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# BETWEEN THE LINES

## Aim

- ◆ To analyse the strategies, designs and images used in PR and campaign materials.

## Outcome

- ◆ An improved understanding of how organisations try to influence our beliefs, attitudes, behaviour and lifestyles through the media.

## What you need

Samples of posters and leaflets produced by campaign groups and businesses, especially examples which reflect different sides of the same argument; **Actionpages:** *Shreela's story* and *Between the lines* flip chart paper; glue.

## What you do

- ▷ Explain that all organisations produce publicity materials to communicate their values or raise awareness of their activities to their various audiences.
- ▷ Hand out **Actionpage:** *Between the lines* Explain that they will use it to analyse some publicity leaflets, focusing on the issues raised in the text and its design.
- ▷ It might be useful to illustrate the method by briefly looking at **Actionpage:** *Shreela's story* which de-constructs a Nestlé advertisement.
- ▷ Divide participants into small groups. Display selection of leaflets and posters. Ask groups to choose a leaflet.
- ▷ Alternatively, ask the whole group to analyse *Shreela's story*, and then compare their results with the full analysis provided.

## Whole group discussion

- ▷ Choose two or three groups to show their material and explain the main points of their analysis. Bring out more general points.
  - ◆ Which audiences are the materials aimed at?
  - ◆ What strategies have the PR or advertising agencies used to gain your interest (eg humour, guilt, striking image, human interest)?
  - ◆ How well do text, images (photos, illustrations) and design (use of colour, layout, fonts) work together to communicate the message?
  - ◆ How do the materials give authority to their views?
  - ◆ How can you find out if the information provided is accurate?
  - ◆ Will material like this make a difference to your attitudes and behaviour? Why/why not?
  - ◆ What would be the most effective way of reaching a group like you?

## Key ideas

- ◆ PR practitioners claim that their code of ethics ensures they do not make exaggerated claims because this would undermine their credibility. However, PR information often verges on propaganda – highly selective and chosen to put clients in a positive light or counter criticism, rather than present all sides of an argument.
- ◆ Many TNCs are engaged in a PR war to counter criticism about their operations – environmental or health damage, denial of workers' rights etc. Their counter-offensive is well funded and comprehensive – targeting public opinion, policy makers and the media.
- ◆ NGOs also use PR to further their objectives – raise awareness, campaigns, fund raising etc – but usually have fewer resources at their disposal.
- ◆ TNCs use PR and lobbying to create a political and economic climate where they are able to operate with as few restrictions as possible, eg voluntary codes of practice, low taxes.

- ◆ For most the bottom line is to maximise profits and keep shareholders happy – the large institutional investors, pension funds and banks, demand good performance so they in turn can offer attractive interest rates to customers.
- ◆ There is also a strong incentive on directors to keep a company's share price high – most have stock options and so their personal wealth is tied to share price.
- ◆ Some businesses are moving away from using economic indicators as the only criteria for measuring performance – the bottom line. They include social and ethical auditing, and environmental impact, to create a 'triple bottom line'. Although concepts of 'corporate citizenship', 'social responsibility' and 'ethical trading' are being introduced, and widely publicised on websites etc, questions remain – how extensive is the monitoring of Codes of Conduct, and how transparent is the monitoring process, ie who does the monitoring and are all the results published?

## Follow-up

- ◆ **Appendix 1:** *PR for beginners* examines PR in greater detail; **Appendix 9:** *Co-op fairtrade*, **Appendix 10:** *Fair & ethical trade* and **Appendix 11:** *Triple bottom line* tackle issues of ethical sourcing and corporate responsibility; **Appendix 13:** *Greenwash guide* and **Appendix 14:** *Bluewash* take a more sceptical view of claims of corporate citizenship.
- ◆ Using information taken from the www, some groups produce a PR leaflet which draws attention to the social responsibility of one of the businesses outlined in *What's in a name*. Other groups produce a campaign leaflet criticising the same company for some aspect of its corporate behaviour. Both should address the same audience.

**Ad Men!**  
Nagging doubts? Trouble sleeping?  
Has pimping for the Man got you  
tossing and turning?

YOU NEED  
**ETHIC-EZE!**

FAST ACTING RELIEF  
FOR YOUR TROUBLED CONSCIENCE  
Recommended by 4 out of 5 psychiatrists.

