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An exploration of the methods employed by advertisers to attract us to buy their products

To advertise is described in the dictionary as “to give public notice of”. Encarta describes advertising as “the collective term for public announcements designed to promote the sale of specific commodities or services”. These two definitions are both correct and are describing a colossal feature that is ever present in today’s modern world. Advertising techniques range in complexity from the simple publishing of a poster stuck on a shop window to the concerted use of newspapers, magazines, television and other communications media.

As said above, advertising is a gigantic feature of the commercial world that we live in. In the late 1980s the USA spent \$120 billion over 12 months on advertising. Nowadays, just about everywhere you look, you will see some type of advertising. Advertisements on the T.V are directly promoting the product in front of your eyes, whilst people walking around with logos attached to their clothes are promoting that brand-name to you indirectly and subconsciously. It may therefore be said that we are walking and living advertisements and if this is the case then we are actually the most effective way of advertising because if nobody bought a brand-name (e.g. Nike) then nobody else would buy it. It seems that wherever there was a flat and bare looking space, there is now an advertisement for example, posters on buses.

Advertisements inform and remind us of issues as well as goods and services. For example, television adverts made by the government are often about road tax and why not to smoke.

In addition, a significant amount of advertising is invested in miscellaneous ways such as window displays, free shopping news publications, calendars, and even pens, which really does suggest the world is becoming infatuated with marketing. I have chosen to write about television adverts and newspaper adverts in further detail.

Television – the greatest baby-sitter of all time – is the essence of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century mass communication. Although it can be extremely expensive, it can also be highly effective. T.V advertising is still very new at 40 years old yet it has already given us slogans and catch-phrases that are now part of our language. One of the lasting images that I will never forget is the barmy old grandma from the famous Tesco’s advertisement.

Nowadays, television combines the mixture of sound, sight, colour and emotion to enhance its programmes and adverts. This synergy added with the powers of today’s special effects enables the producer to make any advert he or she wants to. To use the technology to its fullest extent, T.V commercials must be carefully planned and professionally made.

The best advertisements stay in the mind of the person like the Tesco’s advertisement has done on me. It is also noticeable that bigger companies usually make the advertisements that are more memorable (e.g. Budweiser, Nike). This is probably because more money and time can be spent on them to. Or perhaps it is the fact that we have seen them more times because bigger businesses can spend more money to have them shown more often.

Often, advertisements on television are not amazingly well produced. They might not have clever wit or a catchy slogan but still be very penetrative. Some

companies make their advert stand out more by making them chilling. For example, the business “Benetton” have been criticized for showing quite unusual scenes. They put a picture of a woman giving birth on billboards around the country. This of course made that advertisement very memorable and actually did cause and increase in sales for the firm showing that bad publicity can be good publicity. This can be done television. Nowadays, you see more and more adverts with partially exposed women on them. Many of these advertisements obviously appeal to men.

Another way of making advertisements on television memorable is to make a series of advertisements or very similar advertisements. For example, there was a time when McDonald’s always showed their character Ronald McDonald in their advertisements. By having the same character in all their advertisements, McDonald’s advertised successfully. However, firms employing this technique have to be careful as these adverts can get repetitive and ultimately boring. Another example is the Nike series. Youngsters always remember the series of Nike advertisements. The series of Nike advertisements showed endorsements by football superstars who performed tricks to dazzle and amaze. Other sport companies have tried to follow suit like Adidas who also started showing football stars doing football tricks on television. Of course, this method soon became less effective as too many sports businesses used it.

Expenditure on television advertising is increasing because of its many new advantages and accounts for almost one third of all money spent on advertising. After my extensive research and the watching of television for hours on end, I have enabled myself to be enriched in the knowledge of the methods used by T.V advertisers and experts to make us spend our money.

The following advertisements were recorded in one of the commercial breaks during Cold Feet. The time that this programme starts is 9pm and it finishes at 10pm (after the watershed). It is also shown just before the 10 O’ clock news.

