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What do Brands Mean? A series of three essays that explore the nature of meaning for well-known brands.

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What do Brands Mean?
A series of three essays that explore the nature of meaning for well-known brands.

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ABSTRACT

Brand meaning has been theoretically linked to brand equity and long-term brand success; however, it remains underdeveloped and underutilized relative to its potential. In this dissertation, three distinct yet interrelated essays address the multifaceted nature of brand meaning and meaning transfer in the context of well-known brands and celebrities. Essay 1, “What do Brands Mean? A multi-dimensional framework for successful meaning management”, proposes a multi-dimensional definition of brand meaning. Building on existing literature, brand meaning is broadly defined as the complex collection of perceptions that are produced by the consumer from the marketplace and culture around them. Using qualitative techniques borrowed from social psychology, the dimensions of this definition are examined and what emerges is a theoretically and empirically sound framework. The second essay, “What do Celebrities Mean? A multi-dimensional framework for understanding celebrity brands”, attempts to apply the definition developed in Essay 1 to the meaning consumers ascribe to celebrities. Using the same method as in Essay 1, the results, not surprisingly, indicate that celebrity meaning differs from traditional brand meaning in some important ways. In the final essay, “How Does Meaning Move? Understanding the process of meaning transfer in the context of celebrity endorsements”, a conceptual framework is tested. This framework, which is well-established in the literature, suggests that brands obtain meaning in part from the celebrities that endorse them. Using well established conditioning procedures to manipulate implied celebrity endorsement relationships, changes in brand meaning and brand attitude are observed. These results make an important contribution to the academic literature and to those interested in the relationship between brands, consumers and culture.
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DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

Brand meaning has been theoretically linked to brand equity and long-term brand success; however, it remains underdeveloped and underutilized relative to its potential. In this dissertation, three distinct yet interrelated essays address the multifaceted nature of brand meaning and meaning transfer in the context of well-known brands and celebrities. Each essay is presented as a self-contained unit that includes a review of the relevant literature and research questions as well as the appropriate methods, results, and concluding sections (discussion, limitations, references, etc). The final section of this dissertation briefly summarizes the contributions of this research as a whole and then focuses on plans for future research.

Essay 1, “What do Brands Mean? A multi-dimensional framework for successful meaning management”, proposes a multi-dimensional definition of brand meaning. Based on a review of the object meaning, experiential consumption, and consumer culture literatures, brand meaning is broadly defined as the complex collection of perceptions that are produced by the consumer from the marketplace and culture around them. This definition incorporates both tangible and abstract components of meaning and as such is relevant for a diverse set of brands that are well-known by and important to consumers. In addition, it embraces the notion of co-created meaning that is based on extensive consumer use and experience, not just firm initiated marketing messages.

Using qualitative techniques borrowed from social psychology, Essay 1 attempts to validate the above definition of brand meaning. These methods are necessary and appropriate given the idiosyncratic relationship between consumers and brands and the relatively limited
amount of empirical work in this area. What emerges is a theoretically sound framework. The results confirm the complexity of brand meaning and its implications for brand management.

The second essay, “What do Celebrities Mean? A multi-dimensional framework for understanding celebrity brands”, attempts to apply the definition developed in Essay 1 to the meaning consumers ascribe to celebrities. Celebrities can be viewed as a unique conception of traditional product and service brands. They include actors, musicians, athletes and even politicians, authors and chefs. Like brands, celebrities are promoted through the mass media and consumer “buy” them by supporting their movies, television programs, music and teams.

Using the same method as in Essay 1, the results, not surprisingly, indicate that celebrity meaning differs from traditional brand meaning in some important ways. Celebrities are embedded in a social context that must be acknowledged as a part of their meaning and the meaning making process. As such, those who manage celebrities must not only understand the unique aspects of celebrity meaning but also carefully coordinate their client’s public behavior in a way that is consistent with their inherent meaning. In the end, it is well crafted meaning that contributes to a celebrities appeal in the marketplace.

In the final essay, “How Does Meaning Move? Understanding the process of meaning transfer in the context of celebrity endorsements”, a conceptual framework is tested. This framework, which is well-established in the literature, suggests that brands obtain meaning in part from the celebrities that endorse them. In this case, the celebrities meaning is transferred from the brand to the celebrity as a result of their repeated association. This association can take the form of overt endorsement via television or print advertising or more implied support conveyed by simply being publicly co-present with the brand.
Using well established conditioning procedures to manipulate implied celebrity endorsement relationships, changes in brand meaning are observed. There are also interesting differences as a function of consumer gender and the nature of the celebrity’s meaning. These results provide evidence to support the meaning transfer framework and offer an experimental procedure for future study in this area.

The dissertation presented here addresses important and interesting questions related to well-known brands and their meaning. It seeks to understand how consumers define meaning for a brand they know well and how that meaning can be constructed, manipulated, and exploited in the marketplace. It is clear from the literature that greater knowledge and tools are needed in this domain. The results provide a good first step in providing what is needed. They make a contribution that is meaningful to academic researchers and practitioners interested in the relationship between brands, consumers and culture.
WHAT DO BRANDS MEAN?
A multi-dimensional framework for meaning management

ABSTRACT

Brands, particularly those that have been around for years, are full of meaning. Brand meaning is an important and dynamic concept that has been frequently mentioned, but loosely defined, in the marketing literature. This research attempts to define brand meaning in the context of brands that are well-known and well-loved by consumers. Using largely qualitative methods, this first study defines meaning in terms of four dimensions; attributes, performance, emotion and symbolism and applies this definition to a wide range of utilitarian and hedonic brands. Results suggest that the brand meaning concept has important implications for understanding the brand-consumer relationship which may have impact long-term brand management decisions.
INTRODUCTION

In this mad frenzy to instant credibility and morning-after "hits," most forget that building a brand is not a sprint, but a marathon. And while "brand awareness" is important, building lasting "brand meaning" is essential, a process that requires carefully managing the distinct lifecycle stages each brand goes through.

Brandweek, May 5, 2000

The brand boom at the turn of the century not only signaled an increasingly complex and competitive global marketplace, but also the need for better long-term management of valuable brand assets. According to the American Marketing Association brands are defined as “a name, term, sign, symbol or combination of them that is designed to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers to differentiate them from those of competitors”. This definition describes what brands are and to some extent what they do, but it fails to capture what brands mean to the consumers who support them. By discovering what a brand really means we can better understand its potential and its limitations in the marketplace.

There is no doubt that well-known brands have complex meaning based on years of advertising and promotional messages as well as first hand consumer experiences. Furthermore, these brands, despite their success, struggle to keep their meaning interesting and relevant in the face of competition and changing consumer culture thus evolving meaning over time. At one end of the spectrum, marketers of these established brands may feel trapped by the historical success of the brand and be hesitant to stray too far from what the brand has meant in the past. As a result, consumers may become bored with familiar brands despite previous positive experiences. At the other extreme, marketers may respond impulsively to every business dip by continuously changing the brand’s current meaning. This can lead to confusion among current
consumers that alienates them from a brand they thought they knew well. So, the question is does the current literature adequately address the complexity of brand meaning and its management in the face of cultural evolution?

Conventional brand research makes reference to brand meaning as a prerequisite for building brand equity and long-term marketplace success. Classically, brand meaning is operationalized conceptually as the brand’s performance (attributes and benefits) and image (e.g. user profile, personality, values, and heritage) related associations (Keller 2001). While this definition makes an appropriate distinction between tangible and intangible dimensions of meaning, the perspective from which it comes does not recognize the consumer’s role in creating meaning. It assumes that the marketer plays the primary role in establishing brand meaning through its marketing activities.

However, consumers don’t just store and retrieve the information they are given about brands. They take information about the brand and incorporate it into their lives based on their unique needs and experiences. A number of researchers have put forth an alternative view of brand meaning that acknowledges the consumer’s role in making brand meaning (Allen, Fournier, and Miller forthcoming; Hirschman 1986; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Holt 2004; Holt 2005; McCracken 1986; Schroeder and Salzer-Mörling 2005; Schroeder 2005). Holbrook and Hirschman’s seminal article (1982) was among the first to delineate the experiential aspects of consumption that are influenced by both environmental and consumer inputs. Consumer culture researchers have take this perspective a step further by suggesting that all environmental inputs are influenced by culture (e.g. Arnould and Thompson 2005; Holt 2004; McCracken 1986). As a result, consumers draw from systems that exist in the
culture like advertising and fashion to create meaning for consumption goods (McCracken 1986; Thompson and Haytko 1997). The current definition could be greatly enhanced by embracing some of the experience and culture based dimensions of meaning that can be found in the broader consumer culture literature. With better definition, this underutilized construct and its implications can be more easily studied by researchers and practitioners.

The following sections provide the theoretical foundation for a four-dimensional framework of brand meaning. This begins with a brief discussion of successful, well-known brands which motivates the multi-faceted definition of meaning. A review of the brand and object meaning literature then provides theoretical and empirical support for the conceptual framework. The framework is then presented followed by the results of an exploratory study which provides additional empirical support for the four dimensional definition of meaning. Limitations of this initial study as well as implications and future research directions are discussed in the final section.
LITERATURE REVIEW

UNDERSTANDING THE WELL-KNOWN BRAND

Marketing researchers have maintained a sustained interest in brands and branding research including: the introduction of new products (Boulding and Morgan 1997; Claycamp and Liddy 1969; Day 1970; Henard and Szymanski 2001), the revitalization of declining brands (Austin and Nolan 2000; Holt 2003a; Keller 1999; Wansink and Huffman 2001), and the evolution of iconic brands (Holt 2003b; Kester and Morley 1992). However, given the vast amount of brand-related research, there is a surprisingly small amount of theoretical and empirical research on the topic of successful, everyday brands that have been around for years. These well-known brands are often considered by practitioners to be valuable core assets in the corporate portfolio and looked to as sources of organic growth for the company (Brandweek 2004; Meer 2005). Examples include not only traditional products like Crest toothpaste, Nike running shoes and M&Ms candies, but also services and experiences like ESPN sports network, Nordstrom department stores, and the Boston Red Sox.

In addition to being well-known, these brands typically enjoy a loyal, and sometimes large, base of users. To these users, the brand comes to represent a complex collection of perceptions shaped by personal experience, culture and time. Because of the complex nature of mature brands, consumers connect and respond to them in unique and unexpected ways. Fournier (1998) describes the unique relationships that develop between consumers and well-established brands based on extensive satisfying experiences. In many ways, these dynamics mirror the interpersonal connections that exist in human relationships. For example, a consumer may have a nonvoluntary familial connection or kinship with a brand that she “inherited” from
her mother. As a result, that same consumer may react very dramatically to changes (or lack of) in the product, its packaging or its marketing communication (Fournier 1998).

Given this unique relationship, well accepted persuasion models have difficulty predicting and explaining consumer reactions to persuasive messages for mature brands. For example, the Elaboration Likelihood Model postulates that source variables like brand name can play multiple roles in persuasion; they can serve as a central argument, a peripheral cue, and can influence the extent and direction of elaboration (Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Petty and Wegener 1999). Thus, the role of the brand name is context dependant making it difficult if not impossible to predict consumer reactions a priori using this model. Furthermore, empirical tests of dual-process models have generally used new or fictitious products as stimuli (Maheswaran, Mackie, and Chaiken 1992; Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983) and as such offer little insight for mature brands.

Another persuasive framework that has limited application to well-known brands is the well established link between attitude toward the ad (A_ad) and brand attitude (A_b). Much of this research has been conducted with fictitious or unfamiliar brands as the experimental stimulus (Batra and Ray 1986; Edell and Burke 1984; MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch 1986; Mitchell and Olson 1981; Stayman and Aaker 1988). Attempts to extend this relationship to brands that consumers know well have been mixed (Edell and Burke 1986; Gresham and Shimp 1985; Machleit, Madden, and Allen 1990; Machleit and Wilson 1988). Specifically, researchers have shown a weak (Gresham and Shimp 1985) or non-significant (Machleit, Madden, and Allen 1990; Machleit and Wilson 1988) relationship between A_ad and A_b for highly familiar, established brands. Given the limited empirical support, Machleit, Allen and Madden (1993)
developed a new construct, brand interest, as an alternative explanation for the effect of affective advertising on familiar brands. Brand interest is defined as “the base level of approachability, inquisitiveness, openness or curiosity an individual has about a brand”. This non-evaluative construct recognizes that when consumers are exposed to an affective ad for a brand they know well, they may be led to reconsider or revisit the brand which may subsequently influence contact intentions and purchase decisions (Machleit, Allen, and Madden 1993). The development of the brand interest construct has begun to address questions about consumer’s response to advertising for familiar brands. However as suggested by the authors, there needs to be additional research to understand the consequences and antecedents of brand interest.

It is clear that new models are needed to help researchers and practitioners better understand how and why established brands are successful over time. By their very nature, these brands must remain interesting and relevant in the face of competition and changing consumer culture. Keller (1999) suggests that brand managers must have a long-term perspective and use brand reinforcement strategies to adapt to the changing marketplace overtime while remaining true to the brand’s core equities. These strategies include maintaining a consistent level of marketing support and reinforcing brand meaning consistently over time through marketing communication.

The next section takes a step back from well-known brands and looks at the perceptions individuals have of non-branded consumption objects. As such, we can see more clearly the consumer’s, vs. the firm’s, perspective on meaning that is inherent in generic objects. This is followed by research concerned with the meaning of branded consumption goods. These
complementary streams of research offer unique insights that can help better define the meaning for successful, mature brands.

WHAT IS OBJECT MEANING?

The study of object meaning has its roots in many disciplines. In the field of psychology, researchers have emphasized the personalized nature of meaning that resides within each individual. In this context, meaning making is defined as a mediational process which is triggered when an individual encounters a sign or object. The work of Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957) on the measurement of meaning through the use of the semantic differential typifies this person-centric approach. This tool defines meaning in a three-dimensional space characterized by the individual’s perception of the object’s evaluative (e.g. good-bad), activity (e.g. active vs. passive), and potency (e.g. strong vs. weak) qualities. For example, an individual may define a flower as a beautiful (evaluative), living (active), but fragile (potency) object.

In contrast, sociologists and anthropologists have traditionally focused on the cultural context in the study of meaning. As such, meaning is shared; it resides in the culture and is defined by the culture’s symbols and signs. An important variant of this culture-centric view is that of the social psychologists who embrace the contextualized nature of meaning, but also recognizes the importance of the interpersonal dynamic in shaping meaning. The work of Ogden and Richards (1953) illustrates this perspective by exploring the causal relationships between symbols, thoughts and meanings in a social context.

It is the highly contextualized view of meaning that has been adopted by many consumer researchers as they examine the external forces that continually give meaning to consumption objects (Belk 1988; Fournier 1991; Hirschman 1986; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). Kleine
and Kernan (1988; 1991) have defined the meaning of non-branded consumptions objects as an individual’s interpretation of the object’s attribute and performance characteristics. As such, meaning is not resident in the object, but rather the result of the interaction between the individual, the object and its context. The authors emphasize the idea that object meaning is “inherently symbolic, subjective, psychological and perceptual” and as such may differ across individuals.

WHAT IS BRAND MEANING?

The concept of brand meaning is regularly mentioned in the context of brand equity (Farquhar 1989; Keller 1998; 1999; 2001; 2002; 2003) and general brand building principles (Farquhar 1992). In this research meaning is defined in terms of the performance and imagery related associations that characterize a brand and what it should stand for in the minds of consumers (Keller 2001). The performance based component of meaning is related to the inherent properties of the brand (attributes and benefits) that contribute to how well the brand meets functional needs. In contrast, the imagery based component of meaning is defined by the intangible aspects of the brand (e.g. user profile, personality, values, and heritage) that address psychological and social needs. The performance and imagery associations are formed through consumer’s direct experience with the brand and exposure to advertising and other non-company sponsored sources of information such as word-of-mouth (see Keller 2001 for complete review).

In Keller’s research, meaning is conceptualized as an important precursor to building brand equity. However, within this larger framework brand meaning is underdeveloped. The imagery component is a catch-all for a brand’s intangible qualities that provides no real structure or definition to these important elements. In addition, this conception of brand meaning does not
acknowledge the consumer’s role in creating meaning beyond just responding positively or negatively to what the company puts in front of her. Consumers don’t just respond. They take the brand and the information that the marketer and the marketplace give them and, if they don’t flatly reject it, they adapt it to fit their needs and their environment.

In contrast, consumer culture theorists assert that consumer goods are more than just a collection of attributes and intangible features. They have demonstrated that well-known brands have symbolic meaning that goes beyond their functional and commercial value (e.g. Arnould and Thompson 2005; Fournier 1991; 1998; Hirschman 1986; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Levy 1959; McCracken 1986; McCracken 1987; Mick 1986). For example, McCracken theorizes that consumer goods can not only take on functional meaning, but also symbolic meaning from the culture in which they are embedded. Systems like advertising and fashion provide a mechanism for meaning to move from the culture to the good and as a result ordinary goods can have significant cultural importance. Similarly, the work of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) demonstrates that the consumption experience results in emotional consequences which over time can become associated with some hedonic goods and services. For example, a movie can trigger emotions like fear, sadness or joy that come to characterize a particular movie franchise. The author’s seminal paper challenged the traditional information processing model of consumer choice by arguing that the consumption experience is characterized by thoughts, beliefs, pleasure and emotion, all of which influence choice. As a result, consumption objects become filled with objective and subjective meaning over time.

A FOUR-DIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK OF BRAND MEANING

From the previous review of the meaning literature, four natural dimensions of meaning emerge to form a comprehensive definition. As such, brand meaning is broadly defined here as
the complex collection of perceptions that are produced by the consumer from the marketplace and culture around them. These perceptions are based on the consumer’s interpretation of the brands attributes, functional benefits, emotional experience and symbolism. As such, a brand’s meaning can be represented in a perceptual space to represent the extent to which the brand has a relatively high or low level of meaning across the four dimensions. The perceptual map in Figure 1 provides a visual illustration of the conceptual framework and how brands may be depicted. The discussion that follows focuses on each dimension of the model and provides additional support and examples. Examples are for expository purposes only and are drawn from existing literature and limited preliminary research.

**DIMENSIONS OF MEANING: ATTRIBUTE**

Product attributes and features are necessary, but not sufficient, elements of an object’s meaning (Fournier 1991; Hirschman 1986; Kleine and Kernan 1988; Kleine and Kernan 1991; Ligas and Cotte 1999; Solomon 1983). For non-branded objects, attributes have been defined in the literature as the perceived physical characteristics of an object (Kleine and Kernan 1988; 1991). The tangibility of these elements may vary depending on product type (utilitarian vs. hedonic). For example, laundry detergent is clearly a functional product that has very tangible attributes (color, form, etc.) which largely define its meaning. In contrast, the attributes of a movie are far less tangible (humor, beauty, etc) and are resident in the viewer’s experience (Fournier 1991; Hirschman 1986). Drawing on this definition, the dimension of meaning is defined as the physical characteristics that describe the brand. The complete definition is shown below in Table 1.

**DIMENSIONS OF MEANING: FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS**
Related to a product’s attributes is its performance; another important element of object meaning. Performance has been defined as the functional potential of a non-branded object based in part on its attributes and features (Kleine and Kernan 1988; Kleine and Kernan 1991). Like attributes, product performance can be more or less tangible as a function of the product type delivering utilitarian or psychological benefits. Within the four-dimensional model of brand meaning, performance is translated to functional benefits. Functional benefits of a brand are clearly related to attributes; take for example Tide laundry detergent. Attributes for this brand may include white powder, original scent and expensive which then enable functional benefits like cleans clothes or leaves clothes smelling fresh. Similarly a more experiential brand like the Boston Red Sox might have attributes like good players and talented general manager which in part lead to a benefit like winning championships.

DIMENSIONS OF MEANING: EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

Beyond the attribute and performance dimensions of object meaning, there are other intangible aspects that should also be considered. Emotional components of meaning include felt emotion and emotional response (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Hirschman and Stern 1999; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy 1984) as well as emotional attachment (Richins 1997; Shimp and Madden 1988). As Fournier (1991) points out the emotional component of object meaning can range in intensity; from low to high. Emotional components of object meaning are often more intense for hedonic vs. utilitarian objects.

