

## Persuasion Techniques in the 21<sup>ST</sup> Century Advertising

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### **Abstract**

*Most people do not know that their buying decisions are influenced by the use of persuasion techniques in advertisements and commercials. This research can be seen as a small step in raising awareness of why and how persuasion is used in advertising in order to enable buyers to protect themselves from its effects and to make correct purchasing decisions without being too much influenced by advertising.*

*For this purpose we have chosen to analyze a corpus of commercials and advertisements in order to identify similarities and differences between the persuasion techniques used in TV commercials and Facebook advertisements and to analyze the relation between the target audience and the techniques used in the selected advertisements in order to better understand how persuasion is used by advertisers.*

*The results show that in TV commercials more complex and sophisticated combinations of persuasion techniques are used, while in Facebook advertisements a combination of maximum three persuasion techniques is used. Moreover, on Facebook, even if the same persuasion techniques as in the TV commercials are used for the same product, they are adapted to a specific age segment.*

**Keywords:** *persuasion, advertising techniques, advertisements, commercials, advertising slogan*

### **Introduction**

**E**ven though many of us are familiar with the concept of persuasion, few of us really understand its real power in modern society. I think that it is important to understand the ways in which this concept is used, why it is used and what implications its use has on people as buyers in order to be able to protect themselves from its manipulative effects.

We have chosen to focus our research on how persuasion is used in advertising and we are particularly interested in analyzing the choice of the persuasion techniques used in advertisements and TV commercials depending on the medium of delivery.

Because of the limitations of this paper, we have chosen to analyze only the persuasion techniques used in TV commercials in comparison with

the persuasion techniques used on social media advertisements, more particularly, on Facebook, given the popularity enjoyed by this social media platform. For the same reason the corpus of commercials and advertisements is limited but it could be extended in further research.

The criteria on which the analysis is based are the persuasion techniques used in the selected advertisements and the impact of the persuasion techniques used on the target audience.

We think that it is important for buyers to understand how persuasion is used in TV commercials and advertisements in order to raise their awareness of the positive and negative effects that advertising may have and to help them make correct buying decisions.

### **Literature review and defining concepts**

#### **Understanding the Concept of Persuasion**

According to [businessdictionary.com](http://businessdictionary.com), persuasion is “the process aimed at changing a person’s (or a group’s) attitude or behavior toward some event, idea, object, or other person, by using written or spoken words to convey information, feelings, or reasoning, or a combination of them.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, persuasion can be explained as deliberately influencing a person’s view of a certain event, object, idea or person in such a manner that it helps the persuader fulfill his/her purpose.

The concept of persuasion is not new. As Mark Jadoul explained in his article “About Rhetoric, Storytelling and Persuasion”, this concept has its origins in Ancient Greece when the philosopher Aristotle introduced one of the oldest theories about persuasion.

Once people have understood the power of persuasion, they have applied it to various domains: business discourse, political discourse, and last but not least mass media. Mass media is, as the [businessdictionary.com](http://businessdictionary.com) states “any non-personal channel of broadcasting a message to the general public”<sup>2</sup>. Some examples of channels would be TV, radio, newspapers, and in the last few years, social media. The main branch of promotion in which persuasion is used is advertising.

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<sup>1</sup> BusinessDictionary.com, ‘persuasion’,  
<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/persuasion.html>, retrieved on 28.03.2016

<sup>2</sup> BusinessDictionary.com, ‘mass media’,  
<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/mass-media.html>, retrieved on 29.03.2016

### **Persuasion in Advertising**

“Advertising is fundamentally persuasion and persuasion happens to be not a science, but an art.” – William Bernbach

Advertising is defined in Merriam-Webster Dictionary as “the action of calling something to the attention of the public especially by paid announcements”<sup>3</sup>, such as commercials, billboards, website banners.

Creating an efficient advertisement is not easy. It involves a lot of work and factors must be taken into consideration. There are many different theories about how an advertisement should be done in order to be considered successful.

Bonnie Conard presented in her article “The Qualities of a Good Advertisement” four essential characteristics that a well-done advertisement must have:<sup>4</sup>

1. It must be memorable.

For an advertisement to be effective, it must be something that the viewer would remember after seeing. However more important than recalling the advertisement itself, it is that the viewer should remember the product which is being advertised.

