

International Week Metropolia Helsinki

# Ethical Communication in PR, Advertising & Social Media

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## Agenda for the 20th of May

- Ethics in Advertising
- Ethics and Social Media





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IZJAVA: JA OTAC, GOJKO GAGRO, POGINULOG MARINKA GAGRE ROĐ. 1963. GOD. U BLATNICI OPĆINA ČITLUK, SUGLASAN SAM DA SE UZMU PODACI MOGA POK. MARINKA U SVRHU PLAKATA ZA MIR U BORBI PROTIV BATA.



UNITED COLORS  
OF BENETTON.

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## Criticism of Advertising

- Advertising is an instrument which industry uses to control and manipulate people (see Critical Theory).
- The consumer is will-less considering the appeals of advertising.
- Advertising has a harmful influence on children.
- Advertising leads to uncontrolled consumption.



## What is Advertising?

- Form of marketing communication used to persuade an audience to take or continue some action, usually with respect to a commercial offering, or political or ideological support. (Wikipedia)



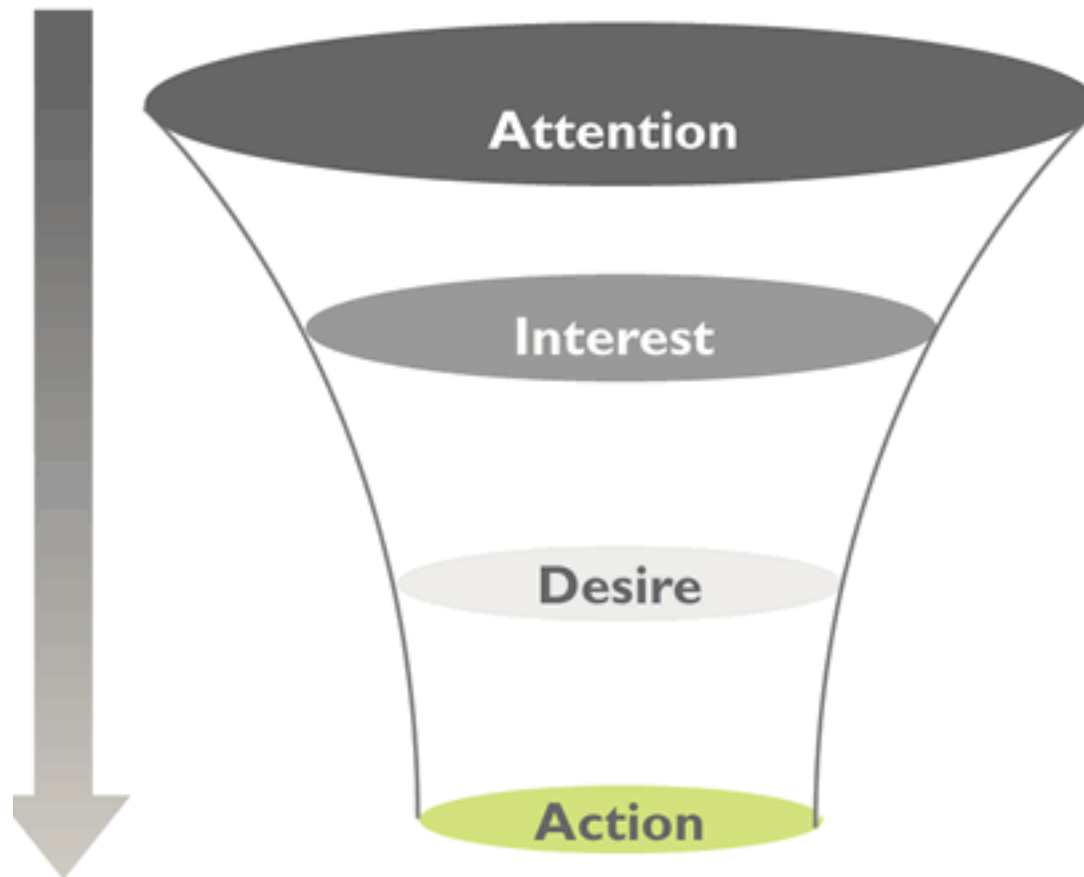
# Functions of Advertising

- Announcement
- Memorization
- Information
- Experience





## The AIDA Formula

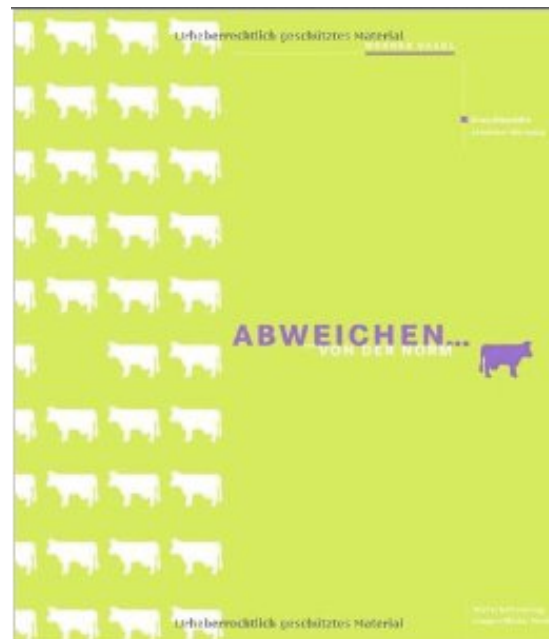


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## But How to Win Attention?

- Nowadays only 5% of the advertisement information is recognized by the public.
- Advertising seems to be mostly successful when it breaks the rules or “deviates from the norm”.



## Advertising as Persuasion

- For sociologist Klaus Streeck advertising means playing with the hopes and desires of the audience (Streeck 2010).
- In most cases advertising is not so much about a product itself but about a *lifestyle* evoked by the visuals, words and music.



