

Advertising and Marketing Propaganda
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One of the earliest well-known advertising slogans was RCA Victor's advertisement of "His Master's Voice." The symbol associated with the slogan was a dog sitting at the end of an amplifying bell or trumpet listening to a recording of "his master's voice."

What company slogans are these?

- "Just do it" (Nike)
- "Snap, Crackle, Pop" (Rice Krispies Cereal)
- "The Real Thing" (Coca-Cola)
- "Finger Lickin' Good" (KY Fried Chicken)
- "Eat Mor Chikin" (Chick-fil-A)

Fifteen years ago when I was in private psychiatric practice I saw several patients from Outwood in Dawson Springs. One young man who was a fairly high functioning autistic person knew scores of advertising slogans he had learned from watching television for hours on end. If you said, "See the USA. . ." he quickly responded, "in your Chevrolet." If you said, "Plop, plop, fizz, fizz. . ." he would immediately respond, "Oh what a relief it is." He literally knew hundreds of these ads.

Advertisements are a part of most U.S. residents existence. These slogans and memorable short phrases are meant to create a positive association between a business or corporation and a consumer and make one feel good enough to want to buy or own what the slogan is selling. These slogans/ads are clever, usually witty, short and repeated ad infinitum if not ad nauseam. They are a type of propaganda. All be it a very familiar type of propaganda which we accept without thinking about it.

The word propaganda is derived from the Latin "propagate." Propagate originally referred to the biological reproduction of plants and animals. It took on new meaning in 1622 when Pope Gregory XV established a special division in the Roman Catholic Church called the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to systematically spread Catholic doctrine throughout the world to stem the rising tide of Protestantism.

Random House Dictionary defines propaganda as "information, ideas, or rumors deliberately spread widely to help or harm a person, group, movement, institution, nation, etc."

The "Wise Geek" defines propaganda as "the presentation of ideas designed to persuade a group of people to think a certain way.

Any campaign designed to persuade people to think or behave in a certain way can be considered propaganda. While the usual general impression is negative when one thinks of propaganda, propaganda can be positive as well. For instance, a public health campaign to get a person to wash their hands before eating or cover their mouth and/or nose when sneezing or coughing would be considered positive propaganda.

Media creators working on a campaign rely on knowledge of human psychology, especially knowledge of group psychology and knowledge of subconscious or unconscious behavior. With such knowledge they can manipulate the negatives of fear and anger or appeal to one's idea of "sexiness" or happiness or vanity.

Propaganda usually appeals to the Reptilian brain-the primitive and emotional brain and not to the neo mammalian brain-the rational and cognitive part of our brain. Propaganda shares techniques with advertising and public relations.

The U.S. Holocaust Museum says propaganda is biased information designed to shape public opinion and behavior.

Since World War I and even more specifically World War II many people have developed negative associations with the term propaganda: it

conjures up images of lies, manipulation, brainwashing and servility. It stands as the antithesis of objectivity, rationality and truthfulness.

As opposed to impartially providing information, propaganda presents information primarily to influence an audience. Propaganda often presents facts selectively (thus possibly lying by omission) to encourage a particular synthesis or it uses loaded messages to produce an emotional rather than a rational response to the information presented.

In 1936, Boston merchant Edward Filene helped establish the short-lived Institute for Propaganda Analysis which sought to educate Americans to recognize propaganda techniques. Although it didn't last long, the group did produce a list of seven propaganda methods that have become standard:

BANDWAGON: pump up the value of "joining the party"

CARD-STACKING: build a highly biased case for your position

GLITTERING GENERALITIES: use power words to evoke emotion

NAME-CALLING: denigrating opponents

PLAIN FOLKS: making the leader seem ordinary increases trust and credibility

TESTIMONIAL: the testimony of an independent person is seen as more trustworthy

TRANSFER: associate the leader with trusted people

Propaganda has been a human activity for as long as we have had reliable history. It was used in 515 B.C. by Darius in his rise to power and the Persian throne. It was used in 350-328 B.C. in India by Chanakya who employed propaganda techniques in his rise to power. Livy and other Romans (59 B.C. to 17 A.D.) were masters of Pro-Roman propaganda. It was used by 12th Century Irish to portray themselves as the legitimate rulers of Ireland.

