

**THE PHENOMENON BEHIND THE BITE: ALTERCASTING AS IT APPLIES TO  
APPLE TECHNOLOGY  
A RHETORICAL STUDY**

by

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THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College at Liberty University  
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
For the Degree of Masters of Communication

Major: Media Communication

Under the Supervision of Dr. Stuart Schwartz

Lynchburg, Virginia

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This Project is Dedicated to My Amazing Family-

Wes, Margie, David and Mary Baldwin

Whose love and support have given me the energy and encouragement to follow my goals every  
step of the way.

## Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my thesis chairman, Dr. Stuart Schwartz. He has been amazing to work with, encouraging me along the way, giving me revision after revision and years of knowledge from corporate advertising industry. I have had the privilege to have Dr. Schwartz in undergraduate studies and my graduate studies as well. His humor, dedication to the art of communication and love for the Lord has helped me make this thesis what it is. I would also like to thank my readers, Dr. Cliff Kelly and Professor Todd Smith. I took Dr. Kelly in my undergraduate classes and stayed in contact over the last several years. A man of God dedicated to encouraging and bringing positivity to his students, I cannot thank you enough, Dr. Kelly, for telling me to apply for graduate school, that one rainy day in the Ford dealership- you have helped shape my path in ways I could not repay you. And Professor Smith, who I had heard on the street as the “amazing art teacher who could be found on the fourth floor of DeMoss.” I have only known you for a short time but I thank you so much for your kindness, your insight, your flexibility and your commitment to help me despite your busy schedule. Everyone I have met that has had an interaction with you has nothing but praises.

Lastly, thank you Sara Svendsen. You have become my best friend and sister these past two years in graduate school. You far exceed the title of my roommate. I know that God brought you into my life to be more than my Google that answers all my graduate school questions, but someone that I know I can count on for everything. I am excited for the next chapter of our lives, know that I will always be your lifelong friend.

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper investigates how the brand Apple markets its product so that consumers feel obligated to buy the product. By looking at five main categories of brand loyalty, environmentally friendly practices, being up-to-date with technology, pricing with value and customer service, this paper will rhetorically analyze how successful of a job it does. To get an inside look at what the public thought on the way that Apple fulfilled its altercasting this paper analyzed what people said about Apple versus competing technology brands. By drawing overall conclusions, recording trends and making observations about the way that people had been altercasted this paper will give insight to the reader about how to effectively brand their product, how to implement altercasting to a consumer and to gain understanding on the how Apple has fulfilled altercasting.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

Summary: The introduction will explain what the Communication theory of altercasting is. This chapter will explain the different contexts in which a person could find altercasting. This introduction chapter looks at different experiments that have been tested out for altercasting, and real life examples of people that have used altercasting. It will identify the positive and negative effects of altercasting. This paper specifically looks at how the company Apple uses altercasting, and the very end of this chapter will lead to the brand Apple.

Roles are a major part of life. There are theatrical roles played by actors in movies or on stage in the theater when actors assume a character's persona. Then there are real life roles played by individuals which are expected social behaviors exhibited by people as a part of real life depending on the role assumed. For example, if someone is a doctor and they are at a party and another partygoer experiences an injury the doctor would quickly change from partygoer and assume the role of doctor as they offer assistance. On any given day a person can assume multiple roles.

These roles are supported by social mores as there is a standard for socially acceptable behavior. One example is that culture has a preconceived notion of the role the clergy should have in society. That role is one of compassion, purity, proper behavior and wisdom to name just a few of the characteristics that would be acceptable behavior in such a role. These roles may be stereotypical but they provide cultural norms that are understood by all.

Advertising is one of the fields that has used the concept of roles and adapted it to fit the

agenda of the advertiser. This use of roles is specifically called, altercasting. Altercasting is a strategy for persuading people by forcing them in a role, so that they will be inclined to behave according to that role (Deutschberger; Eugene).

A consumer might be asked if they need a certain product. Will the consumer fall behind if they don't have it? Their life will be inconvenienced without it. The product is worth the price even if other similar products are cheaper. They'll do whatever it takes. But why is that? What has happened to people that they want a product so bad, to the point where it almost seems as essential as food and water? What if it is not their fault, rather it is the advertisers' prompting? While researching advertising, a trend appeared with most products sold. Advertisers are geniuses at putting consumers in a role. They spend billions of dollars in market research. They make the target age feel like they have to fulfill the role they have cast their audience into, and like magic the public buys product so they can fulfill their role. For example, advertisers might say a 35-year-old woman should care about being a good mother. And, coincidentally a good mother has a big enough vehicle to drive her children and their friends around after soccer practice. Therefore she should buy the newest van coming out. She fulfills the role, because it is important to her. She has been led to believe that she will not be a good mother without that particular van. Altercasting has taken place on the woman, and she in fact goes out and buys the latest van. While not many people have heard of the term altercasting, it happens everyday. Although consumers are not always consciously being altercasted, it is a process that can easily rope a buyer in.

Some studies have previously been done on altercasting; this includes the procedure of putting participants in a role, altercasting in advertising and the effects of altercasting in

relationships (Weinstein). Eugene A. Weinstein, William DeVaughn and Mary Glenn Willey studied altercasting by coming up with very plausible situations that might occur, and putting participants in a role where they have to act out their role. The situation called for two same sex college age students, and the participants were told they were roommates. The script that the students were given told them that one of the roommates was speaking poorly about the other, when the roommate walked up. As the third person to whom they were speaking walked away, they were left to resolve the situation (Weinstein). This exercise was to see how participants would act in a role where they were being altered.

This is a powerful study that can apply to nearly everyone, as most people have or will have to work out conflict at some point in their lives. The study analyzes people who have been altercasted in the role of hearing negative things spoken about them. This study is useful to learn because it will help the reader to understand how people typically react when they are in a situation of conflict.

In addition to that study, Sam Keshaw looked at the advertising industry to discover how viewers were impacted. Keshaw looked at A Colt 45 beer commercial where a man and his three friends were watching football and drinking beer. The man stepped outside to tell his girlfriend he loved her, hoping the guys won't hear, as a giant beer can knocked him to the ground for being tender (Keshaw). Keshaw examined how altercasting occurred when the Colt 45 company implied men have to drink beer and be rowdy to fulfill their role, and they can't be sweet and sensitive. This research explains how advertisements impact Americans and shapes and molds a very vulnerable audience. This study points out how easily people can be cast into roles and how

easily people's minds can be altered. This study can help create awareness for when a viewer is being molded, enlightening that person to stop negative altering.

This paper will address other research studies to gain understanding of altercasting. It will look at what altercasting is, a rhetorical analysis of altercasting used in media, the negative and positive side effects of altercasting, and finally how altercasting is used in one of the most current and powerful examples for demonstrations of altercasting, in Apple technology. Apple has proven itself a master of the theory. Through this new research, this will give further understanding to help advertisers know how to properly implement the theory, and it will allow consumers to be aware of the roles they are cast into. This will help consumers to save money, spend wisely, and be aware of their needs versus wants. Altercasting is powerful and happens often. The majority of people have never heard of altercasting, and therefore are not aware of the fact that there trying to fulfill a role. A role that has the ability to take their money, their time, their pride and their resources. This paper will first lay out a foundation of what altercasting is. It will then look at studies that have used altercasting, and finally it will apply altercasting to Apple. This paper will look at roles into which consumers are daily cast; roles that society, media, advertising, their friends and their work say they must fulfill. It will then address how Apple has successfully implemented altercasting by making their consumers feel like they can help them fulfill those roles by purchasing their products. After that, this paper will rhetorically analyze what some of the public feels about Apple's categories of altercasting. It will analyze what the general public feels about the good, the bad and the ugly parts of how Apple carries out altercasting. And finally, this research will conclude with results of how Apple is using altercasting.

### *Understanding Altercasting*

Altercasting was a concept introduced by Eugene A. Weinstein and Paul Deutschberger in 1963 (Allport 3). The two researchers helped define and describe the process of casting people into a particular role. It highlighted the fact that the way in which one person acts towards others has a definite pattern and may constrain what other people do in response. (Deutschberger and Weinstein). Weinstein and Deutschberger defined altercasting as projecting an identity, to be assumed by other(s) with whom one interacts, which is congruent with one's own goals. It is posited as a basic technique of interpersonal control. (Deutschberger and Weinstein 454).

Among the most venerable notions in social psychology is the assumption that human behavior is goal directed. Psychologist, Gordon Allport said it is implicit in Plato and Aristotle, and explicit in the hedonistic calculus of Bentham, in motivational theory, and in psychoanalytic theory (Allport 3).

In altercasting there is the person or group who is designating someone else in a social role. The person, or groups who are being put in a role is fulfilling the response, which is the goal. Deutschberger and Weinstein defined the group responsible for eliciting subjects in the social role as "Ego," and the group with the response and who was put in a social role as "Alter." All of Ego's behavior directed toward Alter was named "lines of action." The response of Alter that Ego intended to elicit was termed "the interpersonal task."

Ego's actions of the basis of identity they create for themselves is self presentation. However, the basis of the identity they create for alter is altercasting- casting Alter into a particular identity or role type (Deutschberger and Weinstein 454). To remain consistent, the rest of this paper will refer to the terms named by Deutschberger and Weinstein.

### *Why altercasting is so powerful*

Mischel, Cantor & Brewer said the social role is a basic unit in people's everyday social cognition. A number of theorists have argued that people naturally think of other people in terms of roles (Brewer, Cantor and Mischel 4). Social roles are one of the most basic units of social cognition, thus the power of altercasting can be used as a powerful device (Mischel, Cantor, and Brewer 40).

One of the key findings on impression management is the number of ways people present themselves to others (Pratkanis). Author, and altercasting theorist, Anthony Pratkanis listed the following tactics for self-presentation: favorable self-descriptions; self-serving attributions; attitude expressions of agreement; biased recall; emotional displays; gestures; modification of physical appearance with clothes, cosmetics, sun-bathing, diets, and exercise; development of social association; conformity to the group; behavioral expressions of helpfulness, aggression, risk taking, etc.; and arranging one's physical environment (Pratkanis). With so many available roles, putting someone in a specific role becomes fairly easy (Pratkanis).

Nikka posited that constructing roles that trap others in a course of action is relatively easy as well. He stated, "For any given issue, a role can be cast that makes the alter more pre-disposed to accept the ego's position. Once accepted, these roles, alter may be trapped into a given position. For example: pro-national health insurance (patient or possible future patient), antinational health insurance (taxpayer), increases in education spending (parent), cut in education spending (taxpayer), overpriced wine (a connoisseur more concerned with quality than price), and Valentine candy (lover who cares)" (Nikka 5). Dan Reveal highlighted this in his article when he said "In popular culture, altercasting is represented by the "Buddy, can you spare a dime?"



stereotype. If I call somebody "Buddy," I'm hoping they will be persuaded to act like a buddy and give me a dime (Reveal 1).

*Altercasting's Use through different Media/ Motivation for Ego*

Altercasting can be direct as in marketing and advertising, or as indirect as non-verbal communication. Ego may use the multiform gestures of approval and disapproval, which serve as signposts for the route he wishes Alter to take (Deutschberger and Weinstein 458). Ego may also use lines of action to gain rewarding effects for themselves. For example, "Now Joe, as a good friend of mine you should lend me five dollars," or toward a third party or object "Stop beating your dog." (Reveal 2). Deutschberger and Weinstein identified seven dimensions into which alter is cast. The list is not exhaustive and does not contain overlap. Both researchers studied this through a series of role playing scenes (Deutschberger and Weinstein 456).

1. Structural Distance: the position of relative authority Ego is directing Alter to play out in the current encounter. The qualification, "in the encounter," is important since there may be a number of positions Alter occupies vis-a-vis Ego. Moreover, as Anselm Strauss asserts in his discussion of status forcing, Ego may attempt to switch Alter from one position to another in mid-encounter.

2. Evaluative Distance: the relative evaluative status of Ego and Alter as presented selves, independent of the structural distance involved. One can be in a subordinate position and still, through skillful playing, cast Alter into a "one down" identity, making it clear that Alter is not as superior, holy or infallible as his position might imply. On the other hand, girls, starting from structural parity, have been known to cast their male alters into near reverential identities. It is to this dimension that ploys and flattery, deference and derogation, are relevant.

3. Emotional Distance: the "primariness" or "secondariness" of alter's relationship with Ego as projected by Ego. To what extent is Alter cast into a role in which he is presumed to be involved with Ego's feelings, needs, and everyday concerns? One's awareness of this dimension tends to be evoked when there is dissonance. Someone is perceived as "coming too close" when he casts another into the undesired role of intimate or confidant, reveals intimate information about himself, seeks it from someone, or simply affirms the strength of emotional ties which are actually unilateral at best.

4. Support vs. Support Seeking: Ego's indications to Alter that Alter is in an identity requiring Ego's help or assistance or, at the other extreme, being required to give aid and comfort to Ego. Self-presentation and altercasting clearly merge on this dimension. Casting one's self in a vulnerable role tends to automatically place alter in the nurturant reciprocal. The simple affirmation that one is in difficulty acts as a demand upon alter without the necessity of a specific request for assistance from him. (Sometimes the request is vehemently denied by Ego.) The reverse, while not as apparent, also holds. Witness the discomfort we feel when approached by another who "comes on" full of unrequested assistance, conveying, by implication, a picture of ourselves as incapable of dealing with the business at hand.

5. Interdependence vs. Autonomy: the extent to which Ego projects alter as being tied to him by bonds of common fate, perspective, or concurrence of interests.

6. Degree of Freedom Allowed alter: the range of behavior Ego allows Alter within the encounter. Strictly speaking, this dimension does not characterize alter's role but the altercasting process itself. Of course, all lines of action are ultimately directed at narrowing alter's choice of responses so as to increase the probability of eliciting the task response.

However, the strength of the constraints placed on alter to assume the projected role as well as the techniques used for constraining it can vary a great deal.

*Procedure of putting participants in a role*

Eugene A. Weinstein, William DeVaughn, Mary Glenn Wiley tested altercasting in their 1964 study of putting people in social roles. The researchers created a plausible situation that might occur, and tested to see how the participants would act, and if altercasting would arise in the social situation (Weinstein, DeVaughn and Wiley 210). The researchers took 20 male and 20 female students enrolled in a summer sociology class at an urban university. Same sex pairs were grouped together. The sample was then further subdivided, on the basis of sociometric data collected in the classes, into pairs who were well acquainted with each other, (5 pairs) with the rest not knowing each other.

Weinstein describes the scenario; “Subjects were told to act out, as if it were everyday life, the social situation that would be described, being told that there was no right or wrong way to deal with the situation. Subjects were told Miss X, you and Miss Y are sorority sisters and roommates (fraternity brothers if the pair was male). You, Miss X are down in the chapter room talking to another of the sisters. You are talking about your roommate, Miss Y, and in particular, about her atrocious taste in clothes and how embarrassing it is to you. Your conversation is over and the other girl leaves. You turn around to leave and who do you see standing close by but Miss Y. It's obvious from the expression on her face that she has overheard what was being said. All right, now take it from there. With only two exceptions, subjects took the situations seriously and stayed “in role.” Sessions took place in the office of the senior author and the interactions were tape recorded (with the tape recorder in the presence of the subjects). After finishing the

scene, subjects were told to forget everything that happened, and the roles were reversed” (Weinstein, DeV Vaughn and Wiley 210).

