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The Psychology of Consumer Resistance to Advertising

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at
Syracuse University

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and Renée Crown University Honors
Spring 2018

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Abstract

Advertising has been used for a long time to support the large amount of content that people consume every day. However, the negative stigma associated with advertising has led to increasing amounts of consumer resistance towards advertising, such as the problem of ad avoidance. Through a literature review, this paper answers the following question: how can understanding consumer resistance inspire more effective advertising? First reviewing the psychology literature, this paper explores the the origin and manifestation of consumer skepticism in response to attempts at persuasion. Cialdini's weapons of influence provide a basis for the persuasive techniques commonly used. Counterarguing, attitude bolstering, message distortion, social validation, source derogation, negative affect, and selective exposure are some of the ways resistance to persuasion manifests. Next, this paper analyzes some of the existing methods advertisers are using to fight back against consumer resistance: authentic and honest tonality, positive emotions and associations, insights, and unusual media. Based on these two perspectives, this paper takes a look at how psychological elements that could be applied more effectively in advertising.

Executive Summary

In the modern world that we live in, people are targeted by messages from every direction. There is an endless and limitless stream of content available on every media platform at all times. Many of these sources of content are supported by the revenue generated by the advertising industry. Advertising is the tradeoff for the unlimited flow of content in our daily lives that we all rely on for school, work, entertainment, and everything in between. However, as the amount of information we consume grows with every year, this constant information flow can leave us feeling overwhelmed. People have to spend so much time sorting through all of the content available, that it is easy to get distracted. This avalanche of information has instilled a sense of impatience, as leisure time used for consumption is now a scarce resource.

This poses a core problem for advertisers. When there is only a limited amount of psychological space left to consume advertising, how do advertisers make sure that their message is the one that is heard and remembered? Advertising continues to adapt to the advancements in how we consume media. The methods advertisers use range from finding deep emotional insights to connect with the consumer to making their advertisements appear in the most unsuspecting locations. However, the large quantity of advertising people are exposed to every day means that consumers' cognitive defenses get triggered and can cause resentment towards advertising as a whole. Advertisers need to continue developing better ways to connect with the consumer. Fully understanding the psychology of persuasion and consumer resistance can help advertisers more successfully speak to the audiences they target.

While advertising can take many forms, with different target audiences, this paper will focus solely on the category of advertising for consumer goods and services. In this paper, advertising will be defined as a form in which brands and the marketers working for them

attempt to persuade the consumer target audience to view the brand's product or service in a particular way; the long-term goal is that by directing the way a brand is perceived, there will be a positive effect on purchasing decisions and sales will increase. As persuasion is a well-studied psychological concept, this paper will analyze resistance to modern advertising techniques used to overcome consumer resistance in light of psychological findings on persuasion. The goal of this literature review is to find how an understanding of psychology to help inspire more effective strategies and execution.

This paper presents three main areas of focus. The first part consists of the research I conducted provides a psychological perspective of the problem. This means a background on what consumer skepticism, including an explanation of how industry conditions have facilitated the growth of consumer resistance. I discuss some of the most common forms of consumer resistance as well as how general persuasion and resistance functions. In order to combat resistance, one has to understand how resistance manifests. These principles will be applied to understanding how resistance is commonly used in response to advertising.

The second part of this paper focuses on the types of advertising techniques that are currently used. It begins with strategies for resisting persuasion, as well as basic persuasion tactics as used in advertising. As advertisers adapt to the changes in the consumer marketplace, brands have to decide what direction they want their advertising messages to take. Some brands focus on promoting unique features to differentiate the product or service from the others in the same market category, while others choose to differentiate themselves with more emotional storytelling. This leads me to discuss the direct and indirect methods of responding to resistance that are employed. Using case studies to provide examples, this section of the paper also

highlights the different types of strategies and tactics used by advertisers and how they have made a difference in effectiveness.

Having looked at the problem from both the psychological and advertising perspectives, the conclusion of this paper is a discussion of how advertising could improve. This conclusion will be drawn on the basis of what most unsuccessful advertising lacks in their persuasive attempts. I also look at what psychological elements that have been discussed that are not applied effectively in advertising and draw a connection between the results of psychological studies and the places that advertisers can improve. By identifying and understanding psychological elements, this paper should give advertisers something to consider when attempting to increase their chances of breaking through the information saturation.

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Advice to Future Honors Students

Always keep asking questions and don't be afraid to explore how different people with different perspectives would answer those questions. That's a great way to make sure you always push your ideas farther. Don't put any limits on yourself, especially when developing an idea. After you've formed a big idea, break it down into little parts and be realistic about how many of those parts you can get done. While setting lofty goals only made me less motivated to get started, setting realistic goals has allowed me to get more work done and reach further with my project than I could have imagined.

Introduction

In the age that we live in, we face the problem of information saturation. We are targeted by messages from every direction. News is no longer limited to the newspaper. Our favorite shows are no longer limited to sitting in front of the TV at a specific time. Music is no longer limited to physical albums. Research is no longer limited to libraries. Every piece of content we reach for is available in multiple locations at once, with a seemingly limitless supply of it. This supply of content comes with a price, in the form of advertising. Many sources of content are supported by advertising revenue as advertisers spend billions of dollars to push their own messages to us alongside all of the other information we're being hit with every day with the hopes that their messages might stick and ultimately influence our purchasing decisions. However, the amount of information we're being hit with only increases with every year, as we reach new technological advancements, and consequently, new technological trends. We rely on this unlimited flow of content in our daily lives for school, work, entertainment, and everything in between. In a way, this constant information flow can leave us overwhelmed. We spend so much time sorting through all of the content available and getting distracted by other content that leisure time used for consumption ends up a scarce resource.

For advertisers, that means there's only a limited amount of psychological space left for consumption of advertising messages (Rumbo 2002). This leads to a major challenge for advertisers: how does one make sure a message doesn't get lost amongst the clutter? In fact, 54% of Marketers find Ad Clutter to be the biggest obstacle of advertising, making this problem the most prominent from advertisers' points of view (eMarketer, 2016). Advertisers have discovered several ways to do this, ranging from finding deep emotional insights to connect with the consumer to making their advertisement appear in the most unsuspected locations. Even so, the

large quantity of advertising ideas that already exist have led advertisers to often express the concern towards the challenge of creating new ideas. However, we can still aim to develop unexpected ones.

Nevertheless, so many advertisers are focused on discussing how to make their messages heard that they forget breaking through the clutter is only the first half of the battle. As expressed by Rumbo, “Although the range of consumer goods and services that advertisers promote offers consumers a multitude of modern conveniences and means for self-expression and empowerment, exposure to too many selling messages can alert cognitive defenses and foster resentment” (2002, p. 128). Just because a consumer isn’t paying special attention to advertising messages in particular, it doesn’t mean that they’re not aware of the sheer amount of advertising they’re being hit with. In a world where consumers are faced with a seemingly infinite number of messages, this leads to a very real threat for brands and advertisers: a consumer’s disbelief in and skepticism about their messages. As such, it is notable that the conversation about the problem advertisers face from the psychological, and consumer, perspective is different from that of the advertisers’ perspective. However, both viewpoints are important to understand, if advertisers are to further improve their methods. With the combination of these two major barriers to an advertiser’s success, we can see that advertising resistance takes form in many ways. Fully understanding consumer resistance can help advertisers more successfully speak to the audiences they target.

