

# THE EFFICACY OF USING PROMOTIONAL MODELS TO MARKET ALCOHOL PRODUCTS IN THE UNITED STATES

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## Abstract

*In this paper, we offer a brief history of alcohol consumption, beginning with a literature review tracing its use in pre-modern domains to its use in modern domains and ultimately, the institution of alcohol as a market commodity. We pay special attention to the marketing tactics employed in the alcohol industry, particularly the use of promotional models to market alcohol products. We synthesize aspects of self-reflexive anthropology and a cost-benefit economic analysis to highlight concerns brought about by the practice of promotional modeling.*

## Keywords

- anthropology, economics, gender, labor, marketing

## Introduction

Alcohol marketing and distribution are macro-level economic activities worthy of detailed study. In addition to promoting brand awareness through a variety of traditional practices such as television, radio, and print advertising campaigns, some larger entities in the alcohol industry subcontract third party agencies to fulfill their marketing needs. These agencies often hire promotional specialists - often referred to as brand ambassadors or promotional models - to execute marketing programs. Models are generally young and attractive, and their main objective is to encourage consumer demand for the wine, beer and spirit brands that belong to the supplier's portfolio. This is achieved through dissemination of brand information and increasing brand awareness via product sampling and point of sale materials such as branded hats, t-shirts, glassware, keychains, and the like. In addition, promotional models discursively construct value for various brands by embodying whichever specific attributes are associated with each. The field of promotional modeling is of notable academic interest, as it encompasses a range of issues concerning economic efficacy, gender, and performativity. In this extended abstract, we aim to socially and historically situate alcohol marketing practices and the use of promotional models. We begin by discussing the history of alcohol consumption in pre-industrial contexts juxtaposed with alcohol production, distribution, marketing, and consumption in modern, industrialized contexts. We use an interdisciplinary approach to explore the major economic motives of the alcohol industry and the anthropological and ethical concerns of related practices, paying special attention to promotional models.

## History and Impact of Alcohol Consumption

In premodern times, fermented alcoholic beverages could be found in societies around the world - with the exception of Australia, Oceania and North America (WHO, 2014). Fermented alcohol played an important role in social, ritual and religious practices in many of these societies (McGovern, 2009.) Archaeological evidence from Neolithic China demonstrates that a fermented beverage composed of rice, fruit and honey had "considerable social, religious, and medical significance" (McGovern et al, 2004). In Andean cultures of South America, Chicha, or maize beer, was shared ritually and functioned as an essential part of social life. The Inca engineered complex systems of reciprocity centered around the consumption and distribution of chicha. Distributing chicha to laborers worked to legitimize political power and allowed the Inca to maintain important alliances (Duke, 2010).

In places where fermented alcoholic beverages were consumed in traditional contexts, production was generally small scale. It commonly occurred at the household level, and was often contingent on the availability of an agricultural surplus. In these contexts, the use of fermented alcohol was “an occasional and communal activity, associated with particular communal festivals” (Gumede, 1995 in WHO, 2014). The rise of European colonialism, modernization and industrialization brought with it significant changes in the ways in which alcohol was used traditionally. These new modes of production, distribution and consumption, eclipsed traditional modes already in place. New varieties of alcoholic beverages were introduced and produced in mass quantities. Alcoholic beverages became increasingly readily available, and new drinking practices and establishments replaced old ones (Jernigan, 2000). Other manifestations of modern industrialization, such as improved transportation, transformed alcohol into a market commodity. It could now easily be consumed at any time. The increased quantity of alcoholic beverages and the ease with which they could be obtained “often proved disastrous for indigenous economies and public health” (Colson & Scudder, 1998 in WHO, 2014). In places where alcohol was not previously consumed in any context - such as Australia, Oceania and North America - the effects were particularly disastrous. By the nineteenth century, alcohol was considered “a major impediment to industrial livelihoods, which demand a sober and attentive workforce” (WHO, 2014). Before long, industrialized societies around the world began to view alcohol as a sizable social and public health issue (Aaron & Musto, 1981 in WHO, 2014).