Night and Day-programme on ITV  
Dolmio-Italian pasta made in Holland  
Lindt-luxury chocolates  
Finish-dishwashing powder  
Dolmio-Italian pasta made in Holland  
I-mac apple-electronic equipment  
BT-cellnet-phones  
Don’t smoke advertisement by government  
Gabrielle-new album  
Stars in their dressing rooms-another programme ad on ITV  
(late evening programme)

The first thing that I notice was how the programme has a pause before the adverts come on. This is so we the audience, know that the commercial has started and the programme is having a short break. For many programmes, there is a caption saying things like “end of part one”.

The first advert is the one for the “Night and Day” programme which is also shown on ITV. This advertisement consists of a 16 year old girl kissing various men on the lips. It is after 9pm and after the watershed so these kinds of commercials are allowed at this time. In fact, advertisements containing issues like HIV are often on after 10pm. These advertisements are of course aimed at adults. It is possible by using television advertising to aim your advertisements at different people by showing

tem at different times. For example, toy advertisements would be shown between 3pm and 4pm whilst children are watching after their long hard day at school. Most of the products advertised above are quite expensive luxuries and so this set of advertisements looks to be directed at those with a disposable income who are of course the adults, perhaps this is why the advertisements have been shown at this time. Also, all the products that have been advertised above, are by quality producers, for example, Dolmio, Lindt (luxury chocolates), I-mac, BT and Gabrielle (music album). The quality products have been advertised at the same time. Perhaps this helps to each product's advantage. However, it is probably due to these companies being quite rich and able to afford this specific time to show their advertisement (these adverts have been shown during a commercial break for Cold Feet – a programme which had excellent ratings).

The Dolmio advert is shown twice. This is because some people do not notice all the advertisements because they start to talk at the end of the programme. Advertisers also hope that in repeating their messages they will make the audience remember the product. This also happens in newspapers which I will explore. Occasionally the same advertisement may be in the same newspaper twice – sometimes in quick succession.

In the case, ITV is also promoting its other programmes. At the start of the list is the “Night and Day” advert and at the end of the list is another ITV programme. Both of these programmes are to be shown after the watershed – once again reflected in time that the advertisements themselves are shown. Schedulers want us to keep loyal to their television channel. It is very easy for a channel to advertise their very own channel very effectively. Since they have complete control over what and when advertisements are shown, they can show their own advertisements as regularly as they want and make viewers remember them that way.

Another important factor is the language used in advertisements. Different language must be used for different television commercials. Advertisements aimed at children should include simple yet effective language. For example, you may use the words wonderful and fantastic. These are long words, however most 6 year olds would know them. Any kind of language can be used for adults, although the language, used for them is normally more of a complex nature. Language can be used to control the feelings of the audience.

Language can be used to create humour in advertisements and using the right language with the kind of wit you want to use is very important in making what you want to do work. I will always remember the advertisements which are made by the government. It is obvious that a lot of time and effort has been spent on these to make them as effective as possible. Programmes for example to stop smoking must be made very carefully. Usually to make these adverts effective, you must touch a nerve in the audience's body and therefore, sometimes you must be extra-careful as to not offend or upset people too much. In the smoking advert powerful language has been combined with powerful imagery. The advertisement is shown before and after the watershed unlike the HIV advertisements. Language in both of these advertisements makes the narrator seem to talk quite slowly. The narrator is also able to use his voice to express the powerful words in the sentences and instil them onto our minds.

With technology becoming more and more advanced makers noticeable that the style of advertising has changed and is still changing. In the past, to promote a cereal a black and white advert for example may have shown a simple family eating cereal and commenting on the cereal. However, with new technology and an advert for

cereal today may show bright animations in full colour. This is also probably due to changes in attitudes of the consumer.

The newspaper is certainly the oldest and is still the largest of the major advertising mediums. Advertisements are actually why some papers exist (e.g. Metro in Manchester) and pay for a lot of the newspaper.

Although newspapers have been replaced as the primary medium for national advertising by the television, its local orientation has made it well suited to retailers. Newspapers enable merchants to reach a wide cross section of people, by concentrating their coverage in the local market. This wide coverage of local markets is the newspaper's greatest strength. Since many communities only have one newspaper, a very large number of people can be reached with two or three advertisements. Also, advertisements will be read again and again.

