

# Shock advertising effective way to develop social awareness media essay



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Mass Media is the fundamental tool in the information society. In general, Mass Media can be defined as a message sent to a lot of people simultaneously; it is the vehicle to transmit information to an audience which is most of the time, heterogeneous regarding sex, age, religion, socio-economical level, etc. Nowadays, there are several kinds of Mass Media such as the radio, the television and the newspapers etc which deliver the information through audio, visual or audio – visual channels.

Let's think about the function of the Mass media! It is clear that one of the main function that they fulfill is to keep people acknowledge about the most current events that happen around the world both nationally and internationally, but it is the only one function that they have?-the answer is obviously “ no”; Mass Media fulfill many functions in our society , but now I am going to mention only the most important ones which are : 1)inform, 2) Surveillance, 3)Service the economic system , 4)Entertain 5)Hold the society together 5)Persuade , etc. Now, I want to focus myself on the third and the fifth function because they are very connects into each other. Let's analyze the following situation : economic system in any country depends on a key element called “ consumers”, so if there are not consumers , I mean , people who buy the products and services that the market offers(food , clothes, electro domestics, etc) it could be possible that an area of the economic system suffers a crisis. If it occurs one of the most effective way to encourage people to buy, would the use of the Mass Media as persuasive technique . So as I you see, economic system and persuasion are elements closely connected. Nowadays, one of the strongest tools that Mass Media use to persuade is “ Adverting”.

, “ Advertising is the attempt to inform and persuade a large number of people with a single communication” (Longman, 1971). Advertising is about delivering controlled messages to many people simultaneously and at a low cost per message (Wilmshurst, 1985). The main feature of the “ ads” is that they are created in an attractive manner for the viewers. Most of the advertisement that we watch or listen to are created for an economic purpose; they offer products and services in order to persuade the audience to buy them. But, they also can be focused on promoting certain ideas in relation with controversial topics that are currently affecting our society. At the same time they deliver information, they also dissuade people to purchase their behavior and to develop awareness in regards to social issues (health, politics, social and environmental issues etc): in this category can be found the so- called “ Shock advertisements”. This name refers to particular features that this type of advertising has such as that are controversial, disturbing , explicit and crass at the time to deliver the message( ). They also apply certain tactics to persuade their audience which are mainly, fear, guilty, compassion, etc. That way, the combination of those feelings in an announcement is supposed to work well to. But does it really work? Is shock advertising an effective way to develop social awareness? or are they just a manner of offending people?

Shock ads can be effective depending on the way they appeals to audience’s feelings. Shock ads appeal to the deepest feelings of fear, guilty, sadness, disgust, etc . So, they used to work with impacts images that usually show the consequences of approaching behavior. Currently, one of the most common examples of shock advertisements are related to lethal diseases

that are affecting strongly to the society such as HIV, Breast cancer, diseases caused by the excessive use of cigarettes etc . Let's think in this last one, "the use of cigarettes". In our society is has become very that people start smoking to early age and continue smoking during all their life. This excessive usage of cigarettes can cause serious diseases such " Lung cancer" and other health problems which decrease the quality of people's life. Smoking is a dangerous vice which can end with people's death. So, what do advertisers do to develop awareness in regard to this issue? They resort to the persuasion through the creation of shock ads which show impacts images about the negative effects of smoking in people parts of body like teeth, mouth, trachea, lungs etc. Even though, these images can impact to the audience, they also need to produce change in people's behavior so they need to appeal to the precise feeling to obtain positive results. According to researchers in the United States, in order for anti-smoking adverts to be effective they must either scare or disgust the audience. A study by researchers at the University of Missouri has revealed that ads which have a combination of both fear and disgust content decrease viewers' attention and memory but those which focus on one or the other, increased attention in viewers. But, to be honest, the fact that these images attract the viewer's attention and impact them is a guarantee that they will change their behaviors and will stop smoking? And what happen when the audience becomes accustomed to see those kinds of ads? Does it cause the hopeful results?