However even the most mundane brand can have emotion based meaning. There are numerous typologies and taxonomies of emotion in the social psychology literature (Izard 1977; Mehrabian and Russell 1974; Plutchik 1980) and more specifically in the consumption literature (Derbaix and Pham 1991; Havlena and Holbrook 1986; Havlena, Holbrook, and Lehmann 1989;
Hirschman and Stern 1999; Mehrabian and Russell 1974; Richins 1997; Richins, McKeage, and Najjar 1992). Despite the significant amount of research, there is little consensus on what feelings are most relevant for consumer research. However, the most recent work by Richins (1997) develops the Consumption Emotion Set (CES) which is a set of diverse descriptors representing the range of emotions felt in consumption situations. Richins’ CES includes: anger, discontent, worry, sadness, fear, shame, envy, loneliness, romantic love, love, peacefulness, contentment, optimism, joy, excitement, surprise, guilty, proud, eager, and relieved. Given this range of emotions that are associated with consumption, this dimension of meaning is captured as emotional experience. It is easy to see how emotional experiences are associated with hedonic brands like the Boston Red Sox. However, simple consumer products can be associated with a positive or negative emotional experience as well. For example, the Mountain Dew brand is often associated with feelings of excitement and pleasure.

**DIMENSIONS OF MEANING: SYMBOLISM**

Finally, there are representational or symbolic elements of consumption object meaning that are drawn from the culturally constituted world. This component of meaning is often linked to the culture’s unique conception of time, space, nature and person (McCracken 1986) during a given period. For example, the “hippie” movement of the 1960s emerged from socially conscious, anti-establishment sentiment expressed by a select group of individuals during a politically turbulent era in the United States. Clothing (tie-dye, sandals, etc.), music (e.g. Jimmy Hendrix, The Beatles), and automobiles (e.g. the Volkswagen van and Beetle) took on the values and meaning of this movement and continue to be commercialized in the marketplace as emblems of the era (Brown, Sherry Jr, and Kozinets 2003; Thompson and Haytko 1997). In a complimentary research stream, the symbolic nature of products has been examined in a social
Solomon (1983) proposes that symbolic product meaning plays an important role in driving social behaviors. These behaviors are related to how the individual defines herself and performs in social settings i.e. role based meaning. From this body of important research, the symbolic dimension of brand meaning is defined in terms of what it represents within a social and broader cultural context.

In the next section, results of an exploratory study will provide some initial empirical support for the dimensions of brand meaning discussed above. Consistent with the definition, this study is designed to specifically address the nature of meaning for well-known brands and as such incorporates a number of techniques that allow subjects to provide structured and unstructured open-ended reactions. These propositions are examined in the following study:

P_1: A well-known brand’s meaning can be reliably identified in terms of four discrete, yet interrelated dimensions; attributes, functional benefits, emotion, and symbolism.

P_{2a}: Brand meaning for well-known hedonic brands will be higher in emotion and symbolic dimensions vs. attribute and functional benefit dimensions.

P_{2b}: Brand meaning for well-known utilitarian brands will be higher in attribute and functional benefit dimensions vs. emotion and symbolic dimensions.
METHODS AND ANALYSIS

Overview
This study is designed to assess the underlying dimensions of brand meaning as conceptualized in the extent literature. This study uses open ended surveys so that subjects can provide a broad range of descriptive statements in their own voice across a broad range of product categories. This type of exploratory research has been used in the past to examine object and brand meaning (Farquhar 1992; Kleine and Kernan 1988; Szalay and Deese 1978) and are necessary to ensure the full domain of the brand meaning construct is recovered as a solid foundation for subsequent research.

Instrument Pre-testing
30 undergraduate students at University of Cincinnati participated in the pre-test in exchange for course participation credit. Half of the students were asked to read a general profile which asked them to list well-known brands that they had used for a significant period of time, were satisfied with and expected to use for the foreseeable future. They then selected the brand they liked the most from the list. Next, the students were asked to write a short conversation between themselves and the brand they selected as if the brand had come to life. Finally, the students were asked to list words and phrases that describe what the brand they selected means to them. The other half of the students were given a brand, the University of Cincinnati, and asked to complete a similar survey.

All students concluded with questions regarding the clarity and difficulty of the task. The results of this pre-test were used to refine the survey and procedures for the primary data collection. Specifically, the conversation task was simplified; instead of personifying the brand and describing a conversation, subjects would simply write a story in the final data collection.
Some format changes were made to the thought listing task to make the responses easier to read and understand. Details of the final instrument are described in the next section.

**Study Procedure**

Eighty students in an introductory marketing course completed the final survey in exchange for course credit. Forty-four students read a general profile similar to the one used in the pre-testing and were asked to generate a list of brands and select the brand they liked the most. This type of self-selection procedure was effective in the pre-testing and has been used in other experiments where first-hand experience with well known objects or brands is required (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995; Richins 1997; Thomson, MacInnis, and Park 2005).

Next, participants were asked to write a short story involving themselves and the brand they selected. The story could be real or fictitious. The subjects were then asked to complete a thought elicitation task for the brand they selected. Specifically, they were asked to list words or short phrases that describe what the brand means to them. Below the directions, ten boxes were provided for their answers. After completing the thought listing, students were instructed to review what they had written and rank each word or phrases. They were instructed to put a “1” next to the thought or phrase that best represented what they thought of the brand, a “2” next to the next best and so on. Finally, the students completed the Hedonic and Utilitarian Attitude scale (HED/UT) (Voss, Spangenberg, and Grohmann 2003) for the brand they selected. General demographic, product usage, and brand familiarly and affinity information were also collected. The remaining 36 students completed the same survey except they were asked to use the University of Cincinnati brand as the brand stimulus. The final version of the surveys can be found in Appendix A (self-selected brand) and Appendix B (University of Cincinnati brand).
Analysis

A number of steps were taken to prepare the data for analysis. First, two coders were briefed on the four dimensions of brand meaning model and independently examined the responses to the thought listing task. Specifically, each coder read the story the subject wrote about the selected (or given) brand. Then the coder read and assigned each response to the thought listing task to one of the four dimensions of brand meaning: attribute, functional benefit, emotional experience, or symbolism. Items that could not be categorized into one of the four dimensions were coded for a fifth category, “other dimension of meaning (See Appendix C for category definitions). After the coders completed the coding, a short debrief was conducted by the author. As discussed in the literature review, the definitions in Appendix C are based on previous object meaning research (Fournier 1991; Hirschman 1986; Kleine and Kernan 1988; Ligas and Cotte 1999; McCracken 1986).

Next, dominance scores were assigned to the thought listing data. An adaptation of the method of continued association (Szalay and Deese 1978) was used. Per Szalay and Deese, a subject’s early responses can be assumed to be more salient and should be given more credence relative to later responses. In line with this premise, dominance scores were assigned based on the order in which the response was given: the first response received a 6, the second received a 5, the third a 4, the forth through seventh a 3, the eighth a 2, and all subsequent responses received a 1. To confirm the validity of this method for assessing salience, a ranked dominance score was also created using the subjects ranking of the responses to the thought listing task. Specifically, the response that was ranked first was given a 6, the second was given a 5 and so on as described above.
Following these preparatory steps, the coded responses were analyzed in several ways. First, the results from each coder were compared to determine the inter-coder agreement and general fit of the four-dimensional model. Next, the distribution of each response within the brand meaning model and its salience to the brand was assessed. The number of responses in each category (attribute, performance, emotion, symbolic, and other) were summed for the entire sample to determine the distribution of responses across dimensions. This step was repeated for the portion of the data on which coders agreed; the matched data.

Next for the matched portion of the data, the dominance scores and ranked dominance scores for each response in each dimension were summed to determine the distribution across the dimensions of the model. Finally, the mean score for the hedonic and utilitarian scale items were calculated and used to examine differences in brands in terms of the number and dominance of the four dimensions of the brand meaning model.
RESULTS

Inter-coder Agreement

Data collection included 44 students responding to 38 unique self-nominated brands (four brands were nominated by two different subjects and one brand was nominated three times) plus the 36 responses to the University of Cincinnati (see Table 1 for a list of the self-nominated brands). Across all brands, inter-coder agreement was only 40%; significantly lower than expected. Further examination of the results revealed that more than a third of the disagreements between coders were due to confusion between the attribute and functional benefit dimensions. Take for example, the response “comfortable and soft – not itchy like other materials” for female clothing brand Bebe. In this case, comfort and softness could easily be interpreted as inherent traits of the physical garment or end benefits that the garment delivers. Another example is the response “friendly” for the Kroger grocery store brand. Again, this response could be describing the store personnel or environment, both characteristics of the store, or the friendly service that the personnel and environment deliver. In both cases, it is difficult to determine whether the response is related to the brand’s attributes (the cause) or its benefit (the effect) because the association could reasonable be related to both. Feedback and subsequent conversations with the coders confirmed that it was extremely difficult to distinguish between attributes and benefits across such a wide variety of brands.

The strong relationship between attributes and benefits has been documented in the literature. In Keller’s (2001) two-dimensional definition of brand meaning, performance and imagery, the physical characteristics of the brand are included as a sub-category within the performance dimension. Similarly, Kleine and Kernan (1988) assert that attributes and functional performance characteristics must be taken together to uniquely identify an object’s meaning.
They also acknowledge that their attribute and performance based definition would likely need to be expanded for brands to include intangible elements of meaning (Kleine and Kernan 1988). Based on this, the attribute and functional benefits dimensions were collapsed to yield a three-dimensional definition of brand meaning; functional assets, emotional experience and symbolism. This reduced model is used throughout the remainder of this essay.

Using the three-dimensional definition of brand meaning, inter-coder agreement improved to 61%, still below expectations. However, further analysis revealed that the level of agreement varies significantly between the self-selected brands and the UC brand. Specifically, the inter-coder agreement for the self-nominated brands is 74%, on par with other similar studies (e.g. Kleine and Kernan 1991). In contrast, inter-coder agreement for the UC brand is only 45%. There are several reasonable explanations for this difference. First and most obvious, is the nature of the brand stimulus. In the case of the self-nominated brands, the subjects chose a brand with which they had a long-standing, satisfying relationship. As a group, these subjects had a more consistent and stable perception of the brand they chose. In contrast, the subjects who were assigned the UC brand varied in terms of the nature of their relationship with the brand. For some the relationship was positive; for others it was negative.

To support this rationale, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to identify significant differences between the two groups of subjects. Subjects who chose their own brand were significantly more familiar with and positive toward the brand than those who were assigned the UC brand ($F_{(1,81)}=13.38$, $p<0.001$ and $F_{(1,81)}=82.1$, $p<0.001$, respectively). Also, a review of the stories and thought elicitation responses reveal a decidedly negative tone among the subjects assigned to the UC brand. Anecdotally speaking, this is likely in part due to the
timing of the data collection which was roughly three months after the firing of popular men’s basketball coach, Bob Huggins. The disparity in attitudes between the two groups, and even within the UC group, clearly generated confusion in the coding and perhaps even speaks to the idiosyncratic nature of brand meaning. For all these reasons, the remainder of the analysis will focus on just that group of subjects who self-selected their brand.

**Meaning Distribution and Dominance**

Results of the distribution analysis indicate that attributes and benefits make-up the majority of brand meaning across all the data for the self-selected brands. Specifically, attributes are 38% and benefits an additional 22% accounting for a combined 60% of the total response. Despite the skew toward functional associations, this study was able to uncover a significant number of intangible aspects of meaning that are unique to branded goods and services and have not been discussed in other empirical meaning research. Emotional experiences and symbolism accounted for 25% and 8% of the total meaning respectively.

The remaining results in this section are for the 74% of the data on which the coders agreed on the meaning dimension. It is important to examine this sub-set of data as it reveals how each dimension of meaning is distributed within the final three-dimensional model that represents brand meaning. The functional associations, labeled functional assets in the final model, represent nearly 80% of brand meaning with emotional experience accounting for 11% and symbolism 7%. Only 2% of the responses fall into the “other” category. The increased prominence of the functional assets is in part due to the consolidation of the previous attribute and benefit dimensions. Recall that confusion between the attribute and benefit dimensions was the primary source of coder disagreement. However, it is important to note that nearly all of the disagreements involving the attribute dimension were with the benefit dimension. For all the
other dimensions (benefit, emotional experience, symbolism, and other) the disagreements where not primarily with one other dimension, but occurred fairly evenly across all the remaining dimensions. As a result, nearly all of the attribute related meaning remains in the final model and the other dimensions have lower real and relative representation (See Figure 2).

The dominance analysis, using Szalay and Desse’s (1978) methodology, reveals a consistent pattern. Again, the functional assets (attributes and benefits) account for nearly 80% of the brand meaning while emotional experience is 12%, symbolism is 7%, and other is 2%. The validity of this method of assessing salience is confirmed by the ranked dominance analysis which has nearly identical results. See Figures 3 and 4 for details.

Meaning by Brand Type: Hedonic vs. Utilitarian

Initial analysis of the hedonic and utilitarian attitude scale indicates that all the self-selected brands have relatively high hedonic and utilitarian attitude scores. The X-Y plot in Figure 5 demonstrates that these brands all cluster in the upper right quadrant (plot is constructed according to Crowley, Spangenberg, and Hughes 1992). This result is not surprising as Voss, Spangenberg and Grohmann (2003, study 5) found that there is a significant positive relationship between hedonic attitudes and product category involvement. It is reasonable to suggest that involvement was high among subjects in the self-selection group as they chose brands for which they had a positive, on-going experience. The nature of the relationship (positive, long-standing, satisfying) between the subject and the brand is also likely the reason for the high level of utilitarian attitudes. Given these results and the high level of functional assets (attributes and benefits) found in this study, it is not possible to examine the propositions related to hedonic and utilitarian attitudes (\(P_{2a}\) and \(P_{2b}\)).
With that said, there is still an opportunity to examine the potential effects of hedonic and utilitarian attitudes. To do this a mean split of both scales was used to form four exclusive conditions: High Utilitarian-Low Hedonic, High Utilitarian-High Hedonic, Low Utilitarian-High Hedonic and Low Utilitarian-Low Hedonic. Note, the high and low distinctions for each condition are relative to the mean utilitarian and mean hedonic scores which are both significantly higher than the scale mid-point (p<0.001). Results suggest that meaning for brands with higher levels of utilitarian attitudes, while holding hedonic attitudes constant at the mean, contains directionally more functional assets (see Figure 6). In addition, meaning for brands with higher levels of hedonic attitudes, while holding utilitarian attitudes constant at the mean, is characterized by significantly more emotions (p<0.01). See Figure 7.
DISCUSSION

The primary goal of this initial exploratory research was to assess a multi-dimensional definition of brand meaning that is appropriate for a wide range of successful well-known brands. The initial four-dimensional definition, while conceptually sound, proved to be somewhat difficult to deliver based on the current distinction between a brand’s attributes and its functional benefits. As a result, a three-dimensional definition emerged. This reduced model continues to reflect the spirit of the original definition which embraced both tangible and intangible elements of brand meaning and acknowledged the consumer’s role in creating meaning. Therefore it is still appropriate to define brand meaning as the complex collection of perceptions that are produced by the consumer from the marketplace and culture around them. As demonstrated in this study, these perceptions are based largely on the consumer’s interpretation of the brand’s functional/utilitarian assets, the emotional experiences it evokes and the cultural symbols it represents.

From this revised definition comes the perceptual model of meaning shown in Figure 9. The results of this exploratory study support this model as coders agree nearly 75% of the time that 98% of the brand meaning for self-selected brands is captured by this definition. In addition, the results of the distribution and dominance analysis indicate that all three dimensions are well represented and salient.

The somewhat unexpected results for the UC brand suggest that brand meaning is quite personal and can take on both positive and negative forms. Because the focus here was to examine a broad range of successful brands, a complimentary stream of discovery will be needed to examine the unique nature of meaning for brands that leave consumers highly conflicted.
The examination of hedonic and utilitarian attitudes toward brands provides some partial support for the initial propositions, P\textsubscript{2a} and P\textsubscript{2b}. The functional/utilitarian dimension of meaning appears to be related to the utilitarian attitudes toward the brand. Similarly, the emotion-based dimension of meaning seems to be more evident for brands with high hedonic attitudes. However, these results must be taken with a bit of caution. The presumably high level of involvement associated with these self-selected brands clearly contributed to high hedonic and utilitarian attitudes. These inflated scores, while consistent with previous literature, may have somewhat distorted the relationship between the nature of the brand attitude (hedonic or utilitarian) and the brand meaning dimensions. With this said, the results are consistent with P\textsubscript{2a} and P\textsubscript{2b} and would likely be strengthened by a less extreme distribution of attitudes.
LIMITATIONS

While the results discussed above are encouraging, they are not without limitation. The primary limitation of this study is the sample. The convenience sample of students limits the results to this population and the brands that are available and important to them. By no means is this a small or homogeneous group of brands (see Table 2 for the list of brands nominated in this study) however, the types of brands offered are potentially limited. For example, certain luxury brands like Lamborghini (car), Bang and Olufsen (home electronics), and Rolex (jewelry) are unlikely to be found in a student sample of self-selected brands. Similarly, there are brands that while affordable, may not be relevant for this sample due to their life stage. For example, most students are unlikely to have significant experience with brands related to life insurance (e.g. Nationwide) or retirement planning (e.g. Charles Schwab).

A second limitation of this study is related to the data collection method. While the paper and pencil open-ended survey was able to generate both functional and intangible aspects of meaning, an alternative method may have uncovered more emotional and symbolic elements of meaning. For example, a one-on-one or small group interview format would give the interviewer an extended period of time to delve deeper into the topic of brand meaning. As a result, you may gain a richer understanding of the functional and intangible dimensions of meaning.
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Mature brands are an important part of the landscape of brands as they are often cornerstones of the corporate portfolio and significant sources of organic growth. As argued throughout this paper, brand meaning is an important and dynamic construct for these brands. Therefore, the primary contribution of this work is to provide a framework for understanding and uncovering what brands mean to consumers. It is clear from the review of the literature that mature brands are more than just performance and imagery. There is evidence that felt emotion, emotional attachment and emotional response are an important part of what brands mean. Likewise, the cultural context in which brands are consumed undoubtedly influences a brand’s meaning. As such, a definition of meaning that incorporates a brand’s functional/utilitarian assets, the emotions it inspires and the cultural qualities it embodies is appropriate.

This three-dimensional framework provides much needed structure versus other definitions in the literature. Both tangible and abstract components of meaning are incorporated in this framework and therefore it can be applied to a broad range of traditional and non-traditional brands including products, services, vacation destinations, television programs, sports celebrities, politicians and authors. This model is also unique in that it acknowledges the consumer’s role in co-creating meaning based on her experience with the brand and years of marketing messages (e.g. advertising, promotion, PR, etc). Specifically, the consumer’s emotional reactions to the brand are captured as well as her interpretation of the brand’s symbolic significance.

