

The Wonderful World of Advertising

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Foreword

Advertising is a powerful tool and the world of advertising instills a captivating aura for enthusiasts like me. After completing an advertising course during my MBA I had to write something about this fascinating discipline.

This is an attempt to explore the various advertising tools available to advertisers at the time of writing. It also educates the reader on the types of media and how advertising plays its part in delivering the message.

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Advertisements, Advertisements.....and Advertisements. Everywhere we go we are bombarded by advertisements. Pick up a newspaper or go on a long drive ads are everywhere. However, this article is not about the intruding effects of Advertisements on our daily lives. The object of my writing is, to briefly explain what advertising is all about and to accustom my readers to the new modes and techniques being employed in the field of advertising. Advertising has a world of its own and this world is full of charm, creativity, imagination, color, action, zeal and enthusiasm. These are the enchanting colors of advertising.

What does Advertising do?

Advertising can be used to generate initial sales of a new product or to promote sales of existing products. The first job of an Ad is, to generate viewer's attention and to continue the state of attentiveness to form the basis on which desire to own a product is formed. Actuating the potential customer is the final requirement. However, if we look at the big picture we will find that advertising has far reaching affects. To start with, advertising creates a pool of information for ignorant customers, thus helping them in choosing a product (information) of their choice. Moreover, it encourages competition by lowering information costs and promotes brand image by improving product quality.

Social, cultural or economic, advertising enters all realms. On the Social front, advertising encourages the development of new products, promotes product differentiation and justifies investment. Advertisements can also impose severe threats to a society. The Globalization strategy in ads, despite of its cost effectiveness, is infusing western culture in our society. Many multinationals like, Pepsi, Coke, Procter & Gamble and Lever Bros. are running "One for all" ad programs. It all depends upon advertising agencies and companies, to produce ads promoting good social and cultural norms in a society. These ads can

change the way we think, act, dress, behave and communicate while remaining within our social boundaries.

Different Drums & Different Drummers

Different Ads are produced for different purposes. By keeping their target in focus these ads hit the desired customer and yield the desired result. We may find ads displaying a whole range of products for consumers while others targeted specifically towards retailers. The gist of discussion, ads are customized and tailor-made for specific segments depending on a company's marketing strategy and objective. For reader's interest and knowledge I will try and list a few objectives of Advertising. To make it into an interesting exercise you can match these objectives with the different ads being aired nowadays.

- 1) *Inducing a customer to try a product* is one of the most common objectives of an ad. Ads falling in this category try to provoke new customers in making their first purchase while keeping their existing customer base intact. In pure marketing jargon this may be referred to, as, putting the foot in the door strategy.
- 2) Some ads fulfill the purpose of *increasing existing sales volume* of a company. Take for example the famous Qarshi Johar Joshanda ad tempting us to take Joshanda in sickness and in health. The objective of this type of ad is, to find new usage of the same product.
- 3) You will find ads that not only focus on creating an initial purchase but also fulfill another unique objective, and that is, to maintain loyalty amongst current customers. Cigarette companies quite often focus on these objectives.

- 4) Changing habits, is another interesting objective an ad may communicate. Soft drink companies, milk & bread producers, all exemplify this objective. Whenever you see an ad using words like, twice a day, thrice a day, with breakfast and with lunch, in sickness and in health (remember the Joshanda Ad), think about this objective and the hidden message unfolds.

- 5) *You've made the right choice!* This type of ad is used in removing customers' cognitive dissonance (post purchase doubts) and maintaining a level of faith and reliance in the product, the company and the purchase. These ads may contain words like "Smart choice" thus reducing or eliminating doubts (pertaining purchase decision) that may creep into the customer's mind after he has made the purchase.

- 6) Ads are also used to *break the ice* between the seller and the buyer. These ads are used to start a communication process between the two parties. You may find ads in places like wash rooms, elevators etc where you are completely open to all sorts of communication. At a place, where you are completely isolated, and where, you are only communicating with yourself, another person is trying to start a communication with you!

In Store Displays

Point of Purchase (POP) advertising has introduced a new wave of communication for advertisers. They may take the form of window displays, wall displays, eye-catching display racks, exotic display cards, colorful packaging etc. Many stores in the west have introduced a variety of display units for enthusiastic companies. Monitors are placed in each of these stores airing short commercials with a catchy beat and heart warming messages.

