

History of Advertising Trust

Comedy in advertising. Why use parody?

Advertising provides a unique barometer and record of social, cultural and economic change and offers countless insights into the processes and creativity involved in the construction of advertising.

HAT Archive is the memory bank of UK brands and advertising industry expertise. We aim to inspire young people by giving them access to the largest collection of British advertising in the world and presenting specialist advertising industry knowledge to support your teaching and learning programmes. In collaboration with current media teachers in Norfolk and Suffolk, and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, we have designed and tested a series of resources that bring a rich seam of authentic material into the classroom. By matching our unique advertising archives to your specific teaching needs we can provide:

- insider knowledge
- specialist support
- expert guidance
- tried and tested classroom materials.

Students will benefit from access to original source materials and information from experts, with opportunities to hear directly from industry practitioners. The resources contain advertising themed content, suitable for any area of the curriculum and are ideal for teachers who want contextual material for lesson plans and ideas for assignments, homework, activities or comparisons.

These invaluable learning tools will enable you to deliver engaging, relevant and meaningful content to your students and save you valuable time in research and development of lesson plans.

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Advertising often uses humour to attract the attention of the consumer, hold their interest and improve recall - parody is one such comedic device. As well as gaining attention parodying can allow brands to associate themselves with the positioning and buzz of their chosen parody subject. An idea that has already infiltrated the mind of the public has media currency.

However, campaigns that use parody must be clever and original enough to impress their audiences. The original needs to be subverted in some way or it looks as though the parody is merely jumping on the prestige of the original, not adding value or anything new. To use parody effectively it must fit the brand's established tone, heritage and background. A well-executed parody allows a brand to build on its own reputation of being witty and edgy. It also makes the brand look current and responsive.

1. Parody as inspiration

Many advertising campaigns that use parody find inspiration not from an existing advertisement but from a particular genre, format or style. For example; parodies of rap music videos in recent Yeo Valley campaigns and Star Wars films in Currys/PC World commercials. Even Lorraine Chase, 'I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here 2011', starred in an advertising campaign for Campari in 1979 that was a parody of the iconic film 'Casablanca'.

When using parody in advertising the parody must be obvious and the original needs to be popular, well-liked and respected. Also, for the parody to work, the original and the parody version may need to share a similar target audience or the inter-textual references being made may go unrecognised. A parody borrows credos and cool from the original so the original needs to be acknowledged by the audience. It is then the use of juxtaposition and contrast in the parody that creates new meaning.

2. The potential to go viral

A parody also has great **viral potential** (or 'trending topic' on Twitter), allowing it to be shared by consumers therefore letting word-of-mouth add to the hype for the brand. These types of campaigns also invite **audience participation and co-creation**, inviting consumers to create their own material (as in a recent political campaign for the Liberal Democrats that used a 'Labserveative' website asking people to post their own 'mashed up' images of Conservative and Labour party members).

All of this taps into the wider trend of communicating with audiences via **online communities and social media networks**.

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Images



1994 Wonderbra

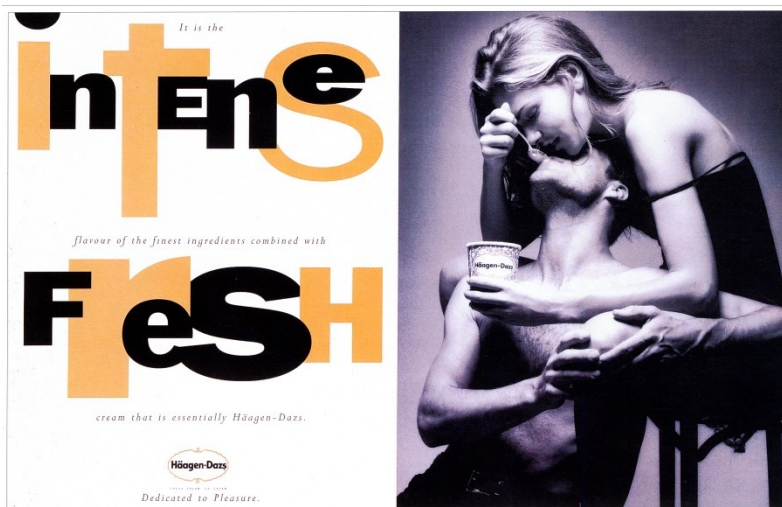


1994 Kaliber

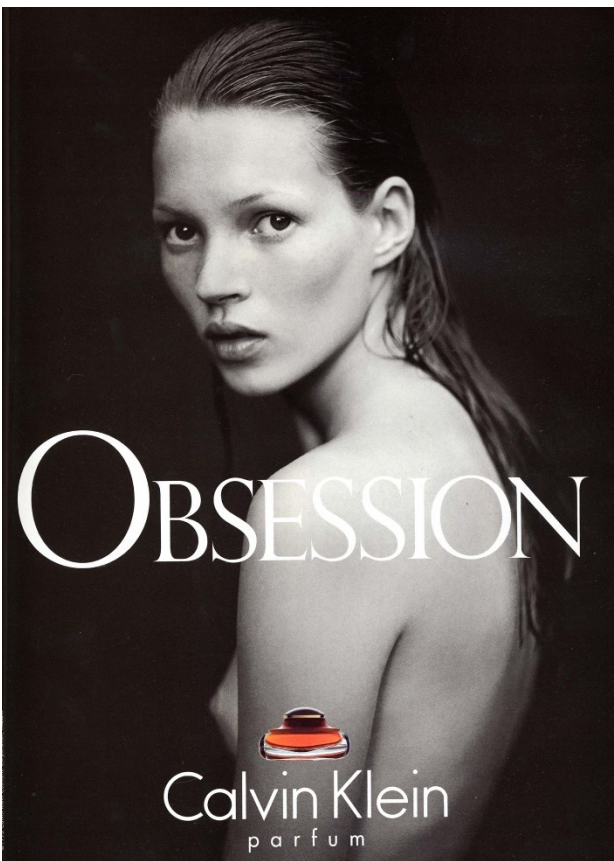
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Images



