

Advertising in a modern world marketing essay



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Advertising in a modern world as today is still considered a very difficult task when the new media channels have reduced the barriers of market penetration and brand knowledge to the consumers. Rather at times the whole concept of launching the brand or a product in the market successfully and sustaining its position through out the times is dependant on how strong does the advertising holds its position in the brains of the consumer.

With the amount of products, brands, marketing channels and the ways to inhabit the idea of a new product or the reminder of the old brand to a customer to achieve their sales through advertising is in debate since a long time and most famous among these all is the Strong Versus Weak Theory.

Many theorists have argued on the effects of advertising as a Strong or a Weak theory as their center of discussion and among all most prominently the strong debate between by J. P. Jones (1990) and Ethrenberg (1999) is the most popular.

The truth as most of the writer emphasis that the outcome of advertising is untrue and not realistic its success and failure is dependant on the products, the market and the aim of the advertising which makes e every scenario different from the other. As quoted “ Measuring the effectiveness of advertising is much harder than it may seem. To know weather an advertisement is working, you need to first be clear about what it is meant to do. Consumer goods manufacturers take a much simple point of view: that advertising is about creating and then nurturing brands” (The Economist, 1996).

The Strong theory argues that the consumer through advertising can be persuaded to switch to a new brand or a product and can create the interest or change of the demands previously engaged, where as the Weak theory argues that the perception or the demand can not be changed but it can be reinforced or “ nudged” to the consumer.

There are many other models given which support the argument of Persuasion among which the most important is AIDA - Strong (1925) in addition to the support of the model the theories like Hierarchy of Effects - Lavidge and Steiner (1961) and DAGMAR are always discussed to support the Strong Theory of advertising.

Where as, the Weak Theory of advertising purposes its points based on Habits Theory which is supported by the two models given by Ethrenberg (1974, 1997).

To understand these arguments it is important to understand the models given in support of the theories and the assumptions given by Persuasion Theory. Persuasion theory assumes that the attitude can be changed through advertising; human beings are always making decisions actively on linear fashion i. e. learn, feel and do. That consumer can be persuaded by giving cues as they are less motivated at times to make active decisions on the information they have.

Strong Advertising

Likewise AIDA supports the Strong theory as the consumer through advertising is captured or has noticed the product, which later when is

interested in the product or the situation would desire would buy the product in resulting as the action. (Strong, 1925). Before that advertising was simply information providing, which maybe true or false or even at time misleading (Turner, 1952).

Explanation

Thereafter the other models of Strong theory are as mentioned above Hierarchy of Effects (Lavindge and Steiner, 1961) which strongly supports that first the consumer is made aware of the product and then gains knowledge about the product which would result in liking the product and end up setting preferences over the other products and is convinced or persuaded to purchasing the product thus supporting the argument that the attitudes can be changed through persuasion and awareness.

examples

One of the recent television commercials of Barclays " Performance", supports the Strong Theory of advertising as they are focusing on persuading the consumer's perception by announcing their new scheme in which the Individual Savings Account (ISA) would get Tax-Free savings which is unlike other banks in the UK, following the AIDA model or Lavindge and Steiner's theory that they first created the attention with the new offer which would create consumer's interest and desire ending up them opening an interest free savings account at Barclays.

Weak theory which opposes the Strong theory states it is all otherwise, a 30 second ad is highly unlikely to persuade a consumer to change their

perception to do what they were not doing before, similarly, parents, teacher, the clergy or any of us often tell other people what to do but usually they go on as before (Monyle, 1991)

Thus the weak theory is more focused on the cognitive process, the mental ability to understand the new information and reinforce the consumer on buying the old product again and again instead of switching to a new product with new information. Weak Theory of advertising chains the Habit Theory which states that advert reflects the change based on the prior knowledge of product, is reused and is used as a defense against the new products coming in the market. It nudges the old customer, reinforces them to old their desires which might be hidden and retains the customer to go to the same habit. As it reinforces the pervious gained information thus it retains the loyal customers and reinforces the existing attitudes, it likewise increases the product purchase or brand usage.

