Source, Message, and Channel Factors

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

LO1 Discuss the variables in the communication system and how they influence consumers’ processing of promotional messages.

LO2 Identify decision factors involved in selecting a source for a promotional message.

LO3 Compare the different types of message structures and appeals.

LO4 Explain how different types of channels influence the marketing communications process.
Under Armour (UA) was founded in 1996 by Kevin Plank, a former University of Maryland football player, who began by selling compression shirts that could “wick” sweat away from the body to college sports teams out of the trunk of his car. Plank hated how the cotton T-shirts he wore under his shoulder pads and jersey became soaked with sweat as it was not only uncomfortable, but the extra weight hurt an athlete’s performance. From the very beginning Under Armour’s value proposition was based on selling athletic apparel that is functional and comfortable and enhances performance. However, the challenge facing Plank as an entrepreneur was how to build awareness of his innovative product and get athletes to wear it. As a former high school and college player, Plank had friends who were playing for more than a dozen National Football League (NFL) teams whom he would send shirts to wear as well as encourage them to get their teammates to do the same. As part of his grassroots approach he emphasized that if an Under Armour shirt helped them improve their performance even a little they would earn more money, thus positioning his pitch as a way to help the athletes rather than asking them to do him a favor. Thus, even in the nascent stages of the company, Kevin Plank was learning how to negotiate with athletes to get them to endorse Under Armour products.

Plank’s first big break came in 1997 when the Miami Dolphins NFL team wore his product under their uniforms in a nationally televised game with the Under Armour logo visible on the neck of every shirt. The following year the football-oriented movie *Any Given Sunday* was being filmed in Baltimore where Under Armour is based. The producers of the movie were looking for a football-oriented brand that would represent the athletic nature of the movie and be comfortable to wear during filming. Under Armour agreed to provide products and its shirts were used throughout the filming and appeared in the movie itself, resulting in national exposure for the brand. A similar situation arose in 2003. This time it was sports cable giant ESPN that came calling, asking UA to be part of its new HBO series about football players called *Players*. ESPN thought that since everyone in locker rooms seemed to be wearing Under Armour, it would be more realistic if the players in the movie were shown in UA clothing.

Under Armour achieved great success and grew very quickly in its early years by forming a brand identity that was associated with the raw emotion and muscle-filled world of football and other predominantly male team sports. The company developed a unique brand identity through its television advertising campaign that began in 2003 and used the slogan “Protect This House.” The commercials featured well-conditioned football players working out while wearing Under Armour, and ended with the players gathering in a huddle and shouting “We must protect this house!” as if their lives depended on it. The iconic tagline became a symbol of what Under Armour stands for as a brand; and a few years ago the phrase “I will” was added to it as a call to action for athletes.

Under Armour went public in 2005 and the stock price nearly doubled the first day it was traded. Since going public the company has averaged more than 25 percent annual growth and reached $4 billion in revenue in 2016, and expects to hit $7 billion by 2018. The keys to Under Armour’s success have included quality products, strong branding and positioning, and an incredible roster of athletes as endorsers, a number of whom it signed for much less money than its major competitors such as Nike and adidas. Even with its incredible growth, Under Armour is still only about an eighth the size of Nike, which had sales over of over $30 billion in 2016 and less than a quarter the size of adidas whose global revenue was nearly $20 billion. Nike spends nearly $1 billion a year on endorsement deals while adidas recently announced that it planned to sign 500 athletes in North America alone to deals. Nike’s endorsers include basketball legend Michael Jordan and NBA superstars LeBron James and Kevin Durant, golfers Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy, and soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo. Adidas top endorsers include soccer star Lionel Messi and Derrick Rose who plays for the New York Knicks in the NBA.

While Under Armour may not be able to spend as lavishly as its larger competitors on endorsement deals, most industry experts argue the company is spending its money more wisely. Under Armour’s endorsers now include three of the best players and biggest stars in professional football, basketball, and baseball: Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton, Golden State Warriors point guard
Stephen Curry, and Washington Nationals outfielder Bryce Harper. Newton is a former Heisman trophy winner who won the NFL’s Most Valuable Player award in 2015 while leading his team to the Super Bowl. Harper was the National League Rookie of the Year in 2012 and won the league’s MVP award in 2015.

Stephen Curry has been the key to Under Armour’s newfound success in the basketball shoe market which is dominated by Nike. Under Armour approached Curry in 2013 when his contract with Nike was about to expire. Nike considered whether it was worth outbidding Under Armour for Curry and decided not to resign or offer him a coveted signature shoe line. Since signing with Under Armour, Curry has become one of the NBA’s most prominent stars, winning the league’s MVP award in both 2015 and 2016 while leading the Warriors to an NBA championship in 2015. Under Armour leveraged Curry’s success by creating its first signature shoe, the UA Curry One, which is its best-selling shoe and has played a key role in helping the company reach nearly $800 million in footwear revenue.

Under Armour’s eye for talent goes beyond team sports. The company signed swimmer Michael Phelps, a Baltimore native, to an endorsement deal in 2010. Phelps is the most decorated Olympian of all time with 22 medals, including 18 gold. In 2013 Under Armour signed golfer Jordan Spieth, who was a relative unknown right after he turned professional, but by 2015 was the number 1 ranked golfer in the world after winning two major championships including the Masters and U.S. Open.

Under Armour’s roster of endorsers is not limited to male athletes. An important part of its growth strategy is to move beyond male-dominated sports such as football, baseball, and basketball and bring more women to the brand. Its roster of female athletes include skier Lindsey Vonn, a four-time Olympic gold medalist who has been with the company since 2006; up-and-coming tennis star Sloane Stephens; and Kelly O’Hara, who plays on the U.S. Women’s National Soccer team that has won the FIFA World Cup and an Olympic gold medal. However, two of its most influential female endorsers are not athletes playing a professional sport, but rather a ballerina and a superstar model. The women are helping Under Armour in its efforts to position itself as a brand that can empower female athletes and compete against Lululemon and Nike in the fast-growing athleisure segment of the apparel market.

In 2014 Under Armour signed ballerina Misty Copeland to an endorsement deal. She went on to become only the third African American female soloist in the history of the American Ballet Theater. The company also signed Gisele Bündchen, one of the world’s highest-paid models and wife of New England Patriots star quarterback Tom Brady, who is also an Under Armour endorser. Both women were featured in the award-winning “I Will, I Want” women’s campaign that was a viral sensation racking up over 4 million views in just one week and helped make women’s apparel 30 percent of Under Armour’s revenue.

Under Armour recognizes that having the right athletes and other celebrities endorsing its products is a key success factor in the athletic shoe and apparel market. They not only help build the brand, but also are catalysts for sales. Kevin Plank notes that the success the company has had with Curry, Spieth, and Copeland has taught the company a valuable lesson regarding the need to think bigger, as all three have transcended their sports and become known by just their first names. In 2015 Under Armour overtook adidas, which also owns Reebok, to become the second most popular sportswear manufacturer in the United States and it has set its sights on the rest of the world. Watch out, Nike!

To develop an effective advertising and promotional campaign, a firm must select the right spokesperson to deliver a compelling message through appropriate channels or media. Source, message, and channel factors are controllable elements in the communication model. The **persuasion matrix** (Figure 6–1) helps marketers see how each controllable element interacts with the consumer’s response process. The matrix has two sets of variables. **Independent variables** are the controllable components of the communication process, outlined in Chapter 5; **dependent variables** are the steps a receiver goes through in being persuaded. Marketers can choose the person or source who delivers the message, the type of message appeal used, and the channel or medium. And although they can’t control the receiver, they can select their target audience. The destination variable is included because the initial message recipient may pass on information to others, such as friends or associates, through word of mouth.

Promotional planners need to know how decisions about each independent variable influence the stages of the response hierarchy so that they don’t enhance one stage at the expense of another. A humorous message may gain attention but result in decreased comprehension if consumers fail to process its content. Many ads that use humor, sexual appeals, or celebrities capture consumers’ attention but result in poor recall of the brand name or message. The following examples, which correspond to the numbers in various cells of Figure 6–1, illustrate decisions that can be evaluated with the persuasion matrix.

1. **Receiver/comprehension: Can the receiver comprehend the ad?** Marketers must know their target market to make their messages clear and understandable. A less educated person may have more difficulty interpreting a complicated message. Jargon may be unfamiliar to some receivers. The more marketers know about the target market, the more they see which words, symbols, and expressions their customers understand.

2. **Channel/presentation: Which media will increase presentation?** A popular prime-time-TV show such as *The Big Bang Theory* is seen by as many as

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**FIGURE 6–1**
The Persuasion Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Independent variables: The communication components</strong></th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Receiver</th>
<th>Destination</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Message presentation</strong></td>
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<td>(2)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attention</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Comprehension</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Yielding</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Retention</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Behavior</strong></td>
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18 million people each week, while magazines such as Time and People reach over 3 million readers with each weekly publication and millions more through their digital editions. But the important point is how well a media vehicle reaches the marketer’s target audience. A show such as Keeping Up with the Kardashians, which appears on the E! cable network, reaches around 2 million viewers each week and its audience primarily consists of young men and women between the ages of 18 and 24 who are very fashion conscious and tech savvy. Although the ratings of the show have declined recently, many companies still view it as a way to reach this audience which is highly coveted by many advertisers since they are prime prospects for clothing fashion, consumer electronics, and many other products.

3. **Message/yielding:** What type of message will create favorable attitudes or feelings? Marketers generally try to create agreeable messages that lead to positive feelings toward the product or service. Humorous messages often put consumers in a good mood and evoke positive feelings that may become associated with the brand being advertised. Music adds emotion that makes consumers more receptive to the message. Many advertisers use explicit sexual appeals designed to arouse consumers or suggest they can enhance their attractiveness to the opposite sex. Some marketers compare their brands to the competition.

4. **Source/attention:** Who will be effective in getting consumers’ attention? The large number of ads we are bombarded with every day makes it difficult for advertisers to break through the clutter. Marketers deal with this problem by using sources who will attract the target audience’s attention—actors, athletes, rock stars, or attractive models.

**SOURCE FACTORS**

The source component is a multifaceted concept. When Tina Fey appears in a commercial for American Express, is the source Fey herself, the company, or some combination of the two? And, of course, consumers get information from friends, relatives, and neighbors; in fact, personal sources may be the most influential factor in a purchase decision. Word-of-mouth information transmitted from one individual to another is often perceived as more reliable and trustworthy than that received through more formal marketing channels such as advertising. As was discussed in Chapter 5, marketers are using buzz and stealth marketing methods to generate favorable word-of-mouth discussion and recommendations for their products and services.

We use the term source to mean the person involved in communicating a marketing message, either directly or indirectly. A direct source is a spokesperson who delivers a message and/or endorses a product or service, like country music star Miranda Lambert who appears in an ad that is part of “The Breakfast Project” campaign sponsored by the Milk Processor Education Program. The campaign encourages people to eat a nutritious breakfast that includes milk (Exhibit 6–1). An indirect source, say, a model, doesn’t actually deliver a message but draws attention to and/or enhances the appearance of the ad. Some ads use neither a direct nor an indirect source; the source is the organization with the message to communicate. Since most research focuses on individuals as a message source, our examination of source factors follows this approach.

Companies are very careful when selecting individuals to deliver their selling messages. Many firms spend huge sums of money for a specific person to endorse their product or company. They also spend millions recruiting, selecting, and training salespeople to represent the company and deliver sales presentations. They recognize that the characteristics of the source affect the sales and advertising message.
Marketers try to select individuals whose traits will maximize message influence. The source may be knowledgeable, popular, and/or physically attractive; typify the target audience; or have the power to reward or punish the receiver in some manner. Herbert Kelman developed three basic categories of source attributes: credibility, attractiveness, and power. Each influences the recipient’s attitude or behavior through a different process (see Figure 6–2).