Responsible, moderate consumption of alcohol can be a source of enjoyment, but consumer overindulgence and binge drinking can be tied to many unfavorable social and health-related outcomes (Fogarty, 2008). According to the World Health Organization, irresponsible consumption of alcohol is implicated in “a large disease, social and economic burden in societies” (2014). It ranks among the top five risk factors for disease, disability and death worldwide. The World Health Organization cites more than 200 diseases and conditions as being closely linked to the unhealthy use of alcohol. These diseases include alcohol dependence, liver cirrhosis, and various cancers and injuries. Research also suggests a link between unhealthy alcohol consumption and the prevalence of highly infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. In 2012, roughly 3.3 million deaths - 5.9% of total global deaths - were linked to alcohol consumption. According to the Federal Trade Commission’s report “Self-Regulation in the Alcohol Industry”, alcohol is “tightly woven into the fabric of American society” (2014). Alcoholism and underage drinking are persistent societal issues in the United States, and they engender concerns about the extent to which alcohol advertisements and marketing programs unintentionally target those under the LDA (legal drinking age.)

Because of these concerns, self-regulation in the alcohol industry is extremely common. Self-regulation does not replace state or federal legislation. Rather, it is meant to buttress statutory law. It functions as a working code of ethics to be followed by suppliers, distributors, marketing agencies, and retailers. Alcohol marketing enters highly sensitive territory. A hierarchy of organizations within the alcohol industry are meant to offer layers of protection for consumers. The United States’ legislative framework for the production, distribution and retail sale of wine, beer, and distilled spirits is commonly known as the three-tier distribution system, instated after Prohibition (Southern Wine & Spirits, 2014.) Tier one consists of suppliers or producers, tier two of distributors, and tier three of retailers. The system is structured in such a way that suppliers can only sell products to distributors, who in turn can sell to retailers. Retailers are broken into two categories: On-premise retailers (also referred to as accounts) consist of bars, restaurants, and nightclubs, which sell products for immediate consumption. Off-premise accounts consist of grocery, liquor and convenience stores, which sell products for later consumption. In most cases, suppliers build contracts with distributors to prevent conflicts of interests - such as two distributors competing against one another to sell the same product (Federal Trade Commission, 2014).

A great deal of money and effort is involved in alcohol marketing. The Federal Trade Commission breaks down marketing activities and places them into distinct categories. Categories include traditional media (television, radio, print), expenditures to help others promote alcohol, transit and outdoor advertising, online and digital advertising, and sponsorships. An additional category accounts for miscellaneous activities such as product placements, telemarketing, spring break promotions, cinema advertising, and direct mail advertising (2014).

According to data collected by the Federal Trade Commission in 2011, the majority of supplier expenditures went towards television advertising (22.54%) and point of sale advertising (28.57%). Point of sale advertising falls under the umbrella of expenditures to help others promote alcohol and includes. The point of sale subcategory

“reflects expenditures for branded materials used by retailers engaged in either on-premise or off-premise sales, including temporary or permanent signage, display racks, neon signs, furniture, lighting, mirrors, and glassware, as well as the net cost (deducting payments by consumers) of distributing items such as t-shirts, hats, can openers, printed recipes, key chains, and coupons” (2014).

Of the total 28.57% spent on point of sale advertising, 4.86% of expenditures went towards “retail value added” promotions - promotions where a consumer receives a complimentary gift, such as glassware, after purchasing a particular alcohol product. A mere 4.61 percent of total supplier expenditures were dedicated to additional promotional allowances. Suppliers may provide distributors and marketing agencies with lump-sums in advance, or they may reimburse distributors and marketing agencies for using their own funds. Promotional activity is a broad category and includes setting up in-store displays and signage, producing coupons, and facilitating the execution of various local marketing programs (2014).

### The Role of the Promotional Model

The majority of following data comes from personal experience working in the field as a promotional model in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Although marketing agencies are not explicitly built into the three-tier system, their activities closely correspond with those of distributors in the second tier. Under the supervision of the supplier, marketing agencies and distributors work together to engineer on and off-premise promotional campaigns to be executed by promotional models. Representatives from the distributor use promotional models as leverage to encourage retailers to purchase cases of wine, beers, and most commonly, spirits. If a bar manager agrees to buy eight cases of vodka from his sales representative, the representative can in turn promise to send in promotional models to help educate consumers, increase brand awareness, and move the recently-purchased product.

