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<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctor's thesis

Subject	Marketing	Date	27.6.2008
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		Number of pages	162
Title	Celebrity endorsement as form of brand alliance. Case: Jamie Oliver and Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd.		
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Abstract

In the current situation of a maturing celebrity market, the original theories for explaining the persuasive processes behind celebrity endorsement no longer provide a comprehensive view and a new perspective is needed. This thesis investigates the relationship between celebrity endorsement and brand alliances and suggests they have a symbiotic relationship. The context for the study is the growth of celebrity endorsement especially in the United Kingdom. In particular, the phenomenon is explored through the context of a collaboration between one of the largest supermarkets in the United Kingdom, Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd. and celebrity chef Jamie Oliver.

The aim of this research was to find out that if celebrities have become like brands, could celebrity endorsement be considered a brand alliance and if so, what challenges that would pose on celebrity endorsement management. The study consisted of a three-stage research strategy, where the first stage examined the existing literature on celebrity endorsement and brand alliances. Both brand alliance and celebrity endorsement were found to be fundamentally based on the same principles: meaning transfer process, associative learning and associative networks. The findings from the first stage contributed to forming a theoretical framework for celebrity endorsement as brand alliance as well as provided a basis for the second stage, which sought establish the existence of brand alliance like celebrity endorsement, where a reverse meaning transfer would be possible. This was achieved through qualitative content analysis describing the process through which meanings and associations were assigned to and transferred from the brand to the endorser in newspapers. After having established that the celebrity endorsement in question is a brand alliance in character, the third research stage consisted of semi-structured interviews of marketing practitioners involved in this collaboration to explore the practicalities of such a relationship.

The use of celebrities to promote brands is not without risk and one of the biggest risks is ensuring compatibility between collaborators: the right fit between the endorser and the endorsed brand was seen as crucial to the success of the partnership. As a result of the research, a blueprint for celebrity endorser selection is suggested. Furthermore, a managerial tool for Celebrity Endorser Selection Process is presented.

Key words	celebrity endorsement, brand alliance, brand, associations, meaning transfer
Further information	