

Media Awareness

Companies appeal to consumers in many different ways to persuade them to buy their products. As individuals, or in small groups, list television, magazine or newspaper advertisements that use each of the techniques described below. Make a list of specific products and describe how they use the techniques.

Advertising Techniques	
<i>avant garde</i>	the suggestion that using this product puts the user ahead of the times <i>e.g. a toy manufacturer encourages kids to be the first on their block to have a new toy</i>
bandwagon	the suggestion that everybody is using the product and that you should too in order to be part of the group <i>e.g. a credit card company quotes the number of millions of people who use their card</i>
facts and figures	statistics and objective factual information is used to prove the superiority of the product <i>e.g. a car manufacturer quotes the amount of time it takes their car to get from 0 to 100 k.p.h.</i>
glittering generalities	"weasel words" are used to suggest a positive meaning without actually really making any guarantee <i>e.g. a famous sports personality says that a diet product might help you to lose weight the way it helped him to lose weight</i>
hidden fears	the suggestion that this product will protect the user from some danger <i>e.g. a laundry detergent manufacturer suggests that you will be embarrassed when strangers see "ring around the collar" of your shirts or blouses</i>
magic ingredients	the suggestion that some almost miraculous discovery makes the product exceptionally effective <i>e.g. a pharmaceutical manufacturer describes a special coating that makes their pain reliever less irritating to the stomach than a competitor's</i>
patriotism	the suggestion that purchasing this product shows your love of your country <i>e.g. a company brags about its product being made in Canada and employing Canadian workers</i>
plain folks	the suggestion that the product is a practical product of good value for ordinary people <i>e.g. a cereal manufacturer shows an ordinary family sitting down to breakfast and enjoying their product</i>
snob appeal	the suggestion that the use of the product makes the customer part of an elite group with a luxurious and glamorous life style <i>e.g. a coffee manufacturer shows people dressed in formal gowns and tuxedos drinking their brand at an art gallery</i>
transfer	words and ideas with positive connotations are used to suggest that the positive qualities should be associated with the product and the user <i>e.g. a textile manufacturer wanting people to wear their product to stay cool during the summer shows people wearing fashions made from their cloth at a sunny seaside setting where there is a cool breeze</i>
testimonial	a famous personality is used to endorse the product <i>e.g. a famous hockey player recommends a particular brand of skates</i>
wit and humour	customers are attracted to products that divert the audience by giving viewers a reason to laugh or to be entertained by clever use of visuals or language

(based on Tressler and Lewis, *Mastering Effective English (Third Edition)*, pp.470-472)