While advertising can take many forms, with different target audiences, this paper will focus solely on the category of consumer advertising. Advertising is a form in which brands and the marketers working for them attempt to persuade this consumer target to view the brand’s product or service in a particular way; the long-term goal is that by directing the way a brand is

perceived, there will be a positive effect on purchasing decisions and sales will increase. As persuasion is a well-studied concept in the realm of psychology, this paper will compare the psychological findings on persuasion and resistance to modern advertising techniques used in attempt to face consumer resistance through a literature review. The goal is to identify any psychological theories, techniques, and observations that the advertising industry can draw from going forward to help inspire more effective strategies and better advertising executions.

This paper will look at published articles from the psychology literature to identify relevant persuasive techniques and theories. Information also found from news articles and campaign case studies will be used to provide a deeper look at existing advertising's effectiveness. These sources were found to be relevant to the topic of resistance towards advertising in several different ways and will provide a more well-rounded perspective on the topic. The research will be categorized into three major parts, which will provide the structure of this paper.

The first part of the research that will be discussed will serve the purpose of providing a general background of the problem. I will first review a background on consumer skepticism itself. This will include an explanation of the industry's condition that provides an environment which has facilitated the growth of consumer skepticism and resistance. There are many forms that consumer skepticism takes, and many variables that cause consumer resistance methods to be employed in one way or another. This paper will identify of the most common forms of consumer resistance, provide an understanding of the psychological foundations of consumer skepticism and that of persuasion and resistance as a whole. In order to combat resistance, it is necessary to understand how resistance manifests itself. This includes passive resistance as an unconscious defense mechanism, as well as any strategic measures targets of persuasion (and consequently, of advertising) may choose to implement in an active choice to avoid being

persuaded by advertising. These strategies might not only be implemented in response to what is generally thought of as advertising that is persuasive to the point of being borderline manipulative, but also in response to honest advertising. There is a public preconception that advertising does not always speak in full, honest truths in order to tailor their message in a positive light. However, even completely honest advertising does not always yield the desired results. Why do honest ads not always work?

The second part of the research that we will discuss within this paper is the types of advertising techniques that have been employed at present as an attempt by advertisers to make their messages heard. This will begin by reviewing techniques of persuasion from a psychological viewpoint, as discussed in psychology books and journals (as opposed to the advertising literature). This will include cognitive strategies for resisting persuasion, as well as the persuasion tactics known as Cialdini's Weapons of Influence. This will be supplemented by case studies of past advertising campaigns that demonstrate these persuasion tactics. This will provide a basis for discussing the use of hard sell techniques versus soft sell techniques. As advertisers adapt to the changes in the consumer marketplace, some brands decide to focus their advertisements on promoting unique features that differentiate the product or service from the others in the same market category. However, some brands have similar enough products to their competitors that this is not a viable method of differentiation, and instead choose to differentiate themselves from competitors with more emotional methods and by crafting a unique brand image. As such, direct and indirect methods of responding to resistance will also be discussed. This will be followed by an explanation of insight-driven advertising strategy, focusing on the four major types of insights: cultural insights, product and brand insights, consumer insights, and media insights. This paper will use numerous case studies to highlight how insight-driven

strategies have made a difference in consumer advertising. After exploring the techniques advertisers use to improve the strategy behind the proposition made to the desired audience, this section of the paper will conclude with an analysis of one of the ways advertisers can help brands reach their desired consumer: unusual media placements. I will place particular focus on the examples of native advertising, guerrilla and ambient advertising, as well as techniques used to attempt to provide a service beyond a brand's product for their desired target consumer.

After analyzing the situation from both a psychological and a modern advertiser's perspective, this paper will look at what is missing from advertising. By applying psychological theories, techniques, and observations that will have been discussed, I will draw a connection between the results of psychological studies and the places that advertisers can improve. I will identify some of the most notable mistakes or problems in modern-day advertising and how they relate to the psychological literature reviewed. The goal is to identify psychological elements that can help advertisers increase their chances of breaking through the information saturation and clutter. Not only do we aim to find a way to better reach the consumer, but also draw insights from psychological research into how advertisers may do this more efficiently in addition to effectively.

The Psychological Perspective

Resistance and Skepticism

To first understand the effect of consumer resistance towards advertising, we must first understand where skepticism towards advertising comes from and why it exists. Skepticism is a key defense mechanism that consumers use to detect false or misleading claims in advertising (Koslow, 2000). However, contrary to the popular misconception, consumer skepticism did not originate from extensive experience with false advertising. In other words, consumers do not question advertising's honesty because advertisers lie a lot. Skepticism was developed as a defense mechanism because consumers have the perception that advertisers do not have their best interests in mind (Koslow, 2000). The early days of advertising consisted of straightforward messaging with shallow concepts. Ads said little more than "buy this product!" or "this new service/product is now available!" When advertising became more popular, this type of messaging created a negative stigma that still influences how consumers view the advertising industry today. Advertisers are spokespeople for brands, talking to consumers rather than standing up for them. Also, advertising is generally thought of as trying to sell a product, not to tell consumers about the product so they can make an informed decision (Koslow, 2000). We can also observe the boomerang effect contributing to this response to advertising as well: selling intent is negatively correlated with preference for the product or service being sold (Koslow, 2000). This means that the more consumers feel like they're being pressured to buy something, the less they want that product.

This was not a huge issue when advertising was first introduced, because there weren't many ads being placed. In the modern day, however, with the large quantity of advertising present in our lives at all times, it's easy for consumers to feel an overwhelming pressure to buy.

Advertising clutter only adds to the feeling that people are being exploited, especially if they had any skepticism to begin with. (Rumbo, 2002). Increased exposure to advertising only makes it easier and more top of mind for consumers to catch on to marketer's ultimate end goal, increasing sales.

Individual freedom is an important and prevalent trait of humanity. As posed by psychological reactance theory, humans are driven to restore their free will whenever it becomes threatened (Rosenberg & Siegel, 2017). It is notable that while people are not actively aware of their own freedoms, it becomes a powerful motivator once freedom is restricted or removed. The need to choose for themselves when and how to behave is renewed. This need influences not only one's opinion, but also one's behavioral responses (Rosenberg & Siegel, 2017). It's the reason why people sometimes feel compelled to do what they're told not to. It's also the reason why when advertising is perceived to be infringing on consumers' freedom to choose for themselves, consumer resistance begins.

Consumer resistance manifests itself in many forms. It can be an active choice, or a passive one. The most common type of active resistance that advertisers have to face is advertising avoidance. Advertising avoidance varies by media. For example, many more people avoid TV commercials than they do print ads (Rumbo, 2002). Prime time television commercials with cute jingles get avoided more often because consumers take advantage of things like DVR recording, fast forwarding through the commercials, and using ad-blockers with streaming services on their computers. In this highly digital age of information saturation, it is common for people to switch to a different screen the moment an unskippable advertisement appears. More common, however, are passive manifestations of resistance. Having been bombarded with advertising on a regular basis, people have formed unconscious defenses against advertising, by

employing defense mechanisms instinctually rather than intentionally (Rumbo, 2002). These passive resistance strategies are not advertising-specific, but rather, methods used to resist persuasion in general.

