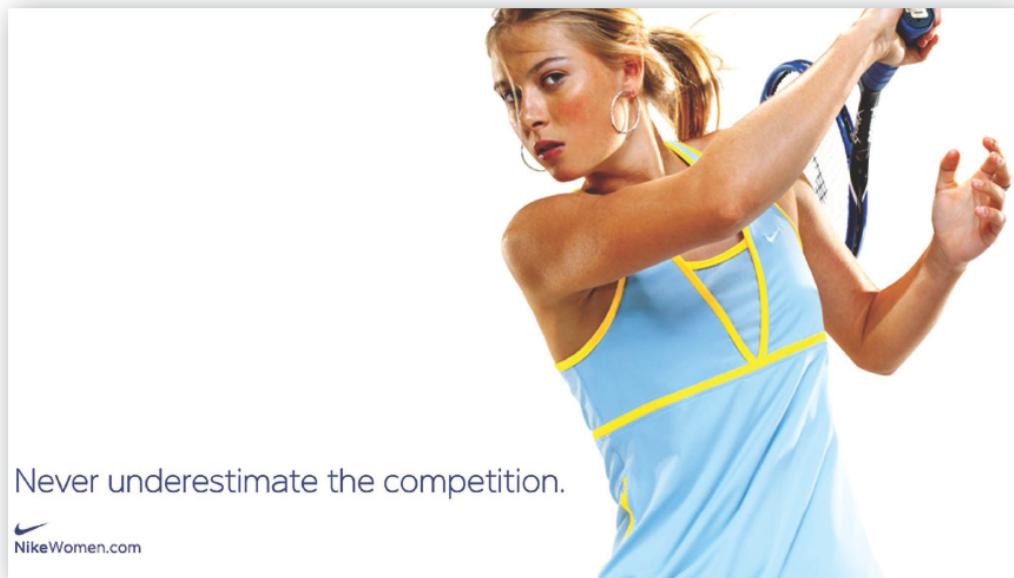


6

Source, Message, and Channel Factors



Never underestimate the competition.

 NikeWomen.com

Source: NIKE Inc.

Learning Objectives

- LO 6-1** | Discuss the variables in the communication system and how they influence consumers' processing of promotional messages.

LO 6-2 | Identify decision factors involved in selecting a source for a promotional message.

LO 6-3 | Compare the different types of message structures and appeals.

LO 6-4 | Explain how different types of channels influence the marketing communications process.

page 175

Tiger and Maria Rebuild Their Images

Companies have been using popular athletes to endorse their products and services and serve as advertising spokespersons for decades. Marketers realize the value of using athletes who are recognized and often admired by their target audience as a way to draw attention to their advertising messages. Sports stars usually promote products such as athletic shoes, apparel, and sports equipment. However, the popularity of high-profile athletes often transcends sports, and they endorse a variety of other products, including automobiles, fast food, soft drinks, clothing, airlines, and watches, as well as consulting and financial services.

There are a number of reasons marketers use athletes to pitch their products and services. Consumers are likely to see athletes as experts who can reassure them about the quality of an athletic product, particularly when it is seen as being related to the athlete's performance. Another reason is that many athletes achieve celebrity status because of their popularity; sports fans admire and often idolize them and view the use of a brand they endorse as a way of identifying with them. Avid sports fans often engage in a psychological process known as BIRGing, or "basking in reflective glory," whereby they associate themselves with successful athletes such that the athlete's success becomes their own.

But what happens when a controversy arises regarding an athlete, and how might it affect the companies or brands he or she is endorsing and is closely aligned with? Is it

possible for a high-profile athlete involved in controversy to recover from the negative publicity that accompanies it, particularly in today's social media-obsessed world, where pictures, video, comments, and opinions fly around cyberspace? Over the past decade, two high-profile athletes in two of the most popular sports around the globe engaged in behaviors that cost them very lucrative endorsement deals: professional golfer Tiger Woods and tennis star Maria Sharapova. And both have been working to rebuild their public images and value as endorsers.

Prior to Thanksgiving weekend of 2009, if you were to ask nearly any advertising or sports marketing guru to name the most impactful endorser in the history of marketing, chances are most would have named professional golfer Tiger Woods—and for good reason. After turning professional, Woods dominated golf in a manner few athletes have ever been able to do in any sport. In 13 years on the PGA Tour, he won 71 tournaments, ranking him third all-time in career wins. He also won 14 major championships and was closing in on the record of 19 held by the legendary Jack Nicklaus. Woods was also a marketer's dream as a spokesperson because he was very articulate, likeable, and credible. His image and popularity helped Woods make more than \$100 million per year on endorsement deals with blue chip companies and brands such as Accenture, Gillette, Tag Heur, Gatorade, Upper Deck, and Nike. Woods was more than an endorser for Nike—the company built its entire golf division and several brands around him.

The early morning of November 27, 2009, everything changed for Tiger Woods after a car accident outside of his home following an argument with his wife. The accident was the catalyst for intense media scrutiny of his personal life, which led to revelations that the superstar, who was married and had two young children, had numerous extramarital affairs. A few weeks after the accident, Woods checked into a rehabilitation clinic to receive treatment for sexual addiction as well as addiction to pain medication from injuries that he had suffered from golf as well as his intense training regimen. While his transgressions had made a mess of Woods' personal life, they presented a major problem to companies with whom he had lucrative endorsement deals as well, as they recognized that the star endorser was now a potential liability. A few weeks after the accident, nearly all of the companies except Nike and Upper Deck terminated their relationships with Woods, costing him an estimated \$50 million per year in endorsements.

Over the next eight years, Woods struggled with injuries and underwent multiple back surgeries, including a spinal fusion in early 2017 that left many, including Woods himself, wondering if his career was over. After missing most of the 2017 season, Woods returned to competition in 2018 and started regaining his old form. In September 2018, he won the prestigious Tour Championship, which was his first PGA Tour title in five years. In April 2019, Woods shocked the world when he won The Masters, which many consider the most prestigious of all the major tournaments, for the fifth time. The victory was also his 15th major championship, and at page 176 43, Woods became the second oldest winner of The Masters. Many called his comeback one of the greatest ever, and a few days later, President Donald Trump announced he was awarding Woods the Presidential Medal of Freedom "in recognition of his incredible success and comeback in sports and, most importantly, life."

Woods' victory at The Masters made him once again the biggest star in golf and perhaps in all of sports. However, it remains to be seen if he will ever regain superstar status as an endorser. Nike has stood by him through all of his difficulties, and while the company no longer makes golf clubs, its loyalty is paying dividends, as Woods helps sell a tremendous amount of Nike golf shoes and apparel. Woods also has an endorsement deal with drink company Monster Energy as well as several golf equipment companies, including TaylorMade and Bridgestone Golf. The CEO of Bridgestone summed up Woods' impact quite well by noting an old saying in the golf equipment business: "Win on Sunday and sell on Monday." It will be interesting to see if other companies feel that Woods can help sell more than golf equipment.

Another high-profile athlete whose image and status as an endorser suffered a setback is tennis star Maria Sharapova, who was the world's highest-paid female athlete for 11 straight years, from 2005 to 2015, and earned as much as \$20 million per year in endorsements. The attractive and popular tennis star has won five Grand Slam championships and is one of only 10 women to accomplish a career Grand Slam by winning all four major tournaments. However, in January 2016, Sharapova failed a drug test at the Australian Open when she tested positively for meldonium, a drug used to treat cardiac problems that can also increase endurance. The World Anti-Doping Agency had added the drug to its list of banned substances at the start of 2016, and Sharapova, who had been taking the medication for over a decade for various health issues, claimed that she had failed to read the update. The International Tennis Federation (ITF) issued a two-year suspension and banned Sharapova from competing for two years; she appealed the length of the ban, and it was reduced to 15 months.

Sponsors' reactions to Sharapova's suspension were mixed, as bottled water brand Evian as well as Head, her long-time racquet sponsor, were immediately supportive. Nike initially suspended its \$12.5 million annual endorsement deal with the maligned star, estimated to be worth \$100 million over eight years and the company's biggest deal for a female athlete, as did German automotive company Porsche. However, a few months later, Nike announced that it was continuing its sponsorship deal with Sharapova, noting that she did not intentionally break the ITF rules and had apologized for her mistake. Porsche also reinstated Sharapova as a brand ambassador, while Swiss watch maker Tag Heuer and Avon cosmetics chose not to renew deals that had expired.

During her 15-month suspension, Sharapova used her time to hone her business skills. She enrolled in several one-week intensive business courses at the Harvard Business School while also interning for the National Basketball Association and a London-based advertising agency. She used the training to help launch her own candy company, Sugarpova, which makes chocolates and gummies, sold in more than 50,000 locations, including grocery and convenience stores. Sharapova returned to the professional tennis circuit in April 2017 and, six months later, won a World Tennis Association tournament. Although she has struggled since, Sharapova remains a popular endorser, with more than 14 million followers on Facebook and 3.5 million fans on Instagram. She is also preparing for life after tennis; she has entered into a partnership with a leading sports facilities architect to design fitness and tennis facilities for hotels and resorts around the world.

Sources: Merrit Kennedy, "Tiger Woods Rises Again—And Sponsors Are Celebrating His Resilience," *NPR*, April 16, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/15/713443562/tiger-woods-rises-again-and-sponsors-are-celebrating-his-resilience>; Brian Braiker, "How Do You Build a Brand Like Maria?" *Advertising Age*, October 30, 2017, pp. 27–31; Lara O'Reilly, "Maria Sharapova Is Losing Sponsorship Deal Worth Tens of Millions of Dollars after Her Failed Drug Test," *Business Insider*, March 8, 2016, <http://www.businessinsider.com/nike-ends-100-million-maria-sharapova-deal-over-failed-drug-test-2016-3>; Jeremy Mullman, "For Nike, the Tiger Woods Brand Was Too Big to Fail," *Advertising Age*, April 12, 2010, pp. 1, 21.

In this chapter, we analyze the major variables in the communication system: the source, the message, and the channel. We examine the characteristics of sources, how they influence reactions to promotional messages, and why one type of communicator is more effective than another. We then focus on the message itself and how structure and type of appeal influence its effectiveness. Finally, we consider how factors related to the channel or medium affect the communication process.

page 177

PROMOTIONAL PLANNING THROUGH THE PERSUASION MATRIX

LO 6-1

To develop an effective advertising and promotional campaign, a firm must select the right spokesperson to deliver a compelling message through appropriate channels or media. Source, message, and channel factors are controllable elements in the communication model. The **persuasion matrix** (Figure 6–1) helps marketers see how each controllable element interacts with the consumer's response process.¹ The matrix has two sets of variables. *Independent variables* are the controllable components of the communication process, outlined in Chapter 5; *dependent variables* are the steps a receiver goes through in being persuaded. Marketers can choose the

person or source who delivers the message, the type of message appeal used, and the channel or medium. And although they can't control the receiver, they can select their target audience. The destination variable is included because the initial message recipient may pass on information to others, such as friends or associates, through word of mouth.

FIGURE 6–1

The Persuasion Matrix

| Dependent variables: Steps in being persuaded | Independent variables: The communication components | | | | |
|---|---|---------|---------|----------|-------------|
| | Source | Message | Channel | Receiver | Destination |
| Message presentation/exposure | | | (2) | | |
| Attention/awareness | (4) | | | | |
| Knowledge/comprehension | | | | (1) | |
| Yielding/liking | | (3) | | | |
| Retention | | | | | |
| Behavior | | | | | |

Promotional planners need to know how decisions about each independent variable influence the stages of the response hierarchy so that they don't enhance one stage at the expense of another. A humorous message may gain attention but result in decreased comprehension if consumers fail to process its content. Many ads that use humor, sexual appeals, or celebrities capture consumers' attention but result in poor recall of the brand name or message. The following examples, which correspond to the numbers in various cells of Figure 6–1, illustrate decisions that can be evaluated with the persuasion matrix.

1. Receiver/comprehension: Can the receiver comprehend the ad?

Marketers must know their target market to make their messages clear and understandable. A less educated person may have more difficulty interpreting a complicated message. Jargon may be unfamiliar to some

receivers. The more marketers know about the target market, the more they see which words, symbols, and expressions their customers understand.

2. *Channel/presentation: Which media vehicles should be used to present the advertising message?* When advertisers purchase media, they do so based on exposure potential, or the opportunity for consumers to see their message. Media decisions are based in large part on the size page 178 and composition of the audience reached as well as cost. A popular prime-time-TV show such as *NCIS* is seen by as many as 15 million people each week, while magazines such as *Time* and *People* reach over 3 million readers with each weekly publication and millions more through their digital editions. But the important point is how well a media vehicle reaches the marketer's target audience. A show such as *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, which appears on the E! cable network, reaches around 2 million viewers each week and its audience primarily consists of young men and women between the ages of 18 and 49 who are very fashion conscious and tech savvy. Although the ratings of the show have declined recently, many companies still view it as a way to reach this audience, which is highly coveted by many advertisers since they are prime prospects for clothing fashion, consumer electronics, and many other products.²
3. *Message/yielding: What type of message will create favorable attitudes or feelings?* Marketers generally try to create agreeable messages that lead to positive feelings toward the product or service. Humorous messages often put consumers in a good mood and evoke positive feelings that may become associated with the brand being advertised. Music adds emotion that makes consumers more receptive to the message. Many advertisers use explicit sexual appeals designed to arouse consumers or suggest they can enhance their attractiveness to the opposite sex. Some marketers compare their brands to the competition.
4. *Source/attention: Who will be effective in getting consumers' attention?* The large number of ads we are bombarded with every day makes it difficult for advertisers to break through the clutter. Marketers deal with this problem by using sources who will attract the target audience's attention—actors, athletes, entertainers, or attractive models.

SOURCE FACTORS

LO 6-2

The source component is a multifaceted concept. When Tina Fey appears in a commercial for American Express, is the source Fey herself, the company, or some combination of the two? And, of course, consumers get information from friends, relatives, and neighbors; in fact, personal sources may be the most influential factor in a purchase decision. Word-of-mouth information transmitted from one individual to another is often perceived as more reliable and trustworthy than that received through more formal marketing channels such as advertising. As was discussed in Chapter 5, marketers are using influencers and viral marketing methods to generate favorable word-of-mouth discussion and recommendations for their products and services.³

We use the term **source** to mean the person involved in communicating a marketing message, either directly or indirectly. A *direct source* is a spokesperson who delivers a message and/or endorses a product or service, like country music star Miranda Lambert, who appears in an ad that is part of “The Breakfast Project” campaign sponsored by the Milk Processor Education Program. The campaign encourages people to eat a nutritious breakfast that includes milk (Exhibit 6–1). An *indirect source*, say, a model, doesn’t actually deliver a message but draws attention to and/or enhances the appearance of the ad. Some ads use neither a direct nor an indirect source; the source is the organization with the message to communicate. Since most research focuses on individuals as a message source, our examination of source factors follows this approach.

XHIBIT 6–1

Singer Miranda Lambert endorses milk as part of “The Breakfast Project” campaign.

Source: The California Milk Advisory Board

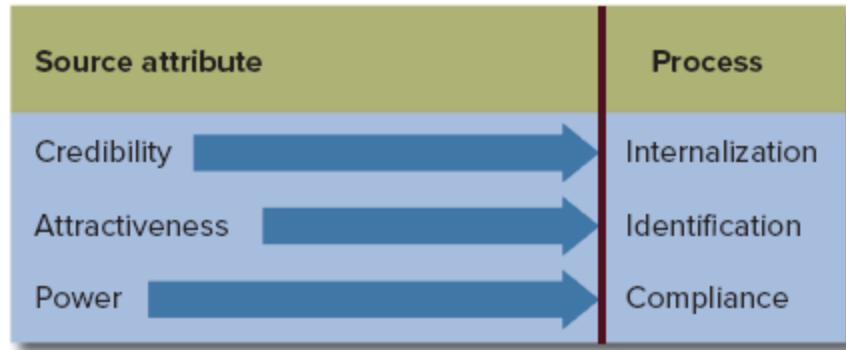


Companies are very careful when selecting individuals to deliver their selling messages. Many firms spend huge sums of money for a specific person to endorse their product or company. They also spend millions recruiting, selecting, and training salespeople to represent the company and deliver sales presentations. They recognize that the characteristics of the source affect the sales and advertising message.

Marketers try to select individuals whose traits will maximize message influence. The source may be knowledgeable, popular, and/or physically attractive; typify the target audience; or have the power to reward or punish the receiver in some manner. Herbert Kelman developed three basic categories of source attributes: credibility, attractiveness, and power.⁴ Each influences the recipient's attitude or behavior through a different process (see Figure 6–2).

FIGURE 6–2

Source Attributes and Receiver Processing Modes



Source Credibility

Credibility is the extent to which the recipient sees the source as having relevant knowledge, skill, or experience and trusts the source to give unbiased, objective information. There are two important dimensions to credibility: expertise and trustworthiness.

A communicator seen as knowledgeable—someone with expertise—is more persuasive than one with less expertise. But the source also has to be trustworthy—honest, ethical, and believable. The influence of a knowledgeable source will be lessened if audience members think he or she is biased or has underlying personal motives for advocating a position (such as being paid to endorse a product).

