

PERSUASION MOCKERY - CONSUMER RECALL OF
SELF-AWARE ADVERTISEMENTS

by

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A THESIS

Presented to the School of Journalism and Communication
and the Robert D. Clark Honors College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Science

June 2017

An Abstract of the Thesis of

Chris Ableidinger for the degree of Bachelor of Science in the School of Journalism and Communication to be taken June, 2017

Title: Persuasion Mockery - Consumer Recall of Self-Aware Advertisements

Approved: _____

Professor Kim Sheehan

Advertisements increasingly make fun of themselves. Whether it be through ridiculous exaggeration or breaking the fourth wall, advertisers and marketers are standing out by making a mockery of the very concept of an advertisement. This thesis explores the strategy of Persuasion Mockery: using the elements within an advertisement to make light of traditional advertising and its tactics in order to develop ironic humor. This phenomenon is well documented in advertising trade media - described as 'meta advertising' or 'self-referencing' - but rarely explored experimentally.

This thesis tests the hypothesis that persuasion mockery within advertisements increases the ability of consumers to successfully recall the brand advertised. A study comparing persuasion mockery and traditional humor across three product categories found brand recall to be higher among ads containing persuasion mockery (p value <.001) when attitudes toward humor were controlled. This evidence is used as basis to accept the hypothesis, though its application is limited by the small sample size of the main test and potential confounding factors. Further results regarding correlations between persuasion mockery, daily television consumption, persuasion knowledge, and recall ability are also discussed. Directions for future research are outlined including the repetition of this experiment across more product categories in order to replicate results.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks go out to Professor Kim Sheehan for providing me with guidance and feedback throughout the research process. Additional thanks to Professors Terry Hunt, Heather Shoenberger, and Mark Carey for their contributions in turn. Further thanks to the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program for providing funds for this research. Final thanks to my parents, who have supported me tremendously along the way.

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Introduction

Advertising gets a bad rap. It is labeled as callous and manipulative; a brainwashing of weak minds to purchase unnecessary amounts of hair conditioner and fast food. American consumers mute the television, avoid solicitors, and even download browser extensions to eliminate ads as if they were not even there. Even in this climate of advertising avoidance, it is estimated that worldwide spending on paid media will reach \$573.36 billion by the end of 2017 ("Total Media Ad Spending Worldwide, 2014-2020," 2016). This money sustains the majority of the entertainment, news, and social media that provide value in our day to day lives.

Americans are exposed to hundreds if not thousands of ads ever day, all of which fight for our attention in an effort to stand out. With this need to compete for attention and market share, advertisers will try a range of tactics, some of them manipulative, to increase their brand awareness and persuade audiences to buy their products. The ubiquity of advertising creates its tediousness. Faced with this onslaught of messaging, we as individuals develop an understanding of the tactics used in advertisements in order to better process, filter, and choose whether or not to attend or ignore them. Within this somewhat toxic give and take, how can advertisers expect to successfully persuade us? Perhaps by recognizing and making light of the inundation of persuasion attempts, advertisers can improve the persuasive power of their advertisements. Willing to try anything to stand out, many advertising agencies and marketers look to capitalize on the sense of jadedness that results from the public's familiarity with advertising.

One way advertisers try to get consumers to pay attention is through the strategy of persuasion mockery: the use of elements within an advertisement that make light of traditional advertising tactics in order to develop ironic humor. Often times these elements of persuasion mockery are highly transparent to the viewer, providing an illusion of taking the viewer behind the scenes in order to poke fun at the production and persuasive purpose of advertisements. A simple and overt example of persuasion mockery can be found in Jack in the Box's "Worst Commercial Ever". After listening to two characters debate which new sandwich should garner more attention, Jack, the personified logo of the chain, breaks the 'fourth wall' by turning to the viewer and admonishing that "this is the worst commercial [he's] ever been in."



This thesis will investigate this phenomenon of persuasion mockery in order to assess its effectiveness on consumers.

History of Persuasion Mockery

Persuasion mockery has existed in some form since the advent of commercialized advertising in the 19th century. The earliest form of persuasion mockery found during this investigation is a print advertisement for Proctor and Gamble's Ivory Soap from 1885 shown in Figure 1. The advertisement depicts a crowd of animals, seated and in some instances dressed as humans viewing a presentation by a bird-like creature dressed in a tuxedo. The presenter is a salesman and up on the wall for all to see is a giant depiction that reads "Ivory Soap 99 $\frac{44}{100}$ Pure". The advertisement is making a mockery of a direct sales presentation, a common tactic used by marketers before forms of mass media could reach wide audiences. Proctor and Gamble relied on the persuasion knowledge of the average consumer, in this case their familiarity with direct sales presentations, in order to provide the context for the humor in this print advertisement.

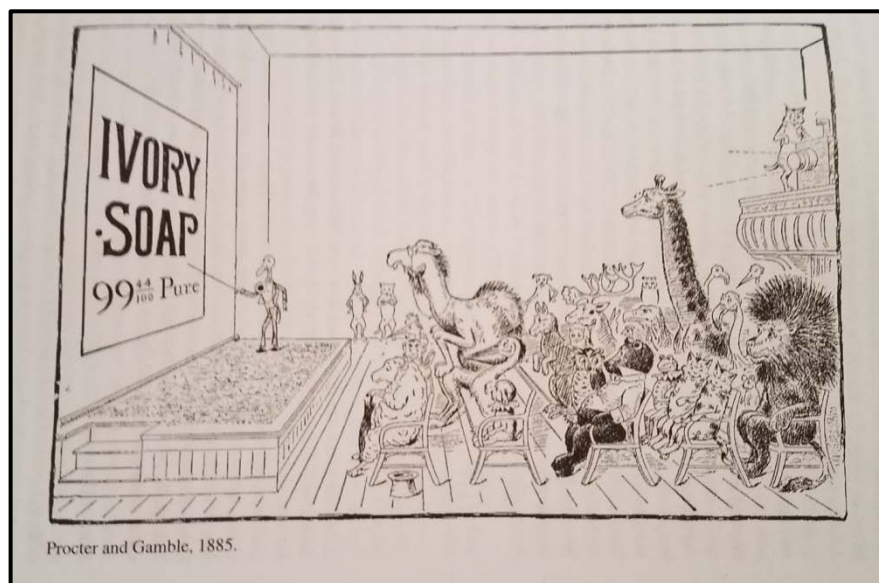


Figure 1: Procter and Gamble Ivory Soap (1885)

Persuasion mockery surfaced again during the rise of broadcast media in the early 20th century. The invention and mass distribution of the radio birthed a new era of

mass communication that could reach consumers with dynamic audio and live presentations. Radio programs at the time were typically supported by a single sponsor who exercised a certain degree of control over the program's content. This overarching sponsorship meant humor was rarely involved when consumers were exposed to the sponsoring brand. The Jack Benny Program, a comedic radio show broadcast from 1932 to 1955, has been argued to be the first instance of comedy within broadcast advertising (Oakner, 2002). When discussing the advent of self reference in media, David Foster Wallace mentions that the Jack Benny Program was consistently about itself as a show, making it one of the first examples of self reference in mass media (Wallace, 1993). Jack Benny of the Jack Benny Program was well known for using his sponsors within his comedic material by making jokes at their expense. A tongue-in-cheek joke that not a single person stranded in the dessert didn't like sponsor Canada Dry's soda pop is just one example of how the sponsor's persuasive role was used to develop ironic humor (Oakner, 2002). The following quote alludes to the relative success of this tactic of persuasion mockery despite the sponsor's displeasure:

"[Despite] evidence that audiences liked this form of good-natured kidding of sponsors, and therefore paid attention to the plugs, many sponsors took offense. Canada Dry did not renew its contract with the Jack Benny show because they did not like being the butt of Benny's jokes" (Gulas & Weinberger, 2006, p. 13 referencing Oakner, 2002).

Persuasion mockery has also been used in more direct mass media advertising to connect with consumers. Britain in particular saw a rise in persuasion mockery due to a cultural appreciation for self-deprecating humor. One need look no farther than the comedy stylings of famous UK celebrities such as Ricky Gervais or Craig Ferguson to appreciate the power of self-deprecating humor to disarm audiences and build credibility. Famous agency account planner John Steele suggests that the use of persuasion mockery in television has its roots in Britain, where it is a popular strategic choice when targeting British consumers who have learned to actively enjoy advertising.

"In Britain, advertisers don't just parody TV shows and movies; they parody other *advertising*, taking for granted a level of knowledge and interest among the viewing public that ensures they will not only get the joke, but enjoy it" (Steel, 1998, p. 32).

A content analysis of advertising conducted in tandem with a survey of ad agency executives revealed a more frequent use of humor in British advertising, as well as a greater cultural appreciation among British agencies and consumers for the diverse use of humor in advertising (Weinberger & Spotts, 1989). Persuasion mockery has now become a popular television advertising tactic in the United States, used by prestigious agencies and major brands. Why is it an appealing strategy for them? Is persuasion mockery more persuasive than more traditional humor?

Overview of Study

An experimental investigation will be conducted to determine the extent to which elements of persuasion mockery can improve the persuasive power of advertising in comparison to advertisements that employ traditional humor elements. The prevalence of persuasion mockery in modern day advertisements suggests an understanding among advertisers and marketers of the effectiveness of persuasion mockery as a communication strategy. Based on its use in past and present advertising, this study will look past the question of whether or not persuasion mockery *is* effective and focus instead on the question of *why* it works. Persuasion mockery might be more humorous to consumers than traditional advertising, but is it also more persuasive? To answer this question, persuasion mockery will be investigated within various theoretical frameworks of advertising and humor. It will then be examined in an experimental context to determine if the presence of persuasion mockery can increase the relative persuasive power of an advertisement. Specific causal variables including demographics and viewer self assessments will also be considered in order to explore potential factors that may influence the relative persuasive effectiveness of persuasion mockery advertising.

Review of the Literature

Persuasion mockery is often identified and discussed in the advertising trade press, but is rarely discussed outside of theses and dissertations in academia. In 2006 Adweek used the term 'commercial-within-a-commercial' to describe the use of persuasion mockery in a commercial for Volkswagen that featured two women complaining about the shock-value used in recent Volkswagen safety advertising. This strategy was praised for its ability to "grab consumer attention by acknowledging public feelings about [its] advertising practically in real time" (Quenqua, 2006). In 2010 Adweek again pointed out the use of persuasion mockery, this time in a Chipotle "meta fast food campaign ... explaining why it [wasn't] running the usual fast food ads" (Wasserman, 2010). Social blogs touted the rise of the "viral spoofvertising" tactic that uses a "tongue-in-cheek tactic" and "they know what we know" approach to engage consumers ("Viral Spoofvertising," 2015). By 2016, Adweek suggested that "every Super Bowl needs at least one meta ad" (Ives, 2016). The success of this strategy was often attributed to the rapid pace of digital sharing via social media platforms such as Youtube. The degree to which an advertisement was able to 'go viral' provided a new and obvious metric for advertisements that measured how effective they were at engaging audiences and stimulating digital word of mouth. Some suggested that new generations of consumers were more savvy with technology and advertisements, and more appreciative of self-aware content (Nudd, 2014).

While these observational articles placed preliminary thoughts on why this tactic was working, a deeper dive into academic theory is required to understand the rising employment of persuasion mockery in television advertising. The potential for

persuasion mockery to increase the relative persuasive power of an advertisement can be better understood and explored when examined through theoretical frameworks including the persuasion knowledge model, irony and self reference, theories of humor, and the vampire effect.

The Persuasion Knowledge Model

The persuasion knowledge model establishes a foundation for consumer appreciation of persuasion mockery by describing how the plethora of advertising creates the necessary context for ironic humor. The Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) describes the process by which individuals amass their own personal knowledge of the tactics used by agents to persuade their targets. Described by Marian Friestad and Peter Wright (1994), the PKM outlines how a consumer's persuasion knowledge influences their response to specific persuasion attempts. As illustrated by Figure 2 in the appendices, the PKM defines an advertisement (or any other persuasion episode) as an interaction between the agent's persuasion attempt and the coping behaviors used by the target to process the attempt. When dealing with an attempt, a target (consumer) uses not only their knowledge of persuasion tactics, but also their knowledge of the topic and persuading agent in order to determine their response (Friestad & Wright, 1994). In the case of a television advertisement, consumers combine their knowledge of the brand, its product category, and common persuasion tactics in television advertising to inform the coping behaviors they use to process it. The PKM is useful for understanding the complex interaction between target and agent by creating a framework that acknowledges the importance of each target's unique knowledge that

extends beyond information processing to reveal forces of skepticism and advertisement fatigue.