Persuasive Techniques

It is easy to agree that at its core, advertising is a form of applying persuasion. In order to better understand how and why resistance forms, it is necessary to understand what forms of persuasion are being used. One simple, well-known way of looking at persuasion that is commonly used, especially in advertising, is Cialdini's weapons of influence. Cialdini's theory includes six key principles: reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, authority, liking, scarcity.

The first of the principles, reciprocity, is about mutual exchange. People have a tendency to return favors. Even if they do not remember the exact moment, people have lingering perceptions of who has done them well in the past. This is the principle that explains why free samples are worth the investment for some brands. It is also well known between advertisers that the majority of media available for ad placement contains a sort of unspoken trade-off agreement with the consumer. This is usually in the form of free entertainment, paid for by advertising revenue. This model applies to traditional media, such as radio, newspapers, and magazines. It also applies to the digital age as well, such as our favorite social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat), Youtube, even Google searches. For example, in exchange for watching some commercials, the consumer is allowed free access to TV shows. Because of this unspoken reciprocity, advertisers have an advantage.

There are media that do not include this standard tradeoff, such as most out-of-home advertising. Out-of-home advertising is the most prominent medium that does not have such a

tradeoff. In return, advertisers have to work extra hard to make ads in these locations to feel rewarding for the consumer, in order for the advertisement to be noticed and remembered. These usually offer some sort of campaign-specific rewards. An example of reciprocity being used in one such case is when Coke partnered with Skyfall in the “Unlock the 007 in You” ad. (Full commercial here: <https://youtu.be/RDiZOnzajNU>). This ad required the consumer to complete a race against the clock in a display of their own Bond-like abilities. In exchange for buying a Coke, the consumer gets a chance to win Skyfall movie tickets, which provides further incentive.

The next principle is commitment and consistency. We, as humans, instinctually want our behaviors to align with our choices. (It is important to note that these choices must be perceived as freely made). This principle has a large scope. We can see it in play when we feel obligated to comply with actions that reflect our beliefs and values, as well as our self-image. Doing the opposite causes cognitive dissonance and makes us uncomfortable. It may cause us to make up a rationale in hindsight to explain our behavior in an attempt to realign our behaviors with our inner choices. This principle also explains why people often feel compelled to comply with choices that they have already made. If they’ve agreed to one thing, they want to follow through with it. This can lead to several results. One is the “foot in the door” method, in which a person who has said yes to a small request is more likely to continue agreeing, when progressively presented with larger requests later on (Cialdini, 2007). Advertisers commonly use this to their advantage with promises of free trials, because it is harder to say no to a product when they’ve already said yes to it before. Another result of this principle at play is that the more time people have invested in a choice, the more likely they are to continue on a path they’ve taken. This is an explanation for the brand loyalty consumers often have towards brand they have used for a long time, such as from childhood, even if there is no actual particular benefit to the product itself. We

feel committed, because it doesn't make any sense that we would have engaged in a behavior over and over if we do not feel that there must be a reasonable explanation for that behavior.



(See full video here: <https://youtu.be/R8RIqJLUYSE>)

Fantastic Delites relied on this tactic in their guerrilla advertisement, a machine that gave tasks to any passerby who was willing to play in exchange for Fantastic Delites. The tasks got more and more extensive with each press of the button. People who have started the process of whatever task the machine instructed them to do are more likely to continue it to the end. For example, some of the people who had to kneel and bow to the machine were hesitant to follow the instructions after pushing the button. However, they did it anyway for the remaining instructions. The same goes for those who had to press the button many times. Because they have already said yes to the task and started it, they continued pressing it to the end even though we can see several shots in the recording of the event where they looked around like they wanted to leave.

People want more of what they can't have, or what they perceive they will not be able to get in the future. This is the underlying principle of scarcity. Exclusivity has long been associated with things we consider "premium." This is because scarcity provides an implication that the opportunity is socially desirable; there must be a high demand for the product and it is a competition between people to see who is able to obtain it (Knowles & Linn, 2004). Many expensive, luxury brands use scarcity to their advantage to distance themselves from their competitors in the mind of the consumer. For example, Rolls Royce limits their cars to the incredibly rich, requiring their customers to be verified as worthy of their cars before selling. While the Rolls Royce is a car with nicer features than many others, it is able to sell for a much higher price than competitors without losing demand for their cars (Rolls-Royce Motor Cars PressClub, 2018). This is because the brand image Rolls Royce has built, which prominently features the use of scarcity, makes the cars much more desirable.

That being said, one of the most common cases of the use of scarcity in marketing are limited-time discount sales. Unfortunately, brands often overuse this tactic, defeating the purpose of using scarcity in the first place.



An example of a brand that is consistently uses scarcity ineffectively as a method of persuasion is Macy's. Macy's "One Day Sale" is a discount event, pushing exclusive low prices that are only available for one day. However, it is a perfect example of how marketers often overuse this tactic, as Macy's holds a "One Day Sale" very frequently.

Another principle that Cialdini discusses as part of his theory of influence is social proof. Also known as the bandwagon effect. People like to follow what they see many others are doing. This is especially true with younger generations; studies show that millennials love searching for the opinions of the people they trust. The experiences and opinions of friends and family are as important as their own. This is closely related to the rise of influencers, people who share their lifestyles and opinions online and are viewed as a trusted source by their followers.



Shown above is one case of social proof in play. This is Zoella, a popular YouTube beauty guru and influencer; her YouTube channel has over 12 million subscribers. She created a haul video in which she reviews a large number of products. In this example, the purchases are from Lush, a UK bath and cosmetics store. When she reports that she loves a product, her fans and followers are more inclined to try that product, as they look to her beauty opinions as good advice and guidance.

Along a similar line of thought, Cialdini's next principle is liking. Simply put, people are more easily persuaded by someone that they like. As humans, we have a tendency to become more attracted to people who are similar to ourselves. This principle of liking can also be explained by balance theory, a psychological theory that states that people want cognitive consistency. Let's say Molly likes Jane, and Jane likes Apple products. If Molly also likes Apple, there is cognitive consistency because it makes sense that someone Molly likes shares the same likes and dislikes. Therefore, if Molly originally had no opinion on Apple, it would also make sense for her to begin to like it, because she likes Jane. If Molly does not also like Apple, it would cause cognitive dissonance – the very thing humans try to avoid. In order to regain consistency, Molly would have to change her opinion about either Jane or Apple products. This theory supports the use of celebrity and influencer sponsorships & endorsements. For example, if

a beauty guru suggests a new lipstick in a video, their avid followers are much more likely to try it than if they had heard about the lipstick from someone they are less enthusiastic about.

This principle also covers the use of physical attraction to sell a product. Many brands, especially those in the fashion and beauty industries, feature models or celebrities who are considered attractive to the target consumer.



For example, this Revlon ad features actress Emma Stone wearing their foundation. Emma Stone is considered to be an attractive actress and the ad features a picture of her looking good. If viewers were fans of Emma Stone, or thought she was pretty, then they would be more inclined to buy a product that she is endorsing. A fan would think that if Emma Stone likes something, they would probably like it too. Those who find her attractive would want to use the product, with the hopes of gaining a piece of that beauty for themselves.

