

Chapter 3

Persuasion in marketing communications

Teaching notes

The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) provides students with a framework for understanding how receivers actually process promotional communications, while the attitude model can be used to explain existing beliefs (which will in part determine how a message is processed) and potential leverage points for persuasion. The attitude model also offers a good basis for demonstrating how basic promotional research can be designed using statements about products' features or benefits and the importance of those benefits. This chapter introduces involvement, or personal relevance, as a major determinant in how messages will be processed.

Chapter 3 also reinforces the critical point that effective promotional communications cannot be designed without focusing on as the receiver's existing beliefs, involvement level, motivation, opportunity and ability to process communications.

If the instructor is interested, philosophy of science and related theoretical issues can be raised along with the attitude model and the consumer processing model (CPM). The theory of reasoned action (TORA) demonstrates how theories can be helpful without necessarily being 'true'. In other words, we do not need to prove that attitudes actually exist in order to use the model effectively. A basic understanding of hypothetical constructs can help students see how theory and practice can be combined, thus demonstrating the value of theory to practitioners.

Learning objectives

After studying this chapter, students should be able to explain:

- the nature and role of attitudes in marketing communications
- the role of persuasion in marketing communications
- the ELM and its implications for marketing communications
- basic attitude change strategies
- practical marketing communication efforts that enhance consumers' motivation, opportunity and ability to process messages
- tools of persuasion from the marketing communicator's perspective.

Chapter tie-ins

- Chapter 2 tie-ins
 - The CPM deals with generic responses to messages, often over time. The ELM deals more with responses to a specific communication.
 - The attitude model can be seen as a memory model that influences cognitive processing and behaviour.
- Future tie-ins: the CPM can be used as a basis for understanding different message strategies such as one-sided versus two-sided communications, inoculation and high-fear communications. The CPM can also be used to evaluate different creative strategies.
- The most important aspect of the CPM is the role of receiver in counter-arguing marketing communications. Counter-arguing is usually based on existing beliefs and feelings, again highlighting the importance of existing belief structures in designing effective communications.
- Once students understand the basics of the CPM and the attitude model, then understanding different message strategies to change attitudes and to enhance processing becomes relatively easy.

Chapter outline

- The nature and role of attitudes. Attitudes are hypothetical constructs which cannot be seen or touched and are used to explain observable events, such as a purchase.
- Attitude is an enduring positive or negative feeling or evaluative judgement of some person, object or issue.
- An attitude is developed by consumers, whereas persuasion is an effort by a marketing communicator to influence the consumers' attitudes and behaviour in a manner that benefits both the communicator and, in relationship-oriented marketing, the consumer.
- Three important characteristics of attitudes: they (1) are learned, (2) are relatively enduring, and (3) influence behaviour.

The tri-component model of attitudes

- Attitudes consist of three components.
 - Affective reflects a person's feelings or evaluations with regard to an object or issue.
 - Cognitive refers to a person's beliefs about an object or issue.

- Conative represents a person's behavioural tendency to act towards an object or with regard to an issue.
- An attitude is characterised by progressing from thinking (cognitive) to feeling (affective) to behaving (conative).

Hierarchies of effects

- For high-involvement decision making, consumers become aware of a brand from marketing communication – which, if effective, motivates them to acquire more information about that brand. They form beliefs about the brand's ability to satisfy their consumption needs (cognitive component); those beliefs are integrated, and feeling towards and evaluations of the product are developed (affective component). On the basis of these feelings and evaluations, an intention is formed to purchase the new product or not (conative component).
- For low-involvement decision making, the consumer progresses from minimal cognition to conation (and actual behaviour) and then to affect.

Persuasion in marketing communications

Multiple forms of persuasion

Persuasion is a deliberate attempt to influence how consumers' beliefs, attitudes, or behaviours are formed.

