**Introduction**

In the comedy movie *Grandma’s Boy* the main character is Alex Covert a 35 year old who gave up his accounting career to become a video game tester. The movie revolves around Alex being kicked out of his old apartment and moving in with his grandma and her two roommates. All the while trying to hide the fact he is living with his grandma from his quirky co-workers. Alex works for a gaming company, Brainasium, which is currently trying to finalize the production of their newest game Eternal Death Slayer 3. So the company brings in extra help from another agency, Samantha, to ensure the release of the game stays on track. With the trouble of a space cadet CEO, Mr. Cheezle, and a teenage prodigy video game designer, J.P., Alex struggles to balance work and family life,

**Questions & Answers**

**Question 1.** How was the “business world” portrayed… in a positive light, negative light, neutral, etc.?

In the movie *Grandma’s Boy* the company Brainasium is shown in a negative light. It is run by Mr. Cheezle, the CEO, who shows no interest in his company’s work throughout the movie. He is shown most of the time slacking off meditating, or holding tea parties in his office. It is also known that he smokes marijuana by his fellow employees. Mr. Cheezle hires Amanda to take over the preparation of Eternal Death Slayer 3, instead of taking on the responsibility on his own he hires someone to do his job. This gives businesses a bad portrayal of the CEO’s and other top dogs in today’s companies. It alludes that the CEO of companies does not take responsibility or do anything that actually helps the company.

**Question 2.** Choose 3 specific ethical dilemmas.
Briefly describe how the issue was portrayed.

How was the issue resolved, if at all?

How should the issue have been resolved in your opinion? What would you have done in that situation?

- J.P. stole Alex’s game and claimed he had made it himself.
  - Since the beginning of the movie we see Alex working on his own creation of a new video game called Demonik. His grandma has been watching him and helping him create the new video game throughout the movie. But at the end of the movie J.P., the prodigy gamer, comes to his CEO with the same exact game Alex had been working on, and claiming he had created it himself.
  - The issue was resolved by the CEO having them have a ‘game-off’ where they would compete to see who could beat the game, because that is how they would prove they had made it. But Alex was not able to play so his grandma steps in and plays for him and beats the game proving that Alex is the true creator of Demonik.
  - If I was Alex in this situation, first off I would not trust anyone at my work to not steal my creation so if I had created a new game I would go get a trademark with my name on it. And if I were the CEO in this situation I would have not actually had a ‘game-off’ and have the two compete to beat the game. That to me seems pretty trivial. Although whoever did create the game should be able to beat it, J.P. is a video game prodigy and would easily be able to figure out how to beat the game. I would have made them go to a court and battle out the rights to the game there, I would not take charge to decide who made it and who is lying.
- All of the employees smoke marijuana on a regular basis.
  - Throughout the movie the theme of marijuana is constantly repeated. From the opening scene through the last shot of the movie. And it is not just the video game testers who are smoking. The CEO, Mr. Cheezle smokes, and also the hired help, Amanda, smokes marijuana and also all of the video game testers’ smoke in the film. What makes it even worse is that they all smoke together in many scenes. The only person in the movie we know does not smoke marijuana is J.P., and he is portrayed a dork or a nerd. Besides the face that the drug is illegal, it is unethical to be working under the influence of any drug, including alcohol.
  - The issue is never resolved in the movie. Because of the upper management’s engagement in the recreational use of marijuana it is never brought up as an issue in the movie.
  - If this was my own company and I knew my employees were doing drugs I would start giving out random drug tests every few months. I personally think that it should stay an illegal drug. Because it does so much harm to the user and it alters their mind and personality when they are using it. I believe that the first way to resolve this problem would be to fire Mr. Cheezle. After seeing his character a few times in the movie you can really tell he is a worthless CEO for the business. After that I would make all employees understand and get a copy of the company’s policy on doing drugs and drinking.

- Alex and Amanda develop a relationship.
  - The issue begins right away in the first ten minutes of the movie. Amanda and Alex meet and instantly have a connection. As the movie goes on it is obvious to all of the
coworkers that there is something between Alex and Amanda. Alex’s coworkers poke fun at him and joke around, but never state that they have an outright problem with him and her having a connection. But by the end of the movie their relationship hinders the progress of the release of Eternal Death Slayer 3.

- By the end of the movie their relationship is up in the air. We do not know what is going to happen next if they will continue to date, or if their relationship will end with the launch of Eternal Death Slayer 3.

- Although most companies have a list of rules as far as dating coworkers. Brainasium obviously does not. If I were the CEO in this case, I would definitely have a talk with both Amanda and Alex and let them know that they have two options, to either end their relationship, or to have Amanda leave this project but continue dating. It is unfair and unethical to other coworkers for there to be a romantic relationship between a coworker and upper management. Although they can claim they will not treat them any different than any other coworker most of the time they are going to be less harsh on someone they have a romantic relation with.

**Question 3.** Briefly list any other marketing ethics issues that were portrayed.

In the movie many sponsored products appeared, the most prevalent being Vitamin Water. It is seen in a lot of the background shots and all around the office in the movie. I personally as a representative of Vitamin Water which basis it’s brand on being healthy and good, would not agree to sponsor a movie that is revolving around sex, drugs, and alcohol. Although it may reach some of their target market, the movie does not portray a good, healthy image that I would want my company to have.
Question 4. Overall, what did you learn from this exercise?

From doing this exercise it made me realize that even comedy movies, like Grandma’s Boy, they have real life issues that businesses and marketers have to deal with on a daily basis. It makes me think about my ethics, and what kind of company I will want to work for when I graduate. I would definitely not want to work for a company like Brainasium. I will want to work for a company that has moral and ethical standards they hold for all of their employees. I want to say that most companies in the United States are not like the one portrayed in this movie, but I am sure there are some companies that do have horrible CEOs that do not do their job, and employees who dabble in experimental drugs on a regular basis, etc. I just hope that I can find a job that fits my morals and personal beliefs.

Reference: