

Many advertisements use fallacies to boost their effectiveness and impact on readers and the audience. A fallacy is defined as misleading content that influences a reader to buy a product.

To a larger extent, advertisements use fallacies such as gift pitches, skills and testimonials. However, to a smaller extent, advertisements use other forms of psychological mechanisms that do not involve fallacies, such as persuasion psychology.

Gift pitches are used to attract customers with the prospect of receiving an additional free gift, making them feel that they are gaining from the purchase. For example, a Baygon advertisement claims that customers can win a hundred times of what they spend on Baygon, making readers feel that they gain rather than spend by buying this brand. It also encourages customers to start “winning” instead of “buying”, adding to the psychological effect that they are gaining from this promotion. However, the seller or manufacturer may not be in actual fact giving a free gift. He may have simply increased the selling price so that his profits can cover the cost of the “gift”. However, gift pitches are very attractive as they mislead customers into thinking that they are getting something for nothing.

Skills are used to assure a customer that the product is worth buying, since another customer has given feedback that he approves of it. For example, a tuition advertisement by BrainFit Studio states that a customer is satisfied with its services, and its effects include reducing the time to learn a subject from three days to two hours. The statement is written by a parent to satisfy other parents who want to send their children for the course. However, the “customer” may be a false customer, who has been paid to pose for the advertisement. Alternatively, the statement may be conjured up by the advertiser.

Testimonials are used to convince potential buyers by making fallacious appeals to authorities. Authorities can include celebrities who endorse the product, or scientific authority. For example, an advertisement by BEST selling laptops claim that a notebook or a tablet uses less than half the amount of electricity used by a desktop computer. This will lead potential buyers to believe that their product is more efficient than a computer, and thus buy it. However, the statement may not be scientifically accurate. Still, customers may accept it without any suspicions and buy the product.

However, not all advertisements use fallacies. They may use other forms of psychological mechanisms. Telemarketers contact customers to demonstrate a product’s effectiveness, hence persuading a customer to buy the product. However, the customer is able to judge for himself the effectiveness of a product and is not misled in any way.

Hence, to a larger extent, advertisements use fallacies to advertise products. However, not all advertisements mislead customers to sell their products. In such cases, customers can judge for themselves the effectiveness of the product, making a well-informed decision.