Source Credibility

Credibility is the extent to which the recipient sees the source as having relevant knowledge, skill, or experience and trusts the source to give unbiased, objective information. There are two important dimensions to credibility, expertise and trustworthiness.

A communicator seen as knowledgeable—someone with expertise—is more persuasive than one with less expertise. But the source also has to be trustworthy—honest, ethical, and believable. The influence of a knowledgeable source will be lessened if audience members think he or she is biased or has underlying personal motives for advocating a position (such as being paid to endorse a product).

One of the most reliable effects found in communications research is that expert and/or trustworthy sources are more persuasive than sources who are less expert or trustworthy. Information from a credible source influences beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and/or behavior through a process known as internalization, which occurs when the receiver adopts the opinion of the credible communicator since he or she believes information from this source is accurate. Once the receiver internalizes an opinion or attitude, it becomes integrated into his or her belief system and may be maintained even after the source of the message is forgotten.

A highly credible communicator is particularly important when message recipients have a negative position toward the product, service, company, or issue being promoted, because the credible source is likely to inhibit counterarguments. As discussed in Chapter 5, reduced counterarguing should result in greater message acceptance and persuasion.

Applying Expertise  Because attitudes and opinions developed through an internalization process become part of the individual’s belief system, marketers want to use communicators with high credibility. Companies use a variety of techniques to convey source expertise. Sales personnel are trained in the product line, which increases customers’ perceptions of their expertise. Marketers of highly technical products recruit sales reps with specialized technical backgrounds in engineering, computer science, and other areas to ensure their expertise.

Spokespeople are often chosen because of their knowledge, experience, and expertise in a particular product or service area. Endorsements from individuals or groups recognized as experts, such as doctors or dentists, are also common in advertising. For example, Dove has promoted the fact that its skin cleansing products are the most recommended by dermatologists in ads for more than 60 years (Exhibit 6–2). The importance of using expert sources was shown in a study by Roobina Ohanian, who found that the
Celebrities Sell Out—but Only Abroad

While many celebrities make huge sums of money endorsing products and serving as advertising spokespeople, some big stars won’t appear in ads in the United States because they don’t want fans to think they’ve sold out. There has also long been a feeling among actors that appearing in commercials might devalue their image among the powerful Hollywood producers and directors. However, this has been changing in recent years and even some of the biggest names in entertainment have decided to cash in on their celebrity and appear in commercials. For example, Hollywood heavyweights Scarlett Johansson and Matthew McConaughey have been the faces of Dolce & Gabbana’s “The One” fragrance for a number of years. McConaughey also signed a lucrative endorsement deal with the Lincoln Motor Company division of Ford to help the luxury brand attract younger, more culturally progressive consumers. Nicole Kidman was paid $8 million to appear in commercials for the Chanel No. 5 fragrance line, and in 2012 Chanel hired Brad Pitt as its first male spokesperson for its signature fragrance. Using Pitt in Chanel ads may not have been a wise decision since the TV spot, which featured him rambling on about journeys and fate, was widely criticized and parodied on YouTube and shows such as Saturday Night Live.

Some of the A-list celebrities still resist the temptation to cash in on their fame in the United States, but they are only too happy to appear in ads in foreign countries. Nowhere are ads starring American celebrities more prevalent than in Japan. Even the rich and famous have trouble saying no to Japanese advertisers who will pay them between $1 million and $3 million for a few hours’ work to make 10-second spots that their Western fans across the Pacific will never see. In Japan, celebrities make more money for less work and because the commercials will never air in the United States, they think they can make the money without looking like they are selling their artistic souls.

Academy Award winner Leonardo DiCaprio, who is arguably one of the most famous actors in the world, appeared in a 15-second spot for the Jim Beam bourbon brand in which the only words he says are “cool bourbon, Jim Beam.” The company said the ad would be used only in Japan, but it made its way to the United States and other countries via YouTube as soon as it was aired there.

Megastars such as Charlize Theron, Brad Pitt, Sean Connery, Kiefer Sutherland, Kevin Costner, and Harrison Ford have been paid millions for appearing in Japanese commercials. Theron has appeared in an ad for Honda and for Lux bath products, while Ford received several million dollars for appearing sweaty and bare-chested in Kirin beer commercials and print ads. Pitt has appeared in ads for canned coffee and blue jeans. Sometimes celebrities are forced to change their images or personalities to suit the advertising style of Japanese companies and the tastes of audiences in Japan. Japanese commercials have a totally different feel perceived expertise of celebrity endorsers was more important in explaining purchase intentions than their attractiveness or trustworthiness. She suggests that celebrity spokespeople are most effective when they are knowledgeable, experienced, and qualified to talk about the product they are endorsing. A number of other studies have shown that celebrities perceived as having expertise with a product or service can lend persuasive power to an advertising message.

Applying Trustworthiness While expertise is important, the target audience must also find the source believable. Finding celebrities or other figures with a trustworthy image is often difficult. Many trustworthy public figures hesitate to endorse products because of the potential impact on their reputation and image. E-Poll Market Research conducts ongoing consumer surveys to gauge the popularity and marketability of celebrities by surveying consumers and having them rate celebrities on 46 different personality attributes including items such as trustworthy, sincere, trendsetter, and influential. The company publishes its E-Score Celebrity Report each year which includes a spokesperson index score that reflects a celebrity’s perceived credibility and authority and suggests his or her potential as a spokesperson. The highest-scoring celebrities on its most recent lists have included
than those in the United States and Europe and have often been described as “tacky” or “cheesy” by Western standards. For example, a commercial for Takara sake featured a kimono-clad Madonna wielding a sword and declaring “I’m pure,” while another actor, Sean Connery, was shown carrying a ham into a room accompanied by the theme music from the James Bond movies.

There are several reasons why Japanese companies are willing to shell out huge sums of money for these stars. Many Japanese are fascinated by American culture and its celebrities, and endorsement of a brand by a star gives it a certain international cachet. Also, Japanese advertising emphasizes style and mood rather than substance; consumers expect to be entertained rather than bored by product information or testimonials. More than 80 percent of Japanese commercials are 10- or 15-second spots and around 85 percent use celebrities to capture viewers’ attention.

Japan is not the only country where the Hollywood celebrities are hawking products. Actors Uma Thurman and Jeff Bridges appear in ads for the German fashion chain Marc O’Polo in Europe and Asia. Richard Gere has appeared in ads for Fiat in Europe, including a spot showing him driving a Lancia Delta from Hollywood to Tibet. Even though the ad aired in Italy, it created an uproar in China, where Gere is disliked for being an outspoken supporter of the Dalai Lama.

Some celebrities cashing in on endorsement deals abroad still try to protect their image at home and not be seen as selling out for money. Many stars have non-disclosure clauses in their contracts, specifying that the ads cannot be shown, or sometimes even discussed (oops!), outside Japan. They still see their appearance in TV ads as being potentially harmful to their reputations back home. However, with the growth of the Internet it is difficult to limit the viewing of the ads to one country; many of the commercials can now be found online on popular websites such as YouTube. Linda Thaler, chief executive officer of the Kaplan Thaler Group advertising agency, notes that “the days of Brad Pitt doing a commercial in Japan that he thought no one was going to see are gone.” However, she also notes that the stigma that celebrities are selling out by doing a commercial has also gone by the wayside as Hollywood snobbery toward appearing in commercials declines.

While many celebrities are still unwilling to appear in ads in their home countries, some are softening their stance on the issue. For example, actor George Clooney appeared in ads for the Nestlé Nespresso coffee system only outside the United States for many years. However, in 2015 he agreed to use his star power to help Nespresso compete in the U.S. market which has proven to be resistant to smaller servings of coffee as consumers prefer to grab their java on the go from Starbucks, Dunkin Donuts, and other places. Clooney stars in humorous commercials alongside actor Danny DeVito where he trains him in the art of good taste. His Nespresso deal also includes an online film where he discussed how Nestlé supports farmers in war-torn South Sudan.

Syracuse professor Robert Thompson, an expert on television and popular culture, argues that appearing in commercials no longer carries a stigma for Hollywood celebrities. According to Thompson: “TV ads are much hipper and much cooler than a decade ago. I don’t think people feel an obligation to hide it.” However, celebrities are used to getting their way, and most would probably still prefer that the knowledge of their overseas endorsements stay there. Sorry about that.


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actor Morgan Freeman, director Ron Howard, HGTV show host Mike Holmes, Tony Dungy (former NFL coach and analyst on NBC’s Football Night in America), Michael J. Fox, Sandra Bullock, Betty White, and Tom Hanks. Talk-show host and entertainment producer Oprah Winfrey has also been a very trusted source through the years, and her “Favorite Things” list has served as a trusted source for product recommendations for many consumers. While many top celebrities could command large sums of money as endorsers and spokespersons, very few of them do often out of concern for how their image might be impacted. Global Perspective 6–1 discusses how some American celebrities protect their image by endorsing products in Japan and other countries rather than in the United States.

Advertisers use various techniques to increase the perception that their sources are trustworthy. Hidden cameras are used to show that the consumer is not a paid spokesperson and is making an objective evaluation of the product. Disguised brands are compared. (Of course, the sponsor’s brand always performs better than the consumer’s regular brand, and he or she is always surprised.) Advertisers also use the overheard-conversation technique to enhance trustworthiness. This involves creating a situation in a commercial where a person is shown overhearing a conversation in which favorable claims are made about a product or service. Most consumers are
skeptical of these techniques, so they may have limited value in enhancing perceptions of an advertiser’s credibility.

Marketers can also deal with the source-trustworthiness issue by using other IMC tools such as publicity. Information received from sources such as newscasters is often very influential because these individuals are perceived as unbiased and thus more credible, even though they are often presenting stories that stem from press releases. In some situations celebrities may appear on news programs or talk shows and promote an upcoming cause or event such as the release of a new movie or music CD. With the increase in stealth marketing techniques, many consumers are becoming wary of endorsements made by celebrities on news programs and talk shows. For example, a New York Times article revealed that drug companies were making payments to celebrities or their favorite charities in return for the celebrities’ touting the companies’ pharmaceutical products on news and talk shows. As a result of the controversy from the article, CNN and the major broadcast networks announced that they would disclose any such financial deals during an interview.\(^9\)

Concerns over potential bias in touting a product or service can involve more than celebrities. Several so-called consumer advocates and product experts have been criticized for giving favorable reviews and/or promoting specific products on local and national TV news programs and other shows without disclosing that they were being paid by the companies to mention their brands. Concern has been expressed over the practice as most television shows present the information presented by trend and fashion gurus or individuals with expertise in areas such as consumer electronics as unbiased and based solely on their expertise. However, the presentation is misleading to consumers if the experts have been paid to mention the products.\(^10\)

With the growth of social media another area of concern has arisen regarding the trustworthiness of sources that endorse companies and brands and make recommendations on sites such as Facebook and Twitter as well as through online reviews or on blogs. In 2009 the Federal Trade Commission passed a set of guidelines requiring online endorsers and bloggers to disclose any material connection they might have to a company. The FTC developed the guidelines in response to studies that showed as many as 30 percent of online reviews were fake and were coming from someone who had been paid to write them or failed to reveal their association with a company or brand.\(^11\)

