Return of the MAC:

A Strategic Communication Plan to Resonate with Gen Z Consumers

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Abstract

In today's modern beauty industry, competition has intensified, making it challenging for brands to stand out from others. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the landscape of the beauty industry, with a focus on current and evolving trends within the space. In addition to the analysis, it will contain an evaluation of Gen Z's unique shopping habits and preferred beauty attributes. It will also include an examination of their perceptions of MAC Cosmetics. This showcases the significance of tailoring strategies toward targeting these influential young consumers, whose buying power is ever-growing.

Furthermore, with the insights collected from the conducted primary and secondary research, a strategic communication campaign will be crafted for MAC Cosmetics. The **Return of the MAC** campaign aims to amplify the brand's awareness and relevance, through various elements that focus on resonating with young consumers.

Chapter One: Overview of the Beauty Industry

<u>Global Business Landscape</u>

The beauty industry is ever-evolving and has seen substantial growth, shaping its global

business landscape in significant ways throughout the past decade. According to Marchessou and

Spangnulo from Mckinsey, the industry consists of five segmented categories: skincare, color

cosmetics, hair care, fragrances, and personal care. The industry makes well over $100 billion in

revenue worldwide, each year (Howarth, 2023). Furthermore, a report published by the Business

of Fashion states that global retail sales are forecasted to "record a compound annual growth rate

of 6% between 2022 and 2027." This derivative of growth is attributed to several factors

including emerging markets, new integrations of technologies, and changes in consumer

behaviors. In terms of regional performance, the United States acquired the most revenue

worldwide at $87,125.45 million in 2022 (Statista, 2023). Statista also reports that China follows

behind, accounting for $55,307.19 million. Overall, the global beauty industry is facing

astonishing growth year after year and is projected to be worth $689 billion by 2028 (Oberlo,

2023).
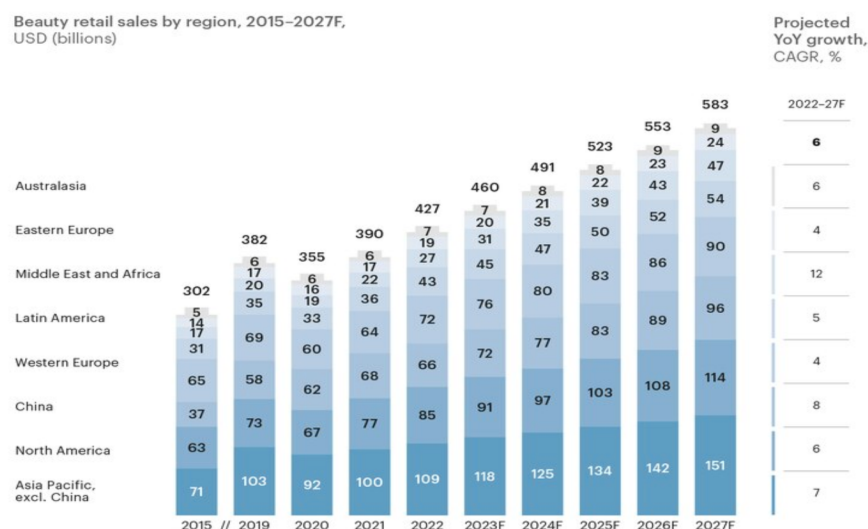

Figure 1: Forecasts of Beauty Retail Sales by Region   Source: The Business of Fashion

With an increase in new brands joining the competitive market, it is essential that they remain on trend and evolve to survive. The global powerhouse brands include L'Oréal and Estée Lauder. According to Women's Wear Daily, L'Oréal is dominating the industry with a revenue of $40.31 billion in 2022. While Estee Lauder follows behind with an estimated $16.4 billion (Women's Wear Daily, 2023). These industry leaders have established a strong global presence with an extensive brand portfolio to align with diverse consumer preferences.

United States Business Landscape

The American beauty industry is dynamic and showcases a strong demand for beauty products. The main category segments include skincare, hair care, make-up, perfumes, toiletries and deodorants, and oral cosmetics (Statista, 2023). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 182.5 points in 2022. This marks an increase from the previous year which was 178.5, suggesting that consumers are willing to spend more. In a survey conducted by Groupon, researchers found that, on average, women spend $3,756 on beauty products and services, annually.

Furthermore, technology and changing consumer preferences have also influenced a shift in the landscape of the industry. With the increasing digital dependence of our lifestyles, there has been an increase in online shopping via e-commerce. According to a survey conducted by the National Retail Federation in 2021, 29% of consumers would prefer to shop online over in-person shopping experiences. With this in mind, competitive beauty brands are prioritizing their digital presence and optimizing their digital platforms.

Chapter Two: Industry Trends

Over the past decade, the beauty industry has undergone significant transformations influenced by evolving social trends and cultural norms. From beauty influencers on the newest platforms to gender-neutral makeup, the change is notably immense. This section provides an overview of the top industry trends that have transformed the beauty world.

Social Media Platforms

As new social platforms arise, beauty brands have introduced various ways to communicate and advertise to their audiences. In order to stay competitive in the saturated beauty marketplace, brands must produce engaging content to capture the attention of their followers. According to a study conducted by We Are Social, consumers are 41% more likely to discover new brands or products on social media. Social media serves as a powerful tool to reach an array of beauty consumers and is invaluable to brands that are looking for more ways to connect with their targeted audiences. Additionally, brands can connect directly with their followers by responding to comments and direct messages. This personalized initiative fosters a relationship between beauty brands and consumers by increasing brand awareness and encouraging loyalty.

With the power of social media, brands can capitalize on emerging trends that have captured the attention of their target audiences. Brands that are nimble and able to participate in these trends while integrating their beauty products will benefit from the acquired engagement that has the potential to translate to a sale conversion. If the social media trends are performed in a timely manner, the possibility of resonating with consumers is high.

Throughout the past decade, Instagram alone has emerged as a top-performing platform for beauty brands. According to a report by Launch Records, a whopping 85% of marketing professionals have named Instagram as one of the most effective platforms for engagement. While Instagram has demonstrated success, each social media platform provides the opportunity to channel different messaging and reach specific audiences.

Furthermore, features on social media platforms have allowed beauty brands to bring their products to consumers. Without the need to physically enter their retailers or websites, consumers can shop directly from social media. For example, on Instagram, brands can add a "call-to-action" sticker on their Instagram stories which will send their followers directly to a checkout page of the product advertised. Additionally, on individual shares via Instagram, brands can tag the direct product showcased, allowing the consumers to be directed to their e-commerce platform or Instagram Shops. The directed page often contains essential information such as pricing and ingredients. An example of this approach is performed by the beauty brand Too Faced (see Figure 2). The brand frequently shares a direct link to shop for the products that are advertised. The consumer would simply click on the tagged link and then be directed to an Instagram Shops page with all product details, and the option to "Add to cart" or "Buy now". It is important to note that this option is only available to mobile users.
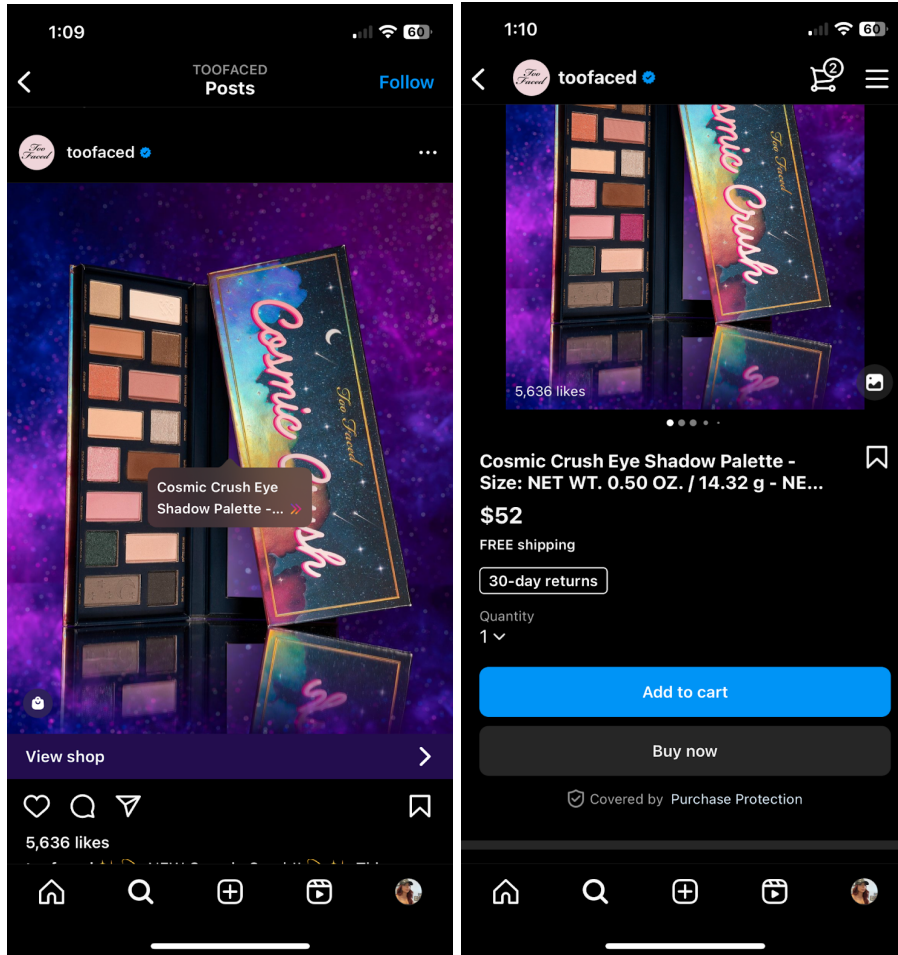
Figure 2: Screenshot of Too Faced Cosmetics' Instagram Shop

Overall, with a strong social media strategy, brands can increase awareness, drive traffic to their e-commerce websites to convert sales, and increase engagement.

Influencer Marketing

The rise of social media influencers has had a profound impact on the beauty industry over the past decade. According to Joe Gaglisea, co-founder & CEO of global digital and social innovation group Viral Nation, more than 50 million people around the world label themselves as influencers or creators. Furthermore, there are approximately 500,000 active beauty influencers across various social platforms (Social Star, 2023). This figure highlights the significant role

influencers play in marketing products, driving trends, and shaping consumer behavior, within the beauty industry. The influencer marketing sector is a $5 billion industry in the US and continues to grow, year after year. (Enberg, 2022). As more consumers are rejecting traditional advertising, social media influencers can provide authentic promotion that has the potential to deeply resonate with consumers.

Influencers excel at crafting content that resonates with their followers and niche audiences. By creating content on topics they are passionate about and showcasing their creative skills, influencers can captivate through engaging content that may result in encouraging their audiences to take a particular action. Their content has the potential to increase the value and trustworthiness of the brands that are endorsed. Within the beauty industry, this is done by beauty influencers through makeup tutorials, product reviews, and even by simply tagging the products within their captions. According to a study shared by Influencer Marketing Hub, more than 65% of consumers have reported purchasing beauty products after viewing recommendations shared on social media by influencers. This demonstrates the significant influence these individuals have in driving sales. Influencers are able to provide their followers with an authentic and preferred version of a makeup advertisement at the tip of their fingers.

