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Does The Rock Really Rock? The effects of using a celebrity in a B2B advertisement.

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Does The Rock Really Rock?

The Effect of Using a Celebrity in a B2B Advertisement.

Amanda Heah & Mary Widmer, Department of Marketing, School of Business, with Dr. Jodie L. Ferguson, Associate Professor of Marketing & Customer Experience Lab Director

Marketers are spending millions of dollars on featuring celebrities in advertisements – is this money well spent?

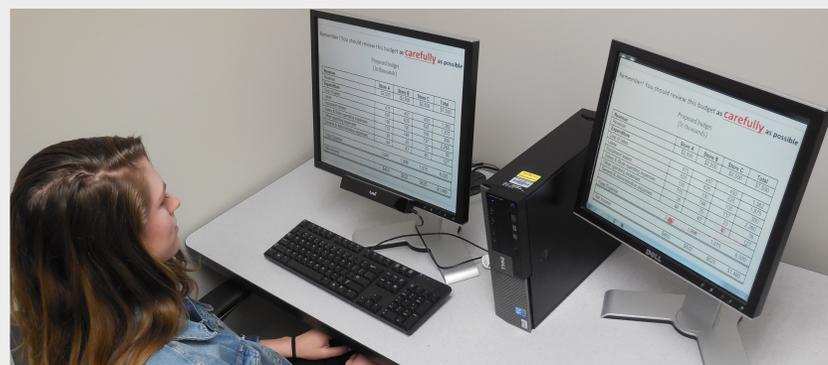


Introduction

Previous studies have investigated the relationship between the content of advertisements and the effect it has on viewers' engagement and retention. Seno and Lukas (2007) looked into this phenomenon and stated, "research has found that celebrities are more effective than other types of endorsers" (p. 121). Another study by Tantiseonepong, Gorton, and White (2012) found that celebrity endorsers "can improve the effectiveness of marketing communications, by enhancing a product's image, attracting attention and improving recall rates" (p. 57).

Research Questions

- How does the usage of a celebrity in a B2B advertisement affect visual attention?
- How does the usage of a celebrity in a B2B advertisement affect the retention of information presented in the advertisement?



Methods

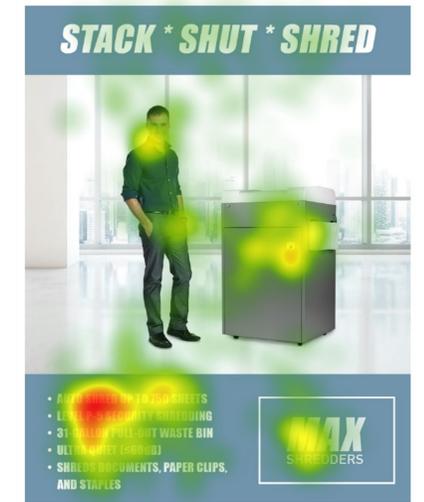
- Location:** Customer Experience Lab (a School of Business behavioral research lab)
- Subjects:** 37 qualified business managers selected through a pre-screening survey
- 50% female; 89% of subjects had at least a bachelor's degree; wide range of titles
- Equipment Used:**
- 2 Tobii X2-60 Eye Tracking Equipment
 - 2 Tobii Pro Studio Software
 - IBM SPSS Statistics
- Procedure:**
- Between subjects experimental design with eye tracking:
 - Cell 1: shredder advertisement featuring a celebrity ("The Rock")
 - Cell 2: shredder advertisement featuring a stock photo model ("Average Joe")
 - Subjects were assigned one of two cells – each subject sat at a computer station and viewed their respective advertisement while their eye movements were tracked
 - After viewing their respective advertisements, subjects completed a follow-up questionnaire and were compensated upon completion
- Questionnaire:**
- Favorability Measure: a seven-point semantic differential rating scale from "Unfavorable" to "Favorable"

Hypotheses

- The Rock brings about a more favorable attitude toward the advertisement than Average Joe.**
- An independent sample T test revealed a t-value of -2.672 ($M_{\text{Rock}} = 3.24$; $M_{\text{Joe}} = 4.50$), indicating the data does not support this hypothesis. The Rock brought about a more negative attitude toward the advertisement than Average Joe.
- Business managers will spend more time viewing the advertisement with The Rock than the advertisement with Average Joe.**
- On the surface, the mean viewing time of the advertisement with The Rock is roughly 2.5 seconds longer. However, an independent sample T test revealed a t-value of 0.639 ($M_{\text{Rock}} = 22.47$ sec; $M_{\text{Joe}} = 19.99$ sec), indicating there is no statistical significance.
- Business managers who view the advertisement with Average Joe will better retain the shredder brand name than those who view the advertisement with The Rock.**
- A cross-tabulation revealed a t-value of 0.10, indicating the data supports this hypothesis at the 90% confidence level ($\text{Brand Name Correct}_{\text{Rock}} = 13/17$; $\text{Brand Name Correct}_{\text{Joe}} = 19/20$)

	Mean (Standard Deviation) Time Fixating on Advertisement Elements (sec)	
	The Rock	Average Joe
Brandmark (Max Shredders)	0.47 (0.50)	0.78 (1.04)
Copy (Bulleted Product Information)	4.28 (4.01)	3.46 (2.76)
Face (Face of Person in Ad)	0.61 (0.90)	0.32 (0.69)
Person (Person in Ad)	1.96 (1.67)	1.67 (2.50)
Product (Shredder)	1.23 (1.17)	1.88 (3.11)
Tag ("Stack * Shut * Shred")	0.77 (0.82)	0.53 (0.79)
Total (Entire Ad)	10.12 (6.80)	9.49 (7.44)

Heat Maps (Absolute Duration)



Conclusion

In general, the results indicate that the usage of a celebrity leads to a longer viewing time of the advertisement. While the data shows that subjects spend more time looking at the advertisement with The Rock in comparison to the advertisement with Average Joe, there is not a statistical significance to this difference. However, retention of product information included in the advertisement is greater when The Rock is not present in the advertisement. Additionally, the usage of Average Joe leads to a more favorable attitude toward the advertisement than the usage of The Rock. In comparing the two heat maps, there appears to be a higher concentration of attention on The Rock's face than on Average Joe's face but a higher concentration of attention on the copy in the Average Joe advertisement. In looking at fixations (see table), the advertisement with The Rock had a higher number of fixations than the advertisement with Average Joe, however it was not a statistically significant difference.

Based on these results, usage of a stock photo model could be the better option for B2B companies whose objective is to have a high product information retention rate. The usage of a stock model appears to positively affect the retention of product information and brand name.

References

- Diana Seno, Bryan A. Lukas, (2007) "The equity effect of product endorsement by celebrities: A conceptual framework from a co-branding perspective", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 41 Issue: 1/2, pp.121-134, <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560710718148>
- Nisachon Tantiseonepong, Matthew Gorton, John White, (2012) "Evaluating responses to celebrity endorsements using projective techniques", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 15 Issue: 1, pp.57-69, <https://doi.org/10.1108/13522751211191991>

Acknowledgements

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