

# Racial stereotyping in advertising



When advertising occurs in television you can see how leading companies of the world try to attract persons for them to buy their products, but sometimes instead of bringing them incomes, the ads, in which they invest a lot of money, bring them a little more than money and attention, they bring them serious problems. No one can deny the incredible power mass has, but the problem of this is that while more powerful something is the more it can gain attention, from babies to adults, all of them can get easily the attention required not just to buy things, also unconsciously to build stereotypes towards people. During the past decade the media has become a great format of expressing ideas to the people, but this advertising sometimes can perpetuate racism and can also create sub conscience among the mass.

No one can deny that the television is the major advertising technique that the companies have now a day, according to the A. C. Nielsen Co., the average American watches more than 4 hours of TV each day (or 28 hours/week, or 2 months of nonstop TV-watching per year). In a 65-year life, that person will have spent 9 years glued to the tube (<http://www.csun.edu/science/health/docs/tv&health.html>). In a study made by that same company, (A. C. Nielsen Co.) you can observe that a normal person that lived at least 65 years in his life time would have at least seen 2 million commercials over his lifetime (<http://www.csun.edu/science/health/docs/tv&health.html>). This previous statistics show us perfectly how the television has an amazing way to spread ideas trough the whole world, but the problem is when the ideas spreading to the world include stereotypes that can hurt certain group of people. Afro-Americans, Asians, popular public figures, all of these groups are common target to

stereotypes. Some people may say what's the big deal about all this stuff? Yeah there have always been people treating bad Afro-Americans, so?

Stereotypes toward Afro-American persons have always been a great deal, they have really been. Since they came to America they have been discriminated, most of all because of their dark color, maybe this seems a problem, but a bigger problem is when huge companies such as Intel (Computer company) make racist ads that are not even worth sending them to the media.

In July 2007 Intel made a public campaign on television where a white man stands while six color athletes are bowing down to him, the ad of course was removed from National television, and it appears that it has also been removed from internet, since it can't be found anywhere, the only thing that can be found is a promotional picture of the ad. This ad made a lot of critics from customers and from the media, it even led to Intel asking for public apologies in their own website, " We are sincerely sorry and have identified specific steps covering heightened cultural sensitivity, our review and approval process, and just using more common sense to ensure that this does not happen again. "(Don Mac Donald, <http://www.intel.com/news/sprintad.htm>) Using ads that perpetuate racial stereotypes did not go to good to Intel since they even had to make an apology publicly that today is still visible to any people who wants to see it( <http://gawker.com/284292/intel-ad-stupid-or-stupid-and-racist>).

As well as Intel, but with more luck, Asian Toothpaste Company named Auulws made also a racist ad towards Afro-American, with the only

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difference that this one made a direct comparison between a black man and a new on market black toothpaste. The add in this case sends us a message directly, not all black things are bad (comparing it to a black men), buy our new black toothpaste. It sure sounds to racist to even be used in television but it really did, and it did not create too much controversy in Asia maybe because they found the ad funnier than racist. At last this company was the one winning because of the success of the innovative product ( <http://www.buzzfeed.com/expresident/racist-toothpaste-commercial>).

The commercial you just read was made by Asians, but as well as they make stereotypes of people in U. S, people in the U. S make stereotypes of them like the one Whiskas (Company that sells cat food) made about 3 years ago, the ad shows how an American man fools an Asiatic woman that seems to be stupid in the commercial. The message that Whiskas successfully give to the public is that Asian cat food is bad, and that Asian woman are stupid (<http://www.adsavvy.org/25-most-racist-advertisements-and-commercials/>)

Every culture, group of people or however you want to call it can be a victim of this strong way of making stereotypes in television, even the strongest persons on earth such as the president of the United States, Barack Obama. In a commercial made by the Japanese mobile company, Emobile, you can see president Barack Obama being compared to a monkey, this ad was banned in several days due to the strong humor the Japanese try to show in television ([http://www.sodahead.com/united-states/japans-emobiles-commercial-depicts-obama-as-a-monkey-racist-or-just-a-commercial/question-809365/?page= 2](http://www.sodahead.com/united-states/japans-emobiles-commercial-depicts-obama-as-a-monkey-racist-or-just-a-commercial/question-809365/?page=2)).