Generally, on-premise promotions are structured as follows: Promotional models (usually two or three) enter an account wearing branded uniforms that more or less correspond with whatever image the brand means to convey. For example, if market research indicates that a particular ultra-premium brand of vodka is widely consumed at golf tournaments, then the uniform for that brand may consist of golf-related attire. For a promotional model, looking “professional” means voluminous hair, false eyelashes, and lipstick. Particulars about makeup and uniform may change from brand to brand. Models present the bar manager with a road check from the marketing agency in order to purchase, depending on check amount, one or more bottles of alcohol, which they will use to pour samples for consumers. To help with sales, many bar managers agree to run drink specials for the brand being promoted. Models circulate the account asking consumers if they would like to try a sample. They recite key talking points about the brand, pass out point of sale items, and encourage consumers to take advantage of drink specials. Models are expected to be bubbly and flirtatious in order to create excitement about the brand. With the exception of LGBT accounts, promotional models booked to work on-premise are generally female.

Sampling activity is highly regulated - for example, the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) states that a single sample of straight distilled spirit must be no more than a quarter of an ounce, and a single sample of wine or beer must be no more than one ounce. Consumers are allowed only one sample of distilled spirits per promotional event, one sample of beer per promotional event, and three sample of up to three different wine varietals per promotional event (2013). Once the bottle has been purchased, models are required to dump any remaining product before leaving the account. In order to uphold sampling regulation, ABC will send “secret shoppers” to various accounts running promotions to ensure that models are adhering to sampling policies.

Off-premise events, known commonly as “in-store demos” are instituted to drive bottle sales rather than individual drink sales. Models are instructed to look “daytime appropriate” and generally wear business-casual uniforms consisting of slacks and branded polos or blouses. Both male and female models are used in this context. Demos are most commonly executed at grocery and liquor stores. They are primarily “dry”, meaning that the promotional model may not sample any alcohol to consumers. The model uses brand knowledge, point of sale items, and instant rebate coupons to encourage sales. Demos may only use a “wet” sampling mechanic when an off-premise account has a Type 86 license - ABC’s Instructional Tasting License. When issued, this license allows alcoholic beverages available for purchase to be tasted by consumers. Sampling off-premise is also highly regulated. Tasting stations must have proper signage stating that only those over the legal drinking age are allowed to enter.

Sample sizes for off-premise promotions are the same as those for on-premise events (California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, 2013).

Although the ultimate goal of both on and off-premise promotions is to create brand awareness and move product, on-premise promotions also function as a mechanism to maintain positive relationships between the three tiers - suppliers, distributors, and retailers. Promotional models play a crucial role in facilitating this social relationship, which can be understood as a form of market-based or “closed” reciprocity. According to anthropologist David Graeber (2001), market-based exchange of gifts tend to be highly competitive and self-serving (p. 219-20). When a retailer purchases cases of alcohol from its distributor, the distributor responds with a form of closed reciprocity - that is, providing the retailer with promotional models who will not only purchase a bottle back, but also immaterially construct value for the brand while encouraging drink sales. It is, in a sense, providing the retailer with labor for which it does not directly pay. In this context, gift exchange furthers the ambitions of all parties involved.

Promotional models also act as amateur market researchers. At all on and off-premise events, models are required to take photos which demonstrate consumer interaction with the brand. Photos may consist of consumers holding drinks, wearing branded apparel, or posing with the models themselves. These photos work to capture demographic information about consumers. Models are also required to fill out event recaps. Recaps ask for information about the efficacy of the promotional event, number of drinks sold, and how consumers reacted to the promotion. Recaps also ask for demographic information - such as ratio of men to women, age range breakdown, and ethnicity breakdown.

#### Promotional Modeling and The Anthropology of Respect

I began working as a promotional model in college - at roughly the same time I began my undergraduate cultural anthropology coursework. I have worked for several distinct marketing agencies over the course of roughly four years. I have thus positioned myself as a promotional model-anthropologist, an “observing participant” conducting independent research various aspects of the promotional modeling field. What follows is a brief look at some of that research. Although there are male promotional models, I choose to focus on females, as females dominate the field. My methodology is composed of primarily informal interviews and participant observation. All names have been changed to protect subjects’ privacy.

One of the first pieces of instruction that a female neophyte promotional model receives is that she must act as “the face” of whichever brand she happens to be promoting. She is told that, when in uniform, she must be cheerful, friendly, and sweet- regardless of what is happening in her immediate environment or in her life outside of work. Any missteps will cause the brand she represents to be viewed in a negative light or will create an unfavorable association in the minds of consumers. She must look the part - her hair must be styled, her makeup done, and her high heels on. Using sex appeal to sell products is not a new strategy, and it is arguably more important that a promotional model be conventionally attractive than able to speak knowledgeably about the brands she represents.

