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Intro College Writing

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Old Spice Advertisement; “The Man Your Man Could Smell Like”

When a company produces a commercial, their main objective is to get their product or whatever they are showcasing to sell. Many methods are used to lure the audience being targeting to purchase a product. According to a study done at the *Obafemi Awolowo University* in Nigeria, advertising is, “a promotional strategy designed to encourage purchase, and ideally re-purchase, through brand loyalty”, (suite101.com). Old Spice, a major company for men’s hygienic products, has created a line of men’s body wash that has a very appealing and humorous advertising campaign. These ads are designed not only to get their product noticed in the marketplace, but to eclipse other lines of men’s body wash. The Old Spice commercials imply that by using their product, a man will be or become more similar to the Old Spice man, or in other words, the ultimate man. The Old Spice advertisements capture men by reaching out to the needs of women, giving the ideal image of what a man should be and how he should smell, and by creating a sexual theme that attracts attention.

In our society, an extremely smart and effective way of selling a product designed for men is to appeal to women. According to the website She-conomy, women account for 85% of all consumer purchases – especially purchases made because of a certain brand.

(Holland) Women have many opinions on commercials that deal with men's products, and if they like the commercials, they will be more apt to either buy the product themselves or influence the men they know to buy it. In Old Spice's current ad campaign, there are a series of commercial using different actors and sports stars that are very fit and good looking to highlight their body wash. Two specific spots use ex-NFL wide receiver Isaiah Mustafa, and both ads promote elements of masculinity, sex appeal, and humor. In one ad, Mustafa is coming out of a shower clad only in a towel, saying in a deep voice, "Hello, ladies", and then continuing to talk directly to women viewers, telling them to look alternately at him and then the man sitting next to them for the implied comparison in which no normal man would come out very well. He then says that the man sitting next to them is "unfortunately not me". The commercial then continues with rapidly shifting scenes that show Mustafa in romantic fantasy-like settings designed to appeal to women – he is shirtless on a sail boat at sunset, then holding tickets to "that thing you love". The tickets then turn into diamonds, and finally then ad ends with Mustafa sitting shirtless on a white stallion on a tropical beach. In the second ad, Mustafa again starts in a towel, this time on a beach. He then is rapidly shown shirtless and in shorts log rolling in a mountain lake, baking a cake in a kitchen he built with his bare hands, diving off a waterfall into a hot tub for an "incredible night", and finally, ending up shirtless and in jeans and boots on a motorcycle. In both ads, Mustafa constantly reminds his lady viewers that their men can be more like him by using Old Spice body wash. A contributing blogger to the website The Daily Femme, Annamarya, wrote, "These two spots are meant to appeal to women (like me) who not only want their men to smell like Dos Equis 'the most interesting man in the world' instead of cherry blossoms but also have a sense of humor about the absurdity of it.

No, Old Spice won't make your man build you a kitchen and make you a cake, but it sure is fun to sniff him and imagine he would". (dailyfemme.com). The commercial's appeal to women relies not only on the attractiveness of the actor and the settings, but to the humor that is based on the idea that such a perfect man can exist at all. According to the website [Marketing to Women Online](#), "Humor in advertising appeals to both sexes, but is especially powerful with women". (Buchanan). Both the attractiveness and the humor of the ads demonstrate that the producers knew that women were an important audience.

Not only do these commercials reach out to women, but there are men in the target audience and there is a message for them as well. These ads present an ideal image of how a man should be and what he should smell like. By using a good looking fit man for this advertisement it gives the product an image that men want. "The Old Spice Guy is perfect, obviously. Zero body fat, the supernatural ability to embody masculine ideals, and a baritone deadpan delivery that instantly unleashes awesome into the world".

(pcworld.com) There is no hidden message. The ads almost shout out the idea that if you use this product you can look, smell, and be exactly like the man you see on your television set. The Old Spice man, Mustafa, does everything better than you do and will give your woman more than you can give her. You can smell like the "ultimate man", or as the slogan used in the ads says, "Smell like a man, man". The commercials go after men emotionally by saying that they currently aren't the man their lady is expecting them to be, but by using Old Spice, they can smell like and maybe even be the man she hopes for. In other words, they promote an ideal of what the perfect man should be. The ads make a man react emotionally and appeal directly to his masculinity, vanity, and even his insecurity in being able to impress, attract, and keep women happy.

In addition to appealing to women's tastes and a man's emotional need to smell like a manly man and attract a woman, these commercials use the old reliable advertising strategy – sex sells. A sexually themed commercial can appeal to both men and women, and is sure to attract attention. "From a marketing perspective, sexual appeal may be advantageous for the simple reason that they prey on basic biological instincts and thus, an incredible motivation factor, which is a desirable attribute to break through all the clutter". ("web.biz.uwa") Because of the sexual nature of the ads - a fit and good-looking man talking directly to women in a seductive voice and in romantic locations – the desired result is achieved. People, both men and women, stop what they are doing and watch. The sexual content of the commercials also does more than grab people's attention. It also helps them remember the ads. The Old Spice ads are successful because they make an impression on people and lead to discussions with other people who have seen them. The advertisers do have to be careful with the use of sex appeal in these ads. If the sexual content is overdone, it might not work as intended. Advertisers realize that, "commercials that cause offense may be detrimental to the attractiveness of their products". (Gunter 2007) Especially women may not like a commercial if the sexual content is too strong. Advertisers know that, "The last thing any company should do is insult the intelligence of their target base. As far as a marketing strategy would go, it is career suicide. How can you insult your audience?" (Nutt 1) The reason why the Old Spice commercials have been successful with both men and women is that the sexual content is not overdone. It is mixed with the right amount of humor and does not offend.

Old Spice, by appealing to women, making men want to look and smell like a manly man, and by using old-fashion sex appeal, has created a successful advertising

campaign. Writers, producers, and actors are all paid a lot of money to come up with commercials that people like to watch and that make everyone remember the products. If this happens, the pay-off for the company can be huge. Samuel Johnson said, "Promise, large promise, is the soul of advertising". ("Quote Garden") The large promise in the Old Spice ads for a women is the existence of good looking, masculine, yet romantic man. For the man, he somehow becomes a superman by washing with a certain brand of soap. Only on television.

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