**EXHIBIT 6–3**

John Schnatter is one of the most effective CEO spokespersons

\(©\) Papa John’s International

Using Corporate Leaders as Spokespeople  Another way of enhancing source credibility is to use the company president or chief executive officer as a spokesperson in the firm’s advertising. Many companies believe the use of their president or CEO is the ultimate expression of the company’s commitment to quality and customer service. For some firms, the use of a president or CEO in their ads can help create an identity and personality for the company and/or brand. For example, Richard Branson’s irreverence and zeal for life have helped personify the image of Virgin’s empire of megastores, airlines, mobile phones, and soft drinks. Branson has been used occasionally in ads for various Virgin brands. A study by the research firm Ace Metrix found that the most effective CEO spokespersons currently are John Schnatter of the Papa John’s pizza chain and Jim Koch, who is the head of the Boston Beer Company, which markets the popular Samuel Adams brands.\(^12\) Schnatter has appeared in more than 50 ads for Papa John’s and is perceived to be authentic and genuine, which are two important traits for the effective use of CEOs in ads for their companies (Exhibit 6–3). The practice of using company founders, owners, and presidents as advertising spokespersons is particularly prevalent among small and midsize companies such as retailers and auto dealers serving local markets.
Many marketing and advertising experts question the strategy of using company presidents or owners in ads and note that it is often ego rather than logic that is the reason for their use.\textsuperscript{13} The experts suggest that businesspeople should get in front of the camera only if they exude credibility and possess the intangible quality of provoking a warm, fuzzy feeling in viewers. For example, Microsoft chair Bill Gates appeared in several TV commercials that were designed to help build a stronger image for the company. Gates was paired with comedian Jerry Seinfeld in the spots, which attempted to use quirky humor to get consumers to think about Microsoft in a different way. However, the ads aired for only a short time and many ad critics noted that Gates did not come across well in them.\textsuperscript{14}

Another concern is that creating an image or culture around the CEO can make the corporate brand image more vulnerable if the individual becomes involved in any type of controversy such as a labor dispute, political issue, or personal problem. Critics of the practice also note that CEO spokespeople who become very popular may get more attention than their company’s product/service or advertising message. And if a firm’s image becomes too closely tied to a popular leader, there can be problems if that person leaves the company. For example, one of the most popular corporate spokespersons ever was Dave Thomas, the founder of Wendy’s fast-food restaurants. Thomas appeared in more than 800 ads for Wendy’s between 1989 and early 2002, when he passed away.\textsuperscript{15} Wendy’s had a difficult time replacing Thomas, who had become an advertising icon and was seen as the voice and personality of the company.\textsuperscript{16} It has also been argued that the recent financial crisis and scandals involving top executives in some companies has eroded confidence in executives, which affects their ability to come across as trustworthy as they would have a few years ago. Moreover, in the new era of social media it is very easy to criticize corporate leaders who do not come across as trustworthy and believable.\textsuperscript{17}

Major corporations are likely to continue to use their top executives in their advertising, particularly when they have celebrity value that helps enhance the firm’s image. Some research suggests the use of a company president or CEO can improve attitudes and increase the likelihood that consumers will inquire about a company’s product or service.\textsuperscript{18} Defenders of the practice argue that the use of top executives or business owners in ads is an effective way of projecting an image of trust and honesty and, more important, the idea that the company isn’t run by some faceless corporate monolith. As one expert notes: “These guys come into people’s living rooms every night and, over the course of weeks and years, become like members of the family. It gets to the point that when you think of a certain product category, you think of the guy you see all the time on TV.”\textsuperscript{19}

**Limitations of Credible Sources** Several studies have shown that a high-credibility source is not always an asset, nor is a low-credibility source always a liability. High- and low-credibility sources are equally effective when they are arguing for a position opposing their own best interest.\textsuperscript{20} A very credible source is more effective when message recipients are not in favor of the position advocated in the message.\textsuperscript{21} However, a very credible source is less important when the audience has a neutral position, and such a source may even be less effective than a moderately credible source when the receiver’s initial attitude is favorable.\textsuperscript{22}

Another reason a low-credibility source may be as effective as a high-credibility source is the **sleeper effect**, whereby the persuasiveness of a message increases with the passage of time. The immediate impact of a persuasive message may be inhibited because of its association with a low-credibility source. But with time, the association of the message with the source diminishes and the receiver’s attention focuses more on favorable information in the message, resulting in more support. However, many studies have failed to demonstrate the presence of a sleeper effect.\textsuperscript{23} Many advertisers hesitate to count on the sleeper effect, since exposure to a credible source is a more reliable strategy.\textsuperscript{24}
Source Attractiveness

A source characteristic frequently used by advertisers is attractiveness, which encompasses similarity, familiarity, and likability.\(^{25}\) Similarity is a supposed resemblance between the source and the receiver of the message, while familiarity refers to knowledge of the source through exposure. Likability is an affection for the source as a result of physical appearance, behavior, or other personal traits. Even when the sources are not athletes or movie stars, consumers often admire their physical appearance, talent, and/or personality.

Source attractiveness leads to persuasion through a process of identification, whereby the receiver is motivated to seek some type of relationship with the source and thus adopts similar beliefs, attitudes, preferences, or behavior. Maintaining this position depends on the source’s continued support for the position as well as the receiver’s continued identification with the source. If the source changes position, the receiver may also change. Unlike internalization, identification does not usually integrate information from an attractive source into the receiver’s belief system. The receiver may maintain the attitudinal position or behavior only as long as it is supported by the source or the source remains attractive.

Marketers recognize that receivers of persuasive communications are more likely to attend to and identify with people they find likable or similar to themselves. Similarity and likability are the two source characteristics marketers seek when choosing a communicator.

Applying Similarity  
Marketers recognize that people are more likely to be influenced by a message coming from someone with whom they feel a sense of similarity.\(^{26}\) If the communicator and receiver have similar needs, goals, interests, and lifestyles, the position advocated by the source is better understood and received. Similarity is used in various ways in marketing communications. Companies select salespeople whose characteristics match well with their customers’. A sales position for a particular region may be staffed by someone local who has background and interests in common with the customers. Global marketers often hire foreign nationals as salespeople so customers can relate more easily to them. Companies may also try to recruit former athletes to sell sporting goods or beer, since their customers usually have a strong interest in sports. Several studies have shown that customers who perceive a salesperson as similar to themselves are more likely to be influenced by his or her message.\(^{27}\)

Similarity is also used by creating a situation where the consumer feels empathy for the person shown in the commercial. In a slice-of-life commercial, the advertiser usually starts by showing an event or predicament that consumers often with the hope of getting the consumer to think, “I can see myself in that situation.” This can help establish a bond of similarity between the communicator and the receiver, increasing the source’s level of persuasiveness. Marketers like to cast actors in their commercials that consumers will notice, recognize, identify with, and remember, as well as help differentiate their products and services. In some cases they try to create a personality figure for the company or brand that consumers will find likable. For example, one of the most popular advertising characters in recent years has been Lily, the retail store employee who appears in ads for AT&T’s mobile service (Exhibit 6–4). Her perky enthusiasm and somewhat quirky wit and charm along with the way she presents the mobile plans to customers has made ad campaign very popular.
with consumers. Casting directors consider factors such as similarity and how the audience will identify with people when looking for talent to use in commercials.

Many companies feel that the best way to connect with consumers is by using regular-looking, everyday people with whom the average person can easily identify. For example, some of the most popular commercials for many years were those from the “Whassup?” campaign for Budweiser beer. In these ads the DDB agency cast a group of real-life friends from Philadelphia, rather than actors, who greet each other with the slang word “Whassup?” when they speak on the phone or get together to watch a game and enjoy a Bud. Advertising Age named “Whassup?” one of the top ad campaigns of the 21st century, noting how it was very effective at tapping into popular culture and what young people are actually like and how they speak to each other.

**Applying Likability: Using Celebrities** Advertisers recognize the value of using spokespeople who are admired: TV and movie stars, athletes, musicians, and other popular public figures. Estimates of the percentage of all television commercials in the United States that feature a celebrity range from 14 to 20 percent, although an analysis of prime-time shows found only 9 percent. The prevalence of celebrities in magazine ads is similar to television; a content analysis study of advertising appearing in 38 different magazines found that celebrities were used in only 10 percent of the ads. The use of celebrities was the highest for fashion, sports, and teen magazines and lowest for general news and business publications. With regard to product category, the use of celebrities was highest for athletic products, fashion/apparel, and cosmetics. Globally, the market research company Millward Brown estimates that 18 percent of ads contain a celebrity spokesperson. The use of celebrities in TV commercials is even higher in other countries such as South Korea and Japan.

The top celebrity endorser in 2015 was Swiss tennis star Roger Federer, who made $58 million in endorsements, followed by pro golfers Tiger Woods at $50 million and Phil Michelson at $44 million. Other top American athlete endorsers include NBA stars LeBron James, Kevin Durant, and Kobe Bryant. The top international endorsers include soccer stars Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, along with tennis stars Novak Djekovic and Rafael Nadal.

For women, the top athlete endorser in 2015 was tennis star Maria Sharapova, who made nearly $30 million per year from her deals with Nike, Tiffany, Evian, Samsung, Head, Tag Heuer, and Cole Haan. Other top female endorsers include tennis stars Serena Williams and Caroline Wozniacki, along with actor-singer Jennifer Lopez and singers Beyoncé, Taylor Swift, and Katy Perry. Later in the chapter we discuss how Sharapova lost millions in endorsement deals when she failed a drug test at the 2016 Australian Open tennis tournament.

Why do companies spend huge sums to have celebrities appear in their ads and endorse their products? Many marketers think celebrities have **stopping power**. That is, they draw attention to advertising messages in a very cluttered media environment. They think a popular celebrity will favorably influence consumers’ feelings, attitudes, and purchase behavior. And they believe celebrities can enhance the target audience’s perceptions of the product in terms of image and/or performance. For example, a well-known athlete may convince potential buyers that the product will enhance their own performance.

A number of factors must be considered when a company decides to use a celebrity spokesperson, including the dangers of overshadowing the product and being overexposed, the target audience’s receptivity, and risks to the advertiser.

**Overshadowing the Product** How will the celebrity affect the target audience’s processing of the advertising message? Consumers may focus their attention on the celebrity and fail to notice or recall the brand or advertising message. Carsten Erfgen and his colleagues refer to this as the “vampire effect” and note that it occurs when the personality of the celebrity endorser overshadows the brand he
or she is advertising and thus has a negative impact rather than helping
to sell it. Advertisers should select a celebrity spokesperson who will
attract attention and enhance the sales message, yet not overshadow
the brand. For example, high-end clothing brand St. John decided that it was
best to drop actor Angelina Jolie from its advertising after a few years.
The company felt that she was overshadowing the brand. Jolie was viewed
as a very good fit for St. John, including her role as the voice of its
children’s charity—a cause she is well known for supporting. However,
the company felt that she was simply too famous and decided to use a
top British fashion model in its ads. A recent study found that celebrity
overshadowing can be particularly problematic when the consumers have
low attachment to or interest in the celebrity.

Overexposure Consumers are often skeptical of endorsements because
they know the celebrities are being paid. This problem is particularly
pronounced when a celebrity endorses too many products or companies
and becomes overexposed. For example, at one time cyclist Lance Arm-
strong had endorsement contracts with nearly 20 different companies,
including Nike, PowerBar, General Mills, Oakley, and many others, and
had to limit his endorsements so he did not become overexposed. Soccer
star David Beckham has endorsement contracts with a number of companies/brands
including Gillette, Pepsi, Samsung, adidas, Armani, H&M, and Breitling watches
(Exhibit 6–5). Advertisers can protect themselves against overexposure with an
exclusivity clause limiting the number of products a celebrity can endorse. However,
such clauses are usually expensive, and most celebrities agree not to endorse similar
products anyway. Many celebrities, knowing their fame is fleeting, try to earn as
much endorsement money as possible, yet they must be careful not to damage their
credibility by endorsing too many products. For example, singer-actor Cher damaged
her credibility as an advertising spokesperson by appearing in too many infomercials.
When she realized that appearing in so many infomercials was hurting her acting
career as well, she ceased doing them.

