GENERATION Y & RETRO MARKETING

“Which product strategy a nostalgic positioned brand should adopt to target the population aged between 18 and 35 years old?”

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Declaration:

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of the thesis entitled “Generation Y and Retro Marketing”. I duly marked out all quotations. The used literature and sources are stated in the attached list of references.

In Paris, on October 5, 2017

Signature: ………………………

Fiona Anziutti
Abstract

The Generation of consumers aged between 18 and 35 years old is the new target of marketers. It represents the generation of the young new working persons which are more numerous and have different consumption patterns which differ from their predecessors. In today’s world, it is the youngest generation with the most important purchase power, and to face the challenge of the current consumption market, companies should find ingenious ways of differentiation in order to seduce those consumers.

The Retro-positioning is back in force those last years, especially for Baby Boomers and older generations, but the most surprising trend is that nostalgic products are also seducing the younger age range. Companies have realized the potential represented by the Generation Y on this market, the current challenge now is to adapt its strategy according to their expectations. Therefore, this thesis provides an analysis of the relation between Millennials and nostalgic brands. Research papers and articles have been analyzed. The deductive approach has been chosen in the research method, and 113 respondents have been interrogated in a qualitative survey. The research concludes that consumers from the Generation Y are emotionally attached to the original components of nostalgic brands products. Therefore, companies adopting a nostalgic positioning for their brand should always take into consideration the brand heritage and authentic elements which are part of the identity of the brand in the mind of consumers.

Keywords: Generation, Retro marketing, Nostalgia, Positioning, Consumer/Brand Relationship
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Introduction

The concept of Retro marketing has been described by Cova (2001) as “the marketing trend which relies on the nostalgia of the past time or old products”. The strategy to re-launch an old brand or product is a form of retro marketing. This strategy which at the origin aimed to seduce the older generation which are the most turned to the past and nostalgic of the time which has run out, turned out to be as much efficient if not more efficient among the youngest consumers. The Generation Y which gathers the population aged between 18 and 35 years’ old is the current biggest generation in term of size. It represents the population of the young new working persons and the youngest generation with the most important purchase power. Those demanding consumers represent a new challenge for marketers, which should develop continuous inventiveness and understand the consumption codes of these consumers, in order to provide them products and services adapted to their expectations.

The aim of this thesis is to distinguish the key elements for a company which has chosen a nostalgic positioning, on which it should focus to draw the attention, interest and then act of purchase of the Millennials. Findings of the thesis would help to better understand the purchase motivation of these consumers toward nostalgic products when considering the product components. The following research question has been formulated to address the objective of the thesis:

“Which product strategy a nostalgic positioned brand should adopt to target the population aged between 18 and 35 years old?”

The study has been conducted under the deductive approach, in the beginning by the mean of literature analysis of research papers and articles, taking up the key definition of the concept of nostalgia, its application in strategic marketing and then to finish by the focus on the subject; the Generation Y. This part will help in the formulation of research hypothesis. The second part describes the methodology adopted during the research, with the justification and explanation of the quantitative research. Then findings and analysis of the survey will be established based on the answers provided by the respondents of the research sample. According to the results deduced from this analysis, hypothesis will be either accepted or rejected. The final part of this study will be dedicated to the formulation of recommendations.
to a specific nostalgic brand on which the option of conquer Millennials consumers would be conceivable because of its positioning. The brand Nesquik because of its presumed nostalgic image perceived by the Generation Y population, has been chosen as subject for this case application.
I. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Key Concept of Nostalgia

a. From a disease to a fleeting feeling

Etymologically speaking, the origin of the word Nostalgia dates back to the XVII th century. It comes from the Greek word “nostos” which means return, and “algos” which means pain. It referred at this time to a pathology among people who are physically far from their home country and feel a certain form of sadness. It has been developed with the thesis of the Swiss physician Johannes Hopfer in 1688, who described the mental and physical state of the Swiss soldiers who were sent far from their native country during the wars. According to him, this disease relies on two kind of manifestations:

- the Psychic manifestations - which appear through insomnia and the obstinate desire to return to the local country
- the Physical manifestations - which was described by the loose of appetite, palpitations, anxiety

There has been a breaking in the XVIII th century, when nostalgia has definitely been adopted as a pain of the time which is running out, and then differentiate from homesickness – the unconditional miss of the home country.

The thesis elaborated in the XX th century defended the termination of thinking of nostalgia as a neurological disorder rather than a psychological disorder (McCann, 1941; Rosen, 1975) which was described as a form of melancholia or depression. The work of Davis (1979) went farer with his research among college students. As college students are for the most of them living for the first time the experience of moving far from home and they are prepared for the world of work, it is the period of their life where they are willing to feel for the first time the emotions of nostalgia and homesickness. Through this study, the result was that the words “warm”, “old times” and “childhood” were more attributed to nostalgia than homesickness.
Among the different fields, nostalgia assumes singular definitions.

In Sociology, nostalgia can be defined as a significant criteria of the identity function, and takes it into account as an emotional reaction which preserves the identity of the person among difficulties and changes that can appear along the life (unemployment, divorce, death). In psychology, nostalgia relies on two temporal perspectives (Rose, 1948; Nwas and Platt, 1965), which are the non adaptation of the individual to the present time and the anxiety which appears when looking at the future. These two characteristics are determining for the following of this study, since we will see in further details how it could be relevantly applied to the Generation Y.

Nostalgia entered the Marketing sphere at the end of the XX th century with Holbrook and Schindler (1989) in reference to the post modern conception of the regressive consumers (Badot and Cova, 2003; Brown, Kozinets and Sherry, 2003). It has been described as an evocation (Davis, 1979), a mood (Belk, 1990), an emotion (Belleli, 1991), a preference (Holbrook and Schindler, 1991), a state (Stern, 1992), a desire (Baker and Kennedy, 1994; Sierra and McQuitty, 2007).

Those different interpretations of nostalgia have been synthetized in the following table by Kessous and Roux:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Key word</th>
<th>Interpretation of the causes of nostalgia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>Spatial distance</td>
<td>Nostalgia is the expression of homesickness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychoanalysis</td>
<td>Maternal attachment and narcissistic wound</td>
<td>Nostalgia is an unconscious manifestation of the maternal attachment (objectal pole) or the expression of an identity wound (narcissistic pole)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Temporal distance</td>
<td>Nostalgia is the expression of a painful regret of the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>Identity transition</td>
<td>Nostalgia is a mechanism of preservation of the identity between the different steps of the cycle of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Insecurity / Anxiety</td>
<td>Nostalgia is linked with the non adaptation of the individual to his environment or anxiety regarding the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semiotics</td>
<td>Continuity / Discontinuity</td>
<td>Nostalgia is an obsessive regret : a state of conscious pain due to the lost of something valuable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Kessous and Roux (2012)*

The definition we will finally keep in mind is the one developed by Divard and Richard-Demontrond (1997), who described nostalgia as “a bitter sweet affective reaction, eventually associated to a cognitive activity and which is felt by an individual when an external or internal stimulus brings him to a period or an event from an idealized past, which could be part or not of his own lived past”.

The past remains a desire since it is different from the present, and is for the individual at the same time familiar and inaccessible.

### b. The affective dimension of Nostalgia

As described in the previous part, Nostalgia is an emotional reaction based on the memories or idealized past, intrinsically linked with the affective register. Nostalgia can be encouraged by stimuli, which can be described as every physical, chemical or biological element capable to cause phenomenon in the organism. These stimuli will create particular reactions according to the personal experience of the individual and his current state of mind. However, nostalgia is always connected with the affective dimension, we can describe it as an “affective signature”, which relies on three perspectives: the positive affect, the negative affect, and the mixed affect.

11
The positive affect

The positive affect described by Davis (1979), only connects nostalgia with the positive feelings and memories. As if the brain chose to only remember the good things and concealed any negative part from this time. It succeeds to recreate an idealized period of the past which is only connected with the notions of pleasure, joy, satisfaction, happiness, or love. All the dull memories are put aside to only focus on the better of this time and procure exclusively good sensations. This rekindled idealized past will have a direct influence on the current state of mind of the individual in a positive way.

The negative Affect

In the other hand, Ortony, Clone and Collins (1988), developed the negative side of this affect, which was more focus on the idea that nostalgia was marked by a significant distress and loss emotions, but above all sadness and mourning about the past. Once the past is gone it is definitely lost, there is no way to get back to these days or to recreate the feelings we could deeply feel at this time, or relive the moments from a bygone era. At the opposite of the positive affect which only highlights good and perfect memories, the negative affect will remind that all these goods things remain nowadays inaccessible.

The Mixed Affect

Since everything is not only black or white or positive or negative, Johnson, Laind and Cathley (1989) have defined a mixed affect, which relies on the idea that nostalgia creates a bitter sweet feeling. The mixed affect is more complex in the way that it is characterized as a positive emotion marked by tones of loss, as a “highly level cognitive appraisal and proportional content”. In this idea, happiness would be a related emotion to nostalgia, but with a subjacent sadness because of the idea that some things, feelings, people, desirable from the past are in the present time out of reach. The positive and the negative affects are intertwined at the same level to create this bitter sweet feeling concept reiterated later in 1997 by Divard and Richard-Demontrond in their definition of nostalgia.
c. **Self experience and collective imaginary**

When defining nostalgia, it is important to identify and to differentiate the nostalgia that one will feel regarding his own experience, his own past, and the one dating before its birth and any creation of memories, created in his imaginary by external testimonies. These different kinds of nostalgia are respectively called personal nostalgia which is opposed to historical nostalgia.

**Personal nostalgia**

Personal nostalgia refers to the feeling when looking at autobiographical memories and experienced in childhood or a period of time when the individual was younger. In this case the individual is his own reference, and memories from this time are usually “utopitized”. Indeed, when looking at the sweat memories of the past and the loosing time, the individual tends to conceal the negative and pejorative part of the memories to create an idealized period that he would like to live again. Even if the framework of the memory was sad or in contrast with the remembered nostalgia, the important thing which the individual will keep in mind is the wellness he felt at this precise moment and which is missing today. Stern (1992) summarized personal nostalgia with this simple quotation “The way I was”. She also took the example of Truman Capote who often referred to his childhood as a period of time that he treasured and missed, and did not seem to take into consideration or focused on the fact that he was grown up under the influence of an abusive mother. A context which could have terribly marked a child for life has been curtailed in his memories, to only retain the best.

When personal nostalgia refers to the individual memories, collective nostalgia on the other hand, refers to a period of time which has been lived by a generation, or in common with a group of individuals. It is an experienced lived by the person during the course of his lifetime, but shared by other persons as it is entrenched in the collective memory.