- It can be considered from the point of view of the person being persuaded, by exploring the factors that cause a person to be persuaded
- It can be considered from the perspective of marketing communicators and examines the techniques that marketers can use to influence consumers' attitudes and encourage their action

The influence process: The person being persuaded

There are four main factors in the influence process: message arguments and peripheral cues, which are under the marketer's control, and receiver involvement and initial position, which apply to the characteristics of the person being persuaded.

Message arguments

- The strength or quality of message arguments is a major determinant of whether and to what extent persuasion occurs.
- Emotion plays a key role in driving consumer choice.

Peripheral cues

Cues that are peripheral to the primary message arguments, such as background music, scenery and graphics, are also major determinants of persuasion.

Receiver involvement

The personal relevance that a communication has for a receiver is a critical determinant of the extent and form of persuasion. Motivation and attention to message arguments depends on the consumer's decision or topic at hand.

Receiver's initial position

- Persuasion results from self-generated thoughts produced by individuals in response to persuasive communications ('thinking makes it so').
- Consumers reactions tend not to be vocalised, but are instead thoughts that occur spontaneously in response to exposure to advertisements and other forms of persuasive marketing communications.
- Different types of message-related thoughts include the following.
 - Supportive arguments occur when a receiver agrees with the message's arguments.
 - Counter-arguments occur when the receiver challenges or argues with message claims. In persuasion, counter-arguments are the most damaging type of thoughts to a communication's potential effectiveness.

An integrated model of persuasion

- Petty and Cacioppo's elaboration likelihood model (ELM).
- Elaboration deals with mental activity in response to a marketing message (i.e. thinking about what the message is saying).
- Three factors – motivation, opportunity and ability (MOA) – determine the degree to which a receiver will think about (or elaborate on, hence the title) a message.
 - For example, motivation occurs when a message relates to a person's present consumption-related goals and needs, and it therefore relevant to that individual.
 - Opportunity relates to whether it is physically possible for a person to process a message; opportunity is restricted when, among other reasons, a message is presented too quickly, the sounds is too

low, or an individual is distracted.

- Ability is based on whether a person is familiar with message claims and is capable of comprehending them.
- Elaboration likelihood represents the chance that the receiver will 'elaborate' on a message (i.e. think about it, use his or her own memory structures, and make comparisons and/or associations).
- Elaboration likelihood is low when MOA factors are low; elaboration likelihood is high when MOA factors are high. Low elaboration leads to peripheral processing; high elaboration leads to central processing. Moderate elaboration leads to a dual route.

The central route

- Central processing. This means that the receiver focuses predominantly on message arguments rather than peripheral cues.
 - Central processing does not imply that the receiver agrees with the message's claims.
- High-involvement persuasion. When a consumer is highly involved in a marketing communication message, they will relate aspects of the message to their personal situation. If these associations are positive, their attitude towards the advertised brand may become more positive.
 - As involvement increases, the receiver usually will both use more memory for and make associations to information surrounding the product, its purchase or use. Therefore, any attitude change experienced under the central route will be relatively enduring.
- Emotion-based persuasion. When the receiver is highly involved with the communication's message content and experiences strong positive or negative emotions, his or her attitude towards the advertised brand may become either more positive or more negative. The change may be more enduring because of the receiver's high involvement.
- Message-based persuasion. When the receiver is sufficiently motivated, message elaboration may be about beliefs about the advertised brand or the importance of specific features and benefits. These thoughts can result in a change in attitude towards the brand, which is based on the theory of reasoned action (TORA).

Teaching note: Students may have come across attitudes towards an object model (i.e. beliefs that objects have certain features and that those features vary in importance) in consumer behaviour or psychology classes. Stressing the consequences of actions and the importance/liking of those consequences will help them to understand the differences between TORA and the object model.

- TORA suggests that a consumer's attitude towards using or buying a brand is determined by the perceived consequences of using the brand weighed against their evaluations of those consequences.
- Definitions of the terms in the TORA equation are as follows:
 - Outcomes involve those aspects of brand ownership that the consumer seeks either to obtain or to avoid. Outcomes vary in the value consumers place on them or in consumers' evaluations; they are not brand specific, but instead relate to the general product category.
 - Beliefs are consumers' subjective assessments or expectations regarding the likelihood that performing a certain act will lead to a certain outcome.
 - Evaluations represent the subjective value that consumers attach to consumption outcomes.