### *Results from Role Playing*

There were no systematic differences between the way friends and strangers role-played friends and dealt with the situation at hand. However, there were significant differences in how males and females played the roles, and how altercasting took form. Predominately revolving around emotional distance and autonomy, males differed from females (Weinstein, DeV Vaughn, Wiley 210).

For example, the males were much more likely than females to protest their independence of taste and to suggest that each go their own way. The matter of blame was rarely negotiable in the male sessions, the “talker” being universally at fault, while it was “up for grabs” in many of the female sessions. The “poor dresser” occasionally even apologized for having offended the standards of her roommate or the group.

There was also a greater tendency for girls to emphasize the emotional ties between them: “I wouldn’t have said anything if I didn’t really like you.” The evaluative distance correlation indicates that the talker tends to be projected as inferior either by himself or the person talked about. In numerous cases the one talked about was referred to in such a way as to put him in a “one down” position in the situation. Talkers were dealt with less warmth (projection of emotional distance) and the one talked about tended to use heavier constraints in his altercasting (Weinstein, DeV Vaughn, Wiley 210).

The highest form of altercasting that was displayed in the scenes was support vs. support seeking. This form was used most when resolving the issue, and one of the conclusions that can

be drawn from it is how people cope with interpersonal stress. The talker's help was sought in overcoming the other's deficiency. The subjects would ask questions like "Why don't you come along the next time I go shopping for clothes?" (2). The usual pattern was for the talker to accept the projection offered; occasionally he would even initiate the offer himself, implying that the Alter was in need of assistance from them. This pattern was used in almost every case by the girls and frequently by the boys as well to terminate the episode.

### *Lost Letter Effect*

Altercasting messages are important to study, especially because they are so prevalent in society. (Miller et al., 1977; Weinstein & Dutschberger, 1963). Pratkanis wrote that "casting others in various social roles provides a powerful theoretical mechanism for understanding behavior (Pratkanis 2000)." Monique Mitchell and et al looked at the technique of gaining compliance through altercasting. Mitchell designed a study for inducing compliance, where subjects faced the pressure to comply with the request to behave in a manner that is consistent with the role into which she or he was cast. The technique they chose "projected the individual into a particular role that was consistent with one's goals (e.g., "A good colleague would..."). Mitchell et. al said, "The target faces pressure to comply with the request to behave in a manner that is consistent with the role into which she or he had been cast."

Marwell and Schmitt explained that altercasting messages can either be framed negatively or positively. Negative altercasting puts the target into a potentially undesirable role; in the example of the lost letter technique, receivers must perform the behavior to avoid acting in a manner that is consistent with the negative role. Marwell and Schmidt said, "A negative altercasting messages may take the form: "only a person with bad qualities would not comply."

On the other hand, positive altercasting projects the target into a potentially affirming role, such as making it clear that “a person with ‘good’ qualities would comply.”

### *Procedure*

The Lost Letter Technique was a field experiment conducted by Milgram. Experimenters placed 2,400 ostensibly lost letters under the windshield wipers of different parked cars in Austin, Texas. The researchers tried to ensure uniformity by making the following requirements, letters were dropped: on weekdays, during daylight hours; out of visual sight of any other letter; not on rainy days, and only on those vehicles parked on a public street- No letters were placed on cars parked in private driveways, parking lots, or shopping malls. One out of three different messages were put on the back of a business card. One had positive altercasting, one had negative altercasting, and one had a direct message. The ‘lost letter’ also had a business card under their windshield wiper, that on the back read for the positive altercasting, “I found this next to your car. A good person would mail it (that is, if it’s not yours).” On the cars with the negative altercasting it read, “I found this next to your car. Only a bad person wouldn’t mail it (that is, if it is not yours). The direct message stated, “I found this next to your car. Mail it (that is, if its not yours).” The front of the business card was from someone with either the profession of a medical doctor or a mover. Underneath the business card was a stamped letter with an envelope addressed to either the Children’s Hospital, representing the pro social group or the Communist Party for the counterstitudinal group.

The return address had the name Pat Karnak. Inside the envelope was an identical single sheet of paper with a message of 90 words informing the recipient “Walter” that the plans for a speaker had changed and that Pat (the sender) would be back in time for previously planned

meeting. On the back of each letter a numerical code was included by the researchers to help with tabulation of return rates (to understand when the letter was returned vs. when it was left on the windshield).

One potential concern about the method was the question, why would someone take the time to write a note on the business card instead of simply mailing the letter themselves? The premise of the technique is that the note-writer found the letter by someone's vehicle and has assumed it belongs to the vehicle's driver. The note explicitly encouraged the person to mail it "if it's not yours." The scenario was pilot tested, and participants indicated that the scenario seemed plausible. It was concluded that pairing notes with the lost letter technique was an appropriate method for testing the lost letter technique.

### *Discussion*

Mitchell said, "It should be noted that the effect sizes in the present study were small, and hence, the results should be interpreted with caution. (Mitchell et al)." The researchers concluded this study did not demonstrate the effectiveness of altercasting compared to a direct request as a compliance-gaining tactic. However, there were still lessons to be drawn about the altercasting that was studied. To start, Positive altercasting messages were not more effective than direct requests, and both kinds of requests resulted in the same number of letters returned, regardless of whether the letter was pro- or counterattitudinal (addressed to the Children's hospital or the communist party). Both direct requests and positive altercasting messages were more effective than negative requests.

### *Altercasting in advertising*

People are influenced by media. Dan Reveal shares this view by saying it's simple to lock your door at night with a simple turn of your wrist and it doesn't seem like a big deal. But, this nightly ritual also implies that the person is aware of crime statistics that involve deeper sociological issues such as poverty, drug abuse and so forth. Reveal wrote, "In general, I find that sociology is not just something written on the dusty and cobweb-ridden pages of a college textbook" (Reveal 2). Because there is a link between the premises of social science and the everyday conversational tidbits of popular culture, I am constantly bombarded by sociological references, regardless of whether they imply positive or negative human circumstances." Reveal asserts that the link between social science and popular culture is strong, although it often goes unrecognized.

Altercasting is used not just in relationships but in advertising as well. A possible reason is that the advertising field is worth about \$49 billion (Advertising). Altercasting theorist, Osome studied the altercasting theory in Colt 45's "The Strong Beer for Real Men" commercial campaign. The commercial aired on November 28, 2008. In the commercial, four guys are sitting around a television, cheering loudly for their favorite football team while all of them except for one are drinking the beer Colt 45. The guy that isn't drinking the beer gets a call from his girlfriend, and purposefully steps outside to say "Hi honey, I miss you too." Colt 45 then crashes him to the ground with the voiceover saying, "Men should act like men; strong beer should truly be strong, Colt 45- The strong beer for real men." Kestaw points out that this commercial has been very strategic in addressing and persuading their target consumers, men specifically, to patronize their product Colt 45 (Osome 1). This commercial uses mandated altercasting, putting men in the social role of acting like a "real man."



People often accept the social roles that are offered to them. One of the major conclusions drawn by social psychologists is that placing people in social roles is relatively easy. For example, experiments such as Milgram's obedience to authority, the counter attitudinal role play of dissonance research, the Stanford mock prison and the Tajfel's minimal groups all exemplify (Horner 2). This is also one of the major lessons Allen Funt, the producer of television's "Candid Camera" learned (Horner 2). The situations created by "Candid Camera" capture our imagination: People readily get into roles and then engage in behavior that they probably should not and would not otherwise (Kestaw).

#### *Negative effects of Altercasting*

In the case of Colt 45 commercials, there is gender insensitivity and it promotes stereotypes of what a real man should and should not do. The sex stereotyping sends negative messages that men can't be sweet and soft, and especially not around their guy friends. It sends the message that its necessary for men to portray strong traits all the time, and only then can they be labeled as real men. To add to that, there is the derogatory portrayal that women are shown as the only ones who are weak, and is they are a nag to men and only prevent them from their manliness. Osome explains how continuous exposure to commercials like these would cause the audience to view men as more superior over women and how in time these manded altercasting ads can take away women's dignity.

In addition, altercasting has been seen in another negative light in the case of Bernie Madoff. Madoff was the chairman of the major stock exchange, Nasdaq (Crewsell; Thomas). Impressing many people, he created an idolized air of importance about himself which led many individuals and foundations to invest billions of dollars under his management. He ended up

choreographed a \$50 billion Ponzi scheme leaving many people stripped of their wealth (Creswell; Thomas). As many people were blindsided by Madoff's scandal, one must ask what he did so that so many people would want to invest with him. Madoff epitomized altercasting as he not only created an image for himself, but as he cast others into a role.

Madoff used altercasting to successfully embezzle billions of dollars for quite a long time before he was caught. Through perfecting the art of image management, and through creating a role for his investors, he exploited altercasting in the most criminal and detestable ways (Lewis). Madoff created his image and then finessed the art of what Erving Goffman's seminal work described as becoming a "disciplined performer." Someone who remembers his part and does not commit unmeant gestures or faux pas in performing it. He is someone with discretion; he does not give the show away by involuntarily disclosing its secrets. Goffman said that he is someone with 'presence of mind' who can cover up on the spur of the moment for inappropriate behavior...And if a disruption of the performance cannot be avoided or concealed, the disciplined performer will be prepared to offer a plausible reason for discounting the disruptive event, a joking manner to remove its importance, or analogy and self-ambasement to reinstate those held responsible for it. The disciplined performer is also someone with 'self-control.' He can suppress his emotional response to his private problems. (Lewis and Goffman 5). Madoff's friends and coworkers have been interviewed hundreds of times, with many of their responses showing how important Madoff was in their minds and what an image he created for himself.

For example, Michael Bienes who knew Madoff for more than two decades and who passed money directly off to Madoff talked about the aura he carried in an interview with a television reporter.

“But when I really got to know him, he had a whole floor at One Wall Street, and a trading room, and it was all beautiful and set up nice. And he had a private office. And he had a big conference room and great views. He was Bernie. He was the guy. Bernie was the guy. When he walked into a room, he was the guy. And I was in awe of him (Lewis).”

In another interview, Bienes rhetorically asked a newspaper reporter: “Doubt Bernie Madoff? Doubt Bernie? No. You doubt God. You can doubt God, but you don’t doubt Bernie.” In addition, Bienes said in another interview, “He had an aura about him....It was a lunch, a buffet lunch...And I remember my partner, Frank Avellino, and myself and Bernie meeting in the middle of the dance floor, and we were saying, “Thanks for having us,” and he said, “Hey, come on- we’re family, aren’t we?” And at that moment he had me. He had me. We were family. Oh, my God! I was in! It really took me because he had a presence about him, an aura. He really captivated you.”

Similarly, Sheryl Weinstein, Madoff’s friend and according to her, lovers for five of those years can relate to the importance he put on his persona. Weinstein said, “I think it was more important to Bernie to keep up the facade, the image at all costs and no matter what the moral implications...It was about Bernie and who Bernie had to be to the world.”

The facade that Bernie presented allowed others to be under the control of his altercasting. Supermodel, Carmen Dell’Orefice described to *Vanity Fair* magazine her first meeting with Madoff: “And there was a little man sitting behind a very big desk...” His mouth was pursed in his trademark smirk. At that meeting, Levy invested \$100,000 for her in Madoff’s “exclusive fund,” an “honor,” she was told, that Madoff did not bestow on everyone. Lionel Lewis described the altercasting as her joining his inner circle.

Elie Wiesel, the Holocaust survivor, author, and Nobel Prize winner lost approximately \$37 million to Madoff's Ponzi scheme (Lewis). Wiesel admitted that he bought into the Madoff mystique, that he was charmed. Lewis reports that Wiesel fell into altercasting by the "vener of exclusivity" he felt from Madoff.

#### *Positive effects of Altercasting*

While altercasting may sound negative or manipulative, it can also be used positively. For example, doctors can use it by saying things like "You need to be more responsible, you have a family to worry about and a bright future ahead of you, so I would recommend taking the pills as soon as possible." (Dr. Chang's Comm Persuasion).

#### *To conclude Altercasting*

To conclude, altercasting can be seen many times in relationships and has been used by many at some point in their life. Whether it is trying to get someone to do something, trying to make someone feel guilty or trying to get someone to forgive you, Altercasting can be a very effective tactic to put someone in a role that they feel obligated to fulfill. Along with relationships, altercasting is visibly and numerous used in marketing and advertising as the main tactic to draw in revenue. Just like the Colt 45 beer commercial used altercasting, many other companies do it all the time. They know who their target audience is and from there they make the audience feel like their product is the solution to their needs. For example, 'As a person who should care about your health, you should buy our product,' or 'to be hip or cool, you need this item,' or as someone who should be concerned about driving safety, buy this car.' The Ego (advertisers and marketers) channels. The lines of action that Ego sends at Alter are done through ads, through salesmen talking about a product, and even through word of mouth.

The interpersonal task of Alter is to fulfill their role and to buy their product. The full cycle of altercasting is then complete. This paper will examine one of the best examples of altercasting in this generation. For years now, Apple has put people in a role where they feel they must buy Apple, and that no other PC company will compare. By looking at five different roles that the 21st century consumer feels like they are cast into, and then by looking at how Apple fulfills those roles the reader will gain a better understanding of what altercasting is, how consumers are altercasted, and just how affective it really can be.

### *Introduction to Apple*

In 2011 Apple technology, was adding \$1,200 to its cash pile every *second*. The company had 97.6 billion in cash and in terms of GDP, the companies cash pile alone would make it the 58th largest country. According to Forbes rankings, the company could buy every NFL, MLB, NBA and NHL team-- and still have 31 billion left in the bank. Walmart is the world's largest retailer and Apple brought in four times more than profit than Walmart in the last three months (Bly) Apple became popular in the last ten years and according to CNBC's All-America Economic survey, half of all US homes own an Apple product, and 1 in 10 homes that don't own any Apple products plan to purchase one in the next year (Gralnick). Because its the most valuable public company in the world, and worth over \$400 billion, one can conclude altercating has had quite an impact on the general public.

Homes that own one Apple own an average of three (Gralnick). Jay Campbell, a vice president of Hart Research Associates, said "It's a fantastic business model- the more of our products (Apple) you own, the more likely you are to buy more (Gralnick)." Apple revolutionized the way we view technology. It made it desirable to have the latest most up to date

technology- something the world hadn't longed for the way it does now. In 2011 researchers in the United Kingdom discovered that Apple actually triggers the same areas of the brain that light up during intensely religious experiences. Neuroscientists used magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technology to discover that, when Apple fans see images of Apple products it lights up the same part of that brain as images of a deity do for religious people. It should now make sense if you've ever seen photos or videos of customers whipped up in a sort of "evangelical frenzy" at Apple Store openings (Gallo).