Target Audiences’ Receptivity One of the most important considerations in choosing
a celebrity endorser is how well the individual matches with and is received
by the advertiser’s target audience. Former athletes such as Peyton Manning, Brett
Favre, and Michael Jordan are still effective endorsers because they have very favor-
able images among baby boomers as well as Gen X consumers. NBA star LeBron
James has been an effective spokesperson for several companies including Nike,
Samsung, and Coca-Cola because he has tremendous name recognition and is very
popular among younger consumers who are the primary target market for athletic
shoes and soft drinks. McDonald’s signed James to a multiyear endorsement deal,
noting that his personal qualities make him a good fit for the company and that he
is popular among young males who are heavy users of fast food. However, the the
endorsement deal ended in 2015 as James began focusing more of his attention on
Blaze Fast-Fire’d Pizza, a company in which he is was a founding investor.

Consumers who are particularly knowledgeable about a product or service or
have strongly established attitudes may be less influenced by a celebrity than those
with little knowledge or neutral attitudes. One study found that college-age stu-
dents were more likely to have a positive attitude toward a product endorsed by a
celebrity than were older consumers. The teenage market has generally been very
receptive to celebrity endorsers, as evidenced by the frequent use of entertainers
and athletes in ads targeted to this group for products such as apparel, cosmetics,
and beverages. However, many marketers are finding that teenage consumers are
more skeptical and cynical toward the use of celebrity endorsers and respond better
to ads using humor, irony, and unvarnished truth. Some marketers targeting teenager
have responded to this by no longer using celebrities in their campaigns or by
poking fun at their use.
Some companies avoid the use of celebrities entirely as they have determined that the market they are targeting is really not influenced by their endorsements. For example, New Balance became one of the leading brands of athletic footwear without the aid of celebrity endorsers. For many years, the company had a policy against hiring athletes to endorse its products and even ran ad campaigns that poked fun at its competitors for paying exorbitant amounts of money to athletes to wear their shoes. However, in 2013 the company began using athlete endorsers as it expanded beyond running shoes into other market segments such as baseball and soccer. The company now has endorsement deals with more than 300 Major League Baseball players and also signed a number of international soccer stars when it entered the soccer market in 2015 (Exhibit 6–6).

Risk to the Advertiser A celebrity’s behavior may pose a risk to a company. A number of entertainers and athletes have been involved in activities that could embarrass the companies whose products they endorsed. Several companies including McDonald’s, Coca-Cola, Spalding, and Nutella terminated endorsement deals with NBA superstar Kobe Bryant when he was charged with sexual assault in 2003. Other companies such as Nike and Upper Deck had long-term contracts with Bryant but limited their use of him as an endorser for a number of years. Even though the charges against Bryant were dropped, it took him years to repair his image and become a marketable endorser once again. At one time Tiger Woods was making more than $100 million per year from various endorsement deals. However, a number of companies terminated their deals with him after issues regarding his infidelity became public in late 2009. IMC Perspective 6–1 discusses the risks marketers face when using high-profile athletes as endorsers and how companies such as Nike and others respond when a controversy arises involving one of their spokespersons.

Crisis situations regarding endorsers are not limited to athletes; problems can occur with other types of celebrities as well. For example, celebrity chef Paula Deen, who hosts popular cooking shows on the Food Network, became involved in a controversy after court documents released as part of a race and sex discrimination lawsuit against her showed she admitted to using racial epithets. Deen lost more than $12 million in endorsements and merchandising and licensing deals as companies such as JCPenney, Sears, Target, and Walmart removed her kitchen and cookware products from their stores; the Food Network terminated her as well. Problems can also arise with individuals who have become celebrities based on their role as an advertising spokesperson. In 2015 Subway terminated its relationship with Jared Fogle, who had been a popular spokesperson for the company for more than 15 years, after he was arrested and later pleaded guilty to child pornography and sex charges.

Marketers recognize that the use of celebrity endorsers can be a very expensive and high-risk strategy because what the celebrities do in their personal lives can impact their image and the way they are viewed by the public. Some companies may face a dilemma in selecting celebrity endorsers: While they prefer them to be upright, they still want them to have an edge or be somewhat irreverent to be able to connect with consumers. This may be particularly true for companies marketing their products to teens and young adults. To avoid problems, companies often research a celebrity’s personal life and background. Many endorsement contracts include a morals clause allowing the company to terminate the contract if a controversy arises. Several companies, including luxury brands Burberry and Chanel as well as fashion retailer H&M, canceled their contracts with supermodel Kate Moss in the wake of a British tabloid photo that showed her using cocaine. However, marketers should
Marketers Run into Problems with Athlete Endorsers

Companies have been using popular athletes to endorse and pitch their products for years. Marketers realize the value of using athletes who are recognized and often admired by their target audience as a way to draw attention to their advertising messages. While sports stars are also frequently used to promote athletic products such as shoes, apparel, and sports equipment, the popularity of high-profile athletes often transcends sports and they are used to endorse a variety of other products and services including cars, fast food, soft drinks, clothing, airlines, watches, and consumer electronics. For example, watch companies such as Rolex, Omega, and TAG Heuer have used high-profile athletes such as Tiger Woods, Maria Sharapova, Lindsey Vonn, Roger Federer, and other sports icons as brand ambassadors while Samsung has used NBA star LeBron James in ads for its Galaxy smartphones.

There are a number of reasons why marketers use athletes to pitch their products. Consumers are likely to see athletes as experts who can reassure them about the quality of an athletic product or brand, particularly when it is perceived as being related to the athlete’s performance level. Another reason is that many athletes achieve celebrity status because of their popularity and sports fans admire, and often idolize, them and view the use of a brand they endorse as a way of identifying with them. Avid sports fans often engage in a psychological process known as BIRGing or “basking in reflective glory” whereby they associate themselves with successful others such that another’s success becomes their own.

But what happens when a controversy arises regarding an athlete and how might it affect the companies or brands he or she is endorsing and is closely aligned with? Recently several high-profile athletes have engaged in behaviors that have cost them very lucrative endorsement deals. One of the most costly, and perhaps most surprising, involved tennis star Maria Sharapova who for the past several years has been the world’s highest-paid female athlete, earning nearly $30 million in prize money and endorsements in 2014 as well as 2015. The very attractive and popular tennis star has won five Grand Slam championships and is 1 of only 10 women to accomplish a career Grand Slam by winning all four major tournaments. However, Sharapova failed a drug test in January 2016 at the Australian Open when she tested positively for meldonium, a drug that is used to treat cardiac problems and can increase endurance. The World Anti-Doping Agency added the drug to its list of banned substances at the start of 2016 and Sharapova claimed that she had failed to read the update. The International Tennis Federation (ITF) took several months to investigate the case but in June 2016 she received a two-year suspension from the governing body.

While the ITF was taking some time to investigate the situation and make a decision, Sharapova’s sponsors moved very quickly to distance themselves from her. German automobile company Porsche announced it was suspending its deal with Sharapova, while the Swiss watch maker TAG Heuer also announced it would not renew its deal with the 28-year-old star. Sharapova has endorsement deals with a number of other marketers, including Avon and Evian, who were reviewing their relationships with her, while her racquet sponsor Head did announce it would renew her endorsement contract. One of Sharapova’s largest endorsement contracts is with Nike which initially announced that it was suspending its $12.5 million annual endorsement deal with her which is estimated to be worth $100 million over eight years and the company’s biggest deal for a female athlete. However, a few months later the sportswear giant announced that it was standing by her, noting that an investigation by the International Tennis Federation found that she “did not intentionally break its rules” and had apologized for her mistake.

The swift action by TAG Heuer and Porsche to suspend their endorsement deals with Sharapova is an example of how marketers are reacting much more quickly to scandals involving athletes that they have under contract. In the past, companies would say or do nothing for months or even years, waiting for the dust to settle and story to die down before making a decision. By suspending its endorsement deal with an athlete but not terminating it, marketers leave the door open to renew the relationship if the athlete continues to perform well and remains popular with sports fans. For example, in late 2009 Nike had to make a decision regarding its endorsement deal with professional golfer Tiger Woods, who was involved remember that adding morals clauses to their endorsement contracts only gets them out of a problem; it does not prevent it from happening. Thus, it is important that they carefully consider the character of a celebrity as well as the potential risk associated with using him or her as a spokesperson or endorser for the company or one of its brands.49

Return on Investment Perhaps the most important factor a company must consider regarding the use of celebrity endorsers is the return on investment from using them. Marketers use celebrities to increase awareness of and attention to their company and/ or brands, as well as their advertisements, and to develop strong associations between
in a car accident outside his home following an argument with his wife. The intense media scrutiny of his personal life that followed led to revelations that the superstar, who was married with two young children, had been involved in numerous extramarital affairs. Nike had built the company’s golf division around Woods and he singlehandedly helped make Nike one of the fastest-growing brands in the industry. Nike stood by Woods as surveys showed that attitudes toward him remained favorable among its target demographic of male golfers. However, Woods lost nearly $50 million in endorsement deals as a number of companies terminated their relationships with him, including Accenture, AT&T, Gatorade, and Gillette.

Three years later, Nike faced another major problem when seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong finally admitted to using performance-enhancing drugs. The company stood by Armstrong for a decade of allegations that the cyclist used PEDs throughout his career, but the evidence eventually became too overwhelming and Nike finally recognized that it could no longer afford to be associated with him. Armstrong also lost an estimated $70 million in endorsement deals with other companies including Oakley, UPS, Anheuser-Busch, Trek, 24 Hour Fitness, RadioShack, and Giro.

Some marketing experts noted that the problems Nike has encountered with endorsers is not surprising given that it has so many athletes under contract around the globe, including the superstars in most sports. They also note that Nike has a policy of standing by its athlete endorsers—except in the most extreme cases—and the brand is strong enough to withstand these setbacks. One such extreme case occurred in early 2016 when Nike terminated its relationship with Filipino boxing champion Manny Pacquiao one day after he made extremely derogatory statements about people in gay relationships during a media interview while he was running for political office in the Philippines. Pacquiao had won world championships in eight weight classes and was revered in the Philippines, as well as many other countries, for both his athletic success and his personal story, having risen from poverty to international stardom and political office. Nike announced that it found his comments abhorrent since the company opposes discrimination of any kind and has a history of supporting and standing up for the rights of the LGBT community.

While problems with endorsers may not do too much damage to larger companies that have a stable of celebrities endorsing their products, the effects can be very damaging to smaller companies whose brand is closely tied to, and often defined by, an athlete endorser. In an age where athletes and other celebrities have a myriad of platforms on which to speak such as Facebook and Twitter and the media are dedicating more resources than ever toward uncovering their transgressions, what can companies do to protect themselves? Aside from language in the contract barring such behavior, the simplest answer is—very little. No matter how much money a company pays endorsers, it cannot monitor them around the clock. Instead, companies must be very selective in selecting endorsers and in how much they pay them. Or as one agency executive suggests, marketers can go back to basics and hire real, credible experts and let the product be the star rather than the athletes. It is an interesting suggestion, but it is very unlikely that Nike or other companies will just do it.


the celebrity and the brand that will result in higher purchase intentions. Many companies do not reveal the increases in sales and/or market share that result from the use of celebrity endorsers. However, an interesting study was conducted by Anita Elberse and Jeroen Verleun that examined the economic impact of a sample of 347 endorsement deals for 180 athletes across six packaged-goods product categories. The results of their study found that sales did increase significantly over the first six months that the athlete endorsers were used—about 4 percent. However, subsequent major achievements by the athletes did not improve the sales of the brands studied relative to their competitors which calls into question the long-term value of endorsement deals.
It should be noted that there are many examples of companies that have seen sales increase, and there can be other factors that marketers consider in determining the value gained from using a celebrity endorser. Thus it is likely that many marketers will continue to use them, despite some of the drawbacks associated with their use that have been discussed. Some companies are changing their relationships with celebrity endorsers and having them become more involved with their companies and brands rather than just appearing in advertisements (Exhibit 6–7). A number of high-profile celebrities have become involved in areas such as product design and development as well as the advertising creative process. For example, Anheuser-Busch InBev hired Justin Timberlake as the creative and musical curator for its Bud Light Platinum brand. However, the arrangement lasted only a year as the pop star changed allegiances and joined forces with Beam Inc. to market a new tequila called Sauza 901. His deal with Beam came after competitor Diageo announced a joint venture with Sean “Diddy” Combs for the acquisition of a luxury tequila brand called DeLeón.51 BlackBerry retained singer Alicia Keys as a global creative director in 2013, but the relationship was short-lived and caused some embarrassment for the company after she tweeted out a message using an iPhone.52 PepsiCo hired Beyoncé as a “brand ambassador” as part of a long-term $50 million endorsement deal that includes having her help create content and develop new ways to engage consumers and fans.53 Some marketing experts argue that these celebrity deals are little more than window dressing while others argue that they can be valuable.