Beauty brands strategically collaborate with influencers to promote their products in authentic ways. In fact, consumers today prefer collaboration advertisements rather than traditional advertising (Grin, 2023). This is a result of influencers' own brand and persona that contribute to the beauty brand's social media identity. Their contribution adds a personalized touch to beauty brands with an infusion of credibility due to their authentic connections with their followers and potential consumers. With this in mind, it is important that beauty brands

engage with influencers to increase their trustworthiness, authenticity, and overall brand awareness.

Inclusion and Diversity

Over the past few years, there has been a strong shift for inclusivity and diversity within the beauty industry. This push has been significantly noticeable as in the past the industry has been criticized for its narrow beauty standards. Inclusive beauty refers to the idea that all individuals will be represented no matter their background, gender, skin type, skin tone, age, etc. This notion refers to both the products created and those involved within the industry. By creating beauty products that encompass the full range of human skin tones and branding with diversity in mind, there is a strong sense of resonation that empowers consumers.

Societal pressures have redefined the industry and brands have begun recognizing the need to cater to all potential consumers. In 2017 Fenty Beauty shocked the world of beauty causing what experts call the "Fenty Effect." This was done by creating beauty products and branding with inclusivity at the top of mind. Fenty launched over 40 foundation shades, which is something that a beauty brand has never done in the past. The positive response received from this launch encouraged other brands to follow suit, therefore impacted by the "Fenty Effect." Since the inclusive initiative came to fruition, many brands have reevaluated their social values and pushed for more inclusive messaging (Dara, 2022). Whether this be by expanding their skin shade ranges in foundations to creating more diverse campaigns with various models, the increased representation is an essential factor to today's consumers.

The push for diversity and inclusion is relevant for all, but it is especially important to members of Generation Z (Gen Z). According to Gintux, 52% of Gen Z consumers believe in

shopping for inclusive brands. While Gen Z may be leading the way in purchasing with a purpose, other cohorts are also following suit in performing conscious consumerism.

Although there have been strong strides toward increasing diversity and inclusion within the beauty industry, consumers believe that there is still work to be done. In a recent research report, Mintel states that 68% of American consumers would like to see more diversity within the beauty space that "reflects real life." The push for diversity and inclusivity is evident but consumers want it to be showcased in more authentic ways. In order to achieve this, ongoing efforts from brands and experts will be key to ensuring equitable and respected representation.

Sustainability and Clean Ingredients

Sustainable beauty and clean ingredients have become popular among today's consumers and experts. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reports that the industry causes 120 billion units of plastic waste and contributes to 18 million acres of forest annually, making it one of the least environmentally friendly industries. As the conversation on global warming has become increasingly discussed, the push for sustainable beauty initiatives has also gained momentum.

Sustainable beauty, also known as "green beauty" emphasizes conscious purchasing for both the planet and the well-being of an individual. These beauty products often feature natural ingredients, biodegradable materials, and use minimal to no waste with environmentally friendly packaging (NIQ, 2023). Sustainable beauty also includes clean ingredients. Clean ingredients are often free of synthetic chemicals such as parabens, phthalates, sulfates, and other toxic substances (Sustainable Jungle, 2022). The overall goal of sustainable beauty and clean

ingredients is to lower the negative ecological impact of the industry on the environment and one's health.

To authentically align with the values behind sustainability and clean beauty, brands are adopting strategies that reflect their commitment to the environment. A few of these strategies include recycled packaging, environmentally friendly ingredients, and transparency of one's carbon footprint. One notably sustainable brand in the beauty and cosmetic industry is ILIA. According to ILIA's website, the brand has implemented a free recycling program for hard-to-recycle products and is committed to sourcing materials that are safe for both the planet and your well-being. Furthermore, ILIA is dedicated to giving back and has a goal of planting 1 million trees by the end of 2023 in partnership with One Tree Planted (ILIA, 2023). Beauty brands like ILIA are pioneering the way through initiatives that reflect the principles of sustainable and clean beauty. Their contributions and transparency will inspire other brands to follow suit as the beauty industry transitions into more environmentally conscious spaces.

Moreover, the desire for more sustainable beauty is heavily demanded by younger generations. A study published by Statista in 2021 found that 86% of Gen Z shoppers and 80% of millennial shoppers actively search for sustainable beauty products. Both of these groups are known for their conscious purchasing decisions derived from their commitment to social and environmental causes. They seek brands that prioritize sustainability which is showcased in transparent ways. Because both demographics are the primary targeted market with the most vital purchasing power for the beauty industry, it's important that brands take part in credible sustainability and clean beauty trends that are emerging as common practices (Deyo, 2023).

Ethical Beauty

With an increase in conscious consumers, ethical beauty has become an additional crucial trend within the industry. Many may consider sustainable beauty and ethical beauty as related concepts, but they are attributed to distinctive focuses. While these terms are often used interchangeably or incorrectly attributed to certain products, for the purposes of this we are adhering to the following definitions: sustainable beauty pertains to the ingredients put into beauty products and the environmental impact of the environment. On the other hand, ethical beauty focuses on the practices used to produce the products (Sandhu, 2022). Further, some practices of ethical beauty refer to material sourcing, product testing on animals, and working conditions.

Testing products on animals is one of the most visible ethical concerns that fall within the segmentation of ethical beauty. This is a heavily frowned upon practice that many beauty brands have now rejected as consumers and organizations have strongly advocated for cruelty-free beauty. Cruelty-free brands and products ensure that no animals are subjected to unnecessary harm or suffering for the sake of producing beauty products. Although the use of animals to test the safety of cosmetics is not illegal in some areas of the United States, the FDA requires that products are properly labeled and disclosed to consumers (FDA: Animal Testing & Cosmetics, 2023). Despite many brands now claiming to be cruelty-free, nearly 500,000 animals suffer and die worldwide every year due to animal testing (Humane Society, 2023).

In addition to cruelty-free products, consumers are in search of vegan ingredients. Vegan beauty products do not contain any animal-derived ingredients. An example of animal-derived ingredients that are often found in beauty products includes beeswax, gelatin (cow or pig bones), and carmine (crushed-up beetles). According to the Economist, a quarter of millennials identify

as vegan or vegetarians in 2019. As vegan diets have popularized in recent years, consumers desire products that align with their lifestyles. This push has prompted many brands to reformulate or create dedicated vegan product lines to attract these consumers.

Increase in E-commerce Purchasing and Advancement of Technology

With the advancement of technology that has occurred over the past decade, the purchasing landscape within the beauty industry has also transformed. The industry has seen a shift that focuses on online platforms and e-commerce. This shift has revolutionized the way consumers discover and purchase products. For example, the increase in shopping online has made beauty more accessible to consumers. At the tip of their fingertips, consumers can shop from anywhere. These e-commerce sites have all the information needed to make purchasing decisions such as product images, virtual try-on features, and reviews from others. E.l.f. Cosmetics is an example of a brand that has focused on its digital portfolio. In 2019, the company made the decision to close down all brick-and-mortar stores to focus on its digital channels (Hopkins, 2019). E.l.f.'s website features tutorials, quick tips, and a virtual try-on feature to engage with its online consumers and create a unique digital experience (E.l.f. Cosmetics, 2023).

Beauty brands are now using advancements in technology and data analytics to offer a personalized experience for their consumers. By integrating augmented reality (AR) and artificial intelligence (AI) technology, brands can cater to individual consumers on a mass scale through learned algorithms (Fjermedal, 2023). For example, AI can provide consumers with a skincare diagnostic experience from a selfie. In this case, AI will generate recommended products to target potential skin concerns. Beauty technology provides consumers with their own personal

beauty advisor, which can be accessed through their devices, anywhere. Additionally, brands are analyzing data analytics to understand consumers' behaviors and preferences to provide accurate product recommendations. By utilizing personalized technology, beauty brands can enhance the shopping experience and build deeper relationships with consumers.

It is significant that the beauty industry prioritizes the incorporation of technology into shopping experiences as both Gen Z and Millennials prefer to shop online. In a survey conducted by Klarna, the organization found that 48% of Gen Zers and 61% of millennials prefer to shop for beauty products online. This comes as no surprise as both generations are digitally-native and tech-savvy.

The beauty industry's adoption of technology in recent years has increased a deeper relationship with today's consumers. By integrating technology, brands can remain relevant in the ever-growing landscape through new and unique digital experiences.

With these trends and beliefs in mind, I have chosen to conduct an in-depth analysis of one of the industry's giants – MAC Cosmetics – and create a strategic public relations plan. This plan could help the brand reignite some of the leadership and glamor that it once enjoyed, especially amongst young consumers.

Chapter Three: MAC Cosmetics - SIP Model

To craft this plan, I will be utilizing the Strategic Integrated Planning Model (SIP). Here is my analysis of MAC Cosmetics.

    I.   **Company or Organization Background**

Make-up Art Cosmetics, more commonly known as MAC Cosmetics, is a globally recognized beauty brand known for its professional-grade cosmetic products. The Canadian-born cosmetics company was founded in 1984 by Frank Toskan, a fashion photographer and makeup artist, and Frank Angelo, a hair salon owner (Jaques, 2015). The brand was originally created specifically for best results under photography and studio shots for professionals to "fill the gap between makeup artistry and fashion photography" (Chesters, 2011). Toskan and Angelo saw a common issue in the way makeup was translated in photographs and intended MAC Cosmetics's editorial products to solve it.

Although the brand was created for professionals and models, it gained popularity amongst consumers in the late 1980s. In a quote shared by Byrdie, Tonskan states "We were manufacturing for models at first, but soon the models wanted our products for their sisters, friends, and so on," (Ross, 2022).

The very first product launched by MAC Cosmetics in the early 80s was the start of their iconic lipsticks. The lipstick was named, "Flamingo" and was inspired by a pink Crayola crayon, created in Toskan's Kitchen with the help of his chemist brother-in-law and mother (Clair, 2014). According to Beautylist, Toskan claimed that Flamingo was the first matte lipstick to photograph the same way on the lips as it did in the product's tube.

As MAC Cosmetics gained popularity amongst consumers, the founders decided to open up their first brick-and-mortar retail operation in 1985. The store resided in New York City's West Village, which was also known as the epicenter of the AIDS epidemic (Zippia, 2023). To combat the tragic epidemic and bring a dose of optimism to the LGBTQ+ community, MAC began its commitment to social causes and diversity. According to Beautylish, the founders hired beauty advisors of unconventional beauty and welcomed all forms of beauty no matter your gender or skin color to their store. MAC Cosmetic's passionate founders have heavily contributed to the company's strong values, which still play an important role in the brand today.

In 1994 MAC Cosmetics initiated an acquisition agreement with Estee Lauder Companies, a global beauty powerhouse (Seo, 1998). By 1998 following the passing of Angelo, Estée Lauder fully acquired 100% ownership of MAC Cosmetics. This acquisition helped the cosmetic brand by elevating MAC Cosmetic's global recognition and leveraging Estée Lauder's reach and resources. Today, MAC has become an international stable beauty brand for professional makeup artists, photographers, and the average beauty consumer.

