



**UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 24 SEPTEMBER 2008 - 22:00**

#### STUDY RESULTS

## MTV Networks crowns the coolest brands of 2008: Coca-Cola and Nike again at the top

### Cool chromosome for young people unravelled

In order to be seen as cool by young people, you must be original, popular and attractive. Friends, music and actors or actresses can be 'cool', according to young people, without too much trouble. But teachers or professors *and* advertising have a much harder time to be seen as cool. For daddies it is no less than three times as hard to be cool than for mommies. Brothers have an easier time than sisters. Young people think cool product categories are: mobile telephones, jeans brands, game consoles and shoes. While banks, temp agencies, travel agencies and coffee and tea brands are facing a major challenge when they want to become cool to young people. Yet, we don't find only cool brands in the product categories with a high cool content. A brand from an industry with little 'cool potential' can yet become cool, provided it uses the correct formula and manipulates the correct chromosomes. This is shown through an extensive study of 1,778 Belgian youngsters between 13 and 29 years-old, that was conducted by market research agency InSites Consulting at the end of August at the request of youth expert MTV Networks.

MTV Networks, mother company of youth broadcasters TMF and MTV, asked InSites Consulting to study '*The Cool Sneaking Formula.*' This study looked at what determines whether something or someone is 'cool' and whether there is or isn't a 'coolness' formula. For this study, 274 young people between the ages of 18 and 24 were asked to keep an online journal. These 'cool sneakers' kept a daily journal for a full week, entering their 'cool' and totally 'uncool' experiences and rated them. They were also asked for spontaneous reactions why something was 'cool' or 'not cool' and they could add to their journal using pictures, videos, music, etc. From this preliminary study, InSites Consulting distilled a basic formula for coolness which was then subject to a large-scale test on 1504 youngsters (13 to 29 years-old, representative for Belgian youth by age, language, sex, and education). In addition, the formula was used on young people for brands in 35 different

product categories. For the third year in a row, MTV Networks gave the Cool Brand Awards to the highest-scoring brands.

### **Greenpeace boots are cool, but Crocs aren't**

All together, the 274 youth shared 466 experiences with InSites Consulting and MTV Networks in the preliminary study. They could classify these experiences themselves as a 'hit', a 'fail' or an 'accident.' A 'hit' is something or somebody who wants to be cool and succeeds well. A 'fail' is something or someone who is desperately trying to be 'cool', but fails. An 'accident' is something or someone who unintentionally and unexpectedly comes across as 'cool'. 42% of the experiences were classified as 'hits', 30% were 'fails' and 28% were classified as 'accidents'. Examples of a 'hit' are the environmentally-friendly Greenpeace boots because they are "environmentally-friendly and hip and come from Greenpeace." Crocs in their turn are an example of a 'fail', because, according to some youth, they "just look ugly." A chicken on a motorway turned out, by accident, totally unexpectedly, yet to be 'cool'.

### **Naturally cooler?**

Sometimes something is 'cool' without working at it. For example, friends, music and musical artists, actors and actresses are immediately 'cool'. Young people think their father is less cool than their mother. Cool advertising directed at young people turns out to be a challenging job and being a teacher or professor yet being considered cool by 13-29 year olds, is only given to few. There are sectors that naturally have more 'cool potential' than others. Mobile telephones, jeans, game consoles and shoes are products that have a significant cool status with young people. While banks, temp agencies, travel agencies and coffee and tea brands have little appeal to young people's imagination. The brands that populate these industries, however, are not as easily classified. Cool brands are not just found in cool product categories! Take mints. This sector has a negative cool potential index of -15%. Yet, Tic Tac gets a 7.5 out of 10 for coolness. On the other hand, there are brands that profit little from the coolness status their sector built up among youth.

### **Cool = (0,22 x original) + (0,23 x popular) + (0,55 x attractive)**

What decides what is cool and what isn't? The study calculated which dimensions have the biggest impact on being 'cool'. Originality, popularity and attractiveness are the most important elements and explain no less than 90% of the differences in coolness between the various experiences (people, events, products, etc.). Whoever wants to be 'cool', therefore better score high in these three dimensions, where 'attractiveness' has the highest impact. For products and brands, the formula is slightly different: popularity remains equally important, but the impact of originality on coolness increases, while attractiveness' importance decreases slightly. Depending on the product category differences were also found between these dimensions. For example, it is striking noticeable that in product categories that young people already find cooler (e.g. game consoles), the impact of popularity is bigger. *"A category like coffee or tea and ready to eat meals, which has more trouble to be cool with young people, can increase its score by focusing on originality. We hope this will refute the preconceived notion that it is much easier to be cool as a brand of jeans or games than as a bank or breakfast cereal brand,"* said Joeri Van den Bergh, youth expert at InSites Consulting.