2. The advertiser should clearly know who the target audience is.

Most products and services do not appeal to all the people. Because of this, the advertiser must identify the segment of population that could benefit from buying that specific product or from paying for that specific service. There are several factors to be taken into consideration when selecting the target audience: age, gender, rural vs. urban area, level of literacy, level of income. Also, by knowing who the target group is, the advertiser can choose the best media channels to broadcast the message in order to be efficient.

3. A successful advertisement is an entertaining one.

It is not enough to inform the potential buyers about the product or service being offered. In order to grab and keep their attention, the

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<sup>3</sup> Merriam-Webster, ‘advertising’, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/advertising>, retrieved on 29.03.2016

<sup>4</sup> Conard, Bonnie, “*The Qualities of a Good Advertisement*”, 2016, <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/qualities-good-advertisement-26099.html>, retrieved on 29.03.2016

advertiser has to develop an entertaining advertisement. Humor is one of the most effective ways to do this, but its appropriateness should be taken into consideration.

4. Grabbing viewers' attention is crucial.

"No matter how good your ad may be, it will do your company no good if no one sees it"<sup>5</sup>, states Conard. It is very important that the advertisement catches the eye and the interest of the potential buyer. There are various elements that should be considered in order to capture the public's attention, such as the placing of the advertisement, the design or the time when it is run.

According to the Advertising Educational Foundation "advertising is about selling"<sup>6</sup>. As a result, advertising is naturally "neither neutral nor objective"<sup>7</sup>. The means through which advertising is fulfilling its purpose, which is to sell, is persuasion.

### **Classification of Persuasion Techniques Used in Advertising**

'To persuade', as the MacMillan Dictionary states, means "to make someone agree to do something by giving them reasons why they should"<sup>8</sup> or "to make someone believe that something is true"<sup>9</sup>. Persuasion comes in different forms. In advertising, a series of persuasion techniques are used in order to convince people to buy products, to vote for a certain candidate, to give money for an organization, etc.

The persuasive techniques used in advertising can be classified in several ways. For example, according to [www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org), the persuasive strategies used by advertisers can be divided into three categories: pathos, logos, and ethos, which also correspond to the three

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<sup>5</sup> Conard, Bonnie, "*The Qualities of a Good Advertisement*", 2016, <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/qualities-good-advertisement-26099.html>, retrieved on 29.03.2016

<sup>6</sup> Advertising Educational Foundation, *Persuasion*, 2005, [http://www.aef.com/on\\_campus/classroom/speaker\\_pres/data/4001](http://www.aef.com/on_campus/classroom/speaker_pres/data/4001), retrieved on 15.02.2016

<sup>7</sup> Idem

<sup>8</sup> MacMillan Dictionary, 'persuade', <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/persuade>, retrieved on 15.02.2016

<sup>9</sup> MacMillan Dictionary, 'persuade', <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/persuade>, retrieved on 15.02.2016

appeals introduced by the Greek philosopher Aristotle:<sup>10</sup> Pathos, Logos and Ethos.

Medialiteracyproject.org offers a more structured and detailed classification of the persuasion techniques used in advertising. They present 40 techniques divided into three categories: Basic, such as Bribery, Beautiful people and Association; Intermediate: Flattery, New, or Nostalgia; and Advanced such as Symbols, Diversion and Timing.

### **Methodology**

The aim of the case study is to identify similarities and differences between the persuasion techniques used in TV commercials and in Facebook advertisements and to analyze the relation between the target audience and the techniques used in the selected advertisements.

The case study is based on an analysis of a corpus of advertisements. The corpus that we have selected consists of five groups of advertisements. Each group consists of a TV commercial and several commercials placed on Facebook for a brand or a product.

The criteria on which the analysis is based are the persuasion techniques used in the selected advertisements and the relationship between the persuasion techniques used and the target audience.

Due to the limited amount of space allocated for this paper, out of the forty persuasion techniques presented in the classification made by Media Literacy Project<sup>11</sup>, I have chosen only thirteen persuasion techniques for analyzing: Association, Warm & fuzzy, Plain folks, Intensity, Humor, Bandwagon, Simple solution, New, Beautiful people, Maybe, Flattery, Bribery and Explicit claims.

