Business and the Media

Business firms today use a wide variety of new and old media—from the World Wide Web, blogs, and podcasts, to television, DVDs, CDs, radio, newspapers, billboards, movies, and books—to communicate with stakeholders, sell products or services, and enhance their image. As business acquires greater power through its use of the media, it also must accept greater ethical and social responsibility when wielding this power. Business must be acutely aware of the impact it may have on its stakeholders when administering a public relations or crisis management plan. It must avoid deceptive advertising and show special concern when targeting vulnerable populations such as youths. The media, as an industry, also must honor its ethical and social responsibilities to the public. It must be sensitive to maintaining decency, reflecting diversity and equality, and portraying organizations and issues in a fair and balanced way.

This chapter focuses on these key learning objectives:

- Understanding the responsibilities of business's public relations managers as they interact with various stakeholders.
- Analyzing how businesses can most effectively manage a crisis situation.
- Evaluating when advertising is deceptive or unnecessarily exposes young people to indecency and violence.
- Knowing how governments around the world have regulated advertising, especially the tobacco industry.
- Ensuring that gender and racial diversity are appropriately reflected in the media.

The annual National Football League Super Bowl generates some of the largest audiences in the history of television, and naturally many companies wish to reach these viewers. However, DaimlerChrysler decided to withdraw company sponsorship of the "Lingerie Bowl," a pay-per-view event scheduled to air during halftime of the 2003 Super Bowl. The Lingerie Bowl was to show a seven-on-seven tackle football game between female models wearing only Victoria's Secret-brand bras and panties. Dodge, a Daimler- Chrysler subsidiary, would have its ram logo on the bras worn by the players. A Dodge spokesperson explained, "We don't think it's a good depiction of our brand. It's not an association we feel comfortable with, for obvious reasons."

A group of 20 girls, ages 13 to 16, launched a "girlcott" against Abercrombie & Fitch's new line of T-shirts in 2005. The girls found the slogans on the shirts to be offensive, such as "Blondes are adored, brunettes are ignored" and "Who needs brains when you have these?" What started out as a local western Pennsylvania concern among a small group of girls became a national issue when NBC's "Today Show," Fox Network's "Hannity & Colmes," and CNN began to feature this protest on its shows. Just a few days after the "girlcott" was launched, Abercrombie & Fitch announced that it was pulling the T-shirts from the shelves. The company released the following statement: "We recognize that the shirts in question, while meant to be humorous, might be troubling to some."

Chi-Chi's, a Mexican restaurant chain, faced a major crisis when 600 people were sickened by hepatitis A, and three died, after eating in one of its outlets. The cause was unsanitary preparation of green onions. Although the company acted quickly to remedy the food preparation problem, it failed to warn customers of the health situation until days after the discovery and repeatedly cut short its meetings with the press. The company argued that it took time to verify the cause of the outbreak and did not want to speak out prematurely. Experts pointed to the company's handling of the situation as "a textbook case in how not to respond to a crisis." One victim complained, "I'm very disappointed in Chi-Chi's. They haven't even as much as apologized to the poor people who are sick."[1]

The challenges confronting businesses when interacting with the media are often complex and fraught with ethical and social issues. *Did DaimlerChrysler demonstrate ethical responsibility by refusing to sponsor the Lingerie Bowl? Did it matter that this would have been a pay-per-view event, thus less likely to be viewed by children watching the Super Bowl's halftime show? Was Abercrombie & Fitch insensitive to the message being portrayed on its line of T-shirts? Did Abercrombie & Fitch act responsibly by pulling the shirts in question once challenged by a small group of potential consumers? How could Chi-Chi's have better handled its health crisis? How can a company be completely open and honest with the public and the media when it is unsure of its information?*

The **media** is defined as a means of communication that widely reaches and influences people. It comprises many channels, including television, radio, books, magazines, and the Internet, and uses multiple technologies—many of them rapidly evolving, as described in Chapter 13. Business utilizes various media channels to educate and interact with its stakeholders through public relations announcements, crisis management efforts, and advertisements. Complicating this relationship is the fact that the media is both a stakeholder of business, as well as a profit-making enterprise in its own right, with its own stakeholders. This chapter will explore the complex relationship of business and the media, and then take up some key issues involving the social and ethical challenges facing the media industry itself.

Public Relations

Designing and managing an effective **public relations** program is fundamental to any organization's relationship with the media. A good public relations program sends a constant stream of information from the company to the public and opens the door to dialogue with stakeholders whose lives are affected by company operations. As one group of scholars has written, its essential role "appears to be that of a *window out* of the corporation through which management can perceive, monitor, and understand external change, and simultaneously, a *window in* through which society can influence corporate policy and practice. This boundary-spanning role primarily involves the flow of information to and from the organization."[2]

A public relations program should be proactive, not reactive. Channels of communication with the media should be established on a continuing basis, not just after a problem has arisen. Once this step has been taken, a company can view the media as a positive force that can help the company communicate with the public. Some companies have been reactive, such as Abercrombie & Fitch when facing the "girlcott" of its clothing line or Chi-Chi's openness with the media during its health crisis. However, a more proactive strategy was taken by DaimlerChrysler regarding the Lingerie Bowl.

One purpose of the public relations function is to promote a positive image for the firm in the media. Businesses saw opportunities for good work and boosting their public image when natural disasters devastated their country, as shown by firms responding to aid the victims of Hurricane Katrina, discussed in Chapter 3, and as shown in the following example.

> Venezuelan companies responded to the need for emergency efforts in their country just before Christmas 1999 when large portions of the country were ravaged by floods and landslides. The nation's two leading newspapers collected, organized, and distributed online information about lost relatives, emergency aid, and homeless shelters. At one point, the Venezuelan Civil Defense ministry had the

names of 1,400 flood refugees, while the newspapers had several thousand names and status reports on these people located on the newspaper's Web sites.[3]

When businesses, or industries, face a crisis in how they are perceived by the public, they may be challenged to respond, as did the pharmaceutical industry in 2005. Effective responses often involve addressing the substantive concerns that gave rise to the crisis.

Suffering from a failing public image caused by several consumer lawsuits against Merck, the U.S. pharmaceutical industry launched a campaign to - rehabilitate its image. Drug companies curbed claims made in consumer - advertisements, expanded access to low-cost drugs for the poor and uninsured, and provided more open disclosure of clinical trial data for new drugs. The industry endorsed the PhRMA Guiding Principles, a code of ethical conduct governing direct-to-consumer advertisements of prescription medicines. The industry's trade association set up the Partnership for Prescription Assistance, which included a Web site and hotline staffed by 450 operators to assist - consumers enrolling in discount drug programs. Johnson & Johnson, long considered a socially responsible leader in the industry, increased three-fold its advertisement budget focusing on corporate image or general information on diseases, instead of promoting a specific drug.[4]

[illegible]

[illegible][5]

International Public Relations

Public relations strategies increasingly assume a global or international focus, since interactions with stakeholders through the media cross national boundaries, and business relations with stakeholders are often international in scope. Many multinational businesses have extended their public relations strategies globally, as shown in the following example.