The public, from the most technology-savvy user to the older generation needed to get their hands on Apple. We all remember the colorful ads of the happy dancing people introducing the first ipod. Something happened in these last few years. It was no longer just a device to listen to music on, it was the name of Apple. It was the look, the feel, the sophistication, the popularity, the usefulness, feeling up to date, feeling like you could become something, make a name for yourself. From music to computers, to phones, to paperless books, Apple redefined the normal way of life, from how we carried out our day to day activities, how we invested our money, our stocks, our appearance. Apple put the audience in a role, a role that clearly worked that Americans bought into and fulfilled. The following research will investigate what role Apple put its audience into and why Americans so successfully bought into that role and felt so strongly that they needed to fulfill it.

### *Research Questions*

This thesis will set out to see how Apple puts its customers in five different roles that consumers care about while shopping for a technology. There are five research questions that will be asked:

Does the Apple Brand for Consumers appear to be:

1. The most up-to-date technological company?
2. Building a company that creates brand loyalty?
3. Creating a product that consumers feel they can wisely spend their money on for a valuable product?
4. A company that is dedicated to quality customer service?
5. A company that will deliver environmentally friendly practices.

The Literature Review will look at how Apple fulfills the five roles they have cast their consumers into. This paper will dissect what people are saying about Apple's practices, in the context of these five research questions. By studying what research analysts are saying about Apple's procedures, practices, rules, standards, employees and customers, this thesis will gain an understanding of how Apple sets out to solve these five questions.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Summary: The Literature Review will look at five specific roles that customers are cast into. The roles are: Consumers believe they need to be up-to-date with technological releases, they need a brand they can build loyalty with, they need to be wise with spending their money, they need to partake in environmentally friendly practices and they need the best customer service. The literature that will be used to support these five facets are articles, journal entries, books and reviews from CEO's of companies, advertising specialists, bloggers, experts in advertising etc. The second part of the literature review looks at articles, journal entries and books on how Apple's company provides these five factors for their consumers.

### *1) Customers believe that they need to be up-to-date with new technological releases*

This generation has seen numerous changes from fast paced changes in technology, to the way people communicate, to the technology and tools that are industry standard. MindTools, a company committed to helping people be successful in their careers wrote in a recent article, "Many of us work in changing competitive environments. If we don't keep up with news and trends, we can miss key opportunities and can be caught unawares. That's why, for some of us, it's important to keep-in-touch with news and trends in our industries (Keeping-Up-to-Date on Your Industry)." MindTools suggested that people read blogs and use Twitter to stay up-to-date with the changing times (Keeping-Up-to-Date on Your Industry).

Derek Thompson and Jordan Weissmann wrote in the *Atlantic* that the new generation has shifted their attention from buying cars or homes, things past generations cared about, to buying things like technology and smartphones. Millennials have turned against both cars and houses in dramatic and historic fashion (Thompson; Weissmann). Just as car sales have



plummeted among their age cohort, the share of young people getting their first mortgage between 2009 and 2011 is half what it was just 10 years ago, according to a Federal Reserve study (Thompson; Weissmann). Thompson and Weissmann said that the current largest generation in American history is not spending money on the same things that their parents did, and not as lavishly either. Since World War II, new cars and suburban houses have powered the world's largest economy and propelled the most impressive recoveries. However, millennials have lost interest in both.

In Thompson's and Weissmann's article they talk about how popular the Zipcar became when it was founded in 2000. The average price at the time for a gallon of gasoline was \$1.50, and iPhones didn't exist. Since that time the Zipcar has become the world's largest car-sharing company. They believe there are two reasons why Zipcar owes its success. First off, gas prices more than doubles, making car-sharing alluring. Secondly, smartphones became ubiquitous, making car-sharing easier. The emergence of the "sharing economy" is largely due to mobile technology and peer-to-peer software which allows everyone to have access whenever they need it. Thompson and Weissman said that car ownership has slipped down the hierarchy of status goods for many young adults, and Zipcar gives drivers access to cars they don't have to own. "The typical new car costs \$30,000 and sits in a garage or parking spot for 23 hours a day." Mark Norman, Zipcar's president and chief operating officer said that Zipcar conducted a survey of Millennials. He said, "This generation said, 'We don't care about owning a car.' Cars used to be what people aspired to own. Now it's the smartphone."

Some automakers are slowly catching onto the idea. In 2011, Ford agreed to become Zipcar's largest supplier on more than 250 college campuses. The head of global consumer

trends at Ford said, “Young people prize “access over ownership (Thompson; Weissmann).” Subaru’s publicist Doug O’Reilly said “The Millennial wants to tell people not just ‘I’ve made it,’ but also ‘I’m a tech person.’” Smartphones compete against cars for the big purchases. Young people spend since the cost of a good phone and data plan can exceed \$1,000 a year (Thompson; Weissman). “You no longer need to feel connected to your friends with a car when you have this technology that’s so ubiquitous, it transcends time and space,” Connelly said (Thompson; Weissman). Thompson and Weissman conclude, “mobile technology has empowered more than just car-sharing. It has empowered friendships that can be maintained from a distance. The upshot could be a continuing shift from automobiles to mobile technology, and a big reduction in spending.”

### *1. Being First to Gain Social Status*

Jared Spool writes that some people like having up-to-date technology because it drives their social status. Spool said that when he interviewed people that have the latest-and-greatest because they enjoy the thrill of having something before others, of knowing details about what’s happening, and of partaking in the ‘insider’ community of the tech world (Spool). Spool said that for these individuals it is a ‘passionate avocation’ - and sometimes it is professional but they collect and promote their newest items. Spool compared these individuals to movie reviewers- they go to practically every movie, to serve as an informed authority for others in their influence circles on how good their newest product is and what features work the best. He said these people don’t even need the products for what they do but they just want them to be at the leading edge of use.

### *2. Being First as Product Research*

Another sort of person that is the first to buy new technology and to be the first to have it is the person that needs to keep up for professional reasons. Spool said that these people buy new to understand the core of the innovations that are happening. These people are almost always in the tech community. Spool compared them to fringe communities, like financial analysts that study the tech world. Spool said, “Their interest isn’t in use, but in reverse engineering, on some level. They want to see what makes it tick and how to exploit any good ideas for other projects they may have (Spool).”

### *3. Being the First to Solve An Active Need*

This next group of consumers jumps at a chance to buy the newest technology because it promises to solve a need that they have found to be very pressing (Spool). Spool said that these people are currently feeling pain and that the new product or service is the solution to their dilemma. Spool uses the example of the Toyota Prius. The need was to be more environmentally friendly and reduce gas consumption. The need for getting an Apple iPod would drive people of this level to get it because they have the need to download more music. Or maybe they would get the Apple iPhone because they have a need for a better mobile experience. This person may download Dropbox because they have the need to share files across devices and with colleagues. Spool said that he found that this group of people doesn’t typically buy into just any product early but that they have a real need they are willing to purchase a new release and that they are willing to take the risks of the early product to resolve it. This group isn’t particularly tied to a certain brand, although a successful outcome will strengthen brand engagement (Spool).

*Customers care about building loyalty to a brand*

Brand loyalty is the act of consumers purchasing a product by patronizing a company (Joseph; Vietz). Osmand Vietz and Osmand Joseph wrote in a recent article for *WiseGeek* that building brand loyalty is extremely important because it leads to increased market share, higher profits and better goodwill among customers. Robert Passikof wrote in his recent Forbes article that consumers will emotionally bond with brands- long enough to have real consequences as regards a brand's profitability. Pasikoff studied brand loyalty and wrote that research has demonstrated that consumers are more willing to engage with brands more than any other time in history. Consumers are the "deciders," as one former United States President would say. And the brands that can meet or even exceed their expectations win a loyalty that exceeds anything remotely rational.

Brand Handler wrote in his October 31, 2012 Forbes article that there is nothing better for business than fiercely loyal customers. Handler wrote that that is why car companies often upgrade loyal customers to larger, more comfortable cars. Or hotels will upgrade frequent guests to better rooms or provide freshly baked cookies and a glass of milk. Handler wrote that Inspirato (a vacation real estate company) often leaves small gift baskets of age-appropriate toys and other personalized treats at the vacation homes in advance of a family's arrival. To add to that, they sometimes even surprise club members with free tickets to private concerts and other exclusive events. Handler wrote that companies need to build brand loyalty for current customers but they also need to attract new customers through positive word of mouth. Handler wrote that surprising customers is one of the best ways accomplish that and to get people talking.

Brandon Eley, Interactive Director of Kelsey Advertising and Design wrote that all departments within an organization are collectively responsible for brand loyalty and if one of

them fails it could send the customer to the competition. Eley advises giving an overall assessment of the entire customer lifecycle, from lead to customer to after-purchase support (Eley). “Find the points in the process that don't adequately convey your overall brand message. Find the places where the product or service aren't exceptional, and fix them,” said Eley. John Nichimoto, creative director at Sequal, agrees and said that strong brands deliver a consistent experience wherever they're encountered- a large part of this being that their communications on all touch points are on the same page. Companies often face two problems with their brand identity and messages. These can include a lack of shared ownership and understanding among those who represent and speak for the company and a lack of dialogue before, during and after the rebranding effort (Nichimoto).

Nishimoto said that thriving in the new economy demands building and preserving brand loyalty. A company must ask itself- how does your brand measure up- with customers, investors, employees and others? Nichimoto wrote, “Understanding where you stand now is essential to knowing what to do next, and to evaluating your progress as you build your enterprise and increase the profile of your brand.” Nichimoto said that a brand is much more than a logo and a catchy phrase on a homepage or truck. He believes that it is essential that a culture, policies and business practices support the brand. Brand loyalty includes everything from the design, features and benefits of your products, to the functionality of a website, to the way customers are treated on the phone (Nichimoto).

“Remember, in the new economy, customers are tough and their loyalty must be earned.

Knowing where you stand, and acting on that knowledge, is more important than ever.”

Robert Hanson wrote in a November 2012 article on brand loyalty that brand loyalty is so important loyal customers don't purchase a substitute brand if their preferred brand isn't available. Instead they'll travel to multiple stores in search, and that they are less likely to make a purchase if their brand cannot be found than they are to making a substitute. Hanson said that brand loyalty is based on an emotional involvement that develops between the customer and the brand. According to researcher in brand loyalty, Susan Gunelis, Brand loyalty is based on an emotional involvement that develops between the consumer and the brand. Brand loyalty is based on an emotional involvement that develops between the consumer and the brand. The consumer's perception is that the brand fulfills some kind of physical need or emotional want in such a unique way that some kind of emotion is evoked during the purchase process and while using the brand. Purchasing the same brand every time can elicit feelings of security (Gunelis), and on the flip side not being able to purchase the brand might elicit feelings of fear of impending doom.

Gunelis said that a powerful brand with a loyal customer audience behind it can withstand any micro-or macro- environmental factor thrown at it. "Whether there is a recession at the macro-level or a corporate re-organization at the micro-level, brand loyalists will keep on buying the brands they love." An example of this is Toyota's recall of 2010 where they recalled the Toyota Camry and Toyota Corolla is an example of how the brand survived because of brand loyalty. Gunelis stated that loyalty equates to long-term, sustainability, business success and that you can count on loyal customers to keep buying your branded products and telling friends about them. According to Gunelis, there is a value to the loyalty that correlates directly to brand equity, Brand loyalty is an indicator of intangible value as well as a quantifiable measurement of your

brand's success to-date and future performance predictions. Gunelis wrote that you cannot underestimate the importance of brand loyalty. "Emotional involvement is a powerful thing that trumps just about every other purchasing factor you can think of."

### **1) *Customers Feel that they Should Spend Their Money Wisely when Shopping for Items***

Business consultant, Dale Furtwengler said that customers only care about price. He said that businesses have trained people to only care about price. Furtwengler stated that the majority of buyers are value buyers. "The problem is that we're not educating them about the value we provide or we're not really providing the value they desire. Either way we're causing them to become more price conscious (Furtwengler)." Furtwengler said part of the reason that so many buyers in this economy are deciding only on price is because the vast majority of owners/ CEOs have resorted to heavy discounts to salvage market shares. The owner/CEOS report declining sales despite the discounting but they are afraid to charge higher prices for fear of losing even more sales (Furtwengler).

Furtwengler opined that what these business leaders fail to recognize is that buyers become more value conscious, not more price conscious in a down economy. He suggests that when a business competitor is discounting heavily in failed attempts to gain business, they can distinguish themselves by selling value, and that way the customer will appreciate you for helping them make an informed decision on the higher quality product they purchased.

According to Shella Shayon's article in Brand Channel's article, prices are the reason so many customers change their buying habits. Shayon compared regular spending prices to the amount of shopping that is done on special discount days like Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

For example, according to the IBM Digital Analytics Benchmark sales were up 24.1 percent in 2011 on Cyber Monday, and made it a banner year for retailers (Shayon).

Sean Gregory of *Time* magazine wrote that people are so conscious of money that they've stopped going to malls as much just to avoid temptation. Another thing he said that is really curious is that people will walk through the stores, put items in their basket and then take it out when they get close to the register. He said that the demographic of people willing to shop down is also expanding. "There are people in the parking lot of Goodwill and the dollar stores, that were never there three years ago (Gregory)." Gregory said that there is a changing concept of secondary markets, its EBay, goodwill industries; whether it's selling a previously owned Mercedes Benz- the perception is changing (Gregory). There's willingness to buy used, rather than buying new. You'll never sell used underwear or used socks. But the number of things that people are considering buying used, or buying previously owned, is considerable (Gregory)."

Gregory stated that Americans are understanding how important spending is compared to earlier years. There's the fundamental realization that Americans have woken up. Their bellies are too big, their cars are too big, their homes are too big, their debts are too big, and they have to go on some kind of a diet. The era of "bling" is over.

Gregory further stated that it is getting harder for the retailer, especially in electronics because there is more access of information and he can easily check prices on a web-enabled phone. It makes it easier for the consumer to compare. "The whole pricing issue here is going to have to get much more transparent because consumers have much more access to information than they ever used to have. And that information isn't something that they need to get at home. They can get it on the fly. This is both exciting and frightening for the merchant (Gregory)."



Author Bob Janet agreed that the customer buys based on price, but that they also shop value. Janet said that most customers think a hammer is a hammer, no matter how much better one is constructed than the other. “But that is ok, because your customers do not really buy products (hammers). They buy the results the product (hammer) will give them. And if your results, the value are of more worth to them than the competitions value, you can easily receive a higher price for it (Janet).”

Derek Thompson and Jordan Weissmann wrote in their article for the *Atlantic* that this current generation is the cheapest and that people are not willing to spend money like they used to. Thompson and Weissmann believe that some of the decline is because of the 2008 “Great Recession.” They wrote in their article, ‘The Cheapest Generation,’ “It’s highly possible that a perfect storm of economic and demographic factors—from high gas prices, to re--urbanization, to stagnating wages, to new technologies enabling a different kind of consumption—has fundamentally changed the game for Millennials (Thompson; Weissmann).”

