

Gender a major factor in consumer response to advertising on TV

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Both informative and emotional appeals are adopted by advertisers to communicate product features as well as user experience and feelings.

The 'rational' approach focuses on the persuasive power of argument or reason.

Consumers process information delivered by advertisers that eventually influence his or her beliefs, attitudes and behaviour.

The response often involves a logical, rational thinking approach. This type of advertising is usually referred to as 'thinking' commercials.

On the other hand, the 'emotional' approach focuses on the creation of feelings that can ultimately influence consumers' attitudes and behaviour.

Feelings of energy, vitality, fun, warmth, humour or even fear are evoked with the advertising and they later get associated with the

brand. These ads are usually referred to as 'emotional' advertising.

Advertising researchers formulate different models on how emotional advertising works.

Some hypothesise that feeling commercials put people in a good mood which increases positive thoughts over negative thoughts.

People who like the commercial tend to do less thinking about the intrinsic quality of the brand and form favourable brand attitudes based on the advertising alone.

Results of our previous study based on 160 viewers' perception on 30 informative and 30 emotional Chinese prime time commercials have revealed that Hong Kong viewers go for emotional spots.

Emotional commercials were more frequently described as appealing, interesting and original. Informative commercials were often described as being dull,

uninteresting and easy to forget. Advertisers using emotional advertising may wonder whether the perception will differ among male and female audiences and whether a particular emotional appeal may work better for both target groups. This study looks further into 10

emotional spots and explores differences in viewer perception for commonly used appeals like humour, fear and warmth.

None of these TV spots contained any factual information such as price, quality and special offers.

Among the main findings:

- The male audience liked the Lexus car and Midland property agent commercials, while their female counterparts found them pointless and easy to forget.

Both these two commercials featured no personal character, suggesting that the female audience is less attracted by impersonal advertising using abstract association of feelings.

- Surprisingly, female viewers rated the Marrell XO commercial as appealing but the males — who are the intended target of the ad — found it dull. Evidently, the spot featuring such glamorous scenes as successful business negotiations and celebrations in a French chateau and the Great Wall of China appealed more to women.

- The Chow Tai Fook Jewellery shop commercial featuring a romance story was described as effective by a higher percentage of

Gender Difference in Perception of Emotional Advertising

Commercial	Appeal	Gender orientation of characters in the TV spot	Higher % of male viewers described it as...	Higher % of female viewers described it as...
Rolex	Prestige, harmony	male	original, well done	informative
Lexus	Smoothness, wildness	impersonal	well done	pointless
Midland (property agent)	Justice, fairness (fear)	impersonal	appealing, well done	easy-to-forget
IBM	Confidence (fear)	male	informative	
Chow Tai Fook Jewellery	Love, romance	male, female	effective	
Marrell XO	Prestige, achievement	male	dull	appealing
Wellcome supermarket	Humour, warmth	male, female and kids	dull	amusing, interesting
ICI paint	Excitement	male, female and kids	dull	
Sharp G-code video recorder	Curiosity	female		pointless
AAA insurance	Warmth	male, female		

the male audience.

This illustrates that romantic commercials attract both men and women.

- The Sharp G-code video recorder ad featuring a beautiful woman touring a magnified version of the product was found to be pointless by the female audience, suggesting a female figure without a definite occupational or family role and who has nothing to do with the product appealed less to women.

To conclude, the study indicates

that the male and female audiences have very different responses toward emotional advertising.

Female viewers are least likely to be attracted by abstract ideas, impersonal commercials or spots without a clear product user image. Male viewers find musical and family scenes less appealing.

Advertising using the emotional approach should carefully pre-test their commercials to ensure they appeal to the right target group in order to get the desired response.