Dow Chemical created a global public relations management team to deal with issues surrounding chlorine. As one of the world's largest producers of chlorine, Dow had a very large stake in proposals to ban or regulate the use of chlorine, a widely used chemical in modern manufacturing. Members of the global management team were drawn from the United States, Europe, and Asia-Pacific and included scientists, plant managers, and managers from Dow's manufacturing businesses that would be affected by any changes in the availability of chlorine. The global management team analyzed scientific studies of chlorine, tracked government actions across the world, coordinated research into various aspects of the problem, and worked with company government relations staff to ensure that Dow "spoke with one voice" when talking about chlorine.[6]

When public relations strategies take on a global perspective, new challenges emerge. For example, public relations managers must be sensitive to cultural disparities as well as similarities in crafting press releases and interactions with the media. The impact of the organization's public relations program could have markedly different impacts in a country given its culture, social or political systems, or history. The ability for a public relations manager to communicate with local media and other stakeholder groups in their native language and avoid embarrassing or misleading communication due to poor translations must be assured. All of these basic public relations tasks are more complex in an international business environment but must be mastered to be an effective public relations manager.[7]

Crisis Management

A critical function of the public relations manager is crisis management. Every organization is likely to face a crisis at some time that forces its employees to act on a difficult issue quickly and without perfect information, such as in the example of Chi-Chi's described above. A **corporate crisis** is a significant business disruption that stimulates extensive news media coverage. The resulting public scrutiny can affect the organization's normal operations and also can have a political, legal, financial, and governmental impact on its business. A crisis is any event with the potential to negatively affect the health, reputation, or credibility of the organization. It might be a terrorist attack, poor financial results, the death of a key executive or government official, employee layoffs, a charge of sexual harassment, the filing of class-action lawsuits brought by injured customers, or something bizarre and unique such as the crisis that confronted Wendy's that is described in Exhibit 20.B. But crises by definition are often unique. To prepare for these unexpected events and sometimes tragedies, an organization must develop a crisis management plan.

Crisis management is the process organizations use to respond to short-term and immediate corporate crises. Some businesses or industries are more prone to corporate crises than others. According to the Institute for Crisis Management, medical and surgical manufacturers, pharmaceutical companies, and software manufacturers (because of the sophisticated technology found in their products and the potential for disruptive impact on consumers' lives), are at the top of a recent list of crisis-prone industries.

Often the corporate crisis quickly escalates, producing intense pressures and many suggestions about what the company should do or not do from outside experts, politicians, and observers. Unfortunately it is very costly to develop a strategic response once the crisis is upon the organization. Most experts recommend that organizations develop a crisis management plan ahead of time, citing the biblical wisdom: Noah started to build his ark before it began to rain.

According to experts, an effective crisis management plan must include these steps:

- *Prepare for action* by creating an internal communication system that can be activated the moment a crisis occurs. Key employees must be identified in advance so that they are ready to address the issue. Wendy's, for example (see Exhibit 20.B), already had plans to scramble their crisis management team into action well before the crisis emerged.
- *Communicate quickly, but accurately.* Honesty and full disclosure was at the forefront of the media announcements crafted by Denny Lynch of Wendy's. The media have excellent resources and will find the truth whether the organization speaks it or not. It is often best to take the offensive and be the first to comment on a situation affecting the organization, thus placing the organization in greater control.
- *Use the Internet* to convey the public affairs message to minimize the public's fears and provide assistance. In addition to face-to-face press releases, Wendy's frequently updated their company Web site to communicate to the public and its customers what the company was doing about the crisis situation.
- *Do the right thing.* Often the true test of an organization is how it reacts in a time of crisis. Public relations managers should not try to minimize the seriousness of a problem or make excuses. It is possible for the organization to

accept responsibility without accepting liability. For example, Wendy's clearly expressed regret over its customers' fears and advised the public that it was doing everything possible to investigate.

- *Follow up* and, where appropriate, make amends to those affected. Seek to restore the organization's reputation. Wendy's relentless pursuit of the truth resulted in vindication for the company and assisted law enforcement in the prosecution of those making the false claims. With proper planning and effective implementation of a crisis management program, an organization may emerge from a crisis in a stronger condition.[8]

Media Training of Employees

Another important step businesses can take is to provide **media training** to executives and employees who are likely to have contact with the media. Media training is necessary because communicating with the media is not the same as talking with friends or co-workers.

As a company representative, an employee is normally assumed to be speaking for the company or is expected to have special knowledge of company activities. Under these circumstances, the words one speaks take on a special, official meaning. In addition, news reporters sometimes challenge an executive, asking penetrating or potentially embarrassing questions and expecting instant answers. Even in more deliberate news interviews, the time available for responding to questions is limited to a few seconds. Moreover, facial expressions, the tone of one's voice, and body language can convey both positive and negative impressions.

Many large businesses routinely send a broad range of their employees to specific courses to improve their media skills. Media communication experts generally give their clients the following advice.

- Resist the temptation to see reporters and journalists as the enemy. Business spokespersons should build bridges with the media. Employees should resist avoiding the media and not withdraw into a shell of silence, which tends to generate suspicion that the company has something to hide.
- Employees should be instructed to keep the long-term reputation of the company in mind.
- Being open and honest is a successful media strategy. Honesty is the best policy, especially since media personnel will investigate to confirm all information a business provides and the truth will be uncovered.
- Businesses should make communications a priority and the training of the company spokesperson a critical and ongoing program.[9]

Ethical and Social Responsibilities of Public Relations Managers

Public relations managers often are challenged by various ethical and social issues. How they present their firm in the media, respond to stakeholder demands expressed through media channels, and adhere to ethical principles (or not) can influence how the public perceives public relations managers and more importantly the firms they represent. One such controversial ethical challenge, involving sponsorship contracts, is described in Exhibit 20.C. Some public relations managers and businesses embrace their ethical responsibilities; others appear slow in acknowledging that their increased power requires greater attention to their impact on society.

The **Public Relations Society of America** (PRSA) is a professional association of public relations officers committed to "the fundamental values of individual dignity and free exercise of human rights." The PRSA believes that "the freedom of speech, assembly, and the press are essential to the practice of public relations." In serving its clients' interests, the PRSA is dedicated to "the goals of better communication, understanding, and cooperation among diverse individuals, groups, and institutions of society." To this end, the PRSA adopted a Member Code of Ethics in 2000, replacing previous standards and codes for the industry in place since 1950. The new code presented six professional core values for its members and the public relations profession: advocacy, honesty, expertise, independence, loyalty, and fairness.[10]

The importance of managers adhering to ethical principles and meeting social responsibilities when developing a solid public relations program or crisis management response cannot be emphasized enough, as businesses that have experienced media crises can attest. In some circumstances this may be a daunting task for businesses and their managers; but it is a critical one as business managers seek to deal with their public through the media.