**Historical nostalgia**

At the opposite of personal nostalgia which had been lived by the individual, historical nostalgia refers to a time before the birth of the person, outside of the living memory. It has
been created by testimonies of persons who have truly lived these moments, or also described and romanticized by external influencers, on television, books, etc.

The positive tone is usually used to evoke this past period of time, and will raise the development of empathy as affective reaction shared with the previous generation by the individual.

The terms chosen by Stern (1992) to describe this nostalgia were “The way things used to be”.

These two kinds of nostalgia have been illustrated by the research of Abrams (1988) about the identification of a person in the context of reading with the two different kinds of literary styles which are historical romance and sentimental novel.

In one case, the reader will be absorbed in a specific treatment of time, space, characters and values which are unknown and totally unfamiliar to his lived experience. The reader will therefore create empathy for these elements that he is imagining.

In the other hand, the individual is more likely to identify itself to the sentimental novel since it is set up in a current or closed period of time. It is therefor easier for him to refer to its own experience, and to imagine the situation according to a truly lived memory from his past.

This illustration demonstrates the distinction between those two kinds of nostalgia and the reactions it can generate inside the individual according to a situation he can only imagine and a situation from his own experience.

Nostalgia as an affective reaction created by numerous external factors, as a significant impact on the individual since it affects his emotional values.

Emotional value is one of the two factors –with perceived quality- which will directly influence the purchase decision of the individual. In that way, marketers started to think about nostalgia as a concept potentially applicable in the marketing field.
B. Retro marketing: Nostalgia as a strategic positioning

At the end of the XX th century and at the threshold of the XXI st, the population was ineluctably searching for continuity and stability at the approach of this temporal breaking. The metaphorically death of the century had a kind of unconscious impact on the individuals in the way that they turned to consume products and brands which bring them comfort, security and are familiar to, to bring them emotional support.

This phenomenon enounced as the “Fin de siècle effect” (Stern, 1992) is one of the manifestation of cultural anxiety and the impact of nostalgia on the mind of the consumers and indirectly on their purchase intention and buying behavior.

At the eve of a new century, individuals where psychologically faced to the end of an “era”, and indubitably looked behind them something that is now going to its end. As when you are looking something which is almost finished, this is the moment when you realized how it was important for you and began to become nostalgic, because of the unknown which enhance insecurity facing. People were looking for security and turned to buy warmth and comforting products which reminded them of the good old times, like the Proust madeleine.

It has been a windfall for every nostalgic brand at this time, as for brands which adopted a nostalgic and retro image.
a. Nostalgic brands: an intergenerational and generational matter

A nostalgic brand can be defined as a brand who existed before, who were popular in the past and is still existing today (Kessous and Roux, 2012). It benefits from the connotation of the “good old time”, and the fact to still exist today can be seen as a proof of special value and differentiation. Those are brands which give the impression that they exist since decades, and are still maintaining, and they are usually keeping a leading position on their respective market. One of the main reason which which can be quoted as driving the longevity and durability of a nostalgic brand, is the consumer comportment of recommendation between generations.

The first institution in which the individual is shaping his experience and discovers consumption habits is in the sphere of his family. A consumption habit can be described as “A learned behavioral response that has become associated with a frequently repeated situation” (Kaufmann, 2014).

This family framework is the first environment in which the child will get use to consume specific brands and products, which are bought by parents, grand parents or brother and sisters who have the purchase power and are kinds of role models. At the same time the family is transmitting values, it is also transmitting norms of consumption. The connection of an individual with a brand plays a role in the building of its identity, but also in social integration and link with the past (Fournier, 1994; Bettman, 2003). This would explain the phenomenon of young adults which are consuming similar brands than they were consuming during their childhood.

They have been raised with the unconscious idea that the brand was better than the others because it was consuming among the familial sphere, so it is unconsciously rooted in the mind of the consumer. The role of the emotional attachment also comes into play, in the sense that the brand can have an emotional aspect since it is in link with the person who prescribed the product. The generational transmission is important, the younger generations tend to believe their elders because of their wider experience of life.

Even with the strong competition on some market segments like biscuits for example, new brands have made their entry in some market segment but old brands are still having special place, and intergenerational transmission can be an explaining factor of their subsistence.
Example of the biscuits market in France – The brand Saint-Michel

If Mondelez remains the world leader on the biscuit market, the group Saint-Michel held out against their invaders on the French market for biscuits and madeleines with a turnover of 400 Million euros in 2014.

It has been created in 1905 by Joseph Grellier in the town of Saint-Michel-Chef-Chef, from which he will give the name to his brand, before becoming The Group Saint-Michel in 2008. The brand is well-known for its Madeleines and Roudor, but it is the Sablé de Retz a.k.a Galette Saint-Michel which have made the renowned of the brand. Those have been consumed since decades, comparable to the short bread in England, the Galette Saint-Michel is the typical butter biscuit which has never changed and remains the same that it has been consumed by elders and previous generations.

The brand Saint-Michel can be quoted as an example of an intergenerational brand, since in the current biscuits industry, which is now composed of numerous and innovative competitors, the brand remains the leader on the French market. The brand has well understood that its brand perception was the familial brand, with a specific know how for biscuits manufacturing. They have build their positioning around this idea of authentic brand which appeals to young and old, with a specific aged packaging and slogan “Familial biscuits manufacturer since 1905” which give the impression that it has always existed.

Evolution of the Saint-Michel brand logo since its creation
Intergenerational transmission also works also in the other way; the younger generations can have the role of prescriber for the older generation in some field where they are considerate more as expert. For new technologies for example, the Generation Y which is called the generation of “Digital natives”, because they have grown with the evolution of the internet and new technologies, which they had the chance to tame at the same time it was developing. For all which is mobile phone, internet, computers, etc., older generations usually ask and follow advises from the younger generation which are considerate as expert.

Generation brands can be separated from the intergenerational brands, even if both are still in the nostalgic brands category. A generation can be defined as a group of person born and who have lived during a specific period of time, they have lived the same historical event, evolution of the society and way of life, and they admit to be part of this specific generation in opposition of the others. Each generation is impacted by some elements from this historical period they have grown with, for example for the Generation X it was the end of the cold war,

\[1\text{ Source : Docteur Marques Website - }\text{http://www.docteurmarques.fr/saint-michel-une-marque-en-poule-position/}\]
divorces and hippie movement, and the Generation Y grew with terrorism, AIDS, unemployment and new technologies. A generational brand can be defined as a brand which has been specifically consumed or is consumed by a particular generation (Kessous and Roux, 2010). It can really by associate with a specific generation at a precise period of time, and is usually not transmitted by another generation. At the difference of a trans generational brand which is going through the different generation and target different consumers, the generational brand is proper to a specific generation; for example, Nintendo for Generation Y, Lego for Generation X, etc. Marketers can also target a specific generation with a product which will according to them appeal or answer to a need specific to this population.

Nostalgia is omnipresent in both cases, in the way that when an individual is consuming an trans generational brand, it may refer to historical nostalgia since he consumes a brand which has been prescribed by an older generation, but also for generational brands when someone is consuming a brand he used to consume in the past, he refers to his own memory and his own experience of a nice moment he tries to recreate by consuming this brand. Here we are referring to personal nostalgia.

b. Retro brands or “how to innovate through retro”

How the retro managed to become “classic”? The answer would explain how the old products which used to be seen as old fashioned and out-of-date can become basic and fundamental products, or a re-launched product adapted to the technologies of the present time. Retro branding can be defined as the action to re-launch a brand or a product from the past but adapted to the present taste and need of the consumers (Petr Král, 2012). It allows the older generation who used to consume the products as it was to buy it again as if it has never changed, and to seduce the younger generation with a “classic” asset and aspect that they cannot benefit from consuming another brand.
Since several decades, the consumption is omnipresent and strongly represented in a society that we can describe as consumerist. Consumers have the habit to have access to a wide choice of products, they are encouraged to buy an important amount of products and services with a total free of choice, and also accessible by more and more people with the development of the middle class. Revolutionizing retro products come into a period of time marked by a mainstream trend of consumption. The main stream concept can be defined as a mass phenomenon of popularity toward what is fashionable and trendy, which is usually opposed to the “niche” concept. It is the main trend which influences the way of dressing, and consuming other products of the major part of the population.  

Retro products come at the opposite and try to counter the products of mass consumption, since it gives the impression to bring something “new” but relying on the previous experience and memories of the consumer, and in this sense offers a certain added value. It has the advantage to be considerate as being connected with the good old times, cooler and more authentic than what you can find in comparison with any of the other brands, but with the advantage to be adapted to the need and requirement of the consumers.

**The example of the brand Polaroid**

We can take the example of the brand Polaroid, a brand which became successful in the end of the 1940s with the creation of a camera with instantaneous development of your pictures. At its beginning, the company Polaroid Corporation was creating polarized glasses, and decided to adapt its technology to develop the revolutionizing concept which allows to obtain the photo you just took in one instant printed on a paper.

With the emergence of the film, and then numeric cameras, this revolutionary tool tend to disappear to the benefit of an increasing technology and make it seen as an old-fashioned and expensive way to take pictures. Then with the development of the camera incorporated in the mobile phones, the possibility to take pictures was in the hand of everybody, everywhere and at anytime. Here again, maybe the fact that this mode of taking a photo became so popular, that people tend to add an added value to those innumerable shots, with the Instagram filters. In a couple of years, Instagram became one of the most successful and prosperous application never developed, with a concept as simple as offering the opportunity to add a vintage filter

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2 *Glossaire, E-marketing* - [http://www.e-marketing.fr/Definitions-Glossaire/Mainstream-242212.htm#BiZ1333Vp9WGCLRf97](http://www.e-marketing.fr/Definitions-Glossaire/Mainstream-242212.htm#BiZ1333Vp9WGCLRf97)
on your photo, to adapt the size, tones and shades of the pictures to give to it a certain cachet of a unique photo as if it has not taken a hundred tries to obtain this result. This trend re-launched the demand for old devices, such as polaroid or logographic cameras, which offer the authenticity of the perfect –or failed- photo that you only have one try to take. Ridding the wave of the old shots, Polaroid launched in the 2010s, a new design of instantaneous camera, with bright colors and modern curves. The size of the photos has also been adapted to the size of the camera – smaller, to allow you to bring it everywhere- and also to reduce the unit cost for the customer, which is looking for not a too expensive way to offset the mobile camera. It allowed the brand to came back on the forefront, with a powerful background of quality brand and products renown from decades. The older generations, which have more known the old versions of Polaroid than the new ones and Instagram, have also been sensitive to the re-launch of one of the memorable object from their time.

