



[Academic Script]

Effective Advertising Message – I

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1. Introduction

Effective Advertising Message – I

Advertising has become a part and parcel of our modern life. It is usually undertaken either for marketing, information-sharing, persuasion, education or reminder. Day in and day out, we are bombarded with umpteen number of advertisements out of which only a few appeal us. Have you ever thought why a majority of the advertisements fail to create an impact? If we want to understand the reason behind success/failure of the advertisement, then we must understand what advertising is and how advertising message can be made effective.

Bovee and Arens defined advertising as the non-personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media. Advertising has as an objective to bring about such a change in customer's behaviour that is beneficial to the company or brand being advertised. Advertising is a process and its end result is an advertisement. So, the question is: how to make the message underlying any advertisement effective?

2. Effective advertising

Effective advertising is more than creating a clever punch line or tag line. It consists of various aspects of product/service integrated in such a coherent way that a customer is persuaded to make a positive decision towards buying product/service. For effective advertising message, one has to evolve various strategies including verbal and visual aspects keeping in mind

the target audience. The verbal aspects refer to the text of the advertisement. The visual aspects refer to pictures and/or models in the message. These models are not fashion models but are characters depicted in the advertisement or commercial.

If an advertisement is successful in grabbing the customer's attention, then it can have an opportunity to bring about a change in his/her behaviour. This can be done when the company thinks from the customer's point of view and understands what motivates the customer's behavior and buying decisions. For instance, if you own a food joint and if your customers keep coming to your food joint then you should understand that it is not just for food that customers come; it could be price, quality, convenience, reliability, friendliness, cleanliness, courtesy or customer service. The very attempt to seize the customer's attention is a matter of strategy. There are certain approaches commonly used in advertising to grab the customer's attention. Let us try to know more about these approaches in detail.

1) Generic Approach

This approach is usually adopted by those companies which rush to create a category before competitors follow suit. It is also adopted by those who are market leaders or monopolists. For example, *Xerox* is a brand name which has become synonymous with photocopiers. Similarly, vegetable ghee sold in India is known as *Dalda*, but the fact is *Dalda* is a brand name of vegetable ghee. However, with the changing times, such monopoly is short-lived and the company requires to change its strategy frequently to survive fierce competition.

2) Unique Selling Proposition

The distinguishing, competitive advantage of a brand which lets it stand apart from its competitors is known as Unique Selling Proposition (USP). USP is also known as Unique Value Proposition (UVP). USP or UVP is a company's statement that describes the benefit of its offer which differentiates itself from its competitors while catering to the customer's needs. USP can be identified on the basis of product characteristics, price structure, placement strategy (location and distribution) or promotional strategy.

3) Brand Image

The creation of the customer's perception of a particular brand is known as Brand Image. This perception is a result of rigorous advertising undertaken over a period of time and is based on factors that are extrinsic to the product. For instance, the brand *Macho* is associated with masculinity.

4) Competitive positioning

The concept of creating a brand image relative to competitors is known as competitive positioning. It stresses on establishing the superiority of the brand through a direct or indirect comparison. This strategy is usually adopted by the new entrant who wishes to challenge the market leader. For instance, "honey ke nam pe money ki loot".

5) Pre-emptive claim

When a company makes a generic type of claim with an assertion of superiority, it is known as pre-emptive claim. This is done because it effectively prevents the competitors from saying the same thing. For instance, the claim of real milk ice cream raises the doubt about the ingredients the competitors use.

6) Resonance

The strategy of resonance is used when product differentiation is not possible. Consequently, the product is linked with an experience or occasion, situation or lifestyle. For instance, the necessity of paints is linked with the festive occasion of Deepawali in India.

It should be kept in mind that these strategies are not mutually exclusive. The company can employ one or more than one strategy to advertise the product/service. This can be done by using the language, the words, and the phrases that the customer uses while promising to satisfy his/her self-esteem, his/her sense of safety, love, belonging and security. Pictures used in advertising are not of exotic locations but one with which the customer can identify and the models are not fashion models but characters with whom the customer can relate.

