

УДК 659.1: 316,7: 316,346

Advertisement as Meaning-Making Element of Stereotypes Formation in the Modern Society

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Received 15.07.2013, received in revised form 28.08.2013, accepted 04.09.2013

The current phenomenon of our time are stereotypes, that, on the one hand, simplify the process of communication, as they empower the members of society with a number of characteristics in advance, but on the other hand, create additional problems in the process of interaction, for example, form preconceptions. The increased level of competition makes the creators of promotional product resort to unusual elements of its attractiveness. However, advertisement should not only be interesting and eye-catching, but also understandable and relevant to the target audience. Carrying out this task, the advertising business refers to such concept as “social stereotype” that helps to include a certain set of symbols, containing the necessary and relevant for the consumer information into the advertisement message.

Stereotype is a derivative of the modern society. The fact that stereotypes affect not only human relationships, but also formation of the public opinion is important. People mostly think in images – stereotypes, and this is an effective tool for an advertisement creator. But we must not forget that its primary task is to “hook” the potential customers with the help of competent motivation, in other words, to create an image that will stand out from the products by competitors and attract attention. However, advertising producer must remember that the border, where interesting and unusual advertisement becomes repulsive and unpleasant is very thin, and it creates the need for highly skilled approach to the use and formation of stereotypes when creating an advertisement message. Advertising, as the meaning-making element of culture can not only change social stereotypes, opinions and ideas that exist in society, but also create new ones.

Keywords: advertisement, stereotype, social and cultural activities, gender, advertising communication, ethnic stereotype, gender stereotype, culture.

Modern society is a complex, multi-level system, and hence, the interaction of elements within a given society has a number of specific features. Modern scholars have repeatedly emphasized this complexity (Koptseva N.P., 2012, Nozdrenko E.A., 2013). It is necessary to determine the factors that influence the formation of such a

unique phenomenon as stereotyping. In addition, an important issue is the role of stereotypes in the modern society, as well as possibility of their use in advertising communication.

According to Niklas Luhmann, communication should be understood as “a kind of historically-specific process, a context-dependent

event”, a specific operation, which characterizes only social systems, in the process of which redistribution of knowledge and ignorance, rather than communication or transmission of information or transfer of “semantic” content from one psychic system that process them to another takes place (Luhmann, H, 2005).

According to Baxter, as well as Sillars and Vangelisti, communication is a mean with a help of which people develop and maintain their relationships (Nazarchuk A.V., 2009). This definition suggests that nowadays communication is a global process covering the whole world. Communication represents not only relationships between people, but also interaction of society, various social groups, etc.

In this research we are interested in mass advertising communication. Mass communication is a process of systematic dissemination of institutional information, as well as transfer of specially prepared messages with the help of different technical means to large, anonymous and dispersed audiences; it is a regulator of the dynamic processes of social consciousness, integrator of mass attitudes, and a powerful tool to influence over a person and groups (Andrianov M.S., 2007). It is the concept that we have included in our study, as the final product in terms of advertising communication can be not only information, but already formed sustainable knowledge, such as stereotypes about any object, phenomenon, etc.

In the modern society a lot of stereotypes are associated with different areas of human activity. The system of stereotypes is a social reality. A modern society is based on stereotypes, relationships in the society happen according to a certain list of the formed images. For example, the stereotype is that women are “the weaker sex”; so a woman, who, according to the stereotypes, determines so-called “male” professions, such as police officer or fire fighter,

can be discussed and sometimes even judged by the public.

According to Lippmann, stereotypes are ordered, determined by culture “worldviews” in human mind, which, firstly, save human efforts in the perception of complex social objects and, secondly, protect human values, attitudes and rights (Lippmann, W., 2004). This thesis brings us to the conclusion that nowadays relationships in society are built with the help of present, prepared patterns. Thus, on the one hand, the process of communication is getting much easier; on the other – the social function of advertising – formation of the new “worldviews” that are socially relevant and necessary at the moment for a given culture appears.