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<sup>10</sup> ReadWriteThink, *Persuasive Techniques*, 2009, [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson1166/PersuasiveTechniques.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1166/PersuasiveTechniques.pdf), retrieved on 15.02.2016

<sup>11</sup> Media Literacy Project, *Language of persuasion*, <http://medialiteracyproject.org/language-persuasion>, retrieved on 18.07.2013

## The Case Study

### Volkswagen

The first set of advertisements belongs to Volkswagen Group which is “one of the world’s leading automobile manufacturers and the largest carmaker in Europe”<sup>12</sup> as [volkswagenag.com](http://www.volkswagenag.com) specifies.

The TV commercial that we have chosen for this brand is called “Companion” and it is the latest commercial released by Volkswagen<sup>13</sup>.

Firstly, let us look at the story itself. In short, the commercial presents the red-haired boy growing up. The process is presented in stages marked by important events in his life, such as: learning how to drive, falling in love, and getting married. For each of these stages a model of Volkswagen car is attributed. Seasons change, the boy grows older, the cars change, but the brand, Volkswagen, is constant. This creates in the minds of the target audience the idea that they can depend on this brand, regardless of what is happening around as the time passes by.

Secondly, a very important persuasive element used to create the association is the message at the end of the commercial: “It’s more than just a car. It’s a life-long companion, Volkswagen.” These short sentences link the Volkswagen brand with the idea of friendship, evoking feelings of security and comfort in the viewers’ minds. They also imply that Volkswagen is a brand that you can depend on. In this message we can see that the Intensity technique is used as well. Intensity is achieved by using the comparative weasel word “more than”, extending the attributes of the car. It is suggested that a car is just an object used to go from here to there, but a Volkswagen car is more than that, it is a “companion”, it is a part of your life.

The Association technique is strengthened by two other techniques used in this commercial: Warm & fuzzy and Plain folks.

The Warm & fuzzy technique is used against the soothing background music, the warm color tones used to depict the scenes, the loving atmosphere created by the smiles and the eyes full of joy and love of

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<sup>12</sup> Volkswagen Aktiengesellschaft, “*The Group*”, published on 31.12.2014, [http://www.volkswagenag.com/content/vwcorp/content/en/the\\_group.html](http://www.volkswagenag.com/content/vwcorp/content/en/the_group.html), retrieved on 01.04.2016

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BJpq6lArPw> Volkswagen, “Companion”, published on 04. 02. 2016, retrieved on 12. 04. 2016

the people in the car. All these elements help to create an association of the feeling of comfort and security with the Volkswagen brand.

The fact that in this commercial ordinary people play the main characters and an ordinary life is depicted makes it easier for the viewers to identify themselves with them. Thus, it helps the viewer to associate the emotions shown by the people in the commercial with the Volkswagen brand.

- Persuasion techniques used: Association, Warm & fuzzy, Plain folks and Intensity.

For the Facebook advertising part, we have chosen two advertisements posted on the Volkswagen official Facebook page.

The first advertisement looks like an ordinary picture taken together with some friends. In the picture we can see four people in a convertible car, who are portrayed as friends or relatives.

- Persuasion techniques used: Association, Plain folks and Intensity.

The second advertisement that we have chosen is an example of advertising done by engaging the customers in games<sup>14</sup>.

The advertisement consists of an image of a black Volkswagen car. The picture is made to look like an assembled puzzle from which only one puzzle piece is missing. At the bottom of the image, three choices are offered. The Facebook users are asked to choose which puzzle piece from those at the bottom they think is the one that completes the image.

- The persuasion technique used in this advertisement is Flattery.

*Comparison:*

As we can see, for this brand, there are a lot of similarities between the persuasion techniques used in televised advertising and Facebook advertising. Both follow the same pattern. Association is the main persuasion technique that Volkswagen advertisers use in their commercials and advertisements. Being a product available for any social class, not a luxury product, most of the advertisements also use the Plain folks technique, regardless of the medium used in order to help the customers identify with the people in the commercials and advertisements.

The difference is that, on Facebook, the advertisements are made in such a way that they engage the target audience in debates and discussions

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/VolkswagenRomania/photos/pb.286947639638.-2207520000.1460494445./10153048400629639/?type=3&theater> Volkswagen official Facebook page, posted on 26. 07. 2015, retrieved on 12.04.2016

in which Volkswagen representatives gladly engage too. Regardless of the persuasion techniques used for the Volkswagen brand, the online advertising tends to be more interactive and entertaining than in the televised commercials.

