

УДК 659.1

Creative Thinking in Advertising Communication: Cultural Aspect

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Received 5.08.2010, received in revised form 12.08.2010, accepted 19.08.2010

Modern advertising is a phenomenon which to this or that extent affects the nature of social, economic, political and other interactions in the society. Tendencies of advertising communication system development involve integrated use of ATL-and BTL-tools to effectively represent the product at the market relevant for such product. The main requirement for the various tools of advertising is their efficiency including the ability to deliver a creative content of the message in accordance with the pragmatic goals of advertising communication. But, as practice shows, today these tools do not allow to achieve the desired goals without creativity. Advertising creativity can be defined as an imaginative cover of tools for informative and persuasive forms of communication designed to solve pragmatic business problems. Such factors of market environment as aggravation of competition, growth of financial and intellectual potential, globalization of information flows become a sufficient reason for appealing to the methods and sources of innovative solutions development, the search for innovative and creative ideas in order to increase the effectiveness of various institutions' functioning in the society. Nowadays the understanding of the advertising success through the prism of creativity which provides opportunities to single out the product in the variety of market offers is quite obvious. The development of the informative and persuasive forms of communication in Russian contemporary history defines the rising tide of interest in disclosing the mechanisms of creative activity.

Creativity is always primary and fundamental. However, in the creative advertising product it pursues a pragmatic purpose – to change the consumer behaviour of the target audience. One should understand that creativity in advertising is only a technology of the creative process organization that is fruitless out of the context of the culture in which it is carried out. Today in order to overcome the cover, a person builds to protect himself from a huge flow of information, we need to use the stimuli involving the appeal to the collective unconscious. Consequently, the issues of creativity should be considered from the prospective of different elements of culture (lifestyle, values and mentality) which determine the specifics of advertising within.

An important condition for the development of creative thinking in advertising communication is an emotional and sensitive component, the development of which is designed to guarantee sensory perceptions and create emotional and axiological attitude to the objects of interest. This process includes entering into a situation of emotional experiences given in the advertising text which enables to actually experience emotions and feelings and get emotional and rationally provided images that promote accumulation of emotional and sensory experience and the development of emotional and imaginative component of thinking. The main component of the creative process in this case is a pragmatic element that is the original understanding of why advertising should be created, for whom it should be created (distinct identification of the target audience), how it should be created (the choice

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of a relevant technology) and, basically, what exactly should be created (a qualitative approach in determining the form and content of advertising text). Every culture can be represented as a set of hierarchical values shared by the majority of its representatives. Since advertising reflects the world and is a product of its time, the prevailing value orientations in each culture can be determined by the advertising content. Thus, a social role of advertising is to advance the basic spiritual values that are essential to the society.

If the behaviour patterns and value orientations are set within the mentality of the society, then advertising not only transmits them but also affects their quality change suggesting a different pattern of behaviour and correcting value orientations. In this case it is necessary to take into account the fact that the social differentiation of mentalities reflects the existing division into social groups with the inherent material interests, lifestyle, which is definitely reflected in the formation of the collective image of the target audience. The secret of creativity in this process lies in the methodology of values creating, the involvement of a particular culture's mentality that is innovative, beyond the existing technologies, commonly accepted standards and regulations.

Creativity in advertising is a combination of search and implementation of such an extent of information freshness which will strike the target audience and draw its attention. Cultural aspect of this search is quite fundamental because it is important that an advertising image is based on archetypes, stereotypes and myths present consumers' minds taking into account mentality, values, lifestyle and other components of culture. In this case it does not cause rejection but is perceived as something already familiar. In many cases such recognition inspires trust, and, as a consequence, increases the efficiency of advertising communication. Consequently, cultural approach in advertising communication is an integral part of creative positioning where an effective advertising idea can change something in the thinking of the target audience in a certain problem field with its cultural codes.

Keywords: advertising, advertising communication, creativity, creative thinking, advertising creativity, lifestyle, values, creative advertising idea, cultural approach.

Point

Advertising as an object of study has a scientific value. The first issue to draw one's attention is the extremely high social significance of advertising which involves many spheres of human life, including not only the economy and business, but also morality and art. The discussion about the essence of advertising and where it is implemented (whether in business or artistic endeavour) is quite relevant. The current debate about advantages and disadvantages of advertising from the perspective of everyday awareness states the need for scientific analysis so that a particular position associated with social significance of advertising could be reasonable and advertising itself could be subjected to forecasting and modeling in the spirit of social optimism. There is an opinion that advertising in its many manifestations reflects ideological, aesthetic and moral principles of Russian society

and becomes an ideology of mass consumption. This tendency causes progressively increasing interest precisely to the creative part of the idea and its embodiment in the advertising product. Therefore, the understanding of creativity principles can be defined as a factor of the efficient advertising communication.

