Gender Differences in the Language of Web Based Communication

The Cases of Heineken and Innocent

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Introduction

The world of beverages is a world of image. You do not drink a beer; you make a statement about your lifestyle. Heineken work hard to portray themselves as party-starters with a long tradition. It is the drink for fun people and the long tradition of the beer proves that it works since the brand is still around and doing well. If you prefer to drink the smoothie Innocent then you also make a statement about your lifestyle. You show people that you are a fun but also responsible person when you drink the playful and natural Innocent and what you show others by drinking a smoothie is that you want to take good care of your body. In a way, the things we buy work as an extension of our own power and ability. Possessions make people feel stronger and, to some extent, they compensate for the feeling of being inadequate (Fexeus 141). Therefore these two brands, Heineken and Innocent, work hard to make sure that these “truths” that their brands reflect in their consumer’s lifestyles and image, are sustained. They use several methods to achieve this and these methods stretch from graphic design to linguistics.

This paper will deal with two linguistic aspects, connotation and politeness, of branding from a gender perspective. This means that this paper will focus on analysis of how the brands fortify the feeling of masculinity and femininity in their consumers. In our culture, beer is traditionally seen as a masculine beverage (Talbot 173) while fruit and health are related to femininity (Talbot 138). This investigation will show what linguistic proof there might be that the brands use gender stereotypes in order to establish themselves as powerful brands on a highly competitive market.

The reason why I have chosen to compare the two brands Heineken and Innocent is that they express themselves in two very different ways. When looking at their material it soon becomes evident that they have chosen two totally different styles of communication. Also, the two brands have products that are masculine versus feminine and this made it interesting to investigate whether this masculinity and femininity is reflected in the way they use language.
This paper will compare the following three sources: annual report; website; Facebook page, and look for evidence of gender aspects in these sources. The scope of three sources for each brand is chosen in order to prove gender targeting through consistency across text types.

The study is outlined in the following way: the first chapter gives a background to the topic chosen together with the aims of the investigation as well as an explanation of why this topic was chosen. The second chapter goes through the material and method used for this paper. The third chapter presents the brand profiles. The fourth chapter contains the theoretical framework and in the fifth and sixth chapter the results and conclusions are discussed.

**1. Topic, Aim and Research Questions**

This section will give a presentation of the topic of this essay together with the aims and the research questions.

The topic of this study is to examine gender differences in the language of the web based communication of the brands Heineken and Innocent. The web based communication will include the annual reports published on the internet, some randomly chosen subpages on the official websites of the brands; and here only the websites targeted at the consumers will be analysed along with the first 30 posts on the Facebook pages of the brands.

The aim of this paper is to find out if two brands with products that are feminine versus masculine use language that reflect the gender aspect of the product in their corporate branding. The masculinity and femininity of the products are defined in accordance to, among others, Talbot’s definition of gender. The definition will be described in greater detail in section 4. In general terms, however, masculinity is displayed by showing one’s own skill and by using language to spread information rather than emotion (Talbot 86). A general definition of femininity is that women “articulate” themselves through their bodies (Talbot 138) and they use language to express emotion and in order to establish relationship (Talbot 86). Deborah Tannen gives a definition of gender, which also summarises the description in section 4 in general terms (Tannen 40):
Research on gender and language has consistently found male speakers to be competitive and more likely to engage in conflict (for example, by arguing, issuing commands, and taking opposing stands) and females to be cooperative and more likely to avoid conflict (for example, by agreeing, supporting, and making suggestions rather than commands).

This study will investigate the two features politeness and connotation. The paper is limited in the amount of material used for examination and will only contain material that has been published on the internet.

The aim will be reached through a set of research questions. The two brands Heineken and Innocent are both brands of beverages. The first and obvious point is that their products are different. Heineken sell beer and Innocent sell smoothies but are these product differences connected to gender differences and if so, are the profiles of the brands different as well? How is this evident in the communication used by the two brands and can profile differences be related to gender? Will Innocent use more politeness strategies than Heineken? Are Innocent more likely to use lexical items carrying connotations of “women’s language” (Lakoff 1975 referred to in Talbot 36)? Will Heineken and Innocent fall under two different types of storytelling typical of men and women (Talbot 52). Will Innocent engage their readers more in conversation than Heineken will? How will the two brands show evidence of problem-sharing versus problem-solving?

The hypothesis for this paper is that brands that sell masculine products use connotations and politeness strategies in a way that is typical of men, while brands that sell feminine products use the same linguistic features in a way that is typically female. The reason why they acquire this kind of gender-targeted behaviour is that this helps them to reach out to their target audience. In this paper the brand Heineken, with their product beer, and the brand Innocent, with their product smoothie, will represent male versus female brands and products.

The assumption is that since Heineken provide a masculine product they will use language directed at and appealing to men, while Innocent produce feminine products and therefore make use of language that is typically female. The definition of the gender of both products comes from, among others, Mary Talbot’s definition of gender. This assumption of masculinity and femininity of
the products do not mean that women do not drink Heineken and vice versa. The focus of this paper is to investigate if and how these companies make use of gender targeting in their marketing to reach their target audience.

2. Material and Method

The method used in this paper will offer a qualitative analysis of the web-based communication of Heineken and Innocent and interpret their communication in terms of gender aspects. The starting point for the examination is to identify the core values of the brands and analyse the gender differences of the products. The core values will not be deeply analysed in this paper but it is interesting to keep them in mind as the core values of a company are meant to influence every single aspect of a company’s actions and communication. The core values will be presented in section 3.

The material will be examined in order to identify gender aspects of the use of the lexical features politeness and connotation. Politeness strategies will be identified and frequent use of politeness strategies will be recognized as feminine while lack of the same will be acknowledged as masculine behaviour. The definition of politeness used in this paper will be presented in section 4.2.

Connotations will be examined in terms of the lexical items presented by Lakoff (referred to in Talbot 36) as parts of women's language; feminine versus masculine style of storytelling and engagement in conversation along with masculine contra feminine expectations on social interaction. The material chosen for this paper will be examined and words and phrases that are part of the lexical items of women’s language will be identified. The lexical items will be explained further in section 4.3.1. The same will be done for storytelling, presented in section 4.3.2; engagement in conversation, section 4.3.3 as well as expectations on social interaction, section 4.3.4.

The material used in this paper consists of “The quick read” of the Heineken annual report from 2009 (Appendix A), the first 30 posts of the Facebook page of Heineken (Appendix C) as well as six randomly chosen sub pages of the official consumer website (Appendix E). The reason why only “The quick read” is included in the corpus is that the full report is aimed at the investors and would not
show any evidence of how Heineken address their consumers. This “quick read” will still be referred to as “the annual report” in this paper. The material about Heineken will be compared with Innocent’s annual report of 2007 (Appendix B), the first 30 posts of the Facebook page of Innocent (Appendix D) as well as six randomly chosen sub pages of the official consumer website (Appendix F). The Innocent annual report is not a typical annual report either. It is written in an informal style and aimed at consumers rather than investors or other business people.

The material consists of a total of 7885 words. The annual report of Heineken consists of 1640 words, the chosen Facebook posts consists of 435 words and the chosen sub pages from the website consists of a total of 225 words. The annual report of Innocent consists of 3648 words, the chosen Facebook posts made by Innocent consists of 906 words and the chosen sub pages of Innocent’s website consists of a total of 1031 words.

3. The Brand Profiles of Heineken and Innocent

Core values are set up by companies to set the framework of how they should communicate their brand profiles to their consumers. These values are important to the companies, as they are the bases that build up their images (Melin 2008). This chapter will introduce the brand profiles and examine whether they are masculine or feminine.

3.1 Heineken

In their annual report, Heineken present their company values in a competitive tone. They state that they work towards marketing excellence and innovation. Their goal is to be the leader of their market and they claim that they actually are leading. There is also a softer side to Heineken as they claim to work for sustainability and take social and environmental responsibility. Even though they show soft values, the competitive and corporate tone is the most prominent and it is also highly masculine.

Under their brand name Heineken sell different products, such as the “BeerTender“, a five-litre keg, tap beer and bottled beer. In this paper no consideration will be taken of these different product types. The main focus will be
Beer as a product is considered masculine in European culture. The reason why it carries male connotation is related to the alcohol content of the product. Men can expect to earn respect by performing masculinity. Some of the key concepts of masculinity are rationality, dominance, violence, manual labour and heavy drug and alcohol use (Talbot 160-161).

3.2 Innocent

Innocent claim to work towards making their core values present in everything they do. In their annual report they have put together a list of values that consists of the following words: “responsible”, “entrepreneurial”, “generous”, “commercial”, “natural”.

In bullet points the values of Innocent do not come across as strictly feminine. In context, on the other hand, Innocent only present the values that they also state as their most important. These are responsible and natural, which have female connotations of motherhood. In the press, work related situations and in everyday conversations women are defined in terms of home and family. In the press a woman can often be described as a “working wife” where the main point is to stress the fact that this particular woman deviates from the norm of women staying home and taking care of the family (Talbot 225).

The products produced by Innocent are all related to food and nourishment. In this paper the main focus will be kept on one of the core products of the brand, which is the Innocent smoothie. Today the product range of Innocent stretches from pure fruit juices to vegetable based meals, called “veg pots” by the company. Due to this varied product range, Innocent sometimes refer to the term “food” to cover all the products they produce. This term might be referred to in this paper but unless specifically referred to, no consideration will be taken of the other products throughout this paper. Traditionally the woman has responsibility to feed the family and ensure that all family members, especially the children, get the correct amount of nutrition every day.

