

Techniques of Advertising

Advertisers use several recognizable techniques in order to better convince the public to buy a product and shape the public's attitude towards their product. These may include:

- **Repetition:** Some advertisers concentrate on making sure their product is widely recognized. To that end, they simply attempt to make the name remembered through repetition.
- **Bandwagon:** By implying that the product is widely used, advertisers hope to convince potential buyers to "get on the bandwagon."
- **Testimonials:** Advertisers often attempt to promote the superior quality of their product through the testimony of ordinary users, experts, or both. "Three out of four dentists recommend..." This approach often involves an appeal to authority.
- **Pressure:** By attempting to make people choose quickly and without long consideration, some advertisers hope to make rapid sales: "Buy now, before they're all gone!"
- **Appeal to emotion:** Various techniques relating to manipulating emotion are used to get people to buy a product. Apart from artistic expression intended to provoke an emotional reaction (which are usually for associative purposes, or to relax or excite the viewer), three common argumentative appeals to emotion in product advertising are wishful thinking, appeal to flattery, and appeal to ridicule. Appeals to pity are often used by charitable organizations and appeals to fear are often used in public service messages and products, such as alarm systems or anti-bacterial spray, which claim protection from an outside source. Emotional appeals are becoming increasingly popular in the health industry, with large companies like 24 Hour Fitness becoming increasingly adept at utilizing a potential customers fear to sell memberships; selling not necessarily the actual gym, but the dream of a new body. Finally, appeals to spite are often used in advertising aimed at younger demographics.
- **Association:** Advertisers often attempt to associate their product with desirable imagery to make it seem equally desirable. The use of attractive models, a practice known as sex in advertising, picturesque landscapes and other alluring images is common. Also used are "buzzwords" with desired associations. On a large scale, this is called branding.
- **Advertising slogans:** These can employ a variety of techniques; even a short phrase can have extremely heavy-handed technique.
- **Controversy,** as in the Benetton publicity campaign.
- **Guerilla advertising:** Advertising by association. Done in such a way so the target audience does not know that they have been advertised to, but their impression of the product is increased (or decreased) if that is the intent of the advertiser.

- **Subliminal messages:** It was feared that some advertisements would present hidden messages, for example through brief flashed messages or the soundtrack, that would have a hypnotic effect on viewers ('Must buy car. Must buy car.') The notion that techniques of hypnosis are used by advertisers is now generally discredited, though subliminal sexual messages are extremely common, ranging from car models with SX prefixes to suggestive positioning of objects in magazine ads and billboards.

During the 1990s, advertisers have increasingly employed the device of irony. Aware that today's media-savvy viewers are familiar with -- and thus cynical about -- the traditional methods listed above, advertisers have turned to poking fun at those very methods. This "wink-wink" approach is intended to tell viewers, "We know that YOU know we're trying to sell you something, so bear with us and let's have fun." The ultimate goal of such advertising is to convey a sense of trust and confidence with viewers, by essentially saying, "We respect your intelligence, and you should respect us because we're not trying to fool you." Common television examples include most beer advertising and the commercials of the Geico insurance company.

Future

With the dawn of the internet has come many new advertising opportunities. Popup ads, Flash ads, banner ads, and email ads (often a form of spam) abound. What the advertising community has recently begun to do is make the ads themselves desirable to the public. For example: Cadillac chose to advertise in the movie 'The Matrix: Reloaded', which as a result contained many scenes in which Cadillac cars were used. From some points of view the whole movie could be viewed as an ad, but since it was entertaining, the public desired to view it. Each year, greater sums are paid to obtain a commercial spot during the Super Bowl. Companies attempt to make sure these commercials are very entertaining and many members of the public desire to watch them.

The advertising community has not yet succeeded in making their ads available to the public. Since the dawn of interesting and entertaining (desirable) advertising some people have been so entertained by a particular ad that they might like to watch the ad later or show a friend. The advertising community has not yet made it easy to acquire and watch an ad when and where a member of the public wants to. A few members of the advertising community have used the Internet to widely distribute their ads to anyone who wishes to see or hear them. In the future, more advertisers may wish to do this, possibly by distributing their television advertisements for free from their websites. Considering that in most cases advertisers must pay to get their ads seen or heard, it could be valuable to allow those who wish to watch them to do so freely and even distribute them to others - by that classic method, word-of-mouth.

Potentially (this has not been achieved to any degree) we could see the advertising community releasing quantities of free advertising content in the form of pictures, sounds and video to the public for whatever use they wish (perhaps under a Creative Commons license) which would likely result in widespread viewing and distribution which is desirable for both the advertiser and the public who enjoy using the content in their own creations.

Public Service Advertising

The same advertising techniques used to promote commercial goods and services can be used to inform, educate and motivate the public about non-commercial issues, such as AIDS, political ideology, energy conservation, religious recruitment, and deforestation.

Advertising, in its non-commercial guise, is a powerful educational tool capable of reaching and motivating large audiences. "Advertising justifies its existence when used in the public interest - it is much too powerful a tool to use solely for commercial purposes." - Attributed to Howard Gossage by David Ogilvy

Public service advertising, non-commercial advertising, public interest advertising, cause marketing, and social marketing are different terms for (or aspects of) the use of sophisticated advertising and marketing communications techniques (generally associated with commercial enterprise) on behalf of non-commercial, public interest issues and initiatives.

In the United States, the granting of television and radio licenses by the FCC is contingent upon the station broadcasting a certain amount of public service advertising.

Public service advertising reached its height during World Wars I and II under the direction of several U.S. government agencies.