Marketers are also becoming more creative in the way they pay celebrities and even giving them a stake in the company. For example, rapper 50 Cent (Curtis Jackson) received a minority stake in Glacéau Vitaminwater which increased his involvement with the company. He developed a flavor, appeared in ads, and even mentioned the brand in some of his songs. When the company was acquired by Coca-Cola, Jackson made an estimated $400 million.54 When Rihanna released the hit single “Umbrella” in 2007, Totes Isotoner, which had been manufacturing umbrellas for over 30 years, approached the pop singer about branding the company’s umbrellas side-by-side with her and the song. What followed was an entirely new offering from Totes that allowed customers to design their own (sparkly, glittery) umbrellas that were consistent with Rihanna’s image. Rihanna, in exchange for her commitment to the company and the use of her image and song, received a percentage of umbrella sales and other perks.55 And when Under Armour signed New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady to an endorsement deal, he received an equity stake in the company. According to Under Armour CEO Kevin Plank, it was an ideal arrangement for the firm as it makes Brady fully invested in the company’s success.56

**Understanding the Meaning of Celebrity Endorsers**

Advertisers must try to match the product or company’s image, the characteristics of the target market, and the personality of the celebrity.57 The image celebrities project to consumers can be just as important as their ability to attract attention. An interesting perspective on celebrity endorsement was developed by Grant McCracken.58 He argues that credibility and attractiveness don’t sufficiently explain how and why celebrity endorsements work and offers a model based on meaning transfer (Figure 6–3).

According to this model, a celebrity’s effectiveness as an endorser depends on the culturally acquired meanings he or she brings to the endorsement process. Each celebrity contains many meanings, including status, class, gender, and age as well as personality and lifestyle. In explaining stage 1 of the meaning transfer process, McCracken notes:

Celebrities draw these powerful meanings from the roles they assume in their television, movie, military, athletic, and other careers. Each new dramatic role brings the celebrity into contact with a range of objects, persons, and contexts. Out of these objects, persons, and contexts are transferred meanings that then reside in the celebrity.59
Examples of celebrities who have acquired cultural meaning that they bring to endorsements include actor Zooey Deschanel (from her role as the cute, quirky, and offbeat but lovable roommate on the sitcom *New Girl*) and Charlie Sheen (from his role as the free-spirited, bachelor/playboy on the hit show *Two and a Half Men* and then in his role as an anger management therapist on the show *Anger Management*). Deschanel’s character image has been used in commercials for the Apple iPhone, while she also appears in ads for Rimmel cosmetics and Pantene Prov-V shampoo which capitalize on her attractiveness. Sheen’s bad-boy image was utilized in a commercial for the Fiat Abarth which featured him driving the car around the inside of an opulent mansion as a group of attractive women cheer him on. The spot also poked fun at his personal problems as it showed him stepping out of the car and saying, “I love being under house arrest.”

Actress-comedienne Tina Fey has developed cultural meaning through the various roles and characters she has played on *Saturday Night Live*, the sitcom *30 Rock*, and in movies such as *Mean Girls*, *Whiskey Tango Fox Trot*, and *Date Night* in which she played the role of a relatable woman trying to balance her life as a wife and mother. She is also an acclaimed writer and producer, which contributes to her cultural meaning as a successful, multitasking businesswoman.

McCracken suggests celebrity endorsers bring their meanings and image into the ad and transfer them to the product they are endorsing (stage 2 of the model in Figure 6–3). For example, American Express has been using Tina Fey in the advertising campaign for its Amex EveryDay Credit Card, which allows users to earn rewards on everyday purchases. The company introduced the card to attract a new set of consumers and position the brand as more approachable and inclusive. American Express is also targeting working mothers who are living a very busy and somewhat hectic life. The TV commercials for the campaign show Fey in her trademark witty fashion as a busy, on-the-go working woman and mom, juggling her personal life with work other demands. She is an effective endorser for the brand since she represents the quintessential do-it-all woman with an endless things-to-do list but who gets it all done with the help of the Amex Every-Day Credit Card (Exhibit 6–8).

In the final stage of McCracken’s model, the meanings the celebrity has given to the product are transferred to the consumer. By using Tina Fey in its ads, American Express can deliver on its branding and positioning platform by showing how its EveryDay Credit Card matches well with the lifestyle of busy people who are trying to balance demanding careers with their personal lives. McCracken notes that this final stage is complicated and difficult to achieve. The way consumers take possession of the meaning the celebrity has transferred to a product is probably the least understood part of the process.
YOUTUBE STARS ARE THE NEW CELEBRITIES TO TEENS

If you took a survey of baby boomers or millennials and asked them to name the most influential celebrities, it is likely the list would include television and movie stars, entertainers, musicians, and athletes. Depending on their age, they would probably mention popular celebrities such as Jennifer Anniston, Sandra Bullock, George Clooney, Jimmy Kimmel, Carrie Underwood, Ellen DeGeneres, LeBron James, and perhaps even Kim Kardashian. However, if you were to ask American teenagers the same question, the list would be quite different and include names that most people have never heard of—such as Smosh, Shane Dawson, Jenna Marbles, and KSI—unless they spend a lot of time on YouTube and other popular social media sites.

A survey commissioned for Variety magazine and conducted by celebrity brand strategist Jeetendr Sehdev asked 1,500 respondents a list of questions assessing how 20 well-known personalities stacked up in terms of approachability, authenticity, and other criteria considered key aspects of overall influence. Half of the 20 were personalities with the most subscribers and views on YouTube while the other half were the celebrities with the highest Q-scores among U.S. teens aged 13 to 17. The results of the survey found that the five most influential personalities among the American teens 13 to 18 were all YouTube favorites, eclipsing the popular mainstream celebrities.

Heading the list was Smosh, the online comedy team of Ian Andrew Hecox and Anthony Padilla. Finishing second was another comedy duo, the Fine Brothers (Benny and Rafi), followed by the Swedish video gamer Felix Ulf Kjellberg, otherwise known as PewDiePie who has the most subscribers of all on YouTube. Rounding out the top five was a video gamer from the UK, Olajide Olatunji—better known by his alias KSIOlajidebt or KSI for short—followed by Ryan Higa who is known for his YouTube comedy videos. Higa, whose YouTube user name is Nigahiga, has over 16 million subscribers to his YouTube channel and his comedy videos have been viewed over 2.6 billion times. The only mainstream celebrities to score in the top 10 were Jennifer Lawrence, who ranked seventh, and Katy Perry, who was ninth.

Sehdev took a deeper dive into the survey data to better understand why the YouTube stars have more influence on teens. He found that they scored significantly higher than traditional celebrities across a range of characteristics that are seen as influencing the purchase behavior of teens. The YouTubers were judged to be more engaging, extraordinary, and relatable than mainstream stars, who were rated as being smarter and more reliable. The two types of celebrities were rated evenly in sex appeal. He also found that teens enjoy an intimate and authentic experience with YouTube personalities because they do not feel their images are

EXHIBIT 6–8
Tina Fey’s image works well in ads for the Amex EveryDay Credit Card
Source: American Express Company

The meaning transfer model has some important implications for companies using celebrity endorsers. Marketers must first decide on the image or symbolic meanings important to the target audience for the particular product, service, or company. They must then determine which celebrity best represents the meaning or image to be
orchestrated by PR professionals. Teens also say they appreciate YouTube stars’ more candid sense of humor, lack of filter, and risk-taking spirit, which are behaviors that are often managed carefully for mainstream celebrities.

Chris Foster, the chief operating officer of the Saatchi & Saatchi advertising agency, notes that the Internet and social media are clearly changing the nature of celebrity in ways that have major implications for advertising and other forms of marketing. He argues that the traditional image of a celebrity as remote and unknowable and highly controlled by publicists is no longer persuasive or effective since members of today’s plugged-in generation want to feel connected to their idols and have a sense of how they spend their lives.

There is no doubt that a new generation of talent who create their own content and deliver it on social sites such as YouTube, Vine, Instagram, Facebook, and other platforms are becoming household names among young consumers online and are legitimate influencers. Thus, marketers may have to rethink how they select and use celebrities since relying on mainstream celebs to endow their brands with star power may no longer be effective. Foster argues that a democratization of celebrity is taking place that includes three key factors—expertise, access, and identification—and popular social media personalities often stack up as well, if not better, on all three than Hollywood endorsers who are paid to hawk companies and brands. He notes that the use of endorsements in advertising will never go away but it is changing dramatically in ways that give it more meaning. Technology is making it easier for ordinary consumers to do the marketing for brands and do it in ways that are more authentic and may remove the need for celebrity endorsers. As Foster notes: “We’ve seen the future of celebrity endorsement. And it’s us.”


CHOOSING A CELEBRITY ENDORSER

As we have seen, marketers must consider many factors when choosing a celebrity to serve as an advertising spokesperson for the company or a particular brand. Studies have shown that advertising and marketing managers take these various factors into account when choosing a celebrity endorser. Among the most important factors are the celebrity’s match with the target audience and the product/service or brand, the overall image of the celebrity, the cost of acquiring the celebrity, trustworthiness, the risk of controversy, and the celebrity’s familiarity and likability among the target audience. Digital and Social Media Perspective 6–1 discusses how YouTube personalities have become more influential than mainstream celebrities who are less popular among young people.
While some advertising and marketing executives rely on their own intuition and gut feeling, many turn to research that measures a celebrity’s familiarity and appeal among their target audience as well as other factors. Many companies and their advertising agencies rely on Q-scores that are commercially available from the New York–based firm Marketing Evaluations, Inc. To determine its Q-scores for sport personalities, actors, and entertainers, the company surveys a representative national panel of consumers several times a year. Respondents are asked to indicate whether they have ever seen or heard of the performer or sports personality and, if they have, to rate him or her on a scale that includes one of my favorites, very good, good, fair, and poor. The familiarity score indicates what percentage of people has heard of the person while the one of my favorites score is an absolute measure of the appeal or popularity of the celebrity. The well-known Q-score is calculated by taking the percentage of respondents who indicate that a person is “one of my favorites” and then dividing that number by the percentage of respondents who indicate they have heard of that person. Q-scores are important because they answer the question: How appealing is the person among those who do know him or her? The average Q-score for performers is generally around 18 and about 17 for sports personalities. Marketing Evaluation’s Q-scores are also broken down on the basis of various demographic criteria such as a respondent’s age, income, occupation, education, and race so that marketers have some idea of how a celebrity’s popularity varies among different groups of consumers. Marketing Evaluations also now reports a negative Q-score which is the percentage of respondents who rate the personality as fair or poor divided by only those who are familiar with the person. Exhibit 6–9 shows a sample page from the Performer Q study. In addition to Q-scores, marketers use information provided by a number of other research firms that provide them with data on the popularity of various celebrities and insight into how well their image might fit with their company or brand.

**Applying Likability Decorative Models**

Advertisers often draw attention to their ads by featuring a physically attractive person who serves as a passive or decorative model rather than as an active communicator. Research suggests that physically attractive communicators generally have a positive impact and generate more favorable evaluations of both ads and products than less attractive models. The gender appropriateness of the model for the product being advertised and his or her relevance to the product are also important considerations. Products such as cosmetics or fashionable clothing are likely to benefit from the use of an attractive model, since physical appearance is very relevant in marketing these items.