4. Theoretical Framework
This chapter contains the theoretical framework used for this study. The language features politeness and connotation will be used to examine gender targeting by the two chosen brands. Therefore this chapter will introduce these features and describe which aspects of them will be used to make up the theory of this paper. I will start his chapter with an introduction to gender differences.

4.1 Sex-Exclusive and Sex- Preferential Differentiation

Even though linguistic gender differences can be found across the globe and in various cultures, they tend to vary in strength across cultures. In some languages the differences tend to be so great that it even seems as if men and women use two totally different languages. Even in cultures where the differences may not be as extreme, women and men make use of different pronouns or affixes specific to their gender as speakers, spoken to or spoken about. These differences are uncommon in languages of European origin but many European languages have different pronouns for men and women. In French, for example, the third person pronouns “il” (“he”), “le” (“him”), “ils” (“they”, referring to an all-male or mixed-gender group) are all masculine, while the third person pronouns “elle” (“she”), “la” (“her”) and “elles” (“they”, referring to an all-female group are all feminine. This proves that men and women are treated differently both linguistically and socially. Using specific pronouns and affixes according to gender in a strict way goes under the term sex-exclusive differentiation (Talbot 6). They are characterised by being absolute, meaning that they are used in conservative cultures where male and female roles are not flexible. In Japanese there are several different words for the first person pronoun “I”. There are formal pronouns which can be used by both men and women: “watashi” and the highly formal “watakushi”. Less formally, “atashi” is used only by women, “boku” is traditionally only used by men. There is also another form, “ore”, available to men if they want to show off their masculinity. The choice of pronoun in Japanese depends on the sex of the speaker, not the addressee. That is, a man must choose from the male pronoun forms and a woman must choose from the female forms (Talbot 4-6).

In languages of European origin the differences tend to be subtler and vary in degree. These types of weaker social gender differences go under the term sex-
preferential differentiation (Talbot 6). As to how this shows from a linguistic aspect Talbot claims that in western societies women tend to be more cooperative in their style of conversation while men are competitive. She also claims that women tend to speak more ‘correctly’ by using language that is closer to the standard forms than men do (Talbot 4-6).

Since Talbot has found that boys and girls are spoken to differently she claims that sex-preferential differentiation arises from environmental influence. For instance, she claims that in western cultures adult people tend to talk more to baby girls than to baby boys. Talbot is convinced that this, along with other examples of environmental influence, is the reason why adult men and women are treated differently. The fact that women in the workplace are frequently subordinate to men in social status is an example of environmentally influenced differences in adulthood. She further states that not only is the workplace an arena for cementing differences between men and women as language not only projects these inequities, it actually creates them. Talbot takes up an example of how a shopkeeper addresses an adult man as “sir”, giving him a social status above her own. The same shopkeeper addresses an adult woman as “dear” or “love”, which shows a lack of the respect shown for the man (Talbot 15).

In this paper focus will lie on what Talbot refers to as the sex-preferential differentiation that arises from environmental influence. Note that both brands may use language that is different from the one examined in this paper when they produce material such as advertisement, web pages and similar for markets outside of Europe. No consideration of this aspect will be taken in this paper.

4.2 Politeness

Politeness is used to make participants in a conversation feel comfortable. There are two partially opposite aspects of politeness: positive politeness and negative politeness. Positive politeness is used to establish involvement and negative politeness is used to maintain independence (Talbot 92).

When speaking of politeness as part of linguistics the concept of face is frequently referred to. “Face is the negotiated public image, mutually granted each other by participants in a communicative event.” (Scollon & Scollon 45). Positive face is
used to establish involvement and closeness. It is about establishing a positive relationship between the participants in a social interaction. Positive politeness is about showing respect for a person’s need to be liked and understood. Negative face is not actually a negative act. It is about showing respect by maintaining independence. One way of doing this is by making a request less intimidating. By formulating a question in a way as “If it isn’t too much trouble…” the speaker shows respect by giving the person spoken to the right to act freely. Negative politeness also involves things like using indirect speech as well as using titles. Negative face can become evident in using titles by an employee calling his boss Sir even though the employer used the employee’s first name when addressing him (Talbot 84-85).

The terms positive and negative face are not evaluative but are used either to establish friendship (positive face) or to show respect (negative face), in other terms the distinction between friendly behaviour and respectful behaviour. Women tend to use both positive and negative politeness strategies extensively. They use a lot of the positive politeness strategies: hedges, boosters and compliments in friendly conversation but they also apologize a lot, which is a negative politeness strategy. It is possible that this extensive use of hedges and boosting devices comes from women’s fear of being seen as bossy and too sure of themselves as these elements are used to either weaken or intensify a statement (Talbot 85).

Men have been found to use politeness strategies a lot less than women. They also focus more on the referential function of language, which means they use language to spread information. Women on the other hand use the affective function, which is used to share feelings. Both men and women use language to show closeness and cement friendship. The way they do this is very different. Politeness is used when people interact and women, for example, frequently compliment each other as part of positive politeness. Compliments among women are seen as social lubricants while men seem to be scared of compliments and use insults and competitive verbal abuse as part of their friendly interaction. Verbal abuse and insults are not polite but are still used in the same way as positively polite compliments among women and therefore Talbot calls them ‘friendly signals’ (Talbot 86).
4.3 Connotation

Connotation is the suggestion of a meaning by a word apart from the thing it explicitly names or describes (Merriam-Webster). Often connotations are looked at from the perspective of either being negative or positive. In this paper connotations will be examined as being either feminine or masculine. As mentioned above in section 2, this paper will examine connotations that show connections to Lakoff’s women’s language; feminine versus masculine style of storytelling and engagement in conversation along with masculine contra feminine expectations on social interaction.

4.3.1 How and Why Men and Women Use Language Differently

Talbot argues that since women are socially less secure, they tend to use a greater amount of prestige forms of language. She claims that men are not under the same pressure to show social status and therefore they do not have the same need to use the prestige variants. Instead men tend to use more of the non-standard forms predominantly used by the working class, which carry masculine connotations. On this issue, Talbot refers to studies conducted in Tyneside, an area in the northeast of England with a strong regional identity. She claims that here the local forms are markedly more used by men, both working-class and middle-class, than by their female counterparts. In this region there are two different ways of pronouncing the word “local”. Men in this region almost always use the local variant, whereas the women’s pronunciation of this particular variable is less consistent. This regional form of pronunciation contributes to the establishment of masculine identities in Tyneside (Talbot 28).

Talbot discusses a study made by Lakoff on the subject ‘women’s language’ (Lakoff 1975 referred to in Talbot 36). Lakoff argues that there is in fact a distinct use of language specific for women. It is characterized by excessive use of politeness strategies, lack of confidence and eagerness to please. Lakoff has examined some lexical items from a gender usage point of view. Here are some of the terms together with a brief description of Lakoff’s gender analysis of them (referred to in Talbot 36-38).
Precise colour terms

These are words that specify colours in detail, such as “beige”, “aquamarine” and “plum”. Women can spend time discussing whether an object should best be described as “lavender” or “mauve” while men see these kinds of fine distinctions as trivial.

Affective adjectives

Words used to express feelings are seen as feminine. Examples of these words are “divine”, “adorable” and “charming”.

Superpolite forms

This means, for example, avoiding swearwords since swearing is seen as “unladylike”. Euphemisms are also a superpolite form, which means using indirect expressions, such as “passed away” instead of “died” or “put down” instead of “killed”. Extensive use of euphemism is typical for women. For men on the other hand, not swearing can be seen as negative. In male contexts swearwords are used in the same way as affective adjectives are in female contexts. That is, to express feelings and show closeness to the addressee.

Hedges

Hedges are “filler” items such as “you know”, “well” and “kind of”. Hedges can be used for different reasons, but women are said to use them to reduce assertiveness, which may otherwise have made women seem too masculine.

Tag questions

Women tend to seek approval of their statements by changing them into questions by using tags like “don’t you?” or “haven’t we?” Tag questions are used to reduce the force of a statement.

Emphatic stress

Women tend to use ‘over-the-top emphasis’ as in ‘What a beautiful dress!’ because they anticipate not being taken seriously.

4.3.2 Storytelling
The way in which men and women tell stories has also shown to be different. Barbara Johnstone studied a series of stories told by men and women, which are presented in Talbot (Talbot 52-55). From the stories that Johnstone has examined she found some key differences in the storytelling of men and women (referred to in Talbot 52-55). In the results section (section 5) Innocent’s and Heineken’s way of telling their company stories will be compared to the way men and women use language differently in the act of storytelling and thereby male or female connotations used by the brands can be identified.

A man is often the protagonist of his own story, and if he is not he is telling a story about another man. Men focus on displaying their own skill, courage and wit. The stories men tell are often about competitions, either among one another or with the natural world. Men also tend to focus on descriptive detail and details relating to location in time and place (Talbot 52-55).

Women on the other hand tend to tell stories about other people. If the protagonist is male or female does not seem to matter but it is very rare that a woman telling a story uses herself as protagonist. Women also tend to focus more on the collective group, and the mutual support of that group, not giving much attention to the resourcefulness of an individual. They are more likely to establish the teller as someone foolish rather than heroic. Whereas men focus on details describing the scene-setting, women tend to pay more attention to details about people, such as their names. Women’s stories often contain larger amounts of dialogue than stories told by men do. Women often centre their stories around decision making, while men focus on competition (Talbot 52-55).

