



Abstract

In recent years, the retail industry has changed to standards that were never before seen, with the emerging technological advancements opening the doors for a multitude of potential and revolutionary ideas. This means that every emerging business or anyone who aims to introduce themselves to any new marketplace must be aware of the exact approach to take in order to be successful in this ever-changing entrepreneurial landscape. This study aims to introduce the brand of Kith streetwear in the Singaporean market, targeting their efforts towards the tech-savvy and fashion-following youth of the country. The campaign will take the focus of different characteristics that make Singaporean youth stand out from others in Southeast Asia, and by choosing and understanding those cultural aspects, the brand will be able to find more success, by communicating their message more effectively and spreading the messages across all the demographic. Multiple traditional and digital touch points as well as social media were reported as ideal touch points for awareness, keeping in mind the lifestyle and mindset of the average Singaporean young person. The end result of this campaign proposes an interesting point regarding interactions between the Singaporean youth and retail brands in this day and age and, as time progresses, it would help Kith to understand better how to enter different foreign markets across the globe. It also brings in-depth study of the new way retail advertising is taking.

Keywords: Singapore, Advertising, Campaign, Kith, Streetwear, Culture, Lifestyle

Introduction:

The business of streetwear has grown to an unimaginable degree in recent years. In an industry that is constantly changing and highly saturated, the challenge of standing out in the crowd is always present. Kith, an American streetwear brand, has ventured in foreign markets before. However, this study aims to increase awareness of the brand in a foreign country using advertising specific to a selected country – Singapore.

The main objective of this study is to use this information to build a cohesive and scientifically-backed advertising campaign for the streetwear brand Kith. This investigation will do a detailed analysis of different cultural, political and social characteristics from scientifically backed research on Singaporean culture as well as an insight on affairs that are happening in said country right now. Using this information, advertising pieces for a complete campaign will be developed, using different traditional and digital media channels to best reach the target audience.

Why Singapore?

Since their independence from Malaysia in 1965, Singapore has transformed into a developed city-state. To a substantial extent, this transformation may be explained in terms of the role of the Singapore state, which in part may be attributed to the regulation of certain cultural values — those reconstructed by the Singapore government under the influence of both Western and Oriental cultures.

Singapore is considered one of the “four tigers” of Asia, due to their economic growth and open international market. Even though the GDP is four times smaller than that of the US, Singapore’s purchase power is significantly higher than the US – a sign of their active working environment.

Culturally, the youth of the country is highly aware of global trends and are fond of a popular phenomenon. This is due to the fact of it being a highly-connected country. It is considered the Art and Cultural Center of Southeast Asia. For this reason, Singapore was the only country in Asia chosen by Kanye West for his global Life of Pablo pop-up store event.

Singapore’s Culture:

Singapore is a cosmopolitan society where people live harmoniously, and interaction among different races are commonly seen. The various cultural influences that have come together to form Singapore make its culture one of the most diverse in the world. The immigrants of the past have given the place a mixture of Malay, Chinese, Indian, and European influences, all of which have intermingled.

The four official languages of Singapore are Mandarin, Malay, Tamil and English. English is the most common language used and is the language which unites the different ethnic groups. Children are taught in English at school, but also learn their mother tongue to make sure they don't lose contact with their traditions.

Culture in Singapore is largely defined by peace, justice, and social and religious harmony. The saying that Singapore is a “fine” city not only refers to its cleanliness or its quality of life; In fact, to ensure safety and order in the state, the government has prohibited various things such as: chewing gum, spitting, smoking indoors, consuming drugs, and even dancing on counters or tables at bars.

The Singaporean government invests heavily in education since they've realized that investing in its people has been a winning formula in the past. The system aims to support the development of children's strengths and social skills, and as a result, students produce very good academic results. Still, the government is constantly working on reforms for the education system in Singapore to remain flexible and guarantee a high quality of education.

Singaporeans celebrate the major festivals associated with their respective religions. The Chinese are predominantly followers of Buddhism, Taoism, Shenism, Christians, Catholics and some considered as 'free-thinkers' (Those who do not belong to any religion). Malays are Muslims and Indians are Hindus. But still, religious tolerance is essential in Singapore. In fact, religions often cross racial boundaries and some even merge in unusual ways in this modern country. But still Singaporeans share public holidays such as: New Year's Day, Chinese New Year, Easter, Labour Day, Vesak Day, Hari Raya Puasa, Racial Harmony Day, National Day, Hari Raya Haji, Deepavali and Christmas Day.

Fashion is an important subject for Singaporeans who can be fiercely competitive and It is not unusual to see people endeavouring to get to the front of a crowd or determinedly queuing for great lengths to buy or see something. They attribute this to '*kiasu*', the fear of losing.

