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Psychology of Advertizing

Introduction

Psychology is a science that studies psychological activity of a human being, influences of outer factors on people's behavior, and interrelation between individuals. Nowadays, the implications of the psychological data can be found far beyond its immediate application. It is a successful practice for businesses to resort to various psychological instruments in advertizing. Entire corporations and institutes are working on the psychological aspects of effective advertizing, spending vast financial resources. Despite the fact, that the society can like or dislike the phenomenon of advertizing, it has become an essential part of a person's everyday life. The concept of advertizing is not only a commercial, but also social, political, and ideological context. Therefore, it possesses enormous powers to influence the whole consuming mankind. Advertizing can be classified as a related branch of the psychological science with an additional focus to promote commodities. At present, psychology and advertizing co-exist in straight correlation and interrelation, whereas advertizing intensively exploits all psychological experience and studies.

This research examines the contemporary situation of advertising in terms of the psychological science. Based on a literature search and case studies of adverts and commercials, the paper involves the evaluation and analysis of the relevant articles and books. The focus of the paper is made on the interrelation between psychology and the marketing science (advertizing). The study objectives are to investigate the main aspects of advertizing

psychology and to show the psychological instruments of intensive influence on the mentality and behavior of consumers. The results of the study indicate several components of the advertizing image and message, proving the influential impact on the consuming society. The results are shown in the relevant examples of adverts and commercials.

Advertizing from a marketing perspective

“Advertising is a centuries-old practice, dating back to ancient Greece and Rome” (Green 6). The main constituent part of the advertizing has always been the product or service, which is supposed to be effectively presented to addressees and is usually paid for being reported through the media. Thus, the marketing communication presents the required idea into the coded message (advert), which is to be deciphered by a consumer. At present, there is a shift from the traditional marketing to the empirical one. An advantageous premise of the product has changed into emotional, sensual, and cognitive experiences, associated with this product. In the early nineties of the last century there has been initiated “an emotional or effect-based appeal, that aimed to influence the consumer’s feeling and emotions, rather than his thoughts” (Fennis 4). Apart from this, the consuming audience tends to stimulate the process by the desire to be entertained, intrigued, and, finally, instigated to a purchase as well. Consequentially, it has become extremely beneficial for businesses to resort to all psychological instruments that scientists have at their disposal.

Psychological aspects of marketing strategy

Psychological aspects interweave in the whole process of advertizing, starting from elaborating the strategy of the product promotion. The study shows that the most powerful advert or commercial is originated by the creation of psychologically outstanding idiosyncrasies of a product or service, creating a unique relevant image, and differentiating it from competitors’ commodities. In this case, slogans play a significant role to accommodate

the essence of the advertizing conception: “Impossible is Nothing” (Adidas), “Because you are worth it” (L'Oreal Cosmetics), "Buy it, Sell it, Love it"(Ebay), etc.

Psychological impact of advertizing on a consumer

Resorting to the cognitive perception is the key instrument to obtain an effective reaction of an individual to an advert. Attention, interest, desire, and action constitute a chain of cause-effect successive psychological processes that lead a consumer to the decision-making stage of a purchase. Possessing features of a good psychologist, marketing specialists take into account the specifics of information flow perception of the addressee. Furthermore, they analyze the target audience's individuality. It is necessary to forecast the effect of the commercial text or image at a conscious and subconscious level as well. Judging by the audience's peculiarities marketers rely on consumers' world perception, self-esteem, outlook, life values, national historical aspects and peculiarities of mentality, etc.

Psychological processes and their role in advert image creation

When envisaging the advert image, specialists appeal to a number of psychological processes of a human brain. Three main components should be followed to create an attractive and powerful advert, i.e. cognitive, emotional, and behavioral.

The cognitive component

The cognitive factor presupposes that such processes as perception, sensation, attention, memory, imagination, thinking, language, should be involved in an advert message. For example, sensations project the characteristics of various objects in the cerebral brain cortex with the influence on all the sensory organs. Thus, numerous adverts build up their strong impact on smell, taste, visual, audible and tactile sensations of a consumer. “Research found that supermarket sales increase 38% when slower music was played. Another study found that wine shoppers purchased more expensive wine when classical music was playing” (Graig 546). Harley Davidson used to send away a message with a powdered bullet shell by

mail among their potential customers. Commercials of Zippo lighters are accompanied by a click sound, to make it more realistic and memorable for a potential buyer. In their activity, marketers employ psychophysical Weber-Fechner's law as well. "A visual stimulus reduces the excitability of the visual system so that the effect of an equal subsequent stimulus is diminished by approximately the same amount as would have been the case had the stimulus intensify itself been diminished proportionally" (Roeckelein 212). The law explains why monotonous or constantly repeated adverts do not succeed in attraction of consumers. Thus, to get an experience equally intense as previous ones, a new advert should contain a stronger message each particular time.