Some models draw attention to the ad but not to the product or message. Studies show that an attractive model facilitates recognition of the ad but does not enhance copy readership or message recall. Thus, advertisers must ensure that the consumer’s attention will go beyond the model to the product and advertising message. Marketers must also consider whether the use of highly attractive models might negatively impact advertising effectiveness. Several studies have shown that some women experience negative feelings when comparing themselves with beautiful models used in ads and the images of physical perfection they represent.

Some companies have developed marketing campaigns that undermine the traditional approach to beauty care advertising by telling women, as well as young girls, that they’re beautiful just the way they are. For example, Unilever’s Dove brand has long eschewed the use of supermodels in its ads and uses everyday women and girls who resemble its typical consumers. Since 2004 the company has been running an interesting global integrated marketing campaign designed to appeal to everyday women. The “Campaign for Real Beauty” includes magazine ads, extensive public relations, and a website (www.campaignforrealbeauty.com) where women
can discuss beauty-related issues (Exhibit 6–10). Dove has taken a social advocacy approach in the campaign, which it proclaims “aims to change the status quo and offer in its place a broader, healthier, more democratic view of beauty.”

Source Power

The final characteristic in Kelman’s classification scheme is **source power**. A source has power when he or she can actually administer rewards and punishments to the receiver. As a result of this power, the source may be able to induce another person(s) to respond to the request or position he or she is advocating. The power of the source depends on several factors. The source must be perceived as being able to administer positive or negative sanctions to the receiver (perceived control) and the receiver must think the source cares about whether or not the receiver conforms

### Exhibit 6–9

Sample page from Marketing Evaluations, Inc. Performer Q Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONALITY NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONE OF MY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAVORITES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q SCORE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 11 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 - 17 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 24 YEARS</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 - 49 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 AND OVER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL MALES</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 AND OVER</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 - 34 YEARS</td>
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<tr>
<td>35 - 49 YEARS</td>
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<tr>
<td>50 AND OVER</td>
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<td>18 - 49 YEARS</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 YEARS AND OVER</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 - 54 YEARS</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNDER $20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 - $39,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>$40,000 - $59,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>$60,000 AND OVER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 AND OVER</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION (ADULT)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIGH SCHOOL/GRADUATE/LESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOME COLLEGE/DEGREE</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION (ADULT)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHITE COLLAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLUE COLLAR</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>RACE</th>
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<td>NON BLACK</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHNICITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HISPANIC</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>MEDELBORUM COUNTY SIZE</th>
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<td>C &amp; D</td>
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<th>REGION</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>NORTHEAST</td>
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<td>NORTH CENTRAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUTH</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEST</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The receiver’s estimate of the source’s ability to observe conformity is also important (perceived scrutiny).

When a receiver perceives a source as having power, the influence process occurs through a process known as compliance. The receiver accepts the persuasive influence of the source and acquiesces to his or her position in hopes of obtaining a favorable reaction or avoiding punishment. The receiver may show public agreement with the source’s position but not have an internal or private commitment to this position. Persuasion induced through compliance may be superficial and last only as long as the receiver perceives that the source can administer some reward or punishment.

Power as a source characteristic is very difficult to apply in a nonpersonal influence situation such as advertising. A communicator in an ad generally cannot apply any sanctions to the receiver or determine whether compliance actually occurs. An indirect way of using power is by using an individual with an authoritative personality as a spokesperson. For example, Take Pride in America uses actor-director Clint Eastwood, whose movie roles earned him an image as a rugged tough guy, in public service campaigns commanding people not to pollute or damage public lands (Exhibit 6–11). Eastwood has used his imposing image in TV commercials calling for people who abuse public lands “to clean up their act or get out of town.”

The use of source power applies more in situations involving personal communication and influence. For example, in a personal-selling situation, the sales rep may have some power over a buyer if the latter anticipates receiving special rewards or favors for complying with the salesperson. Some companies provide their sales reps with large expense accounts to spend on customers for this very purpose. Representatives of companies whose product demand exceeds supply are often in a position of power; buyers may comply with their requests to ensure an adequate supply of the product. Sales reps must be very careful in their use of a power position, since abusing a power base to maximize short-term gains can damage long-term relationships with customers.

EXHIBIT 6–10
Dove’s “Campaign for Real Beauty” uses everyday women rather than supermodels in its ads
Source: Dove by Unilever Home and Personal Care-USA

MESSAGE FACTORS

The way marketing communications are presented is very important in determining their effectiveness. Marketers must consider not only the content of their persuasive messages but also how this information will be structured for presentation and what type of message appeal will be used. Advertising, in all media except radio, relies heavily on visual as well as verbal information. Many options are available with respect to the design and presentation of a message. This section examines the structure of messages and considers the effects of different types of appeals used in advertising.

Message Structure

Marketing communications usually consist of a number of message points that the communicator wants to get across. An important aspect of message strategy is knowing the best way to communicate these points and overcome any opposing viewpoints audience members may hold. Extensive research has been conducted on how the structure of a persuasive message can influence its effectiveness, including order
of presentation, conclusion drawing, message sidedness, refutation, and verbal versus visual message characteristics.

Order of Presentation  A basic consideration in the design of a persuasive message is the arguments’ order of presentation. Should the most important message points be placed at the beginning of the message, in the middle, or at the end? Research on learning and memory generally indicates that items presented first and last are remembered better than those presented in the middle (see Figure 6–4). This suggests that a communicator’s strongest arguments should be presented early or late in the message but never in the middle.

Presenting the strongest arguments at the beginning of the message assumes a primacy effect is operating, whereby information presented first is most effective. Putting the strong points at the end assumes a recency effect, whereby the last arguments presented are most persuasive.

Whether to place the strongest selling points at the beginning or the end of the message depends on several factors. If the target audience is opposed to the communicator’s position, presenting strong points first can reduce the level of counterarguing. Putting weak arguments first might lead to such a high level of counterarguing that strong arguments that followed would not be believed. Strong arguments work best at the beginning of the message if the audience is not interested in the topic, so they can arouse interest in the message. When the target audience is predisposed toward the communicator’s position or is highly interested in the issue or product, strong arguments can be saved for the end of the message. This may result in a more favorable opinion as well as better retention of the information.

The order of presentation can be critical when a long, detailed message with many arguments is being presented. Most effective sales presentations open and close with strong selling points and bury weaker arguments in the middle. For short communications, such as a 15- or 30-second TV or radio commercial, the order may be less critical. However, many product and service messages are received by consumers with low involvement and minimal interest. Thus, an advertiser may want to present the brand name and key selling points early in the message and repeat them at the end to enhance recall and retention. Order of presentation is also an important consideration in other forms of marketing communication. For example, many press releases use the “pyramid style” of writing, whereby most of the important information is presented up front to ensure that it is read since editors often cut from the end of articles.
Conclusion Drawing  Marketing communicators must decide whether their messages should explicitly draw a firm conclusion or allow receivers to draw their own conclusions. Research suggests that, in general, messages with explicit conclusions are more easily understood and effective in influencing attitudes. However, other studies have shown that the effectiveness of conclusion drawing may depend on the target audience, the type of issue or topic, and the nature of the situation.  

More highly educated people prefer to draw their own conclusions and may be annoyed at an attempt to explain the obvious or to draw an inference for them. But stating the conclusion may be necessary for a less educated audience, who may not draw any conclusion or may make an incorrect inference from the message. Marketers must also consider the audience’s level of involvement in the topic. For highly personal or ego-involving issues, message recipients may want to make up their own minds and resent any attempts by the communicator to draw a conclusion. One study found that open-ended ads (without explicit conclusions) were more effective than closed-ended arguments that did include a specific conclusion—but only for involved audiences.  

Whether to draw a conclusion for the audience also depends on the complexity of the topic. Even a highly educated audience may need assistance if its knowledge level in a particular area is low. Does the marketer want to trigger immediate action or a more long-term effect? If immediate action is an objective, the message should draw a definite conclusion. This is a common strategy in political advertising, particularly for ads run close to election day. When immediate impact is not the objective and repeated exposure will give the audience members opportunities to draw their own conclusions, an open-ended message may be used.  

Drawing a conclusion in a message may make sure the target audience gets the point the marketer intended. But many advertisers believe that letting customers draw their own conclusions reinforces the points being made in the message. For example, a health services agency in Kentucky found that open-ended ads were more memorable and more effective in getting consumers to use health services than were ads stating a conclusion. Ads that posed questions about alcohol and drug abuse and left them unanswered resulted in more calls by teenagers to a help line for information than did a message offering a resolution to the problem. The ad shown in Exhibit 6–12, which is from the Montana Meth Project (MMP) drug prevention messaging campaign, is a good example of this strategy. The ad challenges teens to consider what they know about methamphetamine and prompts them to learn more by visiting the MMP website.

EXHIBIT 6–12
This ad is a good example of the use of open-ended messaging

Source: Meth Project Foundation Inc., The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids

Message Sidedness  Another message structure decision facing the marketer involves message sidedness. A one-sided message mentions only positive attributes or benefits. A two-sided message presents both good and bad points. The logic of a two-sided message is that acknowledging a limitation or short-coming can be a way to enhance credibility and make the message more effective. One-sided messages are most effective when the target audience already holds a favorable opinion about the topic. They also work better with a less educated audience.  

Two-sided messages are more effective when the target audience holds an opposing opinion or is highly educated. Two-sided messages may enhance the credibility of the source. A better-educated audience usually knows there are opposing arguments, so a communicator who presents both sides of an issue is likely to be seen as less biased and more objective. Martin Eisend conducted a meta-analysis of the research conducted on the effects of one- versus two-sided advertising messages. The results of his analysis showed that the persuasive
impact of message sidedness depends on a number of factors including the amount and importance of negative information in the ad, attribute quality, placement of the negative information, the correlation between negative and positive attributes, and whether the advertiser discloses negative information voluntarily or because it is required to do so.\textsuperscript{75}

Most advertisers use one-sided messages. They are concerned about the negative effects of acknowledging a weakness in their brand or don’t want to say anything positive about their competitors. There are exceptions, however. Sometimes advertisers compare brands on several attributes and do not show their product as being the best on every one. There also may be situations in which a company feels that is best to acknowledge its shortcomings and let its customers know that it has addressed them.

An example of a company that used a two-sided message very effectively is the Domino’s Pizza chain, which took the strategy to a whole new level in an integrated marketing campaign used to introduce its new, reformulated pizza. Domino’s recognized that changes were needed after conducting research that revealed many consumers had issues with the taste of its pizza; As part of its “Pizza Turnaround” campaign Domino’s used commercials showing the chain’s new CEO in front of the camera admitting that he had heard what the focus groups had to say and that it took it to heart. The spots then pointed viewers to a special website (www.pizzaturnaround.com) that featured a four-minute documentary chronicling Domino’s employees’ reactions to the negative comments coming from the focus groups and telling about the company’s quest to make a better pizza (Exhibit 6–13). The website also showed both positive and negative viewer comments that were linked in from Twitter. While Domino’s and its agency knew the campaign might be risky, they moved forward with it and the results were very favorable. They received a great deal of publicity regarding the ads, much of which praised the company for conceding the shortcomings of its product and explaining what it was doing about it. The two-sided message strategy also had a very positive impact on sales as the chain generated a record increase in same-store sales during the campaign.\textsuperscript{76}

Refutation In a special type of two-sided message known as a \textit{refutational appeal}, the communicator presents both sides of an issue and then refutes the opposing viewpoint. Since refutational appeals tend to “inoculate” the target audience against a competitor’s counterclaims, they can be more effective than one-sided messages in making consumers resistant to an opposing message.\textsuperscript{77}

Refutational messages may be useful when marketers wish to build attitudes that resist change and/or must defend against attacks or criticism of their products or the
company. For example, Exhibit 6–14 shows a refutational ad used by SeaWorld Entertainment that was part of an integrated campaign the company ran to defend itself against criticism by the animal activist group PETA. In addition to the refutational ads, SeaWorld created a website (seaworldcares.com) that provides information refuting many of the attacks made against the company regarding its treatment of killer whales as well as educate the public about the many programs and initiatives it has to protect and help marine life. Market leaders, who are often the target of comparative messages, may find that acknowledging competitors’ claims and then refuting them can help build resistant attitudes and customer loyalty.

