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# Lesson 3

## Topic 2: Advertising

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### **Pre-Class Homework 3-1: Reading & N@vi Quiz**

Advertising Cultures

### **Pre-Class Homework 3-2: Research**

Advertisement Worksheet

### **Before the Joint Session**

#### **Joint Session**

- A) Set-Up
- B) Discussion: Advertising Strategies & Catch Phrases
- C) Wrap-Up

### **After the Joint Session**

### **Post-Class Homework 3-3: BBS**

BBS Topic 2 Reflection

## Pre-Class Homework 3-1: Reading & N@vi Quiz

### Advertising Cultures:

Read the passage below, and then answer the vocabulary and comprehension questions on Course N@vi before Lesson 3.

Throughout the world, advertising plays a key role in influencing consumers' purchasing habits. Whether you are watching TV in China, Japan, Taiwan, or South Korea, it is unlikely that you will be able to watch your favorite program without it being interrupted a number of times by advertisements. Companies spend large amounts of money on TV advertisements in the hope of increased sales of the product being promoted. It is clear that these companies have the same goals, but is the method of advertising the same across cultures?

Research has found clear differences between the content of advertisements in different countries. In the US, advertisements tend to use a very direct informational style, providing explicit information about the price, performance, and benefits of using the product. Such an approach is valued by American audiences because they want to hear detailed information in order to make an informed decision as to whether to buy the product or not. Such a style of advertising is referred to as 'hard sell.'

The following is an example of an American car advertisement.

*The commercial starts with a camera shot of the exterior of the car. It then shows close-ups of the interior of the car, the rear lights, the headlights, and the name of the car. In between the shots, the following information about the car is written on the screen:*

*"Five star safety rating"*

*"Over 500 improvements"*

*"The 3.5 liter \*V6 with 263 horsepower and 249 pound-feet of \*torque paired to a six-speed automatic transmission powers all models".*

In contrast, research indicates that advertisers in Japan, South Korea and mainland China avoid giving specific information about product benefits. Instead, they make emotional, rather than informational, appeals to the audience. This is done by creating a positive mood through the music and scenery. Such advertisements aim to make the audience feel that the product will bring benefits.

The advertisements seek to stress the benefits of the product more subtly; in fact, it is felt that providing explicit details may be insulting to the audience. The audience does not feel that it is necessary to be informed of the details of a product in advertisements, as the specifics of a product will be learned when the customer actually visits a store. There is also a focus on building a relationship between the company and the audience. Here the aim is to build trust in the company. This is achieved by stressing the company's name in the advertisements. It is also very common to take advantage of a celebrity's reputation, as it is felt that if a well-known celebrity is in the advertisement, then the product can be trusted. This less direct approach to advertising is known as 'soft sell.'

(Continued)

The following is an example of a Japanese car commercial:

It starts with a view of a hot spring resort in the mountains. It then shows a guest inside the hotel kneeling on traditional Japanese *tatami* mats, relaxing with a cup of traditional green tea after soaking in a hot spring. While watching this, the viewer is provided with a definition of good hospitality. It is said to consist of three things: beautiful appearance, a relaxing interior and sophisticated behavior. The audience is expected to interpret that the car will provide its driver with all of these things. No image of the car is provided until halfway through the advert, when the viewer is shown both the interior and the exterior of the car. The word "hospitality" is repeated, followed by the name of the car at the end.

Such an approach (as described above) is well suited to high context cultures. In such cultures, emphasis is placed on understanding messages with less direct verbal communication; the message is communicated to a greater extent through context. In such a communication style it is not necessary to give a message explicitly for it to be understood; instead it is understood through nonverbal communication. In contrast, in low context cultures the most information is communicated verbally, because people expect messages to be conveyed explicitly. Ambiguity in messages is not valued. Because people in different cultures change communication styles depending on the situation, one can not say a culture is exclusively high or low context, but it is possible to identify countries in which people tend to value a high context communication style in a wider range of situations. Such countries include Japan, China and South Korea, whereas in countries like the US, Canada and Germany, people tend to value a low context communication style.

Although it appears that advertising in East Asia tends to adopt a soft sell approach, there does seem to be a general trend towards a more direct style of advertising recently. Research into advertising in Taiwan has shown that since the mid-eighties, advertisements have started to provide more explicit information about products, such as availability and special offers. An analysis of advertisements in Hong Kong in the 1990s also showed that a harder sell approach was being used, with advertisers emphasizing the specific features of products. This trend towards providing more explicit information has also started to appear in advertisements in Japan. For example, it has been noted that advertisements for shampoos now include more direct reference to the potential benefits of using the product.