Advertising communication exists in an inextricable connection with a cultural worldview which integrates in it as an internal, so an external contexts of the communication process. The internal context includes the value system, cultural identity, mentality, etc. The motivation of consumers belonging to another culture is often different, which determines their consumer behaviour. As the external context we can mention the time factor, location, conditions of communication, etc. Advertising can be quite efficient only if it takes into account the substantive aspects of both internal and external

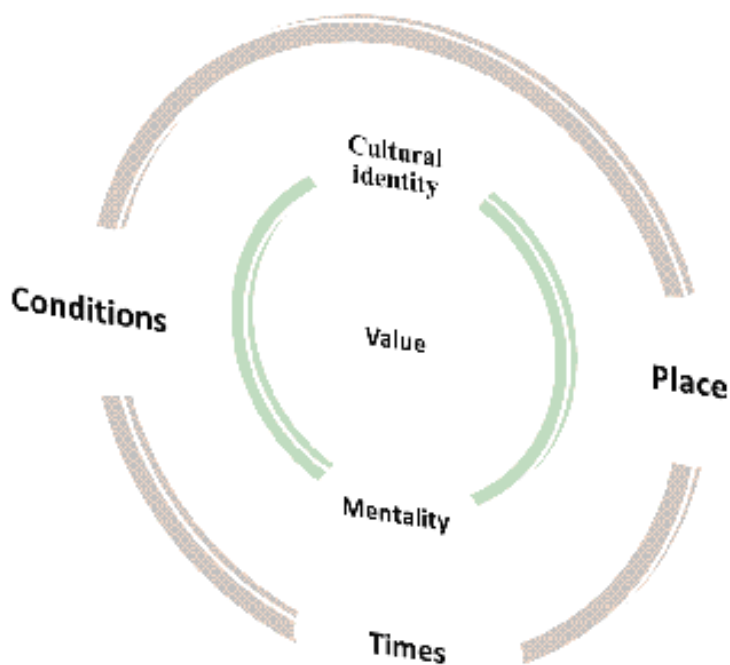


Fig. 1. An internal and external context of advertising communications

contexts of communication. Thus, advertising should be high-context, i.e. implying context of another culture in its message, appealing to the consumer's basic ideals of a particular culture with consideration of the national and cultural specificity.

Cultural approach in advertising is an integral part of creative positioning, where an effective advertising idea can change thinking of the target audience in a certain problem field with its cultural codes. According to B. Malinowski, the elements of culture can continue to exist only if they are surrounded by an aura of satisfaction for the society members (conjugated with the balance of pleasure and pain, in which the first one prevails). [3] The underlying structures of culture which have historically and socially engrained in minds and behaviour of many generations are now integrated into advertising, influencing the historical and cultural evolution. If each culture has its own language system, then the language of advertising in the process of social interaction acts as a conductor which allows to attach an

intersubjective, cultural significance to the subjective, individual experience as a translator of socially important ideas giving them a common, sharable meaning. Creative advertising contributes to the creation of a new reality defined by the increasing integrity of culture, traditions, values, etc., thus fulfilling its cultural function.

Example

The issues of the main approaches to the formation of creative thinking should be considered starting with the specification of the concepts used in this work. Let us consider the object of research, that is advertising communication, clarifying the concept of communication in this context as a "socially conditioned process of information transmitting and receiving in terms of interpersonal and mass communication on different channels with the help of different means of communication" [7, p.23]. In general sense, thinking is an indirect and generalized reflection of reality, a kind of mental activity, involving the cognition of the essence of

things and phenomena, natural connections and relations between them. Thinking originally has creative nature, and a truly motivated person can generate new ideas.

The basis of creativity in the advertising communication is *a creative thinking* which is the ability to create new relevant knowledge and forms embodied in an advertising text (both on verbal and nonverbal levels) that has a social and economic effect through the synthesis of dissimilar elements. Creativity is always primary and fundamental. However, in the creative advertising product it pursues a pragmatic purpose – to change the consumer behaviour of the target audience. One should understand that creativity in advertising is only a technology of the creative process organization that is fruitless out of context of the culture in which it is carried out. Today in order to overcome the cover a person builds to protect himself from a huge flow of information, we need to use the stimuli involving the appeal to the collective unconscious. Consequently, the issues of creativity should be considered from the perspective of different elements of culture (lifestyle, values and mentality) which determine the specifics of advertising within.

