Get the most out of Your Marketing Budget

Effective Advertising
Consumer Behavior: How to Create an Ad that makes Consumers want to Buy

By Nicole Elmore

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Introduction

Consumers are exposed to hundreds of marketing stimuli each day, everywhere and anywhere they go. This large number of marketing stimuli makes it difficult to compete with other marketing stimuli and stand out. Thus, it is important for marketers to know how to construct effective advertisements that will attract the consumer's attention and make the consumer want to purchase the product or service being promoted.

Why Advertise?

“A man wakes up in the morning after sleeping on an advertised bed, in advertised pajamas. He will bathe in an advertised tub, wash with advertised soap, shave with advertised shaving cream, eat a breakfast of advertised juice, cereal, and toast that was toasted in an advertised toaster. He will put on advertised clothes, glance at his advertised wrist-watch, and then ride to his office in his advertised car. At the office he will sit at his advertised desk, in his advertised chair, and write with his advertised pen. Yet this man hesitates to advertise, saying that advertising doesn't pay. Finally when his business fails, he will advertise it for sale.”

This anecdote emphasizes the importance of advertising and how it can make the difference between a business failure and success. There are countless advertising techniques and marketing stimuli; it is important not only to advertise, but to design an advertisement to be effective and reach and influence consumers.

The Perfect Advertisement

Design

For an advertisement to receive full attention from consumers, the advertisement needs to be created carefully to be pleasant, surprising, and easy to process for consumers. In addition, also the length of the time will determine how likeable the advertisement is perceived as.

Pleasant

Three ways to make a marketing stimulus pleasant to consumers are the use of attractive models, familiar music, and humor. By using attractive models, consumers usually experience a positive feeling or sexual attraction and thus might lead consumers to react to the advertisement and purchase the advertised product or service.² Marketers should focus on popular songs that are familiar to the target market when choosing music to accompany an advertisement.³ A third way to make a marketing stimulus pleasant and attract consumer’s attention is the use of humor. Humor in an advertisement will cause consumers to laugh and arouse positive feelings.

³ Ibid.
Surprising

Consumers are more likely to process a marketing stimulus when it is surprising. With the use of novelty, unexpectedness, and puzzling nature, a marketing stimulus can be created to be surprising. Novelty can be used by using marketing stimuli in an advertisement that are new or unique and thus are paid attention to, because they stand out. When there is no new or unique marketing stimulus to be used in an advertisement, the solution is for marketers to use unexpected stimuli that will surprise consumers and thus get their attention. A third attention-getter is the use of a puzzle in form of a metaphor, visual rhyme or antitheses that will lead to consumer involvement in an advertisement by trying to solve the puzzle.

Easy to process

Consumers, especially in the gray market, respond negatively to complex messages. Hence, marketers should make marketing stimuli easy to process. That can be achieved by creating intense marketing stimuli, meaning that a stimulus will be prominent in its size, size of images, size of text or loudness of music used. In addition, concrete stimuli allow consumers to imagine being in a situation that is described. A third way to make a stimulus easy to process is to use contrasting stimuli, meaning that marketers should construct advertisements that differ from competing advertisements and thus are noticeable by consumers. Finally, an advertisement should be placed in an environment with the least possible amount of competing stimuli, which can also be referred to the time of the day a television commercial is played.

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4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid. (p.78)
7 Ibid. (pp.78-79)
Length

Generally, a 15 second television commercial costs 60 to 80 percent of the cost of a 30 second commercial.\(^8\) Thus, it is worth it to invest the additional 20 to 40 percent of media cost to have a commercial that will be long enough to be able to include many effective marketing strategies. In addition, research has shown that 15 second commercials only have 80 percent of the likeability in comparison to 30 second commercials.\(^9\)

Content

Customer’s Needs and Wants

An advertisement should primarily focus on conveying the offering’s value to customers. Only by understanding consumers’ needs and wants, and how they are changing, can marketers craft an advertisement that maximizes effectiveness of delivering value to customers.\(^10\) This will lead a company to have a differential advantage over competitors.\(^11\) One method that can be used to quantify the importance of customer wants and needs to construct an effective advertisement is vector autoregression modeling.\(^12\)

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9 Ibid.


