

TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

Advertising Techniques

Avant garde

The suggestion that using a product puts the user ahead of the times. *Example:* A toy manufacturer encourages kids to be the first on their block to have a new toy.

Bandwagon

The suggestion that everybody is using a product and that you should too in order to be part of the group. *Example:* A credit card company states that millions of people use its card.

Facts and figures

The use of statistics and objective factual information to prove the superiority of a product. *Example:* A car manufacturer states the amount of time it takes one of its cars to go from 0 to 60 m.p.h.

Glittering generalities and weasel words

The use of ambiguous or empty terms to suggest something positive and desirable without making any guarantee. *Example:* A soft drink claims that it is the “real thing”; a breakfast cereal makes a vague suggestion that its ingredients prevent cancer or lower cholesterol.

Hidden fears

The suggestion that a product will protect the user from some real or perceived danger. *Example:* A laundry detergent manufacturer suggests that you will be embarrassed when strangers see a “ring around the collar” on your shirts or blouses.

Magic ingredients

The suggestion that some almost miraculous discovery makes a product exceptionally effective. *Example:* A pharmaceutical manufacturer describes a special coating that makes its product less irritating to the stomach than a competitor’s.

Patriotism

The suggestion that purchasing a product shows your love of country. *Example:* A company associates its product with patriotic imagery, suggests that its product is for Americans and announces that its product is made in the United States.

Plain folks

The suggestion that a product is a practical product of good value for ordinary people. *Example:* A cereal manufacturer shows an ordinary family sitting at the breakfast table enjoying their product.

Snob appeal

The suggestion that using a product makes the consumer part of an elite group with a luxurious and glamorous lifestyle. *Example:* A coffee manufacturer shows people dressed in formal gowns and tuxedos drinking their brand at an art gallery.

Association

Words, ideas and images are used to associate a product with a positive experience. *Example:* To associate wearing a garment with staying cool in the summer, a clothing company shows people dressed in its fashions at a sunny seaside setting where there is a cool breeze.

Testimonial

A famous personality endorses a product. *Example:* A famous hockey player recommends a particular brand of skates.

Wit and humor

A company entertains and amuses viewers through the use of visuals or language. *Example:* A man who has neglected to use deodorant raises his arms and causes others to pass out.