Attitude-change strategies

- Using the TORA model, three different strategies emerge to change consumer attitudes.
 1. Change an existing belief about a consequence (e.g. 'Maybe your deodorant doesn't work all day ...').
 2. Change existing outcome evaluations of the importance of certain consequences (e.g. 'Certain snack foods have sodium levels so high you'll have to pay attention').
 3. Add an entirely new outcome into the evaluation process through an add-an-outcome-strategy (e.g. 'Our chips are not only delicious, but your purchase supports Australian potato farmers').

The peripheral route

- Receivers process peripherally when MOA factors are at low levels. Peripheral processing focuses on processing peripheral cues rather than message arguments. For example, receivers may listen to music in an ad, watch models or scenery and so on, rather than attending to message arguments.
- However, peripheral processing can still have an effect. If the consumer experiences thoughts or emotions in response to peripheral cues, these associations carry over to the brand. This effect will most likely occur if the brand is named and/or shown repeatedly in the communication. Classical conditioning provides one account of how

attitudes towards a brand are formed via the peripheral route.

Classical conditioning of attitudes

- Attractive brand advertisements provide peripheral cues that are unconditioned stimuli, while the advertised brand is the conditioned stimulus. The emotional reactions to the unconditioned stimuli are unconditioned responses.
- Conditioning occurs when an unconditioned stimulus (taste, smell) is paired enough times with a conditioned stimulus (e.g. a brand name or package) that seeing the package alone is enough to elicit the feelings surrounding the taste or smell. Students who are dental phobic need only to be reminded of the sound of a dentist's high-speed drill to demonstrate this effect.
- Through repeated pairings, the emotion contained in the cue may become associated with the brand and create a positive attitude towards the brand.

Temporary versus enduring attitude change

- When elaboration likelihood is high, causing receivers to think about and process message arguments, the attitudes that are formed will be relatively enduring.
- When elaboration likelihood is low, attitude change may occur, but it will be temporary unless consumers are exposed constantly to the peripheral cue.

Dual routes

Central and peripheral processes often operate simultaneously when the MOA factors produce a moderate elaboration likelihood level.

Practical implications: enhancing consumers' processing motivation, opportunity and ability

- Common sense implies that messages should match consumers' motivation, opportunity and ability to process information.
- If consumers are interested in learning about a product and a company's brand has clear advantages over competitive brands, design a message telling consumers explicitly why the brand is superior. Consumers will be motivated and better able to comprehend the message.
- When brands in a product category are similar, persuasive brand

messages add little to consumers' product category understanding. Consequently, consumers will devote only a small amount of mental effort to processing brand-related messages. In this situation, peripheral cues become important. Music, attractive models and humour may help to initiate the motivation process or offer the opportunity for classical conditioning-type associations.

- In practice, persuasive marketing communications efforts include a combination of message arguments and peripheral cues.

Enhancing motivation to attend to messages

- A major objective for a marketing communicator is to increase the consumer's motivation both to attend to the message and process brand information.
 - Voluntary attention occurs when consumers perceive a message to be relevant to their current purchase-related goals. (This will usually be high involvement.)
 - Involuntary attention occurs when attention-getting cues (e.g. novel stimuli, complex pictures) are used to attract the receiver's attention.
- Appeals to informational and hedonic needs. Relevant factual information can help garner attention by fulfilling informational needs, while messages producing certain positive feelings or pleasant experiences cater to hedonic needs.
- Use of novel stimuli. Novel stimuli (unusual, distinctive or unpredictable) are ones that have not become habitual to receivers and usually can command some attention.
- Use of intense stimuli. Intense stimuli (louder, brighter, bigger) can attract greater attention.
- Use of motion. Using motion can attract attention and direct consumer attention to the brand name and the ad copy.

