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Advertising campaigns by Lay’s in China and American

With the development of technology and the improvement of the degree of opening to the outside world, some companies named transnational companies are more active between the countries. Carolyn A. Lin describes China a big and attractive market, she says: “China, with its one billion plus population, become a coveted market.” Lin explains this one reason that transnational companies based in the United States pand their markets to China(Lin). Lay’s, one of these transnational companies, also makes inroads into the Chinese market.

One essential problem faced by these transnational companies first is how to make people know its product. The solution clearly is using advertisements. Another problem comes out then that how to advertise. Lin writes out the point in her article, she says: “As advertising is a cultural product in its own right, when the East meets the West without a conjoining point, the marketing costs borne by advertisers could be unexpectedly exor- bitant; such costs may come in the guise of missed opportunities or, worse yet, a battered product image.” We can easily see from her words that the power point having an impact on the marketing cost even the product image is the culture. Yes, the culture is a vital influence in advertisements. As the saying goes, when in Rome, do as the Romans do. When influenced by the culture, an advertising campaign can be different in two countries(Lin). Lay’s, also shows this side within China and American advertising campaigns.

Culture does have a great impact on the advertising campaigns. Lay’s, when marching in to Chinese market, should know clearly about the culture difference between China and American so that it can adjust its advertising campaign timely. Lin cites Pan and colleagues’ conclusion about cultural differences between China and the American. She says,

Pan and colleagues (1994, p. 24) summarize the differences between the cultural systems the United States as follows:

1. U.S. culture emphasizes "active mastery" in the person-nature relationship…
2. U.S. culture tends to be concerned with external experiences…
3. U.S. culture is characterized by an open view of the world, emphasizing change and movement…
4. U.S. culture places primary faith in rationalism and is oriented toward the future…
5. U.S. culture emphasizes horizontal dimensions of interpersonal relationships…
6. U.S. culture values the individual personality…

Lin use these notes to state the traditional cultural difference between China and the American. Then she elucidates that the preceding discussion indicates that China and the United States have their own traditional core values, but the values are never fixed. In other words, advertisements can also influence the culture. In the two advertising campaigns of Lay’s we can see some points of cultural difference between China and American above, also, we can see the advertisement influence on culture.

To start with, we will see a video advertisement named “Lay’s - 2016 Happy Chinese New Year” in China. This video advertisement is prepared for the Chinese New Year 2016 which is the year of money. In the video, one-person visits relatives for the year and they give their benediction to each other. Money is the Chinese zodiac of 2016. We can easily perceive that on the top of the Product packaging, there is half of the money’s face which is one prove for the cultural influence for advertisement. At the last scene of the commercial, there is one words says “ 把乐带回家” which translates to “ take happiness to home.” In this words, “ 乐”, which means“ happiness”, is also a symbol of Lay’s for the translation of“ Lay’s” is “ 乐事”. “” means “home” which is very important and meaningful for Chinese. Lay’s combines these two words together and get a good effect. We can interpret this as when we go home in New Year, we can take Lay’s which is also happiness to home. In my opinion, Lay’s does a good job in the advertisement campaign. It combines elements of China perfectly. overall, we can find that Chinese culture places more weight on vertical interpersonal relationships (the main character is the old man), also, Chinese culture weights heavily a person's duties to family, clan, and state (Lay’s uses visiting relatives in spring festival as entry point). While the American culture emphasizes the individual personality. The other video is named “Lay’s TV Commercial –Out For Some Lay’s And You Face A Test”. I think this title is very interest. This name compares “out for Lay’s” to “face a test”. When facing a test, we might be hard to choose an answer. Just like the test, we can not choose to buy which one for that there are many kinds of flavors and all of them are worth a try. As for the video, we will find that a man hangs into the merchandise area of Lay’s which is long and filled with many colors of Lay’s. When he sees the product of Lay’s, he just can not control himself (this is a paradise with Lay’s). At last, he just sits there with several bags of Lay’s chips open and eats the chips. Although he is glared by security guard, one chip can solve this problem (we can see the big power of the chips, defusing anger). In this video, Lay’s values one person’s feelings. It describes the man’s difficulty to choose one (there are many flavors) and the yummy taste which can be seen from the man and the security guard’s exaggerated facial expression. Thus, we can say U.S. culture values the individual personality. Both videos convey that Lays can take happiness to us; however, the happiness are different. The Chinese video’ happiness is the happiness of sharing and reunion, while the American one is the happiness of enjoying chips. One is for a group of people, one is for individual. In conclusion, these two videos, which influenced by local culture, have different emphases. Chinese one values more about family while American one cares more about the individual personality. The culture can influence the commercial.

Lin thinks that culture is unfixed, she says: “China and the United States have their own traditional core values, but the values are never fixed.” Though I concede that the culture is unfixed, I still insist that there are some deep rooted cultural values remaining strong. Like the kinship in China. In my opinion, it is these deep rooted cultural values that make the culture influence the commercial. These deep rooted cultural values can not be change. In order to have a better benefit, the commercial made by transnational companies must follow these cultural or may leading to bigger marketing cost even the product image damaging. This explains what is the main character for pushing the commercial to be influenced by culture. On the contrary, there are still some thing not very fixed in culture which can be impacted. Therefore, the advertisements also can change the culture. Take Lay’s as an example, when Lay’s advertises in China, advertisements sell a new lifestyle, a new eating habits. Chinese once lived in a regular life (three meals a day and not eat other things packed before), but now, they can eat snakes and their eating habits slowly change. Chinese use chopsticks to eat but they must use hands to eat chips. To a certain extent, we can say the commercial can influence the culture.

To give a conclusion, it is still right that cultural values reflected in Chinese and American advertisements. The cultural values can influence the commercial for there is still some values deep rooted must be obeyed. Also, the commercial can also change other country’s culture for its based original culture.

Work Cited

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