

Module 9: Marketing Trends

Lesson 1 - Marketing Trends

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will explore current marketing trends.

OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the concept of an industry trend.
2. Explain why it is important for businesses to monitor and track industry trends.
3. Recognize how seasonality impacts the promotion and sales of certain products and services.
4. Identify examples of current marketing trends.

KEY TERMS

Brand Collaboration
Experiential Marketing
Industry Trends
Nostalgia Marketing
Pop-Up
Seasonality
Sensory Marketing

This Lesson Bundle Includes:

- Marketing Trends - Lesson Outline
- Marketing Trends - Presentation Slides
- Industry Application - Related Links
- Student Activity - Pop-up stores

Lesson 1 - Marketing Trends



DISCUSSION

- When do Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales occur?
- Why do you think so many brands are interested in the metaverse?
- How many brands have you seen collaborating with one another or launching their own merchandise collections?
- Why are there so many pumpkin spice products on the market in September?

WHAT IS AN INDUSTRY TREND?

Industry trends are patterns that occur within a specific industry. These patterns could relate to pricing, costs, consumer behavior, manufacturing, promotions/sales strategies, distribution channels, or any function of marketing. Trends are constantly shifting, making it critical for businesses and brands to effectively track and monitor them.

Shifts in industry trends include:

- Customer buying patterns
- Consumer preferences / distastes
- Effective marketing techniques (product placement for example)
- Product and/or service modifications
- New technology
- Efficient communication tools

How do businesses and brands effectively track industry trends?

- Monitoring news and social media feeds
- Reading trade or business magazines, journals, websites, or newsletters
- Attending trade shows, conventions, and other industry-related events
- Studying market research
- Observing the activity of competitors

Why is it important for businesses and brands to monitor industry trends?

Marketing professionals evaluate trends that fit their respective marketing plans and implement changes accordingly. Trends impact a business's ability to generate revenue, and monitoring shifts in consumer preferences and behaviors provides the insight companies rely on to develop effective marketing strategies.

Current business and marketing trends:

- Diversity and Inclusion
- Branded merchandise collections
- Brand collaborations
- Brand rivalries playing out on social media
- Nostalgia marketing
- Sensory marketing
- Experiential marketing



Diversity and Inclusion

More and more brands are shifting a marketing focus toward diversity and inclusion. As America's population becomes more diverse (according to the latest Census data, [42%](#) of the population is made up of people with multicultural backgrounds), brands recognize the consumer demand for seeing themselves reflected in marketing campaigns and doing their part to make the world a better place. Including people of all ages, abilities, genders, ethnicities, and other demographic groups in advertisements is important to consumers, and businesses and brands are responding accordingly. When businesses and brands make diversity and inclusion a priority, consumers will respond. For example, a recent [Deloitte](#) survey suggests that 57% of consumers are more loyal to brands that commit to addressing social injustices.

Examples of diversity and inclusion in marketing:

- Instagram introduced a new typeface in 2022 designed to make content more accessible and legible in different languages, including Arabic, Japanese, and Thai. According to Instagram (via the company [blog](#)), the effort was “designed to embrace continued evolution to help us create more immersive and inclusive experiences for our community.”
- In 2022, Google [announced](#) a partnership with Harvard professor Dr. Ellis Monk, an expert in evaluating how skin tone and colorism impact people's lives, to use artificial intelligence to help create more inclusive experiences for consumers with a variety of skin tones
- Ben & Jerry's has long been associated with a commitment to diversity and inclusion, and its website clearly communicates those [values](#) and goals for driving racial equity throughout the company.

However, it is a strategy that has not always yielded positive results. In 2023, some of the biggest brands in the United States experienced significant backlash as the result of inclusive marketing initiatives, including Bud Light who saw sales decline significantly, and Target, who saw its popularity hit its lowest point in company history.

Branded Merchandise

Branded merchandise collections have been all the rage. Especially popular among fast-food restaurants, brands have been releasing a variety of merchandise swag in limited quantities with more and more frequency. It isn't about generating revenue through merchandise sales, however, but rather a unique marketing strategy to engage consumers and build loyalty. From cowboy boots ([from Whataburger](#)) to bologna face masks ([Oscar Mayer](#)), brands have enjoyed tremendous success capturing consumer attention with the release of branded merchandise collections. More often than not, these merchandise collections sell out quickly and are only offered in limited quantities and for a limited period of time.

