Integrated Marketing Communications Plan
Executive Summary

Axe marketing has traditionally been dedicated to young males’ self-esteem, while using the sexual objectification of females in previous campaigns. In 2012, Axe released Anarchy for Her, their first product line dedicated to women. This product line created potential for Axe to extend its target to women instead of catering solely towards men.

Axe Situation Analysis

Unilever is a multinational consumer goods company with many brands in its portfolio. Launched in the later part of the year 2000, Unilever unveiled their new brand, Axe. Axe is described to be more than the average deodorant for it is also a “spray used by young men worldwide to keep them smelling great,” (“Unilever”). According to a PR Newswire article, Axe is considered the leading antiperspirant and deodorant brand for men in most of the 60 countries in which it is sold in (“Unilever”). Axe provides its target audience with a variety of scents to choose from, all of which were developed by Ann Gottlieb, a world-renowned fragrance expert (“Unilever”).

Axe’s main target is young men aged 18 to 24, and through “all-over body efficacy, combined with exceptional fragrances” the brand has proven quite popular with young men globally (“Unilever”). Axe’s success can be attributed to its cutting-edge marketing strategy that, “constantly monitors youth culture’s subtle shifts… to stay hot on the hormonal trail,” (Feifer). It takes into account sociological studies to figure out the male
desires and how they will try to fulfill them. Through an aggressive campaign, Axe has, in a way, promised its users that they will be, “chased down by mobs of nubile women,” (Wasserman). In fact, many of Axe’s advertisements involve women, despite having products catered to specifically just men. It is as if they created the formula of: man plus Axe deodorant equals the lust of women. However, it begs the question on where do women lay in Axe’s fantasy world, and what makes them want to fulfill their desires?

The women’s deodorant market is definitely a competitive one, as seen in the following Economic Environment Analysis. That, however, should not discourage Axe from venturing into a women’s line of deodorant and body sprays. Axe should push a new type of IMC that does not ignore the existence of women with actual desires and motivation.

Unilever holds the market for men’s deodorant at 38.4% in 2015 and 39.9% in 2016, and followed only by Procter and Gamble, which is at 37.6% in 2015 and drops to 37.4% in 2016. Unilever’s top three product lines in the men’s deodorant market are Degree, Axe, and Dove. In regards to Unilever’s 39.9% control of the market, Axe makes up 10.8% of that market share (Romanowski).

In the women’s deodorant market, Procter and Gamble holds majority at 47.4% in 2015 and 45.2% in 2016. Unilever holds 42.8% in 2015 and 45.1% in 2016 (Romanowski). Procter and Gamble’s leading product line in the women’s deodorant market is “Secret” which holds almost all of Proctor and Gamble’s market value. Unilever’s front running product line, “Dove”, is around less than half the market value of “Secret”. These numbers alone show potential market share increases if Axe were to be
marketed towards women. As Unilever holds market majority in the men’s deodorant market place and slightly falls behind in the women’s deodorant market place there is room for growth for Unilever’s Axe in the feminine side of the market.

Axe’s main competitor in regards to body spray is Old Spice. The new release “Anarchy” was Axe’s attempt at adding more sales by adding a new target market: women. Axe currently dominates the men’s body spray category in which they take up about 74% of the market (Newman). Axe reports that it primarily pitches its sales to the age group of 18-24 while only 28% of that group uses body spray (Newman). These age groups are predominantly males who want to feel the extra attractiveness that the scent gives off towards women. Also, 47% of women use body spray, which is definitely worth Axe investing its resources into this new target market (Newman). Old Spice currently has no women specific products; instead, women just like to use the men’s products for their own. With Axe actually making their own specific women’s body spray and body wash, it significantly puts them in the lead compared to the competition.

Axe’s ads have historically targeted younger men, and according to a 2012 article, the core consumer is a male between 20 and 25 years old. The company aims to focus on this main group of men, and adapt to the changing preferences of this age group, rather than appeal to the same men as they age (Feifer). Many of its past campaigns have claimed that Axe will help its consumers attract women. However, in the past year, Axe has attempted to expand its consumer base beyond the stereotypical “ladies’ man” and relied less heavily on sex appeal. Its newest campaign looks to male consumers of all types and urges to “Find Your Magic” through Axe products (Waldman).
Axe and its parent company Unilever face multiple socio-cultural issues in terms of marketing. Today, there are markets that have adopted the gender-neutral route of advertising their products towards males and females, without designated packaging or labeling, claiming each product “embraces fluidity among all gender expressions,” (Binkley). Many of these are fashion or toy companies, but Unilever has the opportunity to deliver products catered towards men and women. Unilever’s Axe already released the Anarchy for Women line in 2012, saying that it was created “to level the playing field and allow females to partake in the sexual objectification game [and] to highlight the sexual tension and absolute chaos created when both parties use Axe body spray” (Fisher). Unilever’s brands may not achieve gender-neutrality, but it has the opportunity to expand its product lines for men and women, even with their brands specifically catered to one demographic.

