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Unrealistic Advertising

Advertisements are all around the world. Jean Kilbourne says “We cannot escape it. Unless, of course, we keep our children home from school and blindfold them whenever they are outside of the house” (113). A vast majority of consumers do not even realize half of the advertisements around them. For example wearing a brand name shirt with a big logo on the front is one way companies advertise in an unconventional way and make money off of the advertisement. Unlike the traditional advertisement such as televisions, newspapers or magazines; companies are also placing their advertisements on the sides of vehicles and buildings to draw attention to their product. Driving down a heavily traveled road or city street you will most likely see several vehicles and buildings plastered in different slogans and advertisements trying to promote the company’s product. Whether consumers believe that advertisements affect them or not is their own judgment, but little do they know, customers are more than likely persuaded by the ads if not immediately, than later on in the future.

There are many advertisements, when analyzed closely, which are misleading. This advertisement I chose to analyze for a Sogo Dream Wave Messaging Chair creates a serene environment amidst the chaotic world that is going on all around us. Everybody knows what it feels like to be in over your heads, wanting to escape everything that is going on around you. This advertisement promotes just that. At first glance, this advertisement is showing a man relaxing peacefully in a massaging chair. There are many nonsensical concepts in this ad when you look at it closer. Unbeknownst to consumers, deceitful ads are everywhere whether they realize it or not. With the society we live in, and the fast pace commotion going on around us, people rely on products such as the Sogo Dream Wave Messaging Chair for relaxation. This advertisement of the chair uses impractical statements and imagery that give consumers unrealistic expectations of the product.

The advertisement displays a blurred city street behind a massaging chair. I believe the blurriness portrays the busy life of the people today. The chair is positioned directly in the front of a chaotic street. The man in the chair is sleeping peacefully conveying that when in the chair everything happening around him is a blur, and simply does not matter.

After becoming knowledgeable to all of the advertisers tricks, I was able to pick out many shallow meanings in this advertisement. Short fragments containing several weasel words help promote the chair. Before reading William Lutz’s essay, I was oblivious to all the tricks that advertisers have. William Lutz stated “Advertisers use weasel words to appear to be making a claim for a product when in fact they are making no claim at all” (161). For example one declarative fragment states “relieves muscle and back pain.” Little do the consumers know “relieve” is a perfect example of a weasel word. People think that the word relieves means to stop the pain, little do they know, relieves meaning featured in this advertisement is far from the word stop. Another phrase that jumped out at me is “promotes relaxation and well-being.” Just because the ad says it may promote relaxation, it does not necessarily mean that by purchasing this chair you are guaranteed relaxation.

Advertisers tell the consumers what they want to hear. You do not see on the top of an advertisement, in bold lettering, a negative comment about the product. Promoters only publicize the potential positives of their item. Kilbourne says “Much of the information that we need from the media in order to make informed choices in our lives is distorted or deleted on behalf of corporate sponsors” (127). Sponsors will do whatever it takes for their product to be successful on the market.

This advertisement is explicit in what it promotes. It promotes relaxation, and relieves muscle pain. Another fragment on the advertisement is “a true, in-home shiatsu massage experience.” I personally have never sat in this Songo Dream Wave chair but I have sat in a messaging chair and have gotten a shiatsu massage. From my experience a messaging chair does not perform the same as an actual hands on massage. Although one person’s opinion may say that the massage chair feels like a true in-home shiatsu massage, many others would probably not agree with that statement. Opinions are what make up many of the advertisements we see, but yet we are naive enough to think that what one person believes must apply to everyone.

Advertisers bold and enlarge letters to catch the reader’s attention. This advertisement uses the catchy phrase “No Matter What The World Throws at You, FIND YOUR QUIET PLACE.” This phrase immediately intrigues the reader into looking at the ad. I mean seriously, who doesn’t want to find their quiet place? In all reality though, sitting in some massaging chair will not block out everything that is going on around you. It may help you relax some but, you are not going to go into your happy place just by sitting in a chair.

This Advertisement can be found in the Sky Mall Magazine. The INADA Songo Dream Wave Messaging Chair ad may appeal to those of a wealthy class. Even though people of all age, gender, and social class may find enjoyment looking through the Sky Mall Magazine while on their flight, more likely than not this ad for a $7,999 chair would appeal to upper class adults. Being in a magazine placed in the back of thousands of airplane seats makes this advertisement noticed by people across the world and is possibly seen several times to those that fly frequently. Those that travel frequently are probably in need of something relaxing after dealing with the commotion in airports. Also, while having nothing better to do while traveling on an airplane, customers have a plethora of time to look thoroughly through the advertisements in the Sky Mall Magazine. Having flown many times, I am aware of the countless times I flip through the Sky Mall Magazine trying to pass the time.

People of today get so wrapped up in their daily live they forget to pay attention to everything around them. A huge problem with Americans today is that we are so stubborn yet so gullible. How often do we pay attention to the real meaning behind the ads? Advertisements cause consumers to fantasize that products will in some way alter their lives. Whether it is a certain brand that can increase your popularity status or in the case of the advertisement I chose, a chair which can apparently liberate you from all your worries. Consumers are oblivious to all of the hidden meanings that many advertisers use. As a result of advertiser’s tricks, consumers seem to believe that our decisions are not hindered by advertisements. As Jean Kilbourne stated “Advertisers want us to believe that we are not influenced by ads” (118) People do not like being told what to do, therefore, advertises use jingles or other slogans that will stick with you and later persuade you to purchase their product.

In the end, numerous customers are disappointed in their purchase because their expectations were much higher. Many ads are deceiving and the consumers are just foolish enough to look past all of the advertisers’ hoaxes. Whether it is a messaging chair, like the example I used, or a model that appears to be absolutely flawless because she used a certain product, when in all actuality she was edited to perfection. Advertisers have their ways of making sure that their product will sell. This is a reason why society needs to be aware of all of the tricks advertisers use to lure you into purchasing their products. Before purchasing a product, think to yourself, can this merchandise really do what the advertisement claims?

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