

Understanding the Basics of Advertising

advertising campaign: series of related ads with a similar theme and message, appearing in a variety of media over a set period of time

advertorial: print advertisement designed to resemble an actual article; often featured as a supplement in magazines and newspapers; can be deceptive if the reader doesn't notice the disclaimer labeling the material as an advertisement

banner ad: promotional message that appears at the top or side of a Web site; other Internet ads include pop-ups, buttons, flashers, and product Web sites

billboard: large outdoor advertising sign, placed along highways or on buildings

demographics: study of a population, grouped by age, gender, income, or other social factor(s); used to create ads and products that appeal to a specific group

infomercial: extended TV, video, or radio ad; usually includes demonstrations, testimonials, and other detailed product information

marketing: the commercial processes of promoting, selling, and distributing a product or service; involves packaging, as well as price, promotions, advertising, and distribution

message: basic idea or theme communicated in an ad

packaging: eye-catching design and message on a product; used to sell or market it and to create brand recognition

print ad: promotion in a magazine or newspaper; features graphics, images, illustrations, graphic design, and text to convey a clear message and appeal to consumers

product placement: advertising a product or service through its use or placement in a TV show or film

political ad: message promoting a candidate or campaign, broadcast on radio or TV, or printed; may require much of a candidate's campaign funds; includes positive (self-promotion) and negative (attack or opposition) strategies

public service announcement (PSA): message in magazines, on billboards, or on radio or TV, promoting an idea for public benefit; may encourage fitness and health or increase awareness of services; typically created by government or nonprofit groups

radio spot: ad aired on radio; relies on music, sound effects, creative scripts, memorable voices, and persuasive language

sponsor: company or individual that pays to advertise a product or message

target audience: specific group a sponsor hopes to persuade, whose members share characteristics such as age, gender, background, values, or buying habits

TV commercial: ad broadcast on television; employs an array of techniques, such as special effects, music, dazzling visuals, and creative scripts, to create a memorable message

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By analyzing the types, purposes, and characteristics of advertisements, you will better understand how advertisers market products and services to their target audiences.

HERE'S HOW

Strategy 1: Recognize the advertising surrounding you. Advertisements don't simply come in the form of TV commercials and magazine ads. Persuasive messages surround you, attempting to convince you of what you *need* or how to behave or think. Look at the ads that surround you, and ask yourself:

- Do these ads influence me or affect my choices?
- Do I *need* these products, or do I simply *want* them? Why do I need them or want them?

Strategy 2: Note both the message and the sponsor. The idea or theme behind each message is unique and carefully crafted. Sponsors consider persuasive techniques, presentation, and medium when creating their message. A product's message is conveyed through the logo and the slogan, as well as through the ad's colors and images and the product's packaging—all in order to convince consumers what to do, buy, or believe. Ask yourself:

- What is the message trying to convince me to do, purchase, or believe?
- Who is paying for this message? Why?

Strategy 3: Consider the target audience. Sponsors tailor their messages to specific target audiences, or audiences that share similar characteristics such as age, ethnicity, gender, or income bracket. Advertisers study demographics, or the composition and behavior of population groups, to understand the relationship between factors such as age, gender, education, employment, or lifestyle choices and buying patterns. The characters in an ad and the ad's narrative, music, visuals, colors, copy, and design will help you determine for whom the message is intended. Ask yourself:

- Based on the elements in the ad, what can I infer about the target audience? Is it convincing the right group?
- Why was this medium chosen? Who is most likely to see or hear this advertisement?

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Directions: Although public service announcements (PSAs) are created by nonprofit or government groups, PSAs have the same goal as other ads—to convince an audience. Study the PSA shown. Use it to answer the questions.



“FOR TOO LONG OUR CULTURE HAS SAID, ‘IF IT FEELS GOOD, DO IT.’ NOW, WE WANT TO BE A NATION THAT SERVES GOALS LARGER THAN SELF. WE HAVE BEEN OFFERED A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY. WE MUST NOT LET THIS MOMENT PASS. MY CALL IS FOR EVERY AMERICAN TO COMMIT TO THE SERVICE OF YOUR NEIGHBORS AND YOUR NATION. BY DOING THIS, WE SUSTAIN AND EXTEND THE BEST THAT HAS EMERGED IN AMERICA.”

★ ★ ★ **EVERYONE CAN DO SOMETHING.** ★ ★ ★

Answer the President’s Call to Service. When you volunteer to help your neighbors, you help your nation. Everyone can do something. To learn more, visit USAFREEDOMCORPS.GOV or call 1-877-USACORPS.

1. What is the message of the advertisement? Who is paying for the advertisement and why? _____

2. Who is the target audience? What elements helped you determine the target audience? _____

3. Where would you be *most* likely to see the advertisement? Explain. _____

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Directions: Sponsors air TV ads during certain hours and shows in hopes of reaching a target audience. Choose *one* TV show. Record it, so you can view it slowly. Use the chart to log and analyze every ad during the show. Also, make note of any product placements in the *actual* show. You may wish to continue your notes on the back of this sheet.

Ad for ...	Message	Target Audience	Was the spot effective for the intended audience? Explain.