

Analysis of virgin atlantic commercial 2010

Psychology, Behaviorism



1. Introduction

This essay will analyze the advertising campaign of Virgin Atlantic in 2010. Richard Branson founded Virgin Atlantic in the early 1980s.

Originally it was called British Atlantic Airways, later changed to Virgin Atlantic Airways. The first flight was from Gatwick to Network on the 22nd of June 1984 (Virgin Atlantic, 2012). The company launched a £6 m advertising campaign in 2010, which was James Bond themed (Guardian, 2010). The new advertisement helped the company recover from the recession. Now I will examine how exactly it was achieved and what methods were used to obtain the best performance of the advertisement.

2. Target Market

Market segmentation is a way of separating consumers into different sections by their shared needs and personalities (Leon. G, 2010, p. 28). The needs and values depend from person to person according to his culture (Leon. G, 2010, p. 366). The VALS (values and lifestyles) segmentation system clearly shows the type of audience this commercial is aiming at (Leon. G, pp. 84). This system divides consumers into eight distinctive subcategories, which consist of thinkers, achievers, experiencers, believers, strivers, and makers.

The subcategories this advertisement will appeal to are: innovators because they are receptive to new technologies and who can experience the innovated technologies at a Virgin Atlantic flight; achievers because they are goal-oriented consumers who like to display success to their peers, which they can display by flying Virgin Atlantic as it is high-class airlines;

experiencers because they like to spend their income on fashion, socializing and entertainment which Virgin Atlantic offers through great service, food, entertainment, and their flights are considered as 'trendy'.

The social comparison theory states that the consumer with higher purchase ability tends to have a higher status; this is proof why achievers like to spend on luxurious products and services (Leon. G, 2010, p. 338). This commercial appeals to all the five effective target-marketing segments (Leon. G, 2010, p. 73). It is identifiable as it clearly distinguishes the shared needs, age and gender of the consumer. The consumer is a businessman or career orientated working woman who prefers high-class service. The age would appeal to Generation Y that is born from 1980 and onwards (Leon. G, 2010, p. 410). Generation Y spends 150 billion annually and is into innovation and luxury while Generation X is considered as 'sophisticated' group. Virgin Atlantic Airways allows children ages 5 and above to travel or should be accompanied by an adult (16+). Pets are accepted if they accompany a disabled person (Virgin Atlantic, 2012).

3. Service Offered

The marketing mix shows what kind of service/product is offered by dividing the elements to: product, price, place, and promotion (Leon. G, 2010, p. 58).

The service being offered is not just a flight from one destination to another; it is an experience at a high-class level of the Virgin Atlantic flight where the customer will be served at a high class, with security, entertainment, and with maximum comfort. It is a high-involvement purchase, which requires considerate thought and cognitive process, as the price is high (Leon. G,

2010, p. 231). The flight can be purchased online or at a flight ticket office. The company offers promotions such as: flying club cards, ticket sales, and discount codes/vouchers (Virgin Atlantic, 2012).

The price and quality relationship the company has is low- price tickets in comparison with its competitors and with a high-class service.

4. Seasonality

The time of placing the advertisement is very important, as there are competing companies to take into consideration. The order effect research has shown that the advertisements presented first (primacy effect) and last (recency effect) has a greater effect on the consumer (Leon. G, 2010, p. 302). The release date was 26 October 2010, which was a great push to recovery from the recession. British Airways and American Airlines are the biggest competitors.

American Airlines released its commercial in May 2010, which had a primacy effect whereas Virgin Atlantic Airlines gained a regency effect. The James Bond 007 Blood Stone video game was released on the 5th of November 2010(IMDB, 2010). This shows that the commercial was released 10 days before the release date of the game. This strategy used by Virgin Atlantic is a very clever marketing move, as their advertisement is James Bond themed and during that period of time all sorts of media (TV, newspapers, online, word of mouth, and billboards) had James Bond game advertisements.

Virgin Airlines got increased attention to their advertisement by publishing their advertisement at a time coinciding with Blood Stone's release.

5. Positioning the Commercial

The advertisement is transmitting through mass media as well as through new (non-traditional) media (Leon. G, 2010, pp. 294-296). The commercial is played on TV where it addresses a wide range of consumers (i. e. via mass media) and through YouTube where it is addressable and interactive, while response - measurable.