### **Coca-Cola**

The televised commercial that we have chosen is called “Brotherly love” and it was released at the beginning of 2016<sup>15</sup>.

The emotional element is very powerful in this commercial. The message of this commercial is that brothers may not always get along but they are always there when it counts. It could also be interpreted as the family is above all. At the end of the commercial the viewer is likely to associate the notions of brotherly love and family with the Coca-Cola brand. The Association technique is endorsed by the Plain folk technique. By using ordinary people in the commercial, the advertiser makes it easier for the viewer to identify with them and to associate the feelings brought up by the commercial with the brand.

- Persuasion techniques used: Association, Plain folks.

The Facebook advertisements that we have chosen belong to the campaign #TasteTheFeeling by Coca-Cola. In this campaign Coca-Cola uses the Association technique to link almost any positive emotion with the brand.

- The persuasion techniques used: Association, Plain folks, Warm & fuzzy.

### *Comparison:*

For this set of commercials there are no differences in the persuasion techniques used by the advertiser in both the televised commercials and the Facebook advertisements, but we can see some differences when we analyze the level of intensity of the persuasion techniques. In the televised commercial the emotional load is much more powerful than it is in the Facebook images, so even if the same persuasion techniques are used, they tend to be more aggressive in the TV commercial. As a difference, when it comes to the target audience, we can clearly see that the televised commercial is designed for every age segment, while

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xq8trrEecGg>, Coca-Cola, “Brotherly love”, published on 19. 01. 2016, retrieved on 12.04.2016



Facebook advertisements target a certain group. Most of the images posted on the social media for this brand are pictures of young people, dressed to the latest fashion trends and all of them encourage the Facebook users to leave comments and to discuss by means of the questions asked in the captions.

### **Gillette**

The TV commercial that we have chosen for this brand is called “Shave Face” and it is a commercial for Gillette Fusion ProGlide with FlexBall Technology released in 2014<sup>16</sup>.

At the beginning of the commercial four persuasion techniques are combined: Humor, Plain folks, Bandwagon and Simple solution. The problem that needs to be solved is presented through humor. In the first few seconds the commercial shows men making funny faces in slow-motion at the camera, which even if it is amusing, the viewer is left a little bit confused. Then the voiceover intervenes and explains that this is a problem. To help a man identify with this problem, the Plain folks technique is used in combination with the Bandwagon technique. The variety of ages and ethnicities used for the commercial implies that this is a problem that every man in the world faces while shaving. To enforce the Bandwagon technique the statement “This is what men do” is used, implying that if you are a man, you have this problem. Then, of course, the solution is given: the advertised product.

In the second part of the commercial, the Simple solution technique is used in combination with the New technique and the Intensity technique. The phrase “Introducing Fusion ProGlide rebuilt with FlexBall Technology” implies that the new product is better than the older one, and that it has been improved. The Intensity technique is used in the next phrase “Makes maximum contact over tricky contours and gets virtually every hair.” through weasel words such as “maximum” and “every”. The company’s slogan at the end of the commercial: “Gillette. The best a man can get” also contains a weasel word, “the best”, to create intensity.

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<sup>16</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5IMz0krxdA&list=PL5urOKdhITFREbPt3SS\\_yiCjUt3-QTktj&index=2&src\\_vid=X6WvdJn9e60&annotation\\_id=annotation\\_2606384519&feature=iv](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5IMz0krxdA&list=PL5urOKdhITFREbPt3SS_yiCjUt3-QTktj&index=2&src_vid=X6WvdJn9e60&annotation_id=annotation_2606384519&feature=iv), Gillette, “Shave Face”, published on 29.04.2014, retrieved on 19.04.2016

- Even though this is a relatively short commercial, it abounds in persuasion techniques. We have identified six persuasion techniques in this thirty-second spot: Humor, Plain folks, Bandwagon, Simple solution, New, and Intensity.

From the official Facebook page of Gillette we have chosen three advertisements that follow the same pattern.

The first example is a picture that is divided into two parts. The first part shows a little boy playing with a soccer ball along with the slogan "First soccer game" and the second part shows the same boy as a teenager playing an aggressive soccer game on a real football ground along with the slogan "First real soccer game".

