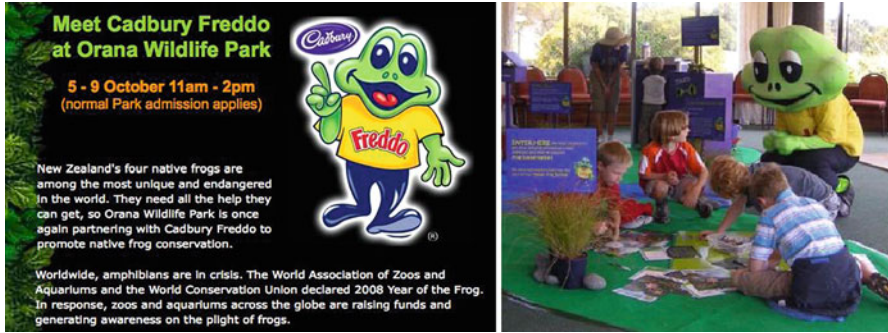
Fig. 3.11 Freddo's affiliation with Orana Wildlife Park in New Zealand

Fig. 3.12 Example of a Freddo "showbag" and contents

Sponsorships, affiliations, and celebrity endorsements are other key strategies used by Cadbury. Cadbury aims to be associated with an active, sporty, energetic lifestyle through its sporting sponsorship (Fig. 3.10). It also wishes to be perceived as charitable, educational, and fun through its various other sponsorships and fund-raising activities. As part of the 'Adventures of Freddo' campaign, branded outdoor activities were run at aquatic centers in states throughout Australia. Similarly, in New Zealand, Freddo has been affiliated with Auckland Zoo and Orana Wildlife Park (Fig. 3.11). This sponsorship allows Cadbury to reach many children and create a lasting brand impression through fun activities and learning.

Cadbury Freddo Frog merchandise is also made available to children through various events. Cadbury showbags are available throughout the year at fairs and 'shows' in many locations throughout Australia. The Freddo showbags generally include about a dozen of different flavored Freddo chocolates plus branded items like a Freddo keychain, a Freddo tumbler, or a Freddo bag (Fig. 3.12).

Fig. 3.13 Examples of Cadbury Fundraiser boxes

Fig. 3.14 Freddo fundraising promotion

A central method Cadbury uses to enhance familiarity between its target audience and the Freddo Frog is its fundraisers (Fig. 3.13). Cadbury's fundraisers see the chocolate brought into the home, and often the child has a role selling the chocolates. Indeed, the child is made a part of the selling process, in order to fundraise for a group or club they have a recreational interest in such as a childcare centre, sporting club, or a scout group. Cadbury is prominent in the confectionary fundraising market raising millions of dollars each year, as seen in the self-promotion from the Cadbury website in Fig. 3.14.

Fig. 3.15 McDonald's logo

McDonalds Corporation

Since the opening of its first restaurant in California in 1940, McDonald's has grown to become the most iconic brand of modern times. The logo, a yellow "M" (referred to as the 'golden arches') on a red background, is recognizable across cultures and borders (Fig. 3.15). The logo has attained a level of familiarity that much of McDonald's signage is able to be presented without the company name, or in some instances, without the red background (Fig. 3.16).

McDonald's has been criticized substantially for advertising to children, which resulted in the corporation implementing a self-imposed ban on directly advertising unhealthy food to children in 2007, and redirecting marketing budgets to advertise and promote healthier options (Lee, 2008). It has since incorporated pasta zoo (recalled due to bad sales), seared chicken wrap, fruit fizz drink (with 65% fruit juice), fruit juices, and apple slices into poster that shows a glass of fruit fizz, a fruit bag, and a seared chicken mini snack wrap in a Happy Meal, which includes a toy. Given the increasing objections to advertising to children, McDonald's now aims to target 'mums', inviting a panel of mothers to visit supplier's facilities, the restaurant kitchens, and other sites to learn about its food quality.

