

The Power of Advertising

Advertising plays an important role in influencing our behavior as consumers. Many of our everyday decisions about what product to buy are influenced by the ads we see and hear. By learning more about advertising and by being aware of the techniques used by advertisers to persuade us to buy a certain product or behave in a certain way, we will be less likely to be persuaded to do something we might not ordinarily choose to do.

The Purpose of Advertising

The purpose of advertising is to sell products—to persuade us to buy their products. Some ads are deceptive. They deliberately mislead potential buyers by presenting information that may be at least partially inaccurate, by presenting accurate information in such a way that they are able to play down the weaknesses of the product and play up its strengths, or by greatly exaggerating the truth. Many advertisers are so effective that they often make us want their product without our being aware of the fact that they have persuaded us.

Key Points

If you keep in mind these key points about advertising, you will be less likely to be easily influenced by clever ads.

- The purpose of advertising is to sell products.
- Many ads are deceptive in that they try to trick or mislead the consumer (us).
- To convince us to buy their products, advertisers use specific methods or techniques that they have found to work in the past.
- Being aware of these techniques can help protect you from being influenced to buy a product you don't want or do something you don't want to do (like smoking cigarettes or drinking beer).

Resisting Media Influence Techniques

When you see or hear an ad that makes you want to go out and buy the product, ask yourself the following questions:

- Did the ad convince me that I would be a better or happier person or improve myself in some way by using that product?
- Do I feel that I would be more attractive if I followed the ad's advice?
- Do I feel that if I ignore the ad I will lose status with my friends or that something bad will happen?



Ask Questions

Advertising "Tricks of the Trade"

AMAZING NEW PRODUCT OR INVENTION

- * Stating that their product is new and therefore better or more exciting

COMPARISON

- * Comparing their "superior" brand to another "inferior" brand.

Example:



SEX APPEAL

- * Using a beautiful woman or a handsome man to sell their brand.



HAVING FUN

- * Showing people having fun and implying that using their brand will help people enjoy themselves more.



SYMBOLS

- * Emphasizing a brand's logo or catchy saying. (McDonald's - "arches" or Apple Computers - "apple")



TESTIMONIALS

- * Showing a famous person using a certain brand or talking about how wonderful some brand is.



HEALTH APPEAL

- * Suggesting that their brand can do wonders for your health.



BANDWAGON

- * Claiming that "everybody" is using their product or making you feel left out if you don't use it.



SNOB APPEAL

- * Claiming rich people use their brand or saying that even though their brand costs more, it's worth it!



MOCKERY OR PUT DOWN

- * Getting people to feel they are doing something wrong or have failed if they don't have a certain brand.



Other common advertising techniques

- Slogans and Jingles/Songs
- Before and after (shows use of a product before then after to see the difference)
- Demonstrations (shows how well a product works-typically for household or beauty items)
- Macho (one is more masculine if they use the product)
- Adventure
- Freebies or Deals given away

Advertisement Analysis Questions

Directions: After choosing an advertisement, answer the following questions:

1. What product is being advertised?
2. Describe the people and or images in the advertisement. What do you see going on in the ad? What do these images imply (or suggest) about the product?
3. What specific information about the product is provided? For example: Non-addicting, Light, etc. What further information would you want to know about this product?
4. What is the advertiser trying to get you to believe? Is this true? Explain.
5. What advertising "Tricks of the Trade" are they using? Explain
6. Based on the appearance of this ad, does it make you want to buy it? Why or why not?
7. Comparing what you know about tobacco, what makes this ad unrealistic?
8. What 5 changes could you make to the advertisement to show the real effects of tobacco use?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.