## 2) *Customers Believe they deserve the best service*

A customer believes that their role as a customer means they deserve the best help. Customers feel that their role as a buyer means they should be taken care of, in the best way possible. Startup Nation, a business committed to teaching business the best techniques for starting their company, wrote in their article *Satisfied Customers* that trying to compete on price can be a quick ruin for a startup company in today’s cutthroat competition from big business (Startup Nation). Startup Nation contended that contrary to popular belief; customers will not go almost anywhere just to save a buck. If you want to avoid getting beat up on price, than your company needs to stop trying to compete on price alone (Satisfied Customers). Startup Nation

contended that what your company needs to stand out is better customer service and satisfied customers. Startup nation said, “But don’t make it the simple “please and thank you” variety. Aim higher. Strive for fabulous, standout, outrageously great service to set your startup business apart from the crowd (Satisfied Customers).”

According to a four-year study conducted by the Ohio-based market intelligence firm BIGresearch, most customers will put service ahead of price- if given the chance (Satisfied Customers). The survey that included over 100,000 small businesses and retail customers concluded that the superior service will trump price (Satisfied Customers). BIGresearch asked tens of thousands of shoppers how they like to shop, what they look for in customer service and what it takes for them to buy a product. According to T. Scott Gross, who turned the results into a new book called “When Customers Talk,” he found that what people have always believed about American shoppers may be wrong. “American shoppers are not the finicky, price-conscious bargain hunters they have been made out to be,” says Gross. “Consumers will pay for good service with both their cash and their time.” BIGresearch asked customers how far they would be willing to go for good service and 80 percent of the people said they would travel four or more miles, and almost half said they would travel 10 miles or more for the right combination of quality, price and customer service (Satisfied Customers).

BIGresearch found that 17 percent of customers will not come back to the store after a single service slipup (Satisfied Customers). Another 40 percent will bail after two poor service interactions and 28 percent will be gone after three. That’s a total of 85 percent of your customers that believes in three strikes and you’re out (Satisfied Customers).

Rick Suttle with Demand Media, a company running social media and American content with large companies like eHow and Cracked, explained that customer service is very important because it is often the only contact a consumer will have with the company (Suttle). Suttle said it is important for a company to differentiate themselves through customer service. “For example, it may be difficult to tell the difference between two small-town drug stores, especially if their prices are similar. Therefore, putting extra efforts into customer service may be thing that gives one drug store a competitive advantage (Suttle).” A company with excellent customer service is more likely to get repeat service and consequently will benefit with greater growth in sales and profitability (Suttle). Suttle explained why customer service is quintessential, “It costs a lot more money for a company to acquire a customer than to retain them, due to advertising costs and the expense of sales calls. Therefore, the efforts that go into maintaining quality customer service can really pay dividends over time (Suttle).” The Consumer Affairs website said that people that have a positive experience will with a company’s customer service will likely tell two or three others about their experience. Customer service can therefore act as a form of advertising (Suttle). On the other hand, someone that has a bad customer service experience will tell between nine and twenty people (Suttle).

### *Timely help*

In addition, customers want service to be timely. Customers want to be helped in a quick fashion, but not at the expense of quality (Reiter). Support and customer service representatives should never feel they are on a stop watch, as the support should thoroughly help them with their problem or question. Ed Reiter of Dresser and Associates wrote that customers expect an

experience that is personal, as if they were your only customer. Reiter said that customer wantsto be treated with respect, they want someone to help them who is polite, calm and knowledgeable. The customer would not be asking a question if they were as knowledgeable as you were (Reiter). Reiter said, “Positive customer experience is the driving force behind all your future business. Meeting the customer’s expectations for a pleasant, timely, calm and knowledge-filled meeting, while on the phone or in person, will help to generate future sales and provide a well satisfied customer base (Reiter).”

### *Knowledgeable Staff*

Customers satisfied said that customers want knowledgeable and available staff. They said that customers place a high value on accurate information and want to be served by employees who know the product inside and out (Customers Satisfied). Customers place a high value on accurate information and want to be served by employees who know the product inside and out (Customers Satisfied).” In an article by sports retailer, J.D. Powers and Associates reported that helpful and knowledgeable sales staff is they key driver of customer satisfaction and has the highest importance weight in determining overall satisfaction, followed by cost and facility (J.D. Powers and Associates).

### *Friendly people*

Customers also want friendly people to serve them (Customers Satisfied). Customers not only want product-savvy sales people, but they want them to be kind and courteous. Staff should value each costumer more than an individual sale. Lahle Wolfe wrote in her article on customer

service that customer's should be treated well, and not bombarded just so the worker can make a sale. "Over zealous, uninvited attention, made worse by fake compliments, works on only a handful of customers. And, many of those who do respond to aggressive sales people (and yes, being too helpful is aggressive) simply do so to be polite - or to shut the sales person up (Wolfe)."

Unfriendly sales reps can do so much damage, not just to the one customer, but to the amount of people the customer will tell about their experience. In a survey of 1,000 consumers about in-home service calls, the consulting firm Accenture found that although most people still pick up the phone to complain to the company, many people are still going to online sites (like Facebook and Angie's List) to complain about their annoyance. Twenty percent of consumers under the age of 35 said they expressed views online (Carnns). To add to the bad publicity through social networking, 63 percent of consumers were also willing to switch to another provider due to bad service. Additionally, 77 percent of complainers looked to use other service providers more often when they encountered bad customer service (Carnns).

### *Convenience*

Customers want convenience. Gross said, "Customers want merchandise that is well organized, attractively displayed and easy to find. That's how today's customers define convenience, and the easier you can make the shopping, the more money you will be lugging to the bank (Customers Satisfied)." Martin Newman, author for Retail Week wrote that customer behavior has changed and that their task-rich and time-poor behaviors now dictate how they shop. Newman said that convenience is the driver for the rise in sales through smartphones

(Newman). In the Customers Satisfied article, the author wrote that one of the last components of convenience is that customers want a fast finish. This is where too many businesses fall flat, right at the finish line. While customers are in the process of deciding to buy or not, they are proceeding on their own time line. They want thoughtful help making the right decisions. But once the buying decision is made, get out of their way because now you are working on their time, and they want to complete the transaction and be on their way as quickly as possible. At the cash register, there is no time for making additional suggestions (Customers Satisfied).”

*Customers believe their role as a consumer means they should be environmentally friendly*

Environmental friendly practices have been going on for a couple decades now, and more recently companies are turning to environmentally friendly practices as well (Grocery Manufacturers Association). A study done by the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA) conducted a survey with more than 6,000 shopper experiences in 11 major retailers or varying formats to study the characteristics of the green shopper. GMA found that the green shopper may not fit the typical granola (tree hugger) stereotype (GMA). The green shoppers are demographically diverse spread along all income ranges, age brackets, education levels and various household sizes. The GMA said that green shoppers are a great customer target. They typically buy more products on each trip, visit the store more regularly and demonstrate more brand and retailer loyalty in their purchasing behavior. Their survey revealed that fifty-four percent of shoppers consider environmental sustainability characteristics in their buying decisions (GMA).

A survey conducted by Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates and advertising agency JWT Intellience said that consumers in the United States, UK and Japan have placed emphasis on buying so-called “green” items than they did before the recession began (Environmental Leader). Those surveyed expect to buy even more green items once the recession has passed. (Environmental Leader). Although the demographics are widespread, the most likely people to buy green products are college graduates and young adults (Lesonsky). Researcher and author of the the green shopper, Rieva Lesonsky said “If your business targets these markets, a green message is more likely to have an impact on your sales. But be sure your product information, website and packaging are clear about the benefits of your product, and that you’re honest and forthright in explaining why it’s green.”

Amy Hebard and Wendy Cobrda, Co-Founders of Earthsense LLC wrote an article about consumer behaviors. They concluded in their article that when consumers support companies that are eco-friendly they do more than just shop- they align themselves with businesses that do good for the environment (Cobrda, Hebard). Hebard and Cobrda stated that if consumers don’t know about corporations’ sustainability initiatives, those efforts will not be fully realized. Coincidentally, the newest trend is the growth in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reporting by major corporations. The auditing firm KPMG reported a 30 percent jump from 2005 to 2008 in the percentage of large companies that generated CSR reports; that is about four out of five (79%) of the world’s largest companies that now provide this information in a publicly available form. Judy Henderson of the Global Reporting Initiative offers a reason for this change, “More than ever, employees, investors and consumers are looking to the companies from which they buy,

invest in, and work for to join them in addressing the critical sustainability issues of the day in innovative ways (Cobrda, Hebard).”

### *How Apple fulfills Customers' Needs*

#### *I. Apple Sets the Standard for New Technology*

Apple has been the standard for new technology and has been the leader at innovating, blazing trails and setting a standard on many different levels. Jessie Scalan wrote in her *Bloomberg Businessweek* article titled *Apple Sets the Design Standard* that the best companies making the best products still want to mimic the iPod (Scalan). John Edson who is the product designer of Lunar Design stated, “Apple is definitely setting the standard for product design today.” He continued, “We're being asked to create wonderful products, you know, like the iPod. It's still rare, though, that an organization has the force of will to make a product like this happen.” Scalan wrote that Apple’s new position has had a ripple effect in the world of design, everything from product and service design to development and branding strategy. However, Scalan said, not all the companies are taking away the right lessons. She said that companies have started copying Apple’s minimalist aesthetic look where they make shiny, white products without grasping anything deeper than the iPod’s plastic skin. Scalan said, “When PC makers E-Machines, Daewoo, and Future Power each began selling computers uncannily similar to the original iMac, Apple sued. More recently, Myriad products seem to have been "inspired," by the iPod.” Lunar Edson pointed out the Sonos Digital Music System’s similarity to the iPod. He said the muted color, minimalist lines, slightly rounded corners, and scroll wheel is a literal copy of the iPod visual language (Scalan). Edson suspected that the success of the iPod helped Motorola



in their emphasis on appearance and design, as it showed in the Razr (Scalan). Edson said that even on a mass level people want better design. He said that even LG's Chocolate reflected other manufacturers understanding of that. Scalan used the analogy that Apple design has had in setting the standard to BMW. She said that BMW was traditionally an engineering- driven company that eventually learned the power design had to create intense consumer excitement and how design could be used to drive sales. Scalan concluded that just like the iPod, the BMW MINI has almost a cult following.

Apple sued the Korean company iOPS for copying Apple's design of the iPod. Along with that, countless other manufacturers, including many in Asia have introduced similar players (Scalan). Scalan wrote that Apple's success doesn't stem from style alone and not only do these technology imitators end up in court but its not a strategy likely to generate revenues. Few of the companies that have tried to match Apple's success have succeeded (Scalen).

Not only does Apple pave the way for design, but some companies are also being influenced by Apple's user-friendly products (Scalan). Nintendo seems to have implemented this lesson when they created the Wii and the DS mobile game player. While reviewing the Wii console, New York Times tech columnist David Pogue wrote: "The Wii is not for 'gamers.'... Anybody, even 78-year-old lawyers who've never touched a video game, can immediately get into these games." Scalan said that like the iPod the Wii and the DS have less tech ability than some of the competitors. However, most consumers don't care about technology, but more what they can do with the product, and the usability and processing power.

To add to that, the Xbox 360 was famously "inspired" by Apple's innovations over the years (Scalan). Scalan said that with Apple's iPod, the consumer isn't buying into just the design

of the product itself, but rather all the immensities it offers with its services. It has iMac, iTunes software, and the iTunes store- which allowed consumers to buy and manage a digital music collection easily. The Xbox created Live site for the gaming community, and the Xbox Live arcade, where players can buy downloadable games to fill the Xbox ecosystem.

## *II. Apple's Brand Loyalty*

Passikof wrote for *Forbes* when they recently released their 16th annual Brand Keys Customer Loyalty Engagement Index list of brands that demonstrate the best customer loyalty. The list gives the rankings for the top 100 loyalty rankings out of the 598 brands that were assessed in 83 different industry categories. Passikof wrote that the index proved a link between emotional engagement and brand dominance that was made clear by the technology brands. Apple took three of the first five spots- for tablets, smartphones and computers. Passikof said it was of importance because the categories have become ever more and complex and demanding categories.

Passikof reported that over 49,000 consumers participated in the survey. He concluded that its obvious that consumers don't engage in one category the same way they do another. "While we all may have differing opinions about politics, we can agree that nobody buys a tablet the same way they buy toothpaste, or a smartphone the way they buy spaghetti sauce or choose a social network!" Passikof furthered that customer loyalty is important because loyalty correlates extremely highly with positive consumer behavior. "If you measure a brand against those drivers, you'll see that brands best able to meet or even exceed expectations consumers hold for those drivers, see higher levels of loyalty than those that don't. Not sometimes. Always (Passikof)."

Apple's stock price and capitalization demonstrate that brand loyalty correlates with revenue. Apple reported that revenue for the period ending September 29th rose 27% and that revenue for the full fiscal year of 2012 was nearly \$157 billion, a number that exceeds the combined revenues of Facebook, Google and Microsoft. Pasikoff wrote, "Identifying the real drivers of loyalty is an interesting exercise for marketers because once you know what they are, it becomes difficult not to understand how one brand ends up with more loyal customers (and sales and profits) than another. Consumers (and politicians) are entitled to their own opinions, but not their own facts."

Pasikoff looked at what drives loyalty in the Tablet category. Pasikoff created with the following list of what determines loyalty in the tablet category:

1. Brand Value (Is this an innovative brand I'm proud to be seen with?)
2. Advanced Design (Does this brand set the bar for the category and does it provide intuitive, organic connections for me?)
3. Features (Does it have everything I want and does it provide me with more than I thought was possible?)
4. Hardware/Software (Does the brand support more apps and is it most advanced system available?)

Apple met customer expectations for this category by 96% and sales for the iPad were up 9% to more than \$7.5 billion. It is important to note that this was also before they announced their smaller iPad mini (Piskoff). Comparing that to Amazon, they were ranked number 2 at 92%.

Piskoff said that it is not like political elections where coming in second place is something to complain about- rather it is an accomplishment in highly competitive categories.

Another highly competitive category was the smartphone. Apple's iPhone sales skyrocketed and made it number one on the list. The only setback was that the company couldn't supply enough to meet the consumer demand. The loyalty polls record that Blackberry isn't even coming close to this category drivers- where it was number 100 on the list (it was number 60 on last year's list) (Pasikoff). Pasikoff confirmed that loyalty metrics are predictive of what consumers are going to buy 12 to 18 months in the future. Blackberry therefore could have predicted how people were going to vote for loyalty back in June of 2011. Pasikoff said that that is why something like this brand loyalty list is so important; it's an indicator to how profitability will go.

### III. Apple's Prices

Ferhad Manjoo said in her article for *Slate* magazine that Apple used to have the reputation that their products were only for the rich and elite in society. The perception is partly Apple's fault. The company purposefully cultivated an aura of luxury; it puts those Apple stores in fancy malls, after all, not next to your local dollar store (Manjoo).” However, Manjoo explained that Apple's computers aren't as expensive as they seem when considering what comes with it- free walk-in tech support, a range of well- designed built-in programs and substantially higher resale value. Manjoo claimed that many companies are releasing competitors to the iPad- and so far they are more expensive than Apple's. According to Manjoo, as Apple continues to increase their sales this year in iPad production, it will reap enormous benefits from its massive

scale and the company will be able to buy tablet components for much less than its competitors pay, thereby undercutting its rivals.

