

Quiet on the set

Local commercials combine capitalism and creativity, sometimes with mixed results

BY BRIAN FLEMING
The Battalion

Commercials sell. They reach out and grab the masses, and here in Brazos Valley each business seems to have its own personal approach to making commercials.

Whether the commercials seem humorous or just cheesy, students who make fun of local commercials should stop and think, "Is it memorable?"

John Cangelose, owner of Sun City Tan in College Station, said in the long run commercials tend to do exactly what they are supposed to do — bring in business.

"The point is, [students] remember it, they come in and from there they can see if they want to use our product," he said.

Cangelose said his business' advertising campaign gets different reactions from different viewers.

"Usually they are either irate with it or love it," Cangelose said. "They might ask 'Why did you do that?' but the irony is, they still come in."

Cangelose said the commercials are attention-grabbing, and also are aimed at reaching Sun City's clientele.

"First of all, about 90 percent of our customers are college students," Cangelose said, "so really we wanted to pick a fun theme to reach them."

Paul Bodholt, owner of Nutritec, a health products store in Bryan, said developing a coherent theme is of utmost importance for a commercial.

Nutritec takes the humor angle in reaching its target audience, Bodholt said.

"A lot of people are sensitive to these [health] issues," Bodholt said. "Making a laugh out of something really makes people remember it."

Bodholt said the most important thing in making a commercial is knowing its target audience.

"We appeal to college students," Bodholt said. "We play our commercials on ESPN, MTV and during football games."

Bodholt said Nutritec's commercials portray exactly what is emphasized in its store.

"What we really stress is advice on dieting, losing weight and exercise," Bodholt said. "That has a lot to do with our advertising campaign. We want to portray an image our customers want to achieve."

Bodholt said Nutritec's commercials feature actors and actresses whose lives coincide with what its store provides.

"In our commercial, the two [actors] both exercise very seriously and maintain a very healthy lifestyle," Bodholt said. "What we want to say is, 'You can achieve your goals.'"

Cangelose said selecting actors and actresses for commercials is not difficult.

"We used a combination of employees, customers and people the production company brings in," Cangelose said. "For most, it is more fun to do and less of a job."

But after all is said and done, are commercials really effective?

The verdict from some Aggies is "yes." Kevin Daigrepoint, a junior sociology major, said memorable commercials often are the best commercials.

"You have to stop and think, 'Do you remember it?'" Daigrepoint said. "I know sometimes I do."

Daigrepoint said some traits, however, can make a local commercial very bad.

"It seems that some commercials rarely have any logic behind them," he said. "What they are saying does not even make sense."

Daigrepoint said correct grammar and clarity of thought also effect the response to a commercial.

"When you are watching someone who can barely even talk, it makes the commercial pretty ineffective and stupid," he said.

Daigrepoint said some commercials fail because they are too over-the-top.

"Some commercials seem to try too hard," Daigrepoint said. "They can go too far with a theme, and that makes it hard to understand. From a small business, people don't always expect something real elaborate, just something logical and sensible."

Daigrepoint said large-scale commercials for local businesses usually do more harm than good.

Daigrepoint said the best local commercials are those featuring Texas A&M.

"If it has to do with Aggies or has Aggies in it, I like it," Daigrepoint said. "That makes it easier to understand because it is something people around here can relate to."

Rayshelle Mullen, a junior English major, said a good local commercial is sincere and personal.



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

"The one with Marshall Dillon, for example," Mullen said. "It is personal, and it is a little boy, so that, I think, makes it more effective."

Daigrepoint said The Mattress Factory's commercial is a catchy marketing idea.

"It sticks," he said. "You remember it as the commercial with the kid, and if I need a new mattress,

that is probably the first place I would think of and where I would go."

Mullen said most local commercials are not bad, but if she could tell the makers of not-so-good advertisements one thing, it would be to simply watch what potential customers are seeing and ask, "Would you buy from me?"

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