Fig. 3.16 Variation of
McDonalds logo without
red background or
company name

McDonald's began introducing healthier options to their menu, beginning with
the grilled McChicken burger, in 1998 (Fisher, 1998). However, it is arguable that
the changes introduced, such as fruit juices, salads, and cooking oil low in trans fats,
and the introduction of the Heart Foundation tick, were a calculated response to
attacks through litigations and books such as Fast Food Nation and movies such as
"Supersize me" and "Food Inc.," rather than any authentic attempt to change con-
sumer behavior or preferences (The Associated Press, 2007 http://www.msnbc.msn.
com/id/20895437/; Sugarman & Sandman, 2006; Munger, 2004).

At McDonald's restaurants, the Happy Meal, also known as the children's meal,
is prominently displayed. The Happy Meal is always accompanied by a toy.
McDonald's has aligned itself with various organizations and appealing brands,
such as Disney cartoon characters and most notably various Hollywood studios, to
develop toys for inclusion to promote the Happy Meal product. The majority of
the successful cross promotions have been for children's movies such as Shrek,
Ice Age, Night at the Museum, and Fantastic Mr. Fox. The toy included in
the Happy Meal is used in the IMC program as a tangible connection, along with
the take home puzzles, quizzes, and activity books, that the child makes to the
McDonald's brand.

Fig. 3.17 The layout of restaurants enables parents to have a quiet snack while their children play safely in the Playland

McDonald's Playlands form an important part of a child's social life, providing a recreation area outside of school to meet friends and have a good time (Powell et al., 2005). The layout of restaurants enables parents to have a quiet snack while their children have a separate area to play (Fig. 3.17). It is also a safe environment for parents and children to socialize, especially in low-income areas where playgrounds are not safe, or situations where responsible monitoring is difficult. Playlands foster a sense of enjoyment and fun among children, affection towards the parents who bring them there, and resulting feelings of good parenting (Schlosser 2002).

McDonalds use spokes-characters such as Ronald McDonald (Fig. 3.18), Hamburglar, and Mayor McCheese, which through the use of bright colors and fun themes, activities, and storylines help children to recognize the McDonald's brand. McDonald's also use easy-to-remember taglines and jingles to further help children differentiate between competitors.

McDonald's integrates the internet into its marketing structure to create enduring relationships with the consumer. The McDonald's website features information on the menu, currently sponsored events, and links to the Ronald McDonald House charity (Fig. 3.19). The US market also has access to Ronald.com (Fig. 3.20), which is targeted to younger children and features games that help them develop motor, memory, and observation skills. HappyMeal.com.au (Fig. 3.21) features interactive games and will take you to McWorld, an entire website dedicated to the entertainment of children. The site features games, puzzles, arts and crafts instructions, wallpaper, screensavers, printable coloring sheets, icons, and a parent information

Fig. 3.18 McDonald's spokes-character, Ronald McDonald
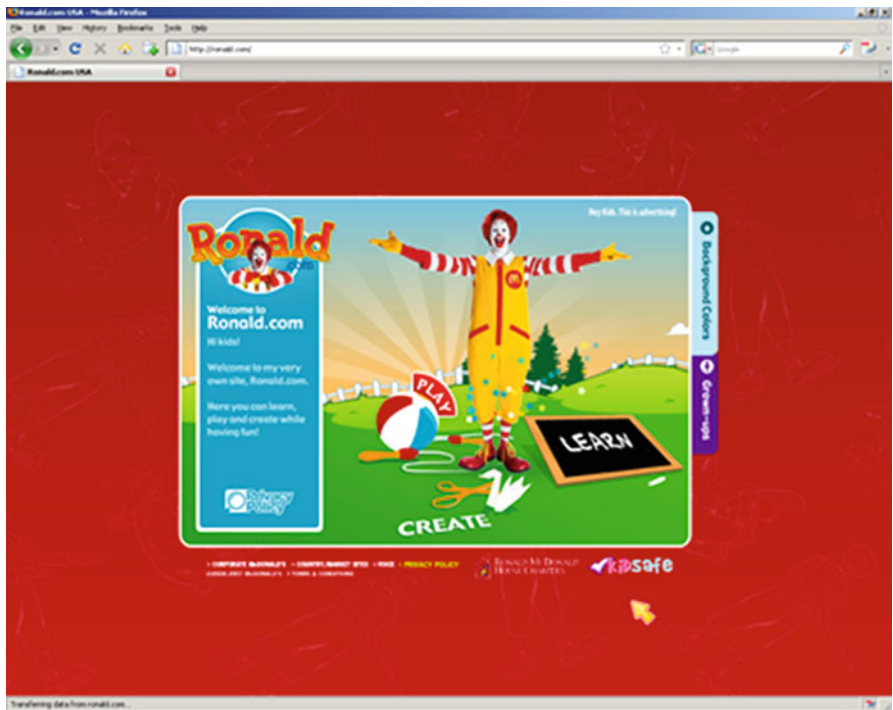