II. Mission Statement

MAC Cosmetics' mission statement highlights its authority within the beauty industry in which the company leads with its values at the forefront. According to the MAC Cosmetics website, the brand's mission statement reads, "Since 1984, MAC Cosmetics has established itself as the ultimate colour authority with artistry at our roots, inclusion and diversity at our core, and a commitment to conscious beauty and social responsibility at the top of our minds. With products sold in over 120 countries, it's no wonder why makeup lovers always return back-to-M.A.C." This statement is followed by the tagline, "All ages, all races, all genders." The

mission statement reflects MAC Cosmetic's expertise in creating artistry-level makeup, their commitment to diversity and inclusivity, and as well as their dedication to conscious beauty and their social responsibility. In addition, MAC's tagline further reinforces its commitment to embracing individuality amongst diversity. The clear dedication is a reflection of the brand's core values, which serve as the foundation for its continued success.

III.   Brand positioning

The brand positioning refers to the brand's identity and how it is perceived in the minds of consumers. In this section, I will utilize the brand positioning statement formula from the SIP model:

- **To:** professionals, makeup enthusiasts, and beauty lovers
- **MAC Cosmetics are the:** experts in producing quality and on-trend cosmetics
- **That**: celebrates the power of diversity and inclusion within the beauty space
- **Because:** of its foundational core values instilled by its passionate founders who believe makeup artistry should be for every individual.

IV.   Statement of Problem or Opportunity

While MAC Cosmetics has built a strong presence in the beauty industry today, the brand is finding difficulty in connecting with members of younger consumers, specifically Gen Z and young millennials. Both of these groups are known to be constant consumers of beauty products. Although the brand was built on a foundation of values that the cohorts resonate with such as the importance of incorporating diversity and inclusivity, MAC Cosmetics is not implementing the essential communication and marketing initiatives to amplify their messaging and remain relevant in an oversaturated market.

V.   Research

To further develop a campaign that will solve the statement of problem, both forms of primary and secondary research were conducted. Within the section, I will further expand on the focus group that was conducted with an analysis of findings and insights. In addition, this section will contain a content analysis featuring comparisons of advertisements from MAC Cosmetics and a Gen Z-targeted brand, Rare Beauty. Furthermore, a list of the secondary research used throughout this strategic planning model will be provided.

Focus Group

Methodology:

In order to further understand attitudes and opinions of MAC Cosmetics amongst Gen Z, an online focus group was conducted via Zoom on June 6th. The six participants consisted of an array of Gen Z members and one young millennial. They are all from the United States, between 22 and 27 years old, and also have earned a Bachelor's degree. The group also included a mix of races and ethnicities. The moderator of the focus group was Professor Jennifer Floto and the session was both audio and video recorded with the consent of each participant. In order to maintain confidentiality, each participant's name was removed and will be referred to by a number. The full transcript can be found in the appendix, below. The primary purpose of this focus group was to test assumptions about beauty brands and purchasing habits among our key target audience. For each major segment of the focus group, I have noted my major takeaways as they pertain to MAC Cosmetics. Please note that the following excerpts have NOT been edited and appear exactly as they were stated during the focus group.

Analysis of findings on consumer purchasing decisions:

- **Gen Z members are willing to pay a premium price for beauty products as long as they know it is something that will work for them.**

    In the focus group, Participant 3 said, "I have the products that I know that I like and that I'm okay splurging on just because I'd rather pay for something that I know works for me." Participant 3 expressed that as long as the product targets their certain needs, they are willing to pay more. Additionally, Participant 5 mentioned the following, "I feel like if the product has really good reviews and it works, I'm not really too concerned about the pricing, because I know like, in the long run, it'll either help my skin or to like get the job done." This demonstrates that Gen Z consumers tend to prioritize quality over pricing or affordability in their purchasing decisions. Furthermore, in a global consumer survey, McKinsey found that 44% of Gen-Z respondents are willing to pay more for high-quality beauty products.

    This insight can be used as a way to emphasize the significance of amplifying MAC Cosmetics' messaging on their product quality. **Takeaway:** *In the campaign that will target Gen Z and younger millennials, the brand should include testimonials, consumer product reviews, and offer samples to highlight the performance of its products.*

- **Gen Z members use TikTok as a platform to discover beauty products through influencers.**

    According to the focus group, three participants mentioned using influencer recommendations on TikTok to make purchasing decisions. Participant 5 said the following, "So, I like wait for them to post, and then, like, when they review something I'm like okay, like I need to go to Sephora, I'm gonna get this." This participant waits on

reviews she finds through TikTok influencers, then heads to her local retailer to purchase the beauty products. Additionally, Participant 6 shared, "I just got the Rare Beauty blush because I saw it on TikTok all over for like months and I was like I need to get it, so I just bought it." This demonstrates the power of consistent awareness or exposure can hold in influencing purchase decisions.

This insight highlights the significance of sharing content on TikTok and collaborating with influencers as a way to reach Gen Z consumers. **Takeaway:** *MAC Cosmetics should consider increasing its presence on this social platform through both owned content and shared content with influencers.*

- **Authenticity captures the attention of Gen Z.**

An additional noteworthy insight that was discovered from the focus group was the important concept of authenticity within content messaging. Participant 5 shared the following, "I kind of personally like when it's not like a paid ad when the influencer is like 'I'm promoting this product because I swear by it like, I actually use this like, I love this product. This is not an ad'." This Gen Z participant values when product recommendations by influencers are genuine and showcase elements of transparency. Through authentic messaging, both the influencer and the brand will be viewed as credible and trustworthy.

This insight demonstrates the essence of authentic partnerships between brands and influencers. **Takeaway:** *MAC Cosmetics can tap into achieving authentic shares from influencers to target Gen Z, by encouraging them to share personal experiences with their products on social media.*

- **Gen Z is highly attracted to the beauty trend of natural and dewy makeup products that also offer skincare benefits.**

     According to the focus group, Gen Z is highly attracted to beauty products that offer natural or dewy finishes and incorporate skincare benefits. Participant 4 said, "Dewy-like, -kind of like natural, but like fresh-looking makeup look is what, is the trend that I'm really, really loving right now." This participant emphasized the desire for light-coverage makeup that enhances one's natural beauty. An additional participant mentioned the significance of skincare to achieve a seamless makeup look. She highlights that the combination of both a natural beauty look and skincare will make your makeup lay better on your skin.

     This insight emphasizes the importance of creating minimalist products that enhance natural features while also contributing to skincare benefits, to attract the consumer market of Gen Z. **Takeaway:** *MAC Cosmetics should consider creating a campaign with products that contain lightweight formulas and message skincare benefits.*

- **Incorporating aspects of inclusivity within beauty campaigns is key to attracting Gen Z.**

     Throughout the past decade, the concept of inclusivity and diversity within the beauty industry have been essential core values for brands to incorporate into their agendas, to remain relevant. This is especially key to capturing the attention of Gen Z which is a group that prioritizes equal representation and positive strides towards social justice issues. During the focus group, when the moderator asked about a memorable campaign, one participant mentioned the personal impact of a campaign that showcased the incorporation of inclusivity. Participant 1 said, "Just the thought of it being more

inclusive from an ability standpoint, those have really kind of caught my eye to make people feel beautiful, no matter like what who you are or ability level." This demonstrates how Gen Z consumers can recognize inclusivity initiatives by brands that then become more memorable to them.

This insight showcases the significance of beauty brands incorporating inclusivity and diversity that derive from core values. **Takeaway:** *MAC Cosmetics should incorporate inclusive elements in its campaign by embracing diversity and promoting unique individual attributes to foster a genuine relationship with the Gen Z cohort.*

- **Although some members of Gen Z are willing to spend more for products that may work, others have a threshold amount that is considered when making purchasing decisions.**

The focus group demonstrated that spending thresholds vary among Gen Z when it comes to how much they are willing to spend on beauty products. Three out of the six participants spoke about their spending thresholds and the exceptions that they might make. For example, Participant 4 is willing to spend up to $70 on a beauty product, while Participant 1 indicates a spending limit of $55. Notably, both of these amounts are higher than the average spend of a single beauty product amongst Gen Z. According to an online survey study published by Statista, 38% of Gen Z respondents reported spending an average of $21-$50 on a singular skincare product. This indicates that the average threshold amount is slightly below that of the focus group participants. Furthermore, Participant 6 expressed, "I'd be willing to spend more like for a foundation or something that I like had a good experience with verses like maybe a mascara, or like a lipstick."

This reveals that Gen Z's pricing preferences may vary on personal experiences with the product.

While some members of Gen Z may be willing to splurge on products that they know work for them, others may be more conscious of their spending. **Takeaway:** *MAC Cosmetics should consider these findings and tailor product pricing messaging to effectively meet the spending habits of Gen Z.*

Analysis of findings on MAC Cosmetics perceptions:

- **Gen Z members are not often purchasing from MAC Cosmetics and describe the brand's target consumers as millennials and "older" generations.**

In an oversaturated beauty market with intense competition, it can be difficult to capture the attention of Gen Z members. In the focus group, several participants revealed their low engagement with MAC Cosmetics. Participant 2 mentioned that she has only purchased from the brand once in the past 10 years and this is only due to a collaboration with the music artist group, BLACKPINK. Similarly, Participant 4 purchased a product a year ago only because it was for a recommended product, and before that purchase, she had not engaged with the brand in four to five years. Participant 3 has not purchased from MAC Cosmetics since she first started college, which was over five years ago. Nearly all participants acknowledged that they do not frequently purchase from MAC Cosmetics.

In addition to not engaging with MAC Cosmetics, two of the participants mentioned that MAC Cosmetics' target audience is millennials and "older" generations. Participant 3 stated that her mother is an avid MAC Cosmetics user because the brand showed up in the industry when the competition was not as intense. **Takeaway:** *This insight suggests that MAC Cosmetics will need to reassess its communication strategies*

in order to stand out to Gen Z. A campaign that specifically targets this cohort through initiatives based on Gen Z's preferences, can increase its brand's relevance and engagement among the cohort.

- **Gen Z feels that MAC Cosmetics is an introductory cosmetics brand that serves as the gateway to new brands and products.**

   According to the focus group, some members of Gen Z perceived MAC Cosmetics as an introductory brand. Participant 1 mentioned that MAC Cosmetics was one of the first makeup brands that she used. Participant 3 also mentioned that MAC Cosmetics was her go-to brand to use in her early college years. This perception may be due to the brand's popularity in the early 2010s which the participants may have caught an interest in, through their premature beauty journeys.

   The perception of MAC Cosmetics as the introductory cosmetic brand among Gen Z consumers has the potential to create a sentimental association of nostalgia. **Takeaway:** *By tapping into the emotions associated with MAC Cosmetics from early memories of beauty products, the brand can evoke a deeper connection with young consumers. This can be done through a campaign that emphasizes the role MAC Cosmetics played in their beauty discovery.*

- **Gen Z perceives MAC Cosmetics as a brand with products intended for professionals with high-quality formulas.**

   MAC Cosmetics' origins are in creating products intended for professional makeup artists, and Gen Z consumers may still have this perception of the brand. In the focus group, Participant 3 said, "I kind of position it as like it's for professionals, like people who do makeup professionally. So I think that's also why I don't really care to

touch a lot of their products." Gen Z is lacking an interest in MAC Cosmetics due to the perception of it being developed solely for professionals.

While this association with professional-grade products can be viewed positively with the indication of high quality, it may pose a hurdle for Gen Z consumers who particularly prefer to follow the neutral and minimalistic beauty trend. Participant 6 mentioned that she used it during her dance recitals as it was "good stage makeup." This is also due to the notion that professional makeup artists tend to create dramatic editorial looks that are not commonly worn as a daily look.

