

Student's name

Professor's name

Course title

22 January 2011

Role of Advertising in People's Daily Life:

Where Does Informing End and Manipulation Begin?

Sir Winston Churchill once said: "Advertising nourishes the consuming power of men. It sets up before a man the goal of a better home, better clothing, better food for himself and his family. It spurs individual exertion and greater production." His words show the uniqueness of marketing influence on people's everyday life, their purchasing habits, as well as values and dreams (Bullock 25).

Originally, advertising appeared due to the need of information, and served as a mere data sharing tool. Nowadays, in the time of market economy, the situation has changed: advertising is one of the main ways for industries to acquire competitive advantage. Therefore, advertising specialists are forced to use psychoanalysis in order to find more effective means of selling their products (Day 56). Thus, hidden psychological influence and manipulation can be found in the majority of advertising messages. In my opinion, modern creative advertising is incapable of being solely informative, since it always sends viewers or listeners a certain manipulating message that influences human subconsciousness, appealing to people's motives, needs, and inhibitions. It inevitably alters their lives, habits and, ultimately, future.

PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCE AND HIDDEN MANIPULATION

The main goal of contemporary advertising is control of consumer behavior by means of influencing people's psychic structures, appealing to their wishes, needs and dreams. Advertising serves as a source of hope, rather than a guarantee for ordinary people. Manipulation in advertising is always hidden. Most often consumers are unable to notice it, and perceive it as a common way of receiving advertising message. For example, Nivea Company slogan in advertising of anti-shadow eye cream is the following: "Life without dark circles" (Bullock 67). At first glance, it is a successful play on words. However, a closer look reveals that it is a way of creating a false illusion, since one product cannot influence person's whole life. One of the main advertising messages sent to consumers is: "This product is only for the best. If you can afford it, you are among the chosen ones." On TV you can see how a young successful top-manager takes a sophisticated expensive mobile phone out of his pocket to call his gorgeous girlfriend. This image creates false correlation between how to become "the winner" or "the best" and the advertised product. Human subconsciousness gets a wrong, yet desired, message that if you want to be the best, you must go and buy this product (Day 135).

However, others can argue whether advertising is a method of hidden manipulation, explaining that the fact of a product being advertised already shows real intentions of the company. They claim that people always understand that an actively advertised product must be sold in order to get profit. I believe it is a rather good claim, but according to Mayer, advertisers spend over 12 billion of dollars annually on child and teen advertising in spite of the fact that children are obviously too young to notice and realize they are being manipulated and exploited

by the companies (Mayer). Therefore, every day young population is being brainwashed, while their likes, habits and future are being changed by advertisers.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, advertising is an important part of contemporary life. It is a communication instrument, which informs people about new products and services, as well as teaches how to choose and use them. Yet, contemporary advertising is, unfortunately, moving further and further away from Philip Kotler's understanding of true marketing. His definition was unique and simple: "Marketing is not the art of finding clever ways to dispose of what you make. It is the art of creating genuine customer value." The multitude of competitors pushes companies to use all possible means to achieve a desired level of profit, irrespective of any ethical considerations (Bullock 245). Advertisers are paid millions of dollars every year to find the best ways to manipulate and manage people, including immature teenagers and children who are vulnerable and defenseless against their influence.

Works Cited

Bullock, August. *The Secret Sales Pitch: An Overview of Subliminal Advertising*. San Jose, CA:

Norwich Publishers, 2004. Print.

Day, Nancy. *Advertising: Information or Manipulation*. Berkeley, NJ: Enslow Publishers, 1999.

Print.

Mayer, Caroline. "Information or Manipulation? Regulators Urged to Further Limit Ads Aimed at Children". *The Washington Post*, 24 Feb. 2004. Web. 22 Jan. 2011.

evolutionwriters