Interim Assessment - Analysis Of An Advertisement

[Name of the Writer]

[Name of the Institution]

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***Introduction***

In ancient times, when the humans had not evolved much, and life was very simple, people used to rely on simple products and fulfil their needs through basic commodities. People mostly used to focus on satisfying their needs and not give importance to the alternatives available. As a matter of fact, there were not many choices available at that time. Only essential products were available, and everyone had the knowledge of them. Market system was also not much advanced, and most trade use to happen through barter. Presence of money was an alien concept, and traders only gave preference to sell their product, by hook or by crook. No one was interested in presenting their products or services beautifully or making the general public aware of their products and services.

With the advancement of technology, human needs started becoming more complex, and they began to demand better products as compared to the past. The introduction of currency posed an end to the barter system, and people started exchanging good and services for money. Furthermore, the advancements in technology brought more and more benefits for the people, and they start looking for better options to curb their needs.

Then came the industrial revolution. Multiple types of industries sprung up to cater to the needs and demands of the quickly growing populations. This era was especially characterised with rapid social change motivated by swift shifts in the scientific and technological sectors, lasting from the late 18th century and lasting till the 19th century. Now people had more and more alternatives available against a single need or demand. For a single type of need, there came multiple products and services. People had choices now; they used to get a whole range of products against just a single demand. The competition had largely increased, and people preferred to purchase the best product available in the market. At this stage, the business owners and industrialists felt the need for marketing (Babin, and Zikmund, 2015, p.319).

Marketing refers to the set of procedures and processes, a group of institutions and activities carried on in order to create, communicate, deliver and exchange offering that have values for clients, customers, partners and society at a massive level (Armstrong, Adam, Denize. and Kotler, 2014, p. 25). Marketing, one hand, helps in the promotion and publicity of the product and services and on the other hand, it also helps to impart knowledge about various concepts apart from just the product and service being advertised. Many organisations have a separate formulated department for marketing that is only designed to market the products and services in which the organisation is dealing. In a sole proprietorship or small business setups, marketing is usually carried on by the owner himself or herself or the small team that is managing the business. Lager business setups, on the other hand, have a separate department or departments for marketing (if the operations are spread over the globe).

Marketing has become extremely necessary in today's fast-moving era when the competition between various organisations has increased to cutting edge level, and competitors fight neck to neck increase the figure of their sales (Lovelock, and Patterson, 2015, p. 117). Companies try their level best to attract new customers and retain the already existing customers. Various marketing tactics are also used to bring back the customers who were once the users of company’s products and services but have now either left the product, company or have switched on to some other company. Numerous methods have been designed and formulated for the marketing of products and services such as usage of social media, use of flexes, kiosks, seminars, distribution of free samples etc. One of the most commonly used methods for marketing is Advertisement (Malhotra, and Peterson, 2014, p. 125). An advertisement is the use of a notice or announcement in public to promote and impart knowledge about a specific product, service, and event, create awareness about a cause or job vacancy. The notice or public announcement used for this purpose is called advertisement or “ad” in short.

***Discussion***

Almost all the companies use the techniques of advertising to promote and create awareness about their products and services. Multiple sorts of advertisements are seen popping out every now and then to achieve the goals of the organisation (Ellis, Katiyar, and Smolin, 2014, p.214). A recent example of sun an advertisement can be seen in the form of ad presented by Sprint. Sprint is a highly popular telecommunication company that deals in American Market and provides services like telecommunication and internet services (Percy, and Elliott, 2016, p. n.d.).

# *The Super Bowl 2018 Ad (Sprint Super Bowl Commercial 2018)*

Sprint decided to roll out its “Super Bowl TV commercial” in 2018 which was aired in the first quarter of the game (Sprint 'Evelyn' Super Bowl Commercial 2018, 2018). In the 60 second ad, Sprint introduced the world to a new character “Evelyn”, which is a robot. Evelyn is shown to be a highly intelligent robot produced as a result of artificial intelligence. Evelyn is super smart and highly intelligent which can gather data, make quick mathematical and statistical calculations, make comparisons and take rational decisions just like human beings. She is the highest developed machine of her lot and can make really smart moves. It is proven in the very start of the ad, as it is shown playing chess. Her creator (or more precisely developer) “Dr” is also seen exclaiming with amazement that his developed robot Evelyn is showing exponential performance as it is learning things at a rapid pace.