Persuasion mockery relies on the persuasion knowledge of consumers in order to develop ironic humor. The PKM places special emphasis on the consumer's persuasion knowledge, defined as a consumer's "personal knowledge about the tactics used in ... persuasion attempts" (Friestad & Wright, 1994, p. 1). It is this exact persuasion knowledge that is used as context to develop ironic humor within persuasion mockery attempts. According to the PKM, a person's persuasion knowledge has a distinct influence on their response to persuasion attempts. The activation of a consumer's persuasion knowledge, defined as the conceiving of the advertiser's actions as a persuasion attempt, will lead to a "change of meaning" in the advertisement's purpose and message (Friestad & Wright, 1994, p. 13). While a typical change of meaning might be considered off-putting when unprompted, an intentional activation of persuasion knowledge through ironic humor has the opportunity to preempt negative effects and instead capture attention. A consumer will shape their opinion of the advertising brand based on "assessments of the effectiveness of that tactic and of how appropriate or fair it seems" (Friestad & Wright, 1994, p. 13). If the ironic humor of an ad's persuasion mockery is found to be funny, it may activate the consumer's persuasion knowledge and increase the perception of the sales attempt as appropriate.

When persuasion knowledge is activated, substantial effects can occur. Since 1994, research has been conducted using the persuasion knowledge as a framework to develop perspective on how persuasive attempts and specifically advertisements are processed by individuals. One investigation looked at tThe role of persuasion

knowledge in consumer responses to covert marketing in radio (Wei, 2008). Covert marketing includes product placement, sponsored content, and other veiled attempts to create exposure for a brand; they are ads in the disguise of other media. In terms of strategy, covert marketing is the exact opposite of persuasion mockery because it attempts to prevent the activation of persuasion knowledge rather than trigger it preemptively. The researchers found that the test group who had their persuasion knowledge activated by a disclaimer ended up evaluating the sponsoring brand more negatively than the test groups who did not receive the disclaimer. More relevant to my own thesis however is the follow up study that looked at the effect of a higher intensity, or more transparent, activation of persuasion knowledge. When audiences were given a clear statement from the brand itself that the radio mentions had been paid for, consumers responded with more favorable evaluations than the control group. This finding suggests that the activation of persuasion knowledge via persuasion transparency can elicit favorable responses from consumers.

In a similar study two researchers used the PKM to investigate the 'stereotypicality' of persuasion attempts to determine if this aspect correlated with high perceptions of trustworthiness among targets. While the persuasion attempt studied came in the form of a salesclerk engaging with a customer within a store, the researchers did apply a degree of persuasion transparency in order to create a less stereotypical persuasion attempt. Salesclerks within the less stereotypical condition said "you may think that I am just trying to make a sale, but that's a great pair of sunglasses" while those in the more stereotypical condition used simple flattery. The results suggested that consumers had a higher trust associated with the less stereotypical, more

transparent method, indicating the potential for persuasion transparency to improve persuasive power via trust development (Guo & Main, 2012).

Experimental results suggesting that the activation of persuasion knowledge can have positive effects for advertisers and other persuasive agents suggest that the development of ironic humor through the activation of persuasion knowledge may increase an advertisement's persuasive power relative to advertisements that employ traditional humor. The proactive and transparent activation of consumer persuasion knowledge can improve consumer trust and other attitudes felt toward a persuasive agent. Therefore this thesis will attempt to measure persuasion knowledge among test participants in order to examine its potential effect on an advertisement's effectiveness. A consumer's activation of persuasion knowledge is "influenced by how well developed each body of knowledge is" with regards to topic, agent, and general persuasion (Friestad & Wright, 1994, p. 4). A measurement recording a participant's self assessment of their persuasion knowledge should serve as indicator for their familiarity with persuasion tactics, and their subsequent ability to appreciate the context of persuasion mockery elements. A set of six questions used in several past PKM-related experiments was chosen to measure a participant's self assessment of their persuasion knowledge on a nine point scale (Bearden, Hardesty, & Rose, 2001 referenced in Wei, 2008). A list of these six questions is provided in the appendices.

Irony and Self-Reference

The ubiquity of advertising creates a natural environment to employ elements of irony and self reference as differentiating marketing strategies . In his paper "Contemporary Print Advertising in the Age of Irony", Brian Curtis frames the

emergence of persuasion mockery as a natural progression in the role of advertising as a societal shaping force. This claim is based on the idea that the emergence of commercialized advertising is directly tied to the rise of industrialism. The mass production of uniform goods demanded new communication outreach to sell inventory across wider markets. Curtis argues that advertising exerted massive cultural influence "not only to sell individual products, but to sell the idea of consumption" (Curtis, 2002, p. 21). Advertisers were tasked with nurturing consumer buying habits by exerting control over consumer life perceptions (McAllister, 1996). This control helped to develop a consumer culture that could match the supply of goods and services produced under ever-growing corporate brands (Marchand, 1985 referenced in Curtis, 2002). Widespread distribution meant new competition between brands that had previously operated in a limited geographical area. This competition made it important for products to be "differentiated - so that consumers would be able to choose between the benefits of one over the other" (Curtis, 2002, p. 10). Advertisements communicating unique selling propositions and stating simple product features gave way to ads with more creative depictions of a brand and its persona, developing what Curtis describes as a mythology of social values, acceptable behavior, and product needs. Within this storytelling were manipulative tactics such as Listerine's use of the term halitosis in a 1922 for antiseptic (Figure 3). The print ad creates a fear of bad breath among consumers through the use of an outdated medical term and depictions of flirtation and loneliness. Strategies to invent product needs and other manipulative tactics are used to this day, and are a contributing factor towards the negative stigma of advertising as a manipulative practice.

The growing predominance and resultant criticism of advertising developed an appreciation for the irony and self reference of persuasion mockery. As American consumers were exposed to greater and greater amounts of manipulation strategies in mass media with the advent of television and later the internet, their persuasion knowledge developed in turn to help them cope with the increasing variety and volume of persuasion attempts. Curtis leans on David Foster Wallace to introduce the concept of 'metafiction' and its emergence as a counter-trend to persuasion and its mythology in postmodern mass media. Wallace provides the following definition of metafiction:

"[A] radical aesthetic, a whole new literary form unshackled from the canonical cinctures of narrative and mimesis and free to plunge into reflexivity and self-conscious meditations on aboutness" (Wallace, 1993, p. 160).

In layman's terms, metafiction ignores the boundary between the illusion created by story, and the reality of the story's fabrication. Persuasion mockery fits this definition of metafiction as it breaks the illusion created by a commercial's mythology by using ironic elements that expose the fabrication and persuasive purpose of the story being told in the ad's execution. An appreciation for persuasion mockery stems in part from the conflation of glorified consumption and the resulting cynicism and increased agency of consumers (Curtis, 2002). Advertisements that "self-consciously [make] direct references to the modes, forms, themes, and myths of modern advertising's past" (Curtis, 2002, p. 49) are able to commodify the very notions of cynicism and resistance that are created by other advertisements. Some in academia are beginning to investigate

how advertiser's can use ironic humor via persuasion mockery to exploit this sense of jadedness towards ads in order to increase the persuasiveness of their own attempts.

Under the Microscope

While many research experiments have been conducted on the effects of humor, only one study places the concept of persuasion mockery at the heart of an experimental investigation. In a study titled "Self-Mocking Marketers: Can Irony in Commercials Influence Brand Evaluations?" Kristian Rognstad uses the blanket term 'ironic' to describe persuasion mockery advertisements as "ads that [are] satirical towards the devices used in commercials" (Rognstad, 2012, p. 1). He expands upon many of the potential reasons for the use of these ironic elements, suggesting that they allow consumers to feel a sense of superiority for being in on the joke, or that they trivialize the advertising of the opposition, making the brand's ad stand out in comparison.

Rognstad conducted an experiment to determine if the presence of ironic elements in commercials can affect the implicit associations made by viewers with the brands advertised. The brief implicit association test (BIAT) was used as the primary metric for measuring the persuasive power of advertisements containing and not containing ironic elements. Video commercials and poster advertisements were manipulated so as to create ironic and non-ironic versions. Test participants first completed the BIAT to determine baseline associations for the advertised brands. Advertisements were then shown to participants before re-taking the BIAT to calculate if their associations with the brand had changed. While the exposure to the advertisements did increase people's positive associations made with the brand, this relationship was not affected by the presence or absence of ironic elements. Rognstad

attempts to explain this finding by suggesting that these ironic elements might only work for products being actively searched for or considered by viewers. He also suggests that ironic persuasion mockery elements might be considered disingenuous, and that the proliferation of such elements in advertising strategy may have worn down their effectiveness. In addition to providing rich literature review and analytical insight, Rognstad's experiment helps to inform the experimental design of this thesis by eliminating a potential method for measuring an advertisement's effectiveness. Due to limitations of the BIAT that will be discussed in the methods section, implicit associations will not be used as a metric for the effectiveness of persuasion mockery advertisements.

Humor Theories

Persuasion mockery relies on elements of humor to increase the persuasive power of an advertisement, and can therefore be analyzed within humor frameworks to explore potential mechanisms through which it operates. Many ads attempt to develop humor in their execution. This is done through the interaction of a variety of components, predominant among which are the use of visuals and words. Other components include music, testimonials, objects, themes such as sex or violence, characters, endorsers, voiceovers, drama, and editing techniques (M. S. Sutherland, Alics, 2000). These components are manipulated and combined in the ad's execution in order to develop a meaning that engages and ultimately persuades consumers.

Persuasion mockery advertisements commonly use these components to develop several humor elements including transparency, irony, self-deprecation, satire, and the breaking

of the fourth wall. A detailed explanation of each of these elements of persuasion mockery is provided in the appendices.

Strategically, humor elements have the potential to improve consumer attitudes towards an advertisement as well as the underlying effectiveness of its persuasion attempt. While commonplace in today's advertising, humor was seen as a risky strategic choice in the early days of commercialized advertising when it was used in only three to seven percent of advertising (Burt, 1938 referenced in Gulas & Weinberger, 2006). As spending on advertising grew so too did an appreciation for humor. By 1987 use of humor in advertising had risen to between ten and fifteen percent of advertisements worldwide (Rossiter & Percy, 1987). One need look no further than the Super Bowl for evidence that Americans, among others, have a cultural appreciation for humor in advertising. An analysis of Super Bowl commercials based on metrics created by *USA Today* found that humor was the strongest predictor for the likability of a super bowl ad in the 2000s (Yelkur, Tomkovick, Hofer, & Rozumalski, 2013). Humor in advertising has shown an ability to draw in a consumer's attention and develop more positive attitudes towards the ad and the brand advertised (Eisend, 2009 referenced in Rognstad, 2012). As a specific kind of humor in advertising, persuasion mockery can be explored through several differing theories on the function of humor in order to better understand how it might affect the persuasive power of an advertisement. There are three predominant categories of theories regarding the mechanisms through which humor operates.

1. Cognitive-Perceptual

Cognitive theories describe the effectiveness of persuasion mockery as the ability to build incongruity by subverting an audiences' expectations for a traditional advertisement with disruptive elements such as satire and self-awareness. Cognitive theories center around the core concept of incongruity as a foundational perception that allows for humorous reactions among audiences. Chosen stimuli subvert audience expectations, building a discrepancy between what the audience member is witnessing and what they would consider normal. Many researchers suggest that incongruity must be paired with resolution in order to develop humor. Advertisements that utilize the resolution of incongruity have shown an ability to generate relatively high perceptions of humor (Alden, Mukherjee, & Hoyer, 2000 referenced in Gulas & Weinberger, 2006). Elements of persuasion mockery develop humor by playing off of audience expectations through the use of their persuasion knowledge. Viewers of advertisements grow accustomed to the mythology and glossiness of advertisements. Commercials are expected to paint over their own persuasive pretext by using indirect tactics delivered by confident celebrity endorsers and omniscient voiceovers. Elements of persuasion mockery subvert these expectations by dropping the traditional pretext of an ad and resolving the resulting incongruity by forcing the viewer to perceive the ad as a persuasion attempt.

2. *Superiority*

Superiority based humor theories define the effectiveness of persuasion mockery as the successful disparagement of traditional advertising techniques. Relating back to primitive emotions such as aggression and ridicule, superiority theories establish

winners and losers in every humorous situation or interaction (Gruner, 1997). A smart and well put-together character may point out the foolishness of a dimmer character that is unaware of the advertised brand. In some cases an advertisement may disparage the audience or its own brand in order to be humorous. Many researchers have argued that superiority represents a style of humor rather than a general theory of humor, and that disparagement is not required to produce humorous effects (Gulas & Weinberger, 2006). Still, superiority can be developed in multiple ways when elements of persuasion mockery expose the tackiness and manipulative nature of traditional advertising.

Brands that employ persuasion mockery may be viewed as more honest and critical of typical low-brow persuasion. Audiences may perceive an honest brand as superior to its competitors. Audiences may also perceive themselves as superior to other consumers for transcending the masses and being in on the joke that traditional, glossy advertising tactics no longer work on savvy consumers (Rognstad, 2012).