The second example follows the same pattern. The image is split into halves. The first part shows a student sleeping in a library with a book under his head along with the slogan "First all-nighter" and the second part shows the same young man holding in his arms his baby who is yawning, with the slogan "First real all-nighter". 2.1. C. The last example features the same type of image. The first part shows a little boy smiling. He has curly, messy hair. The slogan says "First haircut". The second part shows the same boy, who is now a young adult with a well-groomed hair and the slogan says "First real haircut".

- Because all the three examples use the same persuasion techniques, we have chosen to analyze them together. The techniques used are Association, Intensity and Plain folks.

*Comparison:*

There are differences on multiple levels between the TV commercial and the Facebook advertisements for this brand. Firstly, the TV commercial uses a very complex blend of persuasion techniques, while the Facebook advertisements use fewer persuasion techniques and are more simplistic.

Secondly, the emotional impact is much more powerful in the Facebook advertisements due to the use of the Association technique which is absent in the TV commercial.

Thirdly, with regard to the target audience, it is clear that the TV commercial targets a wider segment of population by using men of different races and ages, while the Facebook advertisements are focused on a specific age segment. In all the three examples of online advertisements the grown-ups are presented as teenagers or young adults. Therefore it is

clear that the Facebook advertisements target the population aged approximately between 15 and 27.

### **Doritos**

The TV commercial that we have chosen for this brand is called “Ultrasound” and it was run during the 2016 Super Bowl<sup>17</sup>.

The commercial starts in a doctor’s cabinet when a soon-to-be mother is having an ultrasound. We can see the doctor examining the baby, the happy and emotional mother and the father who is carelessly eating a bag of Doritos. As the doctor informs them that the baby could be born “any day now”, the mother looks full of joy at her husband. When she sees him eating the Doritos, she gets annoyed. As she complains to the doctor about this, the future father notices on the screen of the ultrasound that the baby follows with its little hands the Doritos chip that he is keeping in his hand. The doctor gives him a disapproving look. He continues to play with the nacho watching the baby following it until, obviously annoyed, the mother grabs the chip and throws it away. Immediately after that the woman looks at the doctor with a shocked and worried look and starts screaming. On the ultrasound screen we can see the baby shooting right out after the Doritos chip. The doctor starts screaming too, the father, obviously panicked, also starts screaming and we can hear the newborn baby’s cry while the Doritos logo appears on the screen.

Obviously, the persuasion technique used in this commercial is Humor. Humor is used because it captures the viewers’ attention and puts them in a good mood. This technique is used in order to make the viewers link the good feeling with the product that is being advertised and remember the good feeling later, when they are in the store to make them select the product.

The Plain folks technique is also used to make the viewers remember the scenario as a possible one. By presenting everything else as plain as possible, the fantastic situation presented seems more credible.

- Persuasion techniques used: Humor, Plain folks.

The Facebook advertisement that we have chosen also concerns 2016 Super Bowl.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZnBpmZXBms> , Sport Videos, “Ultrasound”, published on 07.02.2016, retrieved on 21.04.2016

On the official page of Doritos there are multiple advertisements that not only advertise the brand, but also the 2016 Super Bowl. The one that we have chosen presents a contest for the best Doritos image text or video for which the participants could win \$50,000. For a tweet, image or video to be selected in the contest, it had to contain the tag “#Doritos”<sup>18</sup>.

- Persuasion technique used: Bribery.

*Comparison:*

As we can clearly see, the TV commercial and the Facebook advertisement for this product have nothing in common. Their commercials are all very entertaining and funny to watch, while their online advertising campaign consists mainly of contests. The persuasion techniques used for the commercial and the advertisement selected are also different depending on the medium used. The TV commercial uses Humor to capture the viewer’s attention and it is entertaining for any age segment, while the Facebook advertisement uses Bribery and appeals mainly to a certain age segment, most specifically, to teenagers and young adults.

**Garnier**

The TV commercial that we have chosen for this brand is called “Grow Strong” and it is a commercial released at the beginning of 2016 for Garnier Fructis products<sup>19</sup>.

The commercial is not based on a specific story. It is a combination of scenes that show a beautiful girl with gorgeous hair in different postures and images of the Garnier Fructis Grow Strong products. At the end of the commercial a boy also appears in the commercial. They both smile and look happy. In the background we can hear an inspiring song.

