

Appealing to Emotions in Advertising

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Advertising, particularly television advertising, is a medium that must be exact and on-point with the message they want the audience to receive. According to Thill and Bovée (2015), three things must happen in order for an audience to respond to a message. First, they must remember the message; second, they must have the ability to respond; and finally they have to be motivated to respond. I think one of the best ways to achieve response with a commercial is by appealing to the senses and emotions (2015) of viewers. The commercial I selected, “Uncle Ben’s: Drawing” is one that has an emotional impact and one that I think demonstrates the use of emotion in advertising.

First of all, the design of “Drawing” is animated, but rather than being cartoonish it looks like a child’s craft project. The trees seem cut from construction paper, the cabinets and kitchen made from cardboard. The interesting thing to me is that the commercial could easily have been done in a real life setting, but the emotional factor might have been affected negatively by that. The father and daughter are made from burlap and yarn, which allows the viewer to judge them based on age, race, or whether they are likeable. The cheerful orange and blue of the Uncle Ben’s brand is reflected within the commercial through muted shades of the colors. The creators use blue as well as green against the tan backgrounds. These colors, according to color theory, are used to imply trust (blue) and health or wellness (green). Although these messages are subtle, they lend to the message that Uncle Ben’s is pushing while the overall effect of the commercial is warm and welcoming. It seems that the craft style animation would not only appeal to children, but also appeal to adult nostalgia. For me, the first time I saw the commercial I was drawn to it by the extremely simple and clear style of it as opposed to active, flashy or otherwise busy commercials that are normally on television.

The second emotional point of this commercial lies in the music selection, which is an a cappella cover of a 1990s hit dance song, “I Saw the Sign,” originally performed by Ace of Bass. This version strips the original song down to sound soothing and childlike, almost like a lullaby. Anyone over the age of 35 will remember the original, and teenaged viewers will likely recognize it from the more recent movie, *Pitch Perfect*. In addition to the emotional attachment to the music itself, the words almost spell out the message to the viewer without having to incorporate it with dialogue

The father, poised to make a frozen meal, sees his daughter drawing a picture of him cooking fresh vegetables and is inspired to make something rather than just heating up a frozen dish. In addition to encouraging healthy eating, there are other messages within this simple act. Uncle Ben’s endorses healthy lifestyles, but also the bonding that an activity like cooking encourages. Almost subliminally the commercial denies gender roles by having the father cook dinner for the mother and daughter. This simple and concise message speaks to millions of working parents and their children. The only dialogue in the commercial comes at the end of the reel, when a voice says “Every meal is a chance for a fresh start. Trust your instincts and begin with Ben. (Uncle Ben’s Mars)” The brilliance of this is that the company does not shame working parents, it does not preach to the kids about healthy eating. It simplifies the concept of working with Ben to make each meal a healthy collaboration.

References

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