

Who We Are

I Buy; Therefore I Am

Mass Media Merchandizing and
How It Influences What We Think,
What We Do, and Who We Are



You may not know it and
you may not want to
admit it, but more and more,
we are products of the
products we buy. More
accurately, of the products
advertisers want us to buy!

Money, Money, Money

Sell, Sell, Sell – Buy, Buy, Buy



From Buffy to the Hulk, one of today's cleverest advertising campaigns is the "got milk" campaign funded by America's milk processors and dairy farmers. The advertising agency had a tough job: make milk hip. Do you think they were successful? Go to <http://www.whymilk.com> to see more ways the agency markets milk.

According to business analysts, the U.S.-Canada youth market is worth around \$500 billion (US). This means that youth between the ages of 15 and 24 spend this much money on goods and services annually. That is high incentive to figure out what will get young people to spend their money.

In Your Face, All the Time



17th century French philosopher, René Descartes once said, “I think; therefore I am” as an example of a statement that could not be doubted. Is there any doubt today that we are what we buy?

That advertisers seek to promote their goods is not news. That in doing so, they may be having a profound negative impact on how we see ourselves may be surprising. Some may disagree. Let’s consider the following:

Most people in Canada already have the basics: a place to live, food on the table, clothing on their backs, a way to get around town, and cable TV (which is not really a basic but most people consider it so). What they have may not be fancy, but for the most part, it’s serviceable. Sure, clothing gets worn out, and cars wear out, but, with the exception of needing to replace things once in a while, most people have pretty much what they need to get by. But getting by doesn’t result in high consumer sales.

In order to build sales, merchants must convince people to purchase things they don’t really need. It’s as simple as that.

Advertising is the most common way that merchants convince people they need to buy their stuff. Advertising guru, James Twitchell, says that the average adult encounters around 3,000 ads a day.

List four places where you see ads on a daily basis.

List three public places you go to where there are no ads.

If you want to sell something to teenagers, where do you think it would be effective to advertise? Give three examples.



In a battle between a long-haired French philosopher and the **ultimate cleaning solution** for your home, do you doubt who would be the victor?

Feel the Power



Getting out the word about what makes your product better than others seems like a reasonable thing to do. However, the merit of a product is often not the only or even the most obvious message in advertising. Advertisers generally don't ask you to "think" about their products – they want you to "feel" about their products. They want you to buy their product based on the feelings their advertising creates in you.

How I Feel About Advertising

Indicate whether or not you agree or disagree with the following statements:

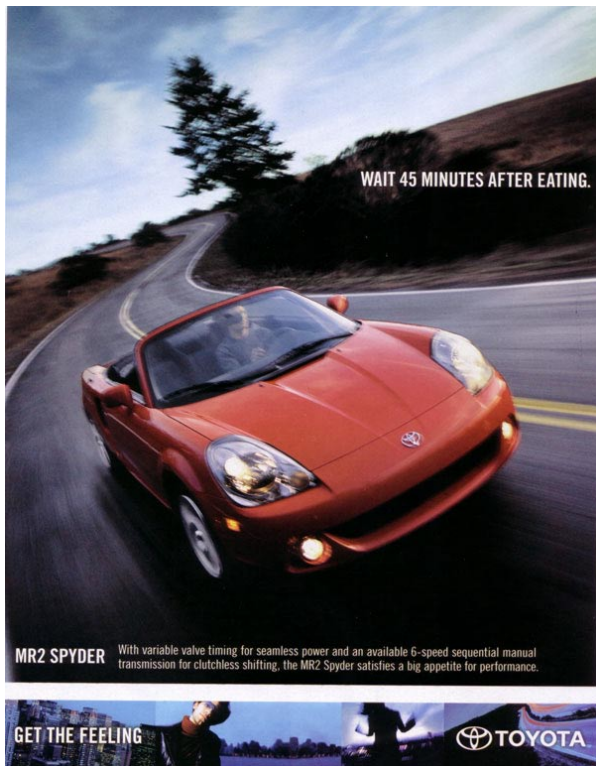
Agree	Disagree	
		I can ignore most advertising.
		Songs from commercials tend to stick in my head.
		I like advertising; it gives me ideas about what to buy.
		I have tried to look like someone I saw in an ad.
		Some ads make me feel inadequate, jealous, or bad about myself.
		Advertising does not really affect me.
		Advertising sets us up to be dissatisfied.
		Many advertisers try to show us how much more satisfied, popular, happy, hip, attractive, sexy, and fun we would be if we had their product.
		Fashions and trends are always changing so that we must continually spend money to be current.
		Advertising stresses competition and status versus feeling good about being who you are and accepting others for who they are.

Explain Your Opinion

Select one of the statements above and describe why you agree or disagree with it. Be specific. Give examples where appropriate. Use the back side of the sheet if you need more space.

You Are What You Buy

Rather than directly selling their products, advertisers often promote a lifestyle or image. They want you to associate their product with the desirable message or person shown in the ad. Take a look at the advertising strategies on the following page and then write in the box below each picture the numbers of all of the strategies that apply to the following ads.



Advertising Strategies

Here are some common advertising strategies used to market to teenagers and young adults.

