

UNETHICAL ISSUES OF ADVERTISING

¹Dr. BHAWNA ATTREYA

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Management, HLM College

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is about the unethical issues related to advertising. The purpose of this paper is to focus light on avoidance of morals or ethics in the field of marketing and advertising. Its true that to earn the maximum profit is the ultimate goal of an organization but how we earn profit is a primary thing to focus. Many companies have made mistakes in their advertising policies which misguide, misleads and make fool their customer which not a right way to make their product popular or to increase their sales. Many brands like Nestle(Maggi),Nivea,Axe,8PM,Rajnigandha, CocaCola,Amazon, Adidas,Tesco,Walmart etc. had Unethical advertising issues. Many laws have made in different countries to control such issues.

Methodology – This is a review paper based on the study of secondary data.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising has a purpose to inform or communicate about a particular product or service so that our customer get attract to purchase that. So advertising is a motivating force to increase the sell of our product or service. Advertising prepare the mind of customer for purchasing the product. It's a message we communicate to customers regarding a company's product or service. So, advertising has a very deep impact on the mind of consumers.

It creates an image of our product or service. It's a kind of mind teaching process. Through advertising a company or a firm teaches the mind of its customers about why to use and how to use the products,about benefits of the product, what is the gao filling area of the product or service. So basically advertising means communicating or informing the customers about the product and to motivate them to purchase that product.

Definition of Advertising: "Advertising is any paid form of non- personal presentation and promotion if goods,Services or ideas by an identified sponsor".

By-Philip Kotler: Advertising consists of all activities involved in presenting to a group, a non personal oral or visual openly sponsored identified message regarding a product.

By-Frank Presbrey: Its true that by perfect advertising a company can be successful to attract more and more consumers to purchase its product but sometimes the advertising policies of an organization forgets about their moral and social responsibilities and avoid the difference between right and wrong.

Its good to attract consumers and earn profit by increasing the sales but when the profit is earned on account of avoiding work ethics, this needs to pay attention.

So the main objective of this paper is to throw light on the Unethical issues of advertising which was faced by many companies and what are their consequences so that in future ethical values of work can be maintained.

So firstly its essential to know the mean of moral values and ethics.

Definition of Ethics: "Ethics is the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duties and obligations".

By- Webster: "Ethics is defined as standards of conduct that indicate how one should behave based on moral duties and virtues".

"Ethics is defined as standards of conduct that indicate how one should behave based on moral duties and virtues". So basically moral values are the standards to guide about the right and wrong, Moral values set the rules of right and wrong.

Moral values set the rules of right and wrong for a person's behaviour and conduct. Ethics or moral values are the basic foundation of each and every area of our life.

Definition of 'Business Ethics': Business ethics is generally coming to know what is right or wrong on the workplace and doing what is right this is in regard to effects of products /services and in relationships with stakeholders.

By- "Carter MC Namara": So ethics basically creates clarity between right and wrong.

When an organization knowingly or unknowingly goes against the ethics many issues and consequences arise and it become a challenge to overcome

For conveying the message regarding your product or service many law have been made so that the social responsibility can be fulfilled. No doubt a company efforts to earn high profit and it should be their ultimate goal but when profit is earned by misguiding or befooling your customers ,it becomes an offence and needs to settle the issue. For to earn a good profit margin many companies misguided and mislead to their customers.

False advertising is something which is based on making fool to your customers. Some companies promise for a good quality product but actually they don't provide. Such things ruin the image and goodwill of company and its product.

Following is a list of some main ethical issues of advertising:

1. Harming to competitive Organisations.
2. Promoting unhealthy habits like-Alcohol,Smoking.
3. Overstatement about a product.
4. Not fulfilling the quality promises.
5. False promises.
6. Misguiding to children.
7. Promoting Unhealthy eatables.
8. Promoting Unhealthy and harmful products.

A discussion regarding the above heads is as follows:

1. Harming To Competitive Organization

Many companies or brands have tried to destroy the image of their competitor 's product by teaching the minds of consumers or conveying the message in a way which shows their product is better than their competitors product. Its good to promote the benefits of your products but not by the direct comparison because it can harm the image of other company's product which is not ethical.

2. Promoting Unhealthy Habits And Lifestyle

Its completely unethical when companies or brands promotes unhealthy habits or style and fashion. Such marketers advertise their product by misguiding the customers. When it is already known that the consumption of a particular product is dangerous for human life they should not motivate people for unhealthy lifestyle like - Alcohol, smoking, consuming Tobacco. Examples of such brands are- 8PM, Baggpiper, Pan Parag, Rajnigandha etc.

