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Identification and the 2013 Hyundai Team Super Bowl commercial

Jack M. Ghizoni

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University

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Jack Ghizoni

Check

Rhetoric Of Advertising

4/15/2013

Hyundai Team Analysis Paper

The Hyundai-Team commercial was released during the 2013 Super Bowl on February 3rd, 2013. The theme of this commercial is very team orientated in that, being a part of a team is more than just competing against others but includes the reliability, loyalty, and stability that you get from your teammates. In this commercial, the Hyundai Santa Fe is indeed a part of the team that is insuring these qualities to its owners. Clearly, Hyundai is trying to gather up a team of its own and give the audience a chance to be a part of this magnificent, comprehensive team by owning the Santa Fe. This advertisement is a great example of effectively persuading audience members to form a positive attitude towards the commercial and Hyundai altogether through identification and incongruity. It really encourages the consumption of Hyundai automobiles and in particular the Santa Fe. The commercial was also effective in using humor from the team of unrealistic, manly qualities that are given to children, to distract the audience from noticing the cultural issue at hand, which is bullying.

Hyundai is a motor group that started in Asia and was formed from Kia motor group in 1986. According to Warren Brown, from the Washington post on April 1st 2011, “The early years for Hyundai Motor America were downright painful. The reason was the abysmal quality of Hyundai's first U.S. offering, the subcompact Hyundai Excel.” This

car really had bad reviews and it created this awful reputation for Hyundai. This steep beginning has really given Hyundai a mindset to strive for excellence and compete with some of its top competitors like Honda and Nissan. Hyundai has really been doing as much as they can to separate themselves and create quality for their consumers.

Also, according to Brown, “Hyundai is now implementing a strategy of building better passenger vehicles than any of its European or Asian rivals.” According to Market Watch, “Hyundai’s target audience consists of those who demand a low acquisition price and reliable transportation.” It is for those who value reliability over luxury, serves for a typical family that includes children so to speak. Also, According to Market Watch, “Hyundai’s sales have increased by 42% since 2011 mainly because they have sold more of their top quality, reliable SUVs. Sales are expected to rise by another 13% this year.” According to Jim Henry from Forbes in January 2013, “Hyundai is throwing its weight around after record sales in 2012, with no fewer than five game-day ads on TV running in and around the Super Bowl.” According to Anita Lienert, from Edmunds, on February 23rd 2013, “This Super Bowl advertisement gave Hyundai a great advantage especially since some automakers including Honda, their top competitor, decided to opt out of the 2013 Super Bowl.”

This very popular Super Bowl commercial begins at a park where several children are playing around with a football. One of the children is left out and the other kids tell him that he can’t play until he has his own team. With that said, the lonely child runs home and gets his mom. At first, you think it is a tattle tail type of story but the mom and her son mean business. They then plan a trip where they go around and pick up these children with unrealistic qualities associated with children. For example, some of these

kids are wrestling bears, saving grown men from a burning building, and even children lifting weights way above normal. These qualities really stand out and give distinction to this particular team. Once all of the children are riled up in the Hyundai Santa Fe, the mother drops them all off at the park where they walk up to the other kids. They steal the words right out of the bully's mouth as they tell him they would prefer tackle.

Identification plays a key role in this commercial. According to Fred Beard from *Humor in the Advertising Business* in 2008, "This is a communicative process that unifies people based on their common interests and characteristics." Identification is used numerous times throughout this advertisement. One example is based on the common interest of striving to be the best team. In this commercial, the two teams are competing against one another by trying to be better than their opponent. With this, the lonely child goes and gets all of his friends or "teammates" to come and back him up in this standoff competition. In reality, we all want to be the best team and that is clearly demonstrated within this commercial.

Another example of identification is within the characteristics of the children. Whether it is saving a man from a burning building or wrestling a bear, these are things that many people look up to as impressive or moving. Not many people have what it takes to do these kinds of things and when the children are put in this situation it really draws the attention of the audience into the commercial. Being on a unique team that has these characteristics that rides in the Hyundai Santa Fe allows for the audience to configure the same message to the automobile making it stand out and be better as well. The rhetoric works in this case because it is allowing the audience to associate themselves as the best and to be unique and stand out by owning this car. Not only do the

characteristics come off from the children but from the car as well. The audience can identify that this “Hyundai team” is a team that will protect you, have your back, and be reliable. These qualities for a family car are essential for moms and dads with children alike.

