

The persuasive antismoking ads

[Health & Medicine](#), [Addiction](#)



Persuasion and Anti-smoking Ads

Smoking is a habit that does not do anything constructive for the individual practicing it. Anti-smoking organizations have launched numerous campaigns to further their efforts. One such campaign involves proliferation of anti-smoking ads.

What chances do print ads have against the smoking industries lure? This paper aims to evaluate the effectiveness of print ads used in convincing smokers to stop their habit. The different elements of persuasion that are present in the ads will be analyzed in order for the ads to be assessed properly with regards to their effectiveness. The results of this research can help in the determination of the different factors contributing to an antismoking ad's success or failure.

Methodology

Four print ads with messages espousing antismoking belief were taken from online archives with access to the databases. Antismoking was operationally defined as any instance wherein clear and unequivocal denouncement of the use of cigarettes was seen. Print ads were selected randomly from the database and were then analyzed in terms of capability to persuade.

The ads capability to persuade was assessed by checking for the presence of the following elements of persuasion in the ad. In terms of the messenger: credibility. In terms of the message content: associations with good feelings, arousal of fear, presentation of a discrepant view, primacy and recency effect design. In terms of the way the ad delivered the message: allowing of

the audience's use of action upon response to the ad. In terms of the target audience: age and gender appropriateness. (Myers, 2008)

Results

The first ad shows a male African American with a hook and line piercing the side of his mouth in much the same way a fishing hook would pierce a fish's mouth. In an empty space near the upper portion of the ad, the words " The average smoker needs over 5000 cigarettes a year." are written. Directly below these words is a short sentence saying, " Get unhooked. Call 08001690169 or visit getunhooked. co. uk."

The second ad shows a curved cigarette imposed on a black background. In the space above the image of the cigarette, the words " It's not just your lungs that smoking affects." are written in block and capital letters.

The third ad shows an African American's middle and index finger straddling a cigarette. The fingers are positioned in such a way that they appear to be the legs of a standing individual. In the lower left portion of the ad, a warning can be read, " Did you know that there's a valve in your penis that traps the blood inside so you can get an erection? That every time you smoke, this valve is damaged?

That if you don't quit now, it might stop working altogether? You do now. Text HARD to 84118 for a free information pack. Texts will be charged at your standard rate. Call 0800 169 0 169. www. stayinghard. info." Beneath the image of the fingers and to the left of the above warning, larger words

can be read, “ If you won’t give up smoking for your lungs, heart or throat, maybe you’ll do it for your penis.”

The last ad to be discussed showed two spliced pictures of an African American woman in a blue top. In the first half of the ad, she is smiling with her lips fully closed. In the second half, she is still smiling but only this time revealing yellowed, nicotine-stained teeth. In the second half of the picture, the woman is also holding a cigarette in between her fingers.

Discussion & Analysis

The antismoking ads showed different trivias about smoking that the everyday person would not have known. The samples showed many of the different elements of a persuasive ad. First, the presentation of facts about smoking established the credibility of the communicator. Second, the ads combined both the presentation of fear and the invoking of good feelings in the audience. Fear was the goal in the ad’s choice of images and facts. However, this was presented in a comic manner that good feelings were still invoked in the reader. Third, primacy and recency effects were taken into consideration.

Having large and conspicuous images allowed for these foreboding images to be the first the reader would see. Also, making the size of the contact information smallest meant that it would most likely be the last detail viewed, the most recent. Fourth, the ads were gender-specific in its approach to the audience. Lastly, the inclusion of hotline numbers as well as of website addresses allowed for action to be initiated by the target audience

after seeing the message. These are all factors that contribute to the capacity of the antismoking ads to persuade its target audience. Antismoking ads, as reflected by the samples obtained, are effective albeit the wide room for improvement. (Myers, 2008)

Reflection

This paper helped me realize that even though antismoking ads seem harsh and sometimes even doomsday-like in their messages, these are exactly some of the features they have that make them such persuasive mediums. Persuasion is not a simple matter. The elements that comprise a persuasive ad are varied and numerous. I did not expect to find antismoking ads with an integration of the number of elements of persuasion that I did. This leads me to appreciate even more the works of antismoking organizations and their campaigns for information dissemination and also for their campaigns for intervention in cases of nicotine-addiction.

References

Myers, David. (2008). *SocialPsychology*(9th ed). Boston: McGraw Hill.

Antismoking print ads were taken from:

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Image number 30544824 - yellow teeth (2005) NHS Magazine Retrieved November 30, 2007 from <http://www.advertisingarchives.co.uk/searchframe.php?search=book&preview=min>