

NOW WITH TRUSTWORTHY RESEARCH!:
COMPARING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES
USED IN ADVERTISING

by

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Abstract

Seven major propaganda devices used in advertising were examined and rated on a scale of most to least successful. The techniques analyzed include the transfer, glittering generalities, bandwagon, plain folks, testimonial, card-stacking, and name-calling devices. Seven printed advertisements employing the use of each propaganda technique to sell an identical product categorized as an impulse buy were created, compared, and contrasted to develop a list rating each propaganda device's degree of success. This thesis develops a response to these propaganda devices and presents suggestions about the advantages and disadvantages of each technique as it relates to advertising. The research yielded the glittering generalities device as the most successful propaganda device and found the card-stacking device to be the least successful.

Keywords: graphic design, advertising, propaganda techniques, persuasion, exaggeration

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Introduction

The public is comprised of unique individuals, some demographics prove easier to persuade and influence, while others remain skeptical in spite of various advertising techniques. Because of this, an understanding of how advertisements persuade consumers to act becomes increasingly crucial for society to recognize. Investigating persuasion techniques used in advertising concurrently serves two disparate purposes. On one hand, such research benefits society by offering materials to help the contemporary consumer better recognize and resist persuasion efforts. On the other hand, such research allows the designer, who may be unfamiliar with persuasion tactics, to familiarize him or herself with these devices so that he or she may take advantage of their powerful effectiveness in appealing to the emotions of the average consumer. This benefits the designer by educating and inspiring those whose profession requires the creation of advertisements intended to influence consumers to act. In both cases, research focused on persuasion tactics as applied to advertising and the mass media intends to further educate all parties involved with persuasion-based ads, both those who create it and those who consume it. By doing so, a perplexing question can be answered: which persuasion method when applied to advertising has the best success rate influencing consumers to act?

Literature Review

The use of persuasion to sell something has been implemented in advertising as long as it has existed. According to Aronson and Pratkanis (1992), persuasion, and by extension the use of propaganda, began in 1843 in Philadelphia with Volney Palmer's creation of the first advertising agency. As a society, we have come a long way since persuasion's meager beginnings to a point in time where advertising is virtually inescapable. Although the history of advertising is quite interesting, the psychology behind the actions of consumers seems to be an entire study on its

own. An understanding of techniques that speak to the consumer on a psychological level is exceptionally crucial to the designer when clients expect specific results.

Some techniques are viewed as morally questionable, while others are viewed as morally unquestionable. Although a subjective topic, when morals are considered while examining the power of persuasion as it relates to the masses, particular persuasion techniques appear less innocent to critical thinkers. The majority of my research describes persuasion and propaganda techniques as two separate approaches to advertising. These two approaches, though nearly identical in meaning, carry with them particular connotations. White (1971) writes, “In American usage the connotations of propaganda are wholly bad, while those of persuasion are neutral” (p. 27). While these questions of morals are important to consider, all persuasion efforts attempt to influence the thinking and reasoning patterns of others.

Background

In 1938 an organization devoted to helping people identify and combat propaganda tactics was formed in New York City. Named the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA), this organization focused on creating learning materials that allowed educators to teach students how to detect propaganda by increasing their critical thinking skills. As a result of The Great Depression, many educators felt it important to introduce contemporary learning more relevant to the lives of students into their curriculum (Hobbs & McGee, 2014). The IPA was of paramount significance in academia, forming a now well-known list of the seven propaganda devices designed to manipulate the average consumer. This list appeared in the first volume of publications distributed by the IPA, instructing readers how to detect propaganda and explaining that the reason these techniques are so effective is because “they appeal to our emotions rather than to our reason” (Institute for Propaganda Analysis, 1938, p. 5).

This list of seven propaganda devices is the most recognized approach to exploring and detecting propaganda and is still used by contemporary educators, however, the teachings of the IPA were not protected from criticism. Hobbs and McGee (2014) write that educators found students more likely to become cynical after being exposed to curriculum focused on how mainstream advertisers manipulate the average citizen. These teachings also caused students to find all forms of rhetoric calculating and dishonest (Hobbs & McGee, 2014). Delwiche (2018) notes that further criticism stems from the fact that many forms of propaganda cannot be placed into one category alone as spelled out by the IPA's list of seven propaganda devices.

Differences in the consumer and propagandist credibility are also argued as problematic when considering the IPA's list (Delwiche, 2018). Even so, Delwiche (2018) argues that the benefits of the main goal of the IPA—to promote critical thought—far outweighs any criticisms against the organization's teachings.

Stewart Ewen (1976) describes the role of the age of mass production in America—a cynical force that bred a self-conscious culture that was subjected to authoritarian obedience. This obedience forced people to behave and buy in a certain way decided not by the masses, but by corporations. To this end, advertisements created during the age of mass production sought not only to sell products, but instead strove to sell ideas. By doing so, corporations deliberately sold consumers a way to fit in with society. Ewen (1988) further explains the role that style plays in marketing, granting corporations a way to tell the masses which trends are appreciated and sacred, and which are obsolete. In essence, the masses are trained to accept and consume the idea of style, and along with it, anything the media deems stylish and unobtainable to those focused on necessity alone. The contemporary consumer, as Shah (2010) writes, has been

subjected to globalization and cultural programming, two factors that contribute to causing more diverse people to desire the same thing.

Elliot Aronson and Anthony Pratkanis (1992) have researched persuasion techniques for 45 years and believe that there is more to persuasion than “naïve acceptance on the one hand and total cynicism on the other” (p. xii). Both researchers explain there is a difference between persuasive devices and propaganda techniques as they relate to advertising. According to Aronson and Pratkanis (1992), “In general, we humans seek to conserve our cognitive energy by taking mental shortcuts whenever we can and we attempt to rationalize our thoughts and behavior so that they appear reasonable to ourselves and others” (p. 24). Because of this, the target of persuasion becomes an active participant in the persuasion process. Contemporary propaganda takes advantage of the cognitive miser—such consumers are less likely to participate in discussion and more likely to rely on simplistic persuasion devices and limited reasoning. Aronson and Pratkanis (1992) summarized their research by pointing out consumers respond to propaganda with little thought—a fact that advertisers understand and strategically seek to take advantage of.

Persuasive devices are successful because they seek to reward the recipient in a variety of ways. For example, they attract a consumer’s attention while causing them to understand and comprehend an argument that they come to accept as true. More successful, however, is a persuasion attempt that gives the consumer an incentive to act (Aronson & Pratkanis, 1992). This can be achieved through benefits the product brings to the consumer as well as through the benefits that the company brings to society. By humanizing corporations, “institutional advertising” devices bring attention to the incidental benefits of the corporations by explaining

how they “contribute toward the maintenance of culturally sacred values” (Pearlin & Rosenberg, 1952, p. 8).

In contrast, persuasive devices also prove successful when taking advantage of “dissonance reduction”, by offering a solution after arousing feelings of threats to a consumer’s self-esteem. Fear-driven persuasion works best when it offers a specific solution to a threat brought to the attention of the consumer in an advertisement. For this method to be effective, the consumer must believe that the solution offered to reduce the threat will be effective and that the consumer can perform the recommended action (Aronson & Pratkanis, 1992).

In addition to more broad techniques like reward-driven and fear-based tactics, advertisers take advantage of consumers in many other ways. Aronson and Pratkanis (1992) explain that the amount of copy found in an ad can cause people to believe it by telling us that when consumers are subjected to an overwhelming amount of information they more readily accept this information as true. In other words, people falsely believe that “message length equals message strength” (Aronson & Pratkanis, 1992).

