

Advertising Strategies

Advertisers have many methods to try and get you to buy their products. Lots of times, what they are selling is a lifestyle, or an image, rather than the product. Here are some tricks of the trade.

Ideal Kids (or families) - always seem perfect. The kids are really hip looking, with the hottest fashions, haircuts and toys. Ideal families are all attractive and pleasant looking -- and everyone seems to get along! Ideal kids and families represent the types of people that kids watching the ad would like themselves or their families to be.

Family Fun - a product is shown as something that brings families together, or helps them have fun together; all it takes is for Mum or Dad to bring home the "right" food, and a ho-hum dinner turns into a family party.

Excitement - who could ever have imagined that food could be so much fun? One bite of a snack food and you're surfing in California, or soaring on your skateboard!

Star Power - your favorite sports star or celebrity is telling you that their product is the best! Kids listen, not realizing that the star is being paid to promote the product.

Bandwagon - join the crowd! Don't be left out! Everyone is buying the latest snack food: aren't you?

Scale - is when advertisers make a product look bigger or smaller than it actually is.

Put Downs - when you put down your competition's product to make your own product seem better.

Facts and Figures - when you use facts and statistics to enhance your product's credibility.

Repetition - advertisers hope that if you see a product, or hear its name over and over again, you will be more likely to buy it. Sometimes the same commercial will be repeated over and over again.

Heart Strings - ads that draw you into a story and make you feel good, like the McDonalds commercial where the dad and his son are shoveling their driveway and the son treats his poor old dad to lunch at McDonalds when they are done.

Sounds Good - music and other sound effects add to the excitement of commercials, especially commercials aimed at kids. Those little jingles, that you just can't get out of your head, are another type of music used to make you think of a product. Have you ever noticed that the volume of commercials is higher than the sound for the program that follows?

Cartoon Characters - Tony the Tiger sells cereal and the Nestlés Quick Bunny sells chocolate milk. Cartoons like these make kids identify with products.

Weasel Words - by law, advertisers have to tell the truth, but sometimes, they use words that can mislead viewers. Look for words in commercials like: "Part of..." "The taste of real...." "Natural...." "New, better tasting...." "Because we care..." There are hundreds of these deceptive phrases -- how many more can you think of?

Omission - where advertisers don't give you the full story about their product. For example, when a Pop Tart claims to be "part" of a healthy breakfast, it doesn't mention that the breakfast might still be healthy whether this product is there or not.

Are You Cool Enough? - this is when advertisers try to convince you that if you don't use their products, you are a nerd. Usually advertisers do this by showing people who look uncool trying a product and then suddenly become hip looking and do cool things.

PROPAGANDA IN ADVERTISING

TECHNIQUE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Testimonial	The endorsement of a product by a well-known example	“Wayne Gretzky uses Axe after-shave lotion.”
Transfer	The transfer of the qualities of one idea to those of another.	“Smoke Mint Fresh and get a breath of springtime.”
Plain Folks	The technique of talking down to the masses in order to appear to be one of them	“Use Whitewash. It makes your clothes as white as Momma used to wash them.”
Bandwagon	The suggestion that everyone is doing it	“Sparkle! Canada’s #1 best-seller.”
Snob Appeal	The association of a product with a desirable life	“She lives at Regency Towers. She spends her winters in the Swiss Alps. Her perfume – L’air Riche.”
Facts and Figures	The implication that figures and statistics prove a point beyond dispute	“No-ache Pills – only headache tablet with 30 mg of pain reliever.”
Hidden Fears	The exploitation of an individual’s fears and insecurities	“Don’t lose friends. Use Sweet-Pit, the friendly deodorant.”
Repetition	The constant repetition of an idea in order to instil the image of a product in a person’s mind	“Finally – Natural Glow! The natural shampoo with nature’s ingredients to bring out your natural glow.”
Magic Ingredients	The implication that a product’s effectiveness is scientifically based	“Drink Eau-Boire, the only mineral water with H ₂ O.”
Weasel Words	The use of vague qualifiers to mislead the consumer to think the product is better than it really is	“Zit-Kwit helps fight virtually all skin blemishes.”
Sex Appeal	Associates the product with sex. Appeal and desirability by the opposite sex	“Parfum oh la la. One dab will last all night long.”

SLOGANS IN ADVERTISING

Trivia: The word <i>slogan</i> comes from the Gaelic word for “battle cry. It is the “battle cry” of the advertiser.	
Purpose: To sum up the theme of a company’s advertising message & deliver it in a few, short words.	
TYPES OF SLOGANS	EXAMPLE
Slogans describing the uses of a product	For upset stomachs, use Pepto Bismol
Slogans suggesting the advantages of a product	Air Canada – The world’s most experienced airline
Slogans suggesting the product be used	Let Hertz put you in the driver’s seat
Slogans that emphasize the entire organization	You can be sure if it’s Duracell
Slogans guarding against substitutes	Make sure it’s Kodak

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD SLOGAN

Characteristic	Example
Brevity	Always so good for so little (Swiss Chalet)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should contain short, action-packed words • never any longer than 7 words 	Just do it (Nike) I’m lovin’ it (McDonald’s)
Catchy	They’re Grrreat! (Frosted Flakes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should be catchy and unusual • originally creates force 	
Memorable	The quicker picker upper (Bounty)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should be easily remembered & produce pleasing sound • use alliteration if applicable 	
Suggestive	Get Cracking (eggs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • double meaning creates force and attracts attention 	