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TATTOOS – AN ART OR ADVERTISING?

Tattoos have long been used throughout history for different purposes. In some cultures, they have been used as symbols of authority. In other cultures, they have been used to give mystical powers or abilities. Lately in modern times, tattoos have been used in the United States as a form of self-expression. However, there is one use of tattoos that has recently come up as a more commercial use rather than an individual use. Some people have started using tattoos to advertise their website or business.

During the last half of the 1990s and in this decade, tattoos have become wildly popular and many sports stars and celebrities have well-known tattoos on their body. Seeing this trend, certain businesses (especially the ones that target teens), are starting to use tattooing as a form of promotion. You can get tattoos bearing the name of a company or a brand on your arm, leg, or other part of your body. This results in free advertising for the company who sells the product. However, many doubt the merits of this form of advertising.

First of all, the audience is quite limited. Many people rather look at the design of a tattoo than the words on it. Seeing a Nike swoosh or some other familiar brand name will automatically result in many viewers thinking “advertisement” and they will promptly ignore it. This generally renders many of these “advertising” tattoos ineffective.

Secondly, many tattoos are for the most part, covered by clothing. This obviously limits the number of people who see the tattoo. People who ask you to raise up your sleeve to see a tattoo are probably going to be looking for something spectacular like a dragon, and not a Pepsi symbol. For these two reasons, advertisements in the form of tattoos would have very limited effectiveness.

However, there are some merits in tattoo advertising. People tend to better remember things (including advertisements) that they have seen in weird places. Seeing a coke logo tattoo on some guy’s stomach would probably leave more of an impression in your mind than seeing it on a generic billboard.

Since tattoos cost money to get and are many times painful to get, people may

think that someone who tattoos a product onto themselves really believes in that product. Celebrity tattoos have also have high advertising value. Since many of them have well-known tattoos that people are often curious about, adding another tattoo with the logo of a company or product could make the celebrity a walking commercial. Depending on the product you are advertising, this could be an effective investment for certain companies or products.

Tattoo advertising may be new and not many may embrace it, but it does present some interesting opportunities for Niche products that cater to a certain crowd. Before deciding to invest or not invest in such advertising, you'd be best served researching your target demographic and deciding whether tattoos are popular within that group of people. While for some groups, it may be a good model of advertising, for most, tattoos should be kept as an art of self-expression.