

Springboard^{into} Comprehension 5

Main Idea	Plagues Coral Reefs
Compare and Contrast	Air, Land, and Water Transport – Then and Now Olympic Game Technology
Fact and Opinion	The Cackleberry Creek Foghorn Defying Gravity
Cause and Effect	Animal Adaptations Severe Weather
Bias and Prejudice	Prejudice on the Goldfields Houdini – Man of Magic or Deceit?
Figurative Language	The Big Campaign The Loaded Dog



RA 11.5–12.5



Description



Written by Andrew Einspruch

The BIG Campaign

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Ads Everywhere

Everywhere you look, you see ads. Look at a billboard, magazine, TV show, T-shirt, web page, or newspaper, and you'll see ads. They show up in the mail, on radio, and embedded in online games and communities. The world is an ocean of advertising.

But why are there so many ads? That's simple. Ads are there to grab your attention, make you think about something, and influence your actions. An ad might seek to change your opinion about something, for example, which candidate to vote for. It might try to affect your behaviour, like "Don't smoke" or "Don't do drugs." Most often, however, an ad is aimed at getting you to buy something, such as a kind of food, bike, or clothing.

A planned series of ads is an **ad campaign**. Its purpose is to get a message out about a **product** and to sink that message into the minds of potential buyers, or **consumers**. A campaign's ads might be placed in several different **places**, such as in bus shelters or on TV. They may take different forms, such as print ads, posters, radio commercials, or electronic advertising displays, known as digital signs. No matter what form the ads take, they will have one major thing in common. They will have a **single idea** that ties them all together – a **campaign theme**. The theme might centre on particular words, like a slogan for a product, or it may include a particular "look" for the product and the ad, which conveys a certain feeling, such as fun, good health, or adventure.



Sales Strategies

All the strategies a company uses to get people to buy their product or service are called **marketing**. Usually, a product's marketing is planned well before the product is available. The company needs to know how it will position the product in the market, which means that it needs to look at the market and work out what the competing products are. Then it must figure out how to make its product stand out like a sore thumb in that field of similar products.

Take a new kind of sneaker, for example. Lots of companies sell sneakers and other sports footwear, and even more companies sell shoes. So, if a company wants to sell a new kind of sneaker, it is going into a crowded market. It has to work out what makes its sneakers different and get ahead of the game. It has to come up with a distinguishing feature that no other product has, called a **unique selling point** or USP. This will be the key to marketing the new product. What kind of sneaker is it? What story will the ads need to tell?



Are the sneakers for fashion or actually playing sport? Will they appeal to younger kids, teens, or adults? Boys or girls? Are they rugged or sleek? Do they yell, "Look at me!" with a gimmick like flashing lights, or are they really just to wear when you exercise? Are they just cheap, and therefore affordable to everyone, or are they the most expensive shoes ever made?

These factors affect the kinds of ads placed, where they are placed, and what they will look like. It is important to define which group of consumers you are trying to reach with your message, in other words your **target audience**. You would not advertise a teen boy's shoe in a gossip magazine or advertise a women's exercise shoe using animated dinosaurs. All of the various elements of the advertising campaign need to work together and paint a consistent picture of the product to the buyer.



The Plan

For an ad campaign to be successful, it has to be planned well, and the goals of the campaign have to be clearly defined. Answering some crucial questions before you get started will help clarify those goals and get your product to the top of the ladder quickly.

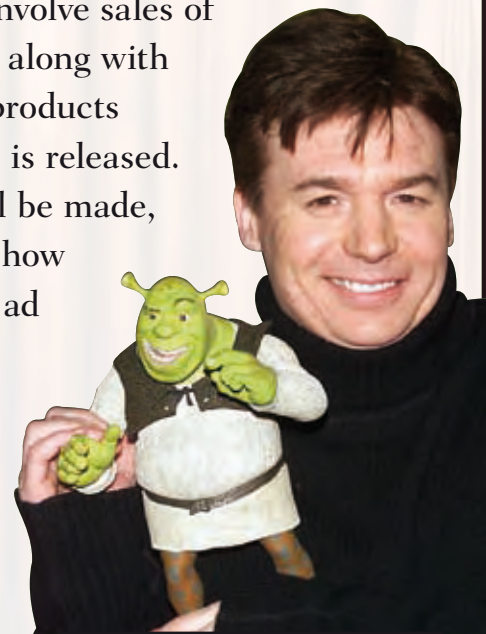
- **What is the message?** What do you want your ads to say about the product? What image or ideas do you want potential buyers to associate with it? Do you want to focus mainly on the features of the product, that is what it is good for or how it works. Alternatively, is price the main bait? Would it be more effective to focus on what a good bargain your product is in comparison to competing products? Should you talk about the availability of your product, that is how easy it is to find and purchase it?
- **Where should you put your ads?** Once you know your target audience, you need to make sure that ads appear where your target audience will see them. What mix of media and locations will be the most effective for hitting that target?
- **How much should be spent?** Ads cost money, and different types of advertising cost different amounts. For example, TV typically costs more than radio. The budget for the campaign should be decided in advance. Big companies generally plan a certain percentage of their budget for advertising each year, while small companies are often on a tight shoestring. They may only spend on ads when they have some extra cash on hand. If a company is going into a new market that is unfamiliar, it will have a hard time planning advertising spending without a crystal ball.
- **When should the ads appear?** Ads work best when they are seen over and over. Timing and frequency has to be worked out for each medium and each location.



The hugely successful *Harry Potter* books were made into movies. *Harry Potter* wristwatches were sold as part of an international ad campaign for one of the movies.

Some ad campaigns, for example for children's movies, may involve elements that have to be planned aeons in advance. Blockbuster Hollywood movies like *Shrek* or *Harry Potter* involve sales of a lot of tie-in products, or **merchandise**, to go along with the movie. The ad companies will plan these products months and sometimes years before the movie is released. They have to figure out what merchandise will be made, who will sell it, where it will be available, and how the merchandise will contribute to the overall ad campaign for the movie.

A lot of thought must go into the words and images used in any part of an ad campaign. Ads have to get people to act, which usually means "buy." The words and pictures need to trigger thoughts and feelings that encourage the consumer to buy. How well this is done will decide if an ad campaign booms or busts.



Movie star Mike Myers promoted the movie *Shrek* along with a *Shrek* doll.