Takeaway: *MAC Cosmetics should consider creating a campaign that completely shifts the narrative of its origins to attract the attention of Gen Z. The brand should highlight the versatility of its products. This can be done by highlighting that their products are made for various skill levels.*

- **MAC Cosmetics' in-store experience can be labeled as unwelcoming and not beginner-friendly, to Gen Z.**

During the focus group, it was revealed that MAC Cosmetics' in-store experience is contributing to Gen Z's lack of attraction toward the brand. According to Participant 4, "the experiences that I've had personally going into a MAC store, they have not been like the friendliest, or like very helpful in like trying to help me figure out like beginner products." Participant 1 also had a similar experience, stating, "From my experience when I've gone into the MAC store there, I've kind of been met with a 'why don't you know'." This unwelcoming perception could be a derivative of MAC Cosmetics' professional tone, pushing away young consumers.

From this topic of our discussion, participants also brought up a direct competitor, Sephora. They mentioned that at Sephora their shopping experiences are different as employees with this company are much more attentive and approachable. Participant 1 spoke about how she is often approached and always offered help.

Takeaway: *Considering this sentiment, MAC Cosmetics should reevaluate its customer service practices and offer beginner-friendly resources that encourage experimenting. This is especially important due to Gen Z's perception of the brand creating makeup products primarily for professionals.*

- **MAC Cosmetics' branding is dated and has not changed to align with modern trend aesthetics.**

Despite MAC Cosmetics' simple product packaging being highly recognizable to consumers, Gen Z members are describing it as dated. Participant 4 mentioned that the packaging looks the same as when her mom was using it and would like to see a change in the company's branding. **Takeaway**: *In order to attract the attention of Gen Z consumers in an oversaturation of options, MAC Cosmetics should create a new branding concept that is on trend within a new campaign.*

- **Gen Z is unaware of MAC Cosmetics' involvement in LGBTQIA+ initiatives since the birth of the brand.**

It is evident that Gen Z is attracted to brands that outspokenly take a stance on social issues and advocate for marginalized groups through initiatives. From the focus group, it was discovered that Gen Z is unaware of the work the brand has done for the LGBTQIA+ community. When the moderator asked if the group was familiar with any of the inclusivity work and LGBTQIA+ involvement the brand has done, all participants

nodded their heads and signaled "no." This is extremely insightful as one of MAC Cosmetics' most popular campaigns is VIVA GLAM which launched in 1994. Within this campaign, MAC Cosmetics has created a line of VIVA GLAM Lipsticks in which 100% of the profits are donated to "support women and girls, the LGBTQIA+ community, and people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS" (MAC Cosmetics, 2023). To amplify this campaign, MAC Cosmetics has partnered with various celebrities such as Lady Gaga and Rhianna (Pijak, 2014).

Takeaway: *To reach Gen Z consumers and increase awareness of the philanthropy work the brand has done, MAC Cosmetics should re-introduce its rich history in the upcoming campaign. The campaign should also mention the specific organizations the brand had donated to as well as highlighting its positive impact. With this in mind, MAC Cosmetics will feature various characteristics of Gen Z's preferences ensuring their attention.*

Content Analysis

[NEW Connect in Colour Eye Shadow Palettes | MAC Cosmetics](#)

Figure 3: MAC Cosmetics - Connect in Colour Eye Shadow Palettes Advertisement

The MAC Cosmetics advertisement was shared in May 2023 on YouTube. The video is promoting the launch of the new Connect in Colour eye shadow palettes and is 15 seconds long. It showcases a group of diverse individuals wearing various eye shadow colors from the palettes, along with product shots. It also gives a demonstration of the innovative QR code featured on the palette, which can introduce consumers to different potential looks for inspiration. In its entirety, the video's inspiring tone encourages consumers to express their individuality with the new eyeshadow palettes.

The target audience for the advertisement is individuals who value expressing creativity. Specifically, the advertisement is targeting millennials between the ages of 25-33 years old. This is due to the estimated age range of each model in the video. In addition, as previously discovered in the focus group Gen Z tends to pursue more natural makeup looks, which is something that is not depicted in this advertisement. Instead, it focuses on the use of vibrant eye shadow colors.

Although the video is relatively short, it does capture a few shots of eye shadow application shots. These shots share with the target audience how effortless it can be to apply the eyeshadow by simply using your fingers. The application shots also show viewers how pigmented the colors are. Additionally, the diversity of the models allows MAC Cosmetics to show how the eye shadow pigments look on different ethnicities and skin tones. The diversity of the models also reinforces MAC Cosmetics' core values of representing all individuals in its brand.

The advertisement includes quick shots and various layouts. This is a visual strategy used to capture the attention of the viewers. It also features upbeat background audio that can contribute to the inspiring and fun tone of the advertisement.

Takeaway: *The Connect in Colour advertisement successfully communicates messaging of individuality, creative self-expression, and connection. MAC Cosmetics reinforces its core values of diversity and inclusion by including models of different backgrounds. Furthermore, the innovative feature of the QR Code can connect individuals as well as inspire consumers who purchase it.*

[Kind Words Matte Lipstick and Lip Liner | Rare Beauty by Selena Gomez](#)

Figure 4: Rare Beauty - Kind Words Matte Lipstick and Lip Liner Advertisement

The Rare Beauty advertisement was shared in July 2022 on YouTube. The video has a duration of 21 seconds and is promoting the launch of the new Kind Words Matte Lipstick and Lip Liner. Similar to the MAC Cosmetics ad, the video showcases a group of diverse individuals wearing the lip duo. Product shots are also included at the beginning and end of the advertisement. Additionally, the advertisement features the founder and actress, Selena Gomez.

The target audience for the advertisement is individuals who value self-expression, genuine connections, and kindness. Rare Beauty's primary target

audience is Gen Z members and younger millennials between the ages of 18-28 years old, which also translates to the target audience for this advertisement. The diverse models shown in the video are estimated to be in their mid-twenties, therefore resonating with Gen Z. Additionally, all the models are wearing light makeup, a preferred makeup look among Gen Z, according to the Focus group.

The product's name and text in the advertisement, "Kind Words" and "Use Kind Words" are aligned with the brand's core values to be respectful amongst one another and promote self-acceptance (Rare Beauty, 2023). This message communicates to the target audience to be kind both to themselves and to others. Additionally, the inclusion of diverse women in the advertisement represents the brand's values of embracing individual uniqueness.

Furthermore, Rare Beauty showcases slight "imperfections" of each model within the advertisement. It is clear that the brand did not use a beauty filter on the model as skin texture and small blemishes are shown. This initiative derives from the brand's value of authenticity and breaking down unrealistic beauty standards. By featuring unfiltered representations of beauty, the advertisement communicates to viewers that "imperfections" are okay and should not cause insecurities.

In terms of visual strategy, the advertisement includes quick shots with multiple close-ups of the lip duo on the models. The quick shots assist in grabbing and maintaining the attention of the viewers. The colorway of the video is aligned with the natural colors of the lipsticks. Additionally, the audio used is upbeat and aligns with the fun expressions of the models.

Takeaway: *The Kind Words advertisement effectively promotes the lipstick duo by communicating the brand's core values in inclusive representation, authenticity, and kindness. Through thoughtfully crafted visual storytelling Rare Beauty's advertisement conveys elements that resonate with Gen Z consumers.*

Secondary Research

All secondary research sources can be found in the References section, starting on page 67.

VI.   **SWOT Analysis**

In this section of the SIP Model, a three-way SWOT analysis will be conducted. The brands featured are MAC Cosmetics, NARS Cosmetics, and Rare Beauty. To provide some context on the reasoning behind the selection of the brand, NARS and Rare Beauty were selected as they were brands that were brought up as go-to's for the focus group participants. Additionally, both brands are popular among both Gen Z and Millennial consumers. Overall, three-way SWOT will provide an analysis of the characteristics lacking from MAC Cosmetics in comparison to the other brands which are hindering the brand from targeting Gen Z consumers.

MAC Cosmetics

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
● Strong brand reputation and awareness with global recognition ● Professional-grade products endorsed by makeup artists and photographers	● Difficulty attracting younger consumers, particularly Gen Z ● Professional tone with a lack of brand personality

● Wide range of products with high-quality formulas and developed cruelty-free ● Founded on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives: work with LGBTQIA+ communities and the VIVA GLAM Charity ● Highly inclusive with visible diversity and makeup products for all ● Luxury products at affordable pricing for the targeted audiences of millennials ● Can be purchased both online or in person at a brick-and-mortar store ● Rewards program: 1 point for every dollar spent which can be redeemed for free product ● Strong celebrity endorsements and collaborations ● Well-known recycling program and commitment to sustainability	● Lack of promotion of minimal makeup looks ● Delayed in keeping up with new beauty trends and consumer demands ● Unwelcoming customer service experiences ● Low-grade social media presence with minimal reach
Opportunities: ● Rising demand for inclusive beauty and authentic branding ● Increase digital presence and e-commerce experience ● Growing popularity of influencers among Gen Z ● Perceived as the OG of beauty brands	Threats: ● Competitive landscape in an over-saturated industry ● Consumer preferences evolve with beauty trends ● Lingering notion that MAC is merely a "starter" brand

● Capitalize on foundational messaging and core values to increase brand awareness	

NARS Cosmetics

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
● Reputable brand with a strong awareness ● High-quality formulas ● Extensive product range and shade diversity ● Can be purchased both in-store at retailers and online ● Cult-like following over certain products ● Inclusive marketing strategies ● Strong social media presence with a large following and high engagement ● Popular among professionals and beauty enthusiasts across multiple generations	● Premium pricing that may not attract price-sensitive consumers ● Limited collaborations with celebrities and influencers ● Limited engagement with current beauty trends, especially on their social media platforms ● Limited mention of sustainability, inclusivity, and CSR efforts ● Lack of brand personality
Opportunities: ● Growing demand for clean beauty products: sustainability campaign	Threats: ● Intense competition in an oversaturated industry ● Increase in conscious and price-sensitive consumers

● Leverage influencer collaborations to further connect with younger audiences ● Capitalizing on the natural makeup trend with existing products ● Rising demand for inclusive branding	● Delays in integration to sustainability and inclusive initiatives can deteriorate brand image ● Evolving consumer preferences and beauty trends

Rare Beauty

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
● Association with the founder Selena Gomez, a popular celebrity among Gen Z and millennials ● Authentically promoting self-love, expression, and inclusivity ● Mental health initiatives: resources and the Rare Impact Fund ● Wide range of products and inclusive shades ● Emphasis on vegan and cruelty-free products ● Strong social media presence with an engaged community: content demonstrated the brand is up-to-date on evolving beauty trends ● Sustainability efforts with a clear commitment to the environment ● Available for purchase at Sephora and online ● Affordable for targeted consumers	● A relatively new brand still emerging into the beauty industry ● Dependency of Selena Gomez's brand image as the brand's identity ● A limited targeted audience that resonates with the brand

Opportunities:	Threats:
• Capitalize on current core values in clean beauty and inclusivity • Expansion of product portfolio • Leverage Selena Gomez's reach to amplify new initiatives • Growing demand for wellness and self-care beauty, aligning with brand values • Utilize social media reach to connect with a wide range of consumers • Capitalize on natural beauty looks	• Intense competition especially against well-established beauty brands with loyal followings • Evolving beauty trends

VII.   Strategic Insights

Although MAC Cosmetics has a strong brand reputation with global recognition, the brand is facing challenges in gaining relevancy amongst younger consumers. The lack of attraction from Gen Z consumers poses a major threat as this emerging cohort will represent a quarter of the world's population by 2030 (Amed and Berg, 2023). Note that Gen Z prioritizes quality over pricing, in the primary research conducted. To address this, MAC Cosmetics must emphasize its product quality and performance in its communication and marketing initiatives.