Deceptive Advertising

The presentation of fair, balanced, and truthful information is a business necessity. Businesses are sometimes accused of misleading or lying to the public, often through the practice of deceptive advertising. *Deceptive advertising* occurs when an advertisement misleads the consumer by lying, withholding relevant information, or creating an unreasonable expectation. This deception often influences a consumer's purchasing decision. (Deceptive advertising is also discussed in Chapter 16.) Sometimes a competitor may accuse a firm of deception and seek help from an industry-created organization for action, as shown in the following example.

> On the First Response Early Result Pregnancy Test's label it promised "Use as early as three days before you expect your period" and "Over 99% accurate in laboratory testing." But Pfizer, the maker of a rival product, the ept Pregnancy Test, took issue with these claims and brought its challenge to the National Advertising Review Council (NARC). The NARC, often referred to as the advertising police, is an industry-created, self-regulating organization. Pfizer argued that First Response's claims ultimately could pose a health risk to those who are pregnant but, having tested negative, might think they are not. The NARC agreed with Pfizer and now First Response's label no longer makes those specific claims.[11]

Businesses are subject to legal challenges when engaging in false or deceptive advertisements as Sony Pictures experienced:

> Sony Pictures regularly cited critic David Manning of the Ridgefield Press when promoting its latest movies. The critic praised Sony's *The Animal, Hollow Man, A Knight's Tale, The Patriot,* and *Vertical Limit* with various hyperbolic "greatest movie ever" quotes. The problem was that David Manning did not exist, or at least was never on the payroll at the Ridgefield Press, a small weekly newspaper in Connecticut. A class action lawsuit was filed against Sony Pictures and the company agreed to pay more than $1 million to settle the lawsuit in August 2005. The Reuters news agency accused Sony of "intentional and systematic deception of consumers."[12]

In addition to the courts, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) serves as a public watchdog evaluating honesty in advertising. In some cases, the FTC will force a business that originally made the deceptive claims to voluntarily modify its advertisement.

> The Federal Trade Commission launched an aggressive campaign against the advertisers of Blue Stuff, a pain-relief product. The FTC alleged that advertisements for the emu oil–based gel, priced at $60 for eight ounces, claimed without substantiation that it relieved severe pain. Threatened with

legal action, Blue Stuff Inc. agreed to pay $3 million to settle the deceptive-advertising charges and to alter its future advertisement language.[13]

Following this embarrassment and other negative publicity, the pharmaceutical industry took significant steps to improve its image and the authenticity of its advertising message by agreeing to abide by voluntary guidelines governing advertising practices. Twenty-three companies, including the industry's largest firms, Bristol Myers Squibb, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, and Pfizer, adopted measures that called on companies to tone down hyped advertisement claims, more closely disclose drug risk, shift ads for adult products like Viagra to later television timeslots, and provide regulators a chance to view commercials before they are aired. These voluntary or self-regulatory marketing controls were part of the industry's overarching public relations campaign discussed earlier.

The relationship between government and business and their advertisement practices is quite different in other countries than in the United States. Exhibit 20.D describes how the Chinese government, in the absence of a constitutional right of free speech, controls advertisements and businesses' use of the media.

Free Speech

The ethical principle underlying the issue of deceptive advertising is one of free speech. The **free speech issue** is about how to find a balance between the constitutional right to free expression on the one hand and the need for trustworthiness of information used by stakeholders to make purchases, seek employment, and take other actions.

The legal basis for the right of free speech in the United States lies in the 1st Amendment to the Constitution. The 1st Amendment states, in part, "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech." State governments also are prohibited, under the due process clause of the 14th Amendment, from passing laws that impair free speech. Although these constitutional provisions are subject to continual interpretation and reinterpretation by government regulators, by the courts, and by general public opinion, their fundamental meaning does not change through time. Businesses, as legal citizens, have often relied upon the right to free speech when promoting their products through their advertisement campaigns. However, expressions of free speech in advertisements have led to numerous questions of good taste and respect for others as seen in the following example.

During the summer days of August 2003, drivers in Los Angeles were more distracted by the scenery than normal when Wellspring Media placed a billboard on Sunset Boulevard depicting a woman performing oral sex on a man. The billboard promoted the new movie *The Brown Bunny*, which had drawn criticisms for its portrayal of sex acts when previewed at the Cannes film festival earlier that year. The movie's actor and director, Vincent Gallo, explained, "This is my idea of a beautiful billboard—that's all it is." Complaints poured in as motorists and pedestrians passed by the offensive billboard, angry that it was in plain view for children and teenagers to see.[14]

[illegible]

Marketing to Children

Beyond good taste and respect for cultural traditions, advertisers have been accused of being insensitive in their marketing of products to minors. The American Psychological Association (APA) has expressed grave concern over the effects of advertising on children. The APA estimated that more than 40,000 television commercials a year are targeted at children. Moreover, they argue that while "older children and adults understand the inherent bias of advertising, young children lack the mental skills to differentiate between straightforward content and biased ads."[16]

Recently appearing on the marketing scene has been a new method of promoting products, especially to children—*advergames.* **Advergames** are free online games that incorporate marketing promotions for products such as cookies, candy, cereal, chips and soda. Kraft's *Nabiscoworld.com* Web site, for example, featured advergames for 17 different product brands, from Ritz Bits Sumo Wrestling to Life Savers boardwalk bowling. The typical users of the advergames spend a half-hour on a game site, often replaying a single games 15 times or more.[17]

Food companies, particularly those that produce products aimed at children, responded to protests against advergames by forming the Alliance for American Advertising. The group included three of the largest food companies, General Mills, Kellogg, and Kraft Foods; these three firms alone accounted for a combined annual advertising budget of $380 million in the United States. The Alliance defended the industry's 1st Amendment right of free speech to advertise to children and promoted its willingness to police itself.

In addition, the Alliance disputed the contention that there was a link between advertising and childhood obesity (see also our discussion in Chapter 16). Marybeth Thorsgaard, General Mills' spokesperson, argued that instead of a ban on advertising to children of a certain age, "we talk about balanced moderation and exercise." Many food producers follow the self-regulatory standards put forth by the Children's Advertising Review Unit, an industry group that monitors children's advertising and is part of the Better Business Bureau. These guidelines state that food companies should advertise truthfully and accurately to children and should use appropriate messages that children can understand.

The debate over whether advertisements are a constitutionally protected right under the 1st amendment or may be deceptive practices that must be regulated will undoubtedly rage on for years. Caught in the middle of this heated discussion are the consumers, especially vulnerable children. Whatever path emerges, it is clear that business must recognize various ethical and social responsibilities when utilizing the media to market its products and services.

