

The Cognizin advertisement in Psychology Today attempts to persuade white middle-aged men to buy their product, appealing to problems of an aging mind. These problems, such as lack of mental energy and the “complications” of responsibility, are supposedly solved by the product Cognizin. The purpose of the advertisement is to convince potential buyers that Cognizin is a trustworthy dietary supplement that increases the chemical phosphatidylcholine which may help those who suffer from circulation problems in the brain (WebMD). The advertisement is presented in Psychology Today, a magazine that is “devoted exclusively to everybody's favorite subject: Ourselves.” By placing their ad in a magazine that promotes physical and mental forms of self-discovery, the ad plays on the idea that readers will find problems in their behavior (namely mental) by looking at the ad, thus making a path for persuasion of the solution of Cognizin.

The ad depicts a scarlet silhouette of a man holding his chin, presumably in deep thought. Inside of the silhouette, white words, ideas, and illustrations fill the area. One of these illustrations is an incandescent light bulb which, in cartoons, is often used to signify a character coming up with an idea. However, an ad has only one frame to convey the entirety of a thought. Thus we are led to believe that the rest of the information inside the silhouette are parts of the idea of what is going through the man's mind. The top of the ad states, “Help your brain keep up” then proceeds to list responsibilities, claims to reliability, and technical jargon. Off on the side the ad, a dark box holds a link to Cognizin online site where one would find games that “Train -your-brain”. Immediately below this lies familiar Facebook and Twitter icons. These social media interfaces may extend the influence of the ad across multiple platforms.

The advertisement uses ethos to frame the product as trustworthy and reputable for those looking at purchasing it. Logos is used to show that their product is the right choice to give your brain “the energy, nourishment, and protection it needs.” Pathos is used in an attempt to show understanding of the difficulties that the reader may be having. These techniques combine to influence the reader that Cognizin will help ease their complicated “Modern life”.

Cognizin relates its name to a major feature of the supposed side effects the supplement: improved thinking. The brand name “Cognizin” takes its name from a derivative of the word “cognition”: the act of understanding something. Naming the supplement this way draws parallels of the similar signifiers and improved mental ability for readers. Moreover, the slogan under the name says that Cognizin is “For the evolution of your mind.” This mind growth may be precisely what the reader who was presented with so many problems may be looking to achieve with the help of Cognizin.

The ad suggests that in the modern world the amount of information that aging adults need to keep track of is complex and growing. The images in the silhouette affirm this by showing relationships among figures that are exceedingly difficult to grasp in a mere glance. These figures also help us get a better idea of who the ad is targeting. We see the both the words “work” and “team” in close proximity within the silhouette. This suggests that the target had a team/human focused work environment. In addition, the ad seems to show worry over 401K savings. Most adults only begin to worry about this as their life progresses and retirement plans become a priority. The silhouetted man is noticeably older and worried about the details possible obstacles of retirement. Finally, we see an image of clouds and the sun appear in the upper portion of the silhouette which means that the man is considering a vacation. If this man is the head of his household with a family his may need to consider this as well. Thus we can assume that the audience the ad is attempting to appeal to is a middle-aged, professional, male that possibly has a family.

In this ad, Cognizin attempts to show it is dependable through assertions of reliability and visual shows of market dominance. Cognizin claims to be “backed by years of clinical trials.” This statement aids in building trust among those who are reading. In general, people don’t trust experimental drugs, so Cognizin takes the time to explain that it is tried, tested and proven to be effective. In addition, the bottom of the ad is lined with a multitude of other icons. By saying “Look for Cognizin® Citicoline in these fine brands”, Cognizin shows that it has a lot of support among the pharmaceutical business, furthering its credibility as an effective drug. This type of bandwagon tactic makes people think that the drug is popular for a good reason and that most companies would agree to sell its product. In building the ethos surrounding the product and company, the ad builds a foundation of trust for the reader to believe in.

The view of the advertisement is one sided with an obvious bias that could easily affect the information presented. A small section of text explains that none of the statements were evaluated by the FDA: in addition, "This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease." The location and size of this federally mandated warning shows that they wish to hide this fact. By placing the warning in an inconspicuous space that can easily be glanced over, it can be shown that they are aware of the hypocrisy it will expose if closely. As a for-profit company, the main goal of an ad is to sell a product. This slants what is said is very likely as it needs not be evaluated provided it keeps the FDA message on the ad, even in a discrete space.

The advertisement also utilizes technical language to assert that the product is founded scientifically. By including words and phrases such as "ATP" and "free radical damage" the ad employs the power of jargon that plays into an appeal to pathos. Since Psychology Today is geared towards an audience with an average age of 42.7(Mega) the general reader may not know exactly what these terms mean as many people don't use these terms on a daily basis. How the increase of phosphatidylcholine due to oral supplements of Citicoline on the brain works is not known yet. However, this observed link between a "decrease [in] brain tissue damage" allows Cognizin a guess that can be displayed in the ad. This product makes a logical appeal to the science of the product without digging deep into the background that is still quite unknown.

The ad attempts to blur the line between a dietary supplement and a pharmaceutical drug through utilizing ethos it has built from support and unverified claims. Cognizin asserts that it has gone through "years of clinical trials." This may cause readers to attribute the reliable attributes of an FDA approved drug to Cognizin. Although these certifications are not the same in the rigor or reliability that they must have gone through and possessed, the statement skillfully pairs the thinking. Since the warning box may be easily overlooked this claim may never be tested by the reader. In addition, the support Cognizin has seemed to receive in the pharmaceutical business may further lend to the idea that this dietary supplement is actually a highly respected drug.

By playing into the fears and realities of an aging man, the advertisement becomes the solution to the problems it presents. The silhouette of the man and the figures in it represent the thoughts and problems

that are being processed in an aging man's mind. Many of these things could be viewed as stressful to the average person. Some of the stress inducing words drawn in the picture include "Work", "Keys?", and "Taxes". These are burdens that no adult can escape and sometimes pressure them into difficult situations. These all cluster together, appearing in the figure as part of a confusing internal map. In presenting this common part of life as a complication the advertisement shows that it is the one pill solution. Cognizin links the medication with the idea that it will provide a certain stress relief from the world. In addition, the ad suggests that without the medication you may be failing to "Help your brain keep up". The clear appeal to the fear of falling behind mentally may play at the ego of men who believe themselves inadequate. By following these plays on pathos with a positive assessment of Cognizin the desire for the medication may be amplified.

The Cognizin advertisement effectively creates an appeal of their product through careful phrasing, establishing pathos through relatability, and showcasing its claims to reliability. In addition, Cognizin relies on the usage of logos to appeal to a logically minded audience, pathos to relate to the lives of middle-aged men, and ethos to assert safety and reliability of the product creates an effective ad at pushing product. Overall the ad had a specific focus on a population of readers of Psychology Today and seems to prove effective by using known methods of persuasion to buy Cognizin.

Works Cited

Cognizin. Psychology Today Sept. 2015: n. pag. Print.

"CITICOLINE: Uses, Side Effects, Interactions and Warnings - WebMD." WebMD. WebMD, n.d. Web. 28 Oct. 2016.

":: Demographics ::" :: Demographics ::. Mega Media Marketing, n.d. Web. 28 Oct. 2016.