These commercials attract viewer's interest and just when a customer is purchasing a product they influence his decision. According to a research, soft aroma and melodious tunes in retail outlets can have positive effects on a buyer's behavior. Interestingly, you may find advertising on floor tiles of many stores. There are ads everywhere; grocery pushcarts, shelves (which might be holding competitors products) chairs all are carrying ads. To add to your amazement ads are also placed on eggs. Yes! On eggs, and Guess what? This type of advertising is called "*Eggvertising*". Now, picture this departmental store firing ads from all directions and that also at a very crucial moment, the moment when you are about to make the purchase. Will this kind of advertising be helpful in increasing sales for a company or will this result in customer irritation? Are we going too far in the quest of displaying our products? Who will define checks and limitations? Is this for the better or for worse? I would like you, to take some time and think about these questions.

The Dazzling - Outdoor Advertising

Outdoor advertising has its own unique advantage. Efficiently used, Outdoor advertising can create lasting and spontaneous effects on the customer. The most spectacular thing about this mode is that, it captures your eye when you are away from your home, your office, school or university. A moment in time, when you are ready to expose yourself to all sorts of external stimuli, your mind is ready to assimilate information and you, are ready to become a prospective client. This form of advertising may include the usual; on the premises sign boards, Road side billboards, pole signs, plastic signs, neon signs etc. or the unusual; Trivisions, Panaflaxes, 3Ms, Computer Visions, Metro Media Technologies etc. These Trivisions, Panaflaxes, 3M's, and MMTs have a high degree of resolution and a very fine picture quality. This is where technological advancement shows its color. Tobacco Companies, Banks and Airline Carriers are all using these modes effectively. Apart from these hi-tech ads advertisers

have introduced other techniques of making outdoor ads more attractive, creative and eye-catching for the nonconforming customer. *Transit Ads* comprise of advertisements placed in public vehicles exclusively for passengers while *Traveling Displays* are placed at the outer body of the vehicle for outsiders. Bound to catch your eye is 3M's "Scotch Brite", being colorfully advertised on yellow cabs, it is attracting thousands of potential customers. Now 3D Billboards have also been developed in Europe. Imagine standing on a bus stop next to a billboard displaying a virtual image of an attractive model posing for a Pepsi can. I don't know whether this will make you buy Pepsi or not, but this, will definitely attract your attention. Winning the attention of a prospective customer is considered to be the first step in winning the customer himself.

The Mind Jarring, Video Advertising

In Pakistan, rented videos are also used as an advertising medium. Instead of being productive, this form of advertising conjures up irritation among customers. Half screen ads embossed on the ongoing movie can only create distraction and distress. Venerable companies should understand the harmful effects of this type of advertising. It can not only tarnish their public image but can also create a consumer backlash.

The Battlefield

Ads may not only be used in attracting and creating a large customer base but can also be used in launching media wars against troubling competitors. Ads can thus, portray an excellent picture of a company's competitive awareness. Coke and Pepsi, Tetra Pack Milk association of Pakistan, Procter & Gamble, Lever and Colgate are all fighting to gain an edge over their competitors. You will find some attacking and counter attacking statements just by listening carefully to the Unique Selling Points (USP's) and grab the hidden messages of these ads. "Our detergent really cleans!" claimed one consumer good manufacturer. A

competitor, having other ideas, used this famous USP in his ad to counter that claim. In this way, he cleverly managed to counter the competitors claim while putting forward his own. For those who are vigilant and conscious of their competition, this is a battle, for others just another Ad!

Internet, Breaking the Barriers

The introduction of Internet has opened a world of communication. Enthusiastic advertisers can now gain an edge by sending solicited e-mails and designing their web pages to make their presence felt. The Internet has no barriers, restrictions or governmental interference. Advertising can benefit from all of them. Manufacturers and customers are now communicating without any arbitrary party. On the net, everybody is exchanging views, comments and ideas. In short, they are all exchanging their experiences. They are chatting on a wide range of topics. Products and producers can be one of them. Wouldn't it be nice for producers to jump in at that crucial moment and vindicate their position or maintain their corporate image? Quite amazingly, online advertising can achieve this and that too, in style!!!!

Leaving Wonderland

Technologically, advertising has experienced new trends and gained new heights. Creatively, advanced technology has made possible the exploration of new and exotic ideas. Combined together, new technology and creative thinking have put advertising on a journey full of magic and mystique. These marvelously capricious ads can warm the customers' heart, where all the desires of owning a product reside, and capture their minds where all the buying decisions take place. These, are the wonders of advertising!