I.S. Kon writes: “stereotyping lies in the fact that complex individual phenomenon is mechanically associated with a simple formula or an image that characterizes the class of such phenomena” (Kon, I.S., 1999). It should be noted that this definition suggests that in the modern society stereotypes have simplified the process of comprehension. When a person sees an image of a subject and an object, he/she already has a number of paradigms about its features in mind. The existence of stereotypes in the mechanism of knowledge is ambiguous and contradictory. On the one hand stereotypes simplify the processes of cognition and creativity, allowing extensive use of existing knowledge and skills, which are represented by a complex set of stereotypes, and on the other hand – limit the ability to get new knowledge that go beyond the usual concepts or contradict them.

H. Tajfel identified two social functions of stereotyping: a) explanation of the existing relations between the groups, including the search for the reasons of complex and, “as a rule, sad” social events, and b) justification of the existing inter-group relations, such as acts, committed or planned in relation to other groups (Yakovlev, I.P.,

2006). Thus, stereotypes form the relation of a person to an object, which is associated with the certain features that were already formed in mind. So, stereotypes can partly be an element that forms public opinion. For example, such phenomena as racism and national discrimination are particularly associated with the ethnic stereotypes that currently exist in the human society.

The problems of ethnic stereotypes Ethnic stereotypes are associated with perception of one nation, ethnic group or cultural group by another group. Relevance of this group of stereotypes is associated with acute, at the moment, situation which is reflected in emergence of such concepts as racism, Nazism, racial inequality, etc. According to the paper by V.B. Kashkin and E.M. Smolentseva "Taboo Topics and Ethnic Stereotypes in Intercultural Communication" ethnic stereotype is historically established rules of conduct and evaluation of a particular ethnic group (Kashkin, V.B., 2000). In this case the concept of stereotype can be compared with the concept of "evaluation" or "characteristic", as perception of ethnic group, race, etc. depends on them. Ethnic stereotypes do not appear "out of nothing", a number of factors, more often connected with a particular historical event, contribute to the emergence of a certain stereotype.

It should be noted that ethnic stereotypes have dual nature, as they may come from a representative of an ethnic group, and from another source. Most often, it is this fact that gives rise to such a problem as ethnic conflicts, as ethnic representation of one ethnic group (the ethnic image) may not coincide with the opinion of another ethnic group. For example, in Russia the opinion about visitors from the former Soviet republics is stereotyped, a person, who does not understand ethnic and national differences, may assimilate all the visitors to such a concept as

"migrant worker" that can also have an insulting form.

Many researchers recognise the role of ethnic stereotypes in the formation of specific, and, in particular, negative attitude to different ethnic groups. For example, T. Pettegrew believes that the basis for the formation of social stereotypes in general and ethnic stereotypes in particular, is conformism as unconditional submission to the prevailing social norms. J. Watson showed that anti-Semitism of the new immigrants increases in a short period of time in the case when they settle in areas where anti-Semitism is quite typical, that is, immigrants who did not have anti-Semitic stereotype before coming to the United States, got it as a result of communication and under influence of the new social environment (Yakovlev, I.P., 2006). With the course of time, every ethnic group, nation or race forms a definite number of specific features, the stereotypes, that separate them from others. Thus, it is possible to say that stereotype is an element of culture of an ethnic group, the element that helps to identify it among the others.

Such words as "German", "Russian", "American", "Chechen", etc. have (i.e. encode) more meaning than just names of representatives of a certain territorial area or representatives of a certain nation. They imply some specific features of appearance connected with racial characteristics, traits of character, temperament, belonging to a particular religious denomination, etc. Thus, it is easy to see that ethnic image is a complex element of ethnic consciousness, as a particular physical type of a person summarizes territorial, social, historical and cultural features of life of a whole ethnic group. In other words, in a particular ethnic image stereotype personification of both the people and the country where people live takes place.