This work is a first step toward understanding the complex nature of brand meaning and its application to successful, well-known brands. It also provides an additional lens through which to examine the unique relationship that exists between consumers and their brands. Meaning
provides the foundation on which the relationship is built and is the language through which brands and consumers communicate. A fuller understanding of this dynamic construct also has implications for positioning, targeting and segmentation as well as other brand management decisions that affect a brand’s short and long term success. For example, a better understanding of brand meaning can be helpful in advertising development, celebrity endorsement selection, line-extension decisions, and design changes. In addition, this definition of meaning could also be helpful in understanding how brands create meaning and how meaning moves and changes over time.
Figure 1
Map of Brand Meaning

Figure 2
Meaning Distribution Comparison
(all data vs. matched)
Figure 3
Brand Meaning Dimensions
Dominance Scores

- Emotion Experience: 12%
- Functional Benefits: 19%
- Attributes: 60%
- Symbolism: 7%
- Other: 2%

Figure 4
Brand Meaning Dimensions
Ranked Dominance Scores

- Emotion Experience: 11%
- Functional Benefits: 20%
- Attributes: 60%
- Symbolism: 7%
- Other: 2%
Figure 5
Hedonic-Utilitarian Plot
Figure 6
Mean Number of Functional Assets

Figure 7
Mean Number of Emotions
Figure 8
Map of Brand Meaning

Symbolism

Emotional Experience
Functional Assets

Honda  Nike  University of Cincinnati
Table 1
Definitions of Brand Meaning Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Functional Benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical characteristics that describe the brand (color, price, packaging, signage, location, etc).</td>
<td>The utilitarian value of the brand. Responses that address what the brand does for the person, what it produces, what activities it enables, how it works, and when and why it might be used are included in this category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes tangible and intangible features (e.g. ingredients, hours of operation) and offerings (e.g. flavors, payment options) associated with the brand. General labels for the category or brand itself (e.g. potato chip, clothing, school) are not an attribute.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Experience</td>
<td>Symbolism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The feelings the user has developed as a result of their experiences with the brand. Ranges from mild affinity (e.g. like, dislike, happy) to more intense sensations (e.g. love, hate, joy). Mood states and arousal evoked by the brand as well as statements about emotional investment and attachment are included in this category.</td>
<td>What the brand represents within the given social and cultural context and says about its members. Reflects what is important and valued by the society. Associations that capture the intangible value of the brand are included in this category.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2
Self-selected Brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Product Category*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abercrombie and Fitch</td>
<td>Apparel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alias</td>
<td>Television Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpine</td>
<td>Audio Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anheuser Busch</td>
<td>Alcoholic Beverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>Computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bebe</td>
<td>Apparel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMW</td>
<td>Automobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bounty</td>
<td>Paper Towel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budweiser</td>
<td>Alcoholic Beverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charmin</td>
<td>Bath Tissue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinique</td>
<td>Skin Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crest</td>
<td>Dentifrice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Pablo's</td>
<td>Casual Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove</td>
<td>Personal Cleansing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fender guitars</td>
<td>Musical Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford (2)</td>
<td>Automobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford Mustang</td>
<td>Automobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fossil</td>
<td>Jewelry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap</td>
<td>Apparel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GM</td>
<td>Automobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graeter's</td>
<td>Retail-Ice Cream Outlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honda (2)</td>
<td>Automobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kroger</td>
<td>Retail-Grocery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAC cosmetics</td>
<td>Cosmetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macintosh Computer</td>
<td>Computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Dew</td>
<td>Carbonated Beverages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Basketball Assoc (NBA)</td>
<td>Athletic League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nautica</td>
<td>Apparel /Perfume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nike (4)</td>
<td>Athletic Wear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomi</td>
<td>Produce-tomato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puma</td>
<td>Athletic Wear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph Lauren</td>
<td>Apparel/Shoes/Perfume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxy</td>
<td>Apparel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starbucks (2)</td>
<td>Retail-Coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mars Uolta</td>
<td>Music Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tommy Hilfiger</td>
<td>Apparel /Shoes/Perfume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Armour</td>
<td>Athletic Wear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria's Secret (2)</td>
<td>Intimate Apparel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamaha</td>
<td>Audio Electronics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*based on subject stories.
Appendix A

University of Cincinnati
College of Business Administration
Department of Marketing
Consumer Opinion Survey

Information Sheet
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Before agreeing to participate in this study, it is important that you read and understand the following instructions and statement of confidentiality. They describe the purpose and procedures of the study. Participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw from this study at any time and without penalty by simply returning the questionnaire to the investigator. This study will take from 10 to 15 minutes to complete. You should also understand that there are no risks involved in participating in this study. It is important to understand that no guarantee or assurance can be made as to the results of this study.

By completing this survey, you indicate your consent to participate in this study.

Instructions
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Although participation in this survey is voluntary, please answer all questions. In return for volunteering you will receive participation credit as described by your instructor. After completing this survey, you will notify your instructor of your participation in this study as described at the end of this survey. If you do not want to participate in this study or chose to withdraw at any point you will have an additional opportunity to earn participation points in the course as indicated in your course syllabus.

Statement of Confidentiality
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Your responses will be kept anonymous. The researchers will not be made aware of your personal, identifying information. Further, only the researchers will see your completed questionnaires. Your responses will be combined with those of all other participants, that is, your individual responses will not be identified.

If there are any questions concerning this study you may contact Dr. Chris Allen at 556-7110, Chris.Allen@uc.edu or Felicia Miller at 556-7109, millerfm@email.uc.edu. Both are located in Linder Hall, Marketing Department, 4th floor. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board’s Program Manager, Claudia Norman, at 558-5784, claudia.norman@uc.edu.

***** Thank you very much for your assistance *****
Please remove and keep this page for your reference
Today we are interested in your thoughts and feelings about some brands you are familiar with. Your honest opinions are very important to us, and will help us to understand the various roles that brands can play in different people’s lives.

We will be asking you to generate a list of brands fitting a certain description. We ask you to use a very broad definition for what constitutes a “brand” as you generate these lists. Brands of course can be products that you use in the course of daily living, or services that are delivered through interactions with company employees. But stores are also brands. TV Shows are brands. Vacation destinations are brands. Authors are brands. Even sports teams, colleges, musical groups, celebrities, presidents, and countries can legitimately be considered as brands.

Please follow the directions carefully and answer our questions as thoughtfully as possible in the order they are presented. Please work independently, without talking or looking at others’ responses to the survey. Please know that there are no right or wrong answers to any of our questions: all that matters is your point of view.

Thanks for helping us to understand the role of different brands in your life.

........................................................................................................
In the space below, please list 5 brands with which you have a strong, balanced, and reinforcing relationship. These are brands that you have probably supported for a long time and expect to continue to support in the future. These may be brands that you use to treat yourself or give as a gift to someone else. You are committed to these special brands in some significant and lasting way. These brands acknowledge you as a valued customer to them and in return for your support you receive novel experiences and special attention.

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

Of the brands you have listed above, please circle the one that you like the most.
We would like for you to play a game with the brand you selected: something that will help us to better understand what you really think of this brand. The game may seem unusual, but it is actually a device that advertising agencies and brand managers use all the time when talking with consumers about their brands.

We would like you to write a short story about the brand you selected. Like all stories, your story should have a beginning, middle and an end. Your story can be real or fantasy and should express what you think and feel about the brand. Your story should include yourself, the brand, and any other people that you think are important. Please write your story in the space below.

________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________


Now we would like to learn more about what the brand you selected means to you. In the space below, write down everything that comes to mind when you think about the brand. Please write each word or short phrase inside the boxes below.

Look back at what you wrote, and put a “1” next to the box that contains the word or phrase that best represents what you think of the brand you selected, put a 2 next to the next best, and so on until you have a number next to each box you wrote in.
1. Thinking about the brand you selected, rate it on the following items. Circle the number that best matches your response.

Effective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Ineffective
Helpful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unhelpful
Fun 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not Fun
Exciting 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Dull
Functional 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not Functional
Necessary 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unnecessary
Delightful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not Delightful
Thrilling 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not Thrilling
Practical 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Impractical
Enjoyable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unenjoyable

2. How familiar are you with the brand you selected? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Familiar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unfamiliar

3. What is your attitude toward the brand you selected? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Like 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Dislike
Please circle the responses below that best describe you.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnic Background</th>
<th>Major</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18-25 years old</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26-32 years old</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Digital Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33-40 years old</td>
<td>Hispanic-American</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship/Family Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>over 40 years old</td>
<td>Asian-American</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Native-American</td>
<td>Industrial Management</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Information Systems</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>International Business</td>
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<td>Management</td>
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<td>Marketing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eastern-European</td>
<td>Operations Management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bi/Multi-Racial</td>
<td>Product Information and Supply Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>_________________</td>
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<td>Real Estate</td>
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<td>Freshman</td>
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<td>Junior</td>
<td>Senior</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other: __________</td>
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Thank-you for completing this survey.
Please give the survey to the person administering the survey and initial the class roster.
Appendix B

University of Cincinnati
College of Business Administration
Department of Marketing
Consumer Opinion Survey

Information Sheet
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Before agreeing to participate in this study, it is important that you read and understand the following instructions and statement of confidentiality. They describe the purpose and procedures of the study. Participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw from this study at any time and without penalty by simply returning the questionnaire to the investigator. This study will take from 10 to 15 minutes to complete. You should also understand that there are no risks involved in participating in this study. It is important to understand that no guarantee or assurance can be made as to the results of this study.

By completing this survey, you indicate your consent to participate in this study.

Instructions
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Although participation in this survey is voluntary, please answer all questions. In return for volunteering you will receive participation credit as described by your instructor. After completing this survey, you will notify your instructor of your participation in this study as described at the end of this survey. If you do not want to participate in this study or chose to withdraw at any point you will have an additional opportunity to earn participation points in the course as indicated in your course syllabus.

Statement of Confidentiality
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Your responses will be kept anonymous. The researchers will not be made aware of your personal, identifying information. Further, only the researchers will see your completed questionnaires. Your responses will be combined with those of all other participants, that is, your individual responses will not be identified.

If there are any questions concerning this study you may contact Dr. Chris Allen at 556-7110, Chris.Allen@uc.edu or Felicia Miller at 556-7109, millerfm@email.uc.edu. Both are located in Linder Hall, Marketing Department, 4th floor. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board’s Program Manager, Claudia Norman, at 558-5784, claudia.norman@uc.edu.

***** Thank you very much for your assistance *******

Please remove and keep this page for your reference
Today we are interested in your thoughts and feelings about a brand that you probably know very well. Brands of course can be products that you use in the course of daily living, or services that are delivered through interactions with company employees. However, we ask you to use a very broad definition for what constitutes a “brand”. TV programs are brands. Authors are brands. Even sports teams, colleges, musical groups, celebrities, presidents, pop culture icons and countries can legitimately be considered as brands.

Today we are interested in your thoughts and feelings about the University of Cincinnati brand.

Please follow the directions carefully and answer our questions as thoughtfully as possible in the order they are presented. Please work independently, without talking or looking at others’ responses to the survey. Please know that there are no right or wrong answers to any of our questions: all that matters is your honest point of view.

Thanks for helping us to understand the role of this important brand in your life.
We would like for you to play a game with the University of Cincinnati brand: something that will help us to better understand what you really think of this brand. The game may seem unusual, but it is actually a device that advertising agencies and brand managers use all the time when talking with consumers about their brands.

We would like you to write a short story about the University of Cincinnati. Like all stories, your story should have a beginning, middle and an end. Your story can be real or fantasy and should express what you think and feel about the University of Cincinnati. Your story should include yourself, the University, and any other people that you think are important. Please write your story in the space below.
Now we would like to learn more about what the University of Cincinnati means to you. In the space below, write down everything that comes to mind when you think about the University of Cincinnati. Please write each word or short phrase inside the boxes below.

Look back at what you wrote, and put a “1” next to the box that contains the word or phrase that best represents what you think of the University of Cincinnati, put a 2 next to the next best, and so on until you have a number next to each box you wrote in.
3. Thinking about the University of Cincinnati, rate it on the following items. Circle the number that best matches your response.

- **Effective**: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Ineffective**
- **Helpful**: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Unhelpful**
- **Fun**: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Not Fun**
- **Exciting**: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Dull**
- **Functional**: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Not Functional**
- **Necessary**: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Unnecessary**
- **Delightful**: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Not Delightful**
- **Thrilling**: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Not Thrilling**
- **Practical**: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Impractical**
- **Enjoyable**: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Unenjoyable**

4. How **familiar** are you with the University of Cincinnati? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

- **Familiar**: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Unfamiliar**

4. What is your **attitude** toward the University of Cincinnati? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

- **Like**: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Dislike**
Please circle the responses below that best describe you.

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Thank-you for completing this survey.  
Please give the survey to the person administering the survey and initial the class roster.
Appendix C

Primary Dimensions

Attribute
Physical characteristics that describe the brand (color, price, packaging, signage, location, etc). Includes features (e.g. ingredients, hours of operation) and offerings (e.g. flavors, payment options) associated with the brand. General labels for the category or brand itself (e.g. potato chip, clothing, school) are not an attribute.

Functional Benefit
The utilitarian value of the brand. Responses that address what the brand does for the person, what it produces, what activities it enables, how it works, and when and why it might be used are included in this category.

Emotional Experience
The feelings the user has developed as a result of their experiences with the brand. Ranges from mild affinity (e.g. like, dislike, happy) to more intense sensations (e.g. love, hate, joy). Mood states and arousal evoked by the brand as well as statements about emotional investment and attachment are included in this category.

Symbolism
What the brand represents within the given social and cultural context and says about its members. Reflects what is important and valued by the society. Associations that capture the intangible value of the brand are included in this category.

Sub-Dimensions

Positive Feelings

Negative Feelings

Self Image

Social Image

Other
Associations that do not fit in any other dimension.
REFERENCES


Boulding, William and Ruskin Morgan (1997), "Pulling the plug to stop the new product drain," Journal of Marketing Research, 34 (February), 164-76.


Edell, Julie A. and Marian Chapman Burke (1986), "The Relative Impact of Prior Brand Attitude and Attitude Toward the Ad on Brand Attitude After Ad Exposure," in Advertising and


WHAT DO CELEBRITIES MEAN?
A four-dimensional model for understanding celebrity brands.

ABSTRACT

In the field of marketing, celebrities are often thought of as brands. A celebrity’s name and image attracts a great deal of attention from the public and can be effective tools to promote traditional goods and services. However, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements remains an open question in part because it is difficult to know at any point in time what meaning a celebrity brings to the brand it promotes. The exploratory study reported here attempts to examine what celebrities mean in terms of four distinct, yet interrelated dimensions of brand meaning: attributes, functional benefits, emotional experience and symbolism. Results suggest that celebrity meaning is more complex than the meaning ascribed to traditional brands. As such, branding and brand management principles may be inadequate for understanding celebrities and their role in the marketplace.
INTRODUCTION

“North Americans are not “star crazy” but merely active consumers of the meanings that are made available by the celebrity world.”

McCracken, 2005

Celebrities are a permanent fixture in our society. They are everywhere: on television, in magazines and newspapers and on the radio. Defined generally as well known individuals who receive significant media attention, these public figures include actors, athletes, musicians, models and even chefs, authors, journalists, and politicians. Whether they are famous or infamous, many people can’t seem to get enough of celebrities. As McCracken points out, this fascination with celebrities is a natural part of consumer behavior in North American culture.

In the field of marketing, celebrities have been treated as brands. Like traditional products and services, celebrities are distinguished by a recognizable name and image and evoke a great deal of meaning. They are promoted and sold to us through the mass media. As consumers, we “buy” celebrities by going to their movies, watching them play a sport, and listening to their music.

In addition to being brands unto themselves, celebrities play another important role in the marketing system: they endorse products and services. In this function, they lend their own personal meaning to the brands they promote. As such, the endorsement relationship can be characterized as managing the meaning of two brands; the celebrity’s brand and the brand she or he is endorsing. While there is considerable debate about the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements, there is general agreement that the celebrity’s meaning is a significant factor that distinguishes success and failure (Dholakia and Sternthal 1977; Ohanian 1990; Ohanian 1991; Till 1998; Till and Busler 1998; Till and Busler 2000). Despite the significant roles celebrities
play in our society and the marketplace, there has been little empirical research on celebrity meaning and how it does or does not transfer to brands.

The purpose of the research that follows is to apply the four-dimensional definition of brand meaning developed in Essay 1 to celebrity brands. As such the following sections report the results of an exploratory study that provides new insights into the complex nature of meaning for celebrity brands. This begins with a brief review of the meaning literature discussed in Essay 1 followed by the method and analysis sections and study results. Limitations of this study as well as future research directions are discussed in the final section.
LITERATURE REVIEW

WHAT DO BRANDS MEAN?

Brands, particularly those that have been around for decades, are full of meaning. Brand meaning is frequently referenced in the brand equity literature (Keller 1998; 1999; 2001; 2002; 2003). In this context, brand meaning is defined conceptually as the brand’s performance (attributes and benefits) and image (e.g. user profile, personality, values, and heritage) related associations. However, the image component of meaning in this definition lacks structure and definition for these important intangible associations. In addition, the two-dimensional definition does not recognize the consumer’s role in creating meaning. It assumes that the marketer plays the primary role in establishing brand meaning in consumer’s minds through marketing programs and activities.

However, consumers don’t just store and retrieve the information they are given about brands. They take information about the brand and make it their own based on their unique experiences. As such, a number of researchers have put forth an alternative view of brand meaning that acknowledges the consumer’s role in making brand meaning (Allen, Fournier, and Miller forthcoming; Hirschman 1986; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Holt 2004; Holt 2005; McCracken 1986; Schroeder and Salzer-Mörling 2005; Schroeder 2005). Holbrook and Hirschman’s seminal article (1982) was among the first to delineate the experiential aspects of consumption that are characterized by both environmental and consumer inputs. For their part, consumers not only seek and use information, the respond emotionally to the consumption experience which informs current and future decisions. The work of consumer culture researchers extends and refines this perspective by offering that all environmental inputs are influenced by culture (e.g. Arnould and Thompson 2005; Holt 2004; McCracken 1986). As a
result, consumers draw from systems that exist in the culture like advertising and fashion to create meaning for consumption goods (McCracken 1986; Thompson and Haytko 1997). This co-created perspective results in consumer goods and services that are full of emotion and symbolism.

From this overview of the brand meaning literature, four natural dimensions of meaning emerge to form a comprehensive definition. Brand meaning is broadly defined here as the complex collection of perceptions that are produced by the consumer from the marketplace and culture around them. These perceptions are based on the consumer’s interpretation of the brand’s attributes and functional benefits, their emotional experience with the brand and its symbolic qualities. As such, a brand’s meaning can be depicted in a perceptual space to represent the extent to which a brand has a relatively high or low level of meaning across the four dimensions. The perceptual map in Figure 1 provides a visual illustration of the conceptual definition and how brands may be represented.

WHAT DO CELEBRITIES MEAN?

According to the American Marketing Association brands are defined as “a name, term, sign, symbol or combination of them that is designed to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers to differentiate them from those of competitors”. However, taking a broader view of brands, it is reasonable to suggest that a celebrity is a unique type of brand. A celebrity’s name is certainly a large part of his or her distinct identity within a given field. Take for example mega celebs like Madonna, Oprah, Cher and Tiger whose first names evoke images of well-known individuals. These single names, not unlike Nike, Coca-Cola and FedEx, are associated with a plethora of tangible and intangible meaning.
As established in the previous essay, brand meaning is defined in terms of the consumer’s perception of its attributes and benefits as well as the emotions it evokes and the culture-based values it represents. Meaning for celebrities can be similarly defined. The attributes and benefits of a celebrity are related to the individual’s physical appearance (young, blond, tall, etc.) and what she or he does for others (sing, acting, play a game, etc.). However, beyond these generic descriptors celebrity meaning can also be defined by intangible associations.

First there is the emotion and emotional attachment that celebrities inspire through their actions and their very presence. This can be seen in the frenzy of excitement that surrounds Oprah Winfrey at the beginning of her show and the obsessive curiosity that motivates fans to chase Madonna through the streets of London and consume tabloid media about her. Celebrity meaning can also be defined by the culture’s conceptions of age, class, gender, and status (McCracken 1989). These individuals represent cultural values like youth, beauty and success. Unlike anonymous actors or models, celebrity meaning goes beyond demographic information to represent the subtle yet vast differences among individuals and groups within a given culture. Celebrities as a whole represent all that a culture admires and aspires to as well as what it disapproves of and revolts against (McCracken 2005). For example, Tom Cruise represents the quintessential “ubersexual” male: he is attractive, sexy, passionate, and of late outspoken, controversial and a little annoying.

A celebrity’s meaning is not singularly defined, but rather is a unique collection of meanings that are based on the individual’s public actions and roles (McCracken 2005). It is this unique meaning that allows celebrities to play an important role in the world economy and more specifically the marketing system. To better understand the function of celebrities in the
marketing system, McCracken (1989) points out the need for tools to help determine celebrity meaning.

