
How Marketing And Advertising Make Us Feel That We Lack Something

Introduction:

Advertising and Marketing are effective techniques to promote brands, services, goods and ideas. We can find advertising in every form, from watching a movie, watching videos on YouTube, billboards (the infamous Times Square in New York), and even advertisements cover a section of newspapers and magazines. In short, we can say that today the world is under the influence of advertisements and almost everything is considered to be guided by advertisements.

We all are bombarded by the advertisements popping up everywhere and urging us to buy more. These advertisements have become a competition between the brands to sell more and increase consumerism. Millions of dollars are being spent on just marketing and advertising by the brands with a common goal of reaching the right people with right message.

Evolution of Advertising and marketing:

Advertising began as early as the Industrial Revolution, where it was emancipated as the form of commerce but later it came down to mass production and this marked the beginning of mass marketing. "The mid-19th century to the beginning of the world war II saw the formalization of client, agency and media structures" (McDonald & Scott 2007, p.17) Today, modern times have seen the disintegration of media and agencies by consumers and its uses in advertising.

Advertisements at first were only meant to be showcased on televisions, radios and newspapers but now the medium to marketing and advertising has increased. It seems like with every advancement one started the replacing the other for example, Internet replaced newspapers or television replaced radio but instead every new media is actually a forerunner of the previous one in advancing technology and keeping up with the pace of life. Advertising platforms such as televisions and social media set "standards" for the people. Technology such as virtual and augmented reality, emphasise people to buy and make them feel that they can enjoy an experience by just spending some money and they don't even require to move from their place.

Why does good advertising works?

Advertisements often leave long-lasting impressions. (Hollis, 2011) suggests that "Advertisements are not often meant to buy things in an instant. Instead it creates positive memories and feelings that influence our behaviour overtime to encourage us to buy things at later date."

People often see these advertisements and are intrigued by the positive message. These advertisements are carefully perceiving us to feel that we are lacking something. They constantly remind you how your life would change if you buy a certain experience or product, service. They always make you feel that you "need" something rather than a "want". Marketers

often learn to target audience according to their needs and wants so that they plan and strategies their advertisements according to the audiences. Once a customer recognizes a need to buy, advertisers then try to show the problem to their audiences and then convey the message that how their brand would solve the problems that meets the need of the audience through emotional satisfaction or functional need. (Kokemuller 2014)

The functional need is identified when you buy soap to wash as it serves the function of being hygienic and clean. Whereas emotional satisfaction is when one participates to satisfy the cravings of entertainment, luxury, pleasure and social involvement. Many marketers try to use this emotional implication to perceive the buyers according to their “need” or “want”. Two buyers might shop for a car in the same showroom, but one would have a functional need to travel from his workplace to home whereas the other one would want a high-end luxury car to fulfill his emotional satisfaction for status in the society.

Placebo Effect:

Marketers are using advertisements that have a placebo effect on the customers. Placebo effect can be defined as how people are convinced by a certain product or experience, they have received and how one’s feeling and behaviour changes after that. This is based on the notion rather than the experience. This placebo effect is used by business owners to influence buyers and analyse their purchasing behaviour.

The placebo effect works best when the advertisements convince people to purchase the products they need or want. It is all about managing expectations. Many companies try to sell their products in the amount of 9.99\$ instead of 10\$ that is because consumers have a limit to spend on certain products and the strategy of not putting a whole number on a price or paying “half price on the original price” makes people believe that they are spending less and gaining more. This marketing strategy of paying less for more deceives consumers to spend more than they originally intended to. Consumers always crave for the experience they receive and that is the concept of how Placebo effect takes place.

Influence of Social Media on Marketing and Advertisements:

Radios, televisions and now Social Media have a capacity to reach a large number of audiences in a very short time. In this Digital Age, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are the new ways that marketers are using to influence the consumers. Consumers can now customize their pages according to their needs and marketers use this data to show similar services and products which might be better or cheaper than what they were originally looking for.

The best example to understand the influence social media has in decision making of the consumers was the USA Presidential Election in 2008. In the history of Elections, it was the first time ever that President Barack Obama used Social Media as a platform to campaign which became a huge success and played a major role in winning the elections. He not only actively used his Twitter and Facebook account but also made use of the data he received from email addresses that helped him to win the electorate. (Wright et al. 2010, p.11) The rise of social media had a huge impact on the election and the trend is being continued. This social media campaign is now being used in all electorate all around the world. Digital media now has become so popular that advertising has become so easy. Social media platforms like Facebook,

Twitter and Instagram has made advertising very effective and it reaches out to a large number of audiences which is easily accessible on fingertips.

