



Merchants *of* Discontent

Critical Issues on Advertising

Muhammad S. Rabiú



Merchants of Discontent:

Critical Issues on Advertising

Merchants of Discontent:

Critical Issues on Advertising

By

Muhammad S. Rabi

Stirling-Horden Publishers Ltd.
Gaaf Building, 110-112 Oyo Road,
Orogun, Off University of Ibadan,
Second Gate, Ibadan, Oyo State,
Nigeria. Phone: 08023519154
stirlinghorden@yahoo.com
www.stirlinghorden.com

University Post Office
Box 20984
Ibadan
Oyo State, Nigeria

7 Ikioda Street
Jattu-Uzairue
Edo State, Nigeria

© Muhammad S. Rabi

First Published 2009

ISBN 978-032-541-7

All Rights Reserved

Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act of Nigeria, this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form, or by any means, only with the prior permission in writing of the publishers, or in the case of reprographic reproduction, in accordance with the terms of licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, enquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to the publishers

Stirling-Horden Publishers Ltd.
Lagos, Ibadan, Benin City, Jattu-Uzairue.

Acknowledgement

I will like to acknowledge my colleagues in the Department - Mr. Samuel Akpede, Dr. Chris Iyimoga, Dr. (Mrs.) Acholonu; and others for their cooperation and encouragement. They were all helpful in contributing to this work by offering useful suggestions.

I also thank the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and other faculty members.

Foreword

The book, *Merchants of Discontent: Critical Issues in Advertising*, has given us a brief background to what advertising is, without pretence that it constitutes a good source of entertainment, information and can be very exciting; correspondingly it may be deceptive. This, among other vices, are complaints arising from what advertising presents to customers. The overall intention is to move consumers to countenance favourably the merchandise put forward in the market and to patronise them. Nevertheless, the claims beneath the advertising messages could be obscure, disguising superstitious and false. Equally, sometimes the messages may counter religion, culture and philosophy of a people. It is when advertising violates these fundamental aspects of society that there is growing discontent. Some countries have evolved stiff laws to regulate advertisement while in some countries the regulation is lax or may not exist at all particularly among developing markets.

In the United States, for example, the criteria for determining deception is viewed against the backdrop of whether the claim is false; whether the information presented is partially true and partially false; whether the message lacks sufficient information, whether claim is true but the proof is false and whether the message creates a false implication. The same standard should be applicable in all countries and adopted universally so as to avoid deceptive practices which are capable of being harmful not only to the consumers but also to honest advertisers and their public image of advertising generally. The author acknowledges advertising as a source of social influence and delved into its ethical question agreeing that consumers are affected by the quality of the ethical decision of the agencies having to do with honesty and fairness in presenting products to the public. Thus, he advances concerns like deception, false claims and manipulations. Most at the areas the book has touched are illuminating; particularly on the concepts of advertising, its uses and how advertising agencies operate.

It is therefore, a good initial step towards understanding advertising and given the level of research and the points raised, I have no hesitation

in recommending this book not only to interested students and general readers but scholars in Mass Communication, Sociology, Business Administration and Economics.

Prof. J.A. Sambe FNIPR JP

Department of Mass Communication,
Benue State University,
Makurdi.

Preface

Advertising has become an integral part of our social and economic systems. Over the years, it has grown tremendously, both as a business activity and as a social phenomenon. It has affected not only business but also the whole society. These days, anyone living and working in any modern society is under its influence. Day after day, and for most of our lives, we see, read, watch and listen to advertisements.

Advertising is an inevitable companion of industrialisation. For example through it, new companies e.g. MTN, Globacom, Zain, Etisalat, Starcomms; and others, have an easier time entering the telecommunications market. It helps the young companies or a company with a recent product take on the giants in the industry and take their places of pride in the market place. The shoemaker can make pairs of shoes and sell to passers-by, but a shoe factory has to sell to thousands of people all over the country, and advertising can reach them.

Advertising is fun. It can be exciting, inventive and entertaining. It has an IPR function: i.e. it informs, persuades and reminds. It is a colourful, diverting aspect of our life, and many of the creations of advertising men are tasteful, honest works of artistry; but sometimes, they are not.

In advertising, it is plain that all that glitters is not gold. Inescapably, consumers have a wide range of complaints. For years, critics have denounced and denigrated advertising for allegations of statistical manipulation, craftiness, extravagance, negative political advertisements; and others. The biggest controversy concerns how much of freedom of speech should be given to advertising. A related debate revolves around the nature of truth in it. Critics contend that some advertisements lie outright, while others are subtle deception. Other arguments swirl around advertisements that affect children.

Some believe that no advertisements should be directed at children, and that promoting drinking and smoking can be detrimental to teens or teenagers. Other critics bother about the ways advertisers influence the news and information that a medium carries.

Clearly, every coin has two sides, and so advertising is both applauded and attacked. It has been contentious right from the first printed advertisements to those currently being developed for the World Wide Web. Accordingly, this investigative effort identifies those most critical issues facing advertising today. The title of the book even suggests it. The word 'discontent' hints:

- envy;
- uneasiness;
- depression; and
- regret – states that a consumer passes through, if he or she considers the disapproving or disparaging side of advertising.

Muhammad Sani Rabi,
Keffi

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Acknowledgement | v |
| Foreword | vii |
| Preface | ix |
| Chapter 1 | 1 |
| First Things First | 1 |
| Introduction | |
| What is Advertising? | 1 |
| Background on Advertising | 2 |
| The Advent of Advertising Agencies | 4 |
| From Brokers to Agencies | 4 |
| Chapter 2 | 9 |
| How Advertising is Conceived | 9 |
| The Creative Team : Authors and Encoders of Advertising | 9 |
| Ingenuity in Writing Advertising Copy | |
| Chapter 3 | 11 |
| The Puzzle with People | 11 |
| Irritations about the Public | 11 |
| Psycho-Persuasion in Merchandising | 11 |
| Chapter 4 | 21 |
| Advertising: A Social Influence | 21 |
| Advertising as Persuasion | 21 |
| Steps in the Persuasive Process | 21 |
| Chapter 5 | 31 |
| Good or Bad? Ethical Questions and Concerns about Advertising | 31 |
| The Ethics of Persuasion | 31 |
| Three Levels of Ethical Responsibilities Applicable to Advertising | 33 |
| Ethical Dilemma or Ethical Lapse? | 34 |
| Other Anxieties and Distrusts about Advertising | 35 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Chapter 6 | 51 |
| Insights into the Phenomenon of Advertising | 51 |
| Review | 51 |
| Discussion: | 52 |
| i. Perception | 57 |
| ii. Perceptual Screens | 57 |
| iii. The Question of Morality | 59 |
| iv. In Conclusion | 60 |
| v. Bibliography | 62 |

Introduction

From their first favourite television and video show, to the first music they liked on the radio, to reading their first comic strip, the media have been in people's lives for as long as they can remember. One element of the media that is almost inescapable is advertising. Azzaro (2004) says 'total 2003 advertising spending in the United States was almost \$ 249 billion'. According to her, advertising business in the United States largely supports the media. She explains that media is the business of delivering content to an audience. Interesting content is what attracts audiences to the media. These audiences then pull advertisers who want their advertisements to be part of that content. Advertisers spend money to buy access through media channels to communicate with consumers who might wish to buy their products, services or ideas.

And those advertisements help to pay for the media that consumers enjoy. Sometimes, advertisements pay for part of a media production, as it is with newspapers and magazines; and sometimes for all the costs, like most television and radio stations do.

What is Advertising?

Today, several definitions of advertising abound. Journalists for example, might define it as a persuasive process; business people see it as a marketing process; economists and sociologists tend to focus on its economic, societal or ethnical significance.

And some consumers might define it simply as a nuisance. Each of these perspectives has some merits.

However, a more functional definition is given by the Nigerian Code of Advertising Practice, published by the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), which says (2005) 'an advertisement is a communication in the media, paid for by an identified sponsor and directed at a target audience, with the aim of imparting correct information about product, service, idea or opinion'. It explains that media, in this case, shall

include, but are not limited to, the newspaper, magazine, radio, television, outdoor, cinema, the Internet and direct mail.

Ginn (1995) reveals that the word 'advertise' comes from the Latin root 'vertere', meaning 'to turn'. According to him, when an advertisement turns a person's head, it has already done half of the job. Once it has a consumer's attention, it may turn his/her ideas about what to buy, think, or do.

Rodman (2004) adds that the American Marketing Association defines advertising as 'any paid form of non personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor.'

Several terms in that definition bear further scrutiny - for example, the word 'paid'. Advertisers might own the media in which advertisements appear but they are still paying for the advertisements in the sense that they pay for the paper in the newspaper or the transmitter at the broadcast station. Because advertisements are paid for, the advertiser has control over what the advertisement says and where it goes. The word 'non-personal' distinguishes advertising from in-person selling, which includes the salespeople in stores or in the streets as well as telemarketers (in US) who always call at dinner time. The words 'presentation' and 'promotion' are used in the definition of advertising to make sure that entertaining messages, as well as informative and persuasive ones, are recognised as advertisements. The expression 'ideas, goods or services' reminds people that advertisement is not limited to commercial products but can also be used to sell ideas, such as political concepts like tax cuts or campaign for reforms. Finally, the term 'identified sponsor' reminds the public that people generally know who placed the advertisement and what that person or group sells.

Background on Advertising

Agee, Ault and Emery (1982) say advertising works in five basic ways:

1. **By Familiarising** – by making something well-known, bringing it into common use. This is absolutely the basic value created by advertising, the one underlying all others.
2. **By Reminding**: A function that may in some cases make advertising pay off.

3. ***By Spreading News:*** Not only news in the newspaper sense, but a special kind of news that only advertising, in the commercial field, can widely deal with.
4. ***By Overcoming Inertias:*** The great drag on all human progress, economic or non-economic, as represented by the sociological term 'cultural lag.'
5. ***By Adding Value not in the Product:*** The most challenging field for creativeness in advertising.

Arens, Weigold and Arens (2008) observe that 'to the economy as a whole, the importance of advertising may best be demonstrated by the abundance principle'. According to them, this concept states that in an economy that produces more goods and services that can be consumed, advertising serves two important purposes: it keeps consumers informed of their alternatives (complete information), and it allows companies to compete more effectively for consumers' money (self interest). They explain that in North America alone, the US and Canadian economies produce an enormous selection of products. Most supermarkets carry more than 30,000 different items. Each carmaker markets dozens of models. And many suppliers compete for the consumers' money. According to them, this competition generally results in more and better products at similar or lower prices.

Furthermore, the scholars say advertising stimulates competition (many buyers and sellers). According to them, in countries where consumers have more income to spend after their physical needs are satisfied, advertising also stimulates innovation and new products. However, the authors note that no amount of advertising can achieve long-term acceptance for products that do not meet consumer approval. Despite massive advertising expenditures, they illustrate, fewer than a dozen of the 50 best-known cars developed in the twentieth century are still sold today.

Additionally, Arens et al (2008) say that advertising stimulates a healthy economy. According to them, it also helps create financially healthy consumers who are more informed, better-educated, and more demanding. As a result, consumers now demand that manufacturers be held accountable for their advertising. This has led to an unprecedented level of social criticism.

The Advent of Advertising Agencies

According to Rodman (2006, p. 408), 'ever since Benjamin Day ushered in the era of the penny press in 1833 with the publication of the *New York Sun*, advertising has been the chief means of support for newspapers.' He adds that most newspapers, however, did not want to maintain a full advertising department. Early newspaper publishers believed that their job was solely about finding and reporting the news, not chasing up advertising accounts. In addition, they often had a difficult time getting paid. Volney Palmer of Philadelphia saw a way to provide a needed service. As an advertising broker, he would act as a liaison between advertisers and newspapers, buying up advertising space from the newspapers at a discount and selling it to advertisers for full price. Volney started the business in 1841, and it soon became widespread. Publishers liked the service because they could now concentrate on the news and still have a steady source of revenue. Advertisers liked brokers because they gave them the ability to advertise in several papers at once. Rodman (2006) reveals that one broker charged a standard fee of \$ 100 for one column inch in 100 newspapers.

From Brokers to Agencies

Rodman (2006) adds that to make advertisements attractive for sale, brokers became proficient at designing them. When they did that, they moved from being merely brokers to being advertising agencies. As advertisers became dependent on agencies, the agencies began to hire professional writers and artists. By 1800, according to Rodman, 30 major agencies were servicing some 4,000 newspapers and magazines. By this time however, many manufactures had become so large that they needed agencies that worked directly for them rather than for the newspaper or magazine. Rodman (2006) says 'the first of these modern agencies was N.W. Ayer & Son, founded in 1869.'

According to Dominick (2002), 'the last few years in the agency business have seen the spawning of super agencies, or mega agencies resulting from the merger and consolidation of several large advertising agencies.' He further says the business has been globalised since these new mega-agencies have branches all over the world. The five mega-agencies, listed in the table above, dominated the industry at the close of 1999:

Table 1: Top Five Advertising Agencies, 1999

| | Company | Headquarters | 1999 income (in billions) |
|----|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | WPP Group/Young and Rubicam London | | \$ 6.69 |
| 2. | Omnicom Group | New York | \$5.74 |
| 3. | Interpublic Group | New York | \$ 5.08 |
| 4. | Havas Advertising | Levallois(France) | \$ 2.39 |
| 5. | Publicis and Saatchi | Paris | \$ 2.17 |

Source: *Dominick (2002)*.