During this compilation we can hear a woman’s voice delivering the actual message of the commercial: “Want to grow your hair longer? Then, it has to be stronger! Fructis reinvents strength for hair. New Fructis Grow Strong: the power to make hair up to ten times stronger. 1. Grow Strong shampoo and conditioner with a power dose of active fruit concentrate reinforce hair. 2. The treatment injects strength from root to tip. Every inch

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/DoritosUSA/photos/pb.24497276164.-2207520000.1461023391./10154284309121165/?type=3&theater> Doritos, posted on 05.02.2016, retrieved on 21.04.2016

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNWrEsHw1tI> GarnierUSA, “Grow Strong”, published on 17.02.2016, retrieved on 21.04.2016

is ten times stronger. For longer, shinier hair. New Grow Strong. Fructis: stronger hair, stronger you. Garnier.”

The simple Solution technique is used to imply that by changing your hair products with the Garnier Fructis new products you will not only have more beautiful hair, you will also feel different: “Stronger hair, stronger you”. This persuasion technique is used in combination with the Beautiful people technique to maximize its effect, suggesting that you could look like the beautiful girl in the commercial if you use their products. The new technique is used for an even bigger impact. The commercial introduces the new, improved products, implying that they are obviously better than everything that has been commercialized before.

To assure the credibility of the product a combination of the Explicit claims and Maybe techniques is used. The shampoo is improved with a “power dose of active fruit concentrate” and the treatment “injects strength from root to tip” and this attributes of the products can make your hair “up to ten times stronger”, the key term being the weasel word “up to”. Even if it seems true, these assertions do not guarantee any result.

- The persuasion techniques used: Beautiful people, Maybe techniques, Simple solution, New and Explicit claims.

The first Facebook advertisement presents a picture of three boys looking like in a cartoon. The boys all have pimples and the title of the image is “3 Pimples”. In the lower part of the image the Garnier logo appears and the name of the advertised product “Neem Purifying face wash.” The image is posted together with the caption “Acne is what stops these young university students from following their dreams. #GarnierNeem is what helps them follow their hearts. #LoseThePimplesNotYourMind.”<sup>20</sup>

- Persuasion techniques used: Fear, Simple solution.

The second example refers to the last 007 movie, Skyfall. The image shows a cartoon version of the main character, full of pimples. The character says “Pimple...James Pimple!”

- The persuasion techniques used: Humor, Simple solution.

The last example is an advertisement that follows the same theme as the previous one. It is a reference to the popular series Game of Thrones.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Garnier.PK/photos/pb.175716965817509.-2207520000.1461199392./937015393020992/?type=3&theater> Garnier, posted on 25.11.2015, retrieved on 21.04.2016

The image shows one of the main characters full of pimples and the title is changed to Game of Pimples.

- Persuasion techniques used: Humor, Simple solution.

*Comparison:*

Both, the TV commercial and the Facebook advertisements use as the main persuasion technique the Simple solution, but a series of differences can be noticed.

Firstly, the TV commercial uses a combination of more persuasion techniques to support the main one, while the Facebook advertisements use a more simplified approach.

Secondly, the TV commercial appeals to women of all ages, while the online advertisements focus on a specific target audience. This can be observed looking at the references made in the advertisements. All the three advertisements on Facebook make references to things that mainly concern teenagers and young people. The first example describes the three boys presented as being students, the second and the third examples refer to movies, and blockbusters popular with teenagers.

**Findings and Discussion of Results**

In order to obtain the final results we will make an overall comparison between the persuasion techniques used in the TV commercials and the Facebook advertisements that we have analyzed.

In the five commercials that we have chosen, we have found a total of eleven persuasion techniques: Association, Warm & fuzzy, Plain folks, Intensity, Humor, Bandwagon, Simple solution, New, Beautiful people, Maybe, and Explicit claims.

In the eleven Facebook advertisements that we have analyzed, we have found a total of seven persuasion techniques: Association, Plain folks, Intensity, Flattery, Warm & fuzzy, Bribery and Humor.

Five of the total of thirteen persuasion techniques can be found in both the commercials and the advertisements that we have analyzed: Association, Intensity, Warm & fuzzy, Humor, Plain folks and Simple solution. The most frequently used techniques in the TV commercials and advertisements that we have chosen are Association and Plain folks.

