3. Emotion

The Philip Morris Marlboro "Mild as May" cigarette campaign, which began in 1924, targeted "respectable women." By the early 1950s, Marlboro's market share was 0.25 percent. In December 1954, the Leo Burnett agency decided to change the product's image from a woman's cigarette to a man's cigarette. It selected a masculine figure—a cowboy hailing from the fictitious "Marlboro Country." In the following 20 years, Marlboro went on to become the world's most popular brand. Its market share increased to 25 percent—that is, 100 times larger (Twitchell 2000). The effectiveness of the advertising was clear given that it was the only thing that changed. Marlboro successfully tapped into the emotions of its target customers.

Advertisements with emotional elements can affect consumer expectations, which in turn can affect the satisfaction experienced from using the brand. For example, the more people expect a product to make them feel relaxed, the more relaxed they will become.

Once people have become familiar with a brand, advertisers can shift the emphasis from information toward emotion. This was supported by an analysis of customer responses to ads for a toll-free medical referral service. The same ads were used in 23 markets ranging from new markets (8 months old on average) to mature markets (144 months old). Over time, the effects of arguments on "expected referrals" got weaker, while the effects of emotion became stronger (Chandy et al. 2001).

Emotional appeals are often used in motion media. Stewart and Furse (1986) found that 37 percent of their sample of TV commercials used emotional appeals. Emotional appeals are more relevant for hedonic than utilitarian products.

The principles on emotions are organized as follows:

3.1. Emotional focus
3.2. Trust
3.3. Self-expression
3.4. Guilt
3.5. Fear
3.6. Provocation

3.1. Emotional focus

Within any given ad, a combination of rational and emotional content will probably not work. That said, a *campaign* might consist of some ads with rational approaches and some with emotional appeals.

3.1.1. Do not mix rational and emotional appeals in an ad

While many advertising experts have suggested that an emotional component would strengthen almost any ad, the evidence suggests the opposite.

Rational and emotional appeals can interfere with each other. If you build a mood, don't spoil it with a rational argument. Imagine that you and your sweetheart are watching a glorious sunset. Now consider how the mood would change

if you explained the combination of atmospheric conditions and dust that produced the sunset.

Conversely, if you have good arguments, do not distract people with emotion.

A key issue involves which emotion to emphasize. That depends on consumer knowledge about the product. Scott (1912) offered general advice when he said that advertisers should gradually build upon the target market's previous experiences: "Nothing is regarded worthy of our consideration which does not relate itself to our previous experience."

Evidence on the effects of mixing rational and emotional appeals

In an experiment involving donations to "Save the Children," a narrative description of a victim's plight led to higher donations than when the description also included statistics about how the donations would help. Apparently, the latter information damped the emotional effect and led people to think about how their efforts would help; unfortunately, it also led them to determine that their contributions would be negligible (Small, Loewenstein, and Slovic 2006).

> **Print ads that did not mix rational and emotional appeals had better recall.** Our *WAPB* analysis found 50 pairs of print ads in which one ad had either rational or emotional appeal while the other ad used both rational and emotional appeals. Recall for ads that did not mix the appeals was 1.24 times better than the ads that mixed them.

Turning to non-experimental data, an analysis of 80 automobile ads found that recall for ads using either a rational or emotional appeal yielded better recall than did ads that used both types of appeals (Mehta and Purvis 2006).

Eye-tracking studies of 190 subjects as they watched Dutch TV commercials found that people were overwhelmed when both emotion and information were present, and were more likely to fast-forward through such ads (Elpers, Wedel, and Pieters 2003).

TV commercials containing "a balance of rational and emotional appeals" were lower on comprehension and much below average with respect to persuasion in comparison with commercials that did not contain such a balance (Stewart and Furse 1986).

3.2. Trust

The best ways for an advertiser to gain trust are to tell the truth and to honor promises. This is especially important when a firm is seeking long-term relationships with customers. There is nothing new about this. Adam Smith said:

> The success of most people ... depends upon ... the opinion of their neighbors and equals: and without a tolerably regular conduct these can very seldom be obtained. The good old proverb, therefore, that honesty is always the best policy [is] almost always perfectly true.

3.2.1. Sign an ethical standards statement for each ad

"If you want to sell product, you should tell the truth about the product ... stick to the truth, and that means rectifying whatever's wrong with the merchant's business. If the truth isn't tellable, fix it so it is."
John E. Powers, Wanamaker copywriter, 1880

Volvo showed in a 1990 TV commercial how its cars could withstand the force of being run over by a monster truck, while other cars were crushed. The slogan was "Volvo, a car you can believe in." When it became public knowledge that the Volvo car had been fitted with reinforcement beams for the filming of the ad, Volvo's credibility was damaged. The agency that created the ad resigned from the account, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission fined Volvo, and Volvo took out full-page ads in national newspapers to apologize.

Truth and honesty are vital for advertising, especially for organizations that desire continuing relationships. Most advertisers agree. Still, we know that some lying occurs, so the key issue is how to reduce the likelihood of dishonest advertising. Moreover, it is important to avoid even the appearance that advertisers lie.

Harvard Business Review subscribers were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "In general, advertisements do *not* present a true picture of the product advertised." Half agreed that it was accurate (Greyser and Diamond 1974). A series of Roper Organization surveys for the period from 1973 through 1983 found consistent answers to the question of whether we can be confident we are getting the truth in most advertising—about half were "Not at all confident." A 2005 U.S. Gallup poll asked people to rate the honesty and ethical standards of people engaged in 20 occupations; advertisers ranked next to last.

In the early days of advertising, truth was often ignored. For example, soon after tobacco was introduced to England in the middle of the 16th century by Sir John Hawkins, it was recommended as a treatment for toothaches, worms, bad breath, and cancer. Tobacco sellers continued to advertise health benefits up through the 1950s.