Research on gender and language has consistently found male speakers to be competitive and more likely to engage in conflict (for example, by arguing, issuing commands, and taking opposing stands) and females to be cooperative and more likely to avoid conflict (for example, by agreeing, supporting, and making suggestions rather than commands) (Tannen 40).

4.3.3 Engaging in Conversation

In conversation between men and women at home there are also huge differences in their way of communication. Talbot (2010) discusses the examinations
conducted by Pamela Fishman of the amount of effort put in by men contra women in conversations between the two. Fishman found that women work harder than men do to keep the conversation going. According to Fishman women ask three times as many questions as men do in order to trigger men to engage in the interaction at all. Women use minimal responses, such as nodding and humming, supportively in order to develop the topic while men withhold or delay minimal responses in a way that is uncooperative. Fishman concludes that men behave like strong, silent types at home (referred to in Talbot 77). Tannen agrees with Fishman that women find their men to be unengaged in conversation, but Tannen does not believe this to be true even though she agrees that many women interpret the actions of men in that way (Tannen 86). Tannen has found that boys and men lack physical and visual alignment in social interaction but she questions whether this is evidence of lack of engagement. If gender differences are seen in a cross-cultural framework, the evaluation of lack of eye contact and physical alignment is taking the women’s pattern of showing conversational engagement as the norm. For men, head-on posture and gaze connote combativeness, so breaking that alignment signals and establishes friendly engagement (Tannen 96). Men and women achieve and display involvement in different ways. However, this does not mean that men and boys are not engaged nor involved in conversation. It simply means that their means of establishing conversational engagement are different. These differences, however, are likely to lead to negative evaluation and the impression of lack of engagement if measured by women’s norms of interaction (Tannen 98-99).

4.3.4 Expectations of Social Interaction

The fact that men and women communicate in different ways often leads to miscommunication across gender. Several studies show that the root of the problem originates from childhood. When children grow up they spend a lot of time playing in single-sex groups. They learn to communicate from their peers in these groups rather than from adults (Talbot 80).

Daniel Maltz and Ruth Borker (referred to in Talbot) found that communication between young boys and girls is very different and this leads to miscommunication between adult men and women. In Talbot’s discussion of
Maltz and Borker she argues that these studies show that girls often play in small non-hierarchical groups. There is joint participation in decision-making and almost no signs of the competitive status negotiation that boys engage in to establish hierarchy. Proposals about what to do are usually made by all participants and by using inclusive terms like “let’s”. Boys on the other hand tend to group themselves in hierarchical teams or gangs. Their games are frequently highly competitive including battles over who is the leader. They often use explicit commands, but only the leader can use commands successfully (referred to in Talbot 81).

Adult men and women find themselves in miscommunication because their expectations of the discourse differ. The origins of these different expectations are set in those childhood single-sex playgroups. If a girl is to use the explicit commands used by a boy who wants to claim his status as the leader, she will be seen as bossy and showing off, two cardinal sins among girls (Talbot 83).

Men and women have different expectations of conversation. Women use conversation to seek sympathy, problem-sharing, while men expect conversation to lead to advice, problem-solving. Women put a lot of energy into finding common ground in conversation, establishing friendship and striving for solidarity. Male conversations can be highly competitive in order to maintain status. Men frequently include exhibitions of knowledge and skills in their conversations in order to get and keep attention (Talbot 92). Women frequently express dissatisfaction with the way that men respond to their concerns. Whereas they would like the men to express understanding and sympathy, what they hear is downplaying of the problem (or if the problem is acknowledged, advice about how to solve it) (Tannen 119). This gender perspective of expectations of social interaction along with the other evidence of gender differences are expected to become clear in the following section which will present the results of the analysis of the material.

5. Results

This chapter presents the results of how Heineken and Innocent use politeness and connotations from a gender perspective. The two main subsections will start with a presentation of the current language feature and will then be followed by the
results of the examination of Heineken and then Innocent. As the language used throughout the three sources for each brand is consistent, the results for the sources annual report, Facebook page and official website will not be presented separately. Most of the data exemplified in this section will be taken from the annual reports. This main focus on the annual reports is chosen because they are the parts of the material containing the largest amount of coherent text. Each of the main subsections will end with a discussion, which consists of a conclusion of the results for each brand.

5.1 Politeness

Innocent are expected to make greater use of politeness strategies since they are anticipated to be the brand with a female target consumer profile. Therefore they are expected to use language with female characteristics. As discussed in section 4.2 women, in general, tend to make more use of politeness strategies in conversation than men do. Women even tend to use both negative and positive politeness strategies extensively. The reason for this is that predominantly women use the affective functions of language in order to share feelings while men mainly focus on the referential function in order to spread information (Talbot 86). Therefore the thesis is that Heineken will refer more to hard facts while Innocent will have a more emotional approach. The evidence for this will be found in the amount of politeness strategies used by the brands.

5.1.1 Heineken

Across all three sources Heineken make use of very few politeness strategies. This is exactly what can be expected of a masculine brand since men in general use only a small amount of politeness strategies. In the parts of the annual report which describe the history, awards, future and goals of Heineken, the reader is never addressed at all. This could be one way of avoiding politeness strategies but it is not clear whether this is done in order to avoid them or if there is another reason for using indirect communication, such as maintaining a formal language style. This makes the results of the analysis somewhat ambiguous but the fact that no politeness strategies have been used will still be seen as a sign of masculine communication style in this analysis as men use few politeness strategies (Talbot 86).
There is no evidence of Heineken addressing the reader or welcoming the reader to further involvement of any kind in their annual report. The economic information in the form of financial figures that show the progress of Heineken, which are of course natural parts of an annual report, are presented in a way that looks graphically appealing but they are still presented without any sign of affective text. There are only plain numbers, which means this section is strictly used to spread information. This is characteristic for the masculine way of using the referential function of language. Direct and referential language used to spread information is clear evidence of masculine communication style (Talbot 86).

On their Facebook page Heineken encourage their readers to interact by asking them questions. They formulate their questions in such a way so that they do not have to participate in deeper conversations with their audience at a later stage. Neither do they further participate in the conversations that they have started. An example of the type of questions Heineken post on their page is “Heineken never sleeps ;) How will you light up the night?” (Appendix C). This shows that they want to engage people in interaction and further conversation but then Heineken do not continue to participate. Therefore this cannot be seen as a positive politeness strategy. A sincere positive politeness strategy would be used to establish friendship. It is most likely that Heineken use these types of engaging questions in order to substantiate consumer loyalty. Due to the fact that the consumers are the only ones involved in the following conversation, this could be seen as a form of one-way communication that would not be used if the aim were to establish true relationship. Therefore it seems as if Heineken want to give the impression that they want to establish relationship but when analysing their behaviour it seems as if they do this only because they are expected to. The reason for this is most probably that companies are expected to take part in the new communication through social media, such as Facebook. Social media is all about establishing relationships and these relationships are then expected, and most likely, to lead to trust and loyalty towards the brand. Therefore it is not surprising that Heineken want to be a part of social media but this phenomenon is in itself highly feminine. Social activities through the Internet are more common among girls. To a greater extent than boys, girls choose to be active in chat-rooms, visit networking sites, send emails and post photos (Nilsson 171).
On the website Heineken do address the reader but not in an engaging way. The reader is encouraged to consume Heineken products through requests such as “give yourself a break” and “Discover the magic behind the world’s most international premium beer [...]” (Appendix E). This way of addressing the reader is not used in order to establish relationship; it is a form of one-way communication traditionally used in advertising (Scott 5-8). Therefore Heineken cannot be considered to use politeness strategies on their website.

**5.1.2 Innocent**

Innocent use a very different approach to the one used by Heineken. Innocent have a higher frequency of engaging and addressing the reader than Heineken.

Innocent address the reader directly at all times, in their annual report, on their Facebook page and on their official website. The first sentence in their annual report is: “Hello and welcome to our first annual report.” The headline of this chapter in the annual report is also “hello” (Appendix B). Already, at this early stage of the report there are several indications that Innocent want to engage their readers in conversation and this could even be seen as proof that they want to establish some sort of relationship with their readers. This is an example of positive face frequently used by women. There is an even more explicit indication of this as they sum up the starting chapter with: “Have a read and come back and tell us what you think. We’re all ears.” (Appendix B) Here they continue to seek contact with the reader.

There are of course financial figures and graphs of the progress made by Innocent in their annual report as well. The pages with this kind of information, which is by nature more static, are also set up in such a way that Innocent make use of the affective function of language. Out of the total of three graphs, two are related to the economic development of the company while the third one shows an ideological aspect: the progress in reducing the carbon footprint of each bottle. This is how Innocent introduce the chapter of the economic facts (Appendix B):

An annual report wouldn’t be an annual report without some charts. So for those of you who have been quite frankly upset with the lack of informative visio-numeral interfaces, here are the charts. They represent
the things that are important in terms of us working out how our business is doing.

In the text above a politeness strategy is used when weakening the statement about some of the readers being upset by adding the weakening term “quite frankly”.

In the annual report Innocent dedicate one whole chapter to an issue that has raised mixed feelings among their customers. Some have been positive while others have been negative. Innocent chose to discuss this issue and say that they do not believe in “sweeping things under the carpet” instead they want to discuss why some people have told them that they have “sold their soul to Satan” and they want to be a “transparent” company (Appendix B). These are all issues of the negative politeness strategy of apologising, which is typical of women (Talbot 85).

