

Americans have always cherished personal freedom and mobility, rugged individualism and masculine force. The advent of the horseless carriage combined all these qualities and more. The automobile traveled faster than the speed of reason; it promised to make everyone a pathfinder to a better life. It was the vehicle of personal democracy, acting as a social leveling force, granting more and more people a wide range of personal choices allowing people to make choices such as where to travel, where to work and live, where to seek personal pleasure and social recreation

A century ago, automobiles were viewed as friends of the environment; they were much cleaner than horses. In 1900, for example, New York City horses deposited over 2.5 million pounds of manure and 60,000 gallons of urine on the streets. About 15,000 dead horses also had to be removed from the city streets each year. The motorcar promised to eliminate such animal waste.

The car also offered a huge leap in power. In 1901, Motor World magazine highlighted the subconscious appeal of the motorcar by alluding to its horse-like qualities: "To take control of this materialized energy, to draw the reins over this monster with its steel muscles and fiery heart - there is something in the idea which appeals to an almost universal sense, the love of power."

But it was one thing to boast about the individual freedom offered by the horseless carriage when there were a few thousand of them spread across the nation; it is quite another matter when there are 200 million of them. In 1911 a horse and buggy paced through Los Angeles at 11 miles per hour. In 2000, an automobile makes the rush hour trip averaging four miles per hour. American drivers are stuck in traffic for hours before reaching their destination.

Yet despite congested traffic, road rage, polluted air, and rising gas prices, Americans have not changed their driving or car ownership patterns. Suburban commuters have resolutely stayed in their vehicles rather than join car pools or use public transportation. Teens continue to fill high-school parking lots with automobiles. And the Sunday driver remains a peculiarly American phenomenon. America's love affair with the car has matured into a marriage, and an addiction. We refuse to consider other transportation options.

The automobile retains its firm hold over our psyche because it continues to represent a metaphor for what Americans have always prized: the seductive ideal of private freedom, personal mobility, and empowered spontaneity.

Our solution to rush hour gridlock is not to demand public transportation but to transform our immobile automobile into a temporary office, bank, restaurant, bathroom, and stereo system. We talk on the phone, eat meals, don makeup, cash checks and listen to music and audio books in them. Some cars have more accessories than a small house, and even cost more than a small house. And advertiser try to make us believe that we need those things. As GM's famous slogans says: "It's not more than you need, just more than you're used to"

Americans, however seems to enjoy green space and the beautiful undisturbed scenery. When it came to using the reserve oil supply in Alaska there was great turmoil over this decision. But the typical Cadillac Escalade or Ford Excursion is not really the way to ecological prosperity.

In addition to forcing public dependency on automobiles by monopolizing the market for ground transport, the car corporations and their business cohorts have striven to make this imposition palatable by selling the car culture through advertising. In the United States an intensive advertising campaign has been waged for several generations-- since the 1920s-- and by now automotive ideology is ingrained in most Americans.

As we progress in an era dominated by technological perfection we utilize this technology to improve our standard of living. That point could be argued, however, we can all agree that we use technology for our personal benefits as individuals and as a society. When it comes to the car industry we use technology for comfort and safety although some argue that speed and performance is more valued. In this paper I will talk about the different ways advertisers entice consumers into buying their automobiles. Additionally I will compare and contrast the different advertising techniques and see whether or not the primary motto is speed or safety. To do so I will look at many advertisements on television and in car magazines and analyze what the main message.

Today when it comes to cars there is a bigger selection than ever before. And it is no secret that as we progress into the future they will even be a bigger selection, increasing competition. So when it comes to selling cars it is harder today to sell a product than it was before. Consequently, when it comes to their cars, makers have to catch the consumer's attention by showing them what really makes a certain car better than another. Evidently they are certain criteria that narrow down the selection process, such as price and what is needed from the vehicle. For example someone who works in construction might want to choose a truck over a car. But, even after narrowing down the variety of cars according to price and expectancy they still are a lot of choices. Nonetheless, it seems that car makers have very similar slogans often related to speed and comfort. And in the process more important things such as safety and gas efficiency are not being talked about.

Car advertising in the 1920s and 1930s was geared toward expanding the mass market for the emerging technology of the private motor vehicle. In the same period (as we have seen) the alternatives of the electric trolley and the diesel bus were purposely degraded, making them inefficient or unavailable. So the advertising emphasis was on the practicality, service, and reliability of the automobile.

After the Second World War, with a deep decline in mass transit and a rapid growth in private cars, advertisements shifted away from such mundane qualities of autos. The new message: the right car can satisfy presumed or fabricated human "needs" (mostly just "wants"). Now the car as a device for getting from one place to another was rarely mentioned. Rather, the automobile had become-- and remains today-- an ethereal genie, available to satisfy a buyer's deeper desires and even dreams.

For example there was a study done on the Hummer H2 and the way GM used advertising to its benefit. For the ones who are not familiar with the H2, it is probably the next biggest SUV next to its cousin the H1, which is a vehicle constructed for the military. Magazines are a great way to advertise because they enabled the automaker to show off the Hummer's design in a boldly stylized campaign. "Our signature shot was of the front grille, from low and angled up," says Liz Vanzura, marketing director for GM. "A very aggressive angle, but we shot it like a piece of jewelry. We wanted that visual imagery to set the style and we were very clear about stepping back and letting the product speak for itself. That was one reason magazines worked so well for us."