Nigeria's *Thisday* newspaper says there are close to one hundred registered advertising agencies in the country today, with many of them having built many brands considered strong from the scratch. The daily publication ranked the first twelve as follows:

Table 2: Nigeria's top 12 Advertising Agencies

| | Agency | Name of the CEO | 3 Major accounts | Billings | Staff strength |
|----|--------------|--------------------|--|---|----------------|
| 1. | Insight | Mr. Jimi Awosika | Nigerian Breweries, Seven-Up Plc, Bank PHB | Between four and five billion Naira range | 100+ |
| 2. | DDB | Mr. Enyi Odigbo | MTN, Fidelity Bank, Mimcee Noodles | Over four billion Naira | 85 |
| 3. | Centrespread | Mr. Kola Ayanwale | Sky Bank, Zenith Bank, Starcomms | Within one billion Naira range | 77 |
| 4. | SO & 11 | Mr. Udeme Ufot | Guinness, Access Bank, Procter & Gamble | Within One billion range | 70 |
| 5. | Prima Gamet | Mr. Lolu Akinwunmi | Coca-Cola Shell, Multichoice | Over three billion Naira range | 75 |

| | | | | | |
|-----|------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| 6. | Rosabel | Mr. Tunji Abioye | United Bank for Africa, Grand Oak, Toyota | Within one billion Naira range | 80 |
| 7. | TBWA/ CONCEPT | Mr. Kelechi Nwosu | UAC, Stanbic IBTC, Indomie | Within one billion Naira range | 50 |
| 8. | Lintas | Mr. Erhabor Emokpa | Star Lager Beer, Malina, Unilever | (not given) | 75+ |
| 9. | LTC/JWT | (not given) | Nokia, Shell | (not given) | (not given) |
| 10. | Bate Cosse | Mr. Funmi Onabolu | Interswitch, Wema Bank, Virgin Nig. | (not given) | 56 |
| 11. | 141 Worldwide | Mrs. Bunmi Oke | BAT, Etisalat, Virgin Atlantic | (not given) | (not given) |
| 12. | STB McCann | Mr. Rufai Ladipo | Western Union, UBA, Peugeot | (not given) | 80 |

Source: *Thisday* Newspaper, Sunday, Feb. 15, 2009

Advertising agencies, says Baran (2002), are usually divided into departments, the number determined by the size and services of the operation. Smaller agencies might contract with outside companies for the services of these typical advertising agency departments:

- **Administration:** It is the agency's management of its accounting operations.
- **Account Management:** This is typically handled by an account executive who serves as liaison between agency and clients, keeping communication flowing between the two and heading the team of specialists assigned by the agency to the client.
- **The Creative Department:** This is where the advertising is developed from idea to advertisement. It involves copywriting, graphic design, and often the actual production of the piece.

- *The Media Department:* The department makes the decisions about where and when to place advertisements and then buys the appropriate time or space. The effectiveness of a given placement is judged by its cost per thousand (CPM), that is the cost of reaching 1,000 audience members. For example, an advertisement that costs N20, 000 to place in a major newspaper and is read by one million people has a CPM of N20.
- *Market Research:* This department tests product viability in the market, the best venues for commercial messages, the nature and characteristics of potential buyers, and sometimes the effectiveness of the advertisements.

The Creative Team: The Authors and Encoders of Advertising

Arens, Weigold and Arens (2008) say that most advertisements rely heavily on copy, 'the words that make up the headline and message.' The people who create these words are called copywriters. They must condense all that can be said about a product into a few pertinent, succinct points.

According to the authors, nonverbal communication is also used in advertising. That is the purview of the art directors, graphic designers and production artists, who determine how the advertisement's verbal and visual symbols will fit together.

The scholars explain that the agency's copywriters and artists work as a creative team under a creative director. Each team is usually assigned a particular client's business. Each member of the creative team plays an essential role. The team's copywriter develops the verbal message, the copy (words) within the advertisement spoken by the imaginary persona. The copy writer typically works with an art director who is responsible for the nonverbal aspect of the message and the design, which determines the visual look and intuitive feel of the advertisement. Together, they work under the supervision of a creative director (typically, a former copywriter or art director), who is ultimately responsible for the creative product - the form the final advertisement takes. As a group, the people who work in the creative department are generally referred to as 'creatives', regardless of their specialty.

Ingenuity in Writing Advertising Copy

Benice Fitz-Gibbon (1967), one of the most successful advertising women in America, says in writing advertising copy, the materials a copywriter uses are words. According to her, his tools are a *thesaurus* and a large unabridged *dictionary*. Fitz-Gibbon, at various times the advertising director of two rival New York department stores, called Macy's and Gimbel's, states that a copywriter should actually read the dictionary - go through it in the evenings as if it were what it is: an interesting book. She

adds that he should make the job a form of recreation. She further says that the point is to dig up fresh words that are not threadbare. Fitz-Gibbon submits that the skilled copywriter will use few adjectives and adverbs and many verbs and pictorial nouns. According to her, he will also use little surprising words. She asserts that a couple of adjectives make all the difference in the world, all the difference between a mediocre description of an article/product and a description so irresistible that it makes money tumble out of wallets fast.

To illustrate the power of carefully chosen adjectives, Fitz-Gibbon mentions an advertising campaign in which she was involved, for the KLM Airlines. Describing the effort as 'brilliant', she reveals that they came up with two adjectives - 'careful' and 'punctual' - with which they associated the Dutch airline. Observing that though no airline can advertise that it is safer than any other airline, she notes that every word has connotations beyond its literal meaning - overtones that impress the reader mightily. Fitz-Gibbon points out that those two words, 'careful' and 'punctual', ran through the whole body copy of the advertisement and made one feel that everybody in KLM bends over backward in being careful. According to her, nothing could be more irresistibly appealing when one flies than carefulness.

The Puzzle with People

Irritations about the Public

Can one understand people? Shakespeare acknowledges man's riddle and unpredictability when he observed that a person's mind cannot be discerned from the construction of his face. Literature captures this mystery as paradox, a word defined by the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (2000) as an assertion that is essentially self-contradictory, though based on a valid deduction from acceptable premises. It is a seemingly inconsistent statement that may nonetheless be true. Indeed the first paradox is that man is half flesh, half spirit.

Man is full of ambiguities - a streak that has given social scientists and psychiatrists a considerable pondering, leaving them to wonder. He is kind, he is unkind. He loves, he hates. He remembers, he forgets. But more to our point in this work, man is rational and irrational. He is thinking and unthinking. He knows what he wants, and he doesn't know what he wants.

We are always intrigued by people. We love to observe them and we love to read and write about them too. Yet, however hard we may try, to explain or predict it, man's nature or behaviour remains an unattainable wish. Gaining complete understanding of human conduct will forever be elusive.

Still, we remain obsessed about people because the indulgence can be exciting and edifying. Thus, over the centuries, the study of man has fascinated so many individuals, scholars and writers. One of them is Vance Packard, born in 1914 in Pennsylvania, a 1937 graduate of the Columbia School of Journalism, New York, his curiosity in human behaviour led him straight to the work being done by the Institute for Motivational Research in New York and to articles and speeches made by motivational research people throughout America. The outcome of his investigation was a 223-page book, *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957), described by the *Sunday Times* of London as 'alarming, but entertaining.'

Psycho-Persuasion in Merchandising

According to Packard (1957), advertising is a 'strange and rather exotic new area of modern life.' To him, it is about the way many of us are being influenced and manipulated - far more than we realise - in the patterns of our everyday lives. Large-scale efforts are being made, often with impressive success, to channel our unthinking habits, our purchasing decisions, and our thought processes by the use of insights gleaned from Psychology and the social sciences. He adds that typically, these efforts take place beneath our level of awareness, so that the appeals which move us are often, in a sense, 'hidden'.

The use of mass psycho-analysis to guide campaign of persuasion has become the basis of a multimillion-dollar industry. Professional persuaders have seized upon it in their groping for more effective ways to sell us their wares - whether products, ideas, attitudes, candidates, goals or states of mind. This depth approach to influencing our behaviour is being used in many fields and is employing a variety of ingenious techniques. It is being used most extensively to affect our daily acts of consumption.

The findings of Psychology and the social sciences are used to engineer our consent to their propositions. The efforts of the persuaders to probe our everyday habits for hidden meanings are often interesting purely for the flashes of revelation they offer us of ourselves. We are frequently revealed, in their findings, as comical actors. The findings of the depth probers provide shocking explanations for many of our daily propensities and perversities. It seems that our subconscious can be pretty wild and unruly.

What the probers are looking for, of course, are the ways of our behaviour so that they can more effectively shape our habits and choices in their favour. Motivational analysts are learning to offer us considerably more than the actual item involved. It was found out, for example, that women will pay two dollars and a half for skin cream but no more than twenty-five cents for a cake of soap. Why? Because soap only promises to make them clean, but the cream promises to make them beautiful (soaps have now started assuring beauty as well as cleanliness). The women are buying a promise. The cosmetic manufacturers, for example, are not selling Lanolin, they are selling hope. We no longer buy oranges (or other fruit juices), we buy vitality. We do not buy just an automobile, we buy prestige.

Packard (1957) observes that the trend in marketing to the depth approach was largely impelled by difficulties the marketers kept encountering in trying to persuade people to buy all the products their companies could fabricate. One particularly disturbing obstacle was the apparent waywardness and unpredictability of the prospective customers. Marketers repeatedly suffered grievous losses in campaigns that by all the rules of logic, should have succeeded.

The marketers felt increasingly dissatisfied with their conventional methods for sizing up a market. Gradually, many perceptive marketers began to become suspicious of three basic assumptions they had made, in their efforts to be logical, concerning the predictable behaviour of human beings, especially customers.

First, they realised that it should not be assumed that people know what they want. Second, some of the marketers concluded that it cannot be assumed that the people will tell the truth about their wants and dislikes even if they know. What one is more likely to get, they decided, are answers that will protect the informants in their steadfast endeavour to appear to the world as really sensible, intelligent and rational beings. Packard (1957) says: 'One management consulting firm has concluded that accepting the word of a customer as to what he wants is the least reliable index the manufacturer can have on what he ought to do to win customers.'

Finally, the marketers concluded that it was dangerous to assume that people can be trusted to behave in a rational way. The Colour Research Institute had what it felt was an alarming encounter with this proneness to irrationality when it tested a package designed for a new detergent. It was testing to see if a woman is influenced more than she realises, in her opinion of a product, by the package. It gave the housewives three different boxes filled with detergent and requested that they try them all out for a few weeks and then report which was the best for delicate clothing. The wives were given the impression that they had been given three different types of detergent. Actually, only the boxes were different; the detergents inside were identical.

The design for one was predominantly yellow. The yellow in the test was used because some merchandisers were convinced that yellow was the best colour for store shelves because it has very strong visual impact. Another box was predominantly blue without any yellow in it, but the third box was blue with splashes of yellow.

In their reports, the housewives stated that the detergent in the brilliant yellow box was too strong; it even allegedly ruined their clothes in some cases. As for the detergent in the predominantly blue box, the wives complained in many cases that it left their clothes dirty-looking. The third box, which contained what the Institute felt was an ideal balance of colours in the package design, overwhelmingly received favourable responses. The women used such words as 'fine' and 'wonderful' in describing its effect on their clothes.

In another instance, a department store that had become skeptical of the rationality of its customers tried an experiment. One of its slowest-moving items was priced at fourteen cents. It changed the price at two for twenty-nine cents. Sales promptly increased by thirty percent when the item was offered at this 'bargain' price.

One advertising agency, thinking about this seemingly irrational behaviour, made a more thorough study of the reasons why we brush our teeth. It concluded that we are motivated by different reasons, based on individual personalities. Some people, particularly hypochondriacs (suffering from depression), are really concerned about those germs and are swayed by a 'decay' appeal. Another group, mostly extroverts brush their teeth in the hope they will be bright and shiny. The majority of people, however, brush their teeth primarily for a reason that has little to do with dental hygiene or even their teeth. They put the brush and paste into their mouths in order to give their mouths a thorough wash, to get rid of the bad taste that has accumulated overnight. In short, they are looking for a taste sensation, as a part of their ritual of starting the day afresh. According to Packard, at least two of the major paste merchandisers began hitting hard at this appeal in 1955 and 1956. One promised 'clean mouth taste' and the other proclaimed that its paste 'cleans your breath while it guards your teeth.' Later, one of these products got itself a new advertising agency and the new mentor began appealing to the extrovert in people through the slogan 'you'll wonder where the yellow went'. And good results were reported, which simply proves there is always more than one way to catch a customer.