On the Facebook page Innocent spend a large amount of energy responding to peoples questions and concerns. When negative actions carried out by Innocent are implied by “fans” of the Facebook page the reaction from Innocent is instant as they reply the “fans” and apologize for being or doing wrong (Appendix D). This is a politeness strategy used by women. It is used in order to show respect, which is a negative politeness strategy (Talbot 85).

There is an interesting aspect of Innocent introducing what seems to be a new lexeme with the introduction of a new product. It is the derivation of the word thick that makes up the new lexeme “thickie”. It was introduced by Innocent when they made a new product, which is a smoothie made with yoghurt. This makes the drink thicker and therefore Innocent named it “thickie”. The word thickie has no entries in the Oxford dictionary (oxforddictionaries.com) or in the Merriam-Webster dictionary (merriam-webster.com). The word “smoothie” is in itself also a fairly new lexeme formed from derivation but it is not one invented by Innocent. In a report on the History of Smoothies written by the director of The Juice and Smoothie Association Dan Titus he argues that the word “smoothie” with the definition of a fruit drink became popular in the middle of the 1960’s (smoothiecentral.com). The invention of the word “thickie” is obviously related to the new, but already established, word “smoothie”. Still the fact that Innocent chose to invent the new word “thickie” also shows that they want to use this kind of informal language to establish closeness to their readers. It is the positive
politeness strategy frequently used by women in order to establish friendship (Talbot 86).

The official website follows the same style of language use as the annual report. For example, on the website each product is presented in more depth than in the annual report, including a description of the ingredients and likewise, but the register is equivalent. The website and the annual report contain much of the same information, even though it is presented in a way that fits specifically for each field. The reader is addressed in the same style on the website as in the annual report and politeness strategies are used in the same way as well. Therefore this section will not include a greater analysis of the website as the results from the website will be equivalent to the results of the annual report.

5.1.3 Discussion

There is a major difference in the amount of politeness strategies used by Heineken and Innocent. Heineken use a minimum amount of politeness strategies, the few that can be found are positive but when examining them closely they are not of genuine nature. In the material produced by Innocent an extensive use of politeness strategies are found, the majority of positive face. When analysing the way Innocent use positive face in depth, there are indications that Innocent use politeness strategies in a genuine way. They continue to invite their readers into profound conversations while Heineken seem to use politeness strategies in a shallow way. Innocent are consequently using politeness strategies as well as engaging their readers in conversations. The most evident proof of this is that they keep the same friendly and engaging tone even in the annual report, which is a document that is by nature highly static.

5.2 Connotation

The hypothesis of connotation is that Heineken use connotations that are highly masculine including competitiveness, roughness and proof of their superiority. Innocent are expected to use female connotations associated with health, appearance and cooperativeness.

5.2.1 Heineken
Heineken use their annual report to spread information. There is no welcoming phrase at the beginning of the Heineken annual report. The first page shows economic figures of results, financial balance and number of employees. The fact that Heineken start their report by giving the “hard facts” of the economy and showing the results at the top of the page indicates that they are highly competitive oriented. This is a typical example of the referential function of language that is predominantly used by men. Referential function means that the language is used to spread information. This connotes to problem-solving, which is a masculine way of using language (Talbot 92).

The section in Heineken’s annual report that carries the headline “History” tells the story of the company in short, focusing on the long tradition and the authenticity of the company by saying: “The Heineken story began 145 years ago in 1864 when Gerard Adriaan Heineken acquired a small brewery in the heart of Amsterdam.” (Appendix A) This section then continues with an explanation of the high quality and the growth of the company by using terms like “… guaranteed pure and premium taste …” and “… created a stronger, more competitive business focused on sustainable growth” (Appendix A). The terms used in this history section follow the pattern of typical masculine behaviour. Using phrases as “premium taste”, “a stronger business” and “sustainable growth” (Appendix A) all connotes to masculine behaviour of competitiveness and high skill. The uses of terms similar to these are regular features of male storytelling. Premium is not a real taste that can be experienced in a physical sense. Heineken have chosen to use this term to make its beer appear as one of very good quality, which connotes to masculine emphasis of social status (Talbot 28).

In the annual report under the section called “Heineken today” where they talk about their position today Heineken say that they are “… one of the world’s great brewers and are committed to growth and remaining independent.” (Appendix A) They also emphasise the quality of the beer by saying “… the world’s most valuable international premium beer brand.” (Appendix A) They present their goals in the following way: “Our aim is to be a leading brewer in each of the markets in which we operate and to have the world’s most valuable brand portfolio.” (Appendix A) In the annual report Heineken want to show what kind of company they are and what they stand for. They do this under the heading
“Priorities” where the first paragraph reads: “Marketing excellence and innovation are key components of our growth strategy. In everything we do, it is the consumers and their changing needs that are at the heart of our efforts.” (Appendix A) All of the above proves Heineken’s high use of masculine connotations of will to show the skill of the individual, which is typical of storytelling performed by men (Talbot 52-55).

Heineken constantly want to prove themselves as the best and leading brand in the world. From their description in the annual report of their current position words like “growth”, “independent” and “valuable” can be found as connotations of Heineken as a major leading brand within their area of business. This is an example of the stereotypic male behaviour found in male storytelling (Talbot 52-55). When they continue on their priorities they show both male and female connotations. They show male signs of competitiveness by speaking of “market excellence and innovation” while they also focus on soft and female values such as paying attention to their customer’s changing needs. These female values are less evident than the masculine forms of language used in the annual report.

In the section about their history in the annual report Heineken say that, “it all started in the heart of Amsterdam” (Appendix A). A city does not have a physical heart therefore the word is used as a symbol for the most important part of the city. By this connotation Heineken want to show that they are a part of the most important place of Amsterdam, meaning they are where the action is. This shows masculine signs of social status as the word heart is used to place Heineken in the centre of events (Talbot 52-55). Whatever it is that is placed in the heart of a city, it is good enough to earn an attractive location.

Another phrase that Heineken uses over and over in the annual report, on their Facebook page and on the official website is “premium taste”. The phrase is used in order to show their status as a beer of high quality and good standard and carries masculine connotations of showing skill (Talbot 52-55).

In the financials section of the annual report the following sentence is found: “Strong organic net profit growth of 18 per cent” (Appendix A). There are no biodynamic aspects of the financial development of Heineken. Therefore the assumed reason for this choice of word is that Heineken want to create the feeling
that the profit they are making comes naturally and relatively effortless and thereby again they show masculine connotations of skilfulness (Talbot 52-55).

Heineken take up the issue of alcoholism and the responsibility they want to take in order not to add to this problem. They say they want to “combat alcohol abuse” (Appendix A). By using the word “combat” they connote to the male sphere of warfare. A war can be compared to a competition where there is one winner at the end. Of course the consequences that a war brings cannot be compared to a sports competition but the glorified aspect of war carries many similarities to the pride and nobility of the winner who has had a chance to show off his skills.

In the annual report Heineken have included a section where they notify that they are sponsors of various sport events and state that they have started their own campaign as part of their support for the UEFA Champions League. They call this campaign “The Heineken Star Experience” (Appendix A). The word “star” carries connotations that refer to the winner of a game, it is the person who stands out more than the rest. Both the fact that Heineken have set up this campaign and the fact that they chose to use the word “star” proves that Heineken behave in a highly masculine way through the connections to competition and skill that refer to typically male behaviour and style of storytelling (Talbot 52-55).

Out of the total of the five pages of the report, two are dedicated to numbers and figures of the financial success and constant progress of Heineken. Two pages are dedicated to sports events sponsored by Heineken or awards that Heineken have won as well as charity they are involved in. The one page that is not mentioned above is the one about history, current position and goals. Overall the report connotes highly to competition and leadership, two clearly male characteristics (Talbot 52-55).

Heineken’s Facebook page includes many signs of competition. In many of the posts made by Heineken they ask their “fans” to write something about the brand. For example the fans could be asked to change an existing film title so that it includes the word Heineken and then Heineken repost the title they like. The whole page is about sports, games and contests and of course about drinking Heineken, which means a large quantity of posts about the weekend and drinking beer.
When visiting the Heineken official website and examining information about Heineken, straight away comes the aspect of games and competition again. When clicking the link called “Heineken story” a screen showing a slot machine comes up (Appendix E). The three wheels are used to produce a story about Heineken, which can then be watched. There are a total of six short video clips that can be grouped by the slot machine; all of these clips contain proof of the innovativeness that Heineken talk about in their annual report. They are all portrait with a scientific feeling shown in a playful way. Innovativeness and science show masculine connotations of skill while the playfulness connotes sports, which are associated with competition (Talbot 52-55).

Another part of the website is called “The Heineken experience”. “The Heineken experience” represents the Heineken Museum. In order to portrait innovativeness and excellence Heineken have chosen to redirect themselves from the traditional connotations of a museum. A video clip shows a group of people having fun in a high tech landscape, which is the actual museum. What Heineken themselves say about this is “We’re not the Heineken Museum, we’re the Heineken Experience. Why? Because four levels of interactive experiences in the former brewery will plunge you chin deep into the fascinating world of Heineken!” (Appendix E). This shows male connotations of superiority (Talbot 52-55).