Gen Z heavily relies on social media influencers, especially on TikTok, for product recommendations. This insight suggests that MAC Cosmetics should increase its social media presence and collaborate with Gen Z influencers. It was also discovered that authenticity and inclusivity are highly valued characteristics among the cohort. MAC Cosmetics should leverage its foundational core values and highlight its CSR efforts to

communicate these characteristics effectively. In addition, it was learned that Gen Z gravitates to the current beauty trend of natural makeup with skincare benefits. This insight provides an opportunity for the brand to showcase the versatility of its products focused on a lightweight complexion. This is a trend that other Gen Z-focused brands such as Rare Beauty have successfully tapped into, in order to foster their attention. Despite Gen Z preferring an online shopping experience, MAC Cosmetics should reevaluate its in-person customer service practices to create a welcoming environment. This also derives from the perception that MAC Cosmetics caters only to professionals. Despite the brand being founded on this notion, it is evident that there is more work to be done to change this narrative. MAC Cosmetics does an excellent job of expressing the importance of individuality. With the amplification of other targeting initiatives, Gen Z will eventually resonate with this aspect of the brand. Furthermore, MAC Cosmetics is perceived as an introductory to many members' beauty journeys. MAC Cosmetics can capitalize on this notion through a campaign that evokes feelings of nostalgia. The strategic insights provide a roadmap for the brand to effectively resonate with the emerging cohort of Gen Z consumers.

VIII.   Communication Goals

The communication goals for the **Return of the MAC** campaign are as follows:

- To increase and maintain brand relevance among Gen Z consumers in the United States
- To highlight the versatility and high quality of the products while simultaneously breaking down the notion that MAC Cosmetics is for professionals
- To continue to promote diversity, inclusion, and sustainability efforts

- To foster authentic connections through a relatable brand personality that empowers one another

- To prioritize social media and influencer collaborations as a way to connect with Gen Z

IX.   **Communication Objectives**

Corresponding to communication goals, MAC Cosmetics will implement these realistic and quantifiable communication objectives for the **Return of the MAC** campaign:

- The campaign will obtain a 30% increase in social media engagement and traffic within the first six months of launch through a Gen Z-targeted social media campaign to increase brand awareness and relevance.

- MAC Cosmetics will achieve a 25% increase in survey respondents expressing a positive in-person shopping experience by the end of the campaign.

- The campaign will acquire a 20% increase in positive customer perceptions that align with the messaging, which will be measured through a post-campaign survey.

- The campaign will result in 70% of positive sentiments reflected in earned social media impressions and interactions by the end of the campaign.

- The campaign will achieve a 20% increase in user-generated content amongst Gen Z users, specifically sharing personal experiences and testimonials within the first 6 months after launch.

- The campaign will influence a 30% increase in social media followers by the end of its duration.

- The campaign will obtain an increase in influencer collaborations and overall social engagement by 20%, within the final month of its launch period.

X.   Target Audiences

The campaign's primary target audience is **Gen Z and younger millennials**, between the ages of 18 and 28. These individuals prioritize brands that demonstrate core values in self-expression, authenticity, and inclusivity. Gen Z and younger millennials are also more keen to shop with brands that show support for social causes. Overall, this set of individuals is redefining the standard of the beauty industry through new consumer preferences and conscious purchasing. It should be noted that Gen Z and younger millennials, while often grouped separately, share many of the same shopping habits, brand loyalty, and social media usage. With this in mind, it's logical for MAC Cosmetics to target them as one audience.

An additional target audience for this campaign is **clean and sustainable beauty advocates** who prioritize ethical and eco-friendly practices. By amplifying MAC Cosmetics' commitment to creating cruelty-free products and minimizing their carbon footprint, the campaign will resonate with this audience that has influenced the perceptions of the primary target audience.

The campaign will also target **beauty, lifestyle, and fashion influencers.** Through the use of iconic branding and the generated buzz, the campaign will capture the attention of influencers and encourage them to share personal experiences. From these shares, their followers will also become aware of the campaign and may be influenced to purchase from MAC Cosmetics.

Furthermore, the campaign will target **current and potential employees**. Targeting this audience is essential in ensuring that these employees are also amplifying MAC Cosmetic's core values and contributing to the brand's image.

Lastly, the campaign will also target **stakeholders and investors**. While the brand is a subsidiary of Estée Lauder, it is still significant that MAC Cosmetics showcases financial growth and overall performance to attract and retain the interest of this audience.

XI.   Current Audience Brand Perceptions

The brand perception of MAC Cosmetics varies among audience segments, but many common perceptions overlap with one another. The brand is recognized as a cosmetic company that creates products for makeup professionals. MAC Cosmetics has a strong brand reputation and is known as one of the original beauty brands within the beauty industry. Additionally, Gen Z consumers view MAC Cosmetics as a brand that primarily targets millennials and has a customer base of older generations.

XII.   Desired Audience Brand Perception

The desired brand perception of MAC Cosmetics is to become a brand that resonates with Gen Z and young millennial consumers. Through the execution of the **Return of the MAC**, the target audiences will develop a connection with the brand and become a go-to for high-quality products that have the ability to achieve any preferred look. MAC Cosmetics will be perceived as authentically inclusive while also empowering consumers to express their individuality. Additionally, by tapping into the perception of the brand being a part of young consumers' introductory journey to makeup, MAC Cosmetics will evoke feelings of nostalgia. By achieving this desired

audience brand perception, MAC Cosmetics will garner a strong connection with the young cohort.

XIII. **Key Message Mapping**

- **MAC Cosmetics is an inclusive brand that celebrates individuality.**

  Since the birth of MAC Cosmetics, the brand has always embraced inclusivity and welcomes all. MAC Cosmetics strives to build a community that empowers each individual to celebrate their individuality. With this in mind, the brand caters to a wide spectrum of skin tones, through an array of shades offered.

- **MAC Cosmetics is committed to developing clean and sustainable beauty products with transparency top-of-mind.**

  MAC Cosmetics' products include clean and cruelty-free products. One of the brand's primary focuses is to minimize its carbon footprint, allowing consumers to embrace their beauty routines guilt-free.

- **MAC Cosmetics creates high-quality products with a wide range of versatile and customizable looks that best resonate with you.**

  Whether you're a beauty expert or just exploring, MAC Cosmetics' versatile products allow you to truly express yourself with confidence. The brand offers products that can enhance your natural beauty or bring your editorial look to life. With MAC Cosmetics, you have the power to truly reflect your unique ideas of beauty.

- **MAC Cosmetics, the nostalgic brand that started countless beauty journeys, continues to evolve with you.**

MAC Cosmetics is the pioneering beauty brand that became the starting point for the beauty journeys of many consumers. The brand continues to remain iconic and relevant by staying up-to-date with the latest beauty trends.

XIV.   **Strategies**

The overarching strategy for this campaign is to position it as the **Return of the MAC**. This approach not only communicates that MAC Cosmetics is still prevalent and better than ever but also cleverly taps into a nostalgic mid-'90s hit tune from the target audiences' formative years.

- **MAC Cosmetics will launch a social media and advertising campaign that promotes the versatility of the iconic Studio Fix Fluid Foundation and other best-sellers to reconnect with Gen Z and younger millennial consumers.**

   MAC Cosmetics will produce content on their social media platforms and marketing materials that showcase the versatility of the Studio Fix Fluid Foundation, with a focus on its ability to assist in achieving a lightweight look. This strategy will resonate with the target audience's preferences for natural-looking makeup and demonstrate the brand's ability to recognize current beauty trends.

- **MAC Cosmetics will re-introduce its commitment to inclusivity and sustainability to all targeted audiences.**

   MAC Cosmetics has always been ahead of the curve when it comes to being inclusive and sustainable. Both of these notions live rich in the roots of the brand's history, with a notable emphasis on inclusivity due to its involvement in openly supporting LGBTQIA+ communities during a time when it was far less commonly accepted. It is significant that

these ideas are re-introduced as a powerful way to garner attention from the target audience.

- **Tonality: empowering, nostalgic, fun, & confident**

The campaign will be empowering by communicating messages that celebrate individuality. It will also tap into the nostalgic factor of MAC Cosmetics' role in personal beauty journeys, while also confidently reminding consumers of its impact. Furthermore, the campaign will feel fun and exciting as MAC Cosmetics emerges as an iconic trendsetter.

XV.   **Tactics**

Below is a list of tactics and their corresponding media types that will be utilized in the **Return of the MAC** campaign, to successfully implement the overarching strategies and achieve the communicative goals:

- **Name Doja Cat as the face and celebrity ambassador of the Return of the MAC campaign.**

Doja Cat is an award-winning and popular music artist who can resonate with mainstream audiences as well as conform to Gen Z's expectations (Vasquez, 2022). MAC Cosmetics can leverage Doja Cat's massive platform and international reach, which can also be utilized to further amplify the awareness of the campaign and MAC Cosmetics' visibility. Additionally, Doja Cat's values also align with the values of MAC Cosmetics. She is known for always expressing herself and breaking beauty norms in her own unique ways (Ahlgrim, 2023). With this in mind, she would make the perfect celebrity

ambassador for the campaign. According to the PESO model, this tactic would be defined as paid, shared, and owned media.

- **Collaborate with micro to macro beauty, fashion, and lifestyle influencers to amplify the brand awareness of the campaign and generate a buzz among the target audience.**

    By partnering with influencers within these categories who have a strong Gen Z following, the campaign can reach wider audiences and gain credibility. These influencers will create engaging content that highlights the versatility and high quality of MAC Cosmetics. Moreover, it would be highly recommended that MAC Cosmetics emphasize collaborating with non-beauty influencers to diminish the perception of their products being created exclusively for professionals. These influencers can share their everyday makeup routines to resonate with the beauty trend of natural makeup looks. The relatable content will then be shared on Gen Z social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. According to the PESO model, this tactic can be defined as paid, shared, and earned media.

- **Create campaign videos that will be shared on all social media platforms showcasing and re-emphasizing MAC Cosmetics' rich history in diversity and inclusivity.**

    Diversity and inclusion are highly valued by Gen Z and millennial consumers. Unlike other cohorts, these demographics tend to practice conscious consumerism and aim to prioritize brands that align with their own personal values. With this in mind, it is key that MAC Cosmetics reintroduces its work in LGBTQIA+ communities and philanthropy initiatives for underrepresented individuals. Additionally, the brand has always celebrated diversity in its marketing and communication initiatives. In the campaign video, MAC

Cosmetics can "pull out the receipts" as Gen Z would word it, to demonstrate that diversity and inclusivity have always been at the forefront of their brand. According to the PESO model, this tactic would fall under owned media.

