

Fundamentals of Marketing Communications: Duolingo



"Education for All"

TARGET

Demographic

- 16-24 y/o (Gen Z)
- Men & women

Psychographic

- Interested in learning a language
- Cares about education
- Likes creative / funny content

Behavioral

- Spends lots of time online / on social media
- Undertaking education
- Low spenders, price sensitive

Geographic

- USA

TARGET – DAMP criteria

Distinct

- Gen Z's needs & preferences are distinct from other generations
- Large enough to focus on
 - Largest existing & fastest growing generation - 18-24y/o comprise 9.2% of the US population (Datareportal 2023)
 - Largest no. of students attending university - 6% more than millennials 15 years prior (Pew Research Centre 2018)

Accessible

- Spends lots of time online & on SM
 - On average, Gen Z spends 3 hours a day on social media (Statista, 2023)

Measurable

- Online activity can be measured through metrics

Profitable

- Most likely to consider using the app
 - 18-24 year olds are already the largest consumer group (Duolingo blog 2023)
- Can be reached cheaply & in large quantities
- Low, but growing purchasing power
- Outsized impact on culture & the economy
 - Estimated to comprise 40% of consumers globally (2020)

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES

Primary Objectives

- Increase brand awareness by 35% within the target segment by the end of the year
- Increase social media engagement by 30% within 6 months of the campaign
- Improve brand perception by 40% within the target segment by the end of the year

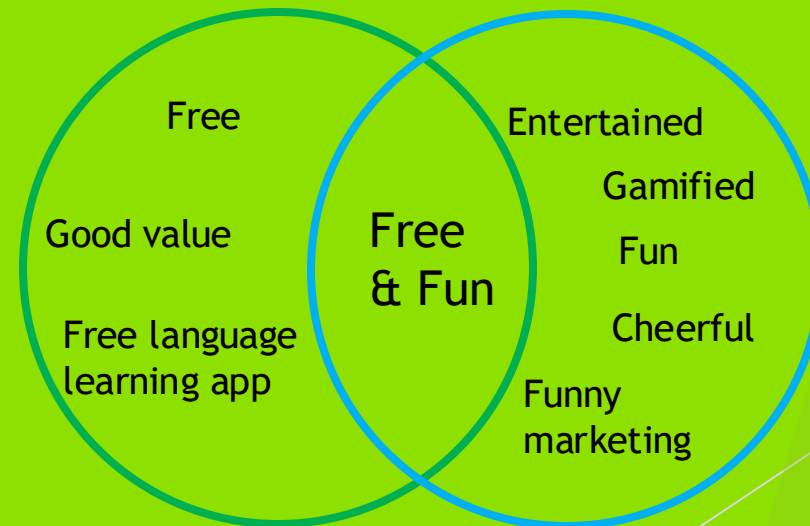
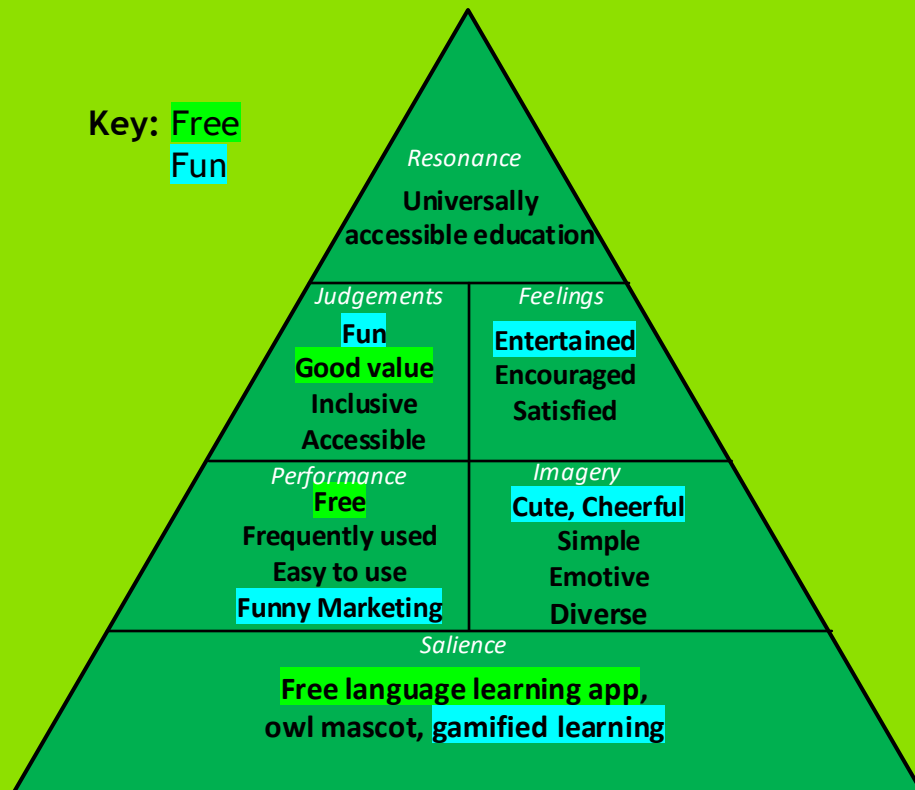
Secondary Objectives