It was also played during the flights on the Virgin Atlantic TV channel where it exclusively targets its audience (i. e. via target media).

6. Reason for the Commercial

Consumer behavior consists of searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, disposing of products and services that in their belief will fulfill their wants (Leon. G, 2010, p. 23). The commercial was created in order to persuade and make aware the audience of the fact that the service being offered by the airlines is luxurious, entertaining, and high-class, to convince that this kind of service will satisfy there needs.

7. Perception

“ Perception is defined as the process by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. ”(Leon. G, 2010, p. 175) This advertisement appeals to emotional motives, which are affection, status, and pride in this case (Leon. G, 2010, p. 110). The advertisement's mood is sexually charged and is putting the buyer into a state of excitement by: James Bond themed music and graphics, illustrations of high-class adventure, and good-looking actors in the commercial.

Abraham Maslow created Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which identifies the five basic levels of human needs (Maslow, 1987). The advert is aiming to satisfy all the five needs of the potential consumer. Egoistic needs will be satisfied during the flight on these airlines, as it is illustrated as a prestigious flight. Egoistic needs include the need for good reputation, status, and recognition from others, which advert convinces that the consumer will have if he/she chooses Virgin Atlantic Airways.

The need for Self-Actualization will be satisfied as shown in the advert, by flying on this flight the customer will feel self-actualized by getting high-class service which he/she deserved or earned themselves. Social Needs are to be satisfied by communication with good-looking staff. The Virgin Atlantic cabin crew was voted as the most attractive staff in the whole world by the surveys of travelers (Daily mail, 2011). Richard Branson has always stated that the appearance of the flight crew must be important in order make the customers enjoy a memorable flight.

Cabin staff of Virgin Atlantic Airlines is told that: 'You'll be the face of the airline. As such, your grooming should always be immaculate - even after a long, tiring flight' (Daily mail, 2011). As flying on an airplane has a small risk of security, the advert is aiming to convince that their flight is safe and is a pleasant experience where there is nothing to worry about. Physiological needs will be satisfied by the high-class food and beverage service that would be offered during the flight by good-looking staff.

Air and shelter will also be present, as the designed with up to date technology. This commercial is aimed at visual consumers that prefer and take information better through visual images or messages as sources of

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information (Leon. G, 2010, p. 147). While watching the Virgin Atlantic advertisement repetitively on TV or Online passive learning is occurring and it changes the consumer's attitude regarding the product (Leon. G, 2010, p. 232). The theme message delivered through this advert is: 'Your airline's either got it or it hasn't'.

There is a message resonance in the wording, which adds a bit of humor to it and will make the viewer remember the commercial (Leon. G, 2010, p. 301). The theme message has a comparative advertising technique to it where Virgin makes the viewer compare their airlines to Virgin Atlantic (Leon. G, 2010, p. 303). The sexiness in advertising is present in order to grab the attention of the viewer (Leon. G, 2010, p. 308). The hostesses are wearing short dresses in red color and the man who is passing the security check hasn't got underwear on. Virgin is trying to show that their flights are 'sexy'.

8. Persuasive Analysis

| Chromatic scale is red and black, which is eye-catching. The flight attendances are tall, stylish, and beautiful. | | Shot of men wearing suits doing a pole dance around the fork with a shrimp. This is demonstrating that the food they are offering is high-class and 'sexy'. | | Very few cuts in the filmmaking instead have transitions that are much more flowing and make it much more difficult to look away. This is a shot of a transaction, which is made through a disco ball. | | The transition from the airplane saloon to the red lips. | The shot of the crewmember falling in and disappearing in the carpet after she gives ice cream to the customer. This could be symbolizing submission as well as it is a large eye catch that keeps the viewer's attention. | | Shot of flying destinations. | | Shot of flying destinations. | | Shot