In 2009, several researches were carried out to pro the effectiveness of shocking advertisements in Great Britain and according to Professor Alex <https://assignbuster.com/shock-advertising-effective-way-to-develop-social-awareness-media-essay/>

Gardner, a chartered psychotherapist and psychologist, shocking ads traditionally worked however, if the same tactics and the same message are being used all the time, and then it will only become wallpaper to a person. So, as this research shows, using the same images and tactics all the time for communicating messages to the audience doesn't work very well. Now, let's analyze what happen with the case of shock advertisement used for anti- smoking campaigns. They used to work with images that show the negatives effects of smoking in people's body parts: damaged teeth, gory lungs, etc. That way, with the purpose of keeping people's interest and for they don't become desensitized, advertisers use another images which are also shocking but in a different way: for example, showing pictures where a child is smoking a cigarette and is saying: " I wanna be like you . What does this ad communicate? Essentially, it also talks about the consequences of smoking but through of a new message which is not as explicit as the images of damaged part of the body . This message makes people realize that when they smoke , they damage not only their heath but also theirs children heath. As Andy Nairn, the executive planning di- rector of Miles Cal crafts Briginshaw Duffy in Great Britain. Says:" By featuring extreme, shocking images, you're giving people a get-out clause, making them think: " I ' m not that bad."

Shock stimuli influence in a positive way the comprehension of the messages and increase retention of them in the viewers. There are three levels of shock in advertising: visceral shock, intellectual shock, and for lack of a better term, soul shock (Bruce Grierson, 1998). So, when an audience

watches a shock ad about a specific issue (social, health, environmental, etc) one of these three levels will react.

Although shock advertising is effective as they attract people's attention and facilitate retention in the viewers, they can also be people in several ways. What is more, in one of their definition Venkat and Abi Hanna said, " shock advertising appeal and, indeed " shock", is regarded as, and advertisement that deliberately offends its audience". Let's analyze what kind of offences shock ads can elicit to the audience that watch or listen to them. The offences are closely in relation with violating norms either social or religious which should not be broken up. But, what is norm violation? According to Baron and Byrne (1997), is the violation of shared expectations within a social group, of their rules what is acceptable what is unacceptable. That way, shock ads show both certain messages and images that break these norms in many ways. There are a lot of manners that advertisers can offend their audience which are : obscenity, sexual references, profanity , vulgarity , religious taboos , etc . There are many ways in which shock ads offend people , specially, social and religious organizations.

Members of Catholic religion have been strongly offended by the images that shock ads show,. One of the most reminded ads is called " kissing-nun " sensual kiss with the sacred vows pronounced by men and women who enter religious orders. This advertisement caused a high impact in the viewers who are encoring to refuse the ideas and beliefs of Catholicism. This offended in a terrible way the whole catholic community. So, the use of this ad was finally banned. But let's think in the final purpose of this ad , it try to bring

awareness or it is just trying to promote ideas against the Catholicism. It actually does not have a real purpose.

Taking all in consideration, we are living in a society which is constantly receiving lot information. This information is delivered by the Mass Media which can be defined as a message sent to a lot people simultaneously . It is the vehicle to deliver information to the audience which is most of the time heterogeneous. Mass media is a key tool in the knowledge and information society because it fulfills several functions such as: : 1)inform, 2) Surveillance, 3)Service the economic system , 4)Entertain 5)Hold the society together 5)Persuade , etc. There are of these functions which are closely related: they are the economic system and to persuade. Economic system of any country depends in a direct way of a key element called “ costumers”, that is to say, people who buy the products and services that the market offers. If there are not buyers it is probably that an economical crisis occurs. Therefore, it is necessary that exist something which encourages people to buy: Something or someone that persuade people. This is the role of a technique called advertising. “ Advertising is the attempt to inform and persuade a large number of people with a single communication” (Longman), 1971). It needs to be created in a very attractive manner to attract audience’s attention and persuade people for they to buy the products and services that the ad offers. But, ads not also offer products and services but also they promote ideas regard to social issues that are affecting our society. In that category we can find a special type of advertising which is called “ shock advertising”. This type of ads has become very popular in our society because of the particular tactics that they use to

attract the attention of the viewers. In few words, shock ads are disturbing, controversial and crass at the time to deliver the messages. They use the shock factor in order to impact their audience for influencing behavioral changes. But does it work? It is shock advertising an effective to develop social awareness?

Shock ads use the shock factor which a very strong tool at the time to attract the attention. Shock factor cause a high impact in people's mind and help to promote changes in their behaviors. Nowadays, Shock advertisements are focused on communicates messages which have relation with health problems and its effects.

Antismoking Campaigns have become popular because they used to work with shock images. That appeal to the most deepest people's feelings.. the effeteness of a shock ad depends on the way it appeal t audience's feelings , how the shock stimuli works for people to comprehend the messages and change their behavior.. Shock ads can be a very useful tool to develop awareness in our society but it also can be offensive in the way they do not contribute to the society.