

Consider the role of advertising as part of graphic design in the 20th century as...

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Introduction Undoubtedly there has been a growth in the use of graphics in the advertising industry over the past century. New communication mediums such the internet have opened the flood gate's for new methods of advertising. Graphics have played a key role in how information is communicated through these new mediums. This paper explores the link between Graphic Design as part of advertising. The paper explores William Bernbach's role in modern advertising as well as considering three separate advertising campaign pieces from three different decades including Volkswagens beetle (1959) , Absolut Vodka (1980) and Apple Inc (1997).

We will explore the synergies between graphics, images and text with particular reference to graphics as a communication tool within the advertising industry. Bill Bernbach & Volkswagen DDB (Doyle, Dane, Bernbach) was established as an advertising agency in 1949. Over the course of the 20th and 21st century their organisation helped pave the way for a new approach to graphic design in advertising. DDB took a fresh approach to advertising products, moved away from scientific models of consumer research and injected creativity and individualism into an advertising campaign.

William Bernbach (DDB creative Director and father of modern advertising) warned against advertising as a science and instead offered clients a unique opportunity to represent the benefits and values of their product through visual communication, specifically graphics and their synergy with the text. Bernbach believed, " Nobody counts the number of ads you run; they just remember the impression you make. " This puts a strong emphasis on creativity and individualism which can be seen in some of Bernbach's more <https://assignbuster.com/consider-the-role-of-advertising-as-part-of-graphic-design-in-the-20th-century-assignment/>

famous adverts such as the “ Think Small” campaign for the Volkswagen Beetle.

Bernbach was a pioneer of creative techniques such as brainstorming. He also placed a keen emphasis on researching the attributes of the product they undertook. As AdAge (2005) points out, “ Bernbach insisted on first learning how his client’s products related to their users, what human qualities and emotions came into play. ” He would then go through the creative process and express these product values through a combination of print and visual communication. The aforementioned Volkswagen campaign spearheaded by DDB in the early 1960’s broke the mould of conventional U. S advertising.

Advertising to date was overrun with characters, icons and flamboyant usually scripted text. Bernbach embraced his imagination and humour in his work to come up with advertisements that were seductive not for their flamboyancy and colour but for the use of negative space, a some what counter productive headline that lead to intrigue from the reader. This was followed by witty and informative reasons why to choose a Volkswagen. The company took what seemed to be the small foreign cars weakness to the big ‘ gas guzzlers’ of the States and turned it to its strengths with the infamous slogan ‘ Think Small’.

This could be referred to as the point when ads got smart. The DDB team studied the products they were selling and tried to express the bundle of benefits though graphic design and creative advertising. Bill Bernbach, with his infallable confidence in his own abilities managed to change graphic

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design from an almost assembly line approach to an intelligent more organic process. It is impossible to consider the role of advertising as part of graphic design with-out paying tribute to Bill Bernbach who was named No. 1 on the honour role for most influential people in advertsing by Advertising Age. Berger, 2001, p45) summizes the sum of Bernbachs work by suggesting, " No longer could you assume that an ad was obvious and one dimensional, a mere sales pitch. Now, suddenly, there were ads with an unspoken message and complex personality; ads that were capable of engaging you in dialogue, and that challenged you to keep up with their level of wit and intelligence. " His use of images, his fresh approach to the creative process and his synergy bewteen print and graphics played a crucial role in the development of advertising and ultimately graphic design in the 20th century. Lorin, 2001, p114) pays tribute to the great creative mind by suggesting Bernbach, " inspired the largest number of immortal campaigns in the history of advertising. He was the catalyst for a whole generation of brilliant and talented people, the inventor of a new form of advertising. " Bernbach unquestionably changed the way advertsing was portrait to the masses and with this altered the role of graphic design and advertising in modern society forever. Absolut Vodka by TWBA In 1980 TBWA embarked on what would become the longest uninterrupted advertisement campaign ever seen.

To this day nearly 1, 500 original pieces of design have been printed, broadcast and installed as part of the Absolut Vodka campaign. These pieces have been viewed by millions of people all over the world. TBWA developed the first printed poster for Absolut Vodka. The ad at first glance could be

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seen as a throw back to the traditional ads of old, i. e. showing just the product. However perhaps inspired by Bernbach before, TBWA managed to add symbiotics and synergy between text and graphics to create a long running advertising campaign.

The headline read ' Absolut Perfection'. This was complimented by subtle graphics of wings and a halo which reinserted the perfection message with angelic references to the reader and perhaps even suggested ' Gods Nectur'. It certainly laid the foundations for Absolut's long running campaign depicting through graphics perfect situations and thus positioning Absolut as the perfect Vodka. Reader interpretation and engaging the reader in the advertising content were now becoming more important than ever.

As Advertising Today points out, " with the expansion of electronic media, the public was growing less and less willing to submit to content, and advertisers were beginning to rely more on the power of imagery. " (Berger, 2001, p96) The Absolut Vodka campaign managed to use graphic's successfully to portrait thier intended brand image by subtly synergising graphics with text that engaged the reader. This ultimately created a valuable brand equity over the next number of years. The synergy between graphic design and advertsing is again very evident. The idea was so simple, the shape and ergonomics of the Absolut bottle so ecognisable and the advertising campaign so successful that over the years TBWA developed the ideas to make the advertisements more and more challenging for the readers. They placed perception/reality idea's that challenged the reader intillect and drew them into the advert by suggesting perfect situations and

challenging the readers interpretation of a perfect world. The success of the Absolut Vodka campaign proved that a printed ad which has a strong visual and intelligent aspect can engage the reader of the media content through subtle messages and symbiotics.