### **Being cool: not just for the big boys**

To prevent the familiarity of brands having an influence on the ratio of being considered 'cool', the methodology for determining the coolest brands was refined. This year, young people were asked to only judge those brands in different product categories that they knew. Not only was coolness scored on a scale from 1 to 10, but for each brand the three dimensions from the cool formula (originality, attractiveness and popularity) were tested. *"That way we also gained insight in the status of niche brands,"* explains Veerle Colin, MTV Networks' head of strategy and communication. *"In the end, what matters is bringing a*

*convincing story to the target group you aim for, and those can be both large brands and niche brands.*" The brand builder has the job of watching over this coolness. Whether this is a giant or a niche brand, a brand must be on guard at all times so that the brand image doesn't lose its *coolness*.

### **This year's award goes to...**

For the third consecutive year, the coolest brands of the year were crowned. Like previous years, Coca-Cola won the *Overall Coolest Brand Award*. No less than 10% of Belgian youth between 13 and 29 years-of-age, spontaneously named Coca-Cola as the coolest brand. Nike was the runner up, like last year, by the way. Esprit won third place and so strengthens its position compared to last year.

The winner in the category *Coolest Mobile phone* was Apple's iPhone. As a newcomer, iPhone received an overwhelming coolness score of 8.3 out of 10, leaving all competitors far behind. Last year's winner Nokia dropped to third place, after Samsung. The ranking in the category *Coolest Mobile Phone Operator* was also shaken up compared to last year. Mobistar is the coolest operator with a score of 6.3 out of 10. However, the brand is closely followed by the new Generation MTV. Proximus reaches third place, while last year the brand was the coolest.

Few surprises in the category *Coolest Soft Drink Brand*. Coca-Cola can keep calling itself the coolest soft drink brand, thanks to a nice score of 7.7 out of 10. First runner up is Fanta and second runner up Ice Tea. In the category *Coolest Energy Drink Brand*, the award went to Redbull, which reached a top score of 7.1 out of 10. Despite the fact that Spa was the winner last year in the category *Coolest Water Brand*, the situation looks different this year, and Spa is no longer in the top 3. Instead young people this year proclaimed Evian the coolest water brand. They gave the brand 6.5 out of 10. Perrier is new in the top 3 and jumps from nowhere to second place. Vittel is in third place, just like last year.

Last year, L'Oréal was the clear winner in the category *Coolest Make Up Brand*. This year the deck was shuffled. Nivea ascends to the Make Up throne. The brand achieved a coolness score of 7.0 out of 10 and with that pushes L'Oréal to second place. Maybelline came in third.

The results in the category *Coolest Mint Brand* are nothing short of remarkable. Despite the fact that the sector Mints is an industry with little cool potential according to many young people, Tic Tac reaches a coolness score of no less than 7.5 out of 10! Mentos is close behind, One Sec follows at a distance. The perfect proof that as a brand you don't necessarily need to belong to a cool sector in order to be cool!

All Stars received the award for *Coolest Shoe Brand*. All Stars turned out to be an appropriate winner with a coolness score of 7.5 out of 10. Runners up are Guess and Puma. The sector Sport Brands is yet another sector with much cool potential. Brands in this sector actually almost have to work hard to be 'not cool.' So, in the category *Coolest Sport Brand* many cool brands came up. Yet, with a coolness score of 7.5 out of 10, Roxy had the edge on numbers 2 and 3: Nike and Banana Moon.

Congratulations to Diesel, which won the *Coolest Denim Brand* award. Thanks to a nice coolness score of no less than 7.9 out of 10, the brand clearly distinguishes itself from number 2, Replay. Levi's closes out the list of top 3 coolest jeans brands.

Little change in category *Coolest Bank*. Thanks to a score of 6.2 out of 10, Mine, Fortis' youth line, is number 1, just like last year. Dexia's Axion ended up in second place, ING's Futuris, third. Just like banks, the temp agency sector appeals little to young people's imagination. This is reflected in the coolness scores. Start People won the award for

*Cooldest Outplacement Office* with a coolness score of 5.8 out of 10. Randstad is close behind, Adecco at a little distance.

