Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal – Vol.2, No.10
Publication Date: Oct. 25, 2015
DoI:10.14738/assrj.210.1513.
Kapexhiu, K. (2015). Repetition and Content Implications in Advertising Wear Out: A Practitioner's View. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, 2(10)* 204-209.

Repetition and Content Implications in Advertising Wear Out: A Practitioner's View.

Kled Kapexhiu
European University of Tirana, Albania

Abstract

One of the main advertisers' dilemmas is: How long should their commercials or campaigns keep running? Repetition might enhance awareness, but too much exposure might diminish its effectiveness. The article examines theories that support the declining effectiveness of advertising over time, and suggests exposure and content strategies to advertisers. The literature review stresses that added repetition leads to greater and faster wear-out. Ease of processing, as a result of ad content, and resource availability speed up wear-out. The study suggests that along traditional effectiveness measures, advertisers should test their ads and campaigns for wear-in and wear-out. These tests should provide information on adverting and campaign longevity.

Keywords: advertising, wear-out, effectiveness, information processing.

INTRODUCTION

The declining effectiveness of a commercial or campaign associated with increased exposure is defined as advertising wear-out. (Kinnucan, Chang and Venkateswaran, 1993). Research indicates that even when television commercials are initially effective, subsequent exposures cause effectiveness to decline (Appel 1971; Grass 1968; Grass and Wallace 1969). Keeping an ad running is likely to enhance its attitudinal effects, keep commercial production costs low, and allocate more resources to other marketing strategies. On the other hand, repeated exposure, even to advertising that scores high on persuasion, may cause a campaign to lose its effectiveness. This relationship between repeated exposures and advertising effectiveness, poses a dilemma to advertisers. This article will review wear-out theories and the related inferences on advertising effectiveness. Implications on applicable advertising strategies will be suggested.

REPETITION EFFECTS

Berlyne's (1970) two factor theory is the most broadly accepted explanation of advertising repetition effects. He proposes a two-part process, which repetition influences message response. During the first phase, called "wear-in", might be a certain amount of hostility or uncertainty about an unfamiliar message. This is the habituation phase, where initial levels of message repetition help to increase positive attitude by reducing negative responses to the new stimuli. In lower levels of repetition, advertising effectiveness increases (Campbell and Keller, 2003). During the second phase, the "wear-out" phase, repeated exposure results in the onset of tedium. Tedium arises because of boredom, less opportunity to learn and reactance against the repeated message. As a result, message effectiveness decreases.

Ciacioppo and Petty (1979) have proved that cognitive responses to the message appear to mediate the effects of repetition on the reactions aroused by advertising. Supporting arguments first increase and then, decrease with repetition. Counterarguments on the other side, decrease at first and then increase with repetition. Under low levels of repetition resources are not sufficient for complete processing but high levers of repetition prompt

Copyright © Society for Science and Education, United Kingdom

counter argumentation Repetition has its greatest effect at moderate levels. Anand and Sternthal (1990) show that in addition to the effects of resource availability resource requirements for processing influence the effects of repetition. They show that the facility of processing information moderates the influence of repetition on brand attitude. Greater processing difficulty slows down the habituation and tedium experienced by the consumer so that the point at which ad wear-out occurs is delayed, while low processing difficulty speeds up the point at which wear-out occurs. According to them, both resource availability and resource requirements influence information processing when repetition effects will be greatest (Campbell and Keller, 2003).

LIFE CYCLES MECHANISMS

According to life cycle theories, each advertisement has its own three-stage response pattern. During stage one, the opportunity of the ad to entertain and inform is at its greatest level. This occurs when an ad just started to be aired (Weilbacher, 1970). During this phase attention levels increase rapidly. This result in cumulative learning which in turn sets the ground of attitude improvement. In the second phase, consumers stop responding to the ad. This might happen because of problems related to the ad content itself, or because of consumer attitudes, like self-confidence (Wright 1975). This phase marks the peak level of attention and the onset of forgetting. In the third phase, the consumer has seen the ad so often that it becomes boring and even inappropriate or insulting. Any further exposure to the ad causes boredom and tedium arousal, because all the information has been extracted from the ad and there's nothing new to learn (Weilbacher, 1970).