However, Unilever still face the socio-cultural issues of controversy in conflicting marketing campaigns with its brands, Axe and Dove. Axe is regarded as “the pinnacle of masculinity” (Coleman-Lochner) with the sexual objectification of women in its advertisements. Whereas Dove launched its “Real Beauty” campaign in 2004 with a goal to help women appreciate their natural beauty rather than the media portrayal of beauty. Critics were quick to say the campaign lacked authenticity because Unilever is the same company who owns Slimfast, Fair & Lovely, a skin-whitening cream, and Axe (Bahadur). Unilever needs to be able to find a balance between their conflicting marketing campaigns without sacrificing the “its ideology, which is dedicated to improving quality of life through the provision of hygienic products and therefore enhancing self-esteem” (Said). Once
they find a balance between their advertising campaigns, they will become a unified company with a broad range of diversity and authenticity.

**SWOT Analysis**

Axe is the leading competitor in its target market, and an early mover on the inclusion of female products in its male product based company. While it is in the process of changing its advertising and marketing strategy away from masculinity and sex appeal, it has build its foundation on these ideas, and may take aggressive strategies to deliver a new message. Although a female product has been introduced, Axe can focus more of its marketing efforts on targeting women or producing more gender-neutral products, since there is a large potential for profit in the female product market. When targeting women, Axe may lose some of its core consumers if its credibility as a male brand is lost.

**SWOT Summary**

Axe has relied on masculinity and boosting the male ego, while sexually objectifying women in previous marketing campaigns. However, with their newest “Find Your Magic” campaign and their women’s line, Anarchy for Her, they have shown potential to mature the brand that has “immature” perceptions from its target market. There is potential to expand into the growing market of evolving gender roles and social norms with their Anarchy for Her line. However, they do risk a decline in sales from men’s products if Anarchy for Her succeeds.
### SWOT Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Axe offers products for both men and women, even though their main market caters to men body and hair care. Axe's newest “Find Your Magic” campaign acknowledges different types of men and what makes them different.</td>
<td>Axe has always relied on hyper-masculinity, catering to the male ego and fantasy. Previous marketing campaigns usually relied on sexual objectification of women. The overall perception (by market audience) of the brand is seen as “immature.”</td>
<td>Many companies are focusing on gender-neutrality; Axe can further expand women’s product line and meet the wants of women who enjoyed the Anarchy for Her line. Societal norms and gender roles are evolving leaving room for brands to expand on their target markets with different product lines or marketing campaigns.</td>
<td>P&amp;G currently has the most market share for women’s deodorant. Unilever’s Dove also creates competition for the women’s body care market. There is risk in decline in sales from the male market if Axe Anarchy for Her product line succeeds in marketing objectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objectives

Analyzing the position Axe has in their current market, we have designed methods to help the brand expand into the female market. They already have a product dedicated to women, Anarchy for Her: Daily Fragrance, so it would not be as hard for Axe to break into the woman’s body care market. However, Axe is owned by the same company as one of the leading women’s body care lines, Dove.

Best Agency aims to reach the following objectives with this campaign:

1. Raise awareness of Axe Anarchy for Her line among target female consumers by increasing sales by 90%.

   Many female consumers know Axe to be a male brand, and since there is currently only one fragrance for women, the brand may not come to mind for most women. Best Agency hopes to grab the attention of female consumers to increase trial and sales. Axe has seen success with the launch of the Anarchy line, with $4 million in sales on their gift packs over a year period from 2015 to 2016 (Nanninga, 2016).

2. Increase preference for Axe over other female brands by 25%.

   Best Agency aims to decrease any negative or indifferent attitudes from women about the Axe brand through a message that no longer objectifies them, but empowers them, Best Agency hopes this campaign will increase the frequency of trial among women and ultimately gain repeat consumers.