11 Ibid.

Advertisements are more likely to receive attention from consumers and be processed carefully when the perceived risk is high.\textsuperscript{13} There are many situations that can be used to make consumers perceive risk as high. Marketers can lead consumers to believe that the non-purchase of the product might harm one’s social standing, when targeting for example high-end consumers with designer clothing. Another situation would be a high price that would be associated with potential financial risk. Advertisements for new products or services usually have a high perceived risk. Finally, a product or service can have a high perceived risk when little information is available or revealed about it in an advertisement.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{Inconsistency with Attitudes}

When an advertisement reveals information that is slightly inconsistent with consumer’s attitudes and beliefs, consumers become motivated to process messages in the advertisement carefully and conduct research about the advertised offering to reduce or eliminate this inconsistency.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
Subliminal Advertising

The Federal Trade Commission states that subliminal advertising “causes consumers to unconsciously select certain goods or services, or to alter their normal behavior, might constitute a deceptive of unfair practice”\textsuperscript{16}. Hence, there is no clear ban against the use of subliminal advertising when considering the word “might” in this description of subliminal advertising. Marketers can decide if subliminal advertising does not go against their moral values, but the use of subliminal advertising is not recommended, because it has never been proven to be effective in that it actually leads consumers to purchase or consume more of a certain product that has been displayed via subliminal advertising.

Marketing Strategy

Liking

Individuals are most likely to react positively to requests made by people that they like.\textsuperscript{17} Thus, it is important for marketers to know the major characteristics that cause a consumer to like an individual. With this knowledge, marketers can hire individuals for their advertisements that will produce the most favorable results regarding consumer buying behavior toward the advertised product or service.

\textit{Physical Attractiveness}

Research indicates that consumers automatically assign favorable traits to attractive individuals, such as talent, kindness, honesty, and intelligence.\textsuperscript{18} Although beauty lies in the observer’s eye, meaning that consumers consider different individuals as attractive, it is beneficial to hire models for an advertisement that would generally be considered attractive.

\textit{Similarity}

In addition to general attractiveness, consumers like people who are similar to them in areas of opinions, personality traits, choice of clothing, age, religion, background, or lifestyle.\textsuperscript{19} With this in mind, marketers should place individuals who are similar to the offering’s target market to maximize “liking” of that individual and thus also the positive reactions to the indirect request to purchase the product or service that is being advertised.

Compliments

Compliments made to an individual have the effect of return liking and increased willingness of compliance.\textsuperscript{20} Because it is impossible to make compliments via an advertisement that will make consumers feel like these compliments are personally made to them, one solution is to create a context, where an individual using the advertised product is being complemented on for using it. For example, if an advertisement displays anti-aging crème, a woman could be complemented on her skin improvement by a gentleman.

Social Proof

According to the principle of social proof, consumers determine what is correct by finding out what other individuals think is correct.\textsuperscript{21} When consumers observe that many other individuals are performing a behavior, such as purchasing a certain product, they believe that this behavior is correct and the other people have a good reason for purchasing this product. The result is these consumers will also purchase the product.\textsuperscript{22} A marketer, wanting to maximize consumer buying behavior toward the advertised product should thus place individuals in advertisements that will be liked by consumers and incorporate a concept, such as testimonials, within the advertisement that will convey to consumers that many other consumers purchased the product and are satisfied with their decision.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
Authority

According to Stanley Milgram, a psychology professor who has contributed to much research about the power of authority, explains people’s obedience to authoritative requests with a “deep-seated sense of duty to authority” that individuals have. What has been found is that it is not the authority itself that leads individuals to obedience, rather the connotations that are associated with authority, such as a title, professional clothing, and uniforms, are the symbols that trigger individuals to compliance even if no genuine authority is present. Thus, actors in commercials, who are displayed with an authoritative title, such as Dr., dressed in expensive suits or uniforms (such as a police uniform) are very powerful and effective in leading consumers to compliance by purchasing the advertised product or service.

Scarcity

The principle of scarcity states that individuals are more attracted to products or opportunities when they are less available. Thus, statements such as “limited time offer” and “as long as supplies last” are very powerful weapons of influence, because they lead consumers to act quickly. They are powerful for two main reasons: 1) Individuals naturally conclude that things with limited quantities or limited time offers are more valuable, since they are more difficult to obtain. 2) Individuals hate to lose freedoms they already have, which is exactly what happens if an opportunity to purchase a limited product is missed. An advertisement using the limited-number technique would maximize effectiveness to urge consumers to act quickly. And the sooner consumers act, the less time they have to think of objections and construct doubts about their decision.

25 Ibid. (p.200)
26 Ibid. (p.204)
Green

Studies have been conducted to determine that it is a misconception that environmental associations always enhance a company’s brand.27 “According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model, the study shows that the relationship between environmental associations and attitudes toward a brand are conditioned in part by the product category and the brand. As such, the usefulness of environmental associations to improve attitudes toward a brand should not be generalized.”28

Repetition

Repetition of an advertisement is crucial to exposure of the advertisement, and particularly to the attention the advertisement receives with each further time a consumer is exposed to it. “The first time people look at an advertisement, they don’t see it. The second time they look at an ad, they don’t notice it. The third time, they become conscious of the ad’s existence. The fourth time, they vaguely remember seeing the ad somewhere before. The tenth time, they think someday I am going to buy that. The 20th time they see the ad, they finally get in their cars and head down to the store to buy what was in the ad.”29 The more frequently consumers are exposed to an advertisement, the quicker they become aware of the product and engage in consumer buying habits.