Overloading the consumer with too much information goes hand in hand with the implementation of what Aronson and Pratkanis (1992) describe as factoids—an “assertion of fact that is not backed up by evidence, usually because the fact is false or because evidence in support of the assertion cannot be obtained” which is why “they become widely treated as true” (p. 71).

George Felton (1994) provided advertisement copywriters guidelines to understanding “people’s attitudes, opinions, and habits; their personality traits, lifestyles, and social class” (p. 32) through what he calls psychographics—research that must be added to the concept of demographics when locating markets to advertise products. Understanding the type of consumer to target when creating ads is an important approach for advertisers because without a particular

consumer in mind, a copywriter could cause a disservice to the ad, product, and company by segmenting the market. Felton (1994) calls this the “8 to 80 perplex” where a copywriter fails to select a particular consumer by trying to talk to too many demographics at once, resulting in “diffusion and blandness” (p. 42). Felton offers a strategic approach to advertising—one that is either product oriented or consumer oriented. Product oriented approaches focus on “(1) generic claims, (2) product features, (3) unique selling propositions, and (4) market niches.” In contrast, consumer oriented approaches focus on “(1) brand image, (2) lifestyle, and (3) attitude” (p. 43). Most interesting is the lifestyle approach, where “rather than creating an image of the brand itself, it creates an image of the consumer, making him or her, in effect, the product” (Felton, 1994, p. 52).

Felton (1994) recognizes for an effective ad that causes a consumer to act, synergy should prevail over redundancy by allowing a relationship between words and pictures to take place where each element depends on the other. Doing so is a great effort to avoid repetition, which Douglas Haddow (2010) explains is the basic function of advertising. Another clever aspect of effective advertising is the implementation of taglines, which Barry (2008) explains are shortened phrases that briefly tell the consumer why he or she should purchase a product being advertised. Applying taglines to ads allow copywriters to condense the entire argument found in an ad campaign to simple, easy to remember slogans.

In 2004, Brand building consultant Martin Lindstrom conducted a three year, seven-million-dollar neuromarketing study contributing to the understanding of the subconscious mind of the average consumer (Lindstrom, 2008, p. 12). His study required the use of fMRI technology to track brain activity in an attempt to understand what happens in the minds of consumers on the subconscious level. Boasted as the most advanced brain scanning technology

to date, fMRI (functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) technology tracks the movement of oxygenated blood in the brain, allowing researchers to see which areas of the brain are in use (Lindstrom, 2008, p. 8). In reference to consumers buying habits, Lindstrom (2008) says that, “As consumers, we can’t ask ourselves these questions, because most of the time, we don’t know the answers” (p.3). Lindstrom’s study on neuromarketing supported this idea by asking participants of the study to fill out a questionnaire rating their feelings on a new television show. Their brains gave completely different answers through fMRI scanning than what the participants gave for their pencil test (Lindstrom, 2008).

Subconsciously, consumers react positively through a process of mirror neurons at work in the brain that allow us to feel like we are participating when we see someone else doing something (Lindstrom, 2008). Moreover, we attempt to service our own ego by defining ourselves as someone who agrees with and wants to take part in what we see in favorable ads (Aronson & Pratkanis, 1992). Lindstrom’s (2008) research proves that memorable ads will frequently win out over more sensible ads (p. 47). Consumers are inundated with thousands of ads on a daily basis, those that stay with us and do not become background noise are the ads that are more likely to persuade a consumer to act (Lindstrom, 2008). Consumers tend to remember things much easier when multiple sensory experiences are combined in advertising. This is because a vivid appeal is more likely to attract a consumer’s attention by making the information presented more concrete, personable, and memorable (Aronson & Pratkanis, 1992).

Haddow (2010) believes that advertising, regardless of its ubiquitous nature, is failing. He argues that with the formation of Internet culture, the consumer is in control of everything, leading the average advertisement viewer to regard ads as a desperation tactic. Furthermore, he explains advertising is currently at odds with itself because of the recent trend of a preoccupation

with creativity on the part of the designer and copywriter. Perhaps in the distant future, as Haddow firmly believes, advertising will indeed succumb to its own downfall. Even so, advertising is still inescapable in today's culture; therefore, it is exceedingly relevant and important to continue dissecting advertising and the persuasion techniques employed by advertisers for the sake of critical thinking. To halt all research pertaining to propaganda as it relates to advertising and the mind of the average consumer simply because one is aware of advertising's inevitable end would be a disservice to modern and future society.

The Seven Types of Propaganda Devices

The following devices, as defined by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, are the most commonly used techniques propagandists utilize to take advantage of lazy thinkers and appeal to the emotions of the average consumer. The IPA researched these devices and made them easily accessible to the general public, striving to allow ordinary people unfamiliar with these tactics to familiarize themselves with manipulation strategies employed by propagandists. The organization's ultimate goal was to educate and encourage people to recognize propaganda, motivating them to no longer be fooled by these tactics ("Propaganda Analysis", 1938, p. 5).

Transfer Device. The IPA defines the transfer device as a way for a propagandist to cause a consumer to relate positive ideas he or she has about something in particular to the product being advertised. In other words, consumers transfer the ideas they have about something else to the product being sold. Often times the product is completely unrelated to the object or idea it is being compared to. Symbols are coincidentally used to great effect by propagandists when transfer devices are employed. These symbols create a distinct emotional response in the mind of the advertisement viewer. The consumer should understand that an object or idea that already

has public and individual respect should not cause them to think differently about the product being sold simply because it is mentioned alongside something the advertisement is selling.

Glittering Generalities Device. According to the IPA, the glittering generalities device utilizes the emotions consumers have already developed for words of virtue. A propagandist's goal when using this device is to get the consumer to form ideas of acceptance and approval before thinking about what is being advertised. Using words of virtue is a strong emotional appeal; the consumer has had a lifetime to define what "good" and "virtuous" means to them specifically. Because of this, the propagandist takes advantage of words that make the consumer feel good and blatantly apply those words to the product being sold. It is important to understand that the propagandist does not make an effort to define the words of virtue that are employed in the advertisements themselves. In a way, the propagandist allows the consumer to do the work for them by employing words defined subjectively by each individual consumer.

Bandwagon Device. The IPA defines the bandwagon device as a way for propagandists to make the consumer want to follow the crowd by telling them "everybody's doing it." This device either causes the consumer to feel left out, precipitating a desire to be part of a clearly defined group, or salutes the consumer for already being part of a group that appreciates and uses the product being sold. In simple terms, this device takes advantage of the consumer's emotions through use of fear and flattery. This technique makes no effort to explain why "everyone" is doing something; the propagandist merely wants the consumer to be aware that large groups of people feel a certain way about the product and in order to define oneself, the consumer is encouraged to make a decision. This device is especially useful when the consumer feels that he or she has much in common with the group being depicted favorably.

Plain Folks Device. As the name of this technique suggests, the IPA describes any attempt for the propagandist to appear more like the normal population to be an example of the plain folks device at work. When this device is used, the propagandist hopes to cause the consumer to trust what is being said because it appears to be voiced by a person who is just as common and trustworthy as any average person the consumer may personally know. The propagandist still holds the same goals in mind, yet they purposefully tailor their personality to match the average consumer and make the purchaser of their products feel that buying what is being advertised is in their best interest. The person selling the product is not a faceless corporation when this device is used; rather, this device causes the consumer to make a personal connection with the voice of the advertisement by appearing to be as similar as possible to the reader.