Fig. 3.19 http://www.mcdonalds.com.au

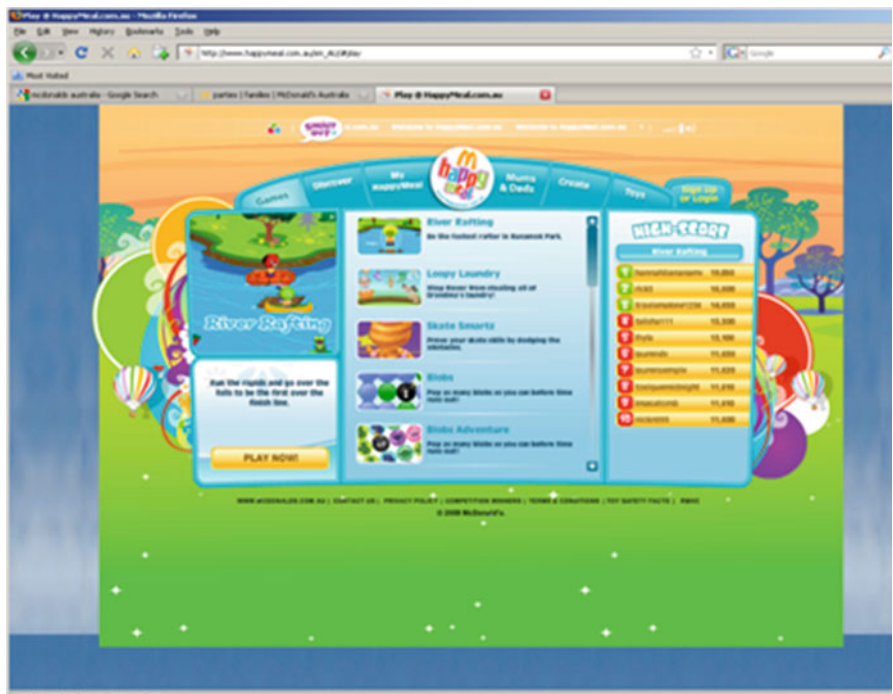**Fig. 3.20** http://www.ronald.com

Fig. 3.21 http://www.happymeal.com

Fig. 3.22 McDonald's logo as part of sponsored community teams and events

section. HappyMeal.com has a selection of 20 games, all catering to different personality types and skills. The availability of a parental information section on the sites also creates a perception of openness and thus gains the trust of the parent.

Marketers aim to change brand attitudes via the use of product placement—the planned placement of branded products in movies or television programs. McDonald's has used product placements in various movies aimed at children and tweens, such as Richie Rich in a 1994 campaign, and Josie and the Pussycats in a 2001 campaign. On the small screen, McDonald's McCafe has featured on the Australian morning show "Sunrise" on Channel 7 as a supplier of its coffee and food. In 2005 MTV and McDonald's launched a music partnership, MTV Advance Warning, which aims to strengthen connections with young adult audience and features both the McDonald's and MTV logos.

Exposing children to the brand in strategic locations like hospitals, schools, and sporting events facilitates memory of the brand and strengthens the association of positive attributes, ensuring continuous brand recall and thus translating into increased sales.

Sponsorship of sporting events creates the association of youthfulness and an image of an active lifestyle. In Australia, McDonalds is an active sponsor of Little Athletics, whose members are in the 4–15-year-old range. In Victoria, it partners Basketball Victoria and sponsors many of Basketball Victoria's Junior Development Programs, involving 32,000 children across 480 schools. McDonald's sponsors Skill Fun and Play, a school-based program involving 9,500 children, along with McDonald's Super Mini Series for 10 years and under players, and McDonald's Champion School for secondary schoolers (Fig. 3.22). McDonald's has been a sponsor of the National Junior Classic tournament for the past 3 years; the Golden Arches are a distinctive part of the logos used by all programs. McDonalds support of a range of community charities and events increases trust in the brand and makes it easier for parents to choose McDonald's fast food over and above other competitors (Fig. 3.23).

Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) has been operating successfully since 1986 with the aim of helping sick children and their families. Apart from providing accommodation and facilities, RMHC also includes National Learning programs (so that children can maintain schooling), grants for families, and the

Fig. 3.23 Billboard demonstrating support for community charity

Fig. 3.24 Ronald
McDonald House Charities
logo

Charlie Bell scholarships. McDonald's conducts regular events, including the
"McHappy Day" where a dollar from every Happy Meal goes towards the charity but
also has a RMHC charity box into which restaurant and drive-through patrons can
donate coins. RMHC is allowed the use of the golden arches in its posters and adver-
tising as well. In this case, Ronald McDonald is an interactive interpretation of the
McDonald's logo, and his association with health care based charities for children is
aimed to imply positive health aspects of the McDonald's restaurants (Fig. 3.24).

Fig. 3.25 Kellogg's Logo

Ronald McDonald House Charities and McDonald's restaurants located in children's hospitals create positive associations between the restaurant and the health and well-being of children. A study conducted in the US found that fast-food restaurants are common in hospitals that sponsor pediatric residency programs (Sahud et al. 2006). They also found that "a McDonald's restaurant in a children's hospital was associated with significantly increased purchase of McDonald's food by outpatients' belief that the McDonald's Corporation supported the hospital financially" (Sahud et al., 2293). This study also revealed a higher rating in the perceived healthiness of McDonald's food by survey participants.

McDonald's marketing to children is well integrated, involving the physical attributes of the restaurant, locations of restaurants, print media and signage that popularizes the logo, sophisticated and entertaining online content, product placement, event sponsorships, and even employment opportunities.

Kellogg's Nutri-Grain

Kellogg's is the leader of Australia's ready-to-eat breakfast cereal market (Superbrands, 2001). One of these products, Nutri-Grain, has become Kellogg's Australia's best-selling cereal brand, covering 11% of the ready-to-eat category (Superbrands). Studying the promotion for Kellogg's Nutri-Grain reveals a sophisticated level of integration among the brand's marketing-communication elements.

The Kellogg's logo combines the color red with a stylized version of the company's founders' signature (Fig. 3.25). These elements are likely to gain attention and encourage a certain level of trust and familiarity among consumers. The Kellogg's logo is used on all its products and in its communications for instant brand recognition.

Nutri-Grain is positioned as an energy food for power, strength, and performance (Jones et al. 2007) and primarily targets teenage boys, largely through the use of sports themes (B and T, 2003a). The Nutri-Grain package helps create this association using its no-frills, solid, big and bold front paired with blacks, browns, and reds (Fig. 3.26). Red draws attention to the three key ingredients of "CORN OATS WHEAT." The cereal pictured visually explodes off the packaging in an effort to represent the cereal's energy-giving qualities. Health benefits often form part of Nutri-Grains promotion. Nutri-Grain taglines, including "Iron man food," "helps fuel growing boys," and "You only get out what you put in," aim to create an association between working hard physically to achieve a challenging feat and eating the cereal to provide you with energy to do so.

