

Unethical advertising assignment

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They are being inundated by advertising at a very young age through television, radio, internet, and teen magazines. Children are vulnerable marketing targets: easy to manipulate and possess the power of persuasion over parents. They take things literally and can't discriminate between the real and imaginary features of products. Companies are exploiting children as consumers which has become a profitable business.

Advertising directly to children is damaging and has had a negative impact on them and in my opinion, it's unethical. Obesity in children is a serious problem in America and can partially be attributed to advertising. Fast food commercials constantly advertise unhealthy meals that are high in sugar, fat, salt and calories to children. They are enticed by offering novelty toys from the latest movie or popular kids show. Most of these advertisements are shown repeatedly during hours when children are watching television; especially, on Saturday mornings when cartoons are airing.

Advertising promotes materialism and superficiality among children. Children can feel sad if they don't have the latest or newest products which can lower their self-esteem. The hidden message advertisers relay to children through their advertising is happiness, success and social status can come if you possess a certain type of product. Children believe they need to have the product at all cost and will nag the parent until the parent gives in.

Advertisers rely on this to boost sales, which is called the "pester power" or nagging power. Psychologist Allen D. Canner believes this is a serious problem and in the article "Advertising to children: Is it ethical?" by Rebecca Clay she quotes, "According to Canner, the result is not only an epidemic of materialistic values among children, but also something he calls "

narcissistic wounding” of children. Thanks to advertising he says, “ Children have become convinced that they’re inferior if they don’t have an endless array of new products. ” Companies use online advertisement as one way to create brand loyalty among children.

They offer online games and contest they can enter, which always features a trademark character and the product logo. Take Disney for instance, you can hang out in one or more of their many themed club houses and play interactive games for free, but if you want to advance to a higher bevel and hang out with more Disney characters you have to buy a membership. Children become part of these virtual playgrounds and because Disney offers so much to them, they become loyal to the brand.

Disney is every” here and it’s one brand that almost every kid in the world can identify with. Advertising has also used radio to get their message to children. Fun Kid’s and Disney are commercial radio stations that are funded by advertising and target children. They use special offers and prizes to lure children in. Kid’s magazines are over run with advertisements that have full ads for candy, died games (some are violent), movies, clothing and some ads are made to look like articles, and it’s outrageous.

Advertising that is directly targeted at children, doesn’t seem to be going away anytime soon, regardless of how unethical is it, but the responsibility ultimately lies with the parent. Parents are responsible in limiting the amount of advertisement children are exposed to by monitoring their programs and reducing time spent watching television. Also, putting limits on internet

usage and parental controls on which sites can be visited is another mechanism in reducing children's exposure to advertisement.