Testimonial Device. Although the name may be misleading, the IPA explains that the testimonial device employs the use of an individual that is not an average person to sell a product. Instead of using someone considered average or “of the people”, this technique uses a person of value in advertisements because the consumer has more of a reason to believe someone knowledgeable about the product. Often times, however, this device takes advantage of respected individuals, frequently those who are famous, who have little or nothing to do with the product being sold. When famous people are used to sell a product, the propagandist takes advantage of the star-power of the famous person. When a role model or respected member of society endorses a product, the consumer transfers the respect from the famous person to the product being sold and will buy the product in an effort to mirror the actions of someone they admire.

Card Stacking Device. The IPA explains that any and all deception tactics employed by propagandists are examples of the card-stacking device in use. Among the most used of these

deception tactics are half-truths, where a propagandist omits information, blatantly lies, distorts truth by use of over and under-exaggeration, projects euphemisms, and makes use of selective censorship. When exploiting this device, the propagandist uses words in a way to make the consumer accept these falsehoods as truth by changing the tone and mood of the message. This device makes the most use out of the role of the copywriter because the advertisement must make the consumer believe falsehoods in any way that is feasible. Incorrect statements must be presented as truth, causing the copywriter to manipulate information and present it in a way that will force the consumer to accept it without question or further examination.

Name Calling Device. Similar to the glittering generalities device, the IPA defines the name-calling device as a polar opposite to the aforementioned technique by causing the consumer to form negative opinions about something by using words that the consumer has had a lifetime to define as negative. This forces the consumer to respond emotionally to something the propagandist wants them to distrust or feel hatred for. Where the glittering generalities device causes the consumer to accept ideas and products through words of virtue, the name-calling device causes consumers to reject ideas and products through words of condemnation. Propagandists often use this device to make consumers feel disdain towards a competitor by focusing on the negatives of the competitor and the positives of what the propagandist is trying to sell. Alternatively, a propagandist may target a negative aspect of the competitor without offering his or her own solution to the targeted problem.

Method

As part of my research in exploring persuasion techniques used in advertising, I found propaganda devices that appeal to the emotions of the consumer as the most potentially effective methods to persuade a consumer to act. I created seven magazine advertisements representing

each of the seven propaganda devices as spelled out by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA). These ads are unique in that each one simultaneously advertises an identical product. When conducting my research, I had no problem finding examples of each of the seven propaganda devices made famous by the teachings of the IPA. Nonetheless, as I conducted my research, I was unable to discover examples like the ones I strived to create, a series of advertisements that focus on selling the same product in each ad. By emphasizing the propaganda devices themselves while keeping the product uniform, my ads encourage a viewer to compare and contrast each individual propaganda device without the need of familiarizing him or herself with a new product when viewing each ad.

Objective

For this demonstration focusing on a comparison between the seven propaganda devices as applied to advertising, a single product should be chosen to serve as the vehicle for research. By keeping the product the same for all seven of the advertisements, it can play the role of a constant; the only aspect that will vary between the designs created will be the propaganda techniques and the designs themselves. When approaching the exercise, the consumer must be persuaded to buy a particular product. Although the exercise could be achieved by selecting any number of arbitrary products, a purposeful decision based on the nature of a product in need of exaggerated persuasive techniques in order to sell it would be ideal. By keeping the product constant and by focusing on the propaganda devices and the design elements that support each device that vary throughout the series of advertisements, suggestions about the advantages and disadvantages of each technique as it relates to advertising becomes an achievable goal.

Product Selection Justification

Numerous categories exist that oversee the types of products consumers purchase daily, yearly, and over a lifetime. When considering these various categories, one cannot help but notice a list of opposites:

Superfluous vs. Necessary

Inexpensive vs. Costly

Common vs. Luxury

Short Term vs. Long Term

Everyday vs. Specialty

Impulse Buy vs. Investment

Certainly, those products that require the consumer to carefully consider the price, necessity, and quality of what they are buying would cause consumers to be less likely persuaded to buy as opposed to advertisements persuading consumers to buy products that require much less thought. When a consumer has additional time to think about purchasing a product, they may decide to select a competitor's product or decide to purchase nothing at all.

With this in mind, I chose to select an item that fits into the above lists by being a superfluous, common, everyday inexpensive item that is used for a short term and is classified as an impulse buy. I chose the Hostess® Twinkie as the constant product throughout my ads demonstrating the seven propaganda devices because the Twinkie is a common household food item and consumers are familiar with it. Thanks to bankruptcy complications, the confection became discontinued in 2012 only to return the following year to great fanfare, further elevating consumer awareness. This is beneficial to the exercise because the consumer does not need to familiarize his or herself with a new product when viewing the ads that I create and thus will take less time to think about the product when viewing ads focused on propaganda techniques.

With the Twinkie selected as the product for the exercise, it is important to consider the strengths and challenges. In ads that focus on exaggeration, the goal is to elevate the positives

and downplay the negatives of the product being sold. Twinkies taste sweet but are not nutritional. Eating them is convenient, however they are not very filling. They can be paired with other ingredients and taste excellent when deep-fried, but the consumer may view them as extremely unhealthy. Ultimately, the Twinkie is similar to any other dessert in that it is an exemplar of all junk-food-offering instant self-gratification but simultaneously bad for your health. Most consumers understand these facts.

Before focusing on the ads themselves, I decided to re-brand the product being sold. Based on my research, I realized that the current Twinkie logo does not represent the product in the best way possible (see Appendix A). The current logo's typeface is thick, but the visual similarities between it and the product end there. With the characters red and a white outline present complete with a drop shadow, the current logo begs for a re-design (see Appendix B). I decided to choose a bold yellow paired with white for my color scheme—a visual representation of the color of the product itself. The Hostess® logo accompanies the Twinkie logo, appearing in red as a compliment to the yellow and white color scheme, yet small in size in comparison to the main logo. The typeface revisits a retro logo used by Hostess® in an attempt to call back to the history and nostalgia of the company.

The object behind the typeface in the logo is shaped like a Twinkie and the typeface displayed in white visually represents the crème filling that is injected into each Twinkie. This is achieved by selecting a sans-serif mono-weight typeface and by connecting characters together. With a few more adjustments, like curving the capital T to follow the edge of the Twinkie shape, connecting the n to the s, adding the little dollops that dot the character i, and by thickening the characters overall, I created the final logo. When appearing against a page flooded with the bold yellow found in the logo, the Twinkie shape of the logo gains a white stroke.

The color scheme was decided because I understood the visual repetition between the product and the logo would cause consumers to make a mental connection and remember the logo. As expressed earlier, the less a consumer has to think about the product, and by association the branding and company itself, the easier it is to persuade them to buy the product. Now that there is less dissociation between the product and its branding, the easier the job will be to persuade someone to buy it. The newly designed logo is bold, curvy, and thick—just like a crème filled Twinkie; it celebrates the novelty of the product itself. It also grabs the attention of the consumer through use of yellow, the most visible hue of the color spectrum.

Exercise: Advertising Hostess® Twinkies

Transfer Device (see Appendix C). The transfer device compares the product being sold to something not being sold that the consumer has positive feelings about in an attempt to cause the consumer to transfer the ideas of the unrelated product to the one being sold.

