

Cheerios: impact of advertising on product packaging essays example

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



Introduction

In this study, we will be studying an example of direct advertising, which is advertising on the packaging of breakfast cereal, Cheerios. I believe it is very important to assess the impact of direct marketing, via product packaging because it happens so often, and we don't even realize its impact on us. Unlike television or print advertising, where we few and high budget ads, here we are exposed to a whole lot of them while at nearby store for shopping. We may or may not buy the product, but its mere presence on the shelf has impact on our subconscious mind. Unknowingly, it becomes a deciding factor while making a choice at the store. Therefore, as a consumer and as a marketing person, it becomes important for us to assess its impact on consumer behavior.

So, in this study we will be analyzing the advertising on the packaging of a common breakfast cereal, the Cheerios. This is particularly important as there is a whole range of breakfast cereals, with attractive packaging, on the shelves of departmental stores. A typical box of Cheerios is bright yellow in color, with a red heart shape bowl in the center. The bowl consists of milk and cereal itself, with a few red strawberries prominently shown. The banner across the bowl has a health slogan, "Clinically Proven to help reduce cholesterol". Also, below the logo is mentioned that it is a toasted whole grain oat cereal.

Principles of Advertising

In the book, the "Advertising's Fifteen Basic Appeals", the author highlights the 15 basic principles the advertisers use to convey their message and

influence their audience. Among the prominent ones, particularly those which will be applicable in our research would be; nurture, guidance, achieve, attention, etc.

Similarly, Roland Marchand, in his book “ The Parable of the Democracy of Goods”, elaborates how advertising help brings a feeling of excitement and better living. He quotes, “ In its most common advertising formula, the concept of the Democracy of Goods asserted that although the rich enjoyed a great variety of luxuries, the acquisition of their one most significant luxury would provide anyone with the ultimate in satisfaction”.

Finally, in the book “ Men’s Men and Women’s Women” the author tries to explore how the gender based preferences influence their buying decisions. It states how advertising shows relevant images, carefully selected to show pleasures one gets from deep-seated anxieties. And how the advertisers are willing to exploit these buy using gender based preferences.

Thesis

It is our opinion that advertising on product packaging follows the same principles of advertising as those in print or television. This is because it affects us subconsciously while shopping, and also influences the spot shopping decision. Therefore, we will be evaluating the impact of product packaging of Cheerios on purchasing decision.

Analysis

Of all the theories, we will be using the “ Advertising’s Fifteen Basic Appeals” most extensively in our analysis. The first appeal, which is sex, won’t be really applicable in the context of Cheerios. It is basically a breakfast

product, and that also a healthy one, the priorities and preferences are different. The need to use sex is typically more in cosmetics or garment advertising. Next appeal, which is an affiliation, has a strong presence on the box. The logo is boldly displayed and occupies almost a third of the front space. The color of the logo is also contrasting from that of the rest of the box. So, while picking up a box of Cheerios from the shelves, one is conveying a sense of well-being and affiliation to a credible brand. It is a purchase that is visible to other shoppers as well as to the person at cash counter.

As it is a breakfast cereal, there is a strong sense on nurture in what we see on the box. First and foremost is the image of the cereal bowl itself. The bowl being red and heart shaped conveys a feeling of warmth, care and nurture. Presence of milk and strawberries too convey a healthy and nurturing feeling. Also, both the slogans convey a strong message that the product has been made keeping the health in mind. The color code of the slogan banner is of contrasting color making it stand out. The bowl and the banner together convey a very strong message. For the very same reason, the packaging also conveys a feeling of guidance. This is particularly relevant because most likely it would mother, along with her kids, who would be shopping for it. The presence or thought of a kid at the time of buying decision would have a strong guiding influence.

A feeling of aggress won't be applicable in the context of this product.

However, there is a strong feeling of the need to achieve in this advertising.

The banner clearly conveys the benefits of oats based cereal, as to how helps lower the cholesterol. It conveys that consuming this breakfast will

help them achieve a healthier lifestyle. This also prompts them to do a repeat purchase. Quite naturally, the advertising does convey its desire to dominate the market. The characters that highlight this aspect are; bright color; big and bold fonts; and big image of the cereal bowl itself. As one would have noticed the overall impact is greater than that of the store brands. The above mention factors also make the advertising more prominent. However, the elements of safety and escape do not apply to the product in question.

There are strong elements of aesthetics, as the box needs to be attractive to the child. This way the child is more likely to point out to the mother while shopping, and also like to do the same while choosing among different boxes of cereal at home. In this context, the advertisers have kept the bright yellow color scheme keeping the children in mind. The red heart shaped bowl carries forward the same effect. The advertising also satisfies our curiosity by explicitly stating the scientific fact that the product is made of oats, and therefore, helps in reducing cholesterol. As this is a well-known scientific fact, not further details or data is required. Finally, it captures our psychological need of healthy living by showing a heart shape bowl serving the cereal with strawberries.

In the context of Steve Craig's passage "Men's Men and Women's Women", I would like to state that the advertising is gender neutral. Even though it is a mother who is more likely to purchase it, the packaging has to be attractive to the child so that they can point out while shopping and choose one among many options at home. Either way it is certain the product packaging is certainly not men specific. Men specific product packaging is something you

would typically find in men's deodorants and sports equipment. However, there are variations of Cheerios that have more influence of gender preferences.

Elaborating further on Steve Craig's theory about gender preferences, it seems plausible that the advertisers assume that the women and children will continue to behave the same way in the future.

Finally, let us come to how Roland Marchand's theory the "The Parable of The Democracy of Good" would be applicable to our research. The theory contends that the product should appeal to the anxiety of the consumers, and harness their desire to join the elite. Further, how the purchase of that product will help them achieve that end. I would suggest that the variety of products and every changing product line conveys a sense of a lot of research going on behind the development of a product. This conveys a feeling of eliteness, as it would be something that would appeal to prosperous and image conscious people. Therefore, it helps to alleviate the anxiety of the masses that they too can be health conscious while remaining within their limited means.

Conclusion

For manufacturers and advertiser, the package advertising remains a key and relatively low cost method of conveying information about the product. Moreover, what is significant about this method is that it allows instant differentiation of the product as compared to others on the shelves. And, it influences spot buying decision.

On the other hand, the consumers need to be cognizant of these facts, and

should do thorough research so as to make informed choices. They shouldn't lose sight of the fact that what really matters is what is inside the box. I believe with a moderate amount of shopping experience and with guidance from their peers they should be able to do that.

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