LEARNING-BASED PROCESSES

According to learning-based theories, wear-out occurs because continual repetition of the stimuli causes reduction in attention and motivation (Rethans, Swasy and Marks, 1986). These theories draw parallels between mental processes involved in learning "nonsense information" and in learning from television (Kinnucan, Chang and Venkateswaran, 1993). In these cases the information resides in short-term memory and will be quickly forgotten unless repeated exposure occurs (Craig, Sternthal and Leavitt, 1976). During first exposures, repetition of the stimuli produces a positive effect because it increases the opportunity to learn and reduces the uncertainty toward the stimulus (Rethans, Swasy, and Marks, 1986). But the positive effect is substituted with a negative response as further exposures lead to decreased cumulative learning, satiation, reactance and boredom. Even though repetition is necessary for learning, too much exposures can induce cognitive responses (inattention, reactance) or affective responses (boredom, tedium), which in turn prevent learning.

INFORMATION PROCESSING

Calder and Sternthal's (1980) information processing theory states that message recipients rehearse two kinds of thoughts, thoughts stimulated directly by the message which reflect the message content, and other thoughts based on associations and reflecting personal experiences. The first is termed "message-related thoughts" and the second "own thoughts". With the initial exposures to a message, the individual's thoughts tend to be message-related. At some level of repetition, however, the thought which come to mind are generated mainly from associations and are indirectly linked to the message. These own thoughts, in general are less positive toward the product than message-related thoughts, because these were selected by the consumer to be highly positive (Calder and Sternthal, 1980).

Copyright © Society for Science and Education, United Kingdom

Cacciopo and Petty's (1979) work on the Elaboration Likelihood Model, has shown that elaboration mediates the attitudinal effects of message repetition. It refers to the counter and support arguments that consumers generate when exposed to advertisement. First exposures provide the opportunity to think about the message arguments and elaborate them. This ongoing processing supports ad's strengths and qualities, which in turn enhance persuasion. High repetition on the other hand, causes reactance and tedium, which dominate information processing. The counter arguing draws the cognitive processes, which decrease persuasion and message acceptance. Wear-out occurs because elaborations induced by repeated exposure are increasingly composed of counter-argumentation, which reduces the ad's persuasive power (Kinnucan, Chang and Venkateswaran, 1993).

Berlyne (1970) has found that when a consumer sees for the first time an ad for an unfamiliar brand, he is faced with two sources of unfamiliarity to which he could react negatively: the ad itself, which is novel, and the brand, which is also novel. On the other hand, when a consumer sees a new ad for a familiar brand, there is only one source of unfamiliarity, only the ad. Thus, negative uncertainty created by unfamiliarity should be higher for a new ad from an unfamiliar brand as compared with a familiar one. Habituation is the process by which initial uncertainty to an unfamiliar stimulus is attenuated. Tedium derives from boredom, annoyance and reactance to the repeated message (Anand and Sternthal 1990; Berlyne 1970). When consumers are repeatedly exposed to an ad for an unfamiliar brand, they process primarily in order to learn about the brand. Once they have been exposed to the same ad several times, there is very little information to process or learn (Krugman 1972). Consumers are likely to process ads for familiar brands less extensively than those for unfamiliar brands, because they have stored knowledge, for familiar, but not unfamiliar brands. The stored knowledge provides processing material for familiar brands, but not for unfamiliar brands. Thus, consumers continue to process an ad for a familiar brand over repeated exposures to the ad, in addition, the brand knowledge that exists in memory provides context for continued processing (Britton and Tesser 1982). Since no additional knowledge exists for unfamiliar brands in the consumers' memory, they will have no more information to process with repeated exposure to the same ad (Anand and Sternthal 1990). Because of a lack of stored knowledge, the processing requirements are much lower for the same ad for an unfamiliar than for a familiar brand, which will accelerate the wear-out expansion.

BRAND FAMILIARITY AND EXPOSURE WEAR-OUT

When a customer is exposed to ads repeatedly, he can become bored, irritated or simply lose interest as the benefits of processing the ad are perceived to be worthless (Berlyne, 1970; Weilbacher 1970).

Brand familiarity reflects the extent of a consumer's direct and indirect experience with a brand (Kent and Allen, 1994). Brand familiarity is buildup of the brand associations that exist within a consumer's memory. Familiar and unfamiliar brands differ in terms of the knowledge regarding the brand that a consumer has stored in memory.

Because of knowledge differences, consumers are likely to have different processing goals when exposed to ads for unfamiliar and familiar brands. People tend to learn about and evaluate new stimuli. When consumers are exposed to an ad for and unfamiliar brand they are likely to have a goal of learning about and forming an accurate impression of the brand (Hilton and Darley, 1991). If ads for an unfamiliar brand appear more novel and interesting, they will therefore elicit more extensive processing. On the other hand, when exposed to and ad for familiar brand, consumers already have some knowledge about the brand and, therefore, are

more likely to update their existing knowledge (Snyder and Stukas, 1999). Since consumers already know something about familiar brands, they are likely to engage in relatively less extensive, more confirmation-based processing when exposed to and ad for a familiar brand (Keller 1991; MacKenzie and Spreng, 1992). The more extensive processing drawn by ads for unfamiliar brands, the more increases resource availability. Therefore, unfamiliar brands show decreased repetition effectiveness at a lower number of ad exposures relative to ads for familiar brands (Campbell and Keller, 2003).