3. Psychodynamic

Psychodynamic humor theories attribute the effectiveness of persuasion mockery to the venting of tension built up from the inundation of advertisements and their inescapable persuasion and manipulation. Also described as arousal-safety theories, psychodynamic approaches are built around the idea that humor serves a biological function to release pent up tension (Morreall, 1983 referenced in Gulas & Weinberger, 2006). Humorous stimuli create a state of arousal for audience members; a cathartic expression of mirth that returns the individual to a sense of safety. This arousal can be a reaction to tension that is either created by the stimuli of an advertisement or built up by outside circumstances (Gulas & Weinberger, 2006). In the case of

persuasion mockery, the exposure and acknowledgement of persuasive tactics may provide arousal for consumers that feel jaded towards the volume of traditional advertising. Consumers may feel like they no longer need to deploy coping mechanisms to deal with persuasion attempts, relieving the typical tension felt between consumers and advertisers.

Vampire Effect

The effectiveness of persuasion mockery can be further understood as a protection against potential distraction caused by the humor elements of an advertisement. The use of humor elements in an advertisement has a strong positive relationship with audience attention, but not necessarily with the persuasiveness of an ad (Chan, 2011 referenced in Rognstad, 2012). The vampire effect refers to the ability for humor elements to overshadow and distract from the persuasive purpose of an advertisement. More audience attention is allocated to the humor elements of the ad than to the featured product or brand (Evans, 1988 referenced in Rognstad, 2012).

The vampire effect can also occur when a celebrity endorser distracts from the advertised brand. Elements of persuasion mockery often bring attention to brands and celebrity endorsers in the context of their role as persuaders when attempting to persuade the audience with ironic humor. In the TurboTax advertisement "Never a Sellout", persuasion mockery is developed by directly referring to Sir Anthony Hopkins's role as endorser in light of all the TurboTax merchandise he has around him. The humor and celebrity endorser are directly tied to the brand in a way that minimizes the risk of the vampire effect.

Brands that utilize persuasion mockery may therefore be at less risk of experiencing the vampire effect due to an inherent connection between the humor of the advertisement and the brand's persuasion attempt.

Methods

Persuasive Power: Measuring Ad Effectiveness

A variety of metrics can be utilized to investigate the relative persuasive power of persuasion mockery. Ad strategy is nebulous. It is a constant challenge for agencies and academics to evaluate how successful a finished ad campaign has been, let alone how successful a campaign in development might be. In the case of humorous ads, the effectiveness of an ad's humor must be distinguished from the persuasive power of the ad as a whole. Humorous advertisements can fail to increase consumer purchases just as non-humorous ads can successfully increase consumer purchases. As stated previously, humor elements in an advertisement have a strong positive relationship with audience attention, but not necessarily with the persuasiveness of an ad (Chan, 2011 referenced in Rognstad, 2012). So how is the effectiveness of an ad determined? At their heart, advertisements are supposed to increase product sales. Yet the effectiveness of an advertisement cannot simply be measured by sales due to the numerous confounding factors that can influence how well a product sells (Reeves, 1961 referenced in Gulas & Weinberger, 2006). Less direct methodologies must be considered that focus on different ways advertisements affect consumers, all of which are suited for certain purposes more than others. In choosing the best one, many factors must be considered including product involvement (purchase gravity), advertising medium, and the components of the advertisement in question. A majority of metrics look specifically at the interaction between a consumer and the components of the advertisement in question. These include the advertised brand, product category, product message, and the ad's execution (what happened in the ad) (M. Sutherland &

Sylvester, 2000). For the purposes of this investigation, a methodology must be chosen that works in an experimental setting, where audience exposure to advertising stimuli must be simulated and no reliance can be made on external performance such as generated impressions or product sales. The following subsections consider potential approaches for evaluating the persuasive power of persuasion mockery including produce message recall, self-response attitudes, implicit associations, and brand recall. The theoretical basis and limitations of these approaches are discussed along with those of similar metrics before selecting brand recall as the preferred approach for evaluating persuasion mockery.

1. Product Message Recall

The use of product message recall would evaluate the effectiveness of persuasion mockery based on the ability of consumers to recall specific product details communicated through its advertisements. At its heart, advertising is about message transmission. Pragmatic agencies understand their work as "the art of getting a unique selling proposition into the heads of the most people at the lowest possible cost"(Reeves, 1961, p. 34 quoted in Heath, 2008, p. 7). In their paper "Fifty years using the wrong model in advertising", Robert Heath and Paul Feldwick assert that this definition continues to dominate agency thinking to this day. The effectiveness of message transmission is grounded in what they describe as the Information Processing Model (IPM), which asserts that "success in advertising is indicated by recall of ... a clear (i.e. verbally describable) message about the product or service" (Heath & Feldwick, 2008, p. 2). Consumers go through a cognitive process of understanding an advertisement's message, redefining it for their own internal memory, and consciously

evaluating it to inform their behavior. Based on this model, consumer recall of an advertisement's product message should also be a strong indicator for the ad's ability to increase consumer purchase intention. From a more practical standpoint, an agency's reliance on product message recall can keep clients satisfied. The key to success in advertising is to give the client what they want. In the process of producing a campaign, a client's goals are distilled by strategists into a document called the brief, which outlines what consumers should think about the product after they have seen the advertisement. It stands to reason that if your client wants to communicate a new product detail to its audience, a new \$5 price for foot-long sandwiches for instance, the recall of said detail would be the best metric for retaining the client. Yet this fixation on message transmission ignores the complex and constantly evolving factors that make advertisements successful such as references to current trends or the 'stickiness' of the advertisement's execution.

The recall of specific product messages was not selected to measure the relative effectiveness of persuasion mockery due to both theoretical and experimental limitations. The IPM assumes that the purpose of advertising is to convey complex information in a way that will stick in a consumer's mind. It fails to consider the importance of cultural context and the psychology of consumption (McCracken, 1987). The persona of a brand, rather than the detail of its products, plays an important role in its commercial success. Purchases, particularly of lower priced, low involvement products, are rarely made based on a logical weighing of product features, but rather on how a consumer consciously or subconsciously feels about a brand. While persuasion mockery can successfully relay product messages, a focus on just one of the

components of an advertisement may fail to capture how the use of ironic humor interacts with an advertisement's execution and brand. From an experimental perspective, product message recall also poses challenges to maintain experiment simplicity and scalability. Product message recall is best measured after substantial time delays (1-2 weeks) to assess long term retention of relatively complicated messages, making it difficult to measure for a large sample of test participants. A focus on product message recall also places tremendous importance on the ability to control for the nuances of product message among advertisements tested, limiting the possible advertisements that could be used for testing.

2. Consumer Attitudes

A reliance on consumer attitudes would evaluate the effectiveness of persuasion mockery advertisements based on their ability to create emotional affect within consumers. It is common practice in the advertising industry to assess the degree to which consumers view the components of an advertisement as enjoyable or humorous. Affective measurements became popular within agencies in part because they were cheap and easy to conduct, and provided quick results for creatives working on a short timeline (Lucas & Britt, 1963). But the measurement of affective reactions also provides balance to the industry's reliance on cognitive reactions such as product message recall as noted above (MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986). Commercials can be influential to consumers even if they are not given full attention or cognition. New theoretical support was made for the importance of a less direct cognitive mechanism for ad effectiveness with the introduction of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). The ELM maintains the same assumption made by the IPM that persuasive

communication can be cognitively processed to form new memories, attitudes, and purchase intentions. However the ELM adds a second route of cognition, the peripheral route, that can also cause shifts in product attitudes and purchase intention, albeit more temporary ones. If an advertisement is muted or not directly relevant, a consumer may still latch on to peripheral cues including emotion and perceived source credibility while not fully processing the ad (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Measuring consumer attitudes to peripheral cues such as pleasantness or humor can help determine the frequency with which an advertisement will be directly or indirectly processed instead of ignored entirely. Positive consumer attitude toward an advertisement has been correlated with increases in attitude toward brand and subsequent purchase intention (Marks & Olson, 1981 referenced in MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986). Measuring consumer attitudes to persuasion mockery advertisements would help to evaluate the effectiveness of persuasion mockery at generating perceptions of humor. More complicated consumer attitudes such as attitude to brand or purchase intention may fail to successfully capture persuasive power.

Consumer attitudes were chosen to help control for effectiveness of ad execution and ad humor, but not to evaluate the effectiveness of persuasion mockery. Self-response questions like those used to measure consumer attitudes suffer from two main drawbacks. The first is social desirability bias, defined as an "individual's tendencies to provide responses that conform to social desirability factors" (Belk, 2007, p. 149). Consumers asked about their intent to purchase a Volkswagen may feel obligated to give extra consideration to recent controversies they may overlook in real life. Self-response questions are also limited by any given participant's lack of conscious access;

an inability to accurately assess complicated emotions and persuasive mechanisms (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977 referenced in Rognstad, 2012). A consumer may consider a commercial with a jingle as unmemorable before realizing that they have it stuck in their head a week later. Because of these two reasons, consumer attitudes were not chosen to measure the relative persuasive power of advertisements containing persuasion mockery. However, as mentioned previously, the effectiveness persuasion mockery's humor must be separated from its power to persuade. In an experiment meant to investigate the relative persuasive power of persuasion mockery, controlling for two key consumer attitudes, attitude toward humor and general advertisement liking, via consumer self-responses will help to determine if persuasion mockery is fundamentally more persuasive, and not just more likely to be found funny. Peripheral processing in the ELM is correlated strongly only with low involvement products (Park & Young, 1984), so it will be important to test advertisements that are only for product and services of low purchase gravity.

3. Implicit Association

The measurement of implicit brand associations would evaluate the effectiveness of persuasion mockery by bypassing issues of conscious access to determine changes in subconscious brand perceptions. Used in Kristian Rognstad's study mentioned in the literature review, implicit brand association can be tested to measure the immediate associations consumers make between an advertised brand and a predetermined set of characteristics such as positive or negative, cool or uncool. By testing these associations before and after exposure to an advertisement, this method

can identify the extent to which the ad's execution changed participants' implicit perceptions towards the advertised brand.

Implicit brand associations were not chosen to evaluate the effectiveness of persuasion mockery due to experimental difficulty and past experimental results . The implicit brand association test requires researchers to choose dichotomies (cool and uncool) that may not appropriately describe the subconscious associations of all consumers. The experiment is also heavily involved and therefore hard to scale for a large number of participants. The implicit brand association method has also been used previously to investigate ironic humor in advertising. When using this method, Kristian Rognstad discovered no difference in persuasion mockery's ability to shift implicit brand associations when compared to the absence of persuasion mockery. While this result may be due to experimental limitations, a different and more basic measurement can help successfully evaluate the effectiveness of persuasion mockery.

4. Brand Recall

A focus on brand salience would evaluate the effectiveness of persuasion mockery by measuring the ability of consumer's to immediately recall the brand advertised. Whether it's called salience, recognition, or awareness, consumers will often choose to purchase a brand they recognize over a brand that they do not. The purpose of advertising is not just to influence which brand is chosen over another but also to impact which brands are considered in the first place (M. S. Sutherland, Alics, 2000). Prior to mass media, "early ads didn't emphasize product features or consumer benefits, they merely brought attention to goods that were currently available for purchase" (Laird, 1998, p. 16 quoted in Curtis, 2002). This strategy places trust in consumers to

develop a knowledge of the product and consider purchasing it based on its merits, and not the mythology and persuasion of the advertisement. Brand recall presents itself as a good measurement for evaluating persuasion mockery because it focuses on the basic role of advertising to insert a brand into the life of a consumer for a certain cost.

Advertising is a competition over attention, a limited cognitive resource that consumers dole out grudgingly. Brand recall was selected to evaluate the relative effectiveness of persuasion mockery in order to measure the basic ability of an advertisement to be successfully processed and attributed to its creator. Variations including product category recall, unaided, and aided recall can be used to collect data at multiple levels of difficulty and conscious access.

Research Question and Hypotheses

This thesis set out to investigate whether or not elements of persuasion mockery can improve the relative effectiveness of an advertisement to persuade consumers. It will focus on addressing the following hypotheses:

H1: Ads with persuasion mockery will be assessed as more humorous than ads using traditional forms of humor.

H2: Ads with persuasion mockery will exhibit higher brand recall than ads using traditional forms of humor.

Measurements of consumer attitudes towards an advertisement and its humor were chosen to control for the effectiveness of persuasion mockery's humor, while brand recall was chosen to measure the effectiveness of persuasion mockery's ability to influence consumers. It is hypothesized that the presence of persuasion mockery in television advertisements will improve the relative recall of low involvement brands

when compared to the use of traditional humor. Two main causal factors, daily television consumption and persuasion knowledge, will also be investigated as part of this experiment based on the following hypotheses:

H3: Persuasion knowledge will be more positively correlated with the recall of persuasion mockery brands than of traditional humor brands.