According to Packard, a business journal, *Business Week*, commented on the often seemingly unreasonable behaviour of customers: 'people don't seem to be reasonable... But people do act with purpose. Their behaviour makes sense if you think about it in terms of its goals, of

people's needs and their motives. That seems to be the secret of understanding or manipulating people' (1957).

Another aspect of people's behaviour that trouble marketers is that they are too easily satisfied with what they already have. By the mid fifties, says Packard, American goods producers were achieving a fabulous output, and the output with automation promised to keep getting more fabulous. Since 1940, gross national product had soared more than 400 percent; and man-hour productivity was doubling about every quarter century.

One way of viewing this rich, full life the people were achieving was the glowing one that everyone could enjoy an ever-higher standard of living. That view was thoroughly publicised. But there was another way of viewing it: that Americans must consume more and more, whether they wanted to or not, for the good of their economy. In late 1955, the church publication, *Christianity and Crisis*, commented grimly on America's 'ever-expanding economy'. It observed that the pressure was on Americans to 'consume more, whether we need or even desire the products almost forced on us' (Packard, 1957). It added that the dynamics of an ever-expanding system require that Americans be 'persuaded to consume to meet the needs of the productive process'.

There was a serious thinking on how best to stimulate consumer to buy a product; this however can be achieved by creating wants in people. An auto maker talked of increasing his car sales by selling to those who do not yet know what they need Packard (1957). This urgently- felt need to stimulate people to buy brought new power, glory and prosperity to the professional stimulators or persuaders of American industry, particularly the skilled grey-flannelled suitors of New York's Madison Avenue, known as 'advertising alley'. In 1955, according to Packard, \$9,000,000,000 was poured into United States advertising; up a billion from (2002) reveals that 'about \$215 billion was spent on advertising in US in 1999'.

One big and intimidating obstacle confronting the stimulators was the fact that most Americans already possessed perfectly usable stoves, cars, television sets, clothes; and others. Waiting for these products to wear out or become physically obsolete before urging replacements upon the owners was intolerable. More and more advertising men began talking of the desirability of creating 'psychological obsolescence'. One advertising executive, reveals Packard (1957), exclaimed with fervour: 'What makes this country great is the creation of wants and desires, the creation of dissatisfaction with the old and outmoded'.

Another major dilemma that was forcing marketers to search for more powerful tools of persuasion was the growing sameness of their products, with increased standardisation. Too many people were complacently saying that the gasoline brands were 'all the same' and equally good. According to Packard, the director of research at the *Chicago Tribune*, Pierre Martineau, frankly asked a group of advertising men: 'What difference really is there between brands of gasoline, tyres, cigarette tobacco, orange juice, milk and what have you?.. What is the advertising direction going to be when the differences become trivial or non-existent?' Packard (1957).

Thus it was that for several compelling reasons, marketers began groping for new and more penetrating persuasion techniques, for deeper approaches and better hooks. They needed customer-catching techniques that would be powerful and still not get them in trouble with the Federal Trade Commission which has been taking a sternly righteous and disapproving attitude toward extravagant claims and promises, such as had often characterised some of the advertising copy of yesteryears.

The search for more persuasive ways to sell was summed up colourfully by a car salesman in Atlanta who said of his problem in selling cars in a then-slack market: 'If buyer shopping gets any worse, we will have to hit the customer over the head and get him to sign while he is unconscious'. Packard (1957).

In using psycho-persuasion, the aim is to play on customers' subconscious to condition them to go on unrestrained buying splurges. The psychological consultants shrewdly encourage trends by using psychology to find triggers of action that would propel prospects into a buying mood. Motivation experts have proposed depth-probing methods for promoting and distributing products since the 1930s, according to Packard. He identifies some of the leading names, in this endeavour, as Pierre Martineau, Loius Cheskin and Burleigh Gardner. Others are Professor Dale Houghton of New York University, Lloyd Warner, Director of Colour Research Institute of America, and Dr. Ernest Dichter, President of the Institute for Motivational Research. Dr. Dichter was sometimes called 'Mr. Mass Motivations Himself'. His standard fee for offering advice was \$500 a day. For that amount, the client was apt to get an outpouring of impressive suggestions.

According to Packard, the depth probes, studying the most effective way to sell status symbols to American strivers, concluded that most of them are vulnerable to one of three merchandising strategies.

One is to offer bigness. Millions of Americans were believed to equate subconsciously, biggest with best; best at least at making a big impression. He adds that the yearning to make an impression through bigness has been most vigorously exploited in the automotive industry. People feared that small cars might make them look small in the eyes of neighbours. Therefore, for the reason of prestige, they were influenced to go for big, fat cars. Packard (1957) says:

Professor Smith, in his book on motivation research, offered further evidence on the anxiety that the thought of riding in a small car aroused. People were asked to picture themselves riding in a certain type of compact car. The images which came into the people's minds were of being jolted, tense, cramped and personally small and inferior.

Faced with such evidence, the auto makers stepped up their emphasis on bigness and hammered on the big theme with type and air wave during most of 1956 in order to try to gain a favoured position in a generally difficult market. A Pontiac television commercial dealt at length on 'Your Big Pontiac', and expressed amazement that people had to pay more for 'a small car'. Pontiac, it said, was a 'Big Car with Big Power'. Then, in a bit of theatrics, the announcer (or voice over) exclaimed, 'People are getting smart about car buying nowadays'. With that, the screen showed a crowd chanting, 'We are everybody . . . we want a Big Car, and style too'. Meanwhile, Mercury was pounding away at its 'Big M' theme, and Lincoln was running double-page magazine spreads showing its car stretched the width of two pages: 'Never before a Lincoln . . . so long and so longed for'.

A second way merchandisers found they could sell consumers their products as status symbols was through the price tag. By seemingly inverse logic, many discovered they could increase their sales by raising their price tag, in the topsy-turvy marketing battle of the mid 50s. Many products, besides cars, started to be sold to upward strivers largely on the merits of being the most expensive. Packard (1957) reveals: 'Jean Paton, Inc proudly advertised that its Joy perfume was the costliest perfume in the world'. It was sold at \$45 an ounce.

And so the man who offers a girl such a costly perfume is doing a little advertising of his own: He is letting her know that he has arrived.

The third strategy that merchandisers found was effective in selling products as status symbols was to persuade personages of indisputably high status to invite the rest of us to join them in enjoying the product or service. Using this method, Cristiano Ronaldo, the FIFA World Footballer of the Year 2008, stands up for a bank in Portugal, his home country, encouraging his compatriots to save in it as he does. Similarly, Kanu Nwankwo, a three-time African Footballer of the Year became the brand ambassador for Fidelity Bank in Nigeria. And in its print advertisements, he said: 'We are Fidelity: We keep our Word'. Additionally, at different times, various American stars from film (Clint Eastwood, Bruce Willis, Will Smith, Halle Berry, Angelina Jolie), from music (50 Cent), and from boxing (Muhammad Ali) have praised Chris Aire as makers of 'fine jewellery and timepieces'. Packard observes that the testimonial can be a mighty effective selling device.

Persuaders soon embarked on several bold attempts of unspecified significance to create new, broader or more insatiable demands for their products. This attempt led them to new frontiers for recruiting buyers. Packard says in 1956, motivation researchers created 'psychological obsolescence' as a double-barreled strategy of making the public style-conscious, and then switching styles to all sorts of home appliances. The marketers were driven to it by an ugly economic fact: the overwhelming majority of American families already had refrigerators, washers; and other home appliances. In order to be persuaded to buy replacements, rather than to wait for the old ones to collapse in exhaustion, some powerful influences would have to be brought to bear on the customers. A programme of 'planned product obsolescence' creates new styles and features each year that would make appliance owners dissatisfied with the models they had.

This drive to pump vitality into the appliance industry makes potential buyers watch for style changes in next year's appliances. They tend to consider their model 'obsolete' after two or three years even though it works well, just as a car owner watches year-to-year style changes in cars, and feels the family model is outdated after two or three years, even though it still runs beautifully.

Furthermore, persuaders found that while there are various ways to create a new-styled product that will outmode existing models, use of colour is one of the cheapest ways it can be done. Auto makers went berserk with colour in 1955 and then stressed muted colours in 1956. Typewriters and telephones came out in a wide range of colours in 1956, presumably to make owners dissatisfied with their plain old black models. The phone people were using colour as room-brighteners to get people to order more extensions and thus have 'properly telephoned homes'.

4

Advertising: A Social Influence

Advertising as Persuasion

Of course, most advertising is intended to win converts to a product, service or idea. Some advertisements, such as legal announcements, are intended merely to inform, not to persuade. But, according to Arens, Weigold and Arens (2008) 'they are still advertisements because they satisfy all the other requirements of the definition'.

Galvin and Terrell (2001) say 'persuasion is central to people's lives'. They add that many persuasive messages are encountered through the media. Describing persuasion as a complicated process, they define it as a communication process with a goal of influencing other people.

The authors add that a persuasive message is a communication strategy designed to change people's beliefs or behaviours or to move them to action.

Steps in the Persuasive Process

According to Galvin and Terrell (2001) advertisers, as effective persuaders, use the following four steps to accomplish their aim:

- decide on an audience goal;
 - analyse the audience;
 - create logical emotional and credibility appeals; and
 - organise and deliver the persuasive message.
1. *Deciding on an Audience Goal:* The audience goal is the belief or behaviour the persuader wants his listeners/viewers/readers to adopt.
 2. *Analysing the Audience:* The more the persuader knows about his audience, the easier it is to find the most effective strategy. Advertisers try to appeal to their patrons' needs. All human beings have similar needs. But some needs are more important than others at different times.

According to Abraham Maslow, a psychologist there are five basic types of human needs: physical, safety, belonging, self-esteem and self-

actualisation. These needs range from the most basic (physical) to the least basic (self-actualisation). People need to meet the most basic needs first. After they have satisfied them, they will focus on meeting the higher-level needs. Let's look more closely at Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

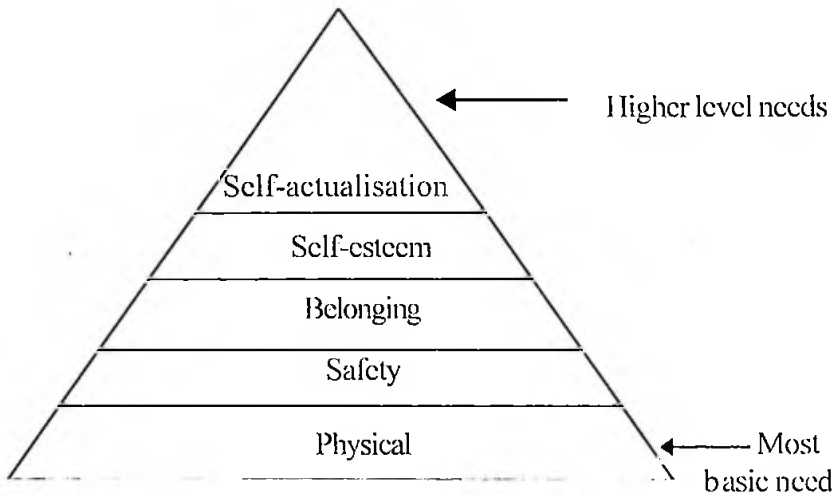


Fig. 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs

- a. **Physical needs:** People need basic things such as food, drink, shelter and medical care for survival. If these needs are not met, life becomes uncomfortable and frightening.
- b. **Safety and security needs:** People need to feel safe and protected from threats and danger. When people feel threatened or live in unsafe school or work environments, they feel insecure. Lack of money or security makes life insecure.
- c. **Belonging needs:** People need warmth and affection and a sense of being part of particular groups or communities of people. The alternative is loneliness and isolation.
- d. **Self-esteem needs:** People need to feel valued. They need to feel that they have freedom, competence in certain areas, respect, recognition, and appreciation.

- e. **Self-actualisation needs:** People need to do what make them fulfilled and what make them feel good about themselves. They want to explore their potential and challenge themselves.

Maslow arranges these needs on a scale from basic to higher-level needs because he believes that the lower-level needs must be fulfilled before the other needs become important. Effective advertisers know audience's current needs and try to show their patrons how the suggested change will help them satisfy their needs while at the same time accomplishing the advertiser's goal.

Creating logical, emotional and credibility appeals: Once an advertiser has a sense of what his patrons' needs are, he has to consider how to appeal to them. According to Galvin and Terrell (2001), the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, first prescribed the three strategies for persuasive speaking. He called them logos, pathos and ethos. Today they are referred to as logical appeals (logos), emotional appeals (pathos), and credibility appeals (ethos). Most advertisers use a combination of these strategies to influence their audiences.

Logical appeals

These propositions make use of solid evidence and sound reasoning. To make a strong argument, the advertiser will need to find valid evidence to support his ideas.

Logical appeals are built on solid evidence such as definitions, facts, statistics, examples, and expert testimony. A speaker uses reasoning to show listeners/viewers/readers the logical connection between ideas.

When an advertiser uses reasoning, he develops arguments based on evidence. There are three major types of reasoning: inductive, deductive and cause-effect.

Inductive reasoning involves using specific pieces of information to make a general conclusion. It moves from specifics to a generalisation. When using inductive reasoning, a speaker lists many pieces of evidence to help listeners draw a conclusion.