The detection of consumer preferences which define the concept of advertising leads us to the concept of a life form or a *lifestyle*. According to the scientific sources, the concept of the "lifestyle" is derived from Weber's *Lebensführung* – a way of maintenance and organization of life. Speaking of the style in advertising, it is a specific content in the way of presentation, language and composition of an advertising message which reflects the way of life and ways of expression of the target audience. The content always finds a well-ordered common expression through a form (in this case – advertising). In other words, individual experiences, motives and goals turn into social facts that run into the flow of social interactions in the process of advertising

communication. An intellectual component of the above described content cannot be underestimated in this process. Resolving the problem of the relationship of creativity and intelligence in many ways contributes to understanding of creativity's nature: the first one is the product and the result of creativity's expression, and the intelligence is the integral expression of the cognitive abilities implementation. The problem is that the creator must generate and adopt new ideas at the same time, i.e. recognize their originality, have a clear picture of how to use them in advertising.

The lifestyle demonstrated by advertising is based on the system of social values, social priorities, standards, worldviews, etc. appropriate for each particular culture. Thus, if in the process of generating creative ideas a crucial role belongs to creativity, then their adoption and implementation are involved with the manifestation of cognitive abilities of the target audience. David Ogilvy, a well-known expert in the field of advertising, says that "you cannot bore your consumers into buying your product, you can only interest them into doing so" [5], which means that you should find the only one true motivation which will allow to satisfy an unmet human need and offer an effective way to satisfy it in a way relevant to modern lifestyles. In respect to advertising, the lifestyle can be defined as a social status because it is a function of the typical for the target audience characteristics having been formed in the process of its social interactions. Lifestyle as a definition which explains the uniqueness of a human and features of consumer behaviour is a subject to changes. One of the factors of this change can be creative advertising that transmits the idea of self-expression in order to have a conscious choice of the popular product or a behaviour model including symbolic cultural codes. In this process it is important not to be mistaken in the notion of the potential target audience lifestyle and to affect

its changes in the context of cultural peculiarities where the advertising communication is carried out.

In the advertising practice the in-demand form of the advertising message is a kind of television commercial “lifestyle” in which the emphasis is done not on the advertised product but on its user. To become understandable for the target audience advertising must speak the language of their time – in this sense, advertising becomes both the carrier of the dominant and the instrument of creating a new style. In this context we can say that advertising reproduces style features of the product. The objective of creativity here may be considered as achievement of an effective association of the suggested lifestyle with the advertised product. Thus, the social function of advertising in this context is to create a lifestyle relevant to the value orientations of the modern society which, as a consequence, becomes a strategy for its consumer behavior.

The concept of the style is directly connected with the concept of *values*. The world of culture is the world of values where each culture is represented as a set of values being shared by the majority of its representatives. According to the opinion of many researchers, the basis of any culture is the value. Therefore, if there is a substitution of fundamental values in the society the type of culture changes as well. Consequently, if the type of culture changes the transformation of informative and persuasive types of communication occurs in it. Thus, in the basis of an advertising unit design, the transmitting of which supposes appeal to the problems of the society, the system of universal values becomes the uniting element. Nevertheless, the factor of cultural variety of each society should be considered.

The values present in each culture direct the human activity in a determined way. We can suppose that it is the value that influences the

choice of the behaviour alternative representing the desired. The human definition of the reality depends on the subjective idea, about the values as well. Notwithstanding that the human independently determines the halidoms important for him, there is a number of spiritual absolutes equal for all people (good and evil, beautiful and ugly, right and wrong etc.). The modern advertising not only takes into account the worldview and value orientations of the target audience but creates them in some respect building a specific consumer ideology. Creative thinking in this process functions on the basis of combining rational and logical, emotional and image components of the advertising communication. It should be noted that advertisement, as well as the values, cannot be referred to the concept of “truth” and is related to ideal, desired, standards; it brings assessment into understanding of the reality. The axiological approach is inevitable to all phenomena of the culture (advertisement included).