In addition to listening to trusted social circles, people also have a tendency to obey experts and other authority figures. This leads to the next of the six principles that Cialdini discusses in his weapons of influence: authority. People often assume that experts are able to substantiate the claims they make. Advertising needs to be quick and concise, because it is

talking to an audience with little patience for content that they are not actively seeking to view and remember. When a trusted authority figure endorses a product, it saves the consumer part of the trouble of doing their own research into whether the product's features are what it is said to be.



The simplest example of authority being used in advertising is in health or personal care products. As pictured above, Oral-B makes the claim that it is the trusted brand of dentists and hygienists – people who are experts in dental health. This is a claim that is backed by an authority figure, making it appear more believable than without the endorsement.

It should be noted that when too many brands/products have the recognition of the same authority figure, the overall effect is lessened and much less influential. Some popular examples of this are how many toothpaste brands are considered the “dentists’ choice,” or when you walk into a bookstore and it feels as if every book on the display has been a “New York Times bestseller.” For brands in categories like this, having this extra authority won’t hurt but it should be kept in mind that it is definitely is not able to drive an advertising campaign on its own.

Resistance Responses

One way of looking at resistance towards persuasion is through the cognitive response approach. The literature shows that there are seven major types of response strategies employed

in resisting an attitude change. They are counterarguing, attitude bolstering, message distortion, social validation, source derogation, negative affect, and selective exposure (Jacks & Cameron 2003).

Counterarguing, as the name suggests, is when the person comes up with direct arguments to refute the message(s) that they are faced with. (Jacks & Cameron 2003). For example, a person might see an anti-littering PSA but decide that it is not that important of an issue, because littering can result in the creation of jobs for janitors and street cleaners.

Attitude bolstering, on the other hand, uses indirect arguments. It is done by making arguments that is consistent with and supportive of one's existing attitude toward the subject. (Jacks & Cameron 2003). For example, someone who is pro-choice, when faced with a pro-life message, will think about reasons they believe why people should have the right to choose an abortion, rather than counter any specific argument the pro-life message includes.

Message distortion is when one processes only a portion of the message, in such a way that the understood message does not conflict with, or is supportive of, the individual's original thoughts (Jacks & Cameron 2003). It is what we might commonly refer to as "selective hearing."

Social validation is a resistance method in which the target thinks of other trustworthy individuals who share the original attitude (Jacks & Cameron 2003). These individuals can include experts as well as trusted members of one's social circle, such as friends and family. By bringing to mind trusted sources, the target validates his or her own beliefs by rationalizing that other important people share the same attitude, and therefore must be correct in their thinking. The next type of persuasive resistance is source derogation. It is when the target attempts to invalidate the persuasive message's source. This might be done through putting forth any evidence that the sources' expertise or trustworthiness should be questioned, or just blatantly

deciding that the source is unreliable. Both social validation and source derogation do not require a full understanding of the message to be implemented; as long as there is a general cognitive recognition that the new thoughts introduced are unfavorable, these two resistance strategies can be triggered in response.

A person utilizes negative affect when they respond to a persuasive message with a negative emotional response (Jacks & Cameron 2003). Instead of calmly absorbing the message, they respond with anger or irritation, which negates its persuasiveness. Emotional responses of this kind, not only in the form of internal thoughts but also as physical expressions, have been found to create lasting impressions and attributions (Lewinski, Fransen & Tan, 2016). Negative affect as a resistance strategy further associates the negative emotion with the topic at hand. In the case of advertising, this might mean that a negative association is being formed with the product or the brand.

The seventh and last major resistance method is selective exposure. Instead of allowing themselves to be in a position where they could be receptive to the message, people utilizing selective exposure opt out of the conversation entirely (Jacks & Cameron 2003). This can be as simple as tuning out someone's words when they're speaking about a subject one does not want to be moved on. It is one of the simplest methods commonly used to resist advertising. We can see selective exposure at play when someone walks away from the TV during commercial breaks, or in the popular usage of ad-blocker applications. Furthermore, some marketers who specialize in digital and social medias use the term "echo chamber" to describe how the content that we see online strongly reflects our own existing attitudes and opinions. The echo chamber is a good example of how consumers use selective exposure to resist advertising, even without employing any active choices to do so.

The Advertising Perspective

While the core techniques of persuasion have remained present for many years, advertisers are also constantly adapting to the times. As the world and media spaces evolve, so do creative strategies and executions. The way brands talk to consumers has changed over the years. The strategies behind messaging in advertising have evolved to make a more meaningful promise to the consumer beyond the “this product is great!” of old advertising. Executions have gotten more creative in the ways to reach the consumer, attempting to appeal to the consumer in unexpected ways.

One of the ways advertisers have tried to make advertising more appealing is through authenticity. As previously discussed, skepticism is a defense mechanism used to detect false or misleading claims. The prevalence of consumer skepticism often leads to an assumption that if an ad is truly honest, it would be believable. However, even completely honest advertising does not always work. Studies show that when advertisers use honest advertising, the same claims often end up being repeated over and over by several different parties. This leads consumers to believe that it might be too good to be true and they end up raising their guard towards hidden persuasion (Koslow, 2000). The effects of this can be severe. As found in previous studies, “subjects motivated to not believe claims do so by calling up the beliefs and inferential rules that could be used to question it” (Kunda 1990) meaning if consumers are not motivated to believe, they will ask pointed questions for a reason to disbelieve it. As a result, authenticity is a highly valued trait in a lot of new advertising. Brands are given a voice that makes it feel as if the brand were an individual person, rather than an unfeeling corporate entity.

In forming this voice, brands have a tendency to maintain either a hard-sell or a soft-sell technique that carries throughout their advertising campaigns. The hard sell technique uses a

direct approach, providing reasons why the product's features directly benefit the consumer. It is based on factual and rational decision making (AdAge, 2003). This can be an effective choice for brands whose products have very notable unique product features that would interest the consumer on their own. It can also be good for products that a consumer would actively do research on and make a practical decision about before purchasing. However, the problem with hard-sell advertising is that it has a blatantly high selling intent. Recall that a higher pressure to buy is negatively correlated with preference for the product. Therefore, many brands decide to take a soft-sell approach instead.

Soft-sell advertising is subtler and often taps into emotional perspectives rather than rational ones. These ads focus on forming positive emotional association with the brand (AdAge, 2003). Soft-sell advertising often tries to sidestep resistance rather than face it head on. It redefines the relationship between brand and consumer. This is done by using language that people are not instinctually trained to associate with persuasion (Knowles & Linn, 2004). Instead, it uses language that the target audience would instinctually respond well to, language that minimizes the call to action and focuses on building a lasting positive emotion, such as happiness, in the consumer. Emotional and affective responses to advertisements have been found to increase the persuasiveness of the ad (Lewinski, Fransen, Tan, 2016). Typically, consumers do not bother to actively regulate their emotions when viewing advertising, which allows room for positive emotions to be subconsciously linked to the brand.

Positive Emotions in Advertising

At least 40% of ads have an intended use of positive emotions in their persuasion, because people like to consume content that makes them feel good (Lewinski, Fransen, Tan, 2016). As such, one technique commonly used to make creative executions more appealing is by

adding humor. Many brands selling consumer products like to use humor to make their brand appear more interesting, or to generate conversation. But humor does not work for every advertisement, and not every brand. Psychological studies have been able to provide perspective on the effects of humor, which can lead us to infer when humor has the best chances of working in favor of a brand.

