

# Example of research paper on unethical advertisement

[Business](#), [Company](#)



\n[toc title="Table of Contents"]\n

\n \t

1. [Abstract](#) \n \t
2. [Unethical Advertisement](#) \n \t
3. [References](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

## **Abstract**

Ethics in advertising is of big concern to consumers and businesses alike. While many companies advertise ethically, there are a number of ways in which unethical advertising proliferates, including advertising to children, ads by pharmaceutical companies, and Internet advertisement, to name a few.

## **Unethical Advertisement**

Advertising is everywhere: it is on the television, Internet web pages, E-mail, newspapers, magazines, billboards, at doctors' offices, on the radio, and in movies. Some companies use unethical advertisement to sell their products and services. They may feel they have a legitimate reason to push the boundaries of ethics, for instance, believing they will have an advantage over competitors by shocking consumers. Others may abuse ethical standards in devious ways, seeking to trick consumers they believe are ignorant. This paper will discuss some of the ways unethical advertising is used.

The ethics of advertising to children are always under scrutiny. According to

Commissioner Roscoe B. Starek, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has “[placed] a high priority on combating deceptive and unfair practices that harm children,” but “neither deceptive speech nor speech that proposes an illegal transaction is protected by the First Amendment” (Starek 1997, ¶ 1, 9). For instance, portraying children doing hazardous things such as playing with a hairdryer in the bathtub would be considered unfair advertisement by the FTC because “Children tend to imitate other children and they often lack the ability to foresee and avoid dangers” (Starek 1997, ¶ 4). Starek proposes that industries such as tobacco, alcohol, and other industries advertising where children may view their ads use common sense and self-regulation to avoid government (¶ 26).

Some psychologists consider the idea that advertising to children may not be ethical at all. Dr. Allen D. Kanner, a Psychologist in Berkley, California, is incensed at psychologists teaming up with companies to help better target children in their advertisements, and his statements resulted in the American Psychological Association (APA) developing a task force to “consider how psychology can help minimize advertising's harmful effects and maximize its positive effects” (Clay 2000, ¶ 6). However, other psychologists disagree that they need to divorce themselves from the world of advertising. Professor Whiton S. Paine of the Richard Stockton College in Pomona, NJ, asks, ““ If you remove ethical psychologists from the decision-making process in an ad's creation, who's left? People who have a lot less sensitivity to the unique vulnerabilities of children” (Clay 2000, ¶ 16). The First Amendment is not going to disappear, so it seems reasonable that ethical psychologists should be involved in the process of creating advertisement

geared toward children.

Another area under heavy scrutiny is advertising by pharmaceutical companies. Rather than being ethical companies focused on improving people's health, pharmaceutical companies have transformed into big businesses that “unethically [market] products to exploit patients and physicians alike to maximize profits,” and the reason for this exploitation is due to lack of innovation (Cousins 2008, 1). For physicians, exposure to pharmaceutical company advertising begins in medical school when they attend Continuing Medical Education (CME) events, where over half of the funding for CME events is provided by pharmaceutical companies who “showcase their product at what is regarded as a scientific gathering” (Cousins 2008, 2). The United States is one of the few countries that allow direct to consumer drug advertisement (Cousins 2008, 5). The ethical problem here is that with few real innovations, pharmaceutical companies are no longer seeking to improve the health of people as much as they are trying to push out minor variations on previous and effective drugs. They persuade doctors and patients to push for the new, higher-priced drugs that may harm the pocketbooks of consumers more than they help remedy health problems.

Advertisement on the Internet and the fraud it often represents are another ethical concern. In a personal investigation of how fraudulent advertisements promising various miracle cures end up on otherwise respectable sites like Slate, reporter Chadwick Matlin found that the publishers had little to do with the content provided by the ad networks they use (Northrup 2009, ¶ 2).

Matlin discovered that the ad networks are not taking responsibility for the

content either when he spoke with ad network Pulse360 CEO Jann Janes, who would only say, “ The responsibility lies with the advertiser. Our responsibility is to run ads subject to our guidelines and terms and conditions” but would not confirm that the ads met Pulse360’s terms and conditions ((Northrup 2009, ¶ 3). Perhaps of greater concern is the collection and selling of consumers’ personal data via the Internet. Without the consent of the consumer, “ matching user profiles with personally identifiable information, and selling this data to other internet marketers becomes unethical as it constitutes an invasion/loss of consumers’ privacy (Byramjee, Klein & Batra 2010, 16). Sites such as Facebook and Google have come under greater pressure to clarify their privacy policies in an attempt to make it clear exactly what they can do with a consumer’s information if they give consent to the terms and conditions. While Facebook and Google may be attempting to be ethical, the specter of many other unethical applications and websites remains.