It is obvious that the appearance of new spiritual absolutes in history is inevitable when social realities change. W. Windelband says that disintegration of previous life forms and occurrence of new value motives lead to the state of searching and detecting which require expression. According to the philosopher’s opinion, appearance of a new epoch requires, at least, new value orientations which give birth to a completely changed structure of life. W. Windelband writes: “when we speak about true cultural values we never act like individuals or even representatives of our kind, but always as treasurers and carriers of superempirical ... functions of the mind” [1, pp.13-14]. The culture is determined by the established values while in various cultures we can observe the same values, but their priority is positioned differently. Advertisement in this context draws attention to social values shared by the majority

of this or that culture/subculture representatives in order to change the behaviour pattern in the society or its segment. The values transmitted by advertising are always connected with the temper of the epoch and the consumer behaviour significantly depends on the culture prevailing in each particular society.

One of the topical creative thinking strategies in this context is the “Big Idea” concept as a long-term strategy of creative positioning aimed at involvement of the maximum mainstream audience due to offering appreciated values and appealing to socially important tendencies. In today advertising activities the “Big Idea” is a specific and practical creative technology which allows to establish efficient advertising communication. In this creative technology (which is outlined by variety, long duration, uniqueness and sociability) we find the axiological approach as well, while the “big advertising idea” does not offer some specific product, but always life values (up-to-date in each specific culture) connected with this product.

Each culture can be presented as a set of hierarchically established values shared by the majority of its representatives. One can determine the value orientations prevailing in each culture by the contents of the advertising while the advertising reflects the world and is the product of the time. The process of advertising creativity always has some sensual component and it is the feeling which becomes a specific image reflecting its rational essence and sensual perception. The connection of emotional perception and logical understanding of things synthesises the occurrence of such feelings which can become irreplaceable guidelines while looking for the solution and the guarantee for realising the possibility to understand an instinctively found advertising idea. The critics of modern advertising say that it influences the system of human values in a negative way, while

it promotes the way to happiness through things’ acquisition and not through spiritual, ethic and intellectual development. But in any culture with various systems of values the modern human is relatively free in his/her choice determining the limit for the aspiration to satisfy desires, needs and fantasies in accordance with his/her own ideals.

Values are always estimated in relation to some ideal and involve personality, structure of self-consciousness, i.e. personal needs as well. The attention paid to wealth does not reject spiritual or cultural values. Moreover, this creates favourable conditions for the development of these values while according to A. Maslow’s theory of needs motivation the fulfilment of high aspirations is possible only when lower, basic needs of the person are satisfied. D. Pivovarov thinks that active raising of spiritual ideals is more preferable for human activities while it will inevitably lead to understanding of the matter and flesh value, unlike the irrestrainable worship of only material goods (by means of advertising as well) which can transform the ideal into an idol and can make the human life itself meaningless and frustrated [6].

Therefore, the social role of advertising is in perfection of the basic spiritual values vitally needed by the society. The value characterises human measurement of social consciousness presenting the existentially felt being. Cultural values do not die due to objectivization in texts while they are constantly getting new meaning. In advertising communication the type level of advertisement understanding is connected with a personality type, a typical motive, a typical situation which together compose everyday-life practical version of a social structure of a particular culture. Conversational level of advertisement understanding is connected with its substantial content, building of its meaning on the basis of existing knowledge of the text’s meaning

in the particular culture and understanding of the message which can be expressed in a particular action. The values present in each culture projected in advertising which not only spreads, but also forms them, direct human activity in a particular way, thus, being the vector of the society development.

One of the elements of the axiological attitude is the first layer of desires, aspirations and preferences forming the initial level of the mass consciousness – *the mentality*. From numerous research works we know that within the mentality various oppositions are presented – natural and cultural, emotional and logical, rational and irrational, individual and collective. Mentality as a collective-individual formation is a set of stable spiritual values, deep guidelines, skills, automatisms, latent habits, long-term stereotypes considered within particular spatial-time limits which are the basis of behaviour, lifestyle and conscious perception of particular occurrences of reality. This definition is determined as “psychological furniture” (M. Bloch), “symbolic paradigms” (M. Eliade), “prevailing metaphors” (P. Receur), “archaic residues” (Z. Freud) or “archetypes” (C. Jung), “...the presence of which is not explained by the individual life of the person but comes from the aboriginal inherent and inherited sources of the human mind” [9, p. 64]. This definition is used in modern literature at cultural and philosophic analysis of social reality and culture as a whole.

