Keeping pace with the youth of today

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How do we engage teenage culture?

It was forecast that teenagers would spend $238 billion world-wide in 2006. With increasingly large disposable incomes, the powerful youth and teenage market is one of the largest and most lucrative in the UK. With a diverse and media driven culture, keeping up-to-date with trends, fashions and youth attitudes can be a tough challenge. Businesses wishing to meet this challenge and access this profitable, yet challenging market must understand the contemporary needs of modern youth and be willing to change, adapt and drive the market forward.

To enable researchers and business alike to keep pace with this elusive market, the Market Research Society (MRS) will hold a one-day conference at the CCTV Centre, Barbican, London, on Monday 12 February to discuss the major challenges facing those wishing to engage the youth market. Keynote speakers will lead debate on new and exciting material such as neuroscience and the teenage brain, attitudes to image, and lifestyle patterns.

Chaired by Barbie Clarke, Editor of Young Consumers Journal and a member of the Kidsâ€™ Superbrands Council and the BBC Childrenâ€™s Editorial Board, the Conference will present high profile speakers from several sectors and industries. This will include keynote addresses by Sean Pillot de Chenecey, founder of kidsâ€™ brand consultants Captain Crikey, and Graham Saxton, Senior Vice President of International Research & Planning at MTV Networks International. Sean will draw on his extensive experience across a multitude of sectors, including sport, retail, media and fashion, whilst Graham will discuss a recent global study on the social impact of digital media and technology, â€˜Circuits of Coolâ€™.

From the client-side, Vicky Hathaway, Marketing Manager at the Milk Development Council, will present on the always topical and controversial issues of teenage attitudes to dieting and body image. Richard Heylar, Reseach Manager at Channel 4, will present his own survey on â€˜Youth Tribesâ€™, providing a guided tour on todayâ€™s most important tribes, an offering a new blueprint for how to tackle researching youth today. The Carphone Warehouse will also be presenting on the lucrative and fast moving market of mobile communications technology.

The use of neuroscience in market research is a new and exciting field. Martyn Richards, of Martyn Richards Research, will take us through the trials and tribulations of teenage life, especially in relation to the pressures of education. Also from the consultancy side, Sam Davis, Senior Research Manager at COI, will discuss the Franks Campaign, focusing on youth segmentation (and the dangerous segregation of youth communities is this right?). Todayâ€™s youth are the pioneers of the 3G age, and Dr Richard Atkinson, Research Director at 2CV Research, will question how youth connects and consumes in a networked and wired world.

Conference chair, Barbie Clark is positive that the conference is successfully tackling one of the most challenging fields in market research. Barbie comments: "In such a fast moving society where youth drives change at an intense pace, it is vital that the research community keeps abreast of the latest trends and developments. This conference will challenge outdated and perceived attitudes to youth culture by unveiling new research and adopting new and exciting methods.

Barbie adds, "The conference will be a milestone in youth research and is absolutely essential to any business wishing to keep up pace with youth culture."

The Youth Research Conference will be held on Monday 12 February from 9am until 5.30pm at the CCTV Barbican Centre in London. For more information or to book a place please contact James Coyle on 020 7566 1852 or e-mail James.Coyle@mrs.org.uk.

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