Special Issue: Government Regulation of Tobacco Advertising

We have discussed government's role in regulating businesses' use of the media to market their products and services. A related issue that has garnered much public attention is tobacco advertising. Should tobacco advertising—particularly ads aimed at underage smokers—be regulated or even banned by the government?

Various stakeholder groups over the years have challenged tobacco advertising. Some believe that children have been unfairly targeted as a vulnerable consumer group, and cite the use of cartoon characters such as Joe Camel. Others believe that the health care costs for smokers incurred by society are unfair and have been aggravated by tobacco advertisements. The tobacco industry has countered with the argument that the firms market a legal product to adults, so tobacco ads should not be restricted by laws or regulation. Most tobacco executives have publicly agreed that selling to children is wrong and the use of advertisements targeting youth sales should be stopped.

In 1998, the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), a national organization of the 50 states' chief lawyers, and the tobacco industry's largest companies reached a settlement that resulted in significant restrictions of the industry's use of the media to market products. The landmark agreement called for firms in the tobacco industry to prohibit all advertising that targeted youth; to ban all use of cartoons in advertising; to prohibit advertising tobacco brand names at all concerts, youth sporting events, or any athletic event between opposing teams; to eliminate all outdoor and transit advertisements; to stop marketing through logos on clothing; and to require tobacco companies to affirm their commitment to comply with this agreement by designating an executive-level manager to identify methods to reduce youth access to and the incidence of youth consumption of tobacco products, and to encourage their employees to become involved in efforts toward reducing youth consumption of tobacco products.[18]

In the years following the landmark agreement, some positive effects were seen. A national "truth" campaign against youth smoking funded largely by the tobacco industry was launched by the American Legacy Foundation in 2000. A few years later the Foundation reported that about 300,000 children were prevented from becoming smokers. "These truth campaign ads are the MTV of the public health world. They really get to these kids," said Joseph A. Califano, Jr., chairman of Citizens' Commission to Protect the Truth.[19] These public service announcements were in addition to the ban on advertising tobacco products. While some cigarette manufacturers were complying with the 1998 NAAG agreement, others were not.

In 2002 a California judge ruled that R. J. Reynolds Tobacco had indirectly -targeted youths with magazines ads for Camel and other cigarettes in violation of the 1998 agreement. Reynolds was accused of exposing young people to tobacco advertising at levels very similar to those targeting adult smokers by placing ads in *Sports Illustrated*, which has a substantial number of youth readers. The judge ordered Reynolds to change its advertising practices and pay a $20 million penalty.[20]

Philip Morris received significant negative publicity when it released a report analyzing the economic impact of smokers on the Czech Republic economy. The economic analysis celebrated the "positive effects" of smoking on Czech's national finances, including revenues from excise and other taxes on cigarettes and "healthcare costs savings due to early mortality." Ten days later, Philip Morris publicly apologized for the report. Five months later, Philip Morris changed its name to the Altria Group.[21]

Government efforts to regulate the tobacco industry have occurred in many countries. For example, in 2002, the European Union health ministers voted to outlaw most tobacco advertising. The ban included tobacco ads in print, on radio and on the Internet within the 15 EU nations by July 2005. However, the EU law did allow tobacco companies to advertise in cinemas and on billboards.[22] Other national efforts to limit or prohibit tobacco advertising emerged, leading to a coordinated global effort against tobacco advertisement sponsored by the World Health Organization.

In 2005 the world's first antismoking treaty came into force despite years of opposition by the world's tobacco companies. The treaty, known as the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), was signed by 168 countries as of May 2006. The ratifying countries were obligated to establish strict health warnings on cigarettes and ban tobacco advertising and sponsorship. Misleading marketing terms, like light and mild, were outlawed and efforts needed to be made to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke. African and Asian countries were among the strongest supporters of the treaty in the hope that it would provide them with leverage to combat the tobacco industries' growing quest of the youth market in the developing world. Douglas Bettcher, coordinator of the FCTC, explained "the underlying reason that a binding piece of international law was required is that the world community was faced and appalled by the mushrooming number of needless deaths due to tobacco related diseases."[23]

As business acquires more and more power when using the media to market its products and services and promote its image, it also must accept greater responsibility when wielding this power. Whether the ethical issue is deception in advertisements or concern for vulnerable populations, business must recognize and address its ethical and social responsibilities. Likewise, the media industry must focus on its responsibilities regarding decency, equality, and fair and balanced presentation of an issue when conducting its business.

Ethical and Social Responsibility in the Media Industry

The media, itself, is a profit-making industry, subject to ethical and social responsibilities just as other businesses are. The media must be attentive to issues of decency in broadcasting, diversity in the portrayal of women and minorities, and the presentation of a fair and balanced view of the issues.

The issue of decency in the media has a storied history, often promoting government regulation of what is seen or heard or the imposition of fines for content found in broadcasting.

> In 1969, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that free-speech protections for broadcasters were narrower than those for publishers. In 1978 the Supreme Court upheld the Federal Communications Commission's ban on comedian George Carlin's "seven dirty words" and other indecencies heard on the radio or television. The Court also focused on television programming "when there is a reasonable risk that children may be in the audience." A federal appeals court validated the Supreme Court broader FCC indecency ban in 1995, but limited the focus to between 6:00 am and 10:00 pm. Therefore, most adult-content programming was moved to the 10:00 pm time slot when most children would be asleep in bed.

Despite the government's rulings and concerns over sexual material on television, a Kaiser Family Foundation report in 2005 stated that 70 percent of all television shows included some sexual content, citing popular shows such as "Desperate Housewives" and "The O.C." The report stated that the number of sexual scenes on television nearly doubled from 3.2 scenes per hour in 1998 to 5 scenes per hour by 2005. Popular shows with teens had an ever higher average number of sexual scenes—6.7 per hour.[24]

The government regulators have attempted to crack down on indecency. Clear Channel Communications, one of the largest U.S. radio station chains, reached an agreement with the FCC to pay an estimated $1.75 million in penalties. This settlement was in part to settle complaints of indecency lodged against Howard Stern's radio program, carried by Clear Channel. The largest previous penalty assessed by the FCC was against Infinity Broadcasting in 1995, when the company agreed to pay $1.7 million to settle complaints also related to Stern's radio show. Penalties also were assessed for violations of television programming regulations.