Fig. 3.26 Nutri-grain
packaging
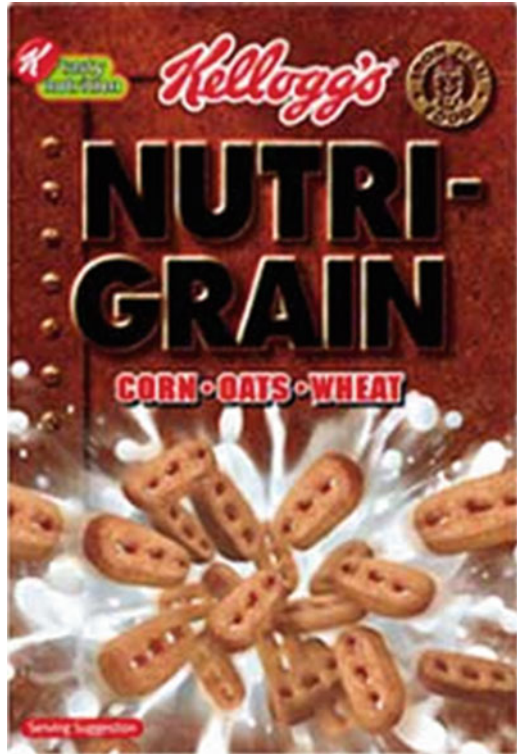
A 1984 television commercial (TVC) showed Iron Man, Grant Kenny, running and kayaking. In the next scene he is eating Nutri-Grain and says, "tastes great." Another TVC in the same year, also with Grant Kenny, emphasized the "five vitamins and iron" and protein contained in Nutri-Grain, again branding it as "Iron Man food." A 2003 TVC "On Your Own" aimed at the teen market transported the "Iron Man food" into a futuristic hybrid football match (Fig. 3.27). Recently, Iron Man, Ky Hurst, has appeared in a TVC that showed him lifting weights, doing push-ups, shoveling coal, kayaking, running to the top of a mountain and eating Nutri-Grain. The tagline, "You only get out what you put in," is used in this TVC.

Nutri-Grain marketing also targets parents, specifically mothers. The cereal's advertising sends a strong message that part of being a good mother means providing sons with a high-energy breakfast that will help them grow into healthy, strong men. A 2009 TVC addresses mothers and informs them that "Nutri-Grain has what it take to help build your son into an Iron man."

The Nutri-Grain 2008–2009 campaign showed how the cereal can make boys into Iron Men and included advertisements run via print, radio, and online before the launch of two TVCs. The campaign focused on the mother–son relationship and the role of the mother in her son's growth and development (B & T, 2008). The ads are

Fig. 3.27 Nutri-Grain as the "Iron Man food" for football in the "On Your Own" TVC

shot from the mother's perspective and emphasize Nutri-Grain's nutritional creden-
tials. One TVC begins showing a mother encouraging her young son as he runs to his
swimming class and takes off on his journey to become an Iron Man (Fig. 3.28).

In 2008, Kellogg's announced that it would sell a branded television series about
soccer-playing youngsters to Foxtel Pay TV (Lee, 2008). 'Football Superstar' fol-
lows the competition of 50 young Australians vying for a contract with Sydney
Football Club's youth team and other prizes, including starring in a Nutri-Grain

Fig. 3.28 Nutri-Grain TVC showing the mothers role in the Iron Man journey

Fig. 3.29 Nutri-Grain website homepage

commercial. Nutri-Grain was provided for contestants to eat during the series, and logos were visible on training gear and on signage around the events (Sinclair, 2008). An implication of creating strong associations between the Nutri-Grain cereal and success in sport is that boys may perceive Nutri-Grain as essential in their day-to-day diet.

The Nutri-Grain website also uses browns and blacks to represent masculinity and strength. The website almost entirely focuses on Iron Men and the Kellogg's Nutri-Grain Iron Man series. On the homepage the viewer is greeted with images of Iron Men competing in the Iron Man series set to "epic-style" music (Fig. 3.29). Profiles of the Iron Men and Women are available for viewing and other information about the series is provided via links such as "the rounds," "round-by-round results," "the winners," and "behind the scenes." Links to the Iron Man Series website (http://www.ironmanseries.com.au) provide additional content about the event. Other prominent links encourage the viewer to access the "Iron Man code," to meet "the

Fig. 3.30 A section of the Iron Man code found on the Nutri-Grain website

champions," and to "facts about protein" (Figs. 3.30 and 3.31). The Nutri-Grain website taps into boys dreams of achievement and glory and puts into use several interactive marketing techniques (Story and French 2004).

The sporting theme associated with Nutri-Grain extends to product promotions, which have included the chance to design team jumpers for their local football team, along with opportunities to win an X-box, music downloads, an MP3 player, and mini-speakers.

Iron men and women also act as a form of celebrity endorsement (Fig. 3.32), in which positive attitudes toward the athletes transfer to the brand. Kellogg's integrates these associations across its marketing communications to enhance brand liking amongst its target markets and serve as a risk-relief heuristic (Roselius, 1971).