The two models which chains with the Weak theory and are widely accepted are ATR model (Ehrenberg, 1974) and ATRN (Ehrenberg, 1997). The first model states that Awareness, Trial, Reinforcement and in second model the nudge is added. These models advocate that the brand's information is already in the mind of the consumer or the advert helps the consumer to gain awareness about the product and gain some interest. The advert is useful to create awareness which forces the trial usage of that product. If that product is liked then it reinforces the consumer to repurchase the product; this process is repetitive every time a consumer watches the advert, relates to it and gets nudged.

For low involvement products (Heath, 2001) provides an extensive review and suggests that there is an exception that familiar brands in a product category will be similar to each other therefore minimal incentive for the consumers to attention to the advertising for these brands. These vies are supported by (Amber, 2000). Both Heath and Amber suggest that advertising produces association between brand names and consumer attributes; this association influences the decision making process (Rose). These views are supported by (Ethrenberg, 2001)

Thus the brands who are already established and have many loyal consumers use a reinforcement or repeat purchasing habit which has already developed in the trial process which can be understood by the example of one of the highest viewed ads of coke cola which had 2 million views through out the world. The ad represents is based on factual settings where “ Happy Machine” in a student café gives, if asked for one bottle of coke, a pizza or a big burger or 10 bottles of cokes, exciting all the students / consumers in the café. Now here such a brand which is already known in the whole world does not needs persuasion but is reinforcing its presence and nudging the consumers to buy it whenever they see a cola machine.

In the modern world both of the theories imply of they have gone absolute in the rapid changing consumer focused times of today. The strong advertising is focused in changing the attitudes of the consumers where as the weak theory focuses on reinforcing the previous attitude. These can only be measurable with the increase in sales but still are very ambiguous and vague.

Supporters of strong theory use advertising as the way to change buyer's attitude by laying out product specific features, individuality and differentiation. Though in debate it seem to be possible that consumer can switch from their old products to the new advertised product, which though vary from a situation to situation but yet is very difficult as said " old habits die hard".

The models in such as AIDA does not put into account the calculation of loyalty or relationship with a consumer was prior existent, it takes every step as an individual component, treating each sale as a target, creating its awareness and attention and then finally closing the sale (this model was firstly introduced as a sale's training model; Strong, 1925). There is no hint in AIDA that some kind of loyalty or relationship might at any stage have developed, weather as a convenient habit, liking after use of some deeper commitment nor does AIDA mention the competition (Monye, 1991).

But in the example quoted above of Barclays which offers something which other banks are not offering has given a competitive advantage and would drive the consumers to leave other banks and open their accounts in it for their tax-free savings, thus the ad might change the perception and convince the consumers which would shift them to a new brand to which the loyalty stimuli relies on the tax-free offers. As argued in the Strong Theory that this factor would maintain the previous customers to stay loyal and pursue the new customers to switch.

On the other hand both Heath and Amber (2000, 2001) both argue that Hierarchy of of Effect is a very simplistic explanation of a very complicated

behavior and people do not always take decisions in their previous manner and are very unpredictable (Jones, 1991). They also argue that a large number of advertising by less differentiation is done by the major brands or which are already very famous thus do not need to emphasis on awareness, keeping these into account a natural human behavior mostly responds to the old habits thus the persuasion is highly unlikely.

But contrary to that while buying some product of which the ad is being displayed makes the consumer watch it more carefully, thus the information stored previously, or currently makes us take into account the new information given to what had been stored before.

In the weak and strong theory argument one of the most important points to be discussed are of product differentiation of a new product or the old products, in which the scenario changes, if it is a new product and is competing to the other brands which already have a mature market, they would try to use the more strong method of advertising but the one's who are already in the market would use the weak theory, as most of the consumers are already experienced with the product and have used it or years, and a few persuasive adverts can not make them move to this new brand which is different, thus the ads would focus reusing it and getting into the same habit.

Week Advertising

Explanation

Examples

Discussion Models

Arguments based on examples (new)

Strong Conclusion