The advertisement features a photograph of three people (two women and one man) in a social setting, possibly a lounge or bar, with warm lighting. In the foreground, a pack of JPS Gold cigarettes is shown, partially open, revealing several cigarettes. The pack is white with gold accents and features the JPS logo. Text on the pack includes 'GOLD', 'JOHN PLAYER SPECIAL', and 'JPS'. A black warning label at the bottom of the pack reads 'Rauchen kann tödlich sein'. To the right of the pack, the text 'NEU 5€ 20 STK' is displayed. Below the photograph, the text 'JPS GOLD' is written in large, bold letters, followed by 'GENIESSEN IST GOLD' in smaller letters.

**JPS GOLD**  
GENIESSEN IST GOLD

NEU  
5€  
20 STK

Rauchen kann tödlich sein

Rauchen kann tödlich sein. Der Rauch einer Zigarette dieser Marke enthält: 6 mg Teer, 0,5 mg Nikotin und 6 mg Kohlenmonoxid. (Durchschnittswerte nach ISO)

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## Assignment

- Work out reasons why advertising campaigns might be judged critically under an ethical perspective!



## Complaints at the German Advertising Council (2004-2009)

- Discrimination against women (530 campaigns)
- Glorification of violence (134 campaigns)
- Violation of minimum requirements concerning morale (109 campaigns)
- Endangering children and young adults (105 campaigns)
- Discrimination in general (91 campaigns)
- Hurting religious perceptions (66 campaigns)





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## Control Mechanisms

- The German Advertising Council was founded in 1972 and is supported in 2010 by 43 organizations (companies, media, agencies).
- In the UK, the Advertising Standards Authority is the UK's independent regulator of advertising across all media.