Two Twinkies, placed side by side, take up nearly the entire top half of the advertisement. Rich with detail and positioned at a diagonal angle, every dimple on the surface of the Twinkies can be seen. Around the Twinkies, a subtle glow emitting from their top surface begins to emerge. The Twinkies, bright yellow in color, stand out significantly against the stark white background of the ad. All typography, save the Hostess® logo, appears in a golden-yellow color that complements the oversized Twinkie photo placed centrally at the top of the ad. The copy below the Twinkies reads, “They’re golden for a reason” displayed in an elegant, serif typeface. Below the large Hostess® Twinkies logo, in the same elegant serif typeface as before, reads, “The *superior* snack cake”. Below this continuation of the main headline in an easy to read sans serif typeface reads the following text: “Hostess® Twinkies have always been a

flawless, mesmerizing, and enchanting 24 carat golden color that snack cake lovers ask for by name. They stand alone in a class of purity. Enjoy the decadence. Enjoy Hostess® Twinkies."

All content is centered on the page and take advantage of oversized imagery.

An association between gold bars and Twinkies is made visually by lining two Twinkies side by side so that they begin to look like golden bars. The ad intends to cause the consumer to associate the high quality and superiority of gold to Twinkies. This is achieved by highlighting the golden color of the product, tapping into a sensory experience associated with golden bars and the notion of high standards. Shape associations are celebrated here, making the customer more aware that the shape of the Twinkie logo itself begins to take on the appearance of a golden bar. This point is blatantly made clear by the written content, explaining that this association between golden bars and Twinkies is not purely happenstance; "They're golden for a reason." The word "superior" is called out through typographic hierarchy by making it bold and italicized. By doing this, the advertiser hopes to associate more ideas of superiority through the visuals of the elegant typeface paired alongside the product.

Additionally, the ad employs a direct tagline by instructing the consumer to "Enjoy the decadence. Enjoy Hostess® Twinkies." Here, the word "decadence" works in conjunction with all other words associated with the ideas of objects possessing a high level of value. Together with the visual relationship between the golden snack cakes and idolized gold bars, this ad uses multiple attempts to persuade the consumer that Hostess® Twinkies are of the highest quality and should therefore be appreciated and admired.

Perhaps after being exposed to this ad, every time the consumer sees the Twinkie logo he or she will be able to make the mental connection between the shape and color of a gold bar and the logo and product itself. When viewing ads that focus on other propaganda techniques after

being exposed to this ad, the consumer may be doing the work of the transfer technique in their memory before reading the new ad they are looking at.

Glittering Generalities Device (see Appendix D). By using powerful words of virtue, the glittering generalities device persuades a consumer through use of strong emotional appeals.

On a page flooded with Twinkies Brand golden-yellow sits an extremely large product shot of two Twinkies, once sliced in half and positioned so that the crème center is pointed directly at the viewer, placed on a delicate saucer complete with a drop shadow. The typeface, used as a secondary font for large headlines in subsequent Twinkie ads, is colored white, just like the crème filled center of the product being advertised. The headline, overlapped at the top by the Twinkie photo and running across the base of the unique plate at the bottom reads, “Life is Better.” Below the large headline the Hostess® Twinkies logo is placed in the bottom center of the ad.

The orientation of the Twinkies is very inviting for the consumer; by placing them in a way that shows one sliced open, the consumer can imagine the sensation of biting into the product. The dainty saucer chosen for the product to sit on is very unique and uncommon, a subtle way to associate the Twinkie as being unique and uncommon as well. The plate is lightly colored, yet not flushed as pure white as the crème center of the Twinkie. This contrast lets the crème center become highlighted and pairs nicely with the oversized white text.

The typography is blatant and suggests simply that “Life is Better” without describing what exactly makes life better when enjoying Twinkies. The concept of something being “better” is especially vague and purposefully employed here so that the concept is left to be interpreted by each unique consumer. This ad does not bog the reader down with any additional facts, only three words, an image of the product, and the logo are shown. The point is rather obvious and

requires little thought; people reading the ad have had a lifetime to define the concept of the word “better” as it applies to them.

The words used in the ad are purposefully large, assigning a more authoritative mood to the message. It begs the question to the consumer: what is more favorable than a better life? By breaking the message in half with the orientation of the photo of the product, the ad begins to cleverly suggest that by taking a break and introducing Twinkies into a consumer’s life, his or her life will become better. By simultaneously flooding the page with the distinct golden-yellow color found in the product’s branding and celebrating an oversized image of Twinkies, this ad hopes to cause the consumer, if even briefly, to mentally associate the concept of a better life with enjoying the product being sold.

Bandwagon Device (see Appendix E). The bandwagon device takes advantage of the consumer’s emotions through use of fear and flattery, insisting that everyone else is using or buying the product being sold. This emotional appeal forces the consumer to make a decision that affects his or her societal status.

The ad explains that “Everyone has been raving over deep fried Twinkies, so we’re bringing the carnival to you” and allows a repainted and repurposed airstream trailer that has been converted into a food truck to take the place of the word “Twinkies” in the sentence. Again, the same typeface used elsewhere in the full set of advertisements for this demonstration is used, this time taking advantage of the golden-yellow characters as they contrast against a stark white background. Each line of type has been sized so that the sentence is fully justified on either side, allowing the deep-fried Twinkie food truck to jut out of either side of the implied box created by the orientation of the typography.

The logo only appears on the food truck, itself painted a signature golden-yellow that defines the updated branding for Hostess® Twinkies. A consumer cannot help but notice that the food truck begins to take on the appearance of a Twinkie because of the paint color and shape of the truck itself. It is very interesting that the truck replaces the word “Twinkie” in the sentence because it purposefully allows the viewer to notice the similarities between the truck and the product by allowing it to represent the name of the product in a complete sentence. This layout allows synergy between image and text to make the consumer both read about and see the way Hostess® wants to be portrayed to the masses. The truck is vacant and brightly lit from the inside, causing a subtle interior glow to reflect on the ground beneath the shadow of the truck. In addition to the logo, the words “Deep Fried” and “Get ‘Em Fresh Here” are painted in white on the sides of the truck, highlighting the handmade quality of a deep-fried Twinkie through use of friendly, informal message patterns.

The food truck culture is trendy and relevant in today’s market. By advertising how much everyone loves Twinkies when they are deep-fried and by emphasizing acceptance and approval of deep-frying the famous snack cakes, the company becomes much more personalized. It shows the consumer that the company is aware that people enjoy customizing the way they enjoy the product. These deep-fried Twinkies can be found at hometown carnivals, further tapping into a sense of community. This causes the consumer to start thinking about his or her own community and how they personally fit within their respective communities. If the consumer has not tried a deep-fried Twinkie, they feel obligated to because the words “everyone” and “you” are much larger than the surrounding type. These oversized words get the consumer thinking about how they personally relate to everyone else, segmenting the world into people who have tried and like Twinkies, and people who have not tried or do not like Twinkies.

Plain Folks Device (see Appendix F). By adopting the tone and terms most familiar and relatable to the reader, the plain folks device causes the consumer to make a personal connection with the voice of an advertisement.

Two young children, a girl looking into her brown paper lunch bag and a boy seated next to her peering into the bag take up the top half of the ad. Both smile while looking into the bag; the girl grasps either side of the brown paper revealing to both herself and the boy seated next to her what hides inside. Below the duo a white organic shape resembling a cloud is placed with a handwritten script font overlapping it, colored in Twinkies Brand signature golden-yellow, stating simply, “Imagine the Envy.” Below this headline written in the same script-font is a sub-header that reads, “Give your child Hostess® Twinkies in their daily lunches.” The logo is placed in the center of this sentence and is larger than the copy surrounding it, allowing synergy to happen between the words of the sentence and the logo taking the place of the word “Twinkies” in the sentence. Below the sub-header appears copy contained within a curved rectangle that reads:

They’ll suddenly be everyone’s best friend at lunch time, and you’re suddenly the cool parent that every other kid wishes he or she had. Bring a smile to your child’s face and let them enjoy a sweet conclusion for every school lunch. Twinkies® are the perfect treat to keep your kids happy.