Enhancing motivation to process messages

- Increase the relevance of the brand to consumers (e.g. personalised messages that make the receiver feel this message is directed specifically towards him or her) by using rhetorical questions in actual copy, fear appeals and dramatic presentation.
- Raise consumers' curiosity about the brand with humour, rhetorical questions, fear appeals and dramatic presentation to increase the significance of the brand to the consumers: 'What is coming next?'

Enhancing opportunity to encode information

The marketing communicator's goal is to get consumers to encode information and to make it as easy as possible for them to do so quickly. Through repetition, consumers have an increased opportunity to encode the important information the communicator wishes to convey. Also, different media channels (TV, radio, print etc.) offer different types of message-processing opportunities.

Enhancing opportunity to reduce processing time

The more processing time is reduced, the less effort the receiver needs to expend and the greater the potential for more information to be processed. Pictures and imagery can reduce reading time, instead of just words alone being used in a communication.

Enhancing ability to access knowledge structures

People are most able to process new information that relates to something they already know or understand. To enhance consumers' ability to process information, the marketing communicator needs to provide a context for verbal information or pictures. A method for accomplishing this is verbal framing, which means that pictures in ads are placed in the context of or framed with appropriate words or phrases.

Enhancing ability to create knowledge structures

- Sometimes marketing communicators need to create knowledge structures for the information they want consumers to have about their brands. This is accomplished by facilitating exemplar-based learning. An exemplar is a specimen or model of a particular concept or idea.
- Presenting information in a very concrete (or non-abstract) form, or concretising information, often with metaphors or similes, can help people better understand it.

Creating definite brand benefits

Creating specific and tangible brand benefits is based on the idea that it is easier for consumers to recall and retrieve tangible, rather than abstract, information.

The influence process: the persuader's perspective

- Robert Cialdini identified six tools of influence that cut across persuasion practices. The following are based on (scientifically

speaking, metaphorical comparisons) how behaviours can appear to be almost instinctive or at least partially out of the normal realm of choice and consciousness.

1. Reciprocation

- As a part of the acculturation process, people acquire the norm of reciprocity – we learn to return a favour with a favour. Marketing communicators sometimes give gifts or samples in the hope that customers will reciprocate by purchasing products.
- The effectiveness of a tactic depends on persuasion circumstances and participant characteristics. The effectiveness of reciprocation depends on whether the receiver perceives the gift-giver as honest and sincere.

2. Commitment and consistency

- After customers make a commitment, there is a strong tendency to remain faithful to it. Consistency is a valued human characteristic. The marketing communicator may get a commitment to purchase from a customer and then work on the price in the hope that the customer will continue to act in a manner consistent with the commitment.
- Sincerity of the persuader plays a role in the effectiveness of this tactic. A consumer who is highly ego-involved in a choice tends to remain consistent.

3. Social proof

- When individuals do not know exactly what to do, they often take their lead from the behaviour of others. This principle of social proof is activated when appropriate behaviour is somewhat unclear.

4. Liking

- Individuals are most likely to adopt an attitude or undertake an action when a likeable person promotes that action. Two manifestations of likeability are physical attractiveness and similarity.

5. Authority

- Most people are raised to respect authority figures and to exhibit a sense of duty towards them. Marketing communicators typically use surrogates, such as medical authorities, for appeals to authority in the marketplace.

6. Scarcity

- Objects become more desirable when they become rare. This reaction is explained by the theory of psychological reactance –

people react against any effort to reduce their freedoms or choices.

- Marketing communicators often appeal to psychological reactance by making products seem scarce (e.g. 'There are only a few left').

Ethical issues in persuasion

- Ethics are society's persuasion about what is right and wrong, or what is morally acceptable, and although the intensity of these beliefs varies between individuals, ethics and corporate responsibility are an important element of persuasion in marketing communications.
- The success, or otherwise, of an organisation's ethics and corporate responsibility are an important element of persuasion in marketing communications.

Solutions to discussion questions (page 81)

- 1 Fully explain the cognitive, affective and conative components of consumer attitudes. Provide examples of each by selecting a particular product brand.

