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Scholarly Article Evaluation

In the research study, “Advertising as a Method of Mass Communication of Ideas and Information”, published in the *Journal of Advertising* in 1975, Nugent Wedding presents the advantages and disadvantages of the use of advertising as a way to influence attitudes and opinions. Wedding cites the immense cost, time limitations and lack of trust from the public as the disadvantages and the advantages as the ability to control the message being sent as well as how often the message is sent. While Wedding brings up some very good points, he neglects to consider the future of advertising, like how it may become more important as technology continues to advance.

Wedding’s article begins with an introduction in which Wedding clarifies the difference between product advertising and what he will be talking about in his article, which he calls “non-product advertising” (Wedding 1975). The first is advertising with the intent of selling a product or service, while the latter is advertising to try to change an individual’s attitudes or opinions.

Wedding then continues by discussing “causes for the increased use of non-product advertising” (Wedding 1975). These include a spike in importance of brand image, or how the public views a brand. This means that the public wanted brands to take a stance in different social, political or environmental causes. This desire for the public to want to know where a

brand stood in these situations ultimately led to an increase in the type of advertising where they weren't promoting a product or service, but were merely appealing to the public.

Wedding then talks about the advantages of non-product advertising. His main argument in this portion is that the freedom a brand has to control where, when and how often an ad is played helps that brand to reach its target audience. However, that is all Wedding really has to say about the advantages, the section is rather short. Whereas, his comments on the disadvantages of non-product advertising are pretty intense.

His first argument is that this type of advertising is expensive, especially because in 1956 the Supreme Court had a hearing about said advertising in which the outcome was, "a ruling which declared expenditures for advertising used for lobbying purposes non-deductible" (Wedding 1975). He then describes how the public generally dislikes advertising because it was still a newer form of communication in the 1970s, and most people thought these brands were being boisterous by continuously promoting themselves. Furthermore, Wedding discusses the overwhelming lack of trust the public had for advertising. At that time, many people heard of brands through word of mouth and other more traditional ways of publicity. The radio and television advertisements that people saw left them wondering how reliable the information was. Wedding ends his article with a short conclusion in which he repeats his main points, and includes a short list he entitles, "Some suggestions for improving batting averages in the use of advertising" (Wedding 1975).

With all of this being said, I believe that this research is very good overall. Firstly, Nugent Wedding is a very decorated man in his field. He was a professor of advertising at the University of Illinois, Urbana, and was previously a professor of marketing at the University of Miami in Ohio. This leads me to believe that this research is very credible. I also think the article

was written in a very succinct manner- it could be read and understood by someone who has no previous knowledge of advertising or mass communication. His research question was promptly stated in the introduction of the article, and is extremely relevant given the time that this was written.

Wedding's conclusions definitely make sense. He reiterates his main points, as well as bringing up some final disadvantages. These include copy requirements and the real intention of non-product advertising. Wedding claims that even though these advertisements may not be about a specific product or service, the end goal could very well be to make a sale (Wedding 1975). Wedding also, while he says he wants to give possible ideas for improvements for the future of advertising, fails to consider the continuation of technological advancements. Yes, this was 1975, and very much not like today in 2022. However, televisions were being sold like crazy and were swiftly replacing radios. So, as someone commenting on the future of advertising, I think this article could have benefited with a little more creativity in his contemplation of the future. It would be speculation, but he speculated many things in this article, like the real motive behind non-product advertising.

In this article, Nugent Wedding discussed the advantages and disadvantages of non-product advertising. This article would be extremely beneficial for the marketing or public relations team of a brand. Those individuals would be able to read about the disadvantages and work out a way in which they could still make this type of advertising work. Overall, this article was extremely informative and interesting, especially because of when it was written. Wedding was sure to include his advice and opinions on how to better non-product advertising. However, I think he could have used his opinion and creativity to try to anticipate advertising in the future in regards to technological advancements.

Reference List:

Wedding, Nugent. "Advertising as a Method of Mass Communication of Ideas and Information."

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