In the next section, the results of an exploratory study are discussed. This study attempts to extend the brand meaning model developed in Essay 1 to assess the underlying dimensions of meaning that are associated with celebrity brands. As suggested discussion above, celebrity meaning goes beyond physical characteristics and vocation to include emotions and culturally-defined symbols. As such, the following proposition is examined in this exploratory study:

P1: A celebrity’s meaning can be reliably identified in terms of four discrete, yet interrelated dimensions: attributes, functional benefits, emotional experience, and symbolism.
METHODS AND ANALYSIS

Overview
This study is a reapplication of the method in Essay 1. Again a diverse range of celebrities that are familiar to and well liked by the subject are need. For this reason, the pre-test and study procedures in this study are the same as those used in Essay 1.

Instrument Pre-testing
The goal of this pre-testing was to refine the procedures for the primary data collection. 15 undergraduate students at a large Midwestern university participated in the pre-test in exchange for course credit. Students were asked to list celebrities that they have known for a long time, have a positive opinion of, and expect to support in the future. These students were then asked to select the celebrity they liked the most from their list and then write words and phrases that come to mind when they think of the celebrity. Finally, the students completed questions regarding the clarity and difficulty of the task. It was important to use this type of self-nomination technique to generate a diverse set of stimuli that fully represent the domain. Results suggested that the instructions were clear and the task relatively easy. However, the thought listing task did not stimulate a sufficient number of thoughts. For this reason, a short creative exercise was inserted before the thought listing task in the final data collection.

Study Procedure
Half of the students read a general profile for celebrities and were asked to generate a list of groups or individuals they liked and were familiar with that fit the profile used in the pre-test. They then selected the celebrity that they liked the most from their list. Next, the students completed a creative exercise. Specifically they were asked to imagine being in an elevator with their chosen celebrity and describe the conversation that would take place. After this exercise,
participants were asked to list words or short phrases that describe what the celebrity means to them. They were then asked to rank the thoughts and phrases from most to least important.

The other half of the subjects completed the same creative exercise, thought listing and ranking task; however, they were given Bob Huggins as their celebrity stimulus. General demographic, celebrity familiarity and affinity information was collected from all subjects. On average, the survey was completed in 15-18 minutes. Eighty-three students from an introductory marketing course completed the survey in exchange for course participation credit. Forty-six students completed the survey for a self-nominated celebrity and thirty-seven completed it for Bob Huggins. The final version of the surveys can be found in Appendix A (self-selected celebrity) and Appendix B (Bob Huggins).

Analysis
The data was analyzed via SPSS in several ways. First, two coders were briefed on the study objective, and independently read each elevator conversation and then examined the written responses. The coders assigned each item in the thought listing to one of the four dimensions of brand meaning: attribute, functional benefit, emotional experience or symbolism. Items that did not fit into one of the four dimensions were coded for a fifth category labeled “other”. The definitions that the coders used for each category are shown in Appendix C. These definitions were adapted from the study in Essay 1 based. The results from each coder were compared to determine the inter-coder agreement and general fit of the four-dimensional model.

Next, in an effort to assess the salience of each response, in addition to its contribution to the proposed meaning model, an adaptation of the method of continued association (Szalay and Deese 1978) was used. Per Szalay and Deese, a subject’s early responses can be assumed to be
more salient and should be given more credence relative to later responses. In line with this premise, each subject’s celebrity descriptor was assigned a dominance score based on the order in which the response was given. Dominance scores were assigned in accordance with Szalay and Deese (1978): the first response received a 6, the second received a 5, the third a 4, the forth through seventh a 3, the eighth a 2, and all subsequent responses received a 1.

Next, the number of responses in each category (attribute, performance, emotion and symbolic) were summed for the entire sample to determine the distribution of responses across dimensions. This task was repeated for the portion of data on which the coders agreed. Finally, the dominance scores for each response in each category were summed for the matched data to determine the distribution of dominance across dimensions.

As a check of the validity of Szalay and Deese’s dominance procedure, subject ranking data was then analyzed. Each rank was assigned a dominance score as prescribed by Szalay and Deese (e.g. the word or phrase ranked number 1 was assigned a 6, the number 2 ranked word or phrase was assigned a 5, etc.). Again the dominance score for each response among the matched data was summed to determine the distribution of rank based dominance scores across dimensions.
RESULTS

Inter-coder Agreement
Data collection included 46 students responding to 37 unique self-nominated celebrities (three brands were nominated by two different subjects, one celebrity was nominated by three people and one celebrity was nominated five times) and the 37 responses to Bob Huggins. Across all celebrities, inter-coder agreement was only 39%, in line with the initial finding in Study 1 for the brand stimuli. Attempts to fit the three-dimensional model from the first study (functional assets, emotional experience, and symbolism) resulted in essentially the same level of inter-coder agreement (41%).

While there was a somewhat higher inter-coder agreement for the self-nominated celebrity (42%) vs. the given celebrity (35%) it does not explain the overall poor agreement level as in Study 1. Unlike the given brand in Study 1, University of Cincinnati, the given celebrity in Study 2, Bob Huggins, elicited decidedly more positive responses consistent with the responses for the self-selected celebrity. All were well-known and well liked. The mean familiarity and attitude scores for both were significantly higher (p<0.01) than the neutral point on the 5-point likert-type scale. The moderate difference between the two sets of data may still be related to significance differences in the self-selected vs. assigned celebrity conditions. Subjects who self-selected the celebrity had an even higher level of familiarity and liking than those who were given Bob Huggins (p<0.02 and p<0.001, respectively). As in Study 1, this may have led to a less consistent response to the given celebrity.

Meaning Distribution
Further examination of the celebrity results indicated that the fundamental structure of the responses is quite different. The data in Essay 1 and this study differed significantly in terms
of the distribution across the dimensions of meaning. For instance, attributes and functional benefits dominated the full data set (60% combined) and matched data (79% combined) in the first study. In contrast, these functional assets only accounted for 36% of the full data set and 37% of the matched data for celebrity brands. This difference is not surprising given the differences in the nature of the stimuli. You would expect that there would be fewer functional associations attributed to a well-known and well-liked celebrity.

However, the other significant difference is the number of responses that do not fit into the four dimensions. In the first study, only an average of 5% of the data was assigned to the “other” category. In this study of celebrities, on average 36% of the responses were labeled as “other” (See Figures 2 and 3). In the case of celebrity brands, there are clearly one or more unique dimensions of meaning that is currently being captured in the “other” category. In addition, the single largest source of inter-coder disagreement (35%) involved the “other” dimension of the model.

Content Review

Given the high level of responses coded as “other”, a preliminary content review was conducted. The goal was to determine if any general themes existed within this data which may help identify additional dimensions of meaning that are unique to celebrity brands. An extensive emergent content analysis is beyond the scope of the current research; however, the preliminary themes discussed below suggest this may be appropriate for future research.

The primary theme that exists in the responses in the “other” category is related to the world of celebrity; descriptions of the mundane and the interesting details about celebrities that seem to intrigue us. For example, statements in reference to actress Julia Roberts include
“highest paid”, “doesn’t do commercials”, and “different hairdos all the time”. Similarly, responses to actress Jessica Simpson include “broke up with Nick Lachey” and “doesn’t know what tuna is”. Other responses along this theme include: “he died before his time” in reference to rapper Tupac Shakur, “really into cars” in reference to comedian Jay Leno and “did a popular Forgers commercial” in reference to the musical group Rockapella.

These statements speak to what McCracken (1986) describes as the cultural category of the human community. This category is concerned in part with status and class and how people live their lives. In the context of celebrities, McCracken would suggest that these seemingly trivial aspects of celebrity life contribute to the individual’s overall meaning and ultimate success in the marketplace (McCracken 1989).

Other themes that emerge from this sub-set of data provide direction in terms of improving the existing dimensions of meaning in the model. For example, a number of responses address the role or outlet that enables the celebrity to deliver his or her craft. For example, references to actor Will Ferrell are related to the movies he has done; “Elf”, “Anchorman”, and “A Night at the Roxy”. Other similar statements include: “Bengals” in reference to Carson Palmer, “Tonight Show” in reference to Jay Leno, and “small venue concerts” in reference to musical group Tilly and the Wall. Because these comments are related to what benefits the celebrity delivers it seems appropriate that the operational definition of the functional benefit dimension be expanded to include these occupation related associations.

In a similar vein, there are a number of responses that are evaluative statements about intangible attributes of the individual. These are qualities that do not rise to the level of cultural symbol, but rather merely describe an aspect of the individual’s character or personality.
Examples include; “comfortable in her own skin” in reference to talk show host Ellen DeGeneres, “hustler” in reference to rapper/music mogul Jay-Z, and “open minded” in reference to actor Johnny Depp. These responses suggest that perhaps the existing attribute category should not only include physical characteristics, but also intangible qualities that describe the individual though don’t necessarily distinguish them as a symbol or icon.

Meaning Dominance

Despite the unexpected distribution and low inter-coder agreement, it is still useful to look at the distribution of dominance in an effort to further understand the uniqueness of celebrity meaning. The dominance analysis, using Szalay and Desse’s (1978) methodology, reveals that the dominance scores are generally close to the raw count suggesting that the distribution of meaning by dimension reflects what information is most salient to the subjects about the celebrity (See Figures 4 and 5). The “other” dimension accounts for 38% of the brand meaning while attribute is 13%, functional benefit is 29%, emotional experience is 9%, and symbolism is 11%. The validity of this method of assessing salience is confirmed by the ranked dominance analysis which yields nearly identical results. See Figures 5 for details.
DISCUSSION

These results suggest that the four proposed dimensions of meaning do not adequately explain the complex perceptions that consumers associate with celebrities. The overall low inter-coder agreement indicates that the existing dimensions and definitions do not reliably capture the meaning that is ascribed to a diverse set of celebrities. In addition, despite a consistent collection method, those responses differed both quantitatively and qualitatively from those examined in Essay 1.

The “other” category was the largest source of inter-coder disagreement. Over a third of the disagreement occurred because coders could not reliably determine whether the response fit into one of the four dimensions or not. This suggests that perhaps the existing dimensions need to be more precisely defined to increase discrimination and reduce the confusion.

Interestingly, the “other” category was also the largest source of inter-coder agreement. From the dominance analysis we see that nearly 40% of the matched data is categorized as “other”. Said another way; the current definition only captures about 60% of celebrity meaning in this study. So despite the fact that coders agreed that these responses did not fit into any of the existing dimensions, it begs the question – where do they belong? The preliminary content analysis provides some initial hints at the answer to this question, but clearly one or more dimensions are yet to be “discovered”.
SUPPLEMENTAL RESULTS

In an effort to incorporate the learnings from the initial analysis and improve the overall results, the coding rules were revised and a second set of coders examined the data. The attribute dimension was expanded to include not only the celebrity’s physical characteristics, but also his or her personality traits and general disposition or attitude. The functional benefit dimension was expanded to include the locations and outlets in which the celebrity works. These associations are added to this category because they seem to qualify and compliment the celebrity’s occupation which is currently included in the benefit dimension. This includes physical locations (e.g. stadiums, concert halls, etc.) and the vehicle or medium through which they work (e.g. specific movie, song, etc.). Lastly, clarifying examples were added to the rules for both the emotional experience and symbolism dimensions (see Appendix D for the revised code sheet).

Inter-coder Agreement
Across all celebrities, inter-coder agreement improved to 55%, but is still below acceptable levels. There is no difference in agreement level across the self-selected celebrities and the given celebrity (Bob Huggins). There is a small improvement, 60%, when the three-dimensional model from the first study is applied. Further examination of the data reveals that once again there are significant differences in the structure of the data.

Meaning Distribution
First, attributes and functional benefits represent a larger portion of the responses as a result of the expanded definition. Across all the celebrity data, the number of responses coded as attributes and benefits both increased to 31% (only 12% and 25% in the first round of coding). On the surface it seems that this increase is almost entirely sourced from the emotional experience and symbolism categories which shrank dramatically. Across all data, the emotional
experience dimension fell from 15% in round 1 to a mere 2% in the second round of coding. Similarly, the symbolism dimension fell from 21% to only 7%. Surprisingly, the size of the “other” category stayed essentially the same at 29% (see Figure 7 for details). However, given the significant difference in the level of inter-coder agreement, we must look at the matched data to get a true picture of how the changes in coding rules may have influenced the results.

Analysis of the matched data, the portion of the data on which the coders agreed, helps to clarify the impact of the changes to the coding definitions. In the matched data, attributes and functional benefits make up the majority of the meaning response, 71%, vs. only 37% in the first round of coding. As with the full data set, the emotional experience and symbolism categories are much smaller vs. the first round results: 2% (vs. 8%) and 4% (vs. 12%) respectively. However, in the matched data for the second round of coding the size of the “other” category fell from 43% to 23% (See Figure 8 for details). This suggest that the expansion of the definition for the attribute and functional benefits categories resulted in responses shift from emotional experience, symbolism, and from the “other” category (See Table 1 for details). As additional support for this point, examples of responses that were previously coded as “other” and are now in the attribute or functional benefit dimension are shown in Table 2.

Despite the decrease in responses in the “other” category, this dimension is still significantly larger than in the first study with traditional brands. In addition, the largest source of inter-coder disagreement involves the “other” category; particularly confusion with the functional benefit dimension. It appears that there is still some unique dimension of meaning that is not being captured by the existing framework.
Content Analysis
Once again, a preliminary review of the content in the “other” category reveals a primary theme related to the world of celebrity; the seemingly trivial activities that can be of interest to celebrity followers. As McCracken (McCracken 1989) points out, the public’s concern with the lives of celebrities is an indication of our role in interpreting and creating meaning. Many of the examples from the first round of coding remain in this category. For example, there are statements in reference to Julia Roberts (“doesn’t do commercials” and “different hairdos all the time”), Jessica Simpson (“broke up with Nick Lachey”), Tupac Shakur (“he died before his time”), and Jay Leno (“really into cars”). Given the controversy surrounding Bob Huggins departure from the University of Cincinnati, there are many comments about his behavior and the situation that amplify this theme within the “other” category. Examples include: “person who drives drunk”, “got the shaft”, “made a bad decision”, and “doesn’t do his players much good off the court”. It is clear that this is an important dimension of meaning that it currently not in the proposed model and needs to be explored further.

Meaning Dominance
The dominance analysis, using Szalay and Desse’s (1978) methodology, reveals that the dominance scores are fairly close to the raw count suggesting that the distribution of meaning by dimension reflects what information is most salient to the subjects about the celebrity. Attributes and functional benefits each account for 38%, while emotional experience is 2%, symbolism is 3%, and the “other” category is 19%. The validity of this method of assessing salience is confirmed by the ranked dominance analysis which yields similar results. See Figures 9 and 10 for details.
GENERAL DISCUSSION

While the results from the second coding procedure improve the inter-coder agreement, it is clear that the definition of brand meaning developed in Essay 1 does not fit this celebrity data. Given the quantitative and qualitative differences in the celebrity data, celebrities can not be treated as mere extensions of the brand concept. It is clear that they have unique meaning specific to their interpersonal relationships and public behavior. Different tools and procedures are needed to better understand the complexity of celebrity meaning.

The significantly larger percentage of responses that fall into the “other” category are an indication of the quantitative differences between this data and that for traditional brands. This suggests that celebrities carry unique dimensions of meaning that are not present in traditional brands. The unique dimension seems to be related to celebrity behavior and the everyday, or not so everyday, things that they do. This is the stuff that makes headlines in newspapers and magazines and allows consumers to participate in giving celebrities meaning in their lives and the marketplace.

This data also demonstrates the qualitative differences between traditional brand meaning and celebrity meaning. As in Essay 1, a significant portion of the celebrity responses were assigned to the attribute and functional benefit dimensions. However, the changes that were made to the category definitions in this study suggest an additional difference. In the case of celebrity attributes, there are clearly both physical characteristics and personality traits that contribute to their meaning. It is these interpersonal associations, like warm-hearted and open-minded, that make celebrities distinct, interesting and appealing. In the same vein, there is a lot of context that surrounds the functional benefits that celebrities provide. Aside from what they
do, consumers are equally if not more so a tune with where they do their jobs. Celebrities don’t just act or sing or play a sport, they do these things in movies, on stages, and for teams. This peripheral context is also part of the functional meaning of celebrities.
LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Celebrities are an interesting and seemingly ubiquitous part of the consumer culture. They are also an important part of the marketing system as a unique type of brand and marketing tool. The results of this initial attempt to extend the brand meaning concept to celebrities highlight the limitations of this research and the gaps in our understanding.

The primary limitation of this study is the top-down approach to examining celebrity meaning. A fundamental assumption in this work was that celebrity brands are sufficiently similar to branded products and services and as such it was appropriate to apply the same meaning framework. However, the results suggest that “celebrity brands” may not be as much like traditional brands as we think. This may be due to the uniquely human interaction that exists between celebrities and consumers. It may also be related to the unique and varied sources of information about celebrities including tabloid and conventional news outlets. In any case, a more bottom-up or emergent approach is clearly needed to build our understanding of celebrity meaning.

A second limitation is the data collection method. Given the small amount of emotion and symbolic data in the model, it may be necessary to utilize a different tool or procedure to elicit these responses. As suggested in Essay 1 a more informal, procedure like depth interviews may be needed to tap into the intangible aspects of celebrity meaning.

This initial study is a necessary first step. This work helps us to know what we don’t know. Despite the casual use of the term “celebrity brand” it is clear that the celebrity is a unique entity that resembles, yet is distinct from conventional branded goods and services. The celebrity embodies much of the same meaning, but there is so much more. There is much more
to discover and much more to do to truly understand the complex relationship between celebrities, consumers, and culture.
Figure 1
Map of Brand Meaning

Figure 2
Meaning Distribution Comparison
(all data)
Figure 3
Meaning Distribution Comparison
(matched data)

Figure 4
Brand Meaning Dimensions
(raw count)

*count is based on all data
Figure 5
Brand Meaning Dimensions
(dominance scores)

*scores are based on matched data.

Figure 6
Brand Meaning Dimensions
(ranked dominance scores)

*scores are based on matched data.
Figure 9
Brand Meaning Dimensions
(dominance scores)

- Attributes: 38%
- Functional Benefits: 38%
- Other: 19%
- Symbolism: 3%
- Emotional Experience: 2%

Figure 10
Brand Meaning Dimensions
(ranked dominance scores)

- Attributes: 33%
- Functional Benefits: 37%
- Other: 24%
- Symbolism: 3%
- Emotional Experience: 3%
Table 1
Dimension Distribution Comparison
(Round 1 vs. Round 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Round</th>
<th>Second Round</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of matched data*</td>
<td></td>
<td>% of matched data*</td>
<td>second % vs. first %*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>+25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Benefits</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributes + Benefits</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>+34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Experience</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolism</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Given the difference in inter-coder agreement, raw numbers can not be compared.

Table 2
Dimension Distribution Examples
(round 1 vs. round 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coded as Other in Round 1</th>
<th>Coded as Attribute in Round 2</th>
<th>Coded as Functional Benefit in Round 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celebrity</td>
<td>Thought</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen DeGeneres</td>
<td>Johnny Depp</td>
<td>Bengalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiger woods</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elf, Saturday Night Live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tonight Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>open-minded</td>
<td>Bulls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reserved, well-spoken</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carson Palmer</td>
<td>Will Ferrell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay Leno</td>
<td>Michael Jordan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before agreeing to participate in this study, it is important that you read and understand the following instructions and statement of confidentiality. They describe the purpose and procedures of the study. Participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw from this study at any time and without penalty by simply returning the questionnaire to the investigator. This study will take from 10 to 15 minutes to complete. You should also understand that there are no risks involved in participating in this study. It is important to understand that no guarantee or assurance can be made as to the results of this study.

By completing this survey, you indicate your consent to participate in this study.

Instructions
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Although participation in this survey is voluntary, please answer all questions. In return for volunteering you will receive participation credit as described by your instructor. After completing this survey, you will notify your instructor of your participation in this study as described at the end of this survey. If you do not want to participate in this study or chose to withdraw at any point you will have an additional opportunity to earn participation points in the course as indicated in your course syllabus.