From this, it can be said that advertising is not only creative in nature but also tactical in its appeal. At the same time, the effective advertising message should contain a key benefit claim from the customer's point of view and a creative idea that executes the benefit claim.

The company then devises a strategy for the tactical execution of its message. Such strategy includes what is to be said and the manner in which it is to be said. This is known as creative message strategy and the document which contains a plan for the execution of the message is known as creative brief. Creative brief is also known as message strategy brief. This creative brief contains communication issues, objectives for the advertisement, target audience, major selling point, the

advertising theme, the executional styles and the advertising appeals. It supplies the advertiser with the plan along which the advertising message will be developed. In other words, it serves as a guide to creating the framework of execution.

3. Executional style

The framework of execution refers to the method adopted to present the advertising appeal or communicate the brand. The way in which an advertising appeal is used to communicate with the audience is known as executional style. It serves as a template for determining how the advertising message will be told. There are several executional styles which can be used to elicit audience's response. Straight-sell, testimonials, demonstrations, a slice of life, dramatizations, fantasy, animation and comparisons are some of the commonly found executional styles. Let us understand all these styles in detail.

Straight-sell

Straight-sell is also known as straightforward execution. It provides basic information about the brand without employing feelings or special tricks. Such advertisements, at times, contain scientific or technical support where statistics are provided on the success rate of the product.

Testimonial

When a person with product experience shares a positive report on the brand, then such executional style is known as Testimonial. This type of style is very effective when the person used in the testimonial is credible and the audience is able to identify with him/her instantly. Many companies often use

celebrities to endorse their product/service. Such celebrities could be film and television stars, sports personalities, and other famous people like musicians, dancers, men of letters and so on. The popularity and appeal of celebrities make them ideal for influencing the target audience.

Demonstration

The style which shows the actual working of the product is known as Demonstration. It endeavors to show the advantages and effectiveness of the product. This style is best suited for advertising on Television. Many household appliance companies use this executional style to promote their products.

Slice-of-life execution

When a common person is shown facing a problem in his life which is positively solved by using the advertiser's product/service, then it is known as Slice-of-life execution. Such advertisements focus on a major selling point that is presented in a realistic and memorable manner. Such executional style is also known as problem/solution approach. It adds feelings and allows the audience to identify with the situation. Most of the advertisements of detergent powder and soaps adopt such style of executing the message.

Dramatizations

Dramatization is a slightly more complex version of slice-of-life execution. It contains a short tale having element of suspense with the main focus being on the product/service advertised. This style is best suited for electronic media.

Fantasy execution

This executional style allows the character in the advertisement to escape to the realm of imagination where his/her dreams become reality. It places an ordinary product in such a fun and exciting scenario that it becomes memorable.

Animation Execution

The style in which animated characters are used to convey the brand message is known as Animation Execution. This style uses cartoons, puppets, illustrations or similar fictional creations. It is primarily used in advertisements that are aimed at children, but can be used in advertising directed at adults.

Comparison execution

In this executional style the advertiser compares his product/service with products/service of his competitors. While doing so, the advertiser concentrates on attributes of his/her brand that are superior to those of competitors' brands. The advertiser in India cannot use the name of his competing brands directly. However, the advertiser can show his ingenuity to compare with the competing brands by using price, colour, packaging, attributes and so on.

The advertiser can use any one or can combine various executional style for the advertising campaign. Once the executional style is decided, then the advertiser devises the advertising appeal through which the brand can be communicated so as to elicit positive response from the target audience.

Advertising appeals are the stimulants which attract the attention of the audience and influence them by attempting to address an individual's needs, interests, or wants. The company can appeal the customer on rational ground or emotional ground.

Rational Appeal

Rational appeal can be made by focusing on the customer's functional needs. Advertising message with rational appeal is constructed on the premises of convenience, economy, benefits as well as the primary attributes of product/service. Feature appeals usually highlight the attributes of the product/service while price appeals concentrate on the favourable price of the product and its good value. An authoritative expert such as a doctor may be used to underscore technical features of a product/service. Statistics on how many people use the brand or how often it is recommended by experts can influence the target audience. The company can execute rational appeal by Comparison, Straight-Sell, Demonstration, Testimonials, News, Authority, Instructional, Product feature, Reminder, Teaser, Inherent drama, Dialogue, Narrative and so on.