**Verbal versus Visual Messages** Thus far our discussion has focused on the information, or verbal, portion of the message. However, the nonverbal, visual elements of an ad are also very important. Many ads provide minimal amounts of information and rely on visual elements to communicate. Pictures are commonly used in advertising to convey information or reinforce copy or message claims.

Both the verbal and visual portions of an ad influence the way the advertising message is processed. Consumers may develop images or impressions based on visual elements such as an illustration in an ad or the scenes in a TV commercial. In some cases, the visual portion of an ad may reduce its persuasiveness, since the processing stimulated by the picture may be less controlled and consequently less favorable than that stimulated by words. Pictures affect the way consumers process accompanying copy. A study showed that when verbal information was low in imagery value, the use of pictures providing examples increased both immediate and delayed recall of product attributes. However, when the verbal information was already high in imagery value, the addition of pictures did not increase recall. Advertisers often design ads where the visual image supports the verbal appeal to create a compelling impression in the consumer’s mind. Notice how the ad for Arrowhead Mountain Spring Water shown in Exhibit 6–15 uses a beautiful visual image of the mountains to communicate the key product attribute of purity.

Sometimes advertisers use a different strategy; they design ads in which the visual portion is incongruent with or contradicts the verbal information presented. The logic behind this strategy is that the use of an unexpected picture or visual image will grab consumers’ attention and get them to engage in more effortful or elaborative processing. A number of studies have shown that the use of a visual that is inconsistent with the verbal content leads to more recall and greater processing of the information presented. The ad for Gain dishwashing liquid shown in Exhibit 6–16 is a good example of this technique. The visual image showing people happily washing dishes is not consistent with the ad copy stating that “dishwashing may never feel this great.”

**Message Appeals**

One of the advertiser’s most important creative strategy decisions involves the choice of an appropriate appeal. Some ads are designed to appeal to the rational, logical aspect of the consumer’s decision-making process; others appeal to feelings in an attempt to evoke some emotional reaction. Many believe that effective advertising combines the practical reasons for purchasing a product with emotional values. In this section we will examine several common types of message appeals, including comparative advertising, fear, and humor.
Comparative Advertising  Comparative advertising is the practice of either directly or indirectly naming competitors in an ad and comparing one or more specific attributes.\textsuperscript{83} This form of advertising became popular after the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) began advocating its use in 1972. The FTC reasoned that direct comparison of brands would provide better product information, giving consumers a more rational basis for making purchase decisions. Television networks cooperated with the FTC by lifting their ban on comparative ads, and the result was a flurry of comparative commercials.

Initially, the novelty of comparative ads resulted in greater attention. But since they have become so common, their attention-getting value has probably declined. Some studies show that recall is higher for comparative than noncomparative messages, but comparative ads are generally not more effective for other response variables, such as brand attitudes or purchase intentions.\textsuperscript{84} Advertisers must also consider how comparative messages affect credibility. Users of the brand being attacked in a comparative message may be especially skeptical about the advertiser’s claims.

Comparative advertising may be particularly useful for new brands, since it allows a new market entrant to position itself directly against the more established brands and to promote its distinctive advantages. Direct comparisons can help position a new brand in the evoked, or choice, set of brands the customer may be considering. Comparative advertising is often used for brands with a small market share. They compare themselves to an established market leader in hopes of creating an association and tapping into the leader’s market.

The use of comparative advertising is not limited to new brands or those with a small market share; a number of high-profile marketers have been using comparative appeals to differentiate their brands in a competitive marketplace.\textsuperscript{85} For example, comparative advertising has become common in the mobile phone industry as the four major providers (Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, and Sprint) often run ads comparing themselves against one another on key attributes such as network coverage, signal quality and price.\textsuperscript{86} Apple made very effective use of comparative advertising for over three years with its comparative “Get a Mac” campaign, which poked fun at Microsoft’s Windows operating system while promoting the user friendliness of Mac computers. The campaign included nearly 70 different TV spots that portrayed actor Justin Long as the hip, unflappable Mac and New York Times Magazine writer John Hodgman as the uptight and somewhat nerdy PC who is frustrated by the Mac’s capabilities (Exhibit 6–17). It was credited with helping increase Apple’s share of the PC market in the United States from 2 to 8 percent and was named the best advertising campaign of the first decade of the new century by industry trade publication Adweek.\textsuperscript{87}

Ironically, several companies have been using comparative advertising effectively against Apple in recent years including Samsung and Microsoft. Samsung has used comparative ads to gain market share in the smartphone market by comparing its Samsung Galaxy smartphone to Apple’s iPhone. For example, shortly after Apple launched the iPhone 5, Samsung ran a commercial for its Galaxy S III that mocked iPhone loyalists for waiting in line to get the new smartphone. The ad was one of several spots in Samsung’s “The Next Best Thing Is Already Here” campaign that were very...
Microsoft has also used comparative ads against Apple for its Surface Pro 3 tablet that show various features such as touchscreen display, detachable keyboard, stylus support, and connectivity ports—all of which are not available on Apple’s popular MacBook Air. The comparative ads are part of Microsoft’s strategy to position the Surface Pro as “the tablet that can replace your laptop.”

Market leaders often hesitate to use comparison ads, as most believe they have little to gain by featuring competitors’ products in their ads. There are exceptions, of course; Coca-Cola resorted to comparative advertising in response to challenges made by Pepsi that were reducing Coke’s market share. Anheuser-Busch also responded to the comparative ads used by the Miller Brewing Company when its rival started gaining market share at the expense of Bud Light and other brands. A recent study by Fred Beard suggests that marketers must be careful when using comparative advertising because the potential for negative reactions by consumers is high when prominent brands compare themselves against one another. He also found that comparative ads work better with a younger audience than for older consumers.

Another area where comparative messages are quite commonly used is political advertising. Political advertising is viewed as an important component of political speech and thus enjoys more First Amendment protection than commercial speech and less regulation by either government or self-policing agencies. Thus, it has become quite common for political ads to contain negative, one-sided attacks on an opposing candidate’s weaknesses such as character flaws, voting record, public misstatements, broken promises, and the like. The goal of these ads is to discredit the character, record, or position of an opponent and create doubt in voters’ minds about his or her ability to govern effectively. A major reason why negative political ads are used successfully is that voters often tend to weight negative information more heavily than positive information when forming impressions of political candidates. However, studies have shown that the use of “attack advertising” by politicians can result in negative perceptions of both candidates. IMC Perspective 6–2 discusses how the use of attack ads has become very common in presidential elections in the United States and why they are often very effective.

Fear Appeals  Fear is an emotional response to a threat that expresses, or at least implies, some sort of danger. Ads sometimes use fear appeals to evoke this emotional response and arouse individuals to take steps to remove the threat. Some, like the antidrug ads used by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, stress physical danger that can occur if behaviors are not altered. Others—like those for deodorant, mouthwash, or dandruff shampoos—threaten disapproval or social rejection. Fear appeals are often used to discourage unsafe behaviors such as drinking and driving and more recently texting and driving. For example, the Ad Council, which is the leading producer of public service advertising in the United States, has created a number of campaigns that use fear appeal messages to deal with these behaviors. Exhibit 6–19 shows an ad created by the Ad Council to discourage buzzed driving by showing how getting arrested for a DUI can cost nearly $10,000 in legal fees. The ad was part of a campaign created by the council after its research found that too many drivers thought drunk driving messages didn’t apply to them: that driving “buzzed” after only a few drinks was different than driving drunk.
How Fear Operates  Before deciding to use a fear appeal–based message strategy, the advertiser should consider how fear operates, what level to use, and how different target audiences may respond. One theory suggests that the relationship between the level of fear in a message and acceptance or persuasion is curvilinear, as shown in Figure 6–5. This means that message acceptance increases as the amount of fear used rises—to a point. Beyond that point, acceptance decreases as the level of fear rises.

This relationship between fear and persuasion can be explained by the fact that fear appeals have both facilitating and inhibiting effects. A low level of fear can have facilitating effects; it attracts attention and interest in the message and may motivate the receiver to act to resolve the threat. Thus, increasing the level of fear in a message from low to moderate can result in increased persuasion. High levels of fear, however, can produce inhibiting effects; the receiver may emotionally block the message by tuning it out, perceiving it selectively, or denying its arguments outright. Figure 6–5 illustrates how these two countereffects operate to produce the curvilinear relationship between fear and persuasion.

A study by Anand-Keller and Block provides support for this perspective on how fear operates. They examined the conditions under which low- and high-fear appeals urging people to stop smoking are likely to be effective. Their study indicated that a communication using a low level of fear may be ineffective because it results in insufficient motivation to elaborate on the harmful consequences of engaging in the destructive behavior (smoking). However, an appeal arousing high levels of fear was ineffective because it resulted in too much elaboration on the harmful consequences. This led to defensive tendencies such as message avoidance and interfered with processing of recommended solutions to the problem.

Another approach to the curvilinear explanation of fear is the protection motivation model. According to this theory, four cognitive appraisal processes mediate the individual’s response to the threat: appraising (1) the information available regarding the severity of the perceived threat, (2) the perceived probability that the threat will occur, (3) the perceived ability of a coping behavior to remove the threat, and (4) the individual’s perceived ability to carry out the coping behavior.

This model suggests that both the cognitive appraisal of the information in a fear appeal message and the emotional response mediate persuasion. An audience is more likely to continue processing threat-related information, thereby increasing the likelihood that a coping behavior will occur.
Political Attack Ads Become Pervasive

If you watch TV on any sort of regular basis, you’ve probably noticed that every two years the airwaves experience a huge influx of political advertising. Depending on the campaign cycle, the number of ads airing to promote candidates running for either local, state, or national political office will increase. Political ads generally fall into one of two categories. The first type is self-promoting, positive ads that highlight all of the great things the candidate has done throughout his or her career; the second type is negative or “attack ads” that target an opponent’s platform, record, background, or character. These negative ads have become commonplace in political campaigns over the past decade and far outweigh the number of positive messages. And if you are like most voters, you are very annoyed by these ads and tired of seeing and/or hearing them.

While negative advertising in politics is indeed pervasive, the commonly held perception that negative ads are shown more often than their positive counterparts was not always the case. The 2004 presidential election between George W. Bush and John Kerry, for example, was viewed as the “most negative” presidential race since the 1950s, but only a little over 50 percent of all ads that aired were negative. Bush and Kerry were relatively kind to one another compared to the 2012 presidential election between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, which set a record for most negative campaign ads in history. According to the Wesleyan Media Project, which tracks political advertising, 86 percent of Obama’s TV ads and 79 percent of Romney’s were negative. Political analysts noted that the campaign was so negative because both candidates recognized that anything that moved even a small percentage of the voters could make a difference in the seven or eight key battleground states. While attack ads were used extensively by both Obama and Romney, the 2012 election was tame compared to the 2016 campaign between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, which was marked by disparaging messages from both sides, including accusations of racism and bigotry.

Of course the question most people ask when they become annoyed by all of the negative advertising that takes place during political campaigns is, does it work? Unfortunately for the voters who have to watch them, the answer appears to be yes. Studies have shown that negative ads are more powerful, memorable, and much more likely to discuss real issues in an election than positive ads. Positive ads can get away with flowery language and hyperbole to try to “prop up” a candidate, while negative ads must work hard to achieve credibility and provide evidence to support his or her claims. If a negative ad makes an assertion that is untrue, the candidate who created it may experience a backlash far worse than anything an opposing ad could provide. When negative ads do attack an opponent on a personal level, they usually highlight inexperience or dishonesty, two attributes that are very important when electing someone to public office. And attack ads may seem to be everywhere because they are having the intended effect whereby you may recall them long after seeing them.