In Singapore, food is also readily and widely available. There are lots of cuisines to offer: Chinese, Indian, Malay, Indonesian and Western, Italian, Peranakan, Spanish, French, Thai and even Fusion. It is very common to savour other culture's food and some of the food can be very intriguing. Indian food is relatively spicier, whereas Chinese food is less spicy and the Chinese enjoy seafood. Malay cooking uses coconut milk as their main ingredient.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions:

Individualistic/ Collectivistic:

- Singapore, with a score of 20, is a collectivistic society. This means that the “We” is important, people belong to in-groups (families, clans or organizations) who look after each other in exchange for loyalty. Politeness is more valued than honesty, and calmness and respectability are the most important traits in a boss. Communication is indirect, and the harmony of the group has to be maintained. Open conflicts are avoided.
- *Kin Groups.* Kin groups play a significant role in all ethnic groups, and people often move within wide networks of relatives. Privately, kin groups are important, but politically and economically, they play a marginal role.

Masculine/ Feminine:

- Singapore scores 48 and is in the “middle” of the scale, but is slightly more Feminine. This means that the softer aspects of culture, such as leveling with others, consensus, sympathy for the underdog, are valued and encouraged.

Uncertainty Avoidance:

- Singapore is noted for being the country with the highest tolerance for uncertainty of the listed countries. Most of this is due to their high Power Distance Index and mentality of “everything has enforced rules”.

Power Distance:

- Singapore has a high Power Distance (PDI), meaning power is centralized. For example, managers rely on their bosses and on rules, and employees expect to be told what to do. Control is expected and attitudes towards managers are formal. Communication is indirect and the information flow is selective. Government is self described as preaching “Nation before community and society above self.” In Singapore people abide to many rules not because they have need to for structure, but because of high PDI.

Time Perspective:

- Long-Term oriented country: Singaporeans emphasize virtue and the way you do things. They are always keeping their options open as there are many ways to skin a cat. Westerners believe that if A is right, B must be wrong, whereas people from East and Southeast Asian countries see that both A and B combined produce something superior. This mindset allows for a more pragmatic approach to business.

Indulgence / Restraint:

- They are of neutral indulgence rate, showing traces of both restraint (LTO) and Indulgence (Technological advancements and appeal for trends).

Pestel Analysis:

Political

- Regarded as one of the least corrupt countries in the world, constantly figuring in the top 10
- The Port of Singapore is the 2nd busiest in the world, trade is highly active with countries all around the world.

Economic:

- There is excellent opportunity for U.S. companies to participate in the growing Singapore eCommerce market given its sophisticated, international customer base and being one of the highest disposable incomes in Asia. Situated at the crossroads of international shipping and air routes, Singapore is a center for transportation and communication in the region, making it an ideal gateway into Asia Pacific's eCommerce market.
- Business executives surveyed in the World Economic Forum's 2014–2015 Global Competitiveness Report reported no problems doing business in Singapore
- Singapore is generally a free port and an open economy. More than 99% of all imports into Singapore enter the country duty-free.

Social:

- Heterogeneous society in many tiers (race, language, religion)
- Majority speak English and Mandarin; English being the main language in media

- Older generation are still extremely conservative; But, as a society, are fairly open to the world and to different lifestyles
- A young nation that is extremely patriotic and constantly aiming for perfection.
- “The general Singaporean is a person that owns one to two smartphones, definitely has 4G, and back at home has fibre Internet because it’s cheap and readily available”. And the top active social platforms are: Youtube, WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram.
- Singaporeans are generally regarded as business-savvy ethnic groups, as they tend to be profit-oriented, dominating the political and economic facets of society. Status is thought to be merit-based as a result of work ethic.
- Foot traffic is high, because owning a car is way too expensive.
- The Lion head symbol was introduced in 1986 as an alternative national Symbol of Singapore because it best captured Singapore’s reputation as a “Lion City”.
- The Merlion is the unofficial mascot of Singapore. It’s a symbol of nature to Singaporeans and is branded in sports teams, advertising, and tourism.
- Vanda Miss Joaquim is known as the Singapore orchid. The Princess Aloha orchid represent Singapore's uniqueness and hybrid culture.
- The Singapore National Pledge is an oath of allegiance to Singapore. It is commonly recited at public events, schools, Singapore Armed Forces and National Day Parade. It reads:

*We, the citizens of Singapore,
pledge ourselves as one united people,
regardless of race, language or religion,
to build a democratic society
based on justice and equality
so as to achieve happiness, prosperity
and progress for our nation.*

Technological:

- The World Economic Forum's 2016 Global Information Technology Report rated Singapore first in the world on its Network Readiness Index, noting that the city-state has one of the best pro-business environments in the world and a government that has established a clear digital strategy to spur innovation.
- Singapore is host to a multitude of technology and start-up business events—including Tech in Asia, innovfest unbound, Echelon Asia Summit, the 2016 CSX Asia Pacific Conference on cybersecurity, the Internet Engineering Task Force and the Singapore International Robotics Expo. It even hosts Inside 3D Printing Singapore, the world's largest professional 3D printing event.

Environmental:

- “Green and clean” mentality, despite the high urbanity and population density.
- Cars are not popular; the government is trying to cut car usage and aim for higher public transportation use (which has a really great infrastructure)
- Owning a car is expensive, so people rather walk or take public transportation.
- Singapore's shores have expanded by 22% since its independence and Singapore has become one of the largest importers of sand in the world. Most of their sand was sourced from Indonesia and Malaysia until both countries imposed a ban due to the environmental impact – Indonesia saw 24 islands disappear.

