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MECHANISM AND INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISING

Advertising is one of many ways in which manufacturers persuade customers to buy their products. Advertising considered to be one of the element of marketing mix. In today's world, people are bombarded with advertising, with picking up the kids from school, taking the dog for a walk. They haven't got time to make judgments on which can of tomatoes is the best one for me, or which brand of coffee gives me the best flavour. And if you can be constantly telling people why they should choose your brand, rather than another one, they are going to remember that. So, when they are shopping, and they see your product on the shelf, they'll remember it. It's "front of mind". It means that the person knows, ah coffee, I need coffee, which brand am I going for, ah Jacobs, yes I've seen that, that's good isn't it – and they just buy it. It's an automatic response, they don't spend more than two or three seconds, they are going to choose another brand. One Canadian author, Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) said that "Advertising is the greatest art form of the twentieth century". Let's compare two Advertising: one of being a modern piece of media, the other being aimed at the previous generation. I will be reviewing posters from Coca Cola and Benetton, the latter being the modern piece of media in this comparison.

It is important to highlight the background of the corporations. Coca Cola is a household brand name that is the world's biggest soft drink company. As well as the flagship drink, forms of merchandise such as posters, clocks, stationery and another way that the Coca Cola diversifies to increase profits. Coca Cola sells in virtually every country around the world, and is one of the most recognized brands in history. And then there is Benetton. An Italian Company specialising in the clothing sector of the economy. Only a few years ago they expanded into a merger with American store SEARS, which eventually fell through on the account of protests against the controversial Death Row Campaign by Oliviero Toscani. Toscani's vision of advertising did not include any gimmicks such as soft sell; his prime intent was to produce images that would shock anyone who saw them [1]. His image of 'reality-advertising' caused many of his posters to be banned. The multi-racial theme was one of the big talking points, and the fortunes of Benetton increased drastically.

Brand recognition is important for both companies. Coca Cola uses white text on a red background, with the font being classical and the wording being quite bold. Using red symbolises love and loyalty, something that the corporation obviously wants in order for people to buy the product again and again. Benetton for their logo uses a dark green box, with the words 'THE UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON' in white text inside. This is the logo that is invariably placed in all of Toscani's work. The look of the logo is very modern and fashionable to reflect the style of the clothing they sell. Green also represents 'go', which is not unlike a traffic light that indicates that you respond to signals that the poster is showing. In the handcuff poster, the logo is in the top-right corner, and in terms of narrative flow, would be seen second after seeing the handcuffs and the linked hands. In the coca cola poster, it would be seen first because it is at the top and in the centre.

I will now look at the main picture and the messages they send. Both posters use hands, although for completely different reasons. The Coca Cola poster shows a hand holding a cola bottle with the slogan beneath reading 'Ours is Ice Cold'. This makes you want to drink a Coke because when you read ice cold you think of the refreshment that the drink brings. In the case of the Benetton poster, the images shows one white and one Black Hand linked by handcuffs. The initial thought is that the white hand is that of the police man, but the truth is that the black hand is a Policeman's, arresting a white man. It also symbolises how black and white are linked together in

reality: In theory they don't want to hold hands, they are forced to be joined together in one world. In the coca cola advert the hand is white presumably to target the mainstream audience where the majority of people are white. The Coke poster has a border round the outside, perhaps to separate it from other brands and other advertising around it. The Benetton ad has no border but it looks modern and stylish without one. Another point about the Benetton poster is that the white hand looks to be making a fist, which could suggest how white men stereotypically have anger against black people. The Black Hand is not making a fist, and this could be a view of Toscani's that black people aren't as violent as people think [2].

Coca Cola's style of marketing is similar to Disney's, because there is no violence and everything is happy and peaceful. Their audience is also families because anyone can drink coca cola and is not restricted to certain ages. The Benetton ads may only be understood by those over 16 because the images that they send are to do with the reality of the world and aren't fictional and sugar-coated to look better. Toscani's posters tell the world like it is, not because of economical failure (with the exception of war and Death Row), but because of nature. The best example would be the multi-racial poster that he produced in the early eighties of babies of different ethnic origins hugging. The iconography on show has a level of emotion that the human understands, and will drive them into buying the products. Maybe if Toscani had not Juxtapositioned the handcuff poster there would have been a better understanding of the meaning that the poster was supposed to bring. Juxtaposing the Coca Cola picture may have not made much difference because it is self-explanatory that the person is a man and it best to leave it a mystery that it is.

The dimensions of the Benetton poster make it landscape, and this works best with the eyes because it will be seen more. The shape of the Coke poster means that you have to look at it from a skewed perspective to see it at its best.

In Swedish, especially children's advertising is very much limited by government. For example, the famous children cartoon Pokemon. When kids in Sweden watch the Pokemon cartoon series, they don't hear the jingle that everywhere else in the world ends each show: "Gotta catch 'em all." The country's consumer ombudsman deemed it stealth advertising, ruling that the tune is a surreptitious plug for Pokemon playing cards.

Swedes think that, in today's world, commercial influences surround us everywhere we go. Advertising slogans greet us on TV, the radio, newspapers, the Internet, billboards, advertising kiosks, trains, airplanes, buses, and subways. However, Sweden has tried to limit advertising directed at children in a variety of ways. Advertising aimed at children under the age of twelve is forbidden on Swedish television stations, as are direct mail advertising campaigns to children under the age of sixteen. The bans on alcohol and tobacco advertising also came into effect in part to protect children. In the opinion of the Swedish government, "children have the right to safe zones." In fact, Stockholm has prohibited all TV advertising aimed at children under the age of 12 since 1991, so the ruling wasn't all that radical [3]. What alarms advertisers and broadcasters is that Sweden wants the rest of Europe to follow its lead. It has used its six-month stint in the rotating presidency of the European Union to push hard for severe restrictions on television commercials directed at youngsters, and it's made headway. I think it's because of Swedish mentality. I suppose they created safe zones, very kind society and they try to avoid every sign that probably can somehow destroy their order and peace.

LITERATURE:

1. Cotton D., Falvey D., Kent S. Market leader// Longman, 2000.
2. www.commondreams.org
3. www.ilze.org