

TWEENAGE CLICKS

THE SOCIAL MEDIA LIVES OF TWEENS AND EARLY TEENS

Insight #5: Tweens as brand ambassadors

The research showed that there is a role to play for brand ambassadors among the Tween audience, but marketers need to consider their approach carefully and intelligently.

Initially for Tweens, the advantage of becoming a brand ambassador seems quite clear and simplistic. They see it as a straightforward task and an easy way for them to make money. However, brands need to be conscious that there is still an undercurrent of ill feeling towards the idea. At the extreme end, the issue of exploiting people 'under age' is mentioned, but generally it seems to be more about not wanting to be considered an annoyance to their friends. While it might be easy to make money/win rewards, for a Tween there is also the risk of spoiling relationships they've developed by introducing content to friends that they do not want to see.

“Unless it's exactly right, it would be annoying to be on the receiving end.” (Female, 13 years old)

For some Tweens, the concept lacked credibility – they were sceptical about whether they really could make money and be employed in this way. Though theoretically a Tween is more than capable of using social media and sharing content, some, acutely aware of their young age, feel they would be unable to communicate the message of the brand in the intended way. Clearly brands should select their brand ambassadors with the utmost care and reassure any who seem doubtful of the concept.

An important way effectively to engage Tweens as brand ambassadors is to ensure they are provided with content they genuinely care about. Even at the most basic level, a brand ambassador should feel comfortable enough to share the content within his or her peer group. However, utilising one of the four Es, in this case 'exclusivity', will help accelerate the sharing process. Giving a Tween exclusive content that's not immediately available to their friends will naturally encourage them to pass it on.

“I don't mind if my friends send me stuff from brands. I think it must be hard for brands to get out to people so social networking sites are a good way to reach us. I think it could be fun to spread the message of a brand.” (Male, 13 years old)

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TOP TIPS FOR BRANDS:

- Always ensure you are recruiting Tweens who have a genuine interest in the brand/product you want them to represent
- Develop a robust screening process to ensure you are connecting with influencers
- Arm your ambassadors with exclusive content – make them want to share among their peers, rather than feel they have to; make it low-effort!
- Put the online functionality in place to make it easy for your ambassadors to share content with their peers
- Maintain a regular conversation with your brand ambassadors – ensure they feel part of the team
- Ensure there's no 'small print' or 'catches' to put off your potential ambassadors