A type of limitation of headstrong impulses of an individual is important for the ethnic

image formation. It refers to non-standard, non-stereotyped manifestations of temperament and mental conditions: the condition of love, hatred, jealousy, etc. This socially limited manifestation of temperament is a method to control the biopsychic reactions. It plays a special role in formation of a typical ethnic image: prim Englishman, light-minded Frenchman, proud Spaniard, etc. Therefore, an ethnic image serves as a kind of standard, according to which a person motivates his/her behavior and expects a certain type of behavior from the real ethnic prototypes (Arutunyan U.V., 2009). Thus, ethnic stereotypes are stereotypical characteristics of the certain ethnic groups, nations and peoples. These characteristics can have both positive and negative evaluation. And their use in advertising depends on the goals of advertising campaign.

The problem of stereotypes and prejudices, as well as dealing with them is very important in the contemporary world. Formed stereotypes result in the fact that a person, who doesn't face something in practice, already has the given image which can often have different emotional evaluation. This image is formed under the influence of public that forms its own assessment or classification of different groups of people. A kind of generalized attitude that concentrates on the evaluative attitude to all the members of a particular ethnic group, regardless of their personality is formed in a society. This attitude is stereotype.

Irrationality of prejudice lies not only in the fact that it can exist independently of personal experience. For example, a person who has never met the gypsies knows perfectly well that they are the "other" people who personify evil, theft and crimes. When people explain their hostility to any ethnic group, they usually refer to definite negative traits, typical, in their opinion, to the group. However, the same traits, taken regardless to this ethnic group, cannot even cause negative

evaluation or can be evaluated in a more tolerant manner.

The origins of negative attitudes toward people of another ethnic group are rooted in the ancient times. In primitive society, the sphere of human communication was limited by a clan or a tribe. A man was only a tribesman. People from other tribes, when it happened to meet them, were perceived as alien, hostile force, as a kind of devils and demons. It could not have been otherwise: after all, such a meeting promised death to one of the parties. An alien meant an enemy.

The cause of appearance of ethnic images lies in differences between people, and these differences are not only in appearance but also in relation to the cultural component, perception of each other, etc. Ethnic stereotype is not generalization of the real features of a nation, but a product and a symptom of a definite social situation in which personal qualities of a person are deliberately repressed by a general one-sided stereotype. And prejudice is a negative attitude to a group or its individual members, which is characterized by stereotyped beliefs. Ethnic prejudices have the most poisonous influence on their victims and on those who believe in them, they limit communication between the members of different ethnic groups, cause suspicion from both sides, prevent the establishment of close, intimate human relationships. Alienation, in turn, complicates communication and gives rise to new misunderstandings.

It is noteworthy that such stereotypes with different prejudices often become elements for shocking advertisement. Use of ethnic images and stereotypes in advertisement can often have negative evaluation. For example, advertisement of the computer game (Fig. 1) uses a scene of violence as a stopper. It also uses element of racial inequality, which is associated with the existing in the society stereotype of a lower status of the black race.

However, use of ethnic stereotypes can have a positive role, the result depends on quality of the produced goods. For example, when stereotype does not depend on use of an ethnic image, but distinctive characteristics of the certain nation are used. So, a distinctive feature of Russian people is stereotypical love of traditions and history. Therefore, many Russian advertising campaigns use the indication that the promoted products were made according to the traditional methods and recipes. A remarkable example is the slogan of the advertising campaign by “Vorontsovskie crackers”, “we care about the traditions, just for fun”.

