

# Sex appeals in advertising

[Media](#), [Advertising](#)



Sex. Seems like everybody's doing it. And it's ever so tempting to add some sexual spice to your visuals, voice, or vocabulary. Ruth (1976) founds that sex sells in advertising. He stated that it is one of the fundamental driving forces of human nature. Sex appeals in advertising now include eye-catching male models as well as sexy female models.

In fact, advertising companies are advertised heavily by using seductive women and men. (Kang, 1997). Turn-up any magazine, watch any TV channel, shop in supermarket, walk down the street or even stand under a bus stand, you will see sex symbols used in advertising.

Cutlery, sneakers, and breath mints. Do these products make you think of sex? Maybe not, but perfume advertisers use sexual images to sell products all the time! These days, you can't open a magazine, turn on the television, or even walk down the street without seeing some form of sex in perfume advertising.

The answer is too simple: because it works well in most cases. It's true that a sexy ad can create attention (Hopson, 1979). But does sex always sell?

There are few reasons that advertising companies use sex to appeal in their product.

Using sex symbol in advertisement is the right on spot, advertiser is not shy to project a sexual theme without any soft mask, and they are deliberately using sex to promote their product. For example, a perfume advertisement of a woman in a bikini draws women to perfume because they want to get the same body. " The advertiser promotes sex because sex and perfume stereotypically sells" (Hopson 1979, pp. 24). These advertisements are found

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most commonly in women's magazines, such as Sports Illustrated. Bagozzi et al. (1999) noted " women are there to provoke and tantalize their thoughts and fantasies. The pictures that remain in their head are that of the product and the icon, which in the long run does its job by making an impression in someone's memory"(p. 184).

Sex in advertising creates a stimulation and desire for a product. The images convey a way of life. Interest only provokes them (Hopson, 1979).

Lin (1998) founds that " sex appeal is the number one form of advertisement throughout magazines and television" (p. 465). Whether it is a woman in a low cut shirt or bikini or maybe a man in his boxers or a tight revealing shirt. All of these pictures appeal to and are bought by the opposite sex.

Ruth (1976) written many men and women are fascinated by sex, pleasurable thoughts, and by putting actual revealing or sexual pictures in view of the public eye, which make the articles come to vivid life.

Human's bodies have been used whole, or in parts, to market everything from brassieres to monkey wrenches. Bagozzi et al. (2000) stated that one effect of such ads is to give society unrealistic notions of what they should look like. After instilling anxiety and insecurity in women, the ads imply that buying consumer products can correct practically any defect, real or imagined.

The women's magazines that could be telling the truth about such marketplace fraud are largely co-opted by their advertisers. Nor are men immune from exploitation. As more idealized male bodies appear in ads,

men may, at last, really understand what upsets women about the way they are depicted in ads. In addition to reinforcing sexist notions about ideal woman and manhood, ads exploit sexuality.

Many products are pitched with explicit sexual imagery that borders on pornography. Hopson (1979) insisted that this kind of campaign is not pornographic. The ads are intended to "convey the idea that glamour is an inner quality that can be found in regular people in the most ordinary setting" (Jhally 1990, p. 129). It is not something exclusive to movie stars and models.

Sex is one of the most powerful and easy formula of getting people's attention and making the products desirable either for men or for women (Daly, 1989).

Most of the advertisements have no indication other than the women or men are anything but a sex symbol. A man's eye is attracted to and follows a woman's face and body curves. Pleasant female and male, well done make-up, product colour dominating the overall tint, eyes opened - looking at you, close-up shot, focus on brand name and its product in the creative layout. Ruth (1976) classified this is the style of symbolizing sex symbols.

Hopson (1979) written that the difference in male and female psychology forces an advertiser to use different approaches for attracting these genders. Although sex is extremely influential and effective when aimed at one gender it is very easy to pull man's attention by using women's bodies as a push medium. These kinds of advertisements are always played on inherent

unconscious mind rather than on logical mind. This sex driven ads dose not waste time in discussing about manhood credentials for sexual desires, just their existence is enough to propose that.

On the other hand, women have totally different selection criteria. It's a complex blend of physical, emotional and physiological needs. A man physical appearance does influence her a little bit, but her inherent interest finds a long-run support, not the short-term sexual act.

" To sell a product to women, advertising relies on the bridge that holds the relation between a men and a women romance" (Irvine 1996, p. 96).

Kang (1997) insisted that romance directly fits into a woman or men desire for romantic relationships since it's the ultimate goal after a courtship period. To attract the audience, perfume advertisers use conventional images to achieve the romance approach. The ad sells the product on the basis that its purchase will give the audience the feeling of romance in their life. Very rarely these romantic ads show deliberate sex symbols that appear in ads. Although some ad may use body as an attention-getting catalyst, it is usually shown in a romantic rather than sexual context. For example: - A perfume advertisements use a romantic approach.

There is purity and a sense of romance wrapped up in some advertisements promised that rely on images and the emotions. These images will evoke in each individual.

Ralp Lauren is heavily using sex symbols in their advertising. Consequently, their ads are sensational and stunning. Rapl Lauren is not the only one.

There are thousands of other companies who are using controversial images in advertising. After all, Mullen & Jonhson (1990) noted that the bottom line of a successful advertisement is to attract attention. Some of these ultra-class ads are well known for its liberal use of young females and male as sex symbols.

You may recognize most of these world famous examples. What they all have in common is sex symbols. These appeal to the consumer, some with a soft mask or deliberately. According to Ruth (1976) in the mid to late 1960s, advertising executives discovered the road to fortune. This road is sex. Especially in present-day society, it is abundantly clear that sex is what sells. We find it on television, in magazines, billboards and even the radio. It seems that everywhere we look; sex is right in front of us.

" There is a struggle among advertisers, or at least there should be, on whether to use the sure way to sell the maximum number of products or to be true to a sense of morality. More often than not, greed takes over and morality goes out the window" (Bagozzi et al. 2000, p. 85).

To sell products advertisers target an audience and try to appeal to their senses and feelings. The problem is that sexual appeal seems to be showing up more often with a broader range of products and audiences. Females are more likely than males to be presented in seductive fashions or appear nude but males are now being portrayed as sex symbols more and more. Ruth (1976) contend in his study that despite uncertainty over advertisement effectiveness, the use of sex appeal is still considered an effective method of selling products because of its ability to attract consumer attention to an ad.

Advertising presents the images, ideas, and belief systems that a society holds. They have worked their way into what we read, what we care about, the way we raise our children and our ideas of right and wrong. Advertising is a social practice so the expression of sexuality continues to be an issue of social concern. Sex has spread throughout our entire society.