COPY WEAROUT

Content wear-out is the decay in advertising effectiveness due to passage of time and independent of the amount of advertising aired. Such decay may be result of change in consumers' conditions such as increased knowledge about product attributes, imitation of an ad strategy, or increase in ad clutter (Bass, Bruce, Majumdar, Murthi 2007). Wear-out effects may also depend on the change in ad content. Grass and Wallace (1969) suggest that variations in copy improve the effectiveness, specifically recall of ads. Ray and Saywer (1971) also studied the effect of different messages on repetitions functions. They found that "grabber" ads were less effective than "non- grabber" ads, over repetitions. According to Maclnnis et al. (2002) emotional ads have less rapid wear-out than rational ads. They have found evidence of a significant positive relationship between ad repetition and sales when emotional ads are employed, compared to rational ads. Experimental evidences show that emotional ads wear-out more slowly than ads based on rational appeals.

Tellis (2009) generalizes after a literature review on advertising content; Changes in the creative, medium, target segment, or product itself sometimes lead to changes in sales, even though increases in the level of advertising repetition by itself does not. Informative messages are more important early than late in the product's life cycle. Emotional appeals, on the other side, are more effective late rather than early in a product's life cycle.

MEMORY AND FORGETTING

Forgetting has a negative effect on brand awareness, but on the other hand there are studies that suggest that there's a rejuvenating effect of advertising when and ad is taken off the media (Grass and Wallace, 1969, Greenberg and Suttoni, 1973). A period of no advertising enhances consumers' attention to ads. Similarly, Carlder and Sternthal (1980) have found that the amount of cognitive responses increases when there is a break in advertising. The argument stresses that the improvement I quality, when an ad is not aired for a period of time, is that consumers may forget the particulars of a given ad and may consider it as renewed when introduced. This suggests, that as the period that and ad is pulled off the media increases, there's a corresponding increase in forgetting and a consequent restoration of the ad's quality (Corkindale and Newall, 1978 cited by Bass et al. 2003).

CONCLUSION

The evidences deriving from previous studies and experiments show that repeated exposure of ads enhances awareness, but in some circumstances it might diminish its effectiveness. Uncontrolled repetition leads to greater and faster wear-out. Summarizing these studies and experiments leads us to these conclusions;

- Wear-out mechanisms developed to provide explanations for the declining effectiveness of single ads can be applied to the whole campaign. Since repeated exposure to the same commercial leads to boredom and loss of interest, introducing a new ad with the same

message but different execution, may revive attention. But the wear-out of the new ad might be much more rapid, since the consumer is already aware of the concept induced.

- Rational ads are more important in early life-cycle.
- Emotional ads are more effective for mature brands.
- Ads for frequently-purchased products may wear-out far more easily than ads for luxury goods, because of their in market life cycle and consumer behavior related characteristics.
- An ad may be pulled off the media for a period of time, in order to restore its differentiating qualities. Attention should be stressed in evaluating the proper amount of time keeping the ad off air. Wear-out for the second burst will be much faster that for the first one.
- Emotional ads wear out far more slowly than rational ads. Therefore marketers should be aware when employing emotional versus rational, promotional versus brand awareness, luxury product versus everyday purchased-products advertising strategies.
- Marketers of unfamiliar brands need to build familiarity to compete better with more familiar brands, but they must be careful how they use heavy weighted ad schedules, in order to avoid alienating consumers. A high-frequency ad schedule for unfamiliar brands, is not a good option to build positive attitudes compared with familiar brands. Consumers should be kept engaged by showing a variety of messages, or increasing message complexity and content for processing, in order to avoid wear-out.
- Added repetition leads to greater and faster wear-out. Ease of processing, as a result of ad content, speeds up wear-out.
- Under extensive repetition unfamiliar brand ads, wear-out faster than ads for familiar brands.
- Repeated exposure will result inevitably in boredom and tedium.
- Wear out can be slowed down by spacing ads over time.
- Complex ads wear out more slowly.
- Effective advertising wears out faster.
- Content and executions problems concerning the ad itself may become prominent with further repetitions.
- Alike executions in brand category or other categories tend to wear out faster.
- The consumer becomes self-confident under repeated exposures.
- To increase effectiveness, advertisers should modify content more than increasing weight or frequency.
- Advertisers should test their advertisement for wear-in and wear-out. These tests should provide information on adverting and campaign duration.

