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THE EFFECT OF HUMOROUS ADVERTISING
ON VIEWER IN TELEVISION MEDIUM

Monica del Carmen Carrera Vergara

A Culminating Project Presented to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Lindenwood University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science-Mass Communications

1998

ABSTRACT

This study will focus on the effects of humorous advertisements in the television medium and its impact on viewers.

Research has established to the importance of humorous advertising in the business world and the effect that it has on consumers' consciousness.

Humor in advertising is seen as an important factor in the purchaser's process. Also, it is a tool that companies use to create a positive attitude toward the brand.

At this time, humor in commercials is the heavy attribute that gives viewers often pleasures. However, some current uses of humor in commercials do not achieve this purpose.

Some commercials create a negative attitude in viewers toward the brand, because they were made without a deep investigation about the needs of consumers before they were produced.

The purpose of this research is to investigate what makes a humorous commercial successful and another unsuccessful. It intends to give students, professors and advertising professionals a good understanding of how humor works and how and when it is perceived by viewers in a positive or a negative way.

This research will provide some concepts about the appropriate use of humor in commercials. These

concepts can be applied to humor relating to the product, humor relating to the objectives of the company, humor relating to the message, humor relating to gender difference and humor relating to the price.

Moreover, some successful and unsuccessful humorous advertisements were evaluated, nine successful and four unsuccessful. These evaluations and case studies help to understand why some advertisements fail in the market.

The results of this investigation has established considerable evidence that demonstrate that humor can be an effective tool to convey the message effectively to viewers and a medium that can lead consumers to purchase a product (goods or services).

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Communications

1998

COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF CANDIDACY

Professor Dr. Michael Castro, Chairperson and Advisor

Adjunct Assistant Professor Ben Kuehnle

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother Barbara Vergara de Espino, the most important person in my life and to whom I own all my success and my life.

I love you, Monica

Acknowledgement Page

Thanks to God for giving me the courage, the patience and dedication to finish this Culminating Project successfully.

Thanks to my advisor Michael Castro for his time and advice to make this project the fulfill its potential.

Thanks to Exbar Arias for his support in all the moments that I needed it and helping me in achieving this goal.

Thanks to all very much, Monica

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Role of the Advertising in the Market Place

Advertising seems to be a part of human nature, evidenced since ancient times. The need to advertise products and services has been a widespread practice for commerce since for centuries. Today, the health of many businesses depends on the generation of effective advertising.

Advertising activity can be found in various mediums, such as, television, radio, newspaper, magazine or direct mail. "An Advertising medium is any paid means used to present an ad to its target audience" (Arens, 12).

At this time, more companies around the world than ever before are using the advertising activity to promote their products and services. Advertising can be defined as follows:

Advertising is the nonpersonal communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature, about products (goods and services) or ideas by identified sponsors through various media. (Arens 6)

For advertising to be effective, consumers must have confidence in it. If a product does not live up to its ads, dissatisfaction occurs. Any kind of deception

risks being as harmful to the advertiser as to the buyer.

For this reason, marketers know the best way to sell their products is to appeal to genuine consumer needs and be honest in their advertising message.

Advertising offers many social benefits to the company and the consumers.

It encourages the development of new products and speeds their acceptance. It fosters employment, gives consumers and businesses a wider variety of product choices, and helps keep prices down by encouraging mass production. It stimulates healthy competition between companies, and it raises the overall standard of living. (Arens 66)

Unfortunately, millions of dollars in advertising are wasted each year, because some advertising is wrongly designed, poorly written, and badly produced. Sometimes, these results have caused declining sales and damage to the brand.

Some research has demonstrated that most people detest certain commercial treatments.

Albert C. Book says: "They don't like to be yelled at or treated rudely. They want to be respected" (Book 19).

For that reason, the creation of a good advertising is a carefully process, in which advertisers have to be aware of the objectives and

nature of the product, so that the message can be communicated effectively to the consumers.

B. Utilization of Humor Creativity in the Advertising

The use of humor is a common practice in advertising. Every year advertisers spend millions of dollar producing ads that try to be humorous in order to facilitate message acceptance.

"A study by Weinger and Spotts found that 24.4% of ads on American television contained humorous intent" (Weinberger 1). However, the use of humor seems to be an advantage for some companies and a disadvantage for others.

Humor does not guarantee better ads, but in many cases, it can help to achieve the objectives that the company seeks.

1. Communication Goals

The nature of the communication goal plays a major role in the effectiveness of the use of humor.

Some of the major goals of humor in advertising are credibility, comprehension, making a positive impact, persuasion, and attention.

Humor and Source Credibility

The effect of humor on source credibility can be described as mixed. These mixed results appear to be due a number of factors, such as the nature of the source or nature of the humor.

Advertising studies exploring source credibility have produced a smooth distribution of results. With three advertising studies reporting enhanced source credibility in humor conditions, four indicating neutral or mixed effects, and three indicating a negative relationship". (Weinberger 2)

These inconclusive studies indicate, if nothing else, that humor's potential impact on an ad's credibility is an issue that should be carefully weighed with each individual advertisement.

There are two aspects of source credibility: Knowledgeableness and trustworthiness. Studies found that:

While all sources in the experiment were viewed as moderately knowledgeable, the sources of non-humorous ads were viewed as more knowledgeable than the humorous sources. However, trustworthiness of a source was demonstrated to be enhanced through the use of one specific humor type. (2)

The type of humor will be discussed in a later in section.

In summary, studies indicate that it is unlikely that source credibility is consistently enhanced using humor. The creativity team has to be aware of this factor for the success of the commercial.

Humor and Comprehension

The comprehension of the ad by consumers is an important element in effective advertising. The message must be communicated to the consumers in the best way possible. Humor does not always harm comprehension, but some studies indicate that a harmful effect may occur.

Studies have indicated that "some humorous ads do better and some do worse than non-humorous ads on descriptive and message comprehension and that this differential performance was attributable to humor type" (Weinberger 3).

In addition, the type of product advertised also appears to play an important role in the impact of humor on comprehension.

For that reason, advertisers know that humor can not be used for all products or services, because all the products or services are not the same, and the nature of the product or service may demand different treatments.

The type of product is going to be examined more deeply later in the type of product section.

Humor and Liking

Definitively humor enhances the association of a positive identification with the source. "Studies of teacher effectiveness have demonstrated that teachers who incorporate humor into the classroom rate significantly higher on character scales and are seen as more likable than average" (2).

Humor has been viewed as an important aspect in teacher effectiveness and the use of humor by teachers was demonstrated to positively influence student attitudes toward educational programs.

In advertising, a similar positive response occurs when using humor. Humor increases both, the positive identification with the ad and the brand. Thus, it is appropriate to say that humor have a positive influence on establishing a positive identification with the product in the minds of consumers.

Humor and Persuasion

Unfortunately, humor does not appear to offer any advantage when the goal is persuasion. "Sternthal and Craig said that the distraction effect of humor may lead to persuasion. However, they note that the persuasive effect of humor is at best no greater than that of serious appeals" (Weinberger 1).

Some studies indicate that humor appears to be more persuasive for low involvement or feeling products like beer, wine, etc; than high involvement or thinking products like fashion clothes, perfume, etc. In this way, an advertiser must know what type of product being advertised and if it is appropriate to use humor for this product type.

Humor and Attention

Doubtless, humor attracts attention. "Studies have shown that 94% of advertising practitioners see humor as an effective way to gain attention" (Weinberger 2). Moreover, 55% of advertising research executives have no doubt that humor is superior to non-humor in gaining attention. This is because, people like the different, the new, and humor fulfills this purpose.

2. Humor Type

Humor can be divided into five humor types: Comic wit, sentimental humor, satire, sentimental comedy and full comedy.

Some studies indicate that significant differences exist in humor's effects between types. "For example, in measuring the effect of humor on overall attention, Speak found effects ranging from strongly positive for full comedy to

an essentially null effect for sentimental humor” (Weinberger 2).

On the other hand, when attention is the goal, some studies notice that all types of humor, most of the time, are effective. In source liking, creating a positive impression, analysis indicates that sentimental humor is associated with liking while the more aggressive satire is not.

All these studies indicate that there is no one type of humor that has a positive or negative impact on the advertising.

3. Placement

The type of media, the context in which an ad appears, and the degree of repetition for humorous ads are all topics that have been studied over the past twenty years.