The last type of identification falls in the category for the ones buying, the parents. This mid-sized SUV is a typical soccer mom vehicle that parents can relate to when they want to buy a car to drive around their kids. The characteristics of the children give the car that same recognition in keeping their kids safe and getting them to where they need to be efficiently. It collaborates parents with children to buy this car because it promises them the safe, reliable quality in a vehicle and that is important for safety when driving. When we can relate standards in an advertisement to those of our own, it leads to (1) more positive attitudes toward the ad and the model depicted in the ad, (2) stronger intentions to buy the advertised brand, and (3) more favorable impressions of the advertised brand (Torres/Briggs, p.100).

When dealing with identification, it is very important to consider ethnicity. A person’s ethnicity is more likely to be spontaneously evoked in social contexts in which others of the same ethnic group are few. This idea supports the notion that targeting a minority ethnic group “buys” more favorable attention than does targeting a majority ethnic group (Torres/Briggs, p.101). Within this advertisement, the children aren’t all one ethnicity, there are children from all sorts of ethnic backgrounds, making the audience feel comfortable as a whole and this is effective in increasing the target audience. Minorities respond more favorably to “one of their own” (Torres/Briggs, p.102). In this case, there is no majority and everybody is a minority giving the audience the same

chance to respond favorably no matter their ethnicity. This idea really builds that strong long-term relationship between Hyundai and its audience because groups perceived ethnic advertising targeted at them to be more trustworthy, and these perceptions led to more positive attitudes toward the brand being advertised (Torres/Briggs, p. 101).

All throughout the advertisement, the constant use of the rhetorical strategy of identification is effective because it covers all aspects of the common interests and characteristics of the audience. In short, this really allows for Hyundai to be effective in the market size, to be able to target many people at one time and make buyers feel welcome and comfortable. This strategy worked very well for Hyundai, as they were able to associate themselves with everybody, making everybody feel equal in terms of buying and using their featured product, the Hyundai Santa Fe.

Children with these types of qualities catches the audience's attention, stands out, and is funny because of how unrealistic the qualities are to children of that age. Our responses as target consumers of unusual depictions in advertising increase ad recall (Torres/Briggs, p.100). You are never going to see a young boy lifting a grown man out of a burning building with ease; it just simply isn't going to happen. This is where the incongruity of this commercial comes into play. Incongruity, as Beard says, has a punch line to surprise us in the ad, switching us from the first meaning to the second, making it possible to solve the incongruity. The humor in this commercial comes from the incongruity that is brought about. Incongruity can be viewed as the extent to which ad content differs from generally expected beliefs, attitudes and/or behaviors (Alden, p.3).

When the audience gets surprised, there isn't a specific tone that is associated with the arousal. Some can take the commercial as pleasant and others unpleasant. This

commercial is effective in making this a pleasant surprise because of how the humor is used and the contextual factors. These factors being playfulness, resolution, and warmth facilitate a humorous evaluation. Playfulness is a propensity to define (or redefine) an activity in an imaginative, non-serious or metaphoric manner so as to enhance intrinsic enjoyment, involvement and satisfaction. This incident with the children doing their courageous acts, symbolizes an imaginative trait that we can associate them with. The audience is able to redefine these characteristics and enhance their satisfaction.

Resolution is a source of positive affect that helps the consumer place a positive valence label on the surprise emotion (Alden, p. 4). As we see the “good guys” winning the tough guy competition in the commercial, we are able to associate the positive label.

The surprise component is where the humor comes from because we never see it coming that the team he is gathering is a team of invincible, courageous, heroic children. It makes it very funny, as it is such a surprise. It is easy to tell that these children with the tough qualities will win it out in the end because they are so unheard of and they can't be beaten. The positive effect of surprise on humor will be stronger when ease of incongruity resolution is high than when it is low (Alden, p.5). Since the incongruity is easy to predict in the sense that we can tell who will win this standoff, it makes the effect on surprise stronger, correspondingly, giving the humor that positive effect.

