

## Is America Shallow when it comes to advertising? Or just Lazy?

*Introduction.* When a subject reads and add in a magazine, what is it that drives that person to go out and purchase the product the add depicts? What even makes a subject willing to spend more time looking at the add? It is at this point where the art of persuasion does it's best work.

*Definitions.* The Elaboration Likelihood Model claims that there are two paths to persuasion: the central path and the peripheral path. (lecture 2/20/03) The central path is most widely used when the receiver is motivated to think about the. If the person cares about the issue and has access to the message with minimum distractions, then that person will elaborate on the message. (lecture, 2/20/03). If the message is ambiguous but attitudinally neutral (with respect to the receiver) or if the receiver is unable or not motivated to listen to the message then the receiver will look for an easier way to interpret it. This leads to the peripheral route. Peripheral cues include such strategies as trying to associate the advocated position with things the receiver already thinks positively towards (e.g., beauty, money, sex).(lecture, 2/20/03) If the peripheral cue association is accepted here, then there may be a temporary attitude change and possibly future elaboration.

*Peripheral Route.* The first advertisement that was chosen, from *Gentleman's Quarterly* magazine, depicts a very attractive man standing in front of a bottle of cologne. The advertisement is for *Polo*, a brand notoriously associated with affluence, and prestige. This add illustrates the advertisers wish to catch the eye of the consumer as they are flipping the pages of the magazine using a method other than their product.. The argument in this case is weak. Polo is trying to depict that if a subject uses their new cologne, it is possible for them have a lifestyle like the model pictured. Most cologne adds, have a tab that you can open up on the same page and smell the cologne, that would cause one to elaborate on the add. This one does not, therefore,

*Polo* was trying to get the consumer attention to a fragrance, using a beautiful person. This is clearly an example of persuasion using peripheral cues. The average age of a subject that would likely be persuaded by this add, would be middle to late twenties, the age in which people are attempting to attain affluence.

*Central Route.* The second advertisement that was chosen, from *Sports Illustrated*, is an add put out by *Mercedes Benz* to promote their new line of SUV's, the M-Class.. It is very clear that *Mercedes* in this case was trying to promote the security aspect of their SUV's. When a consumer sees this add, it is apparent that the central route will be used, because there is no greater motivation for thinking, then the safety of family. The ad would definatly cause the consumer to elaborate, and think about how safe the car that one is currently driving in, is. Thus, the add has done it's job in attracting a consumer. One specific characteristic of the add that makes it persuasive, are the g-d's in the clouds attempting to disrupt the path of the truck, as it seems to effortlessly keep on going. This clever use of history depicts that nothing can hurt those once inside this vehicle, not even g-d's. The type of person that would most likely be persuaded by this add would be a young father (28yrs.–40yrs.)who is in the market for a new car. This add is affective cause it gets a subject thinking, thus using the central route

*Conclusion.* The way that consumers read and respond to advertisements as shown in this paper, is crucial to promoting a product. Whether a company uses the central or peripheral routes, to attract consumer interest, can make a huge different in sales of that product. The advertising industry is a multi-billion dollars business,(*GQ*, December 2002) in which creative minds develop new ideas in the art of persuasion for the next generations.