One of the most reliable effects found in communications research is that expert and/or trustworthy sources are more persuasive than sources who are less expert or trustworthy.⁵ Information from a credible source influences beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and/or behavior through a process known as **internalization**, which occurs when the receiver adopts the opinion of the credible communicator since he or she believes information from this source is accurate. Once the receiver internalizes an opinion or attitude, it becomes integrated into his or her belief system and may be maintained even after the source of the message is forgotten.

A highly credible communicator is particularly important when message recipients have a negative position toward the product, service, company, or issue being promoted, because the credible source is likely to inhibit counterarguments. As discussed in Chapter 5, reduced counterarguing should result in greater message acceptance and persuasion.

Applying Expertise Because attitudes and opinions developed through an internalization process become part of the individual's belief system, marketers want to use communicators with high credibility. Companies use a variety of techniques to convey source expertise. Sales personnel are trained in the product line, which increases customers' perceptions of their expertise. Marketers of highly technical products recruit sales reps with specialized technical backgrounds in engineering, computer science, and other areas to ensure their expertise.

Spokespeople are often chosen because of their knowledge, experience, and expertise in a particular product or service area. Endorsements from individuals or groups recognized as experts, such as doctors or dentists, are also common in advertising. For example, Dove has promoted the fact that its skin cleansing products are the most recommended by dermatologists in ads for more than 60 years (Exhibit 6–2). The importance of using expert sources was shown in a study by Roobina Ohanian, who found that the perceived expertise of celebrity endorsers was more important in explaining purchase intentions than their attractiveness or trustworthiness. She suggests that celebrity spokespeople are most effective when they are knowledgeable, experienced, and qualified to talk about the product they are endorsing.⁶ A number of other studies have shown that celebrities perceived as having expertise with a product or service can lend persuasive power to an advertising message.⁷

XHIBIT 6–2

Dove promotes the fact that it is recommended by experts in skin care.

Source: Dove by Unilever



page 180

Global Perspective 6–1 >>>

Celebrities Sell Out—but Only Abroad

While many celebrities make huge sums of money endorsing products and serving as advertising spokespeople, some big stars won't appear in ads in the United States because they don't want fans to think they've sold out. There has also long been a feeling among actors that appearing in commercials might devalue their image among the powerful Hollywood producers and directors. However, this has been changing in recent years, and even some of the biggest names in entertainment have decided to cash in on their celebrity and appear in commercials. For example, Matthew McConaughey signed a lucrative endorsement deal with the Lincoln Motor Company division of Ford to help the luxury brand attract younger, more culturally progressive consumers. He started appearing in commercials for the company in 2014 and is credited for helping increase sales of Lincoln cars and SUVs over the past five years. Actor Charlize Theron is paid \$5 million a year to endorse Dior's J'adore perfume, while Nicole Kidman was paid \$8 million to appear in commercials for the Chanel No. 5 fragrance line.



Source: Beam Suntory Inc.

Some of the A-list celebrities still resist the temptation to cash in on their fame in the United States, but they are only too happy to appear in ads in foreign countries. Nowhere are ads starring American celebrities more prevalent than in Japan. Even the rich and famous have trouble saying no to Japanese advertisers who will pay them between \$1 million and \$3 million for a few hours' work to make 10-second spots that their Western fans across the Pacific will never see. In Japan, celebrities make more money for less work and, because the commercials will never air in the United States, they think they can make the money without looking like they are selling their artistic souls.

Academy Award winner Leonardo DiCaprio, who is arguably one of the most famous actors in the world, appeared in a 15-second spot for the Jim Beam bourbon brand in which the only words he says are "cool bourbon, Jim Beam." The company said the ad would be used only in Japan, but it made its way to the United States and other countries via YouTube as soon as it was aired there.

Megastars such as Brad Pitt, Hugh Jackman, Katy Perry, Scarlett Johansson, Ben Stiller, Harrison Ford, and Johnny Depp have been paid millions for appearing in Japanese commercials. Pop star Katy Perry has appeared in commercials for Japanese laundry detergent Laundrin, which show her coming home from a hectic public appearance and slipping into a freshly laundered bathrobe to cook pancakes. Pitt has appeared in ads for canned coffee and blue jeans and recently [page 181](#) appeared in a series of ads for Softbank, the multinational conglomerate based in Tokyo. Harrison Ford received several million dollars for appearing sweaty and bare-chested in Kirin beer commercials and print ads. Sometimes celebrities are forced to change their images or personalities to suit the advertising style of Japanese companies and the tastes of audiences in Japan. Japanese commercials have a totally different feel than those in the United States and Europe and have often been described as "tacky" or "cheesy" by Western standards. For example, a commercial for Takara sake featured a kimono-clad Madonna wielding a sword and declaring "I'm pure." Ben Stiller appeared in a commercial for Kirin Fruit

Beer that shows him being frozen in a block of ice after opening a beer, then being tackled by a bunch of football players.

There are several reasons why Japanese companies are willing to shell out huge sums of money for these stars. Many Japanese are fascinated by American culture and its celebrities, and endorsement of a brand by a star gives it a certain international cachet. Also, Japanese advertising emphasizes style and mood rather than substance; consumers expect to be entertained rather than bored by product information or testimonials. More than 80 percent of Japanese commercials are 10- or 15-second spots and around 85 percent use celebrities to capture viewers' attention.

Japan is not the only country where celebrities are hawking products. In 2018, Mariah Carey appeared in an ad campaign for international booking site Hostelworld, which was designed to change negative perceptions many people have of hostels. The three-minute spot makes fun of Carey's reputation for being a demanding diva when she is accidentally booked into a hostel in Barcelona instead of a luxury hotel and ends up enjoying her stay. The ad ran primarily in Europe and Asian countries. Leonardo DiCaprio recently appeared in a series of commercials for Chinese company OPPO Mobile, while rapper Snoop Dogg pops out of a refrigerator and starts singing in a commercial for the German telecom company Vybemobile.

Some celebrities cashing in on endorsement deals abroad still try to protect their images at home and not be seen as selling out for money. Many stars have nondisclosure clauses in their contracts, specifying that the ads cannot be shown, or sometimes even discussed (oops!), outside Japan. They still see their appearance in TV ads as being potentially harmful to their reputations back home. However, with the growth of the Internet it is difficult to limit the viewing of the ads to one country; many of the commercials can now be found online on popular websites such as YouTube. Linda Thaler, chief executive officer of the Kaplan Thaler Group advertising agency, notes that "the days of Brad Pitt doing a commercial in Japan that he thought no one was going to see are gone." However, she also notes that the stigma that celebrities are selling out by doing commercials has also gone by the wayside as Hollywood snobbery toward appearing in commercials declines.

Syracuse professor Robert Thompson, an expert on television and popular culture, argues that appearing in commercials no longer carries a stigma for Hollywood celebrities. According to Thompson: "TV ads are much hipper and much cooler than a decade ago. I don't think people feel an obligation to hide it." However, celebrities are used to getting their way, and most would probably still prefer that the knowledge of their overseas endorsements stay there. Sorry about that.

Sources: Emerald Catron, "30 Celebrities with Surprising Overseas Endorsement Deals," *BestLife*, June 1, 2018, <https://bestlifeonline.com/celebrity-commercials-overseas/>; Roo Ciambriello, "A Glam Hostel Gets Put to the Test When Mariah Carey Is Accidentally Booked," *Adweek*, April 10, 2018, <https://www.adweek.com/creativity/a-glam-hostel-gets-put-to-the-test-when-mariah-carey-is-accidentally-booked/>; Bradford Wernie, "Lincoln Signs Matthew McConaughey to Help Win Younger Car Buyers," *Advertising Age*, August 21, 2014, <http://adage.com/article/news/matthew-mcconaughey-signs-lincoln-boost-mkc/294661/>; Jeff Labrecque, "Leonardo DiCaprio and the Easy Money of Foreign Commercials," *EW.com*, February 19, 2013, <http://popwatch.ew.com/2013/02/19/leonardo-dicaprio-celebrity-foreign-commercials/>;

Applying Trustworthiness While expertise is important, the target audience must also find the source believable. Finding celebrities or other figures with trustworthy images is often difficult. Many trustworthy public figures hesitate to endorse products because of the potential impact on their reputation and image. E-Poll Market Research conducts ongoing consumer surveys to gauge the popularity and marketability of celebrities by surveying consumers and having them rate celebrities on 46 different personality attributes such as trustworthiness, sincerity, trendsetting, and influence. The company's annual E-Score Celebrity Report includes a spokesperson index score that reflects a celebrity's perceived credibility and authority and suggests his or her potential as a spokesperson.⁸ The highest-scoring celebrities on its most recent lists have included actors Betty White, Tom Hanks, Matthew Gubler, and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson. Talk-show host and entertainment producer Oprah Winfrey has also been a very trusted source through the years, and her "Favorite Things" list has served as a trusted source for product recommendations for many consumers. Winfrey began appearing in ads for Weight Watchers in 2016, a few months after she acquired 10 percent ownership in the company. Her involvement with the company and role as spokesperson led to a surge in publicity as well as an increase in subscribers to the program. However, in late 2018, the company added two new celebrity brand ambassadors, actor Kate Hudson and singer Robbie Williams, as part of a rebranding designed to position the company as a wellness brand rather than a weight loss program. The rebranding included changing the company name to WW to help shed its Weight Watchers image.⁹ While many top celebrities could command large sums of money as endorsers and spokespersons, very few of them do, often out of concern for how their image might be impacted. Global Perspective 6–1 discusses how some American celebrities protect their image by endorsing products in Japan and other countries rather than in the United States.

Marketers can also deal with the source-trustworthiness issue by using other IMC tools such as publicity. Information received from sources such as newscasters is often very influential because these individuals are perceived as unbiased and thus more credible, even though they are often presenting stories that stem from press releases. In some situations celebrities may

appear on news programs or talk shows and promote an upcoming cause or event such as the release of a new movie or music. With the increase in stealth marketing techniques, many consumers are becoming wary of endorsements made by celebrities on news programs and talk shows. For example, a *New York Times* article revealed that drug companies were making payments to celebrities or their favorite charities in page 182 return for the celebrities' touting the companies' pharmaceutical products on news and talk shows. As a result of the controversy from the article, CNN and the major broadcast networks announced that they would disclose any such financial deals during interviews.¹⁰

With the growth of social media another area of concern has arisen regarding the trustworthiness of sources that endorse companies and brands and make recommendations on sites such as Facebook and Twitter as well as through online reviews or on blogs. In 2009 the Federal Trade Commission passed a set of guidelines requiring online endorsers and bloggers to disclose any material connection they might have to a company. The FTC developed the guidelines in response to studies that showed as many as 30 percent of online reviews were fake and were coming from someone who had been paid to write them or failed to reveal their association with a company or brand. In 2015, the FTC issued an update to its endorsement guidelines clarifying how much disclosure is required.¹¹

Using Corporate Leaders as Spokespeople Another way of enhancing source credibility is to use the company president or chief executive officer as a spokesperson in the firm's advertising. Many companies believe the use of their president or CEO is the ultimate expression of the company's commitment to quality and customer service. For some firms, the use of a president or CEO in their ads can help create an identity and personality for the company and/or brand. For example, Richard Branson's irreverence and zeal for life have helped personify the image of Virgin's empire of megastores, airlines, mobile phones, and soft drinks. Branson has been used occasionally in ads for various Virgin brands. A study by the research firm Ace Metrix found that the most effective CEO spokesperson in recent years is Jim Koch, founder of the Boston Beer Company, which markets the popular Samuel Adams brands.¹² Koch has

appeared in numerous commercials for the company and is perceived to be authentic and genuine, which are two important traits for the effective use of corporate leaders in ads for their companies. Another popular CEO spokesperson is Sir James Dyson, who has appeared in ads for the company's vacuum cleaners, hair dryers, and other innovative products. The practice of using company founders, owners, and presidents as advertising spokespersons is particularly prevalent among small and midsize companies such as retailers and auto dealers serving local markets (Exhibit 6–3).

XHIBIT 6–3

James Dyson is one of the most effective CEO spokespersons.

ource: Dyson, Inc.



Many marketing and advertising experts question the strategy of using company presidents or owners in ads and note that it is often ego rather than logic that is the reason for their use.¹³ The experts suggest that businesspeople should get in front of the camera only if they exude credibility and possess the intangible quality of provoking a warm, fuzzy feeling in viewers. For example, Microsoft chair Bill Gates appeared in several TV commercials that were designed to help build a stronger image for the company. Gates was paired with comedian Jerry Seinfeld in the spots, which attempted to use quirky humor to get consumers to think about Microsoft in a different way. However, the ads aired for only a short time and many ad critics noted that Gates did not come across well in them.¹⁴

Another concern is that a CEO spokesperson who becomes very popular may get more attention than the company's product/service or advertising message. And if a firm's image becomes too closely tied to a popular leader, there can be problems if that person leaves the company or is involved in any type of controversy such as a labor dispute, political issue, or personal problem. For example, John Schnatter appeared in more than 60 commercials for the Papa John's pizza chain over the past two decades and was considered one of the most effective CEO spokespersons, [page 183](#) because he was perceived as authentic and genuine.¹⁵ However, during an earnings report conference call in November 2017, Schnatter blamed the National Football League's handling of its players' kneeling protests during the national anthem for the chain's declining pizza sales. Papa John's had been the official pizza sponsor of the leagues since 2010. Several white supremacist groups praised Schnatter for his comments and called Papa John's "the official pizza of the alt-right." The controversy resulted in an extensive amount of negative publicity for the company, which pulled all advertising featuring Schnatter, who resigned as CEO less than two months later.¹⁶ It has also been argued that the negative sentiment that still lingers from the financial crisis the country went through more than a decade ago, as well as more recent scandals involving top executives in some companies, has eroded confidence in executives, which affects their ability to come across as trustworthy as they would have a few years ago. Moreover, in the new era of social media it is very easy to criticize corporate leaders who do not come across as trustworthy and believable.¹⁷

Major corporations are likely to continue to use their top executives in their advertising, particularly when they have celebrity value that helps enhance the firm's image. Some research suggests the use of a company president or CEO can improve attitudes and increase the likelihood that consumers will inquire about a company's product or service.¹⁸ Defenders of the practice argue that the use of top executives or business owners in ads is an effective way of projecting an image of trust and honesty and, more important, the idea that the company isn't run by some faceless corporate monolith. As one expert notes: "These guys come into people's living rooms every night and, over the course of weeks and years, become like members of

the family. It gets to the point that when you think of a certain product category, you think of the guy you see all the time on TV.”¹⁹

Limitations of Credible Sources Several studies have shown that a high-credibility source is not always an asset, nor is a low-credibility source always a liability. High- and low-credibility sources are equally effective when they are arguing for a position opposing their own best interest.²⁰ A very credible source is more effective when message recipients are not in favor of the position advocated in the message.²¹ However, a very credible source is less important when the audience has a neutral position, and such a source may even be less effective than a moderately credible source when the receiver’s initial attitude is favorable.²²

Another reason a low-credibility source may be as effective as a high-credibility source is the **sleeper effect**, whereby the persuasiveness of a message increases with the passage of time. The immediate impact of a persuasive message may be inhibited because of its association with a low-credibility source. But with time, the association of the message with the source diminishes and the receiver’s attention focuses more on favorable information in the message, resulting in more support. However, many studies have failed to demonstrate the presence of a sleeper effect.²³ Many advertisers hesitate to count on the sleeper effect, since exposure to a credible source is a more reliable strategy.²⁴

Source Attractiveness

A source characteristic frequently used by advertisers is **attractiveness**, which encompasses similarity, familiarity, and likability.²⁵ *Similarity* is a supposed resemblance between the source and the receiver of the message, while *familiarity* refers to knowledge of the source through exposure. *Likability* is an affection for the source as a result of physical appearance, behavior, or other personal traits. Even when the sources are not athletes or movie stars, consumers often admire their physical appearance, talent, and/or personality.

Source attractiveness leads to persuasion through a process of **identification**, whereby the receiver is motivated to seek some type of relationship with the source and thus adopts similar beliefs, attitudes, preferences, or behavior. Maintaining this position depends on the source's continued support for the position as well as the receiver's page 184 continued identification with the source. If the source changes position, the receiver may also change. Unlike internalization, identification does not usually integrate information from an attractive source into the receiver's belief system. The receiver may maintain the attitudinal position or behavior only as long as it is supported by the source or the source remains attractive.

Marketers recognize that receivers of persuasive communications are more likely to attend to and identify with people they find likable or similar to themselves. Similarity and likability are the two source characteristics marketers seek when choosing a communicator.