Legal:

- Moral laws are held to high esteem in a facade, but not strictly enforced,
- LGBT laws in effect, but not enforced privately. Pride parades happens.
- Multicultural and heterogeneous society leads to a racially inclusive political background.

Paradoxes:

- Singapore youth are diverse in culture and ethnicities; however, they adopt to western culture. They also find streetwear to be its own culture and community.
- For Singapore, being a cosmopolitan city includes having fashion around the entire town. For this reason, citizens can find fashion malls at every train station. Despite this fact, younger audiences such as Millennials and Gen Z, still prefer doing online shopping. As a result, E-commerce growth is expected to be more than 11.2%

Singapore and Kith:

Kith is a streetwear trend maker, that thanks to the efforts of its founder and designer Ronnie Feig, it's recognized around the world. His success has let him collaborate with renowned brands such as Coca-Cola, Nike, Asics and more.

Singapore is one of the fewest countries where Kith goes unnoticed, Singaporeans don't have a top of mind brand, which means they don't feel truly identified with an specific one. Kith's advertising strategy needs to understand Singapore's culture to enter the market successfully and stand out.

One of Keith disadvantages is that since there are no physical stores in Singapore, all Kith sales are made through e-commerce. Merchandise can only be seen offline in physical store locations of brands that have collaborated with Kith, such as Nike. Shopping is done on their website or with partnered sites like Net-A-Porter.

One of the biggest competitors for Kith in Singapore is Pomelo Fashion, a fashion platform that launched in Thailand in 2014. Pomelo differentiates themselves from others by branding themselves as a "fast fashion brand first and e-tailer second.". Also, local brands such as Zalora threat Keith position to stand out in the market.

Swot Analysis:

Strengths:

- Kith has a high release rate (Monday program), which makes it easy to keep up with trends.
- Collaborations with established Brands and Celebrities
- Puts Experience First, Web and Stores
- Exclusive releases in foreign markets

Weaknesses:

- Misunderstandings with shipment.
- Heavily centralized in the US, making immediate overseas communication complicated.
- Low supply rate for some special products.

Opportunities:

- Easy introduction to countries with open economy and low risk of heavy financial loss as a result
- Adaptability to new, more modern forms of retail (pop-up stores, online, etc.)
- High appeal on “exclusive/limited” versions.

Threats:

- Inflation and production costs.
- Import fees and distribution.
- Risk of piracy and thriving of counterfeit products

Creative Brief:

Big idea:

Kith X Lion City

“Bring the youth of Singapore together, inspiring the leaders of tomorrow”

Campaign:

Kith x Lion City

Observation:

Singapore is a place with different background and cultures

Insight:

Streetwear is a culture we can all belong to.

Target:

- 16 to 25 years old
- Chinese, Indian and Malay living in Singapore
- High school and bachelors students, and first jobs.
- English speakers
- Aspirational (Power of distance)
- Progressive Thinking (Long term oriented)
- Trend followers and Influenced by western Fashion trends
- Traditions are important but they are open to new ones
- They feel identified with streetwear culture and community
- Mainly internet driven by platforms such as Youtube, Facebook and Instagram
- Shop online for exclusive products

Strategy:

Our strategy is to create a campaign that spreads offline and online. The campaign will take advantage of cultural aspects such as Singapore's preference to walk or use public transportation to present the campaign. The large amount of foot traffic would make our outdoor messages seen. If people aren't walking in Singapore then they are most likely using trains. For this reason we want to place our message on trains, too.

Singapore is a collectivist country and Kith, as their name meaning, shares and treasures the value of family and friends. Since Singapore is a long term oriented culture, the campaign will use the national symbols and the anthem that aligns with Kith's manifesto. This manifesto will be placed as a pre-roll before YouTube videos begin. This will be done because YouTube is the largest social media platform used in Singapore. Lastly, we will share our message on Singapore's two other largest social media platforms - Facebook and Instagram. All of the platforms we have chosen, both offline and online, are already part of the everyday lifestyle of our target audience.

The paradox between Singaporean youth being from different ethnicities, but still coming together as one single community, has a role in our campaign. We want to bring together the different youths who identify as being a part of the "streetwear community". The Kith Pledge will act as a way to unify people who do not want to be feel torn between different backgrounds.

Random Facts Kith:

- The name Kith is derived from "kith and kin," an archaic Scottish term that loosely translates as "friends and family"
- Singaporean culture is heavily influenced by Chinese values and one's ethnicity is a strong social identifier

Conclusion:

This campaign can be used as a discussion piece or a reference for any future retail campaign that wish to introduce themselves in a foreign market. It can also be used to encourage viewers to study the methods used to determine the best way to sell brands to a foreign market.

The research aims to prove that determining a target audience goes deeper than just determining a profile. This campaign highlights the importance of understanding cultural and social aspects before venturing in developing a campaign.

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