

# THE IMPACT OF PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION IN ADVERTISING

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## ABSTRACT

*Persuasive speeches and actions in the business world have become in time the most crucial elements, we might even say existential. Whether through negotiation or through manipulation, the partners or opponents, directs their efforts to obtain material benefits and/or emotional. The contemporary world is invaded with advertisements essentially aimed (in addition to information) to persuade the consumers to buy products or services, even those which they do not necessarily need. Therefore, in the advertisements we can observe a wide range of persuasive techniques, whether they appear on television, radio, in newspapers, on the street or online display.*

Effective advertising is, usually always, persuasive advertising, and while not all advertising seeks to persuade, in a competitive situation those who best persuade are those most likely to gain benefits. In this paper, I seek to explain the precise ways in which advertising successfully persuades consumer's thought messages, setting out the framework for advertisers to adopt and illustrate the theories at work.

Useful knowledge about persuasion has been obtained over the last 100 years from the experience of advertising experts and from empirical studies in advertising and other fields including psychology, consumer behavior, law, mass communication, politics, and propaganda. The principles in persuasive advertising provide understandable and easy-to-access guidance for all types of advertising. Including still media such as print and Internet, and motion media such as TV, streaming video, Internet, and radio. They also apply to other types of persuasive communications such as management reports, speeches and press releases.

The persuasive premise of an advertisement message is the knowledge about the purchase behavior and the consumer mind-set. The advertising creators in this regard are interested to find out what processes are taking place in the advertising receptors minds in order to be able to predict the purchasing behavior caused by these processes. The main objective is to identify the purchase behavior patterns of the customers and to use this information in an attempt to improve the structure, layout and impact of the advertising messages.

The intention to persuade others to borrow your point of view or to hinder from taking one belongs to persuasive communication. Although seemingly simple, the processes involved in the persuasion are so complex that even having the basis of several decades of research in this area, these processes are still not yet fully understood. Every day people are exposed to many messages, which are

imposed through texts, images, colors, shapes, as well as many other processes and techniques that ultimately create a desirable consumer behavior for the employer.

The probability for a message to act in a persuasive manner increases if these recommendations are taken into account:

1. increased target audience interest.
2. a serious reason for the target audience to pay attention to the message.
3. a message that the addressee would consider familiar.
4. the use of signs and symbols in order to increase the opportunities for understanding and remembering the message.
5. strengthen the key elements of the message.
6. the recommendation to the addressees to draw their own conclusions.

Humans do not see an object by a random path, but "touche" with the eyes the most important elements of a text. A property of the eyes is to comprise a group of letters, their form and a predetermined length of the rows, resulting in accelerating or slowing down the reading. Taking into account that at an advertisement quick glance takes only 1 second, it is important to choose the correct font style, size, distance between letters and lines, length of the lines and the text placement on the page.

Following meticulous researches scientists have determined that the trajectory of European human gaze while reading the information is: first of all the eye begins to rise in the upper right corner of the page, then it goes down to the middle of the page while reading the information consecutively from left to right until the end. Thus, the best is memorised the beginning and the end of the text - first and last sentence [1, p. 52]. At the same time, some principles were determined with reference to the advertisement copy perception based solely on its graphic. These principles are the following [2, p. 91-92]:

1. Automatically is rejected the long text, which is not divided into paragraphs, without text delimitations and subtitles.
2. The text with a border around it captures more attention than the one without it. The enclosed text in a square or circle (symmetric stable forms) creates a sense of confidence; the elliptical shape stimulates artistic searches and the text contained in a triangle, resting on one of its angles stimulates the movement.
3. The vertical block arrangements are better perceived as compared to the horizontal one.
4. In design it is best to use:
  - diagonals in order to give the impression of motion, strength and speed.
  - verticals to demonstrate supremacy, majesty and power.
  - horizontals to create a sense of serenity, sobriety, security and respectability.
5. A rigorous geometric elements placement hinders the perception, a slight asymmetry is advisable.

