

Lesson 17 - The Science Behind Advertising

Lesson 17. The Science Behind Advertising

Learning Objectives

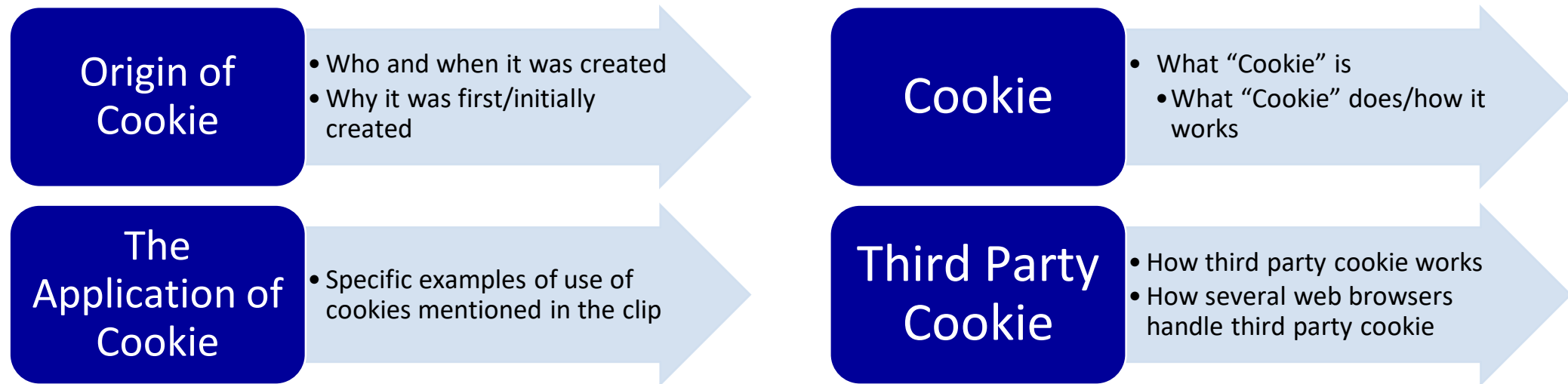
After this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Conclude how online personalized ads are tailored and what they have to do with internet cookies.
2. Discover how psychologists and scientists are involved in the advertising industry.
3. Argue whether advertisements should be restricted or regulated in any ways.
4. Recognize the use of certain vocabularies from a recording using context clues.
5. Identify how misleading ads work.
6. Explore the use of science and psychology in the making of advertisements.
7. Infer relevant information from the provided text.
8. Examine whether the tricks/tactics employed in advertisements are scientifically and psychologically valid.
9. Identify and correct the error found in each sentence.

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Online Advertisements

1. Describe the advertisements that you encounter when you are browsing the internet. Elaborate these following:
 - In average, how many ads do you encounter when you go online?
 - What/how many kinds of online ads are they usually? (Banner ads, pop-up ads or pay per click ads?)
 - Ponder whether the online ads that you encounter are always the same/similar
2. Watch this following clip and complete these following vertical arrow list
[\(5\) How ads follow you around the internet – YouTube](#)
3. In summation, what does a “cookie” have to do with online advertisements?



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In a nutshell

Advertising is a marketing communication that employs an openly sponsored, non-personal message to promote or sell a product, service or idea. Advertising is communicated through various mass media, including traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, outdoor advertising or direct mail; and new media such as search results, blogs, social media, websites or text messages. The best advertising agencies know that the ‘creative’ elements of advertising are just the tip of the iceberg – or the ‘icing on the cake’. Less visible, but equally important, is the market research and clear understanding of customers’ want and needs. Nowadays, consumer psychologists and basic scientists are behind ever more effective advertising campaigns to promote both products and causes. Vance Packard's 1957 book, "The Hidden Persuaders," revealed how advertising agencies used psychologists and other behavioral scientists to probe deep into consumers' minds and build advertising campaigns based on what they found there, which likely results in people being captivated by ads.

“Advertising is legalized lying.”
– H. G. Wells.

**What would you say was H. G. Wells’ stance on advertising?
Do you share the same ideas as his?**

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Debate: Should advertisements be restricted or regulated in any ways?

Points to consider:

- Which and when advertisements constitute “proper”.
- Which body/who will be put in charge of restricting/regulating circulated ads.
- What the assessment of the “proper” ads is based on and how the assessment will be agreed upon.
- What body/who will have the credibility to design the assessment.
- How the regulation/restriction impinges on the creativity of the advertising industry.
- Will the regulation/restriction contradict the principle of freedom of speech.
- Will such regulation/restriction be susceptible to certain political agenda.