Humor works because it distracts from negative thoughts and enhances positive ones. It often causes a physical reaction, such as smiling or laughter. Studies show that our physical expressions of emotion have some effect on the type of associations that we form: we tend to like something more if we're smiling when we encounter it versus when we're not (e.g. Lewinski, Fransen, & Tan, 2016). Humor has also been found to assist in boosting attention, cognitive positive responses, and recognition (Lewinski, Fransen, & Tan, 2016).

Humor in ads is even more effective when paired with a weak argument as opposed to a strong one. This may be because doing so maintains a single-minded focus; this way, the humor does not distract the audience away from critical processing and forcing the audience to split their attention (Strick, Holland, van Baaren & van Knippenberg, 2012). A brand may have many things it wishes to communicate to its consumers. However, as many advertisers know, a single-minded proposition is extremely important in order for an advertisement to have a chance to be remembered. Making sure humor does not distract from a strong or complex argument is one way to maintain the concise message that advertisers need for their work to be effective.

Brand associations are important for purchasing decisions that are made after the moment of ad exposure, such as TV commercials. Humor reduces negative brand associations, but humor cannot undo negative associations that already exist in the consumer's mind (Strick et al., 2012). This includes associations to a brand name, as well as certain product categories or industries

that have negative reputations associated with them. Plastic surgery, tobacco, and loan providers are examples of industries with reputations that currently carry negative associations in the United States (Strick et al., 2012). This may explain why many brands that are in categories with boring or otherwise neutral reputations turn to implementing an element of humor into their ads and successfully build positive associations as a result. For example, the insurance category once had a neutral reputation. It had used to be a boring category in which many people showed little to no loyalty towards any one particular brand of insurance over another. However, since insurance companies like Geico, Progressive, and Aflac began making their commercials funny, the positive associations to those brands have gone up. The study by Strick et al. (2012) also showed humor that is thematically unrelated to the existing brand image is also helpful in effective in reducing any negative associations that might otherwise form. The previous case of humor in insurance advertising is also applicable to this factor as well. The most famous example would be Geico's reputation for joking about subjects completely unrelated to insurance; its advertisements contain dogs eating spaghetti, the Egyptian pyramids shaped as cubes, talking raccoons, and many other non-insurance related subjects.

Humor, despite not being able to undo negative associations that already exist, is able to counter negative responses to persuasion. Strick et al. (2012) conducted experiments which supported the hypothesis that humor is an effective strategy in preventing advertising resistance. It is useful in stimulating positive brand associations. Humor's effect on resistance is a two-step process. First, it distracts from the development of negative brand associations. Then, it builds positive brand associations due to the positive emotional impact humor has on the subject. As discussed by Strick et al., "humor distracts attention, and thereby draws on limited cognitive resources that are required to resist the influence of advertising" (2012).

It should also be noted, however, that there are also downsides to humor as a distracting factor. While humor helps build positive brand associations, it also makes it harder to remember brand names (Strick et al., 2012). This suggests that perhaps brands that are running campaigns with awareness being the primary advertising objective should reconsider using humor as the core of their creative executions. However, brands that are already at the forefront of the mind, such as market leaders attempting to expand the category, might find better results when using humor.

Insights

There are several important rules to good advertising, one of which is that a good advertising campaign is always based upon an insight. It is notable that a great deal of advertising is not insight-driven. Many advertisements are created with speed as the most important factor – the advertising industry moves at a rapid pace, attempting to turn out more ads than time allows. As a result, too much advertising contains messages that are not single-minded, as small but distracting additions find their way into ads as the ad is developed. Sometimes advertisements are created without the research to back up the perspective taken. These ads are unrelatable to the consumer and contribute to the clutter that plagues the modern age of advertising.

But when an advertisement is driven by an insight, it can create a strong foundation for a campaign to be built upon. An insight is *not* a superficial quote from a focus group or interview. It is not a fact from the research. It also is not a manufacturer's metaphor, a cliché, or a simple wish/need that the product is supposed to fulfill. The reason an insight is not any of these things is because these things cannot be unique to one brand. The term "insight" as used by advertisers refers to a human truth that can tie the brand to the consumer in some way. Insights are

discovered through understanding the human element that is underneath the facts from research. It is a story that is relevant to the target, a truth that would make the target say, “That is so me!” A good insight provides a new angle to the product and is specific to the target. It digs into an untapped area and forms an emotional connection to the target. There are four major types of insights: cultural insights, product/brand insights, consumer insights, and media insights.

The first type of insight is cultural insights. Cultural insights focus on cultural trends amongst consumers. What new elements of culture are trending? How do social phenomena affect how they interact with the world around them? These are the questions that a cultural insight will touch upon. Cultural insights give brands the opportunity to become part of existing conversations. It gives the brand a chance to take a stance on popular topics and issues. This makes the brand more personable and gives the brand a more intimate relationship with the consumer.

A case study of a successful insight-driven campaign is the “I will what I want” Campaign by Under Armour (example creative: <https://youtu.be/rtX91YGaBXw>). The problem Under Armour faced was that athletic women rejected the Under Armour brand as they saw Under Armour as an “alpha male” brand. For this study, Under Armour conducted opportunity research to find that there was potential to expand its female targets. This study then used qualitative research based on mobile diaries to find out how the Athletic Woman defined herself, and what fitness meant to her. The study also used a focus group of 10 cultural leaders that the target admired to get into the mindset of the consumer and understand the cultural context surrounding the target. They discovered that “fitness” to athletic women is not a competitive endeavor but a personal one. Women face a lot of judgment as messages targeting generalize what women should aspire to and gender roles are a large cultural problem that has been

prevalent in recent years. The expectations about what a woman should be has created a lot of pressure on women. They arrived at the following insight: a woman has the right to decide for herself who she wants to be. By understanding women's attitudes towards the category and messages being sent by competitors, Under Armour found a way to tap into the cultural conversation and position itself differently from its competitors. They reframed performance as an act of inner strength in their "I will what I want" campaign, which generated conversation and resonated with their consumer.

The second type of insight is a brand insight. A brand insight can be about the brand's image, the product/service itself, or even about the brand's competitors. When developing a brand insight, one has to consider how targets feel about the brand. What do they believe about the brand and where does the brand stand in comparison to other options? A brand insight may identify an unconsidered usage of the product or shed light on a new way to display a unique product feature.

A case study of a brand insight driven campaign is the "Hunt the Truth" campaign promoting Halo 5 (example creative: <https://youtu.be/Gd1VjjarUI0>). The problem with promoting the Halo 5 game was that gamers expected the Halo 5 story to offer the same old story as in the previous games, leading to lack of conversation about the game. The Halo franchise carries a well-known storyline that places the character of Master Chief as the hero. This became a weakness, because after four games, it was predictable and Gamers expect something deeper than the expected gameplay. It would have been impossible to promote the new Halo game without fully understanding what pieces of the Halo franchise stood out as expected amongst gamers, so it makes perfect sense to make gamers doubt their own expectations. This study used secondary research, from Nielsen and historical data, to show Halo 5's ranking in the minds of

gamers. They also conducted purchase journey research, which showed that word of mouth opinions had the most influence on gamers' purchasing decisions. This study also included primary research, in which they talked to Halo fans and shooter genre players to understand their view of the structure of the Halo characters and storyline. In the end, there was one universal fact: Master Chief is a beloved hero of the Halo franchise and gamers have grown to expect him to be the victor in the end. The agency had to change this expectation, which led them to the following insight: open ended questions makes gamers rethink what they expect from Halo. The creative solution was to make gamers debate Master Chief's role by making them question who is really the hero and who is the villain.