Regarding the use of the persuasion techniques, we have noticed the fact that most commercials have a higher level of complexity, using

numerous persuasion techniques, while the advertisements tend to be simpler, most of them using one or two persuasion techniques.

An interesting fact is that some brands like Coca-Cola use the same type of advertising regardless of the medium used, while others like Doritos have chosen totally different ways of advertising their products depending on the medium used. Coca-Cola's Facebook advertisements follow the same theme as the commercials and use the same persuasion techniques: Association and Plain folks. Doritos uses Humor as a main persuasion technique in the TV commercials, while on Facebook most of the advertisements that we have found contain contests and use Bribery as a persuasion technique.

In the cases in which the same persuasion techniques are used for both TV commercials and Facebook advertisements, there are still some noticeable differences regarding the segment of the population that is targeted. An example in point would be the way that Coca-Cola advertises its products. Even though both the commercials and the Facebook advertisements follow the same theme, the TV commercials appeal to people of any age, while the advertisements appeal mostly to teenagers and young people due to the fact that in most of the images "cool" teenagers appear, dressed to the latest fashion.

This can be seen in other cases as well, even though the commercials and the advertisements do not use the same persuasion techniques. For example, Gillette features men of all ages in the TV commercial, while in the Facebook advertisements mostly teenagers and young people appear. Likewise, the Garnier TV commercial appeals to women of all ages, while the Facebook posts make references to movies and blockbusters popular only with teenagers.

Another interesting fact is that on Facebook the captions of the advertisements posted contain questions and other elements that encourage the users to make comments and to engage in discussions and debates. An example in point would be the caption for one of Coca-Cola advertisements that we have presented: "Home-cooked meals are the best! Which is your mother's specialty? #TasteTheFeeling." For the same reason, many brands choose to advertise their products on Facebook using games and trivia. As an example, Volkswagen has done this in the advertisement with the missing puzzle piece. Another interesting aspect is that very often brand representatives also engage in the debates in order to encourage the Facebook users to interact.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

It is not enough to watch a commercial to really understand it. It is not enough to look at an advertisement to understand its real message. We should take some time and really analyze what information we get from the commercials and advertisements before purchasing a product, using a service, supporting an idea or voting for a candidate. If we do that, we will be surprised to find out that we often do not know anything about a product after watching a commercial. If, for example, we watch a commercial for chips, we see people eating them, we see the package, but we will not get anywhere information about the ingredients used and yet we buy them. If you are asking yourself why, the answer is simple: because you are persuaded to do so.

We have chosen to conduct this research because we think that persuasion is a powerful tool in the modern world and it is important for us to be informed of this subject in order to be able to protect ourselves from being misled. Advertisements and commercials are not just funny, interesting images and videos, they are overloaded with persuasion techniques that are used for a sole purpose: to make us buy. It is interesting, though, to look at the creative ways in which advertisers use persuasion. At present, advertisements and commercials have become a form of art in which persuasion is the key element. Advertisers develop more and more techniques to disguise their real purpose, which is actually to sell. Nothing is left at random in a TV commercial or in an advertisement. The images, the colors, the actors, the words used to describe a product, all are carefully chosen to awake in peoples' minds the desire to buy the advertised product.

By carefully analyzing what a commercial or an advertisement really transmits, we will notice that the amount of real, pertinent, useful information about the product is, in most cases, very limited and sometimes it is completely absent. The lack of information is successfully disguised in most cases with the help of persuasion techniques. The negative impact is that most people are tricked by good-looking people and a few weasel words and make their buying decisions based on insufficient data about the product.

By better understanding how advertisers persuade us, we, as customers can make better buying decisions. If we are able to detect the persuasion techniques used in commercials and advertisements, we can avoid their negative effects. It is important not to let yourself be influenced



by the persuasion techniques used in commercials and advertisements in order to avoid making purchasing decisions that you would later regret.

The use of persuasion techniques in commercials and advertisements is an interesting topic and I believe that researching it could teach us important things about us as customers and as people. We believe that if the vast majority of customers were aware of how advertising really worked and started demanding real information about a product or a service before making a purchase, the entire advertising field would go through a dramatic change. The amount of tricks and persuasion techniques used in commercials and advertisements would diminish and the amount of real information would increase. This would also lead to an improvement in the quality of products and we would finally be able to make purchasing decisions really knowing what we buy.

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