It is also of significance to organize not only well-developed, but also easily perceived advert images. Perceived information falls under simplest sensorial categories in the human brain. The image or information, which is too elaborate, is unlikely to be digestive for consumers' brain. Hence, it will not be remembered. A human's ability to memorize bright and unusual objects is another exploited instrument in the marketing science. Long-term, short-term, sensory, explicit and implicit kinds of memory are relied on by marketers to leave an unforgettable impression. To fight the process of forgetting, they resort not only to repetition of the message from different angles, but also to humor, verse, and association fields. These techniques assist them to get into the long-term memory of an advert recipient. For example, since the 1920s, when Coca-Cola had to drop a healthy issue of the advert, the company has always been choosing vivid and playful marketing campaigns "with a fun, sporty image that would quench the nation's thirst" (Green 6).

Marketers move further in their strivings to implant the message into the consumer's mind. The following important psychological data provide professional marketing specialists with potent instruments. The studies indicate that people are sure to remember the beginning and the end of the message better than the rest of the information. People also tend to

memorize 7 simple objects or 4 compound ones, while exceeding these numbers lead to inevitable loss of information. Some commercial campaigns are based on the Zeigarnik effect, when parts of the same commercial are presented to the viewer by several interrupted parts. “This phenomenon seemingly paradoxical assertions by the Russian female psychologist Blyuma V. Zeigarnik (1900-1988) that recall of interrupted/unfinished tasks is superior to recall of completed tasks” (Roedelein 642).

The study data of voluntary and stimulus-induced attention have also been added to marketers’ arsenal. Specialists use all kinds of uncommon means to make an image a draw for the potential buyer. Among them are the upside-down text lines, intricate forms and colors, figurative meanings, puns, slogans, and deliberate mistakes. A bright example of the latter was part of Apple's very famous slogan "Think different". It did not stand the critics for being grammatically wrong. However, to attract further attention to their error and the brand in general, the company’s marketers corrected themselves by creating a new iPhone application Siri! Siri’s software was programmed to reply “I think differently!” to the consumers questions.

The emotional component

In addition, an emotional component in the creation of an advert is highly influential and self-explanatory. Such human emotions as love, sadness, happiness, surprise, fear, pain, compassion, disgust, guilt, etc. are hidden in a message of an advert image with various frequencies. McDonald's extremely popular slogan says, "I'm lovin' it". Despite the obvious health issues of such food consumption, the advert has conquered the world with their burgers and fries. Furthermore, the company suggested a "Put a smile on" slogan for their Happy Meal. The approach based on love and happiness has succeeded in bringing a smile on the faces of millions in the world.

The behavioral component

The behavioral component is one of the most significant parts in the process of advert shaping, which encourages purchasing a product. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a human should satisfy a number of vital necessities. Maslow's theory discusses that humans "begin at the bottom of the needs hierarchy, with physiological needs, and then work the way towards the top" (Plotnik 333). Explicitly or implicitly, any advert appeals to the need of food, safety, recognition, respect, love, spiritual intimacy, and self-actualization in its message to the potential buyer.

Advertizing messages and images resort to Sigmund Freud's theories in abundance as well. "According to Sigmund Freud, there are only two basic drivers that motivate all thoughts, emotions, and behavior – sex and aggression" (Shah 142). Though being highly controversial, these theories have been widely applied in the advertizing business. Marketers have carried out various researches in the field, which also gave some blizzard outcome. For instance, men perceive their automobiles as life partners; people do not like prunes and, since they remind people of ageing, therefore, buy them less, etc.

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Psychologically, advert specialists also examine the stages of a consumer's buying process. They single out five stages: "problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase evaluation" (Shah 162). Thus, using informing, suggestion, motivation and persuasion, an advert urges people to act.

Stereotypes constitute another area for creativity for advertizing experts. By watching TV commercials for several minutes, a person is sure to develop a list of widespread stereotypes. For example, a “five-commercial block on a single television program presented the following stereotypes: the super mum, the computer geek, the trendy youth, the good dad” (Sheehan 79). Thus, the advertiser’s goal is to indicate the possible negative stereotypes, correct them accordingly and intensify the positive ones.

Conclusion and recommendations

The research has defined that the area of business, such as advertizing, has an obvious psychological foundation. It has become evident that the famous scientific achievements and data of psychological studies are employed in the process of promoting goods and services. Cognitive, emotional and behavioral components help to achieve a psychologically attractive and highly demanded image that is sold to the consuming society. The all-embracing implementation of psychological aspects in advert imaging and messaging makes the advertizing and psychology related branches. In my opinion, this phenomenon is rather productive, since it entertains the audience and offers new jobs for creative people, who are fond of psychology and marketing. However, taking to consideration the huge psychological impact of adverting on the nation, esthetic, moral, legal policies must be strictly followed in every single way (adverts, TV commercials, and marketing campaigns) in order to promote psychologically safe notions and ideas.

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