

# Answer Key

## Advertising Strategies

- ▶ **Idealized lifestyles:** 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. By buying it, consumers will be more like the people in the ad, since the product will improve their health, make them happy, give them more time with their family, and so on.
- ▶ **Appealing to emotions:** Giving consumers an emotional response increases their interest in the ad and ensures they will remember the product. That's why so many ads play on consumer feelings. Even when unrelated to the product being advertised, they show touching stories or scenes that make you laugh, cry, or irritate you. They influence consumers because they elicit emotions—especially those associated with health, safety, friendship, or happiness. The advertising industry has understood that young people respond well to humour, and it's often part of their ad campaigns.
- ▶ **Presenting facts and statistics:** 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! Facts and figures are often cited to give products more credibility.
- ▶ **Competition:** 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.
- ▶ **Popularity as bait:** 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.” Sometimes an ad will show a regular person who tries out or buys a product, then suddenly becomes more popular and starts doing “cool” things.
- ▶ **Tapping into memory:** The ad industry sometimes taps into consumer memories to influence their buying. 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.

- ▶ **Testimonials:** 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.
- ▶ **Fame and credibility:** 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.
- ▶ **Playing with the truth:** Sometimes advertisers play with words or information. Although they are required to tell the truth by law, they 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. This is called playing with words. Advertisers sometimes also make a product appear larger or smaller than it really is.
- ▶ **Making promises:** 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.
- ▶ **Piquing curiosity:** 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.
- ▶ **Strategic ad placement:** 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.
- ▶ **Attractive pricing or financing:** Another popular strategy is to offer consumers an affordable price. 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...”