Statement of Confidentiality
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Your responses will be kept anonymous. The researchers will not be made aware of your personal, identifying information. Further, only the researchers will see your completed questionnaires. Your responses will be combined with those of all other participants, that is, your individual responses will not be identified.

If there are any questions concerning this study you may contact Dr. Chris Allen at 556-7110, Chris.Allen@uc.edu or Felicia Miller at 556-7109, millerfm@email.uc.edu. Both are located in Linder Hall, Marketing Department, 4th floor. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board’s Program Manager, Claudia Norman, at 558-5784, claudia.norman@uc.edu.

***** Thank you very much for your assistance *****
Please remove and keep this page for your reference
Today we are interested in your thoughts and feelings about a brand that you probably know very well. Brands of course can be products that you use in the course of daily living, or services that are delivered through interactions with company employees. However, we ask you to use a very broad definition for what constitutes a “brand”. TV programs are brands. Authors are brands. Even sports teams, colleges, musical groups, celebrities, presidents, and countries can legitimately be considered as brands.

Today we are interested in your thoughts and feelings about celebrity brands.

Please follow the directions carefully and answer our questions as thoughtfully as possible in the order they are presented. Please work independently, without talking or looking at others’ responses to the survey. Please know that there are no right or wrong answers to any of our questions: all that matters is your point of view.

Thanks for helping us to understand the role of different brands in your life.

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In the space below, please list 5 celebrities with whom you have a positive, reinforcing connection. These are celebrities that you have supported for a long time and expect to continue to support in the future. While you probably don’t know these people personally, there is something about them that is appealing to you and draws you to them in some significant and lasting way. These individuals can be from the music (individual or group), television, movie or sports arena.

________________________

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________________________

Of the celebrities you have listed above, please circle the one that you like the most.
We would now like for you to play a fantasy game with the celebrity you circled on the previous page of this survey: something that will help us to better understand what you really think of this person.

In the space below, briefly list five characteristics that describe the celebrity you choose.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Imagine that this celebrity just joined you on an elevator which is making its way from the 1st to the 90th floor. In the space below we want you to create a conversation that might take place between you and this person: something that will reveal (a) the type of person that you think this celebrity is and also (b) what you think this person thinks of you. This may sound a bit unusual, but please just try to be creative.

Trapped with him or her in the elevator, what would you say to or ask of your celebrity?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

How would your celebrity respond? What would your celebrity say to or ask of you?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________________

What would you be feeling by the time you reached the 90th floor?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Now we would like to learn more about what the celebrity you circled on the first page means to you. In the space below, write down everything that comes to mind when you think about this celebrity. Please write each word or short phrase inside the boxes below.

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Now look back at what you wrote, and put a “1” next to the box that contains the word or phrase that best represents what you think of this celebrity, put a 2 next to the next best, and so on until you have a number next to each box you wrote in.
5. Thinking about the celebrity you selected on the first page of the survey. Please rate the celebrity on the following items. Circle the number that best matches your response.

Effective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Ineffective
Helpful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Unhelpful
Fun 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Not Fun
Exciting 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Dull
Functional 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Not Functional
Necessary 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Unnecessary
Delightful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Not Delightful
Thrilling 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Not Thrilling
Practical 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Impractical
Enjoyable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  Unenjoyable

6. How familiar are you with this celebrity. Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Familiar 1 2 3 4 5  Unfamiliar

5. What is your attitude toward this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Like 1 2 3 4 5  Dislike
Please circle the responses below that best describe you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnic Background</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18-25 years old</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26-32 years old</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Digital Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33-40 years old</td>
<td>Hispanic-American</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship/Family Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>over 40 years old</td>
<td>Asian-American</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Native-American</td>
<td>Industrial Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Information Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>International Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern-European</td>
<td>Operations Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bi/Multi-Racial</td>
<td>Product Information and Supply Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td></td>
<td>Real Estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other: ______________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year**

| Freshman | Sophomore | Junior | Senior | Other: ______________ |

Thank-you for completing this survey.
Please give the survey to the person administering the research and initial the class roster.
Appendix B

University of Cincinnati
College of Business Administration
Department of Marketing
Consumer Opinion Survey

Information Sheet
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Before agreeing to participate in this study, it is important that you read and understand the following instructions and statement of confidentiality. They describe the purpose and procedures of the study. Participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw from this study at any time and without penalty by simply returning the questionnaire to the investigator. This study will take from 10 to 15 minutes to complete. You should also understand that there are no risks involved in participating in this study. It is important to understand that no guarantee or assurance can be made as to the results of this study.

By completing this survey, you indicate your consent to participate in this study.

Instructions
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Although participation in this survey is voluntary, please answer all questions. In return for volunteering you will receive participation credit as described by your instructor. After completing this survey, you will notify your instructor of your participation in this study as described at the end of this survey. If you do not want to participate in this study or chose to withdraw at any point you will have an additional opportunity to earn participation points in the course as indicated in your course syllabus.

Statement of Confidentiality
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Your responses will be kept anonymous. The researchers will not be made aware of your personal, identifying information. Further, only the researchers will see your completed questionnaires. Your responses will be combined with those of all other participants, that is, your individual responses will not be identified.

If there are any questions concerning this study you may contact Dr. Chris Allen at 556-7110, Chris.Allen@uc.edu or Felicia Miller at 556-7109, millerfm@email.uc.edu. Both are located in Linder Hall, Marketing Department, 4th floor. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board's Program Manager, Claudia Norman, at 558-5784, claudia.norman@uc.edu.

***** Thank you very much for your assistance *****

Please remove and keep this page for your reference
Today we are interested in your thoughts and feelings about a brand that you probably know very well. Brands of course can be products that you use in the course of daily living, or services that are delivered through interactions with company employees. However, we ask you to use a very broad definition for what constitutes a “brand”. TV programs are brands. Authors are brands. Even sports teams, colleges, musical groups, celebrities, presidents, and countries can legitimately be considered as brands.

Today we are interested in your thoughts and feelings about the Bob Huggins brand.

Please follow the directions carefully and answer our questions as thoughtfully as possible in the order they are presented. Please work independently, without talking or looking at others’ responses to the survey. Please know that there are no right or wrong answers to any of our questions: all that matters is your point of view.

Thanks for helping us to understand the role of different brands in your life.
We would now like for you to play a fantasy game with Bob Huggins: something that will help us to better understand what you really think of this person.

In the space below, briefly list five characteristics that describe Bob Huggins.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Imagine that Bob Huggins just joined you on an elevator which is making its way from the 1st to the 90th floor. In the space below we want you to create a conversation that might take place between you and him: something that will reveal (a) the type of person that you think he is and also (b) what you think he thinks of you. This may sound a bit unusual, but please just try to be creative.

Trapped with Bob Huggins in the elevator, what would you say to or ask?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

How would he respond? What would he say to or ask of you?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What would you be feeling by the time you reached the 90th floor?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Now we would like to learn more about what Bob Huggins means to you. In the space below, write down everything that comes to mind when you think about him. Please write each word or short phrase inside the boxes below.

Now look back at what you wrote, and put a “1” next to the box that contains the word or phrase that best represents what you think of Bob Huggins, put a 2 next to the next best, and so on until you have a number next to each box you wrote in.
7. Thinking about Bob Huggins, rate him on the following items. Circle the number that best matches your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Unhelpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Not Fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exciting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Not Functional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Unnecessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delightful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Not Delightful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrilling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Not Thrilling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Impractical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Unenjoyable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. How familiar are you with Bob Huggins? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Familiar</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Unfamiliar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

6. What is your attitude toward Bob Huggins? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Like</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Dislike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Please circle the responses below that best describe you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnic Background</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18-25 years old</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26-32 years old</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Digital Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-40 years old</td>
<td>Hispanic-American</td>
<td></td>
<td>Entrepreneurship/Family Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 40 years old</td>
<td>Asian-American</td>
<td></td>
<td>Finance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native-American</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Industrial Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>International Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
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<td>Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
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<td>Marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern-European</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Operations Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bi/Multi-Racial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Product Information and Supply Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other: ______________</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Real Estate</td>
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<td>Other: ______________</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
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### Appendix C

#### Primary Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical characteristics that describe the celebrity (e.g. blond, thin, short, man, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes summary statements that are directly related to physical characteristics (e.g. beautiful, attractive, young) General labels for the person or his/her occupation (e.g. actress, golfer, etc.) are not included in the category.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Sub-Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The utilitarian value of the celebrity. Responses that address what the person does (e.g. singer, actor, comedian), what he/she produces (e.g. music, books), how she/he works (e.g. tireless, lazy), and when and why you might come in contact with this person (concert, movie, sporting event) are included in this category.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The feelings a person has developed as a result of their experiences with the celebrity. Ranges from mild affinity (e.g. like, happy) to more intense sensations (e.g. hate, excitement). Mood states and arousal evoked by the celebrity as well as statements about emotional investment and attachment are included in this category.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbolism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What the celebrity represents within the given social and cultural context and says about its members. Reflects what is important and valued by the society in terms of status, class, lifestyle, and personality. Associations that capture other intangible qualities of the celebrity (e.g. kind, talented, generous) are included in this category.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associations that do not fit in any other dimension.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Feelings</th>
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<td>22</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self Image</th>
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<td>31</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Image</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attribute</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical characteristics that describe the celebrity (e.g. blond, thin, short, man, etc.). Non-physical characteristics that describe the celebrities personality (down-to-earth, open minded, etc.) and general attitude toward life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functional Benefit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The celebrity’s contribution to others. What the person does (e.g. singer, actor, comedian, etc.), what he/she produces (e.g. music, books, movies, etc.), and how she/he works (e.g. hustler, lazy, etc.). Also, the place (e.g. stadium, concert hall, etc.) or vehicle (e.g. specific movie, song, team, etc.) that enables the celebrity to do his/her job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional Experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How a person feels about the celebrity as a result of their recent or past experiences. Ranges from mild affinity (e.g. like, happy) to more intense sensations (e.g. hate, excitement). Mood states e.g. mellow and arousal (e.g. excitement) evoked by the celebrity as well as statements about emotional investment and attachment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symbolism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What the celebrity represents within the given society or culture and says about its members. Reflects what is important and valued by the society in terms of appearance (e.g. beauty), age (e.g. youthfulness), gender (e.g. masculinity), status (e.g. famous), class (e.g. wealth) and lifestyle (e.g. lavish, private, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not fit in any other dimension.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


Dholakia, Ruby Roy and Brian Sternthal (1977), "Highly Credible Sources: Persuasive Facilitators or Persuasive Liabilities?," Journal of Consumer Research, 3 (March), 223-32.


HOW DOES MEANING MOVE?
Understanding the process of meaning transfer in the context of celebrity endorsements.

ABSTRACT
The effectiveness of celebrity endorsements has largely been tied to source expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness. However, the work of McCracken (1989) offers an alternative explanation based on meaning transfer. The research presented here attempts to provide empirical support for the meaning transfer process. In an effort to accurately represent the endorsement phenomenon and increase external validity, well-known brands and celebrities are used in this research. The results suggest that the meaning transfer process is a complex and valid mechanism that has important implications in the selection and management of endorsement relationships.
INTRODUCTION

Brands, particularly those that have been around for years, are full of meaning. They consist of attributes which allow them to provide functional and emotional benefits and represent important beliefs and ideals in the lives of consumers. The same can be said of celebrities which are in a sense brands unto themselves. These famous, and sometimes infamous personalities, are characterized by their unique traits and abilities which inspire strong emotional and cultural connections. Like more traditional product and service brands, these individuals are promoted and sold to us through the mass media.

However, celebrities play other important roles in the marketing system: for example they endorse products and services. In overt and/or subtle ways, these individuals lend their own personal meaning to the brands they promote. As such, the endorsement relationship provides a unique opportunity to explore how brands obtain meaning from the marketing system and more specifically the process that enables this transfer. There is currently little empirical research in this area.

The purpose of the research that follows is to develop and test a meaning transfer explanation for the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements. The sections that follow report the results of a study that applies the well established procedures found in associative learning research to the theoretical principles from the consumer culture literature. This begins with a review of the results from Essay 2 and the celebrity endorsement literature including a discussion of competing explanations for celebrity effectiveness. This is followed by a description of the study methods and procedures, the study results, limitations of the results and implications. In
the end, this work offers empirical evidence of meaning transfer and a well-defined method for demonstrating it in the context of well known brands and celebrities.
LITERATURE REVIEW

WHAT DO CELEBRITIES MEAN?

As established in Essay 2, celebrity meaning is a complex collection of associations based in part on the individual’s unique physical and non-physical characteristics and occupation. Celebrity meaning was also shown to include the emotions the celebrity evokes and the culture-based values she or he represents. However, there is more to celebrity meaning. It is shaped by how celebrities live and our curiosity with their sometimes mundane activities. As evidenced in Essay 2, consumers are often concerned with what celebrities are doing, where they are doing it and with whom. An example of this can be seen in the most recent media coverage surrounding the birth of Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes’ first child. Traditional and tabloid news outlets squeezed every detail out of this headline-making story including details about the birth and the origin of the child’s name. Clearly, celebrities mean a lot to consumers.

CELEBRITIES AS MEANING MAKERS

Given the range and variety of celebrity meaning, they have unlimited potential for marketers. In addition to marketing themselves directly within their chosen field, celebrities are very often used to promote other products and services. The use of celebrities in marketing goods and services is well documented (e.g. Advertising Age 2004; Erdogan 1999; Kafka 2000; Miciak and Shanklin 1994; Newsweek 2004). McCracken defines the celebrity endorser as “any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement” (McCracken 1989, pg. 310). Traditionally, the endorsement relationship has been very explicit: a celebrity appears in a television or print ad and conveys a scripted message intended to persuade consumers. For example, Bill Cosby,
America’s quintessential father figure, has successfully endorsed Jell-O gelatin in dozens of television commercials for nearly 30 years (Advertising Age 2001).

However, as McCracken (2005) explains, his definition of endorser includes not only explicit endorsement (I endorse this product), but also implicit endorsement (I use this product) and co-present endorsement (the celebrity merely appears with the product). More and more examples of implicit and co-present endorsement can be seen in the mass media as consumers become more savvy about advertising messages. For example, actors, musicians and athletes who appear on television and in print wearing designer labels convey tacit support for the brand without any persuasive message. It is these less obvious modes of celebrity endorsement that are of particular interest in this research.

Whether explicit or not, allowing a celebrity to represent a brand is a high-risk/high-reward proposition and is getting more and more risky. Marketers are more cautious than ever with endorsement deals because of the recent barrage of counterproductive pairings. For example, Kobe Bryant’s legal troubles in 2004 led Sprite, Nike and McDonald’s to drop or postpone planned advertising campaigns (Advertising Age 2004). Similarly, Martha Stewart’s deal with K-mart was in doubt but held steady as she served 5 months in federal prison (Newsweek 2004). While these are examples of the most extreme cases of celebrity endorsement gone awry, there are many more cases with less sensational but equally disappointing results: endorsements that just don’t work. The academic literature is filled with stories of endorsement relationships that don’t deliver positive business results despite millions of dollars in investment (e.g. Aggarwal and Kamakura 1995; McCracken 2005; Miciak and Shanklin 1994; Walker, Langmeyer, and Langmeyer 1992). This is in part due to a lack of
predictable tools that can assess the potential effectiveness, and ultimate value, of a given celebrity as a brand endorser.

The Performer Q score is the most commonly used practitioner resource for estimating endorser potential. This measure taps into two important factors of celebrity effectiveness, familiarity and overall liking. However, it can overestimate the potential of little known celebrities that are well-liked and underestimate the effectiveness of well-known celebrities that receive a mixed reaction (Miciak and Shanklin 1994).

Consumer researchers have maintained a consistent interest in celebrity endorsements over the last 30 years largely focused on examining what makes endorsements effective (Dholakia and Sternthal 1977; Hovland and Weiss 1951; Kamins et al. 1989; Ohanian 1990; Ohanian 1991; Sternthal, Dholakia, and Leavitt 1978; Sternthal, Phillips, and Dholakia 1978; Till and Busler 2000). Empirical results suggest that the persuasiveness of a celebrity endorser is a function of source credibility which has been defined in terms of expertise (Till and Busler 1998), trustworthiness (Shimp 1997), and/or attractiveness (Kamins 1990; Till and Busler 1998; Till and Busler 2000). In Ohanian (1990), the author develops and validates a three-dimensional scale of source credibility and finds that perceived expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness are reliable and valid dimensions of source credibility. Despite these robust findings, little attention has been given to how to strategically select and manage endorsement partners.

In an alternate stream of research, the process that drives celebrity endorsement success has been examined within a meaning transfer model (McCracken 1989). Building on his previous work (McCracken 1986), the author describes how celebrities obtain and transfer cultural meaning to the brands they endorse. Contrary to the source models described above, the
author proposes that it is the celebrity’s cultural meaning and movement of that meaning which
influences his or her effectiveness as an endorser. In the first step of a three-stage process, the
celebrity acquires meaning from his or her public roles (movies, television, athletics, etc). These
roles give celebrities access to various objects, individuals and contexts from which they draw
meaning. Next, the celebrity’s meaning is instilled in a given product through the advertising
system. As the author points out, the choice of celebrity endorser should be based on what
meaning the marketer wants to instill in the brand. Thus, the celebrity should be examined
carefully beforehand to understand what meaning she or he represents and how that fits with the
strategic plans for the brand. Likewise, the advertising vehicle (television, print, promotion, PR,
etc.) that features the celebrity and the product must accentuate the desired meaning such that the
consumer can easily accept that the product shares the celebrity’s meaning. In the final stage, the
consumer appropriates the product meaning into her life to define herself and her world. This
process occurs through ritualistic use, exchange and care for the product (See Figure 1 for
McCracken’s model). McCracken points out that in North America this three stage process
happens in the larger cultural context of the celebrity world that seems to fascinate so many
people. While criticized by some, this preoccupation with the famous and the infamous is
consistent with our efforts to continually redefine ourselves with respect to the culture in which
we live. To better understand this unique function of celebrity endorsements in the marketing
system, McCracken calls for better methods to understand the transfer of meaning from celebrity
to product.

McCracken’s theorizing about meaning transfer has elicited some positive, though limited
response, from the field. Langmeyer and Walker (1991) used a response elicitation technique to
demonstrate that celebrities have a variety of meanings and those meanings are transferred to a
generic product. In this research the authors first selected frequently mentioned endorsement pairs based on subject response to the question “Give us as many celebrity pairs as you can recall”. They then determined what meaning the celebrity gave to the endorsed brand: specifically they asked “In your own words, please describe what you associate with celebrity X advertising brand Y (what you think is being communicated). From this pilot work, they decided to examine Cher’s endorsement of Scandinavian Health Spas (SHS). In the final study, they found that the meaning Cher brought to SHS included attractiveness, fitness, hard work, sexy, independence, confidence and “good middle age”. This study demonstrates the effect celebrity meaning has on an endorsed brand, supporting McCracken’s contention that celebrities contain cultural meaning that can be “delivered” to a product. However, as the authors point out there is a need for additional research to examine a priori the process of transferring meaning from the celebrity to an brand.

