

Sex in advertising assignment

[Art & Culture](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Sex has been utilized in advertising since its beginning. The earliest forms are wood carvings and illustrations of attractive women (often unclothed from the waist up) adorned posters, signs, and ads for saloons, tonics, and tobacco. In several notable cases, sex in advertising has been claimed as the reason for increased consumer interest and sales. The earliest known use of sex in advertising is by the Pearl Tobacco brand in 1871, which featured a naked maiden on the package cover. Sex is the second strongest of the psychological appeals, right behind self-preservation.

Its strength is biological and instinctive, the genetic imperative of reproduction. However, its effectiveness and application are gender-linked. The differences in male and female gender make up cause different approaches to and perceptions of sex, both the act and its outcome. For many products it is possible to find (or invent) a sexual connection. However, the sexual connection is much easier to set up for men than for women. Remember that men have minimal criteria for sexual desire; basically, they are concerned with a woman's anatomy as long as a woman looks young enough and healthy, she is desirable.

Men also consider her beautiful, since to a male beautiful and sexually attractive are nearly the same. Thus, in advertising it is easy to get a man's attention by using women's bodies and associate getting the woman if he buys the product. It is playing on his instinctive rather than intellectual view of the world. The ad spends no time discussing her qualifications for sexual desire; her mere existence is enough. According to Wisped, sex in advertising builds on the premise that people are curious about sexuality and that experience in marketing has been that sexuality sells products.

<https://assignbuster.com/sex-in-advertising-assignment/>

From a marketing point of view, sexuality can have biological, emotional/physical or spiritual aspects. The biological aspect of sexuality refers to the reproductive mechanism as well as the basic biological drive that exists in all species, which is hormonally controlled. The emotional or physical aspect of sexuality refers to the bond that exists between individuals, and is expressed through profound feelings or physical manifestations of emotions of love, trust, and caring. There is also a spiritual aspect of sexuality of an individual or as a connection with others.

Advertisers do and do use the various aspects of sexuality in advertisements. When sexuality is used in advertising, certain values and attitudes towards sex are necessarily 'sold' along with a product. In advertising terms, this is called "the concept". The message may be that "innocence is sexy" (as used by Calvin Klein when it uses young people in provocative poses), or that link pain and violence with sexiness and glamour (as used by Versa), or that women enjoy being dominated, or that women come with a product (e. G. In the advertisement for Budweiser Beer), or that the use of a certain product is aught but legal, or that use of a certain product will make the user more attractive to the opposite sex, and many other messages. Historically, advertising has used women in erotic roles and poses more often than men. However, in recent years young men have increasingly been used in a similar manner, though women continue to be depicted in socialized roles disproportionately. The use of female models in such roles is believed to attract the attention of potential male customers; however, ironically, research shows that most major purchases are made by women.

When people are used in an advertisement, the sex-roles played by each also send out messages. The interaction of the couple may send out a message of relative dominance and power, and may stereotype the roles of one or both partners. Usually the message would be very subtle, and sometimes advertisements attract interest by changing stereotypical roles. Many people oppose advertising that uses sex and nudity to sell products, while others believe that there is nothing wrong with sex or nudity displayed in advertising. Marketing ads sell a great deal more than products.

They sell ideas, images, and concepts of success of worth, love and sexuality, and popularity. They tell us who we are and who we should be. Sometimes they sell addictions" (Belch, G. 2007). When the average person is bombarded by ads a day, it is impossible to remain unaffected by the concepts and stereotype. Ads use insecurities to promise improvement within the person with the purchase of a certain product. They are breeding grounds for stereotypes; most, if not all, are negative. They provide impossible body images for women to strive towards, and sadly, many women do.

The repercussions of these images and stereotypes are quite serious. The female body image is distorted, and many women and girls, in effort to reach the distorted image, develop serious eating disorders. The perpetuation of sex in ads creates a casual attitude towards sex. Sex is used to sell almost anything: from lingerie to makeup, perfume to food and household items. Advertising tells viewers that if they aren't sexy, they are not acceptable. The female body is repeatedly objectified in advertising, and whenever a human is turned into a thing, violence usual follows in some way or another.

<https://assignbuster.com/sex-in-advertising-assignment/>

They never seem to be shown in business roles, work settings, or any position involving authority. They are shown as more feminine and sexual. In an ad for Morel Bacon from the 1950s, a clay model of both a male and a female are shown. The female is wearing an apron and is serving the male, who is sitting down at the table reading a newspaper. What is ironic about this ad is that only one place at the table is set, this being the man's place. Back in this time, it was more common to see an ad showing a woman cooking, cleaning, or serving her husband in some way.

However, it really hasn't seemed to change much because women are still shown in the typical female role. Of course, ads do not only show women. Men too are shown in many different ways. Most often they are shown in more dominant roles. They carry characteristics such as being cool, confident, independent, powerful, or even being rebellious. Unlike women who are shown as being excessively thin, men are shown as being muscular and athletic, which in turn shows that they have more power. However, these ads can diminish men just as much as they do women.

A 2002 study by the University of Wisconsin says that the new focus on muscular male bodies is also causing men a lot of insecurity ("Masculinity and Advertising," n. p.). It is definitely not as common for the spotlight to be put on men in terms of sexual ads. Here and there you may see a perfect bodied man modeling underwear, but this is a rare event compared to all the ads of women who have seemed to lose their clothes. Back in 2004, Diamond. Com put out a new advertising campaign where a woman was only wearing diamonds.

Many people were becoming upset by the ad and were arguing that it was “offensive, obnoxious and despicable.” Also Perry Ellis International Inc. Was getting a lot of heat having accused of advertisements that suggest rape. Diamond. Com told there viewers that the images were suppose to show tatty and the ad was not intended to be offensive (Rogers, Nicole, 2004). I think it will help display a point that people out there do care about what is displayed in the media and advertisements and it is individuals and not just people in groups.

Sex sells claims the old and undeniably true adage. We are sexual beings. Advertisers use this attribute by trying to associate their products and services with sexy imagery hoping that some of the hotness gets attached to their brand in the consumer’s subconscious mind. However abusing your audience’s attention is a dangerous thing. Showing skin to get attention and then trying to sell completely unrelated products like hearing aids or car-rental rental services may backfire. The reader feels cheated and talked down to.

Another thing to be cautious about is how much nudity is sufficient to grab eyeballs and what is too much thus considered offending. This is of course a cultural question. Usually the more religious your target market the less accepted it is to show bare body parts. For these reasons one needs to be careful where and how to use sex in advertising. Sex, in general, is a controversial topic that usually attracts a lot of attention, which makes it highly exploitable for the attention craved advertisers.

Sex is a means to “ gain consumers’ attention” (Belch & Belch 2007). So then, what makes it so special? Why is it so appealing? At its roots, sexual appeal is an emotional trigger. Bryan (2003) describes emotion as ‘ the soul of advertising’. And in terms of advertising, there are countless emotions that an advertiser can tackle to help deliver the message in which he or she so desire to register into the audience’s mind. According to Bryan (2003), emotional messages used in an advertisement should arouse your readers from indifference and propel them to action. These emotions can include, but not limited to, pleasure, leisure or peace, guilt, sadness, love and most importantly LUST. A sin it might be, lust is still a great tool for drawing attention, which owes its growth entirely to the entertainment industry. According to Copley (2004), Hollywood, fashion trends and MET have had great influences on the tastes of today’s audience, which have grown to favor, lust for, or are attracted to sexually explicit contents in ads. For example, MET, a television channel dedicated to music related shows, plays music ideas of barely clothed women on a regular basis.