

Nike Advertisement Campaign

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On September 7th, 2018, Nike Inc. released a controversial advertisement that included Colin Kaepernick and the statement, “Believe in something even if it means sacrificing everything.” Nike aired this commercial with the intent to spark a reaction from certain groups of individuals. Nike’s commercial hit home with a diverse group, but took just as equal strides backwards with others. On one side of the argument, people believe that this ad had a different tone of meaning behind it rather than just supporting someone who knelt for the flag. On the other side, people are making the argument that Kaepernick disrespected the National Anthem, the United States flag, and the military. In return, many believe that Nike would have been better off entering in public service officials instead of famous athletes.

Description of Original Persuasive Artifact

As Nike aired the commercial with Colin Kaepernick, the amount of publicity the ad received was tremendous. Very quickly, the ad was torn apart by both dominant political parties in the United States. Nike utilized this ad in a strategic manner. Secretly, they kept a contract with Colin Kaepernick as he was released from the 49er’s, and decided to capitalize on the contract with the controversial ad. The overarching message is targeted to a younger audience and primarily individuals of minorities including women and individuals with disabilities paralleled by the overarching theme of an active lifestyle leading oneself to accomplishing a dream. The ad focused on a multitude of individuals who may have perceived hardships throughout life. Kaepernick's role played a part in being the forefront leader through the kneeling protests against social injustice that sparked a wave of interest amongst millions across the country and world. The primary persuasive message of the ad was found to have a very specific target audience. After numerous polling results of the ad were released, they found that

individuals ranging from 18 to 34 years of age had an overwhelming amount of support for the ad itself and its persuasive message. However, for individuals who are 65 and older, the overwhelming stance of the ad was in opposition (Boren, 2018).

Next, the ad portrayed one of the two sides of a refutational argument, which can help cultivate the persuasive message. The first side is the speaker's standpoint, and the second side is the opposition, along with evidence that refutes the opposing point of view. Targeting minority groups, the message that Nike relayed was that it does not matter how crazy your dreams are, but that you should chase them anyway. Although the audience does see a wide range of people in the two minute clip, the people utilized are shown because they have all overcome obstacles along their journey in life. Nike did not present a refutational argument through this ad, rather focused on one side. In persuasion, when two sides of an argument are presented, the message is more likely to be persuasive. It is beneficial because when a persuader proposes both sides of an argument, along with their refutation of the opposing argument, they are able to frame why their message is more important. This aligns with the sidedness aspect of message structure.

Continuing along, it is important to include the three different appeals to an effective persuasive message. The three appeals that the ad used to reach people were; ethos, pathos and logos. First off, according to Perloff, (2014) "ethos is the characteristics of the communicator". In the case of this ad, the communicator is Nike. Nike is a very credible source with good character. They are one of the biggest sports retail and shoe distributors in not only the United States, but the whole entirety of the world. When it comes to character Nike has a very reputable past, even with the few blimps in their repertoire, they are still thought of as a very precise and prestigious corporation.

Not only does Nike's message encapsulate the idea of credibility, but also the appeal of emotion through pathos. According to Perloff (2014), pathos is, "the emotional state of the audience of the message". With the topic of the advertisement being, "Believe in something even if it means sacrificing everything", it tugs at a few strings within the heart. What fully encapsulates pathos within the ad is by choosing professional athletes that have had hardships in life such as Shaquem Griffin, Serena Williams and Colin Kaepernick. People are able to relate to them. For instance, Shaquem Griffin only having one hand, Serena Williams being not only a female in professional sports but a African-American female on top of it, and Colin Kaepernick kneeling for something he believes in and getting fired because of it. These individuals are easily relatable, because they all have had challenges to overcome in their lives just as all of us have challenges to fight through, too.

Ethos and pathos are just two ideas that the Nike ad incorporates in their final product, but one final appeal that they used in their ad is that of logos. According to Perloff (2014), logos is, "the ethical component to a message argument." Nike used logic by being able to integrate the slogan of, "Believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything." By using this slogan, they were able to communicate that most things in life require a sacrifice. However, if we put our all into one thing and sacrifice all the other things that we could pursue, because we have full faith and believe in something, we are able to achieve those goals.