Deductive reasoning uses a general idea to reach conclusions about a specific case. It moves from a generalisation to a specific situation. When using deductive reasoning, a speaker states a generalisation which is then applied to an individual example.

Cause-effect reasoning suggests that one event produces another. It suggests that an effect (what happens) can be tied to a specific cause. For example, an advertiser suggests that if one buys a particular sports car, one's social life will improve.

Emotional appeals

These applications use audience's feelings to persuade them. Sometimes this is called an appeal to the heart. People are moved by emotional stories. Many of these appeals are connected to situations involving the basic human needs that make up Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Emotional appeals rely on evidence such as quotes, stories, personal examples or images. Many advertisers use these appeals thoughtfully to tap into audience's feeling. On the other hand, some advertisers employ them irresponsibly by ignoring reason or logic.

Some common emotions to which advertisers often appeal are guilt, fear, freedom, justice, greed, patriotism, belonging, anger and happiness.

Many of these appeals involve ethical issues. Appeals to greed are always a problem. Advertisers tend to exaggerate fears or guilt. Appeals to justice, happiness and fears of real danger can move audiences to take particular actions. Galvin and Terrell (2001) make the point that audiences are more likely to be persuaded more easily by a mix of logical argument and emotion than just by reasoning alone. According to them, 'the key is to appeal to audience's hearts as well as to their heads' (2001).

Credibility appeals

Galvin & Terrill observe that to be effective, advertisers must be credible. According to them, credibility is the quality or power of inspiring belief. They explain that credibility appeals are qualities that make a speaker believable. They stressed that credible persuaders are both believable and trustworthy.

Unfortunately, in advertising, false persuasive strategies are sometimes used. According to Galvin and Terrell, some persuaders use incorrect or misleading methods called faulty appeals, to try to persuade audiences. The scholars explain that these propositions are based on poor, inaccurate, inappropriate or illogical evidence. They caution that listeners/viewers/readers must be prepared to recognise evidence that is based on

faulty appeals so that they are not misled. According to them, examples of faulty appeals include defective evidence, slippery-slope fallacies, stacking, bandwagon appeals, unrelated testimonials, and name calling.

- a. *Defective Evidence*: This is flawed information. The information may be outdated, inappropriate, misleading or simply incorrect. Quoting Kanu Nwankwo (a footballer) as an expert on a nutritional or food technology topic (eg; Peak milk) is one example. Tampering with statistics to create data useful to an advertiser's point is another example.
- b. *Slippery Slope*: This fallacy suggests that once something happens, it establishes a trend and other things, usually bad, will automatically follow: 'If we let the old breed take over, Nigeria shall be doomed politically, socially and economically for a long time to come', a young presidential candidate may say in a political advertisement.
- c. *Comment*: Among thoughtful/critical listeners, viewers and readers, this reasoning (the above example on the old breed in Nigeria) is neither sound nor strong. For example:
 - is it a fact or an opinion?;
 - is it current?;
 - is the source credible? (the young presidential candidate);
 - is it relevant?; and
 - is it valid or representative?

As earlier mentioned, logical appeals are built on solid evidence such as facts, statistics, expert's testimony; and others. For example, if the presidential campaigner had backed up his words with any solid evidence (eg; 'According to the last Forum on Nigerian Governance and Political Statistics Report, 100 percent of old breed politicians have been bad and dangerous choices in leadership'), he would have made a case based on current and valid evidence.

- d. *Red Herring*: This is a claim that is not related to the topic. It ignores the issue under discussion. Galvin and Terrell (2001) explain that 'it is named red herring after the fish that is dragged along a trail for the purpose of leaving a smell that confuses hunting dogs.'

- e. *Glittering Generalities*: These are vague or general statements. Rabiú (2007) explains that ‘they associate something with a ‘virtue word’ to make people accept and approve the thing without examining the evidence’. In this case, advertisers surround their products with attractive and slippery words and phrases. Emotional response may overwhelm logic. Target audiences accept the product without thinking very much about what the glittering generalities mean or whether they even apply to that product e.g: Gold Circle condom, Joy soap, Imperial Leather soap; and others.

Similarly, the advertisements for politicians and political issues often use glittering generalities because such ‘buzz words’ can influence votes. For example, election slogans include high-sounding but basically empty sentences and phrases like the following:

- ‘*He cares about people*’. (Comment: That is nice, but is he a better candidate than his opponent?)
- ‘*Vote for the future*’. (Comment: What kind of future?)
- ‘*If you love Nigeria, vote for candidate XYZ*’. (Comment: If I don’t vote for candidate XYZ, does that mean I don’t love Nigeria?)

- f. *Card Stacking*: This refers to piling up of information in favour of one idea or one side of an issue, with very little backing. The advertisement gives examples or reasons for one side of the issue without explaining them carefully. Rabiú (2007) adds that ‘it is a selecting of the arguments or evidence that support a position and ignoring the arguments or evidence that do not support the position. The arguments that are selected can be true or false. The device probably operates most effectively when the arguments are true, but other equally true arguments are ignored, because then it is hardest to detect’.

Advertisers often stack the cards in favour of the products they are pushing. Some of the clearest examples can be found in movie advertisements that present quotations from movie reviews. These quotations are highly selected to be only the most favourable. An advertisement for a film, for instance, may quote three well-known critics as variously saying:

- ‘First rate and very funny’;
- ‘A triumph’;and
- ‘Never a dull moment in the wonderful film’.

These three critics, no doubt, said these things, but they must have said some negative or less positive things also, and these were not brought out.

Advertisers also use a card-stacking trick when they make an unfinished claim. For example, they will say that their product has ‘twice as much pain reliever. People are left with a favourable impression; people don’t usually ask: ‘Twice as much pain reliever as what?’

In some cases, they may make extremely vague claims that sound alluring on the surface but that have no substance: Toyota’s ‘Oh what a feeling!’ Or, Vintage cigarette’s ‘the task of success’.

- g. *Bandwagon Appeal*: According to Galvin and Terrell (2001) ‘a bandwagon appeal suggests that you should jump on the bandwagon – in other words, do something because everyone else is doing it’. Rabiou (2007) adds that ‘this kind of propaganda often succeeds because people have a deep desire not to be different’.

Political advertisements and commercials tell people to vote for the ‘winning candidate’; the advertisers know that people want to do what the majority is doing. They want to be on the winning team.

Often we see advertisements showing a series of people proclaiming such a sentence as: ‘I am voting for the senator. I don’t know why anyone wouldn’t?’ In this case, the audience feels under pressure to conform to what he perceived everyone else is doing.

In the market place, the bandwagon approach lures buyers. A deodorant is described as ‘the people’s choice’.

When a consumer hears, watches or reads advertisements that include statements such as ‘Everyone has one’ or ‘We are all going,’ he should be aware that he is receiving a bandwagon appeal.

- h. *Unrelated Testimonials*: Galvin and Terrell (2000) say ‘a testimonial is an opinion expressed by a well-known person on a particular subject’. They clarify that testimonials try to persuade listeners by linking positive

feelings for one person, thing, idea or event to a related person, thing, idea or event. Unrelated testimonials try to link things that are not related obviously or validly. Accordingly, if there is no direct, valid connection between the person and the thing receiving the testimonial, the consumer needs to question the testimonial: For example, '*Football great, David Beckham, shops at Leventis stores. You should too*'. Or, '*Be like Omotola Ekeinde. Drink Hollandia milk*'.

- i. *Name-calling*: As described by Galvin and Terrell (2001), 'name calling attacks a person rather than the person's ideas by using unpopular names or labels. They further say it is called an ad hominem argument, that is, attacking the person rather than the argument. Rabiou (2007) adds that 'name calling gives an idea a bad label, and is used to make people reject and condemn the idea without examining the evidence'. For example, in a political advertisement, a presidential candidate may say: 'Conservatives don't deserve your vote. Go for progressives who will bring about change and advancement'.

Advertisements for products also use name-calling e.g; 'There are only two cars in the world: Mercedes Benz and the rest'. By interpretation, all the other brands of cars, which did not even merit any mention, are decreased, diminished and downgraded, thereby hinting the superiority and supremacy of the German-made brand.

Not only that, the unmentioned brands were also described, disdained and dismissed as 'the rest'. Meanwhile valid reasons were not given for the exaltation of the Mercedes brand over them.

Although it is tempting to use some of these eight faulty appeals to convince listeners, viewers and readers, Galvin and Terrell (2001) say the ethical persuader 'uses evidence honestly'. This means he does not exaggerate, use misleading statistics, rely on unrelated testimonials, resort to name-calling or use biased information. The humane, moral and respectable persuader tries to present the best argument with accurate information, careful reasoning and ethical strategies.

Organising and delivering the persuasive message: Galvin and Terrell (2001) observe that although many different organisational forms are used in persuasive efforts, the most commonly used structures are:

- a. statement of reasons (listing of benefits; and others);
- b. problem-solution (describing a way to solve a problem); and
- c. the motivated sequence or 'Hey-You-See-So form'.

This can create an easy and effective outline for persuasive messages. The Hey, You, See and So model, according to the authors, is based on a more elaborate persuasion model called Monroe's Motivated Sequence. The steps in the formal motivated sequence include:

- getting the attention of receivers;
- explaining the need for the advertisement;
- suggesting what can be done to relieve the problem;
- helping receivers picture the benefits of solving the problem; and
- showing what actions receivers can take to solve the problem.

A simplified version can be remembered by memorising the first word in each of the following statements:

1. '**Hey**, listen to me (radio), watch me (television) or read me (newspaper/magazine; and others)!'
2. '**You** need to hear (radio), watch (television) or see (newspaper/magazine) what I am saying'
3. '**See** what it can do for you!'
4. '**So**, what are you going to do about it?'

Galvin and Terrell (2001) say how a persuasive message is delivered is critical to the persuasive process. They submit that chances for success can be improved by paying special attention to specific aspects of the delivery that will directly affect how the persuasive message is received. According to them, because the persuader is trying to change receivers' beliefs or behaviour, he needs to convey a sense of urgency and importance in his delivery.

5 Good or Bad? Ethical Questions and Concerns about Advertising

The Ethics of Persuasion

Some people are easily persuaded, while others are not. Some persuaders are fair, decent and honest, while others are not. Galvin and Terrell (2001) observe that 'often, a persuader is faced with ethical decisions related to questions of right and wrong'. As persuaders attempt to change people's minds, they may be tempted to talk about only one of a controversial issue. According to the authors, ethical persuaders do not ignore information that might weaken their positions. They consider both sides, acknowledge what might be important points on the opposing side, note why they disagree with some or all of those points and try to convince their listeners/viewers/readers why their positions are stronger.

Clearly, in every step of the persuasive process, the persuader will be faced with ethical questions. He will have to ask himself whether he has looked at all sides of the issue and whether he has given his listeners/viewers/readers all the information they need to make an informed decision.

Complaints on advertising have less to do with its existence than with its conduct and content. Most people understand the clear-cut differences in moral choice. They can recognise and decide what is good or evil, right or wrong, honest or dishonest. The question of honesty affects the society, right from a child who tells a visitor that his father is out while he is actually taking a nap in his bedroom, to the mass media that present the news story to favour those in power. But unfortunately, a significant amount of advertising is misleading. Gerald (1965) observed that as long ago as 1924, an international advertising convention held in Wembley, England, adopted a code of ethics exhorting advertising practitioners 'to seek the truth and live by it' and 'to tell the advertising story simply and without exaggeration and to avoid even a tendency to mislead.' But admirable though these sentiments are, he points out that it is almost impossible for those involved to fulfill them. According to him, they earn

their income by selling particular goods and one can hardly expect them to say they think somebody else's goods are better.

Aggressive and ambitious advertisers seem willing to do anything to compel people to buy goods, services and ideas. Major professional organisations adopt codes of ethics. According to Fedler et al, (2006) 'The codes encourage organisational members to adhere voluntarily to the guidelines'. They explain that when a professional faces an ethical decision, he or she can ask several questions, but two of the most important ones are:

- who will be hurt, and how many?; and
- who will be helped, and how many?

Peason et al, (2003) say 'ethics are a set of principles of right conduct'. They added that many principles of ethics are not matters of law, but violations of these rules do have consequences. If consumers later discover deception, they may find the method so distasteful that they reject the medium and its persuasive message.

Similarly, Wright (2009) notes that 'ethics is the division of philosophy that deals with questions of moral behaviour'. He expressed further that outside of individual responsibility, people must assume that they work for somebody who wants to be told the truth. Furthermore, that truth should be respected, and that system of ethics must serve as a cornerstone for any civilised society. The author emphasises that communication cannot be effective without being ethical and socially responsible.

According to Arens et al, (2008) 'ethical advertising means doing what the advertiser and the advertiser's peers believe is morally right in a given situation'. They add that social responsibility means doing what society views as best for the welfare of people in general or for a specific community of people. Together, ethics and social responsibility can be seen as the moral obligation of advertisers not to violate consumers' basic economic assumptions, even when there is no legal obligation.