Consumer insights, as the name implies, seek to discover a new perspective on the target consumer. To develop an impactful consumer insight, an advertiser must first fully understand the consumer and the way the consumer thinks. What personality traits does the target share? What does their world look like? The advertiser needs to understand consumers' habits, opinions, as well as their needs and interests. After all, the best way to communicate to consumers may be to speak their language.

An example of a good consumer insight driven campaign is the "You'd Make a Way Better Rich Person" Campaign for the NY LOTTO. The NY LOTTO needed to address the problem that it was being viewed as "old and forgettable" by contemporary New York lottery players (millennials). This study generated an insight through mostly secondary research, including a study done by the Harris Group. The researchers also looked into the type of jackpot advertising that existed in the past. The agency's case study notes that they thought about doing focus groups of New Yorkers, but realized that New Yorkers are too competitive, outspoken, and critical by nature. Social listening was also used to identify jackpot aspirations of the target.

What they discovered was that LOTTO has produced more New York millionaires than any other game. Millennials find excessive material spending absurd. New Yorkers are competitive people. This led to one major insight about their consumer: New Yorkers believe that they can do anything better. This lent itself to the creative solution of challenging New Yorkers to prove that they'd "make a way better rich person." The personality of the consumer - New Yorkers, mostly millennial - is what made this campaign so successful. Using the judgmental attitude of New Yorkers meant speaking in a language that New Yorkers could relate to. They found that New Yorkers are naturally competitive and critical, so it's no surprise that inviting them to act on these two characteristics would boost sales and conversation.

A media insight is a new perspective on how to make better use of the space used to reach the target audience. How does media fit into the consumer's lifestyle? When and why does the consumer use a certain type of media? With a focus on how the target consumer interact with various media, an advertiser might discover a new way to present the information needed to get the key message across.

One successful campaign that can serve as a media insight case study is the "Smell My neck" Campaign by P&G Prestige Fragrances (example creative: <https://youtu.be/z6yeeFfHXB0>). The problem P&G was facing was that consumers can't smell the fragrances they're shopping for online so the usual sale tactics for the market category, such as perfume samples, can't be used. Through primary research methods, the agency discovered a new way to use the media. The major part of the research was the social experiment between blindfolded strangers to see how people would describe the scents and the person wearing them from smell alone; the video from this experiment was eventually used in the creative for the campaign. The idea for this was rooted in research through discussion, in which the researchers

explored ways smell adds to a person's sensory experience. They found that scent and sight are linked and scents can trigger memories and emotions. The challenge posed required an approach that was limited to the medium, mobile and online shopping. Since one can't have a firsthand experience of smelling the perfumes offered, the challenge was to find a way of expressing the same experience without actually smelling it. Scent can only be described, either audibly or visually, through a screen. P&G found that the way to translate a scent through a screen is with descriptions of the emotions someone experiences while smelling the perfume. All of this led to one major insight: Scent has the power to evoke powerful emotions, especially when people are deprived of sight. Describing scent emotionally allows consumers to relate to the product, making it a great way to approach the media problem P&G had been struggling with.

Unusual Media

Even if not driven by a media insight as the campaign focus, the medium in which an advertisement is placed can play a huge role in how well the ad's message is received. For example, despite generally having a greater reach, ad avoidance is also higher for TV than other mediums, such as print (Rumbo, 2002). Advertising avoidance strategies are also particularly easy to employ to "more technologically advanced media," (Rumbo, 2002). There is more clutter in these spaces, therefore the tactics used in these spaces are designed to make sure the message demands a more visceral response in order to capture the audience's attention. As such, there is a push for advertisers to be more innovative with their use of media. Numerous award-winning campaigns feature advertisements that push the boundaries in regards to where an ad can be located, the integration of new technologies, as well as using old platforms in unusual ways. The lines between traditional and nontraditional marketing are blurred. There are too many examples of unexpected use of media to note, so only three tactics will be discussed in this paper: native

advertising, guerrilla advertising, and providing a service to the consumer. These are examples of the many nontraditional methods of advertising that are growing increasingly popular in the fight against consumer resistance.

Native Advertising. Native advertising is a relatively new method employed by advertisers to bypass the resistance consumers have against their messages. With almost half of online news users using adblockers, it has become increasingly hard to reach a desired audience in the digital space. Unlike some traditional forms of advertising, native advertising is able to grab consumers' attention more effectively. It is when a piece of content, sponsored by a brand, is placed amongst the rest of content. An example of native advertising is BuzzFeed articles, which are often sponsored by brands. Native content is more relevant and intriguing for consumers, providing them with editorials and articles that they would actually read in their free time, but simply incorporating a brand message. According to *Forbes Magazine*, "People view native ads 53% more frequently than traditional advertisements" (Olenski, 2015). Branded content gets placed into consumers' daily routine instead of forcing them to take time out of their day to pay attention to an advertisement. Studies have shown that even when consumers don't remember the brand that was being advertised, they still take away a significant message from the content (Howe & Teufel, 2014); Consumers remember the content so well that it leads to 60% more conversation. The length and thorough nature of branded content allows for a more relatable and relevant discussion of the product or service being promoted. According to a study done by eMarketer, mobile native video content results in significant ad recall ("Native Mobile Video" 2015). Mobile video sharing is very popular on social media and a lot of times viewers will share the video even if it's connected to a brand. It is clear that native advertising is a

growing category for marketers and can be a valuable way of reaching out and catching the consumer's attention.

Like all media formats, there are several disadvantages to using native advertising. It's riskier than other media choices. Native advertising appears in different formats and therefore successful measurement is inconsistent (Lovell, 2015). It is hard to compare native advertising content to one other content because it is presented across various media, from written articles to videos. Following the measurement methods of just one traditional model would cause the data to lack depth, due to the wide breath of content. As Jack Marshall (2015) reports in *The Wall Street Journal*, "when it comes to measuring success and return-on-investment from native ad campaigns, marketers and publishers say they're still trying to figure out exactly what to track and why." Advertisers track click-throughs, social media sharing, awareness, brand lift, purchase intent, etc. with the intention of measuring impact. The problem is that within this wide range of metrics, there is a lack of consensus on what advertisers define as "most important" to judge native advertising with. Without the ability to clearly identify what metrics matter, it is impossible to compare campaigns or, more importantly, to declare that a campaign has successfully achieved its objective.