Recently TBWA has taken the project to new heights with the launch of the 'In an Absolut World' campaign. By association of previous adverts we can perhaps interpret an 'Absolut World' as a 'Perfect world'. Consumers at TBWA are now encouraged to give their interpretations of a Absolut / Perfect world. The graphics and text used in advertising taps into consumers intelligence and combines new advertising mediums such as the internet to create interaction between the consumer and the product. A luxury that Michelangelo and Carravaggio never had. Graphics and information on the website reinforce a brands homogenous nature.

Again we can see how graphics have played a major role in advertising. The growth in graphics has been synonymous with the growth in advertising over the past couple of century's. What is clear is that the new mediums of advertising create new ways of interaction with the consumer. Just look look at www.absolut.com. Click the graphic of the Vodka bottle to see a perfect world. What is clear is that the foundations of the Absolut campaign were laid almost 20 years ago and although adapted the fundamental message is still being portrait by new innovative graphics in advertising.

Apple by Chiat/Day In December 1996 Steve Jobs returned to helm of Apple Computers. Apple's products sold poorly in the 90's however their computers continued to win design awards. Jobs relised the power and strenght of

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Apples brand equity that had been built on a counter culture image in the 1980's. He believed it to be one of the companys core assetts and believed exploiting the brand was the way to turn around Apples financial misfortunes. In 1997 the Los Angeles branch of ad agency TBWA, Chiat/Day ran an ad campaign that echoed Bernbachs VW ads of the past.

The slogan read, ' Think Different' which is similar slogan to VW's classic ad campaign " Think Small". Apple depicted iconic innovative thinkers such as Albert Einstein, Bob Dylan, Martin Luther King Jr. , Richard Branson, John Lennon and Pablo Picasso. The designers were very careful not to exploit the esteemed figures. The " Think Different" slogan and a small Apple graphic were shown succeding the homage to the stars. The adverts simply made subtle links to the company and its desire to be perceived in the same light.

Apple, similar to Bernbach before placed faith in the readers wit and intelligence and tried to draw them in to advert and think for themselves, just like the iconic personalities that went before them. The simple Apple graphic associated the company with the characters and slogan and brought the advert together. After the firm got its approval for the ' Think Different' campaign. Apple's pioneer owner and CEO, Steve Jobs challenged Chiat/Day to create an advertising campaign with-in 17 days.

The advertising campaign would consist of a 60 second TV commercial as well as several posters and billboard designs. Apple ran a traditional advertising campaign i. e. picture of the product with slogan and graphics as well as generic branding ads mentioned above. The advertising campaign was an instant success with the public. The next challenge for Chiat/Day was

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to place the adverts where they would reach their intended new fresh market. They bought advertising space in popular Fashion and Music magazines, as well as magazines such as Newsweek and Time.

This stemmed away from traditional technological magazines advert placement. The campaign and advert placement was an instant success. The strategy helped to bring apple computers not only to a new audience but put their computers on par with a whole other range of popular products. In two and a half weeks, a talented Marketing Director and an ad agency had lifted Apple out of a ten-year rut. They achieved this by using a mix of tried and tested techniques blended with the contemporary technology of the day. By emulating Bernbach's idea of using a small but powerful headline they created a cult advertising campaign. With a simple but sound campaign that lasted for 5 years they turned apples fortunes around and into the revenue-generating powerhouse that we see today. This campaign was important to graphic design as it helped push apple computers to a 'must have' tool in the industry and many other industries today. After the campaign Apple sent thousands of posters to schools around America with innovative thinkers such as Pablo Picasso, Jane Goodall and Ron Howard. Some full sets of poster's are going for thousands in today's market.

This raises the questions the age-old debate of Advertising as art. Since Warhols Campbell Soup Paintings there has been much discussion on where the line is between advertising and graphic design, graphic design and art and so on. It is not the goal of this essay to add to the debate but simply to note that great graphics are consistently being portrait through advertising

which reach an intended market and are perhaps being viewed by more people than the classic fine art pieces of yester year. These graphics are perhaps over looked as an artistic expression due to there commercial nature.

However it could be successfully argued that all the church funded art of previous centurys such as the great Michelangelo's and Carravagio's was perhaps advertising for the Patron of the art and their legacy. It is perhaps the test of time that will judge the artistic value of graphics in art, but as we can see from the value of apples " Think Differently" campaign posters, classic advertsing pieces are beginning to attain a value for there artistic qualities outside of the brand they are advertising. Conclusion

In this essay I hope to have shown some of the ways in which advertising has affected graphic design over the past fifty years through some of the designers and agencies. Graphic design and Advertising seem now to be somewhat synonymous with each other. The success of the advertising industry has no doubt led to an increase in the design capabilities as advertisers and design technology innovators such as Apple strive for new better ways to reach the market. The advent and use of the Internet has led to an increase in advertising and how people interact with the advert.

This has led to increase competition as web-designers try to out wit each other. This has increased the standard of graphics as competition and marketing channels become increasingly competitive. The old cliché of " A picture paints a thousand words" may well be replaced with " A graphic sells a thousand units". This is perhaps were the art of graphic design gets lost in

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the art of capitalism. However as seen with Apples adverts, graphic design and advertising seem to now being sold as an individual commodity and piece of art.

What is for certain is that new technology combined with individual creativity will allow the continued success and synergy between Graphic Design and Advertising in the 21st century. Bibliography Berger Warren, 2001, Advertising Today, London, Phaidon Press Lmt Lorin, Philippe, 2001, 5 Giants of Advertising, New York, Assouline Publishing [www. adage. com](http://www.adage.com) [www. abolutads. com](http://www.abolutads.com) [lowendmac. com/orchard/07/apple-think-different. html](http://lowendmac.com/orchard/07/apple-think-different.html) [wikipedia. com](http://wikipedia.com) [youtube. com](http://youtube.com)