Consumer reactions to our presence varies. At best, we incite mild amusement. At worst, condescending remarks, derision and unwanted sexual advances. The work that we do is innately obtrusive. We are instructed to approach all consumers, paying special attention to consumers in target markets - on average these consist of either 21-24 year old males or 25-35 year old males - without discretion. Our deliberate lack of subtlety - mingled with short skirts, high heels and cleavage-bearing tops - is often interpreted as an invitation for comments regarding our intelligence (or perceived lack thereof), sexually explicit declarations, or unwelcomed groping.

Consumers routinely assume that we must be working as promotional models because of an individualized, intrinsic lack of intelligence or skill. This is not necessarily the case. The vast majority of young women whom with I have worked are pursuing college degrees. Rebecca, 23, is working on her nursing degree, which she will receive next year. She works as a promotional model to help with the burgeoning cost of rent in San Francisco. Some are in graduate school. Erin, 25, is working on a masters degree in architecture and design. In order to pay for school, she works for a catering company and as a promotional model. Others have full-time jobs - Nadeen, 31, is a lawyer. She uses the money she makes at alcohol promotions as what she calls “mad money”: money for vacations, makeup, and other nonessential goods and services. These women and others like them are by no means one dimensional. I frequently encounter consumers who believe that being a promotional model and being educated or professional are mutually exclusive realms. Several months ago, I worked a promotion for a popular brand of rum at a bar in the East

San Francisco Bay Area. My coworker Haley and I approached a couple, preparing to offer them samples. The woman looked puzzled and asked if we were cocktail waitresses. Her partner smirked and sarcastically declared: "I thought you were astrophysicists."

Other consumers find our presence morally abhorrent. In her ethnography *Illicit Flirtations: Labor, Migration, and Sex Trafficking in Tokyo*, sociologist Rhacel Salazar Parrenas (2011) defines sex work as "encompassing a wide array of sexual provisions that include flirtation, stripping, escort service, and prostitution" (p. 5). Because we engage in a kind of low level sex work in order to sell alcohol, it is often assumed that we must be sexually promiscuous in our lives outside of work. Parrenas analyzes the logic that sequesters commercial sex work to the realm of the immoral. She refers to "rigid moral boundaries between market and intimate domains" that stigmatize sex work (as cited in Zelizer, 2000). According to Parrenas, "The intersection of love and money, of intimate social relations and economic transaction, is said to result in moral contamination because intimacy and the private are shaped by sentiment and solidarity while economics and the public are motivated by calculation and efficiency" (p. 9). Parrenas asserts that this perspective "assumes that love and money are mutually exclusive" (p. 9).

Parrenas stresses that acknowledging sex work as morally transgressive disproportionately limits sex work performed by men and women. She argues that "the dismissal of sex work as immoral perpetuates and maintains a gender hierarchy that places men over women. A gendered sex hierarchy defines our sexual activities with stigma limiting the tolerable sexual activities of women more so than those of men." (as cited in Nussbaum, 1998). This double standard arises from the idea that there is something essentially depraved and dangerous about women. They will remain a threat unless kept in control by men (as cited in Nussbaum, 1998). Essentialist thinking about gender and gender roles can lead to the oppression and marginalization of women.

Promotional models perform gender. It is not something we innately have, but rather something we actively, consistently do. To claim that a model's behavior while "in uniform" represents an implicit part of her nature or an unchanging biological truth disregards the cultural context that dictates her performance. According to feminist philosopher Judith Butler (1988), "gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time - an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts" (p. 519). A model's performance depends not only on the values a particular brand of alcohol wishes to communicate to consumers, but on a number of other factors that may have driven her to take the job in the first place. I have written elsewhere on the topics of gender and gender essentialism as they relate to promotional modeling:

"Our identities are not simply something we're born with. As promotional models, we embody many aspects of normative femininity in order to create value for the products we are promoting. The way we walk, talk, and dress is scripted, enacted to create and uphold cultural meaning. Our performances do not necessarily represent sincere intent, nor do they represent essential truths about who we are when we aren't in uniform" (2014).