In parallel, the demand for the authentic devices from the older periods was also booming.

Evolution of the design of Polaroid products since the 70s

3 Source: Photos from the official Polaroid web site - http://www.polaroid.com/
c. Strategic application

The aim of marketers is to analyze and find the need and motivations of a consumer and to propose an answer to fulfill his demand. Numerous studies have shown the impact of nostalgia on the behaviors of the individual, it shows that when an individual is faced to an insecure environment, where he’s facing fear, he tries to offset this feeling by buying things and purchase more than ordinarily which will compensate this feeling of insecurity by comfort. Indeed, the action of purchase is one of the first result of insecurity, and materialism is generated by one’s insecurity. This also refers to Freud and the psychology defense theory. To respond to an uncomfortable situation or psychological state of mind, the individual displaced his malaise on something to compensate his discomfort. Once individuals have finally acquired the material stability, they are then looking for the psychological comfort which can pass through the consumption of reassuring products. It is indeed interesting to notice that usually nostalgic products are not necessity goods but are consumed because of hedonist motivation. In the action of purchase to compensate a miss, what can play a better role than things which have a warmth and comforting connotation, like nostalgic products. Individuals tend to only remember of the good moments from the past (Stern, 1992) and to connect it with positive feelings when thinking about the past time. This trend leads to a particular relation with products connected with the past and influence the consumption comportment of individuals. Nostalgia can counter every other influence as soon as feelings and emotions are stimulated.

When considering the determinant factors which will influence the purchase intention, it is substantial to take the inner of the individual itself; the principle of nostalgia relies primarily on the memories. The background and experience accumulated by the individual conditioned already his behavior toward his purchase intention. It can be by consumption habits transmitted or acquired, or unconscious links with intrinsic memories. It is then the role of the companies to find a way to generate motivations in the side of the consumer who will find a satisfaction to a miss or a need in the purchase of a product.
Brands can adopt a particular strategy, like a nostalgic positioning. The positioning of a brand can be defined as the position a company wishes to obtain in the mind of the customer, relying on key elements chosen by the brand to differentiate itself from its competitors. In the case of brands or objects with retro connotations, the product components like the packaging and the design play an important and non-negligible role since it is what will catch the eye of the consumer in the first place. The design refers to the industrial aestheticism of a product, whereas the packaging designs the first envelope which is contact with the product and what is displayed on the shelves of a store. The color code of a brand, the font, the logo, the mascot, the authentic recipe, are creating the identity of a brand and are elements which differentiate a product from its competitor on the market in the mind of consumers in the product components strategy (APPENDIX 2).

The aestheticism of a product is also one of the predominant character in the purchasing action -with the price and quality perceived- which could be spontaneous or reasoned. In the major part of the situations, the consumer will take into account the aestheticism of what he buys. For example, for two products which answer to exactly the same need, sold at the same price, with the same communication, the consumer will buy the most beautiful one of the two products, since it will generate positive emotions and bring him a bigger satisfaction (Jeff Chun-Chih Chen, 2014). It is all the truer for the Generation Y, which are hedonist consumers, sensitive to the judgment of their peers.

Aged effect, vintage font, first advertising spot, all the brand and even Coca Cola resurrect their first model dotted by retro look, exclusive or limited editions which remember to the consumer the first years he began to consume the brand. Indeed, a consumer can have his own story with the brand built on his own experience, and if he has one it can have a positive and non-negligible effect on its word of mouth (Kessous and Roux, 2011).

The action to rely the product strategy on a retro product can only be efficient if the brand has a history on which it can capitalize to create a storytelling which will seduce and be accepted by the consumer. It should seem to be real and authentic, to create an attachment or a preference for a brand which could turned into loyalty.

At a time when the consumer possesses a compounded choice of consumption, the brand identity and the mental representation that the consumer has of a brand play an essential role in the final consumption decision (Vignolles, 2005). The history of a brand is a significant
differentiation factor which can represent a particular advantage at the moment of choosing between similar and comparable products -and also before, since it will generate affection for the consumer toward the brand. Lacoueilhe (2000) qualifies the brand attachment as a “psychological variable which traduces an inalienable affective and lasting reaction which expresses a psychological proximity toward the brand”.

A particular story, an authentic and unbeatable way of manufacturing, an anecdote which will have its importance, everything is good to interest the consumer at a time he can have access to all the information of a brand thanks to internet.

Brand history is a pillar of brand heritage, which is the associations toward the brands gained in the past, which is itself a key element of the brand equity.

Brand equity can be defined as “the value of the brand, thanks to its ability to generate opinions and specific behaviors of its consumers, like notoriety, loyalty, affinity, perceived quality, image, differentiation, etc. Which will allow it to sell to a higher price or to obtain high volumes of sales or revenues”.  

Brand equity elements

Source: Machková, Lhotáková, Král (2010)

4 Source : Mercator lexique website - http://www.mercator-publicitor.fr/lexique-marketing-definition-capitalmarque#sthash.zH9RXLk.dpuf
Brand equity is especially important in the case of retro bands, since consumers attracted by those products are looking for beyond of the primary function of the product, a history and a singularity on which companies can rely on. The purchase action will then come with explanations and anecdotes to peers which will procure satisfaction by looking for approbation from his entourage which will comfort him in his choice of consumption.

Advertising besides creating brand awareness, comes to support the brand heritage and shapes the brand image. Indeed, advertising represents several actions for companies, like to create awareness, to inform, to generate reaction and discussion, or to remind the existence of the brand and at the same time remind the sustainability of a brand. Positioning should always be credible, all the environment around the brand should be oriented in the same direction, in the idea to defend the same values and to convey the same image of the brand in perfect correlation.
C. Millennials – The brand new generation, the new biggest target of marketers

For many years now, marketers began to target people according to the generation they are part of. A generation can be described as a particular part of the population which is born between a certain period of time which allow them to have lived the same evolution of the society, the same historical events, who have grown in the same environment, which will have a certain influence on their behavior, preferences, and by consequence on their way of consumption.

People can be part of a generation in the condition that they admit to be part of a specific generation in opposition to the others.

After the Baby Boomers generation and the Generation X, make room for the Millennials which will now surpass their predecessors in the number of potential consumers.

They are young actives with an important purchase power, and as a brand new generation they do not have the same expectations and needs than their elders; they represent a new enigma for companies.
a. Definition of a Generation

A generation is a sociologic concept used in marketing as a socio demographic criteria to refer to a sub-population of individuals with approximatively the same age or who have lived at the same historical period of time, sharing common behaviors or habits because of these factors. Usually a generation spans on a 20 years’ period of time, which corresponds to the cycle of renewal of a population. A socio demographic criteria can be defined in the marketing context as a segmentation or targeting criteria relying on social or demographic characteristics of individuals. We can quote as the most used socio demographic criteria the age, the gender, the occupation, habitation, etc.

Kessous and Roux (2009) have identified the different socio-demographic generations below:

- The Traditionalists, Matures or also called the Silent Generation – Born between 1925 and 1945, during the Great Depression and the World War II
- The Baby Boomers – Born between 1945 and 1960, just after the World War II and the peak of birthrate, have lived the Glorious 30
- The Generation X – Born between 1960 and 1980, have lived the end of the cold war and the hippie movement
- The Generation Y, Millennials – Born between 1980 and 1999, have grown at the same time than the rise of new technologies, unemployment and terrorism
- The Generation Z – Born since 2000, do not know a world without the information and communication technologies

So that we can give the denomination of Generation, we should also take into consideration another criterion which is the fact to be aware to be part of a social group in opposition to the other generations.

A person can be part of a generation from three different points of view (Casper and Briones, 2014):

- From a cultural point of view: individuals which had the same age at a precise historical event with a symbolic and cultural significance are part of the same generation
- From a social point of view: individuals which have lived, in the same cultural context, similar living standards in terms of revenues, unemployment, education, etc. are part of the same generation

- From a subjective point of view: individuals which are part of a group of people which differ from their predecessors

A generation can be created if three effects are combined:

- The life cycle effect: the age lead to a certain type of behaviors rather than another – for example 10 years old child does not have the same way of life than someone who is 40

- The cohort effect: the fact to be born approximatively at the same time, to have lived some experiences during youth that elders do not have can be determining

- The period effect: historical circumstances which are particular to a specific period of time – war, crisis, etc.

**The specific case of the Generation Y**

The term “Millennials” comes from “millennium”, in reference to the change from the 1900s to the 2000s, which has been lived in full force by this generation which was for most of them not adults yet a turning point for the society and the population. The new millennial led the way to the development and normalization of the internet, the emergence of terrorism and economic crisis. This instable environment has shaped their way of thinking and adaptation to their society in which they are currently living.

Millennials are also called Generation Y, because they are the posterior generation to the Generation X, Generation “Why”, because of YouTube, of the form of the headphones on their chest, and also called Digital natives because appetite for the new technologies since they have grown with the development of internet, with a mouse in a hand and a mobile phone in the other.

For this study, we will focus on the people born between 1980 and 1999, living in developed countries. It is also important to notice that the trend identified in the following study depicts a “common” and standard profile of potential consumer of the Generation Y, which does not mean that it can be applied to every single consumer from this generation.
This generation has been marked by some external trends which have had an impact on its environment:

- The economic and financial globalization – they are aware of the impact it has on their daily life, at the opposite of elder generations they have well accepted the capitalism rules.
- The boom of the new technologies – they have now instantly access to almost all the human knowledge, and are able to communicate with the whole world.
- Mass unemployment – It has an impact on how this generation perceives the labor market, the life in a company, and their abilities to obtain a job up to their expectations.

Those trends have led to a new relation with the future, which becomes highly uncertain, hardly controllable, and the current situation of today or tomorrow can become obsolete the day after. This observation can be applied at the professional sphere because of the mass unemployment, more and more graduated workers which leads to a bigger competition; but also at the personal sphere, with the increase in divorces, blended families – unlike previous generations which married quite young and stayed their entire life with the same person.

In regards of those characteristics, Generation Y is not pessimistic as it could lead to think, but more realistic.
b. Purchase behavior, intention & motivation

In 1943, Abraham Maslow has published in *Psychological Review* a paper named “A theory of Human Motivation” developing the famous psychological theory of the Hierarchy of needs. It represents under the form of a pyramid, the common hierarchy of the needs a person will through his life try to satisfy. The pyramidal form suggests a priority order, which induces that an individual will always try to answer to the lower need before focus on the upper one.

Eric Briones and Stéphane Bal have developed a new Hierarchy of needs resuming the Maslow’s codes but applicable and inspired by the Generation Y.