Moving ahead, the primary messages resonate with the viewer through the primacy and recency effects in the ad itself. The primacy effect is the initial portion of the persuasive message. The recency segment of a message is the ending part or final thoughts of an idea. Both primacy and recency effects are integrated together when it comes to a persuasive message.

These two parts are the portions of the messages that will resonate and follow with the viewer of the ad. The primacy theme comes into effect with Kaepernick starting off the ad in a very uplifting/positive manner with “If people say your dreams are crazy, if they laugh at what you think you can do, good, stay that way” (Nike, 2018). This primacy grabs the attention of many aspiring individuals who can relate with far-fetched dreams of their own, leading them to draw their attention to the message. Then, the recency portion ends with the memorable lines of “Don’t ask if your dreams are crazy, ask if they’re crazy enough” (Nike, 2018). These two ideas will resonate strongly with a large audience. The ad drew such a statistical interaction with viewers between the ages of 18 to 34 where many lifelong dreams are being attended to as they pursue them. This message is tailored in a way to be both broad, yet specific so that the viewer can connect their own dreams with the ad, which appeals to their need for cognition. The viewer of the ad is left feeling both inspired and moved into holding on to their dreams and that no dream is too crazy to chase, no matter the walk of life they come from.

Furthermore, Colin Kaepernick’s ad employed the use of narrative in several ways. According to Perloff (2014), narrative is defined as, “any cohesive and coherent story with an identifiable beginning, middle, and end that provides information about scene, characters, and conflict; raises unanswered questions or unresolved conflict; and provides resolution”. Throughout the ad, several real life stories are portrayed to showcase the idea that individuals should “Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything.” Kaepernick, a well known athlete, narrated the experiences of a number of athletes that have faced the toughest obstacles in order to achieve their dreams. The ad showcased 10 year old Isaiah Bird, who achieved the unthinkable by being a wrestler with no legs. The ad also depicts the story of

Charlie Jabaley. The majority of people would think becoming an Iron Man is hard enough, yet Jabaley did just that after losing 120 pounds while also beating a brain tumor. The ad shows the life of Lacey Baker, a transgender skateboarder who shows you do not need to conform to the ideas of what a stereotypical skateboarder looks like. Along with using Kaepernick, the ad also narrates the stories of highly famous athletes who have achieved their dreams. LeBron James is not only the greatest basketball player on the planet, but also someone that believes in the success of those less fortunate. The ad also showcased the life of Serena Williams, an athlete that came from Compton to become the greatest athlete ever (Nike, 2018). The narratives of the ad showed that it does not matter what disability you have, how much you weigh, what you look like, what you stand for, or where you come from, you still are able to achieve your dreams if you are willing to sacrifice everything. An audience should believe that they are able to achieve their dreams after perceiving the fact that the individuals of the ad were able to achieve their dreams after facing so many obstacles.

In keeping with the original persuasive message, several conclusions were drawn for the audience. The athletes that were involved in the Nike ad have gone through controversy, hard times, and doubt. These individuals have sacrificed a lot in their lives to achieve something that has always been a dream of theirs'. The audience is left to conclude that these people should not receive such an abundant amount of negative feedback because of the hardships they have had to overcome already. Some viewers will never entirely understand or relate to these individuals and should cast less of a judgement upon them. This ad leaves open the fact that Nike agrees that Kaepernick did sacrifice everything by believing in something, but does not tell its viewers on whether or not kneeling for the flag and National Anthem is right.

Next, the attitude that is being attacked in the Nike ad is that of a sense of overcoming adversity. By using their statement, “Believe in something even if it means sacrificing everything” and the choosing of very strategic professional athletes, they are able to hit on the fact that overcoming adversity is a characteristic of Nike. They understand that not everybody has the easiest route to perfection. Some people have to face different obstacles such as being born without a hand, or being a female and not having the same chances that a male athlete does. While hitting on this overarching understanding that people have challenges to overcome, Nike uses an iconic slogan that sums up why believing in your dreams is worth it in the end.

Additionally, the platform that the artifact appeals to is the power that comes along with well-known individuals. This includes the motivational speech from Kaepernick, the background music, and also him walking, which creates a sense of anticipation from the motion that is involved. It also pulled in the pride of patriotism through the controversy. A lot of controversy was stirred up when the ad was first introduced, since many took offense that Kaepernick was the face behind “sacrificing everything”. Race is also a factor because of racism that is still prevalent today. Race may not be the most abundant idea behind this ad, but it has an underlying script that comes with all of the professional athletes being African-American. Even though racism is a topic that is hush hush in views of some, many were not shy to speak out about it .