In conclusion, the way people expect to receive information depends on their culture. People in lower context cultures prefer information to be provided explicitly so that there is little ambiguity. People in higher context cultures prefer information to be provided less directly, and they rely more on nonverbal communication to convey information. As we can see, these communication styles have a clear effect on advertising strategies. Therefore, it is important to consider whether the changes in advertising styles that have been identified reflect actual changes in how people are communicating. Do they indicate that consumers in East Asia are moving towards a more direct style of communication?

(End)

## Pre-Class Homework 3-2: Advertisement Worksheet

Search for advertisements featured in your country. Any type of media (the Internet, publications, television) is acceptable. Analyze the ads in terms of “advertising strategies” and check which strategy is used. Write down examples of the product and describe the ads. You can add some other advertising strategies you found at the bottom of the chart. Complete the chart before Lesson 3.

### [Advertisement Worksheet]

Check <input type="checkbox"/>	Advertising Strategies	Examples of advertisement	
		Product/Merchandise	Description
✓	Using Celebrities	Cell phone (SoftBank)	<i>Brad Pitt and a famous former sumo wrestler (Akebono) appear in the commercial to show that the SoftBank cell phone is always your best partner.</i>
	Using Celebrities		
	Using original songs/ melodies		
	Detailed explanation of the product		
	Series of commercials in the form of a drama		
	Criticizing other companies' products		
	Announcing the price explicitly		
	Using specific colors or images		
	Appealing to your emotions (heart-warming, funny, exciting, etc.)		

# Lesson 3 [Joint Class]

## Topic 2: Advertising

### Before the Joint Session

Use the "Advertisement Worksheet" from the homework and practice describing the ads in your country so that your partner university students can understand you clearly.

### Joint Session

#### A) Set-Up (5 minutes)

Log in to your LiveOn ChatRoom, adjust the camera, and check the audio connection. Welcome members and confirm the facilitator.

#### B) Discussion: Advertising Strategies & Catch Phrases (40 minutes)

1. Look at the "Advertisement Worksheet" on the previous page. Take turns describing the ads you found in terms of their advertising strategies. Use Chart 1 below to write down your ChatRoom members' research results.

**LEARNING POINTS:**

1. Understanding similarities and differences in advertising strategies between cultures
2. Raising awareness of country-specific trends and personal preferences in catch phrases

**[Chart 1]**

Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Advertising Strategies	Examples of advertisement	
		Product/Merchandise	Description
	Using Celebrities		
	Using original songs/ melodies		
	Detailed explanation of the product		
	Series of commercials in a form of drama		
	Criticizing other companies' products		
	Announcing the price explicitly		
	Using specific colors or images		
	Appealing to your emotions (heart-warming, funny, exciting, etc.)		

- Share your favorite ads. Explain why you are attracted to them. Also, share your experience, if any, of being influenced by the ads into purchasing the products.
- The following chart shows the catch phrases of international companies in the world. Add some more at the bottom of the chart if you know any, and share them with ChatRoom members. Choose three catch phrases you like. Why do you like them? What are the messages that each catch phrase conveys? Share your ideas in your ChatRoom.

**[Chart 2]**

Top 3	Company's name	Country	Catch Phrase
	SONY	JAPAN	It's a Sony.
	NIKE	USA	Take it to the next level.
	Coca-Cola	USA	Open Happiness
	Hyundai	South Korea	Drive your way
	Volvo	Sweden	Volvo for life
	Microsoft	USA	Your potential. Our passion.
	Vodafone	UK	Everything is love.
	Nestle	Switzerland	Good Food Good Life
	McDonald's	USA	i'm lovin' it.
	Toyota	Japan/USA	Drive your dreams. / Moving forward.
	Samsung	South Korea	your life. enhanced.
	HSBC	UK	The world's local bank
	Volvic	France	clean taste CRISP finish
	Lenovo	China	NEW WORLD. NEW THINKING.

### C) Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- Summarize the main points of the discussion in your ChatRoom. Take notes of what you have learned through the Joint Session using the space below.
  - ①
  - ②
  - ③
- Thank the ChatRoom members for their participation and end with a closing remark.

### After the Joint Session

- What did you learn from the discussion?
- What were some of the catch phrases or strategy statements that impressed you most?
- What did you learn about the advertising cultures of your two countries in terms of high and low context? (*cf.* homework reading)

### Post-Class Homework 3-3: BBS

Reflect on the second Joint Session. Write down what you have learned through the LiveOn discussion on BBS "*Topic 2 Reflection*" before the next lesson. The minimum number of words is 100.