In an effort to address this need, Walker, Langmeyer, and Langmeyer (1992) used a 25 item semantic differential scale to assess celebrity and product meaning before and after hypothetical endorsements. Specifically, they use open-ended questioning similar to their previous study to select Madonna and Christie Brinkley as potential endorsers of unbranded bath towels, blue jeans, and VCRs. Madonna and Christie Brinkley were chosen because of the differences in their image; the outlandish Madonna vs. the soft, conservative Christie. Likewise the product categories were selected based on their differences: VCRs represent a technical product, bath towels represent a commodity product, and blue jeans are usually a high image product. Consistent with the previous empirical work they find that the celebrity’s meaning does affect the meaning of a generic product. In fact, they find that in the case of products that have a somewhat undefined image, such as VCRs and bath towels, more of the celebrity’s meaning is
passed on to the product. This work provides additional support for McCracken’s meaning
transfer explanation; however, it is limited by the use of generic product categories. Given this
previous research, the following hypothesis is proposed as a more explicit test of McCracken’s
meaning transfer model within the context of celebrity meaning discussed above:

\[ H_1: \text{When a familiar celebrity with well-establish meaning is paired with a brand, beliefs}
\text{about the brand will become more consistent with the celebrity’s meaning.} \]

**The Transfer Process**

McCracken asserts that advertising facilitates meaning transfer from celebrity to brand;
however, he does not specify how advertising accomplishes this. In fact, he acknowledges the
need for additional research to understand this important component of the endorsement model.
As Shimp (1991) suggests, one potential explanation for how products are infused with cultural
meaning can be found in the classical conditioning literature. Classical conditioning is a
mechanism for fostering associative learning. In a consumer behavior context, this mechanism
enables subjects to make a connection, or association, between a conditioned stimulus (CS) like a
brand, a store, or other consumption object and an unconditioned stimulus (US) like a celebrity,
music, or other meaningful consumption symbols. When the connection is appropriately
established, the CS will elicit a conditioned response (CR). The CR, generally theorized as
evaluative, may or may not be similar to the unconditioned response (UR) previously generated
by the US (see McSweeney and Bierley 1984; Shimp 1991 for a comprehensive review of
classical conditioning).

In general advertising research unrelated to the topic of celebrity endorsement, there is
empirical support for an associative learning model that may be helpful in explaining
McCracken’s meaning transfer system. For example, Stuart, Shimp and Engle (1987) find that
attitudes toward a fictitious brand can be positively influenced by pleasant images after 10 forwarding conditioning trials (brand followed by image). The authors also find that this positive effect is weakened but not eliminated if subjects are previously exposed to the fictitious brand. This last finding demonstrating latent inhibition of classically-conditioned learning, is particularly relevant since McCracken’s model is applicable to highly familiar brands.

Subsequent work by the authors using brands with varying degrees of familiarity (unknown, moderately known and well-known) finds that attitude conditioning is less evident for well-known soda brands vs. moderately and unknown brands in the same category (Shimp, Stuart, and Engle 1991). The authors suggest that a ceiling effect occurs in the case of well-known brands such that already positive attitudes can not be enhanced enough to demonstrate a significant conditioning effect. For this and other reasons (e.g. latent inhibition), there is a general consensus that conditioned responses will be greatest for a novel or unfamiliar CS (e.g. Gresham and Shimp 1985; McSweeney and Bierley 1984; Shimp 1991; Stuart, Shimp, and Engle 1987; Till 1998)

Based on these results, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2a: When a familiar celebrity with well-established positive meaning is paired with a familiar brand, subjects will not demonstrate more positive brand attitudes.

H2b: When a familiar celebrity with well-established positive meaning is paired with an unknown brand, subjects will demonstrate more positive brand attitudes.

Given the high risk involved with celebrity endorsements, it is important to also consider the negative effects that could result. Among consumer researchers, most have used associative learning principles to explain positive effects; however, there is a small body of work concerned with negative conditioning (Stuart, Shimp, and Engle 1990; Till and Shimp 1998). In Till and Shimp the authors found that negative information about a celebrity endorser can have a negative
effect on brand evaluation. Despite the fact that fictitious brand and celebrity stimuli were used, these results suggest that negative attitudes can be generated through the repeated pairing that occurs in implied endorsement relationships. As such, the following hypothesis is proposed.

\[ H_3: \text{When a familiar celebrity with well-established negative meaning is paired with a brand, subjects will demonstrate more negative brand attitudes.} \]

Despite the lack of empirical support for a conditioning explanation using familiar brands, it still seems reasonable that the act of repeatedly bringing a well-known celebrity and a well-known brand in close contact with each other would promote meaning transfer. A cursory survey of endorsement advertising clearly shows that advertisers are attempting to associate the brand with an influential celebrity. Is it possible that this process of associating a known brand with a celebrity effects something other than attitude change? The work of Machleit, Allen and Madden (1993) suggests the answer is yes.

In response to weak empirical support for advertising effects on brand attitude for mature brands (Edell and Burke 1986; Gresham and Shimp 1985; Machleit, Madden, and Allen 1990; Machleit and Wilson 1988), Machleit, Allen and Madden (1993) developed an alternative explanation involving brand interest. Brand interest is defined as the base level of approachability, inquisitiveness, openness, or curiosity an individual has about a brand. It has been shown to reliably explain the effect of affective advertising on a familiar brand (Machleit, Allen, and Madden 1993; Machleit, Madden, and Allen 1990). This non-evaluative construct recognizes that consumers may become bored with familiar brands with which they are generally satisfied. As such, when exposed to an ad consumers may be led to reconsider or approach the brand which may subsequently influence contact and purchase intentions (Machleit, Allen, and
Madden 1993). In addition to their empirical support for this link, the authors find theoretical support in the classical conditioning literature. Nord and Peter (1980) suggest that positive affect associated with a product can bring consumers in “closer contact” with the product. Likewise, McSweeney and Bierley (1984) offered that approach and contact responses may result when classical conditioning procedures are used. In light of this research, the following hypothesis is proposed:

\[ \text{H}_4: \text{When a familiar celebrity with well-established positive affect is paired with a brand, subjects will demonstrate more positive brand interest.} \]

To validate the brand interest measure, Machleit, Allen and Madden (1993) tested a nomological network to understand the relationship between two measures of ad-evoked affect and brand interest. The authors find that while there is a significant relationship between both measures and brand interest, the effect is strongest for positive affect. The role of positive affect is an important variable to consider in choosing a celebrity endorser whose popularity can fluctuate significantly in a short period of time. Also, affect transfer is often posited as an explanation for attitudinal conditional (Gorn 1982; Stuart, Shimp, and Engle 1987). Consistent with these finding, the following hypotheses are tested.

\[ \text{H}_5_a: \text{Affective response to the celebrity will mediate the positive conditioning effect on brand interest.} \]

\[ \text{H}_5_b: \text{Affective response to the celebrity will mediate the negative conditioning effect on brand attitude.} \]

According to Kim, Allen and Kardes, affect transfer is not the only mediational mechanism at work in classical conditioning. In two experiments, the authors find that post-conditioning inferential beliefs about an unfamiliar product help explain the conditioning effect
along with positive affect. Specifically, the beliefs that were formed were consistent with performance related meaning associated with the unconditioned stimulus. These results lend some credence to McCracken’s (1986) meaning transfer framework as the inferential beliefs represent meaning that is transferred from the unconditioned stimulus to the conditioned stimulus. In addition, they demonstrate the appropriateness of using classical conditioning procedures to facilitate meaning transfer as suggested previously (Shimp 1991; Till and Shimp 1998). To further explain the proposed brand interest effect and provide additional support for the meaning transfer process, the following hypotheses are tested.

H_{6a}: Post-conditioning beliefs about the target brand’s meaning will mediate the positive conditioning effect on brand interest.

H_{6b}: Post-conditioning beliefs about the target brand’s meaning will mediate the negative conditioning effect on brand attitude.
METHODS AND ANALYSIS

Overview
Drawing on McCracken’s meaning transfer model, this study will examine how meaning moves from celebrity endorsers to the brand. A classical conditioning methodology will be used to present celebrities and brands in a manner that reflects implied celebrity endorsements and activates the associative learning process. In addition, a mediation analysis will be used to confirm the role beliefs and affect play in the transfer process. Extensive pre-testing was conducted to identify possible brand and celebrity stimulus.

Pre-Test 1
The celebrities generated in Essay 2 were examined to identify individuals or groups who were frequently nominated across the sample. From the more than 150 prospects that were available, 19 were chosen for initial pre-testing. Because the classical conditioning procedure used here requires several similarly defined unconditioned stimuli, the goal of this first pre-test is to identify a number of celebrities who seem to have similar meaning.

Twenty students from a market research class participated in the first pre-test as part of a class discussion. First subjects were asked to provide familiarity and attitude information for each of the 19 celebrities. In addition, they provided open-ended responses to the question “What associations (positive or negative) does this celebrity bring to a brand she or he is endorsing?” and listed any brands they believed the celebrity was currently endorsing. Basic demographic information was also collected (age, gender, ethnicity, major, and academic status). See Appendix A for the final survey.

Six celebrities (four males and 2 females) were selected from this pre-test based on 1) high awareness and 2) consistent associations. None of these celebrities had a significant number
of existing endorsements. Not surprising, the subject’s gender seemed to have some influence on their familiarity and attitude toward the celebrity. The four male celebrities (Chris Rock, Jay Leno, Conan O’Brien and Jim Carrey) are all comedians and as such have well-established and somewhat narrowly defined positive meaning. Aside from occupational similarities these four men were also seen in varying degrees as “irreverent”, “witty” and “controversial”. In addition, they were generally more familiar to and liked by male subjects. Likewise, the two female celebrities, Jessica Simpson and Mariah Carey were well-known and perceived as having similar negative meaning among female subjects. They were characterized as “ditzy”, “trashy”, and “strange”. These findings suggest a logical gender-based design for the final study that is investigated further in the next pre-test.

Pre-Test #2
The six celebrities from the previous pre-test along with four others were examined in the second pre-test. One male comedian, Dave Chappelle was added based on his similarities with the other male comedians. Three female celebrities, Paris Hilton, Britney Spears and Angelina Jolie were added as compliments to Jessica Simpson and Mariah Carey. All of the new additions except Paris Hilton appeared on the original Essay 2 list of celebrities.

Twenty-two students from an introductory marketing course participated in this pre-test. Students were asked to identify, by name, ten celebrities based only on their picture and then indicate the extent to which they were familiar with the individual. They were also asked to provide three or four words that described the person. Basic demographic information was also collected (age, gender, ethnicity, major, and academic status). See Appendix B for the final survey.
Consistent with the first pre-test, male subjects were generally better able to identify the male celebrities and described them similarly in terms of their comedic style (e.g. edgy, irreverent, energetic). In particular, Chris Rock, Conan O’Brien and Dave Chappelle were characterized as more provocative and edgy than either Jay Leno or Jim Carrey. Likewise, the female participants provided common descriptions of the female celebrities which most could identify. Unlike the male participants, the comments of the female subjects reflected a more negative tone. With the exception of Angelina Jolie, the female celebrities were cast as hypersexual, unintelligent, trashy, controversial and lacking in substance.

These results helped to confirm the consistency of each celebrity’s meaning as well as their level of unaided recognition. This last contribution is particularly important since the final data collection used only the celebrity’s picture, not their name.

**Pre-Test #3**

The final pre-test involved pairing the celebrities with brands to get a preliminary understanding of the endorsement effect. The five male celebrities from the previous pre-test were paired with the Honda Civic. The Civic was selected from the list of nominated brands in Essay 1 based on its functionally defined meaning which ran counter to that of the male comedians. In the first essay, Honda was described as “dependable”, “affordable”, “good gas mileage”, “compact” and “reliable”. The five female celebrities were paired with Clinique Skincare products. Like the Honda Civic, Clinique was described in Essay 1 as an effective, functional brand. Specifically it was seen as “high quality”, “fresh” and “clean”.

Thirteen males and twelve females participated in this pre-test. All subject were exposed to a brief description of each potential endorsement and asked to provide their familiarity and
attitude toward the celebrity and brand as well as their reaction (open-end) to the endorsement relationship. The male subjects only responded to the male celebrities and the female subjects only responded to the female celebrities. Basic demographic information was also collected (age, gender, ethnicity, major, and academic status). See Appendix C and D for the final survey.

Among the male subjects, they responded positively to the celebrities and the brands. They expressed skepticism about the possibility of the celebrity endorsing the brand, but saw the celebrity as bringing something different or new to the brand. For example, there were references to youth: “he would bring a young association” (Chris Rock) and “I would think they were trying to get younger people to buy” (Dave Chappelle). There were references to energy: “he would bring energy to the car” (Conan O’Brien”) and “he would be fun and have energy” (Chris Rock). There were references to edginess: “may not work for a conservative car” (Dave Chappelle), “would make Honda more sarcastic” (Conan O’Brien).

Likewise, the female participants saw the group of women as bringing something new, though generally negative, to the brand. For example there were concerns about quality: “I would think it is ineffective” (Jessica Simpson), “possibly cheap” (Britney Spears), and “would be lowering their class” (Paris Hilton). There were concerns about character and reputation: “possibly trashy” (Britney Spears) and “cause the brand to be considered tacky/trashy” (Paris Hilton). There were also comments about youth: “she brings it a young face” (Britney Spears), “gives it a younger image” (Jessica Simpson), and “using Paris will appeal to a younger audience” (Paris Hilton).

Based on these results, three male celebrities, Chris Rock, Conan O’Brien and Dave Chappelle were selected to be paired with the Honda Civic. Three female celebrities were
selected for Clinique: Jessica Simpson, Paris Hilton and Britney Spears. Each was selected because they contributed to a collective meaning that was distinct from the brand. In the case of the male celebrities this meaning was largely positive and for the females it was negative. This design aligns with the study’s hypotheses while acknowledging the unique reactions that men and women have to various celebrities.

Study Procedure

Students were separated by gender and then randomly assigned to one of four conditions: familiar treatment, familiar random control, unfamiliar treatment, and unfamiliar random control. For the male subjects, the familiar conditions featured the Honda Civic and in the unfamiliar conditions included a car brand identified as “Brand A”. Similarly, the familiar conditions for female subjects featured Clinique skincare products and the unfamiliar conditions included “Brand R” skincare products. Given the limited use of well-known brands in the conditioning literature, the unfamiliar conditions are included to maximize the potential for learning in this study. Student from various marketing courses participated in this study in exchange for course credit. A total of 97 females participated in the study: 28 in the familiar treatment, 26 in the familiar control, 26 in the unfamiliar treatment and 17 in the unfamiliar control. 99 males participated: 28 in the familiar treatment, 30 in the familiar control, 26 in the unfamiliar treatment and 15 in the unfamiliar control. See Figure 2 and Appendix E and F for the design details for each treatment condition.

The study was conducted in a computer lab so that the celebrity-brand pairings could be presented on a computer screen. Participants in each treatment condition watched a series of 80 visuals which contained 10 conditioning trials: focal brand (CS) for 7.5 seconds followed by the focal celebrity (US) for 7.5 seconds and 60 non-focal images of brands and celebrities selected
from Essay 1 and 2. In the random control conditions, participants saw a set of 80 randomly arranged visuals that included the focal brands and celebrities from the previous conditions; however, the respective CS and US never appeared contiguously. Conditioning procedures were adopted from Kim, Allen and Kardes (1996) and Stuart, Shimp and Engle (1987).

After viewing the images, participants completed a set of brand attitude, brand interest, affective response to celebrity, and belief formation items for the target brand. Response time for the belief formation items along with contingency awareness and motivation were also measured. To disguise the true purpose of the study, subjects answered questions for the focal brand and celebrities and a second non-focal brand and celebrities. Ninety-eight males and ninety-seven females in various marketing courses participated in this study in exchange for extra credit. Some general demographic information was collected followed by a short debrief.

**Measurement**

*Brand Interest:* Brand Interest was measured using the four-items published in Machleit, Allen and Madden (1993) on a 7-point likert scale anchored by strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (7). The four items are; “I am intrigued by _____”, “I’d like to know more about ____”, “I am a little curious about ____”, and “Learning more about _____ would be useless”.

*Brand Attitude:* Brand attitude was measured using the seven 7-point semantic differential items from Shimp, Staurt and Engle (1991). The items are: good/bad, high-quality/low-quality, like very much/dislike very much, superior/inferior, attractive/unattractive, pleasant/unpleasant, and interesting/boring.

*Belief Formation:* Belief formation items were chosen from the pre-testing and were measured on a 7-point Likert scale anchored by: strongly disagree and strongly agree. For the
male conditions, the belief items were: funny, edgy, controversial, youthful, energetic, conservative, reliable, affordable and dependable. The first five beliefs are consistent with the celebrity’s current belief while the remaining four represent the current brand belief. For the female conditions, the belief items were: young, inexpensive, trashy, hip, irreverent, controversial, high quality, clean, and fresh. Again, the first six are consistent with the celebrity’s beliefs while the last three are consistent with the brand’s beliefs. Response time was measured for each belief formation item to determine if beliefs were formed spontaneously during the conditioning process or prompted by the belief item following Kardes (1988).

_Affective Response to Celebrity:_ Affective response to the celebrity was measured using three semantic differential items: unpleasant/pleasant, dislike very much/like very much, and left me with a bad feeling/left me with a good feeling. The items were adapted from Kim, Allen and Kardes (1996)

_Source Credibility:_ Celebrity expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness were measured using single items taken from Ohanian (1990): “______ is an expert”, “______ is trustworthy”, and “______ is attractive”. Each item was measured on a 7-point Likert scale anchored by strongly disagree/strongly agree.

_Demand Artifacts:_ To assess potential demand bias, subjects completed a Motive Check-List (MCL) as described in Allen (2004). To gauge motivation, subjects were asked to choose one of four responses to the question “How would you characterize the motive behind your responses?” The responses were: 1) finish quickly, 2) conform with what was expected, 3) not conform with what was expected, or 4) not aware of any particular motivation. To assess receptivity to demand bias, participants were asked to identify the focal brand. Specifically, in
the male conditions they were asked to identify which brand was consistently followed by a comedian. In the female conditions, they were asked to identify which brand was consistently followed by a controversial, blond female celebrity. Subjects were also asked to indicate how confident (uncertain, somewhat certain or absolutely certain) they were that they had selected the correct brand.
RESULTS

The results are provided in several sections. The results for the female subjects (familiar and unfamiliar conditions) relative to H₁, H₃, H₅b, and H₆b will be given first. Next, will be the results for the male subjects (familiar and unfamiliar conditions) relative to H₁, H₂a, H₂b, H₄, H₅a, and H₆a. The final sections will address the issues of demand bias, contingency awareness and response time.

Female Subjects: Familiar Conditions

Hypothesis 1: Hypothesis 1 proposes that brand beliefs will become more consistent with the celebrity’s meaning after a conditioning procedure. An independent t-test was conducted to assess changes in mean beliefs for the Clinique brand. The brand was rated as significantly more irreverent and controversial in the treatment condition vs. the random control (p<0.05 and p<0.01, respectively). Other important directional differences include trashy (p=0.07), high quality (p=0.09) and clean (p=0.08). In the case of the later two beliefs, the belief rating is lower for high quality and clean in the treatment condition. These findings support H₁. See Table 1 for complete results.

Hypothesis 3: Hypothesis 3 posits that pairing a known brand with a celebrity having negative meaning will result in a more negative brand attitude. Results from an independent t-test indicate that brand attitude is marginally more negative in the treatment condition than the random control (m_t=4.98 vs. m_c=5.44; t=-1.82, p=0.08). This finding provides limited support for H₃.

Hypothesis 5b: This hypothesis suggests a mediating relationship between the negative conditioning effect on brand attitude and the subject’s affective response to the celebrity. Even
though the negative conditioning effect was only marginally significant, a three-step process of mediation analysis was conducted per Baron and Kenny (1986). However, affective response to the celebrity was not significantly influenced by the conditioning procedure (step 2) and therefore mediation is not possible.

*Hypothesis 6b:* Hypothesis 6b proposed a mediating relationship between the negative conditioning effect and beliefs about the brand. Unlike the celebrity response measure above, the full mediation analysis could be conducted for brand beliefs. Brand beliefs related to irreverent and controversial were significantly influenced by the conditioning procedure while trashy, high-quality, and clean were marginally significant. As shown in Table 2, the negative conditioning effect on brand attitude is fully mediated when trashy, irreverent, high quality and clean are included in the regression model. Full mediation also occurs when controversial is included however the standardized beta for this belief is only marginally significant.