The printing press invented about 1450 A.D. propagated the new ideas, thoughts, and doctrines that gave rise to the Protestant Reformation. By 1517 A.D. there were printing centers in over 200 major European cities.

Gabriel Tarde's "Laws of Imitation" (1850) and Gustave Le Bon's "The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind" were two of the first to codify propaganda techniques. Their writing influenced many succeeding writers including Sigmund Freud as well as Hitler in his Mein Kampf, American journalist Walter Lippmann in "Public Opinion" (1922) and public relations expert Edmund Bernays (nephew of Freud) who wrote the book "Propaganda" early in the Twentieth Century.

President Woodrow Wilson hired Lippman and Edward Bernays to serve on the Creel Commission whose purpose was to sway public opinion in favor of entering WWI on the side of the United Kingdom. The Creel Commission advocated censorship of the American Press. The Public Relations Industry was a direct result of Lippmann and Bernays' work. The Public Relations Industry began as a profession after WWI as businesses and corporations saw the commercial benefits of careful propaganda.

Propaganda has been increasingly used in today's world. Governments continue to tell their citizens what they think they need to know. Advertisers run the gamut of propaganda techniques. Although some people can see the reality most of us are "taken in" and realize little or nothing of how we are being manipulated.

The dominant view of the populace has become that of an uneducated ill-informed mass who should be told what and how to think rather than be allowed to think for themselves. Thinking on higher matters was for leaders and managers who could dictate what was best for lesser people. One may recognize this as the ancient view that we had grown out of, but which we may be struggling to stay out of.

WWII saw even more extensive use of propaganda as a weapon of war both by Hitler's propagandist, Joseph Goebbels, the British, "Political Warfare Executive" and the United States Office of War Information. Russian revolutionaries of the 19th and 20th Centuries combined propaganda and agitation to form a new activity-agiprop-which stirred political unrest.

Most of the negative propaganda of Nazi Germany began after 1933 when Hitler made Joseph Goebbels head of the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. Hitler believed the Allies used propaganda to cause the collapse of German moral and revolt in the German home front leading to Germany's defeat in WWI.

Advertising, particularly psychologically engineered advertising called "marketing" had a big boost with the publication of Vince Packard's book "The Hidden Persuaders" in 1947. It was so popular that it was republished in 1997 on the fiftieth anniversary of the original publication.

In Dan Vergano's article "Psychologist: Propaganda Works Better Than You Think," (USA Today, 1/22/2010) he notes the difference scientists have about the legal view of human psychology and what scientific evidence shows. In view of the Supreme Court decision in "Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission" Vergano asks how will scientific research

support the idea that most people think for themselves with the flood of potential ads as a result of the “Citizens United” decision. He notes the works of Brian Nosek and colleagues of the University of Virginia who surveyed seven million participants in “Project Implicit” which featured an “Implicit Association Test” to measure unconscious beliefs, including political ones. The data showed so called “undecided” voters had already made up their minds unconsciously on whom they would vote for. They found that prejudices swayed voters decisions more than rational thinking.

Shankar Vedantam, the author of “The Hidden Persuaders: How Our Unconscious Minds Elect Presidents, Control Markets, and Save Our Lives” notes there is a small warehouse full of research showing it is an error to believe we live according to reason. Rather we make our decisions with our unconscious. Nosek says psychology suggests, “The reality is that organizations use advertising to control thought.”