The above statement is written in a sans serif font, making it easy to read while it matches the thickness of the stroke of the curved rectangle that contains it on the page.

Although both children smile while looking inside the brown paper bag, it is obvious that the boy appears envious of what his friend has found inside her bag. This idea is further made clear with the main headline explaining that the boy is indeed envious by placing the word

“envy” directly below him on the page. To contrast this, the word “imagine” is placed below the bag. By keeping the Twinkie hidden visually, the consumer participates along with the girl during her moment of surprise while opening the lunch bag. Simultaneously, by not showing the product in the ad consumers can also place themselves in the position of the envious boy, wishing he had a Twinkie of his own to enjoy.

This ad utilizes average children, not famous people to sell the product. These children could belong to anyone that the consumer knows personally; they are not exploited for their popularity, rather, they are ordinary kids. The ad uses these average kids to tap into a demographic that is family oriented and exaggerates just how much children want to find Twinkies in their lunches. The ideas of popularity and joy are used to great effect here; the copy highlights how much children will admire parents that put Twinkies in their kid’s lunches and how doing so will ensure that they become popular parents. Consumers who are also parents of young children are encouraged to make their kids smile just like the children in the ad; these parents need only purchase Twinkies and give them to their children *daily*. A parent would rather their child be the one making the other children envious, not vice versa, or so the ad assumes.

Testimonial Device (see Appendix G). The testimonial device utilizes the star power of a famous person or knowledge of an educated person familiar with a product to cause consumers to buy the product because they respect what is being said by the person being exploited.

Utilizing the use of Twinkie Brand signature golden-yellow, the ad places Harold Ramis of *Ghostbusters* fame in a heroic pose taking up much of the space in the ad. Overlapping his body is a re-imagined quote that reads, “I don’t know about you, but I’d never say no to a Twinkie® over 35 feet long weighing approximately 600 pounds.” A sans serif font is chosen for the quote with lines alternating between white and golden-yellow with the word “never” called

out with the same hue of red found in the Hostess® Twinkies logo, which is positioned at a small scale in the bottom right of the page. The quotation marks are uniquely shaped; upon further inspection a reader may notice that they resemble two Twinkies resting side by side—the exact orientation the product is packaged.

This ad employs the use of a famous person, Harold Ramis, known as the actor who portrayed Egon in the original *Ghostbusters* movie. Here, a direct line in the movie is reimagined to advertise Twinkies. In the movie, Egon uses a Twinkie as an analogy to describe how extreme the psychokinetic energy levels have become in New York City before taking a bite of the crème filled sponge cake. Rephrasing the famous line to explain that Egon would “**never say no** to a Twinkie® over 35 feet long and weighing approximately 600 pounds” is a nice call back to the movie and the scene containing the product placement of the Twinkie.

Egon’s proton pack spits out a white stream of light, similar to the white crème filling of a Twinkie. By surrounding Ramis by a flood of golden-yellow and treating the photo with duotone to add the same yellow to the photo of the actor in character, the entire ad resembles the product through use of a color signifier. Interestingly, an image of the product is not needed for this ad because this tactic focuses less on the product and more on the fact that Twinkies are endorsed by a famous actor. This is made further apparent by comparing the size of Ramis in relation to the size of the Twinkie logo. The hero of the ad is clearly Egon from *Ghostbusters*, and he is talking about how much he loves Twinkies.

By focusing the entire ad on the actor and a reference to the line in the movie where the Twinkie was not only used for product placement but held an active role in the script, this ad addresses all *Ghostbusters* fans familiar with both the movie and the quote. In this example, the testimonial device calls to a specific audience of consumers. For those unfamiliar with the

movie, the idea of a 600 pound Twinkie is certainly an oddity– perhaps one that may stick in the mind of consumers regardless of the unfamiliar connection. Even so, this ad is purposefully designed to grab the attention of consumers who are fans of the famous person that the advertisement glorifies.

Card Stacking Device (see Appendix H). The card-stacking device uses any and all methods of deception to make the consumer accept falsehoods as truth by altering the mood and tone of deceptive messages.

Taking up nearly two-thirds of the top of the page, this ad shows Twinkies elevated to a confection status while being served on a floral-embellished plate instead of coming straight from a package, adding whipped topping and fresh strawberries. A fork is placed next to the crème covered, sliced Twinkies in a way that encourages consumer interaction. The photo places the product in focus and the background reveals another plate containing yet another Twinkie that is completely out of focus. Below the photograph, which is contained in a square shape that bleeds to the edge of the page and vibrantly colored with reds, pinks, whites, and golden-yellow, appears the logo, centered on the page against a white background. Below the logo the tagline “A Dessert Lover’s Dream” is placed, colored with the same red found in the logo. In black, sans serif type, the following information is written below the tagline:

Twinkies® are perfect for pairing with fruit and go great before and after meals. They even help with indigestion. Sponge cake creates a soft landing for a heavy appetite; one reason for indigestion is that some food like spicy chicken and burgers are chilled in oils that are tough on the stomach lining. If you eat your Twinkies®, doing so creates a coating barrier in the stomach that helps digest risky foods at a much slower pace. So go ahead and enjoy your Hostess® Twinkie. Your stomach will be eager to thank you.

This content is justified on the left and right and fit within a box that is stretched as wide as the line of copy appearing above it in the form of a tagline.

The half-truth highlighted in the ad claims that eating Twinkies can help with indigestion, something that is not the main purpose for buying Twinkies in the first place. The ad forgoes mentioning high calories or harmful ingredients that are known to contribute significantly to the risk of chronic disease in favor of making the Twinkie seem like something a doctor would prescribe for indigestion. The ad celebrates the fatty desert and offers a way for the consumer to tell him or herself that it is perfectly fine to enjoy a Twinkie and that, in fact, doing so is actually good for them. Before reading a lengthy message about the benefits of eating Twinkies, the consumer is greeted with the positive idea that eating Twinkies is a “dream.” The uplifting tone of the deceptive message motivates the consumer to believe that eating Twinkies improves health, which is entirely incorrect.

Name Calling Device (see Appendix I). By using powerful words of condemnation, the name-calling device persuades a consumer through use of strong emotional appeals.

Three-fourths of the top of the page of this ad is devoted to an image of a tree set against a sunny, mountainous countryside. Overlapping the image of the tree a question is positioned that reads, “Shouldn’t the elves be back at the north pole?” The typeface is white with serifs and small with a subtle drop shadow. The word “elves” by comparison is rather large and written with a completely different font contained within a red shape that has a white outline. Below the image of the tree is a flood of golden-yellow with the standard Twinkie Brand sans serif headline font written in white exclaiming, “Leave baking to the professionals, boys.” Underneath this sentence the Twinkie logo is placed, large in scale and centered toward the bottom of the page.

The tree used in the ad obviously references a competitor of Hostess®: Keebler®. Even the Keebler® logo is referenced by using the same typeface and shape of the logo but cleverly changing the word “Keebler” to the word “elves”. Synergy takes place between the question posed in the ad and the modified Keebler® logo by allowing the logo to act as a word in the sentence. By modifying the competitor’s logo, the ad pokes fun at the Keebler® mascots being elves, stating that the elves are not professionals like the makers of Twinkies are inferred to be— “Shouldn’t the elves be back at the North Pole? Leave baking to the professionals, boys.” The attack is on a competitor who sells cookies; although not in direct competition with Twinkies, Keebler® still sells dessert-based snacks found on the same aisle as Twinkies in grocery stores. No products are shown, but a clear distinction and division between brands is obvious through a drastic change in color and typefaces. Again, no product is shown in this ad; the branding is left to do the work of selling the product.