> Viacom and Walt Disney Company agreed to pay $1.5 million to settle accusations lodged by the FCC that the firms violated limits on the use of advertising during children's programming. Under FCC rules, only 10½ minutes of commercials can be shown during each hour of programming intended for children on weekends and 12 minutes per hour during the week. A spokesperson for Viacom's Nickelodeon claimed that the company miscounted some of its one-minute commercials as one instead of two, as the FCC requires. The Disney fines were due to a violation of an FCC rule that

prohibits advertising certain products on particular shows. In the Disney case, an ad for the Beyblade game was aired on the children's Beyblade show. An ABC spokesperson, Disney's parent company, explained that a computer system failed to identify the children's programs as restricted from certain commercials and the ads were aired unintentionally.[25]

The FFC gave out one of its largest fines in March 2006, when 111 television stations were fined $3.6 million. The FCC charged that the airing of an episode of "Without a Trace" in December 2004, which depicted teenage characters participating in a sexual orgy, violated decency standards. CBS defended the episode saying that "it contained an important and socially relevant storyline warning parents to exercise greater supervision of their teenage children." CBS intended to appeal the FCC fine.[26]

The active monitoring of indecent gestures, language, and activities on television shows by the FCC caused the industry to develop self-regulatory practices. For example, after the 2004 Super Bowl wardrobe scandal, CBS instituted a 10-second delay during the Final Four NCAA basketball tournament to avoid the possibility of foul language being captured on air during the games. The Fox network hired additional staff to serve as standard watchers to ensure that FCC standards were met during live reality shows such as "American Idol" and "My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiancé." After the infamous kisses during the airing of the 2003 MTV's Video Music Awards between Madonna and Britney Spears and Madonna and Christina Aguilera, the network announced it would have an audio and video delay for future programs. Other networks have changed their programming to include more family shows and content.

Comcast Communications, American's top cable provider, unveiled a family-friendly programming lineup for 2006 in response to pressure to steer clear of sex and violence on TV. This move was followed by Time Warner, the number two cable provider. Subscribers to these cable companies could select channels from a "family-tier" plan, including cable channels that catered to children programming such as the Disney Channel, Toon Disney, and Discovery Kids, as well as other channels such as CNN Headlines News, the Food Network and the Weather Channel. Comcast's package also included Nickelodeon, the highest-rated cable channel for children.[27]

Despite the television industry's efforts at self-regulation, President Bush signed the Broadcast Decency Law in June 2006. Under the law, broadcasters faced a maximum fine of $325,000 per incident, 10 times the previous limit. Bush explained, "Unfortunately, in recent years, broadcast programming has too often pushed the bounds of decency. The language is becoming coarser during the times when it's more likely that children will be watching television. It's a bad trend, a bad sign."[28]

Portrayal of Diversity in the Media

Another important issue facing the media industry is whether various groups in society are portrayed in a biased or discriminatory light. Are ethnic groups cast as second-class citizens? Are women portrayed only in subservient roles on certain shows?

Although the United States is a multicultural and ethnically diverse country, film and television images often tell a different story. While television programming made some steps toward greater diversity in the characters shown during prime time, there were few shows featuring an all-African-American or all-Latino cast. Actor J. Anthony Brown said, "We are living in the days of reality television, which has taken the place of the comedy. For a black show to make it, it has to come out of the box with some killer numbers [high-viewer ratings]. The networks don't have a lot of patience." Others take a harsher view of television programming when it comes to featuring minorities. Latino television creator and producer Dennis Leoni said, "We don't get the advertising, the marketing or the good time slots. All the resources seem to go toward the mainstream shows."[29]

> ABC television did respond to pressure from minority groups to cancel *Welcome to the Neighborhood*, a reality show that would have white suburban families living on a Texas cul-de-sac decide which of the seven families, including one black, one Asian, one Hispanic, and one gay couple, would move into their community. Critics of the show said it violated the letter and certainly the spirit of fair housing laws. According to those who previewed early episodes of the series, some members of the white families made disparaging remarks about the ethnicity, religion, and ancestry of the prospective neighbors. "I'm elated," said Shanna Smith of the show's cancellation. "There'll be no copycat shows by the other networks. Also, ABC understands there are civil rights issues and understands the implications."[30]

Women are often portrayed only as the weaker sex, or submissive to men. However, the recent record is mixed. Contrary to many negative examples of women in advertisements, some ads show women as strong, able characters. In a 1978 ad for Enjoli perfume, a woman sang, "I can bring home the bacon, fry it up in a pan, and never, never, never let you forget you're a man." A few years later, Virginia Slims cigarette ads featured the tagline "You've come a long way, baby."

Recently, the advertising industry has increasingly used everyday women in advertisements rather than super thin, super tall models. Unilever, producers of the Dove line of personal-care products, introduced a "campaign for real beauty," which presented six women, none of them models, sizes 4 to 12, smiling in their underwear. The company spokesperson commented, "these ads show women as they are rather than as some believe they ought to be." Nike introduced a humorous and honest campaign showing and accepting parts of the body that were almost never seen in ads. One ad began boldly, "My butt is big," and featured an oversized photograph of a women's derriere. Other ads declared, "I have thunder thighs." However, sexist representations of women (and men) in the media often prevail. The issue as seen from a Canadian watchdog group is presented in Exhibit 20.E.

The Fairness and Balance Issue

The media is often in a position to portray business in a good or bad light, affecting a firm's image. The **fairness and balance issue** is about how the media reports business activities. Since the 1970s, probusiness organizations have claimed that the coverage of business activities generally has been unfair to business. In addition, business leaders believe that the media does not provide viewers with enough information to make rational decisions about controversial issues, such as the transportation of toxic wastes or the need for product recalls. Many reasons are given for this tension between business and the media. One reason for inadequate media business reports is that few reporters are well trained in financial and business matters, a reality that many media people acknowledge. Another reason sometimes given is that most journalists tend to be left leaning in their social and political outlook, although this notion is disputed and not proved.

Some television shows featuring controversial topics attempt to ensure that both liberal and conservative viewpoints are presented. From 1949 to 1987, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was entrusted with enforcing the **Fairness Doctrine**, which required television and radio broadcasters to cover both sides of important or controversial issues and to give the opportunity for contrasting viewpoints to be aired. The Fairness Doctrine gave the FCC authority to rule on the fairness of broadcasts. This law was repealed in 1987. The media today is sometimes characterized as being divided on a conservative or liberal basis and reflecting the partisan atmosphere of the times, although the networks and some cable shows argue they are objective or try to be.

The question of whether the media fairly portrays businesses and executives was the focus of a study undertaken by Pinnacle Worldwide.

> Pinnacle Worldwide, an independent public relations firm headquartered in Minneapolis, reported differences in opinions between business and media executives. The firm discovered that business executives rated their ethical behavior as an 80 on a 100-point scale, while media leaders gave business executives an ethics rating of 30 points. Other sharp discrepancies were found in the study. For example, the study asked: "To what degree do you believe that ethical issues always are part of the final decision-making process in multinational companies?" Business executives gave the question an average of 80 points (with 100 points being "always"), while media leaders rated business executives at 30 points on this question.