1991 Haagen Dazs



1996 Calvin Klein

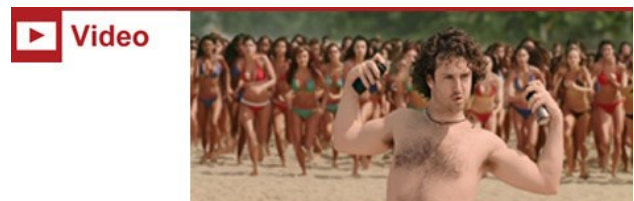
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TV commercials

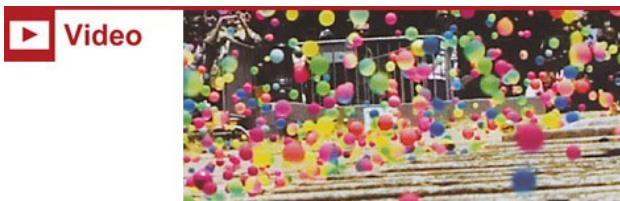


2006 Lynx - Billions

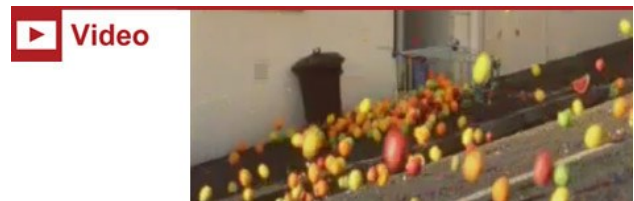


2010 Specsavers - Billions

By awakening the latent consumer memories of a well-known advertising campaign, Specsavers used comic parody four years later to suggest that sexiness can be gained by designer glasses bought at their outlets.



2006 Sony Bravia - Balls



2007 Tango - Bravo

In 2006 an advertising campaign for 'Tango Clear' was launched, parodying the 'Balls' themed advertisement for Sony Bravia LCD televisions. The original advert consisted of footage of thousands of coloured balls as they fell down the streets of San Francisco. The Tango advert was set in Swansea and featured fruit instead of coloured balls, using the same production style and music track by Jose Gonzalez. The Sony slogan of 'Colour. Like no other' is replaced by 'Refreshment. Like no other'.

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Further examples

Film parody

There are many examples of parodying a film genre/using existing codes and conventions to create new meanings. These examples parody memorable and iconic scenes in the respective films.



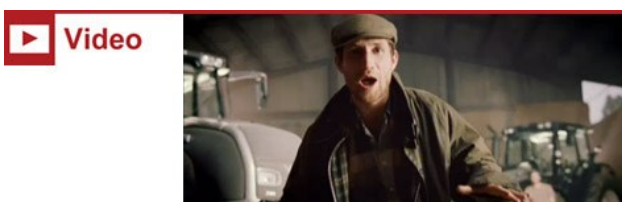
1979 Campari - Casablanca



2010 Curry's / PC World - Star Wars

Music video parody - Yeo Valley 'Yo Vall-Ey' Rap 2010

Released during the first advertising slot in the first commercial break of the 2010 'X-Factor' Live Shows on ITV1, BBH's advertisement, became a trending topic on Twitter and the "YeoTube channel" on YouTube received unprecedented views. The commercial makes the dairy aisle cool by parodying a rap video style. It also uses stereotypes and references the format of many other advertising campaigns (attractive models, cool poses, countryside = natural etc). Brand awareness and recognition has been reinforced by subsequent commercials parodying other bands music videos.



2010 Yeo Valley - Yo-Vall-ey

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3. Ideas for your classroom

- Ask your students to list the advantages and disadvantages of using 'parody' in advertising campaigns
- Using the examples given and others researched ask students why the advertising agency responsible for the parody version chose that particular ad to parody? What qualities were they hoping to 'borrow' from the original campaign, product and appeal to its target audience?
- Many advertising campaigns that use parody find inspiration not from an existing advertisement but from a particular genre, format or style. Get students to think about how parodies have used the generic codes and conventions of the original to communicate a message about the brand
- One of the dangers of parodying is not being able to say something new or unique about your product. Ask students if the parody ad in each of the examples given successfully conveys a specific brand message or does the parody override it? If so, how does it still manage to do this and if not, why not?
- Is a parody advertising campaign just a case of an advertising agency 'running out of original ideas' or is there more to it than that? Ask students to think about why agencies so often use parody when creating campaign material. Get them to list brands that they think have the right tone, heritage and background to use parody as a marketing tool - ask them to research past and present ad campaigns for these brands, were they right?
- Get students to create their own viral parody advertising campaign that inspires crowd-sourcing and user-generated content. Make sure they can explain why they chose this particular campaign and what they hope the original brings to their campaign material. Remember: The creative idea development process should begin with the brand message, the idea of parody should come as secondary
Set students the task to create a public awareness campaign using parody i.e. for 'Anti-drink driving'.

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Links

The images and commercials used in this resource have been selected to illustrate the main points of the text.

Digital advertising images and TV commercial footage can be supplied by HAT on almost any theme at reasonable prices. You may wish to browse through HAT's [online catalogue](#) for more ideas and inspiration.

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