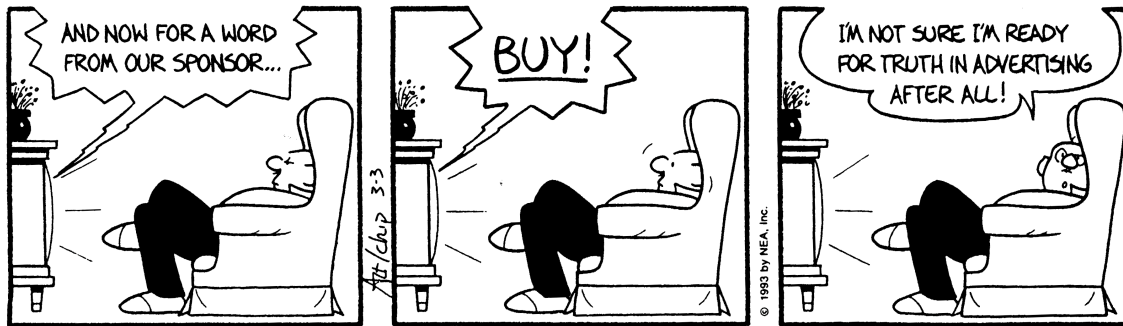


MASS MEDIA AND SOCIETY

Advertising



Advertising is not a medium in itself, is but something closely allied to the mass media. It is a \$159 billion --that's billion with a "b"-- a year support industry that is continually growing.

Advertising did not originate with the American mass media. The first known advertising involved town criers carrying sign boards as early as 500 B.C. We have evidence of advertising being painted on stones in entry gateways of Phoenician cities. The first printed advertisement is thought to have been an ad by William Caxton to sell a book in 1478 (keeping in mind that the moveable type printing press was invented about 1455).

Advertising in the United States

Foreign newspapers brought advertising to the United States. The first known advertisement in an American newspapers was in first issue of the Boston Newsletter in 1704. And, as we have learned this semester, advertising has become a significant part of every medium, though it is probably more subtle in music and movies.

The Penny Press became dependent on ads along with its mass sales. Early ads in the Penny Press included patent medicine ads that included wild claims of cure-alls made up of sugared swamp water.

It was the early muckraking magazines, who at first shunned advertising, exposed the patent medicine ads for their fraudulence. But after the 1880s magazines came to embrace advertising as a way to lower costs. Look at magazines today and you'll see that they contain upwards of 80 percent advertising. Editorial content, once the main purpose of magazines, seems superfluous today.

Radio advertising began about 1922 when WEAf radio in New York sold real estate ads in the form of talk shows. As radio grew, advertisers bought entire 15-minute, 30-minute, or 60-minute time slots and provided content, complete with advertising written in.

Television is probably the first mass medium created as an advertising medium. Thanks to the success of early radio advertising television producers saw TV as an advertising medium where television shows were included mostly as a way to draw audiences to the advertising. Television inherited the direct sponsorship of radio, but soon grew out of it. Advertising is now sold on a cost-per-thousand basis. The bigger an audience for a show, the more a single ad costs.

Early television advertising was weaved into the show itself. In some ways we are seeing a return of that. With technology allowing us to zap out commercials, advertisers are inserting ads back into the content of the show. Look at "Who Wants to Be A Millionaire." Whenever someone needed to phone a friend, the show called on "our friends at AT&T" to make the call. The reality show "Survivor" has gotten more and more blatant at product placement as rewards for survivor contests.

Movies have used advertising in other media, but always including its own form of advertising in the form of movie trailers. Paid product placement within the movie is widespread and movie theaters include more traditional advertising between features.

Music has been included in radio, television and movie advertising for sometime, but with music videos it has become more and more commercial with its own form of product placement.

Once heralded as advertising-free, the Internet, more specifically the World Wide Web is sprouting more and more advertising. Still most prevalent are banner and button ads, but even that is changing. Advertisers pay search engines advertising fees to come up first on searches and advertising is now delivered in the form of e-mail. Expect that to increase in coming years. Amazon.com has added new levels to this. Buy a book from Amazon.com and you'll find out what others who bought that book also bought or what others in your neighborhood are buying. World Wide Web advertising is charged on a per-hit basis. While many of us seem to ignore banner advertising, it is actually considered quite effective. If a web page viewer actually clicks on the banner ad, he/she is more likely to buy the product than someone who merely reads, say, a magazine ad.