Examples of Branded Merchandise:

- From Arby's [online store](#), a “Beefy Aloha Swimsuit” collection
 - The Arby's [store](#) description: “The swimsuit you never knew you wanted... until you saw it just now and realized you actually NEED it. This one-piece is sizzling and it features a tropical print showcasing our famous Beef 'n Cheddar sandwich. For optimal vibes, pair it with our Beefy Aloha Trunks, Bucket Hat, Shirt, and Flip Flops.”
- Pizza Hut's “Tastewear” merchandise collection
 - Pizza Hut's limited-time streetwear collection [featured](#) items like a tracksuit, slides, pizza-shaped jewelry, and red party cups
- [Chick-fil-A](#) launching its first-ever merchandise collection last year
 - The initial launch featured apparel, accessories, home goods, and more, followed by a [limited-edition collection](#) of apparel with themes featuring the brand's sauces like sweet & spicy sriracha, honey mustard, Chick-fil-A's original sauce, zesty buffalo, barbecue, garden herb ranch and Polynesian sauce

Brand Collaborations

In addition to launching their own merchandise, many brands have recently joined forces to amplify their marketing efforts with brand collaborations. Essentially a form of co-branding, **brand collaboration** occurs when two or more businesses partner to produce a product or service in which both parties mutually benefit. Brand collaborations are especially popular with footwear brands, but also with consumer goods like snacks, cereals, and sodas.



Example, Pepperidge Farm has partnered with several brands to introduce a variety of Goldfish Cracker co-branded products:

- Limited Edition Pumpkin Spice Graham crackers collab with [Dunkin'](#)
- Goldfish Limited Edition [Old Bay](#) seasoned crackers
- Limited Edition [Frank's RedHot](#) flavored crackers
- Jalapeno Popper Goldfish Pants collab with [Jnco](#)



Brand Rivalries Playing Out On Social Media

Quite the opposite of collaboration, sometimes brands go after rival brands as part of an advertising campaign. In one of the most iconic advertising campaigns in marketing history, Apple ran a [“Get A Mac”](#) advertising campaign from 2006 to 2009. During that span, the company ran a total of 66 different ads, each highlighting purported weaknesses of PCs when compared to Macs while positioning the Mac as a much cooler product. In 2008, Microsoft responded by investing \$300 million in an ad campaign declaring itself to be a much more diverse group of consumers, according to [Slate](#).

More recently, Google launched a marketing campaign calling on Apple to fix issues that exist between customers using iPhone and Android devices to text each other. The #GetTheMessage campaign included the launch of a [website](#) and an out-of-home campaign while the brand publicly pressured Apple to fix the issue by encouraging consumers to call out Apple on social media.

However, much of the competitive sparring we see today is played out on social media. Brands throw shade, roast, and troll rival brands in playful social media marketing back-and-forths to generate publicity.

Brand Rivalry Example:

- At the peak of the [chicken sandwich wars](#) in 2019, popular fast-food chains like Popeye's, Chick-fil-A, and Wendy's took shots at one another on social media. Even Boston Market joined in, using the conversation as an opportunity to promote its popular mac & cheese dish by [tweeting](#) “Customer: Can I get something like Boston Market mac & cheese but mediocre? Other guys: My pleasure.”
- On “National Roast Day” in 2022, Wendy's promoted its app by offering free medium fries with any purchase by declaring on Twitter, “gotta do something with all this salt”, then proceeded to roast a host of other brands like Oreo, Monster Energy, and even the [Today Show](#).



Nostalgia Marketing

Nostalgia marketing is a strategy used by marketers to tap into ideas and pop culture references that evoke positive emotions and happy memories from previous decades. The concept has recently gained a lot of traction with brands.

For example, Pizza Hut **launched** its “Newstalgia” campaign to inspire customers with retro marketing. The promotion included:

- The revival of an old menu item with the reintroduction of ‘The Edge’, a thin-crust pizza packed with toppings loaded edge-to-edge, covering the entire pie.
- A limited-edition ‘Pac-Man’ themed box which featured an augmented reality game and sweepstakes that provided customers with a chance to win a custom-made Pac-Man game cabinet.



