Consumer Appeal Essay, Research Paper

CONSUMER APPEAL

Advertisers of today have strategically combined commercials and television shows in order to sell products. Gloria Steinem discusses a similar idea in her article, “Sex, Lies, and Advertising.” She repeatedly demonstrates how advertisements, particularly in magazines, are complementary to the articles around them. In the same manner, so are commercials to television programs. They are both aimed at the same groups or types of people, such as sex, age, gender, etc.

Many times, the time of day or day of the week a show is aired has a lot to do with the types of viewers the program will attract. Thus, the types of commercials will also differ. On Saturday nights at 10:00 p.m., the program “Profiler” airs, a mystery-thriller series. The story line is of a young, beautiful white female trying to capture a serial killer/stalker, who killed her husband and continues to stalk her. The show is very detail oriented, in the sense that the viewers need to pay close attention to what is going on to be able to follow along with the mystery. It tends to “suck you in”, so to say, because it causes the viewers to become involved and engrossed in solving the mystery.

The assumed target of this series is mainly adults over the age of twenty-five, with the exceptions of those viewers that do not watch it at the time it actually airs, but they tape it to watch later. Because of the time it airs, the viewers are very select: children under the age of ten are presumably in bed, junior and senior high schoolers are out, and anyone out of high school and under the age of twenty-five is either out or working. This leaves a majority of the older crowds watching the program.

According to Gloria Steinem, the target of the television show will be the same as that of the commercials. This proved to be true with “Profiler” and its commercials. There were a total of twenty commercials aired. They included and Allstate Insurance ad, a number of car dealers and promotions, chewing gum, beauty products, medicine, food, and television satellites. Most of them had female voice-overs with predominantly white actors and/or actresses. The actors and/or actresses were also good-looking, thin, and of high- to medium-status.

In Steinem’s terms, and as mentioned by Cayo Gamber, an advertisement is generally linked to the article, or in this case, the program. The show is seen as a “complementary copy” for the commercials; because it included certain accessories to a person in the same life-style as the characters in the program. The cars advertisements, in particular, were at times found in the show. However, the other products weren’t really enforced by the program. Above all, the program did help maintain the intended target interested and tuned in to that specific channel.

The benefit of airing commercials at that specific time of “Profiler” is great. It airs at a time that is not too late and, therefore the commercials will not be forgotten. Many times, specifically the Wrigley’s Winterfresh , the Maxwell House, and the Allstate Insurance, the commercials were loud and peppy. The Wrigley’s Winterfresh commercial actually shows the product, the pack of gum even has the price on it. It is basically about many different people that are having so much fun’, while chewing this gum. The music and idea of so much fun, entices the viewer to want to buy it. The setting of the Maxwell House is what catches the attention of the viewer. The commercial shows a family having fun in the beautiful country, in the background, there is a fun-loving country song playing. These were just a few of the examples of the commercials with catchy phrases and loud music.

On the other hand, some of the commercials were a bit more comical, such as the Lay’s Baked Potato Chips. This commercials shows Miss Piggy and two super models eating Lay’s Baked Potato Chips at a classy restaurant. Then, Antonio Sabato, Jr. (a good-looking actor) walks in and sweeps Miss Piggy off of her feet. He then tries to eat some of her chips. Appalled, Miss Piggy sends him flying due to his assumption that he could eat her chips.

Changing to somewhat dull and boring commercials were the advertisements for Lady Speed Stick, Oil of Olay Wrinkle Cream, Excellence Cream hair color, and the new long distance saver 10-321. The reason these commercial may have not been as interesting, is because it was most probably directed to an older crowd. That is to say, those that need wrinkle cream, hair color to cover grays, or a new long distance savings plan. These commercials, in comparison to the others analyzed, were not as interesting or lively.

In the words of Janelle Costa,”The commercials sometimes determine whether or not I actually want to finish watching a program. If the commercials are boring, I’ll change the channels.” This is the same perspective most say they take. So, watching a program soon turns into a fight or struggle between the channel with a moderately good show, that has entertaining commercials. Do you find yourself turning away from a program because of its lack of good commercials?

IN TEXT

1. Steinem, Gloria: Sex, Lies, and Advertising; Course Packet, English 11, George Washington University, 1997.