The cognitive component refers to an individual's beliefs about an object or about the consequences of acting towards the object (buying it, consuming it). The affective component represents one's overall evaluation of and feelings towards the object. The conative component refers to one's likelihood of acting towards the object.

For example, a student may regard selling as a career that offers many challenges, opportunities for self-development, considerable autonomy and attractive financial returns (cognitive component). Because of these favourable beliefs, the student evaluates selling and sales management very favourably as a career (affective component) and will interview for jobs in this field (conative component).

- 2 Distinguish message arguments and peripheral cues as fundamental determinants of persuasion. Provide several examples of each from actual advertisements.

Message arguments represent the primary selling points that a marketing communicator attempts to convey, whereas peripheral cues represent other message features (background music, attractive scenery), which

embellish a message but are not intended to be compelling arguments. It has been empirically demonstrated that message arguments are of the utmost importance when an individual is involved in the message topic; peripheral cues play an important role when the individual is not involved. The answer to Question 4 elaborates on these points.

- 3 There are three general strategies for changing attitudes. Explain each of these strategies, using for illustration purposes, consumers' attitudes towards fast-food brands McDonald's, Hungry Jack's and Domino's.

Assume for this illustration a fast-food chain that can be characterised as offering attractive, clean facilities, with consistent food with different tastes/product themes (e.g. burgers, Mexican, chicken etc.). Now assume that the chain wants to create a more 'up-scale' image. It can change consumers' attitudes and, thus, its image, by (1) changing existing beliefs (e.g. 'Our new products really do taste different'), (2) changing an existing evaluation (e.g. 'A burger doesn't have to taste just "regular" any more') or (3) adding a new attribute (e.g. 'Our new country soups are a whole new kind of lunch').

- 4 Fully explain the similarity between the concepts of elaboration and active synthesis.

Active synthesis is the perceptual process by which a receiver interprets incoming stimuli by comparing features and properties of the stimuli with mental templates. Elaboration describes the same type of comparison process but emphasises the amount of effort or intensity devoted to thinking about information. Active synthesis relates more to the processing of visual stimuli compared to elaboration's greater emphasis on verbal material.

- 5 Find two print advertisements that illustrate exemplar-based learning, and explain in detail how they facilitate this type of learning.

Students must look for ads that teach consumers by showing an example of how to use a product or service. Students should already be familiar with the product or service in question.

- 6 Assume that you are responsible for the marketing communications of an online retailer. You know that consumers have positive evaluations for the

convenience of online shopping, but many are distrustful of unknown retailers and are wary of providing their credit card numbers online. Using material from this chapter, explain how you would attempt to change consumers' attitudes about the risks of online shopping. Visit several actual online retailers and describe instances where those retailers have addressed consumers' perceptions of risk.

This requires students to use one or all of the three attitude change models. Students must consider what consequences consumers had negative beliefs about.

- 7 Persuaders use various means of persuasion to influence peoples' actions. Using the six tools of influence that cut across persuasion practices, develop strategies that a fundraiser for breast cancer research can use to encourage people to donate to the cancer research.

The tools of influence are as follows: reciprocation, commitment and consistency, social proof, liking, authority and scarcity.

Students should visit:

<http://www.nbcf.org.au> or <http://www.pinkribbonday.com.au> for inspiration on their campaign.

- 8 Re-read the Asia-Pacific focus feature and explain, using the marketing insights that Griffin's adopted to relaunch Choco-ade biscuits, how an Australian organisation could persuade consumers to change their brand preference for sweet biscuits.

See:

Struggling Arnott's: <http://bit.ly/1xU1JX>

Arnott's range: <http://bit.ly/TNLP25>

Goodman Fielder range: <http://bit.ly/1plpaCQ>

Students are encouraged to be creative in their approach to this question.

Suggested solutions to digital activities

1. To what degree does the website <http://www.nothinglikeaustralia.com> use the ELM model's central vs. peripheral routes to persuasion?

