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SHOCK ADVERTISING: IS IT EFFECTIVE?

It is difficult to imagine the modern world without advertising. At first, its abundance irritated people, but gradually they got used to it: now classic forms of advertising are not as effective as before, it has become more difficult to attract a modern person. And the question arises: how can a producer stand out from the competition in the conditions of oversaturation? One of these methods is shock advertising. The aim of this research is to analyse the effect of shock advertising on people.

Shock advertising (shockvertising) is a type of advertising that violates the established rules of advertising, established traditions, stereotypes of society. The essence of shock advertising is provocation of society. It causes fear, disgust, amazement, anxiety, curiosity and other feelings. The main thing is to draw attention to the background of classical advertising, which is based on presenting the product in the best possible light [1].

Shock advertising can be both social and commercial. Examples of social shock advertising are

Tips from Former Smokers by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) campaign. This advertisement raises awareness of the most extreme effects of smoking. As a result, more than 5 million smokers have tried to quit, and more than 500,000 of them have quit for good.

The hearts of people with the captions "White", "Black" and "Yellow" by the Benetton brand promote equality among people. The idea is that the hearts that beat in each of us are the same, no matter what colour we are.

Another example related to the idea of equality is a print showing a French cemetery of soldiers killed in the First World War. Regardless of skin colour, religion or social status, all people are equal in death [2].

As for shocking commercial advertising, examples include the following.

Skeletons to display jewellery. In 2008, the jewellery designer Fabrice Frere put up billboards showing jewellery (necklaces, bracelets, watches) with blackened human skeletons.

"The beauty of no artificial preservatives". Burger King has also made it clear that it does not use artificial preservatives in any of its products for a natural taste. By using a true and disgusting image, they were able to generate 14% sales with this one campaign.

The survey was conducted by interviewing 87 people on the subject: Which ad caught your eye? The results showed that 72% of voters thought shock ads were more striking and memorable than traditional ads. Voters also added that they had experienced emotions such as disgust, embarrassment, confusion and irritation. This study proves that shock advertising can frighten the audience and violate social norms.

The types of shock advertising can also be systematised according to which element of it causes a shock reaction in the consumer: disgusting images, sexual references, profanity/obscenity, vulgarity, inappropriateness, moral offensiveness, religious taboos [3].

There are some advantages to controversial advertising. Shockvertising allows companies to attract public attention, evoke strong feelings, generate word-of-mouth, increase brand awareness, stimulate responsive behaviour and action, and be memorable [4].

However, there are also disadvantages, which can make companies the subject of controversy and fail to connect with the target audience. Shock advertising can create negative feelings and associations, damage brand identity, overshadow the actual product and there is no guarantee that it will work as planned [4].

Whether shock advertising is successful or not depends on its execution. Shock tactics can work, but only if you fully understand where the line is between shock marketing and offensive marketing. If you don't, you'll not only waste time and money on a marketing campaign, you'll also find yourself fighting a PR crisis to save your reputation.

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