Advertising is the practice of drawing people's attention to a particular product, service or event. Its goal is to elicit a response from you, which often is buying something. However, advertising can also elicit other responses, such as feeling entertained or educated.

Advertising is more than just placing an ad in a magazine or on TV. It can be found in newspapers, on the radio, in billboards, on buses, and even on the side of a building.

In the Tool Kit

Advertisers carefully select different techniques (tools) to persuade their target audience. Some of these include:

- **Humour**: Funny ads can be highly memorable and effective, as long as the humour is appropriate for the target audience and relates to the product. Otherwise, people will remember the ad but not what it was actually promoting.
- **Fear**: Some ads play to our fear, like the thought of being in a car crash or our organs being filled with tar. Then the product or message — like slowing down on the roads or quitting smoking — is presented as the solution. This technique is usually used for adult target audiences.
- **Endorsement**: Sporting and movie stars are often paid to endorse, or support, a particular product. When we see familiar faces talking about how great a product is, we feel as if we “know” the people involved and are therefore more likely to trust what they say.
- **Association**: Some ads encourage us to make a mental link between what we are offering and something that we want — like funny, popular, love or beauty. To an ad for a children’s clothing company might show a few kids wearing trendy outfits leaping through long grass chasing butterflies. What the advertiser is trying to do is prompt us to associate its product with something desirable. When we think of that particular brand, even without an ad in front of us, we might think “fun and fresh” clothing.

Understanding ads makes us better consumers because we are aware of how ads are trying to persuade us and therefore less likely to simply accept what they propose.

### Target Practice

Advertisers know that the same product or ad won’t appeal to everyone so they divide buyers into groups (based on age, gender, culture, occupation etc). Then, they either target their advertising towards the group most likely to purchase their product or tailor their advertising to suit each group. This is called market segmentation and the group of people an ad focuses on is known as the target audience.

A company, for example, wouldn’t waste its time advertising to 10 to 15-year-olds because they don’t have their driver’s licence. Their ads would target adults and if it was a family car (like a people mover) they were selling, they’d specifically make their ad relevant for parents.

As children don’t have huge amounts of money to spend, any advertising targeting children really sets out to prompt them to nag their parents to buy a particular product. This is commonly known as peer pressure.

### The Good Egg and the Bad Apple

Some advertisements influence us in a positive way, like if they encourage us to eat healthy foods, drink more water, keep fit, avoid smoking and drive safely.

Not all ads, however, are for products that promote good health and wellbeing. Some ads feature items that are dangerous (such as drugs) or undermine important social norms (like smoking, alcohol and gambling). Consumers may find an ad offensive, deceptive, too graphic or unsuitable for children. In Australia, people can direct such complaints to the Advertising Standards Board and sometimes ads are withdrawn as a result.

### Awesome Ads

We asked these Year 6 students from Sacred Heart School in Mundaring: tell us about an ad you think is really effective or memorable.

(10) I like the ad where the man is playing volleyball and he hits what he thought was advertising that the man turns out to be a seagull! It was advertising for glasses.

(11): My favourite ad would be the one for the iPad because it is a really cool invention.

(10): I like the ad where the man jumps on a trampoline and flies on of the tree and then the cat gets perch. It was AWESOME ADS.

### DOING THEIR HOMEWORK

Companies use market research to learn more about buyers (eg. their age, gender, level of education and income level), their shopping habits, factors which affect their purchasing decisions and their future intentions regarding buying particular products. The information can be obtained through phone surveys, questionnaires and focus groups. When a small number of people are involved for a group discussion, the better a company knows its buyers — especially what they want and how they think — the more accurately it can target its future ads.

Advertising research aims to test and improve the effectiveness of advertising. Pre-testing involves trying out an ad before running it to see what audience response is likely and what could be improved. This sort of research is important because companies want to make sure they don’t waste money screening or publishing ads that are not going to work. Post-testing is a check to see how effective an ad campaign has been. Do consumers remember the ad? Are they aware of the brand? Do they intend to buy the product? As with general market research, this information can be obtained through phone surveys, questionnaires and focus groups.

### 5 Quick Tips for Creating an Effective Ad

- **Keep it simple**: Make sure it’s relevant to the target audience.
- **Tell a story**: Make it visual. Try to evoke positive emotions.

### Branding As Creative

Emi Cholich has been a junior creative at Meerkats since graduating with a creative advertising degree 18 months ago.

“I asked him: What made you choose a career in advertising?”

“I was studying graphic design major. I did one advertising class and realized I had more fun coming up with ideas than designing them afterwards. Who are some of the clients you’ve worked with?”

“Mr Mac’s, Brownies, Mundoolun, Lotterytown, iNet and P&N Bank.

Your company calls itself a ‘brand leadership’ agency. What exactly does this mean?

“We do more than just that. We help good businesses find their reason to exist other than making a lot of money. Then we help them with how they interact with people, like on their websites or in front of a shop, even how they talk to their own employees.

Describe a typical workday for you?

“I get in at eight, read some emails, sit down by a window and do some brainstorming. I might be writing or coming up with ideas for three brands. Sometimes I do it at a desk or couch. Sometimes I do it at cafes or parks like a hipster. I do it 4.5, 0.5. It’s heaps of fun working on lots of different things.

Which ad campaign have you most enjoyed working on?

“I’ve enjoyed doing brand ideas for the West Coast Fever netball team. And I had a great time writing a brand book for a non-profit called Beyond.”

What do you find most challenging about your job?

“Coming up with better and better ideas. But it’s also the funniest bit. If you’re not challenging yourself at work, you’re not getting better.”

### The Art of Deception

Advertisements are everywhere — from the cereal box in the morning to the radio station you watch after school and the TV shows you watch. Ads are everywhere — from the cereal box in the morning to the radio station you watch after school and the TV shows you watch. Ads are everywhere — from the cereal box in the morning to the radio station you watch after school and the TV shows you watch.