

Advertising for kids

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



No matter what children are doing, they are always surrounded by advertisements. Whether it is watching television, Reading a book/magazine, or browsing the internet; advertisements are everywhere. Eric Schlosser has a good point when he argues in his essay “ Kid Kustomers” that more advertisements are being directed towards children each day. It is not only directed toward children, but influencing children to beg their parents for products they do not need or even want. As in, the stuff they see on television are not essentials for life. Children want them simply because they “ look cool. Schlosser explains how in the 1980’s parents felt bad for leaving their children at home all day without spending any quality time with them, so they started buying them good toys, clothes, or whatever else they wanted to make up for this (519). Prior to this, there were only a handful of companies that targeted children, and now almost every company is. For example, Schlosser describes a study published in 1991 from the Journal of the American Medical Association stating, “ nearly all of America’s six-year-olds could identify Joe Camel, who was just as familiar to them as Mickey Mouse” (520).

Schlosser later explains one-third of the illegal cigarettes sold to minors were Camel. However, more recently, there have been surveys conducted throughout the malls of America asking children to describe every detail they could about their favorite advertisements. One marketer explained, “ It’s not just getting the kids to whine, it’s giving them a specific reason to ask for the product” (520). The marketer simply means, the advertisers goal is to make children to want the product. The product has to be loud, colorful, and

interesting or they need to be able to do something with it to make them want it.

For example, the study concluded the talking Chihuahua in the Taco Bell ads were the most popular out of the fast food ads, but the most popular out of all the ads was the ad for Budweiser. To add to the idea of marketers surveying children in the study in the previous paragraph, Schlosser uses the book *Kids as Customers* by James U. McNeal as a source. McNeal describes the different ways of nagging children will do towards their parents in order to get what they want or to get their way.

In order for children to do so, advertisers found a way to learn the children's interest: by studying their lives, then putting the information into the advertisements (521-522). For instance, imagine a marketer discovered children who are girls enjoy watching television shows about fairies and/or play computer games that involve a cute animal mascot; the marketer will then somehow to put those subjects in an advertisement, young girls would want that product. After mentioning the different studies, Schlosser then explains how improving advertisements are more directed towards children.

He ends the essay on a strong note by explaining how the Walt Disney Company signed a contract with McDonalds. Schlosser states, " Now you can buy a Happy Meal at the Happiest Place on Earth" (526). By McDonalds and Disney combining, children are more likely to beg to their parents to go to Disney World. Eric Schlosser mentions some interesting points in the essay. He is correct when he states that advertisements are harshly aimed toward children. Reviewing back at the advertisements I remember seeing as a kid,

when I about 10 years old, I remember looking at the advertisements and seeing many items that caught my attention and interests.

These interests were the following: drinks, toys, movies, new TV shows, and clothes. It makes me reflect on my behavior towards my parents when seeing such ads. While I currently have a younger sister, who watches cartoons, I have noticed the advertisements have declined from their original purposes. One of the declines that advertisements are played on the incorrect TV channels. For example, commercials for a rated PG-13 (or a higher rating movie) should not be played on a TV channel that little children watch.

Today a great number of little kids have cellphones, laptops, expensive clothes, and so many more things children should not have, simply because they are not old enough. Cell phones are mainly used for when a person is not around anybody else; young children are always around an adult and if something were to go wrong, the adult would know who to call. According to James U. McNeal, there are seven types of “nags”: the pleading nag, persistent nag, forceful nag, demonstrative nag, sugarcoated nag, threatening nags, and pity nags. Then he describes his research discovered, “kids tend to stick to one or two of each that prove most effective . . . for their own parents” (521). For example, a child could start crying in the middle of the store repeatedly saying “please mom/dad” until the parent either gives in. The same goes for a child whom could tell their parents they are going to run away if they do not give them a certain product, but either way, it is up to the parent on whether or not they will give in to the nags. Some children perform well at figuring out which nag works best. Everybody

knows children (particularly small children) love all kinds of animals. However, do we know exactly how much? A study done by Dan S.

Acuff, the author of the book *What Kids Buy and Why*, suggests that about 80% of children's dreams are about animals until they are the age of six (522). Also it suggests the reason why so many characters in children's TV shows and movies have animals as their mascots. Having so, helped the advertisement groups realize they needed new mascots. There is a Character Lab that helps companies make these new mascots, the Youth Market System Consulting that uses, " technique purports to create imaginary characters who perfectly fit the targeted age group's level of cognitive and neurological development" (522).

However, one flaw in Schlosser's argument is he does not reflect on the positive advertisements children are watching every day. He mainly mentions how children want their parents to buy them fast food and cigarettes and alcoholic beverages. Though many advertisements are attempting to get children to buy healthy products. For example, I have seen from the TV my younger sister watches, some commercials are about getting out of the house and playing outside with friends. With this commercial, children will get excited to get out of the house and play with outdoor toys, getting exercise, and interacting with other children.

Another commercial on the Disney Channel there was an advertisement with Michelle Obama telling children to eat healthier and she while gave diet tips. Not only does this advertisement have a popular person in it, but that popular person is the President's wife. Having her in the ad influences the children to have excitement because they are doing something the

President's wife wants. In addition, this advertisement has children asking their parents for healthier food choices around the house and they will rely the diet tips to their parents.

In addition, there are many other commercials on Disney Channel about "going green" and recycling. On the other hand, there are "Above the Influence" commercials that express to children that drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, and doing drugs are a bad habit, but they always have the option to say "no." Without advertisements like these, children would not be as well educated as they are about it now. These types of advertisements make children ask questions to parents, teachers, and older siblings about what is considered right and wrong and the different types of foods that should be in the house.

This also helps children focus on more than the TV or computer. In all, several points can be made about whether or not advertisements positively or negatively affect kids, or if they are making people buy more products. I believe most advertisements do have a negative effect on children and there should be laws in place to keep this from getting worse. However, in the end Eric Schlosser has declared many points to suggest that his study is correct. He has many sources which proves his knowledge about this topic prior to writing about it.

In addition, he orders the essay really well by stating his opinion then backing it up with facts. The only thing he does not preform do in his essay, is explaining and expanding on the other side. Other than that, the essay is good and has made myself pay more attention to whom the advertisement is aimed toward. Works Cited Schlosser, Eric. "Kid Kustomers." From Inquiry <https://assignbuster.com/advertising-for-kids/>

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