

# Advertisement analysis: american beauty

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Ever since civilization began, trends have socialized groups on how to dress, think, and act; it becomes an absolute necessity to support whatever is in vogue or risk ostracization. Modern businesses create advertising in American media by following these cultural trends. Whether it is through periodicals, radio, or the all powerful television these companies use effective methods to psychologically convince their intended audience to buy either a product or service. These advertisements perfectly reflect how Americans perceive sex, social status, and gender roles.

A prime example of this concept is a television commercial by Old Spice soliciting scented body wash to women with boyfriends or husbands. The sales pitch begins with an attractive black male in a bathroom egotistically claiming superiority over every woman's significant other adding that men make a mistake in their body wash which is actually buying anything other than Old Spice. The setting spontaneously changes to a yacht at sea where the actor woos his female audience with show tickets and diamonds.

The actor then confidently promises that if their men smell like Old Spice as well then anything is possible. As a final note, he randomly confesses that he is on a horse as a catchy jingle plays in the background. This commercial is extremely effective in selling to women by creating a stereotypical romantic man to serve as a salesman. The advertisement conveys the notion that women will only be satisfied if their men are not only very attractive but can provide a lifestyle of infinite luxury using humor, subconscious promises of success, and the Old Spice man himself.

Humor is the most explicit tool this advertisement uses in appealing to the audience being over the top to produce positive emotions within each viewer. The most apparent example is how cocky the Old Spice man is in his presentation of the product. It is amusing how he arrogantly degrades other men for their use of “ lady scented body wash” and how they unfortunately cannot be him. The Old Spice man’s presentation is so egotistical yet suave one cannot help but be amused. Spontaneous scene changes from a bathroom to a yacht to on a horse are also ridiculously hilarious because they are random.

The positive emotions evoked by humor are pivotal in order to sell a product. After watching the funny commercial positive feelings resurface whenever someone sees the same product inside a store; the odds that they will buy Old Spice body wash over another brand become very high. This concept brings to light that in American culture people enjoy humor. Humor can provide variations to a monotonous lifestyle as well as make people happy. Most people do not actively seek to be depressed so if humor can lead to amusement then people will actively seek for positive reinforcement.

The writers of the Old Spice commercial understand the importance of humor and incorporate it with selling their personal hygiene product so that people will psychologically associate the two together. The association of an emotional response with a tangible object is not uncommon with advertisements because it is an effective way to sell on a subconscious level. By incorporating images of materialistic wealth such as a yacht, diamonds,

and horseback riding on a beach Old Spice appeals to the American desire to possess limitless wealth.

On the advertisement, the Old Spice man falsely claims that “ anything is possible if your man smells like Old Spice” as he possesses excellent physique and is surrounded by various forms of materialistic wealth. To women the advertisement subconsciously implies that if they buy Old Spice body wash it is possible for their men to own a yacht, diamonds, and horseback ride on a tropical beach. The commercial wants to invoke feelings of desire and associate them with their product so that people will buy it.

For middle class Americans, the demographic group whom the advertisement primarily targets, it is very possible to achieve a comfortable standard of wealth being able to eventually retire and live a lifestyle the way they please. Most people do not actively seek to become destitute therefore advertisements wisely do not portray the Old Spice man as homeless in a gutter using body wash to smell clean. The association of their product with negative imagery would result in poor product sales because feelings evoked by imagery like humor attach to a product in the minds of viewers.

Understanding human psychology is pivotal in soliciting a product. The advertisement’s most powerful tool in attracting attention toward Old Spice body wash is sexual appeal because within American culture sex is a sensitive topic often considered taboo in conservative social circles. The Old Spice man exudes enough confidence to be considered arrogant, has irresistible charm, and has a sexy body in the eyes of women; he is the archetype of a romantic lover.

The Old Spice man is deliberately placed in the advertisement to distract women from making a completely rational decision in buying the personal hygiene product. The real message the commercial makes is to specifically buy Old Spice body wash but the product is not even introduced until a full ten seconds after the advertisement begins with the attractive man commanding women to “ look at your man, now back to me” three times. What women really observe is a romantic fantasy with the man their man can smell like on a boat showered with luxury gifts.

The advertisement reflects the cultural belief that women lust for an attractive and wealthy man; it also plays on the racial stereotype that men of African descent are sexually well endowed being that the Old Spice man is black. For men specifically Old Spice implies that it will make them more desirable in the eyes of women smelling no longer like a lady but a man. This concept demonstrates how powerful sex appeal is in the advertisement epitomized by the Old Spice man himself. Old Spice wants to make their product sexually desirable so it will sell.

Without the element of sex many products would not sell as well as they presently do because there is no explicit desire attached. People like sex. More specifically, people long to become sexually attractive and if a product can make a promise to do so people will buy it. It is well understood that companies make advertisements to sell their product to make a profit. In order to stand out among the competition advertisements play on the psychology of targeted viewers by making references to humor, misleading information, and sex.

In American culture sex is the most powerful because of how sex is socially perceived as indecent or lewd while being very much ingrained within society. It is to retailer's advantage that a product carries an additional label beyond its intended use because of how people like to think they are getting more with what they pay for. It can be very easy for consumers to fall for ploys by advertisements; they are Venus fly traps set to catch their next prey.