On the website Heineken address the reader directly, but here it is not in an engaging way at all. The direct address is about how the reader can enjoy the products that are produced under the brand as well as telling the reader what “problems” the product solves as in the following (Appendix E):

> Good times come easy with friends, so the BeerTender has been designed for you to serve them fresh, draught Heineken at home with one easy motion, So raise a glass to what’s good: the five-litre keg chilled inside. Easy.

This is typical of traditional non-communicative advertising and is not used to build relationships. Therefore this is masculine style of communication as women use language to establish relationship while men use language to spread information and for problem-solving (Talbot 92). The above passage contains several indications of problem-solving. Heineken mention friends in the text but
they do not help the addressee to find friends. Heineken are there to solve the problem of serving the beer in the best possible way to the friends that the addressee is already assumed to have.

The online content that Heineken are sharing through their Facebook page and their official website once again show a masculine side of the brand. The high degree of involvement of the visitor through competitions, experiences and technology are all male aspects of the brand. There is also a softer side to the brand where they declare their love to the beer but this side is subtler and always connected to the male aspects in combination with the object of the love being a highly masculine product.

5.2.2 Innocent

In the annual report of Innocent they start out by welcoming the reader to the first report they have ever written. This first report is written after nine years of business. They say it is a quick review of what they have “been up to” for the last 12 months. They end the first paragraph of the report by saying that it will be about “the stuff that we’re proud of, the stuff we found challenging and the stuff that we’ve learnt” (Appendix B).

In this first and welcoming section of Innocent’s annual report they show signs of female style of communication. They are talking about what they think has been challenging and what they have learnt, which is the female way of using conversation for problem-sharing. There is no sign of competitiveness; it is rather an analysis of their progress as well as of their flaws. This carries female connotations of problem-sharing that is the female style of using language in order to seek sympathy (Talbot 92). Innocent go on to talk about an event where they open up the company to the customers, whom they call drinkers and not customers, so that they can “tell us face to face what we could be doing better”. In this first chapter they also use another feature of women’s language when they use the term “sort of”. This is what Talbot calls a “filler” item, which is a lexical item called hedge that is said to be used by women to reduce assertiveness (Talbot 37).

In the second paragraph of the annual report in which Innocent talk about opening up for “drinkers” to come and tell them what they could do better, they use an
involvement strategy where they want to focus on improvement together with their customers as a collective group. Once again they show female connotations when they say they can do better and focus on the group instead of the individual; in this case individual refers to the brand, and the current progress (Talbot 52-55). When they say they can do better, Innocent show feminine signs of being less secure and lacking confidence, which is one aspect of women’s language. The fact that Innocent focus on the collective group rather than the individual show that they want to find common ground and strive for solidarity, which are two highly feminine expectations of social interaction (Talbot 92).

When they state their purpose Innocent say “This has and always will be to make food good. We promise that everything Innocent ever make will always be natural, delicious, healthy and sustainable. Make food good is just a lot simpler to remember.” (Appendix B) They continue to describe their vision where the aspect that they want to highlight is “To be the Earth’s favourite little food company” (Appendix B). When reading the purpose of Innocent it becomes evident that they make use of several mothering terms such as natural, delicious and healthy, which all carry female connotations. Along with their vision to be the “favourite” as well as referring to themselves as the “little” company even when their aim is to expand to a global company, they show female connotations of anti-competitiveness as well as connotations to motherhood with all aspects of doing good for people as well as our planet (Talbot 52-55).

In their core values, presented in the annual report, Innocent introduce their view of the values of friends. “It is a natural thing – friends usually have the same values. That’s why they are friends.” (Appendix B) This refers to the fact that Innocent consider their employees as friends. When talking about their employees Innocent make use of an analogy with female connotations of the collective and of establishing relationship. “A company without people is like chicken without chips, seawater without salt.” (Appendix B) The morals of their values are also to do responsible things, be generous and only use natural ingredients in their products. The use of the term “friends” instead of the more anonymous “employee” they indicate that they see themselves as a collective group, which is a female style of interaction through inclusiveness. Responsible, generous and
natural also have female connotations of motherhood, the collective group and health (Talbot 137).

Innocent present their approach to business with a highly informal language. They say they want to “do good for the planet” and make sure that their suppliers follow International Labour Organisation standards. Innocent also show their commitment to environmental issues as they make sure that they buy fruit that is as close to the production line as possible. “We’re happy to pay more for specific varieties and to source locally where we can.” (Appendix B)

In the part about sustainability, Innocent still use the same moral language about the fact that they want to be natural and take responsibility for the environment. They use a humble approach when they say that their thoughts about taking care of the planet do not make them special. Innocent just think it is the sensible thing to do (Appendix B):

> Without nature, we are nothing. So our first and most important step in creating a sustainable business is to only use 100% natural, healthy, renewable ingredients for our drinks – quite simply, we will put nothing into an innocent smoothie bottle unless it is made by nature. Of equal importance is that we will only ever make food that is genuinely good for people; each of our products has to have a positive health benefit, and be free of manufacturing shortcuts such as concentrates and flavourings.

Innocent present their thoughts about their carbon footprint and other environmental issues which the company consider to be an important topic. Innocent consider themselves to be a small company. Still they see their chance to make a large difference by influencing their producers to change their actions as well. The phrase “carbon footprint” is frequently used in the annual report. They uphold that they continuously ask their suppliers to “go green”. According to Innocent, the reason for this enquiry is that if they influence their suppliers to act in an environmentally friendly way it will make a greater positive impact on the environment than if only Innocent make improvements in their own behaviour. Being environmentally friendly is one way of taking care of the planet, and this shows female connotations of taking care of the family (Talbot 231).
Throughout the report Innocent maintains a playful and informal tone, talking about the collective group and displaying themselves as a small company. The maternal tone is evident for example in the passage about making drinks that are good for people as well as the environment. This carries female connotations of nurturing. Of course in the last decades things have started to change; fathers are staying home and taking care of the children more frequently than before but still the stereotype of the mother as the caretaker of the family remains strong (Talbot 231).

Innocent have chosen to call their headquarters “Fruit Towers” (Appendix B). It is obvious that they do not mean that their office building is a tower made of fruit; what they want to achieve is to enforce their genuine interest in making a natural and pure product. Since fruit carry connotations of health and the natural and pure product carry connotations of motherhood, it is evident that Innocent purposely makes use of the female connotations of health and motherhood. The health aspect is one way in which women take care of their bodies in order to make themselves more attractive to men. Talbot presents MacKinnon’s theories, which maintain that femininity it is entirely a matter of sexualisation, a matter of learning to view yourself from a man’s point of view and of perceiving your sexuality as your identity as feminine (MacKinnon 1982 referred to in Talbot). In this view, the need for a gendered identity forces women to see themselves through men’s eyes, and to cultivate feminine characteristics that they expect men to want from them (referred to in Talbot 137).

Not surprisingly Innocent use many words related to food. Fruit, bread and butter are all food-related words. In context of the health debate, which has become increasingly popular, the word fruit has acquired a positive connotation with female attributes of health. With the history of women taking care of the family and the home in mind words related to food take on female connotations. Innocent use the phrase “earning ones bread and butter” in their annual report (Appendix B). This is an example of women’s language. This particular example is a euphemism, which is a superpolite form that means using indirect expressions (Talbot 36). Here “earning ones bread and butter” is the indirect way of saying “earning money”.

In the annual report, Innocent include a story describing fruit in detail. The story is about a man who grows damsons that Innocent use in their smoothies and they also describe what kind of bananas they use. This can be compared to the lexical item of using precise colour terms, which is typical of “women’s language” (referred to in Talbot 36).

On their Facebook page Innocent tend to engage in conversation with their “fans” rather than posting one-way communication. When people post something where a reply is expected Innocent seem to be there, giving them the answers. They also use Facebook to reply to criticism and apologise if they have done something wrong. They arrange competitions; both of the character “give this lemur a voice” (Appendix D) as well as “shake the tree & win” (Appendix D). The first competition has connotations to environmental issues and the second one to natural ingredients, two of Innocent’s most important key values, which both connote to motherhood (Talbot 231).

Innocent’s official website follows the same style as the Facebook page and the annual report by being playful, engaging and focusing on environment and natural ingredients. The competitions found on Facebook are prominent on the website as well.

Engaging in conversation is a sign of will to establish a relationship, which carries female connotations (Talbot 92). Apologising is a negative politeness strategy that is typically used by women (Talbot 85). Innocent frequently perform both communication acts on their Facebook page as well as on their website.

5.2.3 Discussion

Heineken and Innocent use language that clearly shows connotations of masculinity and femininity in an expected manner considering the hypothesis that the products of the brands are gender targeted.

The connotations of referential versus affective function of language used by Heineken and Innocent follow the norm of masculinity and femininity as predicted in the hypothesis. The overall finding in the annual report is that Heineken make extensive use of the referential function by focusing on spreading information,
while Innocent use the affective function and often indicate that they strive for problem-solving.

As with the referential and affective functions of language both brands use the male and female styles of storytelling in the expected way. That is Heineken use the style of storytelling typical to men and Innocent engage in storytelling in a typically female style.

As pointed out in section 5.2.1 Heineken want to connect their brand to some typically female values. This kind of expression of opposite gender can be found in Innocent as well when they present their core values, which are listed in section 3.2. Just as men and women can behave in ways that are usually related to the opposite sex without being perceived as a person with characteristics of the opposite sex, so can brands. Unlike sex, gender is not binary; we can talk about one man being more masculine (or feminine) than another. This contrast is reflected in the grammar of English. Grammatically we can have masculine, more masculine, most masculine but not male, maler*, malest* (Talbot 8).