Pinnacle Worldwide advised businesses to seek out or generate opportunities to communicate their values and principles through the news media. "Too many businesses appear to be taking an ostrich position," said Jerry Klein, president of Pinnacle Worldwide. "By burying their heads in the sand, they leave the rest of their operations vulnerable to misunderstanding and misinformation. The new media plays a vital role in communicating information."[31]

While business may seek to better manage its portrayal in the media, the media is a business, too, and thus must always face its social responsibilities to maintain decency in its broadcasts, depict women and minorities in an unbiased light, and present a fair and balanced view of important issues, including business issues, found in society.

- Business and its stakeholders are best served when business managers recognize their professional responsibilities in administering a proactive public relations and crisis management plan.
- Business can effectively manage a crisis situation by preparing for the crisis before it occurs, coordinating its interactions with the media, and always doing the right thing under pressure.
- Young people seem particularly vulnerable to violations of decency through exposure to violence and sex found in television programs, films, and video games. Various governmental and self-regulatory efforts have tried to address this issue.
- The World Health Organization has joined with several national government campaigns to regulate the tobacco industry's use of print, radio, and television ads.
- The media is doing a better job representing diverse ethnic groups and providing gender balance in broadcasting, but some stereotyping remains.

Discussion Case: *"Grand Theft Auto": Honest Mistake or Intentional Indecency?*

In July 2005 the media reported that the popular videogame "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas" contained sexually explicit hidden scenes. The discovery prompted an immediate investigation by the video game industry's Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB) and the Federal Trade Commission. According to ESRB executive Patricia Vance, "what was clear to us is the fact that fully rendered content existed on the [Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas] disk that was not disclosed. The publisher took the risk that a hacker could find it and it clearly put the rating at risk." The ESRB quickly changed the game's rating from M (for Mature, 17 years and older) to Adults Only, seriously curtailing future sales since the primary customers for the game were teenage boys. Some retailers, notably Wal-Mart, Target, and Best Buy, announced that they would pull the product from their shelves, in keeping with their company policy of not marketing adult-content video games.

The scenes in question were hidden from regular viewing but available through a "mod" (short for modifications), a portion of the game that in the case of the "Grand Theft Auto" game could be unlocked by a third-party Internet download. Mods are commonly placed within the games intentionally by the manufacturer as an added thrill for loyal game players. They can include features such as super-powerful weapons or hidden celebrity interviews. Mods may also include unauthorized content created by independent programmers. Game makers usually welcome mods, since they can extend the shelf life and revenue of game titles.

Take-Two Interactive, producers of "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas," initially claimed the newly exposed scenes were postproduction mods developed by a third party without authorization by the company. Later Take-Two Interactive admitted that the game was built with the scenes buried in the company's own content, not unexpectedly inserted into the game by the independent programmers. However, the company further explained that the scenes were left over from earlier drafts of "Grand Theft Auto" and were never intended for public viewing.

The "Grand Theft Auto" mod was called "hot coffee," since it allowed characters in the game to invite other characters into their homes for hot coffee and sex. Dutch programmer Patrick Wildenborg, whose mod allowed users to view explicit sexual scenes in "Grand Theft Auto," defended his programming. "My mod does not introduce anything to the game. All the content that is shown was already present."

[illegible]

Sources: "'Grand Theft Auto' Maker Denies Hiding Sex Scenes in Video Game," Institute for Global Ethics, *Ethics Newsline*, July 18, 2005, *www.globalethics.com*; "Video Game Hit with 'Adults Only' Rating for Hidden Sex Scenes," Institute for Global Ethics, *Ethics Newsline*, July 25, 2005, www.globalethics.com; and "Guess What's Hiding in Your Videogame," *The Wall Street Journal Online*, July 26, 2005, *online.wsj.com.*

1. Did Take-Two Interactive cross over the line of decency by having sexually explicit scenes accessible for players of a game via download? If this type of content is commonplace in video games today, does that excuse the company's actions?
2. Do companies have an ethical obligation to ensure that sexual content does not get into the hands of youth, or it is simply an issue of marketing to teenagers what they want to see?
3. How effective were the video game industry's self-regulatory standards, especially when content was hidden from those evaluating the content and providing a rating? What can be done to make these self-regulatory ratings more accurate?

4. Is government regulation needed to better protect teenagers from sexually explicit content as found in the "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas" game? If so, what steps should regulators take?

[1] "Chrysler's Chief Disavows Support of 'Lingerie Bowl,'" *The Wall Street Journal,* December 9, 2003, pp. A3, A10; "Chrysler's Dodge Brand Moves to Drop Out of Lingerie Bowl," *The Wall Street Journal,* December 17, 2003, p. B4; "Lingerie Bowl," ThomasNet, *encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/lingerie+bowl;* "Bawdy T-shirts Set Off 'Girlcott' by Teens," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette,* November 3, 2005, pp. A1, A11; Abercrombie & Fitch to Pull Line of T-shirts," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette,* November 5, 2005, pp. A1, A5; "Hepatitis Outbreak Spreads to 26 More Restaurant Patrons," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette,* November 5, 2003, *www.post-gazette.com*; and "A Tale of Two Vegetables: Corporate Communications Key in Times of Crisis," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette,* August 15, 2004, p. D2.

[2] Boston University Public Affairs Research Group, *Public Affairs Offices and Their Functions: A Summary of Survey Results* (Boston: Boston University School of Management, 1981), p. 1.

[3] "Venezuelan Telecoms and Media Firms Assume Lead Role in Disaster Efforts," *The Wall Street Journal,* December 21, 1999, p. A16.

Like many businesses, Wal-Mart turned to the media to bolster its tarnished public image after being stung by criticism regarding its labor practices, expansion plans, and other business tactics. Mona Williams, Wal-Mart spokeswoman explained, "We've really been in the spotlight and I think that's made us especially sensitive to the need to balanced coverage [in the media]. It doesn't matter if the subject is Wal-Mart or something else. You just aren't going to have [balanced coverage] unless different perspectives are represented." In the past, Wal-Mart had used more traditional media to broadcast its public relations message. But in 2006, the company turned toward a new media form to communicate with the public—blogging. In one instance the blogger was a non-Wal-Mart employee, Brian Pickrell, but the message was definitely Wal-Mart's. Pickrell posted to his Web site a note attacking state legislation that would force Wal-Mart stores to spend more on employee health insurance. This note was identical to dozens of other notes found on other blog sites and to an e-mail distributed by Wal-Mart's public relations firms to numerous bloggers. Mona Williams of Wal-Mart justified this action: "As more and more Americans go to the Internet to get information from varied, credible, trusted sources, Wal-Mart is committed to participating in that online conversation." Other messages sent to bloggers for posting included positive news about Wal-Mart, like a high number of job applications it received for a new store in Illinois, as well as negative information about its competitors, such as how Target stores raised zero money for the Salvation Army in 2005 because the company banned red-kettle collection from its stores.

