

Commercials Force Continuity on Audiences

By Wyatt Barczak

Just when you are on the edge of your seat watching your favorite television series, the screen glosses over with a commercial of a round red chocolate figure with an 'M' on his

chest or these insurance salesmen in white aprons. You recognize the marketing from similar M&M and Progressive commercials which were trying to grab your attention as well.

Whether it be CGI candies pretending

to be human or a blinding white warehouse with the blue word **PROGRESSIVE** on everything, you have seen their marketing strategy in action.

Every company in the twenty-first century needs a memorable marketing campaign, and many have turned to the technique of placing commercials for their product in a range of venues: print, online, TV, and before movies. One technique commonly used for commercials is 'continuity' or “the promotion of your brand and its appearance across all your marketing channels,” and is, “unbroken, not interrupted, and consistent, time after

[1] O'Connor, Raz. “Brand Continuity. What Is It? And Why It's Not All about You.” Hunter Headline, 11 Oct. 2018, www.hunterheadline.com.au/hh/expert-article/brand-continuity-not/.



1. M&M Brand

time” [1]. Commercials use continuous visuals, phrases, and performers in order to make their product recognizable and memorable for their audience. By the audience becoming more familiar with the product through visual advertisements plastered all through their daily lives, this creates a bond between the company and the consumer across media platforms and helps them remember the product for when they need it most.



2. Flo From Progressive's Commercials

Is Continuity Limiting?

Progressive is an American insurance company that provides automobile insurance across the country. Their marketing team created a stark white shopping center with employees in white aprons and a large, blue **PROGRESSIVE** written on their chest to capture what customers see when they are looking to purchase auto insurance.

What stands out the most in their commercials is their name which is placed periodically around their sets and on their aprons to catch the eyes of their audience. The logo is simply iconic to an audience due to the amount of emphasis the marketing team placed on the company’s name.

No doubt these commercials are recognizable to us as audiences because they have been blasted on the screen which surround

our daily lives. Whether you see it on television, in theatres, or on your phone, you know a string of commercials which repeat the same message whilst trying to get you to buy their product.

Continuity in Other Media

Although one would never admit wanting to watch these commercials, except during the Superbowl, there is this urge after seeing a few commercials from a known company to see more of these commercials. This urge derives directly from the marketing team's use of continuity. Whether you want to see the Geico gecko talk about car insurance with his Australian accent or see Peyton Manning and Brad Paisley do the jingle for Nationwide commercials, there is this trigger in the audience's minds that remind them of the previous ads they've seen for this company.

Continuity is a technique used across corporations, industries, and even media. Filmmakers use continuity when preparing the next scene for a movie by making sure that characters are represented as they should in previous parts of the film. The device is even used in novels and comic books to create cohesive stories across connected written works. When asked about marketing her new book series, Shannon from Shannon Barczak Books talked about how, "forming an audience is the most important part of building an image or a series in general."

Deluding into more about the use of continuity and attracting audiences, the author said that "writing in continuity takes time to build. If it doesn't hook you the first time, then you are going

to be reluctant to return to it. So, it's about crafting something enjoyable, but at the same time, you need to write something that you enjoy.”

“...they use clever themes and marketing images in order to grab their attention on and off the screen.”

Continuity is a tool that companies use to attract an audience in need of their product and they use clever themes and marketing images in order

to grab their attention on and off the screen. As seen in the Progressive commercials, it's the white rooms, Flo the insurance saleswoman, and their company name in big blue letters.

So, to return to the original question. Does sticking to a theme or staple in marketing limit a company or reinforce an image? The short answer is that continuity in commercials is a great way at getting an audience invested in your company's message and endorses the product effectively. With the widespread availability of information now at consumers' fingertips, the digital age has aided the advertising of products and commercials that are viewed by a large audience. To maintain that audience, it is important to practice continuity and supply recurring images and characters, like Flo from the Progressive commercials, to make their product and their company identifiable to the consumer.