Other ethical issues abound in advertising, such as the use of sexuality in marketing, especially to teens, stereotyping of groups such as women, misrepresentations of products through “ Photoshopping” and so on. The lesson learned from even this cursory investigation of unethical advertising is that a wise consumer must be very wary about any advertising they view, in any form of media.

## References

Byramjee, Framarz, Klein, Andreas & Batra, Madan (2010). Ethical Violations in Advertising – Nature, Consequences, and Perspectives. Applied Business

Review. Retrieved from [http://www. cbu.](http://www.cbu.edu/idc/groups/marketing/documents/web_assets/adv_ethics_abr.pdf)

[edu/idc/groups/marketing/documents/web\\_assets/adv\\_ethics\\_abr. pdf](http://www.cbu.edu/idc/groups/marketing/documents/web_assets/adv_ethics_abr.pdf)

Clay, Rebecca (2000). Advertising to children: Is it ethical? American

Psychological Association. Retrieved from [http://www. apa.](http://www.apa.org/monitor/sep00/advertising.aspx)

[org/monitor/sep00/advertising. aspx](http://www.apa.org/monitor/sep00/advertising.aspx)

Cousins, Chris (2009). Pharmaceutical Marketing: The Unethical Reform of an

Industry. Gatton Student Research Publication, Vol. 1, No. 2. Retrieved from

[http://gatton. uky. edu/GSRP/Downloads/Issues/Fall2009/Pharmaceutical](http://gatton.uky.edu/GSRP/Downloads/Issues/Fall2009/Pharmaceutical%20Marketing%20The%20Unethical%20Reform%20of%20an%20Inductry.pdf)

[%20Marketing%20The%20Unethical%20Reform%20of%20an%20Inductry.](http://gatton.uky.edu/GSRP/Downloads/Issues/Fall2009/Pharmaceutical%20Marketing%20The%20Unethical%20Reform%20of%20an%20Inductry.pdf)

[pdf](http://gatton.uky.edu/GSRP/Downloads/Issues/Fall2009/Pharmaceutical%20Marketing%20The%20Unethical%20Reform%20of%20an%20Inductry.pdf)

Foley, John P. & Pastore, Pierfranco (1997). Ethics in Advertising. Pontifical

Council for Social Communications. Retrieved from [http://www. vatican.](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_22021997_ethics-in-ad_en.html)

[va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/pccs/documents/rc\\_pc\\_pccs\\_doc\\_2202199](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_22021997_ethics-in-ad_en.html)

[7\\_ethics-in-ad\\_en. html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_22021997_ethics-in-ad_en.html)

Korn, Daniel (2006). Ethical Judgments of Sexual Appeals in Advertising

Image - Based Products to Teens. University of Rhode Island Senior Honors

Projects. Retrieved from [http://digitalcommons. uri. edu/srhonorsprog/5](http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog/5)

Little, Lyneka (Dec. 19 2011). Procter & Gamble Pulls Photoshopped Taylor

Swift Mascara Ad. ABC News Consumer Report. Retrieved from:

[http://abcnews. go. com/blogs/business/2011/12/procter-gamble-pulls-](http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/business/2011/12/procter-gamble-pulls-photoshopped-taylor-swift-mascara-ad/)

[photoshopped-taylor-swift-mascara-ad/](http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/business/2011/12/procter-gamble-pulls-photoshopped-taylor-swift-mascara-ad/)

Nwagw, Juan (2006). The Ethical Concerns of False Advertisement

(Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg,

Kentucky. Retrieved from [http://www2. pittstate.](http://www2.pittstate.edu/reuret/ethics06/juan06ethics.pdf)

[edu/reuret/ethics06/juan06ethics. pdf](http://www2.pittstate.edu/reuret/ethics06/juan06ethics.pdf)

<https://assignbuster.com/example-of-research-paper-on-unethical-advertisement/>

Northrup, Laura (2009). Unethical, Annoying, and Ubiquitous Ads: Internet Miracle Cures for Everything. The Consumerist. Retrieved from <http://consumerist.com/2009/09/unethical-annoying-and-ubiquitous-ads-internet-miracle-cures-for-everything.html>

Rittenburg, Terri & Parthasarathy, Madhavan (1997). Ethical Implications of Target Market Selection. Journal of Macromarketing, Vol. 17 No. 2. Retrieved from: <http://polaris.umuc.edu/~rouellet/tman613sp99/suppread/Paper23.htm>

Starek, Roscoe (25 July 1997). The ABCs at the FTC: Marketing and Advertising to Children. Federal Trade Commission. Retrieved from <http://www.ftc.gov/speeches/starek/minnfin.shtm>

Wang, Alex (2008). Dimensions of Corporate Social Responsibility and Advertising Practice. Corporate Reputation Review, Vol. 11, Number 2. Retrieved from <http://www.sp.uconn.edu/~alw03009/article.pdf>