6. Each font style gives the text an emotional aspect. While choosing the font it is important to remember that it must correspond to the advertised products and services. Thus, complicated fonts with rounded contours may increase the ease and delicacy of the product. Simple rectangular outline fonts are useful for texts that advertise simple products, suggesting the permanence and safety. A text in capitals and italics is better highlighted than a regular one. The bold text is perceived as cumbersome, bulky, suggesting product safety and is good for advertising washing machines, fridges, electrical equipment etc. Thin letters text express flexibility, sophistication and accuracy that is useful for cosmetic products, perfumery, juvaire, luxurious clothing etc.
7. In a text block is recommended to use no more than 3 fonts. It is assumed that the most legible character font size is 10 – 12 p. at an interval of 1.5.
8. It is necessary to avoid the titles placed above the pictures or drawings as well as a too much distance between letters or words.
9. Light and opaque elements are better to be placed on the top of the page, and the dark and heavy ones (text blocks, usually) at the bottom of the page.
10. Better are perceived black letters on a yellow background, green and red on a white one. In addition, it is important to note that if the words are highlighted less against the background of the page it will be more easy to read and perceive the text.
11. It is beneficial to use in an advertising message that promotes a particular product or service verbs that call for action, especially in present tense, and less beneficial are those that describe static actions conducted in the past or future [3, p. 364].
12. Taking into account the above statements, there are some successful models often used in advertising messages referring to semantics, which are briefly described below:
  - a) You are not satisfied with what you have, what you are and what you feel. **You can get much more; you can lift one-step above and feel better.**
  - b) Product/service X helps **many people, like you** to obtain a certain result.
  - c) Try, you will not lose anything, **but you'll get - ... (list of benefits).**
  - d) Purchase our product (use our service) and **you will be taken into consideration.**
  - e) **Imagine** the future that you deserve. Our product/service will help you fulfill your dream and **achieve your goal.**
  - f) Quality is **guaranteed.** You can be **confident/relaxed.** Decide **immediately.**

Words can obviously make people react or behave in certain ways. The problem is: which words? Obviously some words have built-in reactions and they can have great power over individuals and through various means and techniques

can be used in everyday life as well as in advertising. The most powerful word is the *personal name*, followed by "thank you" and "please" (for example, "Please take into consideration this offer" or "Thank you for choosing us."). Another strong word is "because" (This service will help you, *because* you will be able to call even with 0 lei on account). In addition there are the words: *advantage, economy, benefit, trust, comfort, results, value, great, worth, pleasure, security, guarantee, freedom, love, law, power, perfectionism, discovery, investment, happiness, money, safety, daily, proud, easy, demonstrate, health, income, new, truth, You*, etc. [4, pp. 46-48].

Of particular importance in an advertisement message is given to the title or slogan. Advertising slogans are short intelligent phrases used in advertising campaigns to capture targets' attention. From TV commercials, print ads and direct mail, to tradeshows and election campaigns, the advertising slogan is the most effective means of forcing your audience to stop-and-think. An effective slogan can have a great impact on your advertising and marketing initiatives. This independent short statement grabs immediate attention, it affects your targets' emotions and attitudes, and it acts as an incentive to take action.

In average titles are read 5 times more than the texts. Not mentioning the name of the product, service or brand in the title in around 80% of the cases the potential buyers will be lost. Further, it is important to note the titles and slogans functions [5, p. 265-266]

1. They should attract attention otherwise they have no effect.
2. The slogan must choose the reader, assuming that it must contain what the consumers are interest in. For example, "With Claro, of course you have more".
3. It has to induce the main idea, for example, "The future's bright - the future's Orange".
4. In addition, it must reflect the commercial idea.
5. Promise tangible benefits while purchasing the advertised products/services, for example, "Intel Inside".
6. The title must express the novelty of the product that should interest the consumer.

