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The three Es of marketing to kids

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LONDON: Marketing to children is a complex area filled with potential pitfalls and marketers working in this area should seek to fulfil the three Es of ethical compliance, engagement and ecosystem.

These are outlined in a Warc Best Practice paper – [How to market effectively to children](#)

(<http://www.warc.com/Content/ContentViewer.aspx?MasterContentRef=a6e88e3d-9252-4944-b5e1-c68a50fe17a6&CID=A108173&PUB=BESTPRAC>) – from Sam Clough, strategic insights director at SuperAwesome, the digital engagement platform for children.

Brand recognition happens from a young age – research has found that an average three year old recognises up to 100 different logos – but advertising recognition does not. It is not until children are around eight years old that they can confidently pinpoint advertising across most media.

Even then, Clough notes, the digital space can be particularly confusing with many children under the age of 12 failing to recognise the plethora of ad formats or differentiate between marketing and content – especially when they come in the guise of popular vloggers.

So, first and foremost, brand owners have to think ethically and ensure marketing plans comply with relevant legislation, COPPA in the US and GDPR in the European Union, for example.

Failure to comply with children's data privacy laws can lead to [stiff fines](#)

(http://www.warc.com/Content/News/N36975_Privacy_breaches_cost_InMobi_241m.content?PUB=Warc_News&CID=N36975&ID=568ffebd-ad8f-49f3-9b4d-2c4c5b15f8cb), as mobile advertising network InMobi recently discovered, while brand reputation may also take a hit.

Once over that hurdle, content is key to creating a campaign that children will want to engage with. While brands sometimes worry just about audience reach, engagement with campaigns is often more effective in creating a call to action and driving sales.

Children are far less cynical and jaded than the average adult and can have interesting opinions and a desire to contribute, Clough notes.

And as children thrive on immersing themselves in a particular world, accessing content and brand engagement via as many touchpoints as they can, a campaign needs to be present across an ecosystem.

Disney's 2013 movie Frozen is a classic example: children watch the film on loop, dress up in Frozen costume, play with the toys and games, read the books and eat Frozen yoghurt.

Data sourced from Warc

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