Sensory Marketing

Sensory marketing aims to connect with consumers through some combination of the traditional five human senses. The concept is a strategy where the primary goal of an advertisement is to incorporate a unique means of appealing to a consumer’s sense of hearing, taste, touch, or smell rather than relying on the consumer to just see or hear an ad through traditional channels.

Sensory marketing example:

- Tostitos introduced a “sonic logo” in 2022 that mimicked the sound made with the cracking of chips and tapping of salsa jars, which 64% of [consumers surveyed](#) found the sound to be fun while 64% of consumers 18 to 34 years old thought the sound “embodied the brand”.
- [KFC](#) has offered fried chicken-scented fire logs, [Hormel](#) introduced holiday wrapping paper that smelled like bacon, and [Panda Express](#) once released a candle featuring the scent of one of its most popular dishes, Sesame Honey Chicken.

Experiential Marketing

Experiential marketing is a strategy that directly engages consumers in a way that they participate in a branded experience. This could include pop-up stores, experiences offered at spectator events, or virtual and augmented reality experiences where consumers are provided opportunities to interact with the brand in a virtual “hands-on” manner. Because it has proven to be an effective means of engaging consumers, experiential marketing is growing at a significant rate. In fact, 75% of respondents to one recent [survey](#) suggest that experiential has proven to be the most successful tactic of their brand’s various marketing strategies.

A **pop-up** refers to the concept of opening a short-term sales space, often launched as a promotional tool to create awareness and build interest for new products. Pop-ups are typically only open from a few days to several months and provide opportunities for consumers to interact physically with a product and provide a less expensive alternative to retail because a business does not commit to a long-term lease. According to the [American Marketing Association](#), the pop-up concept is now estimated to be a \$50 billion industry.

Pop-up examples:

- [Wendy’s](#) launched a “Rick and Morty” themed pop-up in connection with its partnership with the popular animated show on Adult Swim at a drive-thru in California. The experience featured characters from the popular show, limited-edition “Rick and Morty” branded menu items, and Wendy’s mascot received a makeover tied to the show.
- Levi’s celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2023 with the launch of its “[501 Experience](#)” retail pop-up in its hometown of San Francisco where it originally introduced its line of 501 jeans. The event included a free concert, art, and an exhibit showcasing jeans from all over the world along with historic products like the oldest pair of Levi’s jeans from the 1870s.

Another example of experiential marketing:

MTN DEW opened the [MTN DEW Outpost](#) for nine days in Tennessee (where the beverage’s original formula was created), which encouraged visitors to participate in a variety of DEW-branded adventures and activities, along with opportunities for consumers to sample six different unreleased MTN DEW flavors.



Seasonality Impact on Business

Seasons impact different industries in different ways. For example, movie theaters traditionally see a significant spike at the box office on Memorial Day weekend, the 4th of July weekend, and Christmas. This is why you see so many blockbuster films released during those holidays.

Industry Seasonality Examples:

- Fitness industry: Gym memberships and fitness equipment see a sales spike in January when consumers make New Year's resolutions and re-commit to getting back in shape
- Sunscreen and swimwear: As consumers plan beach and lake vacations among other plans, sales of sunscreen, swimwear, and flip flops rise during June and July
- Ice cream: Sales of ice cream slip in certain parts of the United States during the winter months when temperatures drop into the single digits
- Pumpkin spice: Every year in the fall, businesses introduce a variety of pumpkin spice products

Seasonality in Marketing Example:

- [Campbell's Soup](#) partnered with CAMP to help usher in the winter season by introducing two limited-edition candles that featured Tomato Soup and Grilled Cheese with Chicken Noodle Soup scents, which also included a "Winter Warmup Guide."



KEY TAKEAWAY

Industry trends are patterns that occur within a specific industry. These patterns could relate to pricing, costs, consumer behavior, manufacturing, promotions/sales strategies, distribution channels, or any function of marketing. Trends are constantly shifting, making it critical for businesses and brands to effectively track and monitor them.