The Weinberg and Guias study found that radio and TV were the media best suited to the use of humor, while print media were considered not well suited to using humor.

Some research shows that in “the United States the 30.6% of radio ads are intended to be humorous, while 24.4% of TV ads and just 9.90% of print ads have humorous intent” (Weinberger 2).

Actually, humor in the broadcast media seems to be more effective than humor used in print. It could be,

because in the broadcast media there are more action. Viewers can watch movements and hear sounds. While, in print media it can appreciate just figures.

However, the company and the advertisers will choose what media they going to choose, or what media will be more effective to advertised the product or service.

4. Audience Factors

"The majority of practitioners believe that humorous ads are best suited to a target audience composed of better-educated younger males" (Weinberger 2). Men appear to enjoy aggressive and sexual humor more than women do. This differs from women, who appear to have a better appreciation for nonsensical humor. However, these results are changing in a changing society.

"The gender, race, and age, other audience factors may impact the effectiveness of humor" (Weinberger 2). People of different cultures respond to humor differently, due to their habits of thought and mental attitudes. In addition, language impacts the effectiveness of humor when language the original language is removed jokes may not be translatable between cultures.

Other audience factor that may also affect humor is the degree of conservatism of the target audience. "Conservatism has been shown to be a predictor of response to humor" (Weinberger 3).

When some conservative people are exposed to humorous advertising, they judge the humor. If they think the ad's humor is too liberal, they will think it goes against their conservative thoughts.

These and other audience factors should be kept in mind in the design of humorous ads and future humor research.

5. Product Factors

The nature of the product or service is another important factor for consideration.

As mentioned before, there are two kind of product: the low involvement or feeling products, such as, snack foods, beer, wine, etc; and high involvement or feeling product, such as fashion clothes, perfume, etc.

Studies have demonstrated that humor appears to be an effective tactic for low involvement-feeling product. Humor does not produce credibility in the ad. For that reason, advertisers know that the use of humor in advertising for high involvement-feeling products may be harmful for these kinds of products. Humor would be more likely here to cause distrust about the

quality that the product has and consumers won't have trust when they want to buy these products.

In addition, "studies have shown humorous ads are more successful for existing products than for new products" (1). When people see an ad for the first time, they want to know about the product, its quality and benefits. But in many cases, humor does not allow showing these details.

C. The Impact of Humorous Commercials

Television has become an important part of the American scene. "According to A. C. Nielsen statistics, the average American watches slightly more than seven hours of TV a day" (Book 97). This indicates that television influences societies greatly.

Television combines sight, color, voices, music, movement, sound, and visual effects. With all this to offer, companies have an advantage to promote their commercials effectively on consumers. Advertising in television seems to be more real than print or radio media and people are more exposed to the advertising and can evaluate better it.

"In The United States there are about 18 major advertiser-supported cable networks and more than 100 multiple system cable operators. Almost one-third of

United State homes have subscription to the cable television systems"(Book 100).

At this time an estimated of 50,000 TV commercials are produced in the United States each year, but unfortunately not all these commercials have achieved their goal of capturing the attention of consumers.

The key to most successful commercials is creativity. For that reason, many businesses are using the creativity with humor as a means of advertising their products.

Dr. Steiner defines creativity in advertising as:

The ability to produce and implement new and better solutions to any kind of a problem--to the writing of the copy, to the problem of deciding where and when to advertise, to the problem of how to organize a company. (Book 2)

A good commercial should express the creative strategy in a highly credible manner. It should make the viewer feel good about the company that makes the product.

Today, Television commercials are getting funnier than ever and advertisers have discovered how important humor is in getting the attention of consumers.

The success of many commercials has been the utilization of feature animals, instead of company president and celebrities.

Bears, dogs, pigeons, cows, a veritable zooful of fauna occupied key roles in ten of the 25 top television campaigns last year, the first time in the survey's 25 year history that a single approach had so dominated the list. (Fortune, 1)

One example of this is the Anheuser Busch's ad. Its beer "Budweiser", produced by DDB Needham, has been represented by croaking frogs, ants and alligators.

Three cute frogs are sitting on lily pads, they appear to be croaking nonsense syllables. There is no hint of what's going on or who is sponsoring the ad. Toward the end, the order of the syllables change: Bud... Weis... Er... The camera pulls back to reveal a Budweiser neon sign, which confirms the sponsor. The ad runs again later in the game, so people can verify the three frogs are indeed endorsing the King of Beer. (Finnie 1)

This ad has impact on consumer, because it is funny. It attracts the attention on consumer, due to the use of animals, in this case frog. The success of this ad is due to viewers don't imagine to watch frogs in television who want to get a Budweiser. This is a creative ad, and it also has achieved its purpose effectively, attract the attention on consumers and make it memorable.

"They had impacts, says David Vadehra, president of Video Storyboard test, because of their sheer simplicity" (Finnie 2).

Anheuser Busch does not need to tell people about the product, because they are familiar with it. Anheuser Busch simply need to remind consumers, in a creativity and original way, that it is, in the words of the company' slogan, the King of Beers.

In addition, a recently produced Taco Bell ads can be appreciated. Their originality and creativity use of Chihuahua and the use of a foreign language has impacted all USA viewers.

"A bug-eyed little dog passes up treats and a possible fling with a trembling little female of the species, all in his search for Taco Bell" (Advertising Age, 8). Toward the end, the Chihuahua finally finds a guy who is sitting eating a taco. The dog looks at him deeply and suddenly says "Yo quiero Taco Bell".

This ad, as the Anheuser Bush' ad, has been positioned on consumers' minds in a positive way. Its little Chihuahua appeals to consumers. The use of foreign language makes viewers repeat the phrase "Yo quiero Taco Bell" over and over again making it memorable.

Also, this ad has positioned Taco Bell on the preference list of fast food. It also has brought a cool image, an accomplishment in itself.

Lee Clow, Chief creative officer of TBA Chiat and father of the Energizer bunny says: "Today we have to

entertain and not just sell, because if you try to sell directly and come off as boring or obnoxious, people are going to press the remote on you" (Robinson, 2).

As mentioned before, not all commercials are successful. An example of an unsuccessful ad is the Miller Lite ad.

This commercial has gone too far and has become impenetrable to consumers. "These ads feature strikingly strange episodes that include cowboys singing about urination, and an old barfly losing his dentures as he tries to flip nuts into his mouth, and the previously cited armpit scene" (Robinson 2).

Unlike the simple and accessible Budweiser spots, these ads are mixed and insular, and sometimes they associate the beer with repulsive images.

The Miller ad, along with those of Budweiser and Taco Bell are all examples of humor in advertising. The styles and types of impact of the humor in each have been different between them. In this way the use of humor has been useful for Anheuser and Bush and harmful for Miller Lite.

D. Keys elements that make an advertisement funny.

There are many elements that make an advertisement funny, such as surreal images, absurdity, talking

animals, witty use of language, and cartoons, among others.

These elements are applied according to the type of commercial or the type of product and service.

The purpose of these elements is to attract the attention of consumers and make the advertisement memorable. Also by using these elements, the advertiser creates a positive attitude toward the brand and toward the product.

It can be appreciated that many companies are using animals in their advertising to promote their products. Dogs, frogs, lizards and cats, are the most popular animals. Also, the use of foreign language in some advertisements can be valuable.

The native language of people in The United State of America is English. For that reason a foreign language actually has a massive impact on consumers. Also the combination of foreign language with animals create a great effect on consumers, as is the case of Taco Bell advertisement.

The language and the use of animals will be discussed later in the third chapter of this research.

E. Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this culminating project is to better understand what makes humor in television

advertising more or less effective on consumers' consciousness.

It will attempt to accomplish many of principles of advertising from up to date books and articles pertaining to the subject of the study. Also it will examine studies realized about the impact that big companies have had by using humor in advertising.

The project developed will be useful to advertisers who want incorporate these ideas into new humorous commercials and students who want to know deeply about this subject.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains all the sources of information researched for the culminating project, including books, articles in magazines, and newspapers.

Although, some of these sources of information were not completely related to the Impact of Humorous Creativity in Television Advertising, they contain useful information pertaining to the subject that supported effectively the findings of this study.

Books

The book, **Emotion in Advertising**, written by Stuart J. Agres, Julie A. Edell and Tony M. Subitsky has good information pertaining to the subject of study.

The principal topic of this book, which is related to the finding, discusses a variety of approaches to studying the relationship between emotion and advertising.