The scholars point out that the foundation of any human society is the amicable relationship among its members. Without harmony, a society will collapse. Accordingly, all the institutions within a society have some responsibilities for helping to maintain social harmony through proper stewardship of families and companies, exercise of honesty and integrity in all relationships, adherence to accepted ethical standards, willingness to assist various segments of the society, and the courtesy to respect the privacy of others.

The authors further remark that advertising plays an important role. It influences a society's stability and growth. It helps create entertainment events that attract hundreds of thousands of fans, and often affects the outcome of political elections. Accordingly, they point out, such power places a burden of responsibility on those who sponsor, buy, create, produce and sell advertising to maintain ethical standards that support the society and contribute to the economic system.

Three Levels of Ethical Responsibility Applicable to Advertising

Arens, et al (2008) said that three levels of ethical responsibility come into play in advertising. On one level, ethics comprise two inter-related components: the traditional actions taken by people in society or community and the philosophical rules that society establishes to justify such past actions and decree further actions. According to them, these components create the primary rules of ethical behaviour in the society and enable us to measure how far an individual or company (or advertiser) strays from the norm. Here, the individual's rights are subject to the standards of what is customary (and therefore proper) for the group.

The authors further explain that every individual also faces a second set of ethical issues: the attitudes, feelings and beliefs that add up to a personal value system. They then raise a poser: 'When these two systems conflict, should the individual act on personal beliefs or on the obligation to serve the group and its policies?' For example, non-smoking advertising agency people may create advertisements for a tobacco client. At the first societal level of ethics, there is some conflict: smoking has been a custom in the US for centuries and is not illegal up till today. However, the US Surgeon-General has declared that smoking is a national health problem (harmful to the group). This conflict, at the first ethical level, passes the responsibility for decision making to the second, individual level. Because the penalty may be the loss of income, non-smokers may decide to produce the advertisements while keeping their own work area smoke-free. The ethical issue is at least temporarily and partially resolved, or at least rationalised, at the second ethical level.

When the group or individuals cannot resolve an ethical dilemma, they must redefine the issue in dispute. Thus, the third level of ethics concerns singular ethical concepts such as good, bad, right, wrong, duty, integrity and truth. Are these concepts absolute, universal and binding? Or

are they relative, dependent on situations and consequences? A person's moral and ethical philosophy influenced by religion, society and individual values, will determine his or her answer.

Let's say, for example, the copy writer for a cigarette advertisement is a smoker, and he writes copy that implies that smoking is a favourable behaviour. But the advertising's art director, a non-smoker, complains that the advertisement is unethical because the copy conflicts with the truth that smoking is actually an unsafe behaviour. At this point, they reach the third level, and a more senior person, such as the creative director, may step in and lead a discussion aimed at defining the agency's ethical policy on smoking.

Ethical dilemma or ethical lapse?

According to Arens, et al (2008), false and misleading advertising - and all the damage they create - begin with unethical judgments. Hence, it pays to understand the differences between ethical dilemmas and ethical lapses.

Explaining this further, they said that 'an ethical dilemma arises from an unresolved interpretation of an ethical issue'. They further explain that to begin with, there is a distinction between 'having a right' and 'the right thing to do'. For example, should advertisers attempt to persuade inner city youths to buy sneakers priced at more than \$ 200 a pair? The scholars point out that there is no law against it, but the responsible action (both socially and morally) may be to refrain. And so we have an ethical dilemma.

How are such ethical dilemmas resolved? According to a University of Wisconsin Professor, Ivan L. Preston (quoted in Arens, et al. 2008), it appears advertising professionals find ethics largely synonymous with legality.

Many believe that advertising a \$200-sneakers to all markets, including to those who should not buy them is 'acceptable' ethical behaviour. But as Preston says, 'You can be ethical only when you have the option to being unethical. You can't choose to be ethical when you can't choose at all, so ethics begins only where the law ends' (Arens et al, 2008).

Arens et al point out that the prospect of a serious protest from watchdog groups, civic leaders and clergy generally, eliminates an advertiser's hesitation to resolve an ethical dilemma.

In contrast, according to them, an ethical lapse is typically a clear case of unprincipled conduct and in many cases, may even include illegal behaviour. In US, for example, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is the enforcement agency against such lapses. According to Arens et al, it brings lawsuits against companies that have engaged in illegal advertising claims – and it can even name advertising agencies as defendants. In 2002, for example, it made a claim against Interstate Bakeries, the marketers of Wonder Bread, and its advertising agency, Campbell Mithun LLC, for making unsubstantiated claims that Wonder Bread would improve children's mental capacities. In including Campbell Mithun, the Federal Trade Commission asserted that the advertising knew or should have known that the claims were not supported and therefore shared liability for the deceptive claim. Although the Wonder Bread case was settled without any fines being levied, many such cases result in companies paying millions of dollars in consumer redress, not to mention substantial attorney's (lawyer's) fees.

Other anxieties and distrusting about advertising

Bovee and Arens (1983) note that 'advertising is the most visible activity of business.' What a company may have been doing privately for many years suddenly becomes public the moment it starts to advertise. They further observe that by publicly inviting people to try their products, companies invite public criticism and attack if their products do not live up to the promised benefits.

Because advertising is so public, it is subjected to wide criticism, not only for the role it plays in selling products but also for the way it influences our society. Bovee and Arens add that, as a selling tool, advertising is attacked for its excesses. Some critics charge that at its worst, advertising is downright untruthful and at best, it presents only positive information about products. Others charge that advertising manipulates people psychologically to buy things they do not need or cannot afford by promising greater attraction, improved social status and other unrealistic expectations.

Still others attack advertising for being offensive or in bad taste. Many argue that there is just too much advertising and that this overwhelming quantity is one reason it has such an impact on our society.

As a social influence, advertising is often charged, with contributing to crime and violence and, on the other hand, with making people conform against their wish. It was also attacked for creating insecurity in order to sell goods.

Advertising, they say, debases the English Language, takes unfair advantage of children, makes people too materialistic and encourages wastefulness. Finally, by influencing the media, critics charge, advertising interferes with freedom of the press.

Other problems considered by the critics to be associated with advertising:

1. *Advertising debases language*: Defenders of traditional English usage feel advertising copy is too breezy, too informal, too casual and therefore; improper. Advertising, they believe, has destroyed the dignity of the language (by employing sentence fragments in place of full sentences, using grammatically incorrect sentences, omitting punctuation, exaggerating, padding sentences through the use of multiple adjectives; and others). The critics believe ideal language should be exact, precise, objective, correct and clear.

According to Bovee and Arens (1983) 'grammar rules and especially punctuation rules are commonly broken by advertising copywriters, and this truly infuriates the critics'. For example, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company introduced the line: '*Winston tastes good like (as) a cigarette should*'. The authors said that the academic community created such a flap (commotion/disturbance) that the advertiser followed up with another commercial filmed on the steps of a university. When the student in the commercial voiced the famous slogan, another student in cap and gown quickly corrected her saying: '*Winston tastes good as a cigarette should*'. This temporarily quieted the critics but the company continued to use the '*like a cigarette should*' slogan for many years.

English critics attack the heavy use of punctuation (hyphens, dashes, periods, exclamation points, dots and quotation marks) used by copy writers and are further offended by the use of multiple adjectives ('rich, full-blooded, heavy texture ; and others.')

However, Bovee and Arens commented that perhaps what the critics fail to realise is that today's advertising copy writers use the same licence that has been allowed in poetry for centuries (the use of alliteration, double adjectives and adverbs, broken sentences and unusual punctuation). They further observe that to do its job, advertising must speak to people. Therefore, it must be understandable and readable. The scholars add that advertisers have found that people respond better to a down-to-earth conversation tone than to a more dignified correct tone. Thus, the best copywriters have developed a style that is descriptive, colourful and even picturesque (scenic, striking, arresting), as well as warm, human and personal. Because of the need for brevity, the words are simple, lively and full of personality, and punctuation is used to build a conversational tone rather than to construct grammatical sentences.

2. *Advertising uses puffery*: Perhaps nothing characterises advertising in the minds of most people than the term puffery. In advertising, it means magnified commendation or hype. Arens et al (2008) define it as 'exaggerated subjective claims that cannot be proven true or false such as 'the best', 'premier', or 'the only way to fly'. The authors explain that puffery comes from the old English word 'pyffan', meaning 'to inflate: make proud or conceited'.

Common usage portrays puffery as praise for the item to be sold using subjective opinions, superlatives, amplifications and vagueness, and generally stating no specific facts. According to Arens et al, the leading scholar on the issue of puffery, Ivan Preston, has established six levels of puffery:

- *best (strongest claim)*: 'Nestle's makes the best chocolate';
- *best possible*: 'nothing cleans stains better than Clorox bleach'; or 'Visa - it's everywhere you want to be';
- *Better*: 'Advil just works better' or 'Nasco biscuits have better ingredients';
- *especially good*: 'Extraordinary elegance';
- *good*: 'M'm, m'm good' (Campbell's soup); and
- *subjective qualities (weakest claim)*: 'there's a smile in every Dandy chocolate bar'.

Puffery often takes the form of ‘non-product facts,’ information not specifically about the product and therefore not directly ascertainable as being truths, falsehoods or deceptions to the product. Non-product facts are typically about consumers: their personalities, lifestyles, fears, anxieties; and others. An example is this slogan by *Allstates*, an insurance company: ‘*You are in Good Hands with Allstates*’. It can also be about the social context in which the consumer uses the brand eg: ‘*Pepsi: the choice of the new generation*’.

Claims (explicit or implied) - that are considered deceptive are those that are factually false or convey an untrue impression and therefore have the potential to deceive or mislead reasonable people. Arens et al further said that puffery can also be ‘artful display’, the visual presentation of a product. Visual extravagance is ever present in advertisements to enhance moods, excite viewers, and more.

The fact is that advertising, by its very nature, is not complete information, it is biased in favour of the advertiser. People expect advertisers to be proud of their products and probably don’t mind if they puff them a little. But when advertisers cross the line between simply giving their point of view and creating false expectations, that is where the people begin to object. One problem is the difficulty of seeing the line, which may be drawn differently by different people.

According to Arens et al (2008) ‘Puffery erodes advertising’s credibility as a trustworthy messenger by first lowering the public’s belief in the advertising they see.’ People begin to question those who support and create such advertising - the advertisers, advertising professionals and ultimately the media that run such advertisements. A slogan such as ‘*Quality worth your trust*’ is immediately deemed false when used in an advertisement for a product that is generally perceived as inferior.

Can a seller’s opinion (an element of puffery) constitute the sole basis of a warranty to the customer? Clearly, more information is required. Is it proper to invent advantages and then falsely assert their existence? Sales talk or puffing is considered to be offered and understood as an expression of the seller’s opinion only, which is to be discounted as such by the buyer, and on which no reasonable man would rely.

3. *Advertising makes people materialistic*: Bovee and Arens (1983) say 'critics claim that advertising adversely affects people's value system because it portrays the acquisition of more things as the means to a happier life instead of the acquisition of more spiritual or intellectual enlightenment'. Advertising, they clarify, encourage people to buy more automobiles, more clothing and more appliances than they need, all with the promise of greater status, greater social acceptance and greater sex appeal. For example, they point to the fact that millions of Americans own twenty or more pairs of shoes, television sets and various vehicles.

In a similar vein, Dominick (2002) observes that 'the most outspoken critics of advertising charge that it stimulates greed, envy and avarice, a claim that can be made by no other industry'. Specifically, he explains, foes of advertising claim that it causes people to buy things that they otherwise would not. Flashy advertisements for new-model cars prompt people to trade-in a perfectly good, older car model simply for the prestige and status of owning a new one. Even though the old CD player works fine, yet an advertisement may prompt the owner to run out and buy the latest version with new bells and whistles. Still wearing last year's clothes? Shame on you. Go out and buy the latest fashions as seen in print and television advertisements. In short, advertising creates needs and makes people buy things they don't really need or want.

In response to this criticism, Dominick said that advertising practitioners point out that humans have a variety of needs: some are biological (the need for food) and basic (the need for a place to live). Others are more complicated (the need for self-esteem and self-actualisation). Advertising supporters say it caters for a wide variety of needs, not just the basic ones. There is nothing wrong in buying a new car yearly if it helps a person's self-esteem. Buying the latest fashions can help a person's quest for self-actualisation.

Advertising is directed at many forms of need fulfillment, some of them subtle and personal. Dominick says it is presumptuous of critics to tell consumers what they need or do not need. In this argument, advertising is pictured as catering to a variety of needs that are already present in consumers; it does little in creating new ones. As further support for this argument, advertisers point out that many heavily-advertised products fail, and there is no evidence to suggest that advertising can compel people to purchase things they do not want.

According to Dominick, supporters of advertising point out that advertising did not create the emphasis on materialism in American life. Writings about rampant materialism in American culture can be found from as early as 1830. Major holidays in the US celebrate consumption and materialism.

Christmas, for example, encourages gift-giving, thanksgiving and eating. American basic economic system of capitalism stresses the production and consumption of economic goods. Therefore, according to the advocates of advertising, the profession simply reflects the larger values of US society and should not be blamed for portraying them.