H4: Daily television consumption will be more positively correlated with the recall of persuasion mockery brands than of traditional humor brands.

Sourcing Advertisements

When attempting to manipulate the presence and absence of persuasion mockery as an independent variable, it would be ideal to select a sample of experimental stimuli from the total population of ads that utilize elements of persuasion mockery. Unfortunately, with decades of broadcast advertisements that are forgotten or difficult to access, a more strategic approach must be taken. A database of persuasion mockery advertisements was created using the search functions of ispot.tv, an industry tool offering free and paid services to advertisers, and Youtube, a social media platform centered around video sharing. Advertisements utilizing persuasion mockery were chosen from both the personal experience of the researcher as well as through discussion of persuasion mockery in advertising trade publications and general online browsing. A database containing 22 advertisements for brands of varying industries made by a variety of advertising agencies and in-house marketing groups was formulated. These ads were chosen for their use of clear elements of persuasion

mockery in order to develop humor within the ad. With this selection in place, an additional 13 advertisements that do not utilize elements of persuasion mockery were added to the database. These were sourced by browsing advertisements for competing brands on Youtube and ispot.tv that were within the same low involvement brand categories as the 22 persuasion mockery advertisements. All advertisements chosen for the database utilized elements of humor as a core part of their persuasive strategy, and were thought to be humorous by the researcher.

Many of the advertisements using persuasion mockery and traditional humor were created by successful, big-name agencies known for cutting edge strategy. Persuasion mockery examples include TurboTax's "Never a Sellout", KFC's "Lie Detector", and Heineken's "Rules" from Wieden and Kennedy (W+K); Johnsonville Sausage's "Regular Speed Chase" by Droga5; Volkswagen's "Safe Happens" by Crispin, Porter, and Bogusky (CP+B); and "Pepsi's Unlikely Spokesperson Marshawn Lynch" by Batten, Barton, Durstine, and Osborn (BBDO). Traditional humor examples include Mountain Dew's "Puppymonkeybaby" from BBDO; "Bud Light Party: Dock" from W+K and AKQA; Planters' "Why You're Here" by Leo Burnett; and Corona Light's "Ditch the Herd" by Goody, Silverstein & Partners. Examples were also chosen from smaller agencies as well as in-house marketing groups. The majority of advertisements were made after 2012 with a few outliers made as far back as 2006.

Study 1 - Pretest

A pretest was conducted in order to compare assessments of advertisements with and without persuasion mockery. For the purposes of experimentation, persuasion mockery is treated as a type of media message that is capable of eliciting an effect upon its audience. An investigation into the main hypotheses (H1 and H2) of persuasion mockery's audience effects must be built upon the manipulation of persuasion mockery as well as the messages in which it is used. As the primary independent variable, persuasion mockery will be manipulated through two treatment levels: the presence and absence of persuasion mockery elements. The pretest therefore tested advertisements that were split equally between those that contained elements of persuasion mockery and those that do not. This variance in the treatment of the media message (persuasion mockery) was combined with message variance: the use of multiple instances of a kind of message or message category. With a focus on advertising, message variance was created through different product categories of advertisements. The pretest investigated advertisements spread evenly across multiple product categories in order to generate a more representative sample of advertising in its entirety. The use of both treatment variance and message variance is critical to increasing the applicability of the conclusions of the experiment (Thorson, Wicks, & Leshner, 2012).

Procedure

In order to test the effectiveness of persuasion mockery to improve brand recall, a pretest was conducted in order to build an understanding of a subset of specific commercials that could be used for brand recall evaluation in the main test. A 5 x 2 experiment design was used to collect participant attitudes toward advertisements across

five product categories (Fast Food, Tax Software, Beer, Snack Food, Soda) for two treatments of persuasion mockery (presence of persuasion mockery elements, absence of persuasion mockery elements). Two specific consumer attitudes, attitude to ad (A_{AD}) and attitude to humor (A_H) were evaluated using a total of five self-evaluation questions on a nine point scale. A list of these questions can be found in the appendices. A total of ten advertisements were selected from the database of television commercials discussed above to be evaluated. These advertisements were selected in pairs of two for each of the five product categories, one containing persuasion mockery elements and one not. Advertisements within pairs were of identical length. Details of the advertisements used in the pretest can be found in the appendices.

A Qualtrics survey was created to conduct the pretest through the sharing of a digital link with participants. A total of 78 students from Endicott College and the University of Oregon completed the survey. Participants began by providing their general age range. Participants then watched the ten selected advertisements in random order. Participants were asked if they had previously seen the advertisement once it had finished. Before moving to the next ad, participants were given the consumer attitude questions for the advertisement they had just viewed. Scores for the three questions dealing with the viewer's general enjoyment of the ad were averaged to create a score for A_{AD} . Scores for the two questions asking about the humor of the ad were averaged to create an attitude toward humor score A_H .

Results and Analysis

Advertisements containing elements of Persuasion Mockery produced better audience attitudes towards the ad (6.01) and towards the ad's humor (5.76) than

advertisements that did not contain elements of persuasion mockery (5.20 and 5.03). This provides support for the first hypothesis (H1) that persuasion mockery advertisements would be found to be more funny than advertisements utilizing traditional humor. Bias and a lack of controlled variables during the selection of advertisements strongly limit the applicability of this finding, as a much larger sample size of advertisements would have to be tested to conclusively state that persuasion mockery advertisements are more humorous. "Pepsi's Unlikely Spokesperson Marshawn Lynch ", a persuasion mockery advertisement, was rated by participants as the funniest and most enjoyable ad ($A_H = 6.98$, $A_{AD} = 6.86$). "Wheat Thins Zesty Salsa Featuring Alex Trebek", containing traditional humor, was rated by participants as the least funny and least enjoyable advertisement ($A_H = 3.89$, $A_{AD} = 4.66$). Advertisements in the snack food category were found to be substantially more enjoyable than they were funny.

Pretest - Consumer Attitudes to Ads

Product Category	Brand name	Persuasion Mockery	Aad	Ah
Light Beer	Heineken	Yes	6.43	6.26
Light Beer	Corona Light	No	5.30	5.17
Soda	Pepsi	Yes	6.86	6.98
Soda	Mountain Dew	No	4.76	4.87
Tax Software	TurboTax	Yes	5.99	5.99
Tax Software	H&R Block	No	5.18	5.35
Snack	Wonderful Pistachios	Yes	5.78	5.05
Snack	Wheat Thins	No	4.66	3.89
Fast Food	KFC	Yes	5.00	4.54
Fast Food	Burger King	No	6.09	5.89

In order to conduct a main experiment that controls for attitude towards ad (A_{AD}) and attitude towards humor (A_H), different product categories (types of message variance) were found with comparable average attitude scores. Pairs of advertisements within the light beer, tax software, and fast food product categories were selected to be tested in the main test. Within this subgroup, the average attitude towards the ad and the ad's humor for ads with elements of persuasion mockery ($A_{AD} = 5.81$, $A_H = 5.60$) was comparable to the scores of the advertisements without elements of persuasion mockery ($A_{AD} = 5.53$, $A_H = 5.47$):

In order to determine the statistical significance of the differences between these averages, a t test was conducted with the following hypotheses:

$$\mu A_{H(PM)} - \mu A_{H(NON PM)} = 0$$

$$\mu A_{AD(PM)} - \mu A_{AD(NON PM)} = 0$$

The chart below provides the data, as calculated using IBM's SPSS , from a pair of two tailed t tests conducted to calculate the statistical significance of the differences between the average attitude scores of advertisements separated by persuasion mockery (presence v absence) containing and not containing elements of persuasion mockery across commercials for light beer (Heineken v Corona), tax software (TurboTax v H&R Block), and fast food (KFC v Burger King).

Pretest - T-test for Differences in Consumer Attitudes

	A _{AD}		A _H	
	Presence	Absence	Presence	Absence
Persuasion				
Mockery				
Average	5.81	5.53	5.60	5.47
Standard Deviation	1.69	1.84	2.04	2.09
N	234	234	234	234
Standard Error	0.163		0.191	
Degrees of Freedom	463		466	
Test Statistic	1.738		0.661	
P-Value	0.083		0.509	
Relationship	No		No	

Using the standard 5% significance level, no significant difference is found between the perceptions of the advertisements containing elements of persuasion mockery and those of the three traditional ads. With a difference of .13 and a p-value of .509, it can be said with a high level of confidence that the stated hypothesis should be accepted, resulting in the assumption that there is no difference in the perceived humor between the ads. It is important to note that with a difference of .28 and a p-value of .083, the attitude towards the Ad, characterized as being enjoyable, likeable, and pleasant, is nearing a statistically significant split. While the hypothesis will be accepted and the assumption made that there is no difference in the positive perceptions of the advertisements, it will important to reflect on the ramifications of the relatively low P-value when discussing the limitations of the experiment.

Study 2 - Main Test

With statistically comparable A_H and A_{AD} scores, it becomes possible to use the selected pairs of advertisements, one with and one without elements of persuasion mockery, to conduct an experiment on the relationships between persuasion mockery, persuasion knowledge, TV consumption, and brand recall while controlling for humor and general ad enjoyment.

Procedure

The primary purpose of the main test is to investigate the relationship between the presence of persuasion mockery elements in an advertisement with the ability of audiences to recall the brand advertised. It was hypothesized (H2) that advertisements containing elements of persuasion mockery would achieve higher recall scores than advertisements utilizing traditional humor. It was also hypothesized (H3 and H4) that stronger correlations between brand recall and the two causal variables, TV consumption and persuasion knowledge, would be found among persuasion mockery advertisements.

A 3 x 2 experiment design was used to manipulate both product category (Fast Food, Tax Software, Beer) and persuasion mockery (presence of persuasion mockery elements, absence of persuasion mockery elements). As mentioned previously, data from the pretest was used to determine pairs of commercials that could be tested while controlling for consumer attitudes. Advertisements were tested separately using six identical surveys on Qualtrics. Test subjects were solicited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk, a small-task marketplace that can be used by researchers to pay a diverse audience to fulfill research tasks. Any participants were welcome and no

responses were filtered out based any kind of exclusion criteria other than test completion. Participants began by answering the previously mentioned six persuasion knowledge self assessment questions developed by Bearden, Hardesty, and Rose in 2001. The answers were averaged to create a single number on a nine point scale that reflected the viewer's self assessment of their own persuasion knowledge. Participants were then instructed to watch a video containing three advertisements. The advertisement being tested was placed in the middle, sandwiched by two distraction ads, one for Tide detergent, and the other for Axe deodorant. Details of the advertisements used for distraction are included in the appendices. After watching the three advertisements, participants were asked to unscramble five words varying in length from four to seven characters. The specific word scramble activity is included in the appendices. This activity was added in order to create a cognitive distraction that also allowed time to pass, increasing the overall difficulty of recalling the brand. Participants then answered four demographic questions to determine their age, gender, ethnicity, and television consumption per day. The placement of distraction advertisements, a distraction activity, and demographic questions to increase brand recall difficulty helped to further expose differences between the manipulated presence or absence of persuasion mockery.

Participants were then subjected to the recall testing. First, participants were provided a closed end list of different product categories and asked to recall the product category of the tested ad. These answers were used to determine the product category recall of the advertisement, a variation of brand recall. Second, participants responded to an open ended question and were asked to write in the specific brand of light beer,

tax software, or fast food that was shown in one of the three advertisements. The correct product category of the tested ad was given to provide participants with the context necessary to answer the question correctly. Data from this question was used to calculate the unaided recall score of the advertisement being tested. This represented the most difficult version of brand recall, as consumers were asked to supply the brand's name from their own memory. Participants were then asked the same question but with four listed choices to choose from in order to calculate the aided recall of the advertisement tested. This represented an easier recall test that still allowed participants to recall the advertised brand even if they couldn't remember it off the top of their head. This question was repeated once again using brand logos as the four options in order to calculate the logo aided recall of the advertisement tested. This was the easiest of the recall tests, as it provided visual clues to aid participants along with the provided brand names.

Results and Analysis

The table below provides the four recall scores for each of the six tested advertisements:

Main Test - Brand Recall Scores

Product Category	Brand name	Persuasion Mockery	Product Category Recall	Unaided Recall	Aided Recall	Logo Aided Recall
Light Beer	Heineken	Yes	94%	79%	87%	87%
Light Beer	Corona Light	No	80%	38%	62%	72%
Tax Software	TurboTax	Yes	94%	83%	99%	96%
Tax Software	H&R Block	No	81%	57%	83%	84%
Fast Food	KFC	Yes	83%	81%	90%	90%
Fast Food	Burger King	No	94%	77%	85%	85%

In order to test the main hypothesis (H2) that the presence of persuasion mockery elements improved participant recall, a Chi Squared test was administered to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. The categorical variable of persuasion mockery (presence, absence) was run against the categorical variable (yes, no) of product category recall, unaided brand recall, aided brand recall, and logo aided recall.

