

### **Different methods of car advertising in magazines**

When one flicks pages through a Sunday paper supplement, one of the most if not the most foremost things is the advertising, more often than not car advertising. It goes without saying that the different methods of advertising used will depend upon the image the company want to portray, and on the target audience. The magazines I have used for the base of my arguments are the various supplements provided with the Sunday Times, and I will use the advertisements from these magazines to look at the different techniques used to advertise cars.

The most striking similarity in all of these advertisements is the effective use of colour. The first advertisement I have chosen is for the Alfa Romeo 156 2.4JTD, and is relatively simple and easy to understand, it uses the same simplistic layout of picture followed by text as in most modern advertisements. It is spread out over two pages, with a silver Alfa Romeo 156 2.4JTD car dominating the top three-quarters of the two pages. Underneath the car is a black border with white text. The text, summarised, is advertising the new Alfa Romeo 156 2.4JTD; the JTD bit standing for diesel, which until now has been unheard-of in an Alfa Romeo car. The advertisement uses shades of grey and blue, the effect of which is to give the impression of a post-modernistic style, and the shine of which gives a certain sleekness to the whole advertisement. The very cool glacier blue colour emits waves of calmness that relax the readers eyes, and according to 'Feng Shui', symbolise assertiveness and authority. This effective use of colour is also linked to the cars performance- large and powerful engine, Q-System automatic gearbox, top speed of 156mph, etc. On the right hand side of the advertisement is a thick red border with the

Alfa Romeo logo at the bottom, and above that, the words '*Cuore Sportivo*'. '*Cuore Sportivo*' is Italian, and translated it means 'Sporting Heart', which ties in with the image Alfa Romeo has tried hard over the years to create. Another advert that uses colour to good effect is an advert for the Saab 9-5, the advertisement takes place in a desert, which takes up the whole of the one page spread. The desert is very golden and picturesque, and it is perfectly motionless. The golden yellow of the background symbolises confidence according to 'Feng Shui', but more importantly it makes the car stand out from the background, yet the reflective silver paint makes it almost part of the landscape. It is interesting how important colour is in each advert. Most of the images use cars that are shiny and/or silver, to give a futuristic and sleek image of their product. The Saab advert uses blues in the idea of the calm and elegance of the sea, while the use of colour, as in both the first and second advertisements, is quintessential to the success of the third advertisement. The green is calm and assuring, and once again referring to 'Feng Shui', symbolises strong growth energy. The idea of strong growth energy is very effective when thought of in conjunction with the theme of parenthood displayed in the advertisement. As with all the advertisements I have chosen, the car is silver, which once again makes the car stand out as well as appearing to be part of the scenery. The scenery itself is a grassy, vegetation covered landscape, which goes on into the misty distance. cold outdoors.

The approach to the text in each advert varies with the style and concept the advertisement is trying to convey. The text itself is not quite as effective or thought provoking as the colour scheme, and neither does it have clever connotations. It says 'ALFA DIESEL' five times in a vertical column, and underneath that it says '(NO

MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU SAY IT, IT STILL SOUNDS STRANGE.)'. The car is going against the stereotypical sports car and Alfa Romeo, by being a diesel and not an unleaded that does about seventeen miles to the gallon. The Saab advertisement uses text in quite an average way, with small text at the bottom. The large text underneath attempts to introduce humour to the advertisement, but unfortunately fails. The second advertisement uses text to much greater effect. Underneath the car is the text 'Saab vs. the Chocolate Bar', and below that is a reasonably sized paragraph of text explaining that if you buy a chocolate bar, you should be able to eat a chocolate bar, and that after putting it in your glove compartment it should not resemble hot chocolate. Then comes the selling point: Saab cars siphon air directly from the air conditioning system, 'maintaining a cool 42°F (5.5°C) in the glove compartment. Which means, when you're ready to eat your snack, it can still be peeled rather than poured.' The advertisement then uses this example as evidence of their extraordinary sense of attention to detail, and in their own words 'It's details like this that illustrate Saab's somewhat different approach to building cars.' In comparison, on the left-hand page of the third advertisement, there is a small portion of text going down vertically, saying, from top to bottom; 'LEATHER UPHOLSTERY. LEATHER STEERING WHEEL. CD PLAYER. ELECTRONIC CLIMATE CONTROL. ALLOY WHEELS. AH, THE JOYS OF PARENTHOOD.' At the bottom of the two pages is a small band of small text, the main selling point of the advert being, I quote; 'Just because you have kids doesn't mean you can't have luxuries'. The text and the picture, and the feeling we get from seeing the picture and reading the text, is that the Volvo V70 XT is a family car, if not **the** family car. The text is geared very towards parents with children, and as if the advertisement knew what we were

thinking when we saw and read what was on offer, at the bottom it says; 'Just because you have kids doesn't mean you can't have luxuries', which would be many a parent buyer's first thought before buying.

This use of text is directly related to the image each company is trying to give the reader. The Saab advert is designed to have a matter of fact approach, down to earth and businessman like. The Alfa Romeo advert on the other hand is very much less serious about it. The text tries to tap into the readers mind 'Alfa Diesel, Alfa Diesel ...(NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU SAY IT, IT STILL SOUNDS WEIRD)', giving the idea that Alfa Romeos are associated with sporty cars, and diesel engines are not. In the small text it explains that now Alfa Romeo have a car with a sporty diesel engine, etc.

One of the most interesting ways in which to look at these adverts is with an idea of the target audience, and the image they are trying to get across to that audience. For example, Alfa Romeo are using a witty text to give an idea of a sporty car, it is targeting a middle class, middle aged readership who want to have a sporty, yet somewhat practical car. The Volvo advert is more about trying to get family people to buy this car, or more importantly, those people who like to think of themselves as family people and aspire to be family people. This is much the same as the Saab advertisement. This builds on the image of Saabs as practical, high technology cars (remembering back to Saab's last advertising campaign, where they compared their cars to their aircraft) and adds in an aspect of style, relaxation and beauty. This sentence opens up another aspect of car advertising, all the cars are trying to get it into peoples minds that they already have an image of what those cars are like. At the very end of the Saab page, it simply says 'It's details like this that illustrate Saab's somewhat different approach to building cars', in

which they are trying to make a name for themselves while retaining a certain comedic value. In the same way Volvo are trying to build up on the image they have tried to create in their advertising campaigns over the last years that they offer value for money family cars, and a sensible car company, which is reflected in their advert.

The effects of these techniques are painstakingly thought out and rarely does an advertisement have any unintended connotations. There are three main factors that control the effectiveness of each advertisement. Firstly, the product being sold is important in choosing the advertising campaign; if you are advertising a Volvo the methods used will be completely different from an advert for a Porsche or a Ferrari. In addition to this, the target audience intended for the product will affect the advertisement. This will vary depending on where the advert is placed, whether it be in a woman's magazine, where the advertisement will be more feminine and likened to women's interests, likewise in a man's magazine such as Loaded, Front or GQ, many/all of the adverts have sexual innuendoes, undertones and direct references to sex. Furthermore, the advertisement will change within each category of product they are placed within. The Volvo advert for is aimed at a conservative, family person interested in safety over looks whereas the Alfa Romeo advert will be aimed more at a middle class businessman with a keen eye for fast cars. The most vital factor in all of these advertisements is the impression the vender is trying to create. Alfa Romeo tried to create an image of speed, reliability and sophistication, whereas the Saab's impression was one of finesse and practicality. All of the advertisements try hard to create the perfect image for their product, and this image, over everything else is what entices us into buying their product.