Is important to know how consumers process the brand information communicated in an advertising. Robert Zajonc concluded that "affect and cognition influence each other in numerous ways, and that both effects are important in understanding how people respond to stimuli in the world" (xiii).

Humor is a practice that many advertisers are using to put emotion in their advertising. "Those commercials in which humor predominated achieved above average recall without simultaneously achieving high persuasion scores" (15).

Another important topic that this book examines is some structural aspects of the advertisement and how they relate to emotional response. Also it examine how the emotional reactions of the advertising affects consumer behavior.

The book, **The language of Television Advertising**, discusses the language of American advertising, focusing for the most part on Television advertising.

The author Michael L. Geis provides an examination about the responsibilities that advertisers have in the creation of any advertising. He says in this study "Advertisers should be held responsible not only for what their advertisements assert and entail but also for what they imply"(xii).

The author discuss how consumers interpret claims employing such logically weak words as the quantifier "many"; modal verbs like "may", "can" and "could"; and the verb "help".

In addition this book examines the ability of young children to cope with television advertising.

Finally, an important point that this book discusses and that is related to the topic of study is how advertisers use language and how this usage is understood by consumers. It examines the special properties of television advertising and discusses the question of truth in advertising and the role of language in persuasion.

Advertising Management by David A. Aaker and John G. Myers, is a book for users and potential users, as well as for those who are preparing for a career in advertising. This book also has been used as the basis for training in at least two of the top ten advertising agencies in the world.

Advertising Management provides an approach to the management of advertising. It contains theories, concepts, and research findings from psychology to help understand and manage the process. It attempts to integrate three related disciplines such as behavioral science, marketing and advertising research, and management science.

Basically advertising is communication and persuasion. For that reason it is very important that advertisers know how consumers perceive the message the advertising contains.

"For the message to be important enough to process, the involved purchase decision needs to be important or interesting" (252).

This book attempts to thoroughly information processing and attitude change.

What happens to information once it gets through the perceptual filter? How is it processed? And how does it influence attitudes and behavior? These are topics the book discusses which are related to the subject of study.

Another source of information found was the book **Advertising-Creative communication with consumers** by Harry Walker Hepner.

This book offers to advertisers and students a better understanding about the benefits of creativity in advertising.

It is very important to understand that when advertising is effective the consumer is stimulated to consider the product when making the purchase. "He also may be conditioned by means of pleasant imagery in the advertisement to be favorably disposed toward the purchase of the product when the need for purchase arises in the future" (4).

This book attempt to carry out some recommendations on this topic.

The book **How to hold your audience with humor** by Gene Perret is a guide to discuss the importance of humor in the advertising message.

Some advertisers feel fear when using humor in their work, because they think it might be a harmful

element. However, laughter has much more positive value potential than negative.

The purpose of humor is to enhance the message and to get people to listen to it more attentively and remember it much longer. This book examines this issue and talks about how humor is used effectively to convey a message.

Humor is an excellent match between a speaker and his audience. The author of this book says: "A short joke, a quick laugh, can break the ice between you and the sea of strangers" (25).

At this time there are many advertisements that offend the audience and make viewers reject it and dislike the products that the companies are selling. This book discusses this point and tells what forms of humor are dangerous for the advertising.

Another important book that contained useful information was **Creating Effective TV Commercials** by Huntley Balwin.

The message a company wants to communicate in a commercial has to be transmitted in the best possible way, without distortion and avoiding misunderstanding. For that reason, it is important to know how a commercial is created and what the steps are that advertisers should follow.

This book describes the process of creating advertising ideas and translating them into a commercial.

Also, this book is designed for anyone who works in marketing and advertising and wants to better understand how commercials are created, how they work and why they take so long and cost so much to make.

The primary purpose of the book, **The Radio & Television Commercial** by Albert Book, Norman Cary and Stanley Tannenbaum, is to help develop effective radio and television advertising.

This book examines and analyzes the techniques of current radio and television commercials format. Also it offers to the makers and advertisers guides to produce and design effective commercials messages. Further, it helps to reduce the number of failures in the elaboration of commercials.

Another important topic that this book refers to and supports effectively is the need for creativity and an important part the success of any commercial.

Humor is a tactic that many companies are using. This book explores this usage, and shows how sometimes the use of humor can be harmful for commercials and, in the other hand, how it can be a good strategy for success.

Finally, the authors talk about what is a good commercial, how to create a commercial, how to develop

the idea, choosing the format and what structure, style and technique it is going to have.

Another book reviewed was **Contemporary Advertising** by William F. Arens.

The purpose of this book is to present advertising as it is actually practiced. It provides good examples of commercials and campaigns and provides examples of some of the best commercials in the business from the last three years.

Is important to know how commercials are produced and what is required be successful when applying one approach or another. This book contains a special section that describes how a print ad and TV commercial were produced from beginning to the end.

Magazine

The article called "**The Impact of Humor in Advertising**" from the magazine Journal of Advertising discusses how the use of humor has become a common practice in advertising at the present.

Marc G. Weinberger and Charles S. Guias, authors of this articles, say:

Humor is by no means a guarantee of better ads, but its effect can be enhanced with careful consideration of the objectives one seeks to achieve as well as the audience, situation, and type of humor. (1)

The preceding discussion make it clear that humor is a diverse concept that is affected by a variety of factors.

This article examines what communication goals are most likely to be achieved through the use of humor. What message factors are probably going to affect the outcome? It raises important questions that should be considered, For what audience is humor most appropriate? and what product factors suggest the use or non use of a humorous approach?

This article proposes several findings about the use of humor. They are:

1. Humor attracts attention.
2. Humor does not harm comprehension of the message.
3. Humor does not appear to offer an advantage over non-humor in increasing persuasion
4. Humor does not enhance source credibility of the message.
5. Humor enhances liking of the commercial.

In conclusion, the articles examine the importance to understand that humor can be appropriate and effective in some situations and not in others. Also this review tries to remove some of the doubts about the use of humor in advertising.

One of the most popular advertisements of 1995 was the advertising of Anheuser Busch.

The article **"Frogs - a breakthrough campaign for Anheuser and Busch"** from the St. Louis Business Journal magazine talk about this ad and the impact that it has had on consumers.

Budweiser advertisements have been one of the most attractive advertising in this year. Its use of ants, frogs and lizards has made consumers take a liking for the product and for the brand.

William Finnie, author of this article, "asked advertising and other marketing people for their thoughts on why "Frogs" was so effective and their responses are fascinating". (1)

The Anheuser Busch Frog ad was an excellent example of how advertising can affect the behavior and the consumer's purchasing.

The Article **"Creativity in advertising"** from the magazine Journal of Advertising talks about the importance of using creativity in advertising.

The author of this article, George M. Zinkhan says, "The key feature of successful advertising involves thinking up (dreaming up) new ways to present selling propositions" (1).

The original and unique selling proposition is well perceived by the viewer. Viewers like to see something that they never have seen before, something new and something that attracts their attention. For

that reason, creativity is crucial for marketing decisions and planning.

This article talks about creativity and other topics that are related to the subject of the project.

Another article found was **"Frogs, Bears, and Orgasms"** written by Edward A. Robin in Fortune Magazine.

This article explores how television commercials are getting sillier than ever and how important humor is in getting the attention of the consumers.

Also this article shows some examples of up to date commercials in the United States and how these companies have achieved an impact on consumers.

An important part of this article that relates to our main subject of humor is the utilization of featuring animals in advertising.

Today more companies are using animals in the commercials instead of company presidents and celebrities to gain the attention on consumers. "A veritable zooful of fauna occupied key roles in ten of the 25 top television campaigns last year" (1).

Advertisers know that, at this time, they have to entertain and not just sell.

The experts say: "Companies should constantly redefine their image in the marketplace to keep up with shifting consumer attitudes" (3).

This article was for most part, a great help to develop the subject of study.

The article "**Generation X on behalf of the VW Golf**" by Bob Garfield from Advertising Age talks about the best commercials for 1997.

This article shows that actually simplicity is much more attractive than 1,000 words of a copy.

To do a good humor commercial advertisers do not need to add a lot of dialogue to do it more effectively. This article examines a good example of this minimal verbage technique.

The approach can be appreciated in the VW Golf commercial in which there is no dialogue.

This is an expressive and understandable ad. Two guys are simply driving around in a new Golf and enjoying each others company.