of flying destinations and the smooth transaction appearing in the background. | | Shot of the flight crew standing on the wing of the Virgin airplane, which is really good imagery. On the top there is the headline: "Your airline's either got it or it hasn't". The headline tries to indicate that Virgin Airlines truly has all the qualities, which will satisfy your needs, and that other competitors may not. | | This shot demonstrates the high-level service done by a good-looking crewmember in a very fashionable saloon. | | The shot of people going through the body scanners. The men going through the body scan are good-looking businessmen, which represent the targeted consumers. The person in the middle coming through the scanner hasn't got underwear, by which he shows that the body scanning isn't just safe but it is also sexy. | Transition from the sunglasses of the crewmember into the next scene, which is airplanes and female flight crewmember flying in the air. There is no cutting in the transactions. | | This is the shot of the flight attendances showing the airline safety check in a very stylish and sexy manner. | | A man being tucked in by a beautiful giant woman into a cloud, which is dreamlike, and it suggests that the customers are going to be truly taken care of. | | The shot has a focus on the center of the pilot's head. Behind his head there is a ray of light, this light looks like an angel-like an aura. This technique tries to show the security the airlines provide (angel-like). The flight team is very good looking and is walking with self-assurance, which adds confidence to the image of the company. The runway lines and the red carpet represents the luxurious service. | | Transition from the safety demonstration to the airplane saloon is done without editing cuts, which is very eye-catching. | |

The shot of people sitting around a pool of martini and playing with the olive, which represents entertainment, beverage, and luxury the airlines offer to their customers.

9. Buying Process

“ The consumer decision making can be viewed as three distinct but interlocking stages: the input stage, the process stage, and the output stage”(Leon. G, 2010, p. 36). This advertisement is designed in order to influence the input and process stage in order to make the consumer come to the output stage. This advert influences and increases the consumer’s recognition of the service need. The information is delivered to the consumers through the marketing efforts of the commercial, which will influence not only media but also word of mouth marketing.

The Psychoanalytical Theory of Personality created by Sigmund Freud explains the drivers of the output stage (Leon. G, 2010, pp. 137-139). According to Freud’s theory, this commercial will affect the superego and id to make the purchase. The superego will be gratified when purchasing this service because he/she will become socially and fashionably acceptable, as Virgin Atlantic flight is ‘ trendy’. Id will be gratified if the consumer will make the purchase because the airlines offer the basic requirements such as food, shelter, and security. The consumer will make a trial or a repeat purchase when buying this service (Leon. G, 2010, p. 497). The consumer might be new to the company or be a frequent loyal customer.

10. Involvement Levels and Risk Perception

Involvement is a very important factor in how much attention is paid to the message sent to the viewer and how it is understood. There are different ways to measure the involvement of the viewer. There are two ways of involvement, high-risk and low-risk purchases. The higher the risk, the higher the involvement, and research will be. The flight purchase is a low-involvement product and consumers prefer congruent context of the message delivered (Leon. G, 2010, p. 293). The mood of the consumer is very important, if he/she is in a bad mood, the content of the commercial might cause a bad reaction of the viewer. Psychological noise may be distracting the viewer from the commercial and the advertisement has contrast in the imagery in order to keep the viewers' attention.

11. Conclusion

The advertisement created by the Virgin Atlantic airlines in my opinion was successful. The James Bond theme imageries and soundtrack had a great impact on the effectiveness of the commercial.

Every time the consumer will watch a James Bond movie or play a James Bond game, the commercial will subconsciously come to their mind and the other way around. The time it was released was perfect, as they needed a push to get out of the recession. The commercial had a bit too much sex advertisement in it, which may lead to worse effect than could have achieved and made the competitors (American Airlines) stand out more, as they had a touching TV commercial that gave gratitude to the men in uniform, veterans and their families. Sexual advertising may distract the consumer's attention from the message content being sent.

This technique may have a little influence on the buyers purchasing intentions and the risk of spoiling the image of the company. This advert is targeting businessmen, but there is a family audience with children and generation X, which they are risking losing. The commercial is based mostly on emotions and only in one short scene, the viewer can see the seats with the monitors. The saloons, seats, and the exact food of Virgin Atlantic Airlines are not shown, but they are very important to be shown, as the consumer wants to see the comfort he/she will have during the flight.

The fact that the advertisement shows a man being tucked into a cloud and not an airplane seat could make the impression that the airlines are hiding something and their seats are not good enough to be shown in the advertisement. This advertisement could have been improved by focusing the viewer's attention much more on the design of the saloon, comfortable seats, and delicious food. Nonetheless, overall this was a very well executed and effective advertisement with successfully reached the hearts and minds of the customer.

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