- Increase sales by 15% by the end of the year
- Increase market share by 5% by the end of the year

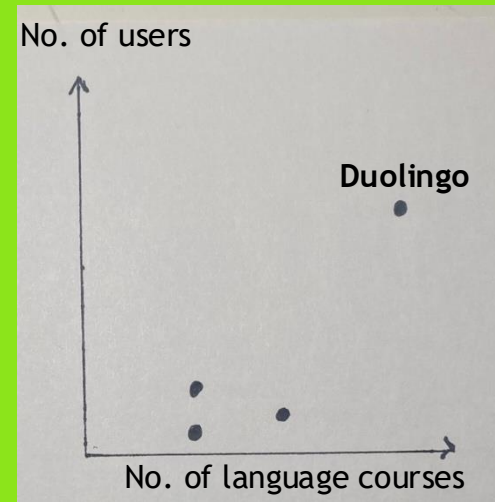
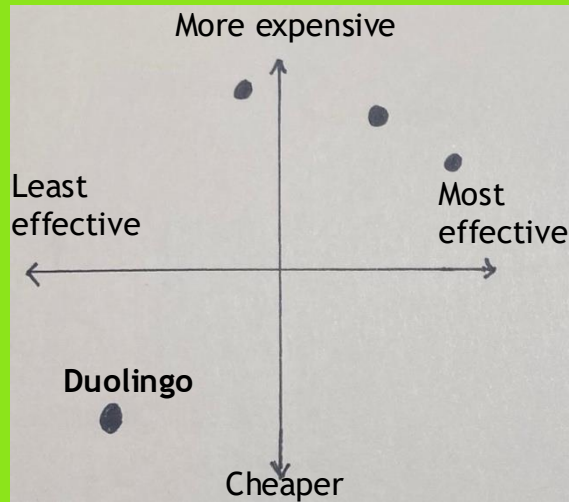
BRAND POSITIONING - Keller's brand equity model

“We’re here to develop the best education in the world and make it universally accessible.” - Duolingo Mission

However, Keller's model reveals a disconnect between brand positioning and brand perception...



BRAND POSITIONING - Competitor Analysis



What does this show?

- its NOT currently the best language education in the world
- low price is important for its success as market leader
- offers more language-learning features than its competitors
- its USP is its price & mission - ACCESSIBILITY

BRAND POSITIONING - positioning & strategy

This campaign will:

Reiterate positioning (universally accessible education) in the target segment's minds.

- ▶ Accessibility is Duolingo's USP
- ▶ Has successfully translated into consumers' perceptions

Put additional focus on diversity & inclusion to reinforce brand mission and resonance

Why will this resonate with the target segment?

