The following is taken from a memo from the advertising director of the Super Screen Movie Production Company.

"According to a recent report from our marketing department, during the past year, fewer people attended Super Screen-produced movies than in any other year. And yet the percentage of positive reviews by movie reviewers about specific Super Screen movies actually increased during the past year. Clearly, the contents of these reviews are not reaching enough of our prospective viewers. Thus, the problem lies not with the quality of our movies but with the public's lack of awareness that movies of good quality are available. Super Screen should therefore allocate a greater share of its budget next year to reaching the public through advertising."

Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be answered in order to decide whether the recommendation and the argument on which it is based are reasonable. Be sure to explain how the answers to these questions would help to evaluate the recommendation.

The argument reaches the conclusion that Super Screen should allocate a larger proportion of its budget towards advertising, in efforts to increase the number of viewers of its movies. This conclusion is based on the premise that the percentage of positive reviews among movie reviewers increased in the past year, while the total audience size decreased. However, in making this conclusion, the advertising director fails to answer three important questions, the answers to which could dramatically affect the veracity of the argument's logic.

First, are the positive reviews representative of the feedback from all prospective viewers? It may be the case that people who did not like Super Screen's movies simply stopped watching them, while the audience that enjoyed the movies stayed on, leading to an increase in positive reviews in proportion to negative ones. Perhaps, the reviews may not even be from unique users, for one person may have posted multiple reviews. By not addressing whether the positive reviews truly represented the potential audience, and by not considering the number of unique reviews, the argument fails to make a persuasive case.

Second, was the decrease in viewers significant in relation to previous years? Also, even if the reviews were unique and representative of the wider population, was the increase in positive reviews significant enough to indicate retained public interest? There is a possibility that the viewers went from 100,000 to 99,000, which is a 1% decrease. Considering that this 99,000 would supposedly be an all-time low for the company, does it warrant a push in advertising? The director fails to establish the real magnitude of the increase in good reviews, which may even be an insignificant climb for the company. In fact, it is possible that Super Screen had only one attractive film in the entire yeat, and that all of the positive reviews were related to that, as opposed to their other productions.

Finally, one of the most important questions is: Is there conclusive evidence to suggest that advertising will be effective in regaining Super Screen's audience? There are many possibilities to consider here; What if most people already knew about the company's movies, but disliked their plots, or how they were made? What if most viewers pirate their films on the internet due to lax security measures taken by Super Screen, allowing consumers to view the movies illegally? It is possible that people downloaded these movies on the internet, or that scandals at Super Screen tarnished the reputation of all its productions. It may also be the case that other movie companies are also facing the same issue, due to external factors, like a recession or economic crisis. Super Screen's films may possibly be shown only in a few cinema theatres, thus reducing their accessibility to the audience. Also, the argument provides no proof that the next year will pan out in the same way, making the assumption that the trend of decreasing viewer figures in the past year will continue on. It could even be the case that advertising was badly planned in the past years, and that the existing funds, if used smartly, could help in gaining publicity.

In conclusion, the argument, as it stands now, is considerably flawed. By failing to address the abovementioned questions, it leaves multiple gaps in its logic, while jumping to conclusions based on a number of unstated assumptions. Hence, the advertising director would most likely need to provide substantiative evidence to prove the need for more advertising funds, perhaps in the form of a comprehensive report. They would have to consider every single possibility before spending more money on advertising, for this decision could lead to deep financial troubles at worst, or be specious at best.