

Entertainment technology

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Viewers now see Lucozade as a new and trendy energy enhancing soft drink, because it has been associated with popular music styles of the time and Daley Thomson and disassociated with sick children (which may not have been the intention of the original advertising campaign but is probably what was remembered from it.) In my opinion, Lucozade's most successful campaign is its most recent association with the computer game heroine, Lara Croft, because it links the product with the very latest in entertainment technology.

Lucozade realize that advertising campaigns can be entertainment as well as a means of fulfilling their more traditional functions of informing and persuading us. Beechams did not simply use a section of a Lara Croft game, but created a completely original sequence, at a cost of £1.2 million, that allowed their product to energise and therefore save Lara from pursuing dogs. Equally importantly, they made full use of a camera angle that allowed them to strategically place their product in front of Lara's most famous physical assets. This has the invaluable effect of bringing Lucozade to the attention of at least every male viewer watching who has a pulse!

Part of Beechams success in marketing Lucozade over the last thirty years has been the 'story' their advertising campaigns have told. In other words, the simple but clear 'beginning', 'middle' and 'end' to the adverts. Originally this was of a sick child, who was then given Lucozade by his caring mother, and was then seen to improve as he cheerfully tapped his big glass bottle of Lucozade as if it was a drum. The product was cleverly positioned throughout to be in the foreground of the camera shot - almost to the point of being part

of the family! By the 1980s, the beginning, middle and end of the advert 'story' were linked to the 'stop, get ready, go' image of traffic lights.

The visually slick advert showed Daley Thompson tired at first - on 'stop', then refreshing himself with an energizing bottle of Lucozade that was shown glowing amber to make it the advert's focal point and to emphasize its energy. Finally, the green light is seen and Daley runs up the track towards us in slow motion to demonstrate his renewed power and energy - courtesy of the Lucozade. In the latest Lucozade advert we studied, the beginning of the 'story' sees Lara Croft fleeing the pursuing dogs towards a canyon. The middle of the story is the predicament of how to cross it and we see that Lara is genuinely scared. Finally though, after choosing Lucozade over various other energy giving products, such as a rival soft drink and a chocolate bar, Lara triumphs and escapes while the dogs perish. The message of the advert is clearly that Lucozade is as much the 'hero' as the character Lara Croft.

In conclusion, the ways in which Lucozade has been marketed in the last thirty years demonstrates that the nature of advertising itself has changed, as has the Lucozade product. To quote Beecham's own report, 95% of Lucozade's sales presently come from Lucozade products that did not exist before 1980, proving that the change was essential. Advertisers have always tried to appeal to our desires to be 'good parents', 'successful career men or women' or part of a 'happy family' and they still do - although more recently with greater finesse. They still exploit our wish to be 'beautiful', 'healthy', 'powerful' and 'knowledgeable' - although now with a great deal more subtlety. In the 1960s and 1970s, it was commonly believed that the mass

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media 'injected' their message into unsuspecting consumers who were unable to form their own opinions.

Advertisements from this period such as Lucozade's 'good mum giving good product to sick child' would now be considered patronizing and inappropriate. It deliberately exploited our desire to be 'good parents' by making us feel guilty if we didn't buy Lucozade to aid our child's recovery. The male voice-over would have suggested authority in a way that we would now find politically incorrect. Nowadays, however, viewers are recognized as being more active and able to make informed decisions based on information taken from a range of sources and not passively accepting the mass media messages that they are fed.

Advertising manipulates images and language to achieve the best possible results, but most people are aware to some extent of the ways in which they are being manipulated and so advertisers have had to respond in the way that the Lucozade adverts have successfully responded and changed. Although the nature of advertising, and the Lucozade advertisements themselves have changed, they are still providing information and persuasion that is not neutral and never will be. This is because the main function of advertising ultimately remains the same, which is to get us to buy the product.