

Persuasion Techniques in Advertising

Buzz words. Words that are popular with consumers and typically have a positive, feel good feeling. For example, phrases like pure, natural, people you can trust, smart money and old fashioned values are used in ads.

Regular folks. People just like you buy it, so why don't you? For example, a man with strong features and a weather-beaten face says he eats eggs every day.

Technical facts and words. Information that provides detailed, impressive-sounding scientific or technical information. For example, computer and camera ads will refer to specifications, such as RAM and 1152 x 864 megapixel resolution.

Appeal to experts. Someone with authority tells you to buy it. For example, Three out of five doctors recommend our brand of cough medicine. The advertisers often do not tell how many or few doctors were contacted, whether the doctors are qualified to judge the product and whether the doctors were paid to endorse the product.

Positive symbols. These ads associate a positive symbol with the product. For example, if the ad has a Canadian flag waving in the background, you might think buying the product would be the Canadian thing to do or that a beautiful natural setting means that using this product is natural.

Famous folks. Someone you respect or like says the product is good. For example, Tiger Woods or Alicia Keys uses this blue soap.

Bandwagon. Everybody is buying it. If you do not, you will be left out. For example, showing thousands of people heading towards a place or buying a product.

Snob appeal. These ads appeal to your desire for praise or prestige. Advertisers try to convince you their product is a status symbol. For example, the ad for an insurance company shows people sailing in a beautiful yacht behind the company's logo.

Glittering generality. Information in these ads is so general it sounds like a fact, but it is not. For example, Many people believe . . . How many is many? Nine out of 10 individuals we asked preferred . . . What the ad might fail to tell you is who those 10 people are and what question they were asked and whether they were paid to give an answer.

Fear. These ads convince you to buy the product by trying to scare you or make you believe that something bad will happen if you do not. For example, If you do not buy our product now, you will never be able to afford it later.

Implicit criticism of competitors. These ads sell a product by making fun of or ridiculing the competition. For example, years ago two colours of salmon were canned—pink and red. A company that sold pink salmon advertised that “Our salmon is guaranteed not to turn red in the can.”

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