- **Create a new employee training program that reminds all beauty advisors of MAC Cosmetics' core values in building a community and creating a safe space for all.**
A new training program for employees will serve as a reminder of MAC Cosmetics' priority in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment. This training program will be taught by managers across all stores and counters, and also be used as an onboarding requirement for new hires. It will provide an educational refresh on the core values of the brand and provide employees with the knowledge needed to personally cater to each consumer's experience. The training program will also highlight the importance of being perceived as beginner-friendly and open to educating consumers on how to use MAC Cosmetics products. By internally empowering employees who represent the brand, this tactic will further expel the external messaging of the campaign by reiterating that working at MAC Cosmetics serves a greater purpose beyond beauty. According to the PESO model, this initiative is defined as owned media.

- **Share content for social media that showcases the Studio Fix Fluid Foundation through user-generated content.**
Through user-generated content (UGC), specifically featuring individuals who are a part of Gen Z, MAC Cosmetics can increase its brand trust and authenticity. The content would be a derivative of the influencer collaborations as they will encourage individuals to share their personal stories with the Studio Fix Fluid Foundation using the hashtag **#ReturnoftheMac**. They can also speak on iconic best-sellers, such as lipsticks. MAC

Cosmetics will reshare these posts onto their social media platforms and also provide a coupon code for these creators as an incentive. According to the PESO model, this initiative would fall under shared content.

- **Produce educational and on-trend content to provide tutorials that demonstrate the versatility and high quality of MAC Cosmetics products.**

   MAC Cosmetics will create and share content that provides step-by-step instructions and demonstrations to educate consumers on the versatility and high quality of its products. To resonate with Gen Z and younger millennial consumers, the content will be influenced by current beauty trends and desired looks. For example, MAC Cosmetics will utilize a Gen Z model to share how she achieves a natural and fresh look with the Studio Fix Fluid Foundation. This content will be shared on all social media platforms in video format as well as on MAC Cosmetics' website. The content will also include a reminder to consumers that samples can be acquired at their local MAC Cosmetics store and counters. According to the PESO model, this tactic would be defined as owned media.

- **Re-introduce the Back-To-M·A·C recycling program and release a sustainability report.**

   While promoting the campaign, MAC Cosmetics will reintroduce the Back-To-M·A·C recycling program to increase its awareness among the target audience. As conscious consumerism increases, it's key that MAC Cosmetics emphasizes its dedication to reducing waste and its carbon footprint. Additionally, the sustainability report will offer a transparent look into how MAC Cosmetics has taken care of our planet over the past 30 years. The report will focus on the carbon offset achievements from the recycling

program. This tactic would fall under owned media as it will be shared on social media and its website, according to the PESO model.

- **Distribute news releases and briefs announcing the Return of the MAC campaign.**
  To assist in generating a buzz, digital news releases and engaging campaign briefs will be distributed to beauty, lifestyle, and fashion media outlets with a primary target audience of Gen Z and millennials. The news release will contain an overview of the campaign as well as key details, while the brief will feature visual elements such as content from a launch photoshoot with Doja Cat and tutorial materials. Some of these outlets include Vogue, Refinery29, and Cosmopolitan. The news release and briefs will provide the primary campaign information and key messages. According to the PESO model, this tactic is defined as owned and earned media.

- **Highlight all clean ingredients and their skincare benefits in all product-focused and promotional content.**
  To emphasize the clean and safe ingredients of MAC Cosmetics' products, this messaging will be integrated into all targeted and product-focused promotional content. Additionally, the skincare benefits of the Studio Fix Fluid Foundation will be called out as it contains sun protection properties. This messaging will resonate with the demand for mindful beauty products that instigate beneficial skincare elements. According to the PESO model, this tactic is defined as owned media.

- **Encourage the completion of customer experience and post-campaign surveys.**
  With the new employee training program, it is significant that customer experiences are evaluated. Once the program is completed and new customer interactions take place, employees will encourage customers to complete a quick question survey on their

experience. The survey will be shown on the payment terminal and include the following

2 questions: Were you helped during your time at MAC Cosmetics? How satisfied were

you with your experience today on a scale of 1-10?

Additionally, a post-campaign survey will be distributed to all individuals who made an

online purchase from MAC Cosmetics during the duration of the campaign. The survey

will be distributed via the email used to confirm their order. If completed, consumers will

receive a 15% coupon to encourage a higher response rate. The survey will include

questions that gather information on the consumer's profile, preferences, perceptions of

MAC Cosmetics, and elements of the campaign that they most resonated with. According

to the PESO model, this tactic would be defined as owned media. By including these

surveys, MAC Cosmetics will gain valuable insights that can be useful for future

campaigns

XVI. KPIs - Measurement and Evaluation

To measure the success of the **Return of the MAC** campaign, the effectiveness of

the tactics will be measured and evaluated by utilizing the following KPIs:

- **Social media analytics of all media to measure engagement.**
  - Increase in social media followers, engagement (likes, comments, shares, mentions), and reach
  - Consistent growth in mentions of MAC Cosmetics and #ReturnOfTheMAC
  - Increase in the number of UGC submissions and produced influencer content
- **Website analytics to evaluate the effectiveness of calls to action.**
  - Number of website clicks and what social platforms they came

- ○ Calculate the percentage of the click-through rate

- ○ Number of conversions completed

- ○ Measure the amount of time spent on website pages

- **Campaign survey respondents to evaluate new perceptions.**

  - ○ Measure customer satisfaction and feedback from in-person experiences

  - ○ Conduct a sentiment analysis to evaluate new perceptions

  - ○ Collect feedback from thoughts on core values

- **Track news article mentions to measure the generated buzz.**

  - ○ Number of articles and their niche categories

  - ○ Calculate total impressions of earned media

  - ○ Evaluate a content analysis of top-performing articles

- **Financial performance is tracked to assess direct ROI.**

  - ○ Calculate ROI during the duration of the campaign

  - ○ Compare quarterly reports

  - ○ Evaluate the average order value

XVII.   Timeline

The **Return of the MAC** Campaign will last roughly nine months, including pre and post-campaign initiatives:

- **Pre-campaign Preparation: Jan. 2024 - March 2024**

  - ○ MAC Cosmetics begins market research on targeted audiences and identifies current trends among the cohorts

  - ○ Messaging and strategy are developed

- ○ Partnership with Doja Cat is negotiated and secured

- ○ Campaign and marketing materials are created

  - ■ Campaign video is produced

- ○ New employee training program is launched in all MAC Cosmetic stores and counters in the US

- ○ Press releases and kits are distributed to major media outlets

- **Campaign Launch and Execution: April 2024 - July 2024**

  - ○ Campaign video is shared on all social media platforms

  - ○ All campaign content and marketing materials are released

  - ○ Doja Cat takes over MAC Cosmetics' Instagram and TikTok, announcing her partnership

    - ■ The collaboration feature will be utilized on Instagram to leverage Doja Cat's platform

  - ○ Paid influencers begin to share encouraging UGC content

  - ○ UGC content and owned content are shared

  - ○ Training program learnings are now initiated by all employees and the payment terminal survey begins

  - ○ Releasing of the sustainability report

- **Post-campaign Measurement and Evaluations: July 2024 - Sept. 2024**

  - ○ Begin measuring and evaluating all KPIs: social media, website analytics, financial performance

  - ○ Distribute and analyze the results of the post-campaign surveys

○ Utilize findings to create a sentiment analysis and understand the overview of new MAC Cosmetic perceptions among Gen Z and younger millennials

○ Create a post-campaign report with all key insights to incorporate into future campaigns and to foster a connection between the target audience

XVIII.   Budget

Because the **Return of the MAC** campaign includes large-scale tactics and expenditures, MAC Cosmetics will need to allocate a generous budget for the execution. Given Doja Cat's platform, it is assumed that the brand will pay her nearly one million dollars to collaborate. In addition to this amount, MAC Cosmetics may have spent an additional half a million on production and advertising. Because the campaign will not require any new product, the company can allocate a large amount towards messaging amplification. To justify the substantial budget required, MAC Cosmetics will be exploring new territories by leveraging its authentic core values that attract and deeply resonate with the target audiences. The **Return of the MAC** campaign will have a large impact with a guaranteed return on investment.

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<u>**Appendix: Focus Group Transcript**</u>

Moderator:

So I am a trained moderator for focus groups and one of the rules that we kind of follow is that the information that you impart or that you share tonight is confidential. I do want to tell you that we are recording this, and I am gonna share the recording and the transcript with Berlyn and she's only using it for educational purposes. Michelle knows all about this. But, I will be destroying the transcript, so there it won't be floating out there. not that we're gonna say anything controversial. But I know everybody always feels a little uncomfortable about, you know, once it's on Zoom, it's everywhere. So if you're comfortable with those rules. We'll go ahead and get started. Let's talk makeup. Okay? So just first a general question, how often do you buy cosmetics and beauty products?

Participant 1:

It's probably once every 6 months for me. I think I probably buy like foundation twice a year.

Moderator:

Okay. Jade, how about you?

Participant 3:

I would say, twice a month.

Moderator:

Twice a month, okay. Alright, and Arantxa, how about you?

Participant 2:

I think for me, it's like twice a year, too.

Moderator:

Twice a year, okay. So that's quite a range. Alright well, that's good to know. Alright, so

when you do that, how likely are you to splurge? Or are you looking for affordable sales or affordable items

Participant 3:

For me, I feel like I have the products that I know that I like that I'm okay splurging on just because I'd rather pay for something that I know works for me.

Moderator:

So you bought the before and you know it's worth it.

Participant 3:

Yeah, I feel like I don't try stuff often but I buy things that I use often.

Moderator:

Anybody else?

Participant 2:

Yeah, I think for me It also depends on my lifestyle. Now that I'm a student, I'm trying to look for more affordable options. But also I tried to like stay loyal to the brands and products that I knew that I know. So when I buy products, I'm like, I try to make sure that I trust the brand, or that I tried the brand before, or that someone else has recommended it to me.

Moderator:

Okay.

Participant 1:

Yeah

Moderator:

Hi, Jasmine. Go ahead, Michelle.

Participant 1

Yeah, it's pretty much the same for me too. Like, I pretty much have like the products that I know I like, and that I try. So I'm usually like replacing things that I've just run out of when I buy it from time to time, like, I'll try new products. this might get into another question. But typically, I'm like replenishing things that I've already used.

Moderator:

Okay? All right. Well, okay, so think back when you you all say that you're pretty much replenishing what you have bought before. So think back when you first started buying that product or that set of products or that brand, what were some of the things you were looking for? Somebody said affordability, but were you looking for the quality? Were you looking for the safety of it? What were some of the things that drove you to it? Was it strictly the brand?

Participant 3:

I feel like for me since there's so many products out there, usually it's a product that I've seen whether it's advertised or it's been recommended to me like multiple times or by multiple people. Just because there's such a oversaturation I feel like of products sometimes. So I feel like it takes a couple of seeing something a couple of times for me to purchase it.

Moderator

Okay. Anybody else, think back on that?

Participant 1:

I think like, I went to a makeup artist and she used like certain products on me, and I was like, oh, I really like how that looks like! What is that? And she would tell me and like it was an affordable, you know, pretty affordable brand, or something that I felt like I could buy, you know a couple of times a year. And, I was mainly looking for the aesthetics really like, how does it make my skin look? How do I feel in this? Is it long wearing long lasting? Can I use it for every day? Can I build it up to use it at night, you know? Is it a product that's going to be personal?

Moderator:

Okay. Yeah, Jasmine?

Participant 4:

Hi everybody, sorry I'm late.