Bob Larbel of Portland, Oregon writes  
"Feelings of remorse  
nearly ruined my career at  
Sasquatch & Sasquatch.  
But now I'm proud of the  
work I do. Ethic-Eze made  
shedding pounds of guilt  
almost effortless.  
Thank you."

Illustration: www.adbusters.org

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# Actionpage: Between the lines

- ▷ Fill in this questionnaire to help you analyse the effectiveness of PR and campaign materials. You may need to use another sheet.
- ◆ Name of organisation
- ◆ Nature of organisation's work (eg protecting environment, oil production)
- ◆ Who are the audiences (eg people concerned about the environment)?
- ◆ What slogans or headlines are used?
  
- ▷ Photocopy the leaflet and:
  - highlight key words in the text (eg community, environment)
  - highlight (in another colour) key facts or information in text
  - highlight (in another colour) opinions expressed in text.
- ▷ Glue the photocopies onto a sheet of flip chart paper.  
Write down points raised by the text, eg:
  - relevant issues or facts that the material ignores
  - facts or information that you would question
  - opinions that you disagree with.
- ◆ What images (graphics, photos etc) are used – who is shown, what are they doing, what is the impact on you?
  
- ◆ How has the designer used colour, images, layout of text to make an impact?
  
- ◆ How effective is the material in:
  - gaining your interest – why?
  
  - providing information – why?
  
  - changing your attitudes – why?
- ◆ What action does this organisation want the reader to take?

# Actionpage: Shreela's story

## ADVERTISEMENT



1 What prompted this advert – it's not selling anything, more an attempt to answer criticism?

2 Cropped image – can't see much of her living conditions.

**Look very carefully.** What do you see?

A woman from a developing country? True.

With a baby? True.

Women throughout the developing world face dilemmas over feeding their children every day of their lives. This woman's story is typical.\* She has just had her fifth child and is not breast-feeding. What do you think?

That she can't be bothered? That she has to go out to work? That, like many women, ignorance of breast-feeding and physical problems are too much for her to handle alone? Perhaps she has simply succumbed to perceived western trends to bottle feed?

Shreela, like 97% of women in India, breast-fed all of her previous children, as she does initially this time. But now, with five children, she has to return to work as a clerk within a few weeks. She cannot continue to breast-feed, because she has to work to feed all her children.

3 Why can't she breastfeed at work – how much does artificial baby milk cost?

How much do you know about her now?

4 Nestlé projecting itself as development agency – what exactly does it do for health & education?

What would you do in this situation? In many Indian towns and villages, one of the largest industries is agriculture. The coffee beans used in the manufacture of Nescafé in India are bought directly from Indian farmers.

5 What else did the farmer say – poor farmers in India are suffering from too little land, high rents & expensive seeds?

Nestlé is not the farmers' employer, only a buyer, but the company does invest heavily in the region. Nestlé has been working in India since the turn of the century. During that time, it has become very clear that without Nestlé's training in modern farming techniques and equipment, the survival of many farms would be in doubt.

6 How fair is Nestlé to farmers – does it guarantee prices regardless of world prices, like Fairtrade buyers such as Traidcraft & Cafedirect?

"I have seen the standard of living improve here since Nestlé arrived" local farmer

7 These statements cannot be supported – there is well documented evidence that Nestlé continues to breach the Code all over the world – its Charter is just PR to counter criticism

Unlike many other organisations, Nestlé works with the local community to ensure that their land works to everyone's advantage. This doesn't just mean that they pass on skills, but that they also provide the community with health education, education in trading and production, schooling and, crucially, fair and regular payment.

Many accusations have been made against Nestlé and about the company's marketing of powdered baby milk (infant formula) in developing countries. Even before the World Health Organisation International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes was introduced in 1981, Nestlé marketed infant formula ethically and responsibly, and has done so ever since.

The Nestlé Charter concerns Nestlé's commitment to the WHO International Code in developing countries. The Charter reflects Nestlé's firm belief that breast-feeding is the best way to feed a baby, and supports the protection and promotion of breast-feeding. It also includes a ban on advertising baby milk to the public and forbids employees from seeking any direct contact with mothers. Naturally they do not provide free supplies to hospitals for use with healthy infants.