Lance Jensen from Arnold Communications explain:

"These two guys, they maybe just graduated from college. They've got maybe nothing going on, probably partied pretty heavily the night before, and Sunday they are just enjoying each other's company, you know? It's that age when you have time to do nothing". (S1)

This ad has been successful, because it focused on a young man target and showed things that guys usually do in their free time.

The highest computer technology in this spot resides in the engine of the car being advertised.

Alan Pafenbach, Exec VP-Creative Director at Arnold Communications, Boston says: "It's better to say less and do less and let people fill in the blanks" (S1).

In this way, this article contained good information about the subject of study.

"Give me more commercials" is another article found. This article was from Forbes Magazine and written by Nina Munk.

When people watch television most go to the kitchen during commercial breaks while others do not.

This article talks about the opinion of Nina Munk, a woman who loves to stay in her seat during commercial breaks and watch good advertisements, especially the Volkswagen ad. She says: "I love this ad. I wonder if I'm mad. If I am, I have company"(1).

This article helped to develop the subject of study and an opinion what consumers think about humorous commercials.

The article "It's funny how humor can convey a serious message" from Nation's Restaurant News Magazine, shows three examples of companies that used humor in their advertising.

This article discusses how the use of humor can be harmful for a product if it is used exaggeratedly or it interferes with the message of the company.

This article discussed how Little Caesars concentrated too much on style and humor and not enough on the product.

Also in this article the Taco Time and Quizno's spots show that humor can convey a serious product message very effectively.

Another example of simplicity was found in the article called "**Taco Bell's odd little pooch**" from the Advertising Age. It shows how the ad' utilization of a little Chihuahua dog exemplifies the interest of the American people in seeing this kind of commercial. The creative element of using a foreign language helped reinforce the ad's unique and playful tone.

Finally, another source was "**The sponsored life, ad, TV and American culture**" by Leslie Savan.

This book is based on eight years of columns and articles that the author wrote about the role of advertising in American culture.

"About all Americans see approximately 100 TV commercials a day. And, about 16000 ads flicker across and individual's consciousness daily" (1).

Advertising affects every level of society. It affects consumer' behavior, purchases and attitudes.

For that reason is very important for marketers to know what the claims and needs of consumers so to make advertising more attractive to them.

This book brings some example of the most popular advertising ever seen and how these advertisements have become so popular.

The author also examines advertising credibility. He says: "Don't be shocked that ads lie, that is their job" (7).

All advertising tells lies. The viewers have to distinguish between the big lies and the little ones. However, Savan makes the important and provocative point that actually to buy a particular product is less important than buying into the world that makes the product seem desirable. This world of consumer needs and emotions is the world where advertising lives and flourishes.

Finally another topic that this book discusses is about women and how advertising still aims primarily at them.

The author does a good job of achieving its stated goals.

It provides a sense of how specific ad campaigns and marketing trends got to be the way they are, and lends some cumulative insight into the symbiotic relationship between modern consciousness and advertising.
(14)

In summary all the sources reviewed in this chapter contain information that helped to develop the subject of study.

Some of the sources agreed that commercials can an impact consumers and create as much a positive feeling about the product as a negative. For that reason, the creation of a commercial is a careful and deep work that needs a lot of research and study to make the advertisement successful in the marketplace and agreeable by consumers.

Chapter III

SELECTIVE REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF RESEARCH

Among all the sources of information reviewed, the following four sources were the most significant in helping me comets terms with the subject of study. These sources are: The books The language of television Advertising by Michael L. Geis, How to hold your audience with humor by Gene Perret, Emotion in Advertising by Stuart J. Agres, Julie A. Edell, and Tony M. Dubitsky and Creating Effective TV Commercial by Huntley Baldwin.

A. The Importance of Emotion in Television Advertising

All advertising should make a member of the audience want to use or buy the product or service. Also it should help to create brand loyalty and create resistance to other competitive companies in the marketplace. However, it is not actually happening in the marketplace. Some advertising does not attract consumer' attention and does not make consumers buy a product or service, because it does not contain what consumers want to hear or watch.

Actually the needs and attitudes of the consumers have changed. "Some years ago, we in the market and advertising community use to say: the consumer is

changing. And indeed we now use the term consumerism" (Agres 5).

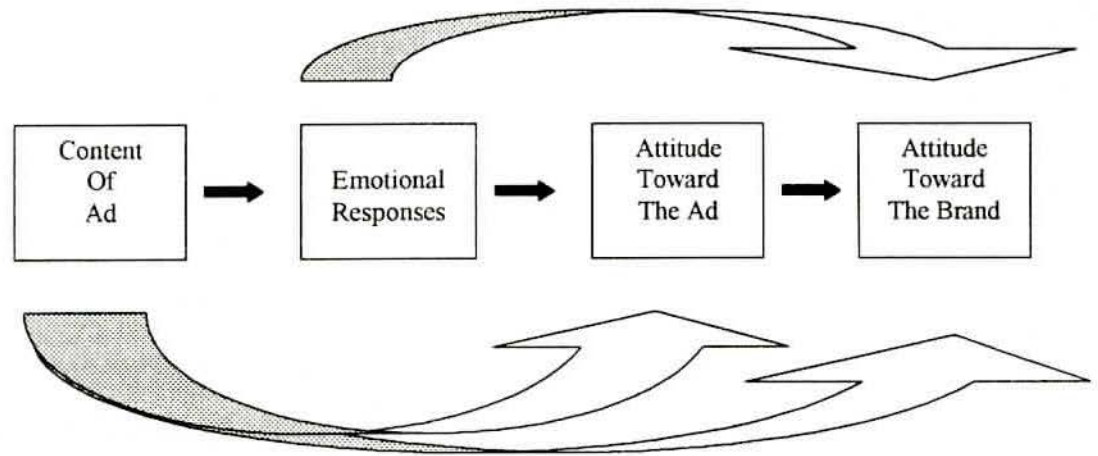
Also the industry has changed. Something consumers do now is very different from they did years before and the message itself is different too. For that reason, today the focus of most advertising is how consumers process the brand information conveyed in an advertisement.

This orientation leads to the question: What happens inside the viewer in response to the advertising that was just seen or heard?

Emotional response produced by the humor in advertising is an important topic that is discussed by many advertising agencies. They believe that emotions produced by the humor are extremely important in the persuasion process.

"Emotional response is recognized as the mediator of advertising effectiveness" See figure # 1.

Figure 1
Communication Model of Advertising Effectiveness



It can be appreciated in this model by Holbrook and Brata that emotional responses determine the effectiveness of the advertisement.

On the other hand, a recent study analyzed a data base of 168 thirty second commercials to ASI Market Research, a proprietary copy testing service. The commercials in this study were coded in four different types:

1. Humor predominating
2. Dynamic emotion (bringing the viewer from one emotional state to another by the end of the commercial).
3. Static emotional arousal (simple mood generating advertising).
4. No likely emotional response (Agres 14).

This study chose to look at the recall and persuasion score separately.

Both of the emotional response-generating categories (dynamic shift in emotion and

simple sustained mood) tended to generate suppressed recall scores (which require an association of the brand name to the execution, but only the simple mood category was unlikely to generate a high level of persuasion. (Agres 15)

This study shows that those commercials that used humor achieved above average recall and also high persuasion scores.

This study demonstrates that humor can be an excellent tool to attracts attention to the advertising and a positive attitude toward the brand.

1. Humor attracts the attention of the viewers.

There is no audience in the world that doesn't enjoy to laugh and the research made in this study has proved that humor attract the attention of viewers.

In a speech, when speakers are talking about a subject in particular, for two continuous hours, the audience becomes visibly wearier. But when a touch of humor is introduced, the audience is revitalized.

The same principle is applied in television advertising. Today there is infinity of advertising in television and some of theses advertising do not gain the attention of consumers.

It could be due to advertising made without a deep investigation about the real needs of the consumer. Such ads will not achieve the goal of attracting audience attention.

When advertising has a touch of humor, people usually talk about it, because the ads differ, and make the viewers laugh.

In this way, humor has a positive effect of attracting the attention of consumers.

1. Humor's audience

The purpose of humor is to get a laugh from the audience and attract their attention. If that is the purpose, then advertisers should find out what will make a particular audience laugh.

"It is pointless to tell a joke in Denver, be greeted with silence and confused stares, and then berate the listeners because that same joke worked last week in Seattle" (Perret 45).