Blogging is a new public relations outlet for business and there are many bloggers ready and willing to help. Marshall Manson, who identified himself as a blogger who does online public affairs for Wal-Mart, offered to the public in a *New York Times* article, "If you're interested, I'd like to drop you an occasional update with some newsworthy info about the company and an occasional nugget that you won't hear about in the M.S.M.—or mainstream media." Public relations has "a new twist."

Sources: "Wal-Mart Tries to Shine Its Image by Supporting Public Broadcasting," *The New York Times Online,* August 16, 2004, *www.nytimes.com*; and "Wal-Mart Enlists Bloggers in P.R. Campaign," *The New York Times Online,* March 7, 2006, *www.nytimes.com*.

[4] "Stung by Public Distrust, Drug Makers Seek to Heal Image," *The Wall Street Journal Online,* August 26, 2005, *online.wsj.com.* The PhRMA Guiding Principles can be found at *www.phrma.org/dtc*.

[5] Craig S. Fleisher, "Emerging U.S. Public Affairs Practice: The 20001 PA Model," *Journal of Public Affairs* 1, no. 1 (January 2001), pp. 49–51.

[6] See Dow Chemical's company Web site, *www.dow.com/commitments*.

[7] For a thorough discussion of these issues see Craig S. Fleisher, "The Development of Competencies in International Public Affairs," *Journal of Public Affairs* 3, no. 3 (March 2003), pp. 76–82.

On March 22, 2005, Denny Lynch, senior vice president for communications at Wendy's, one of the country's largest fast-food restaurant chains, received a shocking and unexpected call. A customer, Anna Ayala, claimed she had bitten down on a severed finger while eating a cup of chili purchased at a Wendy's restaurant in San Jose, California. Lynch knew that he had to act quickly, since this incident would certainly be the top story on the evening news and in the headlines of every major newspaper the next day. A public relations nightmare had emerged, and Lynch, on behalf of Wendy's, had to prepare a response. Within days Wendy's Northern California restaurants lost 20 to 50 percent of their normal business, estimating their losses at $1 million per day. "We need closure," said Lynch. "Until then, there is lingering doubt."

As an immediate response, the crisis management team from Wendy's regional headquarters in Sacramento, California, was assembled. Lynch also prepared a statement for the press, instructed the company's Web site to be frequently updated, and began coordinating with the San Jose police department which was already involved in the case. According to Lynch, “It went nonstop the next two or three days. Even when the Pope passed away, it still got coverage.”

In the wake of the immediate crisis, Wendy’s focused on trying to discover what had really happened. Through an internal investigation, Lynch learned that a 10-year veteran and trusted employee had prepared the chili for Ayala; he assured Lynch there was nothing improper in the food preparation. Wendy’s also turned to the public and offered a $100,000 reward for information about the case.

Investigators initially were unsure if the finger came from a live or dead person. The finger’s DNA did not match anything in the police computer files, and a search for the fingerprint failed to turn up a match in the FBI’s 50-million-print database. Further, the police still had not determined if the finger had been cooked, and if so, for how long. A thoroughly cooked finger might indicate that it came through Wendy’s food supply chain, but if uncooked, it was likely that the finger was added to the chili after preparation.

While Lynch and his team worked furiously around the clock to discover the truth, Ayala, the woman who had made the accusation, was a guest on numerous morning and late night television shows. Yet, it was soon discovered that Ayala had a litigious history that included a settlement for medical expenses for her daughter, who had claimed she became sick at an El Pollo Loco restaurant in Las Vegas.

The public-relations break Lynch and Wendy’s needed occurred exactly one month after the initial incident, when Anna Ayala was arrested in her Las Vegas home for attempted grand larceny, accused of trying to extort $2.5 million from Wendy’s. The finger in her chili was all a hoax. “The true victims are Wendy’s owners and operators,” said San Jose chief of police Rob Davis. Forensic evidence proved that the finger was not cooked at 170 degrees for three hours—the typical preparation of Wendy’s chili. It was later discovered that Ayala acquired the finger through her husband’s workplace, where a fellow worker had lost part of his finger in an industrial accident.

In September 2005, Ayala and her husband, Jaime Plascencia, pleaded guilty to attempted grand larceny and conspiring to file a false claim. Ayala was sentenced to 9 years in prison and her husband, who supplied the finger, was sentenced to 12 years and 4 months in prison.

Sources: “At CSI: Wendy’s, Tracking a Gruesome Discovery,” *The New York Times Online*, April 22, 2005, *www.nytimes.com*; “Finger in Chili Called Hoax; Las Vegas Woman Is Charged,” *The New York Times Online*, April 23, 2005, *www.nytimes.com*; and “Stiff Sentences for Wendy’s Chili-finger Couple,” *Bay City News*, January 18, 2006, *www.SFGate.com*.

[8] Adapted from Ronald J. Levine, “Weathering the Storm: Crisis Management Tips,” *Metropolitan Corporate Counsel,* March 2002, pp. 3–4.

[9] These guidelines and other suggestions are discussed in Mike Haggerty and Wallace Rasmussen, *The Headlines vs. The Bottom Line: Mutual Distrust between Business and the News Media* (Arlington, VA: The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, 1994), pp. 89–92.

[10] Public Relations Society of America Web site, *www.prsa.org*.

When Kobe Bryant was arrested on charges of sexual assault in 2003, the public wondered if his company sponsors would stand by this athlete or if the negative publicity would cause Bryant’s sponsors to distance themselves from the star and cancel their endorsement contracts based on his violation of the “morals clause.” Bryant, who played for the L.A. Lakers basketball team, had endorsement deals with Nike, Coca-Cola, and McDonald’s, and he was scheduled to earn $11 million to $13 million in 2003 from them. The Nike deal alone was worth $45 million over four years.

Other star athletes had faced similar criminal charges, and endorsers had been loyal to them during their troubled times. Reebok International stood by basketball player Allen Iverson when Iverson was charged with weapons violations after he allegedly barged into his cousin’s apartment with a gun looking for his wife. A Reebok official noted, “Sales pretty much stayed consistent during and after the incident.” Charges against Iverson were later dropped.

A few months before Bryant’s encounter with the law, Reebok signed a sneaker endorsement with football player Ray Lewis. Lewis had pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of obstruction of justice in a case stemming from the murder of two men in Atlanta. “Mr. Lewis has become a popular player and our people felt comfortable signing him,” said Ron Rogers, a spokesperson for Reebok. In the two years after Bryant’s arrest, the criminal charges were dismissed and a related civil suit was settled. Although McDonald’s, Spaulding, and Coca-Cola dropped Bryant from their ads, Nike remained loyal to the basketball superstar and relaunched the Bryant-Nike ad campaign in 2005 after dramatically reducing the number of ads Bryant appeared in immediately following the 2003 arrest.