Main Test - Chi Squared Test (Persuasion Mockery vs Traditional Humor)

Chi Squared Test	Product Category Recall	Unaided Recall	Aided Recall	Logo Aided Recall
Pearson Correlation	2.541	24.905	16.821	9.066
P Value	0.111	<.001	<.001	0.003
Relationship?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

A statistically significant relationship was discovered between persuasion mockery and all three of the brand recall scores within a 99% significance level. These results suggest that the main hypothesis (H2) should be accepted with the conclusion that the elements of persuasion mockery in the three advertisements tested were correlated with higher recall scores. This finding provides some evidence that persuasion mockery has an inherent ability to improve the ability of viewers to recall the brand advertised. A Chi Squared score of 2.541 between the presence of persuasion mockery and the product category recall earns a p value greater than .1, and therefore while some relationship might be present, it cannot be asserted with a high level of confidence.

The Chi Squared values between the presence of persuasion mockery and the three types of brand recall seem to also correlate with the difficulty of the recall, with a higher correlation the harder the recall. Unaided brand recall, the most difficult of the measures, held a Chi Squared value of 24.905. The strength of this relationship dropped for aided brand recall (Chi Squared value of 16.821). Logo aided recall, the easiest, had the weakest relationship of the brand related recall tests (Chi Squared value of 9.066). This observation makes sense intuitively, as the increased utility of persuasion mockery is appreciated more when the difficulty of the recall is increased.

The second investigative purpose for the main test was to determine if elements of persuasion mockery had an effect on the relationship between a participant's persuasion knowledge and their ability to recall advertised brands. It was hypothesized (H3) that a greater positive correlation would be found between a participant's self-assessed persuasion knowledge and their ability to correctly recall the brand and product category advertised in advertisements containing persuasion mockery. Persuasion mockery relies on a viewer's familiarity with advertising discourse. Participants with higher persuasion knowledge might find the elements of persuasion mockery more engaging, funny, or memorable by having a greater chance of understanding the context of the humor, causing their recall scores to improve.

In order to scrutinize the effect of persuasion mockery on this relationship, the persuasion knowledge and recall scores were separated into two samples based on the presence or absence of persuasion mockery elements in the viewed advertisement. The following table provides the Pearson correlations between persuasion knowledge (1-9) and the recall scores (true/false) as calculated using IBM's SPSS.

Main Test - Pearson Correlations (Persuasion Knowledge and Recall Scores)

		Presence of Persuasion Mockery	Absence of Persuasion Mockery
Product Category Recall	Pearson Correlation	0.072	0.266
	P Value	0.268	<.001
	Relationship?	No	Yes
Unaided Brand Recall	Pearson Correlation	0.116	0.207
	P Value	0.073	0.002
	Relationship?	No	Yes
Aided Brand Recall	Pearson Correlation	0.099	0.210
	P Value	0.125	0.001
	Relationship?	No	Yes
Logo Aided Recall	Pearson Correlation	0.038	0.230
	P Value	0.560	<.001
	Relationship?	No	Yes

Statistically significant correlations for all four recall tests were found among the ads that did not contain persuasion mockery. No statistically significant correlations were found between persuasion knowledge and the four recall tests among the ads containing persuasion mockery. These results suggest that H3 should be rejected in favor of its inverse: the presence of persuasion mockery elements within advertisements disrupted the positive relationship between the persuasion knowledge of participants and their ability to recall the brand and product category advertised. In plain English, the presence of persuasion mockery removed the advantage that a sense of higher persuasion knowledge gave participants when recalling the brand and product category. This finding merits further experimentation to determine the extent to which persuasion

knowledge can mediate the affect of an ad, and the disruptive nature of persuasion mockery to affect the typical advertisement to consumer relationship.

A third investigative purpose of the main test was to explore the effect of persuasion mockery elements on the relationship between a viewer's daily television consumption and their recall ability. It was hypothesized (H4) that a stronger positive relationship would be found between TV consumption and recall ability among participants exposed to persuasion mockery than those exposed to traditional humor elements. The table below provides the Pearson correlations between daily television consumption (0-20 hrs) and the recall scores (true/false) as calculated using IBM's SPSS.

Main Test - Pearson Correlations (TV Consumption and Recall Scores)

		Presence of Persuasion Mockery	Absence of Persuasion Mockery
Product Category Recall	Pearson Correlation	-0.180	-0.086
	P Value	0.005	0.196
	Relationship?	Yes	No
Unaided Brand Recall	Pearson Correlation	-0.145	-0.012
	P Value	0.025	0.852
	Relationship?	Yes	No
Aided Brand Recall	Pearson Correlation	-0.236	-0.018
	P Value	<.001	0.785
	Relationship?	Yes	No
logo aided recall	Pearson Correlation	-0.170	-0.059
	P Value	0.008	0.375
	Relationship?	Yes	No

Statistically significant correlations between a participant's TV consumption and all four of the recall tests were found among participants exposed to persuasion mockery. No significant correlations were found for ads that utilized traditional humor elements. While the original hypothesis successfully predicted the presence of stronger correlations for persuasion mockery than traditional humor, these correlations were negative, suggesting that more frequent exposure to television made it more difficult for participants to successfully recall brands that utilized persuasion mockery.

Across the pretest and main test, two out of the four hypotheses were supported. H1 regarding better consumer attitudes was supported by the pretest albeit with considerable limitation. H2, the main hypothesis, was also accepted based on the higher brand recalls of the persuasion mockery advertisements. H3 and H4 regarding correlations to daily television consumption and persuasion knowledge were not supported, but did show interesting relationships separated distinctly by the presence of persuasion mockery. The findings of the main test merit further discussion.

Discussion

The results from the main test provided support for the primary hypothesis (H2) that the presence of persuasion mockery would improve the ability of consumer's to recall the brand advertised. This finding provides an explanation for why so many marketers choose to use elements of persuasion mockery within their communication strategy in order to persuade audiences and increase sales. Improved brand recall could be one reason why countless high profile agencies including DDBO and Wieden and Kennedy have used this strategy for important Super Bowl commercials. By controlling for consumer attitudes towards the humor of the ad, this finding also suggests that ability to increase brand recall is due to a fundamental persuasive effect of persuasion mockery, and not simply because these elements are found to be more funny or enjoyable than traditional ads. These results were found among product categories of low involvement, which have shown to be more affected by the persuasive influence of increased peripheral awareness and processing. It can be extrapolated that persuasion mockery advertisements for low involvement products should result in more product sales than traditionally humorous advertisements. More research should be conducted using other mechanisms of measuring the persuasive power of advertisements in order to better understand how elements of persuasion mockery shape the influencing power of their advertisements.

The acceptance of the main hypothesis has significant implications for advertisers and consumers alike. This result might suggest that consumer's favor more transparent communication between brands and their consumers. Consumers of television advertising might be starting to value modesty and self-awareness more than

the brand glorification and product puffery typical of advertising. It might be a sign that new millennial consumers are making persuasion knowledge a more lucrative strategy as they evolve into one of the most lucrative and forward-looking demographics. The positive and lasting impressions created by persuasion mockery via elements of self-deprecation and corporate transparency may help to evolve advertising discourse and improve the consumer's everyday experience with ubiquitous advertising.

The rejection of the H3 and the ensuing conclusion that elements of persuasion mockery disrupt the recall advantage provided by an increased degree of persuasion knowledge merits further discussion and experimentation. It was hypothesized that elements of persuasion mockery would enhance rather than detract from this relationship due to the fact that these elements rely on a viewer's understanding of the tools and strategies of advertising discourse. Instead the evidence suggests the opposite, that elements of persuasion mockery impede the ability of viewers with higher self-assessments of persuasion knowledge to recall advertised brands at a higher rate than those with lower persuasion knowledge. One reason for this may be that the 'meta' elements of the persuasion mockery advertisements increased the cognitive difficulty of processing them. In a similar vein to the Vampire Effect, this increase in cognitive processing difficulty may have distracted participants from the advertised brand, drawing their attention instead to the relatively complicated development of humor.

The rejection of H3 and the ensuing conclusion that increased television consumption decreases the ability of consumers to recall advertisers using persuasion mockery challenges the assumption that an appreciation of persuasion mockery requires high familiarity with advertising. A potential explanation for this finding could be that

those who watch more television have been exposed to a higher number of persuasion mockery commercials, and have incorporated its dynamic into their persuasion knowledge. These consumers might find persuasion mockery less 'novel' and attention grabbing, having seen it used more often. Persuasion mockery might rely on a degree of 'shock value' felt by the brazenness of persuasive irony and transparency that decreases the more you are exposed to it.

Limitations

Several limitations and qualifications should be considered when discussing the results of this experiment including confounding factors, sample size, product involvement, and control for consumer attitudes towards advertisements and their humor (A_{AD} and A_H). As noted in the results of study 1, the three pairs of tested advertisements had differences in their A_{AD} and A_H when separated by the presence or absence of persuasion mockery. Attitude to humor was relatively similar (5.6 vs 5.47, P value $<.001$) with the persuasion mockery advertisements thought to be slightly funnier on average. The P value of .509 indicates that A_H was statistically similar and therefore controlled in the experiment. In the case of Attitude to Ad (A_{AD}) however, the difference was somewhat more substantial (5.81 vs 5.53, P value = .083). A P value of .083 is approaching statistical significance, as it is within a 10% significance level. When using a significance level of 5%, this difference can be ignored to say that A_{AD} scores were comparable between the two groups of advertisements, but it must be noted that the advertisements containing persuasion mockery may have been slightly more enjoyable than their traditional humor counterparts. It must also be mentioned that these scores were representative of the average attitudes across three different advertisements.

Differences in A_{AD} and A_H were more pronounced in individual pairs of advertisements, with discrepancies as high as 1.35 on a nine point scale. A_{AD} has been shown to correlate with higher purchase intention and other brand effectiveness metrics (Marks & Olson, 1981 referenced in MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986) suggesting that it might possess a correlation with increased brand recall. A high variance in the A_{AD} adds uncertainty when trying to separate the effect of consumer attitudes from the effect of persuasion mockery. Further, the participants who evaluated A_{AD} and A_H for the tested advertisements were different than the ones who underwent recall testing. Despite these limitations, it is unlikely that variations in A_{AD} or A_H impacted the decision to accept the hypothesis. With regards to the original research question, A_H is the more important of the two consumer attitudes to control due to the core comparison of persuasion mockery to traditional humor. Differences in A_{AD} scores were found to be statistically similar within a 5% significance level, and were not as essential to control for in light of the control for humor effectiveness.

Potential confounding factors within the tested advertisements must also be discussed as potential contributing factors to the differences in recall scores of persuasion mockery and traditional humor advertisements. Pairs of tested advertisements may have differed with regards to influential factors in their executions including ad complexity, use of celebrity endorser, and type of traditional humor. Ideally, these variables would have been controlled for in order to further isolate the effect of persuasion mockery. Differences in the complexity of advertisements within a pair may have affected recall scores by providing test participants with differing cognitive challenge. The long and somewhat hard to hear dialogue between the two

young farm hands in H&R Block's "Cow Corral" may have garnered less audience attention and cognition than the more obvious incongruity of the lying Sir Anthony Hopkins in TurboTax's "Never a Sellout". There were no glaring differences in advertisement complexity between the light beer advertisements or the fast food advertisements. It is unclear how discrepancies in cognitive difficulty would affect recall ability. While more complicated commercials may lose some audience attention, their complexity may also increase the humor and persuasive payoff for participants who do pay attention. It is unlikely that differences in advertisement complexity and cognitive challenge affected the decision to accept the hypothesis, as these confounding factors were somewhat accounted for when controlling for advertisement length.

The use and relative popularity of celebrity endorsers may also have been a confounding factor within the experiment. Three out of the six tested commercials utilized a celebrity endorser (TurboTax, Sir Anthony Hopkins; Burger King, David Beckham; Heineken, Neil Patrick Harris). Every pair of advertisements contained one ad with a celebrity endorser and one ad without. Two out of the three pairs had a celebrity endorser in the persuasion mockery advertisement. The failure to control for the presence or relative effectiveness of celebrity of endorsers may have impacted the attention paid to the advertisements as well as any potential 'vampire effect' caused by the endorser distracting consumers from the advertised brand. It is unlikely that differences in use and choice of celebrity endorser affected the acceptance of the hypothesis due to the fact that such an impact would be somewhat captured in the control of A_H and A_{AD} . The uneven use of celebrity endorsers was somewhat scattered,

reflecting the uneven use of celebrity endorsers in real life advertising battles between competing brands.