Advertisers must be aware that there is only one target. They have to learn about the specific target that they want to reach. What is the target's needs and what do they want to hear? In this way, the humor in the advertising will work better.

B. How Advertisers talk to the viewers

"A determination of the parameters that govern what a speaker might say, how he or she might say it on any given occasion, and how a listener will interpret what is said on that occasion is an attainable goal"(Geis 15).

"There are two parameters that govern what a speaker might say are the context which conversants find themselves in and the relative social statuses of the conversants" (Geis 15).

To understand any particular speech behavior, one must appreciate four relevant aspects of the speech context: the physical context, the epistemic context, the linguistic context, and the social context.

"The epistemic context consists of the tangible aspects of context, including where the conversant are, what is present in that context, and what is going on in that context. **The epistemic context** consists of background knowledge shared by the conversant. **The linguistic context** consists of what has already been said prior to any speech behavior in question. **The social context** consists of the social occasion which brings the conversant together." (Geis 15)

To gain a better understanding of these concepts, Geis provides the following example.

A group of people is together in a formal dinner party (social context). While the conversant are discussing the presidential election (linguistic context) the person A is trying to reach the salt boat (physical context). Person A asks for the salt boat and person B recognize that people often add salt to their food at the table (epistemic context) and passes the salt boat to person A.

How conversants say what they say also reflects the social statuses of the conversant.

An Army sergeant wants a private to pick up a cigarette butt while both are on duty. In this social context, the sergeant enjoys a sufficient social advantage over the private to issue and order, perhaps: Pick up that butt, private. (Geis 16)

However when the sergeant and the private are off duty, the sergeant would be more likely to make a polite request, perhaps: Could you pick up that butt?

"How people talk to other can be factored into considerations of style (which reflects the social context) and register (which reflects the social relationships) among conversants" (Geis 16).

Adults employ a special way of talking to children (baby talk, register). Physicians also employ a way of talking to patients (the doctor-patient, register). Adults who occupy a particular vocation often develop specialized vocabularies specific to that vocation (that register).

Commercials can be divided into those commercials that talk directly to the viewers and those commercials in which characters on screen talk to each other. Actually, the commercials employ both types of elements.

Commercials that talk directly to the viewers talk in an impersonal way. In this type of commercial an anonymous or a celebrity talk and looking the viewer directly in the eye.

The tone and maturity of the wording has an important relation in what product is advertised, when it is advertised and how it is advertised. For example, douches are promoted on television, but only at times young children are not expected to watch.

1. Language and persuasion

The goal of any commercial advertising is to persuade consumers to buy products or service.

Persuasion is:

A process in which a source presents a message to a receiver via some communication channel in an attempt to effect either two behavioral changes: For the receiver to believe that the message is true, or for the receiver to act upon that message. (Geis 20)

There is another term that might be used to describe the means advertiser employ to sell product or services. It is manipulation.

In manipulation people do not evaluate the message. "There is no conscious evaluation by the receiver of the merits of the source's message" (Geis 21).

The message would be presented subliminally, where there is no conscious evaluation, or by the technique of repetition, where the success of the message doesn't depend on the receiver evaluation, but only on the receiver's remembering the name.

The are six parameters of the process of persuasion are:

1. Sources must present the message to the receiver.
2. Receiver must attend to the message.
3. Receiver must comprehend the message.
4. Receiver must yield the message.
5. Receiver must retain the message.
6. If the source wants to cause some reaction, receiver must act on the message.

The advertiser can achieve the objective of moving the consumer to buy a product or service simply by creating a positive feeling about the product.

Again, Anheuser Busch' advertisements are a good example of this. These ads have created a positive feeling about the product. Its humor with the use of frogs and lizards is agreeable and it makes consumers take a liking for the product.

It is very important that advertisers know that language plays an important role in the process of persuasion. It is, usually, the vehicle for conveying the message to consumers. It also is a tool that advertisers use to attract the attention of consumers.

In addition, language is very important in facilitating consumers' memory of the desirability of the product or service being promoted. And also, language is crucial in the reasoning process and how consumers come to yield to the advertiser's message.

The current Taco Bell advertising campaign provides excellent example to illustrate how the language can be persuasive in a consumer's consciousness.

Taco Bell persuades the public with their phrase "Yo quiero Taco Bell". This means "I want some Taco Bell". In this advertising campaign Taco Bell is persuading the consumer with the ad's originality is using a foreign language.

Responding to this ad, people repeat the phrase with others and persuade each other to buy tacos at Taco Bell.

2. Use of animals to persuade

At this time the use of animals in commercials has achieved a high level of acceptance by viewers.

How people react to ads that incorporate animals is a theme that many advertising agencies are taking into consideration.

The use of animals can be a tool that can attract the attention of the consumers and also it can make the advertising more agreeable and memorable.

A good example is the Sony-Handycam camcorders commercial. In this ad, Sony is introducing the new handycam camcorder, a camera that records in the dark. This humorous commercial shows the product's feature

when a person surprises a cat and a dog, hugging each other on a sofa.

This commercial attracts the viewer by, at the beginning, creating a suspenseful mini-drama. The viewer is intrigued by not knowing what is going to happen in the commercial, and relieved and entertained by an ending with a touch of humor.

By the utilization of animals many commercials have achieved their purpose: to attract attention and be memorable, like Anheuser Busch did it with their frogs and lizards.

C. Commercial Memorization Impact

A lot of commercials are occurring during the television programming. But not all of these commercials become memorable.

E. Thorson and M. Friestad (1989) and M. E. Goldberg and G. J. Gorn (1987) have shown that emotional commercials are more likely to be recalled than those that do not rely on emotional appeal.

"Commercials that create an emotional response are more likely to be recalled sooner, due to their stronger traces, than commercials that do not create an emotional response in the viewer" (Agres 257).

Many commercials are forgotten as a result of exposure to other commercials. For that reason the

goal of commercials is to create a trace that can be recalled for later processing.

"The ability to produce a strong memory trace in the viewer may depend on factors in addition to emotional impact" (Agres 257)

High situation involvement: This factor refers to the viewer paying more attention to the product's quality. Consumers want to know more about the product and about its quality, because usually it is an expensive product. For example, products such as cars, houses, and electronic devices. With such high-ticket items it can be appreciated that product claims are an important element; meanwhile the emotional response caused by humor is not as strong.

Low situation involvement: Different to high situation involvement, the low situation involvement pays more attention to source credibility. This pertains, for example, to food, toiletries, etc. In this type of ad emotional response is very strong element of trace.

1. Humor helps listeners retain what they hear or see.

"A speaker speaks to communicate and to convey information. He or She is passing on knowledge. But why bother lecturing is after the audience opens the banquet room doors for a coffee break, everything that was said floats off into the ether" (Perret 12).

Images are more easy to remember. This is because the mind seems to remember graphics much more readily than it does abstractions. Advertising in television is more effective because people can see images, movement and things that can be easier to remember.

"Most memory systems convert abstract ideas to familiar images, because they are impressed upon the mind more easily and are retained longer" (Perret 13).

The application of humor is an advantage, because it will help people remember the message, the brand or the company advertisers are conveying longer and better.

2. Misindexing

Indexing is when "the brain classifies messages according to their tentative meaning" (Balwin 10). Misindexing differs from indexing, as when a message about one thing (floor cleaners) gets classified as a message about another thing (children).

Overpower the product: This is a common type of misindexing. "The commercial or advertisement is so compelling in itself that it gets in the way of the message about the product it is trying to sell" (Balwin 10).

As commercials get more sophisticated and creative, more overpowering advertising appears in the marketplace: Typically viewers respond by loving the

commercials which keep their attention through the entire 60 seconds, but after this enjoyable experience, they forget the products.

Borrowed interest: This is another crime committed on consumers' attention that does not always achieve the ad's purpose. There are many things that are sure to get noticed by the viewers. For example women will notice babies and men will notice sexy girls. But will they really notice the product? "The thing that attracts attention should not lead viewers minds off into non-product related areas. It should lead them easily and naturally into the sales message" (Balwin 12).

Imitation: An imitation of an innovator's style of advertising risks being misindexed as just another message about the innovator's brand.

There are two dangers to watch for: First the danger of consciously copying the style of another advertiser and second, the danger of failing to clearly separate your brand from other brands that may be more firmly established in the consumer's mind. (Balwin 13)

3. Humor VS Serious Message

Humor is used well when it is used to convey effectively the message. Also it is used effectively to compel the viewer to remember the message that the advertisers want to communicate. As Perret puts it, "the humor shouldn't overpower the message, but the

impact of the message shouldn't rule out the use of humor".