3. Increase trial of Axe Anarchy for Her products by 20%.

   By changing the views of female consumers about the Axe brand and increasing
preference for Axe Anarchy products, the goal of this campaign is to increase the trial of Axe Anarchy to yield higher use and gain more loyal female consumers.

**Target Audience**

Best Agency aims to gain more female Axe consumers. With the release of the Axe Anarchy for Her line, Axe has attempted to expand their market share, but there is greater potential for growth among this market with a new communication strategy.

According to the Mintel report “Body Care and Deodorant,” women are more likely than men to use body care products regularly, and also change products seasonally (Romanowski). Therefore, gaining female consumers can ultimately lead to higher profits for Axe. Consumers aged 18-34 have higher interest in a variety of product formats, which makes them an important segment in the market (Romanowski). However, Best Agency has decided to focus primarily on the age group that Axe already targets for men, ages 18-24, college students and young professionals in particular. Ultimately, continuing the current marketing efforts towards this segment while implementing a marketing campaign focused towards females of this same age group.

Our segmentation will be based on behavior and demographic. We feel that AXE Anarchy for her could be very successful amongst young independent females, ultimately resulting in a more balanced image and result for the AXE brand.
AXE Anarchy for Her Positioning Map

Vertical Axis: Mature vs. Young

Horizontal Axis: The Delicate Woman vs. The Independent Woman

Brands:
- Dove
- Suave
- Degree
- AXE

The Delicate Woman
- Suave
- Degree

The Independent Woman
- AXE

Mature

Young
Positioning Strategy

Axe currently is marketed to young adult/adolescent males. Best Agency plans to support continuing the marketing efforts to the target market that Axe already has, while adjusting to support the Anarchy for Her product line and move Axe more into a centered location between men and women. The goal of Best Agency is to change the way the average female consumer thinks of Axe. Rather than being pushed away from the product due to past ad campaigns, our goal is to create a new image for the brand that will inspire individualism, in this case of females.

This campaign aims to create a feeling around the Axe Anarchy for Her products that supports independence in females. This feeling will hopefully lead to the possibility of diversifying the Anarchy for Her product line and create more of a balance among consumers that Axe makes products for, ultimately resulting in the new brand positioning. In reference to the second positioning map, Best Agency defines, “The Delicate Woman,” as the stereotypically feminine woman, while the, “Independent Woman,” is defined as the new age woman who is breaking the gender molds by being sophisticated and freethinking. As one can see in the second map, the market is currently lacking a women’s deodorant brand who is marketed towards younger, independent women, and would make sense for Axe Anarchy for Her to position itself in.
Marketing Communication Mix

The core message that Axe will send to its target audience is that using Axe helps express individuality for women, not just men, who have always been the target consumer. Furthermore, the message is that Axe Anarchy for Her is a product for confident women that can be used for every part of their lives. Whether these young millennial women are headed to work or a night out on the town with their friends, Axe Anarchy for Her is the perfect product for any situation.

A promotional mix of digital media and traditional media will be used to communicate the message to the target audience, focusing heavily on social media marketing, such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Print media, specifically ads in magazines, and television advertisements will also be utilized to create a varied promotional mix.

The professional millennial woman is more adept to digital media and perceptive to social networking advertisements. They are more likely to share ads, rely on suggestions and promotions of favorite bloggers, and gain general brand and product knowledge through the Internet before making a purchase decision.

Social media will be the main online channel used to promote the campaign ads, specifically focusing on YouTube commercials. The majority of the campaign will be advertised through YouTube, while being shared on Axe’s Facebook and Twitter. Traditional media, such as the magazine print ads and the television ads, will be used to broaden the audience awareness over different media channels.
The use of these media channels will be effective because it will reach the target market in a more efficient manner. With its emphasis on the use of social media, the target market will be able to respond faster to the brand, with suggestions, comments, and concerns that will help build the brand more so. As seen on the Axe website, many reviews for the existing Anarchy for Her are positive; however, many women have repeatedly commented on wanting the line extended to more products. By using the various platforms of advertisements, the campaign will cater specifically to the wants and needs of the target audience.

The media mix will play on the theory of self-paced media versus externally paced media. The campaign will focus more on the self-paced media forms (i.e. the Internet and print advertisements), allowing the audience to absorb the message and take in the different aspects of the campaign. This makes sense for a brand like Axe, who caters to the younger demographic. The younger age group focused here tend to gather their information more so from the Internet, rather than externally paced media such as TV. These media forms will be digitally utilized through YouTube commercials, Facebook advertisements, and blog posts. Magazines catered towards a younger millennial audience, such as GQ or Cosmopolitan, will feature the print advertisements for the campaign.

