



Advertising Strategies

Advertising influences us in a number of ways, especially in our purchasing decisions. To develop critical thinking about advertising, you must first be able to recognize the various strategies that advertisers use to convince us to buy their products or services.

Associate each of the following strategies with its definition.

- Idealized lifestyles
- Fame and credibility
- Competition
- Popularity as bait
- Attractive pricing or financing
- Strategic ad placement
- Appealing to emotions
- Playing with the truth
- Presenting facts and statistics
- Tapping into memory
- Testimonials
- Making promises
- Piquing curiosity

Did you know?

An **advertising strategy** is a way to reach an audience, cajoling consumers to create a need or to make them dependent on a product, to make them believe they need it, and encourage them to buy it.

1. Advertising often presents “perfect” people in an “ideal” world; in other words, we see fit and fashionable good-looking people with a balanced lifestyle, who own beautiful things, and live in attractive settings. Everyone is happy, all the couples are in love, and all family members get along perfectly. These people represent the type of adult or young person that consumers idealize. This advertising strategy gives consumers the impression that the product will have a direct impact on their life.

2. Giving consumers an emotional response increases their interest in the ad and ensures they will remember the product. Even when unrelated to the product being advertised, they show touching stories or scenes that make you laugh, cry, or irritate you. The advertising industry has understood that young people respond well to humour, and it’s often part of their ad campaigns.

3. A good advertisement presents basic information about the product or service and lists its benefits. By presenting the product features, the way it was designed, where it was made, and interesting statistics, advertisers can convince consumers that the product is everything they need. Especially if this information is provided by an expert.

4. The ad sometimes compares the product with the most popular competing brands in an attempt to depreciate the competition’s products and show the featured product’s advantages. However, watch out for false statements (or “misrepresentation”). By law, any statement in an ad must be true and verifiable.

5. Advertisements can convince consumers that the product is synonymous with popularity. Buying the advertised product will make consumers stand out, be envied by their entourage, attract new friends, and be accepted into higher profile groups. In other words, they will be “cooler.”

6. Using puns or plays on words, slogans, and jingles are all good ways to get consumers to think about the product and brand and to make sure they remember it. In addition, advertising relies on the repetition of specific visual or sound elements, as they believe the more often you see a product or hear its name, the more likely you will be to buy it.

7. In some ads, people who have used the product (and who may even be actors) give testimonials, praising the product and expressing how satisfied they are with it. Certain consumers like to identify with people like them; this makes them believe that they, too, have every chance of being satisfied with the product.

8. Advertising often uses a spokesperson—a television, film, music, or sports celebrity—to sell a product. This spokesperson encourages consumers to do as he or she did and buy the product. The purpose is to make the target consumers believe their favourite stars use the advertised product. Children watch these ads without understanding that these people are being paid to promote a product. Other ads use credibility to push their product by associating scientists with it. You can recognize these ads when the characters who appear in it are wearing a lab coat or when a credible professional association or group in the field expresses support for a product.

9. Although they are required to tell the truth by law, advertisers may use wording to mislead consumers or disguise certain information. For example, they use expressions like is among the..., the real taste of..., natural, new and improved flavour, because we care about... Or an ad selling a breakfast product will state that it is “part of a nutritious breakfast.” However, what they don’t say is that breakfast can be healthy without this product.

10. Consumers want to buy a product because they believe there is at least one advantage to owning it. That's why advertising tries to convince consumers by promising that the purchased product or service will meet one of their needs or desires. Sometimes ads will even go so far as to suggest the product will make them ecstatically happy. For example, the people in an ad will look like they are having the time of their life eating potato chips, or will find themselves on a surfboard after tearing open a frozen treat.

11. People are naturally attracted to new things. Presenting something new makes people sit up and take notice, which means they will be willing to watch or listen to the ad.

12. Advertisers come up with ad placement strategies based on the product they are promoting and the target audience. They pay large sums of money, for example, so that the product appears on popular websites, in movies, on television programs, or during rock concerts.

13. Instead of advertising a product at \$40, the ad says buyers can pay in four \$10 instalments. Some merchants offer financing at reduced interest rates (or 0% interest), or give consumers the option to defer payments as in "Pay nothing before..."

See the [answer key](#) on the last page for the answers.

Answer Key

1. Idealized lifestyles
2. Appealing to émotions
3. Presenting facts and statistics
4. Competition
5. Popularity as bait
6. Tapping into memory
7. Testimonials
8. Fame and credibility
9. Playing with the truth
10. Making promises
11. Piquing curiosity
12. Strategic ad placement
13. Attractive pricing or financing