Humor can be represented in various forms. It can be a word or words, a movement or a facial expression.

For this reason, in advertising, the message can be conveyed to the viewers in different ways. Just a simple movement of humor can be funny for the viewer and it could result in the message getting remembered longer.

It is important to know that "the audience is not only a collection of people's bodies. It's also a collection of people's minds" (Perret 23).

For a successful humorous advertisement, the advertiser has to know what his audience is thinking and what they want or need to hear, and to convey the message in a unique and funny way.

Actually there are advertising subjects for which humor is totally inappropriate, for example ads that advertise medicine products. Humor in this case can be harmful for the advertising message, because viewers want to hear or know about the quality of the product compared with other products on the market. Also in this case, a humorous approach can result in the product or service being perceived in a bad way or in a way in which the claim of quality is thought untrustworthy.

D. When to avoid Humor

The advertiser's goal is to get laughs from the viewers. Therefore, it is good to get them anyway he wants.

Humor is a tool that is used to convey a message effectively and comedy helps the advertisers do that. Also, using humor as a tool, advertisers can get people to listen better and to do that they retain the message longer.

All companies want to be liked or respected. People pay more attention if they like the company. "Humor is one of the tools than can get folks to like you" (123).

All people like to be around people that they like. "They don't even have to be friends, just interesting acquaintances" (123).

The same occurs in television advertising. People like to see advertising that entertains them and are comfortable with these advertisements. However, It can be appreciated that some television advertising, unfortunately, doesn't fulfill this purpose.

The advertiser must be aware of using humor if the message will be dull, superior or rude.

Dullness in the message is one mistake of the advertising. The message can be uninformative, but can't be uninteresting if it wants to be successful.

Superior humor is also a bad decision. The message can tell about the quality and advantage of the product in a funny way, but if it ridicule or embarrass other products, it can cause dislike to the advertising and also to the brand.

Finally, a message that is rude can be harmful for the advertising too. "Racial, ethnic, sexist and off-color gags fall into this category" (128).

If advertisers want the message to be dull, superior or rude, they must be very careful not to irritate listeners or their purpose is likely to be defeated. It is not common being successful with these techniques. For that reason they are not recommended. They have too much dangerous negative potential.

The use of insult humor will be discussed in the next section. Generally advertisers must know that humor is a tool to attract people, not to destroy the main objective of the message with humor that irritates the audience.

Once again, the advertiser must treat the viewers as old friends and they should have no problem.

1. How to use insult humor safely.

Insult humor is a form that can be effective, but has to be used appropriately. "Actually it is a warm and friendly form of humor when used properly" (185). If the advertiser wants to use this form, he has to use

it wisely. It is a powerful aid for an advertiser, but it can be very dangerous.

Gene Perret talks about how insult humor can be used. He lists three rules that, if followed, could lead to its being used safely.

1. Kid about things that are fabricated or obviously untrue.
2. Kid about things that the audience kids themselves about.
3. Kid about things that are fabricated or obviously untrue (185).

Kid about things that are fabricated or obviously untrue. Coming too close to a raw nerve is dangerous. It not only offends the victim, but it makes everyone else uncomfortable. "It's very difficult to keep the audience on your side after using insult humor with any venom in it" (186).

Kid about things the audience kids themselves about.

"When people kid themselves the hurt has long since been removed" (187). Applying insult humor in the ad recklessly knowing that it is dangerous, would be harmful not only for the product, but for the company.

Kid about things that are of no consequence. "Don't kid about things that people don't want to be kidded about" (189). Here is again the example of Miller Lite Advertising. This ad contains episodes that include

cowboys singing about urination and an old barfly losing his dentures when he tries to flip nuts into his mouth. This risks offending beer drinkers or people with dental problems, or anyone sympathetic to their feelings.

Advertisers have to be aware of these rules when they using insult humor, because a simple mistake could be harmful for the product that they want to sell.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

This chapter outlines the results of the study about the importance of humorous creativity in television advertising.

It will analyze current humorous commercials, some successful and some unsuccessful, presented on the most popular television networks. It evaluates the positive and negative impacts that they have had on consumers.

In addition, this chapter will discuss the appropriate use of humor in television advertising. It will explore where the advertiser could apply humor and where should not be used.

This study and its results can be used by advertisers for a better application of humor in commercials. Also, this study will help professors and students understand how consumers process the information conveyed in humorous advertising.

It is very important to stress that many times the failure of a product or service of any company is due to bad communication with consumers.

Advertising is a mass medium where consumers are made aware of the product (goods or services). For that reason, if the advertisement is poorly designed or does not address a consumers need, it simply will not succeed in the market.

Humor has been and will continue to be an excellent tool to convey the advertiser's message to consumers effectively. Many companies are using humorous approaches because they are very effective with consumers, but humor has to be used carefully and correctly. Humor can not be used to promote all products or services. It should be used only after careful considerations of a variety of factors.

The next section will explain when humor is effective, and when it can be harmful for the product or service, and for the company.

A. Appropriate use of humor in advertising activities

Humor can make advertisements more interesting and attract greater attention. This research examines the effect of humor in some situations. It explores when it can be harmful to the objectives of the advertisement and when humor works better.

1. About the product

The product or service of the company is the main point of the advertising. Advertising does not have reason to exist without this. For that reason, it is very important to advertise the product or service in the best way possible.

If the goal of the company is to generally call attention to viewers about existing products, humor can be an excellent tool to do it.

However, this study has proved that humor can not be used for all products or services. In high involvement products, such as fashion clothes, perfumes, medicine, etc, the use of humor reduces credibility.

Humor in this case, can make consumers laugh, but it does not mean that they will buy these kinds of products. Consumers pay more attention to the quality of the product or service.

On the other hand, the use of humor in low involvement products, such as snack foods, beers, etc, is more appropriate. Consumers pay more attention to substance of an ad when they are concerned with the credibility of the product.

In addition, this study has proved that humor is more effective with existing products, because consumers already are familiar with the product. For example, consumers want to know about its quality, its benefits and so on.

Introducing a new product in the market is a difficult challenge. Consumers need to know what benefits the new product has that distinguishes it from other brands on the market. Humor is not the best means to achieve this purpose, because it does not

produce credibility. Viewers want to know what benefits has the product advertised and how this product can satisfy their needs.

2. The message as a goal

Humor can be used as a tool to help better convey the message to consumers. For example, if the company just wants consumers to remember its products or services, the utilization of humor can be effective.

Humor can make consumers remember the product or service longer and better. If the consumer feels good about the ad, the good positive impression is associated with the product.

On the other hand, many considerations have to be reviewed when humor is going to be used in the message of the advertisement.

When a company wants consumers to know of a change made in the product, humor should not be applied. For example: When Pampers enhanced their diapers, they emphasized the change made to the diapers with an informative message. The intent was to inform consumers that Pampers was offering a better diaper.

If Pampers had used humor in the message to advertise their new diapers, it probably would not have been effective. Consumers would not have trusted the product's claims, because they had been made in a funny way rather than a serious way.

The style of the message is very important. Humor is used best to attract attention, not to gain consumers trust in the product or service.

Also if the message is serious and substantive the use of humor is not appropriate. For example: a commercial that gives advice to parents about how to talk with children about the use of drugs. In these kinds of messages, definitely, humor should not be used.

3. Gender Differences

It is very important to know what consumers think or how they respond in order to use humor appropriately.

This research has found that men and women react differently to humor. For example aggressive and sexual humor is more appealing to males than to females.

"Response based on gender may depend on which gender's characteristics are the butt of the joke or which gender's perspective is represented by the joke" (Perry, 25).

Also this study has found that women are encouraged from childhood to be more expressive of their emotions than men.

Many products are targeted heavily at a specific gender. For example, cars have been considered the

domain of men, while detergents traditionally have been targeted at women.

Different types of humor are going to have different effects depending on gender.

4. *Company's objectives*

It is very important that an advertiser knows what the objective of the company is when she or he designs a commercial.

Sometimes advertising is designed without carefully considering the objective that the company seeks. When this happens, they usually do not achieve their purpose.

If the objective of the company, for example, is to increase their sales, humor can be an excellent tool.

