

Senior Honor Thesis

Over the course of this semester, I have been studying social media advertisement's effects on hip hop music in order to help readers understand how to be more productive in gaining more exposure for their music. This is a crucial study in this day and age since almost everywhere that we go, there is some form of advertisements that exists, whether it be in the real world or in the virtual social spaces that many of us often use. These advertisements have come in many different forms throughout the years and help persuade many of us to participate in and purchase real products, but what is the overall mental effects caused from these advertisements and how can it be used to promote a brand in hip hop and stand out from the crowd?

The world's first advertisement was displayed on national television on July 1, 1941 before a baseball game between the Brooklyn Dodgers and the Philadelphia Phillies. This advertisement spot was purchased by Bulova Watchmakers for \$4-\$9 and displayed during primetime television, which is now worth several million dollars for a 30 second advertisement slot. This demonstrates the increasing demand for advertisements as time would go on because companies and brands saw the value that advertisements brought to the table for their company. Many advertisements since then have focused on creating a positive image in the viewers brain for the product being advertised. This increases the viewers likelihood of buying or participating in a product but comes with a small cost since the companies can easily be misrepresenting their companies traditional core values to sell products to the consumer. These negative effects of misrepresented advertisements can include the promotion of harmful products, unrealistic product expectations, corruptness of the youth, or just simply promoting political influence. This is why it is crucial to always check the products that are being advertised to prevent being negatively persuaded by a company and to decide your own feelings towards brands or products being advertised. Especially since advertisements are created by the companies and brands with hopes to positively persuade the consumer into buying their product regardless of the benefit to the consumer.

Since 1941 however, advertisements have grown at an increasingly scary rate since every company and brand sees advertisements as an effective form of potential product growth. This has gotten so out of hand, that most consumers are exposed to 4,000 – 10,000 advertisements each day as they go about living their normal lives. These advertisements come in many different forms such as; print advertisements, broadcast advertisements, product placement advertisements, outdoor advertisements, guerilla advertisements, cell phone advertisements, digital advertisements, and word of mouth advertisements. These multiple forms of advertisements have become so common in our everyday lives that they often go unnoticed, unless they become inconvenient to the consumer in one way or another. This is a great example of why many online services nowadays offer some form of membership in order to get rid of other products advertisements on their platform, since they make about the same amount of money off of either. This doesn't get rid of all advertisements however, since most services will use self-advertisements on their platform and hide a few digital banners into their service without much inconvenience placed on the consumer. This is what allows companies and brands to benefit off of advertisements whether they are actually being presented or not since the consumer will still be spending money on a membership instead of buying the other products being advertised. This creates a win-win scenario for most companies and brands since most

consumers will be consuming their advertisements elsewhere through social media platforms and technology. Therefore, even as a consumer pays to get rid of some advertisements on a single platform, they will still be exposed to thousands of advertisements in other areas of life. Raising the question of whether or not a consumer can actually escape from advertisements altogether.

With this knowledge of advertisements and the effects that they can have on consumers, how can a person take advantage of this new age of advertising and promote their hip-hop brand in a positive manner? This was a question I had asked myself before starting this project and I feel as though I may have finally found the solution. Hip-hop is no different than any other product being sold on television or the radio, other than the fact that most products being sold are digital. This includes the music that the artists make, the music videos that follow the music created, and any other form of art that most musicians make such as cover art. Nowadays most music is created through a digital software program and is often released digitally in the form of mp3's for the convenience of the consumer. This is because most consumers would rather download the music to listen to on the go, rather than drive to a record shop in their town and purchase a physical copy that won't last as long. This allows musicians to promote their music through digital platforms, since most consumers will find the product on platforms such as Instagram, Soundcloud, YouTube, Pandora, Spotify, Facebook, and Twitter. To make use of all these platforms, a musician must first find a good digital distribution service in order to get their music on as many platforms as possible to get as many consumers as possible listening to their music. Getting the music onto platforms with other breakout and legendary artists, allows your music to slowly blend into the mainstream landscape, while also promoting and building your brand along the way. Blending into the mainstream landscape isn't the only thing that artists want to do. However, since there are over 24,000 songs being uploaded every day. Artists must make their brand and sound stand out from the competition rather than just blending in, since most artists that try to copy an individual's sounds often get overlooked by the original artists themselves. Therefore, having a unique and different sounding brand will allow artists to expand their fanbase at a much greater rate than artists that are trying to copy an individual's sound. Paying for advertisements on some major platforms can also expand your fanbase exponentially if the artists ensures that their target audience is actually the type of people that want to listen to their music. If the artist is promoting a new age of hip hop to an audience, it would not be very smart to have your target audience as 40-year-old males, since they grew up on a completely different era of hip hop. Artists are going to want to advertise to a target audience that will actually connect and vibe with the sound that they are trying to create. This is what will create longevity in a hip-hop brand or group since they will stand out from the competition and also find a target audience that isn't like anyone else. The artist just has to ensure that they are creating enough content to keep their target audience happy and stand out from the crowd. Hip-hop is a constantly changing phenomenon and requires lots of creativity that is different from other artists and plenty of motivation to actually be successful.

Overall advertisements can be extremely effective if they offer some type of value to the consumer and stand out from the crowd since there are thousands of advertisements consumers are exposed to daily. Hip hop is no different and requires lots of creativity, individuality, and motivation to be successful. Artists have to be able to stand out from the crowd, offer quality products and content, and never quit on themselves in order to have advertisements be effective for their hip-hop brand.

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