References

1. Anand, Punam and Brian Sternthal (1990), "Ease of Message Processing as a Moderator of Repetition Effects in Advertising," Journal of Marketing Research, 27 (August), 345–353.
2. Appel, Valentine (1971), "On Advertising Wearout," Journal of Advertising Research, 11 (February), 11-13.
3. Bass, Frank M. Bruce, Norris. Majumdar, Sumit. Murthi, B. P. S. (2007) "Wearout Effects of Different Advertising Themes: A Dynamic Bayesian Model of the Advertising-Sales Relationship". Marketing Science. Vol.26, March-April, pp. 179-195.
4. Britton, Bruce K. and Abraham Tesser (1982), "Effects of Prior Knowledge on Use of Cognitive Capacity in Three Complex Cognitive Tasks," Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, 21 (4), 421–436.
5. Berlyne, Donald E. (1970), "Novelty, Complexity, and Hedonic Value," Perception and Psychophysics, 8, 279–286.

6. Cacioppo, James and Richard Petty (1979), "Effects of Message Repetition and Position on Cognitive Response, Recall and Persuasion," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37 (January), 97-109.
7. Calder, Bobby J. and Brian Sternthal (1980), "Television Commercial Wearout: An Information Processing View," Journal of Marketing Research, 17 (May), 173–186.
8. Campbell, C. Margaret, Keller, Kevin Lane (2003). "Brand familiarity and advertising repetition effects". Journal of Consumer Research. Vol. 30 (September).
9. Craig, C. S., Brian Stemthal, and Clark Leavitt (1976), "Advertising Wearout: An Experimental Analysis," Journal of Marketing Research, 13 (November), 365-72.
10. Grass, Robert (1968), "Satiation Effects of Advertising," Proceedings, ARF 14th Annual Conference, New York: Advertising Research Foundation.
11. Grass, Robert and Wallace H. Wallace (1969), "Satiation Effects of Television Commercials," Journal of Advertising Research, 9 (September), 3-8.
12. Greenberg, Allan and Charles Suttoni (1973), "Television Commercial Wearout," Journal of Advertising Research. 13 (October), 47-54.
13. Hilton, James L. and John M. Darley (1991), "The Effects of Interaction Goals on Person Perception," in Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, Vol. 24, ed. Mark P. Zanna, New York: Academic Press, 236–267.
14. Keller, Kevin Lane (1991), "Cue Compatibility and Framing in Advertising," Journal of Marketing Research, 28 (February), 42–57.
15. Kent, Robert J. and Chris T. Allen (1994), "Competitive Interference Effects in Consumer Memory for Advertising: The Role of Brand Familiarity," Journal of Marketing, 58 (July), 97–105.
16. Kinnucan, Henry W. Chang, Hui-Shung, Venkateswaran, Meenakshi (1993). Generic advertising wearout. Review of Marketing and Agricultural Economic, Volume 61, No. 3.
17. Krugman, Herbert E. (1972), "Why Three Exposures May Be Enough," Journal of Advertising Research, 12 (6), 11–14.
18. MacInnis, D. J., A. G. Rao, A. M. Weiss. 2002. Assessing when increased media weight of real-world advertisements helps sales. J.Marketing Res. 39(November) 391–407.
19. MacKenzie, Scott B. and Richard A. Spreng (1992), "How Does Motivation Moderate the Impact of Central and Peripheral Processing on Brand Attitudes and Intentions?" Journal of Consumer Research, 18 (March), 519–529
20. Ray, M. L., A. G. Sawyer. 1971b. Repetition in media models: A laboratory technique. J.Marketing Res. 8(February) 20–29.
21. Rethans Arno J., John L. Swasy, and Lawrence J. Marks (1986), "Effects of Television Commercial Repetition, Receiver Knowledge, and Commercial Length: A Test of the Two- Factor Model," Journal of Marketing Research, 23 (February), 50–56.
22. Snyder, Mark and Arthur A. Stukas, Jr. (1999), "Interpersonal Processes: The Interplay of Cognitive, Motivational, and Behavioral Activities in Social Interaction," Annual Review of Psychology, 50, 273–303.
23. Tellis, Gerard J. (2009) "Generalisations about advertising effectiveness in markets". Journal of Advertisign Research. Vol. 49. (Feb.)
24. Weilbacher, W.M.(1970), "What happens to advertisements when they grow up", Public Opinion Quarterly 34, 216-33.
25. Wright, Peter (1975), "Factors Affecting Cognitive Resistance to Advertising," Journal of Consumer Research, 2 (June), 1-9.

Copyright © Society for Science and Education, United Kingdom