In the past, Axe has not utilized endorsements or spokespeople to promote the brand, and Best Agency plans to stay consistent with the brand message which aims to be relatable to the average consumer. However, when targeting Millennial women, Axe can reach more consumers through influential Millennials like beauty or fitness vloggers.
Reviews in general are important to Millennial consumers: 77% of Millennials trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation from friends or family (Macke). Many of these vloggers post review videos for products they use, and Axe can sponsor these vloggers to gain a greater reach. Bethany Mota, a popular vlogger, has over 10 million followers on YouTube and her videos often receive at least a million views each. Zoe Sugg, or “Zoella,” as she is known on YouTube, has over 11 million followers on the site and could be the perfect spokesperson for the brand as well. Axe may want to use YouTube ads that play during these videos more frequently, but to have Zoe promote a product during one of her videos, it could cost as much as 20,000 euros (Fox).

Best Agency plans to run the campaign for Axe for a period of two years. Due to the little awareness that the Anarchy for Her product line has. A rebranding of Axe will take some time and through this it is our intention to highlight the products Axe also has for women. In order to know if the campaign is successful we will measure it multiple ways. First, we will keep a running sales total of the product. Sales cannot be the only source to measure effectiveness, but they can certainly serve as a means to track a certain amount of progress. Secondly, Best Agency intends on monitoring the success of the campaign through click tracking sources. Since a majority of the ads run will be online, we can measure the number of people the ads reach and the number of people it engages. Best Agency will also use simple surveys to understand if consumers are aware of Axe Anarchy for Her and their feelings about it.

Since the campaign will be running for a period of two years, we plan on having quarterly benchmark check-ups on what is working and what might need to be adjusted
within the campaign. In each of these check-ups, we intend to take all of the above
mentioned factors into account (i.e. product sales and awareness) from which we will be
able to make changes and strengthen the ad throughout the campaign.
Works Cited


Extra Research Links

**How AXE became the Top-Selling Deodorant by Targeting Nerdy Losers**
by Business Insider

**How Axe Found Its (Marketing) Magic**
by Noah Waldman of contently.com

**Ad of the Day: Axe Gets Inclusive in a Remarkable Ad That's Really Pretty Magical**
by AdWeek

**Battle of The Brands: Old Spice vs. AXE**
by Jack Neff of AdAge.com

**As Zoella moves into a £1 million mansion, we reveal just how much money she’s REALLY making**
by Joshua Fox of CelebsNow.com

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**Figure 15: MULO sales of select men's deodorant, Unilever and P&G, rolling 52-weeks 2015 and 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>52-weeks ending Feb. 22, 2015</th>
<th>Market share</th>
<th>52-weeks ending Feb. 21, 2016</th>
<th>Market share</th>
<th>Sales change 2015-16</th>
<th>Share change 2015-16</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unilever</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>274.4</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>275.9</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Axe</strong></td>
<td>136.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>147.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>119.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>502.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>542.9</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Procter &amp;</td>
<td>Old</td>
<td>388.6</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>404.5</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gamble</td>
<td>Spice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gillette</td>
<td>103.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>103.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
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Note: data may not equal totals due to rounding

The above figures are based on MULO sales data from Information Resources, Inc., InfoScan Reviews. MULO is defined as Multi Outlet, representative of the following channels: total US Grocery, Mass, Total US Drug, Total Walmart, Dollar, Military, and Club.

Mintel Academic Marketing Research [http://academic.mintel.com/display/776970/?highlight=hit1](http://academic.mintel.com/display/776970/?highlight=hit1)
NEW AXE ANARCHY
FOR HIM + FOR HER
UNLEASH THE CHAOS
Axe Anarchy for Him and Her Daily Fragrance Print Ad

Advertisement for Axe Anarchy for Her shower gel

BE REBELLIOUS. AXE ANARCHY FOR HER.
When you were a kid, you didn’t follow rules. And you still don’t. You’re an Axe Girl and you always have been. When you wash with Anarchy for Her Shower Gel, the exciting blend of blackcurrant and jasmine will invigorate you, prepping you for another day of marching to your own drummer. Break the rules with Anarchy for Her.
Here's to the Girl Bosses
Here’s to the Girl Bosses
BREAK THE DELICATE MOLD

Original Axe Anarchy for Her Print Ad by Best Agency