*Application of the Maslow’s pyramid to the Generation Y*

Casper and Briones (2014) have resumed and developed this application:

- The psychological need for a Millennial is to de-stress from the pressure he is suffering from, which pass through the experimentation of new experiences
- The security need is explained by the necessity to survive to the crisis and instable economic environment, by using the smart shopping and in this way prioritize the purchase of low cost prices premium and authentic products
- The social need relies on the fact that self-confidence is built on the critical look of the other, which will be the essential motivation and validation of choices
- The esteem need for a Millennial is to build its own uniqueness, and to have the luxurious choice of choosing the famous statues desired
- The self-actualization need is explained by having the courage to undertake, to dare, and benefit from a comfortable and luxurious lifestyle, at a material and immaterial level, and to share it with other people

Having grown up in a numeric environment, Millennials are at ease with the new technologies and are really using it as a daily useful tool. They have the advantage to have a permanent and instantly access to all the information and knowledge of the world, which they are taking the advantage in every circumstance. If they have a doubt on something or need an information in the second, they can check and have the answer as quick as the time they have to take their cell phone out of their pocket. This can also traduce a certain impatience, since they can find answers and solutions so quickly thanks to these new technologies.
This also allow them to have access to all the information about the product, the composition for example, but also the information available about a brand and feedbacks from previous consumers. Transparency is indeed required when addressing a Millennial.

Even if they are living in a society aspired to be individualistic, the notion of sharing, in particular information but also sharing in a broader sense, is very important for Millennials since they are continually communicating, and give a significant importance to the community. Almost 100% of the Millennials have a smartphone, which means that they have access to all the content of internet, their contacts and social medias almost everywhere. Even if they are permanently connected, to bring all their contacts and information with them allow them to be really mobile and they are one of the generation which spend the most of their time outside their house.
Social media have boomed now more than a decade ago, with the emergence of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. Those who portray the Millennials as narcissistic by posting their activities, meals, new purchases, should in reality know that it is less to show them off than searching for the approbation from the others that they are posting on social media. Individuals from the Generation Y are always looking for advises, approbation and to be accepted by their peers in their act of purchase. From their purchases to their personal choices, they are in a continual need to be approved and acknowledged. One of the biggest
fear of most of the Millennials is “the fear of missing out”, to have miss the important trend, or viral reference which has created a buzz, which as indicates its name stopped as quickly has it has started. That is also a reason why they need to be continuously connected.

To be approved and to have the chance to be considered as a leader of opinion or an “Influencer”, the Millennials will be in continual research of uniqueness. To be unique does not go in the opposite direction of the approbation from the others, it just means that you manage to distinguish yourself from the others, which should always try to appeal in a way or another. Those consumers have known the shopping habits in big malls with the same brand you can find almost everywhere, and Millennials are now more and more going against the mainstream brands. As they have to prove that they are different to break through the labor market, they are continually looking for singular experiences and products which will make them feel unique (Vouchilas and Ulasewicz, 2014).

Regarding their relationship with prices, because they are consuming in an instable economic environment, they are quite sensible to prices. However, they are always looking for the best quality-price ratio, and in this sense Generation Y can be described as a Premium Generation where smart shopping is a widespread practice. Indeed, Millennials have all the tools in their hands to allow them to be a picky and request the best consumer.

With globalization, and the democratization of e-commerce, the competition does not have limit anymore, which is added to the fact that the Generation Y is know the generation with the biggest purchase power, and in this sense the biggest potential target for marketers. They could and they like to spend a significant time on the internet to compare and find the best deal possible. Premium products answer to the demand from Millennials, since they are looking for good quality products but for an affordable and justified price, with a certain aesthetic.

To differentiate themselves, companies should find innovative ways to address to Millennials, which are looking for unique purchases experiences, to bring value added.

The Millennium is a hedonist consumer; he will search for the pleasure in the act of purchase. The taste for freedom is one of the major characteristics of this generation, which perceive money as the only limit to this liberty. They have seen their parents – Generation X- spend their time running after money to buy things on credit, and they pertinently know that money
does not buy happiness. They are less attracted by the possession than the direct access to things, because of their need to have access to everything quite rapidly. The notion of possession is called into question with the development of the concept of sharing.

Finally, because of the instable environment in which they are living and the uncertain future, Millennials are desperately looking for comfort and to be reassured. They are not pessimist and they are not optimist, they are just realistic regarding their future. They are continually looking for landmarks and more and more stability in a changing environment. They have lived the divorce of their parents, the virtualization of relationships, the difficulties to find a permanent work contract, etc. They sometimes just want to return to the bases with comfort and recklessness. As they are the most graduated generation, they spent a quite long time in studies, and are entering the adult world at ages when their parents were already working and had children. That is why they are called “adulescent”, they have the age to be adults but they do not have all the constraints and daily obligation to take care of children and to provide living to a family, until a certain age they only have to take care of themselves. They are looking for comfort in authentic moments or products, with a specific value or a sentimental attachment.
c. Appetence for nostalgic products

There is an inclination to think that people are looking back with nostalgia when they are getting older and older, since they have enough back off to realize that time is running out and look at the past time with envy. This is the kind of consumer that retro-positioned brands try to attract, and their favorite target used to be the older generations like Baby Boomers which is one of the largest Generation in term of size and represent an important potential. Nevertheless, marketers should now notice that the younger generations showed also interest in retro products. Several factors can explain this phenomenon, external factors like explained above, because of the instability of the present and insecurity regarding the future, they are looking for reassuring products. Nostalgic products are going on the opposite way of mainstream products, for most of them they have a story, something which make them different and unique compare to other products which could be substitutable and they are associated in the imaginary of the consumer to something comforting (Zimmer, Little, Griffiths, 1999).

The intergenerational transmission of consumption turns out to be quite significant for the Generation Y, since children of this Generation are closer to their parents than any other generation before them (Casper and Briones, 2014). This phenomenon is partially due to the evolution of the familial sphere with an ascertainment of the strengthening of the links. In addition to the fact that children are influenced by consumption habits of their parents, this generation tends to show interest and respect in the tastes of their parents. They pay intention to storytelling and anecdotes to a time they do not have lived but described as better than the one they are living. Parents endorse the role of prescriber, and are referring to their own expertise to advise a product to their offspring.

The “adulescent” term reflects the double and contrary connotation of the individual which has reached the adulthood, but since does not have all the responsibilities associated, has somewhere keep a heart of child and in this sense is particularly sensitive to things which could bring him back in this period of time.

Nostalgic products are perceived as unique, stable, comforting and cool. They gather all the adjectives that Millennials are trying to endorse in their consumption choices.
II. METHODOLOGY

To explain the methodology used for this research, we can refer to the Model of Research developed by Oates:

Source: Oates, 2006

The literature review was used as a base to draw a conceptual framework, and gathered with the experiences and motivation it has led to formulate the following research question “Generation Y and Retro marketing: Which product strategy to adopt by a nostalgic positioned brand wishing targeting the population aged between 18 and 35 years old?”.

Then the strategy used was a survey to generate information by a questionnaire and a quantitative analysis of the data.
Identification of the situation

The central problematic of the research was to find potential results which would highlight trends to build a product strategy coherent and consistent for companies with a retro or nostalgic positioning, and would be interesting in targeting population aged between 18 and 35 also called Generation Y or Millennials.

It was interesting for this study to try to create a trend, but it is almost impossible to make a generalization. The product strategy in a retro marketing context depends greatly on the brand and its history, the family of product and also the sector. A consumer will not take the same factors into account when considering a food product and a technologic product, or a fashion product. In the same idea, the nostalgic perception depends greatly on the context and personal background of each consumer, as well as on expectations and prior experiences.

A generation would comprise a large amount of people, regardless the gender and for a quite wide age group – 20 years in general. In the same idea, what composes a generation is the historical event or context in which the people who compose it have lived at the same time or have in common, that is why the people who have been raised in different part of the world will not have the same reference. The people from 18 to 35 which have been interrogated for this survey are all from developed countries, because of the previous reason but also because they do not have the same framework of reference in terms of consuming, nostalgic brands could highly differ according to the country – even among developed countries.

Some French brands are part of the survey, because the survey takes place in France and mainly of the surveyed people are French, but other nationalities can totally identify technological products –without brands- for example, and globalized brands like Coca Cola or Toblerone. Nevertheless, Nesquik has been chosen as a nostalgic brand to give recommendation to because of its re-known and recognition on the international market, and the approximatively same positioning.

The quantitative survey has been finally chosen to allow me to measure general perceptions and views toward nostalgic products.
A. Research approach

This research thesis has been constructed in the way that literature review made previously can help to create a base for the research of data, which would help to formulate strong recommendations to a specific company wishing rely its strategy on the retro or nostalgic features for its product policy with a specific target – the Generation Y. The literature review remains truly descriptive, illustrated by a large choice of articles, research papers, books, newspapers, magazines, etc.

Whereas, the objective of the survey was to collect precise information and data about Generation Y consumers and their relation, perception and expectations toward retro and nostalgic brands. Therefore, the only restriction to participate in the survey was to be aged between 18 and 35.

Then comes the choice of the kind of survey – quantitative or qualitative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative Research</th>
<th>Qualitative Research</th>
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<tr>
<td>Measure, quantify variables</td>
<td>Explore the existence and signification of the phenomenon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causal relations between measurable variables</td>
<td>Comprehension of the context, consider the subject in his environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test hypothesis</td>
<td>Create hypothesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deductive</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
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*Source: Paul Van Royen et al.*

The differences between the two types of research explained above justify the choice of a quantitative research for the research question chosen.

Indeed, to test hypothesis concerning consumption habits of a large population – in this case a generation, a quantitative survey aiming to reach the maximum of respondent would be the most suitable way to measure tangible and reliable trends.

The inductive approach relies on testify general statement relying on particular, rigorous and systematic experiences. Researcher observe the reality without preconception and are searching to see if everything possible to deduct concepts, hypothesis, theories, laws, etc. The
fact to found the knowledge on experience founded by Francis Bacon and David Hume is called the empiricist approach.

The deductive approach represented by the philosopher René Descartes is founded on the mind, the reason, rather than the sense and experience. From the intuitions (learnt by the knowledge), the researcher will deduct other affirmations which are its consequences. The deduction founded on the reasoning is opposed to the empiricism as source of knowledge.