Working with the right publisher to create relevant sponsored content is very important in creating successful native advertisements. If the content does not fit perfectly with the publication's existing brand image, it can only lead to dismissal or confusion. News sites lose even more credibility than brands do when they publish obtrusive sponsored content, rendering this newer solution to communicating with the consumer useless. As expressed by Alan Smith, chief digital officer at Assembly, native advertising is "labor-intensive beyond belief, because there are so many companies that need to be part of it" (as cited in Moses, 2016). Brands,

agencies, and publishers all need to work as one to create truly unique content. This direct collaborative effort with publishers to create truly unique content is expensive and takes a lot of time. Many brands cannot make this type of investment; 41% of digital ad buyers choose not to explore mobile native advertising due to the lack of resources and expertise, making it the top reason for advertisers withholding from native advertising. (eMarketer, Why Ad Buyers Have (or Haven't) Jumped on the Mobile Native Train, 2014). Its new and developing structure holds high risks for the brand if not executed seamlessly.

One of the greatest debates about native advertising is that brands that employ native advertising face the risk of losing consumer trust. When a consumer feels a native ad has high quality content, trust increases, a similar effect to earned media. However, high quality content is an exceptional case and not the norm. Studies show that the majority of consumers do not trust sponsored content as a concept (Lazaukas, 2015). Furthermore, there is no standard way to label sponsored content. This consumer confusion often leads to protests about unclear disclosure. By definition, native advertising works to blend in with the content it is surrounded by. Only 16% of people who remember having mistaken an ad for an editorial/article do not find it misleading (eMarketer, 2014). By blending in well, the implication of secrecy causes consumers to easily feel disappointed or deceived upon discovery that the content is really an advertisement. A brand and its content can lose credibility because the consumer knows that sponsored content is working in the brand's self-interest, failing to overcome the problem of consumer resistance.

Guerrilla Advertising. Guerrilla advertising is “a type of marketing that reaches consumers in an engaging and...unexpected way” (Margolis & Garrigan, 2008). It is a technique of marketing that addresses the issue of consumer resistance by making avoidance an unusable tactic. The goal of guerrilla advertising is to grab the target audience's attention when they're not

expecting it. It takes the consumer by surprise and often generates social conversation about the brand. By definition, guerrilla advertising typically takes place in a public place, such as on the street or in shopping centers, but the location can be much more unusual, such as in public bathrooms. As a result, guerrilla advertising has been shown to gain high visibility with a low budget, especially compared to traditional advertising campaigns (DeMers, 2016).

No two guerrilla campaigns are the same, because unlike traditional media, there are no media boundaries on what can or cannot be done. Most advertising is bound by all sorts of limitations. Guerrilla advertising allows for creatives to take advantage of the creative liberties associated with it and the creative can stretch beyond what is typical. It can be through a pop-up shop, event, stunt, installation, or anything else. This creative freedom leads to a low sense of repetition; the ad isn't interpreted in a way that fits with the normal schema for advertising (Hutter & Hoffmann, 2011). That means it can help decrease the pressure that triggers a resistance response from the target audience. The brand gets showcased in a unique way that further develops or enforces the brand's message, voice, and personality. In addition, successful guerrilla campaigns also have a tendency to carry a high level of engagement with the consumer.

An example of such a campaign is Nike's "Unlimited Stadium." Working with BBH Singapore, Nike created a pop-up running track that spanned over a whole city block in Manila. It was a 200 meter track shaped into the lunar footprint. A RFID tracker on the shoe recorded the runner's best time for running a lap. The stadium's running track invited runners to engage in a race against their own best times. The track was lined with LED screens that projected an avatar of the runner, giving the target a chance to experience a race against his or her virtual counterpart. Up to 30 runners could participate at the same time.



As running is a core part of Nike's brand identity, The Nike Unlimited Stadium aimed to challenge the concept of running itself. It challenged runners to be better than their best by providing the means to do it, by engaging with the ad. It was like a competition, but against the person whose time mattered the most to the runner: themselves. It gave their best time a personable figure, so runners felt the satisfaction of beating an actual person, even if it wasn't anyone else. The Nike Unlimited Stadium made people want to engage with it rather than shy away as they do towards an advertisement. Events like this give the target audience something to talk about organically, which helped expand the reach of the campaign beyond those who experienced it firsthand.

There are some major drawbacks to guerrilla advertising. Although guerrilla campaigns can be much more budget-friendly than traditional advertising methods, they can require higher time investment (DeMers, 2016). This is because without standard formatting to adhere to, guerrilla strategies require each detail to be thought out and planned in order to make sure it is in line with the intended brand voice and message. Also, since part of what makes guerrilla advertising so successful as a tactic is the element of surprise, there is going to be a factor of unpredictability. Unlike buying a TV spot or a digital ad, guerrilla campaigns have no guarantees

over how much exposure they will actually get. This requires a lot of preparation research and planning in order to raise the odds, but there will always be an element of luck involved. There is the risk that an advertisement won't catch people's eye enough for them to stop and engage with it. There's also the risk that people could misinterpret what is going on, and not make the positive brand connection (if a connection at all) that the advertiser hopes for. In the end, guerrilla advertising can be good at bypassing resistance because consumers' attention is caught before their automatic responses of resistance kick in, but it doesn't necessarily mean it'll be successful at getting the consumer to remember what the brand wants them to.

Providing a Service. Another way of making advertising more appealing to consumers is by creating something that provides a service to the consumer – either in tandem with the product, or beyond it. With the digital age, this is a tactic that has become easier to execute. This tactic attempts to soften the pressure to buy that has caused strong consumer resistance to develop using Cialdini's model of reciprocity, giving the user something that they find helpful to have.

One of the most popular ways to do this is through mobile apps. As a large majority of the population are users of smartphones, apps are easily accessible. We use our phones for almost everything already – adding another feature, sponsored or not, that helps the consumer in their daily life can give the consumer the incentive needed to allow the advertising into their life. A simple example of this is WD-40's Haunted Door app. The app was made for Halloween; when it was activated, the user would slip it into a doorknob sleeve, causing it to play a creaking noise every time the user opened the door for trick-or-treaters. It was something users found fun, because it paired well with Halloween traditions. Users who downloaded the app for Halloween would be using it all night, thereby increasing exposure to the brand. This sort of campaign isn't

typically thought of as an advertisement by consumers, because it specifically doesn't give any pressure to buy – the app is free and while it is branded, nowhere does it tell the user that they should be buying WD-40. Instead, how the app linked back to the brand was by heightening awareness of creaky doors. Research showed that most people get used to their less creaky doors, so the app was a clever way of dramatizing the problem without formally addressing it.

Providing a service can be fun and enjoyable, like the WD-40 Haunted Door app, but it can also be useful in solving a serious problem. One example is the Samsung Safety Truck. Argentina had the highest rate of traffic accidents in the world, most of which were caused by overtaking on two-lane roads. Samsung put their monitors on the back of their semi-trailer trucks, which projected the video from a wireless camera attached to the front of the truck. This way, drivers could see the road ahead which the truck would normally be blocking. This allowed drivers to overtake safely, consequently saving lives. Once again, this type of advertising gave consumers no pressure to buy and sidestepping resistance. What it did was align the brand with a service that displays its brand values. Providing consumers with something that they want or need gives the brand a more personable feeling. It shows that the brand cares about the people, and not just as consumers. This could cause those who experienced the ad to form positive associations that could affect their purchasing decisions later on.