False statements are now more likely to be caught more quickly, thanks to the Internet.

Even small lies can be costly. Qantas Airways advertised travel to Australia by showing an airline seat resting on a lovely beach, "You'll feel like you're in Australia as soon as you're on Qantas." Actually, the ad showed the Lanikai beach in Hawaii. The *Sydney Telegraph Mirror* wrote, "If Qantas' advertising agency can't raise the energy to come to Australia, why should anyone else bother?" Given the complaints, Qantas pulled the ad.

One solution is to ask each person involved in the content in an advertising campaign to sign an ethical statement. Preferably it should be one that is endorsed by the agency.

Evidence on the effects of standards on ethical behavior

When dealing with everyday problems, we sometimes forget to reflect on our

standards. Thus, many people steal from their employer and students often cheat. So what happens when people think about their ethical standards? In one experiment, 229 subjects were given an opportunity to falsify a report on how well they did on a task involving answering a series of questions. Most of those in the control groups cheated, not a whole lot, but to some extent. However, some subjects had been asked to write as many of the Ten Commandments as they could just prior to taking the test. How many of them cheated? None. This occurred even though some students could only remember one or two commandments. Interestingly, when another group of students was asked to predict the outcome of this experiment, they expected cheating in the control group but they did not think that the Ten Commandments task would have an effect. In another study using the same type of task, cheating did not occur for those subjects who were first asked to sign a statement on the answer sheet that "I understand that this study falls under the MIT [Yale] honor system." As it happens, neither MIT nor Yale has an honor code (Mazar, Amir, and Ariely 2008).

3.3. Self-expression

When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody.
Gilbert and Sullivan, The Gondoliers

In contrast to social proof, prestige is the desire to be special. Yogi Berra echoed this in his description of Toots Shor's nightclub, a former hangout for celebrities: "No one goes there any more. It's too crowded."

We purchase some products primarily to impress others. A prominently displayed brand name or label can be the major difference between a $2,000 Prada handbag and a similar $20 no-name bag. By paying much more for a brand name, we make a statement to others and to ourselves about who we are. We express ourselves through clothing, jewelry, art, music, and educational degrees. It is typical practice for advertisers to tap into customers' need for self-expression.

One of the more famous examples of self-expression advertising is a 1923 automobile print ad. While car companies usually focused on advertising their product's features, the Jordan Playboy car used emotion. The story goes that the owner of the Jordan Motor Car Company conceived the ad as he looked out of a train window, saw a woman on a horse chasing the train, and asked a friend, "Where are we?" The answer was, "West of Laramie." The ad then went into poetic detail in describing this "bronco-busting steer-roping girl" who "loves the cross of the wild and the tame," and concludes that the Jordan Playboy was built for her. Ogilvy thought this ad was absurd because it did not give the reader a single fact. However, because the Jordan Playboy car had no comparative advantage, an emotional appeal might have been a the best they could do.[1]

Self-expression themes became important in the U.S. advertising in the 20th century (Pope 1983). A 1928 ad by a steamship line illustrates this principle: "Crossing in the Aquitania carries as much prestige as twenty letters of introduction...!"

1 The text of this ad is available on a Google search for "West of Laramie."

3.3.1. Show how the product allows customers to express their personalities

Because personalities differ and people see themselves as unique, the use of self-expression involves tailoring ads to subgroups. For example, when soccer star David Beckham adopted a clothing or hairstyle, young people all over the world copied it. In 1997 Brylcreem™, a hair product associated with an older audience, paid Beckham to be a model in its ads so that their hair cream would appeal to young people.

Bill Bernbach advertised Chivas Regal scotch in an ad headlined "Tsk, tsk" using the text: "After a party, the host is often faced with several almost empty Scotch bottles. And there's a natural tendency to consolidate the leftovers into a single bottle. Guess whose."

Ads designed for products that show one's good taste should be subtle. Some advertisers, however, choose to flaunt their "status appeal," as illustrated by a Mercedes-Benz ad in the April 17, 2005 edition of the *Wall Street Journal:* "More horses. Bigger engine. Increased envy."

This principle is based on received wisdom. I was unable to find evidence. It seems worthy of study.

3.4. Guilt

Guilt can arise from doing something that violates one's standards (e.g., breaking a contract) or by failing to take proper action (e.g., failing to help someone in need). Guilt can be resolved by taking actions that compensate for the guilt.

Guilt has strong effects and it applies under many conditions It applies whether the guilt arose from a transgression that is accidental or on purpose; whether there is a direct request for help or merely an opportunity; whether the request for help is from the victim or someone else; and whether the help benefits the victim or not.

3.4.1. Lead people to think about their standards

The New Haven Railroad used guilt to get people to accept crowded trains during World War II. When troops were being sent to war, the journey was often by train. A 1942 print ad, *The Kid in Upper 4*, said:

> It's 3:42 on a troop train. Men, wrapped in blankets, are breathing heavily. Two in every berth. One in every upper .... Next time you are on the train, *remember the kid in Upper 4*. If you have to stand—it is so that he may have a seat. If there is no berth for you—*it is that he may sleep.*

This was intended to make customers feel ashamed to complain about poor service. The ad was a big success. Thousands of people wrote to the New Haven Railroad office requesting copies (Watkins 1959).

Another application: "Saturday mornings—you can spend your time catching up on your sleep or catching up with your kids over Bisquick pancakes."

Guilt is especially useful for ads dealing with altruistic behavior, such as fundraising for charities. And indeed, guilt is relatively more common in ads for charities or public service announcements than in ads for commercial products (Huhmann and Brotherton 1997). Customers are wary of attempts to use guilt for commercial gain.