



Bonehead Advertising Ploys

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We are bombarded with advertising in every media segment of our lives. This article will focus on television advertising. It will describe some of the annoying things that are on the air every day that we sometimes fail to recognize. There should be a direct relationship between advertisements and trust in the product being promoted. Unfortunately, in many cases the correlation is negative.

Even though I watch less than 2 hours of TV a day (mostly news), there is still way too much advertising garbage parading before my eyes and ears. I have to use some of the peptic-soothing preparations they espouse - maybe that's their ploy. The advertisements make you sick, then they suggest a remedy. Here are just a few of the ridiculous things I observed today.

1. "I am a non-attorney spokesperson." What idiot thought up this opening remark? If the purpose of an advertisement is to encourage us to purchase the product or service being touted, does it make any sense to start out any commercial with these words? Can the advertising morons not see that doing this will reduce our trust in the service, thus making us much less likely for us to buy?
2. The fine print. If an advertisement has those familiar bands of fine print that are impossible to read, how does that reflect on our perception of the product being sold? Are we actually supposed to read the material in the 3 seconds provided? Of course not! Then why have it there at all? It only serves to reduce our trust in the product. The not-too-subconscious message is "what are they hiding"?
3. Stupid claims. One of my favorites is for an automobile insurance coverage. The idiot on the screen seems surprised when the announcer says, "...and we will not drop you after an accident." He says, "Seriously, you won't drop me"? Like Wow! Isn't that terrific? If that statement convinces you that things will be the same after an accident, I have a bridge I want to sell you. Yes, they will not drop you, they will just triple your premiums and soak you till you are forced to drop them.
4. Disgusting content. When the Phlegm Man is expelled out of the lungs after taking some decongestant, it is pretty disgusting. So why do they have to show that commercial during the lunch or dinner hour. Some of us are eating here! The same goes for Digger the Dermatophyte who peels back the nail of your big toe to crawl under it. That one always gives me the creeps.
5. Totally misleading. When the life insurance man says "...and your rate will never go up due to age," doesn't that automatically imply that it will go up for some other reason, like maybe they needed more profit that year.

6. Free oil changes for life. Wow, is that ever a bonanza? No! Those of us who fell for that line ended up spending huge sums of money for maintenance that was not needed in the end. My daughter was nearly killed when they pumped up the pressure in her tires to such a high level that she had a blowout just a few weeks before they would have had to replace her worn-out tires for free. Because the tire blew, I had to pay for the replacement and, of course, had to buy two since it is never recommended to buy just one tire. I know most people who have tried the free oil changes have found that they are the opposite of free.
7. Call this number right now and we will send you your very own free information kit. Come on folks, it is called an advertisement! Who falls for this stuff?
8. “But wait... if you order in the next 10 minutes we will throw in a second ceramic knife for free - just pay shipping and handling.” Is there a person on earth who believes there are operators standing by with stop watches?

These were just the examples from the ads during my lunch break today. How can I have much respect for the Madison Avenue simpletons? Advertisements should bring about an increase in the level of trust we have in a product or service, not the opposite.

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