Applying Similarity Marketers recognize that people are more likely to be influenced by a message coming from someone with whom they feel a sense of similarity.²⁶ If the communicator and receiver have similar needs, goals, interests, and lifestyles, the position advocated by the source is better understood and received. Similarity is used in various ways in marketing communications. Companies select salespeople whose characteristics match well with their customers'. A sales position for a particular region may be staffed by someone local who has background and interests in common with the customers. Global marketers often hire foreign nationals as salespeople so customers can relate more easily to them. Companies may also try to recruit former athletes to sell sporting goods or beer, since their customers usually have a strong interest in sports. Several studies have shown that customers who perceive a salesperson as similar to themselves are more likely to be influenced by his or her message.²⁷

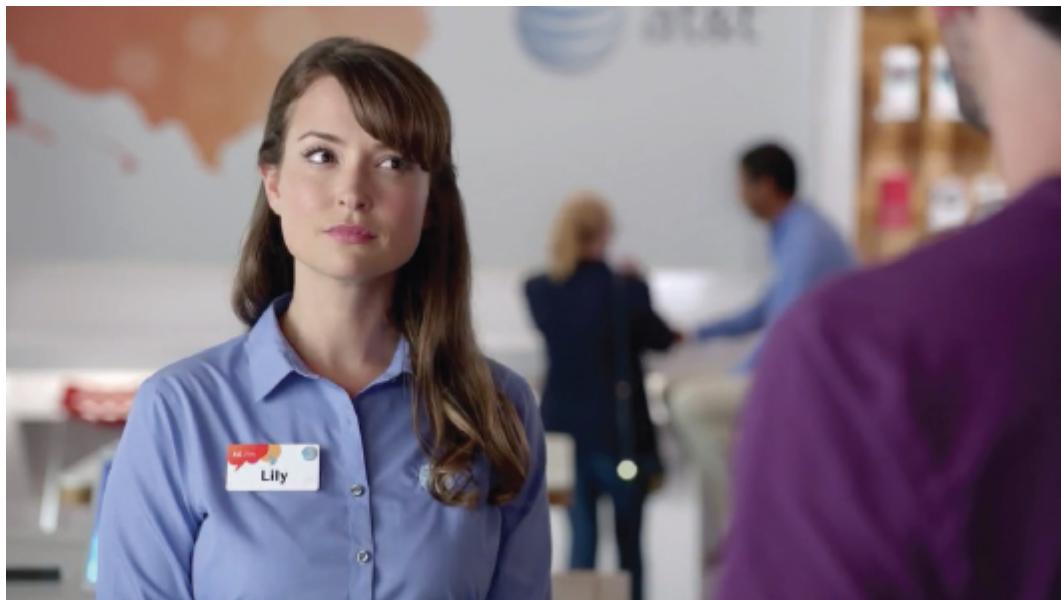
Similarity is also used by creating a situation where the consumer feels empathy for the person shown in the commercial. In a slice-of-life commercial, the advertiser usually starts by showing an event or predicament that consumers often face, with the hope of getting the consumer to think, "I can see myself in that situation." This can help establish a bond of similarity

between the communicator and the receiver, increasing the source's level of persuasiveness. Marketers like to cast actors in their commercials that consumers will notice, recognize, identify with, and remember, as well as help differentiate their products and services. In some cases they try to create a personality figure for the company or brand that consumers will find likable. For example, one of the most popular advertising personalities for more than a decade has been Flo, the fictional salesperson character who has appeared in more than 100 commercials for Progressive Insurance. Her popularity prompted other companies to develop likeable characters such as Jan, the charming and sassy receptionist at the Toyota dealership, and Lily, the retail store employee who appeared in ads for AT&T's mobile service for a number of years (Exhibit 6–4). Her perky enthusiasm and somewhat quirky wit and charm, along with the way she presents the mobile plans to customers, made the ad campaign very popular with consumers.²⁸ Casting directors consider factors such as similarity and how the audience will identify with people when looking for talent to use in commercials.

XHIBIT 6–4

The store employee in the AT&T commercials was very popular with consumers.

Source: AT&T Inc.



Many companies feel that the best way to connect with consumers is by using regular-looking, everyday people with whom the average person can easily identify. For example, some of the most popular commercials for many years were those from the “Whassup?” campaign for Budweiser beer. In these ads the DDB agency cast a group of real-life friends from Philadelphia, rather than actors, who greet each other with the slang word “Whassup?” when they speak on the phone or get together to watch a game and enjoy a Bud. *Advertising Age* named “Whassup?” one of the top ad campaigns of the 21st century, noting how it was very effective at tapping into page 185 popular culture and what young people are actually like and how they speak to each other.²⁹

Applying Likability: Using Celebrities Marketers recognize the value of using popular celebrities to endorse their companies and brands, such as TV and movie stars, athletes, entertainers, musicians, and other well-known public figures. And they are willing to pay them large amounts of money to do so. Many of the top endorsers are athletes such as Swiss tennis star Roger Federer, who makes an estimated \$65 million per year in endorsements, followed by NBA basketball star LeBron James at \$52 million. Several other athletes make more than \$40 million a year in endorsements, including soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo, NBA star Stephen Curry, and golfer Tiger Woods. For women, the top athlete endorser is tennis star Serena Williams, who makes an estimated \$18 million per year for her deals with Nike, Gatorade, Intel, and a number of other companies. Other top female endorsers include tennis stars Gabrine Muguruza, Maria Sharapova, and Caroline Wozniacki—all of whom make an estimated \$10 million per year from their marketing deals. A number of top female endorsers are entertainers, including actor-singer Jennifer Lopez and singers Beyoncé, Taylor Swift, and Katy Perry.

There are a number of reasons marketers spend huge sums of money to have celebrities appear in TV commercials or print ads to endorse their company or brand or promote them on social media. Many marketers recognize that celebrities have *stopping power*. That is, they draw attention to advertising messages in very cluttered media environments, as the human brain recognizes celebrities in a manner similar to how it recognizes people

we actually know. This in turn leads to greater recall and/or recognition of the company or brand. Celebrities can also favorably influence consumers' feelings, attitudes, and purchase behavior, as they may give more attention to and place higher value on products and services celebrities are endorsing.

Another reason for using celebrity endorsers is that they can enhance the target audience's perceptions of the product or service in terms of image and/or performance. Most marketers of sporting goods equipment use athletes to endorse their products, because a well-known athlete may convince potential buyers that the product will enhance their own performance. For example, Under Armour's endorsement roster includes a number of top athletes, including NBA basketball star Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors, Major League Baseball star Bryce Harper, golfer Jordan Spieth, and New England Patriots star quarterback Tom Brady. (Exhibit 6–5) The athletic shoe and apparel company also has endorsement deals with a number of female athletes, including skier Lindsey Vonn, a four-time Olympic medalist, and ballerina Misty Copeland, who is only the third African American female soloist in the history of the American Ballet Theater.

XHIBIT 6–5

Under Armour has endorsement deals with a number of top athletes.

Source: Under Armour, Inc.



A number of factors must be considered when a company decides to use a celebrity spokesperson, including the dangers of overshadowing the product and being overexposed, the target audience's receptivity, and risks to the advertiser.

Overshadowing the Product How will the celebrity affect the target audience's processing of the advertising message? Consumers may focus their attention on the celebrity and fail to notice or recall the brand or advertising message. Carsten Erfgen and his colleagues refer to this as the

“vampire effect” and note that it occurs when the personality of the celebrity endorser overshadows the brand he or she is advertising and thus has a negative impact rather than helping to sell it.³⁰ Advertisers should select a celebrity spokesperson who will attract attention and enhance the sales message, yet not overshadow the brand. For example, high-end clothing brand St. John decided that it was best to drop actor Angelina Jolie from its advertising after a few years. The company felt that she was overshadowing the brand. Jolie was viewed as a very good fit for St. John, including her role as the voice of its children’s charity—a cause she is well known for supporting. However, the company felt that she was simply too famous and decided to use a top British fashion model in its ads.³¹ A recent study found that celebrity overshadowing can be particularly problematic when page 186 the consumers have low attachment to or interest in the celebrity.³²

Overexposure Consumers are often skeptical of endorsements because they know the celebrities are being paid.³³ This problem is particularly pronounced when a celebrity endorses too many products or companies and becomes overexposed. For example, former English soccer star David Beckham has endorsement contracts with a number of companies/brands including Gillette, Pepsi, Samsung, adidas, Armani, H&M, and Tudor watches (Exhibit 6–6). Advertisers can protect themselves against overexposure with an exclusivity clause limiting the number of products a celebrity can endorse. However, such clauses are usually expensive, and most celebrities agree not to endorse similar products anyway. Many celebrities, knowing their fame is fleeting, try to earn as much endorsement money as possible, yet they must be careful not to damage their credibility by endorsing too many products. For example, singer-actor Cher damaged her credibility as an advertising spokesperson by appearing in too many infomercials. When she realized that appearing in so many infomercials was hurting her acting career as well, she ceased doing them.³⁴

XHIBIT 6–6

Soccer star David Beckham has a number of endorsement deals.

Source: Tudor



Target Audiences' Receptivity One of the most important considerations in choosing a celebrity endorser is how well the individual matches with and is received by the advertiser's target audience. [page 187](#) Marketers have to consider the reputation and image of the celebrity endorsers they are considering as spokespersons and how well they align with the image of their company or brand, as well as the advertising message. Consideration must also be given to whether celebrities resonate with the audience they are targeting, because many consumers are not influenced by celebrity endorsements. For example, consumers who are particularly knowledgeable about a product or service or have strongly established attitudes may be less influenced by a celebrity than would those with little knowledge or neutral attitudes. Several studies have found celebrity endorsements are more effective with younger consumers such as Gen Z and millennials because these age cohorts have a higher level of trust of celebrities and are more likely to have a positive attitude toward companies or brands endorsed by them.³⁵

The teen and young adult markets are generally very receptive to celebrity endorsers, as evidenced by the frequent use of entertainers and

athletes in ads targeted to this group for products such as apparel, cosmetics, and beverages. Many marketers are taking advantage of this by utilizing the social media communities of celebrities to engage and build connections with celebrities they follow. As was discussed in Chapter 5, many celebrities promote brands on their personal Instagram or Facebook pages. For example, pop star Selena Gomez has endorsement deals with a number of companies/brands, including Coach, Coca-Cola, and Pantene shampoo. Luxury brand marketer Louis Vuitton signed Gomez to an endorsement deal a few years ago by rolling out ads on Instagram, where she has a huge global following. The post scored more than 1 million likes in the first two hours it was posted.³⁶

While young celebrities with large followings on social media are often used as endorsers, recent research has shown that their older counterparts are just as effective, if not more so. A study by Spotted, a research company that focuses on celebrity endorsements, analyzed the effectiveness of endorsement deals, taking into consideration factors such as the likability; relatability; attractiveness; trustworthiness; authenticity; and facial, name, and voice recognition of 400 celebrities. Their study found that most effective campaigns were those using older celebrities such as Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson for Under Armour, Mark Wahlberg for AT&T, Kristen Bell for Old Navy, and Reese Witherspoon for Crate and Barrel. The least effective campaigns used younger celebrities such as Bella Throne for BUXOM cosmetics, Say Mitchell for Toyota, and Ansel Elgort for Polo Ralph Lauren. Spotted’s CEO noted that older celebrities may be more effective because the sheer volume of their work gives them more exposure to different subsets of consumers, and they enjoy a higher level of familiarity and trustworthiness.³⁷

A number of marketers do not use celebrities because they have determined that they do not influence the markets they are targeting, and/or they do not want to pay the large sums of money often required to do so. Many are also concerned that consumers have become more skeptical and cynical toward the use of celebrity endorsers and respond better to ads using humor, irony, and unvarnished truth. There is also concern over tying a company or brand’s image to a celebrity endorser, which we discuss next.

Risk to the Advertiser A celebrity's behavior may pose a risk to a company.³⁸ A number of entertainers and athletes have been involved in activities that could embarrass the companies whose products they endorsed. As discussed in the chapter opener, golfer Tiger Woods was making more than \$100 million per year from various endorsement deals. However, a number of companies terminated their endorsement deals with him when his infidelity and other character issues became public in 2009. Another high-profile athlete who lost a tremendous amount of money in endorsements was cyclist Lance Armstrong. In 2012, the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency released a report containing evidence that the seven-time Tour De France champion concealed his use of banned performance-enhancing substances. Armstrong had all of his titles stripped away and was banned from cycling for life, which resulted in 11 companies—including Nike, Oakley, Anheuser [page 188](#) Busch, Trek, and 24-Hour Fitness—terminating their endorsement contracts with him. It is estimated that his actions cost Armstrong nearly \$150 million in endorsements.³⁹

Problems regarding endorsers are not limited to athletes; they can occur with other types of celebrities as well, including social media influencers. For example, in 2019 several celebrities were among a group of individuals indicted for allegedly paying large sums of money to help their children gain admission into prestigious universities. Actor Lori Loughlin and her fashion designer husband Mossimo Giannulli were charged with paying \$500,000 to help their two daughters get into the University of Southern California by designating them as recruits to the university's crew team. One of the daughters, Olivia Jade Giannulli, was a popular social media influencer with nearly 2 million subscribers on YouTube channel and 1.3 million followers on Instagram. However, within a few weeks most of the companies whose brands she was representing cut ties with her, including cosmetics giant Sephora, hair care brand Tresemme, fashion brand Lulus, and consumer electronics company Hewlett Packard.⁴⁰ Problems can also arise with individuals who have become celebrities based on their role as an advertising spokesperson. In 2015 Subway terminated its relationship with Jared Fogle, who had been a popular spokesperson for the company for more than 15 years, after he was arrested and later pleaded guilty to child pornography and sex charges.⁴¹

Marketers recognize that the use of celebrity endorsers can be a very expensive and high-risk strategy, because what the celebrities do in their personal lives can impact their image and the way they are viewed by the public. Some companies may face a dilemma in selecting celebrity endorsers: While they prefer them to be upright, they still want them to have an edge or be somewhat irreverent to be able to connect with consumers. This may be particularly true for companies marketing their products to teens and young adults. To avoid problems, companies often research a celebrity's personal life and background. Many endorsement contracts include a morals clause allowing the company to terminate the contract if a controversy arises. Several companies, including luxury brands Burberry and Chanel as well as fashion retailer H&M, canceled their contracts with supermodel Kate Moss in the wake of a British tabloid photo that showed her using cocaine.⁴² However, marketers should remember that adding morals clauses to their endorsement contracts only gets them out of a problem; it does not prevent it from happening. Thus, it is important that they carefully consider the character of a celebrity as well as the potential risk associated with using him or her as a spokesperson or endorser for the company or one of its brands.⁴³

Return on Investment Perhaps the most important factor a company must consider regarding the use of celebrity endorsers is the return on investment from using them. Marketers use celebrities to increase awareness of and attention to their company and/or brands, as well as their advertisements, and to develop strong associations between the celebrity and the brand that will result in higher purchase intentions. Many companies do not reveal the increases in sales and/or market share that result from the use of celebrity endorsers. However, an interesting study was conducted by Anita Elberse and Jeroen Verleun that examined the economic impact of a sample of 347 endorsement deals for 180 athletes across six packaged-goods product categories. The results of their study found that sales did increase significantly over the first six months that the athlete endorsers were used—about 4 percent. However, subsequent major achievements by the athletes did not improve the sales of the brands studied relative to their competitors, which calls into question the long-term value of endorsement deals.⁴⁴

It should be noted that there are many examples of companies that have seen sales increase, and there can be other factors that marketers consider in determining the value gained from using a celebrity endorser. Thus it is likely that many marketers will continue to use them despite some of the drawbacks associated with their use that have been discussed. Some companies are changing their relationships with celebrity endorsers and having them become more involved with their companies and brands rather than just appearing in advertisements (Exhibit 6–7). A number of high-profile celebrities have become involved in areas such as product design and development as well as the advertising creative process. For example, Selena Gomez’s endorsement deal with Coach included her page 189 collaborating with the luxury brand’s creative director to develop her own line of accessories, leather goods, and clothing.⁴⁵ PepsiCo hired Beyoncé as a “brand ambassador” as part of a long-term \$50 million endorsement deal that includes having her help create content and develop new ways to engage consumers and fans.⁴⁶ Some marketing experts argue that these celebrity deals are little more than window dressing, while others argue that they can be valuable.

XHIBIT 6–7

Marketers are using celebrities for more than just appearing in ads.

