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Advertisement Assignment

The United States Presidential election in 2004 was primarily between John Kerry and President George W. Bush. In this election, Kerry represented the democratic party while Bush was representing the republican party. Both candidates used many forms of advertisements, slogans, and persuasion to promote their stances and ideas. One thing President Bush did in some of his negative advertisements attacking Kerry was to bring up Kerry's inconsistency in terms of voting on certain policies. In our advertisement we simulate these same types of themes by directing it to a specific audience, referencing advertisement strategies that had been done before, and creating it in a visually appealing manner.

The audience we targeted in our ad was current United States soldiers as well as those who are considering entering the military. By default, we figured that an ad targeting current soldiers would also appeal to veterans as well as the family members of the soldiers. We did this because these groups of people often have strong viewpoints on gun laws as well as international affairs and waging war. Their desire for a strong leader with a well thought out plan could benefit Bush especially as this ad presents John Kerry as indecisive, potentially making swift, inadequate decisions that could jeopardize troops.

Congruent with our potential target audience, we would most likely air this advertisement from 5pm to 8pm on the Fox News channel Monday through Thursday. Airing this ad during the news and after, until the beginning of prime time, would allow viewers who generally watch Fox News and lean more towards the conservative viewpoint to see it. It is right after the work day

so families could be more likely to relax after a meal and watch television before bed, making this time perfect to target veterans, servicemembers, and their family members to see the ad and understand the image of Kerry we are promoting and portraying.

According to Benoit, there are two topics that a presidential ad can address which are policy and character (Benoit 191). Benoit offers a certain tactic where both policy and character are used in ads: “An interesting twist is to attack a candidate’s policy positions and then draw a conclusion about character (Benoit 194). We used both elements of policy and character in our ad and tried to utilize the tactic that Benoit described above but in a different way. Policy was addressed towards the end of the ad when we supported Bush. We touched on his plan for troops and his confidence in commanding the military, both of which are part of his policy that will appeal to the targeted audience. In the beginning of the ad, we touched on character when attacking John Kerry for voting for the \$87 billion war package but then voting against it. We went further into Kerry’s character issues by asking the rhetorical question “So who is Kerry really backing- his beneficiaries and party who seem to control his every move?” This allowed the audience to draw conclusions about Kerry’s character and got them thinking that perhaps Kerry doesn’t really have their best interest in mind and his character isn’t fit to lead this country.

In the article written by Benoit it talks about candidates attacking their opponents based on inconsistency. Benoit writes “Voters want candidates to be consistent. First, inconsistency can be evidence of confusion or outright deceit, neither desirable in a president” (Benoit 205). In our ad that we created this goes hand in hand with how John Kerry was inconsistent with his vote about the \$87 billion dollar war package. Kerry first voted for the package but after receiving

harsh criticism from his party, Kerry changed his mind and voted against the war package for Iraq and Afghanistan. As American voters we want to see that our future President will hold on to his promises and ideas, and not start second guessing on what they previously voted on. Our ad is similar to the ad Johnson used in 1964 attacking his opponent, Goldwater, for being inconsistent. This can also be seen in the ad President Nixon used in his re-election campaign in 1972 attacking McGovern for flip-flopping on particular issues. America deserves a President that is not going to be flip-flopping on important issues regarding the United States. We want a strong President that will stand up for his ideas that he might have stated, and defend his words and actions even if he is being criticized.

We used a negative political message because we specifically attacked our opponent, John Kerry (Tent, Friedenber & Denton, 118). We did this because Kerry swayed between his own beliefs and beneficiaries. Within our ad we pointed out the various facts that Kerry was unable to make up his mind. We wanted to make it clear that Americans, especially service members in the United States, do not want a president that does not have a set plan. Our ad is very similar to the windsurfing ad that was approved by Bush in 2004. The windsurfing ad demonstrated that Kerry was changing his mind on what he was saying about certain policies. The policy we focused on was how Kerry voting for the \$87 billion war package but then voting against it. In the 2004 windsurfing ad they had a windsurfer changing the way the wing was facing, either supported or opposed side. Both the 2004 windsurfing ad and our ad show that Kerry changed his mind in different political situations making it hard to trust him when he did not have a set agenda.

In conclusion, our main focus for this ad was to demonstrate the fluctuations of John Kerry's views and decisions. We wanted to portray him as being indecisive, which is unnerving for those whose lives are in his hands based on the decisions he makes. John Kerry has had a track record for flip flopping on important issues in America. Americans do not want someone in the most powerful office in the world to be flip flopping on important issues. In this way we showed specifically to service members that President Bush was more capable for the position of President and had the ability to provide a sound plan of action as Commander and Chief through our ad.

Works Cited

Benoit, William L. *Functional Analysis of Political Television Advertisements*. Lexington Books, 2015.

Maviglio. "Historical Campaign Ad: Windsurfing (Bush-Cheney '04)." *YouTube*, YouTube, 2 May 2006, www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbdzMLk9wHQ.

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