The hypothetico-deductive approach is wildly used by researchers and is the classical approach in modern science. It is composed of the following steps:

1. The researcher establishes the farewell research question
2. He formulates deductions or inductions according to empirical knowledge he possesses on the subject
3. He adopts or builds a theory, formulates one or several research hypotheses (provisional answer to the research question)
4. He proceeds to empirical tests to verify or overturn the hypotheses
5. If the hypotheses are verified, the researcher can stop his research at this point, and has to communicate the results.
   If they are overturned, the researcher can take into account the new facts and abandon his farewell theory, to proceed to new deductions or inductions, and so on to discover the truth; that is to say the theory and hypothesis which corresponds to facts

According to the nature of the topic and the structure of the population chosen, the approach which was the most suitable for this research seemed to be the deductive approach, in ad equation with the quantitative research.
B. Research question and hypothesis

Nostalgic brands are well-known in the mind of consumers as if they have always been part of their life, which can be explained by an obvious sustainability, and also allow them to remain because of their historical existence as leaders on their respective markets. Above the re-know they are benefitting, they have the advantage to rely on the emotional register sometimes unconscious and inner motivation of the individual. Applied in marketing, companies relying on this strategy have to adapt all the part of their Marketing Mix according the positioning they have chosen. The Marketing Mix is a concept developed by Neil H. Borden (1964), corresponding to the different operational areas in which strategies have to be developed. At the origin of the concept, we could count 4 different areas – called the 4Ps, which referred to the Product, the Price, the Place, and the Promotion. Those four variables remain today the « core » of the operational areas, and can be described as the set of controllable, tactical marketing tools that a company uses to produce a desired response from its target market. A study about the 4 variables of the marketing mix would have been complete, but due to the context and the framework of the study, it has been decided to focus on only one of the variable, which is the Product strategy. In this way, the research thesis established is the following:

« Generation Y and Retro Marketing: Which product strategy a nostalgic positioned brand should adopt to target the population aged between 18 and 35 years old? »

The Product strategy refers to the goods and/or services offered by a company to its consumers, and relies on the following tools to contribute to the Marketing Mix: Variety, Quality, Design, Features, Brand Name, Packaging, Services. Based on those tools and on the literature review, four main tendencies have been selected to investigate as the following:

1. Do Millennials have a higher quality perception toward nostalgic products compare to non-nostalgic products?
2. Do Millennials prefer retro products adapted to their need of today?
3. Are Millennials attached to the original recipe of the products considerate as retro?
4. Are Millennials sensitive to the change of design and packaging of nostalgic products?

Those questions focus on the quality of the products, the design and packaging and the features of the products, but also the impact of the brand name on the consumption habits of the consumers born between the early 80s and late 1990s.

At this step of the research, questions have to be transposed into hypothesis, which will have to be confirmed or overturned according to the results and the deduction of the survey:

Hypothesis 1: Millennials have a higher perceived quality toward nostalgic products than other products
Hypothesis 2: Millennials like retro products adapted to their needs and trends of today
Hypothesis 3: Millennials are attached to original recipe of nostalgic products
Hypothesis 4: Millennials are sensitive to the change of design and packaging of a nostalgic product

The hypotheses have been made to evaluate separately each factor, but those are intrinsically linked. The attachment to the authenticity of a nostalgic brand and the search of novelty and reinvention are the themes explored during this research.
C. Methodology and associated methods

As quantitative research has been chosen in order to reach and gather a maximum of respondents and release a general trend the most possible reliable, the way of dispensing has also been chosen in ad equation with the aim to obtain in the easiest way returns from interviewed people. The online questionnaire as been used for this survey, which is also totally adapted to the public concerned, since members of the Generation Y have the common feature to be really at ease with new technologies and all which is around the sphere of internet.

Matthews and Ross (2010) described questionnaire as a logically structured set of questions aiming to collect data in way that allow answers to be turned into numerical data.

In order to avoid drop out, questions have been reduced to the number of 22, with 3 extra questions to set the profile of the respondent – age, gender, occupation.

Several types of questions have been used in this questionnaire:

**Qualitative questions with a single answer**

This kind of questions have usually been used for Yes/No questions about the experience of the respondents – example: “Do you know this brand?”, or when the aim of the question is to choose between two different categories of products; the answer is straight to the point with a specific information.

**Qualitative questions with multiple answers**

Qualitative questions with multiple answers allow a richness of collect of data for the interrogating person, and also a wider liberty for the respondents who can illustrate its thinking through several options, and is not forced to choose between one option or another. It has been used for example when asking the opinion about brands “Do you think that those brands are: Familial, Safe, Old-fashioned, etc.”. Several answers can be attributed to this kind of question, and the option “Other” is almost always mentioning in case the respondent doesn’t find the exact formulation of his thoughts in the options proposed in the primary questionnaire.

**Qualitative questions in table with the same reply options**
This kind of question allow a quick enter of the answers, with the same scale of answers the respondent finds easily his landmarks. It has been used to ask the “degree” of consumption of products, the answer can really be tempered and precise about distinct subjects.

**Textual questions**

Textual questions have been used twice in this questionnaire, to ask the respondent his Top of minds brands for nostalgic brands and brands in the market of chocolate powder. This allow the respondent to draw inside its own thoughts, to formulate its own answers without being influencing by the proposition of the interrogating person.

**Images**

Images have been used on several questions, in order to illustrate exactly the statement of the questions, and also because it brings a ludic and enjoyable aspect to questionnaire, for the respondent which took from his time to answer it.

Images would be quite relevant in this specific case, when speaking about retro designed products and packaging evolution for example.

The questionnaire has been designed in such a way that it starts with a very general overview of the subject, with questions about nostalgic brands, to little by little be more and more focused on some aspects of the product strategy, and then to the specific case of the brand Nesquik and its specific strategy on its market as a nostalgic brand.

Questions of the survey can be gathered following the below focuses:

**The General case of Nostalgic brands**

- Question 1 to Question 3: Definition of the profile of the respondent
- Question 4 to Question 8: Nostalgic brands in general and consumption habits
- Question 9 to Question 11: Evolution of the product policy - Retro products focus
- Question 12 to Question 13: Evolution of the product policy – Original features
The specific case of Nesquik as a nostalgic brand

- Question 14 to 17: Brand recognition
- Question 18 to 23: Perception of the brand and consuming habits
- Question 24 to 25: To go further
III. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

A. Results of the research

After the dispense of the questionnaire through social networks and emails, 113 persons completed the questionnaire.

1. Profile of the respondent

In order to establish the profile of the respondents and to guarantee the diversity of the respondent it was important to have a visibility of the person who took time to answer to the questionnaire. Indeed, a generation is composed of man and women, from different ages and different occupations. That is why it was important to have a sample of respondents as representative of the population studied as possible.

Question 1 & 2 – Age & Gender

46% of the respondent were aged between 18 and 24 years old, whereas 54% were part of the age group between 25 and 35. It has been decided to divide the ages between two groups, which correspond more or less to a decade – from 1980 to 1989 and 1990 to 1999. The age groups were quite homogenous since the two age groups were represented almost as equal. Regarding the gender, we can notice a quite more predominance of women among respondents of the questionnaire, which represent two third of the sample of interrogated.

Question 3 – Occupation
The two main trends of this graph are the students (30%) and the employees (50%), which can be explained by the fact that between 18 and 24 years old, the major part of the Millennials have undertaken graduate education after high school. The other main part which is represented by employees or company’s executive is represented by the person who are working after their graduation or have started to work without starting post-secondary education.

2. Nostalgic brands in general and consumption habits

Question 4 – Could you please quote 3 brands that you consider as a nostalgic brand?

Since the concept of “nostalgic brand” is undoubtedly not precisely well-known by everybody, the definition of the term has been put under the title of the questionnaire in order to help the respondent to clearly identify the subject of the study.

The aim of the question was to identify the Top of Mind notoriety of the brands, which refers to the number of time the brand is quoted or in a largest way like it is in this case, the fact that the brand is spontaneously quoted in this category. Since the question was quite large, without any framework to reduce the possibility of answer like the family of products, answers were quite diversified.

The brand which has been quoted more than the others is the chocolate brand Kinder, which refer to the childhood, sweetness, and innocence. Quite often brands of food industry were quoted, and in particulars sweets, chocolate and biscuits (Kinder, Haribo, BN, Mars, Lu, Prince, Pépito, Malabar), which are products for children that they used to consume when they were younger but probably stopped to consume today because of their evolution of consumption pattern, or because they pay attention to what they are eating more than when they were younger.

In the other fields, the brand Nintendo has been mentioned several time, which is one of the brand totally representative of this generation, but also Levi’s which is a garment brand more intergenerational, like Nivea or Coca Cola.
Question 5 – Do you know the brands below?

This question was aiming to test the brand recognition of some of the most well-known brands which can be considered as nostalgic because of their positioning, product or communication strategy, or because of their sustainability on the market – cf. Appendix

To not lost the respondent in too many brands and too many information which could confuse him/her, the choice of logos has been reduced to the number of 16, to allow him/her to take time to analyze and maybe recognize each of them.

Brands mentioned on the image were brands from the food industry, but also cosmetics or household products.

We can notice that 93% of the respondents know already all or almost all of the brands mentioned on the image, which mean that they pay attention to those brands and are able to recognize them between others.

Question 6 – Do you buy those brands?

Here again, most of the respondents have answered positively to the question, by indicating the fact that those nostalgic brand are part of their daily or occasionally habits of consumption. This trend means that nostalgic brands are quite consumed by Millennials.
Question 7 – Do you agree that:

![Brands perception chart]

For this question, respondents had multiple choice of answers, they were free to tick several options. The first trend shows that nostalgic brands are quite rooted in consumption habits of the Millennials, 92% of them are quite loyal to the brands and continue to buy it because “that’s what they have always done”.

Half of the population have a high quality perception of those brands, since they considerer that “They have the best recipe, ingredients, composition”, which leans that in their point of view those brands propose better features than their competitors.

Then, almost a third of the interrogated sample considerer that since they are well-known it means that they are the most trustworthy and sure, they do not take risk and it is a “safe bet”.

Question 8 – Would you describe those brands as:

![Brands description chart]
Most of the respondents describe the brand as being “familiar”, in link with the adoption of the habit of consumption, of being confronting to the brand regularly, but also with the familial aspect and intimacy.

More than a third of the interrogated persons (41) agreed to describe the brand as being “authentic”, 39 think that they are “reassuring” and 32 that they are “safe”. Those adjectives are attributed because of the sustainability and continuity of the brand of the brand on the market, which is a kind of landmark since even if the time is running out, those brands remain the same and endorse the stability.

16 persons have chosen to tick the adjective “old” to describe the brand, which is in direct link with the duration, and their creation which happened many years ago. We can suppose that if few of respondents have chosen to assign this adjective to the brands, it is maybe because it is associated in their mind with a negative connotation, close to the “old-fashioned” one (3).