The assumption that a brand selling gender targeted products will use language that reflects this gender aspect becomes evident through the interaction or, in the case of Heineken, lack of the same between each brand and their audience. This is most evident on the Facebook pages where it becomes possible to examine the interaction from both brand and audience.

One of the major differences between how Heineken and Innocent use their Facebook pages is that Innocent tend to be engaged in the conversations started on their page. On Heineken’s page there is more of the one-way communication described above to be found. Heineken have written almost all posts on the site and even though many people comment on their posts, there are barely any answers from Heineken. When entering Innocent’s page the first post made by Innocent themselves is the ninth post. Still they are highly involved in conversations on posts made by others, as they seem to reply to all posts made by their “fans”. This shows that Innocent’s way of communication carries female connotations, as women are more likely to involve in social interaction through the Internet (Nilsson 171).
The similarities on the two Facebook pages are that both brands use them to post competitions. Still there are differences in the character of the competitions they post as well, Heineken have competitions that carry connotations of sports while the competitions that Innocent post have connotations to environmental issues and nature. The sports connote to male behaviour as sports are used to show skill and physical strength. Environmental issues and natural aspects connected to health have female connotations of the collective group.

6. Conclusion

The examination of gender aspects in the web-based communication of Heineken and Innocent has been conducted in a qualitative manner. The main reason for this has been the fact that gender is not an absolute scientific truth with a fixed set of values where all criteria have to be met but a fine interpretation of perception.

The hypothesis was that the communication used by a brand is highly influenced by a gender-targeted product. This was proven to be true in the cases of Heineken and Innocent. Both Heineken and Innocent show a great amount of evidence that they do want their brands to fortify the gender related perception of their products.

It is hard to completely separate product from brand and therefore the fact that the product of Heineken, which was assumed to be a product with male characteristics, also proved to be so when examining studies about “heavy drinking” being perceived as masculine. Heavy drinking refers to alcohol and since Heineken produce the alcoholic beverage, beer, they have a masculine product. Of course Heineken do not want to be associated with heavy drinking but from the gender perspective of their product this is the primitive aspect that is seen as positively masculine (Talbot 173).

There are clear indications that Innocent’s smoothie is a feminine product, especially compared to Talbot’s view of femininity. She takes up aspects of sexuality, through keeping the body healthy and desirable from a man’s perspective, as well as the nourishing aspects, which come with the role of being a mother and providing healthy nourishment for her children (Talbot 137).
The aim of this paper was to prove the masculinity and femininity of Heineken and Innocent through their use of the language features politeness strategies and connotations. Politeness strategies have been largely used in gender analysis from sociolinguistic perspectives, therefore it was meaningful to identify politeness strategies used by both brands and compare the use of these strategies to studies conducted by gender researchers. Connotations are by nature either one way or the other, either positive or negative, male or female. Therefore it was useful to examine the use of connotations, especially since the aspect of gender itself is not strictly bipolar. In general both brands made use of these language features in the expected manner from a gender perspective. Heineken use them in order to fortify impression of their masculinity and Innocent use language that strengthened their femininity. In both cases it is likely that this was done to become more appealing to their target audiences.
Works Cited

Primary Sources


Innocent official website, http://www.innocentdrinks.co.uk/ (February 2011)


Heineken Facebook page, http://www.facebook.com/heineken (February 2011)


Secondary Sources


Electronic sources


## Appendix A

### Annual report 2009 – Heineken N.V (The quick read)

### Key Figures

#### Results

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
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#### Balance sheet

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<td>Market capitalisation</td>
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#### Results and balance sheet per share of EUR 1.60

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#### Employees

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#### Ratios

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<tr>
<td>EBIT as % of revenue</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBIT as % of total assets</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net profit as % of average equity attributable to equity holders of the Company</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net debt / EBITDA / Beia</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dividend % payout</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash conversion rate</td>
<td>147.7%</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Please refer to the Glossary for definitions.
2. Comparisons have been adjusted due to the inflation of the purchase price account of the Scottish & Newcastle acquisition.
3. EBIT, EBIT / Beia, net profit / Beia, EBITDA, EBITDA / Beia and free operating cash flow are financial measures calculated in accordance with IFRS. Accordingly, it should not be considered to be an alternative to income per share, nor to an alternative to net profit. These ratios include the impact of restructuring activities and other exceptional items. However, we believe that they, EBIT, EBIT / Beia, net profit / Beia, EBITDA, EBITDA / Beia and free operating cash flow are measures useful to users of the financial statements in understanding the financial position and the results of operations of the company for the periods presented. These financial measures may not be comparable to similarly titled measures reported by other companies due to differences in the way the measures are calculated.
4. As at 31 December.
History

The Heineken story began 145 years ago in 1864 when Gerard Adrian Heineken acquired a small brewery in the heart of Amsterdam.

Since 1886, the unique Heineken A-yeast has guaranteed the pure, premium taste of Heineken beer. After 13 years of prohibition, in 1933, Heineken set foot on American soil and in 1937 the first Heineken beer was brewed outside the Netherlands, in the Dutch East Indies.

Over the ensuing years, growth and acquisitions substantially expanded the Company, particularly in Europe, which created a stronger, more competitive business focused on sustainable growth.

Four generations of the Heineken family have been passionately involved in the expansion of the Heineken brand and the Heineken Company throughout the world. By the 21st century, the small 19th century local Amsterdam brewer has grown into a worldwide business with a global brand, employing more than 55,000 people.

Heineken today

Heineken is one of the world’s great brewers and is committed to growth and remaining independent. The brand that bears the founder’s family name – Heineken – is available in almost every country on the globe and is the world’s most valuable international premium beer brand.

Our aim is to be a leading brewer in each of the markets in which we operate and to have the world’s most valuable brand portfolio. Our principal international brand is Heineken®, but the Group brews and sells more than 200 international premium, regional, local and speciality beers and ciders, including:

Amstel®
Birra Moretti®
Cruzcampo®
Foster’s®
Kingfisher®
Newcastle Brown Ale®
Ochota®
Primus®
Sagres®
Star®
Strongbow®
Tiger®
Zywiec®
**Where we operate**

We have the widest presence of all international brewers, thanks to our global network of distributors and over 125 breweries in more than 70 countries in 2009. In Europe we are the largest brewer and we are the world’s largest cider producer.

We achieve our global coverage through a combination of wholly-owned companies, licence agreements, affiliates and strategic partnerships and alliances. Some of our wholesalers also distribute wine, spirits and soft drinks.

Our brands are well established in both profitable and mature markets, and with recent agreements and proposed acquisitions in India, Asia and Latin America, are growing in emerging beer markets.

**Priorities**

Marketing excellence and innovation are key components of our growth strategy. In everything we do, it is the consumers and their changing needs that are at the heart of our efforts.

We also play an important role in society and in the communities in which we operate. Social responsibility and sustainability underpin everything we do. As part of this, we continue to increase our initiatives to combat alcohol abuse and misuse and we will work hard to reach the highest environmental standards in the industry.
Heineken launches the International Graduate Programme. This created a multi-cultural, multi-functional, multi-skilled talent pool capable of undertaking international roles from the beginning of their career. For the first year of the programme, 12 graduates are selected.
It is a two-year programme in which graduates complete four placements specialising in Sales & Marketing, Finance, Supply Chain or Human Resources. Around 4,500 graduates applied for 12 positions on the programme.

The new recruits started the programme in September.

**Heineken partners with Rugby World Cup 2011 in New Zealand**

Heineken announces that it will be worldwide partner and the official beer of Rugby World Cup 2011 in New Zealand. This will be the fourth time that Heineken has been a sponsor and worldwide partner of the Rugby World Cup, having been involved in South Africa in 1995, Australia in 2003 and France in 2007.

The Rugby World Cup is the pinnacle of the sport and will be held in a nation that really knows and loves its rugby. As the world’s most valuable, international premium beer brand, Heineken has been associated with many high profile global sporting tournaments and has been a long-standing supporter of Rugby World Cup and Rugby.

**Heineken endorses UN Water Mandate**

Heineken endorses the United Nations CEO Water Mandate. This United Nations-led initiative encourages companies to play a more active role in solving issues related to water availability and quality. The signing of the CEO Water Mandate by Jean-Francois van Boxmeer re-confirms Heineken’s existing commitment to both sustainability and water management.

Water has long been one of Heineken’s focus areas for sustainability. In recent years, the Company has improved its water efficiency by more than 10 per cent and in parallel, has installed wastewater treatment plants at virtually all its breweries that do not have access to municipal wastewater facilities. Heineken has also consistently improved the quality of the water the Company emits at the end of the brewing process. Given the increasing challenges around the water availability and quality, the CEO Water Mandate provides Heineken with an excellent platform to share and learn best practice from others in this vitally important area.

**Heineken launches global careers site**

Heineken launches the first global careers site, giving a focal point for job seekers worldwide who may be interested in a career with Heineken and who are looking for opportunities across the business.

The site links the Heineken corporate website, the websites for our key brands and local country sites and is designed to inspire the visitor to explore the Heineken business and explain how rewarding a career with Heineken can be.

It provides visitors with information about Heineken, showing potential candidates just how much there is to the business – the scale, the geographic spread of our business, our cultural diversity, our brand portfolio – and the opportunities a career with Heineken can offer.