Moderator:

That's okay, we just started.

Participant 4:

Okay, great. I agree with Michelle also, like versatility. And I am very much influenced by the makeup tiktokers. So a lot of makeup tick- talking has influenced me in terms of like the products that I'm actually gonna buy.

Moderator:

So those product reviews are essential to you?

Participant 4:

Yes

Moderator:

Okay, a sidebar on that side note on that, are there certain tiktokers that you believe more than others, like you feel that their reviews are reliable, or just in general, because they're they're influencers they must know what they're talking about?

Participant 4:

I think for me, honestly, I don't have a few that I go to for all my product recommendations. It's just when I see that a product is being used. And I like the way that it's being used, and it looks good on the person. Then I'm like, Okay, I consider that as a product that I might buy.

Moderator:

Alright. Hi, Eden, do you want to weigh in? We're talking about how you make your decisions about buying makeup products.

Participant 5:

I would agree with Jasmine. A lot of times when I buy products. I do go based off of Tikok. But I do have a few like beauty type influencers that I follow. So I like wait for them to post. And then, like, when they review something I'm like, okay, like I need to go to Sephora, I'm gonna get this.

Moderator:

Okay. Well, that leads me into my next question, which is, what kind of messaging works for you? Is it our ads? Is it something that the influencer says? What what attracts you, like the words like long-lasting do those things matter?

Participant 5:

I kind of personally like when it's not like a paid ad when the influencer is like this, like, I'm promoting this product because I swear by it like, I actually use this like, I love this product. This is not an ad.

Moderator:

So they're not being paid to promote the product?

Participant 5:

No like, it's just something that they love and like they want.

Moderator:

So it's something they personally use. Okay, great. Hi Sarah, welcome. We just got started. Alright, what are some beauty trends that you guys are following right now? This is going to be really important for Berlyn because she's going to be writing a campaign. And she kind of needs to know what attracts your attention.

Yeah, go ahead, Jasmine.

Participant 4:

I think for me personally, like the dewy kind of like natural makeup look is back in. And I like that a lot, especially because I'm not the type of person who needs like a super beat face when I'm just like going to class or going to work. so dewy like kind of like natural, but like fresh-looking makeup look is what, is the trend that I'm really, really loving right now.

Moderator:

Okay. Dewy, Natural, Fresh, okay. Anybody else?

Participant 2:

I agree with Jasmine. I mean, I think also like that natural look is being influenced by like the Asian beauty trend. I particularly love K-pop so I also follow, like those how they influence fashion and beauty. And I have seen the impact of the US. And, for example, Fenty I think, released like a liptint line, and that didn't use to exist before. And it's like from Asia. So I find that very interesting. But it's also like tied to the natural look.

Moderator:

So it was influenced by K-Pop. Is that what you're saying?

Participant 2:

Uh-huh yeah, like Asian culture and like Japanese and Korean beauty.

Moderator:

Anybody else? Is there a thing that you're really into right now?

Participant 1:

I like the trend of like, essentially thinking about your skincare and your makeup like working together. So it's like, if you have, you take care of your skin, then your makeup will lay better and just appear better. So I definitely like the natural trend kind of in skincare and makeup, and just like enhancing your natural beauty. I like that products are cruelty-free, or you know they they talk about not being Vegan, even though I think a lot of them were already Vegan. But You know, I like that. They talk about clean beauty and like packaging. So I I love this trend of like skincare to, you know, make up. And it just being like a seamless type of combination yeah

Moderator:

Anybody else?

Okay. how important it is it would it be to for there to be a celebrity that's attached to a brand, a beauty brand? how important is that to you on a scale of one to 10, you know it has to be, or it doesn't have to be? I'm I'm saying that because the Arantxa Just brought up Fenty.

Participant 2:

In my personal opinion, I think it's not that important because I've noticed how like, where products have gained like a great reputation by themselves, not like not exactly like Tied to Selena Gomez, but, for example, Ariana Grande's makeup line is not doing as well, just because of the quality of their products. So I think it's not that important. And I'd care more about like the people like me that are doing product reviews and like using them.

Moderator:

Okay.

Participant 4:

yeah, I would say for me, it's probably like from a 1 to 10, probably like a 3. I agree with the Arantxa. Like I I'm more so gonna buy a product or look into a product if it has just good reviews from regular people as opposed to a celebrity like as the face of the product.

Moderator:

All right, anybody else?

Okay. Let's see, what are some beauty campaigns that have caught your eye in the last, let's say year or 2, whether it's on magazines, on social media, TV, anything stand out?

Participant 2:

Hmm! I can like the example of the super bowl, and how rihanna like merged her performance to her beauty brand. And then I want, like I still one that lipstick she wore during the super bowl. So that was a great campaign.

Moderator:

So you thought it worked? Well that's interesting, my students, when we re-watched it, did not like it. That's Interesting.

Participant 2:

Really? I love her website. So I was obsessed.

Moderator:

Any other campaign that sticks out in your mind?

Participant 1:

I can't think of the particular one. I don't know if it's Rare Beauty, or Dove?

But it may have been Dove, like they're doing something in terms of like making some products like accessible for people who have disabilities. I'm really liking the inclusivity piece. I think it may have been dove. It's like one of those big brands like that.

And they were like emphasizing that or showing a product that they change the packaging on. And for Rare Beauty, just the thought of it being more inclusive from an ability standpoint. those have really kind of caught my eye to make people feel beautiful, no matter like what who you are or ability level.

Moderator:

Okay.

It's interesting that none of you are just, you know, saying a campaign, because it feels like, maybe those campaigns aren't very successful or they're not. They're not

touching you in any way. So I'm going to ask a different question in a different way. How important is pricing when you're purchasing beauty products?

Participant 5:

For me Personally, I feel like. if the product has really good reviews and it works. I'm not really too concerned about the pricing, because I know, like in the long run it'll either help my skin or to like get the job done. So the pricing, I don't really pay attention to.

Moderator:

Okay.

Participant 3:

yeah, I would. Also, I agree, I have like sensitive skin sometimes. So if I know that I need to spend a little bit more for a product that I know like isn't going to clog my pores, or like whatever the cases, or might have more clean ingredients. Then I'm willing to. I'm willing to spend it.

Participant 4:

I think, for me. I probably wouldn't spend more than $70 on any makeup product. So I think that's like my cap in terms of pricing.

Moderator:

So you have a threshold?

Participant 4:

Yeah,

Participant 1:

I do, too. I'm kinda like in the $50ish- $55 range.

Moderator:

Okay. anybody else?

Participant 6:

I can jump in. I think for me, it it definitely depends on what kind of product it is I feel like I'd be. I'd be willing to spend more like for a foundation or something that I like had a good experience with vs. like maybe mascara, or like a lipstick. something that you probably like. Use the product a little bit more. You might be willing to spend more money with. But yeah, again, it just depends, too. And then I feel like always to like. Now you always see, at least on tik tok. I always see, like dupe videos, or like people find like cheaper alternatives, or like the same, the

same shade, or something like that. So I feel like, it just depends. Like, if you test out like the quality and stuff. because sometimes the quality is better with the cheaper option. So yeah, I think it's a little bit of like in between there.

Moderator:

So it's it sounds like you're all mostly saying that it's If you if it provides value to you, and it's within your sort of budget, It's fine?

Participant 6:

Yeah.

Moderator:

Okay, this is important for Berlyn to hear. So that's good. okay, so as you may have heard from her, she's actually going to be doing it. writing a campaign for Mac. So the rest of my questions have to do with Mac.

When was the last time you purchased a Mac cosmetic product?

This is not good.

Participant 2:

I actually remember one last time, and I know I said I didn't care about celebrities. But there was one collaboration with one of like Black Pink's members. Do you know. Oh, yeah, you know who Black Pink were, yeah, one of Black Pink members, release like your lipstick with mac cosmetics. And that's the last time I remember in the last like 10 years.

Moderator:

Wow, okay.

Participant 4:

I have my, oh, my bad go ahead.

Participant 3:

No you're good.

Participant 4:

I bought a product a year ago, but it was only a bit off of a recommendation from someone else. And before that I hadn't bought a product from them in like 4 or 5 years.

Moderator:

Jade did you want to weigh in?

Participant 3:

Yeah, actually, similarly. I want to say that it's been since like college, for I know that Mac was like the first makeup brand that I ever bought from like when I first started getting into makeup. But I don't think that I've bought anything from there since college which was like 6 years ago.

Participant 1:

Yeah, I had a similar experience like Mac was one of those introductory like makeup brands for me. I bought foundation from them back in March because mine ran out. So that was the last time I bought

Moderator:

so a couple of months ago?

Participant 1:

Yeah, a couple of months ago. And I think even before that. It honestly may have been a year because I hadn't used it as much. But yeah. So a couple of months ago for me.

Moderator:

Okay, anybody else?

Participant 5:

I bought this like liquid lipstick, like 2 3 weeks ago, just because it's like new I was seeing it all over TikTok, So I did end up.

Moderator:

And did you go into the MAC store?

Participant 5:

I bought it elsewhere. I bought it at like Sephora or something.

Moderator:

So that featured the Mac product?

Participant 5:

Yeah.

Moderator:

Yeah, Interesting.

Yeah. One of the problems that that Berlyn and I've been talking about is that Mac is very, you know, much seen as sort of the gateway of products into learning about makeup, and then you kind of abandon it. So in terms of quality. How do you rate Mac Products?

Participant 6:

I feel like I would kind of rate it like, like, pretty high I think I haven't used their products in a while, and it's not really like in my like makeup or anything like that, currently but like, I think. growing up like, I always saw my mom like using Mac products. And I ended up using them mostly, for I did dance when I was younger like, so I would use it for dance recitals because it's like very kind of like known like they're. It's good stage makeup. Because, like what products you're using. And so that's kind of how my introduction to it came to be. And so I feel like because of that, and like the purpose of what I used it for I kind of associated with like good high-quality products and and makeup but I haven't really been to to expose to like their current like formulas and stuff and things like that.

Moderator:

So would you say that's their brand image, though, is high quality, Sarah?

Participant 6:

I would say so, because I feel like I haven't since then seen anything like super negative about any of their products, or like the quality of it.

Participant 4:

I would agree with that, too, I think, like, in terms of the way I position it in my head. I kind of position it as like it's for professionals, like people who do makeup professionally. So I think that's also why I don't really care to touch a lot of their products, because I don't know how to do my makeup really really well, so yeah.

Moderator:

So how could Mac do a better job of enticing you and connecting with customers?

Participant 4:

I think for me also kind of the problem The the problem that I have with Mac is that they're also like I don't really see them as super friendly. So in terms of my store experience that I have I feel like going into a makeup store, where, when you don't really know what products uses, like a little bit of a vulnerable experience. And so the experiences that I've had personally going into a Mac store, they have not been like the friendliest, or like very helpful in like trying to help me figure out like beginner products. So I feel like, if I was gonna look to Mac for makeup products, I would want it to be like products that are that they can explain easily, and that aren't super like complicated to use, or they're not like. You don't have to be a makeup artist to know how to make this foundation look good.

Moderator:

So let me go back on that. So When you say that they're not very friendly. Does it mean they don't approach you, or they approach you in an unfriendly manner?