3. Evolution of the product policy - Retro products focus

Question 9 – Are you more willing to buy products from the first or the second category of products?

This question was along with an image showing two different kinds of products:

- The first category was showing the authentic product version as it was in the memory of the consumer, at its launch
- The second one was presenting the “same” product but with modern features adapted to the current consumption society

Only products with specific technological features were mentioned in this question. The aim of the question here was to test if for this category of products, Millennials are more likely to buy products which are authentic and intact like in their memories, or if they are more attracted by the retro products adapted with a modern design and features, which could break up with the authenticity of the original product.
In the end, three respondents out of four were more inclined to buy technological products adapted to their environment of today. Which would be very specific for this category of products, since usually the investment in term of cost is more important and they are not looking for the same post-purchase feeling, those products are more rooted in the durability than food products which are consumed on the moment.

**Question 10 – Would you more willing to pay more for products from the first or the second category?**

The value perceived when comparing those two different categories products is a quite complicated variable to analyze, since the authentic products have all the value in link with the history of the products, whereas the value of the modern products relies more on the technological features. When dealing with technologies, Millennials are quite experts and estimate that a retro-product adapted to the needs of today have a higher value and deserve to pay a higher price than the authentic products.

**Question 11 – Would you agree to buy one of those products because:**

The question 11 was a question with a scale of answers: Totally agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, totally disagree.
The aim of the question was to evaluate the value-added perceived of the products, and which elements would generate the act of purchase. Regarding the answers, the trend shows that the major part of the respondents agrees to qualify the products with a beautiful design, modern and technological, with quality raw materials, and globally made with a specific know-how. Products shown on the picture benefit from a positive perception, based on aesthetic and functional features, but also psychological attributes—history, specific know-how (based on the image).

4. Evolution of the product policy – Original features

**Question 12 – Would you beabler to buy products from the first or the second category?**

After the focus on technological products, evolution and modernization of food products design and packaging were displayed to respondents. At the opposite of technological products, products from food industry were largely preferred with their external authentic features.

**Question 13 – Would you say that you stand for keeping the “original recipe” (composition) of nostalgic products?**

### Original recipe

- **Yes, because it is original recipe, the one we have always known, which makes us like the product**: 75 votes
- **No, brands have to adapt the products to the trends and keeping renewing itself**: 8 votes
- **No pro or con, it depends on the changes**: 2 votes
- **You tolerate modifications if the taste doesn't change that much**: 27 votes
- **Other: the authentic version because it is made with less chemicals**: 1 vote
Question 13 was testing the attachment of Millennials to original recipes for nostalgic products. As for the design and packaging, this graph shows that 66% of the respondents are in favor of keeping the original recipe because this is one of the main reason they are consuming the product. A few percentage is tolerant to small modifications if the taste does not change. For those two questions, the major trend shows that respondents are quite attached to the original and authentic version of nostalgic products, which can be explained by the particular relation they have with.

5. The specific case of Nesquik as a nostalgic brand

After having measure main trends of consumption toward nostalgic products, the choice has been made to focus on a specific brand to deduce recommendations afterward for a brand considered as nostalgic by the population studied, if this brand would decide to target Millennials by relying on a nostalgic positioning. The brand Nesquik has been chosen since it is well-known by almost 100% of the population aged between 18 and 35, world widely, and it was very popular during the childhood period of this generation, even if it has been created and consumed a long time before their birth.

Brand recognition

Question 14 – Could you please name 3 brands of chocolate powder?
The first question was a Top of Mind question; to evaluate the first brands which respondents would think about when asking about “Chocolate powder brand”. The Top of Mind brand the most quoted by the Millennials is Nesquik (103), following by Poulain (77), Banania (64), and then Benco, Ovolmatine and some private labels. Brands quoted are the leaders on the market of chocolate powder, and the three main answers are brands which can be considerate as nostalgic. We are just noticing that Nesquik has been quoted by 91% of the sample interrogated.

Question 15 – Do you know the brand below? / Question 16 – Have you ever consume products of this brand of chocolate powder?
100% of the respondents have answered positively to the Question 15 of recognition of the brand Nesquik by only showing the logo of the brand, which means that the brand benefits from an excellent brand awareness.

83% of the population interrogated have already consumed the products, which is quite significant in terms of notoriety, and its predominance in its market.

**Question 17 – Do you know the mascot below?**

In 1990, the mascot Groquik has been replaced by the slender mascot Quicky, in a concern of brand image. Indeed, the former mascot was quite in overweight and would be support the theory that Nesquik makes you gain weight in a time when childhood obesity was a big concern. Which means that Millennials have almost only known or remember Quiky the rabbit as mascot of the brand. 90% of the research sample have identified and recognized Nesquik’s mascot of the 90s.

**Perception of the brand and consumption pattern**

**Question 18 – According to you, “Quicky” is:**

To test the perception and attachment to the mascot, only two options were given to respondents, in order to evaluate if they would defend the original design and endorsement Quicky, or if they had an opinion more negative of the cartoon character.
9 respondents out of 10 were in favor of keeping Quicky as the emblematic and symbolic figure of the brand. In this case, the positive judgment and affection outweigh the age of the mascot.

**Question 19 – Would you say that the products from the brand Nesquik have a particular, different, unique taste compare to its competitors?**

**Question 20 – Could you substitute easily products of the brand Nesquik by a product from a competitive brand? (Example: Banania, Poulain, Private label, etc.).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distinctive taste</th>
<th>Substitution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes 38%</td>
<td>Yes 43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No 62%</td>
<td>No 57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of distinction between the brand and its competitors, 62% of the respondents judge that Nesquik products have a particular taste which is unique compare to its competitors or substitutes products, which means that Nesquik can rely its differentiation on the taste and recipe of its products. Nevertheless, 57% would be able to replace the product by one of its competitors or substitutes products if necessary. 43% of respondents which would not tolerate to consume another product than Nesquik’s is also quite significant in terms of brand loyalty in a positive way.

**Question 21 – If you have answered “Yes” to question 16, do you still consume Nesquik products?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumption evolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No 78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even if 90% of the research sample respondents have answered yes to Question 16, 78% of the same persons no longer consume Nesquik products today.
Which could be one of the problematic to look into for the brand, and to try to highlight why consumers are not loyal anymore to the brand.

**Question 22 – If no, why?**

Several leads have been proposed to explain the evolution of consumption of the Millennials toward the brand Nesquik, and also the “Other” option to let them the opportunity to give their own perception about the question. The reasons which stand out were first of all the change of eating pattern; indeed, when people are growing they are changing their consumption habits for some products, for example abandon chocolate powder in favor of tea or coffee which are more consumed by adults – even if only 6% of the respondents are considering Nesquik products as products for kids. The second reason which represented almost 20% is the low consumption of lactose, which can be explained by the evolution of the society and the trend according to consuming too much lactose would not be so much beneficial for health and the increase of lactose intolerance. To recall the context, Nesquik products are consuming during breakfast and complementary with milk like cereals or chocolate powder.

**Question 23 – Would you re-consume products from the Nesquik brand?**
90% of people interrogated would be willing to consume Nesquik products today, even if 61% of them would prefer to have a product adapted to their consumption pattern of today. This tendency shows that Millennials are quite attached to Nesquik taste and recipe even if the most of them do not consume it anymore, they would be open to the possibility of re-consume those products.

*To go further …*

**Question 24 – Which products below do you consume regularly?**

![Buying patterns chart](image)

In order to evaluate the buying patterns of the Millennials composing the research sample, several products have been mentioned in the category of snacks or breakfast products which could be part or enlarge the range of Nesquik products.

**Question 25 – Do you know the product below?**
The last question deals with the picture of a product which Nesquik stopped to commercialize at the end of the 90s.

The aim of the question was to evaluate the awareness toward this product; it seems that 2/3 of respondents remember of this product, whereas 36% of them do not know or do not remember of it.

B. Deduction application and validation of hypotheses

The questionnaire dispensed and analysis extracted from it afterward will validate or disprove the hypothesis formulated at the beginning of this research in the framework of a deductive approach.

_Hypothesis 1: Millennials have a higher perceived quality toward nostalgic products than other products_

It has been demonstrated that Millennials are consuming quite often nostalgic brands, most of them due to habit that they seem to keep since a long time («You have always consumed those brands, due to habit »), but also because of the very good quality perception they have of those brands (« This is the best recipe, composition, formula », « This is the most well-known brand so the most trust worthy »). If we should settle on a general trend, it would support the fact that Millennials have a positive perception of nostalgic brands; indeed, they agree on the attribution of « sure », « comforting », « authentic » or « familiar » to describe nostalgic brands, which show the attachment and the particular relation to this brand which seems to be beyond the simple consumption. We are in this case much more in the emotional consumption context, in link with the intimacy sphere, which has a bigger impact on the
consumer than products from other brands can have.

Even when showing some images of the products, they perceived it as produced with «particular raw materials» and made with a «singular and unique know-how». Those elements confirm the theory based on the fact that Millennials have a higher quality perceived toward nostalgic products than other products. They have a perceived value which is incomparable.

Hypothesis 2: Millennials like retro products adapted to their needs and trends of today

To formulate a coherent interpretation of this hypothesis, it is important to distinguish the different families of products; a family product gathers products which are aiming to have the similar use. Millennials pay attention to the adaptation and evolution of the products, but not in the same dimension for technological products than for food products for example. This differentiation can be explained because of the level of investment, in terms in money; indeed, they will not invest the same amount of money in technological products than in food products, because they do not have the same use, they are expecting to keep it a certain amount of time after the purchase act, it would be a long lasting product. At the opposite, the food product is a unique consumption product, which means that the aim is to answer the need on a moment, a short-lived feeling – eat it, drink it, so it will not be considerate on the same level.

Technological products have to evolve with the evolution of the technologies and the needs of the society, which is an area which is continuously moving and make things appear obsolete and outdated really fast. If a brand wants to launch a technological products based on a retro-strategy, it has to be quite adapted to the current situation since it represents an important investment and expectations. We can however notice, if we rely on on the image of the Question 9 of the questionnaire (Appendix 2), that retro-products have kept some of the really singular characteristics of the original products, which is important to keep in mind. The product has to keep a certain association with the original product, which appealed in the first place.

Regarding food products, we are more talking about recipe than functions, and some brands are trying to adapt their recipe according to the evolution of the consumption patterns – for example Nutella which was trying to reduce the palm oil but finally certified it to keep its original recipe and taste, but this question will be analyzed in deeper details in the following
part. We can settle on the fact that Millennials like products adapted to their needs and the trends of today according to the family of products taking into consideration.

