MIM in Digital Marketing Admissions Case Study:
Influencer and Brand Marketing Ethics

Introduction:

In the modern era, the intersection of influencers and brand marketing has given rise to a number of ethical concerns that warrant careful consideration. Some of the major issues revolve around transparency and authenticity. Influencers often can often blur the lines between genuine content and sponsored promotions. This can leave their followers in a state of uncertainty regarding the motivations behind their content and their honest opinions on products, brands, or even social issues. This lack of transparency can erode trust and mislead consumers, as they may be unaware of the financial incentives driving influencers' endorsements.

Another concern lies in the potential exploitation of vulnerable demographics, such as children and teenagers who are more susceptible to the influence of social media. Brands targeting these demographics through influencers can raise questions about the ethical responsibility of both parties, particularly in regards to promoting products that may have adverse effects on physical or mental well-being. Additionally, both brands and influencers have become more prominent players in the sociopolitical realm. It has become commonplace for influencers and brands to take stances on sensitive topics and current events. Depending on the cause and the tactics used by influencers and brands, this can quickly become an ethical concern.

Instructions:

In 2017, world-famous influencer and member of the Kardashian/Jenner family Kendall Jenner appeared in a Pepsi commercial titled "Live For Now". This advertisement was released while the United States was in the midst of nationwide protests against police brutality collectively known as the Black Lives Matter movement. The advertisement faced strong backlash online and was promptly removed from circulation by Pepsi.

Your task for this case study is to examine why Pepsi received so much backlash for this advertisement and assess the ethical concerns surrounding influencer and brand marketing from a broader perspective. This will be accomplished by completing the following tasks:

1. Read the following articles:
   a. [Pepsi Pulls Ad Accused of Trivializing Black Lives Matter](#)
   b. [Pepsico & Kendall Jenner's Controversial Commercial](#)
   c. [Influencer Marketing Gone Wrong: Why Pepsi's Ad Featuring Kendall Jenner Missed The Mark](#)
   d. [How To Draw The Line On Unethical Marketing](#)

2. Watch the following video:
   a. ["Live For Now" Pepsi Ad](#)

3. Conduct some background research on marketing ethics and deceptive marketing practices.

4. Write a 1-2 page paper which answers the following questions:
   a. Based on the articles, video, and your research, what are the main issues with the "Live For Now" Pepsi commercial? Why did Pepsi and Kendall Jenner face so much backlash for this advertisement?
   b. Based on the articles, video, and your research, what are the main deceptive marketing tactics Pepsi attempted to use in this advertisement?
   c. If you were the head of marketing at Pepsi, how would you respond to the Black Lives Matter movement? Would you generate marketing material around the movement? Why or why not?
   d. If you were a part of the public relations team at Pepsi, how would you help restore a positive brand image following the controversy created by this advertisement? What steps would you take specifically?

Artificial Intelligence Disclaimer:

You are permitted to use whatever AI productivity tools you desire to assist with this case study. The only requirement is that they properly cite the use of AI in their paper. The guidelines to do so are as follows:

1. Include a disclaimer at the end of the citation section which reads: "This project was completed with the assistance of artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence was used to help write the following sections/pages:"
2. Include what sections/pages of the paper were written with the help of AI in this disclaimer.

Please note that we are assessing your critical thinking skills while you complete this case study, not how well you can prompt A.I. While you are permitted to use it as an assistant, please make sure that the answers are coming from your analysis of the articles and video.