Thus, mentality allows to unite analytical thinking, developed forms of consciousness with semi-conscious cultural codes the advertising communication contains. Creative thinking includes as the conscious, so the unconscious components (intuition). David Bernstein, one of the leading specialists of Great Britain in creativity, thinks that the creative process in advertising is a transformation of an offer into an idea and the main skills of people involved in

advertising are the skills of arguing. According to such understanding of this definition creation of efficient advertising, first of all, requires intensive logical thinking based, more likely, on the facts estimation than on ideas “pulled out of a hat”. Creative thinking is fed by lively impressions, interesting events, behavioural clichés and other typical and extraordinary facts which are always present at various levels of the memory [8, p.65]. Advertising projects a worldview including in its message, for example, the idea of the personality and its attitude to the society, ideas of freedom, equality, honour, of good and evil, truth and labour, of the family and sex relationships, of the course of history and the value of the time, of the ratio of new and old, of death and soul. Mentality in advertising communication dates back to different ethnic and civilization origins connected with historical destiny, geopolitical interests in axiological and semantic space of the culture. According to the opinion of Octave-Jacques Gérin “advertising gets control over the consumer, modifies his/her tastes and habits involving the consumer into the continuous process of the cognition, transforming his/her mentality” [2, p. 98].

If the behaviour patterns and axiological guidelines are given within the limits of the society’s mentality, the advertising not only transmits them but can also influence their qualitative change offering another behaviour model and correcting axiological guidelines. At the same time, it should be taken in consideration that social differentiation of mentalities reflects present in the society division into social groups with typical material interests, lifestyle which definitely influence building of the collective image of the advertising target audience. The secret of creativity in this process is in the methodology of values establishment, inclusion of mentality of a particular culture which is innovative and is beyond the limits of existing

technologies, commonly accepted standards and regulations. The result of creativity is clear, traditional and is estimated easily and quickly. The way of obtaining this result itself is non-traditional and this is where the effect lies.

Resume

Thus, today we can speak about such a semiotic system functioning in the society as the advertising discourse. Creative thinking in advertising communication is formed in the conditions of globalization changing and adapting cultures, basing on separate elements (lifestyle, values, mentality, etc.). The power of advertising communication lies in the attention which makes us to turn not to the advertisement itself (as a text) but to the big (creative) idea which it contains. One can interpret “advertising” as the derivative from Latin “*ad verter*” which stands for “to attract attention to”. The next stage in perception in advertising communication is the interest, qualitative content of which determines continuity of the following units of the chain – desire and action (according to the AIDA model of advertisement perception). It is commonly known that this chain can break off at any of its units: attention can be not attracted, interest can disappear soon and then attention will be drawn to other information (another interesting advertisement, for instance), the desire can transform to the following step – the action. In modern conditions of intensive information environment (advertising as well) one can attract the audience using technologies based on creativity. Creativity in advertising is a combination of search and implementation of such an extent of information freshness which will

strike the target audience and draw its attention. The cultural aspect of this search is fundamental while it is important that the advertising image is based on archetypes, stereotypes and myths present in minds of consumers taking into consideration mentality, values, lifestyle and other components of culture as well. Only then it does not cause rejection and is perceived as something familiar. This type of recognition most of the time inspires trust and, as a consequence, increases the efficiency of advertising communication.

Notwithstanding the fundamental cultural aspect of creative advertising, the priority of economic component of advertising communication still remains important while, as it is commonly known, creativity always presupposes deriving benefits (this makes it different from art) and the main function of advertising is to sell (products, ideas, images). Obviously, the most creative advertising is only an art work (exciting, beautiful, tempting) if it does not fulfil this function. It is ironic, but when applied non-creative advertising can also fulfil economic function successfully enough. But we can assume that we will observe such facts in the future less frequently. The influence of advertising can never be predicted for 100%, no matter how creative it is. Constant changes in the society (socio-economic, political, etc.) constantly require fresh advertising decisions, new approaches, new creative ideas. With advance of creative technologies in our culture the human will be more sensitive to art pragmatism. Then it would be possible to call successful only such an advertisement which has *creative selling idea* based on relevant needs of the target audience.