Participant 4:

In my personal experience I felt like I've kind of been ignored when I come into the store as opposed to like Sephora when where they're kind of like coming towards you to make sure that you have a good experience and seeing help. so I think that's also why I kind of have that like position of them being more so for professionals who go into the store. They know exactly what they want. They know exactly what shade they need. They check out and they leave

Moderator:

Anybody else, have have any thoughts on how Mac could improve?

Participant 1:

I've had a similar experience. going into the Mac store. And I feel like if they were to explain, like how to use products. And it's interesting Jasmine, that you said Support, because I immediately thought about that like, when I go into support they're like, do you want to try this lipstick on? You want to try this shade. Oh, here's a dupe you know?

they seem very helpful. And especially like, if I'm trying to new products. I'm like, I want this, but I don't know what to do like. I feel as though From my experience when I've gone into the

Mac store there, I've kind of been met with a "why don't you know" what or like time is money so like I remember actually getting my makeup or wanting to get my makeup done for an event in March and they were like, Oh, we don't do like full of faces that make up anymore. I was like, Okay, they're like, we just do a basic based on makeup. And then, like you have to buy products. But I felt like the person was doing. My makeup did honestly of a piss poor job. I was like I could have done this at home and much better. I couldn't look at a Youtube video. And then this much better, and I felt like I kinda got approached with a Rude like I'm just doing this so that you can like give me my money and be out, because the they're like their philosophy was every minute that that person is not on the floor selling things that's like you taking away from the money they could be making. So we want you to spend a certain amount of money, because that's taking that time away which I get, But they make you feel like that, and I didn't like that feeling.

Moderator:

That's just the opposite, though it may it It seems counterintuitive that if they help you you'll buy more products. Right?

Participant 1:

Yeah I was like, if you really showed me how to use these products, you could've had a whole bag.

Moderator:

Yeah, yeah. A whole bag full. Yeah, yeah, wow! Anybody else have an experience at Mac?

Participant 6:

Not at Mac, but that actually, Michelle. Your experience I used to get like my make up that like the urban decay kiosk that like Macy's and stuff for like Prom, and things like that, and I and they do something similar. I don't know if they do it still, but they would do like a full face and make-up. And then. I think, like the requirement was that you buy like 3 products. It could be the ones that they used on you, or like other ones that you came in wanted to buy. But I feel like I had a different experience, because, like I, I don't know if it's again the customers or what but I feel like they would like show you like how to what it looks like on you like, how they use it in the look and like kind of explain. Oh, you could do it like this. You could do it other ways, and like they were like super helpful in that term. But it's really interesting that, like you had the opposite experience that Mac work have like it. It was more of like a rush and just doing like the

basic and then didn't really explain like any like didn't offer any I don't know extensive, like information or things like that.

Moderator:

So I I know you've said that it's probably more professionals. But who do you think is Mac, our Mac's customers?

Participant 2:

For me. It's my mom.

Participant 3:

Well, I was gonna say, like millennials and older.

Moderator:

Okay.

Participant 4:

I would say the same thing as well. And I think when MAC showed up like on the makeup industry scene, they were really like one of the only ones. So I think, like I like my mom was a Mac user, like everyone else's, So I think that like in terms of them, like having that

category on lock, they they have that. But I think that now that Gen. Z. Is coming up, and Sephora is coming up that it's not working as well, because there's so many other brands. Now, when before, that was really the only one.

Moderator:

True. And what about Ulta? Is that in the mix or just Sephora? Ulta for older?

Participant 5:

I like Ulta.

Participant 4:

Also, yeah, I like Ulta. Its cool.

Participant 6:

Doesn't Ulta also have like, I know, one that I visited has, like a Mac, like little section studio like in their store, too? Right? Yeah.

Moderator:

So I, this is the 1 million dollar question. What would it take for you to maybe venture back into the Mac Calendar or to somewhere where they're selling Mac?

Participant 5:

I feel like it would be like they would have to come up with like a very like creative campaign, or like a collaboration, or like maybe a brand trip or something, because I feel like because Mac has always kind of been known as like the Og. Makeup brand like they kind of act like that in like their campaigns and advertising like kind of like I really haven't seen campaigns, but it's like kind of like they feel like they don't need to do like as big of campaigns or like collaborations, because, like, obviously, they're Mac. Everybody knows who they are, so I feel like they could follow like kind of like what's Tarte's doing with like TarteIsland, or like collaborating with like different influencers, kind of to just maybe appeal more to gen, Z. And like, less to like our parents, our moms, like everyone else.

Moderator:

Yeah. Yeah. So collaboration and maybe some endorsement from somebody that's a Gen Zier? Would that help?

Participant 5:

Yeah.

Participant 4:

Also, I'm not quite sure about like what type of products they have. But when I think of Mac, I always think of like, really, like full, like foundations like heavy foundation. So maybe, you know, since there is like this natural fresh trend going on. They should more so like lean towards marketing, like the products that fall under that trend. yeah, that's what I would say,

Moderator:

so highlight their more natural shades and tones?

Participant 4:

For me. I think that would. That would make me if I wanted to try it. That would make me want to try, because I honestly don't even know what they have beyond. Like the full face makeup, I mean, not the full face makeup, but like the heavier foundations

Moderator:

Yeah, and brighter colors.

Participant 3:

I agree, I feel like it's also I also kind of see it like for professionals, and I don't think they have a very like down to Earth approach in like their marketing. I don't know what that would take, but like you have like a company like Merit, or like Rare Beauty, and like you, see them as very like for the people down to Earth like they're beginner friendly, you know, like you apply some with your hands like. I'm not saying that Mac needs to completely change who they are as a brand like. I think they can still maintain that status in the industry. But, like I do feel like they're a bit rigid. If that makes sense.

Participant 4:

I would. I would also agree with that. I think, in terms of like the tone that they use. I would feel more comfortable if it was more like a conversational, like more of a casual tone. Just because I feel like I would just feel more comfortable with spending my money with them.

Moderator:

So Jasmine, in addition to being ignored. I mean, if they if they did talk to, you'd want them not to like talk at you and preach to you.

Participant 4:

Yeah. And then, even just like in like ads that they're posting or campaigns just like in a copy that they're using, like, I don't want it to seem like very like rigid, and just like very like professional type of tone, but just maybe just a little bit more conversational, or just a little bit just like more comfortable, like, familiar of a tone like in the copy that they're using.

Moderator:

Yeah, go ahead, Arantxa.

Participant 2:

yeah, I think in my opinion, I like for me. They were also like my first makeup brand ever I love their lipstick, and they were like super colorful when I was young. but I think they could really rely on that on that messaging of them being like the first brand you try ever. and I don't know that sense of like like nostalgia, or I don't know. Maybe it would ring back and be like, Oh, oh, yeah, I remember those days I used to love Mac, and I also think that would bring a more conversational sense that that Jasmine is saying like you would feel that they're acknowledging their role in your life, and they're talking to you.

Moderator:

So think back to the beginning. Yeah, I like that.

This is golden. I love it. What about pricing? And is Mac, you know in the the good price range? value?

Participant 4:

What are their prices like? Do you all know?

Berlyn Valdez:

Yeah, I would say, it ranges between like 25 to around like 60 something.

Yeah, not too drastic, but it is definitely up there.

Moderator:

But that's in the range that you guys were talking about.

Participant 4:

Yeah that is in my range.

Moderator:

So it sounds like pricing isnt an issue and we know that the have good quality, it sound like the experience in the customer service is just off?

Participant 4:

And I think a little bit of the branding as well.

Moderator:

Looks dated?

Participant 4:

Yeah, yeah, I would say so. I feel like it looks the same as when my mom was using it like, I don't really see that much of a difference. and maybe that's what they're going for. So it's like you can always recognize it. but I I think in that sense, because it looks the exact same that it feels a little bit dated to me.

Participant 1:

I think like the approachability factor like it doesn't seem very approachable so in their

campaigns and brands, and what color feel has they the same since I was introduced to it

and I would like to see them remix it or switch it up. I definitely like the thought of like the clean beauty, or having some type of campaign that's like a refresh, or at least shows that they're keeping up with some of the trends. I'm a millennial, so like I feel like they definitely have millennials that older on live. But they want to see attract, you know, and keep staying relevant. I think they need to like, think about their approachability and like up hop on some of these trends, and incorporate in their marketing and campaigns throughout the year.

Moderator:

Well, and we know how influential Gen. Zs are. So they're stupid not to be trying to approach you guys. Right? Arantxa, did you want to say one more thing?

Participant 2:

Oh, yeah. I just remember that one of the reasons that I shifted was that I learned that Mac was not cruelty-free. I don't know to this day if they're still not cruelty-free, but after seeing so many alternatives I was like maybe I'm gonna try something that is not how harmful and change like my makeup brand.

Moderator:

So if they are they need to publicize that. And if they have possibly switched we'll find out. okay, so just one last thing, and then I'll see if Berlyn needs anything else for us.

What is your go-to makeup Brand?

Participant 3:

Well for me? Nars.

So I don't really like. I don't wear makeup often, but when I do I do like it a little bit more on the full coverage side. So I feel like it could be comparable, in a way, I guess, to Mac.

Participant 4:

Yeah, for me. It's Nars and rare beauty. Okay?

Participant 5:

for me. It's Laura Mercier and Dior.

Moderator:

Anybody else?

Participant 1:

Go ahead, Sarah.

Participant 6:

I have a I've tried like a lot of different things. I have like different products from different brands. but I was really loyal to like her urban decay at the beginning of a while. just because I was what I was used to, and they kind of known for very light makeup. So that was kind of like my beginner. stage. And then I think I definitely also like went through like a lot of my products are from like Morphe, so that's what I would say. Yeah.

Moderator:

So you said that you have a bunch of different brands. Can you name a couple of them?

Participant 6:

Yeah. So like, I use Nars for foundation. But then, like milk, for mascara, Tarte Cosmetics for my concealer. I'm trying yeah, a couple of things here and there, like I just got the Rare Beauty Blush because I saw on TikTok all over it for like months. And I was like, I need to get it. So I just bought it. But like, yeah, a lot of different brands.

Moderator:

Anybody else want to name their brand?

Participant 1:

Yeah. My main one like the foundation is Mac. I would say, my go to his Mac. I have, like an eye shadow from them as well that I've been in for a long time. but I'm also like all over the place when it comes to makeup. I'm still really looking so I use color pop as well sometimes for shadows. I started using the Laniqe Beauty, which is a black-owned brand. They're kind of up and coming. I think they actually just got into Ulta. I also use like Beauty supply lipstick, like, I'm literally all over the map. And so then I think I use a drugstore mascara. So yeah. trying to think of one that starts with the C. I can't think right now, but.

Moderator:

Cover, girl?

Participant 1:

It may be covered Girl like the guy at Ulta said he, was like the drug store one is the best, and it comes in a silver container. It may be like cover

Moderator:

Cover. Girl has long been, you know, the leading Mascara. Yeah, I think it is. It's like that, or a clinique like one of those.

So Berlyn wants me to also ask, are you guys at all familiar with all of the diversity and inclusivity work that Mac has been doing?

Not heard about it? Anything about the they're involved in pride month for Lgbtq?

Nothing? Okay.

See? We have nowhere to go but up with this campaign. Very, very a PR person's dream, right?

Anything else you'd like for me to ask, or anything you want to say, Berlyn?

Berlyn:

No, I think we got everything. Thank you guys so much. This is very insightful. And I appreciate everyone for being here.