INDUSTRY APPLICATION

Connect your classroom with industry examples by reviewing the following news stories::

Inclusive Marketing

- [How the Bud Light boycott shows brands at a crossroads: Use their voice, or shut up?](#)
- [Why is Target pulling some Pride merch? The retailer's response to hostile backlash, explained](#)
- [Starbucks strike: Union says workers at over 150 stores to protest over alleged Pride decor bans](#)
- [Brands extend inclusive marketing efforts beyond Black History Month](#)

Brand Rivalries on Social - [Wendy's went on an epic roasting spree on Twitter](#)

Branded Merchandise Trend

- [KFC's Shady Rays Sunglasses Show Fast Food Promos Don't Have to be Cheap-Looking](#)
- [7-Eleven, Inc. Releases Custom Birthday Merch for Upcoming 96th Birthday Bash](#)
- [White Castle Introduces New "Night Castle" Merchandise and Packaging to Celebrate Its Reputation as a Late-Night Hot Spot](#)
- [UPS Debuts Branded Streetwear and Merchandise Collection at New York Fashion Week](#)

Brand Collaboration

- [Vans Reunites With Crayola For Colorful Footwear and Apparel](#)
- [J.C. Penney, Sports Illustrated unveil swimwear collections](#)
- [Forget the Spoon: New Apple Jacks® Pop-Tarts® Takes Cereal Experience On the Go](#)
- [Crocs Drops Minecraft Collection](#)
- [Dr. Pepper and Blue Bell team up to create brand-new ice cream flavor](#)

Experiential Marketing - [Pickleball, virtual golf, skydiving, craft beer: How malls are luring shoppers](#)

Industry Trends

- [Summer Food Fashion Serves Up Some Hot Looks](#)
- [Outdoor Industry Marketing Trends of the Future](#)
- [Petco Leans Into The Pet Humanization Trend With New Frozen Meals For Dogs](#)

Industry Trends - [Having a hard time getting free coffee on your birthday? It's true: Companies are pulling back on customer rewards programs](#)

Nostalgia Marketing - [How Bazooka Gum uses nostalgia to drive sweet success](#)

Nostalgia Marketing

- [Taco Bell revives coin drop game from aughts to boost mobile app](#)
- [Hitting rewind: 7 pieces of nostalgic marketing that helped consumers unplug](#)
- [The Xbox Walkman Is a Past-Meets-Present Promotional Campaign](#)
- [Evoking Nostalgia With Samsonite's Latest Campaign](#)
- [How innovation and nostalgia are working for Pizza Hut](#)
- [The Taco Bell X Paris Hilton Collab Is The Height Of Millennial Nostalgia](#)
- [From plaid to Prada backpacks, see the '90s fashion that's making its museum debut](#)

Seasonal Marketing

- [Pumpkin spice season starting earlier than ever](#)
- [Dress As Your Favorite MTN DEW Flavor With Spirit Halloween's Mountain Dew Costume Collection](#)
- [Buddy the Elf spaghetti meal kits available from Hello Fresh for the Holidays](#)
- [Walmart Launches Month-long Walmart+ Giveaway To Celebrate New Moms in Time for Mother's Day](#)
- [TAZO Iced Tea and Deepti Vempati Team Up to Launch Summer Bucket List of Spontaneous Adventures for Every Mood, Featuring Iced Tea Giveaway and Exciting Summer Prizes](#)

Sensory Marketing - [Marriott Bonvoy Collaborates with Dutch Electronic Duo Parallele to Uncover The Power of Travel Through Sound](#)

Trends to Watch - [Global Marketing Trends 2023](#)



KEY TERMS DEFINED:

Brand Collaboration: Occurs when two or more businesses partner to produce a product or service in which both parties mutually benefit.

Experiential Marketing: a strategy that directly engages consumers in a way that they participate in a branded experience.

Industry Trends: Patterns that occur within a specific industry relating to pricing, costs, consumer behavior, manufacturing, promotions/sales strategies, distribution channels, or any function of marketing.

Nostalgia Marketing: a strategy used by marketers to tap into ideas and pop culture references that evoke positive emotions and happy memories from previous decades. The concept has recently gained a lot of traction with brands.

Pop-Up: The concept of opening a short-term sales space, often launched as a promotional tool to create awareness and build interest for new products.

Seasonality: seasonality in marketing refers to periods of the calendar year where certain products and services generate higher levels of consumer demand.

Sensory Marketing: a strategy where the primary goal of an advertisement is to incorporate a unique means of appealing to a consumer's sense of hearing, taste, touch, or smell rather than relying on the consumer to just see or hear an ad through traditional channels.

