

Amnesty International

How does Amnesty International persuade people to donate money to their organisation through advertising?

The reason for advertising in newspapers and in magazines is to sell a product in order to make profit. However, Amnesty International is not selling a product for profit. It is an organisation that is trying to get people to focus on the problem of political prisoners, tortured people and people in difficulties all around the world.

Amnesty International is a charity and charities are different to businesses. Charities are to help people while businesses are to sell products to people. Charities persuade people to donate money for people who are in great difficulties. Amnesty International works worldwide for the release of prisoners, to ensure fair trials for political prisoners and to try to stop torture and death of prisoners.

Amnesty International has to use stronger persuasive tactics because they are advertising stronger and more dangerous issues. They are also trying to compete against many other charities which are perhaps more attractive and appealing to the general public, for example, charities dealing with animals or needy children.

I am going to focus on an Amnesty International advert which tells about the rape and torture of a young girl by soldiers in Mexico. The girl was just eighteen years old and her name was Julieta Flores Castillo. The soldiers also arrested her father. As she was arrested she said, "Kill me! It is better than being tortured!" However they continued to torture her and locked her up for several weeks. As the advert continues, "The men who raped and tortured Julieta are unpunished." The style of writing in telling this story includes very emotive words and ideas. For example, another sentence states, "Julieta was terrified but neither her pleas nor her youth nor her terror saved her from torture."

On the left side of the advertisement there is a recipe titled "MEXICAN CHILLI CON CARNAGE" There is a well-known Mexican dish called Chilli Con Carne. The advert is therefore using a pun, which is a play on the words 'Carne' and 'Carnage'. Carnage means mass killing and torture. The recipe continues with the ingredients and the method involved in the rape and torture of the young girl. This shows the use of twisted humour to catch the reader's attention and make them feel sad about the girl.

There is also a background picture of crocodile clips which is an instrument of torture. This is added to shock the reader and to make him think more about the torture. I think the crocodile clip printed as a background image is rather sinister as it is a constant reminder to the reader of the cruelty of torture. This may make the reader do something about it, such as join Amnesty International or even donate money.

Amnesty International advertisement also uses the technique of coupons. It is a cut-out reply coupon which makes it quick and simple for the reader to reply instantly, while the advert is still fresh in their mind. On the advert coupon you just have to give details of your credit card, your account number, your name, your address and how much money you want to donate. It would be better to increase the size of print in the advertisement, so that it is easier to read, especially for older people who can't read small print.

Throughout the text they have used rhetorical questions as a persuasive technique. These ask the reader questions which do not expect an answer but are designed to make the reader think. In the text these questions are asked in Italics and in the text. The questions they have used are "Do you?" "Will you help us?" "How can I help?" I think it would be better to use more Rhetorical Questions, which would make people think more.

Finally, the advertisement carries the famous Amnesty International logo, which is a burning candle surrounded by barbed wire. It appears on two places on the page advert and is eye-catching. When people see this picture they are interested to read the advertisement because they know the information will be quite shocking. This logo symbolises Amnesty International in short.

In conclusion the Amnesty International advertisement uses various techniques to persuade people to help their work. The technique that I think is the most effective is the title of the advertisement. It was a clever idea to write about someone being tortured in the form of a recipe. It is funny but this increases the shock value. Perhaps this advertisement could be even more effective if they were to use more pictures, perhaps a picture, which is even more horrific.