Advertisement often uses stereotypes about interaction of humans and animals, for example print advertising, according to which the public organization “The Portuguese League for Animal Rights” asks people do not support, and do not go to a circus with animal shows. The slogan of this message is “Animals are not clowns!” (Fig. 2) This advertisement message

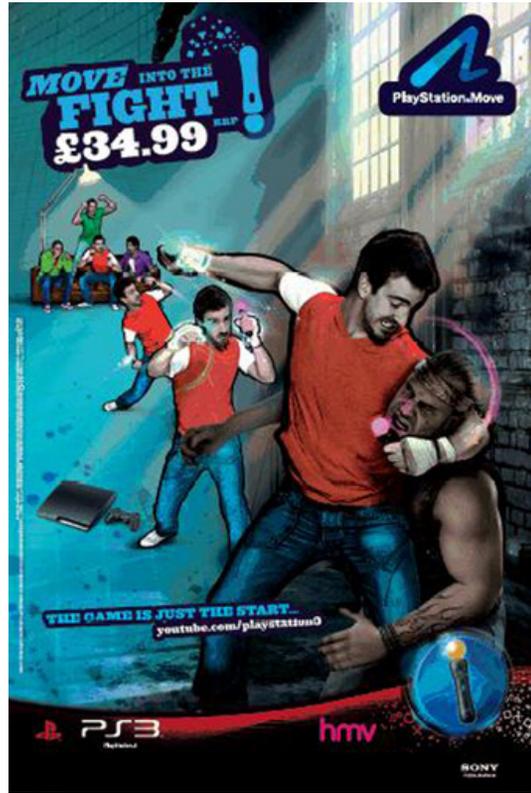


Fig. 1. Advertisement of computer games with ethnic images

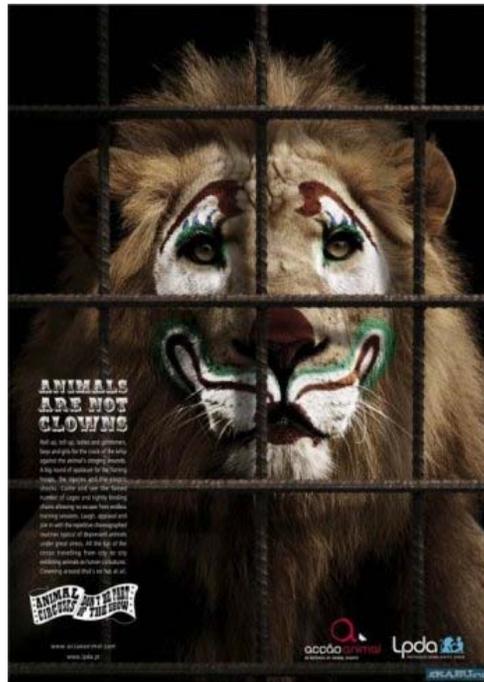


Fig. 2. Social advertising against the use of animals in circuses

destroys the stereotype which is now well-established in society and suggests that animals should serve for people's benefit: be their food, clothing, entertainment, etc.

Advertising campaigns can often break stereotypes connected with religion, cultural component, etc. For example, the famous advertising by Benetton (Fig. 3), clothing manufacturer, advertising of English ice-cream with the slogan: "Give in to the temptation!"

(Fig. 4), advertisement of «AXE» deodorant (Fig. 5). These examples break the traditional stereotypes about the Church, which ministers do not have any temptations.

*About gender stereotypes
in modern advertisement*

Gender stereotypes imply descriptive qualities and characteristics of men and women and contain normative behavior patterns of each



Fig. 3. Advertisement of "Benetton"



Fig. 4. Coffee advertisement with religious images



Fig. 5. «AXE» deodorant advertisement

sex. From the advertising practice's point of view it is important that gender stereotypes reflect generalized opinion, judgments and people's ideas about the differences between men and women in a particular culture. This means that gender stereotypes depend on the cultural context and environment where they are used.

The examples of the use of gender stereotypes (Fig. 6, 7, 8) confirm the statements that the traditional gender roles limit and

constrain development of not only women but also men. It is noteworthy that modern researches don't only study certain stereotypes, but also develop a kind of "portraits" of modern men and women. Thus, for example, D. Buchan's point of view became very popular: men were considered "active" (doing something, solving problems, aggressive), and women – "communicative" (passive, emotional, interested not in business but in relationships between individuals). [3].