Finally, one of the interpersonal persuasion techniques demonstrated in the commercial is the use of Pique then Disrupt. According to Perloff (2014), Pique then Disrupt is defined as “making the request in an unusual and atypical manner so that the target’s interest is piqued, the refusal script is disrupted, and the target is induced to think positively about compliance”. The fact that Nike used a controversial figure such as Colin Kaepernick to narrate the commercial,

piques an audience's interest. Our society finds controversy very intriguing and we are interested in new controversies that may arise. Pique then Disrupt is also demonstrated in the fact that the ad shows several stories of individuals who have achieved their dreams through the toughest obstacles. The fact that they were able to do so makes an audience more inclined to achieve their dreams and be the best at something as it will appear to be more achievable and effortless than the individuals portrayed in the commercial.

Modified Persuasive Artifact

On the contrary, the altered Nike ad is extremely different, and boasts a very different persuasive message. With Nike's main ad slogan "Believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything", being tailored to showcase an entirely different audience. The main persuasive message changes, creating this sense of completely different morals and values of nationalism to the country. Footage of police personnel, firefighters, soldiers, and even athletes who gave everything for their country are shown. As the screenplay plays out, one sees how these messages of Nike's main slogan are almost verbatim to the original ad. However, they are portrayed in an opposite form, which enhances the overall persuasive message to come across as pure nationalism of sacrificing one's precious life, rather than a social movement. Both heroic, but for entirely different reasons.

Keeping a similar framework as the original Nike ad, our changed ad presents only one side of an argument. Instead of targeting minority groups, we altered our audience to that of first responders and military personnel. We do not present the other side of a refutational argument. We frame Nike's message of chasing your dreams no matter how crazy they are to that of people who make the ultimate sacrifice of risking their lives for those in need.

In retrospect, our ad also uses all three appeals that a persuasive message can have to become fully persuasive and have an impact on an individual. The first appeal is that of Ethos. Nike still has the credibility they have had since day one, but even with those blimps from the past, they are still one of the best and biggest corporations on the market. Even though someone being a credible source is a big proponent, an even bigger proponent is that of emotion (pathos). In our ad, we feel as if emotions are heightened. We believe that the emotion of patriotism is an emotion that almost everyone can relate to. By using the photos of fallen fire-fighters, police officers, fallen veterans especially Pat Tillman, we will be able to hit the deep part of other people's hearts. People are able to connect to these individuals because most people support these protective services. Lastly, we will further assess the portrayal of logos within. By using the slogan that Nike used in the original ad, we are able to connect to ordinary people that have given up everything in their lives, such as leaving their home, family, friends and comfortable lives to protect our country. The people who decide to take on these careers, for example Pat Tillman, believed that protecting our country was more important than anything, ultimately resulting in the loss of his life.

Likewise, this ad is now tailored to fit a more nationalistic sense of heroism while encompassing plenty of primacy and recency. The main difference between the primacy and recency of the original ad to the new ad is the amount of dramatic live footage of highly dangerous situations being portrayed. Starting off, the ad depicts a dramatic scene from 9/11 fireman walking away from a cloud of rubble. This stands out, especially with the dramatic screenplay of the slow motion effect. The viewer is now intently watching as they are unsure of what will occur next. Throughout the ad, are several live footage clips of firemen, police

personnel and military personnel who are risking their lives each second during traumatic experiences. Towards the end of the ad, the recency effect depicting the picture portrayed in slow motion is of Pat Tillman, the once NFL star changed military member who sacrificed everything for his country. Tillman knew of his duty regarding his gifted ability and proud nationalism.

Subsequently, the artifact that we have created employs the use of narrative through the ideas of individuals involved with the military, police officers, firefighters, and the SWAT team. Our video specifically focuses on the story of Pat Tillman, a former well-known athlete who died in Afghanistan while fighting in the Army for the United States. The idea that he valued something and sacrificed everything for what he believed in is something that everyone should do. Another use of narrative is found in the footage of the U.S. Marines in combat in Afghanistan in which the raw footage shows them in crossfire, sacrificing their lives for their country. Narrative is also portrayed in the footage of police officers and firefighters battling a fire in Louisiana. While battling this large structural blaze, these men and women are risking their lives in order to put out the fire to save the lives of others nearby. Additionally, narrative is depicted in the clip of the SWAT team going into a potentially dangerous environment to support law enforcement in the high risk situation. All of the men and women portrayed in our ad are people that truly follow Nike's slogan, "Believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything". They believe that the safety of others is highly important and should be a value to stand behind.