Humor creates an effect in the consumer when they are exposed to the advertising that is something like being momentarily hypnotized. In response, consumers remember the product or service when they are making a purchase and they tend to choose it instead of other brands on the market. If the advertising can get the prospect or customer to laugh, it can get them to buy.

In addition, if the objective of the company is to change its target or enlarge it, humor also can be used. Pepsi is a good example of this. Before, the company used to advertise Pepsi to a mature target

audience. Now, they focus on a younger target. "Generation Next" is their logo, and some humorous advertising approaches can be effective in reinforcing this message when targeting this new audience.

It is very important to state that this strategy does not work with a new product, but with a new target. Consumers know the product already, so advertisers just need to attract this new target. Adopting a funny means can achieve this end.

On the other hand, if the objective of the company is to be perceived as the leader in the market, humor won't be an effective strategy.

To be perceived as a leader in the market, the company has to convince consumers that the product that they are selling is the best product, one whose attributes exceed all other. In this case, humor unfortunately, does not produce the necessary credibility to achieve the desired end. For this reason, the use of humor is not appropriate when the objective is to be perceived as a leader.

5. Considerations about the price

Most of the time, companies do not show the prices of their product or service in television advertising. However, in those instances where the principal objective is to show the price of the product, it is appropriate to mention special pricing.

Humor can be used perfectly to advertise sales events. Humor won't harm the sale, neither the product. Rather, its impact can be to imprint the sale message in a positive, memorable manner.

Another example can be found in the advertising of fast food restaurants. Some, like Hardee's, emphasize the price in a funny way. Hardee's advertising attracts the attention of the consumer with the use of humor, and then emphasizes Hardee's low prices. In these two cases, the humor is used appropriately.

Evaluation of some current advertising presented in television

The ads discussed below can be viewed on the videotape included as Appendix A.

Advertisement # 1 Budweiser Beer

This advertisement is one of the best advertisements made. Budweiser has been positioned in the consumer's mind as the best beer on the market. For this reason, Anheuser Busch just has to tell consumers that Budweiser is still the best beer in the market.

It can be appreciate in this ad how Budweiser attracts consumers with its originality. A lizard talks contemptuously with two little frogs that just say Bud-WE-IS-ER.

This study has established that the utilization of animals is effective to attract the attention of consumers. People like to watch original advertising, particularly advertising that makes them laugh.

In the Budweiser ad, viewers don't expect to watch a lizard and frogs talking. Also they don't expect to watch frogs that wish to get a Budweiser or to chat its name. The element of surprise along with the humor helps this ad to achieve its purpose; consumers remember the product and create a positive attitude toward the brand.

Advertisement #2 Budweiser

This is another successful advertisement of Anheuser Busch. Two lizards are seen talking about the frogs and making fun of them.

This advertisement, as in the one just discussed, is successful in the market due to its originality. The viewer tends to be surprised and delighted by the animal's antics.

The ad impacts the consumer, because it is funny and makes viewers laugh. Its simple story, its perfect execution, and its humorous conclusion give it terrific "talk values", which is the decisive expression of entertainment.

Ads like this, prompt consumers to enlarge the entertainment by talking about it with others.

Advertisement # 3
Budlight

The theme in this ad shows what a person will do to keep his beer safe. The implication is that the product is so good, that he fears others may try any means to get it away from him. This funny advertisement tells consumers about the lengths that a person could go to get a Budlight.

This ad always keeps its focus on the main objective, the Budlight beer that the viewer is intended to remember. The advertiser does not overpower the advertisement with flashy or complex messages. It is simple and understandable.

Advertisement # 4
Budlight

A group of football players are pretending to be injured by the complaints of their coach. However, they are just waiting to drink a Budlight.

As with the previous advertisement, this spot makes viewers laugh about its history. It is very funny and original. It holds viewer interest from beginning to end.

Advertising # 5 Jeep

Even though this study has proved that humor is not usually recommendable for high involvement products, this advertisement is an exception to the rule.

This commercial does not lose its principal objective which is, show the power of a Jeep, driving on difficult roads.

The beginning of this ad describes the power and comfort of the vehicle with a serious message, and then ends with a touch of humor showing Superman getting out from the Jeep.

This ad uses humor without losing the serious message of the advertising. This commercial's humor makes consumers remember the product better and longer.

Advertisement # 6 Snapple Juice

This ad provides an example of an inappropriate use of humor. This incomprehensible ad shows strange episodes that include a policeman persecuting a thief, a girl with her mouth open in a dentist's dispensary, a mental health patient in a psychiatry center, and a wrestler applying a head lock to his opponent.

With these complex episodes, this ad tries to tell viewers about the energy that Snapple juice provides. However, with its particular features are so jarring,

obnoxious, and corny, that the simple positive association is not achieved.

This ad overpowers the advertisement in a silly way. It is too complex for some viewers. The powerful image of a girl with her mouth open is memorable, but disgusting or otherwise offensive. Thus, the association with the product is unlikely to be positive.

I believe this ad does not succeed in conveying the message effectively to consumers.

This study has demonstrated that overpowering or overly complex advertising can be harmful for the comprehension of the message and can create a negative attitude for consumers.

Advertisement # 7 **Snapple juice**

This is another Snapple advertisement where the use of humor is not effective.

The ad contains episodes that include a girl in a classroom and a teacher stealing the food of one of his students. Humor in this ad seems to be silly and it is irrelevant to the product.

If the purpose of this ad is to get the attention of young children, I believe this is not the best way to do it. Also this ad is not a good example for them, because they watch a teacher stealing food.

In addition this ad does not show any benefits of Snapple Juice or makes claims about its taste.

In conclusion, if an advertiser wants to use humor in any advertisement, he or she has to be sensitive to not overpowering the ad, and convey the message the simplest, most direct possible for the consumer to create a good attitude toward the brand.

Advertisement # 8
Sony Handicam

This ad has been successful in the market, because it has created a positive attitude toward the brand. The advertisement introduces the new Handicam recorder in a funny way.

This ad starts by showing how the new handican can record in the dark. In this part viewers watch the commercial without knowing what is going to happen. Finally, this ad ends with a touch of humor, with the Handicam catching a dog and a cat hugging each other.

This ad is memorable for consumers, because they do not expect to see a cat and a dog hugging each other. It is original. It is agreeable to consumers and makes them laugh.

Moreover, this ad never loses its main purpose, which is to show viewers the technology of the new camera. Its humor makes the advertisement funny and memorable to consumers.

Advertisement # 9
Puppy Chow

This is a cute humorous advertisement. It shows a strong little dog carrying a newspaper box when his owner tells him to go and look for the newspaper.

Viewers, when watching this commercial, create a positive attitude toward the brand. It is original and the little dog is relevant to the product advertised.

In addition, the computer effects used to create a newspaper box looks realistic. All these efforts make the advertising more attractive to viewers.

Finally, it allows consumers to process its message effectively and memorably for a possible future purchase.

Advertisement # 10
Lee Bunganeer Jeans

This ad shows a doll wearing Lee Bunganeer Jeans. This doll is taken away by a tornado. In the end of this commercial, the tornado destroyed the neighborhood and the doll is found safe wearing the Lee Bunganeer Jeans.

Unfortunately, this ad has not been successful in the market. It contains an absurd episode that tries to show viewers the strength of Lee Bunganeer Jeans.

Its story is silly and irrelevant to the product. Also viewers judge the ad, because they think its humor is not funny.

I believe that the creation of any advertisement has to be a carefully worked out. If the company wants its products to be successful in the market, they have to carefully choose a good advertising agency that can make the advertising effective.

Advertising a product is a difficult work. If it is not done correctly, it can be harmful to the product and subsequently can harm company profits.

Advertisement # 11
PETCO

This advertisement shows animals that want to enter to a place with their new PETCO card.

The purpose of this ad is to inform consumers about the new PETCO' card, in which you can save money on every purchase.

This ad achieves this purpose in a funny way and spots convey the message effectively. Viewers do not have any kind of misunderstanding in the message.

In addition, this ad relates well the use of animals with the product advertised. The humor in this ad, like the other successful humorous advertising, makes it more agreeable to consumers.

I believe this ad achieves its purpose and creates a positive attitude toward the company.

Advertising # 12
Hershey's

This is another successful advertisement. It shows two Hershey's kisses dancing a popular song from the 80's.

As mentioned before, the humor can be represented in various forms, such as movement, music, word or facial expression. In this case, the humor of this ad is represented by movements and music.