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Креативное мышление в рекламной коммуникации: культурологический аспект

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Современная реклама является феноменом, который в той или иной степени влияет на характер социального, экономического, политического и иного взаимодействия в социуме. Тенденции развития системы рекламной коммуникации предполагают комплексное использование ATL- и VTL-инструментов с целью эффективного представления продукта на актуальном для него рынке. Основное требование, предъявляемое к различным инструментам рекламы, – это их эффективность, в том числе способность передать творческое содержание сообщения в соответствии с прагматическими целями рекламной коммуникации. Практика показывает, что сегодня без креатива эти инструменты не позволяют достичь обозначенных целей. Рекламный креатив можно определить как образную оболочку инструментов информативно-убеждающих видов коммуникации, призванных решить прагматические задачи бизнеса. Такие факторы рыночной среды, как обострение конкуренции, рост финансового и интеллектуального потенциала, глобализация информационных потоков, выступают достаточным основанием обращения к методам и источникам создания нетрадиционных решений, поиску инновационных, креативных идей с целью увеличения эффективности функционирования различных институтов в обществе. Сегодня очевидным является понимание успешности рекламной деятельности через призму креативности, предоставляющей возможности выделения продукта из многообразия рыночных предложений. Развитие информативно-убеждающих видов коммуникаций в новейшей истории России определяет возрождение интереса к раскрытию механизмов творческой деятельности. Творчество всегда первично и фундаментально. Однако в креативном продукте рекламной деятельности оно подчинено прагматической цели – изменить потребительское поведение

целевой аудитории. Нужно понимать, что креативность в рекламе – это только технология организации творческого процесса, которая бесплодна сама по себе, вне контекста той культуры, в которой она осуществляется. Для того чтобы преодолеть защиту, которую выстраивает современный человек от большого потока информации, сегодня необходимо использовать раздражители, связанные с апелляцией к коллективному бессознательному. Следовательно, проблематику креативности целесообразно рассматривать сквозь призму составляющих культуры (жизненный стиль, ценности и ментальность), определяющих специфику рекламы в ней.

Важным условием развития креативного мышления в рекламной коммуникации является эмоционально-чувственный компонент, развитие которого призвано систематически обеспечивать чувственно-образное восприятие и формировать эмоционально-ценностное отношение к изучаемым объектам. Данный процесс включает в себя организацию вхождения в ситуацию эмоциональных переживаний, предложенных в рекламном тексте, дающих возможность непосредственного проживания эмоций и чувств, возникновения эмоционально и рационально обусловленных образов, способствующих накоплению эмоционально-чувственного опыта и развитию эмоционально-образного компонента мышления. Главной составляющей креативного процесса в данном случае выступает прагматический элемент, то есть изначальное понимание, зачем нужно создавать рекламу, для кого нужно ее создавать (четкая идентификация целевой аудитории), как нужно ее создавать (выбор актуальной технологии) и, собственно, что именно нужно создавать (качественный подход в определении формы и содержания рекламного текста). Каждую культуру можно представить как набор иерархически выстроенных ценностей, разделяемых большинством ее представителей. По содержанию рекламных сообщений можно определять господствующие в каждой культуре ценностные ориентации, так как реклама отражает мир и является продуктом своего времени. Таким образом, социальная роль рекламы заключается в совершенствовании базовых духовных ценностей, жизненно необходимых обществу.

Если образцы поведения и ценностные ориентиры задаются в рамках ментальности общества, то реклама не только транслирует их, но и может влиять на их качественное изменение, предлагая иную модель поведения и корректируя ценностные ориентиры. При этом необходимо учитывать тот факт, что социальная дифференциация ментальностей отражает существующее в обществе разделение на общественные группы с присущими им материальными интересами, образом жизни, что определенно отражается на конструировании собирательного образа целевой аудитории. Секрет креативности в данном процессе заключается в самой методологии создания ценностей, включенности ментальности конкретной культуры, которая и является инновационной, находится за пределами существующих технологий, общепринятых норм и правил.

Креатив в рекламе – это совокупность поиска и воплощение той степени оригинальности подачи информации, которая поразит и привлечет внимание целевой аудитории. Культурологический аспект такого поиска является фундаментальным, так как важно, чтобы рекламный образ опирался на архетипы, стереотипы и мифы, содержащиеся в сознании потребителей, учитывая ментальность, ценности, жизненный стиль и иные составляющие культуры. Тогда он не вызывает отторжения, и воспринимается как нечто уже знакомое. Этот режим узнавания во многих случаях внушает доверие и, как следствие, – повышает эффективность рекламной коммуникации. Следовательно, культурологический подход в рекламной коммуникации – неотъемлемая составляющая креативного позиционирования, где эффективная рекламная идея может что-то изменить в мышлении целевой аудитории в обозначенном проблемном поле с заложенными в нем культурными кодами.

Ключевые слова: реклама, рекламная коммуникация, креатив, креативное мышление, рекламный креатив, образ жизни, ценности, креативная рекламная идея, культурологический подход.