**Hypothesis 3: Millennials are attached to original recipe of nostalgic products**

The original recipe of a product is something which can evolve through the time, because of the evolution of the price or ingredients of raw materials, a bad buzz around the composition of a product, or because of the flavor which is no longer adapted to the taste of the consumers. In the case of nostalgic products, the recipe and the taste is a quite significant feature which is really important for Millennials, especially for food products. Indeed, the original recipe is “*The one they have always known, and the recipe which has made them like the brand*”, which represent a particular attachment for them. They tolerate small modifications if they are required and justified, and if it does not change too much the original taste of the products they know. Furthermore, when talking about the brand perception, one of the main criteria to explain the act of purchase is the fact that they considerate that nostalgic products have “*The best recipe and ingredients composition*”.

**Hypothesis 4: Millennials are sensitive to the change of design and packaging of a nostalgic product**

The design of a product and its packaging and all which is the matter of visual and aesthetics on the product is one of the hobbyhorse for nostalgic brands in the product strategy. Even if they are trying to evolve and modernize their packaging, they have to always keep in mind the expectations of the consumers which have know a certain version of a product for a long time and is rooted as sustainable in their mind. Nostalgic products are described as familiar and sure products, which are providing stability in the consumption process and also in the brand perception of Millennials. That is why they are quite sensitive to any change of products design and packaging which would cut too much with the original version they have known. The mascot of a brand is also one of the key elements of recognition of a brand and is important when talking about the brand identity, as much as the colors, the logo, etc.

Companies which are operating a nostalgic positioning and are trying to target Millennials should take those factors into consideration; they benefit from a better perceived
quality than their competitors on the same market, features of products have to be adapted to
the current trends according to the family of products considered, and the core components
(recipe and design) as well as the packaging component (package, brand name, trademark) are
important elements on which they have to be really careful because it can totally serve them if
well managed or at the opposite have a negative impact on the brand equity if marketers do
not take into consideration the attachment of the consumers to the foundations of the brand.
IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. The specific case of Nesquik as a nostalgic brand

The brand Nesquik is a brand of chocolate powder created in the United States in 1948, it is part of the brand portfolio of the multinational company Nestlé – first food industrial company in the world. The original name of the brand was “Quik” and became “Nesquik” at its launch in the European market in the 1950s. The main ingredients of the products are sugar and cocoa, which gives to it a sweet and yummy taste especially popular among kids. Over the years the brand has expanded its range of products with cereals, cereals bar, yogurts, cocoa spread, chocolate sauce, etc. Some of the products have been kept and others have been abandoned in order to refocus on the chocolate powder market on which the brand is the leader in France. Beyond the development of different products, the brand has also quite evolved since its creation, in terms of visual and mascot; indeed, the brand has switched its former mascot in favor of a rabbit who looked more “healthy” and dynamic, but the brand has always kept the main characteristics of the product and the brand visual which allow to recognize Nesquik products on the shelves of supermarkets among any other products. The yellow rectangular box with the big blue “Nesquik” font, with the rabbit mascot showing the brown appealing drink and inside the sweet chocolate recipe.

Evolution of the Nesquik chocolate powder packaging

![Evolution of the Nesquik chocolate powder packaging](https://www.nesquikstudios.fr/, Pinterest)

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5 **Source:** Nesquik official website - https://www.nesquikstudios.fr/
Today, Nesquik benefits from a strong brand awareness, they are trying to diversify their recipe by proposing a version with less sugar or with more cereals to seduce the parents, the brand aims to boost Nesquik sales via sugar cuts which remains a curb to the consumption.

62% of the French household are buying chocolate powder, and they are showing a significant attachment to their favorite brand.

Back in the 1990s, the brand has marked the breakfast of kids, with singular commercial spots in the form of cartoon not without recalling the Looney Tunes cartoons with the “bad guys” who are stealing the Nesquik box to the “good guys” who are trying to get it back with the help of the mascot Quicky.

*Extract from a Nesquik commercial spot (1993)*

Nesquik has been chosen as case of research application for nostalgic brands since it has been at its climax in the 1990s, at the period of the childhood of Millennials who were direct targets of their communication campaign – at the difference of today where Nesquik is more trying to address parents.

It has been assumed the hypothesis whereby the brand Nesquik would try to recover its consumers from the Generation Y.

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6 *Source : YouTube* - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P39XwLFW-pk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P39XwLFW-pk)
B. Strategic recommendations

1. Brand awareness and recall effect

According to the qualitative research conducted, the brand Nesquik benefits from an exceptional brand awareness since 100% of the research sample has answered positively to the brand recognition based on the logo of the brand. This excellent figure has to be tempered by the Top of Mind results which have shown that Nesquik is part of 92% of the brands quoted when asking for the chocolate powder brands, which is a very good ratio but shows that consumers need to be recalled of the existence of the brand. Indeed, at the difference of before, Nesquik does not provide a strong communication campaign since the awareness communication is no longer required. If the brand aims to re-seduce its Millennials consumers, it should maybe communicate more intensely in a recall purpose.

After the dispensing of the survey, some respondents have sent some return or photos about Nesquik products that they decided to re-consume because thinking and talking about the brand and their particular attachment to it have remind them of the goods memories from the past time when they used to consume those products (Appendix 3).

2. Retro-product proposition

Another significant figure is that almost half of the interrogated persons would show their loyalty to the brand in the situation were they would have to substitute the brand to another, even for those who do not consume the brand anymore. This goes together with the taste which is qualified as “unique compare to its competitors”, and also with the emotional attachment toward the brand since the major part of interrogated persons have shown their willingness to re-consume Nesquik products.

Because of the evolution of the consumption pattern based on the stop or reduction of the chocolate powder consumption in favor of the tea or coffee during breakfast, and the diminution of lactose consumption; if Nestlé would target consumers from Generation Y today, one of the option would be to re-launch a retro product which would be more adapted to the new habits of consumption of Millennials.
Some of the results of the survey have shown that they would tend to re-consume Nesquik products “under a different form of product” than chocolate powder which is a complementary product to consume with milk, so one of the question was evaluating which product would be in ad equation with the consumption habits of Millenials and the range of products provided by Nesquik. Among several products, the answer “chocolate bars” has been the one which has been quoted the most of times, and which would raise the opportunity for Nesquik to re-launch a retro-product.

Indeed, the last question of the questionnaire was aiming to evaluate the product recognition of a chocolate bar which was marketed in the 1990s, but which Nesquik stopped the distribution at the beginning of the new century. One of the strategic proposition for Nesquik would be to re-launch this product by relying on retro core and packaging components. This presupposes that the product design would take all the characteristics of the product from the 1990s, which means the “pre-cutting” in smaller bars and the pattern of Quicky directly printed on the bars.

*Design proposition for the launch of the Nesquik Retro Chocolate Bar*

But also all the codes of the chocolate bar from this time, covered by aluminum foil and surrounded by a vintage printed sheet taking back all the codes of the brand – the yellow color, the blue logo, the particular font, and of course the design of the mascot of this time
should be reused. All those elements are inseparable and are part of the brand image and corporate identity.

If referring to the product version of this time, this did not have that much a vintage appearance, but the product strategy would be to make it look like a truly vintage product from a bygone era, to really highlight the nostalgic connotation of the product and awake the emotional attachment to the brand.

**Packaging proposition for the launch of a retro-product**

![Nestle Nesquik Packaging](image)

*Source: The author (2017)*

This would would not represent important research and development costs since they have already produced it in the past, and it would be recommended to recreate the exact same flavor than before, in line with the particular tastes of Nesquik products. The mention “Original recipe” should also appear on the packaging as a proof of authentic recipe. The question has been raised to mention the date of creation of the brand, like many other brands - of chocolate in particular – but this would cause the modification of logo which is displayed on the other Nesquik products, in order to adapt the strategy to the whole range.

The brand Swiss company Nestlé has established its predominance on the chocolate market, which is also in link with the Swiss chocolate industries well-known around the world for their expertise in this field, this would be in ad equation with the re-launch of a chocolate bar. Even if it is obvious for consumers that Nesquik is part of Nestlé’s portfolio – because of the evident brand name composition, it is not that popular that Nestlé is a Swiss company. It
would sound wise to precise somewhere on the packaging the “Made in Switzerland” mention if the product is genuinely produced in Switzerland. The unique and authentic know-how is one of the key element of a nostalgic product, and is also one of the characteristic which Millennials associate the most with this category of products.

Even if Nestlé may have the image of a huge multinational group with a large scale production which can contrast with the idea of the authentic little manufacturer with a particular know-how of making products, Nesquik benefits from a unique recipe as Coca Cola which is unbeatable on its market and represents a competitive advantage on which the company should rely.

When launching a new product on the chocolate bar market on which Nestlé is already well implemented, it is important to take into account the cannibalism possibility between the products of a same brand.

We can quote among Nestlé’s brand portfolio the following brands:
- Galak – which is exclusively positioned on the white chocolate segment
- Crunch – which is mostly targeting teenagers because of a puffed rice recipe
- Nestlé Grand Chocolat – dark chocolate or sophisticated taste
- Nestlé Dessert – which is positioned on the bakery chocolate segment
- Nestlé Les Recettes de l’Atelier – which aspires to be gourmand, targeting adults with dried fruits

The Nesquik Retro Chocolate Bar would not cannibalize one of the brand already implemented on the market since it would not target the same consumers, do not have a similar recipe or even the same positioning.

This retro-product would fit the expectations of consumers which have previously known the Nesquik chocolate bar and would re-find a taste of a product they have lost, and also stimulate former Nesquik consumers which have never heard about this product in particular when it was on the market at this time, but are willing to rediscover the sensation of pleasure of eating a Nesquik product today.
3. Observation and parallel with another Nostalgic brand – Benchmark of the brand Poulain

On the segment of the chocolate powder, Nesquik remains the number one in France, closely followed by two French brands which are Banania and Poulain. The Poulain brand of chocolate can be considerate as a direct competitor for Nestlé since it is present in the chocolate powder market, but also on the chocolate bar market. The brand was created in 1848 and finds its origin in a French small chocolate factory founded in the French province.

The Poulain chocolate powder is created in 1904, 44 years before the creation of the Nesquik brand and almost 50 years before its launch on the French market, which means that Poualin benefited at this time of the advantage of the “First-mover advantage” on the chocolate powder market.