Emotional appeal

Emotional appeal is an attempt to evoke response in favour of product/service by striving to create a link between the brand and the consumers' psychological needs. This appeal is useful when rational differentiation between brands is difficult. Emotional appeals can be in terms of appealing one's positive or negative emotions. It can be executed through Humour, Sex appeal, Animation, Fantasy, Slice of life, Music, Scarcity and so

on. Any appeal which focuses on emotions like joy or success then it is known as positive emotional appeal. The opposite are fear appeals which are very effective in intimidating the audience. Such appeals are used in advertising campaign to create awareness against drunk driving, tobacco consumption, smoking and so on.

The company can sometimes combine rational as well as emotional appeals in its advertising campaign to make it effective.

The company uses various themes to arouse the buying instinct of the customer. Depending upon the USP of product/service, the company can associate it with the customer's pride, prestige, comfort, economy, health, beauty, parental affection, fear, achievement, patriotism, curiosity and so on. For instance, possession of a particular brand of Television is considered to be a matter of neighbour's envy but owner's pride.

The advertiser can begin with the actual development of the advertisement after identifying a suitable advertising appeal within an appropriate execution framework. The creative message strategy is a plan for the development of the advertisement or commercial which comes to actualization in the creation of the advertising message. The process that brings message strategy to life is known as message design. The message design comprises the text, visuals and sound, and these elements are combined in the advertisement layout. It attempts to answer what, who, why and where. In other words, what is it that one is going to be advertising? Who are you

advertising to? Why are you carrying out this work? Where is it going to appear? Certain elements remain similar whether the advertisement is for print media or electronic media. Copywriting is one such element essential to any kind of advertisement irrespective of media.

4. Copywriting

Copywriting is the process of writing the words that are printed, spoken or displayed in any type of advertising, marketing, sales and publicity piece. It encompasses all communication media – print, broadcast, Internet. It includes all the written elements of a promotion, including the headline, the body of the text, slogans, photo captions, spoken dialogue, and even stage directions (in the case of scripts for video and television). The text of the advertisement is known as the copy. It is never done haphazardly. It entails critical thinking as well as experimentation of creativity. It should be able to answer questions like can the copy grab the customer's attention? Can the copy arouse the customer's desire to buy? Is the copy capable of creating interest in the product/the service? Can the copy provoke purchasing action?

There are various approaches prevalent in copywriting. The most common approach happens to be the customary approach. This approach is like a miniature essay building up on the point made by the headline. The opening paragraph links the headline with the rest of the paragraphs. The succeeding paragraphs provide more details about the product/service and the closing paragraph wraps up the idea. The advertiser is also tempted to use story approach to encash on human beings age old

penchant for tales and narratives. Such narratives could be in first or third person. The target audience is swayed to positive response by inferring from the story. The copywriters are often tempted to use dialogue approach to make the copy more vernacular and conversational. The bulleted approach is used when the copywriter intends to list down the features of the product/service. Sometimes, the copywriter uses poetic approach by including the element of lyric in the text.

One can use any approach suiting to his needs but it has to be kept in mind that the copy should be clear, simple, succinct, precise, placing benefits over features, visually thought while addressing an individual. This is how the copy whether in print or electronic media can be made effective.

So, today we learnt about the basics of creating an advertisement by identifying USP of the product/the service, the target audience, selection of appropriate executional style, the approach, appeal, theme and the text.

5. Summary

Advertising is a non-personal communication of information usually paid for and persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media. It aims to bring about such a change in customer's behaviour that is beneficial to the company or brand being advertised. Advertising is a process and its end result is advertisement. However, effective advertising is more than creating a clever punch line or tag line or an impressive audio-visual clip. It consists of various aspects of product/service

integrated in such a coherent way that a customer is persuaded to make a positive decision towards buying product/service. This is done by presenting the unique selling proposition of the product/the service using appropriate executional style, appeal, theme and the right kind of copy.