

Advertisements: advantages and disadvantages



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Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of advertisements. Advertising is a communication whose purpose is to inform potential customers about various products and services and how to obtain and use them. Advertising is a multi-billion dollar business and its messages are conveyed to the farthest places on Earth. It uses every major medium to deliver these messages including television, movies, newspapers, radio, magazines, video games, the internet and billboards. Most advertisements are often placed by an advertising agency on behalf of a company.

An advertisement is a product and like every other product in the world, it has its pros and cons. Advertisements are used to sell products. Businesses advertise their products to potential consumers with the hope that they will buy these products. Businesses thrive through effective marketing and advertisement of their products. One good advertisement can make a product a household name and one bad advertisement can ruin the entire company. Advertisements generate awareness about various products and are essential to all businesses. After all, if you haven't heard of it, you won't buy it.

One of the best known advantages of advertisements is their ability to raise awareness among the people about consumer products, varied opportunities and more. But raising awareness through advertisement is always done to sell a new car or new brand of soap. Advertisements have done a lot to raise awareness about many issues of local, national and international importance. These advertisements, also called public service announcements, help inform the people about many social issues such as blood donation programs, immunization programs, AIDS, cancer and many more.

Many NGOs, INGOs and other non-profit organizations raise awareness about various plights plaguing people through advertisements. These advertisements appeal to the people to help their fellow man. They send out a message with the hope that one or more of the billions of people in the world will answer their call for help. This is by far the biggest advantage of advertisements: their ability to make people do something. This ability of advertisements to make people do something can also be a disadvantage.

Advertisements can sometimes be so persuasive as to make the viewers buy something that they may not actually need or may in fact be harmful to them. They achieve this by creating false impressions about their products. A certain cigarette advertisement for example, may show that people who smoke a certain brand of cigarette are more successful than others. This not only creates a false impression upon the viewers about success but also encourages them to smoke. This creation of false impressions is very common in advertising.

In fact, this creation of false impressions is what makes advertisements so influential in shaping a consumer. Advertisements have also been known to play to certain stereotypes. They have, on occasions, downplayed people with certain physical attributes. Only 'beautiful' people are employed to appear in advertisements for various products. Advertisement agencies hardly ever employ people of 'average beauty'. Food commercials never have malnourished people. Energy drink advertisements always have athletic models taking part in sports.

The Marlboro Man is always a 'ruggedly handsome cowboy'. All these advertisements play to various stereotypes. These types of advertisement create the impression that being normal and ordinary isn't good enough. Another disadvantage of advertisement is the sheer volume. There are advertisements almost everywhere one looks these days. Entire walls are plastered with posters about the new chocolate bars from Nestle. There are billboards on top of city buildings as far as the eye can see. Television shows are increasingly airing commercial after commercial.

Entire pages of newspapers and magazines have been taken up by advertisements. With the growth in popularity of the internet and E-mail, unsolicited bulk E-mail advertising, also known as spam has increased a lot. This large quantity of advertisements can ruin these media of communication. Television programs may lose their viewers if they take too many commercial breaks. Newspapers and magazines are sometimes unreadable when advertisements take more space than the articles. This large quantity of advertisements can make these media less appealing than before.

Advertising is a business and like any other business people profit from it. Advertising has both pros and cons. Advertisements influence us in many ways and this is both an advantage and a disadvantage. They can persuade us to choose a product that is good and a product that is bad. They influence us and they enlighten us. Businesses advertise products and services that can benefit the customers. They also advertise products and services that are potentially harmful to the customers.