One of the more significant things I did as the Medical Director of the Pennyroyal Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center was to work with the nurses to create a very structured program of getting sample medications from pharmaceutical manufacturers for the Center’s indigent patients. Ten

or twelve years ago when I contacted the maker of an antidepressant for samples for an indigent patient the company's drug detail representative told me I did not qualify for sample medications for my patients because I had not been prescribing enough of the medication. You can't imagine my surprise and chagrin to find out that a list of all the prescriptions I had written for that company's medication had been sold to that company by the pharmacies where the prescriptions were filled. This was done without my knowledge or consent as well as without the knowledge or consent of the patient. Frankly, I felt used and violated by this practice. I tried to protest the practice among the professional organizations to which I belonged and to my colleagues but to no avail. The practice has since been condemned by several professional organizations and banned by medical societies in several states.

About eight years ago the pharmaceutical industry instituted a sweeping reform in the way their drug detail representatives could interact with doctors and other health professionals. Prior to this reform drug companies could entertain quite lavishly. I will cite only a few such lavish events which I attended.

One year during the "Thunder Over Louisville" weekend one or two

drug companies rented Joe's Crab Shack on the Ohio River in Louisville. They invited 100-150 physicians, psychiatrists, internists and their families to be their guests in Louisville on the day of the Thunder Over Louisville Air Show and Fireworks display (the largest display in the world). The physicians were expected to attend an hour or two of "lectures" at the University of Louisville Medical School. These lectures were handsomely subsidized by the drug companies. The lectures touted their medications for various medical conditions. The lectures were long on benefits and short on side effects and adverse effects. Following the lectures we were transported to Joe's Crab Shack to join our family and friends. All of us-family and friends included-were treated to all the food and drinks we wanted at the expense of the drug companies. Joe's Crab Shack was almost adjacent to the Second Street Bridge where the "Thunder Over Louisville" lavish fireworks show was held that evening. We also had seats on the deck of Joe's where we could watch the Air Show and the fireworks.

One Christmas another drug company rented out a room at the 440 Restaurant in Bowling Green where a brief 20-30 minute lecture was presented followed by a lovely dinner. Following the dinner we walked four or five doors down to the State Theater for the "Larry Gatlin Christmas

Show.” Fifty to sixty physicians of mixed specialties and their families were the guest of the drug company for this event.

The Astra-Zeneca Company in introducing the antidepressant, Wellbutrin, held a conference at a resort in Phoenix, Arizona. This conference included mixed specialty physicians and their families who were welcomed to come at the expense of the company; air fare to Phoenix and back was included. The physicians had two or three hours of lectures (sales talk) every morning; afternoons and evenings were free. There were various activities planned during free time. One afternoon, a guide, three other passengers and myself loaded into a Jeep and toured the Sonora Desert just North and East of Phoenix. All the meals were sumptuous including appetizers of mounds of shrimp served in silver plated bowls, etc.

The reforms instituted by the pharmaceutical industry eight or ten years ago ended nearly all of this type of “entertaining.” Six or seven years ago while I was at Fort Campbell the drug representatives were no longer permitted to host lunch or dinner “on post” and could no longer include spouses or family members. The drug reps could no longer give gifts of any value—just ball point pens and similarly inexpensive gifts. They were permitted to have a business lunch with physicians “off post” for the purpose

of “detailing” the doctor about one of their medications.

In retrospect, I think all these changes were for the better. I think I, as well as other doctors were to some degree influenced by these marketing techniques which the patient ultimately paid for.

In an article in the New York Times on December 4, 2013, Alan Schwarz wrote of “The Selling of ADD/ADHD.” He noted that after a two decade drug marketing campaign by the leading pharmaceutical manufacturers of stimulant medication to treat ADD/ADHD in which the signs and symptoms of ADD/ADHD were publicized and their pills to treat these conditions were presented to doctors, other health professionals, educators, parents and even children, the result was a booming children’s market; the drug companies are now aiming at an even larger market by using similar marketing techniques focused on adults.

Historically ADHD has been estimated to affect 3 to 5% of children in school hindering their ability to perform in reading and math and in causing problems in their personal lives. Most of these children were felt to grow out of this condition as they matured into adulthood.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in

Atlanta, Georgia, the diagnosis of ADHD since the year 2000 has risen from 600,000 to 3.5 million to date and 15% of high school age students are now diagnosed with ADHD.

