Persuasive effect of the media

The three dimensions of persuasion:
   - Change in **attitude**
   - Change in **behavior**
   - **Persistence** of behavior over time

Two types of persuasive messages:
   - Intentional, or overt
     - sell a product, change public policy
   - Unintentional
     - ideas, actors or characters in movies and TV shows that we want to imulate

Media messages can persuade without even trying
   - Entertainment messages can exert a powerful influence on attitude and behavior
   - Possible to change someone’s attitude or behavior without even consciously trying to do so.

“The Day After” – two researchers discovered that exposure of the movie was sufficient to change attitudes about the seriousness of the nuclear war

“The Day After Tomorrow” – researchers reported that after seeing the film, people were willing to give 50% more money toward the effort to mitigate changes in climate

Films with social realism change attitudes

Advertising Influence on Consumer Behavior
   - two perspectives of consumer behavior:
     1. cognitive
        - rational mental process
        - use information in ads to make rational choices
        - more often found in print ads
     2. behavioral
        - appeals to the emotions
        - more often found in TV ads
Elaboration Likelihood Model

Two main routes by which people might be persuaded:

> central route to persuasion
> peripheral-route to persuasion

Central route to persuasion

> Highly rational and cognitive route to persuasion
> Careful scrutiny of messages
> Tendency to think up many counterarguments
> Counter attitudinal messages – when the message is different from the position that the person holds

Peripheral-route to persuasion

> Less scrutiny of messages
> Certain cues in the message lead people to accept the persuasive proposition

For example, persuaded while watching movies and programs that were designed to entertain

Identifying Consumers as Types

Tools advertisers and ad agencies use to identify potential customers:

> demographics
  > characteristics of the person or household
  > age
  > income
  > family size
  > marital status etc.

> psychographics
  > lifestyles and activities
  > hobbies
  > movie attendance
  > music preferences
  > sports etc.
Persuasive message features

- Simplicity,
  Especially in broadcast, billboards and Internet
- Repetition
- Fear
- Guilt
- Humor

Persuasive message features

- Simplicity,
  Especially in broadcast, billboards and Internet
- Repetition
- Fear tobacco ad safe sex
- Guilt whales child soldiers
- Humor Super Bowl

Using Entertainment to Improve Public Health

Felicity ~ date rape
ER ~ morning-after pill

Problems with "entertainment-education"

- Writers and producers say it interferes with their creative license
- Argue it’s turning entertainment into advertising

Some types of persuasive messages

Salience and novelty

Identity advertising
source credibility
Koop ad

classical conditioning
- stimulus and response

Cultivation ratification
- The effects of TV on viewers
  > Heavy viewers are affected by what they see
    - Heavy viewing: 8+ hours per day
    > They see the world more dangerous than it really is

The news on television also contributes to the belief that the world is getting more dangerous.

30-minute local-TV news program:
12 minutes of news
10 minutes of ads and promos
7 minutes of sports and weather
1 minute of anchor chatter

30% of those 12 minutes of news is about crime

Weapons of influence
- Reciprocation
- Commitment and consistency
- Social proof
- Liking
- Authority
- Scarcity
Reciprocity
> We should try to repay in kind, what another person has provided us
> By the virtue of the reciprocity rule, we are obligated to the future repayments of favors, gifts, invitations and the like

Consistency
> High degree of consistency is normally associated with personal and intellectual strength
> Fall in a habit of being consistent even when situations where it is not sensible to be consistent

Social Proof
> We determine what is correct by finding out what other people think is correct
> Product is “fastest growing,” “largest-selling”
> The message that marketers want to give is, “look at all the people who decided to buy. It must be the correct thing to do”

Product endorsement use social proof

Liking
> We tend to agree to the requests of people that we know and like

Authority
> We are trained from birth to believe that obedience to proper authority is right and disobedience is wrong
> We also learn to trust people in authority
**Scarcity**

> Opportunities seem more valuable to us when they are less available
> "limited number" tactic
> Deadline tactic ("while stocks last!"

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**The Great American Values Test**

> TV viewers encouraged to think about and renew their commitment to "freedom" and "equality"
> Viewers persuaded to place high value on the importance of the environment and living in "a world of beauty"

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Of the people who watched the program,
> their ideas of freedom, equality, and a world of beauty were all elevated
> they were 60% more likely to respond to pleas for donations than the control group

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**Determining paid advertising’s success**

> Cost-per-person statistic (In marketing: Cost per thousand – CPM)
> Response rate is effective if only 1% of the audience responds to the ad

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**Evidence for the effectiveness of TV advertising**

> Northwest Mutual Life Insurance Company: advertising improved name recognition
> Mattel: advertising increased value by a factor of about 25

**Subliminal Persuasion**

> Embedded message designed to pass below the normal limits of perception.
> Indiscernible to the conscious mind, but are alleged to be perceptible to the subconscious mind.
> An image transmitted so briefly that it is only perceived subconsciously, otherwise unnoticed.
Subliminal messages involve
- Audio (back masking)
- Sight
- Smell
- Touch and taste

James Vicary – marketing expert
1957
- Slogans "Drink Coca-Cola" and "Eat popcorn" were flashed during a movie for 1/3 of a millisecond at five-second intervals.
- Vicary claimed that sales for both Coca-Cola and popcorn sales increased by 57.5% and 18.1% respectively.
- Vicary coined the term subliminal advertising

James Vicary – marketing expert
1958
- Vicary conducted a television test in which he flashed the message "telephone now" hundreds of times during a Canadian Broadcasting Company program
  However, there were no increase in phone calls
1962
- Vicary admitted to fabricating his claim
  Attempts to recreate the results of Vicary’s claim have never been successful

Subliminal persuasion as urban legend
1962: "Manchurian Candidate" featured a war hero brain washed into killing presidential candidate
- 1973: "Columbo" episode featured a motivational research specialist who used subliminal persuasion to lure his victim to his death
- 1978: Wichita, Kan., TV station used subliminal message to try to get a serial killer to turn himself in; it didn’t work

Subliminal persuasion in advertising
- Advertising community not particularly interested in confessing to the use of subliminal messages
- No documented proof of its prevalence
- Statistically, about 10% of all ads use some form of subliminal technique