Here the emphasis is on the size and status of the vehicle. And when it comes to American cars, the size of the grill is directly associated with the price of the car. Cadillac and Lincoln for example have big grills on their cars, such as the Cadillac Escalade for example. Using the picture of grill of the H2 is very appealing to an egocentric audience, which is the type of consumer they are probably looking for. The grill says it all. It's big and shinny, with this car you can't be unnoticed thus you will get all the attention needed. The ad was equally bold and stylized. It featured a single line of copy that reinforced the ideas of luxury and prestige. To position Hummer as a reward for success or an earned indulgence, media planners sought out publications that shared the brand's attitude and air of exclusivity and luxury.

Here the ad completely leaves out the important issues that of safety, fuel efficiency, and family values. Some people might associate size with safety. Since the vehicle is big it must be pretty solid and therefore absorb the shock pretty well. And contrary to popular belief it is not as safe as one might think. The original Hummer was much safer and also much bigger. By cutting down size GM had to cut down certain features. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety the 2004 H2 doesn't come with side airbags, which should be standard in car that cost over \$50,000. Instead, the only thing it's promoting is luxury and prestige.

I looked at another SUV ad in the same price range to see if I would find the same types of promotion by the advertiser. I looked at an ad from the Porsche Cayenne. They are different models ranging from \$55,000 to about \$85,000, which they do not mention of in the ad. Unlike the H2 Porsche actually touches every subject except for fuel efficiency. The ad showed old Porsches racing around to illustrate the legacy behind the car maker. They also showed a few clips in touch with endurance and success, which is directly associated with Porsche. Eventually there was a little segment regarding safety issues. Again it was only a small part of the ad, but at least it was point that Porsche touched on. Subsequently, Porsche touched almost every subject except for fuel expectancy. One might say, however, that when it comes to SUVs fuel expectancy is always very low, therefore there is no point talking about it. Especially since Porsche is a European car manufacturer, where gas prices are very high, thus the importance of a low gas efficiency car.

On the one hand Porsche has a good reputation and most people wouldn't think that they would have to touch on all these points in order to sell their car, whereas GM doesn't usually have such high standards when it comes to their vehicles. That could be a reason why H2 is trying to omit certain factors in order not to grasp more customers. Or perhaps both manufactures have different financial goals. The message that Porsche is sending might be more appealing to the type of clientele that they are tantalizing, which might be different from GMs. However, both starting prices for the two cars are similar, thus targeting the same class of people. In this case then, it is pretty clear that safety is not very important to the American car maker.

Now, if we take a look at some car advertising, the selection is much broader. And I noticed that all American cars advertise speed over comfort and safety. When it comes to foreign cars they are a little bit more competitive and they usually talk about safety ratings and comfort. For example when Hyundai advertises, no matter what kind of vehicle, they mention every point by comparing it to another manufacturer. In a pretty popular ad still airing today on television, two girls were playing tennis during which one of them bragged about all the features that the Hyundai had. Meanwhile the other girl start being distracted and stops hitting the balls when she realizes that her partner got more feature in her Hyundai for a cheaper price then she does in her car. Here, for example, the ad focuses on more than just speed. It actually goes over the safety ratings, how comfortable the car is, and the many options in the car. Surprisingly, it doesn't mention anything about speed.

Now if we look at an American car advertisement we have something totally different. They focus more on speed than anything else. I looked at a Mustang ad and a Chevy Malibu. First the ad for the Ford Mustang had a Mustang driving with smoke or steam flying out the back of the car to emphasize on the speed of the vehicle. Then the only things that were mention were the engine capabilities and the different types of payments. For the Chevy Malibu the ad is little bit different. There is no smoke flying out the back, instead the car is just cruising on a regular road. But, again, the only things that were mentioned were the type of engine that the car has and the different types of payment. Furthermore, online the advertising characteristics for both car makers are similar. They only mention speed and financials

It seems that America has a society has always been very competitive and always wanted to stay on top. And as the American culture grew bigger, one way to represent this competitive behavior is through cars. The U.S being a business economy will not stop in front of anything in order increase the economy. Regardless how polluted our planet or how miserable some people are. The goal here is to make as much money as possible. And when it comes to cars, the only keep the economy strong is to respond to the demand. In the case of the automobile, the typical American usually wants a fast and powerful car, but still cheap enough to appeal to large audience. Consequently the American car manufacturers spend more money on power at the cost of less safety in certain cases also disregarding the usage of petroleum. Japanese cars for example have a way to make cars fast and gas efficient by installing a turbo. Unfortunately turbo engines

are pretty expensive, and therefore not an options for the American manufacturer. Instead they built bigger engines that consume more gas, also increasing speed, but making them gas guzzlers.

As the price of gas stays pretty low compared to any other country, America keeps building low efficiency cars with lots of power. Consequently they are going to advertise for speed omitting all other factors.