Solution:

The website and campaign applies the central route to persuasion in that there is a focus on high EL and enduring changes in attitudes to travellers about Australia as a destination. The focus is on the experience of other

consumers on the site linked to a community of travellers.

2. Compare the websites of VB beer with John West salmon and see which of the six persuasion strategies each employs. Does your answer suggest that leisure/pleasure products and services are more limited than healthier products and services?

Solution:

See:

<https://www.victoriabitter.com.au/>: (Social Proof) VB places emphasis on the history of the brand and the personality of the real beer drink both as individual but also within the peer context. Drinkers of VB are said to be in a club which has a common standard: drinking VB. Emphasis is also placed on quality and a behind the scenes look at brewing. Having fun is a key element of their argument with 'your mates'. A link into the social network and community is https://apps.facebook.com/vb_intervention/.

<http://www.johnwest.com.au/>: (Commitment and Consistency) John West Salmon places emphasis on visual stimuli and on the visual product image and information. Emphasis in the argument is also placed on health benefits and a number of co-brands that are used to signal this attribute credibly.

No. There are no limitations in strategies that can be deployed for leisure/pleasure products and services compared to healthier products and services.

Search me! marketing

Keyword: Attitude

Read the paper: 'Why celebrity sells: a dual entertainment path model of brand endorsement', *Journal of Advertising*, 43.2 (April–June 2014): p. 155.

1. What does the term 'celebrity endorsement' mean?
2. How do celebrity endorsements lead to attitude change in consumers?

Use the key term to find additional journal papers or news items covering this topic.

Keyword: Motivation, opportunity and ability (MOA)

Read the paper: 'Assessing multifunctional innovation adoption via an integrative model', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39.5 (Oct. 2011): p. 717.

1. Describe the three components of the MOA model.
2. How is the MOA model used when assessing the adoption of innovative products like the Apple iPad?

Use the key term to find additional journal papers or news items covering this topic.

Keyword: Persuasion

Read the paper: "I eat organic for my benefit and yours": egoistic and altruistic considerations for purchasing organic food and their implications for advertising strategists', *Journal of Advertising*, 43.1 (January–March 2014): p. 18.

1. What are egoistic and altruistic considerations?
2. How do marketers persuade consumers to purchase organic food?

Use the key term to find additional journal papers or news items covering this topic.

Weblinks

1. Alcohol Counter-Advertising and the Media – A Review of Recent Research by Gina Agostinelli, Ph.D., and Joel W. Grube, Ph.D.
<http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh26-1/15-21.htm>
2. Jim Beam - Devil's Cut: <http://www.strawberryfrog.com/work/devils-cut>
3. Advertising Education Foundation:
http://www.aef.com/on_campus/classroom/case_histories/landing
4. A List of Mass Communication Theories
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/40477217/List-of-Mass-Communication-Theories>
5. A fun look at the Elaboration Likelihood Model:
<http://youtu.be/p9zlyBxg6Es>
6. The Gruen HQ: <https://www.youtube.com/user/GruenHQ>
7. TVNZ The Ad Show: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TVNZTheADShow>
8. Some really good work from four innovative agencies focusing on IMC:
 - a. Tango Communications (now Done by Friday):
<http://www.dbfdigital.co.nz/>
 - b. Strawberry Frog: <http://strawberryfrog.com/work>

- c. Biscuit: <http://www.biscuit.net.au/advertising.php>
- d. Whybin\TBWA: <http://www.whybintbwamelbourne.com.au/work/> (Melbourne) and <http://www.whybintbwasydney.com.au/work/> (Sydney)

Additional short-answer questions and solutions

1. Identify and explain the six tools of influence that were identified by Robert Cialdini.

ANSWER:

Students should refer to material appearing on pages 76–9 and discuss the following six tools of influence:

- reciprocation
- commitment and consistency
- social proof
- liking
- authority
- scarcity.

2. Explain the significance of the theory of psychological reactance.

ANSWER:

Students should refer to material that appears on pages 78–9 of the text.