In like manner, a specific conclusion drawn for the audience is service personnel that know the risks and willingly sacrifice their lives for others' protection. Since we have pride and love for our country, this ad will show the respect and honor that was wanted, when the original ad first came out. There was a large amount of controversy with the original ad, and this remake

will hopefully impact the people who felt offended the first time. The audience is left to conclude that we should not take our lives, our loved ones, or our country for granted. Our ad leaves open the fact that heroism is a very pertinent idea, but some individuals take heroism in different contexts, which leaves it to be open for interpretation.

Conversely, in the original Nike ad this idea of overcoming adversity was hit upon by the choosing of the athletes and the choice of the quote. However, in our version of the ad we hit upon the attitude of patriotism. The reason we believe that patriotism is the major attitude in our version of the ad is because we chose select figures in the world and certain occupations that resemble the freedom of America. We do not only choose to present these people we also show the significance of their career choices and the things they sacrifice when death is a very realistic outcome for their professions on a daily basis.

Even more, the ideological platform the artifact appeals to is honor because of the service personnel involved and their humble heroic efforts. The slogan, "Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything" plays a huge role in this aspect of persuasion because it makes other individuals stop and think about what a service individual actually experiences. Another platform is not taking anything for granted. This is because some individuals often do take their lives and what they have for granted, but makes those people seem cowardly when compared to individuals who chose to give up their luxuries for something bigger than themselves.

Lastly, the interpersonal persuasion technique in our ad is Pique the Disrupt. Since we are using the same idea behind the script of the original ad, the audience is once again encouraged to not just achieve their dreams but to sacrifice everything in order to be the best at something. Pique then Disrupt is also used through the idea that Nike regularly focuses on athletes rather

than those in the military or law enforcement. We created a new and unexpected perspective to Nike that expands on more than just sports. Some may argue, though, that Pique then Disrupt is not used in the sense that we are creating an ad that is less controversial than the Nike ad. Instead, we are creating the ad that millions of people would have wanted and expected instead. Some of the population believed that the individuals that are portrayed in our ad are the individuals that actually sacrifice everything rather than athletes.

In conclusion, both ads are very persuasive in their own efforts. The original Nike ad used a very persuasive slogan to appeal to the viewer, just as our reconstructed advertisement did. Our ad differs from the original due to its target audience. The slogan of each ad remained the same, but with drastically different visual representations on the ad itself, each one had a very different outcome. Instead of appealing to diversity and minorities, we targeted our ad to hit home with adversity and heroism. We believe that our ad should have been portrayed along side or in place of the original ad because it would have allowed more people to have clarification, rather than having to be open to try to understand what the advertisement creators meant by the dialogue and pictures.

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Appendix A

If people say your dreams are crazy
If they laugh at what you think you can do
good... stay that way

Don't picture yourself only graduating from fireman school, picture yourself in the shoes of a fireman on a day that will forever be burnt in our minds, while saving the lives of thousands

Don't settle to succeed in the police academy after failing once and trying again, challenge yourself and become a member of the SWAT team with a team of officers who share a unique special bond

As wildfires blaze across the western coast, picture yourself and your team giving the ultimate sacrifice to assure the safety of countless families around
Remember, if people say your aspirations are crazy, good, stay that way

Don't picture yourself wearing the gear of a 9/11 fireman...picture a 9/11 fireman wearing yours

Don't settle for simply being the best soldier in your platoon....or the bravest soldier in the ongoing gun battle..... push yourself and be the most courageous soldier this world has ever seen

Because what non-believers fail to understand
is that calling a dream crazy
is not an insult...it's a compliment

Don't picture yourself entering a combat zone with your fellow brothers, rather become the lead SWAT team member and make it a reality

Don't settle to be an NFL superstar, rather retire and become a hero both on and off the field while giving the ultimate sacrifice to your country

Don't ask if your dreams are crazy ask.....if they're crazy enough