Oh, How We Hate Advertising

Of course, we all seem to hate advertising. We do all we can to avoid it, even though it keeps the cost of our mass media affordable. There are only a few times when we seem to WANT advertising. If we're looking for a place to live or for a new job, we love classified ads.

Come SuperBowl time you can enjoy the ads even if you don't enjoy football.

But the rest of the time we seem to work at avoiding the ads. "Ad skipping" is becoming increasingly popular. [Tivo](#) recording systems is just one way we attempt to shift past advertising.

Advertisers, for obvious reasons, don't like us to do that, though. Some in the industry refer to it as stealing TV shows. Broadcast TV is not really free. We get it for free in exchange for watching the ads. If we then try to avoid watching the ads, then industry advertisers claim we're stealing the programming.

The other option that advertisers have is to entertain us with the advertising. And they keep trying. One of my favorite attempts lately has been done by American Express and its Jerry Seinfeld/Superman commercials. They're longer than your average 15-second, 30-second or 60-second commercial. But they are interesting. [Take a look.](#)

How ads grab us

The word "advertise" originally meant to take note or consider. But today it seems to mean more.

Today advertisements go to great effort to attract our attention. The text discusses 15 appeals ads use to get our attention. They include:

1. Need for sex -- Only 2 percent of television ads use sex appeal, but it is used heavily in magazine advertising. The allure of sex is basic
2. Affiliation -- You are looking for friendship and advertisers are quick to point out that you will be in the right crowd if you buy or use this product . . . or you'll be excluded if you don't.
3. To nurture -- Every time you see a puppy, or a kitten, or a child, the appeal is to your maternal or paternal instincts.
4. For guidance -- A father or mother figure can appeal to your desire for someone to care for you, so you won't have to worry.
5. To aggress -- We all have the need to get even, and ads give you this satisfaction.
6. To achieve -- The ability to accomplish something difficult and succeed identifies the product with winning. Sports figures as spokespersons project this image.
7. To dominate -- Power seduces. Master the possibilities.
8. For prominence -- We want to be admired and respected, to have high social status.
9. For attention -- We want people to notice us, we want to be looked at. Cosmetics are a natural for this approach.
10. For autonomy -- Within a crowded environment, we want to be singled out, to be a "breed apart." You may be left out if you don't use this product.
11. To escape -- Flight is very appealing. You can imagine adventures you cannot have.
12. To feel safe -- To be free from threats, to be secure is the appeal of many insurance and bank ads.
13. Aesthetic sensations -- beauty attracts us, and classic art or dance makes us feel creative, enhanced.
14. Satisfy curiosity -- Facts support our belief that information is quantifiable and numbers and diagrams make our choices seem scientific.
15. Physiological needs -- After sex, other needs we have are to sleep, eat, and drink. Sleep aids, a juicy pizza, ice cold soft drinks all use this approach.

Main criticisms of ads

Advertising pays the bills and stimulates the economy, but advertisements and commercials have long been something we love to criticize. Included in some of the main criticisms of advertising as a whole are:

- It adds to the cost of products We all pay for those advertisements with increased costs of goods. A tube of toothpaste that costs 25¢ to produce sells for several dollars after the cost of packaging it in a recognizable cardboard box and distributed through several middlemen. But the big added cost is the cost to advertise the product to us so we'll pick it up from the shelf.
- Causes people to buy products they don't need Do we really need the latest computer or the newest model of car? Are cosmetics and underarm deodorant really necessary? Is Barbie 2000 really much different than Barbie 1960? How new is that newly improved laundry detergent, and what was wrong with the old detergent? The success of advertising to get us to want the newest and latest has led to planned obsolescence and causes us to buy products we probably could live without anyway.
- Reduces competition/fosters monopolies Because of the high cost of advertising and brand marketing, advertising reduces competition and fosters monopolies. Got a great idea for a toothpaste at a low cost? Just try getting the product on the shelves. Because Proctor & Gamble and Johnson & Johnson control most of the toothpaste brands that sell high quantities and because both have large sums of money with which to advertise their products, small companies cannot compete.

Learn more about [how ad slogans work](#) at "How stuff Works."

Reading Assignment

You should be reading the chapter on advertising in your textbook to get more information about advertising.

Exercise

What do you think is the most effective advertising medium in your life? Why do you feel that way?

Note that when submitting the answer start the subject line with:

J100x - YourLastName - Advertising

Send to rcameron@cerritos.edu