28 Ibid.
Change

A measurement of advertising quality on television can be made by collecting and analyzing television set-top box (STB) data.\textsuperscript{30} Another method to measure the impact of a television commercial is to consider the internet search queries that are being made shortly after watching television.\textsuperscript{31} If an advertisement appears to be unsuccessful in reaching consumers and causing the desired outcome, namely new business from the exposed consumers, or other negative feedback is frequently given, marketers should assess the advertisement and follow-up with changes made to the advertisement. After an assessment of the target element to improve (for example the text displayed at the end of a commercial), it is important to concentrate primarily only on changing this target element.\textsuperscript{32} Only when this element has been improved, another target element should be chosen for improvement.


Conclusion

Advertising is a crucial component of business that can lead to success. However, advertisements should be carefully crafted to get consumer’s attention. Furthermore, an advertisement’s content should appeal to their target market’s goals and wants, while usage of perceived risk or inconsistency of the consumers’ attitudes can be helpful attention-getting tools. Subliminal advertising is not recommended. Finally, an advertisement should follow a marketing strategy with the use of actors that will cause consumers to “like” the person(s) displayed in an advertisement. This can be reached by using a combination of many different techniques. Because consumers are exposed to many stimuli, it is important to repeat the advertisement frequently.
Bibliography


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Domain Registration and Website Hosting

**iPage** - If you are willing to spend a little more to get much higher quality of service and better customer service, I would recommend **iPage**. Their .com domain registration is currently priced at $13.99 for one year. However, if you choose to use their website hosting service monthly plan, you will receive a **FREE domain**.

**BlueHost** offers unlimited domain hosting, hosting space with free site builder and a **FREE DOMAIN** included in your plan, plus a $75 Google Adwords Credit starting at $6.95 a month.

**Hostgator** - This is the least expensive web hosting I have been able to find that offers unlimited bandwidth and unlimited disk space starting only at $3.96 a month. What I like about **Hostgator** the most, is that they offer 24/7/365 live support. Their free site-builder and 1-click script installs make this an alternative for all website building starters. Finally, if you subscribe to any of their hosting plans, you receive **$100 Google Adwords Credit**, which allows you to promote your website.

Free Web Hosting

**Weebly** - This is a great option if you are just getting your feet wet in web design. **Weebly** offers free web hosting, but I would not recommend this service as a long term option. They also offer **paid subscription** plan that has great features, such as hundreds of professional themes to choose from, detailed traffic information, password-protection (optional), and much more.

Email Marketing

**Aweber** offers hundreds of templates categorized by purpose and customizable to your needs and allows you to build your newsletter easily.
Promotional Materials

Vistaprint has great prices, several different shipping options, and a wide selection of designs. You can either upload an entirely customized business card design or start with one of their thousands of design templates. If you need help designing your business cards or any other promotional products, please let me know.

Vistaprint also offers a large selection of brochure templates - I believe brochures are a great way to promote yourself and your brand - include your best designs and a description of yourself and your brand.

Book and Portfolio Printing

Blurb - I love the user-friendly interface of easily creating a book. This would be my primary recommendation for creating a high-quality portfolio with high printing quality.

Marketing Strategy

Use this free Helping You Understand Your Target Market - Guide and Worksheet to start your own Marketing Plan.

About The Author

Nicole Elmore is a successful entrepreneur and marketing consultant from Boca Raton, Florida.

Nicole has been helping start-up companies and small businesses grow and succeed in accomplishing their Marketing goals as well as Brand Development and Positioning.

She is the Founder and CEO of Nicole Elmore, LLC, helping entrepreneur start their own businesses and grow them into million-dollar businesses.

Supreme Business Plan Workshop: A resource for entrepreneurs to write highly professional business plans that will serve as the foundation for their businesses and help in important business decisions or crisis situations.

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**Marketing Consulting and Marketing Design and Strategic Marketing Plans**

In addition to over a decade of Marketing research, data collection and several years of experience in Marketing design, I have a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing, graduating with Summa Cum Laude and having been inducted into the most prestigious Business Honor Society: Beta Gamma Sigma.

I am very open-minded, so if you have any ideas that might be mutually beneficial, feel free to contact me at Nicole@nicoleelmore.com.
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