Manjoo predicted that this may lead to a remarkable shift in the computer business. Apple has always set the premium standard, which left the rest of the market open to low-end devices, but now Apple is going for everyone. Manjoo said that when it comes to tablets, Apple might make both the best and one of the cheapest devices on the market, which will be hard for competitors to beat (Manjoo).

In 2013, The iPad starts at \$499 for a model with Wi-Fi only, and is \$629 for a model with a 3G cellular modem. That is cheaper than the Motorola Xoom, which includes a cellular modem for \$799. The Samsung's Android-based Galaxy Tab falls closer in line with the iPad's price, at a 3G version for \$599 and a Wi-Fi version for \$499 but only has a seven inch screen compared to Apple's ten inch screen. Manjoo concluded that there are several reasons why the iPad is cheaper. First, Apple can cut out the middle man by selling directly through retail stores. In addition, it has mastered the logistics of global manufacturing and shipping, and it controls all aspects of its device's design, which is a feat that no other manufacturer can claim (Manjoo).

Larry Digon, writing for *Between the Lines* stated that the iPad mini is a different story. He disagreed with Apple's decision to mark the iPad mini at \$329 when it came out in 2012. He said he was fearful that the price-sensitive consumers will continue to turn to alternative tablet solutions, like Amazon's Kindle Fire or Google's Nexus tablet at prices around \$200. Digon is afraid that Apple's higher price on the mini may push consumers to buying the lower end tablet market and that the Android tablet users may buy compatible Android phones and/or shy away from Apple iPhones in the future.

In agreement with Digion is Gareth Beavis, who wrote a review on the iPad mini for TechRadar. Beavis stated that the new Apple iPad mini has many benefits, such as the 7.9 inch screen where it can hold up to 64 GB of space for movies and music, as well as LG LTE connectivity but the top model of that iPad mini is \$659. Beavis agreed that Amazon's Kindle Fire HD and Google Nexus 7's super cheap price tag comes is in definite competition with Apple's price tag. Contrary to what many people have been saying, the iPad mini is not just a shrunken down iPad, its a whole new product again (Beavis). Beavis posited that the price tag is the main object of competition, but that Apple's content and product is still strong. "Apple fans need not worry too much when it comes to whether the iPad mini is a worthy addition to the iBrand, as it comes with enough power and reams of Ive-inspired design to make it a worthwhile addition to the range(Beavis)."

Manjoo reported that in January 2011, Apple's chief operating officer, Tim Cook, reported in a conference call with investors that Apple had spent \$4 billion on several "strategic" long-term contracts for specific electronic parts. He did not cite specifics on what they were, but DigiTimes, which is a Taiwanese publication covering Asian manufacturing companies, reported that Apple purchased 60 percent of the world's supply of touchscreen glass panel- which is the major component for iPads, iPhones, and iPod Touches (Manjoo).

Author for Forbes, Peter Cohan said part of Apple's success is that their customers are intensely loyal to their products. They are willing to buy big price premiums for the Apple product. For example, Apple's iPad with a higher end model runs about \$600 compared to the \$200 for an Amazon Kindle. Cohan contended that the Apple fan will point out all the reasons why the iPad is so much better than the Kindle. Cohan said even things like the 23 people who

died in the Apple factory in China yields an attitude in the Apple fan that says, “I don’t care so stop talking about it.”

One of the biggest price upsets that Apple made over the iPhone was the enormous change of price shortly after its release. Apple dropped the price of the phone \$200 two months after it went on sale. The 8GB iPhone moved from a price of \$599 to \$399. Apple received hundreds of emails from upset customers who had originally bought the phone. Steve Jobs wrote an apology letter on Apple’s website to all of the customers who had purchased the iPhone at the original price. Jobs stated that he was confident in the lowering of the price to make it more affordable to more customers. He argued that the change of price was perfect timing for everyone looking to purchase a holiday gift for someone. The change benefited not only Apple, he said but the customers as well, because it helped to get as many new customers as possible in the iPhone ‘tent.’

Jobs assured all of the readers that the road in technology is bumpy and that he appreciated his loyal customers. He argued that prices and technology were always changing, and that an individual cannot keep waiting for the newest model because they’ll never end up purchasing anything if they keep waiting. He assured the reader in his note that Apple was making the right decision, but that he still wants to do everything he can to take care of the early and loyal customer. In Job’s closing statement he reassured his customers that they would be compensated by giving them a \$100 in store credit for anyone who purchased an iPhone from either Apple or AT&T. Jobs concluded by saying, “We want to do the right thing for our valued iPhone customers. We apologize for disappointing some of you, and we are doing our best to live up to your high expectations of Apple (Jobs).”

On the other hand, many people do not think Apple is worth the high price tag. Dave Roos and Stephanie Crawford wrote an article about Apple myths. One of the myths identified was that Apple products were not overpriced. The myth is perpetuated by Apple's public relations team and is agreed on by Apple fans all over the world (Crawford; Roos). They will argue that their products are so superior that they are worth the price hike even though Apple products cost more than similar products (Crawford; Roos). Crawford and Roos said that people are willing to pay a little more money for superior design and a more satisfying user experience but Apple asks too much. They said that a price tag cannot be placed on style, but a price tag can be placed on hardware (Crawford; Roos). Crawford and Roos compared the MacBook Pro to a Dell laptop. Both have nearly the same hardware specifications; Mac is more capable graphics, and Dell has more base memory and a slightly larger harddrive (Wildstrom) although the Mac cost \$675 more (Wildstrom). People are debating whether if it is worth the customer paying 50 percent more for the OS X operating system, which Microsoft calls the "Apple Tax" (Crawford; Roos). Stephen Wildstrom of Bloomberg Business writes that for that \$675 difference one can buy a copy of Microsoft Office Home & Student, a copy of Adobe Photoshop Elements, and still have plenty left over.

#### *IV. Apple's Customer Service*

According to Apple's website, there are many different forms of technical support where the company is happy to assist costumers with any questions that might arise, and many different options that increases customer service. Apple offers support in the store. Apple has an online store along with many different locations across the United States. Apple also points costumers to authorized retail stores where Apple products are sold. Along with that, Apple provides local



IT services and support where independent professional service providers that specialize in Apple home visits and deliver on-site technology services and support to home users and businesses of any size. Apple provides training centers and has a financial service department specifically designed to help customers with financing for educational institutions, businesses and consumers.

Apple has topped its competitors in the PC industry in the University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) for the seventh straight year. Apple achieves a score of 86 out of 100, which is the highest ranking score since the annual survey began in 1995 (Ogg). Most of the rest of the competitors (Dell, HP, Acer, and others) tie with a score of 77, while HP's Compaq brand is ranked 74. All of the PC makers improved their score in 2012, but it did not help them compared to the leaps and bounds Apple's progress demonstrated. The Mac maker's nine point lead is currently the highest lead that any brand has over its competitors in the 45 categories the ACSI study surveys. This includes home appliances, gas stations, autos, e-commerce, airlines and more.

Author Erica Ogg contended that Apple's lead can be attributed to a few things. Apple's lineup of products that is broad yet connected, a meticulously controlled retail experience, and a very particular brand of leadership at the top (Ogg). Managing editor of the ACSI, David VanAmburg posited they have notoriously good customer service and a commitment to innovating and integrating products. "Apple is still somewhat uniquely positioned with MACS, the iPad, iPhone, and the iPod," he said (Ogg). "There's a plethora of IT products that have been integrated together easily, and Apple has been able to capture 'IT' at large, rather than just personal computers."

Apple's staff is knowledgeable in their product and they showcase off their technology as they interact with the customers (Gallo 2). When a customer walks into the Apple store, a 'specialist' will check in the customer using an iPad, which is a way of showcasing their technology (Gallo 2). Carmine Gallo wrote in his article, *Apple's Secret Employee Training Manual Reinvents Customer Service in Several Ways* that an iPad is positioned next to each Mac with more detailed explanations about its features and that a customer can even request in-person help through the iPad. Employees check out customers on the sales floor with a mobile point-of-sale tool called EasyPay, attached to iOS devices. Apple started EasyPay to "showcase the technology" and today it is being used by many other retailers as well. Gallo concluded by stating, "Apple Stores are also experimenting with an iPhone app that lets customers scan their own products and pay for them without ever speaking to a salesperson or visiting a cash register. Apple employees get people excited about their technology by using it themselves (Gallo)."

### *Apple's Convenience*

There are 300 Apple stores worldwide right now, mostly in the U.S., although it is growing in major world capitals such as London, Paris, and Shanghai. Ogg said that everything about the store is a representation of what it is like to own an Apple product. Apple controls the whole experience when one walks in to the store; limited range of products on the shelves, to the training of the young, intentionally geeky/hip employees, to the manner in which some stores are designed with architectural flourishes normally reserved for museums, to the tech support received at the Genius Bar, to the educational classes offered in stores for using Apple products. PC companies have had a few varying results when venturing into the retail market. Gateway did well for a number of years until calling it quits and being sold to Acer. Dell's foray was brief and

Microsoft's current experiment in retail (which borrows from Apple's retail look and feel) which is still small and only has four stores as of the end of 2012, with a few planned for the future.

PC makers either rely on the direct approach on the Web or trusts a salesperson to properly present their product at stores like Fry's, MicroCenter, Best Buy or others, or they just leave it up to the customer wandering the aisles at Wal-Mart or Costco (Ogg). Finally, Ogg stated that although retail stores are expensive to maintain, it can define a company's brand and dictate how customers interact with a company. Apple takes the task on itself, in addition to selling its products online and through some third-party retailers.

WanAmburg said that Apple truly puts the customer first whereas many of the other PC companies are reluctant to embrace Apple's customer service approach because of the roots of these companies (Ogg). Ira Kalb, a clinical marketing professor at the University of Southern California Marshall School of Business agreed and said that some of the companies are much more technically oriented than customer oriented, which has a sizable effect on how they prioritize. "The reason that a lot of these companies don't copy Apple's customer service is they don't realize how important it is, that's the big one," Kalb said. "They look at it as a cost rather than a return on investment item." It sounds obvious that the customer should always come first and that that should be the primary concern but Kalb said it's not always followed. "A lot of these computer companies in particular were started and run by technical people, who are notorious for caring about technology over customers (Ogg)." Ogg agreed that things like customer service, marketing and making technology easier to understand for nontechnical people can make or break a customer's perception of a company. Apple understands the difference and it is

illustrative of the enormous amounts of revenue, customers and return customers. Lastly, Ogg states that a major difference between Apple and the rest of the field is that no other company is as subject to a singular vision. Steve Jobs laid a great foundation for how the company would be run. The only person whose opinion really mattered in the end was Jobs, and that goes for the product decisions as well as how the company would be run (Ogg). Ogg wrote, “That doesn’t work for everyone. At most large companies, there are competing agendas and fiefdoms that compete for resources and weigh in with differing visions on products. Jobs' leadership style cuts that out.”

Tim Bjarin wrote in his article, “6 Reasons Apple Is So Successful,” that one of the reasons Apple provides the best service with the iPhone is that they keep it simple. Bjarin said there is one model of their phone and it minimizes the decision making process easy for the consumer. Bjarin pointed out that the amount of options a phone company has makes it hard for the staff to be really knowledgeable about all of them all the time. With Bjarin’s company completing consumer research for over 30 years he knowledgeably wrote, “Our company has done consumer research for over 30 years, and consumers constantly tell us that while choice is nice, in reality they want the process of choosing a tech product to be simple and not complicated by a plethora of choices (Bjarin).” Apple makes the choice easy for the consumer. There aren’t different versions of the iPhone, rather Apple makes it simple for the consumer. It is not a huge overwhelming experience when the consumer walks into the store, filled with choices and options.

Carmine Gallo wrote in his book *The Apple Experience* that if you study the brands that do it well such as Disney, Four Seasons, Zappos, FedEx, Nordstrom, Apple and others, that

extroordinary customer service comes down to communication: how you talk to your employees and how they, in turn, talk to your customers. Gallo wrote that Apple did not invent many of its customer service principles but rather Steve Jobs acknowledged that the Apple Store was inspired by the Four Seasons. Apple copied successful companies that did customer service well and in the process redefined and improved upon the principles it learned from others.

### *Apple's friendly people*

According to Apple researcher, Carmine Gallo “A fundamental part of their job sans sales quotas of any kind; is simply to make you happy.” Apple store employees are trained to make their customers happy (Gallo). According to Apple, “Our stores are a happy place to shop, learn, create, and get help.” Apple Store executive, George Blankenship, who oversees the customer experience for Tesla said that every Tesla employee understands that the goal is to put a smile on the customer’s face. “We’re not selling you anything. We want you to feel differently when you leave the store.”

Apple Store Geniuses deal with different customers all day long that are angry, frustrated or worried but it’s essential that they show empathy (Gallo). Apple trains its employees to follow the Three F’s: Feel, Falt, and Found (Apple Training Manual). The Apple training manual provides this example of how a salesperson should display empathy to a costumer:

Customer: This Mac is just too expensive

Genius: I can see how you’d **feel** this way. I **felt** the price was a little high, but I **found** it’s a real value because of all the built-in software capabilities.

Gallo said that the word “empowered” was a key concept that emerged from the training manual many times. Gallo who has done much reporting on Apple’s company recalled a time that he spent interviewing a salesperson (roughly an hour). He asked her if she would get in trouble for spending so much time with someone that wasn’t going to purchase anything. Her response was, “Quite the opposite. My supervisor might give me feedback but primarily he’ll want to know if I made my customer feel good about the experience (Gallo 2).” Apple’s technique of such high service quality came from the Ritz Carlton which inspired Apple. When Steve Jobs was starting Apple stores in 2001, he modeled many of his customer service techniques (including this idea of empowering employees that Apple uses) after the high and resort chain (Gallo 3).

Gallo said that when he started researching Apple’s customer service, he found that ‘enriching lives’ was a continual theme that Apple implemented in its customers. Gallo said that interesting things happened when a company starts with the vision of ‘enriching lives.’ Gallo wrote that enriching lives meant that employees were not on commission at the beginning of Apple store openings in 2001 (Gallo). The motto also resulted in innovative concepts like One to One, which was personalized training sessions (Gallo). Additionally, enriching lives meant that customers would see, touch and play with devices that were all connected to the internet and stay as long as they wanted (Gallo).

#### *V. Apple’s Environmentally Friendly Standards*

Apple formulated their first environmental policy in 1990, and according to their website they have continued to make their products more energy efficient, eliminated many toxic substances and embraced renewable energy in their facilities (Apple Website).

