

Advertisment



Advertising has had a powerful impact on today's children. From songs, to logos, to characters, advertisers keep in mind their audiences. Competition is the force which causes advertisers to target children. Children are targeted through the catch phrases, animated characters, and toys in these competitive advertisements.

The textbook used in class (Huffman, 2002) describes that " advertising has numerous"

methods to hook the individual into " buying their products and services."

The advertising

company surrounds a particular candidate such as a child and immediately sinks their teeth into

the child's mind to manipulate the child into desiring their products. Through

TV, cartoons and

magazine ads, child are hit by one subliminal message after another. They are shown how this

product will either improve their status by making them they envy of all their friends. Whether it

be a food, a particular catch phrase, a child can be the easiest for advertisers to prey on.

Many types of foods targeted towards children have a catch phrase associated

towards them. Commercials use these catch phrases to implant their product into the

children's memory. One example, are the goldfish crackers. " I love the fishes cause their

so delicious" This is the theme to a well-known commercial, which advertises

Pepperidge Farm goldfish crackers. Children sing the catch phrase over and over

throughout the entirety of the commercial. By the time the commercial ends the line and

products are inevitably stuck in a child's mind. The commercial says" and my mom says

that's okay," which implies to children that their parents will allow them to eat this snack.

Another example of a product with an addicting catch phrase is Oscar Meyer bologna.

" My bologna has a first name its O-S-C-A-R" Instead of this song selling the product

itself, its aim is to sell the brand. The Oscar Meyer Company has auditions for the next

Oscar Meyer child. Again, their goal is to sell their brand. The company also has another

product with another catchy song, Oscar Meyer hotdogs. " I wish I were an Oscar Meyer

wiener" The stress of this phrase is also the brand. Oscar Meyer commercials use

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children to sing these songs and like the gold fish commercial, the song has been imprinted into a child's memory by the ends of the commercial. Both companies goals is to sell their product. By targeting children, whole families are then targeted.

Competition between companies with similar products, is the reason catch phrases are used. If one company can create a catch phrase that everyone will know and remember, they are one step closer to winning the race.

Animated characters are also a medium for ensnaring children. Animation has been the way which companies from Disney to the Cartoon Network, capture the attention of children everywhere. Tony the Tiger is the spokesman for Kellogg's frosted flakes. The image of this tiger appears in all the commercials and on the boxes of cereal. " Their grrreat!," is a catch phrase used along with the animated character. Together these mediums imprint themselves into a child's memory. When a child sees these commercials on television, the get placed in their memory book. When a child goes shopping with their parents and sees the

product on the shelf, the memory resurfaces and the child asks for the product. Other animated characters associated with food products, are the Trix Rabbit, the Flintstones, the leprechaun for Lucky Charms, and the Quick Rabbit. The Flintstones is a well-known cartoon. Using these characters to advertise a product takes something that children already love and gives it more meaning. Again, these commercials get put into a child's memory bank, and the companies hope that the child will one day ask for the product.

Toys are another way in which children are targeted. What kind of child does not like toys? None. This is the answer that some companies keep in mind when advertising their product. Cracker Jacks is just an average caramel popcorn snack until a toy is out inside the box and advertised. The hope here is that the child will remember a particular brand has a toy in it and will therefore ask for that particular product. Cereal companies are also famous for this type of advertisement. The huge competition between the companies has caused a need for them to somehow sell their products better. If they put toys in the boxes of cereal, children are more

likely to want the box with a toy in it. Fast food restraints also advertise to children. For

example, McDonald's has the Happy Meal, Burger King has the Kid's Club and Wendy's has

the Kids Meal. The only difference between these, is the toy that comes accompanies each meal.

These companies hope that when a child is asked where they want to eat, the child will answer with their restaurant.

When I was a kid, I was constantly rewarded for getting an " A" or being well behaved in

church by going to McDonald's and getting a Happy Meal. I don't remember what kind of food

came inside the Happy Meal but I do remember the toys. They were collector's items and I knew

I had to have them all. Every couple of weeks they switched gears and came out with a new set

of collector's items. I felt rushed into collecting all four before the next batch of items were

available. The most disappoint occurrence was when I received a toy that I had already owned

and I would throw fits until I was able to go back to McDonald's and try again. I also remember

the Happy Meal box itself was another toy. It had games, puzzles, riddles and

my favorite

cartoon characters on it. The best part was when I collected all four items and was the

first of my friends to do so. I felt like I was queen of the world. I had accomplished a great feat

that no one else had achieved.

Children, by nature, are very competitive. They strive to get something that no one else

has. A child loves to be the first one on their block to have the new toy, to try the new cereal, or

to own the new outfit. Advertisers know this and try to use it to their advantage. With all the

similar food in the world, there is competition to sell a certain brand. If an advertiser can suggest

to children that their product is better and more popular, then by their competitive nature the

child will have a need to have the product. This need comes from the fact that a child loves to be

the first to have something. If a cereal company uses the hottest cartoon character as their

spokesman a child will want that product because it is cool and they want to be the first one to

have it. If a child owns this product, in their mind, they too will be cool. There is also a

competition to sell name brands over generic brands. While generic brands are cheaper, they do

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not appeal to children as much. Usually, these products are not accompanied by catch phrases, cartoon characters, or toys. This takes all the fun out of the product.; making the product less popular. A decrease in popularity will cause less competition between children and therefore the product will not sell as well. Children want to be popular; to be popular, children want to have the best of everything.

In the article entitled Protecting Children from Advertising, Dittman states that " the advertising industry spends about \$12 billion per year on ads targeted towards children" (Dittman, 2004). That's too much money spent on trying to brainwash our youth to buy their products. Dittman also stated that " the average child is bombarded with more than 40, 000 TV commercials a year" (Dittman, 2004). The campaigns shown on TV persuade children feel that they desperately need the product and that they have to nag their parents into buying the product for them or they will be left out of the cool crowd. The findings in Dittman's article fully support my findings as well as my own personal

believes that advertising to children is unethical because a lot of the children watching the TV are doing so without adult supervision. A lot of children watching TV are 8 or younger and they do not fully comprehend the importance of the subliminal messages that the companies are sending out by using their cartoons and catchy songs to hook the child into buying their products. I

believe that advertising is a modern example of brainwashing and that with no parental supervision or no parental limits, our nation's youth will be so caught up in the power of advertising, that their youth and innocence will end much faster than the generation before.

Advertising is using the power of suggestion to sell a product. In the case of children, a company's advertisement hopes to suggest that their product is best. Many food companies target children with the hopes that they can influence their parents choices when it comes to buying a product. Animated characters, catch phrases, and toys are used to lure a child to the product.

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