Digital media in general also includes the movies and pop culture which we see in our everyday lives that reflects and represents the consumer goods in a positive light. We are fascinated and feel a sense of lacking at the same time. These larger-than-life movies and television advertisements showcase a relationship between individual differences and a standard that has been set to be achieved. Consumers are often attracted when a positive message is passed through such advertisements and want to feel that same way

Because of these Social media platforms, it is very easy to start a trend and make consumers believe in it. These trends about the goods or services makes consumers believe that they need to invest in them to keep up with the market and chase the standards that marketers have created. The cycle of 'buying the next big thing' never stops. Fast fashion, Fast media, fast marketing, fast goods are all ways to make people to invest in more products or they would "fall" behind the race. This "throw away" culture has made consumers to adapt to a new product and abandon them as quickly as possible. The feeling that consumers are lacking something is making them live in nostalgia.

Strategies and Techniques Marketers use:

In the reference image above, it can be seen how Chevrolet is advertising and calling out a particular segment of people to purchase and how they are subtly creating a trend to purchase the cars 'to fit in the crowd'. The basic idea of creating a comparison and competition amongst the automobile industry worked for Chevrolet.

Due to this Digital era, it has become very easy to understand the trend and get to know about consumer interests. There are different Strategies that are being used in the market without our knowledge and yet we are falling into the trap. Some Advertisements use catchy phrases or jingles that get stuck into our mind for ages, some catchy slogans or some brands which use our favourite famous celebrities to endorse their products, hidden with a meaning of how advertisements are just a way of showing that your life can be better or upgraded by using these products.

Why do we remember the logos of iconic brands such as Pepsi, Nike or McDonalds and why do we associate them with the quality of products they have established? The reason behind this is Globalisation. Many brands have taken continuous efforts and developed strategies to understand the customers' needs by adding value to them.

"In order to create a successful marketing plan, managers must configure the varying aspects of the marketing mix and identify precise market segmentation to understand different patterns of customer purchasing behaviour." (Amelia & Raina, 2018)

One such example is of the German-based Automobile Industry, BMW. BMW implemented a marketing strategy that targets segments in the society by selling different cars according to the socio-economic-financial status of the people. They initiated the division of the markets by understanding the relationship between purchasing tendency of customers and selling the cars to maximise sale to that segment. "Responding sensitively to unique values and purchasing

behaviour enabled BMW to transcend intended performance” (Amelia & Raina, 2018)

BMW have always targeted consumers who can spend money on luxury cars and these are the consumers who “want” a car rather than “need” one. These cars have been selling well to premium consumers who can afford luxury, performance and quality as the cars itself has the same attributes.

BMW not only influences the premium crowd to purchase but it also ignites a conversation where people see BMW as a benchmark for luxury cars that they want in their life which would also become a part of their social status. BMW very strategically advertises their cars using an emotional approach where they can see people enjoying a premium luxury. This emotional appeal that comes from these advertisements affects the purchasing tendency of the consumers. This global marketing strategy have helped the company to be considered one of the most successful automobile industries, and it has strategically maintained that reputation all along these years.

“BMW’s global marketing strategy bridging premium and emotional marketing have compensated the company with superior economic performance and a strong leadership position in the automobile industry.” (Amelia & Raina, 2018)

Being part of the “elite” club is an experience and people want to be a part of it. BMW gives consumers a chance to be exclusive, providing membership, gaining loyalty points so that they upgrade their cars to only BMW. BMW customers don’t just pay for the cars but also pays for the premium experience they receive.

Not only the marketers target the socio- economic segment but also use the emotional approach towards culturally bound products. They tend to emotionally appeal to the customers by showing how “culturally appropriate” these services or products are, and influence you to buy these products.

Conclusion:

The question that comes into mind is where does this stop? What does the future look like for advertising and marketing?

Marketers have enjoyed analysing customer behaviour making them spend on things they don’t need and this has excited the marketing profession. Ethics in marketing is also a question as the constant bombardment of advertisements through various medium has resulted in over-consumption. Marketing has made retail therapy and impulse shopping so commercialized that the thin line between buying goods for pleasure and buying goods for a functional need seems to be vanishing. Continuous comparisons and competitions have made one to question their self, a phenomenon FOMO- fear of missing out has kept on increasing, purchasing products that are better or expensive than your circle of friends and making you stand out, has given rise to globalisation of consumerism.

Today, owning a possession like a luxury car, house, luxury bags and shoes has become equivalent to one’s personality and appearance. The world today has become more materialistic and it wouldn’t be wrong if we blame advertisements to be a part of it.

One needs to understand that we do not need a particular product or service at the right time to make us feel satisfied. Reputation is not acquired from the number of luxury cars we own or number of exotic vacations we go to. We need to do better by not comparing our worth in terms of possessions but we need to be better to ourselves by educating, spending time with family and friends, taking care of each other as human beings and taking care of the planet.

Technology will only advance from now, there is no stopping. There would be more ways to influence consumers, more marketing gimmicks to be introduced and more trends to follow but one needs to understand that purchasing products or services is not a solution and one should abide by that.

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