3. Write a description of the elaboration likelihood model and discuss the implications of this model on marketing communications.

ANSWER:

Students should refer to material shown on pages 63–9, including the model shown in Figure 3.5. Two keys areas that students should discuss are:

- central route to persuasion
- peripheral route to persuasion.

4. Explain why physical attractiveness and similarity are important.

ANSWER:

Students should refer to the material on page 77.

5. Explain what attitudes are, and describe their components.

ANSWER:

Students should refer to material appearing on pages 59–61. The three components they should discuss are:

- the affective component
- the cognitive component
- the conative component.

Additional advertisement discussion activity

Show students the Quit ad:

<http://www.quit.org.au/media/article.aspx?ContentID=mouth-cancer>

See also additional resources:

<http://www.quit.org.au/>

<http://www.quit.org.au/media/default.aspx?ContainerID=media-centre>

Compare to: <http://www.quit.org.nz/>

Have students critically evaluate the ad. How effective is it at persuasion? Which parts of attitude does it address? How could it be improved to be more persuasive? Do they think this is an effective ad or does it over-use fear, as suggested by various complaints?

A description of the ad taken directly from the website:

This television advert from the anti-smoking body Quit Victoria was the subject of a large number of complaints from viewers who found its depiction of the ravages of mouth cancer to be, variously, 'disgusting', 'vile' and 'scary'. Australian regulators dismissed the complaints (see adjudication below), taking into account that the 'violent images shown' were appropriate for a public health campaign, but noting also that they were 'at the upper limit' of what could be considered permissible. The advert continues to be shown on Australian television.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on a cigarette pack showing a photo of a mouth ravaged by mouth cancer. The mouth suddenly starts to speak 'Smoking causes mouth cancer.' The camera zooms out to show a woman who continues 'If it didn't I wouldn't be needing radiotherapy and chemotherapy. If looking at mouth cancer on your cigarettes makes you uncomfortable...look at another part of the pack'. The camera then focuses on the Quitline phone number on the cigarette pack. The woman concludes 'Quitting is hard. Not quitting is harder'.

The complaint: Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following: I do not think that everyone should be subjected to such graphic, foul and disgusting images ...

Everyone knows this is a foul and dangerous habit. I DO NOT wish to see these images as they make me nauseous.

The graphic images were totally unnecessary I found the look of the woman...horrifying and scary. I am going to suffer from nightmares and won't be able to sleep.

This ad gave my 9 year old daughter nightmares. The woman looks like something out of a horror movie.

I do not wish to be subjected to such vile imagery. I found this ad highly disturbing as the image of the woman with mouth cancer is disgusting and I could actually not eat again after seeing this.

I am generally sick of our prevailing culture of fear. Even with the use of prosthetics, images such as this in movies quite regularly attracts an 'R' rating.

The pictured face makes us feel nauseous.

It has gone way beyond the boundaries of good (or bad) taste.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following: The response to date to the campaign has been overwhelmingly positive, nonetheless we take very seriously any comments of the kind made by the general public.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Complaint reference number | 313/06 |
| 2. Advertiser | Quit Victoria (Mouth Cancer) |
| 3. Product | Community Awareness |
| 4. Type of advertisement | TV |
| 5. Nature of complaint | Other – Causes alarm and distress |

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 6. Date of determination | Tuesday, 8 August 2006 |
| 7. DETERMINATION | Dismissed |

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ('Board') considered whether this advertisement breaches section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the 'Code'). The Board noted the complaints made in relation to the advertisement. The Board noted that clause 2.2 of the Code requires that violence not be presented unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised. The Board agreed that the advertisement was graphic and likely to be offensive to some people. The Board noted its previous decisions relating to public health and safety campaigns, where it accepted that the level of violence shown is justifiable in the context of the important health message being conveyed to the public. The Board considered that the violent images shown in this advertisement are appropriate but wished it noted that these images are at the upper limit of what the Board considers appropriate even in the context of a public health or safety campaign. Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on any grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.