Sources:

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<https://www.brandthropologist.net/professional-perspectives-marketing-communications/assessing-ad-creative/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/1984/09/09/business/advertising-bans-versus-free-speech.html>

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Keen Listening

Look for the following vocabulary in the recording. Define each vocabulary if you are familiar with it. While listening, jot down how each vocabulary is employed and related to the presented topic.

stakes

social fabric

vying

**shady
playbook**

sensationalism

implication

partisanship

**doomsday news
anxiety**

misinformation

house of cards

pipe dream

bifurcating

peddling

deflect

**Identify what part of
speech each
vocabulary is.**

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Listening 17.1

Listen to the recording carefully and answer these questions below.

https://www.ted.com/talks/caroline_mccarthy_how_advertising_is_dividing_us

How Advertising Is Dividing Us

1. What seems to concern the speaker at the beginning of her lecture?
2. What is the connection between 'ideology', 'algorithm', and 'partisanship'?
3. Why does the speaker argue that paid content through subscription or one-off payments seems like a far-fetched idea? What research backs her claim?
4. "*The ad industry has got to burn itself down and rebuild from the ashes*", to which topic/notion does the speaker give such response?
5. According to the speaker, who often gets wrongly blamed for a media crisis/when something goes wrong? (for example when an ad/content is placed alongside an extremist content on YouTube)

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How Ads Have Been Misleading Their Potential Customers

Pair each description with its matching headline.

... (1)

Sometimes images included within an ad make an item look more attractive to consumers than it really is. For example, grocery store chains sometimes use photo enhancement software to enhance the actual appearance of food items so that you will buy them.

... (2)

Price deception is when a company uses false or misleading pricing in its ads for a product or service. For example, a clothing store may advertise that a shirt is on sale at half-price when that advertised shirt was never sold at a higher price to begin with.

... (3)

This occurs when a company claims that their product will provide specific benefits to end users that have never been officially proven. Here's an example: A holistic health company runs an online consumer advertising campaign that claims their all-natural nutritional supplement helps cure cancer. However, no medical data exist to validate that claim. As a result, a judge later orders them to stop promoting their product based on unsubstantiated claims.

... (4)

These happen when an advertisement compares one company's product to a competitor's only in areas where it is superior, leaving out the fact the other product is superior in other ways. By doing so, one company gains an unfair marketing advantage over others. A good example of comparison inconsistencies is the way auto manufacturers sometimes market their vehicles against comparable makes and models.

Misleading Photos or Illustrations

Price Deception

Unsubstantiated Claims

Inconsistent Comparisons

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Advertising has shaped our society. It has become part of the **global culture** and is deeply ingrained in our society. It's the pretty pictures of happy families next to housing developments. It's our favorite celebrities using new beauty products. We see **household names** selling cleaning products or food. Advertising is everywhere, and it is a large industry.

We might not know it, but the average American is **exposed to** a large number of commercials from various mediums in 24 hours. This includes radio, television, social media and print ads. If you use your phone a lot, it's the ads that **pop up** when we **browse through** merchant stores and while we wait for a picture to load in a photography application. Since we are exposed to so much advertising, how do advertisers and marketers make sure their ads **stand out**?

- **The Number of Ads We See**

In the 1970's, people were exposed to about 500 ads per day. At present, people see roughly 5,000 ads per day. There are 5.3 trillion display ads shown online every year. On average, children see 20,000 thirty-second commercials each year. Adults see an average of 2 million of those on a yearly basis.

Advertisers and marketers know that people readily respond when they find anything enjoyable, noteworthy or interesting. They use that to make their brands popular. They target ads campaigns based on that. It may be an interesting image, music, a story or the brand itself that catches the eye of a person. A good advertising firm will be able to identify viral content and use it in their ads.

- **Emotion over Rational Content**

Ads are geared towards both thinking and feeling. However, feeling seems to **rank higher**. Based on advertising campaign performance, 31% of ads with **emotional pull** succeeded versus the 16% success of ads that focused on rational content.

Ads that **trigger sentiments** do so using different themes. However, pride, love, achievement, man's empathy, friendships, loneliness or memories perform best. Emotional response to an advertisement, rather than the ad's actual content, produces great influence on the intent of a consumer to buy a product. Likeability is the most predictive measure that can help ascertain if an advertisement will increase the sales of a brand.

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- **Color Impact**

We are all aware that color can evoke certain feelings in a person. This is why it is used heavily in sales and branding.

Color plays a strong role in conversion as well. Studies show that changing the call-to-action button of an online ad from light green to yellow can increase conversion rates by 14.5%. A colored border around a Facebook ad image can also double the click-through rate.

Color contrast helps too. Research has shown that contrasting colors of two links within a single image can increase the conversion rate by 60%.

- **Real Advertising Campaigns That Have Been Successful**

Unilever's "**Dirt is Good**" campaign was successful. They wanted a message that would resonate. Due to intense research, they were able to learn that consumers did not dislike stains and dirt as much as most advertising campaigns imply. They raised the bar by launching a campaign that talked about dirt and stains as a part of their kids' natural experiences.

Dove's "**Real Beauty**" campaign is also another winner. The brand **artfully** created videos and images that were made to empower women and make them **feel good about themselves**. They were able to elicit emotional responses that ranged from knowledge, warmth and even happiness from their target demographic. In fact, many of the videos went viral on social media, expanding the brand's reach.

Coca Cola's "**Happiness Factory**" campaign is another powerful example. Over the last few decades, the brand has cultivated a connection between Coke, joy in living and optimism. They were able to send the message by depicting happy friends and families drinking Coke in **cheery settings**. This constant formula has allowed Coca Cola to arouse the emotions they want from their customers, **owing to the prolonged use of the campaign**.