Here are some recommendations with regard to titles and slogans:

1. Titles with a length of more than 10 words are perceived worse than the shorter ones.
2. Using the slogan in quotes increases its efficiency by 28%.
3. Beneficial are perceived the titles that are not delimited by intervals.
4. Directing the reader's attention to the product attributes and not designs.
5. To be the extension of the visual image of the advertised product, service or brand.
6. Use the news style, offering information about new ways of using the products.

Referring to the brand names here, we would like to mention a few rules for their successful creation. A good brand or company name provides a differentiated

market positioning, self-promotes, highlights the uniqueness of the company, is emotional, certainly provides rhythm and inspire [6, p. 4-5]. So, when it comes to brand names, according to the conducted studies by the American consulting company Strategic Name Development it has been established that:

**Table 1 U.S. brand associations and connotations depending on the letter they begin**

| <i>The letter with which begin the U.S. brands</i> | <i>associations and connotations</i> |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| S  | passion, sensuality                  |
| K  | safety                               |
| C, S or B  | tradition, classic                   |
| X, Z, Q or V                                       | innovation                           |
| L, V, F and W                                      | female                               |
| X, M and Z   | male                                 |

**Source:** adapted after [7, p. 3].

If we look at the "S" shaped letter and ascertain that its association with the perceptions of passion and sensuality is appropriate, then we understand why such brands as Sara Lee or Stouffers chose these brand names, which also offers them a feminine connotation. Example of male brand name is Microsoft Xbox, a classic brand with tradition is Cingular. Why brand names beginning with the letter "K", for example Kraft, are associated with "safety"? Partly due to clear pronunciation of the letter that regardless of the accent or other conditions is pronounced practically the same. As a conclusion of the undertaken study it was proved that American companies want to look rather stable than sensual, as it was ascertained that the letter "K" appears in the brand name 9 times more often than in a normal English text, and the letter "S" – only 2 times more often.

When referring to the same research undertaken in Russia the following findings were seen:

**Table 2 Russian brand associations and connotations depending on the letter they begin**

| <i>The letter with which begin the Russian brands</i> | <i>associations and connotations</i> |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| K   | angular, abrasive, dynamic, fast     |
| З   | scary, small                         |
| M   | cold                                 |
| Ч, Ш, Щ, X, C, Ф                                      | passive, dark, slow, dark, evil      |
| Л, Д  | happiness, well, brilliant           |
| A   | brave, active, good, beautiful       |

**Source:** adapted after [7, p. 4].

However, these associations are not universally valid, because the companies that take these names have made great efforts to create specific association with the brand they promote, so McDonald's is not associated with masculinity, but with burgers and kids. However, the associations presented above are valid for the newly created brand names.

Another way to create a positive association in the brand name perception is to include in their names digits. Using such digits as 3, 5, 7, 9, and 12 for many consumers is the prediction of prosperity and successful shopping. The confidence in these digits we form in our childhood. If we remember the stories, we were told we see that number 3 is a positive combination ("Three Little Pigs"). In the Romanian proverbs, the most used digit is 7: "Measure 7 times cut only one", "Rain before seven, sun before eleven". If we look at Christianity here, we find the same positive attitude toward the digits 3, 5, 7, 9, 12. That is why the consumer's majority have a positive attitude toward the product name that has integrated digits in their brand names [8, p. 44].

Creating a brand name, we should take into account not only the sonik perception aspect of the name, but its graphics perception, competitive environment, associations of significance as well as many other factors. Thus, having bad sonik significance, a brand name with a strong linguistic connotation or a superb design could offset this gap. Therefore, ultimately it comes down to the combination of all factors, each of them performing an important function.

Of course, this article is just a little insight into the theory of message persuasion, but these rules are necessary to be taken into account on all advertising aspects in order to create a harmony between the structure of the main text, pictures and suitable slogan. Thus, in this way, researchers in social psychology and particularly in the communication field tried to describe the most persuasive and complex communication model patterns as to convince the consumers efficiently.

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