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## Advertising: A Creative Art of Persuasion

**Dr. J. Lohith**

*Lecturer, Department of Communication and Journalism, Maharaja's College, Mysuru*

Advertising can be viewed in two basic ways, as a tool of marketing and as a means of mass communication. When a marketer or a firm develops a product, after thoroughly analyzing the market, there comes a need of establishing a contact with the public to sell that product. Moreover, it has to be a mass contact. It must reach maximum number of people. Naturally, the best way to reach this mass market is through mass communication. Advertising as one of the means of mass communication has made mass selling possible. Perhaps it is the best known communication channel today. Marketers and firms engaged in selling their products and services are fully aware of the importance of advertising. As a means of forceful communication advertising promotes the sale of goods, services, images and ideas through information and persuasion.

Here, we must clearly understand one thing and that advertising by itself cannot sell the product. It cannot sell products of poor quality, products which are too costly to buy or items which do not come to expectation of the consuming public. We have to remember that advertising only helps to sell the product; it cannot sell the product by itself. Advertising is not a magic communication that can restore a poor product or rejuvenate a declining market. It only helps in selling the product through the art and business of persuasive communication.

### **ADVERTISING DEFINED**

The American Marketing Association (AMA) has defined advertising in the following words:

*“Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor”.*

Let us try to understand the above definition word by word.

#### **Any form:**

Advertising may be in any form of presentation like a sign, a symbol, an illustration, an ad message in a newspaper or magazine, a commercial over radio or television, a dispatch mail, a pamphlet, a poster, or a sketch. The form of advertising depends upon the product and the advertiser.

#### **Non-personal:**

Advertising is not personal selling of a product. It is a non-personal selling by a known form of presentation through art and persuasion.

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**Goods, services, ideas for action:**

It is well known that advertising is employed to inform about the products or services. The Posts and Telegraphs Department advertising to promote the use of PIN Code for faster delivery of letters is an example of selling an idea for action.

**Paid by an identified sponsor:**

Advertising is openly paid for as against publicity, which is not openly paid for. The sponsor who pays for advertising is also identified unlike the publicity.

According to the New Encyclopedia Britannica, “*advertising is a form of communication intended to promote the sale of the product or service to influence public opinion, to gain political support or to advance a particular cause*”.

According to Chambers dictionary, the word advertising means, “to inform, give notice to, to give public information or announcement”.

According to G.B. Hotchkiss, “advertising, as the term is commonly understood today, includes all sorts of public messages for commercial purposes paid for and promoted by those who expect to profit from them”.

According to Jeremy Bellmore, an advertisement is “a message paid for communication intended to inform and or influence one or more people”.

Whatever may be the definition of advertising, it means different things to different people. To a housewife it may mean shopping in the supermarket; to an youngster it may mean the television show starring his favourite performers; to the head of the family it may mean a commercial; the economist may see advertising as a force affecting national economy; to a sociologist advertising may mean a social institution promoting the social change; to a businessman advertising is one of the elements in the marketing of his products.

**ADVERTISING DIFFERENTIATED**

The general impression is that everything we see in the media is advertising. It is not so. For any message in the media to become advertising should be, a paid, non-personal communication about the demand for, supply of, persons, ideas, places, goods, services by the men who are identified. If the message does not satisfy all these requirements then it is not advertising. We should also keep in mind that,

**a) Advertising is not publicity:**

Publicity is given by the media free of charge because of its newsworthy content and its importance to the public at large. News or message about President, Prime Minister, Social dignitaries, film artists etc., is not advertising. Advertising is paid for by its sponsor.

**b) Advertising is not propaganda:**

Propaganda is a communication without an identified source or sponsor. For advertising, an identified source or sponsor is necessary because the acceptance of the message depends

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upon the reputation of the source. Propaganda is effectively used by politicians and governments to influence the public by repeated messages through controlled media.

### ADVERTISING THROUGH THE AGES

If we analyze the history of advertising, we find that the world of advertising has undergone a sea change and has grown out of the era of public criers.

The '*Public Criers*' are the fore-runners of modern advertising. The so called '*Criers*' in the ancient times, passed through the streets calling attention to the sale of items like slaves, cattle and other imports. An ancient advertisement, perhaps 3000 years old was discovered by an archeologist, in the ruins of Thebes. The advertisement offered a gold coin for the return of a runaway slave by name 'Shem'.

Sign language is the second step in the history of advertising. This was in a sense, the visual expression of the name and helped to identify a seller of goods. Most of the early signs were symbolic in character. The boot signified a shoe-maker and so on. The signs indicated where the seller and the product were to be found. Pictures were extensively used to convey the message since most of the people could not read and write.

The invention of movable types by John Guttenberg of Germany during the Renaissance period marks an important date in the history of advertising. As the printing industry developed, signs were replaced by written messages.

By the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century, many newspapers were started in England and other European countries. Gradually newspaper emerged as a powerful medium for carrying advertisements. Soon, advertising became the main source of revenue for the newspapers and space selling came into existence. By the end of eighteenth century important media like sign boards, posters, handbills, pamphlets and periodicals were employed for advertising. The nineteenth century was a period of expansion in advertising consequent to the industrial revolution. There was a tremendous increase in the production and advertising helped to market the products.

By 1930s radio had become an important mode of mass communication. Radio advertisements reached more people than newspapers. By 1950s television had phenomenally grown as a popular medium of mass communication. T.V.ads became famous, as they are more appealing than newspaper and radio advertisements. Sponsored programmers played an important role in the development of advertising in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; advertising has become an inseparable part of our daily life. Now, advertising is an industry of multi-million rupees, its making the entire world of business to dance to its tune.

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