Apple is clear that they do everything to the best of the environment. Their website mentions that Apple designs each product using less material, that they ship with smaller packaging, that they are free of toxic substances and try to be as energy efficient as possible (Apple Website). Apple stated that the most important thing they can do to reduce their impact on the environment is to improve the products' environmental performance. Apple said that they are committed to creating products that have the least amount of impact on the environment and that their growth continues to outpace the rest of the industry.

Apple has made monumental landmarks in their reduction of greenhouse gas emissions per dollar of revenue. That amount has decreased 15.4 percent since 2008 (Apple Website). According to Apple's website, Apple is the only company in their industry whose entire product line not only meets but exceeds the strict guidelines of the ENERGY STAR specification. Apple was also the first company in their industry to report comprehensive calculations for their total carbon footprint. Environmental reports are out for every product that Apple makes, 'giving the public an opportunity to judge our efforts and track our progress in detail (Apple Website).'" Apple even offers a free recycling program for old computers and displays with the purchase of any new Mac. For example, Apple's use of materials, like the use of aluminum in their MacBook Pro can be reused by recyclers at the end of the computers life.

Much controversy arose when Apple chose to leave the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) in the summer of 2012. For years Apple had been working with the nonprofit company that created environmental standards and a rating system for computers and other electronics (Kaufman). Apple removed its products from the group's environmentally certified list despite Apple's products all earning the highest EPEAT's ratings.

According to Kaufman, cities including San Francisco and some companies have purchasing guidelines that favor EPEAT- certified products. Kaufman asserted that Apple made it clear that it wanted to play a big role in helping to craft new EPEAT standards. She says, "In many respects, Apple has been an environmental leader, and the company wants to make sure it is rewarded, and gets credit for, its own green initiatives. Developing these standards is a long and complex process involving input from manufacturers, environmentalists, and government officials, but we are likely to see new updated standards in about a year (Kaufman)."

Industry analysts say that Apple probably did not lose too much money over the withdrawal, although it certainly did hinder their reputation (Kaufman). On July 6, Apple admitted that they made a mistake when they decided to withdraw. Apple called EPEAT and talked about rejoining the list and they announces on its website that it had rejoined the certification process. Within 20 minutes of the news, EPEAT's website was flooded with online visitors and crashed which is very indicative of how much attention Apple's decision received (Kaufman). It's not conclusive why Apple decided to pull out. Kaufman reported that many observers thought Apple would not meet basic EPEAT standards. The observers said they thought Apple was concerned that they would not receive the green certification on their new products, including the MacBook Pro with Retina display. Still other people thought that Apple just did not want to be part of an antiquated product registry (Kaufman).

Robert Frissbee, CEO of EPEAT offers some insight on Apple's dedication, ""They said their design direction was no longer consistent with the EPEAT requirements. They were important supporters and we are disappointed that they don't want their products measured by this standard anymore (Chan)." Although Apple is back on the EPEAT list now, many people are



still frustrated with their environmental practices. Kyle Wiens, the founder of online repair site iFixit, stated that Apple is now moving towards thinner and thinner laptops with glued-in batteries, which are difficult to recycle. Wiens said, "This is like selling a car with tires that are welded to the car so that the only way to swap out the tires is to take it back to the manufacturer," says Wiens, who also said that replacing batteries is part of routine laptop maintenance. Apple has had a large hand in how EPEAT sets their rules and guidelines, and although they were a driving force for the rule that "in order to meet the standards, recyclers need to be able to easily disassemble products, with common tools, to separate toxic components, like batteries," many argue that Apple themselves are not following this rule. According to Reitz, Apple's MacBook is notoriously difficult to take apart with common tools as are most Apple products, including the iPhone and iMacs. The MacBook Pro was even labeled as the "least-repairable" notebook from iFixit (Reitz).

### Chapter 3. Methodology

Summary: By rhetorically analyzing the way that the public felt about Apple's products and company practices, this Methodology chapter sets the stage for how the thesis will rhetorically analyze Apple's implementation of altercasting. The thesis looked at both positive and negative ways that Apple fulfilled (or didn't fulfill) the five terms of altercasting (Customers needing to be up-to-date with technology, needing a company to build brand loyalty with, reasonable prices, environmentally friendly practices and a company that provides good customer service). By investigating through means that consumers would post on (blog forums, articles, comment sections and articles), the thesis was able to see how the general public felt, rather than getting someone that was just endorsing the company for advertising reasons. The thesis looked at trends and overall patterns that the public was saying about Apple. The Methodology chapter explains how this research was rhetorically analyzed.

This research will include three components. The first section will look at the roles in which customers are cast. The roles are: the consumer feels that they must be up-to-date with technology, the customer feels that they must spend their money wisely with pricing and value of the product, the customer wants good customer service and lastly the customer wants a brand they can be loyal to. The advertising industry has said that these are roles they need to fulfill in the product they are searching for and the research will take a deeper look at how the consumers feel that they have been cast into the role where they should care about these five components. The research will look at why these roles are so important for a consumers through looking at commentaries, surveys that have been conducted by interviewing consumers, brands and companies that have successful and unsuccessful at putting the customer in these roles.

The second component of the research will look specifically at how Apple fulfilled these roles. The research will thoroughly investigate their origins set by Steve Jobs, their individual products, their retail stores and phone service, how they have created a community of brand loyalty, commentary from market researchers, actual consumers, bloggers and technicians. Findings will be analyzed to see how Apple implemented altercasting. Every company has the ability to use altercasting to their benefit. Popular brands such as Apple have such a strong platform to use altercasting to convince their costumers to buy. This section will examine research about how Apple uses their altercasting, particularly through comparing it to other technology competitors.

The third component of the research will go into the heart of Apple to get a glimpse of what consumers actually think about the five roles that Apple is fulfilling. The research will analyze what bloggers and commentaries are saying about Apple. This is vital to the research because it will be a true picture of what people think about Apple. It will be an opportunity to learn what the people who are being cast into the roles think about the brand Apple and how they have fulfilled the roles. This section will rhetorically analyze what the general public believes. To protect the users that left comments and their right to privacy, the responses will remain anonymous. After researching many different sites and sources, general findings and trends will be gathered and rhetorically analyzed to see how Apple used altercasting.

## Chapter 4. Results

Summary: The best way to study consumer's beliefs on the way they had been altercasted was to look at what they were saying, thinking and to look at their experiences. By looking at what people said on blogs, comment forums at the end of articles, this analysis was able to generate what the public thought about the five categories that they were altercasted into. This analysis draws what people thought Apple did well for the categories they cast their audience into, as well as what they do not do a good job at. It will gather overall trends about how Apple does, and comparatively how they do to their competitor brands.

### *Buying the most up-to-date technology*

Users that thought Apple was the top of the line, most up-to-date technology company went to defend their beloved company just like in every other category. Apple users seemed to be defensive when they heard that some people did not respect Apple as the best most innovative company. Users that favored Apple in this category had an aggressive, fresh excitement as they took up their shields to fight Apple haters.

First, one user thought Apple had a competitive edge over their competitors because of the exclusive releases that only Apple had access to. Only Apple could get certain releases and exclusive iTunes only-releases and this user was very impressed with how they had that edge over the competitors. The writer was impressed with Apple's business marketing strategies. They raved about how Apple had mastered the art of projecting its consumers into a certain position where that person was in the "in" crowd. Although this user did not talk about

altercasting, the user was essentially impressed with the way that Apple put their customer in the role where they felt like they were in the popular crowd for choosing Apple. Because of Apple's success, this consumer said that it generated more money for Apple, allowing there to be more money in turn for content producers, giving Apple the edge and allowing them to be on top of the market share.

Many reviewers said they loved the new iPhone 5. One author stated that Apple took what was the most perfect phone (iPhone 4s) and perfected it even more. Writers said that the iPhone is a great purchase, even for non-techie people because of the user friendly simplicity. Users agreed that Apple switching the 4-inch screen to 3.5 inches with the iPhone 5 update was brilliant, making the phone not only easier to put it in your pants pocket and carry it around but because the vertical screen allows apps like Mail and Calendar to be read easier. One user also said that watching a movie or television show on the iPhone is now a much better experience.

In addition, consumers also reported the new iPad saying it is only .68 pounds but feels lighter than the competing devices at Barnes & Noble, Amazon, and Google which all have a bigger screens. One user said that up until that point, tablets were not portable and used mostly only in the home. The user believed that the light design make it portable outside the home and will encourage users to start using the internet off of it. Many people looked at how Apple had revolutionized the history of technology with certain aspects of the company. One user said iTunes was a huge leap for technology- where no one could convince music label executives that people would actually pay for music online. One consumer looked at the iPad saying that it was the reason the tablet market took off. She said that it was even the "saviour of the media industry." In addition, Apple started the iOS App store which revolutionized a whole new market

for app makers. A consumer wrote that all of the world's media giants were scrambling for a share in the success because of Apple's geniuses in creating such a tool.

*Consumers Who Do Not Believe Apple has Leading Technology*

There were also people who did not favor the iPhone, saying that it was an unwise purchase and that the only change was the weight and size. Commenters started talking about the iPhone 5 video that played on Jimmy Fallon. Fallon went on the streets of New York asking people if they liked the new "iPhone 5" which was really only the iPhone 4s because the iPhone 5 had not come out yet. Countless people played with the "iPhone 5" saying it was faster, the colors were brighter, it was lighter etc. Bloggers begged the point that there was no technological change with the update and that Apple users are fools, only buying into the phenomenon of the brand. One consumer recommended getting the Razr, One X, SIII if they preferred comfort, ease and longer battery life.

Many users of PC agreed that there are many compatibility issues with MACS, making it unusable and shuts out this group of users. One user said that in the professional world they cannot afford to have compatibility issues for documents and programs. With its universal pieces and compatible software programs it makes it very easy to customize the different PCs. The marketshare is mostly PC and buying MACs means limiting customers to a small audience. The products are not accessible everywhere when a company switches to a MAC.

Second, users compared Apple to other technological companies, showing their lead and competitive edge which decreased the value of Apple's lead in their minds. One user stated that Apple's iPad was having stuttering issues. They argued that when a user downloads an app, or several at the same time that it would get stuck and sometimes take up to half an hour to

download. However, when this user used Google's Nexus 7 the user said it was incredibly fast, and without any glitches while downloading a 10 MB app. The consumer concluded that the Nexus 7 had much better technology and wider bandwidth. In addition, a user said that Apple had to sacrifice a lot of important functions in their new iOS 6 which make it slow and outdated. The user said that compared to the New Android 4.1 Apple's iOS 6 will be slow and dragging. And, many users made fun of Siri on the iPhone. One user said the only time they ever use the tool is to see how many swear words it will say. Many people said Siri was incredibly frustrating, not only with trying to get it to do functions that it cannot understand, but also with accidentally hitting the button pulling Siri up.

Some users said that Apple faces great competition, and a trend appeared while looking at the highly admired Apple technology. Many people said that Apple's quality was going downhill. Many critiques wrote about how Apple's updated maps with the iOS 6 update was actually very inaccurate and many shops and restaurants were actually several streets away from the real location. According to the user, the search function has a hard time understanding certain directions and several important sites are missing from the map, like train stations.

Comparatively, Google Maps is considered very accurate with clear directions by many challengers of the Apple Maps. One user said that Apple forces people to use their maps by standardizing it in all of the iPhones, to turn people from their big rivalry with Google. However, there is agreement that this only makes them look bad because their maps do not compare. The first iPhone in 2007 had Google maps installed, but since Apple encourages everyone to update their phone with the new software, this new update deletes the Google product and makes the

switch to Apple maps. Although this seems like a clever marketing update, many complain that it actually hurts them because Apple's maps are subpar to Google.

Some people thought the maps situation was humorous as they shared stories about iOS6 maps leading them to obscure locations. One user said the maps tried putting their car into a golf cart path, and later into a lake. Another consumer expressed their confusion in the poor maps. They wrote that Apple bought the data from Tomtom, which was incredibly accurate so they weren't sure how Apple maps became so messed up. One frustrated consumer compared their frustrations to the bumper stickers from the 80's that read "Don't follow me, I'm lost too." They suggested the bumper sticker now read "Don't follow me, I'm using Apple Maps."

Users said that the iPad mini was nothing more than a shortened version of the iPad, despite Apple claiming it is a completely different product. Comparitively, Google's Nexus 7 manages extrodinary battery life even with the inclusion of NVIDIA's Tegra 3 processor.

#### *Apple's Negative Feedback for Brand Loyalty*

A large trend that appeared with negative comments in Apple's brand loyalty was that people thought Apple users were just buying into the cult of the brand, saying their loyalty was just ignorance. One commenter said that they were not willing to pay ridiculous amounts of money for a logo. Another person said that people have started treating it like a religion. One commenter said that Apple leads their followers to believe that they are part of an exclusive community. The commenter said that users thought if they became a PC user that they would become a clinically obese, old person and that they would loose their street cred. One blogger wrote that because Apple's market is small, people will talk to other Apple users when they have a problem creating a sense of community which builds their loyalty to Apple.



On one commentary board for an article on Apple's brand loyalty, a writer said that brand loyalty can be seen as a luxury for those who are not price sensitive. The author thought that Apple's loyal fan base were less price sensitive, therefore allowing the option of opting out for shopping around while replacing a product, which the author felt most people would do. One person said that Apple is an indie kids dream; Apple has always been the underdog in the computing market, meaning people feel like their going against the grain when they buy the product, making them want to be loyal because they feel like their in an exclusive club.

One commenter wrote that Apple creates a community where once you buy an Apple product they have you locked in because only their own products are compatible with each other. The author implied that brand loyalty is a must once an Apple product is owned. Another commenter chimed in saying that Android, Windows Phone and Blackberry all had a common format which allowed relatively easy migration between ecosystems but Apple users were also locked in. Another commenter makes on the issue that people were loyal to Apple because they viewed themselves as a minority to be picked on by the bigger Windows bullies which is why they are so committed to Apple.

#### *Apple's Positive Feedback for Brand Loyalty*

While researching Apple's brand loyalty, many links appeared on forum walls that demonstrated the phenomenon of the company. Reading further gave a clear understanding of why people would get tattoos of the recognizable Apple on the back of their skull, on their arms, painted on their cars. Apple users seem to be extremely passionate about their brand, and similarly PC company users seem to strongly disagree with Apple, their users and their obsession to be loyal. It was interesting to see blog forums where people chose sides, making arguments for

Apple's success in contrast to people who thought Apple followers were just blindly following. One blogger wrote that they did not understand why some people get so upset about others enjoying Apple products. In turn, a blogger started defending the idea that he was just a blind loyalist (many bloggers on this particular forum started accusing loyalists as "blind loyalists", just following like lemmings). The writer said that people like knowing they are buying good products and they take comfort in buying quality products. To add to that, he said that people were hyped about the iPhone before it came out not just because of blind loyalty but because of the relief a good product ensures. Another commenter agreed and said that people are only loyal because they make products they don't need to tinker with the product, they have good resale value, are easy to upgrade and have a long lifespan. A trend that appeared was that Apple users were not 'blindly following,' rather they were extremely aware and thankful for their Apple products. One writer said that their whole family had tons of Apple products, and they were glad for Apple's good design. One user even said that he regretted not having more loyalty. He was an Apple user and then switched to another company, and now regrets the product he has.

