During the broadcast of the 2007 Super Bowl, Masterfoods USA (the company that makes Snickers candy bars) ran an advertisement that showed two male mechanics working under the hood of a car in what appears to be an automotive repair shop.  It then showed one of the men remove a Snickers candy bar from his shirt pocket, put it in his mouth, and continue working on the car.  With one end of the candy bar hanging out of his mouth, it shows the other man lean over and start to eat on the other end of the candy bar.  They both continue to eat the candy bar, until their lips meet, like the Lady and the Tramp spaghetti scene.  Immediately after the men "accidentally kiss", it shows them panic, and one tells the other "quick, do something manly", leading them to both rip a handful of hair from their own chests and begin screaming at each other.

The message of the commercial was intended to be funny based on what a Masterfoods spokesperson wrote in a statement that was issued two days later, but the message that was received by many as one of a homophobic and heterosexist nature.

Although the denotative meaning of the two men “accidentally kissing” would be that they had done just that, *accidentally* kissed, the connotative meaning was that they had done something that was gay. That alone, especially 14 years ago, likely would have offended some people. However, the truly heterosexist part of the advertisement stems from the verbiage used immediately after the men locked lips. “Quick, do something manly” implies that because they had done something that a gay man would do, their masculinity was at risk. This indiscriminately infers that a man’s masculinity directly correlates to his sexuality, and that performing an act of masculinity would effectively cancel out their act of homosexuality.

I think that this commercial could have very easily promoted their product in a more positive way simply by making the two people working on their car have a different, more welcoming response to their first kiss – a 30 second love story if you will- but I think that would have taken away from the Masterfood’s goal of running a commercial that was humorous. Being that humor is subjective, I think that the only way for them to accomplish this in a positive way would be to make a commercial where the humor derived from the product itself rather than an irrelevant stereotype of gay men. Something like having the man with the Snickers eat the candy bar erotically, while the other man awkwardly stares at him could have been both funny and relevant to the product, all without giving up the over-the-top Super Bowl commercial factor.