

Work for My Attention

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Blog Post 1

Everywhere I look, there are advertisements being thrown in my face. I see ads when I'm scrolling through Facebook or Instagram. I see them when I read the daily SnapChat magazines. I see them when I flip through actual paper magazines. I glance at marketing ploys when I am driving down the road and huge billboards creep into my peripheral vision. They are on the television, on the sides of buses, in the train station...they are everywhere! Advertisements are inescapable because they constantly bombard us on the daily basis. But, just because these advertisements are visible to me, does that mean that I am truly paying attention to them?

Half of the time, when I see an advertisement I just continue scrolling past it without being phased at all by its content. If someone were to ask me what the ad was marketing, I would not be able to answer without tapping deep into my subconscious, slight photographic memory. So what does an advertisement have to do to grab my attention and get me to scroll back and really look at it?

First of all, visual intake, I believe, is one of the most important aspects of marketing and advertising. Let's compare this to picking which slice of pizza to get at the pizza shop. Here I am, at the pizzeria looking at all the pizzas, trying to figure out which one will taste the best. Since I can't try a sample of each pizza before I pick one, I use my sight to pick the best one. Which one looks like it'll taste good? Now let's assume that I've never had a slice of pizza before and I have no taste-bud memories to go off. I have to pick the pizza slice that simply looks the most appealing. I also pick the biggest slice because I'm feeling gluttonous.

In that same realm, people are drawn in to what is aesthetically pleasing to them and from what they will get the most enjoyment. The use of pictures and visuals in advertisements helps a person to visualize the product in their possession. A description of something without the visual aspect is not always enough to convince someone to engage in this advertisement. Even the use of color schemes and designs can help to attract someone's attention if there is no picture. For instance, if I saw two advertisements that were essentially marketing the same idea or product, but one was just black text with a white background and the other had interesting font and a simple design with cool color schemes, I would be more drawn to the latter.

Next, the advertisement must be marketing something that I am personally interested in. With the advancement of social media and its growing hand in the marketing industry, it is easier for

advertisers to target specific people. For example, I really needed a new pair of shoes for my birthday this summer and I was looking through every shoe website I could find. Then when I logged into Facebook, I noticed that a bunch of the ads on the side of the webpage were for websites like Aldo and Steve Madden, both very popular shoe companies. I actually experimented with this phenomenon while writing this entry. I visited about five different shoe websites and searched “shoe websites” on Google in a matter of about three minutes. I immediately logged into my Facebook account and, there it was, a shoe advertisement. At first I felt a bit weird about this, as if there were little robots spying on me through my computer and tracking my Internet whereabouts. Eventually I came to understand that this marketing strategy is actually pretty brilliant, even though it may freak me out. By keeping tabs on a person’s online activity, marketers can directly cater to his or her specific interests, which will almost guarantee that the advertisement will get attention.

Another way that advertisers get my attention is through representation. If I see an advertisement featuring someone who looks like me or if something that aligns with my identities is being marketed, then I will be more intrigued. For example, advertisements featuring women or people of color will often get my attention because I identify with both of those social groups and what is being marketed may be beneficial or important to me. Marketers can do this on a larger scale by analyzing who uses or engages in what platforms of media in a specific place and at a certain time. These marketers then have a better way of targeting specific groups of people that may benefit from what they are advertising.

Another way in which marketers receive attention is by appealing to the general public. Marketers who place their ads on websites, magazines, or Internet articles that have (or will have) high engagement will most likely gain more attention. One example is Time magazine’s reporting on Facebook’s new addition, the “dislike” button. The dislike button has always been a feature that many people wanted on Facebook but was constantly deemed a “no-go” by its founder and CEO, Mark Zuckerberg. I don’t think the marketers of this article had to try very hard to make this article get attention. The words “dislike button” were definitely enough to grab mine. I think the marketers that chose to place their ads on this page were very smart to do so because so many people are going to be clicking on that article and will see and maybe lend their attention to a few of the several ads on the webpage.

Ultimately, advertisers and marketers have to fight their hardest to get people’s attention. They must try to appeal to people as individuals and as a unit. They must also stay current in order to know what people will be interested in enough to actually pay attention to it. With our ever-evolving

culture, advertisers and marketers really have to stay on top of their game to make people stop what their doing and truly look at what they have to offer.