Commenters defended statements that said their loyalty was only because Apple locked them in. One person wrote that people would prefer to have updated modern technology which Apple provided. Another Apple user said they also preferred far lower power use also. Apple users also contested that they were not locked in with their buying choice, because their music purchased on iTunes could easily be installed into their iRiver HDD player without any hassle. Apple fans in every area of the five altercasting fields agreed that Apple does not have that many issues with the products. One person said that media takes little issues with Apple, which every

company has and blows them up out of proportion. He ensured that his loyalty was just because of the great product.

### *Apple's Prices*

#### *Users that Believe Apple is Worth the Price*

While reading the research on why Apple wasn't worth their prices it was interesting to read people's comments and response to the negative findings. Many Apple users defend the product, through their personal experience and defense of the operating system. Articles implied that Apple users were buying into the design and buying Apple because it was popular but much of the commentary showed that people were willing to pay the price because the value of the product outshone PC products.

Many users said that they can hold on to MACs top quality construction for several years, or on the other hand spend \$2000 every year to keep replacing the new "flimsy plastic or iron clad laptop" as one commenter wrote. One commenter said that his workplace uses HP laptops and replace them within three years, making them not worth the cheaper price. To add to that, users contended that the PC computers cause viruses far more than MACS do have to allocate in the time worth dealing with all the virus software. It was seconded by many commenters that being virus free was worth the additional \$600 price difference. One blogger stated that the total cost of ownership was more with the PC because it was not uncommon for there to be annual support costs that are higher than the purchase price of the item. Another blogger compared the hardware updates that would be necessary on a PC to the Frankenstein nature of the hardware that needs repairs.

One user wrote back to Wildstrom's article in the Bloomberg BusinessWeek that there was no doubt that Dell and many other PC laptops are cheaper, but the value of their product is significantly cheaper too. That user testified from their personal experience of owning a MAC for seven years and said that PC laptops crash and break down much less than MACS. He recalled that he could only count on one hand the number of times that his MAC had frozen. This user also said that the value of Apple's customer service added to the value of owning the product. His experience with a HP Notebook was so "appalling" that he would never go back. After spending four hours on the phone because of a setup issue he had, he connected to a person that was supposed to be a specialist on the Notebook, who didn't even know what the computer's ports were for. He concluded by saying he switched to Apple which was easy to setup, and had quick and efficient customer service something that would never happen with PC companies and that makes Apple worth the price. Readers agreed that MACs operating system is stable, fast, and problem-free compared to VISTA. Apple is also more versatile; if for whatever reason you need Windows, you can still download that on a MAC, whereas you cannot download OS on a PC.

One user said that he would switch back to a PC if OS X were capable of running on non-Apple hardware. He acknowledged that he could buy osx86 hackintosh but that a hacked together system was not what he wanted to be relying on. This user did not seem too impressed with Apple, but he did admit that the operating system was worth the value of owning the MAC.

One user summed it up really well. He said that Apple's OS operating system was superior but because there are so many budget cuts in America, that it is easier for many to look the 30-50% savings and convenience of going with the PC route. This user said that Americans tend to be short-term thinkers and optimists, so since money will be saved at the beginning often

does make people choose the PC over the MAC OS operating system, no matter how great it may be. He said that with huge budget cuts like the one to school districts, he would recommend PC for education.

One user said that he traded in his MAC every two years and got back half of what he paid for it. He dared readers to try that to a Dell and see how much they would get back. He said that the negative articles failed to see the overall picture of purchasing with Apple. The new MacBooks have a solid, and according to the reader virtually indestructible uni-body aluminum housing that makes them far more valuable than a Dell which is not as sturdy and resistant to bumps and bangs that can even shut down a PC. He said that if he tried to pick a thin and light (and sturdy) alternative similar to the MacBook he would end up paying more.

Many users also preferred the iPhone over any other touch phone because of the well designed phone. Users said that if price was a big deal, it was an acceptable purchase to get refurbished.

The overall trend from consumers about Apple's expensive pricing was that the value of the product was significantly more. The consensus was that the TCO on MACS was cheaper when viruses are factors in the build of the PC, the superior operating system, the value of the customer service, the quickness of their products, the trade in value and the life expectancy. Users would rather choose the experience of the MAC rather to the cheaper price of the PC. It is easy to operate, little time is spent on fighting bugs and Apple already comes with a software program that does not require spending additional money and time installing. It could be summed up by saying, "Once you go Mac, you never go back."

### *Users that Believe Apple is Not Worth the Price*

Just like users defended the Apple product, many PC users offered a defense for why their PC was better. One of the biggest trends from the commenters was that PC will do mostly everything MAC can do. They use the same hardware and had many of the same software failures.

The PC users said that the viruses weren't a big deal and that they could be easily fixed. One user said that viruses are easily avoidable and advocated for the "common sense while surfing the web." One user estimated that 99% of the time a virus infected his PC it was just user error. Some people said that if the user is concerned about viruses then they can just move to a Linux based operating system which can be installed right over Windows and won't cause problems. Additionally it's a free, open-source operating system.

Some users said that they get games on their PC which MAC does not offer and they pay cheaper prices but have a larger screen. Many users agreed that you are just purchasing a logo and that Apple users just like the brand name. People agreed that MAC users paid more for a fashion statement and "exclusivity." A recurring theme was that people thought the Apple cult was a bit much. One user humorously explained his fear of the Apple store. He said he was afraid he would be abducted by aliens everytime he went in because of the weird sci-fi vibe it gave out.

A frustration that PC users had about using MACs was that they had to buy all new hardware, because Apple is only compatible with Apple. For example, their Windows based wireless printers would have to be switched to an Apple printer meaning additional costs. Every part of Apple products is an additional cost, set by Apple creating more problems for users. One

blogger wrote about frustrations with having to purchase an AC adapter cord- which was \$80 whereas it is only \$20 for a windows AC adapter. The camera went out next on this bloggers MAC and he said that cost \$300-\$400 when it was no longer under warranty. Next the CD/ DVD drive broke and that cost about \$500 to replace. The parts of fixing an Apple were too expensive for him. One user dispelled the argument that MACs are more secure. They were talking about the hacker conference they had attended previously, where everybody had a good laugh when they talked about the rumor that MACs were more secure. They said that the speaker had total control of a MAC in twenty seconds.

Some users said that the screen hinges on Apple were not secure. Some people were frustrated with MACS screen which can wiggle or bounce when typing or whenever the user moved. Another recurring trend, and just like the trend that appeared in the debate over why MACS are better, many people thought that MACS did not last longer than PCs and that they had to be continually replaced.

Many users bashed the iPhone because of the attached additional cost of the expensive monthly price. Many other phones have the same functionality but require the owner to additionally pay more for the carrying plan each month on top of the initial price. It also did not make sense to many people to upgrade to the iPhone 5 for a higher price rather than just keep with the older version.

#### *IV. Apple's Customer Service*

Apple is committed to creating a great product, which at times does fail, whether a deficiency or user problem they offer Apple care, where "Geniuses" as they are called are ready

to help, repair and answer questions. In an interesting bout of mixed reviews, consumers wrote about their experience with Apple, not holding anything back.

### *Apple's Users with Positive Customer Service Experience*

It says a lot when people write about their good experiences, given the tendency of many to complain. What was interesting to read was that countless people raved about their Apple customer service. Many people spoke about how professional their Apple care was and how convenient and fast their experience was.

People raved about how quick Apple's service was. It was often noted that there were not long lines and that products came quickly while ordering online. One blogger wrote about how an iPhone unfortunately came dented in the mail, and after he called the store Apple overnighted a new phone. He later showed his approval by saying that that is what Apple is known for, their exceptional customer service.

Many users felt cared for and respected when talking about their positive experiences. For example, one user used Apple Chat for questions about their iPhone and instead of what they thought was just going to be a programmed system that they have to follow was a surprisingly helpful technician that went out of their way to find out the issue. The consumer was sent to a link which was very helpful and answered his questions, and when he finished reading the tech support kept typing in more answers of ways to help. The user felt that they did not just find an article and send it to get rid of the person, rather they went out of their way to fix the problem.

Positive experiences included people that dropped their Apple product and had it replaced right away without questions asked. People are very impressed with their remote help. People loved calling in and receiving help without having to leave their home. One user compared their



Apple support to HP's support. Whenever they called HP, they could tell the employees were just reading off of a script, but when they called Apple they reached genuine people who were knowledgeable and cared about their issues. One user said that she never felt like she was annoying the worker when she called, unlike many places she had previously talked to for customer help.

### *Apple Users with Negative Customer Experience*

What was very odd while researching Apple's customer service, was that it seemed there were two different Apple stores. There was a huge number of people writing their compliments towards Apple, but there were also quite a few people who had frustrations with Apple.

When people were upset by Apple's customer service, it seemed to be at policy rather than a person that didn't treat them well. For example, one customer was upset when his friend happened to buy him an iTunes giftcard accidentally instead of an Apple giftcard. While trying to return the gift card he was extremely frustrated about it because the manager of the store said it was policy that he could not return it.

Specific situations rather than an overall trend appeared while researching the people that did not like Apple's customer service. One blogger complained about calling Apple and being sent to an appointment 50 miles away and not being helped when they got to the store. One user was annoyed that his Apple ID was disabled, and when he went on Apple chat he got referred to three different specialists. In addition, one user said his Apple tv was having problems, and after waiting half an hour on the phone with Apple they just said there had been streaming issues in some locations. The writer said that he would never buy Apple again and that their customer service was really going downhill. One consumer said he kept getting emails from his iTunes

issues, and that the emails were from people that did not speak English very well. The blogger wrote that each email was an ESL template that would not answer his question that well. To add to that, the consumer wasn't able to download a movie that they charged him for until two weeks after he had already paid for it. He concluded by saying he wasn't sure if they understood him, or if they just did not care. Another situation was when a consumer's iPhone 4s camera stopped working. The user took the phone to the Apple store when the Genius took it to his repair room in the back of the store and when he came out he declared that it had water damage (although he had never spilled water on his phone). The user was extremely upset claiming that the Genius spilled water on it to frame him. The store manager then said no matter how long he stayed in the store, there was nothing they could do to help him since it was his fault for spilling water on it. One writer said how frustrating it was because she lived several hours from the Apple store, and she just wanted phone support rather than have to drive the distance to have a question answered. In one extreme case, one consumer was even trying to take Apple to small claims court for their frustration with customer service.

Some consumers went to blogs writing about how frustrated they were that they had to pay for Apple care, after the initial year of having a product when the coverage wore out. Many people said that if customers did not pay for phone support than Apple is not willing to talk to you, even to provide an estimate. In addition, a user was frustrated because their iCloud would not sync with their system unless they paid a hostage fee. A large trend that showed up when reading comments on was how people are frustrated with their service is that people hated paying the additional fee for extra help. They felt that if they paid the high price to own an Apple product, then they should have free support.

Several writers expressed their concern that Apple was going downhill. One wrote that he had always been a huge supporter of Apple but since it was passed on from Steve Jobs felt that the care for customers and the importance that they put on them has significantly weakened. One customer said that in the last 5 months they have noticed customer service especially weaken. One user said that the more growth they sustained the harder it would be to maintain such quality service.

#### *Reviews on Apple's Environmentally Friendly Practices*

Consumers appreciated Apple's efforts in their commitment to have environmentally friendly practices. One user said that no product is perfect and that all companies used adhesive in their products which is the problem. The issue of adhesive being used in products was a hot topic that many consumers used against Apple. However, this user really appreciated Apple's commitment to using fewer resources. They said that Apple's prices were higher up front but that it cost less over the lifespan of the product and that the recyclable materials would be able to be recovered at the end of the lifespan, making the product worth it. In addition, one consumer said that they had Apple products for years and the fact that it did not need to continually be replaced meant that it was helping with the environment. One concerned customer pointed out the fact that people often assume Apple is flippant with their design, which is not the case. Apple designs typically last 3-5 years on the market- and PC makers typically take two years to replicate those designs. The writer said that although Apple may be getting criticisms for their practices, and although some say their products are less serviceable today, everyone will be doing it by 2015.

People agreed that it is not easy being green and that Apple was doing the best they could. One user said that he thought Apple gluing in the battery was a great weight loss and

space saver for the MacBook Air. He said that it can be removed with a screwdriver to pry it lose. Another consumer defended Apple stepping on the myth that Apple withdrew because they did not want their Retina MacBook Pro to be certified. The writer said that Apple was already certified, and that they probably did not want to pay a fee to be a member of an organization when they could handle the regulations on their own. In addition, a happy consumer was impressed with Apple's recycling program- saying that was more than most other companies had.

A recurring trend that appeared in debate forums is that many people that were pro-Apple's environmental practices did not think that the removal of EPEAT was even a good representation of Apple's commitment to the environment. Debates often arose in commentaries that made it obvious who was pro-Apple versus who was pro-PC company. One debater said that people complain about Apple not listening to their customers, but then when Apple rejoins the registry people get mad when they do listen to their customers. One user posited out that many people didn't even know what EPEAT was until Apple removed themselves and press blew up the story.

#### *Consumers that Don't think Apple is Environmentally Friendly*

One of the biggest upsets for Apple's environmentally friendly followers was their decision to remove themselves from the EPEAT. One user said that they would start rethinking their loyalty to Apple because of their statement with the removal. One consumer said that the toxins used to make modern products need to be significantly diminished and that Apple needs to make sure their products are not leached into the environment after improper disposal.

A frustrated writer said that the backstory to Apple is greed. Fasteners could be used instead of gluing in components to the computer but they stopped being used because it was

cheaper. Apple switched to be able to charge a premium price for a worse, glued together product. The user felt bad for every person that bought the devices with retina where these practices were used. The consumer also believed that EPEAT dropped them, instead of Apple removing themselves. Another consumer believed that Apple dropped out because they thought they would make more money if they could make their products using glue and thinner products. However, Apple quickly responded that it was clear that they would make less money when the government and individuals did not want to buy their product without the EPEAT rated approval. The writer said that Apple was dumb for making such an obvious mistake and that it was public knowledge that various governments have policies where they will not buy equipment unless it is EPEAT rated.

In addition to the glued in parts, another consumer added that Apple products were difficult to repair and not recyclable because of the screws/ bits used to secure the cases, and that certain components were being soldered. Some people started agreeing that Apple's "go green" practices were all just a scam to gain more buyers. One person even suspected that Apple didn't actually care about going green; but that they saw their own green initiative; one where removing themselves from the list hurt their dollars. A concerned consumer wrote that Apple was taking a good step, but there is still the issue of where the material is made. Apple's products are largely made in other countries and the consumer is concerned that environmental regulations are non-existent and things like open pit strip mining to obtain raw materials and energy to produce Apple's products still have to be factored in. The consumer said that some certificate hanging on a wall would not change what is being done to the damage natural supplies.