Nutri-Grain is rated equally with Billabong as the brand most Australians associate with being a sports sponsor; 30% of Australians recognize the cereal as a sport sponsor (Marketing Magazine, 2009). Kellogg's Nutri-Grain sponsors, and has

Fig. 3.31 Nutri-Grain website links to Iron Men profiles

naming rights for, the Iron Man series (Figs. 3.33 and 3.34). Kellogg's is a major sponsor of Surf Life Saving Australia, as well as the Kellogg's National Leadership Camp and surf education programs. Kellogg's Nutri-Grain has also previously sponsored and had naming rights for the AFL's interactive tipping competition, the Dream Team and has sponsored the branded televisions series "Football Superstar" as discussed previously.

Kellogg's has voluntarily committed to cease advertising unhealthy products to children aged less than 12 years as part of the Australian Food and Grocery Council's Responsible Children's Marketing Initiative (RCMI) (B and T, 2009; see *http://www.afgc.org.au/cmsDocuments/Kellogg%20CAP.pdf*). It is clear that Kellogg's

Fig. 3.32 The 2009 Nutri-Grain Iron Man Series

Fig. 3.33 Iron man series
logo

wishes to position itself a responsible food company playing a role in the battle
against childhood obesity (Lee, 2007). Despite this, Kellogg's continues to receive
criticism for their marketing to children and teenagers (Jones et al., 2007). Kellogg's
was voted the winner of the 2009 Shame Award for Smoke and Mirrors by con-
sumer group, The Parents Jury. Particularly emphasized by the group were the TV
and radio advertisements that encouraged parents to buy Nutri-Grain for their
"growing boys" which they say is misleading in terms of its nutritional benefits.

Fig. 3.34 Iron Men and Iron Women

Policy Implications

The Response to Date

Literature discussed in previous sections of this chapter highlights just a small selection of the significant research and inquiry that has been invested into the issues of marketing to children, childhood obesity and food marketing. However, it appears that understandings of marketing within a public health context are at times inconsistent with those proposed by marketers. Despite encouragement from the World Health Organization to adopt broad understandings of marketing that are consistent with industry definitions (*Marketing of Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages to Children*, 2006), we found a tendency within public health documents to interpret marketing more narrowly, and often focus exclusively on the promotional aspects of the concept.

In 2004, Hawkes noted that an estimated 62 countries surveyed as part of her investigation into the global regulatory environment on marketing to children on behalf of the WHO had some form of regulation on television advertising that targeted children (Hawkes, 2007, p. iii.) In this report she also noted that the food marketing environment was rapidly evolving and that subsequent regulations were characterized by significant gaps (Hawkes, 2007, p. 57).

The risk associated with public health professionals incorrectly defining or understanding concepts such as marketing, promotion and advertising, or fixating on a single marketing tactic or channel, is that it will lead to misinterpretation and possible weakening of policy and public health responses to the childhood obesity epidemic. Despite significant research and investigation into the topic of marketing to children, IMC has only received limited acknowledgement in public health literature and discussions. This is of great concern considering IMC represents the *modus*

operandi among marketers. By not recognizing the significance of IMC, and its associated ethical challenges as it relates to the issue of food marketing and the rise in childhood obesity, the public health community risks making a major oversight.

In addition to adopting an IMC approach, industry has also acted more promptly than government in delivering their response to this issue. In 2011 Kraak, Story, and Wartella completed a 5-year evaluation of progress made by different stakeholder groups in achieving the IOM recommendations as published 5 years earlier in the report *Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity* (Kraak, Story, Wartella, & Ginter, 2011, p. 3). Their evaluation found that while no one stakeholder group had made "extensive progress" toward achieving the recommendations, food and beverage companies, schools, and groups tasked with improving standards of marketing to children all demonstrated some progress (Kraak et al., p. 4). The report also concluded that government made no progress against relevant recommendations of a national social marketing campaign or nominating a single organization to centrally monitor progress.

However, as the case studies in this chapter demonstrate, the self-regulatory actions of food and beverage manufacturers and marketers still enable significant opportunities for companies to promote energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and beverages to young people outside of traditional channels. By defining the maximum age of a child as younger than 18 years (as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) (*Marketing of Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages to Children*, 2006), limiting marketing behavior only to programs or media where children constitute the primary audience or limiting only advertising (*The responsible children's marketing initiative*, 2009, p. 4), marketers to still able to use a wide range of promotional techniques to deliver their desired message to their target audience, while still abiding by self-regulatory measures.

