

IF YOU WANT TO SELL - USE SEX!

A woman is standing in front of a lighted window with a naked-backed dress, looking over her shoulder with pleased seductive gaze with two male hands caressing her attractive back.

Another woman is resting on a bed with her eyes closed a man is over her and he is seductively kissing her neck.

Those ads are seen daily in mass magazines. What they have in common is sex. Why does this advertising use sex to appeal to the consumer?. The answer is simply because it works.

Sexual desire is an instinctive reaction in animals, and individual's perception of a suitable male is the basis.

Thus, today as we have evolved in complex societies, biological criteria isn't the only one that is used. A man is a member of the human race so he will desire a woman who satisfies his physical and instinctive criteria, but also societal and cultural ones.

On the other hand, women's minds make them think about the outcome of their choices in the future so that not only strength or health are important but intelligence, power, money, prestige, position, and religious convictions are more important.

What does all this have to do with sex in advertising? The purpose of advertising is to convince people that products are useful to them. However advertising must do its job very quickly: it doesn't have the time or space to go into detail.

For many products it is possible to find (or invent) a sexual connection, that can be easier to set up for men than for women. Men can be quickly attracted by a woman's body while for a woman it can be more difficult. The use of attractive and healthy bodies indeed catch her attention, but a man has to show her his ability to father healthy children plus support her during her pregnancy.

However those factors are almost impossible to put into an ad. To sell to a woman, romance fits better into her intellectual view or relationship. Rarely, in ads aimed at men there is romantic appeal while sexual messages are preferable. For ads aimed at women, they can achieve the romantic approach using stereotypical images: roses, soft light and music. The ad sells the product as long as women receive the feeling of romance in their life. For example, diamond ads use a romantic approach even if men buy them for women. Images are of soft lighting, elegant surroundings and a well-to-do man offering the gift of the diamond. These images satisfy societal criteria for a desirable man: money, status, taste. If there are any sexual messages, they are subdued and non-threatening. “Diamond are forever”

For ads aimed at a man, courtship and romance aren't primary while sex is. Let us take the example of beer; according to statistics men drink and buy beer much more than ladies. It makes sense to use sex appeal to make a certain beer more attractive to males. The easiest way to do this is to show how attractive a man can be to a beautiful woman if he drinks that beer. Remember the Peroni ads and notice “Men love blondes”. Obviously, the beer gives a man a power over women. The ladies here don't speak, show no signs of money, position, power or intellect they are simply beautiful. (Is that a little sexist?).

In conclusion, is it right to use sex as a selling tool? Biologically it is right, culturally it is wrong. Biologically, the purpose of a man is to be aroused by and impregnate as many women as possible. Culturally, a male must satisfy the female's criteria for being sexually attractive.

Nonetheless, women find men regarding them as “sexual objects” offensive and demeaning by considering them sexually attractive strictly on their physical appearance with no regard for their intelligence or status as human beings. Men find women offensive and demeaning because they are insensitive to the fact that men have no control of their instincts.

To summarize, each gender should change their intellectual views since neither gender can alter their instincts. Since humans live in a social world, considerations must be given to the feelings of the people in that world. If advertising uses sex appeal, it should be carefully aimed and tastefully done. There is no sense in appealing to one sex by offending the other.