Ads can compel people to want to buy or use certain products and services. The emotional route remains one of the best ways to do so. This form of marketing is a great way for companies to present their brand or culture to their consumers. This is where a company's likeability grows, as consumers are able to see the personality of the brand.

Adapted from: <https://appliedpsychologydegree.usc.edu/blog/thinking-vs-feeling-the-psychology-of-advertising/>

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ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

VOCABULARY

1. How do advertisers and marketers design captivating ads that appeal to the masses?
2. According to the passage, what do thinking (reasoning) and feeling (emotion) have to do with advertisements?
3. How does the passage exemplify effective use of colors in the advertising media?
4. **True** or **False**: According to research, consumers have a strong aversion to dirt and stains.
5. What did the Dove “Real Beauty” ad campaign aim to achieve/convey?
6. Which brand is it whose viral videos managed to widen their brand’s target audience?

1. to get or produce something, especially information or a reaction.
2. (of beliefs, attitudes, or habits) so established that they are difficult to change.
3. to force someone to do something.
4. to relate harmoniously.
5. to make someone remember something or feel an emotion.
6. to cause someone to have a particular feeling.
7. the act or fact of intending : purpose.
8. to make certain of something.
9. to design or organize something so that it is suitable for a particular purpose, situation, or group of people.
10. to set a higher standard.
11. deserving attention because of being important or interesting.
12. something such as a speech, piece of writing, or act that encourages people to take action about a problem

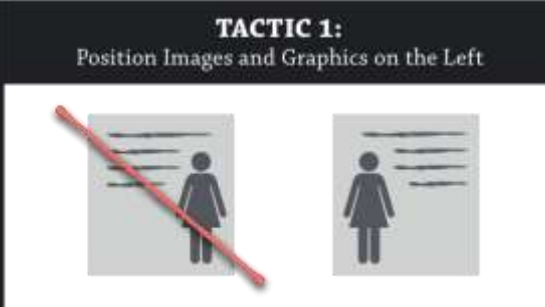
- a. ingrained
- b. noteworthy
- c. gear towards
- d. intent
- e. ascertain
- f. evoke
- g. call-to-action
- h. resonate
- i. raise the bar
- j. elicit
- k. arouse
- l. compel

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Advertising Psychology

According to nickkolenda.com, there are a few tricks in which how advertisements are commonly presented so that they could appeal to the audience. Observe these following tricks and decide whether they actually work and are scientifically proven.

TACTIC 1:
Position Images and Graphics on the Left



TACTIC 3:
Orient Models' Gazes Toward Your CTA



TACTIC 5:
Enlarge Words That Convey an Emotion



TACTIC 7:
Use Assertive Language for Hedonic Products



TACTIC 2:
Depict Products to Encourage Mental Interaction



TACTIC 4:
Show Attractive Models (When Relevant)



TACTIC 6:
Mention Multiple Features (But Not Usage)

~~You'll use X feature a lot.~~ Our product has X feature.

TACTIC 8:
Rhyme Your Slogan or Call-to-Action

~~Download our app today.~~ It's free to play, so download our app today.

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Identify the error in each sentence and correct it.

1. When you place images and graphics towards the left side of your ad, you increase process fluency.
A B C D
2. When businesses create product images, they often depict the product without many thought.
A B C D
3. Some advertisers recommend decrease the size of your brand.
A B C D
4. Brands with consistent social media presence who responds to user comments in real-time receive 3.5 times the user interaction than brands that are inconsistent and non-responsive.
A B C D
5. A York University studies revealed that U.S. pharmaceutical companies spend twice as much on advertising as they do on research.
A B C D
6. It is commonplace for weight lost commercials to pay a fit person to gain weight for the “before” photo instead of showing someone who actually lost the weight.
A B C D

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7. The Disney Channel doesn't accept outside ads. The only commercials it airs are for it's own shows and Disney products.
A B C D
8. Women actually hold 60% of positions in advertising agency, which is a huge plus over other major industries such as finance.
A B C D
9. Being quirk and using funny ideas is a way that advertisers grab your attention.
A B C D
10. Having the call to action button in a bright color that contrast with the background of the website is a great way to call attention to the button and encourage customer action.
A B C D
11. Gone are the days of sending generic advertisements. If the company is certain caliber, they are spending the money needed to gather data on their consumers to make their products more appealing.
A B C D

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Express Yourself

1. Do you think ads create a desire for more and more material possessions?
2. What are some effective adverts you have seen lately (on TV, newspaper, etc.)?
3. Do political parties in your country use TV advertising? If so, should they?
4. Do you think ads influence the choices you make when you buy things?
5. Is there truth in advertising?
6. Is advertising really a 'clever' and 'witty' way of lying?
7. Do you find advertisements persuasive?
8. Are you easily swayed by advertisements? What kind of advertisements do you easily fall for?
9. Some charities sometimes use shocking images of starving children or abused animals in their advertisements. What do you think of this practice?
10. Have you ever placed an ad in the classified section of a newspaper?
11. How do you find the involvement of science and psychology in the advertising industry?

THE END