Realizing the Synergy of IMC

IMC is about synergy; about the whole being greater than the sum of the parts. Marketers who apply IMC realize this and use it to their commercial advantage. The above discussion represents the interplay of marketing characteristics, sociocultural conditions, and ethical challenges that are associated with the use of IMC to promote energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and beverages to children and adolescents. It seeks to illustrate that these factors do not operate in isolation, but build upon one other in a complex and dynamic way.

Marketing and public health are two very different disciplines that are connected by the global obesity epidemic. Outwardly they may be seen as opposing forces—one discipline is focused on alleviating the current problem, the other contributing to it. To make true progress, we need to look beyond the confines of our own disciplines and learn from different, if unfamiliar, paradigms. This is no small request. Yet as global responses to chronic disease remain inadequate even in the face of

growing epidemiological and economic evidence (Yach, Hawkes, Gould, & Hofman, 2004, p. 2616), it is clear that new approaches are needed to help address this problem.

Public health professionals and policy makers need to understand more deeply the complex interplay of factors surrounding IMC as it is used to promote energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and beverages to children and adolescents. There is acknowledgement that the response to date has not been sufficient in addressing this issue (Nestle & Jacobson, 2000). As stated by Harris, Brownell, and Bargh, "a fundamental question remains as to how to protect young people against the unhealthy influence of food marketing." (Harris et al., 2009, p. 216).

Rather than taking a reductionist approach that seeks to analyze the individual components of this situation, we argue that a more holistic and dynamic approach is recommended. IMC represents a paradigm shift away from traditional conceptualizations of marketing. Similarly, its response requires a similar paradigm shift to traditional public health responses. The first step in this shift is recognizing and understanding IMC, the broader environmental factors and dynamics that support it, and its implications in the issue of promoting energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and beverages to young people.

Conclusion

The public health community has thoroughly analyzed and documented concerns regarding the involvement of food marketing in the childhood obesity epidemic. Significant resources have been invested investigating this issue and consequently a sizable body of literature is available to explain the impact of advertising and marketing on opinion, consumer behavior, and preference, how marketing affects and is interpreted by children, the amount of marketing material children are exposed to, and the responses of the food and beverage industry to these concerns.

However, in the same period that this research has been conduced, marketing as a concept has not remained static, but itself has undergone a transformation. From its beginnings as a modern concept, characterized by individual channels and techniques that were managed, implemented, and delivered relatively independently, marketing has been impacted and indeed shaped the transition toward postmodernity, in which marketing itself plays a central role (Firat & Venkatesh, 1993, p. 229).

Researchers have turned their focus to environmental factors to help explore causes for the childhood obesity epidemic. In doing so, public health professionals and researchers need to recognize that marketing is no longer dominated by the same approach that it was as little as 25 years ago. Since this time IMC, grounded in concepts of postmodernity, has become the dominant marketing paradigm. Despite theoretical challenges, IMC has been embraced by commercial marketing practitioners and represents both a powerful way of promoting brands and as a broader business strategy.

IMC used to promote energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and beverages presents ethical implications which derive from the concept itself, inherited ethical challenges associated with marketing more broadly, and broader sociocultural conditions which support marketing and maintain a power structure within society. IMC benefits marketers through increased effectiveness and efficiency, yet it also magnifies the possible ethical risks that underlie more traditional marketing models and their social foundations.

IMC represents a paradigm shift to traditional marketing. Similarly, its response requires a similar paradigm shift to traditional public health responses. Such an approach may be difficult and unfamiliar, is likely to be associated with its own risks, and may not be met with success. Failing to recognize this transition to an IMC paradigm, however, poses a significant threat to efforts aimed at managing the risks associated with marketing of energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and beverages to children and adolescents. Rather than providing expedient solutions, implications, or recommendations, this chapter seeks to provide a preliminary attempt to "catch" the shape of an overlooked research and public policy issue. The first step, an awareness of IMC, and an understanding of its implications among public health professionals, is both achievable and will better position advocates to address this issue now and in the future.

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