Chapter 28
Adapting Collective Tendencies in Narrative Advertising

Ayca Oralkan
Beykent University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Brands are communication-based strategies where consumer expectations confront with company values, goals and promises. Developing successful branding strategies enables strengthened personal bonds with target groups. Stories have always captivated people and a company can tell its own story to reflect the brand value and the company vision. In the current social media era, narrative advertising has become a favorite tool of communication in reaching the target groups as a persuasion technique by making the audience feel involved and be part of the stories. In this context, collective tendencies are adapted to be the hosting medium for the slogan of the brand or any related information regarding the branding strategies. On the other hand, collective inertia, which develops as a side effect of these cultural tendencies, allows the new approaches as a source of interest if and only if they pass the high threshold. In these circumstances, narrative advertising is one of the most appropriate methods that can be used for a successful marketing strategy to overcome the inertia resistance.

INTRODUCTION

Brands are efficient meeting points of consumer expectations with the values, goals, and promises of companies. Developing appropriate branding strategies is a critical approach that provides a way that strengthens personal bonds with target groups. Stories have always captivated people and are easier to remember than the facts. In this manner, social media has become one of the most influential marketing environments in advertisement history and building a brand identity through narrative advertising has become an effective strategic approach for brands.

Concerning narrative advertising as a marketing communication tool, cultural factors are influential in branding strategies. Social evolution has recently been in an equilibrium state with regard to the co-existence of globalization and cultural diversity in an analogy to solar hydrostatic equilibrium between nuclear fusion and gravitational attraction (Kippenhahn & Weigert, 1990), where heterogenizing effects
Adapting Collective Tendencies in Narrative Advertising

are as influential as the homogenizing effects. For example, in response to the homogenization effect of English as a common language, there is heterogenization effect as many network platforms where participants develop content with various national and even local languages. The assumption for social evolution to have similar mechanisms with diversity-based genetic evolution is pointing the continuity of the cultural diversity.

In the current social media era, narrative advertising has become a favorite tool of communication in reaching the target groups as a persuasion technique by making the audience feel involved and be part of the stories. In this context, collective tendencies are adapted to be the hosting medium for the slogan of the brand or any related information regarding the branding strategies. There are many popular hypotheses focusing on the nature of brand loyalty, where a well-established brand trust is the main constraint. With a thermodynamic perspective, the cumulative potential of brand trust has a tendency to get diminished. Therefore, the maintenance of the brand trust requires continuous conduction of energy such as consistent narrative advertising.

BACKGROUND FOR NARRATIVE ADVERTISING

Experiential marketing requires consumers to get influenced by remarkable and memorable elements, and sufficient information to enable them to make purchase decisions (Gilmore & Pine, 2002). In this manner, it is possible to interact on a personal level and develop clearly differentiated product presentation methods. Impressive experiences that stimulate emotions have a positive impact on consumer attitudes and behaviors (Frost et al., 2008). With the opportunities offered by digital communication, narrative advertising has attracted significant interest and has been proposed as an effective tool to generate positive attitudes about a brand (Kozinets et al., 2008; Keng et al., 2011; Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012; Ching et al., 2013) and such technological developments have enabled marketers to build more effective narrative advertisements through the upgraded features and advanced capabilities of internet. The physical properties of the website that addresses the consumer’s feelings and encourages the target audience to buy have a significant impact on purchase tendencies (Constantinides et al., 2010; Mandel & Johnson, 2002). Narrative advertising involves storytelling about product consumption and related experiences that occur in a series of events and affects the feelings of the target groups to convince them (Mick, 1987; Swatman et al., 2006). Besides, consistent stories can allow consumers to connect with the characters and such experiences affect consumer’s purchase intentions (Bagozzi et al., 1999).

Conventional argumentative advertising tends to provide information based on convincing facts through proofs and reason-based statements (Lien & Chen, 2013). On the other hand, the introduction of the product in narrative advertising is an experience in itself, and this can persuade consumers by addressing the consumer’s emotional responses (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010). In narrative advertising, different methods such as drama, humor or epic narration can be used to trigger the emotions of the participants and to provide empathy with the characters in the story (Gulas et al., 2010). Studies have shown that the effects of narrative advertising, especially in approaches to advertising and brand attitudes, are more pronounced compared to argumentative advertising (Chang, 2009).