Newcomer Wii immediately reaches high heights. The brand received a coolness score of 8.5 out of 10. Resulting in the award *Cooldest Game Console*. 2007 winner PS3 sinks to second place, the PSP is at 3. In the category *Cooldest Camera Brand* the award went to Sony. Sony received 7.4 out of 10 and is closely followed by Canon. Samsung received third prize.

Axe is the winner, again, in the category *Cooldest Deodorant Brand*, and rightly so. Axe gained an average score of 8.1 out of 10, leaving runners up Adidas and Rexona eating its dust.

Finally, MTV Networks handed out 2 additional awards: one for *Cooldest film of the Year* and one for *Cooldest Game*. In this category there were not report cards with a scale of 1 to 10, but a percentage of spontaneous answers. The Dark Knight won the award for *Cooldest Film of the Year* because 5% of Belgian youth spontaneously mentioned this movie as the coolest movie. The Sims can continue to call themselves the *Cooldest Game* because, just like last year, this game was the top answer when we asked young people for the coolest game (7%).

Below is a list of all winners, with their respective coolness score:

- **Cooldest Mobile Phone Brand**
  1. iPhone (Apple) → 8.3/10
  2. Samsung
  3. Nokia
  
- **Cooldest Mobile Phone Operator**
  1. Mobistar → 6.3/10
  2. MTV Generation
  3. Proximus
  
- **Cooldest Soft Drink Brand**
  1. Coca-Cola → 7.7/10
  2. Fanta
  3. Ice Tea
  
- **Cooldest Energy Drink Brand**
  1. Red Bull → 7.1/10
  2. Burn
  3. Nalu

- Coolest Make Up Brand  
 1. Nivea → 7.0/10  
 2. L'Oréal  
 3. Maybelline
- Coolest Mint Brand  
 1. Tic Tac → 7.5/10  
 2. Mentos  
 3. One Sec
- Coolest Shoe Brand  
 1. All Stars (Converse) → 7.5/10  
 2. Guess  
 3. Puma
- Coolest Sport Brand  
 1. Roxy → 7.5/10  
 2. Nike  
 3. Banana Moon
- Coolest Denim Brand  
 1. Diesel → 7.9/10  
 2. Replay  
 3. Levi's
- Coolest Bank  
 1. Fortis (Mine) → 6.2/10  
 2. Dexia (Axion)  
 3. ING (Futuris)
- Coolest Game Console  
 1. Wii → 8.5/10  
 2. PS3  
 3. Playstation Portable (PSP)
- Coolest Water Brand  
 1. Evian → 6.5/10  
 2. Perrier  
 3. Vittel
- Coolest Outplacement Office  
 1. Start People → 5.8/10  
 2. Randstad  
 3. Adecco
- Coolest Deodorant Brand  
 1. Axe → 8.1/10  
 2. Adidas  
 3. Rexona
- Coolest Camera Brand  
 1. Sony → 7.4/10  
 2. Canon  
 3. Samsung

Extra categories 'Coolest Film' and 'Coolest game' with their % spontaneous answers.

- Coolest Film
  1. The dark knight → 5%
  2. Ch'tis
  3. Wall-E
  
- Coolest Game
  1. The Sims → 7%
  2. GTA
  3. Call of Duty

These research data come from the study 'The Cool Sneaking Formula' and 'Cool Brand Awards' conducted in August 2008 by market research agency InSites Consulting commissioned by MTV Networks.

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**About InSites Consulting**

InSites Consulting is a prominent market research agency in the field of online marketing research with a strong international position. It was started as a spin-off of the Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School. Both quantitative and qualitative marketing research is conducted online through an online panel consisting of more than 2,000,000 panel members, spread over 25 European countries. The main office in Gent has 80 highly-educated and experienced employees. InSites Consulting represents: expertise and consulting, innovation driven, excellent customer service and quality oriented. More information at [www.insites.eu](http://www.insites.eu)

**About MTV Networks**

MTV Networks Belgium is the market leader in the field of kids and youth entertainment in Belgium. Daily approximately 2.3 million of households in Flanders receive MTV, TMF and Nickelodeon. In French-speaking Belgium, MTV and Nickelodeon reach 1.6 million households. In addition, MTV Networks Belgium offers youth a mobile telephone solution through TMFmobile and Generation MTV, various websites and 15 digital television stations through the various digital platforms in Belgium One stop infopoint: [www.mtvnetworks.be](http://www.mtvnetworks.be)