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Trust Capital in Action: Marketing Strategies for Ethical Food Advertising to Children

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Abstract

Food advertising directed at children has become an increasingly important ethical and marketing concern because young consumers are particularly susceptible to persuasive communication and may have limited ability to critically evaluate commercial messages. In this context, trust represents an important form of organizational capital that can influence parental perceptions, consumer loyalty, brand reputation, and long-term business sustainability. This study examines marketing strategies for ethical food advertising to children, with particular emphasis on building and maintaining trust among children, parents, educators, and other stakeholders. The study explores responsible advertising practices involving truthful nutritional information, age-appropriate communication, transparent product claims, responsible use of characters and digital influencers, and avoidance of manipulative techniques. It further examines how companies can use educational content, positive health messages, clear labelling, and socially responsible campaigns to create meaningful consumer relationships without exploiting children's vulnerabilities. The study also considers the growing role of digital platforms, personalized advertising, social media, and interactive marketing in reaching young audiences, highlighting associated concerns regarding data privacy, behavioural targeting, and excessive consumption of unhealthy foods. Ethical advertising requires organizations to balance commercial objectives with children's health, well-being, autonomy, and right to accurate information. The study argues that trust capital can be strengthened when food companies adopt transparent, child-sensitive, and socially responsible marketing policies supported by effective self-regulation and appropriate legal standards. Responsible advertising can not only reduce potential harm to children but also enhance brand credibility and long-term consumer relationships. The study concludes that integrating ethical principles into food marketing strategies is essential for creating a trustworthy and sustainable advertising ecosystem.

Keywords: Ethical Food Advertising, Children, Trust Capital, Marketing Ethics, Consumer Behaviour, Child Protection, Food Marketing, Brand Trust, Digital Advertising, Corporate Social Responsibility.