

# Grant Dobson Case Competition

## 2021 Brief

### Client Background

Mars Incorporated is a well-known, multinational corporation based in the United States (US) that produces diverse products ranging from pet food to candy. Among the sweet treats produced by the Mars Wrigley division are the round and multi-coloured M&M's candies. In 2010, the M&M's brand launched an "eye-spy" activity on Facebook, challenging users to find a pretzel hidden in an image containing hundreds of M&M candies.<sup>i</sup> The eye-spy activity coincided with the launch of pretzel-themed M&M's. In 2017, the M&M's brand also explored gamified advertising to launch caramel M&M's in New York's Times Square. As part of its caramel-themed product launch, M&M's turned Times Square into an augmented reality (AR) ARcade.<sup>ii</sup> Through a retro-influenced ARcade game accessed via mobile phones, players could try to unsquare the caramel candy and simultaneously engage with the iconic brand.

### Task

The M&M's candy brand is highly interested in leveraging its previous success with gamified marketing to drive sales at the Design Your Own M&M's<sup>iii</sup> site, which serves a US market base. The Design Your Own M&M's portal allows customers to create personalized M&M's for events such as weddings and conferences. Large face-to-face events have historically motivated customers to purchase favours for their guests through the Design Your Own M&M's site.

### Problem

Large face-to-face events have decreased during the pandemic due to public health restrictions and safety concerns in the community. Because of this shift in the marketplace, the M&M's brand seeks to engage a different customer segment to purchase personalized M&M's products.

Due to ongoing pandemic uncertainties, M&M's favours a gamified marketing strategy that users can engage with at home. Additionally, M&M's sees strong possibilities to engage Generation Z customers through the augmented reality (AR) possibilities present in filters or other interface options found in Instagram, Snapchat, or TikTok, which appeal to Gen Z.

## **Details**

To succeed in meeting M&M's marketing needs, you should develop a minimum of three major activities involving gamified marketing tactics that will engage US Gen Z consumers over the course of one year to purchase personalized M&M's.

Evaluators want to understand your strategic approach and how it will convert the target audience to design and purchase personalized M&M's.

What are the three major marketing activities (minimum) that are foundational to this campaign? How will the messages and content prompt engagement? How will you communicate your campaign messages, and what calls-to-action will you use? In creating your campaign, you should consider whether any changes or reconfigurations of the Design Your Own M&M's portal are necessary to support your plan. Make your chosen approach and tactics clear. The campaign will run for one year. The launch date of this campaign is open, but a rationale for your group's timing of events is expected.

You are not expected to develop specific budgets; rather, we trust you to produce ideas and tactics that are 'reasonable' from a budget perspective.

The M&M's brand will cover expenses, but campaigns that may go viral or attract media attention are desirable. Additionally, it is beneficial to leverage existing M&M's social media channels.

## **Deliverables**

Your written response to this brief should include an overview, your analysis, your recommended approach, a spending allocation, implementation considerations, and a conclusion.

Specific elements to think about to assist you in filling out these sections include:

1. A strategic and engaging campaign name;
2. An overview statement to convey the big idea, or creative concept, which informs your pitch to M&M's to gamify its advertising for personalized candies;
3. A researched profile of the Gen Z consumer demographic, which could include generational values, characteristics, and social media usage statistics. This profile should provide a rationale for who will be converted into customers;
4. A timeline and rationale for the three major marketing activities (minimum) that you propose to the client to take place over the year;
5. The slice of a 100% promotional spend pie that you plan to allocate to each medium/platform or activity;
6. Why you've chosen this promotional configuration;
7. The role you assign to each element in achieving your objectives.

*Note:* the Dobson Case competition has no affiliation with the M&M's brand or Mars Incorporated, and the marketing scenario was created for the learning purpose of the extra-curricular marketing competition for students at Brock University.

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<sup>i</sup> Ning, W. S. (2017, Jan). Gamification of product advertising: M&Ms. Gametize Academy. Retrieved from: <https://corp.gametize.com/2017/01/22/gamification-of-product-advertising-mms/>

<sup>ii</sup> Sabbatini, A. (n.d.). M&M's archade – experiential/ar/gaming. Retrieved from: <https://asabbatini.com/mms-unsquare>

<sup>iii</sup> M&M's. (n.d.) Design Your Own M&M's. Retrieved from: <https://www.mms.com/en-us/configurator?method=load&customerType=B2C>