In an effort to assess the combined effect of these beliefs the positively worded items related to the brand’s initial beliefs (high quality and clean) were combined into one item as were the negative belief items (trashy, irreverent and controversial). These two items (mean positive and mean negative) were then subjected to another three-step mediation analysis. Both were affected by the negative condition procedure in the hypothesized direction: mean positive beliefs, p-value=0.07; mean negative beliefs, p-value=0.003. Likewise both fully mediated the conditioning effect when included in separate regression equations: p-value=0.001 for both. However, when both were included in one regression equation only the mean positive belief item was a significant mediator of the conditioning effect.
An analysis of the adjusted $R^2$ indicates that the while both the mean positive and mean negative beliefs explained a significant amount of variance, the mean positive beliefs explained more variance. Specifically, looking at the mediation equation when the mean belief items are examined separately, the adjusted $R^2$ for the mean negative belief equation is 27% and it is 63% for the mean positive belief equation. In addition, the standardized beta coefficient for both is significant. In the equation where both are included, the adjusted $R^2$ is 62% and only the mean positive beliefs variable has a significant standardized beta coefficient. These results support Hypothesis 6b. See Table 3.

Female Subjects: *Unfamiliar Conditions*

*Hypothesis 1*: Results of an independent t-test reveal that there are no significant belief differences between the treatment and control conditions for Brand R skincare. $H_1$ is not supported.

*Hypothesis 3*: Brand attitude is not significantly more negative in the treatment condition than the random control. $H^3$ is not supported.

*Hypothesis 5b/6b*: As in the familiar female conditions, the mediation analysis with celebrity affect and brand beliefs was not conducted due to the lack of significant negative conditioning.
Male Subjects: *Familiar conditions*

Unlike the female subjects, the male subjects provided no support for any of the study hypotheses. Specifically, brand beliefs are not significantly different in the treatment condition vs. the random control (H1). The null hypothesis related to brand attitude (H2) held and brand interest was not more positive in the treatment condition (H4). Finally, the hypotheses related to potential mediators of the conditioning effect, H5 and H6 were not tested since there was not a significantly positive conditioning effect.

Male Subjects: *Unfamiliar Conditions*

Again the male subjects provided no support for any of the study hypotheses. Brand beliefs were not significantly different in the treatment condition vs. the random control (H1). Brand attitude was not significantly more positive in the treatment condition (H2) nor was brand interest (H4). The mediating relationship between brand interest and affective response to the celebrity (H5) and brand beliefs (H6) was not examined given the lack of conditioning effect.

**DEMAND BIAS**

The MCL was used to uncover potentially demand biased participants. Specifically, subject who correctly identified the focal brand and indicated they were motivated to conform with what they believed was expected of them were examined (Allen 2004). Based on the standard, demand bias was not an issue in this experiment. There were very few subjects who met these criteria among the female subjects: familiar treatment (two subjects or 7% of the sample and unfamiliar treatment (three subjects or 12% of the sample). In both conditions, these subjects had statically the same mean brand attitude as the remaining subjects in the condition. As such, no female subjects were identified as biased and no subjects were removed from the study.
Similarly, among the male subjects there were only a few subjects who met both criteria: familiar treatment (one subject or 4% of the sample) and unfamiliar treatment (two subjects or 8% of the sample). As with the female subjects, none of these male subjects had significantly different mean brand interest scores than the remaining subjects in their conditions. Again no male subjects were identified as demand biased and no subjects were removed from the study.

CONTINGENCY AWARENESS

According to Shimp, Stuart, and Engle (1991), contingency aware subjects are those who accurately identify the focal brand and are moderately or extremely confident in their choice. These are subjects who are fairly certain they recognize the pairing relationship in the conditioning procedure. The authors found that contingency aware subjects can have significantly different attitudes vs. unaware subjects. In each treatment condition of this study, contingency aware subjects were identified and examined vs. the remaining subjects in the treatment condition and vs. the random control. Results of this analysis are provided in the following sections by gender and condition.

Female Subjects: Familiar Conditions

In the familiar treatment condition five subjects (18% of total sample) met both criteria for contingency awareness. Hypothesis 1: The contingency aware subjects in the treatment condition rated Clinique as significantly more trashy (p<0.04), irreverent (p<0.01) and controversial (p<0.05) than in the random control group. The brand was also rated significantly lower on high-quality (p<0.01), clean (p<0.05) and fresh (p<0.05). These results are consistent with those between the full treatment condition and the random control group. However, trashy,
high quality and fresh were only directionally significant in the full treatment condition. See Table 4 for details.

**Hypothesis 3:** Unlike in the full treatment group, brand attitude change meets conventional standards of significance ($m_t=4.20$ vs. $m_c=5.44$; $t=-2.79$, $p<0.01$) among the contingency aware subjects. This provides an opportunity to examine the mediating role of affective response to the celebrity proposed in $H_{5b}$. To address this question, the three-step process of mediation analysis per Baron and Kenny (1986) was followed. While attitude toward Clinique ($A_b$) was significantly influenced by the conditioning procedure, affective response to the celebrity was not and therefore mediation is not possible.

Unlike the celebrity response measure, the full mediation analysis could be conducted for brand beliefs ($H_{6b}$). Brand beliefs related to trashy, irreverent, controversial, high-quality, clean, and fresh were significantly influenced by the conditioning procedure. As shown in Table 5, the negative conditioning effect on brand attitude is fully mediated when trashy, high-quality, clean and fresh beliefs are included in separate regression equations. The other two significantly different beliefs (controversial and irreverent) did not mediate the conditioning relationship.

As with the full treatment group, the positive beliefs items (high-quality, clean and fresh) were combined to assess the effect of these beliefs in one regression equation along with the single negative belief item, trashy. The results for the contingency aware subject are similar to those found for the full data set. When the mean positive belief item and the trashy belief are included in one equation, only the mean positive belief item is significant. Again the mean positive belief items account for more variance than the negative item and “cancels” the effect of the negative item when they are in the same equation. See Table 6 for full results.
Female Subjects: *Unfamiliar Conditions*

In the unfamiliar treatment condition there were 10 subjects, 38% of the sample, that meet the Shimp, Stuart, and Engle (1991) criteria for contingency awareness. *Hypothesis 1:*

Similar to the full treatment condition, the contingency aware subjects did not rate Brand R as significantly different on any of the belief items. However, these subjects did rate brand attitude significantly more negative than in the random control ($m_t=3.76$ vs. $m_c=4.70$; $t=-2.00$, $p<0.05$) consistent with $H_3$. Despite this significant negative conditioning effect, neither affective response to the celebrity or brand beliefs were found to be significantly influenced by the conditioning procedure. As a result, the mediation analysis could not be completed.

Male subjects: *Familiar and Unfamiliar Conditions*

Only two subjects, 8% of sample, were classified as contingency aware in the familiar treatment condition. Consistent with the full sample, there were no significant results among these contingency aware subjects. In the unfamiliar treatment there were seven subjects, 27% of sample, classified as contingency aware. In a small departure from the full sample result, brand interest was significantly more positive among contingency aware subjects ($m_t=4.64$ vs. $m_c=3.63$; $t=2.36$, $p<0.05$) as posited in $H_4$. No other results supported the study hypotheses.

Response Time

The response time analysis focused on the results in the familiar female conditions since this data was generally more supportive of the study hypotheses. In these conditions, response time did not differ significantly between the treatment and random control condition or between contingency aware and unaware subjects. If brand beliefs were formed during the conditioning procedure, you would expect that the response time would be significantly faster consistent with information retrieval. However, if inferences about the brand beliefs are triggered by the belief
question, you would expect response time to be slower consistent with information processing (Kardes et al. forthcoming). Because the times are statistically equal, there is no evidence to support spontaneous inference. One interpretation of these results rests on the nature of the stimulus in these conditions. Perhaps because the brands and celebrities were very familiar, time-consuming information processing was not necessary in either condition. This is a reasonable explanation given that response latency and other measures of spontaneous inference are generally used in the context of novel stimulus.
DISCUSSION

The results from the female conditions provide new evidence to support McCracken’s model of meaning transfer. Brand beliefs related to the celebrity’s negative meaning were significantly influenced by endorsement pairings which ultimately led to more negative attitudes toward the brand. The mediation analysis suggests that the negative attitudes are due to the change in beliefs and not the subject’s affective response to the celebrity, ruling out an affect transfer explanation.

The findings among female subjects also support the general concept of negative conditioning. As a general finding these results are particularly significant given the use of well-known vs. novel stimulus. In the context of celebrity endorsements, these results are evidence of the potential negative impact the wrong celebrity endorsement can have on a brand.

The results are strongest among subjects who became contingency aware; this supports the argument that contingency awareness is important if not necessary for conditioning to occur (Allen and Janiszewski 1989; Shimp, Stuart, and Engle 1991). However, the level of contingency awareness in this study is relatively low; ranging from 8% to 38%. In Shimp, Stuart, and Engle (1991), contingency awareness ranged from 21% to 81%. One explanation for this difference may be the high level of familiarity of both the CS and US. Given that subjects knew both the brand and the celebrity well, it may have been more difficult to track the treatment pattern.

The level of contingency awareness, while low, may also help to explain the lack of results among the male subjects. The percentage of contingency aware subjects in both female treatment conditions, familiar (18%) and unfamiliar (38%), was larger than the corresponding male conditions, familiar (8%) and unfamiliar (27%). This suggests that a subject’s gender may
influence his or her ability to detect the focal pairing. However, there are other potential
explanations. Notably, the celebrity meaning in the female conditions was negative and in the
male conditions it was positive. As discussed in the literature review, it is difficult to increase
already positive attitudes for a well-known and well-liked brand. However, the so call “ceiling
effect” is not a factor when attempting to make attitudes more negative. It could be said that a
well-liked brand has no were to go but down. As such, the nature of the stimulus may have been
more suitable for the task of negative conditioning. This would also help explain the differences
in results between the familiar and unfamiliar female conditions.

Another explanation for the gender differences may be related to the brand stimulus.
While pre-testing confirmed that Clinique skincare is seen as a good basic, line of products, it is
arguably more of an image-oriented brand than the Honda Civic. The Civic, while in the
status/image-oriented automobile category, is seen as a reliable, functional car. As a result, the
Honda Civic may not have been as receptive to conditioning with celebrities as was the Clinique
brand.
LIMITATIONS

While the results of this study are encouraging, they are not without limits. The primary limitation is related to the brand and celebrity stimulus. The stimulus was selected based on pre-testing. This was necessary in part because of the need to fully understand the pre-existing attitudes and beliefs about the well-known brands and celebrities. As a result, while the findings support generalization to the endorsement process, they are limited to the parameters of this stimulus set. This limitation underscores the importance of pre-testing not only in this experiment, but also in the process of choosing celebrity endorsers.

The second limitation concerns the brand beliefs that were used in the study. Like the stimulus, these beliefs were chosen based on pre-testing. In the female conditions, the beliefs relating to trashy, high-quality, fresh and clean fully mediate the differences in brand attitude due to the conditioning procedure. However, based on the adjusted $R^2$ analysis, these beliefs only explain 55-62% of the variance in brand attitude. This leaves open the question of what other variables may be influencing brand attitude that are unrelated to the conditioning procedure.
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Celebrities are an interesting and seemingly ubiquitous part of the culture. They are also
an important part of the marketing system as a unique type of marketing tool. In this study, the
dynamic concept of meaning transfer is explored in an effort to provide insights into celebrities
and their potential appeal and limitation as brand endorsers. Another important contribution of
this research is the empirical support it provides for a meaning transfer explanation of endorser
effects. For academics, this work expands our understanding of celebrities beyond source
credibility models.

Because this research utilized familiar stimuli, there are also clear implications for
practitioners. First, the results highlight the negative impact the wrong celebrity endorsement,
even if it is only implied, can have on a brand’s meaning. In addition, they demonstrate the
importance of understanding a celebrity’s appeal across genders. While this is only a first step, it
is an important initial effort toward future research that seeks to understand the complex
relationship between brands, consumers, and culture.
Figure 1
McCracken’s Meaning Movement and the Endorsement Process

Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>objects</th>
<th>persons</th>
<th>context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>role 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Endorsement

Stage 1

Culture → Celebrity

Stage 2

Celebrity → Product

Stage 3

Product → Consumer

Key:
- path of meaning movement
- stage of meaning movement
### Figure 2
**Study Design Description**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Familiar Treatment</th>
<th>Familiar Control</th>
<th>Unfamiliar Treatment</th>
<th>Unfamiliar Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(males)</td>
<td>US: Chris Rock, Conan O’Brien, Dave Chappelle</td>
<td></td>
<td>US: Chris Rock, Conan O’Brien, Dave Chappelle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Belief</td>
<td>Familiar Treatment</td>
<td>Familiar Random Control</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trashy</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irreverent</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controversial</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Quality</td>
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<td>5.85</td>
<td>-1.73</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>-1.82</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*mean score on 7-pt scale anchored by 1=strongly disagree/7=strongly agree
Table 2
Mediation Analysis for Brand Beliefs
Female Familiar Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression Equation</th>
<th>Standardized Beta</th>
<th>Adjusted $R^2$</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$A_b \rightarrow \text{condition}$</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beliefs $\rightarrow \text{condition}$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>trashy</em></td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>irreverent</em></td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-0.45</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>high quality</em></td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>clean</em></td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$A_b \leftrightarrow \text{beliefs} \leftrightarrow \text{condition}$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>trashy/condition</em></td>
<td>-0.61/0.09</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.00/0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>irreverent/condition</em></td>
<td>-0.34/0.14</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.01/0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>controversial/condition</em></td>
<td>-0.25/0.13</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.09/0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>high quality/condition</em></td>
<td>0.73/0.07</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.00/0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>clean/condition</em></td>
<td>0.78/0.05</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.00/0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression Equation</td>
<td>Standardized Beta</td>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>p-value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$A_b \leftarrow \text{condition}$</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beliefs $\leftarrow \text{condition}$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $\text{mean (trashy, irreverent, controversial)}$</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $\text{mean (high quality, clean)}$</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$A_b \leftarrow \text{beliefs} \leftarrow \text{condition}$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $\text{mean1 (trashy, irreverent, controversial)/condition}$</td>
<td>-0.52/0.03</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.001/0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $\text{mean2 (high quality, clean/condition)}$</td>
<td>0.79/0.05</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.001/0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $\text{combined (mean1/means2/condition)}$</td>
<td>0.02/0.80/0.05</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.89/0.001/0.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4
Mean Brand Beliefs
Female Familiar Contingency Awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Belief</th>
<th>Familiar Female Conditions*</th>
<th>Contingency Aware</th>
<th>Contingency Unaware&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Random Control)&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.19)</td>
<td>(0.47)</td>
<td>(0.65)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexpensive</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.88)</td>
<td>(1.19)</td>
<td>(0.33)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trashy</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.58)</td>
<td>(2.17)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hip</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.91</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.38)</td>
<td>(-0.53)</td>
<td>(0.71)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irreverent</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.42)</td>
<td>(2.85)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controversial</td>
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<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.04)</td>
<td>(2.43)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
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<td>4.60</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>-1.86</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5.92)</td>
<td>(-2.87)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clean</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>-1.52</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5.92)</td>
<td>(-2.87)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Fresh</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(5.88)</td>
<td>(-2.18)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
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</table>

*mean score on 7-pt scale anchored by 1=strongly disagree/7=strongly agree
<sup>a</sup>unaware subjects in the treatment condition.
<sup>b</sup>all subjects in the random control condition
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression Equation</th>
<th>Standardized Beta</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
<th>p-value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A_b ← condition</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beliefs ← condition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• trashy</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• high quality</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clean</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• fresh</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A_b ← beliefs ← condition</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• trashy/condition</td>
<td>-0.46/0.29</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.01/0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• high quality/ condition</td>
<td>0.66/0.17</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.01/0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clean/ condition</td>
<td>0.70/0.13</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.01/0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• fresh/ condition</td>
<td>0.57/0.25</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.01/0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression Equation</td>
<td>Standardized Beta</td>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>p-value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$A_b \leftarrow$ condition</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beliefs $\leftarrow$ condition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• trashy</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• mean (high quality, clean, fresh)</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$A_b \leftarrow$ beliefs $\leftarrow$ condition</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• trashy/condition</td>
<td>-0.46/0.29</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.01/0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• mean1 (high quality, clean, fresh)/condition</td>
<td>0.67/0.15</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.001/0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• combined (trashy/mean1/condition)</td>
<td>-0.15/0.60/0.13</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.33/0.001/0.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

University of Cincinnati
College of Business Administration
Department of Marketing
Consumer Opinion Survey

Information Sheet
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Before agreeing to participate in this study, it is important that you read and understand the following instructions and statement of confidentiality. They describe the purpose and procedures of the study. Participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw from this study at any time and without penalty by simply returning the questionnaire to the investigator. This study will take from 10 to 15 minutes to complete. You should also understand that there are no risks involved in participating in this study. It is important to understand that no guarantee or assurance can be made as to the results of this study.

By completing this survey, you indicate your consent to participate in this study.

Instructions
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Although participation in this survey is voluntary, please answer all questions. In return for volunteering you will receive participation credit as described by your instructor. After completing this survey, you will notify your instructor of your participation in this study as described at the end of this survey. If you do not want to participate in this study or chose to withdraw at any point you will have an additional opportunity to earn participation points in the course as indicated in your course syllabus.

Statement of Confidentiality
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Your responses will be kept anonymous. The researchers will not be made aware of your personal, identifying information. Further, only the researchers will see your completed questionnaires. Your responses will be combined with those of all other participants, that is, your individual responses will not be identified.

If there are any questions concerning this study you may contact Dr. Chris Allen at 556-7110, Chris.Allen@uc.edu or Felicia Miller at 556-7109, millerfm@email.uc.edu. Both are located in Linder Hall, Marketing Department, 4th floor. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board’s Program Manager, Claudia Norman, at 558-5784, claudia.norman@uc.edu.

***** Thank you very much for your assistance *******
Please remove and keep this page for your reference
1. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Unfamiliar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Familiar

2. What is your attitude toward this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Dislike 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Like

3. If a company chose this celebrity to endorse its brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations (positive or negative) does this celebrity bring to a brand he is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

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4. What, if any, brands does this celebrity currently endorse? List the brands in the space below.

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________________________________________________________________________
1. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Unfamiliar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Familiar

2. What is your attitude toward this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Dislike 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Like

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________________________________________________________________________
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Unfamiliar  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Familiar

2. What is your attitude toward this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Dislike  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Like

3. If a company chose this celebrity to endorse its brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations (positive or negative) does this celebrity bring to a brand he is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

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4. What, if any, brands does this celebrity currently endorse? List the brands in the space below.

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____________________________________________________________________
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Unfamiliar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Familiar

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3. If a company chose this celebrity to endorse its brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations (positive or negative) does this celebrity bring to a brand he is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

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________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________
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Unfamiliar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Familiar

2. What is your attitude toward this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Dislike 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Like

3. If a company chose this celebrity to endorse its brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations (positive or negative) does this celebrity bring to a brand he is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

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4. What, if any, brands does this celebrity currently endorse? List the brands in the space below.

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________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
1. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Unfamiliar  1  2  3  4  5  6  7 Familiar

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Dislike  1  2  3  4  5  6  7 Like

3. If a company chose this celebrity to endorse its brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations (positive or negative) does this celebrity bring to a brand he is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

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Dislike 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Like

3. If a company chose this celebrity to endorse its brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations (positive or negative) does this celebrity bring to a brand she is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

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4. What, if any, brands does this celebrity currently endorse? List the brands in the space below.

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
1. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Unfamiliar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Familiar

2. What is your attitude toward this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

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3. If a company chose this celebrity to endorse its brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations (positive or negative) does this celebrity bring to a brand he is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

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   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

4. What, if any, brands does this celebrity currently endorse? List the brands in the space below.

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

   155
1. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Unfamiliar  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Familiar

2. What is your attitude toward this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Dislike  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Like

3. If a company chose this celebrity to endorse its brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations (positive or negative) does this celebrity bring to a brand he is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

4. What, if any, brands does this celebrity currently endorse? List the brands in the space below.

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
1. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Unfamiliar   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Familiar

2. What is your attitude toward this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Dislike   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Like

3. If a company chose this celebrity to endorse its brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations (positive or negative) does this celebrity bring to a brand she is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

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   ________________________________
   ________________________________

4. What, if any, brands does this celebrity currently endorse? List the brands in the space below.

   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
1. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Unfamiliar  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Familiar

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Dislike  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Like

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________________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________
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   **Dislike**  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  **Like**

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   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
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   __________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________
1. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unfamiliar</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Familiar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dislike</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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__________________________________________________________________________
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165
Please circle the responses below that best describe you.