4. *Advertising manipulates people psychologically to buy things they do not need:* Bovee and Arens (1983) say 'advertising is often criticised for its power to make people do irrational things'. According to them, it leads people to indulge in desires and fantasies beyond their actual needs. The following are some suggestions based on variations of this criticism:

- advertising should be informative but not persuasive;
- it should report only factual and functional information;
- advertising should not play to people's desires, emotions, fears, or anxieties;
- it should deal only with people's functional needs for products, not their psychological needs for status, appeal, security, sexual attractiveness, or health.

Defenders of advertising observe that underlying all these criticisms is evidently either:

- a belief in some mystical, magic power of advertising to hypnotically control customers, or
- an equally strange attitude that consumers are poor, helpless, ignorant lambs who have no power of rational thinking or choice in the face of advertising's persuasive wolves .

These supporters of advertising assert that persuasion is a fact of life, and so is our need to confront it on a daily basis. According to them, we see it in every avenue of our existence, not just in advertising. Teachers try to persuade students to study; students try to persuade teachers to give them better grades. Girlfriends persuade boyfriends; preachers persuade

congregation, charities persuade donors; borrowers persuade lenders; stockbrokers persuade investors; kids persuade parents; and advertising persuades people. In short, we are all busy persuading or being persuaded in one way or another. They pointed out that we need to recognise that advertising is persuasive by definition, so that we can become better consumers and critics of advertising.

A second reality, the advocates of advertising further argue, is that when we persuade, we usually use a variety of tactics depending on the subject matter and response of the listener. Sometimes, the simple facts of our case are overwhelmingly persuasive. Other times, we appeal to some other needs or motive of our listener because the facts alone are not persuasive enough. They then raised a poser: Is it wrong or bad to use emotional appeals in persuasion? If so, they pointed out, then we are all wrong and bad because we all do it.

All of us, according to these lovers of advertising, have needs and desires beyond food, clothing, and shelter. Otherwise we would live in caves, wear bear-skins, and eat berries. They go on to argue that one benefit of a free society is that we can choose to what degree we wish to indulge our desires, needs and fantasies. Some people prefer a simple life without mortgage payment, fancy cars and trips abroad. Others enjoy the material pleasures of a modern technological society. There are advertising sponsors at both ends of that spectrum. Food companies offer natural products as well as convenience packaged goods. Shoe companies offer simple sandals as well as formal footwears.

The advocates of advertising stressed that all companies attempt to persuade consumers to try their products. They noted that not all companies are successful though. They emphasise that although advertising techniques have become far more effective and efficient in recent years, there is still no magic. They highlighted the fact that the final reality is that far more products fail than succeed in the market place.

5. *Advertising is offensive or in bad taste. It promotes hedonism (pursuit of pleasure) and sex appeal:* Bovee and Arens (1983) said that many people find advertising offensive to their religious convictions, morality or political perspective. Others, according to them, find the use of advertising techniques that emphasise sex, violence or body functions to be bad taste. For example, in the US, in the 1970s, Calvin Klein's Jeans

campaign depicted models that looked 15, were dressed skimpily, and posed suggestively. The huge outcry against those 'kiddie porn' advertisements that emerged from all sectors, including trade publications and the US national press, prompted Klein to discontinue the campaign.

Arens et al (2008) said that some advertisers, in their constant quest to attract consumers and associate products with 'cool' or luxurious and pleasurable lifestyles, have consistently pushed the boundaries of what is ethically and socially acceptable. According to them, American advertising has always embraced erotic suggestiveness while usually staying clear of full nudity and explicit sexuality.

The authors observe that campaigns blurring that distinction often arouse controversy and even protest. They illustrate a blatant use of sex in advertising in recent memory:

A billboard features a young woman, holding a grease gun cartridge in each hand, and leaning over to exhibit an ample amount of cleavage. The headline reads: 'This is Debbie. She wants you to have this pair in your car'. The advertisement is for auto parts, but the implication seems to be that if you buy this manufacturer's auto parts, you will get Debbie or someone like Debbie in the bargain. Nothing in the advertisement says so explicitly, but the innuendo is all that is required to capture the viewer's attention.

Advertisers frequently use the power of suggestion to imply sex, encouraging viewers to come to their conclusions. Advertisers who run such advertisements must contend with the critics who object to obscenity and indecency. The authors add that in 2007, a clothing retailer, Abercrombie & Fitch, sparked controversy at a mall in Omaha, Nebraska, USA, when its window posters featured a topless model covering her breasts with her hands. The scholars revealed that a Christian group, Family First, quickly objected, claiming that Abercrombie's posters created a 'sexualised walkway'. Were the posters obscene (lustful) or indecent (immoral, shameless)? Many advertisers find it increasingly difficult to draw the line between simple sex appeal and unethical exploitation.

There is no easy solution to this dilemma, especially since, according to Arens et al (2008) 'research shows that sexual appeals can be effective

when sexuality relates to the product'. However, when it doesn't, it can distract audiences from the main message and severely demean the advertiser in the consumer's eyes. This brings up an important and rather common paradox about sexually-oriented advertising. How is a naked model in a window poster relevant to a fashion advertisement? The authors say many argue that it is not, making such advertisements not only a distraction, but also a source of negative externalities – the social costs to consumers outside the target market, such as children who might be indirectly affected. In the long run, sexual inferences can lead to real consequences.

6. *Advertising perpetuates stereotypes of people:* Bovee and Arens (1983) noted that in the US, women groups such as the National Organisation for Women (NOW) protest that many of today's advertisements do not acknowledge the changing role of women in the American society. One feminist says:

Advertising is an insidious propaganda machine for a male supremacist society. It spews out images of women as sex mates, housekeepers, mothers and menial workers – images that perhaps reflect the true status of women in society, but which also make it increasingly difficult for women to break out of the sexist stereotypes that imprison them.

The scholars further observed that consumer charges of ethnic and racial bias; including animal abuse in advertising have also been made in increasing numbers to federal and business regulatory agencies. The targets of these complaints have included advertisement that showed a Japanese gardener at work and floor wax commercial that featured a black scrub woman. Charges of animal abuse have been made against beer commercial in which a dray horse is seen hauling a huge, old-fashioned brewery wagon. While none of these advertisement was illegal, all were objects of consumer efforts to halt their use, even to penalising the advertisers.

Bovee and Arens commented that unfortunately, despite the efforts of many, there is still too much bias and sexism in advertising. According to them, the proper portrayal of women and minorities is still open to debate, however, and changes with time.

7. *Advertising takes undue advantage of children:* According to Arens et al (2008) 'kids make up a considerable consumer group whose number and purchasing power are growing'. They added that today, children are influencing the family's buying behaviour for everything from cars to orange juice. Whether they are spending their own money or asking their parents to spend theirs, marketing to kids is big business and it is getting bigger.

The scholars explained that the benefits of reaching children are great. If won now, they tend to be loyal customers into adulthood. Besides selling to children, advertisers also sell through children. Some companies believe they can sell more by appealing to children's preferences than to adults. The authors revealed that mini-van was created because children demanded more room. They further said that when kids decided the vehicle was 'uncool', their opinions helped to develop the Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV). Arens et al also disclosed that Saturday morning cartoons are the traditional vehicle for advertisements promoting cereals, candy and toys. According to them, particular brands of vacuum cleaners and other household goods are requested by parents because kids saw it advertised on television. The authors make the point that marketers rely on kids 'pester power' to get their products sold.

The dangers of marketing to kids from an ethical perspective are fairly clear. Children are 'vulnerable' market. They are less experienced. Advertising to children presents different challenges; being unsophisticated consumers, their conception of self, time and money are immature. As a result, they know very little about their desires, needs and preferences – or how to use economic resources rationally to satisfy them. And the nature of children's conceptual ability makes it likely that child-oriented advertising can lead to false beliefs or highly improbable product expectations. Telling children about a product and accurately describing that product is probably ethical. Convincing them that they must have the toy to be popular and successful with their friends, or misrepresenting the toy, or encouraging them to make a nuisance of themselves to parents and start begging for the toy is probably wrong. Nothing is likely to encourage parents and society at large more than the prospect of marketers manipulating and taking advantage of children.

8. *Advertising mis-uses research statistics:* Arens et al (2008) say marketing research gives the advertiser and its agency the data they need to identify consumer needs, develop new products and communication strategies, and assess the effectiveness of marketing programmes. They add that it also often provides the basis for advertising claims.

However, the authors observed that the way some advertisers use research data can lead to serious ethical lapses. According to them, clever researchers can hide, shape or manipulate statistics. They also claimed that some researchers and marketers deliberately withhold information, falsify figures, alter results, and misinterpret the results to support their point of view.

To support the assertion, the authors cited the example of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) which, in a television commercial, tried to spin the nutritional numbers to its advantage with consumers. The company had tried to present its product as being '*better*' and '*healthier*' compared to that of Burger King Whooper, a rival company. Kentucky Fried Chicken's skewed statistics were soon discovered after investigation by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Consumer protection groups were up in arms as soon as the commercial was aired, forcing the company to pull them within a month of their October 2003 launch.

Sometimes, misleading health information in advertisements can be hazardous. According to Arens et al (2008), in 1996, fen-phen was approved for distribution in the US, and by the end of 1996, thousands of people had reported health complications. The following year, it was found that the fen was linked to heart valve damage and an often fatal lung disease called primary pulmonary hypertension. Subsequently, the manufacturer was pressured to pull the drug off the shelf.

Furthermore, the authors revealed that in 1999, American Home Products went under fire for allegedly withholding important information from the Federal Drug Administration.

9. *Advertising is Deceptive:* Boece and Arens (1983) remark that 'perhaps the greatest attack on advertising has been and continues to be against the deceptive practices of some advertisers'. According to them, critics define deceptiveness not only as false and misleading statements but also as any false impression conveyed whether intentional or unintentional. The US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) defines deceitful

advertising as 'any advertising that contains a misrepresentation, omission or other practice that can mislead a significant number of reasonable consumers to their detriment'. According to the authors, proof that consumers were deceived is not the requirement, and the representation may be either expressed or implied. The issue is whether the advertisement conveys a false impression – even if it is literally true.

Advertising deception can take a number of forms. The common practices that are considered deceptive include:

- *False promises*: Making an advertising promise that cannot be kept, such as '*Prevents cancer*' or '*Restores youth*'. Critics have long hammered advertisers for encouraging girls and young women to internalise unrealistic beauty standards. Arens et al (2008) explained that when Listerine claimed to prevent or reduce the impact of colds and sore throats, the FTC banned the campaign and required the company to run millions of dollars' worth of corrective advertisements.
- *Claims of uniqueness*: Asserting that a product is '*Unparalleled*', '*The first of its kind*', '*Unequaled*', '*Unprecedented*', '*Matchless*' or '*Peerless*'; and others.
- *Incomplete description*: Stating some, but not all, of the contents of a product, such as advertising a 'solid oak' desk without mentioning that only the top is solid oak and that the rest is made of hardwoods with an oak veneer.
- *Misleading comparisons*: Making false comparisons, either explicitly or by implication, such as '*Like Tylenol Advil, upset my stomach*'. That implies that Advil is equal in avoiding stomach upset, though in truth Tylenol is better. This technique also includes making meaningless comparisons such as: '*as good as diamond*' if the claim cannot be verified.
- *Bait-and-switch offers*: Advertising an item at an unusually low price to bring people into the store, and then 'switching' them to a higher priced model than the one advertised by stating that the advertised product is 'out of stock' or 'poorly made'.

According to Rodman (2004) 'in this technique, a seller provides bait in the form of an advertised bargain and a switch when the customer is talked into a more expensive product'. He adds that other forms of cunning, in this method, are often seen in direct mail

advertising. The author says, according to the US Postal Service, which receives hundreds of thousands of complaints about direct mail advertising every year, the most common duplicity involves the statement '*You are a guaranteed winner*'. Sometimes it turns out that recipients are 'winners' because they are being given the 'opportunity' to buy magazine subscriptions. Other times, when the purported prize winners call the number provided, they are asked to send in a 'processing fee', but they never receive any prize.

- *Visual distortions and false demonstrations:* Using trick photography or computer manipulation to enhance a product's appearance – for example, a television commercial for a 'giant steak' special dinner showing the steak on a miniature plate that makes it look extra large. Arens et al (2008) say:

in one classic case, General Motors (GM) and its window supplier, Libby Owens-Ford, rigged a demonstration to show how clear their windows were. The GM cars were photographed with the windows down, the competitor's car with the windows up – and Vaseline smeared on them.

- *False testimonials:* Implying that a product has the endorsement of a celebrity or an authority who is not a bona fide user, or implying that endorsers have a certain expertise that in fact, they don't.
- *Superlative words:* Using absolute (complete, unrestricted) words such as '*The finest*', or '*The greatest value*', or verbal claims such as '*Cures*', '*Stops*', '*Defeats*' or '*Eliminates forever*'.
- *Partial disclosures:* Stating certain facts about the advertised product but omitting other material information. An example is claiming, '*Kraft's singles processed cheese slices are made from five ounces of milk*', which '*gives singles more calcium than the imitators*', without mentioning that processing loses about two ounces of the milk.