Fig. 6. BMW cars advertisement

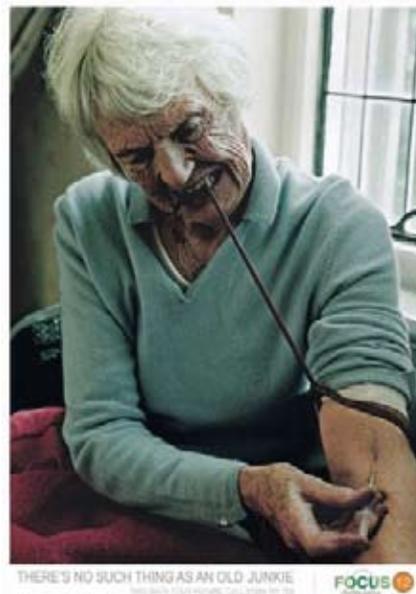


Fig. 7. Drug addiction treatment centers advertisement

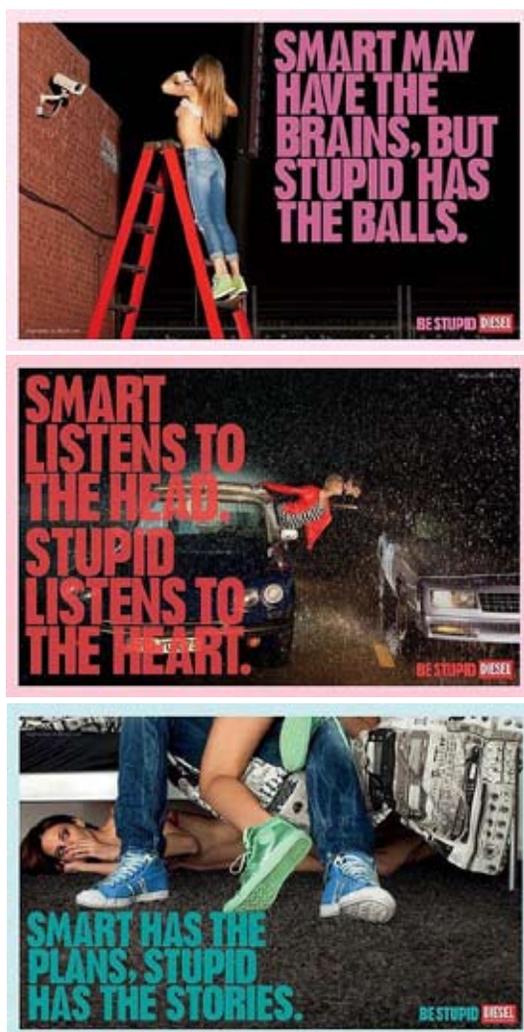


Fig. 8. «Diesel» clothing advertisement

As consequences of generalization, gender stereotypes form our expectations concerning men's and women's behavior. Using such an approach advertisement should not only effectively use these expectations of its audience, but also, if it is necessary, form new expectations. Consequently, advertisement that does not confirm the stereotype, but denies it becomes the most interesting. Such advertisement becomes the most original, and at that the use of stereotypes can be regarded as an essential tool in creating a promotional product.

The factors of stereotypes formation

The study of the problems of use and formation of stereotypes in the modern advertising communication allowed identifying the factors that contribute to the formation of a stereotype in a society:

1. Historical factor presents in connection with the development of society, and as a consequence, development of public relations. In fact, this factor is fundamental.

2. Public relations as a system of social activities. For example, formation of ethnic stereotypes is connected with the quality of relationships between different ethnic groups, in particular, ethnic conflicts.

3. Social roles. It is known that social roles are the main factor in stereotypes formation. In this case a stereotype is subjected to transformation with the change of semantic characteristics of a social role.

