

Red balloon english school: a horrific promotion approach essay



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What is wrong with A for Apple, C for Cat and P for Pot? I always thought this was the best way to teach alphabets to a three year old. But, an advertising agency: "Ogilvy Brazil" felt otherwise and decided to use "ASS", "COCK" and "PUSSY" instead to promote the "Red Balloon English School" for children belonging to age group 3-14 years. I was shocked and as I overcame my dismay and disgust, thought of writing about it and also thought of better ways by which this promotion could have been carried out. Idea:

When I first saw that ad, I was shocked to see that such promotions made for an English School and wanted to probe into it. I learned that this was just a 'ghost ad' trying to win a few awards. But still the idea was horrifying. The idea behind this ad seems to mix sex with children. Though sex and children individually are great means to sell a product, but the combination of two is a very bad idea. One needs to keep in mind the ultimate user of product before choosing a promotion approach. In this case the choice of words are least appropriate for the target consumers i. e. children of age 3-14. One might argue if you don't live in an English speaking country and don't speak English you'd want your kids to learn the real meaning of the word before learning it as bad-word. Art: Though I dislike the approach and promotion idea of the ad, the visual appeal is nice. The choice of colors and graphics certainly catch your eye. The characters in the pictures are attractive especially to a child. This brings me back to the basic mistake again - The words. This could have been a great poster if only the words were appropriate.

Conclusion: Rather than using controversial words the promotion could have been done by using words like chocolate, ice-cream or other things which

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children relate to better and then translate them from Portuguese to English. I feel the ad makers have gone way too off target with this one. Even if they really wanted to use the words like Ass, Cock and Pussy, a decent one liner like “ Learn the animal’s name, to avoid causing yourself lot of shame” could have helped them gain lot of promotion and kill the negative effect of it as well.