Another example is claiming that an electrically-powered automobile will go '*60 miles per hour – without gasoline*' and not mentioning that it needs an eight-hour battery recharge every 100 miles.

- *Small-print qualifications*: Making a statement in large print, such as Beneficial's 'Instant Tax Refund', only to qualify or retract it in obscure, small, or unreadable type elsewhere in the advertisement: 'If you qualify for one of our loans'. Or, for a clothing store to make a statement in large print ('Any new suit in stock - \$50 off!') only to qualify or retract it in smaller type elsewhere in the advertisement ('with the purchase of a suit at the regular price').
- *Under-selling claims*: Making claims like 'Lowest prices in town', 'Highest trade-in allowances' or 'Never under-sold'.

Advertising must have the confidence of consumers if it is going to be effective. Deception will cause consumers to turn against a product and is therefore self-defeating. This is especially true for products for which the advertising claims are easily verifiable.

Advertiser Influence on Media Content

The issue of advertiser control on media involves two related controversies. Advertisers rule content both through product placement in entertainment programming and through their economic clout over news media.

Product placement influencing entertainment content: Rodman (2006) notes that 'in recent years, consumer goods companies have made wide use of product placement – the inclusion of a product in a movie for marketing purposes'. Product placement serves as a type of promotional tie-in (a consumer product built around a movie character) as well as an additional source of revenue for the movie studio. Advertisers sometimes pay the studios outrightly for product placement, but often they merely arrange to promote the movie. For example, in the 2001 movie, *Crocodile Dundee in Los Angeles*, the title character takes a friend to a Wendy's fast-food outlet, telling him it's '*someplace really special*'. Wendy's did not pay for the placement but instead agreed to promote the film on its tray lines and in radio commercials.

According to Rodman (2006), 'this technique is becoming increasingly common in other media as well. Television executives have been concerned about viewers skipping commercials for years. Commercial breaks have always cued viewers to run to ease themselves, to quench a thirst, to make a call or to get a snack. The avoidance of commercials was

heightened by a succession of technological devices, including remote controls, video tape recorders, and most recently digital devices such as TIVO that can automatically skip advertisements. Many industry professionals feel that their only recourse is to make commercials part of the programming itself. That is why people will see sitcom characters occasionally stopping to extol the virtues of a breakfast cereal, or characters in police dramas stopping to talk in front of large billboards.

Reality programmes have been especially ripe for product placement. Rodman says in the US, Sears, for example, had a product placement deal with ABC for that broadcaster's programme, *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. According to him, the show has included not just the use of Sears products but several scenes of Sears trucks delivering merchandise, plumbers and other workers from Sears home-improvement services making repairs, and visits to Sears stores by the show's makeover team cast.

The author added that other media are also experimenting with product placement. This includes books, one of the few media left that seldom include advertising. The Italian Jeweller Bulgari commissioned best-selling novelist, Fay Weldon, to write a novel with references to the Bulgari name. The novel, *The Bulgari Connection*, was published in 2001.

Critics of product placement believe that the practice confuses viewers by masking the sponsor's role in determining the content of entertainment programming. According to Rodman (2006), one critic called the practice 'an affront to basic honesty'. Critics also insist that product placement defies the very definition of advertising, which includes the idea of an identified sponsor.

Economic clout influencing the news: The revenue generated by advertising on television, in newspapers, and other media gives advertisers an extraordinary amount of power. This influence becomes controversial when it is used to control the content of the news or information that the media carries. For example, according to Rodman, Miami, Florida's mayor, Xavier Suarez, threatened to pull the city's legal advertising from the *Miami Herald* in 1998 unless it became 'a lot nicer to me, my people, my citizens and my city' (Rodman, 2006). *The Herald* was investigating accusations of voter fraud by Suarez campaign supporters at the time of his threat, which the mayor left on the managing editor's answering machine. The

city advertising was worth about \$200,000 a year. In response to the mayor's threat, the editor of the paper publicly announced that the news columns and the advertising columns of the paper would remain separate.

Rodman further says sometimes, advertisers try to influence content by cancelling advertisements if they do not agree with ideas expressed in editorial content. When Columbia Broadcasting Service (CBS) ran a story in 2004 critical of auto dealers on its programme, 60 Minutes II, the Philadelphia Dodge Dealers Group withdrew all its advertising from the local CBS station, costing that station more than \$100,000 in revenue. After a Catholic group called for a boycott of 'Nothing Sacred', an American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) television series about a young, hip Catholic priest who questions church doctrine, Sears, Isuzu and Weight Watchers withdrew their advertising.

According to Rodman, advertisers explained that they are concerned about surrounding environment in which their advertisements appear. Because of this, airlines ask newspapers and broadcast news-programmes to pull their advertisements if they will appear near news stories of air disasters. Grocery stores politely request that their commercials go on after cooking segments and not after famine reports. Many other advertisers ask for advance notice of stories that might create a negative environment for their advertisements.

Rodman says critics point out that this practice encourages self-censorship because the media might avoid those stories so as not to lose advertising revenue. According to him, for years, cigarette companies required 'early warnings' of anti-smoking articles that would be run in magazines in which they advertised. The magazines knew that these warnings would enable the companies to pull their advertisements. To avoid the loss of revenue, some magazines, according to Rodman, dropped stories about the relationship between smoking and health.

The author further says 'too often, the media are willing to be influenced by their advertisers.... Some local newspapers may entice new advertisers by offering to run news stories about their businesses'. In all media, the scholar added, memos occasionally arrive from the business office reminding the rest of the staff that the medium cannot stay in business by constantly offending advertisers.

Insights into the Phenomenon of Advertising

Review

A few things come clear from the preceding discussions. The most salient is that advertising is an exposure meant to make something known in order to sell or buy goods, services or ideas. Advertising is a form of mass selling employed when the use of direct person-to-person selling is impractical, impossible or simply inefficient Black (2004). Its power depends on the use of creativity and planning skills to achieve its objective. Advertising techniques range in complexity from the publishing of simple, straightforward notices in the classified advertising columns of newspapers to the intensive use of newspapers, magazines, radio, television, direct mail and other communications media in the course of a single advertising campaign.

Encyclopaedia Encarta (2004) says, 'from its unsophisticated beginnings in ancient times, advertising has grown rapidly into a worldwide industry. Modern advertising is an integral segment of urban industrial civilisation, mirroring contemporary life in its best and worst aspects. Having proven its force in the movement of economic goods and services, advertising has since the early 1960s been directed increasingly towards matters of social concern. Health awareness and anti-drunk driving campaigns are two examples of the use of the advertising industry as a means to promote public welfare.

Secondly, the mass media depend on advertisers for their lives. Thirdly, advertising agencies are the middlemen between the media and the industries that spend millions each year on them. As they plan campaigns, agency people suggest whether radio, television, newspaper, magazine, billboards, the Internet or some combination of these will be used. They also select what specific station or publication will carry the advertisement. Thus, their goodwill is important to the media that depend on advertising. The agencies control the commercial content of the media.

Consumers of the products advertised are affected by the quality of the ethical decisions of the agencies, for these have to do with honesty and fairness with which the products are presented to the public.

Discussion

According to McCann Erickson Inc, the advertising agency that develops Coca-cola's national campaigns, advertising is 'truth well told.' Can this honestly be said for all products, services and ideas in the market place?

It can be argued that advertising's current lack of credibility is due in large part to the cumulative effect of poor ethical behaviour on the part of some advertisers during the last century; misinformation, misrepresentation, false advertising, exaggerated promises, unfair comparisons – all these are injurious to consumers and competitors as well as people's perception of advertisers in general. In other words, any advertisers that engage in unethical behaviour are damaging not only the fragile relationship they have with their customers but also the whole profession of advertising.

Rodman (2006) revealed that the first modern advertising agency was N. W. Ayer & Son, founded in 1869. Its real founder was the son, Francis Wayland Ayer, who was 21 years old at the time. He knew that the businessmen of the day would have a difficult time accepting someone so young, so he named the business after his father. Ayer was one of the first proponents of advertising ethics. He would not work with a product that was dangerous or place advertisements that he considered to be deceptive.

Rodman points out that not all advertising agencies were as ethical as N. W. Ayer. In fact, advertisers had always been prone to exaggeration, a practice that came to be known as puffery. According to the author, by the latter part of the 1800s, the advertising industry was largely out of control. Outrageous claims and outright lies were the order of the day. The free speech and free enterprise foundations of American society encouraged an attitude of caveat emptor (let the buyer beware) about advertising. If people were fooled by false advertising claims, it was too bad for them. The US government maintained a hands-off policy toward advertising, particularly because of the constitutional guarantees of free speech, but mostly because of *laissez-faire* (leave it alone) theories of business designed to encourage the country's growth.

Rodman explained that a variety of products carried misleading claims, but the most striking examples came from the patent medicines of the day. These non-prescription drugs were marketed with promises to cure gout, tuberculosis, cancer, heart disease; and others. Those who sold the so-called miracle elixirs often backed their outlandish claims with testimonials from satisfied customers. One advertisement featured a farmer who claimed, 'My wife was about to die of tuberculosis, but after a few bottles of Dr. Hartman's Peruna, she was able to get up and work again.' According to Rodman, many patent medicines, including Dr. Hartman's Peruna, were either useless or harmful. He added that the flavoured, coloured liquids consisted mostly of alcohol and often contained addictive drugs such as cocaine and morphine.

Rodman says as Americans became more sophisticated about the products they were using, the attitude of 'let the buyer beware' became 'let the seller be honest'. The Pure Food and Drug Act was passed in 1906 largely as a reaction to patent medicine claims. The Federal Trade Commission was established as a national watchdog for business and advertising in 1914. Eventually, 'several government agencies began to regulate advertisements in one way or another. The US Postal Service and Exchange Commission was charged with regulating advertisements about stocks and bonds. The Food and Drug Administration regulated advertisements about foods, drugs, cosmetics and health care products.

Rodman said further that many reputable advertisers actually welcomed government regulation. Companies with established brand names that could not afford to make deceitful claims did not want to be forced to compete with fly-by-night products that could. Besides, obviously deceitful advertising weakened the credibility of all advertising.

Rodman observed that despite its early support of government control, however, the industry became nervous when some legislators began to attack all advertisers with great zeal. Self-control by the industry seemed like a better idea, for at least two reasons. First, if the industry controlled itself, the government would not have to be quite so zealous. Second, industry control would show that advertisers wanted to be ethical – they did not need to have ethics enforced on them by the government. Self-governed ethical practices would strengthen the credibility of their advertising.

According to Rodman, in 1924, the American Association of Advertising Agencies, the industry trade organisation, published its code of ethics. Member agencies pledged not to knowingly produce advertising that contained:

- false or misleading statements or exaggerations, visual or verbal;
- testimonials that did not reflect the real choice of a competent witness;
- misleading price claims;
- comparisons that unfairly disparaged a competitive product or service;
- unsupported claims or claims that distorted the true meaning of statements made by professional or scientific authorities; or
- statements, suggestions, or pictures offensive to public decency.

Rodman observed that this code is still in effect (and still voluntary), and the industry has set up a committee, the National Advertising Review Council, to investigate complaints. If necessary, the council pressures the subjects of those complaints to correct their legal or ethical breaches. If an advertiser persists, the council turns the complaint over to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.

Advertising promises health, long life, sexual success, financial success, companionship, popularity and acceptance. A beautiful woman uses a certain brand of lipstick in a television commercial, and men follow her everywhere. Without making the argument explicit, the advertisement implies that if you, as a woman, use this product you will be beautiful, and if you are beautiful (or use this product) you will be more attractive to men.

People value beauty, kindness, prestige, family, love and success. As human beings, we need food, shelter and the maintenance of the species, in other words, sex. Advertising succeeds by appealing to these cherished needs. According to Baran (2002), the basis for this persuasive strategy is the AIDA approach – to persuade consumers; advertising must attract attention, create interest, stimulate desire, and promote action.

Industry critics, however, say problems arise when important aspects of human existence are reduced to the consumption of brand-name consumer products. For instance, prestige is seen as driving a Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) or any other expensive auto in vogue. Success is seen as brushing one's teeth with Maclean's toothpaste. Freedom is seen as choosing between Pepsi and Coke. Critics argue that people have been

reduced to a consumer culture – a culture in which personal worth and identity reside not in us but in the products with which we surround ourselves. Didn't philosophers and the religious say the material is immaterial?

The consumer culture is corrupting because it imposes new definitions that serve the advertiser and not the culture on traditionally-important aspects of our lives. If love, for example, can be bought rather than being nurtured, how important can it be? If success is not something an individual esteems for the personal sense of accomplishment, but rather is something chased for the material things associated with it, how does the culture evaluate success? If five most successful people were to be mentioned, how many teachers would be named? How many social workers or wealthy, or famous people would come to mind?

Critics contend that the consumer culture also demeans the individuals who live in it. A common advertising strategy for stimulating desire and suggesting action is to imply that we are inadequate and should not be satisfied with ourselves as we are. We are too fat or too thin, our hair is in need of improvement, our clothes are all wrong, and our spouses don't respect us. Personal improvement is only a purchase away.

