

MARKETING TO KIDS REPORT:

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"How important is it to talk in a teen's language?"

by Adam Hollander

It is of maximum importance to speak the language of whatever group happens to be your target! Its paramount while marketing to teens to effectively come across as an equal, and that is, equal to them! A Teen will spot a "Posser" (someone phoney, acting, in attempts to fit in), right from the start, and their defense mechanisms will trigger making it very difficult to market to them.

Teens, like every group, have a culture complete with a specialized language, dress, and code of conduct. A word in the adult world may have a completely different connotation to a teen. For example "Bad" means "Good", "Dope" means "Very Good" and there are many other phrases that only teens or someone well versed in teen culture, can understand.

Style and fashion denote what sub-group, within teen culture, a particular individual identifies themselves with. Skaters, Ravers, Jocks, Punks, Hip-Hoppers, and Nerds all have a different look and language that sets them apart. Each sub-group has specific jargon and isoteric speech that it utilizes. These unique characteristics set them apart from other teen groups. It's a major part of their identity.

A marketer that does not take all of these aspects into consideration may run the risk of alienating a group or cause a negative perception of the product or service. The Field Marketers experiences have found that teens identify best with someone who speaks their language, dresses like them, and understands their human condition. Therefore, we believe in hiring and training individuals that represent the target audience. Its one thing training an individual to be well versed

in product knowledge and customer service, it's another teaching them a culture.