Source: Mark Dierker/McGraw-Hill Education



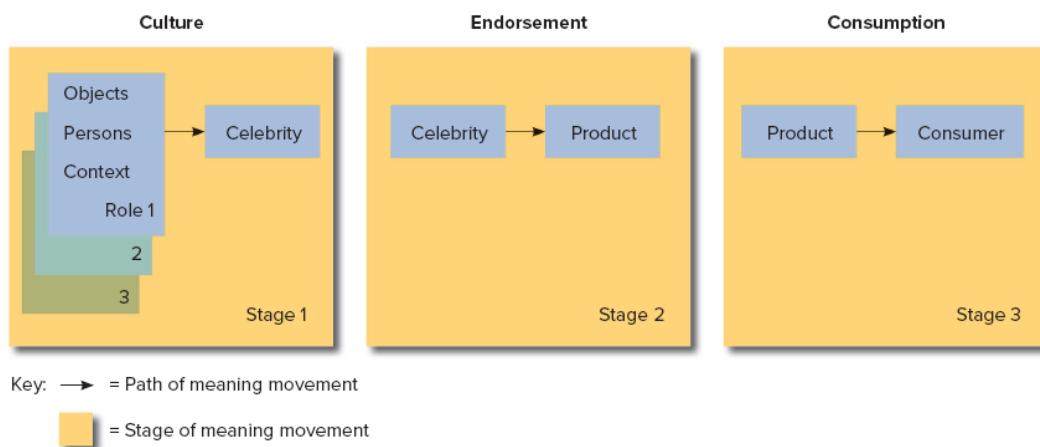
Marketers are also becoming more creative in the way they pay celebrities, sometimes even by giving them a stake in the company. For example, rapper 50 Cent (Curtis Jackson) received a minority stake in Glacéau Vitaminwater, which increased his involvement with the company. He developed a flavor, appeared in ads, and even mentioned the brand in some of his songs. When the company was acquired by Coca-Cola, Jackson made an estimated \$400 million.⁴⁷ And when Under Armour signed New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady to an endorsement deal, he received an equity stake in the company. According to Under Armour CEO Kevin Plank, it was an ideal arrangement for the firm, as it makes Brady fully invested in the company's success.⁴⁸

Understanding the Meaning of Celebrity Endorsers Advertisers must try to match the product or company's image, the characteristics of the target market, and the personality of the celebrity.⁴⁹ The image celebrities project to consumers can be just as important as their ability to attract attention. An interesting perspective on celebrity endorsement was

developed by Grant McCracken.⁵⁰ He argues that credibility and attractiveness don't sufficiently explain how and why celebrity endorsements work and offers a model based on meaning transfer (Figure 6–3).

FIGURE 6–3

Meaning Movement and the Endorsement Process



According to this model, a celebrity's effectiveness as an endorser depends on the culturally acquired meanings he or she brings to the endorsement process. Each celebrity contains many meanings, including status, class, gender, and age as well as personality and lifestyle. In explaining stage 1 of the meaning transfer process, McCracken notes:

Celebrities draw these powerful meanings from the roles they assume in their television, movie, military, athletic, and other careers. Each new dramatic role brings the celebrity into contact with a range of objects, persons, and contexts. Out of these objects, persons, and contexts are transferred meanings that then reside in the celebrity.⁵¹

The advertising industry sometimes refers to the cultural meaning a celebrity spokesperson can bring to an endorsement as “borrowed equity.” An excellent example of a celebrity who has acquired cultural meaning that she brings to her many endorsements is actor Jennifer Aniston. In addition to

being very attractive, she is funny, charismatic, authentic, and wholesome—a persona developed from the Rachel character she played on the hit sitcom *Friends* for many years. She is also perceived as very likeable, relatable, and aspirational, which are traits stemming from the roles she has played in movies such as *Marley & Me*, *Horrible Bosses*, and *Office Space*. Aniston's cultural meaning works very well in endorsements she does for brands such as Aveeno, Smartwater, and Emirates Airlines.⁵²

Another popular celebrity with a distinct identity is actress/comedienne Tina Fey, who has developed cultural meaning through the various roles and characters she has played on *Saturday Night Live*, the sitcom *30 Rock*, and in movies such as *Mean Girls*, *Whiskey Tango Fox Trot*, and *Date Night*, in which she played the role of a relatable woman trying to balance her life as a wife and mother. She is also an acclaimed writer and producer, which contributes to her cultural meaning as a successful, multitasking businesswoman.

McCracken suggests celebrity endorsers bring their meanings and image into the ad and transfer them to the product they are endorsing (stage 2 of the model in Figure 6–3). For example, American Express has been using Tina Fey in the advertising campaign for its Amex EveryDay Credit Card, which allows users to earn rewards on everyday purchases.⁵³ The company introduced the card to attract a new set of consumers and position the brand as more approachable and inclusive. American Express is also targeting working mothers who are living very busy and somewhat hectic lives. The TV commercials for the campaign show Fey in her trademark witty fashion as a busy, on-the-go working woman and mom, juggling her personal life with work and other demands. She is an effective endorser for the brand since she represents the quintessential do-it-all woman with an endless to-do list but who gets it all done with the help of the Amex EveryDay Credit Card (Exhibit 6–8).

XHIBIT 6–8

Tina Fey's image works well in ads for the Amex EveryDay Credit Card.

Source: American Express Company

What's my 20?

1. Grilled cheese and soup from a diner. STAT.
2. Dog groomer. Someone in this family should have a haircut.
3. Tickets to the American Museum of Natural History for a playdate with the Blue Whale.
4. MILB.
5. A taxi ride—it's like my own personal driver—who has amnesia and never remembers me.
6. One huge NY bagel that feeds our whole family and a family of pigeons.
7. Late night online shopping. Vintage squirrel soaps from the '90s? Oh boy. Go to bed.
8. Fresh fish and vegetable fritters. Ciao! That my husband knows how to cook. Yes, I am lucky.
9. Movie download for kids, also known as "the neutralizing mp."
10. Donuts for everyone in the office, because food breeds loyalty.
11. MILB.
12. Apology to someone I've accidentally offended. A down curation for the world's biggest movie star!
13. Manicure. Come when you talk with your hands, they should be human hands.
14. A birthday cake with a covergirl's picture on it. So I can eat her face.
15. Shoes for a not-growing toddler feet. I like sturdy, she prefers light-up ballerina numero.
16. Five "dader chardonnays" for upcoming kid birthday parties. Don't overthink it.
17. A gym membership so I can take a "stretching area rug."
18. Who is deciding all this #F&G#*#*#*#*#?
19. Pens and stickers from my favorite "Stationery and Toy" store. I would like to be buried there.
20. Periodicals. *Celeb Plastic Surgery Secrets!* I mean... *The New Yorker*. *Teah*. *The New Yorker*.

- Tina Fey

AmericaEveryday.com

We count it for the billing period in which 3 goods. Some merchants can divide separate charges into a single transaction before submitting. If so, when this happens, the combined transaction will result in a single purchase for purposes of earning rewards/20% welcome purchases. A batch of a purchase, return or exchange may sometimes be offset from the date you made the transaction. For example, if you do a group order, the purchase date will be the date the first item ships. If you return or exchange an item, we will deduct the date the item was shipped or the date the refund was earned. For full terms and conditions, visit [americanexpress.com/terms](#). Terms and Conditions for the Membership Rewards® program apply.

In the final stage of McCracken's model, the meanings the celebrity has given to the product are transferred to the consumer. By using Tina Fey in its ads, American Express can deliver on its branding and positioning platform by showing how its EveryDay Credit Card matches well with the lifestyles of busy people who are trying to balance demanding careers page 191 with their personal lives. McCracken notes that this final stage is complicated and difficult to achieve. The way consumers take possession of the meaning the celebrity has transferred to a product is probably the least understood part of the process.

The meaning transfer model has some important implications for companies using celebrity endorsers. Marketers must first decide on the image or symbolic meanings important to the target audience for the particular product, service, or company. They must then determine which celebrity best represents the meaning or image to be projected. An advertising campaign must be designed that captures that meaning in the product and moves it to the consumer. Marketing and advertising personnel often rely on intuition in choosing celebrity endorsers for their companies or products, but some companies conduct research studies to determine consumers' perceptions of celebrities' meaning.

Marketers may also pretest ads to determine whether they transfer the proper meaning to the product. When celebrity endorsers are used, the marketer should track the campaign's effectiveness. Does the celebrity continue to be effective in communicating the proper meaning to the target audience? Celebrities who are no longer in the limelight may lose their ability to transfer any significant meanings to the product.

CHOOSING A CELEBRITY ENDORSER

As we have seen, marketers must consider many factors when choosing a celebrity to serve as an advertising spokesperson for the company or a particular brand. Studies have shown that advertising and marketing managers take these various factors into account when choosing a celebrity endorser.⁵⁴ Among the most important factors are the celebrity's match with the target audience and the product/service or brand, the overall image of the celebrity, the cost of acquiring the celebrity, trustworthiness, the risk of controversy, and the celebrity's familiarity and likability among the target audience. Digital and Social Media Perspective 6–1 discusses how YouTube personalities have become more influential than mainstream celebrities, who are less popular among young people.

While some advertising and marketing executives rely on their own intuition and gut feeling, many turn to research that measures a celebrity's familiarity and appeal among their target audience as well as other factors. Many companies and their advertising agencies rely on Q-scores that are commercially available from the New York-based firm Marketing Evaluations, Inc. To determine its Q-scores for sport personalities, actors, and entertainers, the company surveys a representative national panel of consumers several times a year. Respondents are asked to indicate whether they have ever seen or heard of the performer or sports personality and, if they have, to rate him or her on a scale that includes one of my favorites, very good, good, fair, and poor. The *familiarity score* indicates what percentage of people has heard of the person; the *one of my favorites score* is an absolute measure of the appeal or popularity of the celebrity. The well-known *Q-score* is calculated by taking the percentage of respondents who indicate that a person is “one of my favorites” and then dividing that number

by the percentage of respondents who indicate they have heard of that person. Q-scores are important because they answer the question: How appealing is the person among those who do know him or her? The average Q-score for performers is generally around 18 and about 17 for sports personalities. Marketing Evaluation's Q-scores are also broken down on the basis of various demographic criteria such as a respondent's age, income, occupation, education, and race so that marketers have some idea of how a celebrity's popularity varies among different groups of consumers. Marketing Evaluations also now reports a negative Q-score, which is the percentage of respondents who rate the personality as fair or poor divided by only those who are familiar with the person. Exhibit 6–9 shows a sample page from the Performer Q study.

XHIBIT 6–9

Sample page from Marketing Evaluations, Inc., Performer Q Study.

Source: *Marketing Evaluations, Inc.*

| PERSONALITY NAME | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------|------|----------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| | ONE OF MY FAVORITES | VERY GOOD | GOOD | FAIR/POR | TOTAL FAMILIAR | POSITIVE Q SCORE | NEGATIVE Q SCORE |
| TOTAL SAMPLE | 9 | 18 | 30 | 25 | 83 | 11 | 31 |
| 6 - 11 YEARS | 16 | 12 | 18 | 9 | 56 | 29 | 17 |
| 12 - 17 YEARS | 11 | 21 | 30 | 23 | 86 | 13 | 27 |
| 18 - 34 YEARS | 11 | 22 | 33 | 29 | 95 | 11 | 31 |
| 35 - 49 YEARS | 11 | 20 | 34 | 26 | 90 | 12 | 29 |
| 50 AND OVER | 4 | 13 | 28 | 27 | 72 | 6 | 37 |
| 18 - 49 YEARS | 11 | 21 | 34 | 28 | 93 | 11 | 30 |
| 18 YEARS AND OVER | 8 | 18 | 32 | 27 | 85 | 10 | 32 |
| 25 - 54 YEARS | 11 | 20 | 32 | 28 | 91 | 12 | 31 |
| TOTAL MALES | | | | | | | |
| 6 AND OVER | 9 | 16 | 31 | 25 | 81 | 11 | 31 |
| 18 - 34 YEARS | 10 | 21 | 33 | 29 | 94 | 10 | 31 |
| 35 - 49 YEARS | 13 | 18 | 33 | 25 | 89 | 15 | 28 |
| 50 AND OVER | 4 | 11 | 28 | 25 | 67 | 5 | 36 |
| 18 - 49 YEARS | 11 | 20 | 33 | 27 | 91 | 13 | 30 |
| 18 YEARS AND OVER | 9 | 17 | 31 | 26 | 83 | 11 | 32 |
| 25 - 54 YEARS | 12 | 21 | 30 | 27 | 90 | 13 | 30 |
| TOTAL FEMALES | | | | | | | |
| 6 AND OVER | 10 | 19 | 30 | 26 | 84 | 12 | 31 |
| 18 - 34 YEARS | 12 | 22 | 33 | 30 | 97 | 12 | 31 |
| 35 - 49 YEARS | 8 | 21 | 35 | 27 | 91 | 9 | 30 |
| 50 AND OVER | 5 | 15 | 28 | 29 | 76 | 7 | 38 |
| 18 - 49 YEARS | 10 | 22 | 34 | 28 | 94 | 10 | 30 |
| 18 YEARS AND OVER | 8 | 19 | 32 | 29 | 87 | 9 | 33 |
| 25 - 54 YEARS | 10 | 20 | 34 | 29 | 92 | 11 | 31 |
| HOUSEHOLD INCOME | | | | | | | |
| UNDER \$20,000 | 8 | 13 | 30 | 20 | 71 | 11 | 28 |
| \$20,000 - \$39,999 | 9 | 18 | 31 | 26 | 85 | 11 | 31 |
| \$40,000 - \$59,999 | 11 | 14 | 34 | 27 | 86 | 13 | 31 |
| \$60,000 AND OVER | 9 | 21 | 28 | 27 | 85 | 11 | 31 |
| \$75,000 AND OVER | 9 | 19 | 29 | 28 | 85 | 11 | 32 |
| EDUCATION (ADULT) | | | | | | | |
| HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE/LESS | 10 | 19 | 30 | 23 | 80 | 12 | 28 |
| SOME COLLEGE/DEGREE | 7 | 17 | 34 | 32 | 90 | 8 | 36 |
| OCCUPATION (ADULT) | | | | | | | |
| WHITE COLLAR | 7 | 21 | 35 | 29 | 91 | 7 | 32 |
| BLUE COLLAR | 10 | 16 | 32 | 28 | 85 | 12 | 32 |
| RACE | | | | | | | |
| NON BLACK | 7 | 17 | 31 | 27 | 81 | 9 | 33 |
| BLACK | 26 | 25 | 23 | 16 | 90 | 29 | 17 |
| ETHNICITY | | | | | | | |
| HISPANIC | 12 | 17 | 37 | 23 | 89 | 13 | 26 |
| NIELSEN COUNTY SIZE | | | | | | | |
| A | 11 | 18 | 32 | 26 | 87 | 12 | 30 |
| B | 9 | 19 | 30 | 25 | 83 | 11 | 30 |
| C & D | 8 | 16 | 28 | 24 | 75 | 10 | 32 |
| REGION | | | | | | | |
| NORTHEAST | 10 | 21 | 25 | 30 | 85 | 12 | 35 |
| NORTH CENTRAL | 9 | 19 | 32 | 24 | 83 | 11 | 28 |
| SOUTH | 11 | 18 | 32 | 21 | 82 | 13 | 26 |
| WEST | 7 | 13 | 30 | 30 | 80 | 9 | 38 |

YouTubers—New Celebrities to Gen Z and Millennials

If you took a survey of baby boomers or gen Xers and asked them to name the most influential celebrities, it is likely the list would include television and movie stars, entertainers, musicians, and athletes. Depending on their age, they would probably mention popular celebrities such as Jennifer Anniston, Dwayne Johnson, George Clooney, Ellen DeGeneres, LeBron James, and perhaps even Kim Kardashian. However, if you were to ask many millennials and gen Zers the same question, the list would be quite different and include names that many people have never heard of—such as Dude Perfect, Smosh, NigaHaga, Shane Dawson, Jenna Marbles, and Markiplier—unless they spend a lot of time on YouTube and other popular social media sites.

Beginning in the 1950s, and for the next 60 years, television was the primary medium where people consumed news and entertainment. It was also the media vehicle where marketers delivered their advertising messages, many of which featured a celebrity pitching a company or brand. However, over the past two decades, the growth of social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram has dramatically changed the way many people consume media and entertainment. Rather than gathering around the television as a family, teens and young adults are now twice as likely to be watching videos online, primarily on YouTube's platform. YouTube, which launched in 2005 and was purchased by Google a year later, has nearly 2 billion monthly users who spend an average of an hour a day on the YouTube mobile app alone.

With 13- to 24-year-olds watching nearly 12 hours of video per week, a new type of celebrity has emerged—the YouTubers who create content specifically for the site. And even if their parents have never heard of them, they are instantly recognizable to the internet-savvy gen Z cohort and younger millennials who grew up with YouTube as their primary source of entertainment. In the past five years, *Variety* magazine commissioned several studies asking U.S. teens aged 13 to 17 a list of questions to assess how 20 well-known personalities stacked up in terms of approachability, authenticity, and other criteria considered to be key aspects of overall influence. Half of the 20 were personalities with the most subscribers and views on YouTube; the other half were the celebrities with the highest Q-scores among U.S. teens aged 13 to 17. The results of the survey found that the five most influential personalities among the American teens were all YouTube favorites, eclipsing the popular mainstream celebrities. The only mainstream celebrities to score in the top 10 were Jennifer Lawrence and Katy Perry. The study was repeated a year later with similar results, as the top six spots all went to YouTube stars.

The most popular YouTube personalities in the *Variety* survey was Smosh, the online comedy team of Ian Andrew Hecox and Anthony Padilla. Finishing second was another comedy duo, the Fine Brothers (Benny and Rafi), followed by the Swedish video gamer Felix Ulf Kjelberg, otherwise known as PewDiePie, who has the most popular YouTube channel globally, with nearly 93 million subscribers. Rounding out the top five was a video gamer from the U.K., Olajide Olatunji—better known by his alias,

KSI Olajidebt, or KSI for short—followed by Ryan Higa, who is known for his YouTube comedy videos. Higa, whose YouTube user name is Nigahiga, has more than 20 million subscribers to his YouTube channel, and his comedy videos have been viewed nearly 3 billion times. Since the last *Variety* survey was done, a new YouTube star has burst on the scene, Dude Perfect, a sports entertainment group featuring twins Cory and Coby Cotton and three of their college friends from Texas A&M. The Dude Perfect guys are known for their compilation of sports tricks and comedy as well as having famous athletes appear alongside them in their videos. In 2019, Dude Perfect had the second most popular YouTube channel in the world, with nearly 41 million subscribers.