Another confounding factor to be considered is the type of humor used by advertisements that relied on traditional humor. Corona's "Ditch the Herd" relied on incongruity developed through anthropomorphism to develop its humor. This differed in approach from the more superiority based humor used by Burger King's "Shirt Off" and H&R Block's "Cow Corral". It is unclear how different types of humor might affect the ability of consumers to recall the brand advertised. In addition, the Agency behind advertisements was not controlled for. While all three persuasion mockery advertisements were created by the experts at Wieden and Kennedy, the three traditional humor ads were made by three different agencies. The control for AH helped to establish comparable humor effectiveness between pairs of advertisements, helping to cover some of the effect these confounding factor might have had on consumer brand recall. The magnitude of confounding factors including type of traditional humor are further exacerbated when considered within the scope of only three pairs of advertisements.

The broader applicability of the accepted hypothesis is limited by the sample size of the experiment. It is tough to assess the extent to which persuasion mockery can improve the brand recall of any advertisement when the evidence supporting such a statement comes from only three pairs of tested advertisements. The limited sample size places more significance on potential confounding factors including how complicated the commercial was to cognitively process, what kinds of traditional humor were used, and how popular or distracting an endorser such as David Beckham was. Other factors

including participants' pre-existing brand awareness and differences in A_{AD} carry more influence as limitations until future research can repeat the results of this experiment for more advertisements across more product categories. In order to generate a concluding statement on how this experiment answers the initial research question, the applicability of the accepted hypothesis must be discussed within the scope of the tested product categories and limited sample size.

The acceptance of the hypothesis that persuasion mockery improves relative brand recall should be considered only in the context of low involvement products advertised on television. A primary consideration when choosing brand recall as the best metric for an advertisement's persuasive power was the proven correlation between brand recall and increased purchase intention. This relationship has been observed for low involvement brands only, with the correlation disappearing when transitioning to higher involvement product categories such as cars or financial planners (Park & Young, 1984). All advertisements were television commercials and all three product categories used in the main test were low involvement (tax software, fast food, light beer) in order to use brand recall as a surrogate measurement for the effectiveness of the advertisements to increase sales. While this limits the potential application of the experiment's findings, it does not necessarily imply that persuasion mockery would not still improve the recall of non-television advertisements and high involvement brands. More research is required to investigate the extent to which persuasion mockery can improve brand recall regardless of product category or medium.

Future Research

Many avenues of future research can be pursued to better answer the original research question as well as to explore new research questions that are prompted from the results discussed above. The further replication of the main test for additional pairs of advertisements would help to further attribute improvements of brand recall with the presence of persuasion mockery. This would allow the accepted hypothesis to be generalized to all persuasion mockery advertisements with greater confidence, and would also provide an opportunity to confirm the hypothesis for advertisements of high involvement products such as cars and financial advisers. Situational use of humor in advertising was found to be more often used with low involvement products than with high involvement products, making it more difficult to find examples of persuasion mockery for a pretest (Weinberger & Spotts, 1989). Different metrics for the effectiveness of an advertisement should also be used in order to broaden the scope of the accepted hypothesis. Does persuasion mockery improve consumer attention paid to its advertisement. Does it improve their comprehension of the ad execution or product message? Can it noticeably increase a consumer's purchase intention before and after they have seen the advertisement? All of these metrics provide different frames to examine the relative effectiveness of persuasion mockery, and bring with them their own experimental advantages and difficulties. A repeat of this experiment could also test persuasion mockery's ability to improve brand recall and other metrics across alternative media including radio, print, and digital advertising.

Future research could also change the way treatment variance is developed for persuasion mockery. In this investigation, treatment variance was created by selecting two different advertisements, for two competing, well-known brands. A future

experiment could select pairs of advertisements for the same brand, one with persuasion mockery and one without. This strategy would limit the number of commercials that could be used for a pretest to control for consumer attitudes. A more drastic alteration in treatment variance could be made by manipulating a single commercial into two versions, one with persuasion mockery and one with traditional humor. Such a strategy would be difficult to implement, as it would be a challenge to maintain attitudes towards humor for both versions. The ability to control for ad execution and specific brand advertised would have to be weighed against the ability to control for other factors.

Future research could also explore how TV consumption, persuasion knowledge, and additional causal factors mediate the effectiveness of persuasion mockery. The conundrum presented by the rejection of the third hypothesis regarding daily television consumption merits further exploration. Consumers could be asked the extent to which they are familiar with elements of persuasion mockery in television after they have completed recall testing in order to cross examine with daily television consumption. In a similar manner, persuasion knowledge could also be further explored. Consumers could be asked if they consciously thought about the test brand's persuasion attempt after they have completed recall testing. This would attempt to measure the activation of a consumer's persuasion knowledge and could be cross examined with their persuasion knowledge self assessments and recall ability to better understand its relationship with persuasion mockery. A consumer's topic knowledge and agent knowledge (product category and brand familiarity) could also be measured to provide further context to how the persuasion knowledge model applies to persuasion mockery.

Additional causal factors could also be measured via participant self-response in order to better understand the nature of persuasion mockery. Need for humor (NFH), defined as an individual's predisposition to humor and tendency to seek it out, could be measured at the same time as persuasion knowledge before being correlated to recall ability and examined separately for persuasion mockery and traditional humor (Picard & Blanc, 2013). A similar measurement could be made for need for cognition (NFC), defined as an individual's predisposition to cognitive complexity and tendency to enjoy thinking. Advertisements utilizing humorous elements are more likely to be persuasive to audiences with a lower need for cognition (Chan, 2011). NFC measurements could be used to explore whether or not persuasion mockery can be particularly more persuasive for cognitive-oriented consumers. This would provide another explanation for why persuasion mockery is utilized commonly in television advertising.

A content analysis of persuasion mockery would be a useful piece of future research to better understand how persuasion mockery is employed by advertisers. By collecting and analyzing a large sample of television advertisements across a variety of channels and times of day, a large array of data could be collected to answer questions on how humor and persuasion mockery specifically are utilized. How frequently is persuasion mockery used compared to traditional humor? What channels and viewer demographics does it target the most? Which brands and agencies are employing it the most? Which of the four components of the advertisement does it mock? Which elements of persuasion mockery are used the most out of spoofing, irony, transparency, self deprecation, and breaking the fourth wall? Which ones are used together? Such a content analysis could also be paired with qualitative interviews conducted with

industry experts. What do agency strategists and creatives think about persuasion mockery? Have they ever used it themselves? How do they measure the effectiveness of television advertisements; do they do any kind of A vs B testing? A content analysis of persuasion mockery and interviews with industry experts would help to supplement the findings of this investigation and provide further context for how its results might inform future advertising practice.

Conclusion

Persuasion mockery has become a popular strategy in television advertising for its ability to create unconventional humor that can improve the underlying persuasive power of an advertisement. These commercials subvert consumer expectations, develop superiority over competing advertisements, and allow audiences to relieve the tension of dealing with the thousands of advertisements they are exposed to everyday. This thesis explored how persuasion mockery relies on consumer persuasion knowledge as context for ironic humor, playing off the glossy tactics of traditional advertising with bold self-awareness. An initial experiment identified pairs of advertisements across several low involvement product categories that utilized persuasion mockery and traditional humor elements of persuasion mockery.

While controlling for humor and general attitudes toward the ads, these pairs were pitted head to head in a follow up experiment that measured consumer brand recall after multiple distraction advertisements and activities. Advertisements that used persuasion mockery had higher brand recall scores than advertisements using traditional humor that were considered equally funny. This led to the acceptance of the main hypothesis (H2) to support the conclusion that persuasion mockery is inherently more persuasive than traditional humor. As advertisers continue to explore how persuasion mockery can be further applied to brand messaging, its role as a strategic trend remains uncertain. Will appreciation for persuasion mockery lead to more open and honest advertising that drops the pretext of puffery and mythology to talk directly with consumers? Or will its continued use lead to over-exposure and a self-implosion of consumer expectations towards advertisements. Will persuasion mockery ads continue

to be funny if less and less ads utilize the style and tactics deserving of mockery?

Regardless of its future, persuasion mockery has demonstrated consumer appreciation for more down-to-earth advertising.

Appendices

Figure 1: Procter and Gamble Ivory Soap (1885)



Figure 2: Persuasion Knowledge Model

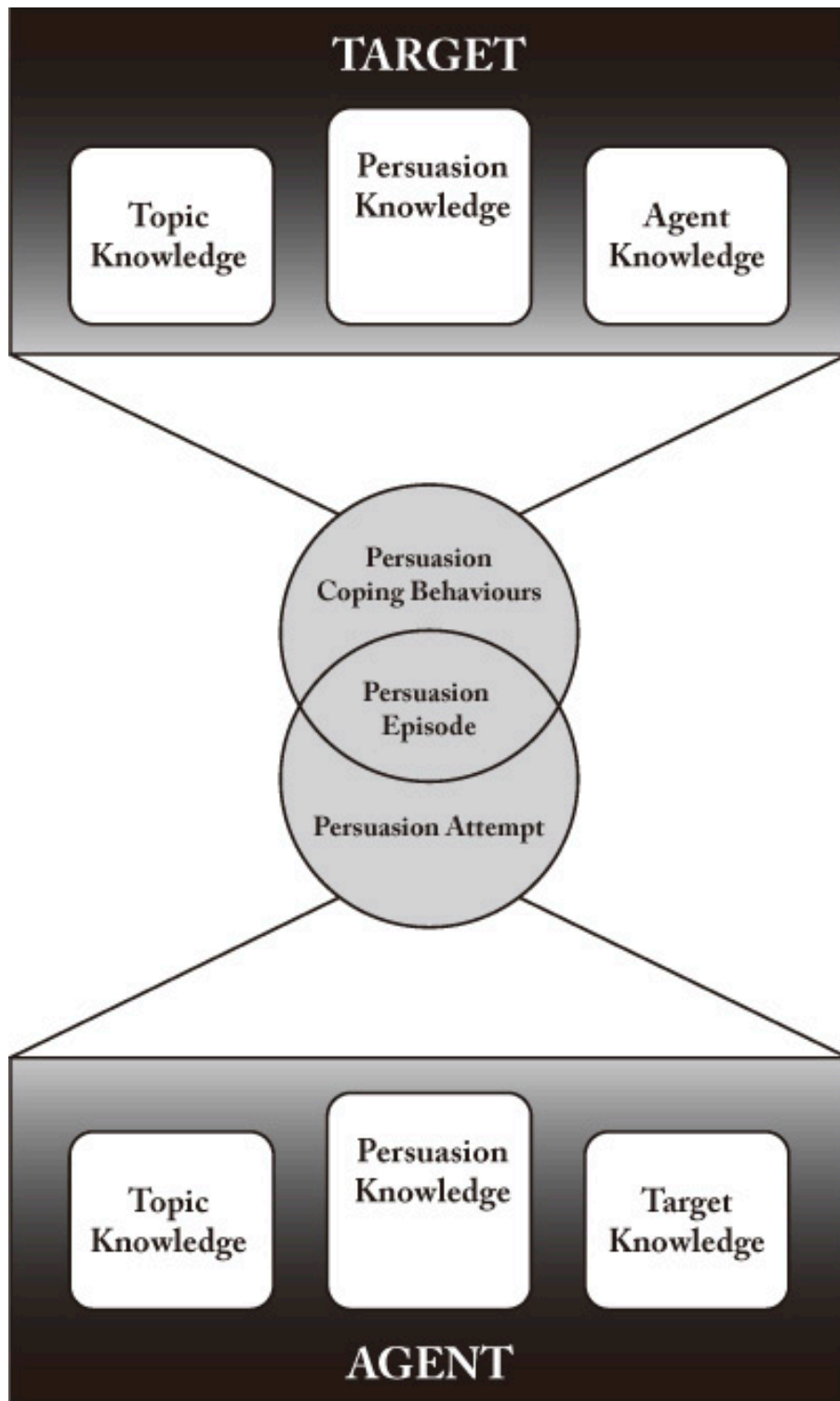
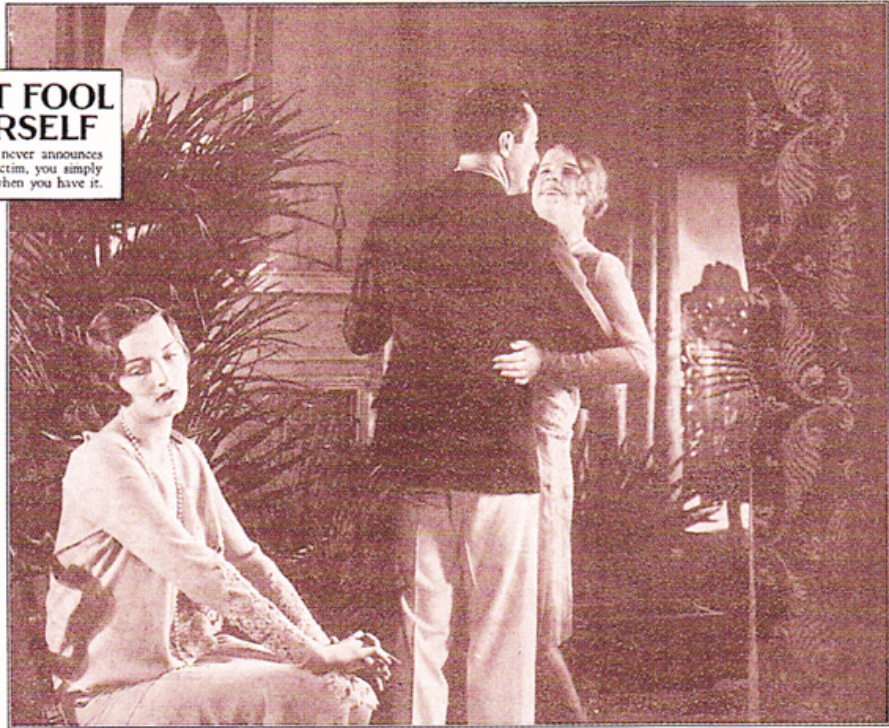


Figure 3: Listerine Mouthwash (1920)

DON'T FOOL YOURSELF
 Since halitosis never announces itself to the victim, you simply cannot know when you have it.