## Criteria (German Advertising Council)

- Effective law
- Guidelines of the council itself (e.g. concerning advertisements with and for children, alcoholic drinks and cigarettes)
- Conglomerate of dominant morals and manners in our society



## Sanctions (German Advertising Council)

- Plea for omission
- Public reproof
- Appeal to legislation in case of suspecting a violation against law



## Facts and Figures

- From 2004 until 2009 1,421 campaigns have been investigated by the German Advertising Council.
- 93% of the companies changed the advertisements or took it from the market, 7% stayed unreasonable and were reprovved in public.
- Most of the campaigns were from the media sector (168), consumer electronics (144), fashion (119), food (99) and alcoholic drinks (88).



## Utopia?

- “To regain sovereignty advertising should draw the picture of another world, another morale and new ethical values. Advertising should help building a human society.” (Jacques Séguéla, founder of the agency RSCG)





## Resume

- Understanding advertising as a kind of “playground” we can assume that not everything has to be taken too seriously and that for example irony is a stylistic device.
- Nevertheless there are constraints due to the fact that people feel affected by motives and messages within an advertising campaign.
- Especially gender and religious topics have to be considered carefully.
- But keep in mind: Advertising wants to gain attendance!



“We know where you are. We know where you have been. We know more or less what you are thinking at the moment.”



“We know where you are. We know where you have been. We know more or less what you are thinking at the moment.”

(Eric Schmidt, Google)



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## Main Ethical Challenges of Social Media

- End of privacy
- Big Data
- Cyber mobbing



## The End of Privacy?

- German communication scientists Petra Grimm and Hans Kraah pose the question if new, social media mean the “end of privacy” (Grimm/Kraah 2014).
  - As boundaries between private and public actions blur it is more difficult to distinguish between “illusion” and “reality”.
  - Examples: reality shows in TV, internet of things
- > The question of privacy is not to be answered by empirical data, it is an ethical one!



## Private Data in the Social Web

- Due to a study conducted in Germany in 2011
  - nearly everybody mentions his/her first name
  - 23% give their email address
  - more than 75% give basic information (last name, birthday), in 38% everybody can see these data
  - about 60% provide photos, 45% without any barriers to entry
  - about 30% post private thoughts which everybody can access



## Controlled by Technology?

- „For decades computers have been grown up with us. They have far reaching qualities, which are used to observe, describe and classify us and which are meant to predict and determine our acting and experiencing. [...] Thus all statements in the internet are collected, evaluated, arranged and integrated to a virtual person who is more real than everybody else.“ (Krotz 2013)



# Big Data

- Massive amounts of data (terabyte, petabyte)
- By analyzing the data far-reaching conclusions can be drawn.
- Human beings are not registered as individuals but as a kind of data puzzle, which can be capitalized.
- Data which is registered: relationship, health, consumption, movement...

-> Big Data is a problem for human autonomy and freedom of decision





## Implications for Businesses

- Companies can easily register their consumers -> Do they treat the data responsibly?
- Companies could for example offer treaties where they inform the consumers what they will do with the data – and what not.
- Apart from that companies have to keep an eye on their own employees´ behavior in the social media.



## The Nestlé Case

- In March 2011, an employee who was managing content on the company's Facebook 'Fan Page' posted offensive comments in response to negative remarks by 'fans'.
- The employee's behavior violated the company's business principle of integrity and their commitment to "avoid any conduct that could damage or risk Nestlé or its reputation" and provoked a consumer backlash.

Cited by Institute of Business Ethics, Issue 22, December 2011



## Social Media Guidelines

- Through a social media policy companies can provide guidance to their employees on how to address ethical challenges.
- Areas covered by a social media guideline are the employees' use of social media in behalf of the company and employees' personal use of social media, including topics like harassment or mobbing.



## The Shell Case

“Our Communications team are now in the process of developing, in collaboration with Ethics & Compliance, Legal, HR and Internal Risk Management, policies and standards to cover (a) internal use, to give employees clear guidance about what they should and should not do in social media, (b) external Terms of Use to set expectations with the external community on how the Company will engage, and (c) a toolset for marketing that provides guidance on engagement processes.”



## Assignment

- Imagine you are working in a company and you have to write a social media guideline for the employees!