The words of condemnation used in this ad are slyly indirect, making the consumer believe that the Keebler® brand is unprofessional by focusing on calling Hostess® professionals. By association, elves, which represent the competitor, are labeled unprofessional, making it seem that they left another job that they should be doing—working at the North Pole. Through secondhand nature, the ad shrewdly makes it apparent that Hostess® would be better suited doing something else that does not require baking—something the ad tells the consumer Hostess® is superior at doing.

Responses to Exercise

While conducting this research, I realized it was important for me to recognize that the average viewer will invest little time and thought when viewing advertisements that utilize propaganda devices. For an ad to be most successful under these circumstances, I reason that the

ad must be both easy to understand and direct about what the consumer must do. With this in mind, I have organized each of my seven ads in a way that highlights those that take the most and least amount of mental effort to understand. By organizing the advertisements I created that each represent a clearly identified propaganda device, my findings can be further applied to the propaganda devices themselves.

In addition to the above criteria determining which propaganda devices seem most effective and which seem least effective, factors contributing to which advertisement seems most easy to remember for the consumer must also be considered. Furthermore, which ads target specific consumers, give consumers an incentive to act, service a consumer's ego or introduce fear driven tactics, and which employ the use of factoids and synergy are all important to consider when developing a response to the ads I created. Clarifying which ads utilize the strongest emotional appeal is exceedingly important to this exercise. Lastly, determining which ads are product oriented as opposed to consumer oriented is crucial in deciding what each advertisement has selected to sell to the consumer and its overall degree of effectiveness. The easiest way to digest my findings is to consider all the aforementioned criteria by reviewing each advertisement separately, then ranking the ads from most to least successful.

Transfer Device (see Appendix C)

This advertisement's goal is quite straightforward by using oversized imagery and taglines. The average consumer will likely pass over the paragraph at the bottom and pay attention only to the Twinkie image, logo, and the headline and tagline, remembering that the product is both superior and golden for a reason. This example is product oriented, offering the consumer positive feelings about a superficial detail about the product: its color. Color appeals

to the senses, making the ad easier to remember. The consumer sees the product and is told that the color of the product is superior.

The emotional appeal in this ad stems from the ideas the consumer has about what Twinkies are positively being compared to—gold. This ad speaks to consumers who value gold and currency more so than those consumers who have little value for monetary objects, therefore, a specific demographic is targeted. To some, these emotions are exceptionally strong, but other consumers may show little to no emotion for gold. The incentive here is for the consumer who appreciates items of high value to reward him or herself with something closely related to their ideals—servicing their egos by telling those particular consumers that the product being advertised is of high value.

Glittering Generalities Device (see Appendix D)

Large imagery depicting the product oriented in a way that encourages consumer interaction and a headline consisting only of three words makes this ad exceptionally easy for the consumer to digest. Flooded with color, the ad appeals to the senses of the viewer, telling him or her that life is better with the product. Because the message is so short, it is much easier to read and remember. The demographics seem quite broad for this ad because it relates the product to the idea of something being “better”, which means something to everyone viewing the advertisement. The only idea presented that would cause market segmentation is the notion that life would be better for a consumer who enjoys the product.

For those consumers who have strongly positive emotions about consuming desserts, this ad will be easy to remember and effortlessly persuade them to buy. Those who do not appreciate sweets are prone to overlook the ad altogether. Those who appreciate sweets in moderation, however, may be persuaded to buy after exposure to the ad. Although the ad promises a better

life, it does so by highlighting the product through use of generic claims. Even so, the ego is flattered by the idea of a simple and inexpensive product offering a better life.

Bandwagon Device (see Appendix E)

This advertisement employs the use of one sentence that takes up the entirety of the ad. It is quite easy for the consumer to read and understand simply explaining that everyone likes the product. The ad uses synergy to its advantage, causing the image to play the role of a word in the sentence. This interaction, along with the unique visual similarities between the truck and the product, make it easier for the consumer to remember the advertisement. When considering the product, the consumer will likely only remember that the ad endorses deep-frying Twinkies, which highlights the brand image of Hostess® as one that is familiar with food truck culture.

Instead of paying too much attention to the product itself, this ad focuses on the consumer and his or her place in society while either attacking those who do not appreciate the product or rewarding those who do appreciate Twinkies. Those who care strongly about their community will be targeted emotionally with this ad. The incentive for the consumer as spelled out by this ad is to enjoy Twinkies so that the consumer can be like everyone else in an effort to fit in. Those who feel strongly about being ostracized are more likely to act after being exposed to this ad. Secondary emotions felt by those who care strongly about the product, food truck culture, or carnival culture may play a role in those consumers already secure with his or her place in society.

Plain Folks Device (see Appendix F)

The entirety of this ad requires a bit of reading, which means that the only portions the consumer will more easily remember are the visuals and the headline, if they even read the last paragraph at all. With this in mind, the consumer is going to remember that one child was able

to make another one envious by having a Twinkie. The children are not famous, meaning that their features will be forgotten; only the fact that they are children will be remembered. This ad does not show the product, but it appeals to the senses by hiding the product, causing the viewer to mirror the actions taking place in the ad, thereby wanting his or her own opportunity to discover a Twinkie.

The goal of the advertisement is unique in that it appeals to a particular demographic—parents and guardians. The ad does not try to sell the product to the person buying it as much as to the children belonging to the consumer. Even if the consumer does not feel strongly about the product, one that feels strongly about family and raising children will be more likely to act after being exposed to this ad. The incentive to buy the product is to allow a consumer's child to make others envious, thus providing a parent a way to make their child feel special, and, indirectly, make themselves feel special. Because of this, the advertisement focuses less on the product and more on the consumer's attitude and lifestyle.

Testimonial Device (see Appendix G)

The consumer who already is familiar with the famous actor in character shown in this ad will have an easy time remembering that the actor was used in the advertisement. Apart from that, because the actor is so predominantly featured, the consumer may question why the ad is yellow until the connection between the actor and the product is made. This color association between the actor and the product will make it easier for a *Ghostbusters* fan to remember the ad. Already, the market is clearly segmented; only those familiar with the actor will remember and respond positively to the advertisement. Those who are unfamiliar may not even read the ad or choose to outright ignore it. The quote is not too lengthy, but may be forgotten if the consumer

is not a die-hard fan. Even so, the consumer who enjoys *Ghostbusters* will remember the actor and his association with the product.

This ad is consumer oriented, appealing to the ego of the consumer who admires the actor, inviting him or her to want to mimic the actor by buying the product. The incentive to do so causes the consumer associate him or herself with the famous person her or she admires. The product only serves as a means to allow a consumer to mimic the popular actor.

Card Stacking Device (see Appendix H)

Because the information is quite lengthy in this ad, chances are a person will not invest much time into reading all of it. This could benefit the advertisement by taking advantage of a consumer's idea that message length equals message strength, thus believing the half-truths the ad offers, yet chances are the only things a consumer will remember for sure about this ad is the photo, logo, and headline. The length of this ad makes it more difficult to follow and understand, causing a clear incentive to act to be more uncertain. The advertisement also suffers from targeting a specific emotion in the consumer. The photo, however, is very inviting for the viewer and could easily be remembered by taking advantage of the subtle placement of the fork, encouraging user interaction.