Conclusion

We've now examined the situation from both the consumers' perspective through the psychological literature covering resistance and persuasion and the advertisers' perspective through the persuasive tactics used in advertising. Advertisers often talk about the problem as "breaking through the clutter" (e.g., Howard, n.d.; eMarketer, 2016), which is an important factor to address when making sure advertising messages are effective. However, after examining the psychological studies done on consumer resistance, it is clear that the problem of advertising resistance is a complex matter. There are many different ways consumer resistance becomes manifest. As discussed, advertisers have already adapted many methods of fighting back against this resistance. Even so, there is still a lot of room for improvement: 50.9% of marketers say creative content needs to be improved and 44.6% of marketers say creative messaging needs to be more relevant (eMarketer, 2016). By keeping relevant psychological information in mind, advertisers might be able to improve by better understanding the consumer's mind. Understanding the psychology behind the consumer's responses to persuasion can also allow for advertisers to identify the problems in faulty advertising. Consequently, it could provide a chance for advertisers to communicate more effectively to the consumer.

The first conclusion I've drawn from this literature review is that advertisers should keep an open mind in exploring how to sidestep or prevent resistance, rather than focus solely on breaking through it. As stated in an approach-avoidance psychological model studied by Eric Knowles and Jay Linn (2004), "Resistance may be dealt with more indirectly by taking away the need for resistance" (p. 102). Their work showed that intentional and carefully placed distractions can help disrupt the formation of resistance against various forms of persuasion. It also showed that conversations are more effective than a one-way lecture or pitch. The

increasing use of unusual media and social media has shown that advertisers are trying to utilize this type of strategy through directly interacting with consumers. However, as with various traditional media, a direct interaction is not always possible. In these cases, it might be a good idea for advertisers to consider adopting a more conversational tone rather than a strictly informative one.

Taking this into account, one important element of psychology that advertisers ought to keep in mind while creating advertising is reactance theory. As discussed in the first section of this paper, something that is perceived to be infringing on consumers' freedom of choice could trigger the response of consumer resistance. It could be advantageous for advertisers to consider this during the beginning of the strategic and creative processes. Advertisers need to take into account the idea that it may be more effective to take a step back and allow the consumer to come to the desired conclusion on their own. A lot of the successful advertising campaigns studied show some sort of mental twist and/or triggered curiosity in the consumer. So instead of keeping a strictly informative tone, it could be better for advertisements to allow the consumer to think and respond in their own way. Consumers do not respond well to demanding advertising, as previously discussed, due to the boomerang effect. Consumers feeling like the ad is putting a lot of pressure on them to follow a directive can increase advertising avoidance, one of the most notable forms of consumer resistance. Advertisers should keep this in mind when deciding how they want to include the call to action in an advertisement. A call to action is any device designed to prompt an immediate response or encourage an immediate sale, usually taking place at the end of an ad. Typical call to actions are asking the consumer to purchase a product, share a post on social media, or sign up for something. As advertisers work to make their content more interesting and tailored to the consumer, they should not forget that they should do the same with

the call to action. Keeping in mind the psychology during the creation process might help remind advertisers of why it is important that the call to action in an ad inspires the consumer to take action, rather than make the consumer feel pressured.

There is another factor I found in the psychology literature that I believe could be beneficial if taken into further consideration by advertisers. Mentioned as part of the principle of commitment and consistency is the fact that all humans instinctually want our behaviors to align with our choices, beliefs, and self-imagery. Advertisers should also find it important to keep in mind that maintaining our choices, beliefs, and self-imagery extends beyond the intended messaging. A number of cognitive resistance methods, including message distortion and selective exposure, show us that trying to convince a consumer of something they don't already believe in is an arduous task. This means that when rebranding a product or simply trying to make a product more appealing to consumers who are on-the-fence, it can be more challenging for advertisers to attempt to revoke the consumer's existing impression about the brand. Instead, they may want to play up an existing but unexploited connection the brand has to its target consumer, while maintaining a sense of consistency with what the consumer already believes about the brand.

As such, it is important that advertising aligns brands and their messages to the values of the consumer. Many successful award-winning advertisements have done this. When considering the modern social climate, there are many different beliefs that a brand can choose to identify with. Yet some of the "biggest campaign fails" of the past year are failed attempts to make this connection (Pollack, 2017). Perhaps it would be beneficial to further test ads against the target demographic (and maybe also against a random sample) to confirm the connection is on-brand before it runs. When doing this, advertisers may especially want to consider the various ways a

consumer might interpret the brand's message when missing a piece of the full story. As lots of advertising is part of a larger campaign, the story is usually bigger than just one ad. An example of this is a Dove body wash campaign in 2017, which became dubbed as the "Dove Racist Ad" because a 13 second online video clip contained a black woman changing out of a nude top and turning into a white woman (Ogunyemi, 2017). The section of the clip was only a few seconds of a clip, which was promoting a larger piece of advertising, mainly the TV commercial that was intended to be the focal point of the campaign. In the aftermath, the black woman in the ad stated that those few seconds of video were simply misinterpreted when viewed alone instead of as part of the full video. Knowing the resistance methods that can lead consumers to take things out of context in such a way, advertisers need to consider how a consumer might react to each individual ad as a standalone because consumers might not see the full story and perhaps not in the order advertisers intend. Also, despite advertisers' efforts to make sure that advertising has a concise, single-minded message, the truth is that advertisers are not always successful in doing so. In these cases, it is probably in the advertisers' and the brand's best interest to review the different parts to the advertising's persuasive message to make sure that they all trigger the same, positive, associations.

To consider another side of accidentally provoking a negative association, recall the way emotional responses manifest in physical expression have been found to create lasting impressions and attributions. It will be useful to combine this with what we know about negative affect, as part of the cognitive response model. Provoking the wrong physical response could possibly lead to the consumer making emotional associations that are detrimental to the brand image the advertisements are working to build. For example, when examining the reasons why humor can be an effective tool in advertising, it was found that the physical sensation of smiling

when a consumer views an ad can assist in the creation of positive associations towards the ad. In the same vein, advertising that causes negative physical reactions, such as frowning, may assist in creating negative associations. This can take effect even if the main message is not something that the consumer dislikes but would have been neutral to otherwise. That's not to say that all ads should be "feel good" ads. But, due to this factor, it could be useful for advertisers to consider not only how the consumer will respond to the message, but also how the consumer might respond to the way the message is packaged and presented.

There is a lot of advertising out there and a lot of it gets passed by. The modern, digital, age provides us with more information than ever before, and with it, the problem of information saturation. Consumers only have so much psychological space they can give to consume advertising content; because of this, consumer resistance towards advertising is a prevalent problem for brands and their advertisers. After looking at published articles from the psychology literature, advertising news, and advertising campaigns case studies, it is clear to me that there are some factors regarding how consumers respond to persuasion that are not fully considered by advertisers during the creation process. By keeping some of these psychological techniques in mind throughout the ad creation process, there is a chance that advertisers can improve the messages shown to consumers. Advertisers are guides that aid brands in their attempts at connecting to the consumer. There is no formula on how to form this connection or how to create the perfect advertisement. One thing that we can conclude is that knowing more about how the consumer thinks could potentially provide advertisers with the insight and inspiration to create more effective advertising. Understanding the psychology of consumer resistance is the first step in combatting it.

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