However, it is not just promotional models who perform gender in these contexts. Imagine for a moment, a consumer (especially a consumer who has had a few drinks) sitting at a bar. He sees a pretty woman in makeup and high heels approaching him, smiling. She's holding a tray of alcohol. The consumer sees her action as a signal to begin his own performance of normative masculinity - complete with objectifying stares, crude remarks, overstepping physical boundaries that the model cannot effectively set. This is not an effort to condone or excuse misogyny or gender hierarchy, nor is it an effort to vilify all men. It is not an effort to employ blame-the-victim rationalizations for promotional models who are subject to abuses. It is an attempt to understand a practice in the context of the structure that gives rise to it.

The alcohol industry employs free-market capitalist logic, and capitalism is the engine that drives social inequality. At all levels of the three-tier system, there is a vested interest in convincing consumers that they need to drink more alcohol so that more profit can be accrued. The commodification of alcohol has created a flood of social problems. In addition to aggravating issues such as underage drinking, alcoholism and diseases related to overconsumption, it has worked to legitimize the ideological fallacy that women should be subservient to men, and that men have a right to objectify women. We should not demonize all men who are disrespectful to women, just as we should not blame promotional models for choosing to work a job that is self-deprecating. Instead of blaming individuals or groups, we should question the structures that perpetuate these social ills. Gendered inequality is built



into capitalist systems, and gender is a commodity to be exploited for profit. The system leaves little room for respect.

As wealth in the United States becomes increasingly asymmetrical, young women are lured into working high wage jobs that may ultimately demean them. “Many bright, capable young women find themselves facing diminishing employment options. These young women may feel forced to accept job opportunities which do not fully recognize the breadth of their abilities.” (Snitselaar, 2014). While there are male promotional models, it is far less common. Male models are used primarily for in-store off premise demos or for promotions in lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgendered bars (the latter may be more of a San Francisco Bay Area.) The demand for male promotional models is slight, as the majority of target markets are men. Using men to market alcohol would be missing the mark set by the supplier. In this way, market conditions inform our understanding of gender and gender roles.

Marketing agencies do not always offer their models solid protection in potentially dangerous situations. Managers tell models that they can leave promotions if they feel unsafe, but leaving is often contingent upon reaching an event manager and letting him or her know beforehand. Harassment is unfortunately common. Aside from numerous tales of harassment committed by consumers - for example, a model named Katie recently confessed that a man followed her to her car after a promotion one evening and drunkenly attempted to grope her before a bystander rushed to her aid - there are also scenarios in which the staff of retail accounts harass models. There is an on-premise account in the South San Francisco Bay Area, which I will refer to as Account Z, that has been particularly problematic for a particular marketing agency’s models. Several models have complained about the manager at Account Z. He has repeatedly made inappropriate comments about models’ ethnicities and bodies. He told one model that her hair was “too nappy.” He told another that she could stand to lose some weight, just before propositioning her for sex. Models have also complained that this manager has asked them to change into their uniforms in his office, where there are visible cameras. Despite repeated offenses and numerous grievances, no action whatsoever has been taken to address these episodes and others like them. At a recent promotional model training, one model, Tanya, asked why she was still seeing Account Z on the schedule. One of the marketing managers looked uncomfortable. “We don’t want to see you guys jumping into the fire and getting burned...but we do like to give accounts second chances.” Sadly, Account Z has used its “second chance” several times over.

### The Economics of Respect

In order for any economic activity to happen, the benefits of said activity have to be greater than the costs. This is true both on the supply and the demand side of the equation: the price of a service has to be high enough that it surpasses the costs of the suppliers, but low enough that it is below the conveyed benefits from the buyers.

In case of the promotional modeling industry, the total cost for the modeling agency has to be lower than their revenues -- this provides a cost pressure on various aspects of the activities, for our interest, on the wages of the models.

On the demand side: the perceived benefits of using promotional agents has to be greater than the cost of the service. Benefits can include:

- increased direct sales
- increased brand awareness, leading to increased expected future sales
- increased collaboration between suppliers, distributors and retailers (three-tier system)
- market data collected by the models while in the field (taking photos with consumers, photos of product displays, completing event reports that ask for statistical information) leading to more detailed market analysis and understanding the structure of demand

These two forces determine the price-band of the promotional modeling services: the lower bound comes from the costs of the modeling agency, the upper bound comes from the (perceived) benefits to the clients.

### Target market

In the San Francisco Bay Area spirit market the following submarkets are identified by marketers:

- “Ultra-Premium” brands of whiskey/scotch/certain vodkas: target market is generally affluent white males between ages of 25-36
- “Ultra-Premium” “urban” brands of certain vodkas/tequilas: target market is generally affluent African American/Latino males between ages of 25-36
- More affordable brands are most commonly marketed towards 21-24 year-old males of varying backgrounds

This seems to be in line with data on price- and income-elasticities of the products.

The demand for alcoholic beverages is a widely researched field (Gallet, 2007; Fogarty, 2008), sadly resulting in a wide variety of income and price elasticity estimates. There are certain trends, however, that are important to note.

- Most studies find all alcoholic beverages to be price-inelastic normal goods, meaning that when prices rise, their consumption declines -- but only to a lesser extent
- The income elasticities of beer and wine generally fall in the 0.6-1 range (0.8-1 for wine), indicating that they are more like necessities than luxury goods
- Most income elasticity estimates for spirits are above 1, suggesting that spirits, as opposed to beer and wine, are actually luxury goods.
- The price-elasticity of alcohol in general has been increasing since the 1950s. This means that consumers are becoming more and more price sensitive, suggesting greater substitutability for alcohols. Some suggest the rise of soft drugs might be responsible for this trend.
- The time-trend in income-elasticity suggests that alcohol in general is becoming more and more like a necessity, and less like a luxury.

Elasticity is an economic measure used to analyze the responsiveness of one value to the change of another. Price elasticity shows the % change in demand of a good when its price changes by 1%, while income elasticity shows the % change in demand when the income of the consumers changes by 1%. Price elasticity is usually negative, showing that if the price of a good increases, the quantity demanded of the good decreases as consumers shift their consumption to substitute products. Price elasticities below -1.0 are called “elastic” and indicate relatively large responsiveness in price -- total revenue can be increased by dropping the price to appeal to a wider audience. Price elasticities between 0 and -1 are considered inelastic, meaning that price changes impact quantity sold by a lesser extent. Income elasticities between 0 and 1 indicate that the goods considered are necessities (if the consumers receive less revenue, the drop in consumption is less than that, signifying the importance of the product). Income elasticity above 1 shows that the good is a luxury product; if the income of the consumer goes down, they will drastically lower the consumption of this good.

#### Cost-benefit of being a promotional model

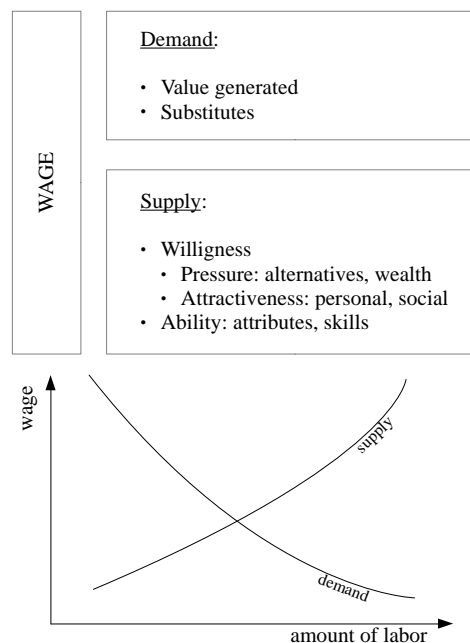
The true price of everything is its opportunity cost: the most beneficial thing or activity that had to be given up to perform the given task. This is the guiding principle when determining the wage of a given job.

As is the case of freely traded goods, the supply and demand of a given kind of job will determine its price. The demand for a job arises from the employers. The employers are concerned about how much value does a given laborer generate, and what alternative ways could the same value or product be generated. As is the case of a standard demand curve, the labor demand curve is frequently negatively sloped: the more expensive labor gets in a given context the more incentive does the employer have to substitute it with something else (different technology using other kinds of labor, machinery, etc). For example, if minimum wage rises, that might reduce the demand for people picking up trash in parks, and increase the demand for engineers designing robots to perform the same task.

The supply of labor to a given job arises from the (potential) employees. The major considerations here is the ability and willingness to perform the given job. The ability to perform the job depends on physical characteristics and skills needed. Being an athlete, for example, usually requires to be in peak physical condition, being a swimsuit model usually assumes perfect body. Engineers, scientists, programmers usually require high level of training, either in an official setting like a university or alternatively on their own (in a manner that enables them to demonstrate said expertise). Just as humans know many things and have many attributes, jobs also have many required skills and characteristics. Being a manager in a production plant, for example, assumes thorough understanding of the processes required to operate the machinery, but also the ability to work in teams, and certain leadership qualities as well. Moreover, many of these skills and characteristics are not binary in nature: the more

skill a surgeon has, the deeper insights a rocket scientist possesses, the higher wages can she command. A notable example is Neil DeGrasse Tyson, who is not just an astrophysicist of great renown, but is an exceptional public speaker, which enabled him to attain jobs as presidential science advisor and TV personality.

