Ethnic advertising

1 **Do the same brands and products appeal to everyone? Do you think the same advert is effective with all people?**

Should a company use just one cross-cultural advert to reach all consumers or should it be making separate adverts aimed at consumers of different ethnicities? In the past, the divisions between the total market and the ethnic-specific markets in the USA were clearer, but the latest census data shows that this has changed and minority ethnic groups, such as Hispanics, African-Americans and Asian-Americans, now make up a large part of the population.

Some companies and advertising agencies feel that a **multicultural approach** to marketing and advertising is best. They recognise the changing demographic realities of the consumer population and try to emphasise the elements that the different ethnic groups have in common. It seems that this is particularly successful with the younger generation as their tastes in clothes, music and food are similar whatever their ethnic background.

Others feel a **segmented approach** continues to be the most effective as ethnic origin is key to a person's identity, even more so than education, religion, income and gender. Agencies specialising in advertising aimed at the Hispanic or African-American market, for example, can offer a deeper understanding of the cultural identity of the consumer and have done much to raise recognition of the importance of the ethnic consumer. Now, however, with this multicultural marketing approach they are feeling the pressure. They are losing accounts as clients choose one mainstream agency to follow all their campaigns or they have to assume a minor role, taking direction from a lead agency.

Separate advertising certainly continues to make sense for anyone who is advertising a product or service for a particular ethnic group: skincare and beauty products are a good example. Otherwise a company needs to be big enough to be able to afford to run multiple campaigns. Nevertheless, it is estimated that only 7% of marketing budgets are spent on campaigns targeted at ethnic groups and ethnic advertising budgets are the first to be cut in times of economic downturn or crisis. It may also be difficult to get the right ethnic perspective. In the same way that a campaign will not necessarily work on a global level, ethnic-specific initiatives might not be successful either. Among Hispanics, for example, there are big differences between someone with Cuban roots and someone with Venezuelan roots and their reactions to adverts are likely to be very different too.

Source: *The Economist* and www.adage.com

READING COMPREHENSION

2 **BEC** **Read the text and choose the correct option.**

1 How has the population changed in the USA?
   A There are more ethnic-specific markets.
   B The divisions between ethnic groups are more distinct.
   C The population of ethnic minority groups has grown.

2 What is an important element of multicultural advertising?
   A Trying to find common factors among different ethnic groups.
   B Knowing consumers' backgrounds.
   C Separating the needs of different ethnic groups.

3 Why is multicultural marketing particularly effective with young people?
   A They are the biggest consumer group.
   B They have similar preferences.
   C They all have the same ethnic background.

4 What is the advantage of a specialised ethnic agency?
   A They can work better under pressure.
   B They know ethnic consumers better.
   C They understand their clients better.

5 Why is it mostly big companies that run multiple advertising campaigns?
   A They have enough money for separate campaigns.
   B They have a wide variety of products to advertise.
   C They operate in a large number of markets.

VOCABULARY

3 **Find the words in the text for these definitions.**

1 _____ to get in contact with, influence or have an effect on
2 _____ someone who buys goods and services for personal use
3 _____ preferences, likes and dislikes
4 _____ fundamental, important
5 _____ an amount of money allocated for a particular purpose
6 _____ to have enough money to pay for something

SPEAKING

4 **Discuss these questions in pairs or small groups.**

1 How much does nationality or ethnic background have to do with a person's likes and dislikes?
2 Are there different kinds of advertising for ethnic groups in your country? (e.g. in a different language.)
3 Which do you think is better – ethnic advertising or multicultural advertising? Why?
4 What differences could there be in the choice of advertising media in order to reach different ethnic groups?