4. Public policy, which supposes participation of citizens in its formation and implementation by the civil institutions. This factor is aimed at solving social problems, and one of the most important tools in this process is formation of the actual stereotypes broadcasted by mass media and used in advertisement.

Thus, the modern society is characterized by a tendency of stereotyping, that is, the presence of certain paradigms in relation to certain objects and phenomena. This fact bears evidence of creation of a society that thinks in images and it is very convenient for advertisement. In the modern society stereotypes made the process of comprehension easier, and, therefore, effective. On the one hand stereotypes greatly simplify the process of studying and creativity, allowing the extensive use of existing knowledge and skills, which represent a complex set of stereotypes, and on the other hand they limit the ability of getting new knowledge, knowledge that goes beyond the usual concepts or contradict them.

It should be noted that there are certain types of stereotypes (gender, ethnic stereotypes) which depend on an object this stereotype is associated with. A number of factors, most often associated with a particular historical event (first of all, it concerns ethnic stereotypes) contribute formation of a certain stereotype. With the course of time, every ethnic group, nation or race forms a number of characteristics, the stereotypes that define them from the others. Thus, we can say that stereotype is an element of the cultural component of an ethnic group, the element that helps to define it from many others. The topical problem of the modern society is existence of such a phenomenon as prejudice.

We should also mention that there are positive (an elderly person is wise and reasonable due to the extensive life experience) and negative stereotypes (women can't drive a car, as it is men's job). The problem of negative stereotypes use is quite relevant nowadays, as consequences can be expressed in the form of dissatisfaction of a certain group of people or in the form of

a major conflict (for example, different ethnic conflicts).

Thus, clever use of stereotypes can create conditions necessary for the public opinion formation. Advertisement often uses common social stereotypes to form the desired image of the promoted product. It is noteworthy that use of stereotypes can often be a source of dissatisfaction with advertising products by a group of people, which is opposed to the existing public opinion. Often, a stereotype can take a form of insult, thus, humiliating a part of society, which it devoted to. This situation is often connected with ethnic stereotypes due to inter-ethnic conflicts that often develop in the society. Nowadays stereotypes concern almost all the aspects of human life and advertising practice uses many of them (Table 1).

The issue of stereotypes' use in advertisement is undoubtedly topical in the moment. It is obvious that advertisement is a phenomenon and an important communicative element of the modern culture, it can influence public opinion formation. Advertisement can be understood as a catalyst

Table 1. Analysis of the stereotypes use in advertisement

Type of stereotype	Analysis of stereotypes use in advertising practice	Context for advertising practice
1	2	3
Ethnic stereotypes	Such stereotypes are effective in social advertisement, which aims to attract attention to the problems of ethnic tolerance that exist in society. In the modern world the problem of ethnic conflict is acute, so advertisement with its product should not worsen the existing situation, but try to ease it, to encourage people to be tolerant, to have positive attitude towards people of other ethnic origins. Thus, the objective of such an advertisement is to change consumer behavior, which is manifested either in ethnic tolerance or in the correct study of the cultural component of the ethnic group representatives, but not in the abusive use of ethnic images, built on stereotypes associated with the represented ethnic group.	The call for respect to the "others", unity of various ethnic groups and tolerance.