However, a good number of merchants discover that they are paying for a lot of excess circulation when advertising in newspapers. As well as this, the small retailer in a large area may discover that the distribution area of their local newspaper is too big for their needs.

Newspapers can be split up into national and local and depending on what kind of newspaper the newspaper itself is, it will advertise particular kind of adverts. National newspapers will be paid by large sums of money by large companies to advertise their products. This is obviously because national papers such as The Sun and The Daily Telegraph are read by huge amounts of people. Therefore in national newspapers you tend to see advertisements for companies such as Comet, Thomas Cook, HMV and also for films that have been released and are shown around the world. In local newspapers you tend to see much more advertisements for small businesses like window-repairing, wedding photographers, and for local builders. Having an advertisement in the a national newspaper may imply a quality good or service since readers will know that the business will have spent a lot of money on the advertisement and a newspaper like The Times is unlikely to advertise a fraudster.

In newspapers, readers can take time to read your advert unlike in televisions where advertisers rush to cram in as much as possible.

Advertisements of specific kinds are put in different newspapers and sometimes in different places of the same newspaper. The Daily Mail has a block of around 15 pages of advertising. Half of these are for "old people" equipment such as stair lifts and shower seats. Therefore, if you planning on advertising something like this, you would phone up the Daily Mail and if you were looking for a piece of equipment like this, you would turn to the Daily Mail and people will generally look in these kind of newspapers when looking to buy one of these kind of products. However, although there is usually a block of pages dedicated to advertisements, they are generally scattered about in the Daily Mail. Advertisements that are not on the pages dedicated to advertisements are usually for larger companies. You would not find an advertisement for Comet in the middle of a page of advertisements for somewhat smaller companies. The larger companies pay more for better places on the newspaper. The Daily Mail has these kinds of advertising because it is not particularly targeted at the upper-class readers. Many tabloids have these types of advertisements.

However, if you are advertising something more hi-tech or something more expensive, you may contact a broadsheet such as "The Daily Telegraph". It is noticeable that this paper is advertising bigger companies which sell more expensive items such as computers. Advertisements in broadsheets are scattered so you can't

really turn to a page full of advertising. However some papers do have a special supplement for advertisements. Papers such as "The Daily Telegraph" consists of many supplements such as sport and gardening. Advertisers could advertise their product in a specific supplement. For example, you would advertise a sports shop in a sports supplement and a garden centre in a gardening supplement. This is particularly useful for advertisers to target their advertisements to their target market.

In newspapers a good advertisement is an expensive one. They must be found close to the front of the paper because that is where the top stories are found and read. If possible, colour makes them stand out more and the bigger your advertisement is, the more likely that it will be taken notice of. Humour can work although if you do not use it properly, it can make your business look less professional and do more harm than good. Unsuccessful humour will result in an advertisement that is a failure because readers may read the advertisements and actually criticize the advert. Although the business may sell very good quality products at a low price the bad advertisement may stick in the mind of the consumer and the one he or she may associate the poor advertisement with the firm. Sometimes, advertisers add pictures and photos to their advertisement and this can help to make the advertisement to look more professional. For example a retailer might choose to show a photo of a sales assistant helping a customer with a smile.

While newspapers lack the intrusiveness of radio and television, they are still an effective advertising medium. Newspapers are an important and respected advertising medium. The power of advertising in newspapers should not be underestimated as they have of course been proven to work when radio and television were not around.

Looking at a specific advertisement can help me to see what makes a successful advertisement. The advertisement attached is from the Sunday Times Magazine. Advertisements for tobacco products like the one attached are now outlawed. However, this particular advertisement is very useful to analyse. In my view it is a successful one because it conveys the product in such a way that it will persuade smokers to buy it. It works subconsciously on the mind with its rich colours and smiles. However, no matter how good the advertisement is, it will never convert a non-smoker into a smoker, or at least very rarely.

On the advertisement is shown a hand holding three metal boxes of cigars. The quality of the packaging is good whilst the name of the product – "Café Crème" suggests richness and creaminess.