## Chapter 5. Conclusion for Apple's Up-To- Date Technology

Summary: This conclusion section notes the overall trends and patterns that Apple has with the five roles of altercasting. It deduces how good of a job Apple does in the five categories. It draws results through the rhetorical analysis section. The conclusion section reveals what Apple is doing well and what they need to work on in their altercasting.

Customers have been thrust into a role that no other generation has needed to fulfill. It is a role that they did not have much say in, and there is not much control over. A role that they did not necessarily choose for themselves is the role that they must be up-to-date with the newest technology. The 21st century consumer has seen so many transformations in technology in the last ten years that there is not much of an option for the consumer. The transformation of the email, smartphones, and even more advanced laptops leaves the working person at a place where they will either fall immensely behind or where they must adopt and learn the new technology.

If there was a company that set the standard and changed the direction of technology, there is no surprise that Apple is leading the way, with few competitors close behind. Apple sets the standard for the actual technology, for the design and for the price at which the industry standard will be sold. It is clear that E-Machines, Daewoo and Future Power copied many aspects of the iMac to their PC. To add to that, Myriad products and the Sonos Digital Music System seem to have copied the iPod. Even Motorola changed their emphasis on design which was said to have shown in the Razor. LG's Chocolate followed the trend of emphasis on technology's design. The whole technology world has been impacted by Apple's trendsetting habits which is seen in every aspect of the company.

Apple has demonstrated the popularity of their new technology on opening days. The long lines, the wait for product, and the buzz on the release days does not compare to the new release of any other product at a PC company. Research showed that there were several reasons why someone would get new technology. One of the reasons proved to be that people wanted to gain the technology to serve an active need that they had in their life. Apple proved time and time again to be the answer to people's technology problems. The iPod allowed a greater amount of music to be downloaded, iTunes allowed people to have a collective library of music, the iPhone allowed for the best mobile experience and the iPad provided a portable technology source.

Apple not only continually kept coming out with its own new technology, but set a standard that no one in the industry could beat. No other PC's could keep their retail stores going, no other technology could make a solid profit margin selling at prices higher than Apple. The fact that Apple even ended up suing different companies because of the way they copied Apple's designs speaks volumes to how they were the brand on top that everyone followed.

Apple put customer in a role that told them they need to be up to date and that they need to buy their product in order to fulfill their role as a 21 Century consumer. That customer in the twenty-first century technology role says that they need to have the latest technology, that they need to be proficient and up-to-date and that they need to have the most style with their technology. Another area of research proved that the 21 century American felt they needed to fulfill was the need to be up-to-date with social media. Apple plays into this because they were the first phone to make it easiest to put Twitter, Facebook and Skype on your iPhone. The fact

that 25% of smartphones are Apple shows how successful the company has been at dominating the industry.

To conclude, Apple successfully put the public in a role where they feel that they must have Apple products to succeed at work, socially and in relationships. Apple proved itself to be the most up-to-date with technology, where they set the standard for the industry to follow. Millions of consumers fulfilled the role they were cast into, and because Apple consecutively stood at the top as the most up to date technology company, it worked for their branding, their profit, and their rapport and public image helping to further move them to the leader.

#### *Conclusion for Apple's Brand Loyalty*

If there was a secret weapon that Apple had, it would certainly be the way they cast their audience into being loyal. Apple has made this image that once their customer is an Apple owner they have arrived. They have joined the secret society. They speak a language the rest of the world doesn't understand. They can now walk more confidently, become smarter, their issues are issues the other technological companies don't know how to fix. They have finally made it, and let's face it: they basically experienced all this earth has to offer. This may be an exaggeration, but quite frankly its not. Apple has done an award winning job at making their consumers feel like they are part of something big when they buy Apple. Apple has had such loyal customers, so that they barely have to advertise anymore. There is so much word of mouth publicity from loyal fans that carries the company. There was buzz for months before the iPhone 5 came out, so much so that everyone without an iPhone must have been annoyed, much less users that didn't own a Smartphone.



People have complained about Apple's users just blindly following the brand...but either way, Apple doesn't care. Apple has successfully built a huge fan base that is committed to buying their product. The comments people left about Apple followers just following because it is a brand and image they are buying into may be partially true. Apple has done such a great job building an image for themselves that people really do want to be part of it. They almost handle their product like it has super powers. In the blog forums that researched what the public thought about Apple, hundreds upon hundreds of people defended their product- and that's the way it has been for years. Apple has so successfully and carefully built their image up that people want to be part of it. And not so coincidentally, people usually don't switch back to their old brands. What seems to happen is that Apple does a great job at altercasting in other areas, and once people have bought into the phenomenon they don't want to switch. People genuinely love the quality of their Apple products. Yes, people are right in that Apple users may blindly buy their products, but they are no fools when they are stuck with their product. For the most part, they are genuinely happy, satisfied customers. This brand loyalty gets them excited about products months before it comes out, it has them standing in lines for hours. For the most part, they will defend and sometimes even argue about the superiority of what they own. Other technology company owners may mock, but it is clearly what has propelled Apple's brand, and what will continue to propel it into the next generation.

#### *Conclusion for for Apple's Prices*

Consumers today, especially with the recession and nationwide budget cuts feel a sense of needing to be more responsible and tightening the wallet while shopping. Consumers feel that it is their role to prioritize how they spend their money, why they spend their money and on what

spend their money on. With so much competition amongst top technology companies, and so many options, it makes the consumer face option after option about everything from design, to storage capabilities, to software preferences and programs and ultimately to brands.

Apple is full aware that their customers care about prices, however they have taken a different route. In this ever increasing recession, Apple boldly chose not to lower prices. Their competitors will sell their brand 30-50% cheaper. However, what Apple has chosen to do is to put the consumer in a role where they should care about value, and factor that in as the overall pricing for mApple products.

Apple does everything to the best of their ability. They have nearly perfected the art of customer service. Almost every single report on Apple's customer service is positive. Comment after comment compared Apple to other brands where they would be on the phone for hours, and then get some person who either didn't know what they were talking about or who could have cared less for their technological problems. On the other hand, Apple considers the way that they treat their customers as part of the value of delivering a product. Apple is the safehaven home when customers have questions or concerns. Apple strives to include the best Apple care that they can meaning their service increases the value of the product. When compared to other technological companies, a product decreased the value because they were just another number, they didn't feel special while purchasing, rather they felt like they were only cared for because of the cash they brought in with them. This decreases the value of an overall product.

Apple also manufactures the best product making it more valuable. Consider for instance, the MAC verses PC debate. Although there were many debates from bloggers and users about which was a better product, something that both PC and MACS users agreed upon was that

MACs OS operating system could not be beat. Their software was top of the line, most efficient, offered a number of innovative and helpful software programs and outdid Windows. A continual debate was if OS was worth the price tag, but the majority of people did agree that their operating system was top of the line.

Apple products are worth more money when selling it back several years after the purchase date. This adds value. Another thing that people continually agreed upon is that Apple gets significantly less viruses. So many PC users defended their computers and talked about anti-bug software that was easy to install. However the fact of the matter is that Apple users rarely ever complain about spam or viruses appearing. MACS are capable of getting them, but rarely do. The time spent fighting off viruses, installing software to stop it, taking it in to the shop to be fixed all the while spending extra money on this time consuming problem significantly decreases the value of the product.

Apple manufactures the best design. A jab that people kept making at Apple was that people just buy Apple for their style and design. This adds value to the Apple product. People want to be seen with Apple. When the updated iPhone comes out, it is cool to be seen with it. So many companies have started copying Apple for their new look.

One thing that has deterred users and works in some cases to lower the value of Apple is the compatibility issues. Because Apple products run on their completely separate operating system is means that it has a hard time being compatible with PCs. Many businesses said it would prefer to have something compatible where they are guaranteed it would work, especially in high profile positions where giving a presentation flawlessly is essential. MACS and other Apple products do not easily interact with each other, and since Apple is newer it has turned

people away. A user has to completely relearn their computer skills when they switch to Apple products, which in some cases, lowers the value of the products because people (older generation in particular) are not willing to make the switch. In addition, you can only buy Apple products which are expensive. An AC adapter will only work with for a MAC if it's a MAC AC adapter. Because they operate as a sort of industry monopoly amongst themselves they are able to jack the prices up. However, in some cases this helps to add value to Apple because people sometimes see it as an elite club. Apple has set the technological trend for several years and because it is top of the line, and not everybody has one does work to add value to the product, especially amongst the younger generation. This really is twofold, because some people are frustrated with having to learn a new system, whereas some like it because they feel like they've "arrived" and joined the elite.

Both Apple products and the products of other technology companies are manufactured in China. However, Apple raises their prices- but they also raise their value. When one buys from Apple, they will have better customer experience, top notch technology and design which is setting the standard, you are gaining social status and they are being seen as "keeping up to date" which not only helps socially but professionally as well and you face less viruses infecting your technology which saves money and time down the road. When they buy from other technological companies they have a much easier time being compatible, a consumer doesn't have to learn anything new, and the consumer pays significantly less money for the product.

The conclusion is that Apple provides more value in their price. Yes, the price is expensive, but the customer has a quality product from a quality brand. Apple casts their consumers into the role that the price is worth of the product. Apple has used the advantage that

this generation requires to be technologically savvy, where there is a huge importance on technology; saying they have the best quality product. Customers pay more, but they will be more satisfied.

### *Conclusion for Apple's Customer Service*

Customers want to feel wanted. They want to feel like their time, their hard earned money, their questions and their concerns are validated. Customers want to be cared for when they walk in to a store, when they purchase the product, when they leave the store, and just as importantly they want to feel that they are cared for when they take the product home, and throughout the life of the product they want support from the company. The customer wants to be able to call the store or walk back in the store where they bought the product and be able to ask questions and feel that they can be helped and cared for with their questions.

While researching the Apple company, it quickly became clear that there was more to Apple than the latest technology, the coolest design and latest fad. There was well-developed, well-planned and brilliant strategy that has created customer loyalty. Apple stood out time and time again as a company that had more behind it than just a brand looking for money. Until recently, everything that Apple stood for pointed back to one person, Steve Jobs. One of Jobs' most brilliant feats was making Apple a company committed to quality customer service. Apple does one of the arguably best jobs at customer service, and this is a major reason to why Apple has skyrocketed to the top as one of the most successful brands. There is limited research that yields evidence of negative customer service from Apple. Bad reviews about Apple that are found are almost exclusively in other aspects of the company, such as price, environmental

practices or small tweaks that could be made about their product barely anything is found on Apple's poor customer service.

Jobs spent significant time studying the brands and companies that had the best customer service as the time. By researching and learning from the Ritz Carlton, it allowed Jobs to glean from the best and not repeat the same mistakes that some of the other companies had.

Apple has established convenience for the customer. With over 300 stores around the world, Apple had proven their loyalty to bringing the best service in every way possible. One of the best ways they provide their service is with convenience. They offer online, and party retailers and stores. The fact that they have their workers going around with iPads ready to ring out their customers shows they are committed to making it the best experience. This sort of service is virtually incomparable. When researching other PC companies it became quickly obvious that the companies value profit but they have not put in the effort to establish a relationship with their customer. They have not tried to form a bond, and they certainly have not developed the service support that is available to the Apple customer.

Apple offers numerous outlets to support the customer. They have proven that they sell more than a product. The Apple consumer knows that they are not alone whenever their technology questions arise. Apple's customer service makes the consumer believe that they are not only buying a product, but they are investing in the value of the company. It is very telling that Apple has consecutively scored highest on the University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index.

Jobs set a standard for Apple where he not only attracted customers that had a standard for their needs but he set a standard for the way Apple would deal with their own internal faults.

Like every business, Apple made mistakes but they proved themselves to care for their customers even through their public blunders. Apple's switch in price with the iPhone only two months after the release caused so much uproar that could have potentially caused terrible publicity. However Apple implemented the same amount of care that they have shown in the good times and they cared for the needs of the customers. Apple is quick to admit their mistakes and own up to their blunders, doing everything that can to console their loyal customers. Apple not only admits their mistakes but they also pay for compensation to make it up to their customers.

One of Apple's strongest assets was the way that Steve Jobs established Apple's customer service. As a company that started out studying other companies model of customer service, Apple's rank stands as one of the absolute best of this generation; a company that will now be studied by other companies for their excellent service.

Customers are in the role where they feel that they need to care about customer service, and the way they will be treated. They realize that there is so much competition within industries that they truly have the power to choose a brand that treats them well. The role of customer service is possibly one of the hardest roles to fill for a brand because they have to get every employee, every cash register clerk, every door greeter, every IT person on board but Apple does it and has mastered the art of it. Apple puts their customers in a role where they feel appreciated, helped, cared for and respected. Apple is not perfect by any means, but their customer service is so outstanding that it makes up for other areas of the company that may be lacking. Customer Service at Apple puts the consumer in a role where they feel obligated to fulfill the role of buying their product and becoming part of the family at Apple.

*Conclusion for Apple's Environmentally Friendly standards*

There has been a huge push for the consumer today to care about where they spend their money, and to know exactly how the practices of the company they buy from are carried out. There was a time when recycling and caring about the environment was for a select amount of people that cared. Now, it is not only a helpful thing to do, but it is socially unacceptable not to do it and has become a societal movement. The consumer has been cast into the role where they must care for the earth and they must be aware of the practices of the companies' products that they are buying. Just as customers have turned to companies to choose where they want to shop, more and more companies have also turned to environmentally sustainable practices that promote the earth and recycling.

This is one of Apple's more controversial aspects of their company. Unlike customer service, and being the leader and industry standard for up-to-date technology, Apple gets mixed reviews on the successful execution of environmental practices. Different reviewers have said Apple is great at their environmental practices, while others say they are terrible and their products are not safe for the environment at all.

Some reviews declared that Apple has the hardest technology to take apart with regular tools and some have stated that what they put in their products, such as their glued in batteries that harms the environment. However, no one can argue with the EpEAT's review, which states that Apple has consecutively topped the charts for every product they have launch. The only question that arose while researching on EpEAT's was the peculiar fact that Apple has been on the top of the list for so many years but Apple also had partnered with EpEAT to set the rules and standards for the list. It does leave the audience questioning why Apple is setting the standard, if they're always on the top.



In addition, Apple was also the first company in their industry to report comprehensive calculations for their total carbon footprint. That alone shows their dedication to advancing their environmental practices. It also allows the chance for the public to judge their practices fairly. Apple's transparency in their practices has demonstrated their resolve. Apple has increasingly gotten better throughout the years with their practices. Because Apple decreased their greenhouse gas admissions 15.4 percent since 2008, Apple demonstrated their care to the environment. Apple also goes out of their way to collect consumers old computers and recycle them- which only costs them money.

It will always be hard to please everyone, so although Apple's environmental practices have not always been perfect, they have shown that they are making great progress, that they care about the environment and that they have the best practices in the industry. Saving the environment is not an easy task, but Apple is making strides to help, and that is evident to the customer. Apple has really allowed the customer to feel comfortable buying their product because of their initiative to help the environment. Because of Apple's dedication to this area, customers feel that they can fulfill the role they have been cast into, where they should care about the environment when buying from Apple.

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