8 Do such cases justify Nestlé's (among others) promotion of breast milk substitutes which the World Health Organisation estimates cause the unnecessary deaths of 1.5 million infants every year?

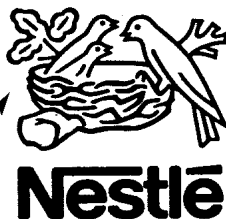
Only in cases of real need, and where it is allowed by the Government, would they help out. One example of this is in Zimbabwe, where the Ministry of Health has to approve requests from local health workers for "needy infants".

One case involved "Baby Sheillah Chipere ...mother died of TB immediately post delivery. Father deserted and left baby with grandmother. She cannot afford food for this baby." The same matron in charge of the hospital's infants also requested help for "Baby Remembrance Kufakwavo...mother is in a diabetic coma...she is a single parent, apparently is kept by auntie who is very stranded and cannot afford milk."

Safeguarding our reputation is important, but not as important as safeguarding a life.

Nestlé has a proven track record in the developing world. They are proud of their record of achievement in developing countries. This work will continue for many years to come: in local communities, helping small economies and working both with employees and customers to improve both work and life in the developing world.

\* Based on a real situation.



9 Nurturing logo – is this Nestlé's main concern?

10 The company has chosen not to mention the 4000 babies who die each day because they are not breastfed.

11 How can we check out these claims?

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## Background to Nestlé advertisement (numbers refer to points on Actionpage, p54)

- 1 Baby Milk Action is a non-profit organisation which aims to save infant lives and to end the avoidable suffering caused by inappropriate infant feeding. It works within a global network to strengthen independent, transparent and effective controls on the marketing of the baby feeding industry.

The global network is called IBFAN (International Baby Food Action Network), a network of more than 150 citizens groups in over 90 countries. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 1.5 million infants die around the world every year because they are not breastfed. Where water is unsafe a bottle-fed child is up to 25 times more likely to die as a result of diarrhoea than a breastfed child. That is why a marketing code was adopted at the United Nations' World Health Assembly in 1981 to regulate the marketing of breastmilk substitutes. However, companies continue to violate its provisions.

Because of concern about Nestlé's marketing many people refuse to buy Nestlé products, and an International Boycott, coordinated by some IBFAN groups, has been in effect in 19 countries for many years. It will continue until Nestlé ends its irresponsible marketing of breastmilk substitutes world-wide and abides by the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent Resolutions in policy and practice. The Boycott focuses on Nestlé because it controls about 40% of the world market in baby milks and uses its influence to undermine controls on marketing activities. Monitoring shows Nestlé to be the largest single source of violations worldwide. The Boycott is supported in the UK by over 100 church, health and consumer groups, over 90 businesses, 80 student unions, 17 local authorities, 12 trade unions, 74 politicians and political parties and many celebrities.

In October 1996 Nestlé placed this advertisement in the Oxford Independent newspaper, dismissing accusations made about Nestlé's marketing of baby foods.

- 3 The ad focuses on one Indian mother, who, as a clerk earning about £40 a month, is better educated and wealthier than the majority of Indian mothers, 60% of whom live below the poverty line. If she's lucky, Shreela may have a tap in her home and access to sanitation, so her baby has a better chance than most of surviving the risk of being bottle-fed – 30% of India's urban population and 86% of its rural population do not have access to adequate sanitation (1996). Even so, like babies in the UK, her baby will still be five times more likely to get diarrhoea if it is not breastfed. Without clean water and sanitation it would face a three-fold risk of dying from a respiratory infection and a 14-fold risk of dying from diarrhoea.

The ad suggests that because Shreela is soon to return to work she "cannot continue breastfeeding". This is incorrect. As millions of mothers throughout the world will testify, during the day she could choose to feed her baby on family foods from local sources which are much cheaper, and continue to breastfeed at night or whenever she is not at work. She could – if her employer will let her – express her milk during the day and arrange for this to be fed by cup to her baby. Why does the advert ignore this practical alternative? It also neglects to mention that the baby milk, bottles and teats will cost Shreela at least £15 a month, roughly 40% of her income!