If a consumer takes the time to read the entire ad, they will find themselves caught in a series of factoids that attempt to convince them that eating Twinkies is beneficial to their health. Because of this, the ad targets a product feature that is actually incorrect. The main headline, alternatively, simply tells consumers that Twinkies are "a dessert lover's dream." There is information presented that attempts to support this idea, but it will be difficult for a viewer to recall all of the half-truths used in this ad. The flawed incentive for a consumer to buy the product as explained by this ad is that Twinkies are not bad for you; they actually can help your

digestion. Those who feel strongly about their health and use negative health associations with the product to justify not buying it will be more readily persuaded to buy Twinkies if they believe the half-truths the ad offer, but such consumers need to read the whole ad and be able to remember it to be successfully persuaded.

Name Calling Device (see Appendix I)

The length of the message in the advertisement is short enough that the consumer can easily perceive it. By asking a question, the ad involves the reader, which makes it easier for the reader to remember it, since they were questioned instead of simply given information to remember. Those familiar with the company that is being attacked by the ad will remember the familiar Keebler® tree and the parody present in Keebler®'s logo as it appears in this ad.

Although the message is easy to read, a consumer may have trouble remembering the specifics of the ad because two competing companies were visually present. A consumer may actually forget what the advertisement was trying to convince them to do, further clouding their memory. The visuals associated with the competitor are very dominant in this ad, causing consumers to think about both companies after being exposed to it.

This ad is more consumer-oriented, demanding that the consumer choose a side between the competing companies. Words of condemnation are used—it is implied that Hostess® is professional and that Keebler® is not. Those consumers valuing professionalism will want to side with Hostess, but they have to be accepting of the product being sold by Hostess® to begin with. The incentive to buy from Hostess® is that you are buying from a company marked by its professionalism; a company who knows how to make a better product than its competitor.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Advertisement Series

As stated earlier, my research has led me to firmly believe that the success of each ad depends heavily on how easy it is to understand, how strongly it appeals to the emotions of the consumer, and how direct it is about what the consumer must do.

Easiest to Understand. Those ads displaying the least amount of information are the easiest to understand by the average consumer who, by nature, will try to conserve his or her cognitive energy when viewing propaganda advertisements. Ranking the ads by how easy they are to understand, the first ad on the list focuses on the glittering generalities device (see Appendix D)—only three words, an image, and the logo is presented. The ad employing the bandwagon device (see Appendix E) ranks second in its ability to present information the consumer can easily understand through use of a simple statement employing the use of synergy, followed by the transfer device (see Appendix C), chosen third in the set because the main ideas are set in unique typefaces and linked to a large picture, backed by supplementary information that will likely be forgotten if not ignored entirely by the consumer. The fourth easiest to understand in the series is the plain-folks ad (see Appendix F), also accompanied by supplementary information that the consumer will overlook, yet emblazoned with imagery and a message that both show the idea of envy.

The last three in the set could cause confusion when viewed by particular consumers. The fifth ad on the list focuses on the testimonial device (see Appendix G), prone to causing confusion simply because the ad depends on the consumer to recognize the famous person. If the consumer does recognize the star, the message is clear that he endorses the product. The ad focused on the name-calling device (see Appendix I) takes the sixth spot on the list because confusion could arise about which company the ad is in support of after viewing it. And lastly,

the ad focused on the card-stacking device (see Appendix H) proves most difficult to understand because of the amount of information the consumer is presented with, let alone the fact that the information is false.

Emotional Appeal. Ranking the advertisements by how strongly they appeal to the emotions of the consumer places the glittering generalities ad (see Appendix D) in the first spot because everyone has an opinion about what the word “better” personally means to them. Second, the bandwagon ad (see Appendix E) appeals strongly to the emotional state of consumers wishing to be part of a community and fit in with society. Third, the ad focused on the transfer device (see Appendix C) appeals strongly to those that emotionally favor items of value, and fourth, the ad focused on the plain-folks device (see Appendix F) appeal to those emotionally invested in raising children and making them feel special and better than their envious friends. Fifth, the ad employing the use of the testimonial device (see Appendix G) appeal to those who wish to be associated with someone famous, and sixth, the ad focused on the name-calling device (see Appendix I) appeals to those consumers invested emotionally in the idea of professionalism. Lastly, again, is the ad focused on the card-stacking device (see Appendix H), as its emotional appeal seems to be quite vague, attempting to soften the negative ideas about unhealthy sweets.

Directness. Ranking the ads by how direct they are about the incentives for the consumer to act quite closely follow the list explaining which advertisements are easiest to understand. To understand the message directly impacts how easy it is to understand what the ad wants the consumer to do. First, the glittering generalities device (see Appendix D) indirectly instructs the consumer to buy the product in order to have a better life. The bandwagon device (see Appendix E) tells the consumer to enjoy the product along with everyone else in an effort to

fit in. The transfer device (see Appendix C) tells the consumer to buy the product if he or she has high opinions for items of value. The plain-folks device (see Appendix F) tells the consumer to buy the product to make their children feel special and make their friends envious. The testimonial device (see Appendix G) tells the consumer to buy the product if he or she respects the famous person who endorses the product. The name-calling device (see Appendix I) tells the consumer to buy their product if they value professionalism and to avoid the competitor. The card-stacking device (see Appendix H) tells the consumer that the product is not completely unhealthy, rather that it holds some health benefits.

Final Results. Surprisingly, the three lists generate the exact same results: 1) glittering generalities device (see Appendix D), 2) bandwagon device (see Appendix E), 3) transfer device (see Appendix C), 4) plain folks device (see Appendix F), 5) testimonial device (see Appendix G), 6) name-calling device (see Appendix I), and 7) card-stacking device (see Appendix H). Although this list was created in response to my series of ads focused on selling a specific product, the list can be approximately applied to each propaganda device when advertising nonspecific items.

The glittering generalities device (see Appendix D) will almost always prove most successful because the message is usually the shortest and it employs the use of words that make the consumer feel good, requiring little to no thought at all. Second, the bandwagon device (see Appendix E) proves quite successful by attacking the ego of the consumer, forcing him or her to make a decision about the product in an effort to find his or her place in society. Third, the transfer device (see Appendix C) proves successful by associating universally positive ideas or objects with the product being sold, also requiring little to no thought. Fourth, consumers do not need to recognize people in ads focused on the plain folks device (see Appendix F), causing

them to think little and focus on what the voice of the average person has to say about the product. Fifth, the consumer who recognizes a famous person advertised in ads focused on the testimonial device (see Appendix G) requires little thought, only that the person they see endorses the product, but if the famous person is not recognized or not respected by the consumer, the ad could be unsuccessful. The name-calling device (see Appendix I) uses words of condemnation, therefore relying on attacking the competitor, giving the consumer more to think about than the brand or the product—forcing them to think about the brand or product being advertised as it relates to the competitor. After thinking about the competitor, the consumer may decide to side with the challenger. Finally, the card-stacking device (see Appendix H) employs far too many variables to be considered a device that would prove easy to understand, remember, feel strongly about, or come to accept.

Implications for Future Research

The findings of this research found the glittering generalities device (see Appendix D) as the most successful way to persuade an audience to buy a product through a series of print advertisements, yet the exercise focused exclusively on a product categorized as an impulse buy. Therefore, further research pertaining to different categories related to the type of product advertised in a series of print advertisements would add research established by this study. Further research can explore products that require more financial commitment on the part of the consumer before choosing to purchase the product being advertised.

