

Age Discrimination is illegal (but no one told the brand).

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The UK Parliament recently passed a bill that outlaws discrimination on the basis of age. So now you cannot give bonuses for long service or use certain words to describe people and jobs.

But no one seems to have informed brands.

Does this mean that Old Monk Rum, Old Navy, Old Spice and even Oldsmobile are in breach of the law? Luckily as they had those descriptors before the act came into force they are legal. This probably saves the mobile phone provider '3', as well as 7-Up and Kronenbourg 1664, not to mention Young's Bitter.

But maybe The Glenlivet 12 year aged malt whisky will have to reconsider...

What about advertising your brand as 'lively', 'energetic' or 'funky'? All could be criticised for being 'ageist' descriptors.

'Young' and 'old' consumers

Throwing caution to the winds, we have analysed the appeal of brands in the UK amongst the 'young' (16-24 years of age) and the 'old' (55+ years) on the BRANDZ survey. Consumers rate their relationship with brands by telling us what their advantages are – and the brand which has the biggest share of advantages is the one they 'bond' to.

The Top 10 Bonded in the UK in 2006 amongst the 'young':

1. Colgate
2. Nokia
3. Microsoft
4. McDonald's
5. Evian
6. Coca Cola
7. Pizza Express
8. Sony
9. Aquafresh
10. H & M

Perhaps it is no surprise that brands which meet life stage needs (such as Nokia, Evian, Pizza Express and H&M) score highly. And of course the most valuable brand in the world, Microsoft (BRANDZ Most Powerful Brands Study 2006 by Millward Brown Optimor, \$62bn), has many of the 'young' bonded.

What of the 'oldies'? Only four from the 'young' list manage to get in the 'oldie' Top 10:

1. Tesco
2. Marks & Spencer Apparel
3. **Colgate**
4. **Nokia**
5. **Microsoft**
6. **McDonald's**
7. Dell
8. Olay
9. Sainsbury's
10. Next

Shopping is clearly something that old people do more of with five retailers appearing on the list. (They seem to go and recover in McDonald's after touring Tesco, M&S, Sainsbury's and Next.).

The 'old' are relatively price led, whilst the young are more emotionally driven

The 'oldies' are more likely to choose brands that they bond to for price reasons (and popularity is also a big motivator) whilst the younger consumers are driven more by affinity (especially emotional affinity).

What about the rest of the World?

Microsoft, Nokia, Colgate and McDonald's are often in the Top 3 across the age divide:

	<u>'Young'</u>	<u>'Oldies'</u>
Australia	Colgate Nokia Nescafe	Colgate Microsoft Nokia
Brazil	Microsoft McDonald's	Microsoft Colgate Motorola Lindoya (mineral water)
China	Microsoft	Industrial & Commercial Bank of China
France	Colgate Chanel Nokia McDonald's Peugeot	Microsoft Colgate Microsoft Nokia Chanel
Germany	Nokia McDonald's Coca Cola	Nokia McDonald's Hugo Boss
India	Nokia McDonald's Kingfisher Strong	Nokia McDonald's Mongolis (fast food) McDonald's

	<u>'Young'</u>	<u>'Oldies'</u>
Italy	Nokia Lavazza Coca Cola	Nokia Microsoft Esselunga (grocery store)
Japan	Toyota McDonald's Asahi Super Dry	Toyota McDonald's Aoen/Justco (grocery store)
Korea	Enclean (motor fuel) Hyundai Bean Pole (apparel)	Hyundai Life Dove Cream Shampoo
Mexico	Colgate Microsoft Corona (beer)	Colgate Microsoft Ford
Russia	Nokia Lukoil Sberbank Rossii	Sberbank Rossii Nokia McDonald's
South Africa	Microsoft KFC Carling Black Label	Microsoft KFC Toyota
Spain	Nokia Coca Cola Colgate	Nokia Coca Cola Microsoft
Thailand	Nokia Microsoft PTT (motor fuel)	Microsoft Nokia Colgate
USA	McDonald's Subway Microsoft	Olay Microsoft State Farm Insurance

Mandatory Retirement Age

The new law now allows retirement to be at 65 years – but there is a ‘duty to consider’ any requests to continue beyond this age.

Out of our four brands that appeal across the ages and are highly rated in almost all countries, only Microsoft is below ‘retirement’ age (being founded 31 years ago).

McDonald’s is 66 years old and so is living on borrowed time!

Colgate is the oldest of the quartet having been founded in the 1840’s.

And Nokia actually began as a pulp mill in 1865. But who is going to telephone Nokia with the news that it is not ‘funky’ because it is well past retirement age? Not me, not those ‘bonded’ consumers out there.

Long live the brand.

NOTE: The BRANDZ™ study, conducted annually by Millward Brown, has measured the brand equity of more than 38,000 "consumer facing" brands, and has interviewed 1,000,000+ consumers globally. Consumer perception of a brand is a key input in determining brand value because brands are a combination of business performance, product delivery, clarity of positioning, and leadership. BRANDZ™ is funded by WPP and is available to all WPP agencies and clients.

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