The ad moves on when the scientist, named as “Dr.” in the ad, receives a text on his mobile device. The message is most probably the bill sent to the customer from his telecommunication provider, Verizon. Evelyn views this and chastises its creator, “Dr” that why is Verizon is still his favourite telecommunication company when another Telco giant, Sprint is providing the almost the same level of services in half the price. The level of service only differs by 1%, but the price is double in the case of Verizon, as per the calculations of the robot. It informs that the network reliability difference between Verizon and sprint is just 1%, but the price difference is huge. Evelyn is quick to observe the situation and analyse the prices offered by both the telecommunication companies. It then directly questions his creator's choice of network and criticises him for choosing and sticking with a wrong telecommunication network.

Moving further, when the “Dr” shows ignorance about this and states that he never gave a thought to this idea, Evelyn teases him and makes fun of him. It also invites his other robot colleagues to join in, and all the artificial intelligently developed robots make fun of their creator. The robots go on one step further when a tiny robot comments “U have got a dumb face” which embarrasses the Dr more, and he feels humiliated. He is shown to be laughing stock of the whole laboratory or office in the hands of his self-created robots.

In the end, the creator of all these robots “Dr” can be seen standing at the Sprint store to switch to a new network. When asked that why he wants to change networks, he told that his co-workers are making fun of him that is why he wants to switch networks.

There are multiple aspects shown in this advertisement which can be divided into both positive and negative categories.

*The positive side of the advertisement*

The positive side of Sprint 'Evelyn' Super Bowl Commercial 2018 is that firstly, it imparts the knowledge about both the companies and their network reliability difference. The ad makes the general public aware that how Sprint is a better network than Verizon and why customers should consider switching to a better network in order to save their expenses.

Additionally, the ad has been excellently designed using the concept of artificial intelligence which a latest or more of a futuristic concept. The pace at which the technology is making progress, it is highly expected that the situation shown in the ad will come true and human will be working with such super smart robots.

*The negative side of the advertisement*

Along with the positive aspects, this ad carries some negative aspects with it as well. First of all, the ad shows the character blurting out the name of the competitor openly and pointing out a flaw in their pricing strategy. In international marketing or advertisement policies, it is considered highly unprofessional and unethical to point out and use the name, or even the symbols used by the competitor, in your own advertisement to criticise and mock them. The international standards for marketing and advertisement state that any company should never use the name of their competitors directly, in any case, to put them down (Moriarty, et al., 2014, p.12).

Another negative and long term adverse effect that has been shown in this ad is the dangerous and horrible picture of the future when robots developed by humans themselves will become so powerful and intelligent that they will question the decisions made by humans, even their own creators. The ad shows artificially intelligent robots mocking and making fun of their own creator, which is a little mean, especially the comment “U have a dumb face” looks quite unethical and hurting (Poore, 2018, p. 13).

*Did it serve the purpose?*

The purpose of every advertisement is very obvious; to promote the product and bring as many sales and customers for the company as it can. The goal behind the Sprint 'Evelyn' Super Bowl Commercial 2018 was the same. It successfully and intelligently plots the idea in the viewers’ mind that he or she is paying a higher amount for the services they are using and being robbed off their precious money for just a difference of 1% network reliability. The ad can successfully re-shape the cognitive, emotional and behavioural patterns of the customers and the company can easily generate many sales by just providing a single fact. The same has been shown in the ad as well.

*Cognitive*

This ad has the capacity to shape the thinking process of the viewers, especially the customers of the other network mentioned and repeat the same process as carried on by the artificially intelligent robot, Evelyn, observe, analyse and compare.

*Emotional*

This ad inevitably triggers the viewer emotionally and makes him or her feel the same way as the Dr in the ad is feeling. A viewer can feel that they are not-so-smart and maybe have made a wrong decision by choosing Verizon, instead of Sprint.

*Behavioural*

The telecommunication ad can largely shape the behavioural patterns of the viewers by making up their minds for switching the network to Sprint, from Verizon, like it did in the advertisement.

***Conclusion***

Shortly, the whole analysis of Sprint 'Evelyn' Super Bowl Commercial 2018 can be summed up an intelligent use of mind and technology to promote and create awareness regarding the service the telecommunication company is providing. The ad suggests a smart technique to the customers of another telecommunication service provider to cut off their expenses for telecommunication by half and save their money by switching to Sprint, which is a highly reliable and affordable network service provider. The only weakness is that using the name of the competitor sounds a little unprofessional and unethical and it can be improved.

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