For the past 5-10 years these same companies have been selling the diagnosis and treatment meds to adults with the result that sales from stimulant medication has soared over the past ten years from 1.7 billion dollars to 9 billion dollars.

You may be aware that over the past 4-6 years there has been considerable use and abuse of stimulant drugs by college and university students trying to stay awake to cram for exams or just trying to increase their concentration and thereby attempting to increase their grade average. This use and abuse has seen an increase in treatment for addiction to stimulants with rare instances of hallucination, paranoid and other psychosis. Within the past year or so there have been increasing reports of instances of painful, unpleasant erections in males (priapism) as a result of stimulant abuse. Stimulants can commonly cause insomnia, anorexia, loss of appetite and anxiety.

A report by the Editorial Board of the New York Times on December 18, 2013 followed the earlier report (December 14, 2013) by Alan Schwarz,

“The Selling of ADD” mentioned previously in this paper. The Editorial Board noted a two decade marketing and advertising campaign by pharmaceutical manufacturers promoting stimulant pills to doctors, educators, parents and even children using marketing techniques that were brazen, often misleading and sometimes deceitful.

Shire, an Irish company that makes Adderall and other ADHD medications, recently subsidized 50,000 copies of a comic book in which superheroes tell children that, “medicines may make it easier to pay attention and control your behavior!”

Advertising on television and in popular magazines such as “People” and “Good Housekeeping” has sought to persuade mothers that Adderall can not only unleash a child’s innate intelligence but make a child more amenable to chores such as cleaning up their room or taking out the garbage.

So many medical professional, journals and news magazines benefit from over prescribing of stimulant medication that it is hard to find a neutral source of information. Prominent doctors get paid \$1000 to \$1500 to deliver Power Point messages at company sponsored dinners where the effectiveness of the drugs are exaggerated and their side effects are downplayed. Most

medical journals are highly subsidized by drug companies. Medical researchers paid by drug companies have published studies on the benefits of the drug and medical journals in a position to question their findings profit greatly from the advertising of ADHD drugs in their journals.

The more insidious marketing efforts are the ones that are not obvious. The main advocacy group for people with ADHD is CHADD (Children and Adults with ADHD). It was founded in 1987 with the goal of bringing more attention to ADHD and its treatment. It was started with seed money from CIBA-GEIGY, the main manufacturer of the ADHD medicine, Ritalin. Furthermore, the CIBA-GEIGY company provided the funds for CHADD to create “fact sheets” about treatment of which one sheet states, “Psycho stimulant drugs are not addictive.” CHADD has lobbied the DEA to loosen restrictions on the advertising and marketing of stimulants and worked on an “educational” video about ADHD with the Department of Education. The 11 main sponsors of CHADD’S 12th Annual Conference in 2000 were all drug companies.

Since 2000 the FDA has cited every maker of ADHD drugs, including the stimulants Adderall, Concerta, Focalin, Vyvanse and Ritalin for false and misleading advertising; some of them have been cited multiple times. The

companies, when challenged, typically stop the misleading claims, but the overall impact has been minimal.

What is the difference between legitimate information, benefits, risks and propaganda? An educated and engaged profession and citizenry is the best defense. Objectivity, rationality and truthfulness are the opposites of propaganda.

I'm circulating a list of resources for identifying and dealing in general with propaganda.

The "Carlot Report" (psychiatry) is an unbiased monthly newsletter covering all things psychiatric. All editorial content is peer reviewed by the Carlot Editorial Board who have disclosed that they have no relevant financial or other interests in any commercial companies pertaining to the newsletter.

In dealing with the propaganda, the deceptive and misleading marketing and advertising of psycho stimulants, the pharmaceutical industry needs to be commended for their efforts at self regulation. However, FDA and FTC oversight and regulation needs to be strengthened.

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