Celebrity brand strategist Jeetender Sehdev took a deeper dive into the survey data to understand why the YouTube stars have more influence on teens. He found that they scored significantly higher than traditional celebrities did across a range of characteristics that influence the purchase behavior of teens. The YouTubers were judged to be more engaging, extraordinary, and relatable than mainstream stars, who were rated as being smarter and more reliable. The two types of celebrities were rated evenly in sex appeal. He also found that teens enjoy an intimate and authentic experience with YouTube personalities because they do not feel their images are orchestrated by PR professionals. Teens also say they appreciate YouTube stars' more candid sense of humor, lack of filter, and risk-taking spirit—behaviors that are often managed carefully for mainstream celebrities.

There are several other reasons YouTubers influence teens and millennials more than mainstream celebrities do. According to a study conducted by Google, YouTube subscribers say that their favorite YouTubers understand them better and can relate to them more than do traditional celebrities. YouTube content creators also develop relationships with their fan base, which leads to higher engagement, as evidenced by more views, comments, and other actions such as liking and sharing. Teens and young adults also feel that YouTube personalities are more influential in setting trends and shaping popular culture than traditional celebrities.

There is no doubt that a new generation of talented people who create their own content and deliver it on social sites such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and other platforms are becoming household names and legitimate influencers among young consumers. Several studies have shown that younger consumers would try a brand or product endorsed by a YouTube personality and that they make purchase decisions based on recommendations of their favorite YouTuber over those of tradition celebrities. Chris Foster, the former chief operating officer of the Saatchi & Saatchi advertising agency, notes that the Internet and social media are clearly changing the nature of celebrity in ways that have major implications for advertising and other forms of marketing. He argues that the traditional image of a celebrity as remote, unknowable, and highly controlled by publicists is no longer persuasive or effective, because members of today's plugged-in generation want to feel connected to their idols and have a sense of how they spend their lives.



Source: Dude Perfect, LLC

Foster argues that a democratization of celebrity is taking place that includes three key factors—expertise, access, and identification—and popular social media personalities often stack up as well, if not better, on all three than do traditional celebrities who are paid to promote companies and brands. He notes that the use of endorsements in advertising will never go away but is changing dramatically in ways that give them more meaning. Technology is making it easier for ordinary consumers to do the marketing for brands and do it in ways that are more authentic and may remove the need for celebrity endorsers. As Foster notes: “We’ve seen the future of celebrity endorsement. And it’s us.”

Sources: Paige Leskin, “These Are the 23 Most Popular YouTube Stars in the World,” *Business Insider*, April 4, 2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/most-popular-youtubers-with-most-subscribers-2018-2>; John Lynch, “The 11 Most Popular YouTube Stars in the US—Who Have Snagged Millions of Fans and Millions of Dollars,” *Business Insider*, February 18, 2018, <https://www.businessinsider.com/most-popular-youtube-stars-in-america-usa-list-2018-2>; Chris Foster, “Why J-Law & George Clooney Don’t Matter: Saatchi & Saatchi COO,” *USA Today*, June 15, 2015, [www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2015/06/12/internet-celebrity-endorsement-advertising-column/71084290/](http://usatoday.com/story/opinion/2015/06/12/internet-celebrity-endorsement-advertising-column/71084290/); Susanne Alt, “Survey: YouTube Stars More Popular Than Mainstream Celebs among U.S. Teens,” *Variety*, August 5, 2014, <http://variety.com/2014/digital/news/survey-youtube-stars-more-popular-than-mainstream-celebs-among-us-teens-1201275245/>.

In addition to Q-scores, marketers use information provided by a number of other research firms that provide them with data on the popularity of various celebrities and insight into how well their image might fit with their

company or brand. For example, in 2018 consumer research firm GfK MRI and market research firm E-Poll launched a new service, MRI/E-Poll Celebrity Fusion, that provides detailed insight into consumer/celebrity compatibility. The service combines MRI's consumer research data, which covers purchase patterns for over 6,500 products and services, with E-Polls research on awareness, appeal, and attribute measures for more than 10,000 celebrities. The new service allows marketers insight into how the interest and appeal of celebrities align with consumers' purchase behavior for various brands.⁵⁵

page 193

Applying Likability Decorative Models

Advertisers often draw attention to their ads by featuring a physically attractive person who serves as a passive or decorative model rather than as an active communicator. Research suggests that physically attractive communicators generally have a positive impact and generate more favorable evaluations of both ads and products than do less attractive models.⁵⁶ The gender appropriateness of the model for the product being advertised and his or her relevance to the product are also important considerations.⁵⁷ Products such as cosmetics or fashionable clothing are likely to benefit from the use of attractive models, since physical appearance is very relevant in marketing these items.

Some models draw attention to the ad but not to the product or message. Studies show that an attractive model facilitates recognition of the ad but does not enhance copy readership or message recall. Thus, advertisers must ensure that the consumer's attention will go beyond the model to

 page 194 the product and advertising message.⁵⁸ Marketers must also consider whether the use of highly attractive models might negatively impact advertising effectiveness. Several studies have shown that some women experience negative feelings when comparing themselves with beautiful models used in ads and the images of physical perfection they represent.⁵⁹ A recent study by Rachelle Jantzon and Michael Basil suggests that it is

possible for models or endorsers to be too attractive, particularly when an ad is targeted at an audience that is the same sex as the endorser.⁶⁰ Their study found that endorser attractiveness generally makes an ad more effective with opposite-sex viewers. However, when an ad is evaluated by viewers of the same sex, the use of a highly attractive model result in less interest in the advertisement. The results suggest that marketers should be cautious about unrealistically attractive models in their ads.

Some companies have developed marketing campaigns that undermine the traditional approach to beauty care advertising by telling women, as well as young girls, that they're beautiful just the way they are. For example, Unilever's Dove brand has long eschewed the use of page 195 supermodels in its ads and uses everyday women and girls who resemble its typical consumers. Since 2004, Dove has run the "Campaign for Real Beauty" which is designed to appeal to everyday women and offer a broader, healthier, and more democratic view of beauty.⁶¹ The campaign has included magazine ads, online videos, extensive public relations, cause marketing, social media, and a website where women can discuss beauty-related issues. Recently, the company took the campaign in a related but slightly different direction with the "Dove Real Beauty Pledge," which is based on the principle that beauty is for everyone and should be a source of confidence and not anxiety (Exhibit 6–10). As part of the Real Beauty Pledge, Dove is committed to three vows: always featuring real women, never models; portraying women as they are in real life; and helping young girls build confidence and self-esteem.

XHIBIT 6–10

Dove takes a social advocacy approach in promoting its beauty products.

Source: Unilever



The only models we'll ever use
are role models.

We feature women who reflect the real beauty
diversity in society
#RealBeauty #DovePromise

Mario Testino & Dove
Mario Testino

Source Power

The final characteristic in Kelman's classification scheme is **source power**. A source has power when he or she can actually administer rewards and punishments to the receiver. As a result of this power, the source may be able to induce another person(s) to respond to the request or position he or she is advocating. The power of the source depends on several factors. The source must be perceived as being able to administer positive or negative sanctions to the receiver (*perceived control*) and the receiver must think the source cares about whether or not the receiver conforms (*perceived concern*). The receiver's estimate of the source's ability to observe conformity is also important (*perceived scrutiny*).

When a receiver perceives a source as having power, the influence process occurs through a process known as **compliance**. The receiver accepts the persuasive influence of the source and acquiesces to his or her position in hopes of obtaining a favorable reaction or avoiding punishment. The receiver may show public agreement with the source's position but not have an internal or private commitment to this position. Persuasion induced through compliance may be superficial and last only as long as the receiver perceives that the source can administer some reward or punishment.

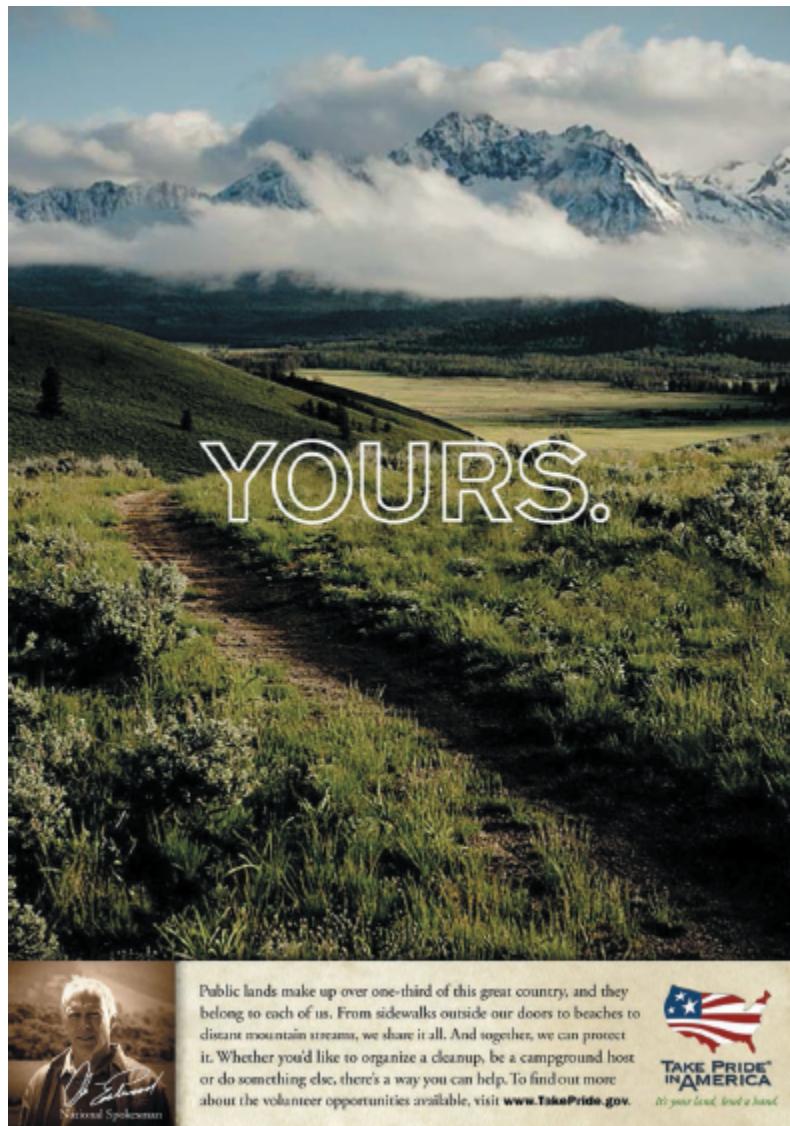
Power as a source characteristic is very difficult to apply in a nonpersonal influence situation such as advertising. A communicator in an ad generally cannot apply any sanctions to the receiver or determine whether

compliance actually occurs. An indirect way of using power is by using an individual with an authoritative personality as a spokesperson. For example, Take Pride in America uses actor-director Clint Eastwood, whose movie roles earned him an image as a rugged tough guy, in public service campaigns commanding people not to pollute or damage public lands (Exhibit 6–11). Eastwood has used his imposing image in TV commercials calling for people who abuse public lands “to clean up their act or get out of town.”

XHIBIT 6–11

Actor Clint Eastwood's authoritative image makes him an effective source.

Source: *Take Pride in America*



The use of source power applies more in situations involving personal communication and influence. For example, in a personal-selling situation, the sales rep may have some power over a buyer if the latter anticipates receiving special rewards or favors for complying with the salesperson. Some companies provide their sales reps with large expense ^{page 196} accounts to spend on customers for this very purpose.

Representatives of companies whose product demand exceeds supply are often in a position of power; buyers may comply with their requests to ensure an adequate supply of the product. Sales reps must be very careful in their use of a power position, since abusing a power base to maximize short-term gains can damage long-term relationships with customers.

MESSAGE FACTORS

LO 6-3

The way marketing communications are presented is very important in determining their effectiveness. Marketers must consider not only the content of their persuasive messages but also how this information will be structured for presentation and what type of message appeal will be used. Advertising, in all media except radio, relies heavily on visual as well as verbal information. Many options are available with respect to the design and presentation of a message. This section examines the structure of messages and considers the effects of different types of appeals used in advertising.

Message Structure

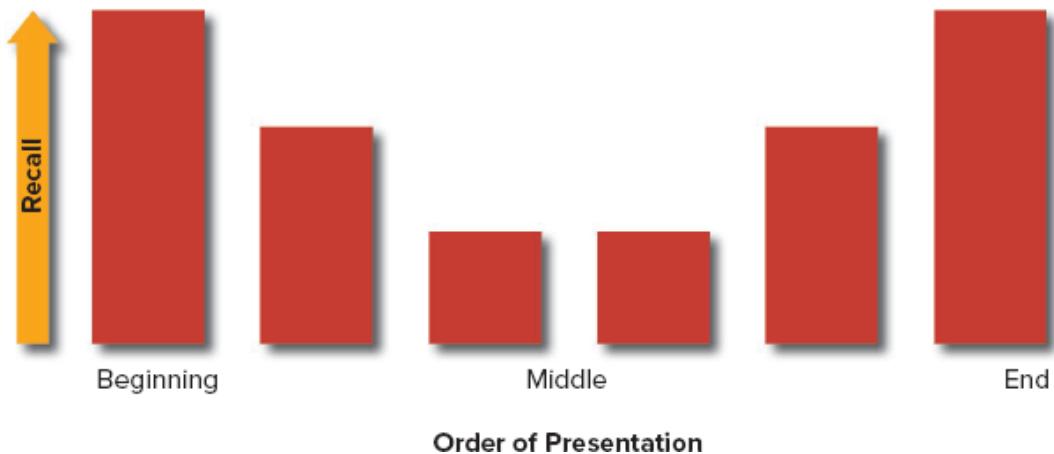
Marketing communications usually consist of a number of message points that the communicator wants to get across. An important aspect of message strategy is knowing the best way to communicate these points and overcome any opposing viewpoints audience members may hold. Extensive research has been conducted on how the structure of a persuasive message can

influence its effectiveness, including order of presentation, conclusion drawing, message sidedness, refutation, and verbal versus visual message characteristics.

Order of Presentation A basic consideration in the design of a persuasive message is the arguments' order of presentation. Should the most important message points be placed at the beginning of the message, in the middle, or at the end? Research on learning and memory generally indicates that items presented first and last are remembered better than those presented in the middle (see Figure 6–4).⁶² This suggests that a communicator's strongest arguments should be presented early or late in the message but never in the middle.

FIGURE 6–4

Ad Message Recall as a Function of Order of Presentation



Presenting the strongest arguments at the beginning of the message assumes a **primacy effect** is operating, whereby information presented first is most effective. Putting the strong points at the end assumes a **recency effect**, whereby the last arguments presented are most persuasive.

Whether to place the strongest selling points at the beginning or the end of the message depends on several factors. If the target audience is opposed to the communicator's position, presenting strong points first can reduce the level of counterarguing. Putting weak arguments first might lead

page 197 to such a high level of counterarguing that strong arguments that

followed would not be believed. Strong arguments work best at the beginning of the message if the audience is not interested in the topic, so they can arouse interest in the message. When the target audience is predisposed toward the communicator's position or is highly interested in the issue or product, strong arguments can be saved for the end of the message. This may result in a more favorable opinion as well as better retention of the information.

The order of presentation can be critical when a long, detailed message with many arguments is being presented. Most effective sales presentations open and close with strong selling points and bury weaker arguments in the middle. For short communications, such as a 15- or 30-second TV or radio commercial, the order may be less critical. However, many product and service messages are received by consumers with low involvement and minimal interest. Thus, an advertiser may want to present the brand name and key selling points early in the message and repeat them at the end to enhance recall and retention. Order of presentation is also an important consideration in other forms of marketing communication. For example, many press releases use the "pyramid style" of writing, whereby most of the important information is presented up front to ensure that it is read, since editors often cut from the end of articles.

Conclusion Drawing Marketing communicators must decide whether their messages should explicitly draw a firm conclusion or allow receivers to draw their own conclusions. Research suggests that, in general, messages with explicit conclusions are more easily understood and effective in influencing attitudes. However, other studies have shown that the effectiveness of conclusion drawing may depend on the target audience, the type of issue or topic, and the nature of the situation.⁶³

More highly educated people prefer to draw their own conclusions and may be annoyed at an attempt to explain the obvious or to draw an inference for them. But stating the conclusion may be necessary for a less educated audience, who may not draw any conclusion or may make an incorrect inference from the message. Marketers must also consider the audience's level of involvement in the topic. For highly personal or ego-involving issues, message recipients may want to make up their own minds and resent

any attempts by the communicator to draw a conclusion. One study found that open-ended ads (without explicit conclusions) were more effective than closed-ended arguments that did include a specific conclusion—but only for involved audiences.⁶⁴

Whether to draw a conclusion for the audience also depends on the complexity of the topic. Even a highly educated audience may need assistance if its knowledge level in a particular area is low. Does the marketer want the message to trigger immediate action or a more long-term effect? If immediate action is an objective, the message should draw a definite conclusion. This is a common strategy in political advertising, particularly for ads run close to election day. When immediate impact is not the objective and repeated exposure will give the audience members opportunities to draw their own conclusions, an open-ended message may be used.