The logo of the brand is today composed of a foal (“Poulain” in French), overhanging the brand name. The third part of the logo is mentioning the year of creation of the brand, which illustrates the establishment and rooting of the brand in the time and duration. The orange yellowish sunset in the background, the foal and the specific red font are the characteristics of the authentic Poulain products that everybody knows since decades. The packaging of products of the brand Poulain have been designed with nostalgic codes, like very sober and simple visuals, with a vintage font, colors like orange, brown and yellow and less information as possible, in total opposition with a modern packaging. Those choices endorse the nostalgic positioning desired by the brand in total ad equation with the brand identity.

7 Source: YouTube - “Poulain, Le Goût du Bonheur” -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PV8dDfDY9q4
Poulain has chosen an intergenerational nostalgic brand positioning, which can be felt on its product strategy as seen below, but also in its communication strategy.

The brand has launched at the beginning of September 2017 a new commercial spot based on the idea of good moments shared between generation of parents and children while eating or drinking some chocolate. The slogan chosen for this new communication campaign is the following: “Poulain, the taste of happiness”.

Those elements also induce to the fact that the recipe of the products of the brand Poulain remains the same since its creation, the same that parents were eating when they discovered the brand and the same that they are transmitting to their children today.

Poulain is adopting an effective strategy today to target at the same time older and younger generations looking for authentic and quality products, for a taste that they knew from the time they were younger.

Even if the hypothesis assumed in this case is a nostalgic positioning aiming to target the Generation Y, Nesquik can learn from its competitor on the original and sober packaging with the visual codes of the brand identity, as well as the authentic recipe the keep unchanged.

Regarding the brand awareness, Poulain benefits from a lower renown than Nesquik, but remains one of the Top of Mind brands on the chocolate powder market. Which means that in terms of communication, Poulain uses its commercial spots to illustrate its positioning but also mainly as a reminder of the existence of the brand since the awareness is not to developed anymore.

When dealing with the objectives of the communication, we can count three different dimensions which correspond to reactions expected from the receiver:

- At the cognitive level (to inform): this is the level of the knowledge. The aim of the communication in this case if the awareness, attention, notoriety, and the information of the target about a brand, a product or an idea.

- At the affective level (to make appreciate): this is the level of the appreciation. The communication has an influence on the attitudes. It aims to raise interest, desire and preference of individuals.
At the behavioral level (to make act): this is the level of the action. The aim is to lead to an action led by the act of purchase or adoption of a new consuming behavior.

If Nesquik is launching a retro-product targeting Millennials, it should communicate on several strategic points:

**Awareness**
Nesquik should not communicate on the brand awareness, but should focus on the development of awareness on the re-launch of the retro-product, to inform that a new product will be launched on the markets.

**Positioning & targeting**
The communication strategy should describe precisely the positioning wished by the brand. If the brand wants to rely on a nostalgic positioning, the communication strategy should express the sustainability of the brand, and directly address to the target which is the Millennial Generation. It should show significant characteristics of the period when they used to consume Nesquik products, like if they were sent back at this time in order to tickle the affective level and desire of the consumer. The aim is to create a miss that they can remedy by consuming the product. Then of course, the right communication channel has to be chosen.

**Recall communication**
As mentioned before, the notoriety is not longer required to develop, nevertheless, for brands which are sustained and enhanced for many years, it is important to remind the consumers of the existence of the brand. As if they are part of the landscape and overshadowed by new brands popping over and over, a wake-up call can have a direct influence on the consumer which will realize the time spent since the moment he has consumed the brand for the last time.

The behavioral reaction and especially the act of purchase if of course supposed to ensue those communication moves.
Conclusion

Throughout this research, the following hypothesis have been formulated in the aim to be validated or rejected:

*Hypothesis 1: Millennials have a higher perceived quality toward nostalgic products than other products*

*Hypothesis 2: Millennials like retro products adapted to their needs and trends of today*

*Hypothesis 3: Millennials are attached to original recipe of nostalgic products*

*Hypothesis 4: Millennials are sensitive to the change of design and packaging of a nostalgic product*

Those hypotheses have been validated one by one, by using the deductive approach through an online questionnaire aiming to gather quantitative information about consumption patterns and perception toward nostalgic brands.

The positive correlation between the nostalgic perception and the preference for the brand has been demonstrated, which is a profitable competitive advantage on competitive markets. Indeed, the loyalty is one of the resulting consequence of this attachment, which the brand should not neglect or take for granted in order to sustain it. The evolution and modification of the product components have been highlighted during this research, in order to perceive the reluctant of the consumers to the change when dealing with nostalgic products. The results were the particular attachment to the core components and packaging of the nostalgic products, which companies should always try to preserve and communicate on, the authenticity and genuine know-how existing from a long time ago and does not have changed since the time they used to or began to consume the product. Every dimensions of the brand identity have to be considerate, from the colors, to the logo, and even the mascot, which raises a particular attachment, assimilated as a hero from this time. Product adaptation have been tolerated and even required when dealing with technological products, since this sector has quite evolving in the time and in particular at the same time than the growth of the Millennials, who are totally assisted and surrounded by the modern technologies. Nevertheless, some retro characteristics have to be kept in order to not loose the true essence of the nostalgic product.
The operation of re-launch an old product, but also to propose it during a limited period of time are operations that are quite functioning with Millennials, because of the omnipresent fear to miss something. That is why for example Capsules and limited editions are more and more developed, in the fashion industry for example, it encourages the impulsive purchase, and offers also the possibility to possess something which not everybody will; we are back here at the concept of uniqueness as benefit from the act of purchase.

Nowadays, supermarkets and e-commerce platforms offer thousands of products on which the competitions practiced is though. The nostalgic positioning remains one of the most stable and sure positioning for a brand wishing to differentiate itself from its competitor by combining psychological attributes and emotional attachment, especially dealing with consumers from the Generation Y, which has been shown to be quite loyal toward brands they are considering according to them as being nostalgic.

Several limitations of this research conducted in the framework of a Master Thesis can be pointed out.
First of all, the size of the studied research samples; indeed, 113 respondents took some of their time to answer to the questionnaire. Even if obvious trends have been observed during the findings and analysis parts (93% of respondents agreed on the same answer), the reliability of the responses can be brought into doubt because of the ratio sample/studied population.
Secondly, the study aims to only deal with one of the four axis of the marketing mix which is the product strategy. A further examination of the other strategic policies in marketing which are the price policy, the distribution and communication would have formulated broader and well-rounded recommendations.
Finally, the issue has been raised several time during this research, but retro-marketing and nostalgic positioning are quite large concepts, which have to be adapted to the particular business segment you are dealing with. The fashion industry for example, this area has not been quoted because of the particularity of the codes of nostalgia applied in this sector. This specificity leads to the fact that since the food industry has been quite in the heart of the topic, it has limited the analysis about the third component composing the product which is the support services component.
REFERENCES


Fore, C. (2013), « Next generation leadership : Millennials as leaders », *Capella University, Dissertations Publishing*, 2013


APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: Evolution of the logo of the Instagram application

Source: Lee, M. (2016), The Evolution of Instagram’s logo

APPENDIX 2: The Product Component Model
APPENDIX 3: Online Questionnaire – Qualitative survey

Question 1 – Age
- 18 – 24 years’ old
- 25 – 35 years’ old

Question 2 – Gender
- Male
- Female

Question 3 – Occupation
- Student
- Employee
- Executive
- Self-employed
- Unemployed
- Other: …

Question 4 – Could you please quote 3 brands that you consider as a nostalgic brand?

Question 5 – Do you know the brands below?
- Yes
- No

**Question 6 – Do you buy those brands?**
- Yes, often
- Yes, rarely
- Never

**Question 7 – Do you agree with:**
- They are the most well-known brands, so they are the most trustworthy
- They have the best recipe, ingredients, composition
- You have always consumed those brands, due to habit
- Other: …
Question 8 – Would you describe those brands as:
- Familiar
- Reassuring
- Safe
- Authentic
- Old
- Old-fashioned
- Other: …

Question 9 – Are you more willing to buy products from the first or the second category of products?

Category 1

Category 2

Source: Author (2017)

- Category 1
- Category 2

Question 10 – Would you more willing to pay more for products from the first or the second category?
- The first category because products are rare, authentic, vintage
The second category since the products are totally adapted to technological needs of today and are aesthetically more beautiful

**Question 11 – Would you agree to buy one of those products because:**

**Answers:** Totally agree, Agree, No opinion, Disagree, totally disagree

- This product has a beautiful design
- It is a modern and technological product
- It is produced with quality raw materials
- It is a product with a significant history, unique and made with a specific know-how

**Question 12 – Would you be abler to buy products from the first or the second category?**

Source: Author (2017)

- Category 1 – “Authentic version”
- Category 2 – “Modern version”
- Other: …

**Question 13 – Would you say that you stand for keeping the “original recipe” (composition) of nostalgic products?”**
Yes, because it is the original recipe, the one we have always known, which makes us like the product
- You tolerate modifications if the taste doesn’t change that much
- No, brands have to adapt the products to the trends and keeping renewing itself
- No pro or con, it depends on the changes
- Other: …

Question 14 – Could you please name 3 brands of chocolate powder?

Question 15 – Do you know the brand below?

![Nestle Nesquik](https://www.nesquikstudios.fr/)

Source: Nesquik official website - [https://www.nesquikstudios.fr/](https://www.nesquikstudios.fr/)

- Yes
- No

Question 16 – Have you ever consume this brand of chocolate powder?

- Yes
- No

Question 17 – Do you know the mascot below?
Question 18 – According to you, “Quicky” is:

- An emblematic and symbolic figure of the brand Nesquik
- A bit old-fashioned, maybe replace it

Question 19 – Would you say that the products from the brand Nesquik have a particular, different, unique taste compare to its competitors?

- Yes
- No

Question 20 – Could you substitute easily products of the brand Nesquik by a product from a competitive brand? (Example: Banania, Poulain, Private label, etc.).

- Yes
Question 21 – If you have answered “Yes” to question 16, do you still consume Nesquik products?
- Yes
- No

Question 22 – If no, why?
- I have changed my eating pattern (tea or coffee)
- These products are for kids
- You do not consume – or few - lactose products
- You do not like the taste (ex: too much sugar)
- Other: …

Question 23 – Would you re-consume products from the Nesquik brand?
- Yes!
- Yes, but another product than chocolate powder
- No

Question 24 – Which products below do you consume regularly?
- Biscuits
- Cereal bar
- Cocoa spread
- Chocolate sauce
- Milk
- Cereals
- Chocolate powder
- Chocolate bar

Question 25 – Do you know the product below?
Source: Dailymotion – Publicité Nesquik Nestlé 1995

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xijkpu

- Yes
- No

Thank you very much for your participation!
APPENDIX 4: Returns from interrogated persons after the survey

Source: Mégane, 24 years’ old

Source: Claire, 29 years’ old