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MTV Networks crowns the coolest brands of 2008

For the third consecutive year, youth expert MTV Networks crowns last year's coolest brands. At MTV Network's request, market research agency InSites Consulting conducted an extensive study of 1,778 Belgian youngsters between 13 and 29 years-of-age. It not only found the coolest brands, but it also unravelled the 'cool chromosome' in young people. Why do some people or brands radiate a 'cool' image, without even trying and why is this hard work for others? MTV Networks and InSites Consulting plumbed the *coolness* chromosome...

What decides whether someone is 'cool' and is there or isn't there a formula to calculate this *coolness*? MTV Networks, mother company of youth broadcasters TMF and MTV, asked InSites Consulting to study *'The Cool Sneaking Formula.'* 274 young people between ages 18 and 24 were asked to keep an online journal for a week. These *'cool sneakers'* daily registered their 'cool' and totally 'uncool' experiences and could add pictures, videos, music, etc. to their journals. From this preliminary study, InSites Consulting distilled a basic formula for *coolness* which was then subject to a large-scale test on 1.504 youth between ages 13 to 29 and several dozens of product categories.

Cool potential

Sometimes something is 'cool' without working at it. For example, friends, music and musical artists and actors are immediately 'cool'. On the other hand, it is almost impossible for a teacher or a professor to create a cool image with young people. It is also remarkable that young people find their fathers much less cool than their mothers. Daddy has to exert no less than three times as much effort to be found cool! So it turns out that some people naturally have more 'cool potential' than others.

The same reasoning applies to industries. Mobile telephones, jeans, game consoles and shoes are products that have a significant *coolness* status among young people. While banks, temp agencies, travel agencies and coffee and tea brands have little appeal to young people's imagination.

However, the brands in these industries are not so easily classified. Cool brands are not just found in cool product categories. A brand such as Tic Tac, from the mint sector, with little 'cool potential', received no less a score of 7.5 of 10 for *coolness*.

The formula:

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

Originality, popularity and attractiveness are the factors with the greatest impact on 'coolness'. Whoever wants to be 'cool', therefore better score high in these three dimensions, where 'attractiveness' has the highest impact.

In order for youth to find a brand cool, the brand must be original, popular *and* attractive. Although the 'Cool Sneaking Formula' for products and brands looks slightly different, popularity remains equally important, but the impact of originality on coolness increases, while attractiveness becomes less important. The 'Cool Sneaking Formula' then becomes "Cool = (0.38 x originality) + (0.20 x popularity) + (0.43 x attractiveness) "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, for example. 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

The methodology for determining the coolest brands was also refined. Young people were asked to only judge those brands in different product categories that they knew, with as result a grade up to 10 for *coolness*.

In addition, all brands were tested against the three dimensions in the 'Cool Sneaking Formula' - originality, popularity and attractiveness. "That way we also gained insight in the status of certain less well-known niche brands," explains Veerle Colin, MTV Networks' head of strategy and communication. "Eventually it boils down to weaving a convincing story for your target group as a youth brand and that goes equally for large brands and for niche brands.

This year's award goes to...

For the third consecutive year, youth expert MTV Networks crowns last year's coolest brands. Like previous years, Coca-Cola won the *Overall Coolest Brand Award*. No less than 10% of Belgian youth between the ages of 13 and 29, spontaneously name Coca-Cola as the coolest brand. Runner up as *Overall Coolest Brand* is Nike, just like last year and Esprit, with an honourable third place, strengthened its position compared to last year.

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

- Coolest Mobile Brand
 - 1. iPhone (Apple) → 8.3/10
 - 2. Samsung
 - 3. Nokia

- Coolest Mobile Phone Operator
 - 1. Mobistar → 6.3/10
 - 2. MTV Generation
 - 3. Proximus

- Coolest Soft Drink Brand
 - 1. Coca-Cola → 7.7/10
 - 2. Fanta
 - 3. Ice Tea

- Coolest 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

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