**Scottish & Newcastle UK changes name to Heineken UK**
Following the acquisition of Scottish & Newcastle in 2008, Heineken’s UK business marks the completion of integration with a change in name.

The switch to Heineken UK is the beginning of an exciting, new chapter in the history of the UK business and a significant milestone for Heineken.

Heineken launches UEFA Champions League campaign

Heineken, in its fifth year as a sponsor of the UEFA Champions League, launches the new 2009/2010 season campaign titled, ‘The Heineken Star Experience’. Heineken brings the UEFA Champions League even closer to football fans, offering a new viewing experience and encouraging them to share that experience of the world’s most admired club football competition.

Heineken continues to integrate its responsible consumption programme into the sponsorship of the UEFA Champions League. Every stadium hosting a UEFA Champions League match will feature “Enjoy Responsibly” on one of the three perimeter boards around the pitch, complementing the regular Heineken boarding. In addition, an Enjoy Heineken Responsibly five-second match bumper will be broadcast several times during UEFA Champions League matches with an estimated audience of 150 million viewers per match week.

Heineken Experience receives Thea Award

The Heineken Experience, one of Amsterdam’s most popular tourist attractions, receives the Thea Award of Outstanding Achievement in the field of Brand Experience by the Themed Entertainment Association (THEA). This association represents the world’s leading creators, developers, designers and producers of compelling places and experiences. The Thea Award is the industry’s highest recognition and granted to the Heineken Experience for its outstanding product.

After undergoing extensive remodelling and expansion, the Heineken Experience reopened its doors in December 2008 with a scale of new attractions such as a mini brewery, a tasting bar and multi-media experiences. The Heineken Experience had welcomed the 250,000th visitor by September 2009. The number of visitors throughout the year remained in line with original projections despite the downturn in tourism, which saw a 30 per cent fall in the number of visitors from the US and the UK. The new Heineken Experience brings the value of the Heineken brand to life in an entertaining and contemporary way.

Heineken Africa Foundation

Heineken announced the Heineken Africa Foundation to support and enhance the improvement of health for people who live in the Sub-Saharan African communities where Heineken operates. The Heineken Africa Foundation supports health projects and health-related education. Heineken has taken this initiative to underpin its long-standing commitment to Africa.

One of the first projects to receive funding from the Heineken African Foundation was an agreement for the purchase and distribution of long-lasting insecticidal nets to help control malaria infection by mosquitoes in Rwanda. This is one of a number of projects supported by the Heineken Africa Foundation.
Heineken partners for growth in India and strengthens Asia Pacific joint venture

Heineken and United Breweries Limited (UBL), India’s leading brewer, create a strong partnership that will drive growth in all of the world’s fastest-growing and most exciting beer markets.

Through the transaction, Heineken will gain joint majority control of India’s Number 1 brewer, UBL and agree terms for the brewing and distribution of the Heineken brand in India. As part of the new agreement, Heineken acquires Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) India and in a subsequent transaction intends to transfer this into UBL during 2010.

Heineken will strengthen and enlarge APB, its successful joint venture partnership with Fraser & Neave through the transfer of a significant part of its controlling interest in PT Multi Bintang Indonesia and its controlling interest in Grnadre Brasserie de Nouvelle-Calédonie S.A. in 2010. This creates a more profitable business and a stronger platform for growth in South East Asia and the Pacific Islands.
Appendix B
hello

Hello and welcome to our first annual report. We’ve been around for nine years now so thought it was about time we properly summed up our views on business and how we approach it as well as giving you a quick review of what we’ve been up to these last 12 months – the stuff that we’re proud of, the stuff we found challenging and the stuff that we’ve learnt.

We’ve done it to coincide with our first AGM – a day when we open the doors of Fruit Towers, ask our drinkers to come and hear what we’ve been up to and let them tell us face to face what we could be doing better. So this is the book of the film of the meeting of the company.

Sort of.

It’s difficult to sum up all of our thoughts in one book. We’re a group of over 250 people all thinking differently, working on different projects and changing all the time, like people do. But we hope that what follows is an accurate, fair and transparent account of what we’ve been doing at innocent. So maybe think of this book more like the start of a conversation. Have a read and come back and tell us what you think. We’re all ears.

why are we here?

Before we get to the specifics, we should probably just state who we are and why we do this. We’re innocent and we make natural tasty drinks.

our purpose

This has and always will be to make food good. We promise that everything innocent ever make will always be natural, delicious, healthy and sustainable. Make food good is just a lot simpler to remember.

our vision

Along with a clear purpose, everyone needs a vision, something to aim for, aspire to and remind you why you’re doing what you’re doing. Our vision is:

To be the Earth’s favourite little food company.

While that might sound a little for fetched to some people, a wise chap once said ‘We are limited not by our abilities but by our vision.’ Which is why we’ve made ours so big.

our values

Things have changed in the last nine years, but the way we do business hasn’t! At the beginning we had a set of unspoken values regarding how we should behave as people and a company. It was a natural thing – friends usually have the same values. That’s why they’re friends.

Then lots more people started working at innocent. And we realised that although they were smart and intelligent, they couldn’t read minds. So we wrote down the unspoken stuff, and ended up with a set of values. It was fairly straightforward – they’d be there all along. They just needed to be put on a bit of paper, or perhaps hung on the wall.

We don’t think they need explaining. But you should know that they underpin everything that we do, and will probably pop up in some shape or form on most of the pages that follow.
our drinks

Like we said before, we’re innocent and we make smoothies. We focus mainly on squashing fruit and putting it into bottles, but we make other sorts of drinks too. Here’s some more about them all.

**smoothies**

Smoothies are still our bread and butter. We started off with three recipes in 1999, and have come up with almost thirty more over the years. The idea of a smoothie is simple – get lots of fruit and squash it into a bottle.

**kids smoothies**

We started making kids smoothies after receiving lots of emails and calls saying “why don’t you make kids smoothies?” Eager to please, we went into the kitchen and made some recipes that were more kid-friendly (no bits). They come with straws.

**thickies**

Thickies are a bit thicker than a smoothie, hence the name. They’re made with yoghurt. We’ve just started making them in big bottles too.

our approach to business

Fruit is very important. Without it we’d be in a bit of a pickle. So we strive to learn more and more about this venerable stuff, and to work out how we can best source it without messing up the planet. We have a policy here of trying to get closer to the fruit (GCTTF): it’s not the catchiest acronym ever, but it’s one of our most important (along with IILY and CIHAB*).

What this actually means is that we have a team of people whose job it is to go and find the best fruit, whilst making sure that it’s grown in a way that doesn’t negatively impact the environment or the people growing it. In order to do this, we’ve made sure that all of our fruit suppliers are signed up to the International Labour Organisation standards. We see this as a minimum requirement and it covers basic workers’ rights issues like no child labour and no bonded labour (see www.ilo.org for more details).

Gradually we are meeting more of our growers, to make sure that every piece of fruit comes from a source that befits a company called innocent. As our fruit comes from all over the world, it’s a huge task, but one which we are passionately committed to. For example, in Latin and South America we work with the Rainforest Alliance (www.rainforest-alliance.org) to get a steady supply of ethically sourced bananas and now only buy bananas from Rainforest Alliance approved plantations.

The Rainforest Alliance look after farm workers’ rights and wellbeing and protect eco systems on the farms to encourage biodiversity. We believe this sustainable approach is the best one. A well-run farm with motivated workers means better quality fruit and better productivity, meaning we get nicer fruit and the farms are more profitable. We believe you can taste the care that goes into finding the very best.

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*’Is It Lunchtime Yet’ and ‘Can I Have a Biscuit?’

"We’re happy to pay more for specific varieties and to source locally where we can. And we work with experts in the field wherever we can. Like Stanley Yapp, below, who grows damsons in his orchard which we buy to crush into our damsons, blackberries and elderflowers recipe."
It might sound like a Miss World sentiment, but we want to leave things a little bit better than we find them. This means taking responsibility for the impact of our business on society and the environment and moving those impacts from negative to neutral, or better still, positive. We don’t think this makes us special. It just seems like a sensible thing to do. If we mess up the planet too much, there will be limited opportunities for conducting business. We want innocent to still be around in a hundred years, and it would be nice to still be based on a habitable planet. So these are the things that we’ve been working on in order to be a more responsible, sustainable outfit:

Without nature, we are nothing. So our first and most important step in creating a sustainable business is to only use 100% natural, healthy, renewable ingredients for our drinks – quite simply, we will put nothing into an innocent smoothie bottle unless it is made by nature. Of equal importance is that we will only ever make food that is genuinely good for people; each of our products has to have a positive health benefit, and be free of manufacturing shortcuts such as concentrates or flavourings. This focus on keeping things pure, natural and healthy is why we called ourselves innocent. In 2007 we kept things natural.

In 2008 we are still keeping things natural. This won’t change.

The innocent foundation

Each year we give at least 10% of our profits to charity, the majority of which go to the innocent foundation. Set up in 2004, it aims to build sustainable futures for the world’s poorest people. The foundation is currently working with 18 partner organisations, primarily in countries where we source our fruit, on projects that have an agricultural focus. We believe it is essential for communities to get the most out of the natural resources they have to enable a sustainable future. Here’s a bit more about just a few of the projects the foundation are supporting:

Send A Cow

We started working with Send a Cow in 2006 to help build the pig farming skills of the 31 families living in Ha Maphathe village in Lesotho, Africa. Farmers are already growing a greater variety of vegetables to supplement their diet. This has been so successful, they are now producing more than they need and are able to sell surplus produce for extra income. They are now preparing to receive livestock by planting sufficient fodder trees and by constructing light and airy sheds.