3. Overstatement About A Product

Sometimes companies and brands try to increase their sales by making overstatement about their product to impress the consumers but when the consumers are motivated to purchase and they use the product the ground reality is different.

Their product does not match with the expectations of consumers and this thing disappoint the consumers. So such overstatements leave bad impact on the success of a product in the market for long term.

Examples of such products are- Berger King- It was of less size than the size they showed in their advertisement. Energy drinks likes, RED BULL an energy drink company promoted the product with the tag line- "Red Bull gives you wings". So the company was sued for making such kind of overstatement regarding the product.

4. Not Fulfilling Quality Promises

Many brands cheats their customers when they promise for best quality product but not serve that like BMW, Coca-Cola.

Just for to get temporary benefit or not having ethical sense many brands promise their consumers that they will provide them best quality but in reality they don't fulfil their promises so again customers feel cheated by the brand and this thing ruin the image of brand, in the contrary if a brand keeps the promises it has made with its consumers, provides the long term benefits to be stable in the market.

5. Misguiding To Children And Youth

Many advertisements target and misguide to children because children do not have experiences of life, sense of right and wrong. So its not good to take advantage of the innocence of children. The products or services related to children must be advertised carefully because children adopt the things very fast without having knowledge of right and wrong.

So if an advertisement is conveying wrong message to children it can hamper their personality and life. Products like chips snacks, heal thdrinks, cold drinks, fast foods (pizza, burger) affects life habits and health of children. So companies producing such products has greater responsibility about what they are conveying to children through the advertisements.

False Promises

When a brand promises to its consumers that they will provide this and this and that even highlight the benefits of their product by a tag line. But later don't provide that level of satisfaction to consumers. Such acts comes under false promise. Consumers are motivated by the features, quality, benefits and level of satisfaction a company promise in advertisement and their expectations raise from the product. But when their product fails match up that level, consumers are highly dissatisfied.

Such things stop the consumer to use your product again and decrease the sell of the product. Although its not essential that a firm do all this knowingly everytime but yes not fulfilling the promise creates dissatisfaction in consumers.

6. Promoting Unhealthy Eatables

From the perspective of ethics its not good to promote unhealthy eatables to children which harm directly to their health like drinks,snacks,junck foods etc.

Many companies advertise these foods in a way which motivate children to consume in high quantity which affect their health in serious manner and cause health problems like obesity, stomach infection.

7. Promoting Unhealthy And Harmful Products

Many brands advertise unhealthy and harmful products to earn profit which are not good for human health, natural and social environment. Such brands are avoiding their social responsibility. Advertisement of defective products, sugary eatables, cigarettes, deodorant and perfumes containing high chemicals are unethical and government has made many regulations to control such issues.

Advertisement of AXE(deodorant)had a controversy due to showing its presence with wings. By such ways a company tries to establish the product with grand image which does not match in reality. Nivea cream advertisement was banned due to many misleading and false promising advertisement of visibly fairer skin and the advertisement was banned for promoting racism. Maggi also faced the challenges of misleading advertisements when the product was found containing lead. The advertisement and production of the product was banned by the Indian government was sued for the act.

Nike was accused for misleading and false promises issue in China. Nike made an official apology for false promise in advertisements because Nike basketball shoes was of low quality than was promised in advertisement. Many regulations have made by Indian government to stop such advertising under the 'Consumer Protection Act' 1986.

L'oreal promised to its consumers with a tag of "Clinically proven" in its advertisements but later it was found that brand has done no studies and analysis regarding its skincare products. So the brand was banned from using its skincare products because it lied to its consumers.

Kellogg's Rice crispy cereal was accused for false promising advertisements. The brand promised to improve the immunity of children but in reality it did not contain such nutrients like Vitamin A,B,C and E. The federal trade commission ordered Kellogg's to stop such advertising.

Hyundai And Kia was sued for advertising its cars horsepower with overstatements which did not match the reality.

CONCLUSION

So by the study we found there are many brands which was sued for misleading false or unethical advertising. We know that earning profit is the ultimate goal of a firm but it should not avoid their ethical responsibilities so that they can contribute for the welfare of society, natural environment and consumers. A firm should increase its sell in ethical manner otherwise it can hamper the brand image and will give negative impact on consumer's health, mind, habits, social image, lifestyle, upbringing of children. For welfare of A company and others its the primary thing to be ethical.

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