<table>
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<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnic Background</th>
<th>Major</th>
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<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26-32 years old</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Digital Business</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>33-40 years old</td>
<td>Hispanic-American</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship/Family Business</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>over 40 years old</td>
<td>Asian-American</td>
<td>Finance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Native-American</td>
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<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Information Systems</td>
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<td>Chinese</td>
<td>International Business</td>
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<td>Management</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Marketing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eastern-European</td>
<td>Operations Management</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Bi/Multi-Racial</td>
<td>Product Information and Supply Management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>Other:</td>
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<td>Sophomore</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Other:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

University of Cincinnati
College of Business Administration
Department of Marketing
Consumer Opinion Survey

Information Sheet
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Before agreeing to participate in this study, it is important that you read and understand the following instructions and statement of confidentiality. They describe the purpose and procedures of the study. Participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw from this study at any time and without penalty by simply returning the questionnaire to the investigator. This study will take from 10 to 15 minutes to complete. You should also understand that there are no risks involved in participating in this study. It is important to understand that no guarantee or assurance can be made as to the results of this study.

By completing this survey, you indicate your consent to participate in this study.

Instructions
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Although participation in this survey is voluntary, please answer all questions. In return for volunteering you will receive participation credit as described by your instructor. After completing this survey, you will notify your instructor of your participation in this study as described at the end of this survey. If you do not want to participate in this study or chose to withdraw at any point you will have an additional opportunity to earn participation points in the course as indicated in your course syllabus.

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***** Thank you very much for your assistance *****
Please remove and keep this page for your reference
Today I am interested in your opinion about celebrity endorsements.

On the following pages you will be asked for your opinion about a number of potential celebrity spokespersons. You will be asked to identify 10 celebrities from their picture and then provide some general information about them.

Please follow the directions and read each question carefully. There is no right or wrong answer; I am only interested in your honest opinion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is this person?</th>
<th>How familiar are you with this person?</th>
<th>In the space below, write three or four words that describe this person.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Image 1]</td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
<td></td>
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<td>![Image 2]</td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
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<td>![Image 3]</td>
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<td>![Image 4]</td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
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<td>![Image 5]</td>
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<td>![Image 6]</td>
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<td>![Image 8]</td>
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<td>![Image 9]</td>
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<td>![Image 10]</td>
<td>Unfamiliar</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Please circle the responses below that best describe you.

<table>
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<td>Bi/Multi-Racial</td>
<td>Product Information and Supply Management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other: __________</td>
<td></td>
<td>Real Estate</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Other: __________</td>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Sophomore</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Senior</th>
<th>Other: __________</th>
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Appendix C

University of Cincinnati
College of Business Administration
Department of Marketing
Consumer Opinion Survey

Information Sheet
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***** Thank you very much for your assistance ******
Please remove and keep this page for your reference
Today I am interested in your opinion about celebrity endorsements.

On the following pages you will be asked for your opinion about a number of potential celebrity spokespersons for a product you are familiar with and perhaps even use. You will be asked to read about five potential brand-celebrity pairings.

Please follow the directions and read each question carefully. There is no right or wrong answer; I am only interested in your honest opinion.
As the newest spokesperson for the Honda Civic, Chris Rock would be featured in a special TV ad that will air during primetime television on the major television networks (ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox) for the next 3-6 months. In addition to television commercials, Chris Rock will also be featured in magazine advertising, on billboards, on in-store displays and on the Honda website. Chris Rock would also make personal appearances at select Honda dealerships.
1. How familiar are you with this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Unfamiliar  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Familiar

2. What is your attitude toward this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Dislike  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Like

3. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Unfamiliar  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Familiar

4. What is your attitude toward this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Dislike  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Like

5. If this celebrity endorsed this brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations does this celebrity bring to a brand he is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
As the newest spokesperson for the Honda Civic, Conan O’Brien would be featured in a special TV ad that will air during primetime television on the major television networks (ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox) for the next 3-6 months. In addition to television commercials, Conan O’Brien will also be featured in magazine advertising, on billboards, on in-store displays and on the Honda website. Conan O’Brien would also make personal appearances at select Honda dealerships.
1. How familiar are you with this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Unfamiliar** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Familiar**

2. What is your attitude toward this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Dislike** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Like**

3. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Unfamiliar** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Familiar**

4. What is your attitude toward this celebrity. Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Dislike** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Like**

5. If this celebrity endorsed this brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations does this celebrity bring to a brand he is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________
As the newest spokesperson for the Honda Civic, Dave Chappelle would be featured in a special TV ad that will air during primetime television on the major television networks (ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox) for the next 3-6 months. In addition to television commercials, Dave Chappelle will also be featured in magazine advertising, on billboards, on in-store displays and on the Honda website. Dave Chappelle would also make personal appearances at select Honda dealerships.
1. How familiar are you with this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Unfamiliar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Familiar

2. What is your attitude toward this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Dislike 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Like

3. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Unfamiliar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Familiar

4. What is your attitude toward this celebrity. Circle the number below that best matches your response.

Dislike 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Like

5. If this celebrity endorsed this brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations does this celebrity bring to a brand he is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
As the newest spokesperson for the Honda Civic, Jay Leno would be featured in a special TV ad that will air during primetime television on the major television networks (ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox) for the next 3-6 months. In addition to television commercials, Jay Leno will also be featured in magazine advertising, on billboards, on in-store displays and on the Honda website. Jay Leno would also make personal appearances at select Honda dealerships.
1. How **familiar** are you with this **brand**? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Unfamiliar**  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  **Familiar**

2. What is your **attitude** toward this **brand**? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Dislike**  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  **Like**

3. How **familiar** are you with this **celebrity**? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Unfamiliar**  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  **Familiar**

4. What is your **attitude** toward this **celebrity**. Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Dislike**  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  **Like**

5. If this celebrity endorsed this brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations does this celebrity bring to a brand he is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________
As the newest spokesperson for the Honda Civic, Jim Carey would be featured in a special TV ad that will air during primetime television on the major television networks (ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox) for the next 3-6 months. In addition to television commercials, Jim Carey will also be featured in magazine advertising, on billboards, on in-store displays and on the Honda website. Jim Carey would also make personal appearances at select Honda dealerships.
1. How familiar are you with this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

**Unfamiliar** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Familiar**

2. What is your attitude toward this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

**Dislike** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Like**

3. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

**Unfamiliar** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Familiar**

4. What is your attitude toward this celebrity. Circle the number below that best matches your response.

**Dislike** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Like**

5. If this celebrity endorsed this brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations does this celebrity bring to a brand he is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

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Please circle the responses below that best describe you.

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**Year**

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Appendix D

University of Cincinnati
College of Business Administration
Department of Marketing
Consumer Opinion Survey

Information Sheet
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Before agreeing to participate in this study, it is important that you read and understand the following instructions and statement of confidentiality. They describe the purpose and procedures of the study. Participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw from this study at any time and without penalty by simply returning the questionnaire to the investigator. This study will take from 10 to 15 minutes to complete. You should also understand that there are no risks involved in participating in this study. It is important to understand that no guarantee or assurance can be made as to the results of this study.

By completing this survey, you indicate your consent to participate in this study.

Instructions
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Although participation in this survey is voluntary, please answer all questions. In return for volunteering you will receive participation credit as described by your instructor. After completing this survey, you will notify your instructor of your participation in this study as described at the end of this survey. If you do not want to participate in this study or chose to withdraw at any point you will have an additional opportunity to earn participation points in the course as indicated in your course syllabus.

Statement of Confidentiality
(Please Read Before Proceeding)

Your responses will be kept anonymous. The researchers will not be made aware of your personal, identifying information. Further, only the researchers will see your completed questionnaires. Your responses will be combined with those of all other participants, that is, your individual responses will not be identified.

If there are any questions concerning this study you may contact Dr. Chris Allen at 556-7110, Chris.Allen@uc.edu or Felicia Miller at 556-7109, millerfm@email.uc.edu. Both are located in Linder Hall, Marketing Department, 4th floor. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board's Program Manager, Claudia Norman, at 558-5784, claudia.norman@uc.edu.

***** Thank you very much for your assistance *****

Please remove and keep this page for your reference
Today I am interested in your opinion about celebrity endorsements.

On the following pages you will be asked for your opinion about a number of potential celebrity spokespersons for a product you are familiar with and perhaps even use. You will be asked to read about five potential brand-celebrity pairings.

Please follow the directions and read each question carefully. There is no right or wrong answer; I am only interested in your honest opinion.
As the newest spokesperson for Clinique, Jessica Simpson would be featured in a special TV ad that will during primetime television on the major television networks (ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox) for the next 3-6 months. In addition to television commercials, Jessica Simpson will also be featured in magazine advertising, on in-store displays and on the Clinique website. Jessica Simpson would also make personal appearances at the Clinique counter in select department stores.
6. How familiar are you with this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Unfamiliar  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Familiar

7. What is your attitude toward this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Dislike  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Like

8. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Unfamiliar  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Familiar

9. What is your attitude toward this celebrity. Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Dislike  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Like

10. If this celebrity endorsed this brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations does this celebrity bring to a brand she is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

    _______________________________________
    _______________________________________
    _______________________________________
As the newest spokesperson for Clinique, Mariah Carey would be featured in a special TV ad that will during primetime television on the major television networks (ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox) for the next 3-6 months. In addition to television commercials, Mariah Carey will also be featured in magazine advertising, on in-store displays and on the Clinique website. Mariah Carey would also make personal appearances at the Clinique counter in select department stores.
1. **How** familiar **are you with this brand?** Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Unfamiliar** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Familiar**

2. **What is your** attitude **toward this brand?** Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Dislike** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Like**

3. **How** familiar **are you with this celebrity?** Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Unfamiliar** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Familiar**

4. **What is your** attitude **toward this celebrity.** Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Dislike** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Like**

5. **If this celebrity endorsed this brand, what would that say about that brand?** In other words, what associations does this celebrity bring to a brand she is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________
As the newest spokesperson for Clinique, Paris Hilton would be featured in a special TV ad that will during primetime television on the major television networks (ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox) for the next 3-6 months. In addition to television commercials, Paris Hilton will also be featured in magazine advertising, on in-store displays and on the Clinique website. Paris Hilton would also make personal appearances at the Clinique counter in select department stores.
1. How familiar are you with this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Unfamiliar  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Familiar

2. What is your attitude toward this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Dislike  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Like

3. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Unfamiliar  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Familiar

4. What is your attitude toward this celebrity. Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   Dislike  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Like

5. If this celebrity endorsed this brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations does this celebrity bring to a brand she is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
As the newest spokesperson for Clinique, Angelina Jolie would be featured in a special TV ad that will during primetime television on the major television networks (ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox) for the next 3-6 months. In addition to television commercials, Angelina Jolie will also be featured in magazine advertising, on in-store displays and on the Clinique website. Angelina Jolie would also make personal appearances at the Clinique counter in select department stores.
1. How familiar are you with this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Unfamiliar** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Familiar**

2. What is your attitude toward this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Dislike** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Like**

3. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Unfamiliar** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Familiar**

4. What is your attitude toward this celebrity. Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   **Dislike** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **Like**

5. If this celebrity endorsed this brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations does this celebrity bring to a brand she is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
As the newest spokesperson for Clinique, Britney Spears would be featured in a special TV ad that will during primetime television on the major television networks (ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox) for the next 3-6 months. In addition to television commercials, Britney Spears will also be featured in magazine advertising, on in-store displays and on the Clinique website. Britney Spears would also make personal appearances at the Clinique counter in select department stores.
1. How familiar are you with this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   ![Familiarity Scale]

2. What is your attitude toward this brand? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   ![Attitude Scale]

3. How familiar are you with this celebrity? Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   ![Familiarity Scale]

4. What is your attitude toward this celebrity. Circle the number below that best matches your response.

   ![Attitude Scale]

5. If this celebrity endorsed this brand, what would that say about that brand? In other words, what associations does this celebrity bring to a brand she is endorsing? Write your response in the space below.

   ![Response Space]
Please circle the responses below that best describe you.

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# Appendix E

## Female Treatment Conditions

### Familiar Treatment

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## Unfamiliar Treatment

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Appendix E
Male Treatment Conditions

Familiar Treatment

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REFERENCES

Advertising Age (2001), "Jell-O-O Taken to "X-Tremes"", 72 (47), 4.

---- (2004), "Kobe kept on the marketing bench," 75 (37), 16-17.


Dholakia, Ruby Roy and Brian Sternthal (1977), "Highly Credible Sources: Persuasive Facilitators or Persuasive Liabilities?," Journal of Consumer Research, 3 (March), 223-32.


So, what do brands mean? As evidenced in this research, brand meaning is a dynamic and complex concept. Consumers and firms share in the process of creating brand meaning. The firm tries to appeal to consumers through overt and subtle marketing messages. At the same time, consumers continually take these messages and, based on their experiences, adapt and incorporate them into their lives. The research presented here takes several important steps toward addressing the question of “what do brands mean”?

First, this research provides a multidimensional definition of brand meaning. In Essay 1 meaning is defined as the complex collection of perceptions that are produced by the consumer from the marketplace and culture around them. These perceptions are based on the consumer’s interpretation of the brand’s functional assets, the emotions it evokes, and the culture-specific symbols it represents. This definition recognizes the utilitarian elements of brand meaning that are noted elsewhere in the literature, but adds structure to the intangible qualities that distinguish brands in the mind of the consumer. By delineating these non-functional associations, this definition also acknowledges the role consumer’s emotions and experiences play in creating meaning. The results of the qualitative study in this essay support the three-dimensional definition. Also, because half the subjects in this study selected their own brand, a large number of unique brands are examined. As a result the definition is appropriate for a diverse group of brands from over a dozen different categories.

The second contribution of this research is related to understanding celebrity meaning. The study in Essay 2 reveals that celebrities contain unique dimensions of meaning not found in traditional product and service brands. At least one unique dimension, captured in the “other”
category of the definition, includes the ordinary, and not so ordinary, things that celebrities do. This is the behavior that makes headlines and allows consumers to “know” a celebrity. It also enables consumers to bring celebrities’ meanings into their lives. Given the differences in the celebrity data, this study suggests that celebrities should not be treated as mere extensions of the brand concept subject to conventional brand management principles.

Finally, this research provides empirical support for McCracken’s meaning transfer model in the context of implied celebrity endorsements. In the final essay, classical conditioning techniques are used to demonstrate that meaning does move from the celebrity to the brand which in this case has a negative effect on the brand. In addition to this important contribution, this study adds to the field’s knowledge regarding associative learning. Contingency awareness, while not as prevalent in this study as in others in the literature, served to intensify the results. This suggests that a minimal level of awareness of the focal stimulus may be necessary for optimal learning. Finally, this study introduces a novel design where the conditioned stimulus and the unconditioned stimulus are both well-known by the subject. This initial effort provides evidence that this conventional research method can be successfully applied to familiar stimulus.

Taken together, the three studies in this dissertation make interesting and important contributions to the brand meaning and general brand management literature. This research addresses some clear gaps and assumptions in the literature; however, this is just the first step. The results of each study suggest the need for additional research. The sections that follow describe the future research that needs to be done to address the limitations of each essay and strengthen the overall findings.
Future research relative to defining brand meaning for conventional products and services needs to first begin with a different method of data collection. While the survey instrument used in the current study allowed subjects to provide a good deal of open-ended thoughts about a brand they knew well, it did not facilitate a comprehensive understanding of what the brand meant to them. This is evidenced by the relatively small levels of emotional and symbolic thoughts captured in the three-dimensional framework.

One-on-one or small group interviews would likely increase not only the volume of information but also the quality. This method of data collection would allow the subject(s) to really engage in the topic and, with the help of a skilled interviewer, reveal a more complete picture of brand meaning. A richer understanding of what brands mean from the consumer perspective may improve the current level of inter-coder agreement or even lead to changes in the current definition.

A second, complementary direction for future research is related to the brand stimulus. The current study examined a broad range of self-nominated brands from over a dozen different categories. While this variety was helpful in understanding how the definition of brand meaning applied broadly, it made it difficult to draw specific conclusions about subsets of brands (e.g. products vs. services, across or within categories, etc.). Future research that constrains brand selection to a given category (e.g. automobiles or clothing) would address this issue. Depending on the category, subject recruitment would also need to be limited to individuals within the category target. This procedure would still give the subjects some element of self-selection, but at the same time provide a natural limit to the variation across brands. Based on the results of the
study in Essay 1, clothing, automobile and cosmetics brands were frequently nominated and therefore these categories should be considered for the next study.


In terms of understanding celebrity meaning, the multi-dimensional framework that was derived from the object and brand literature was not appropriate. While some dimensions seem to match the data, it was clear that the existing definition did not account for the unique dimensions of meaning that celebrities contain. Essentially, more exploratory work is needed to inform this underdeveloped domain that has borrowed heavily from traditional brand research.

First, a more engaging, in-depth procedure for data collection is needed. As discussed above, the current procedure did not allow subjects to fully explore the concept of meaning and in this case what celebrities mean to them. In-depth interviews or small group discussions would be more appropriate for eliciting the quality of information needed for this research.

Given a better quality of data, a framework for celebrity meaning could be developed based on the consumer culture literature. Specifically, McCracken (2005) suggests that celebrity meaning can be described in terms of various cultural categories including those related to time (units and purpose), space (measurement and occasion), nature (flora, fauna, and landscape) and person (status, class, gender, age, occupation, and lifestyle). As the author notes, the “person” category is particularly relevant to the subject of celebrities and what they represent in society. Coding rules could be written for each sub-category and then applied by independent coders. Unlike the framework proposed in Essay 2, this approach would provide a foundation that is grounded in the culture and celebrity literature.
An alternative to this deductive approach is to subject the interview data to an emergent content analysis. In general, content analysis involves using independent reviewers to examine data and identify a list of themes or features. The researcher can then reconcile the lists to produce a scheme or framework along with coding rules that can then be applied by a set of independent coders. Like the first option, this approach would likely produce a definition of celebrity meaning that is well-grounded in this context.

Essay 3 “How Does Meaning Move? Understanding the process of meaning transfer in the context of celebrity endorsements”

The first step to strengthening the empirical support for meaning transfer is related to several design issues. The current design allows for a potential confound between product category, subject gender, celebrity gender, and celebrity meaning valence. Future research needs to include a design that pulls these factors apart so that there true effects can be better understood.

To address this issue, the next study should use the same brand and set of celebrities for both male and female subjects. Results could then be compared across gender and gender could be examined as a potential mediator if results differ. Subsequent studies could then use the same brand but with varying sets of celebrities that differ in terms of gender (same sex or mixed) and meaning valence (positive or negative) to examine the effect of these variables. Likewise the celebrities could remain constant and the brand could change (e.g. different or same category, different meaning, etc.)

The other important issue that must be addressed in the next study is the question of spontaneous inference. It is critical to demonstrate a spontaneous change in brand beliefs as a result of the implied celebrity endorsement. Given the pre-determined conditioning procedure,
response time is likely to be the best indicator of spontaneous inference. Measuring response time is undetectable by the subject and does not disrupt the conditioning procedures.

Simple procedural and design changes could potentially improve results with the current response time measure. First, data collection should be done in a more sterile environment. For example, subjects should be separated by partitions or asked to wear headphones to encourage them to focus on the task at hand. Second, less familiar, yet authentic, brand stimulus should be used. Response time is usually used to assess spontaneous inference in the context of novel stimulus and novel tasks. Future research should replace the fictitious brand stimuli (Brand A car and Brand R skincare) with brands that seem real, but are unfamiliar to subjects (e.g. brands from another country).

In addition to improving the response time results, the above changes may also improve the study results. First, by increasing subject focus the environmental changes may lead to higher levels of contingency awareness and ultimately a more consistent and significant conditioning effect across conditions. Likewise, using novel, but seemingly real, brand stimulus may produce a more realistic endorsement scenario, vs. the fictitious brands, which may also yield more significant conditioning effects.