The Microloan Foundation

The Microloan Foundation provides small loans, basic business training and continuing guidance to vulnerable groups of women in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2007 our support helped to set up 12 new self-sustaining business cooperatives in Malawi. This May Andrew D is going out to help the Chigwirizano Juice Group set up their business plans.

We give 10% of all profits away each year to charitable causes. Most of that money goes to the innocent foundation, a separate registered charity that we set up in 2004. See over the page for more.
our people

None of the stuff in this book would be possible without these people. There are over 250 of us working in eight offices across Europe, and we’ve worked really hard to find excellent people to join us, especially in the last couple of years when we’ve grown more than ever.

A company without people is like chicken without chips, seawater without salt. It just doesn’t work. So we’re happy that we now have offices brimming with smoothie experts, which is a far cry from the early days when things got made up as we went along.

We think everyone should get rewarded for their brilliant work. So to show our appreciation we shower our star performers with share options to give them the chance to invest in the future of the business, extra holidays and a new hat every now and then.

And we’d like to say thank you to everyone who works and has worked at innocent. They could have chosen to be astronauts or ballerinas, but they didn’t. We’re glad you chose us.

our drinkers

Of course, the other group of people who we are rather fond of is the one that buys our drinks. Sometimes we sit down and try to figure out who all these people are, but we usually come to the conclusion that they are young and old, male and female, they work, play, eat, sleep, wake up and do it all again. So quite like us really.

We like meeting all of these people as much as we can. It helps us learn what we’re doing well and what we could do better. Rule number one is that the door to Fruit Towers is always open. If you’re passing, feel free to pop in (like the people on the right did when we invited them to our AGM).

Pretty much every day we’ll be out somewhere meeting people, usually in the form of giving our drinks away, in a shop, on a street or in a park. Our logic is that if more people taste the drinks, then more people might buy them. It’s a crazy idea but it just might work.

And we like to have a bit of a do too. In 2007 we had our very first innocent village fete, a big fete in the park in London, attended by 60,000 people. We also toured the country with our small fete, so that everyone could have a go at our coconut shy.

We like to meet people digitally too. This doesn’t mean dressing up as robots. It’s all about things like our blog, our weekly email news (sent to over 100,000 people), our Flickr groups and our nice shiny website. Accessible by all, and a place where people can tell us exactly what they think about innocent, good or bad.
Larsson 45

stuff we did well

january
We were back on the telly again with a new ad featuring our guy sporting a rather fetching pink t-shirt and a tidier-than-usual beard.

march
Time for a spring clean. We decorated and expanded our office in Dublin (the ‘massage parlour’ people downstairs moved out and we moved in). We also did up the London office.

april
We launched our drinks in Germany. The team has a picturesque office overlooking the harbour in Hamburg, so we’re all trying to get transfers to work there.

june
Not much happened in June. We just made some more drinks, and all went for a mini break together in the South of France.

and stuff we learnt

january
Richard was invited to go on BBC1’s Watchdog. A batch of our drinks had misbehaved on the shelves and started going off before their Enjoy By date. Rich apologised, we recalled the drinks, gave people their money back and fixed the problem. Our technical team made their already excellent quality checking process even better.

february
We found some very tasty new pomegranates – the Hicaz variety, grown in Turkey. Up until this point, we’d struggled to find any pomegranate juice that matched the taste you get when you eat one. But Simon and Rozanne discovered Hicaz and we think you should be able to taste the difference.

april
We noticed that people were staying later at work and not having time to play rounders in the park afterwards. So we introduced objectives for everyone in the company to help people manage their workload better and set up a wellbeing committee to help address that work/life balance thing.

may
We started trialling our drinks in McDonalds. Lots of people thought it was a bad idea. Lots of people thought it was a great idea. You can read a bit more about it in Appendix 1.

june
We learnt that fruit costs what it costs. And that as fruit prices rise even more, getting hold of the best tasting stuff will become even trickier.

september
We didn’t have enough elderflowers to make our local seasonal recipe in our big 1 litre cartons. So we had to change the recipe.

october
We love words like we love our nans and are really careful to make sure whatever we’re saying is always natural, engaging and honest. Especially when it comes to talking about our drinks. We don’t like the ASA telling us we can’t talk about the word ‘natural’ as one of our ads features our drink which didn’t make you go to the loos like that, so we had our hands up and said we were wrong. We’ll learn for next time.

november
Making a green smoothie that tastes as good as it looks is harder than you’d think.

july
We won the Cause Related Marketing Award at the Business in the Community awards, for our Supergran project (more about that in December). Al Gore and Prince Charles presented the prize. Ooh, get us.

august
Our big village fete took place in Regents Park, London. 60,000 people came along to watch the duck herding, dog agility, ferret racing and other such traditional pursuits. We’re doing it again in 2008 – please come along.

september
We achieved a world first by launching our 100% recycled plastic bottle. And we made a special, local, seasonal recipe (damsons, blackberries and elderflowers).

november
Time for our Buy One Get One Tree project – we planted a tree for every special carton sold, as well as being able to force our weak puns upon the nation. 164,020 trees were planted in Africa and India, and we’re doing it all again in summer 2008.

and stuff we learnt

september
We launched our drinks in Germany. Lots of people thought it was a bad idea. Lots of people though it was a great idea. You can read a bit more about it in Appendix 1.

june
No much happened in June. We just made some more drinks, and all went for a mini break together in the South of France.

december
The time of year when we put little woolly hats on our bottles and donate 50p from each bottle sold to help keep older people warm during winter. This year some famous people knitted for us – Russell Brand, Joanna Lumley and Arcade Fire.

a review of 2007
our performance

An annual report wouldn’t be an annual report without some charts. So for those of you who have been quite frankly upset with the lack of informative visio-numeral interfaces, here are the charts. They represent the things that are important in terms of us working out how our business is doing:

**revenue vs number of beards (year on year growth 1999-2007):**

![Graph showing revenue vs number of beards]

Source: Innocent Ltd management accounts, 2006 budget

**chilled juice market share 2007:**

We didn’t expect to grow as quickly as we have, it sort of took us by surprise. Fast growth brings loads of great things like more shiny, new faces, fresh ideas and more opportunities to try out stuff you couldn’t do when you were smaller. It’s also pretty challenging as priorities change quickly – it’s harder to remember 250 names than 20 and there’s new any room in the bike rack. But while it’s all been a bit of a rollercoaster, we’ve definitely enjoyed the ride and still are. When we stop enjoying it, we’ll get our coats and go home.

**carbon footprint:**

We don’t just measure our success as a business in terms of pound signs. At the start of 2007, our carbon footprint for each bottle was measured. By December, we’d managed to reduce it by nearly a quarter. There’s more to be done.

appendix 1:

“you’ve sold your soul to Satan”

In May 2007 we announced our intention to trial our kids smoothies in McDonalds. Our rationale was pretty simple – more than 90% of kids in the UK fail to get their recommended daily intake of fruit. Having our smoothies in McDonalds would give kids the opportunity to get some more fruit on board and help us sell a few more smoothies too.

So we posted a couple of messages on our blog to let people know, without anticipating how much interest there would be. But then when you’re told that “you’ve sold your soul to Satan” (Leanne, May 2007), you realise that people might just have a problem with it.

What was truly amazing to witness as the days and weeks passed was the quality of the debate on our blog. Lots of people were angry, but others saw it as a really positive thing. They argued with each other, called us names and made great arguments for and against. Meanwhile, we didn’t have to get too involved. We didn’t marshal the debate or intervene (apart from removing one very rude comment). The people who drink our drinks (you) did it all for us. That got us really excited. That such a passionate, smart bunch of people gave a monkey’s about our company and our values.

We learned lots from that whole affair, and it reinforced our belief that you should never sweep things under the carpet. We didn’t have to announce it publicly, but we knew that by being absolutely transparent and telling people exactly what we were doing and how we were thinking as a company, it was the right thing to do. We want to always do what we think is right, not what sounds right. And we shall continue behaving in that fashion until we’re old, grey and bearded.

Read more at www.innocentdrinks.com/burger-debate

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*Before we even started the trial, we asked 1000 people if they thought it was a good move. 74% said they thought it was and only 9% disagreed.

75% said they thought it was wrong to try it.
thank you

To everyone who grows our fruit,
to everyone who makes our drinks,
to everyone who sells our drinks,
to everyone who drinks our drinks,
to everyone who works at innocent,
to everyone who helped us in any way,
thank you very much.

If we can do anything in return, please let us know.
Fruit Towers, 1 Goldhawk Estate, Brackenbury Road, London, W6 0BA.
Banana phone: 020 8600 3993
Email: hello@innocentdrinks.com

This booklet is made from 100% recycled paper manufactured totally from post-consumer de-inked waste. It was printed using alcohol-free presses and vegetable-based inks. Once you’ve finished with it, please recycle.
Appendix C
Sample Posts from Heineken’s Facebook Page
Appendix D
Sample Posts from Innocent’s Facebook Page
Appendix E
Sample Pages from Heineken’s Website

[Image of the first page showing "THE HEINEKEN EXPERIENCE"]

[Image of the second page showing "THE HEINEKEN STORY"]
Appendix F
Sample Pages from Innocent’s Website