Drawing a conclusion in a message may make sure the target audience gets the point the marketer intended. But many advertisers believe that letting customers draw their own conclusions reinforces the points being made in the message. For example, a health services agency in Kentucky found that open-ended ads were more memorable and more effective in getting consumers to use health services than were ads stating a conclusion. Ads that posed questions about alcohol and drug abuse and left them unanswered resulted in more calls by teenagers to a help line for information than did a message offering a resolution to the problem.⁶⁵ The ad shown in Exhibit 6–12, which is from the Montana Meth Project (MMP) drug prevention messaging campaign, is a good example of this strategy. The ad challenges teens to consider what they know about methamphetamine and prompts them to learn more by visiting the MMP website.

XHIBIT 6–12

This ad is a good example of the use of open-ended messaging.

Source: Meth Project Foundation Inc., The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids



page 198

Message Sidedness Another message structure decision facing the marketer involves message sidedness. A **one-sided message** mentions only positive attributes or benefits. A **two-sided message** presents good as well as bad points. The logic of a two-sided message is that acknowledging a limitation or short-coming can be a way to enhance credibility and make the message more effective. One-sided messages are most effective when the target audience already holds a favorable opinion about the topic. They also work better with a less educated audience.⁶⁶

Two-sided messages are more effective when the target audience holds an opposing opinion or is highly educated. Two-sided messages may enhance the credibility of the source.⁶⁷ A better-educated audience usually knows there are opposing arguments, so a communicator who presents both sides of an issue is likely to be seen as less biased and more objective. Martin Eisend conducted a meta-analysis of the research conducted on the effects of one-versus two-sided advertising messages. The results of his analysis showed that the persuasive impact of message sidedness depends on a number of factors, including the amount and importance of negative information in the ad, attribute quality, placement of the negative information, the correlation between negative and positive attributes, and whether the advertiser discloses negative information voluntarily or because it is required to do so.⁶⁸

Most advertisers use one-sided messages. They are concerned about the negative effects of acknowledging a weakness in their brand or don't want to say anything positive about their competitors. There are exceptions, however.

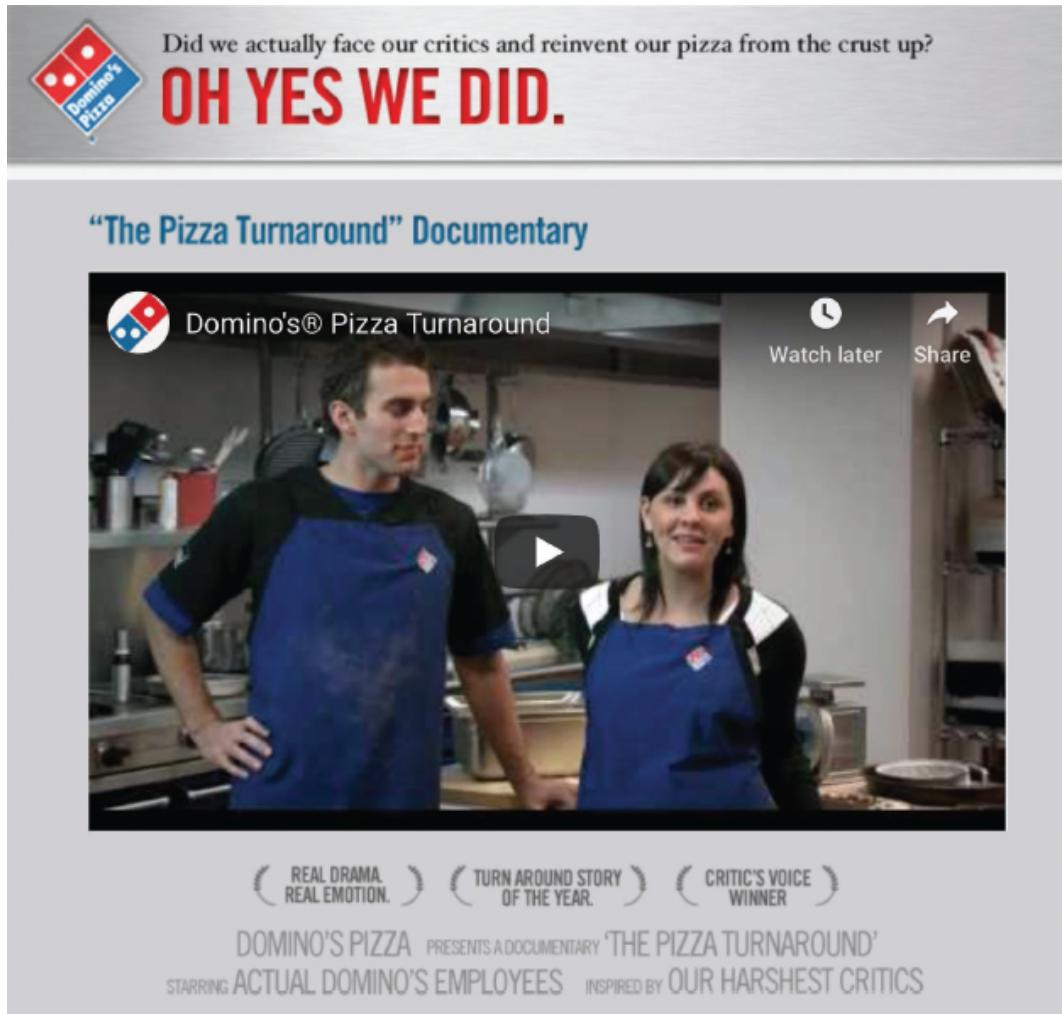
Sometimes advertisers compare brands on several attributes and do not show their product as being the best on every one. There also may be situations in which a company feels that is best to acknowledge its shortcomings and let its customers know that it has addressed them.

An example of a company that used a two-sided message very effectively is the Domino's Pizza chain, which took the strategy to a whole new level in an integrated marketing campaign used to introduce its new, page 199 reformulated pizza. Domino's recognized that changes were needed after conducting research that revealed many consumers had issues with the taste of its pizza; As part of its "Oh Yes We Did" campaign, Domino's used commercials showing the chain's new CEO in front of the camera admitting that he had heard what the focus groups had to say and that it took it to heart. The spots then pointed viewers to a special website (www.pizzaturnaround.com) that featured a four-minute documentary chronicling Domino's employees' reactions to the negative comments coming from the focus groups and telling about the company's quest to make a better pizza (Exhibit 6–13). The website also showed positive as well as negative viewer comments that were linked in from Twitter. While Domino's and its agency knew the campaign might be risky, they moved forward with it and the results were very favorable. They received a great deal of publicity regarding the ads, much of which praised the company for conceding the shortcomings of its product and explaining what it was doing about it. The two-sided message strategy also had a very positive impact on sales as the chain generated a record increase in same-store sales during the campaign.⁶⁹

XHIBIT 6–13

Domino's two-sided message strategy was a very effective way to introduce its reformulated pizza.

Source: Domino's IP Holder LLC



The “Oh Yes We Did” campaign played a very significant role in helping turn around Domino’s, which had image problems prior to its launch and was struggling to compete against Pizza Hut and Papa John’s. The chain has had tremendous success over the past decade as systemwide sales in the United States increased from \$1.5 billion in 2010 to over \$6 billion in 2019. In 2018, Domino’s became the largest pizza company in the world with \$12.3 billion in global revenue. A number of factors have contributed to the growth of the company, including its adoption of digital marketing and early adoption of mobile apps for customization and ordering. However, the company traces its tremendous growth back to the decision to revamp its recipe and launch the bold “Oh Yes We Did” campaign that called itself out for having an inferior product.⁷⁰

Refutation In a special type of two-sided message known as a **refutational appeal**, the communicator presents both sides of an issue and then refutes the opposing viewpoint. Since refutational appeals tend to “inoculate” the target audience against a competitor’s counterclaims, they can be more effective than one-sided messages in making consumers resistant to an opposing message.⁷¹

Refutational messages may be useful when marketers wish to build attitudes that resist change and/or must defend against attacks or criticism of their products or the company. For example, Exhibit 6–14 shows a refutational ad used by SeaWorld Entertainment that was part of an integrated campaign the company ran to defend itself against criticism by the animal activist group PETA. In addition to the refutational ads, SeaWorld created a website (seaworldcares.com) that provides information refuting many of the attacks made against the company regarding its treatment of killer whales. It also serves to educate the public about the many programs and initiatives it has to protect and help marine life. Market leaders, who are often the target of comparative messages, may find that acknowledging competitors’ claims and then refuting them can help build resistant attitudes and customer loyalty.

XHIBIT 6–14

A refutational appeal was used by SeaWorld to defend itself against criticism by PETA and other animal activist groups.

Source: SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, Inc.

FACT: WHALES LIVE as long at SeaWorld.

My name is Chris, and I'm a veterinarian at SeaWorld. My entire professional life has been focused on the care and welfare of animals, including killer whales.

You might have heard attacks from PETA saying our killer whales live only a fraction as long as whales in the wild. They say, "In captivity, orcas' average life span plummets to just nine years."



But the author of an independent study, Dr. Douglas DeMaster, of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, was quoted in *The Wall Street Journal* as saying, "Survival in the wild is comparable to survival in captivity."

There's no other way to say it ... PETA is not giving you the facts.

SeaWorld has several killer whales in their 30s and one that is close to 50 — right in line with what is seen in the wild. In fact, a July 2014 Associated Press (AP) report

analyzing 50 years of data from the federal Marine Mammal Inventory Report found that killer whales born at our parks "had an average life expectancy of 46 years."

It's frustrating that PETA gets a lot of attention by twisting statistics and falsely attacking us. As someone who cares for these incredible animals, their health and well-being is my priority every day. Just like doctors, we veterinarians take an oath. If PETA's accusations were true, I wouldn't work here.

When SeaWorld opened its doors 50 years ago, global understanding of killer whales was just beginning. The world has changed a lot since then, and SeaWorld has continued to change with it. Today, our whales live as long as those in the wild, and our study of them is helping conservationists better understand and protect killer whales and other marine animals everywhere.



Dr. Chris Dold
Veterinarian



Learn more at SeaWorldCares.com

Verbal versus Visual Messages Thus far our discussion has focused on the information, or verbal, portion of the message. However, the nonverbal, visual elements of an ad are also very important. Many ads provide minimal amounts of information and rely on visual elements to communicate. Pictures are commonly used in advertising to convey information or reinforce copy or message claims.

Both the verbal and visual portions of an ad influence the way the advertising message is processed.⁷² Consumers may develop images or impressions based on visual elements such as an illustration in an ad or the scenes in a TV commercial. In some cases, the visual portion of _____ page 200 an ad may reduce its persuasiveness, since the processing stimulated by the picture may be less controlled and consequently less favorable than that stimulated by words.⁷³

Pictures affect the way consumers process accompanying copy. A study showed that when verbal information was low in imagery value, the use of pictures providing examples increased both immediate and delayed recall of product attributes.⁷⁴ However, when the verbal information was already high in imagery value, the addition of pictures did not increase recall. Advertisers often design ads where the visual image supports the verbal appeal to create a compelling impression in the consumer's mind. Notice how the ad for Arrowhead Mountain Spring Water shown in Exhibit 6–15 uses a beautiful visual image of the mountains to communicate the key product attribute of purity.

XHIBIT 6–15

Visual images are an effective way to communicate an important product attribute.

Source: Arrowhead by Nestle Waters North America



Message Appeals

One of the advertiser's most important creative strategy decisions involves the choice of an appropriate appeal. Some ads are designed to appeal to the rational, logical aspect of the consumer's decision-making process; others appeal to feelings in an attempt to evoke some emotional reaction. Many believe that effective advertising combines the practical reasons for purchasing a product with emotional values. In this section we will examine several common types of message appeals, including comparative advertising, fear, and humor.

Comparative Advertising **Comparative advertising** is the practice of either directly or indirectly naming competitors in an ad and comparing one or more specific attributes.⁷⁵ This form of advertising became popular

after the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) began advocating its use in 1972. The FTC reasoned that direct comparison of brands would provide better product information, giving consumers a more rational basis for making purchase decisions. Television networks cooperated with the FTC by lifting their ban on comparative ads, and the result was a flurry of comparative commercials.

Initially, the novelty of comparative ads resulted in greater attention. But since they have become so common, their attention-getting value has declined. Some studies show that recall is higher for comparative than noncomparative messages, but comparative ads are generally not more effective for other response variables, such as brand attitudes or purchase intentions.⁷⁶ Advertisers must also consider how comparative messages affect credibility. Users of the brand being attacked in a comparative message may be especially skeptical about the advertiser's claims.

Comparative advertising may be particularly useful for new brands, since it allows a new market entrant to position itself directly against the more established brands and to promote its distinctive advantages. Direct comparisons can help position a new brand in the evoked, or choice, set of brands the customer may be considering. Comparative advertising is often used for brands with a small market share. They compare themselves to an established market leader in hopes of creating an association and tapping into the leader's market.

An example of a brand that is using comparative advertising effectively is the sports drink BodyArmor, which has become the fastest growing brand in the category by challenging market leader Gatorade. The ads feature a number of high-profile athletes—such as NBA stars James Harden and Donovan Mitchell, NFL quarterback Andrew Luck, and baseball star Mike Trout—and communicate the need for athletes to evolve all aspects of their game in order to compete, including their choice of sports drinks. The ads take aim at Gatorade by noting how the star athletes would not choose an outdated sports drink and that BodyArmor is the more natural and better choice. The comparative ads end with the tagline: “Thanks _____ page 201 Gatorade. We'll take it from here” (Exhibit 6–16). Many of the TV commercials used in the campaign were written and directed by former

Los Angeles Laker star Kobe Bryant, who is the third largest investor in the company.⁷⁷

XHIBIT 6–16

BodyArmor uses comparative advertising to challenge Gatorade in the sports drink market.

Source: BA Sports Nutrition, LLC.



The use of comparative advertising is not limited to new brands or those with a small market share; a number of high-profile marketers have been using comparative appeals to differentiate their brands in a competitive marketplace.⁷⁸ For example, comparative advertising has become common in the mobile phone industry as the four major providers (Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, and Sprint) often run ads comparing themselves against one another on key attributes such as network coverage, signal quality, and price.⁷⁹ Samsung has used comparative ads to gain market share in the smartphone market by comparing its Samsung Galaxy smartphone to Apple's iPhone. For example, shortly after Apple launched the iPhone 5, Samsung ran a commercial for its Galaxy S III that mocked iPhone loyalists for waiting in line to get the new smartphone. The ad was one of several spots in Samsung's "The Next Best Thing Is Already Here" campaign that were very popular with consumers (Exhibit 6–17).

XHIBIT 6–17

Samsung's comparative ads positioned the Galaxy S III against the iPhone 5.

Source: Samsung



Market leaders often hesitate to use comparison ads, as most believe they have little to gain by featuring competitors' products in their ads. There are exceptions, of course; Coca-Cola resorted to comparative advertising in response to challenges made by Pepsi that were reducing Coke's market share. Anheuser-Busch also responded to the comparative ads used by the Miller Brewing Company when its rival started gaining market share at the expense of Bud Light and other brands. A study by Fred Beard suggests that marketers must be careful when using comparative advertising, because the potential for negative reactions by consumers is high when prominent brands compare themselves against one another. He also found that comparative ads work better with a younger audience than they do for older consumers.⁸⁰ IMC Perspective 6–1 discusses the latest comparative advertising battle in the beer industry involving Bud Light and MillerCoors.

Another area where comparative messages are quite commonly used is political advertising. Political advertising is viewed as an important component of political speech and thus enjoys more First Amendment protection than does commercial speech and less regulation by either government or self-policing agencies. Thus, it has become quite common for political ads to contain negative, one-sided attacks on an opposing candidate's weaknesses such as character flaws, voting record, public misstatements, broken promises, and the like.⁸¹ The goal of these ads is to discredit the character, record, or position of an opponent and create doubt in voters' minds about his or her ability to govern effectively. A major reason why negative political ads are used successfully is that voters often tend to

weight negative information more heavily than positive information when forming impressions of political candidates.⁸² However, studies have shown that the use of “attack advertising” by politicians can result in negative perceptions of both candidates.⁸³

page 202

IMC Perspective 6–1 > > >

The Beer Wars: Bud Light and MillerCoors Battle over Corn Syrup

During the 2019 Super Bowl, Anheuser-Busch InBev, the world’s largest beer company, spent over \$30 million to run eight commercials for five of its brands: Budweiser, Bud Light, Michelob Ultra, Stella Artois, and Bon & Viv Spiked Seltzer. However, the ad that received the most attention after the game was a spot for Bud Light accusing rival brands Miller Lite and Coors Light of using corn syrup in their beers. The spot was part of the popular “Dilly Dilly” campaign that uses a medieval kingdom setting and became a viral sensation when it began in 2017. In the commercial, the kingdom of Bud Light mistakenly receives a gigantic barrel of corn syrup that wasn’t intended for them, because Bud Light doesn’t use corn syrup in its brewing process. The king and his loyal subjects embark on a perilous journey to deliver the barrel to the kingdoms of Miller Lite and Coors Light—because they evidently do use it. The attack continued after the game as AB InBev continued to run the commercial—as well as using print and digital ads, billboards, and its website—to point out that Bud Light has “100 percent less corn syrup than Miller Lite or Coors Lite.”

