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Six brand lessons from the Kardashian Clan

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You may not like celebrity culture, but a star's ability to influence consumers is unrivalled in many markets. Hannah Mirza reveals what marketers can learn from the most famous celebs of the lot: The Kardashians.

If you are looking for a conversation starter, just mention the Kardashians. You'll probably get a deeply impassioned response to this famous family and its widely publicised shenanigans. Love them or hate them, you know who they are.

Why? Because Kim, Kylie, and the extended Jenner clan – as well as their clingy partners and friends – are the epitome of reality TV in the 21st century. Their show 'Keeping up with the Kardashians' is broadcast all over the world, and has launched a global brand empire.

They've achieved every global marketer's goal: a genuinely global presence. And they are increasingly shrewd with how they grow it. In many ways 'Brand K' should be the modern marketer's muse. Here are six things brands learn can learn them...



Have a varied portfolio

The Kardashians' mass appeal is driven by the huge number of varieties in the portfolio. Different ages, sizes, genders, ethnicities, body shapes, interests, public agendas; there's a Kardashian for everyone to love (or hate) the most.

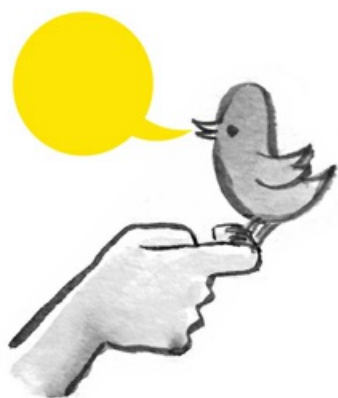
But despite their differences, the 'K' clan stick together. The sisterhood amongst the women is astonishing given how publicly they are pitted against each other. No matter how much they argue, fight and bitterly complain about each other, they are united behind their brand name and never fail to promote it.

Manage your social channels carefully

There's rarely a day when the Kardashians are not featured in the press. But when they're not posing for paparazzi in exotic locations, they're driving the conversation themselves on social media.

Kim Kardashian alone has nearly 90 million followers on Instagram, and her fans try to keep up with her every move. Historically, they could. Kim's social strategy was to be always on, sharing (supposedly) unfiltered images and behind-the-scenes updates of her glamorous lifestyle in a carefully controlled way.

Most importantly though, many of the photos being used in the mainstream press are those they have been personally taken and posted to social media by the family. This is because these are by virtue the most access-all-areas photos outside of the media frenzy when in public places. They are controlling their own brand image and know how to market it to feed the machine.



Use digital and mobile to keep fans engaged

In December 2015, Kim launched KIMOJI, an app that lets users send Kim-related emojis to their friends. It reportedly reached a record of 9,000 downloads per millisecond and crashed the Apple store.

The rest of the family are in on the act too. Kim, Kylie, Kendall, Kourtney and Khloe have all launched branded apps containing fantasy lifestyle adventure games, fashion advice, recipes, live updates and long-form public content.

With over a billion downloads between them and more than \$100 million in earnings for one of Kim's apps alone, the Kardashians have cracked the mobile market by giving fans what they want.

Release new content regularly to sustain interest

Kim also knows a few tricks about keeping fans coming back for more, too. In 2016, a year after its release, she released 160 new KIMOJI designs to keep the app fresh and relevant. Ever want to send a twerking derriere to your friends? Well, now you can.

Smart brands adopt similar long-term thinking in their own content strategies, releasing content at the right times to sustain interest and keep consumers engaged.



Get the most out of your partnerships

The Kardashians have redefined how an influencer can and should act when it comes to product endorsements on personally-controlled social enterprise platforms.

Their marketplace is driven by the virtues of daily bite-size content consumption consumers are so hungry for. This formula has created a co-dependent relationship between the Kardashian business model and the media machine feeding from it.

But as well as cracking the digital code, the Kardashians are expert negotiators when it comes to setting up deals as paid product endorsers, lending their celebrity to promote product lines in fashion, beauty, food and diet, exercise, perfume and more.

Be wary of oversharing

Of course, the Kardashians have been guilty of missteps, too. Mostly, due to oversharing. Their spectacular success has also repelled many consumers who will do anything to stay out of the K Clan bubble.

For the truly allergic there is K Blocker. As the app professes, 'Enjoy Kardashian-free web browsing'. Working much like an ad blocker, it goes one step further and cleanses browsers of any K brand content.

The lesson here? Make sure your brand is everywhere your consumer is, but only share content that's helpful, sincere and genuine. Consumers will soon start tuning you out if you become too wrapped up in yourself.

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