The willingness to perform the job is somewhat more complicated an issue. One component of the willingness of taking a job is the necessity an individual feels. Wealth and opportunity cost play an important role in the necessity of a given job. If an individual has higher wealth (past savings, inheritance, etc), there is less of a pressure for accepting any kind of job. Similarly, if the individual has many other job options available, there is less of a willingness to accept a given job. This decrease of willingness is not just a function of the number of available other jobs, but also (and in theory, more importantly) by the wages offered by the alternative jobs. The higher paying job an individual can attain in other fields, the less willing they become to accept a job in a different field. This is the reason why you infrequently see people cleaning toilets or serving food at a restaurant with a degree in accounting: there are many accounting jobs available, and they pay significantly higher than a restaurant job would. The other, equally important part of the willingness to take a job comes from personal preferences impacted by societal pressure. Every job has many characteristics, some of which might be appealing to an individual, some not. Being a tour guide, for example, requires the employees to travel a lot. This might be a very positive to some people, and greatly negative to others. This “appeal” factor will appear as a wage premium requirement for individuals: those who hate to travel will want to earn more for being a tour guide compared to the other jobs they could land (positive wage premium), while those who love to travel would be willing to take the same job for less than alternative jobs (having a negative wage premium). Unpleasant jobs like sanitation, or jobs with harsh/dangerous conditions (night shifts, working at a nuclear power plant) usually have a positive wage premium, while pleasant jobs (being a scuba instructor in Hawai'i) usually have a negative wage premium. It is also important to consider the social aspect of the desirability of the jobs. In the contemporary United States being a merchant is an accepted job, earning no wage premium. In historic China, however, being a merchant was considered a dishonorable profession, earning a negative wage premium.



Lets take a look at the promotional modeling labor market. On the demand side, substitutes constitute other forms of advertising. In this case, however, they serve more like a complementing good: the promotional models can work on the established brand awareness through other avenues to reinforce their impact. The value generated in this setting relies on the models' gender performance: the direct use of sex appeal to sell products.

On the supply side, the ability one needs to be a promotional model is mostly relegated to physical attractiveness as an attribute. The required skills are limited to memorizing a few simple facts about the brands being promoted. The level of skill and attributes required are a close match to that of a waitress. Because of this lack of inherent skill required, most of the supply side limitations happen on the willingness side. In western societies, the use of sex appeal in a person-to-person business context is viewed negatively (as opposed to, for example, the roles Geisha play in historical and contemporary Japan). On the personal level, most promotional models associate a positive wage premium for enduring the treatment they are subject to on a daily basis. On the other hand, the promotional modeling jobs offers great flexibility compared to the job of a waitress.

Based on all of these forces on the supply and demand, we can analyze the workings of the market. The comparable job, in California, pays on average \$10.81 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013). The promotional models start with a ~\$15 premium compared to that. This is a composite of demand for their work, and also of the altered supply because of the attractiveness of the job. Conclusions

The efficacy of promotional modeling hinges on the ability to use sex appeal to sell products. If consumers become complacent to this strategy, its efficacy would be drastically reduced, thus reducing the demand for promotional



models and promotional models' wages. Wages are high because of the risky nature of the trade. Instead of limiting the role of the promotional model in the marketing of alcohol products, or offsetting the blame wholly onto consumers, we should focus on pressuring all three tiers of the distribution system – particularly marketing agencies – to impose measures that will improve the labor conditions of their models. No promotional model should go to work fearing for her personal safety and wellbeing. Although there is an element of disrespect built into the scheme, it does have its benefits. Promotional models are at-will employees, and can therefore set their own hours. The freedom it offers women - women who are going to school, trying to further their careers, or just make some money – is empowering. If all levels of the three-tier system can work together to stand up for women who execute their marketing programs, it can be all the more empowering. Instead of succumbing entirely to the ills of the free market capitalism, the alcohol industry should be offering support and protection. In offering support and protection, the alcohol industry has the power to challenge the gender hierarchy than reinforce it.

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