The corn syrup accusations drew a quick rebuttal from MillerCoors, which began its counterattack against Bud Light by running a full-page ad in *The New York Times* newspaper defending its use of corn syrup. The ad was addressed to “beer drinkers of America” and made the distinction between corn syrup and high fructose corn syrup, which Miller Lite does not use. The ad also stated that “It’s unfortunate that our competitor’s Big Game ad created an unnecessary #cornroversy. However, we thank them for starting this conversation on such a big stage because it allows us to clarify the truth and remind beer drinkers that Miller Lite has more taste than Bud Light with fewer calories and half the carbs.” AB InBev responded with a statement: “Bud Light’s campaign has always been about transparency and giving consumers what they want. We’re glad that other brewers have joined us in this conversation. Increased transparency can only be good for beer.”

Six weeks after the Super Bowl, MillerCoors fired another salvo in the escalating corn syrup war by invading Bud Light's "Dilly Dilly" kingdom with a series of comparative ads that aired on TV as well as on digital and social media during the NCAA March Madness basketball tournament. One of the commercials used a mock behind-the-scenes parody of the Bud Light Super Bowl ad, where the costumed knights pass by a refrigerator full of Bud Light and crack open cans of Miller Lite during filming breaks. The tag line in the commercial reads: "In the real world more taste is what matters." According to a MillerCoors executive, the commercial was meant to show that while Bud Light lives in a fantasy world, people in the real world drink Miller Lite.

AB InBev quickly responded to the Miller Lite ads with advertising calling for its competitor to commit to transparent ingredient labeling, in reference to Bud Light becoming one of the first beers to provide ingredients and nutritional information on its packaging (the box, not the individual cans or bottles). In a commercial called "Imitation," the king character is shown sitting on his throne with a package of Bud Light that clearly shows the ingredients. He addresses his competitor saying: "Miller, Miller, Miller, I have been made aware of your recent advertisements. I brought you your shipment of corn syrup and this is how you repay me? If you're this set on imitating our kingdom, may I also suggest imitating us by putting an ingredients label on your packaging?" The commercial ends with the king saying: "But what do I know? I am just the king of a kingdom that doesn't brew beer with corn syrup" as one of his loyal subjects gives him a high five.

While beer drinkers were being amused by the clever comparative ads, the battle became more serious when MillerCoors filed a lawsuit in federal court six weeks after the Super Bowl, accusing AB InBev of false advertising as well as trademark dilution. In the lawsuit, MillerCoors claimed the Bud Light ads are misleading, arguing that while the brewer uses corn syrup in the fermentation process, the yeast consumes and breaks it down, leaving no corn syrup in the final product when the brewing process is completed. MillerCoors also claimed AB InBev purposely intermingled corn syrup and high-fructose corn syrup in its messaging to encourage consumers to switch to Bud Light because high fructose corn syrup has been linked to obesity. Of course, AB InBev responded by stating that the lawsuit is baseless because its ads are intended to point out a key difference in Bud Light versus its two competitors.

Dear Beer Drinkers of America,

You may have seen an ad on the Big Game going to great lengths to explain that Miller Lite is brewed with "corn syrup," while Bud Light is not. That's a fact. Miller Lite is indeed brewed with "corn syrup." We'd like to thank our competitors for taking the time and money to point out this exciting fact to such a large, national audience not once, but twice.

You see, the "corn syrup" we source from America's heartland helps make Miller Lite taste so great. [We should mention that a majority of American beer drinkers agree that Miller Lite has more taste than Bud Light. So, when we say Miller Lite has great taste, it's not puffery. It, like the "corn syrup," is a fact.] But back to that syrup.

What might have gotten a little lost between the parties and the wings on Sunday is the distinction between "corn syrup" and high-fructose corn syrup. To be clear, "corn syrup" is a normal part of the brewing process used by many of your favorite brewers and does not even end up in the beers you enjoy as it gets consumed by the yeast during the fermentation process.

It's unfortunate that our competitor's Big Game ad created an unnecessary #cornroversy. However, we thank them for starting this conversation on such a big stage because it allows us to clarify the truth and remind beer drinkers that Miller Lite has more taste than Bud Light with fewer calories and half the carbs.

That's just a fact.
#ItsMillerTime



MILLER RESPONDED® ©2013 MILLERCOORS CO., MILWAUKEE, WI • 2013
Budweiser 4% alc./vol. 5.2% alc./vol. 6.4% alc./vol. 7.0% alc./vol. Bud Light 4.2% alc./vol. 5.0% alc./vol.

Source: Miller Brewing Company

While MillerCoors and InBev take their battle to court, there is concern that the controversy could be detrimental to the beer industry as a whole, because most brewers use corn syrup in their recipes. Beer sales in the United States have been declining for several years as people are reducing their alcohol consumption, and many beer drinkers have shifted to wine and spirits. Industry experts note that the corn syrup issue may raise health concerns, which will not help beer sales. Prior to the controversy, the major competitors in the beer industry—including Constellation Brands, Heineken, AB InBev, and MillerCoors—had plans in the works to collaborate on an industry-wide, non-brand-specific campaign to revive beer sales by turning consumers' attention away from wine and spirits. However, a MillerCoors executive noted the initiative would be a waste of time and money when the industry leader is spending millions of dollars demonizing an ingredient that is widely used across the industry, including by Anheuser-Busch.

Only time will tell how the latest battle in the ongoing beer wars will play out. Some argue that the debate over corn syrup AB InBev has created as part of its “Dilly Dilly” campaign is “silly silly.” Ultimately, beer drinkers decide whether they truly care about rice, barley, hops, and/or corn syrup, or whether they just want a good-tasting beer.

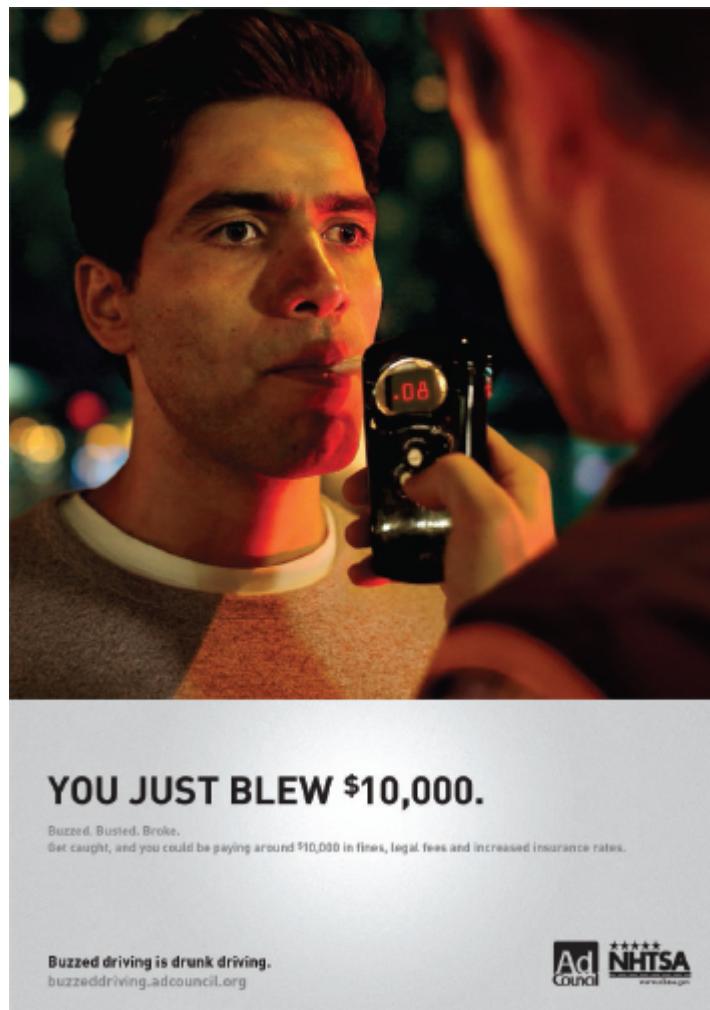
Sources: Laura Reiley, “Beer Giants Wage Corn Syrup War,” *San Diego Union Tribune*, March 22, 2019, pp. C1,2; Robert Conception de Leon, “MillerCoors Sues Anheuser-Busch over ‘Misleading’ Bud Light Ad,” *The New York Times*, March 21, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/21/business/miller-lite-bud-light-lawsuit.html>; E. J. Schultz, “Miller Lite Responds to Bud Light’s Corn Syrup Attack with Full-Page New York Times Ad,” *Advertising Age*, February 5, 2019, <https://adage.com/article/cmo-strategy/millerlite-responds-bud-light-s-corn-syrup-attack/316529>.

Fear Appeals Fear is an emotional response to a threat that expresses, or at least implies, some sort of danger. Ads sometimes use **fear appeals** to evoke this emotional response and arouse individuals to take steps to remove the threat. Some, like the antidrug ads used by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, stress physical danger that can occur if behaviors are not altered. Others—like those for deodorant, mouthwash, or dandruff shampoos—threaten disapproval or social rejection. Fear appeals are often used to discourage unsafe behaviors such as drinking and driving and, more recently, texting and driving. For example, the Ad Council, which is the leading producer of public service advertising in the United States, has created a number of campaigns that use fear appeal messages to deal with these behaviors. Exhibit 6–18 shows an ad created by the Ad Council to discourage buzzed driving by showing how getting arrested for a DUI can cost nearly \$10,000 in legal fees. The ad was part of a campaign created by the council after its research found that too many drivers thought drunk driving messages didn’t apply to them: that driving “buzzed” after only a few drinks was different than driving drunk.

XHIBIT 6–18

The Ad Council uses a fear appeal to discourage buzzed driving.

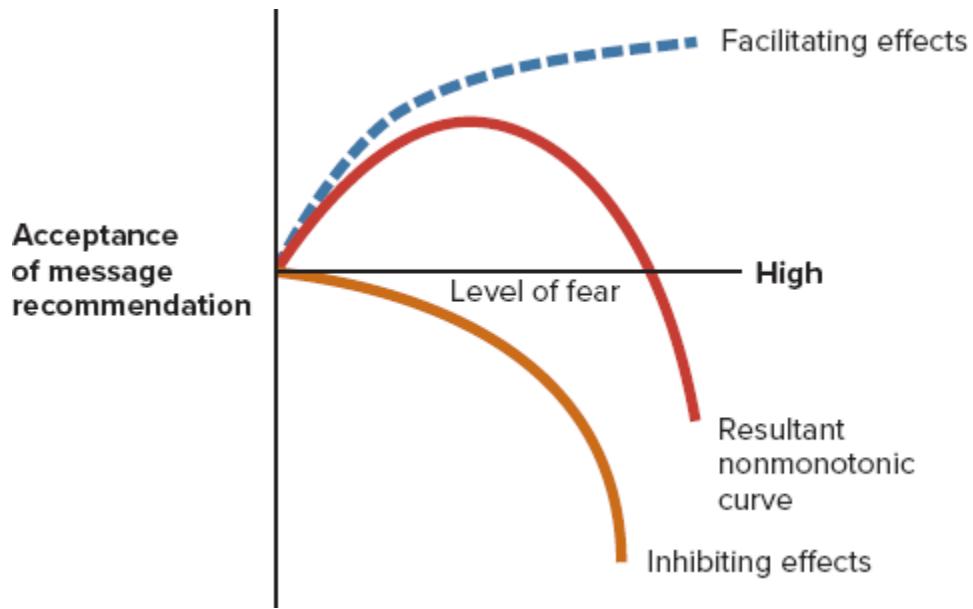
Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Ad Council



How Fear Operates Before deciding to use a fear appeal–based message strategy, the advertiser should consider how fear operates, what level to use, and how different target audiences may respond. One [page 203](#) theory suggests that the relationship between the level of fear in a message and acceptance or persuasion is curvilinear, as shown in Figure 6–5.⁸⁴ This means that message acceptance increases as the amount of fear used rises—to a point. Beyond that point, acceptance decreases as the level of fear rises.

FIGURE 6–5

Relationship between Fear Levels and Message Acceptance



This relationship between fear and persuasion can be explained by the fact that fear appeals have both facilitating and inhibiting effects.⁸⁵ A low level of fear can have facilitating effects; it attracts attention and interest in the message and may motivate the receiver to act to resolve the threat. Thus, increasing the level of fear in a message from low to moderate can result in increased persuasion. High levels of fear, however, can produce inhibiting effects; the receiver may emotionally block the message by tuning it out, perceiving it selectively, or denying its arguments outright. Figure 6–5 illustrates how these two countereffects operate to produce the curvilinear relationship between fear and persuasion.

A study by Anand-Keller and Block provides support for this perspective on how fear operates.⁸⁶ They examined the conditions under which low- and high-fear appeals urging people to stop smoking are likely to be effective. Their study indicated that a communication using a low level of fear may be ineffective because it results in insufficient motivation to page 204 elaborate on the harmful consequences of engaging in the destructive behavior (smoking). However, an appeal arousing high levels of fear was ineffective because it resulted in too much elaboration on the harmful consequences. This led to defensive tendencies such as message avoidance and interfered with processing of recommended solutions to the problem.

Another approach to the curvilinear explanation of fear is the protection motivation model.⁸⁷ According to this theory, four cognitive appraisal processes mediate the individual's response to the threat: appraising (1) the information available regarding the severity of the perceived threat, (2) the perceived probability that the threat will occur, (3) the perceived ability of a coping behavior to remove the threat, and (4) the individual's perceived ability to carry out the coping behavior.

This model suggests that both the cognitive appraisal of the information in a fear appeal message and the emotional response mediate persuasion. An audience is more likely to continue processing threat-related information, thereby increasing the likelihood that a coping behavior will occur.

The protection motivation model suggests that ads using fear appeals should give the target audience information about the severity of the threat, the probability of its occurrence, the effectiveness of a coping response, and the ease with which the response can be implemented.⁸⁸ For example, the ad shown in Exhibit 6–19 uses a mild fear appeal for Seagate Technology's Replica product, which is used to back up computer hard drives. The ad uses playful illustrations in a graphic style to communicate the message of what can happen if your computer crashes and all of the files are lost. Notice how the ad also offers a solution to the threat by showing the ease of using the Replica product and the resulting peace of mind.

XHIBIT 6–19

Seagate uses a mild fear appeal that alerts consumers to a problem and offers a solution.

Source: Seagate Technology LLC



It is also important to consider how the target audience may respond. Fear appeals are more effective when the message recipient is self-confident and prefers to cope with dangers rather than avoid them.⁸⁹ They are also more effective among non-users of a product than among users. Thus, a fear

appeal may be better at keeping nonsmokers from starting than persuading smokers to stop.

In reviewing research on fear appeals, Herbert Rotfeld has argued that some of the studies may be confusing different types of threats and the level of potential harm portrayed in the message with fear, which is an emotional response.⁹⁰ He concludes that the relationship between the emotional responses of fear or arousal and persuasion is not curvilinear but rather is monotonic and positive, meaning that higher levels of fear do result in greater persuasion. However, Rotfeld notes that not all fear messages are equally effective, because different people fear different things. Thus page 205 they will respond differently to the same threat, so the strongest threats are not always the most persuasive. This suggests that marketers using fear appeals must consider the emotional responses generated by the message and how they will affect reactions to the message.

While research suggests that message recipients might tune out a message that uses too much fear, there are examples of advertising campaigns where high levels of fear have been effective at changing behavior. For example, the Montana Meth Project (MMP) is a large-scale prevention program aimed at reducing methamphetamine use, particularly among teenagers, through public service messaging, policy, and community outreach. The integrated campaign uses hard-hitting TV, radio, print, digital, and social media messaging to communicate the risks of meth use.⁹¹ Many of the ads used in the campaign use a high level of fear to communicate the risks of meth use and addiction such as the one shown in Exhibit 6–20. The MMP has been very successful: meth use in Montana has declined significantly, and the campaign has been expanded to a number of other states. A recent study of fear appeals by Andrea Morales, Eugenia Wu, and Gavan Fitzsimons suggests that ads such as those used in the MMP campaign may be effective because they activate disgust as well as fear through some of the disturbing images they contain.⁹²

XHIBIT 6–20

The Montana Meth Project uses ads with a high level of fear.

Source: *Meth Project Foundation Inc., The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids*



Humor Appeals Humorous ads are often the best known and best remembered of all advertising messages. Many advertisers, including, GEICO, Old Spice, Snickers, Budweiser, and Bud Light, use humor appeals effectively. Humor is usually presented primarily through TV commercials and online video and to a lesser extent through radio, as these media lend themselves to the execution of humorous messages. However, humor is occasionally used in print ads as well, as images can be used in combination with clever headlines and ad copy to develop humorous messages. The sermon ad for Listermint mouthwash shown in Exhibit 6–21 is a very good example of how humor can be used effectively in print media. The ad pokes fun at the preacher’s bad breath, which drives everyone to the back of the church.