- **Free -target is price sensitive**
 - already successful - 18-24 is the largest age group of Duolingo users
- **Gen Z cares about diversity & inclusion**
 - Particularly concerned with the corporate social responsibilities of brands
 - 70% of Gen Z respondents thought brands with a large target audience were 'somewhat' or 'very' responsible for promoting diversity & inclusion
 - "Majority values are grounded in equality, respect and inclusion for all people"
- **Expands past average resonance into lovemark territory**
 - expands beyond the sense of self to the inclusion and protection of all individuals"

MESSAGING STRATEGY - organising idea



"Education for All"

#EducationforAll

Reasons this will resonate with the target segment:

- reflects the USP, positioning & mission (Universally Accessible Education)
- target segment (students) can recognize themselves
- invokes inclusion & equality

MESSAGING STRATEGY - Education for All COMPETITION

Aims:

- ▶ increase **brand engagement** by encouraging a two-way communication exchange with the target segment
- ▶ increase **brand awareness** and **perception** from generating earned chatter and content through entries

- Prizes: funding for foreign exchanges & creative credentials
 - 50% of places for minority students
- To enter: must submit a creative piece on the theme of the Duolingo mascot in any form of their choosing (eg picture, animation, short story, poem, fanfiction...)
 - Must post on a public account tagging the brand with #EducationforAll
 - Emphasis on 'Creative, Unique, Entertaining' submissions
- Entries will then be displayed on owned websites (Competition page, social media)

Intended response:

- ▶ generate lots of earned media through competition entries & SM sharing
- ▶ heighten user engagement with the brand and other users to build relationships
- ▶ acquire UGC that can be used as paid media

MESSAGING STRATEGY - acquisition or defence?

“Participation-led campaigns are good at market share defence but little else.”

”The more a brand demands of its audience, the more effective it is preaching to the converted, and the less effective it is at acquisition” -Ipsos, 2012 (the IPA)

Reasons acquisition IS feasible:

- **The nature of the content (creative, original, amusing)**
 - Gen Z’s favourite types of ad are ‘creative, entertaining and funny’ (Statista 2023)
 - Duolingo has already attracted people interested in this through their communications
- **Gen Z behaves differently to UGC than other generations**
 - Transfers trust mainly from their peers, rather than brand-generated content
 - Therefore, positive impact on brand perception
- **Since 2012, the digital & SM climate has drastically changed - content more widely disseminated**
 - ad reach has drastically improved
 - the rise of tiktok - which prioritises non-following content over following content to users
 - Used by over 76% of SM users aged 18-24 in the US (and 70% of teens (Statista 2024)
 - gen Z are more likely to *share online* - and wants peers to perceive them as ‘positive and unoffensive’ (Djafarova, 2022)

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Instagram, Youtube & Tiktok

- The most popular SM channels for target segment
- Paid ads here
- Visual & affective - owned pages can disseminate the visual competition entries

Facebook & Twitter

- Emphasis on sharing
- High conative - owned pages can disseminate textual entries

PR

- Influencers - target segment trusts WOM more than brand-generated content
- Paid ads in newsletters of particularly diverse schools & universities

Cross-platform links

- Hashtags (*#EducationforAll*), URLs of owned channels

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Brand Awareness

- Increase in views, likes, followers, brand name mentions, hashtags & shares on all SM channels (*daily*)
- Traffic increase to owned sites, traffic referral stats (*weekly*)
- Conduct online brand awareness surveys (prompted & unprompted) (*weekly*)
- Cost per head analysis on the number of views (*weekly*)

Engagement

- Increase in likes, followers, comments brand name mentions, hashtags & shares on all SM (*daily*)
- CTR & time spent on each page (*weekly*)
- the volume & quality of creative entries (*weekly*)

Brand Perception

- Monitor & count up positive and negative reviews on websites and SM forums using Google Analytics (*daily*)
- Online NPS surveys amongst the target segment (*weekly*)

CONCLUSION

Optimal target market

- ▶ Gen Z students, aged 16-24, low spenders

Marketing communication objectives

- ▶ increase brand awareness & engagement, improve brand perception

Brand positioning & strategy

- ▶ USP: *Accessibility*
- ▶ reiterate existing positioning (**universally accessible education**) in the target segment's minds with emphasis on diversity & inclusion

Messaging strategy

- ▶ Organising idea: *Education for All*
- ▶ Creative solution: participation-led & collaborative curation competition to generate earned media & brand engagement

Communication strategy

- ▶ Channels: Instagram, Youtube, Tiktok, Twitter, Facebook, PR, Influencers

Methods of evaluation

- ▶ Monitor brand awareness, engagement & perception on an ongoing basis

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