It is also worth noting where this advertisement was found in the magazine. This advertisement was found on the inside of the back cover – a prestige and expensive spot where perhaps more readers would see it. The fact that the company has enough money to claim this spot also suggests quality.

Furthermore, one can notice the quality of the material that the advertisement has been printed on. The paper is of a glossy nature but not of the kind from a clothes catalogue – it is more thick and has less of a papery feel, it feels perhaps more like a photograph. The quality of the paper helps the colours to be more vibrant. Conversely, the paper that newspapers are printed on is quite thin, has a very papery feel and is very easy to tear. This does not help colours to look more vibrant and eye-catching. The tobacco advertisement is A4 in size – a whole page, and this fact combined with the lively colours makes the advertisement very eye-catching.

The advertisement shows three very famous landmarks from London, Sydney and Moscow that are very recognisable. The picture is as universal as the language used,

“The World Everyday Pleasure”

The phrase is set on a yellow background in bold red letters that makes it really stand out and more penetrative. The picture reflects the phrase. However, perhaps it is the other way around and the picture sends a subconscious message to your brain before you even actually read the message. The famous landmarks give a further image of quality. It is clear that the advertisement is focussing on the richness, creaminess and generally quality of the cigar which it must to be successful.

The yellow background to the slogan is very important. The colour yellow is a bright and vibrant one. It makes the advertisement much more eye-catching and goes well with the other colours adding to the richness of the advertisement although the colour itself is not a particularly rich one.

The actual picture takes up well over half the page. It is what makes the advertisement very successful due to its inventiveness and ingenuity. The picture is divided up into three sections (columns), each with a landmark and specific setting. The cleverness of the advertisement is in the fact that the three sections are blended into each other. The merger of the separate sections is so subtle that if one were to just flick over the page, they would be able to miss it. The skies from the bright sunshine of day, to early evening and then to the romantic sunset of an Australian night. The subtlety of the advertisement also implies quality.

Not only are the skies merged but the people in each section interact with people from other sections which makes it even more difficult to notice the merging and at this point it is clear you begin to appreciate the thought and careful and detailed planning that has been put into the production of this advertisement to make it successful. The styles of clothes represent the specific setting that the people are in. The styles of clothes present are casual, formal and evening wear. The people wearing casual clothes sitting at a plastic table on plastic chairs. On the other hand those wearing the evening wear are at a somewhat classier restaurant with proper wooden furniture. The clothes and setting are important. They show that wherever you are and at anytime of the day, it is possible to enjoy a high quality cigar at great pleasure. All the people in the advertisement without exception are smiling and this works subconsciously. Although some might not notice it, if the people were not smiling, would this change a reader's feeling towards the advertisement. The smiling makes the reader more relaxed and this makes you think that smoking the cigar will put you in a state of complete relaxation.

Below the slogan is a white section that contains in a black font “SMOKING CAUSES CANCER”. Although the individual letters are in capital blocks, the message is far from being penetrative. The area of the slogan on its yellow background is almost three times that of which the health warning is on. Of course all tobacco advertisements must carry this warning but it is clear that most tobacco firms do not make the warnings that clear and this advertisement follows suit. Since most readers who would be affected by this advertisement are smokers, it is unlikely that this messages like these would have a great impact overall.

The best advertisements manage to persuade and inform. This advertisement only informs but due to its qualities, it is still immensely effective. Advertisements, which for example advertise computers are very informative sometimes, and this makes them successful. However, perhaps the nature of the product in that situation makes an informative advertisement essential. Even so, the reader still feels what the

product would be like from the clever marketing. Although there is no direct information given to us about the cigars, the whole of the advertisement is able to give us a feeling of what the product would be like to use. Although this advertisement is now banned, it is a useful one to study for students and other advertisements producers as it is a very successful one.

Advertisements have become an unseen and unnoticed part of our world and have indeed made us passive advertisers ourselves. Consumers will always want to know what is available to them and what the best firms have to offer. It is the job of advertisement producers to help inform us of what is on the market. The producers will also have a job to persuade on behalf of the firm it is advertising for. To live properly, nowadays, one must be able to make money and buy products that are essential in surviving like food and shelter. The result is marketing being part of the base we live our world in.