Worries about the effects of advertising intensify when critics consider advertisements directed at children. According to Baran (2002) the average child sees more than 20,000 television commercials a year and countless more in magazines and, increasingly even on school materials. Critics argue that children are simply not intellectually capable of interpreting the intent of these advertisements, nor are they able before the age of 7 or 8 to rationally judge the worth of the advertising claims. This makes children's advertising inherently unethical.

In fact, many critics feel that advertisements should not be directed toward very young children at all, and, according to Rodman (2006) the governments of Denmark and other Scandinavian countries prohibit advertisers from targeting preteens. In the United States where such advertisements are common, parents' groups like the national PTA and watchdog groups, like Action for Children Television, point out that preschoolers do not understand that commercials are there to persuade them – they see advertisements as just more entertainment. Critics also say that young children are too emotionally susceptible to be exposed to advertisements.

Another criticism is that advertisements treat children as consumer trainees at a time when they should be learning some of the higher values of life. According to this argument, advertisements mould the character and personality of the child by encouraging greed and by suggesting that people's importance is based on what they own rather than who they are. Worse yet, according to this contention, advertising discourages critical thinking by encouraging children to buy things they don't need and can't afford. Children are also indirect consumers who persuade their parents to make the actual purchases. An advertisement that makes a child desire a product that the parent does not want to buy ends up adding to family tension.

One of the most common arguments about advertising is that it is so frequently deceitful. Professor Preston quoted in Arens et al (2008) notes that 'the essence of a market place lies in the willingness of buyers and sellers to enter commercial transactions'. Anything that detracts from the satisfaction of the transaction produces a loss of activity that ultimately hurts both parties. If a product does not live up to its advertisement, dissatisfaction occurs - and in the long term, it becomes harmful to the advertiser as to the buyer. According to the scholar, advertisers deceive because they typically sell brands, not just products. Because each brand must be presented as being different from other brands even though it may not be. Advertisers attempt to create false differences.

Incomplete information is another breeding ground for ethical dilemmas. Advertisers tend to highlight the good things about their brands and omit the neutral and bad ones. Nothing that is said is false, yet the advertisement does not tell the whole truth.

Furthermore, the use of technology to distort images to portray the product most favourably can create new ethical dilemmas. Models, for example, can be made to appear slimmer than they really are, with the possible social consequence of a rise in eating disorders in young women.

On the whole, the questions are these: Should advertisements that threaten our health be allowed? Should advertisers be permitted to use any mass medium to present images of youth, vitality and fun to sell products that are harmful to our pockets and health? Are the laws adequate to protect consumers? There may be no simple answers but debate is healthy.

Back to the original, overriding and omnipresent question: is advertising good or bad? Like all controversial topics in life, the scales will

have to be balanced. The answer cannot be straight and absolute but cautious and qualified: restrictive and restrained. Accordingly, an intermediate position is hereby taken that advertising is not wholly truthful and it is not completely untruthful. Being both praised and condemned, it can be said to be both good and bad.

In character and colour, advertising lies between the two extreme states. Since there are so many grey areas in ethical specifications that are exploited by the advertisers, ultimately, it is up to the buyer to beware, to be alert to its deceptive devices and be active in interpreting and repelling them. After all, man is equipped with the mental faculty or intellectual capacity to digest messages, detect loopholes and decide on a well-thought out course of action (except for children who are at a decided disadvantage in this regard).

Perception

Perception is everything. Arens et al (2008) define it as the personalised way we sense, interpret and understand various stimuli. Stimuli are the collection of physical information we receive through our senses. Perception guides all our activities from the people we associate with to the products we buy. How a consumer perceives each of the different brands in a category e.g soft drinks determines which one he or she drinks. The perception challenge, therefore, is the first and greatest hurdle advertisers must cross. Some marketers spend millions on national advertising only to discover that many consumers do not remember the product. The average adult may be exposed to thousands of advertisements each day but notices only a handful and remembers even fewer. How does this happen? The answer lies in the principle of perception.

Perceptual Screens

The moment a medium delivers an advertising message to us, our mental computer runs a rapid evaluation called the consumer decision process. Before any data can be perceived, they must first penetrate a set of perceptual screens, the subconscious filters that shield us from unwanted messages. As Arens et al (2008) explained it, there are two types of screens: physiological and psychological.

The physiological screens comprise of the five senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. They detect the incoming data and measure the dimension and intensity of the physical stimuli. A sight-impaired person cannot read an advertisement. And if the typeface in a movie advertisement is too small for the average reader, it won't be read, and perception will suffer. Similarly, if the music in a television commercial for a furniture store is not complementary to the message, the viewer may tune out, change the channel, or even turn off the television. The advertiser's message is effectively screened out when the viewer can't interpret it: Perception does not occur, and the furniture goes unsold.

We are limited not only by the physical capacity of our senses but also by our feelings and interests. Each consumer uses psychological screens to evaluate, filter and personalise information according to subjective emotional standards. These screens evaluate data based on innate factors such as the consumer's personality and instinctive human needs, and learned factors, such as self-concept, interests, attitudes, beliefs, past experiences and life style. They help consumers summarise unwieldy or complex data.

As over-communicated consumers, we unconsciously screen out or modify many of the sensations that bombard us, rejecting those that conflict with our experiences, needs, desires, attitudes and beliefs. We simply focus on some things and ignore others. This is called 'selective perception'. Hence Panasonic may run a series of outstanding advertisements for its new digital camcorder in the daily newspaper, but they won't penetrate the psychological screens of consumers who don't need or want a new camera. Later, these people probably won't even remember seeing the advertisements.

Contributing to the theme of selective perception, Severin and Tankard (1979) observed that there is a great deal of scientific evidence for selective perception, or the tendency for people's perception to be influenced by their wants, needs, attitudes and other psychological factors. They explain that selective perception occurs in the receiving of the messages of mass communication just as it does in other areas. Different people can react to the same message in very different ways. The communicator cannot be sure that the meaning he or she intended in a message will also be seen there by members of the audience. The receivers of the message have a very active role in assigning meaning to that message.

Indeed, meaning is something invented, assigned, given, rather than something received.

Similarly, Wood (2006) notes that the external world and our experiences in it do not have intrinsic meaning until we perceive and attach significance to them. According to her, perception concerns how we make sense of the world and what happens in it (2006). She adds that human perception is an active process of selecting, organising and interpreting people, objects, events, situations and activities. These three processes are not separate in practice; they interact so that each one affects the others. What we selectively notice affects what we interpret and evaluate. In addition, our interpretations act as lenses that influence what we notice in the world around us. Selection, interpretation and evaluation interact continuously in the process of perception.

The Question of Morality

The moulding or affecting of the human mind through the techniques of advertising has created a deep sense of uneasiness. What does it mean to have so many powerfully- influential people taking a manipulative attitude toward our society? Packard (1957) observes that some of these persuaders, in their energetic endeavours to sway our actions, seem to fall unwittingly into the attitude that 'man exists to be manipulated'. According to him, an advertising executive remarked that America was growing great by the systematic creation of dis-satisfaction. The executive talked specifically of the triumph of the cosmetics industry in reaching the billion-dollar class by the sale of hope and by making women more anxious and critical about their appearance. Triumphantly, he concluded: 'And everybody is happy.'

A good many of the people manipulating activities of persuaders raise profoundly-disturbing questions about the kind of society they are seeking to build. Their ability to contact millions of people simultaneously through radio, television, newspaper; and others gives them the power to do good or evil, on an unprecedented scale and time.

What is the morality of the practice of encouraging housewives to be non-rational and impulsive in buying the family food?

What is the morality of playing upon hidden weaknesses and frailties - such as our anxieties, aggressive feelings, dread of non-conformity, and infantile hang-overs - to sell products? What is the morality of:

- manipulating small children even before they reach the age where they are legally responsible for their actions?;
- exploiting our deepest sexual sensitivities and yearnings for commercial purposes?; and
- developing in the public an attitude of wastefulness toward national resources by encouraging the 'psychological obsolescence' of products already in use? Packard says an Hawaiian public relations man, Kleber R. Miller, sees such manipulation as disrespect for the individual personality.

Another moral questions are:

- where is our economy taking us to under the pressures of consumerism?; and
- how justified are devious and aggressive manipulators to invade the privacy of our minds, who play upon our irrationalities and weaknesses to channel our behaviour, who psychoanalyse children and mind-mould men?

As Packard notes, it is no solution to suggest we should all defend ourselves against the depth manipulators by becoming carefully rational in all our acts. According to him, such a course is not only visionary but unattractive. It would be a dreary world if we all had to be rational, right-thinking, non-neurotic people all the time, even though we may hope we are making general gains in that direction.

Conclusion

Advertising supports the economic system. Without it, new products could not be introduced and developments in others could not be announced. Competitive advertising of new products and businesses powers the 'engine' of the economy, fostering economic growth and creating jobs in many industries. Unquestionably, advertising offers considerable benefits to markets and consumers alike.

However, there is also no disputing that it has been too often misrepresented and misused. Clearly, advertisers must consider the economic, social, ethical and legal points identified earlier on. When behaviour has social and legal effects, when people's sensitivity is violated, social concerns arise, and the government may wish to take corrective

measures. Society determines what is offensive, excessive and irresponsible. To be law-abiding, ethically and socially responsible, advertisers must appreciate these matters. Awareness about the problems is the first step in learning about and practising ethical behaviour. Expectedly, ethical behaviour will be so important to building customer relationships in the 21st century.

The Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) and the Advertising Practitioners' Council of Nigeria (APCON) should sit up to raise the ethical standards of their members. The fact can bear repetition that advertisers must be credible to succeed as professionals.

The media themselves, through which advertising is disseminated, must maintain believability for two main reasons, according to Felder et al (2005). First, people depend on them for their information. The scholars point out that research shows people use local and national television news programmes to find out about breaking events and they monitor radio news for updates. The authors added that people who want more detail about issues or events turn to newspapers, the Internet and magazines. Second, the media must be trustworthy to succeed as businesses. The media need readers, viewers and listeners to attract advertisers, who provide financial support, up to 70% according to Dominick (2002).

If audiences doubt the credibility of a particular news organisation, they will change the channel or stop buying that newspaper. When audiences turn away, advertising revenues decline. Then the media organisation's budget shrinks, which often means even poorer news coverage. The downward spiral usually continues until that news organisation goes out of business.

For advertising to be effective, consumers must have confidence in it. Accordingly, any kind of deception not only detracts from the complete information principle of free enterprise, but also risks being self-defeating. Advertising, anywhere under the sun, must rise and rest on the high moral ground of frankness, honesty and sincerity.

Bibliography

- Agee, W.K.; Ault, P.H & Emery, E. (1982). *Perspectives on Mass Communications*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.
- American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (2000). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Arens, W.F.; Weigold, M.F. & Arens, C. (2008). *Contemporary Advertising*. Boston: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.
- Azzaro, M. (2004). *Strategic Media Decisions*. Chicago: the Copy Workshop.
- Baran, S.J. (2002). *Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Black, S. (2004). *Practical Public Relations*. New Delhi: Universal Book Stall.
- Bovee, C.L & Arens, W.F. (1983) *Contemporary Advertising*. Boston: McGraw-Hill / Irwin.
- Dominick, J.R. (2002). *The Dynamics of Mass Communication: Media in the Digital Age*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Fedler, F.; Bender, J.R.; Davenport, L. & Drager, M. W (2005). *Reporting for the Media*: Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fitz-Gibbon, B. (1967). *Macy's, Gimbel's and Me*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Galvin, K.M & Terrell, J. (2001) *Communication Works: Communication Applications in the Workplace*. Illinois: National Textbook Company.
- Gerald, B. (1965). *Communication and Language: Networks of Thoughts and Actions*. New York: Doubleday Inc.
- Ginn, S.B (1995). *Language Arts Handbook*. Ohio: Multisource.
- Microsoft (2004) *Encarta Premium Encyclopedia*. Microsoft Corporation, USA.
- Nigerian Code of Advertising Practice* (2005). Lagos: Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria.
- Packard, V. (1957) *The Hidden Persuaders*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Pearson, J.; Nelson, P.; Titsworth. S. & Harter, L. (2003). *Human Communication*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

- Rabiu, M.S. (2007) 'Mind Managers at Work: How Motivational Researchers Advertise Products and Services' in *Nigerian Journal of Social Research*, Vol, 1 No. 2, March 2007, 54-65.
- Rodman, G. (2006). *Mass Media in a Changing World: History, Industry, Controversy*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Severin, W.J and Tankard, J. W (1979) *Communication Theories: Origins, Methods, Uses*, New York: Hastings House Publishers.
- 'Top Advertising Agencies Shaping Business in 2009', in *Thisday* Newspaper, February 15, 2009. Lagos: Leaders and Company.
- Wood, J.T (2006). *Communication in Our Lives*. Australia: Thomson/Wadsworth.
- Wright, D. K (2009). 'Communication Ethics' in Stacks, D.W. & Salwen, M.B. (Eds) *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*. New York: Routledge.