Sources: “Should Brands Bryant Endorses Keep Him On?” *The Wall Street Journal*, July 12, 2003, pp. B1, B7; and “Nike Relaunches Kobe Bryant after Two Years of Prep Work,” *The Wall Street Journal Online,* November 11, 2005, *online.wsj.com*.

[11] “Marketers Increasingly Dispute Health Claims of Rivals’ Products,” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 4, 2002, pp. B1, B4.

[12] “Sony to Pay Upwards of $1 Million over Fake Critic Quotes,” Institute for Global Ethics, *Ethics Newsline,* August 8, 2005, *www.globalethics.org*.

[13] “FTC Asks Media to Reject False Ads,” *The Wall Street Journal*, November 20, 2002, pp. A3, A14.

The Chinese government has emerged as a watchdog over its country's firms and their media practices. Commonly referred to as the "propaganda czars," Chinese regulators of the State Administration for Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) prohibited television companies from having their shows' hosts wear orange-tinted hair, dress in too little or too weird clothes, or speak in trendy local dialects or Western slang.

In China all media are state owned and regarded as the *houshe*, or the throat and tongue, of the Communist Party. Therefore, all rules developed by SARFT are enforced as law. The new media regulations passed in 2004 toned down sex, violence, and racy content that were the hallmark of broadcast media everywhere else in the world and were becoming increasingly common in China. Specifically, the SARFT banned as offensive ads for feminine hygiene pads, hemorrhoid medication, and athlete's foot ointment during the three daily meal times. Only two beer ads per company could be shown between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Many of these regulations were a reaction to creeping Western influence, especially in advertisements. "We hope the new regulations will set a distinct criterion for both domestic and overseas ad producers and effectively prevent the recurrence of commercials like the 'Chamber of Fear' [referring to Nike commercials featuring basketball star LeBron James]," explained a SARFT official. The Chamber of Fear campaign showed James battling and defeating a cartoon kung fu master and a pair of dragons, which some Chinese took as an allegory for the defeat of Chinese culture by the West.

Sources: "China Cracks Down on Commercials," *The Wall Street Journal,* February 19, 2004, p. B7; "China Takes Aim at Racy, Violent TV Shows," *The Wall Street Journal,* May 24, 2004, pp. B1, B3; and, "Chinese Regulators Draft New Advertising Rules," *The Wall Street Journal Online,* December 13, 2004, *online.wsj.com*.

[14] "Art? Smut? Commerce? Billboard Gets Attention," *New York Times Online,* August 4, 2004, *www.nytimes.com*.

[15] "Graffiti-style Nike Ads Offend Some in Singapore," *The Wall Street Journal Online,* November 26, 2004, *online.wsj.com.*

[16] "Young Children Need Protection from TV Ads, Group Warns," Institute for Global Ethics, *Ethics Newsline,* March 1, 2004, *www.globalethics.org*.

[17] "Junk Food Games," *The Wall Street Journal,* May 3, 2004, pp. B1, B4.

[18] Master Settlement Agreement, National Association of Attorneys General, *www.naag.org/tobac*.

[19] "Study: Anti-Smoking Campaign Is Helping," *Newsday Online*, February 24, 2005, *www.newsday.com*.

[20] "Judge Rules Reynolds Ads Reach Too Many Kids, Violating '98 Pact," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 7, 2002, pp. A3, A5.

[21] "Philip Morris Notes Cigarettes' Benefits for Nation's Finances," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 16, 2001, pp. A2, A16; "Philip Morris Says It's Sorry for Death Report," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 26, 2001, pp. B1, B6; and "Philip Morris Seeks to Mold Its Image into an Altria State," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 16, 2001, pp. A3, A6.

[22] "EU Health Ministers Bar Most Tobacco Ads," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 3, 2002, p. A15.

[23] "57 Counties Sign On to Anti-Smoking Treaty," *ABC Online*–Australia, February 27, 2005, *www.abc.net.au*.

[24] "Study Says Sex Pervasive on TV in Shows Popular with Teens," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 10, 2005, p. A15.

[25] "Viacom and Disney to Pay $1.5 Million for Violating FCC Rules," *The New York Times Online*, October 22, 2004, *www.nytimes.com*.

[26] "TV Stations Fined over CBS Show Deemed to Be Indecent," *The New York Times Online*, March 16, 2006, *www.nytimes.com*.

[27] "Comcast to Offer Family Lineup with Nickelodeon and Religion," *The Wall Street Journal Online*, December 23, 2005, *online.wsj.com*.

[28] "Bush Signs Broadcast Decency Law," *Billboard.Biz*, June 15, 2006, *www.billboard.biz*.

[29] "Fewer Minorities Seen in Prime-time Shows," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 3, 2004, p. B6.

A Canadian media watchdog organization, Child & Family Canada, looked at how men were portrayed in video games, a $15-billion-a-year industry. It found "Video games, more than any other medium, promote male dominator, racist behavior as glamorous and erotic, the only possible response and the essential requirement for winning."

Child & Family Canada also looked at gender portrayal on television, particularly in commercials. It reported that commercial television suggested the women in this society were almost always young, white, large-breasted, and mainly preoccupied with how they looked and what they wore. They were dependent on men for approval and protection; they were largely seen as caregivers and nurturers, rarely as initiators and leaders. They also tended to be helpless victims of violence, which often was sexual in nature.

On the other hand, men were rarely vulnerable and seldom showed their feelings. They were usually in control, preoccupied with fast cars, prone to drinking beer with their buddies, and used weapons. They most often were the “voice of authority,” selling products or providing information.

The stereotyping of genders in the media extended to children as well. Girls were shown as passive; they were preoccupied with their appearance and played with dolls rather than computers or video games. Boys were more active, frequently aggressive, cared more about sports and war games, and had only male friends.

Source: Meg Hogarth, “We Are What We Watch: Challenging Sexism and Violence In the Media,” *Child & Family Canada, www.cfc-efc.ca/docs*.

[30] “ABC Drops Show after Complaints by Civil Rights Groups,” *The New York Times Online*, June 30, 2005, *www.nytimes.com*.

[31] “’Yes, We Are’ . . . ‘No, You’re Not’ Survey Shows Corporate Executives, Media Differ Markedly on Opinions of Ethical Behavior in Business,” *Pinnacle Worldwide News Release*, December 1998, *www.pinnacleww.com/survey-ethics*.

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Internet Resources

www.cfc-efc.ca	Child & Family Canada
www.prsa.org	Public Relations Society of America
www.prwatch.org	PR Watch
www.ftc.gov	U.S. Federal Trade Commission
www.asianmediawatchdog.com	Asian Media Watchdog
www.mediaissues.com	Media Issues

Discussion Questions