



Keywords

Branding, branding strategy, brand positioning, brand vs. product strategy, segmentation, targeting, consumer perception, marketing campaign, creativity in marketing, toy industry

In Summary

- **The Challenge:** To reposition LEGO as a creativity-driven brand and reignite growth after a 2016–2017 sales stall-out, which was caused by parents who no longer viewed LEGO play as a creative activity.
- **The Insight:** Research revealed a perception gap: lower-affinity parents failed to see LEGO's creative potential, unlike high-affinity families. This suggested that highlighting LEGO's limitless “build and rebuild” play could change those parents' perceptions and re-engage them.
- **The Idea:** Launch “Rebuild the World”, LEGO's first global brand campaign in over 30 years, as a bold platform to celebrate creativity and imagination. The idea reframed LEGO's value proposition around imaginative building and rebuilding, and positioned LEGO as the ultimate tool for creative play in the eyes of both children and parents.
- **Bringing the Idea to Life:** LEGO worked with agency BETC to create a whimsical hero film that became the centerpiece of the campaign. The film followed a playful chase between a knight and a rabbit and departed from conventional toy advertising by focusing on storytelling rather than product demonstration, thereby establishing a clear brand statement. The film was deployed broadly across TV and digital channels to capture parents' attention. The campaign also included a series of digital videos that profiled real individuals, including public figures such as Simone Biles, who were presented as having “rebuilt their world.” These stories gained attention across social platforms and earned media. In parallel, LEGO rolled out on-the-ground activations that invited children around the world to reimagine famous landmarks using LEGO bricks, supported by out-of-home advertising and local public relations efforts. Together, these elements reinforced the campaign's focus on creativity in play.
- **The Results:** LEGO regained momentum – 2019 consumer sales grew roughly 6%, outpacing the overall toy industry's growth. The “Rebuild the World” campaign attracted a wave of new consumers to the LEGO brand, helping restore brand enthusiasm and market share gains.

Discussion Questions

1. **Challenge & Consumer Perception:** What core challenge did LEGO face leading up to the “Rebuild the World” campaign? How did parents' perceptions of LEGO (especially among low-affinity parents) contribute to this stall-out, and why was changing these perceptions critical?
2. **Segmentation & Targeting:** How did LEGO segment its customer base to identify the campaign's target audience? Why focus on “low-affinity” parents who valued creative toys but did not see LEGO as creative, and how did this targeting shape the campaign strategy?



Discussion Questions, *continued*

3. **Buyer vs. User Dynamic:** LEGO's customers include both the buyers (parents/gift-givers) and the end users (children). How does this unique buyer-versus-user dynamic affect LEGO's marketing strategy in this case? In what ways did the campaign need to appeal to parents without alienating the kids who actually use the product?
4. **Cultural Factors:** Analyze the differences in brand perceptions between markets like the U.S., Germany, and China (as presented in Exhibit 4). How might cultural factors play a role in these differences?
5. **Brand vs. Product Strategy:** The case emphasizes a shift to a brand-level campaign rather than a product-focused campaign. What is the difference between a brand campaign and a product campaign in marketing? Why do you think LEGO chose to make "Rebuild the World" a brand statement (focusing on LEGO's overall creativity ethos) instead of highlighting a specific product or playset?
6. **Campaign Development:** Describe the key components of the "Rebuild the World" campaign. What were the main creative elements and channels used (e.g. the hero film, social media content, PR events), and how did these elements work together to deliver LEGO's message?
7. **Creative Execution:** The hero film at the center of this campaign features a whimsical, fast-paced story with a knight, a rabbit in a carrot car, and imaginative transformations. Why did LEGO adopt this unconventional, story-driven approach for the ad? How does a fantastical narrative like this help capture adult viewers' attention and reshape their perception of the LEGO brand?
8. **Integrated Marketing Tactics:** Beyond the main film, LEGO incorporated celebrity influencers (like Simone Biles and others) and local activations (kids reimagining landmarks) into the campaign. What role did these extensions play in the overall strategy? Discuss the advantages and potential drawbacks of using real-world "rebuilders" and community events to reinforce LEGO's brand message.
9. **Measuring Success:** If you were evaluating the "Rebuild the World" campaign, what metrics or indicators would you examine to determine if it was successful? Consider both brand perception measures (e.g. shifts in parents' attitudes about LEGO's creativity) and business outcomes (e.g. sales trends, market share, engagement rates).
10. **Risks and Challenges:** What risks or challenges did LEGO face with this campaign strategy? As the case mentioned, "Julia was aware of internal reservations about the campaign." Speculate the potential reasons for the internal reservations about this campaign.
11. **Looking Ahead – Branding Strategy:** How does "Rebuild the World" fit into LEGO's long-term branding strategy? If you were advising LEGO's marketing team, what would you suggest as next steps to continue building on this campaign's momentum and further strengthen LEGO's positioning as a creative play brand?