Two kisses are dancing in a funny way with a infectious music that attracts consumers when they hear it.

Viewers are attracted and entertained from the beginning until the end creating a positive attitude toward the brand.

In addition, the effects used in this advertisement, such as lights and movements, make it more original. Viewers do not expect to watch two little kisses dancing and the resulting surprise and delight is agreeable to them.

Advertising # 13
AUTO MART

This is a good example of badly designed advertisement.

This research has demonstrated that imitation, no matter in what proportion, can be harmful for the advertiser and for the product.

In this ad, AUTO MART informs viewers about its car sale. They offer an insta-credit to consumers who go to this place and want to buy a car.

However, they choose the worst way to do it. AUTO MART tries to promote its sale by imitating the popular Taco Bell's Advertisement.

AUTO MART can not compare its products with the products of Taco Bell. Taco Bell can promote their fast food with humor, because they are products that do not require a high monetary value decision.

When a prospect wants to buy a car, he or she wants to buy it in a friendly environment, because it is a high monetary value decision. I believe that AUTO MART could be made simply. It should be a serious advertisement that shows consumers the advantages they have by buying a car from this company.

The ad does not produce trust and leaves a negative impression on consumers.

With these examples, it can be appreciated how the use of humor can be a good tool to create a positive attitude toward the brand and toward the company, and get their attention. And on other hand, how it can be harmful for the advertisement and for its message.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

Many companies have achieved success and a positive identification with the brand by the use of humor in their advertising. But, also some companies have elicited a negative response from consumers by the improper use of humor.

If advertising does not satisfy the needs of consumers, a decrease in sales, and a negative identification with the brand can occur.

All the sources are in agreement that the use of humor in advertising can be an excellent tool to attract consumers and influence them to purchase the product advertised. For this reason, many companies are trying to implement this tool into their advertising campaign.

However, with all these efforts, there are many considerations that advertisers have to be aware of when they are designing a commercial to achieve success in the advertisement.

The needs of consumers comprise one of the most important aspects in advertising. Targeting these needs is necessary to develop effective advertising. Usually people seek happiness, safety and beauty. If the company can satisfy these basic aspects in a positive way, they will achieve success.

It is important to avoid any misunderstanding in consumers caused by a poorly designed advertisement. Every advertisement has to be addressed to consumers based on the objectives of the company. If the company does not follow its objective, it will not achieve the desired goal.

In addition, it is important to say that the product is the principal element of the advertisement.

The product is what the company is going to sell. For that reason, if the humor distracts from showing viewers the benefits of the product, consumers won't know about its advantages. In this way, the advertisement won't be successful.

It is recommended that the humor should not overpower the advertisement's core purpose. It must be applied to create a positive attitude in consumers.

Moreover, humor must be applied as a tool to make consumers remember the product (goods and services) longer, and create a positive linkage with consumers. Upon achieving this, companies will increase profits.

A further investigation about consumer behavior, particularly regarding the application of humor in the advertisements is strongly recommended for companies.

People have different backgrounds, feelings, attitudes and behaviors. For that reason, it is very important to know well the habits, attitudes, and needs

of the target audience that the advertising wants to attract.

For some people, humor could be responded to as funny and for others, the same ad could be taken as silly. The attitude associated with the former is positive, but with the latter, the attitude is negative. If the advertisement does not create a positive linkage between consumers and the brand, they will prefer to choose other products instead of the advertised one.

A. Humorous advertisements evaluated in the IV chapter

Chapter IV shows some current successful and unsuccessful advertisements presented in the television medium.

We are now in a position to appreciate the impact and effectiveness that some of these have had on consumers. For example, the Anheuser Busch, Budlight, Jeep, Sony Handicam, Puppy Chow, PETCO, and Hershey's advertisements all use humor well.

As mentioned before, these advertisements have had success, because they do not overpower the advertisement. They used the humor as a tool to convey the message better to consumers and created a positive attitude toward the brand.

In addition, they always keep their message objective present and effectively communicated these objectives.

Moreover, these advertisements used strategies to make the advertising more attractive and effective, such as the use of talking animals and surreal images. By these humorous tactics the advertisers complemented the advertisements' message and made them more agreeable to consumers.

On the other hand, we are also in a position to appreciate the reasons for unsuccessful advertisements, as the cases of Snapple juice, Lee Bunganeer Jean and AUTO MART.

Unfortunately, these advertisements were not well planned or implemented, consumers needs were not effectively addressed.

AUTO MART for example, preferred to imitate the successful Taco Bell advertisement, instead of using its own creativity. This created confusion rather than imprinting a clear message and association in many viewers.

Snapple Juice used strange episodes that resulted in a negative attitude by consumers, because consumers associate these juices with corny situations.

And Lee Bunganeer Jean used an episode that was irrelevant to the message.

The creation of advertising is not easy. It needs deep research to know the needs of consumers, among other aspects.

The following guidelines may be useful to make advertisements more effective on consumers:

1. Never overpower the advertisement with humor.
2. Keep the objectives of the company present.
3. Do not use irrelevant episodes.
4. Know the target market perfectly. Their needs and their gender.
5. Consider the characteristics of the product.
6. Do not imitate other companies' ads.
7. Do not use insult humor or humor that is offensive to morals of the people.

B. Limitations or weaknesses

I encountered some limitations in developing and elaborating this culmination project.

One of these limitations was the lack of sources about the theme of humor in television advertising. Most of the sources found were related to other aspects of humor; for example, humor in speech, humor in consumer behavior, etc.

I didn't find specific books that were related to the subject of study. However, the sources found were applied and adapted to the humor in television advertising satisfactorily.

To do this project I had to visit different public and university libraries. Some of these libraries had not enough sources relating to the subject of study. Also, some universities did not lend books to students of other universities. Thus, I was limited in my access to information.

Another limitation was the lack of time. I didn't have enough time to develop this culminating project more deeply. In my case, I had to finish this culminating project in a limited time, because I am a foreign student and I had to go back to my country. However, this project does contain useful information about humor in television advertising that can be used effectively for any other investigation.

C. Suggestions for future research

As a result of this investigation, I suggest the following topics that could be good themes for future research.

The impact of humor in Radio and Print media is a topic that can help companies to achieve advertising campaigns that are more effective and attractive to consumers.

I suggest these themes because it is still the case that some people do not watch television. One case could be due to people who work hard and they do not have time to watch television. Other case could be

people that do not watch too much television. Other television watchers simply mute the sound when commercials appear.

In these cases, the effort of the advertisement is lost.

Some people prefer listening to the radio rather than watching television. For example, when people go to their work or they are at home, they usually turn the radio on to be informed about the latest current events of the country, such as economy, international conflicts, movie reviews, cultural exhibits, sales of products or just to listen to music.

The same is true of the print media. Some people are more interested in reading newspapers and magazines rather than watching television or listening to radio.

In this way, depending of the service or product, the company evaluates what medium is more effective to attract consumers or what medium reaches more consumers.

Also if the company wants a combination of media, they can choose which are the best for the product.

I recommend extending this research and evaluating the following aspects in radio and print media that could be an additional help for advertisers, students, and professors.

1. A further investigation to find out which product is better suited for advertising in radio and print media.
2. An evaluation to conclude if humor is effective in radio and print media.
3. An evaluation that finds out what type of person is influenced by radio and print media.

These recommendations mentioned above, among others could be useful for a next research that would complement this thesis.

The print and radio media were not included in this research, because this thesis was addressed only to television medium.

D. Conclusion

This thesis was developed to give students, professors, and advertising professionals a complete understanding about the effect of humor in television advertising and its impact on consumers' consciousness.

A humorous advertisement has to be created according to the type of product being promoted and the message objectives of the company.

The use of humor is not recommended for all types of products (goods or services). In some products, it may be an excellent tool to convey the message effectively to consumers. However in other cases,

humor can be a harmful strategy for promoting the product advertised.

To create a positive attitude toward the brand is a process that involves many investigations. To satisfy the needs of consumers in a creative way can secure the success of the advertisement and the loyalty of those who watch them.

Today, those humorous commercials that are not prepared to give consumers good entertainment value, and at the same time, to satisfy their needs, must find out what is the key to success for their product in the world of the advertisement and apply this key to its commercials.

Appendix A

Videotape

Enclosed to this Culminating Project, is a videotape that contains current humorous commercials, some successful and some unsuccessful, presented in television medium.

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