XHIBIT 6–21

This clever ad is an example of how humor can be executed in a print ad.

Source: J. Walter Thompson Sydney Advertising Agency



page 206

Advertisers use humor for many reasons.⁹³ Humorous messages attract and hold consumers' attention. They enhance effectiveness by putting consumers in a positive mood, increasing their liking of the ad itself and their feeling toward the product or service. And humor can distract the receiver from counterarguing against the message. A meta-analytic test of various models of how humor works in advertising showed that its effects are primarily based on affective processes and that it can distract from the processing of cognitive information such as brand beliefs and benefits. This suggests that the peripheral processing of humorous messages is dominant and that effort devoted to processing of ad-related affective elements comes at the expense of attention to brand-related cognitions.⁹⁴

Critics argue that funny ads draw people to the humorous situation but distract them from the brand and its attributes. Also, effective humor can be difficult to produce and some attempts are too subtle for mass audiences. And, there is concern that humorous ads may wear out faster than serious appeals. **Wearout** refers to the tendency of a television or radio commercial to lose its effectiveness when it is seen and/or heard repeatedly.⁹⁵ Wearout may occur if consumers no longer pay attention to a commercial after several exposures or become annoyed at seeing or hearing an ad multiple times. Some experts argue that humorous ads wear out faster than other formats

because once the consumer gets the joke, the ad becomes boring. However, advocates of humor argue that funny ads are effective longer, as consumers will respond more favorably to a well-executed humorous ad than to a serious message.⁹⁶ One way marketers deal with the wearout problem is by creating “pool-outs” or multiple executions around a campaign theme that can be rotated so no one ad airs repeatedly during a short time period. For example, large advertisers such as GEICO, FedEx, and Anheuser-Busch InBev generally have a number of commercials available to rotate. However, this can be a problem for smaller companies that do not have a large enough budget to produce multiple commercials.

Clearly, there are valid reasons both for and against the use of humor in advertising. Not every product or service lends itself to a humorous approach. A number of studies have found that the effectiveness of humor depends on several factors, including the type of product or service and audience characteristics.⁹⁷ For example, humor has been more prevalent and more effective with low-involvement, feeling products than with high-involvement, thinking products.⁹⁸ A recent study examined how audience involvement moderates the effects of humorous ads. The researchers found that for products that are not intrinsically humorous, the use of humor in an advertising message is more effective when involvement is relatively low rather than high. These findings support the idea that high-involvement products may not be as well suited for advertising humor as low-involvement products.⁹⁹

CHANNEL FACTORS

LO 6-4

The final controllable variable of the communication process is the channel, or medium, used to deliver the message to the target audience. While a variety of methods are available to transmit marketing communications, as

noted in Chapter 5, they can be classified into two broad categories: personal and nonpersonal media.

Personal versus Nonpersonal Channels

There are a number of basic differences between personal and nonpersonal communications channels. Information received from personal influence channels is generally more persuasive than information received page 207 via the mass media. Reasons for the differences are summarized in the following comparison of advertising and personal selling:

From the standpoint of persuasion, a sales message is far more flexible, personal, and powerful than an advertisement. An advertisement is normally prepared by persons having minimal personal contact with customers. The message is designed to appeal to a large number of persons. By contrast, the message in a good sales presentation is not determined in advance. The salesman has a tremendous store of knowledge about his product or service and selects appropriate items as the interview progresses. Thus, the salesman can adapt this to the thinking and needs of the customer or prospect at the time of the sales call. Furthermore, as objections arise and are voiced by the buyer, the salesman can treat the objections in an appropriate manner. This is not possible in advertising.¹⁰⁰

Personal channels are used in several ways in an IMC program. As was discussed in Chapter 5, many marketers are recognizing the importance of word-of-mouth communications which is becoming more prevalent with the growth of social media. The more traditional use of personal communications is through sales programs which are implemented through a company's sales force as well as at the point of purchase through retail sales personnel. However, the advertising and promotion programs for most marketers rely heavily on traditional media advertising as well digital and social media. Thus, we will discuss some of the important factors that marketers must consider with respect to these media.

Effects of Alternative Mass Media

The various mass media that advertisers use to transmit their messages differ in many ways, including the number and type of people they reach, costs, information processing requirements, and qualitative factors. The mass media's costs and efficiency in exposing a target audience to a communication will be evaluated in Chapters 10 through 12. However, we should recognize differences in how information is processed and how communications are influenced by context or environment.

Differences in Information Processing There are basic differences in the manner and rate at which information from various forms of media is transmitted and can be processed. Information from ads in print media, such as newspapers, magazines, or direct mail, as well as online through websites and other forms of owned media is *self-paced*; readers process the ad or information at their own rate and can study it as long as they desire. In contrast, information from the broadcast media of radio and television is *externally paced*; the transmission rate is controlled by the medium.

The difference in the processing rate for print and broadcast media has some obvious implications for advertisers. Self-paced print media make it easier for the message recipient to process a long, complex message. Advertisers often use print ads when they want to present a detailed message with a lot of information. Broadcast media are more effective for transmitting shorter messages or, in the case of TV, presenting images along with words.

While there are limits to the length and complexity of broadcast messages, advertisers can deal with this problem. One strategy is to use a radio or TV ad to get consumers' attention and direct them to a website for a more detailed message. Some advertisers develop broadcast and digital/print versions of the same message. The copy portion is similar in both media, but the print ad can be processed at a rate comfortable to the receiver.

Effects of Context and Environment

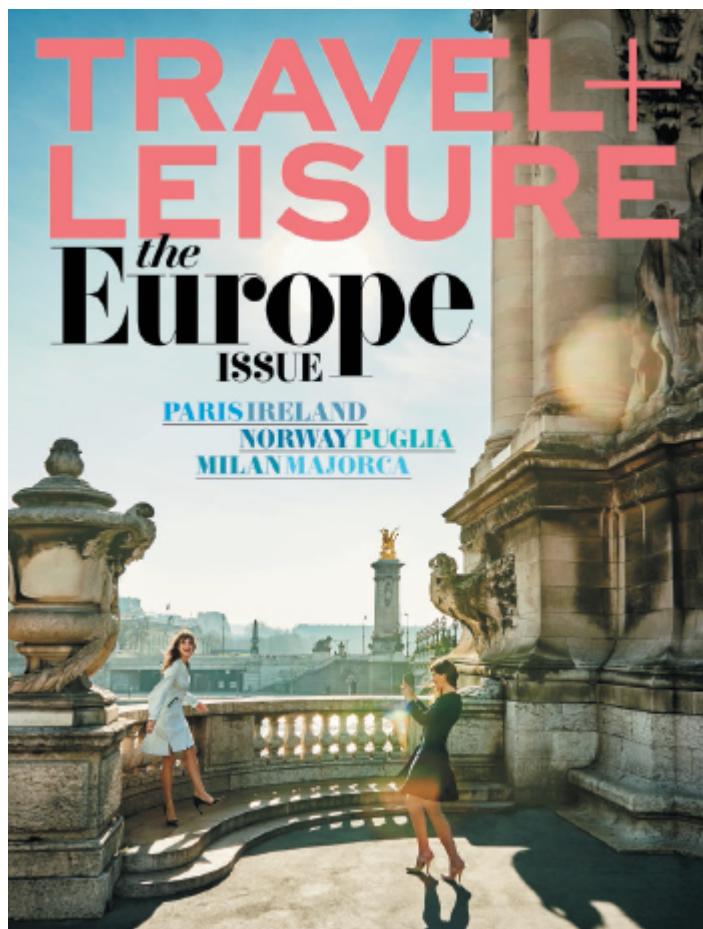
Interpretation of an advertising message can be influenced by the context or environment in which the ad appears. Communication theorist Marshall

McLuhan's thesis, "The medium is the message," implies that the medium communicates an image that is independent of any message it contains.¹⁰¹ A **qualitative media effect** is the influence the medium has on a page 208 message. The image of the media vehicle can affect reactions to the message. For example, an ad for a high-quality men's clothing line might have more of an impact in a fashion magazine like *GQ* than in *Sports Afield*. Airlines, destination resorts, and travel-related services advertise in publications such as *Travel + Leisure* partly because the articles, pictures, and other ads help excite readers about travel (Exhibit 6–22).

XHIBIT 6–22

Travel + Leisure magazine creates an excellent reception environment for travel-related ads.

source: *Travel + Leisure*



A media environment can also be created by the nature of the program in which a commercial appears. One study found that consumers reacted more positively to commercials seen during a happy TV program than a sad one.¹⁰² Advertisers pay premium dollars to advertise on popular programs that create positive moods, like sitcoms, sporting events, award shows such as the Oscars and Grammys, and holiday specials. Conversely, advertisers tend to avoid programs that create a negative mood among viewers or may be detrimental to the company or its products. Many companies won't advertise on programs with excessive violence or sexual content. Coca-Cola never advertises on TV news programs because it thinks bad news is inconsistent with Coke's image as an upbeat, fun product. A study by Andrew Aylesworth and Scott MacKenzie found that commercials placed in programs that induce negative moods are processed less systematically than ads placed in programs that put viewers in positive moods.¹⁰³ They suggest that media buyers might be well advised to follow the conventional wisdom of placing their ads during "feel-good" programming, especially if the message is intended to work through a central route to persuasion. However, messages intended to operate through a peripheral route to persuasion might be more effective if they are shown during more negative programs, where presumably viewers will not analyze the ad in detail because of their negative mood state.

Clutter

Another aspect of the media environment which is important to advertisers is the problem of **clutter**, which has been defined as the amount of advertising in a medium.¹⁰⁴ However, for television, clutter is often viewed as including all the nonprogram material that appears in the broadcast environment—commercials, promotional messages for shows, public service announcements (PSAs), and the like. Clutter is of increasing concern to advertisers since there are so many messages in various media competing for the consumer's attention. Traditionally, nearly half of the average magazine's pages would contain ads, and in some publications such as fashion magazines, the ratio of ads to editorial content was even higher. However, in

recent years, many marketers have shifted their ad spending to digital media, which has resulted in a significant decline in the number of ad pages in many magazines. However, clutter remains a problem for television and radio advertising, as well as online, where consumers are often bombarded with ad messages. On average, around a quarter of a broadcast hour on TV is devoted to commercials, while most radio stations carry an average of 10 to 12 minutes of commercial time per hour. The average length of a commercial break during prime time on the major networks is just over three minutes, which means viewers are exposed to a large number of ads in a short time period, making it difficult for commercials to attract and hold the attention of viewers as well as communicate effectively.

Clutter has become a major concern among television advertisers as a result of increases in nonprogram time and the trend toward shorter commercials. While the 30-second commercial replaced 60-second spots as the industry standard in the 1970s, many advertisers are now using 15-second spots. The advertising industry continues to express concern over the highly cluttered viewing environment on TV; the amount of clutter increased as much as 30 percent during the 1990s and has continued to increase over the past two decades.¹⁰⁵ Several factors are causing the increased clutter, including lower rating for TV shows as consumers spend more page 209 time online and the fact that many marketers are reducing their spending on television advertising and shifting these monies into digital ads. Thus, the TV networks began inserting more commercials into programs to offset these factors and avoid revenue declines.

The four major broadcast networks average around 13 minutes of commercial time per hour during prime time; cable networks average nearly 15 minutes, with some being even higher.¹⁰⁶ Thus, a viewer watching three hours of television during prime time on the broadcast and/or cable networks would be exposed to more than 100 commercials—in addition to programming promotions and public service announcements. The clutter rate is often higher during popular shows, as the networks may add more commercials because they can charge more for them. And, of course, advertisers and their agencies often perpetuate the problem by pressuring the networks to squeeze their ads into top-rated shows with the largest audiences.

Advertisers and agencies have been pressuring the networks to reduce the amount of advertising time on their programs. In 2018, several of the major networks, including Fox and NBC, announced that they were reducing the number of commercials they would show during prime time programming to address the clutter problem as well as deal with the problem of TV viewers spending more time watching commercial-free programming on HBO, Netflix, and Amazon. In 2019, NBC Universal announced that it was reducing commercial time another 10 percent in an effort to bring audiences a better viewing experience and provide marketers with more engaging advertising opportunities.¹⁰⁷ The problem is not likely to go away, however, and advertisers will continue to search for ways to break through the clutter, such as using humor, celebrity spokespeople, or novel creative approaches.¹⁰⁸

Summary

This chapter focuses on the controllable variables that are part of the communication process—source, message, and channel factors. Decisions regarding each of these variables should consider their impact on the various steps of the response hierarchy the message receiver passes through. The persuasion matrix helps assess the effect of controllable communication decisions on the consumer’s response process.

Selection of the appropriate source or communicator to deliver a message is an important aspect of communications strategy. Three important attributes are source credibility, attractiveness, and power. Marketers enhance message effectiveness by hiring communicators who are experts in a particular area and/or have a trustworthy image. The use of celebrities to deliver advertising messages has become very popular; advertisers hope they will catch the receivers’ attention and influence their attitudes or behavior through an identification process. The chapter discusses the meaning a celebrity brings to the endorsement process and the importance of matching the image of the celebrity with that of the company or brand.

The design of the advertising message is a critical part of the communication process. There are various options regarding message structure, including order of presentation of message arguments, conclusion drawing, message sidedness, refutation, and verbal versus visual traits. The advantages and disadvantages of different message appeal strategies were considered, including comparative messages and emotional appeals such as fear and humor.

Finally, the channel or medium used to deliver the message was considered. Differences between personal and nonpersonal channels of communication were discussed. Alternative mass media can have an effect on the communication process as a result of information processing and qualitative factors. The context in which an ad appears and the reception environment are important factors to consider in the selection of mass media. Clutter has become a serious problem for advertisers, particularly on TV, where commercials have become shorter and more numerous.

Key Terms

- persuasion matrix** 177
- source** 178
- credibility** 179
- internalization** 179
- sleeper effect** 183
- attractiveness** 183
- identification** 183
- source power** 195
- compliance** 195
- primacy effect** 196
- recency effect** 196
- one-sided message** 198
- two-sided message** 198
- refutational appeal** 199
- comparative advertising** 200
- fear appeals** 202
- wearout** 206
- qualitative media effect** 207

Discussion Questions

- 1.** The chapter opener discusses the controversies involving professional golfer Tiger Woods and tennis star Maria Sharapova. Discuss how these controversies have impacted the two athletes as potential endorsers for companies such as Nike and others. Do you think marketers should continue to use them as endorsers? Why or why not? (LO 6-2)
- 2.** Discuss how marketers can use the persuasion matrix shown in Figure 6-1 to plan their integrated marketing communication programs. Choose a TV commercial, online video, or print ad and use the persuasion matrix to evaluate how it might influence consumers' response processes. (LO 6-1)
- 3.** Discuss the three primary source attributes shown in Figure 6-2 and the processes by which they can influence attitude and/or behavior change. Find an example of an advertisement or other type of promotional message that uses each source attribute. (LO 6-2)
- 4.** Global Perspective 6-1 discusses how many celebrities appear in commercials in Japan and other countries but not in the United States. Do you think celebrities hurt their image by endorsing companies or brands and appearing in advertisements for them? Why are they willing to appear in ads in other countries but not the U.S.? (LO 6-2)
- 5.** Find a celebrity who is currently being used in an advertising campaign for a specific company or brand and use McCracken's meaning transfer model (shown in Figure 6-3) to analyze the use of this individual as a spokesperson. (LO 6-2)
- 6.** Discuss the rise in popularity of YouTube stars such as Smosh, the Fine Brothers, and Dude Perfect among young people. Do you think these YouTube personalities can replace more traditional celebrities such as athletes, actors, and entertainers as advertising spokespersons? (LO 6-2)

7. Discuss the pros and cons of marketers using a two-sided message as well as a refutational appeal as the basis for their advertising messages. Find an example of an advertisement that uses one of these types of message appeals and discuss why the marketer might be using it. (LO 6-3)

8. Go to the website for the Montana Meth Projects (<https://www.montanameth.org/>) and choose three ads that use various levels of fear in the message. Discuss why each ad may or may not be effective. (LO 6-3)

9. Discuss the pros and cons of using humor as the basis for an advertising appeal. Find an example of an advertising message that uses humor and evaluate its effectiveness. (LO 6-3)

10. IMC Perspective 6-1 discusses the comparative advertising battle between AB InBev and MillerCoors over the use of corn syrup in Miller Lite and Coors Light beer. Do you think the Bud Light ads that accuse Miller Lite and Coors Light of using corn syrup are misleading? Which company do you side with in this controversy? (LO 6-3)

11. What is meant by a qualitative media effect? Choose a television program or magazine and discuss the reception environment created by the show or publication. Which type of companies or brands might be interested in advertising on this program or in this magazine? (LO 6-4)



connect

Available only through your Connect course, help make key advertising and IMC concepts more meaningful and applicable:

- SmartBook 2.0
- Connect exercises, which may include: click-drags, video cases, and case analyses.

7

Establishing Objectives and Budgeting for the Promotional Program