Halitosis makes *you unpopular*

It is inexcusable can be instantly remedied.

NO matter how charming you may be or how fond of you your friends are, you cannot expect them to put up with halitosis (unpleasant breath) forever. They may be nice to you—but it is an effort.

Don't fool yourself that you never have halitosis as do so many self-assured people who constantly offend this way.

Read the facts in the lower right-hand corner and you will see that your chance of escape is slight. Nor should you count on being able to detect this ailment in yourself. Halitosis doesn't announce itself. You are seldom aware you have it.

Recognizing these truths, nice people end any chance of offending by systematically rinsing the mouth with Listerine. Every

morning. Every night. And between times when necessary, especially before meeting others.

Keep a bottle handy in home and office for this purpose.

Listerine ends halitosis instantly. Being antiseptic, it strikes at its commonest cause—fermentation in the oral cavity. Then, being a powerful deodorant, it destroys the odors themselves.

If you have any doubt of Listerine's powerful deodorant properties, make this test: Rub a slice of onion on your hand. Then apply Listerine clear. Immediately, every trace of onion odor is gone. Even the strong odor of fish yields to it. Lambert Pharmacal Company, St. Louis, Mo., U. S. A.

The new baby—
LISTERINE SHAVING CREAM
 —you've got a treat ahead of you.
TRY IT



READ THE FACTS
1/3 had halitosis

68 hairdressers state that about every third woman, many of them from the wealthy classes, is halitoxic. Who should know better than they?

LISTERINE
The safe antiseptic

Elements of Persuasion Mockery

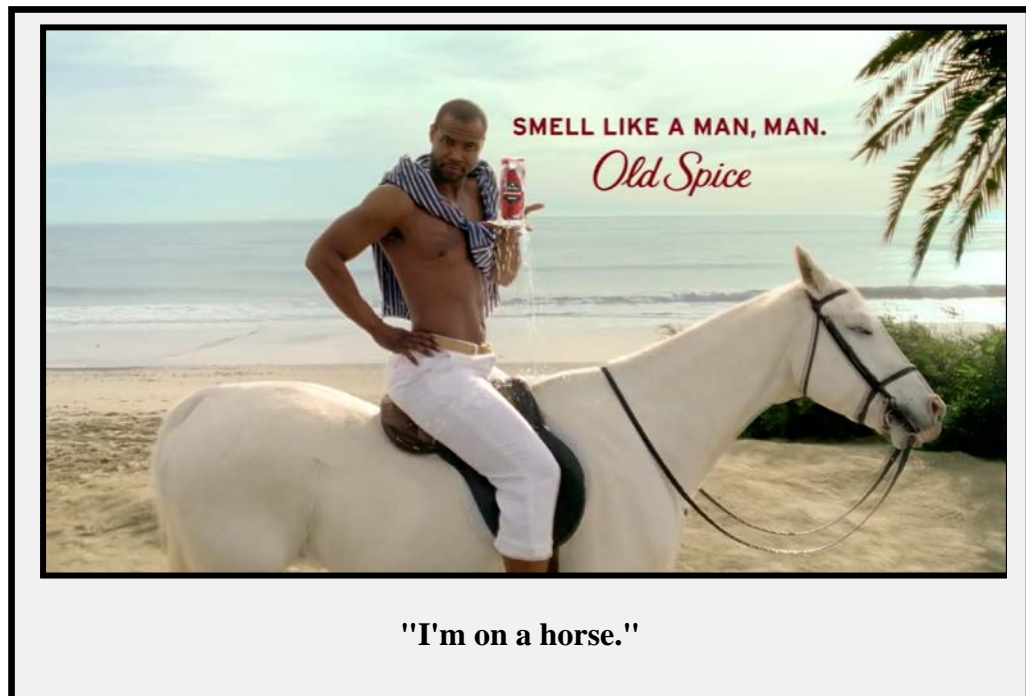
1. Persuasion Transparency

Persuasion transparency is one of the most commonly used elements of persuasion mockery due to its ability to break advertising pretext by demonstrating self-awareness. Voiceovers, characters, and celebrity endorsers often directly acknowledge their existence within an advertisement, and might use the production of the commercial or the nature of an endorsement or sponsorship role. An example of this can be seen in Heineken's "Rules ft. Neil Patrick Harrison" by Wieden and Kennedy. Neil Patrick Harris admonishes the rules prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in television commercials, and moves off-screen where he is presumably able to drink his bottle of Heineken. Transparency is often an integral component in the use of other elements of persuasion mockery.



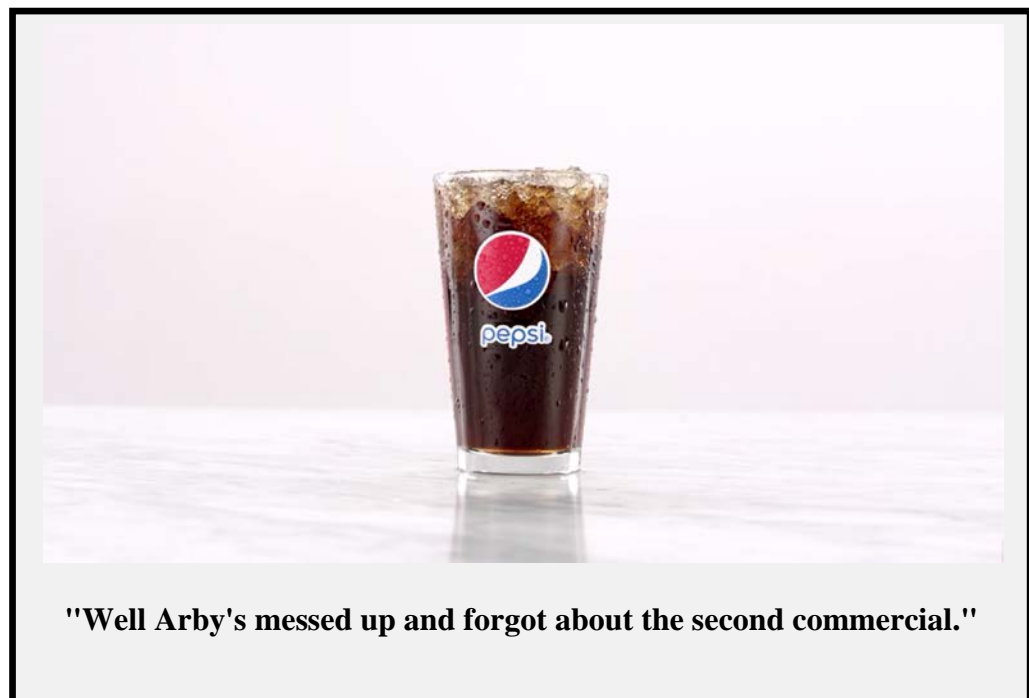
2. Satire

Satire, also called spoofing, is used as an element of persuasion mockery to exaggerate and parody traditional advertising. This can often be seen by the use of heavy handedness in the production of the commercial, and the overstatement of product and brand qualities. The famous example below is taken from Old Spice's "The man your man could smell like" by Wieden and Kennedy. This commercial became a viral sensation for its incredible exaggeration of the concept of 'anything is possible with Old Spice'. The commercial exhibits incredible production value as it transitions seamlessly between sets in a one-take commercial with gemstones, a boat, and a horse. The advertisement and product claims are so ridiculous that consumers feel obligated to share it online and via conventional word of mouth.



3. *Self Deprecation*

Self deprecation is used as an element of persuasion mockery to soften consumer reactions by reversing the expectation that an advertisement will gloat and enshrine its advertised brand. This is often done by utilizing disparaging or ambiguous remarks towards the brand that make the ad seem humble or less manipulative. Self deprecation can help to a brand build trust with consumers by capitalizing on their appreciation of humility and honesty. The example below is taken from Arby's "Arby's: We Have Pepsi" by Fallon. The advertisement's voiceover explains that Arby's has a contractual agreement to feature Pepsi in two commercials per year, and that they messed up and forgot about the second commercial. By deprecating themselves Arby's not only creates an ironic humor, but also appears honest and self-assured by admitting a mistake that would never be broadcast via a television advertisement.



4. Breaking the Fourth Wall

Breaking the fourth wall is used to develop persuasion mockery by including the consumer within the context of the advertisement, thereby breaking its fictional and non-persuasive pretext. Many traditional advertisements that directly address the consumer by looking directly into the camera do not have a fourth wall to be broken. Breaking the fourth wall within the context of persuasion mockery implies the surprise engagement of an audience in an advertisement that has otherwise purported itself to be a piece of fiction rather than a direct attempt at persuasion. The example below is taken from Hotels.com's "Drill Sergeant" by Crispin Porter and Bogusky. In the advertisement, a drill sergeant yells at new recruits before being interrupted by the character named Captain Obvious. Up until this point the advertisement has unfolded for the audience under the pretext that they are viewing a sponsored film, skit, or some other piece of fiction with characters, and are not being directly engaged by Hotels.com with a sales pitch. This pretext is broken when Hotels.com ignores the drill sergeant and instead talks directly to the camera about Hotels.com. Breaking the fourth wall can be a very effective way to develop humor and shatter the usual pretext of advertisements that try to hide any appearance of trying to be persuasive.



5. Irony

Sarcasm, blatant lies, and other forms of irony are used as elements of persuasion mockery to create incongruity rooted in traditional expectations of advertisements. In the example below, Sir Anthony Hopkins claims that he would never endorse a product while drinking from a TurboTax branded coffee mug. The stark difference between his words and his actions create an incongruity resolved by the reality of his endorsement and the active goal of selling the services of TurboTax. The use of ironic humor is an integral part of persuasion mockery, but more surface level forms of irony are often employed to drive home deeper ironies regarding persuasion.



Test Materials

Consumer Attitudes Self-Assessment (A_{AD} and A_H)

1. A_{AD}: To what extent did you find the ad enjoyable?
2. A_{AD}: To what extent did you find the ad pleasant?
3. A_{AD}: To what extent did you like the ad?
4. A_H: To what extent did you find the ad humorous?
5. A_H: To what extent did you find the ad funny?

Persuasion Knowledge Self-Assessment

1. To what extent do you know when an offer is 'too good to be true'?
2. To what extent can tell when an offer has strings attached?
3. To what extent do you understand bargaining tactics used by salespeople?
4. To what extent do you know when a marketer is pressuring you to buy?
5. To what extent can you see through sales gimmicks used to get consumers to buy?
6. To what extent can you separate fact from fantasy in advertising?

