SOCIAL MEDIA
a jungle of junk food ads targeted to children and teens

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THE PROBLEM

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) represent a leading threat to human health and socioeconomic development. Cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes cause an estimated **35 million deaths each year**;

Unhealthy diet is a risk factor for noncommunicable diseases. The risks presented by unhealthy diets **start in childhood** and build up throughout life;

33% of children in Canada are obese or overweight;

Direct **health care costs for obesity** and indirect costs due to lost productivity associated with obesity is estimated between **4.6 billion to 7.1 billion in Canada annually**;

Children and **youth** spend approximately **38 to 42 hours** per week in front of a **screen**;

It is estimated that on a yearly basis, the **average child sees 25 million food and beverage ads** which are available through their favorite websites and **90% of these ads are for unhealthy foods**.

Most used social media platforms used by children and teens are **Facebook**, **YouTube**, **Instagram**, **Snapchat** and **Twitter**.

DIGITAL MARKETING PRACTICES

Influencers: spread their products and content through blogs, vlogs.

FUN FACT: 63% of adolescents will try a brand suggested by a vlogger or blogger vs. 46% suggested by a film star

E-word-of-mouth: Engagement through social networks

User-generated advertisement: Brand content created by users (non-professionals) which bring brand awareness may it be positive or negative

Conversation targeting: Monitor individual interactions, social relationships and location

Buzz monitoring: Analysing messages and opinions expressed across platforms and websites, including, message boards, online communities, video-sharing sites, and social networks

Viral brand promotion: How consumers spread the message on a pass-along based, incentive-based, trendy based, and undercover based (can use regular consumers or influencers)

Location targeting: Follow consumers through their mobile devices and provide location specific advertisement

Neuromarketing: Neuroscience methods to develop digital marketing techniques designed to trigger subconscious, emotional arousal

THE LEGISLATION

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Bill S-228- *Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (prohibiting food and beverage marketing directed at children)-*

September 28, 2017

7.1 Subject to the regulations, no person shall advertise unhealthy food in a manner that is directed primarily at children.

Coming into force two years after royal assent

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Consumer protection act, chapter P-40.1

248. Subject to what is provided in the regulations, no person may make use of commercial advertising directed at persons under thirteen years of age.

249. To determine whether or not an advertisement is directed at persons under thirteen years of age, account must be taken of the context of its presentation, and in particular of

(a) the nature and intended purpose of the goods advertised;

(b) the manner of presenting such advertisement;

(c) the time and place it is shown.

The fact that such advertisement may be contained in printed matter intended for persons thirteen years of age and over or intended both for persons under thirteen years of age and for persons thirteen years of age and over, or that it may be broadcast during air time intended for persons thirteen years of age and over or intended both for persons under thirteen years of age and for persons thirteen years of age and over does not create a presumption that it is not directed at persons under thirteen years of age.

ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

Social media platforms age requirement can be easily overturned

Undisclosed brand affiliation

User-generated content

Traceability of content source

Jurisdiction of the internet

SOLUTIONS

Healthy eating marketing: Counter industry's campaigns by using vloggers, bloggers and influencers to promote healthy lifestyle

Appropriate sanctions and penalties: Sanctions should be applied to content creators, digital platforms as well as affiliated companies

International cooperation: Coordinating efforts between national and international to eliminate marketing to children of foods high in fat, salt and sugar

Using artificial intelligence: To optimize healthy eating habit ads, smart content curation, web and app personalization, multimodal analysis