Continued Table 1

1	2	3
Gender stereotypes	One of the most commonly used stereotypes is an image of an attractive girl, quite often immodest and sometimes even vulgar. Thus, a creator of such an advertising message should understand that a woman can be displayed as a sex object, but this image must be reserved, otherwise such an advertisement may cause public discontent. In addition, the use of such stereotypes as ethnic stereotypes is acceptable in social advertisement, which shows current problems of a society.	Ideas about personality traits and behavioral roles of men and women are topical at the present time and in the cultural context. "The construction of gender" is formation of certain expectations about what kind of people we should be and what we should do to comply with the modern ideas about our environment.
Age stereotypes	Use of this stereotype is possible from different positions, so a creator of an advertisement message should take into account a number of factors, including the target audience, which a creator is going to work with. For example, advertisement of a product for young people can use gender stereotypes that are relevant only for representatives of the young generation.	Inclusion of age characteristics always contains an element of unconscious projection. For example, social advertisement of the rehabilitation center Focus 12 Rehab Centre, for some people may seem too bold and provocative, for others – outrageous and disrespectful to the elderly people, and some people may even say that it is hilarious (Fig. 7). But we should admit that its creators have achieved the main goal – people were affected by it. The text on the print is as follows: "There's no such thing as an old junkie, Take back your future. Call Focus 12 Rehab". It should be noted that this advertisement not only directly used people of a certain age group, but also used the social stereotype that is associated with these people, what was specified in the slogan.
Other forms of social stereotypes	Any public stereotype can be both used and contradicted in an advertisement message. In this case a stereotype violation creates more original and unusual advertising, but such a technique is not always appropriate, as the target audience may not accept the modified stereotype.	Advertisement can both create and break the existing social stereotypes. The example of stereotypes violation is a series of promotional prints by "Diesel" (Fig. 8), which broke the stereotype that it is necessary to be a prudent person. The promotional messages had different meanings: "Smart listens to the head, stupid listens to the heart", "Smart may have the brains, but stupid has the ball," "Smart has the plans, stupid has the stories", etc. The campaign is intended to renovate the core values of Diesel brand – boldness and originality, encouraging people not to grumble, but live and take risks.

for the process of change in consumer behavior. Today, advertisement should be perceived not only as a process of providing consumer with the information about a product, but as a way to influence a person, change a person's point of view on an issue, as a kind of meaning-

ideal-forming element. Therefore, advertisement must correctly interact with all the meanings and ideals that already exist in a society.

Thus, the role of advertisement is to form an image desired and understandable for the target audience. Advertisement as the meaning-forming

element can not only change social stereotypes, opinions and ideas that exist in society, but also create new ones. In turn, advertisement producer can both use topical social stereotypes and destroy them, creating new stereotypes, which are more relevant for the modern society.

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Реклама как смыслообразующий элемент формирования стереотипов в современном обществе

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Актуальным явлением современности являются стереотипы, которые, с одной стороны, упрощают процесс коммуникации, так как заранее наделяют членов общества рядом характеристик, но, с другой стороны, создают дополнительные проблемы в процессе взаимодействия, например образуют предубеждения. Повышенный уровень конкуренции вызывает у создателей рекламного продукта необходимость прибегать к необычным элементам его привлекательности. Однако реклама должна быть не только интересной, привлекающей внимание, но и понятной, актуальной для целевой аудитории. Осуществляя данную задачу, рекламный бизнес обращается к такому понятию, как «общественный стереотип», который поможет заложить в рекламное сообщение определенный набор символов, содержащих необходимую и актуальную для потребителя информацию.

Стереотип является производной современного общества. Важен тот факт, что стереотипы влияют не только на человеческие взаимоотношения, но и на формирование общественного мнения. Люди преимущественно мыслят образами – стереотипами, а это и есть тот эффективный инструмент для создателя рекламы. Однако нельзя забывать, что его первоначальная задача – через грамотную мотивацию «зацепить» своего потенциального потребителя, другими словами, создать такой образ, который будет выбиваться из конкурентного ряда и привлекать внимание. Однако рекламопроизводителю необходимо помнить о том, что грань, за которой интересная и необычная реклама становится отталкивающей и неприятной, очень тонка, что создаёт необходимость высококвалифицированного подхода к процессу применения и формирования стереотипов при создании рекламного сообщения. Реклама как смыслообразующий элемент культуры может не только изменять существующие в социуме общественные стереотипы, мнения и идеи, но и создавать новые.

Ключевые слова: реклама, стереотип, социально-культурная деятельность, гендер, рекламная коммуникация, этнический стереотип, гендерный стереотип, культура.