Distraction Activity

Please unscramble the following words:

- SGEG (EGGS)
- AFEFWL (WAFFLE)
- NBCAO (BACON)
- ECAKAPN (PANCAKE)
- ATOTS (TOAST)

List of Advertisements used in the Pretest

"Shirt Off" featuring David Beckham

Brand: Burger King

Agency: Mother

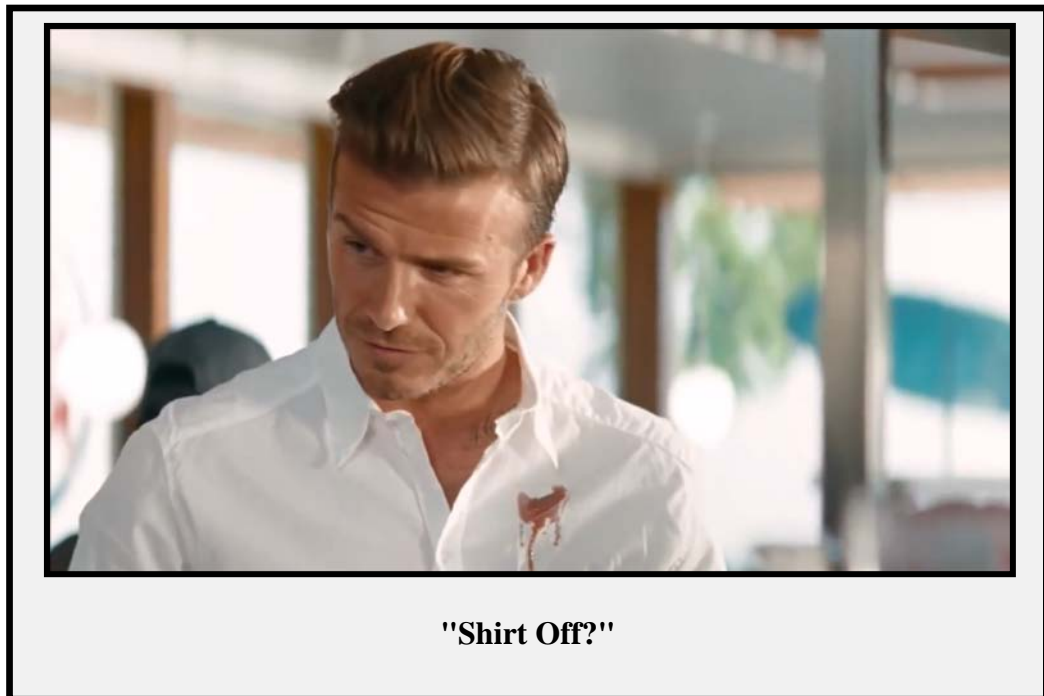
Year: 2012

Length: 30 seconds

Product Category: Fast Food

Humor: Traditional

Description: After some of Burger King's new smoothie product gets on David Beckham's shirt, females within the restaurant want him to take it off while males, including the manager, do not want him to take it off, as they will be embarrassed by his impressive physique.



Lie Detector

Brand: Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC)

Agency: Wieden and Kennedy

Year: 2015

Length: 30 seconds

Product Category: Fast Food

Humor: Persuasion Mockery

Description: KFC's famous founder and corporate mascot Colonel Sanders, played in this commercial by Norm MacDonald, is hooked up to a lie detector. While he tells the truth about the latest KFC meal being delicious and a good value, he is found to be lying when he claims he is the real Colonel Sanders.



Ditch the Herd

Brand: Corona Light

Agency: Goodby, Silverstein & Partners

Year: 2013

Length: 15 seconds

Product Category: Light Beer

Humor: Traditional

Description: A specific sheep within a herd stands up, saying 'adios' as he leaves the rest of the sheep behind. This use of anthropomorphism brings humor to the idea of standing out from the crowd.



Rules featuring Neil Patrick Harris

Brand: Heineken Light

Agency: Wieden and Kennedy

Year: 2014

Length: 15 seconds

Product Category: Light Beer

Humor: Persuasion Mockery

Description: Neil Patrick Harris complains that there are rules prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in advertisements, and moves off-screen where he can presumably Heineken.



Cow Corral

Brand: H&R Block

Agency: Fallon Worldwide

Year: 2016

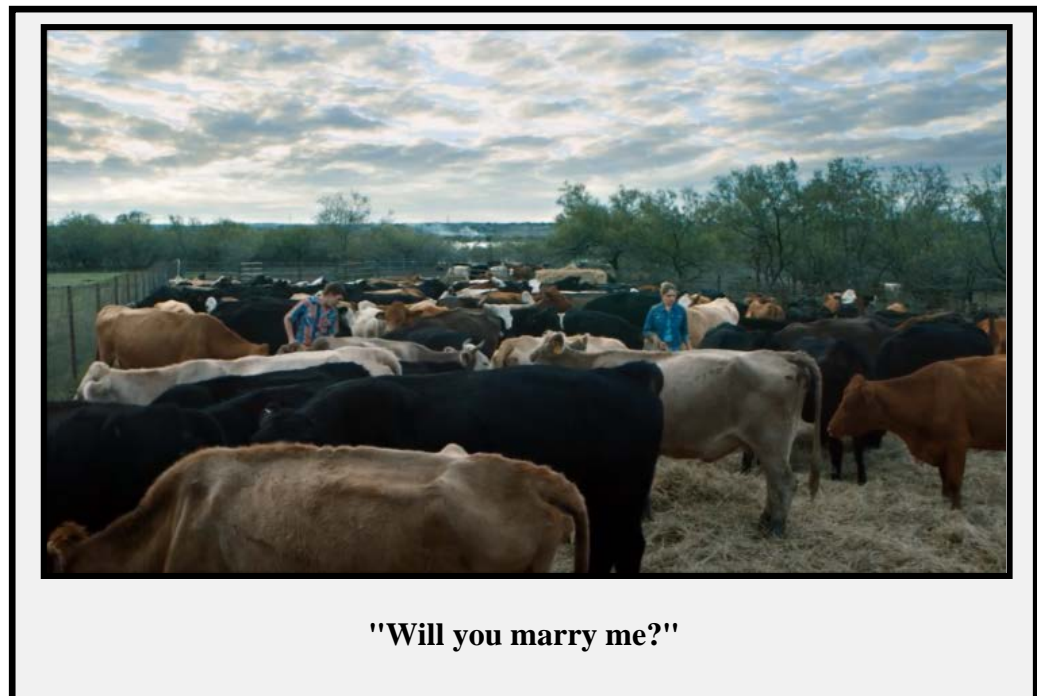
Length: 30 seconds

Product Category: Tax Software

Humor: Traditional

Description: A cowboy and cowgirl discuss how reasonable H&R Block's \$9.99 price is to file taxes, but they struggle to hear each other over the loud cattle around them.

When the cowboy asks the cowgirl at the end to marry him, she does not hear him and he drops the subject.



Never a Sellout featuring Sir Anthony Hopkins

Brand: TurboTax

Agency: Wieden and Kennedy

Year: 2016

Length: 30 seconds

Product Category: Tax Software

Humor: Persuasion Mockery

Description: Sir Anthony Hopkins claims in an interview that he would never tarnish his name by selling products to consumers. This statement is immediately exposed as a lie when as he sips from a TurboTax Branded tea cup and calls over a dog with the name "TurboTax.com".



Pupymonkeybaby

Brand: Mountain Dew

Agency: BBDO

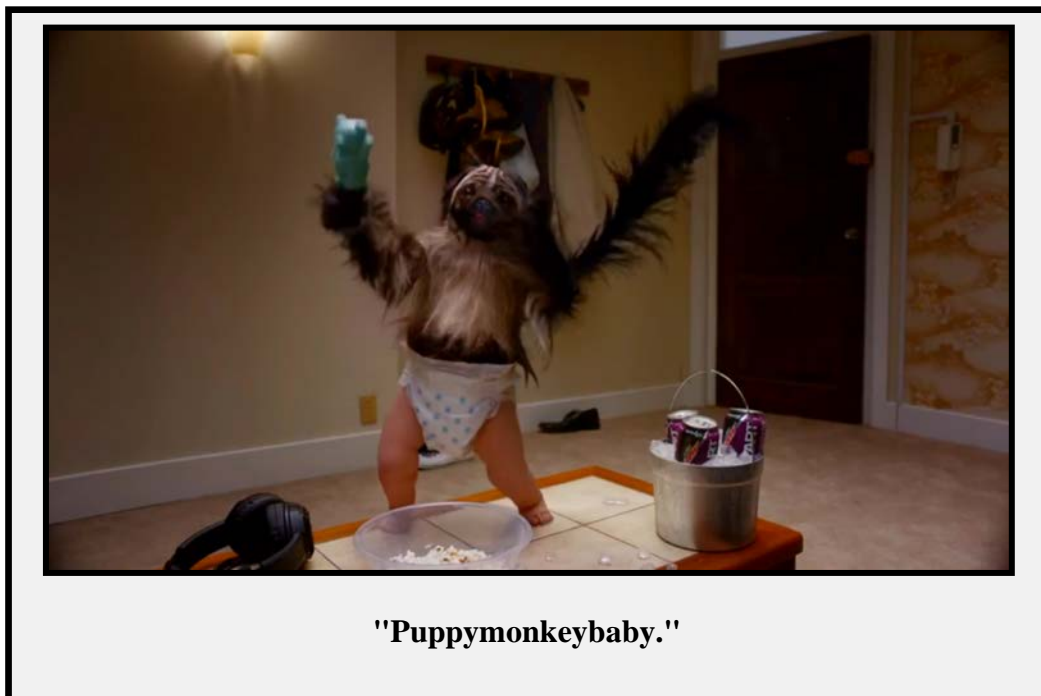
Year: 2016

Length: 32 seconds

Product Category: Soft Drink, Energy Drink

Humor: Traditional

Description: An incredibly strange creature, conceptualized as a cross between a puppy, a monkey, and a baby, appears in the living room of three young men and convinces them to go out that night.



Pepsi's Unlikely Spokesperson Marshawn Lynch

Brand: Pepsi

Agency: TBWA Chiat Day, BBDO

Year: 2015

Length: 30 seconds

Product Category: Soft Drink

Humor: Persuasion Mockery

Description: NFL star Marshawn Lynch, known for his silence when talking to the media, mouths the words of his testimonial without actually saying the words. A woman next to him provides the actual words of the testimonial, syncing perfectly with Marshawn Lynch's silent talking.



"Would you at least move your lips?"

Wheat Thins Zesty Salsa featuring Alex Trebek

Brand: What Thins

Agency: In-house

Year: 2015

Length: 15 seconds

Product Category: Food and Beverage

Humor: Traditional

Description: Jeopardy host Alex Trebek interrupts a conversation at a party to share his ridiculous knowledge of trivia.



Sell Themselves featuring Stephen Colbert

Brand: Wonderful Pistachios

Agency: Firehouse

Yeah: 2014

Length: 15 seconds

Product Category: Food and Beverage

Humor: Persuasion Mockery

Description: Stephen Colbert addresses the audience to say that he is selling product for Wonderful Pistachios. He states that they will sell themselves and promptly ends the commercial.



"The folks at Wonderful Pistachios have asked me to help sell their

List of Distraction Advertisements used in the Main Test

America's Number One Detergent

Brand: Tide

Agency: In-house

Year: 2016

Length: 30 seconds

Product Category: Laundry Detergents & Fabric Softeners

Humor: None

Description: America's number one detergent is shown to be used by all kinds of Americans including families, NFL players, and service men and women.



Know When to Shhh at Dinner

Brand: Axe

Agency: BBH

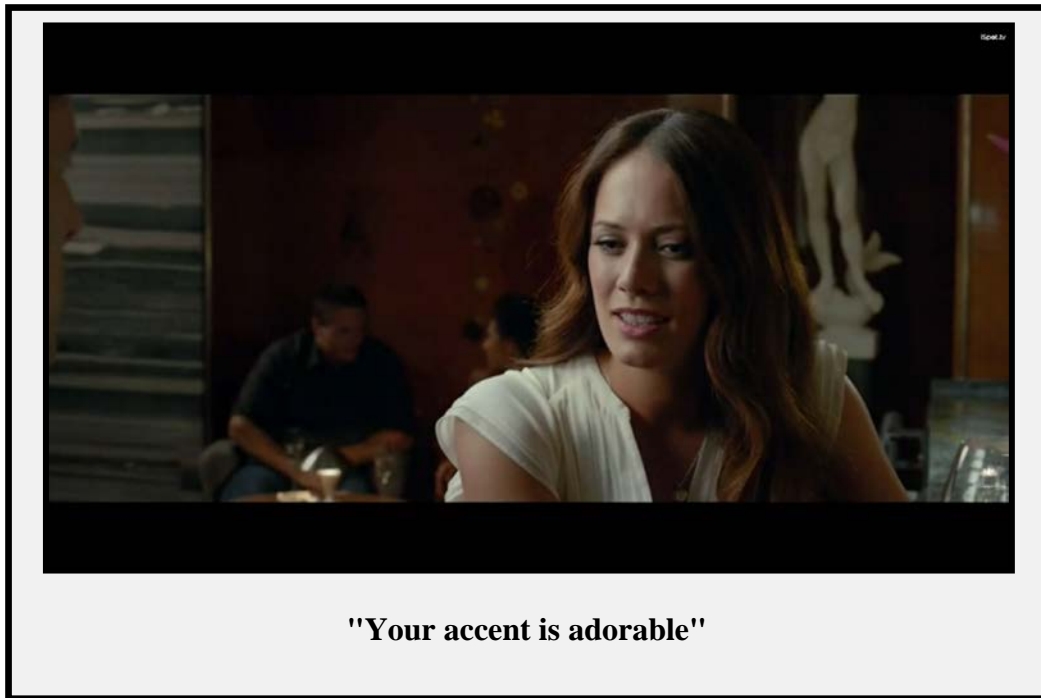
Year: 2016

Length: 30 seconds

Product Category: Deodorants & Antiperspirants

Humor: Traditional

Description: A man begins to antagonize his date when he cannot get over her accent and specifically, her pronunciation of 'tomato'.



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