The positive reaction that the audience gets from the commercial is the warmth component. It is a positive affective reaction characterized by a sense of wellbeing and tenderness (Alden, p.8). Children being portrayed in this commercial really helps build this warmth. Even though the ad can get aggressive with their manly characteristics, the very fact that this is indeed a mother driving around her son and his friends gives off that

safe, family vibe.

At first, we don't know what to expect. Then, the children bring it to a whole other level. This is the oppositeness factor that it is possible vs. impossible. Obviously, children acting out in this way is unheard of and that is why it so affective in grabbing attention and creating humor in the ad. We don't expect it. The fact that these acts are indeed impossible for children to pull off allows for the audience to assume that these characteristics are to be inherited to something else, in this case, the vehicle. Right away, viewers know that the acts are not real and immediately start having opinions. This aspect gives more meaning to the car and what it is capable of, as it takes all of the credit to ensure a quality vehicle.

This rhetorical strategy of using incongruity is effective because it not only does it create humor and grab the attention of the audience, it allows for the audience to recognize and play around with the depiction and associate the meaning to the product. Imagination is a powerful tool and this commercial really emphasizes on that aspect but it plays out by making it easy for the audience to identify, creating more satisfaction and recognition in the product.

As audience members watch this Hyundai advertisement during the Super Bowl, their attention was drawn to the humor in the advertisement thanks to this incongruity. With the incongruity, there is a deeper cultural meaning that the audience doesn't recognize. This cultural issue is becoming more prominent in today's world, especially with younger children. This commercial takes place in a park, where kids place around every day for a reason. That very reason is because children don't always get along, many of them get bullied. Bullying is indeed promoted within this commercial as the

children are picking on the lonely one at the beginning. Advertising places a huge role in what is and isn't cool, especially to young children (Caplan, p.1). Bullies generally prey on those who are different from a perceived idea of what is "normal" or in style -- a perception that sadly, we help to create (Caplan, p.2). If you dig deep into this, it is almost like the bullies at the beginning are picking on the young boy in the beginning who later on rides in the Santa Fe to be "not normal" in return giving him and his team the exact opposite recognition if you look at it from this perspective. Clearly, this worldview of bullying is being promoted but it is hard to catch because of how unusual and eye opening the children's characteristics are that it covers it up. This is not accepted in our culture and everyday parents, siblings, and friends try to help and find ways to stop others from bullying. This happens all of the time in school with younger children. This is a touchy subject that our culture tries to avoid and this ad, even though it is hidden, isn't helping out that cause in bringing bullying to an end.

According to YouTube's Ad Blitz and the USA Today Ad Meter, this ad garnered over 12 million views online and was the 3rd most re-watched Super Bowl commercial. Obviously, it stood out and people enjoyed it. According to Jim Henry from Forbes in January 2013, "Team was Hyundai's funniest one. It's also the easiest one to identify with, and probably the most relevant one for the product attribute." It is clear that this motor group has been making some noise over the past view years and this advertisement only adds on to that assumption. With the reputation that Hyundai has established, and coming off of a record high in sales last year, I don't see how this can get any worse for this remarkable motor group. The commercial clearly features the 7-passenger attribute and relates reliable, safe, and durable qualities to the car. This was a very successful ad

that did a great job using rhetorical techniques to focus in on the car and what it can offer while making it funny at the same time. According to Anita Lienert, from Edmunds, on February 23rd 2013, “This was absolutely an opportunity to take advantage of and they did.”

In conclusion, this commercial was indeed an effective ad that really used identification and incongruity effectively and efficiently to gain the popularity and interest from its audience during the Super Bowl. With the way sales have been going for Hyundai recently, it looks like they are in for a breakthrough, to continue to grow and meet the needs and expectations of customers. The timing of this ad couldn't have been any better and the results have showed just that. The use of incongruity also helped distract the audiences' attention away from a serious cultural issue of bullying which was symbolized in the commercial with the children picking on one another. At the end of the day, this advertisement increased the brand awareness of Hyundai and really gave them an edge over their competitors.

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