- 6 Nestlé objects "to the implication that brands, including our own, which do not have the fair trade logo are somehow unfair". In its leaflet *Nestlé and Coffee: A Partnership for Fair Trade* (from Press Office 020 8686 3333) it argues its case – "Nestlé has been buying coffee direct from growers for over a decade and today buys seven times more coffee this way than all the European fairtrade brands combined... we usually pay a premium over the market price". Although Nestlé does buy directly from small farmers, the fact is it simply does not meet the fairtrade standard which gives small producers a guaranteed price which covers production costs, a living wage and a premium to support community development. Under the certified Fairtrade Mark scheme, advance payments ensure that farmers have the security to keep out of debt and free from unscrupulous middlemen. The production chain is independently monitored to ensure that ethical standards are

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maintained. Coffee is bought direct from the farmers' own democratic organisations who are regularly consulted over what constitutes a fair price. Farmers do not have to pay to join a fairtrade scheme – costs are borne by the companies who retail Fairtrade Mark coffee. Nestlé does not subscribe to this system of safeguards. It does not even have a Fairtrade brand for the growing ethical consumer market.

Nestlé still buys 85% of its coffee on the world market and buys about 12% of the world's crop. The market price can drop to less than half the cost of production. When world prices are low, thousands of small coffee farmers lose their land. Although Nestlé is not directly to blame, it is the major player in a system where power lies with middlemen, processors, exporters, dealers and roasters (like Nestlé), and where small growers and plantation workers struggle to make a living. Much of the world's coffee is grown on plantations where working conditions are poor and pesticide use is abused.

- 7 Baby Milk Action registered complaints with the UK Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) concerning these statements. In May 1999, following a two year investigation, all three complaints were upheld by the ASA Council, and Nestlé was warned not to repeat its claims.

Recent evidence from whistle-blower Syed Aamar Raza, a former Nestlé Medical Delegate in Pakistan paints a picture of systematic infringement of the Code: *"I was confused when I read the 'Charter'. It said Nestlé does not give gifts to doctors, but we did this. My bosses signed the cheques. It said we did not make direct contact with mothers, but we held baby shows and in clinics we used Cerelac (baby food cereal) samples as a way of striking up conversations to push the milks. The 'Charter' says Nestlé does not pay staff incentives, but my salary revisions signed by Mr Roland, Marketing Manager, includes incentives. Infant formula received the most points in the scheme. My bosses told me to do all these things which the 'Charter' says we do not do"*

- 8 Dr Timothy Stamps, Minister of Health, Zimbabwe, was interviewed by Mark Thomas for a programme broadcast on 13 January 2000. Mark asked: *"If Mr Brabeck, the Chief Executive of Nestlé, was here, what would you say to him?"* Dr Stamps: *"Why do you want to destroy my children? Are you interested in ethnic cleansing to the extent of eliminating all African children? That's what I would ask him."* Dr Stamps also revealed that Nestlé's relationship with the Zimbabwean government is not all sweetness and light: *"They called a meeting... to try and tell Parliamentarians that if we went ahead with putting the Code into regulation they would remove themselves from Zimbabwe. We knew this to be an idle threat."*

- 11 There are many examples of Nestlé PR which do not stand up to closer scrutiny. In October 1999 Nestlé's Chief Executive, Peter Brabeck-Letmathé, distributed a 180-page book, *Nestlé implementation of the WHO Code around the world*, claiming that 54 countries had officially verified that Nestlé complies with the Code.

In December, Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF, wrote to Mr Brabeck saying that requesting letters from government officials does not fulfil Nestlé's self-monitoring obligations under the International Code. Her letter goes on to question his claim that the letters are "official verification of compliance" by citing problems with 21 of the 54 letters. For example, the Minister of Health in Oman informed UNICEF that he wrote to Nestlé thanking its staff for attending a meeting and his letter in no way verifies compliance. Nestlé has also had to apologise to the Danish authorities for misrepresenting a letter, following Mr Brabeck's false claim.

In another example, UNICEF questions how Nestlé managed to obtain a letter of verification of compliance from the Philippines at the same time as winning an industry prize for a direct marketing campaign – direct contact with mothers is banned by the Code!

More information on the babymilk issue from [www.babymilkaction.org/](http://www.babymilkaction.org/)

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