Television is a very strong form of communication as you can see, and all of this is because of the large part of society it can get to. Even though, there are other advertising techniques that are very powerful because of their accessibility to the people, there is just one specifically that doesn't need you to pay to see it (such as television or newspaper) and this are the billboards. The billboards are the second most important form of advertising as they get to the 93% of the population in the city where it is shown.

Actually in America an amount of 5.5 billion dollars are used in billboards annually, and this quantity is expected to grow even more in the next years. This means that the billboards are a great way to reach people if you are talking of advertising. ([http://www.businessknowledgesource.com/marketing/using\\_billboards\\_for\\_marketing\\_026351.html](http://www.businessknowledgesource.com/marketing/using_billboards_for_marketing_026351.html)).

The billboards may seem very good way of advertising, but this good way of advertising is also a good way of advertising stereotypes toward groups of people such as what Sony did in 2006.

In 2006 in the Netherlands Sony (technology manufacturing corporation) was promoting the new PSP (Play Station Portable) of color white and may have not done it the correct way. They use a white woman to represent a white PSP and she is aggressively holding the head of the black man (black PSP). The peculiar billboard Sony used to promote the white PSP was used in over 100 billboards all over Netherlands. After the ads were taken of Sony did not really defend themselves, instead they just respond

“ The marketing campaign for the launch of the White PSP in the Benelux focuses on the contrast between the Black PSP model and the new Ceramic white PSP model.” (Sony's CEO).

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The polemic billboard from Sony of course caused some boycotts of buying the white ceramic PSP, but after some time the things calm down. This of course taught Sony a lesson the bad way. ([http://www. engadget. com/2006/07/06/sony-under-fire-for-racist-advertising/](http://www.engadget.com/2006/07/06/sony-under-fire-for-racist-advertising/)).

The advertising over the years have been a great deal since advertising is publicity and publicity is money. As a matter of fact, the racist stereotypes shown on media are not just to black, Asian, or powerful people they can apply to any person in earth. The racism in media is not the only problem in the media, there are also some other problems in the media that can affect society. Thankfully there are several groups that defend racism and the content that the adds can display on the advertising such as the ITC (short for International Television Control) or the CEOUSA (Central for Equal Opportunity).

The ITC has experience controlling the Television Advertising since 1990. The ITC doesn't just control the Television advertising in some parts of the United States, it also does this labor in the United Kingdom. This organization is responsible for banning advertising on the television that are not morally correct for the society in certain regions, they are the main reason that announcements affecting racial stereotypes do not last in air to long. ([http://www. ofcom. org.](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/static/archive/itc/itc_publications/itc_notes/view_note64.html)

[uk/static/archive/itc/itc\\_publications/itc\\_notes/view\\_note64. html](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/static/archive/itc/itc_publications/itc_notes/view_note64.html))

By the other hand the CEOUSA sponsors conferences, supports research and publishes ads on issues promoting equity, ethnicity, assimilation and

public policy. CEOUSA focuses on three areas in particular: racial preferences, immigration, and assimilation and multicultural education.

There can be lots of more groups even more than this ones promoting the anti racism, we can know that, but other thing we know is that there are also a lot of people who can still be making racist advertising. In the world what talks the most is the money, all advertisings are made with money to get more money that is how it really works. From huge companies like Sony to very small companies such as Auulws, all need to make advertising to sell their products. Until there all goes alright, the problem is when they start messing with some culture, race, gender, or nationality. When that happens some people start to indignant and the awesome idea some guy had for selling more things converts to a really big controversy throughout all the internet, television, and news.

However, at last the ones that make this continue or not are us, the consumers are the ones who decide if this type of advertising continues or not. Many times unconsciously we support this by buying products because of some funny ad we saw and that we did not know that it perpetuated racial stereotypes. So how I say at last the ones that make this continue or stop are us, and just us, the consumers.