**The Influence of Advertising**

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**The Influence of Advertising**

Humans are immersed in advertising every single day, sometimes even when we aren’t aware of it. We experience many forms of advertising and marketing through different mediums, channels, and platforms. From social media, television, radio, print, and many more–the options are endless for organizations and businesses alike to reach us directly. Many of us play a huge part in marketing and advertising campaigns, from receiving the message, being a test audience, or buying a product or service. It affects the way we do everything - from eating, shopping, to making big purchase decisions like buying a car or even a home. Every business, company, or organization can benefit from an effective and strategic advertising campaign and the overall influence of our modern advertising. Marketing and advertising can also benefit and affect us as the viewer and ultimately, a consumer.

Advertising is all around us and has been for many years. The roots and history of advertising can be traced back to 3000 B.C. and possibly even sooner when merchants would hire “barkers” to shout out goods and prices at markets and bazaars. Some of the earliest forms of print advertising included “siquis” or “shopbills”, which were simply early forms of posters and business cards (Baran, 2017). Fast forward to 2020, and we have multiple story billboards, massive video screens, and a giant virtual network (the internet) that can carry and deliver any message an organization wants. One method of advertising that may be just as prevalent now as in ancient times, would be WOM or word-of-mouth marketing, with the Word of Mouth Marketing Association proposing it is the “most effective form of advertising” (Ford, 2020). People have always relied on others for recommendations or advice. If we think about a time when we are making a big purchase of planning a big trip, we often rely on the thoughts and suggestions of family and friends. If a family member suggests a particular brand of car or a certain resort, that would be word-of-mouth marketing. WOM is only one method of marketing, promotion, and advertising. Most companies curate many of their ads and campaigns to cater to those who rely heavier on WOM.

Nothing has affected advertising and marketing as much as technology. The industrial revolution, wars, and technological advances all helped herald in the new era of advertising (Baran, 2017). Several new inventions such as the telegraph, electricity, the telephone, and even the railroad, were integral to the growth of advertising in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Many of these new devices would help the spread and reach of the message that a company or brand was trying to broadcast. Over time, as more and more factories began popping up, there was an excess of product - and it had to be sold. Effective advertising and marketing would essentially create what we know as brands. (Baran, 2017).

Technology helped herald in a new era in marketing and advertised and allow companies to get in front of more people, much faster. With the internet spreading like wildfire in the early 90s, this introduced what we know as e-commerce, or buying things online. The first-ever internet browser banner ad emerged in 1994 (Liu-Thompkins, 2019) and according to Miva, an online tech blog, Amazon was one of the first e-commerce websites, launching in 1995 (Miva, 2011). Computers and the internet weren’t just for businesses anymore. With the cost and production of more family and personal computers, more and more “regular” Americans and households had instant access to the internet which would drastically increase the entire marketing base in the United States in such a short amount of time. Businesses not only had thousands and millions of potential new clients but now they were conveniently located inside of the consumer or viewers’ own home. Online advertising and design have also come a long way since 1994. There have been several laws, regulations, and stipulations for online marketing that businesses and advertisers must abide by. According to Lorette from Chron, “companies that partake in deceptive, unfair, or untruthful Internet advertising or marketing may be subject to stiff penalties enforced by the Federal Trade Commission, an agency that works to protect consumer rights” (Lorette, 2020, para. 1). In most cases, they try to make it very easy for the average consumer to spot when they are being served an ad; however, some ad designers are getting creative. Some critics say that current ad methods on websites can be deceptive and lead to different locations, and ultimately confuse the viewer.

 Nevertheless, online shopping, or eCommerce, is actually just one piece to a larger picture. With the rise of social media platforms, advertising how found itself a new impressive platform. According to Byerly, several social media platforms launched in the early 2000s, including LinkedIn in 2003, Facebook in 2004, and Twitter in 2006 (Byerly, 2020). Even since their conception and launch, social media companies have also come a long way, and have had to adapt. As a social media professional, I am fortunate to know how many online social media platforms manage and function regarding their marketing strategies. Companies spend millions of dollars each year on online social media campaigns to advertise their products, services, events, and so much more. Social media advertising is actually a fairly young field compared to marketing overall. Not only did social media marketing almost single-handedly increase online sales and visibility, but it has also created many jobs and companies, whose sole purpose is to work in the social media marketing space. In my work, we are tasked with marketing open positions or careers. We aren’t selling a product or even a service, but a culture. We have had to learn what speaks and resonates with our audiences the most. I am grateful to be a part of an emerging field that has the potential to touch so many people across the country.

Americans have always loved their products and always have the latest and greatest. Many people strive to have nice cars and enormous homes, and that could be because of the influence of advertising. Advertisers and campaigns work very hard to entice people and persuade them. With the increased use of social media and having access to the internet in the palm of our hands - we have instant access to any item we could ever need. Celebrities and influencers now play a huge role in advertising products to people on such a large platform. Anyone can access social media and be served several ads, sometimes without even knowing it. By having such convenient access to apps and sites like Amazon, Walmart, Target, and so many more, we have allowed ourselves to gain goods, easily and fast. Some sites, like Amazon, offer 1-2-day shipping in certain locations, which is an enticing benefit to a consumer.

Through the years, marketing and advertising have changed drastically and has truly come a long way. Marketing and advertisers have done their research, and it shows! There are many institutes and organizations that are constantly gathering ground-breaking research and developments in the fields of advertising and marketing. One publication is *The Journal of Advertising Research, which* “has been a cutting-edge venue for advertising research for over 60 years” *(Ford (2020).*There have been many tests, case studies, and focus groups on how effective and how much influence advertising and marketing can be on consumers. For example, in the article *The Influence of Advertising Media on Brand Awareness,* they could analyze down to age, gender, location, etc. how different marketing and advertising campaigns affected consumer habits for different products. They used the same message on radio, tv, billboard, print, and online studies to determine what many of us already knew - advertising has a tremendous impact on brand awareness, and how much a customer may end up trusting your organization (Domazet et al., 2018).

The influence of advertising and marketing has undeniably been huge for humanity. In relativity with how long advertising and marketing has been around, we have access to a sufficient amount of research and data regarding how well advertising actually works. With advances in technology and human development, marketing and advertising have seen many versions of themselves throughout time. Advertising is an ever-evolving industry and If we think about how far we have come, in even just 20 years, It’s interesting to think about where advertising and marketing will be in another 20 years. Advertising and marketing have always been about communicating. I believe that regardless of the amount and quality of research that has been done and still left to do, as long as advertisers and marketers stay true to communicating effectively, there will always be advances and improvements in marketing and advertising.

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