1	Ideal Kids (or families) – always seem perfect. The kids are really hip looking, with the hottest fashions, haircuts and gear. Ideal families are all attractive and pleasant looking, and everyone seems to get along. Ideal kids and families represent the types of people that kids watching the ad would like themselves or their families to be.
2	Family Fun – a product is shown as something that brings families together or helps them have fun together; all it takes is for Mum or Dad to bring home the “right” food, and a ho-hum dinner turns into a family party.
3	Excitement – who could ever have imagined that food could be so much fun? One bite of a snack food and you’re having the time of your life.
4	Star Power – your favourite sports star or celebrity is telling you that their product is the best. Kids listen, not thinking that the star is being paid to promote the product.
5	Bandwagon – join the crowd! Don’t be left out! Everyone is buying the product; why aren’t you?
6	Scale – is when advertisers make a product (like a hamburger or taco) look bigger or smaller than it actually is.
7	Put Downs – is when you put down your competitor’s product to make your own product seem better.
8	Heart Strings – ads that draw you into a story and make you feel good, like the McDonalds commercial where the dad and his son are shovelling their driveway and the son treats his poor old dad to lunch at McDonalds.
9	Sounds Good – music and other sound effects add to the excitement of commercials, especially commercials aimed at teens. Those jingles you just can’t get out of your head make you think of the product long after the commercial is over. Commercials often are louder than the program that follows.
10	Cartoon Characters – Tony the Tiger sells cereal and the Eveready Bunny sells batteries. Kids identify with cartoon characters. Do you see why there were protests about the use of Joe Camel in cigarette ads?
11	Deceptive Words – by law, advertisers have to tell the truth, but sometimes they use words to mislead viewers. Look for word in commercials like: “Part of...” “The taste of real...” “New better tasting...”
12	Omission – where advertisers don’t give you the fully story about their product. For example, when Pop Tart claims to be “part” of a healthy breakfast, it doesn’t mention that the breakfast might be even healthier if you didn’t eat their product.
13	Are You Cool Enough? – this is when advertisers try to convince you that if you don’t use their products you’re out of it or a nerd. Usually advertisers do this by showing people who look uncool trying a product and then suddenly become hip looking and do cool things after using the product.
14	Facts and Figures – when advertisers use facts and statistics to enhance a product’s <u>credibility</u> . These facts might be correct but they often leave out other information that might detract from the product.
15	Repetition – advertisers hope that if you see a product, or hear its name over and over again, you’ll be more likely to buy it. Sometimes the same commercial will be repeated over and over again.
16	Sex Sells – whether an ad is targeted to teenagers or adults, the promise of being desirable is a strong incentive used to sell products, even as <u>mundane</u> as blue jeans.

Eye on Advertising

List 10 ads you read or see on television on a given day. Indicate: 1) what product is being advertised, 2) number of each of the strategies used from the Advertising Strategies sheet, 3) media in which the ad was seen (magazine, sign, billboard, television, etc.), and 4) a description of the strategies used.

Name _____ Date _____

1) Product	2) Ad Strategies	3) Media	4) Description

Gonzo Ad Agency Scenario

The Spudnut and You



Spudnuts are a real product. They've been around since the 1940s. They're different from regular doughnuts in that they are made from potato flour. Otherwise, they're very similar to regular doughnuts, except many people think they taste better. Nevertheless, only a few shops sell spudnuts – and those are in the U.S. An investor thinks this might be a great opportunity to make a killing in the fast food industry.

He knows that Krispy Kreme doughnuts is one of the fastest growing businesses in the U.S. and that their new shops in Montreal are doing well. He is prepared to invest heavily in opening spudnut coffee shops across Canada. However, he knows he must have a very creative advertising strategy for the product to catch on.

Krispy Kreme may be very popular, but with people becoming more and more health conscious, it might be a hard sell to get them to buy doughnuts made from potatoes. He thinks that tapping into the youth market might be the answer. Therefore, he has come to the Gonzo Ad Agency because of its close familiarity with youth culture. He wants a preliminary advertising plan before contracting with the firm for business.

You are a member of the advertising design team at Gonzo. Working with other members of the team, your job is come up with a highly creative ad campaign using all the tricks of the trade. Money is no limit for the right campaign. But you will have only one chance to make your case to the investor and you are competing with others. Your presentation must contain the following:

- Overall advertising strategy (the general approach you will use to attract customers)
- Specific strategies for different market segments (boys and girls, people of different ages and social groups, and anyone else you might think of) and why these strategies will be effective
- How different media will be used

The investor is a busy man. You'll have only 5 minutes to make your pitch. Good luck.

Who We Are I Buy; Therefore I Am

Vocabulary

Analyst	A person who analyzes (studies the nature and relationship of things) situations and data to discover its true nature.
Incentive	Something that motivates someone to action.
Serviceable	Something that is helpful or useful, but not exceptional.
Merit	A characteristic of something that has virtue or is deserving of an award.
Credibility	The quality of being believable.
Mundane	Something that is of an everyday nature, practical, ordinary.
Media	Multiple forms of communication, including print, movies, television, and now the World Wide Web.
Invest	To commit money to in order to earn more money.
Familiarity	The quality of being familiar or clearly aware of, such as a family member.
Strategy	A careful plan or method for doing something.

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Vocabulary Match

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Write the appropriate word next to its definition.

1. **Analyst**
2. **Incentive**
3. **Serviceable**
4. **Merit**
5. **Credibility**
6. **Mundane**
7. **Media**
8. **Invest**
9. **Familiarity**
10. **Strategy**

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	A careful plan or method for doing something.
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	The quality of being believable.
	To commit money to in order to earn more money.
	Something that motivates someone to action.
	A characteristic of something that has virtue or is deserving of an award.
	Something that is of an everyday nature; practical; ordinary.
	A person who analyzes (studies the nature and relationship of things) situations and data to discover its true nature.
	The quality of being familiar or clearly aware of, such as a family member.