Conclusion

While conducting this research, I realized that there exist many different ways to persuade a consumer to act when creating printed advertisements. Those that focus on exaggeration as opposed to those focused entirely on facts alone proved most successful,

according to my research. Furthermore, the seven propaganda devices as defined by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis appeared crucial to investigate, considering the importance of the formation of the IPA and their passion for educating the masses about propaganda techniques employed for the sole purpose of manipulation.

My research encouraged me to understand that although the art of persuasion can be difficult to comprehend by the contemporary consumer, many factors are at play in the minds of consumers—at times appearing enigmatic to both the professional as well as the novice, contribute to the buying patterns of society. When designers are aware of the choices they make when intending to persuade consumers to act, more powerful ads focused on emotional appeals are generated. Alternatively, when consumers are aware of the tactics utilized by propagandists, they are able to train themselves to better resist servicing their emotions and think critically about what they see in advertisements. My research led me to create a list of criteria for determining the effectiveness of an advertisement: by assessing how easy the ad is to understand by the consumer, how compelling the ad is at targeting the emotions of the consumer, and how clear the ad is about what the advertisement wants the consumer to do, directly explaining either the product-driven or brand-driven incentives of purchasing the product. Ultimately, my research has led me to firmly believe that the glittering generalities propaganda device is the most successful way to sell a product to an audience in a series of printed ads.

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Appendix A
Current Hostess® Twinkies Logo



Appendix B
Updated Current Hostess® Twinkies Logo



Appendix C
Transfer Device in Use



They're golden for a reason.

Hostess®

Twinkies

The *superior* snack cake.

Hostess® Twinkies have always been a flawless, mesmerizing, and enchanting 24 carat golden color that snack cake lovers ask for by name. They stand alone in a class of purity.

Enjoy the decadence. Enjoy Hostess® Twinkies.

Appendix D
Glittering Generalities Device in Use

LIFE IS



BETTER

Hostess®



Appendix E
Bandwagon Device in Use

EVERYONE
HAS BEEN RAVING
OVER DEEP FRIED



SO WE'RE BRINGING
THE CARNIVAL
TO YOU

Appendix F
Plain Folks Device in Use



Imagine the Envy.

Give your child

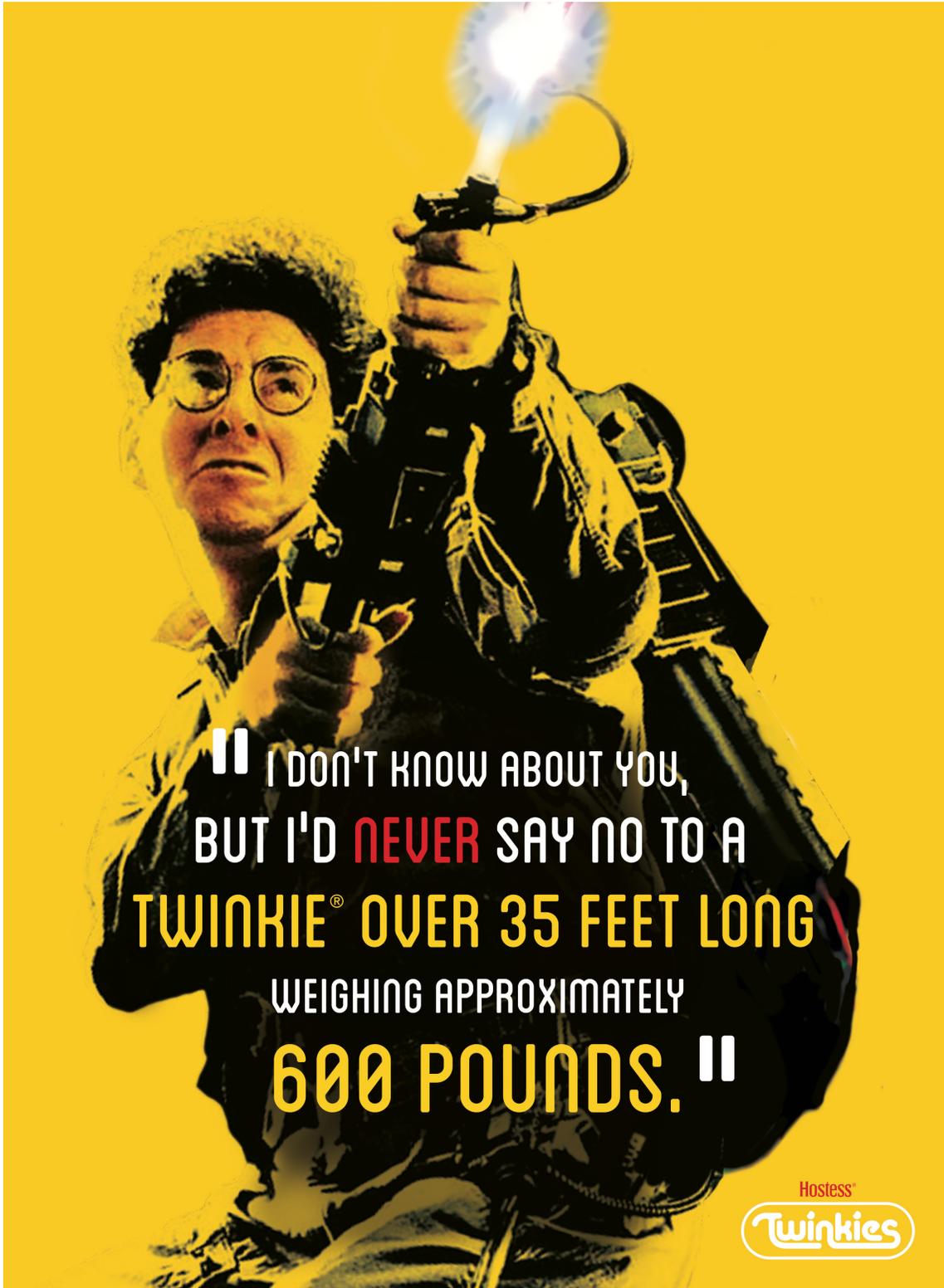
Hostess®

Twinkies

in their daily lunches.

They'll suddenly be everyone's best friend at lunch time, and you're suddenly the cool parent every other kid wishes he or she had. Bring a smile to your child's face and let them enjoy a sweet conclusion for every school lunch. Twinkies® are the perfect treat to keep your kids happy.

Appendix G
Testimonial Device in Use

A man wearing a white hazmat suit and a respirator mask is holding a glowing, futuristic device. The background is a solid yellow color. The device has a bright light at the top and a long, dark, cylindrical component extending downwards. The man has a serious expression.

|| I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU,
BUT I'D NEVER SAY NO TO A
TWINKIE® OVER 35 FEET LONG
WEIGHING APPROXIMATELY
600 POUNDS. ||

Hostess
Twinkies

Appendix H
Card Stacking Device in Use



A DESSERT LOVER'S DREAM

Twinkies® are perfect for pairing with fruit and go great before and after meals. They even help with indigestion. Sponge cake creates a soft landing for a heavy appetite; one reason for indigestion is that some food like spicy chicken and burgers are chilled in oils that are tough on the stomach lining. If you eat your Twinkies®, doing so creates a coating barrier in the stomach that helps digest risky foods at a much slower pace. So go ahead and enjoy your Hostess® Twinkie. Your stomach will be eager to thank you.

Appendix I
Name Calling Device in Use



LEAVE BAKING TO THE PROFESSIONALS, BOYS.

Hostess®

Twinkies