
The Influence Of Tobacco And Nicotine Advertisements On Children

There are many ways to convey a message; from print ads to commercials or even billboards, advertisements are plastered everywhere. Affective ads lure their audience in and captivate their minds. There is a series of public service announcements by Ash Action that are being broadcasted demonstrating just how powerful the use of logos, pathos, and ethos can be by drawing attention to the harsh reality that tobacco and nicotine ambassadors are marketing towards children. When first looking at the public service announcement from Ash Action is alarming. With the words, "Just like mommy" in a child's handwriting written in red on an ashy background drawing the audience's eye to the top of the ad. Further down the ad a carton of, what would normally be cigarettes, is revealed, however, in place of the cigarette's there are crayons filled with tobacco. In the print ad the contrast between what an adult ad should be and what attracts a child's attention are being blended together to create a single ad and this is what makes it so captivating. The idea that big tobacco is brainwashing children into believing that using these products is not only okay, but cool is dangerous. These announcements are warning people that although a product is being advertised in a different light, the side effects are still the same. The concept that children smoking is trying to be normalized as if it should be a part of the culture in the United States is threatening the health and safety of children. Ash Action is fighting to bring knowledge to anyone who cares about the safety, wellbeing, and health of the younger generations.

What makes this print ad so enticing are the words, "Just like mommy" written in red writing that is scribbled sloppily onto the page, not uniformed writing but typical of what a child might write like on a school assignment or even a card. What is supposed to be a transfer of words normally associated with a small child mimicking her mother's actions; like playing dress up in her mother's shoes, is now being compared to smoking a cigarette. The chilling image of a child picking up a cigarette, putting it between their lips then running in to show mommy that she is just like her is haunting. There is a sense of disarray and shame that is being transmitted from the public service announcement. Guilt is being placed on the party that smokes by using a child's innocence against them. The same emotions would not be stirred up if the image was that of a teenager dressed in all black smoking a cigarette; however, due to the placement of the words slightly uncentered and appearing unfiltered a pure and innocent image is portrayed. When the audience thinks of a little boy or little girl being asked what they want to be when they grow up, the typical response they might imagine would be something like a nurse or an astronaut; but imagining that same child's dreams being thrown away because they have lung damage due to first- and second-hand smoking is disheartening. Just like mommy should be a sweet enduring thing to hear from a child not something that causes fear and panic.

Further down the page there is a cigarette carton laying open. Marlboro's brand name clearly legible with their defining logo and a half red half white box with the two colors coming together to form a peak. The top label reading filtered cigarettes, something that is supposed to make adults more inclined to buy their products, another label reading please do not litter is clearly seen, but inside the box are what appear to be cigarettes wrapped in crayon wrappers. All brightly colored with a yellow one slightly pulled out like someone is getting ready to reach for it and smoke it. The image itself is illogical, however, it still brings up a sense of disgust and the

ad creators are using Marlboro to endorse this message. The image is disturbing and sickening, leaving the question to emerge, why would a cigarette company be advertising with products meant for a child? The reality being that nicotine and tobacco companies are marketing towards children, not adults. With more emphasis being placed on tobacco and nicotine products tasting good and smelling good children have more interest in seeing and experiencing the same things they see other adults or even their parents doing. Looking closer at the crayons filled with tobacco, there is no filter. Typically for a cigarette from this company a white cap, or filter, would be seen first not the straight tobacco. This making the argument even stronger. Children do not have filters they are learning constantly from right and wrong and adults are supposed to be stirring children in the right direction. Sheltering them from the harsh realities of the world, filtering the things they come in contact with. Ash Action is bringing in a sense of logical reasoning to anyone who has ever seen or smoked a cigarette. The concept of a filter was originally supposed to make smoking healthier, but over time studies have shown that the filters often time carry other chemicals in them that affect a person's overall health. The logical thing would be going back to unfiltered cigarettes, and yet most people never made the switch. People get stuck in their own habits and don't always realize the side effects those bad habits will have on them later; however, when children come into the picture the risk is significantly increased. This PSA is making the threat of nicotine clear and simple, unfiltered.

After looking at the initial picture on the ad, the last thing that catches the attention of the viewer is the written text placed off to the side and in between the child's handwriting and the picture of the cigarette box. In plain gray, almost transparent text reads, "Children whose parents or siblings smoke are three times more likely to smoke than children living in non-smoking households." The rest of the ad is drawing on a sense of emotion with little facts being incorporated while their final statement gives a simple straight forward fact almost eliminating any doubt that the public service announcement is solely emotion driven. According to tobacco-free-kids, 2,300 underage kids try their first cigarette and an additional 350 kids become regular smokers each year. Even with adults trying to protect their children, they are still being exposed to all different types of threats, a main one being the threat big tobacco has on every child, even more so on children raised in a household that uses tobacco and nicotine products. Parents, siblings and any other adult in a child's life is someone they look up to; someone the child is watching and studying, learning from because they admire them. An example needs to be set early on by being a role model and remembering there is always someone watching.

The concept that pictures stand for a million words seems evident in the announcement, however, Ash Action doesn't stop there; they bring the whole ad home with a single sentence that couples with the images delivering a statement that is so strong it is almost overwhelming. In a culture that is filled with new technological advancements and a generation geared towards the newest creations, it is easy to miss the simple scheming tactics that tobacco and nicotine companies use in order to market to different generations. The effects of all the products are still the same, if not worse due to the fact that all the new inventions are impossible to predict all the side effects. We as a nation should be gearing towards a smoke free society that protects all the different generations from the dangers of tobacco products, but instead big companies are changing their marketing strategies to be more inclusive for each generation. Ash Action is making a stand against this by trying to educate people, encouraging them to think about the future of not only themselves but also of those who are growing up around them. Children are the future. Ash Action is trying to protect and ensure that the future is strong, healthy, and worth fighting for.