Experts argue that another reason for the increase in attack ads is that they attract more attention from and coverage by the news media. Political science professor John Green has studied presidential campaigns over the past 25 years and

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EXHIBIT 6–20

Seagate uses a mild fear appeal that alerts consumers to a problem and offers a solution

Source: Seagate Technology LLC
notes that the news media play a major role in the rise of negativity in presidential campaigns. Green argues that political consultants know that attack ads draw attention by the media which gives them an incentive to encourage candidates to use them. The news media’s focus on negative advertising thus encourages its use and leads to a cycle of attack ads that is driven by political consultants and journalists.

Critics of negative political ads argue that they distract voters from the real issues by getting them to focus on meaningless personal attacks, encourage deception and incivility, and end up disillusioning voters. However, many political analysts are still very much in favor of them, arguing that if negativity were to disappear from our electoral battles so would the democratic system in which we take so much pride. While a significant number of studies show that people are skeptical of and irritated by negative ads, political consultants point to studies showing that despite the public’s feelings toward the moral or ethical nature of them, attack ads are often successful in shifting voters’ perceptions of a candidate.

Politicians and their campaign managers realize that it is very difficult to win an election today without attacking their opponent. Candidates for public office often start a campaign by taking the high ground, but then waste little time turning to attack ads when they fall behind in the polls or feel they have to respond to an accusation made in one of their opponents’ ads. It clearly looks like attack ads will remain the norm, and the question now is whether we will ever see a positive political ad again.


to cope with dangers rather than avoid them. They are also more effective among non-users of a product than among users. Thus, a fear appeal may be better at keeping nonsmokers from starting than persuading smokers to stop.

In reviewing research on fear appeals, Herbert Rotfeld has argued that some of the studies may be confusing different types of threats and the level of potential harm portrayed in the message with fear, which is an emotional response. He concludes that the relationship between the emotional responses of fear or arousal and persuasion is not curvilinear but rather is monotonic and positive, meaning that higher levels of fear do result in greater persuasion. However, Rotfeld notes that not all fear messages are equally effective, because different people fear different things. Thus they will respond differently to the same threat, so the strongest threats are not always the most persuasive. This suggests that marketers using fear appeals must consider the emotional responses generated by the message and how they will affect reactions to the message.

While research suggests that message recipients might tune out a message that uses too much fear, there are examples of advertising campaigns where high levels of fear have been effective at changing behavior. For example, the Montana Meth Project (MMP) is a large-scale prevention program aimed at reducing methamphetamine use, particularly among teenagers, through public service messaging, policy, and community outreach. The integrated campaign uses hard-hitting TV, radio, print, digital, and social media messaging to communicate the risks of meth use.
Many of the ads used in the campaign use a high level of fear to communicate the risks of meth use and addiction such as the one shown in Exhibit 6–21. The MMP has been very successful: meth use in Montana has declined significantly and the campaign has been expanded to a number of other states. A recent study of fear appeals by Andrea Morales, Eugenia Wu, and Gavan Fitzsimons suggests that ads such as those used in the MMP campaign may be effective because they activate disgust as well as fear through some of the disturbing images they contain.100

**Humor Appeals**  Humorous ads are often the best known and best remembered of all advertising messages. Many advertisers, including FedEx, GEICO, Old Spice, Snickers, Budweiser, and Bud Light, use humor appeals effectively. Humor is usually presented primarily through TV commercials and online video and to a lesser extent through radio as these media lend themselves to the execution of humorous messages. However, humor is occasionally used in print ads as well as agency creatives can use images in combination with clever headlines and ad copy to develop humorous messages. The sermon ad for Listermint mouthwash shown in Exhibit 6–22 is a very good example of how humor can be used effectively in print media.

Advertisers use humor for many reasons.101 Humorous messages attract and hold consumers’ attention. They enhance effectiveness by putting consumers in a positive mood, increasing their liking of the ad itself and their feeling toward the product or service. And humor can distract the receiver from counterarguing against the message. A meta-analytic test of various models of how humor works in advertising showed that its effects are primarily based on affective processes and that it can distract from the processing of cognitive information such as brand beliefs and benefits. This suggests that the peripheral processing of humorous messages is dominant and that effort devoted to processing of ad-related affective elements comes at the expense of attention to brand-related cognitions.102

Critics argue that funny ads draw people to the humorous situation but distract them from the brand and its attributes. Also, effective humor can be difficult to produce and some attempts are too subtle for mass audiences. And, there is concern that humorous ads may wear out faster than serious appeals. **Wearout** refers to the tendency of a television or radio commercial to lose its effectiveness when it is seen and/or heard repeatedly.103 Wearout may occur if consumers no longer pay attention to a commercial after several exposures or become annoyed at seeing or hearing an ad multiple times. Some experts argue that humorous
ads wear out faster than other formats because once the consumer gets the joke, the ad becomes boring. However, advocates of humor argue that funny ads are effective longer as consumers will respond more favorably to a well-executed humorous ad than a serious message. One way marketers deal with the wearout problem is by creating “pool-outs” or multiple executions around a campaign theme that can be rotated so no one ad airs repeatedly during a short time period. For example, large advertisers such as GEICO, FedEx, and Anheuser-Busch InBev generally have a number of commercials available to rotate. However, this can be a problem for smaller companies that do not have a large enough budget to produce multiple commercials.

Clearly, there are valid reasons both for and against the use of humor in advertising. Not every product or service lends itself to a humorous approach. A number of studies have found that the effectiveness of humor depends on several factors, including the type of product or service and audience characteristics. For example, humor has been more prevalent and more effective with low-involvement, feeling products than high-involvement, thinking products. A recent study examined how audience involvement moderates the effects of humorous ads. The researchers found that for products that are not intrinsically humorous, the use of humor in an advertising message is more effective when involvement is relatively low rather than high. These findings support the idea that high-involvement products may not be as well suited for advertising humor as low-involvement products.

**CHANNEL FACTORS**

The final controllable variable of the communication process is the channel, or medium, used to deliver the message to the target audience. While a variety of methods are available to transmit marketing communications, as noted in Chapter 5, they can be classified into two broad categories, personal and nonpersonal media.

**Personal versus Nonpersonal Channels**

There are a number of basic differences between personal and nonpersonal communications channels. Information received from personal influence channels is generally more persuasive than information received via the mass media. Reasons for the differences are summarized in the following comparison of advertising and personal selling:

From the standpoint of persuasion, a sales message is far more flexible, personal, and powerful than an advertisement. An advertisement is normally prepared by persons having minimal personal contact with customers. The message is designed to appeal to a large number of persons. By contrast, the message in a good sales presentation is not determined in advance. The salesman has a tremendous store of knowledge about his product or service and selects appropriate items as the interview progresses. Thus, the salesman can adapt this to the thinking and needs of the customer or prospect at the time of the sales call. Furthermore, as objections arise and are voiced by the buyer, the salesman can treat the objections in an appropriate manner. This is not possible in advertising.

Personal channels are used in several ways in an IMC program. As was discussed in Chapter 5, many marketers are recognizing the importance of word-of-mouth communications which is becoming more prevalent with the growth of social media. The more traditional use of personal communications is through sales programs which are implemented through a company’s sales force as well as at the point of purchase through retail sales personnel. However, the advertising and promotion programs for most marketers rely heavily on traditional media advertising as well digital and social media. Thus, we will discuss some of the important factors that marketers must consider with respect to these media.
Effects of Alternative Mass Media

The various mass media that advertisers use to transmit their messages differ in many ways, including the number and type of people they reach, costs, information processing requirements, and qualitative factors. The mass media’s costs and efficiency in exposing a target audience to a communication will be evaluated in Chapters 10 through 12. However, we should recognize differences in how information is processed and how communications are influenced by context or environment.

Differences in Information Processing

There are basic differences in the manner and rate at which information from various forms of media is transmitted and can be processed. Information from ads in print media, such as newspapers, magazines, or direct mail, as well as online through websites and other forms of owned media is self-paced; readers process the ad or information at their own rate and can study it as long as they desire. In contrast, information from the broadcast media of radio and television is externally paced; the transmission rate is controlled by the medium.

The difference in the processing rate for print and broadcast media has some obvious implications for advertisers. Self-paced print media make it easier for the message recipient to process a long, complex message. Advertisers often use print ads when they want to present a detailed message with a lot of information. Broadcast media are more effective for transmitting shorter messages or, in the case of TV, presenting images along with words.

While there are limits to the length and complexity of broadcast messages, advertisers can deal with this problem. One strategy is to use a radio or TV ad to get consumers’ attention and direct them to a website for a more detailed message. Some advertisers develop broadcast and digital/print versions of the same message. The copy portion is similar in both media, but the print ad can be processed at a rate comfortable to the receiver.

Effects of Context and Environment

Interpretation of an advertising message can be influenced by the context or environment in which the ad appears. Communication theorist Marshall McLuhan’s thesis, “The medium is the message,” implies that the medium communicates an image that is independent of any message it contains. A qualitative media effect is the influence the medium has on a message. The image of the media vehicle can affect reactions to the message. For example, an ad for a high-quality men’s clothing line might have more of an impact in a fashion magazine like GQ than in Sports Afield. Airlines, destination resorts, and travel-related services advertise in publications such as Travel + Leisure partly because the articles, pictures, and other ads help excite readers about travel (Exhibit 6–23).

A media environment can also be created by the nature of the program in which a commercial appears. One study found that consumers reacted more positively to commercials seen during a happy TV program than a sad one. Advertisers pay premium dollars to advertise on popular programs that create positive moods, like sitcoms, sporting events, award shows such as the Oscars and Grammys, and holiday specials. Conversely, advertisers tend to avoid programs that create a negative mood among viewers or may be detrimental to the company or its products. Many companies won’t advertise on programs with excessive violence or sexual content. Coca-Cola never advertises on TV news programs because it thinks bad news is inconsistent with Coke’s image as an upbeat, fun product. A study by Andrew Aylesworth and Scott
MacKenzie found that commercials placed in programs that induce negative moods are processed less systematically than ads placed in programs that put viewers in positive moods. They suggest that media buyers might be well advised to follow the conventional wisdom of placing their ads during “feel-good” programming, especially if the message is intended to work through a central route to persuasion. However, messages intended to operate through a peripheral route to persuasion might be more effective if they are shown during more negative programs, where presumably viewers will not analyze the ad in detail because of their negative mood state.

**Clutter**

Another aspect of the media environment which is important to advertisers is the problem of **clutter**, which has been defined as the amount of advertising in a medium. However, for television, clutter is often viewed as including all the nonprogram material that appears in the broadcast environment—commercials, promotional messages for shows, public service announcements (PSAs), and the like. Clutter is of increasing concern to advertisers since there are so many messages in various media competing for the consumer’s attention. Half of the average magazine’s pages contain ads, and in some publications the ratio of ads to editorial content is even higher. On average, around a quarter of a broadcast hour on TV is devoted to commercials, while most radio stations carry an average of 10 to 12 minutes of commercial time per hour. The average length of a commercial break during prime time on the major networks is just over three minutes which means viewers are exposed to a large number of ads in a short time period, making it difficult for commercials to attract and hold the attention of viewers as well as communicate effectively.

Clutter has become a major concern among television advertisers as a result of increases in nonprogram time and the trend toward shorter commercials. While the 30-second commercial replaced 60-second spots as the industry standard in the 1970s, many advertisers are now using 15-second spots. The advertising industry continues to express concern over the highly cluttered viewing environment on TV; the amount of clutter increased as much as 30 percent during the 1990s and has continued to increase over the past two decades. Several factors are causing the increased clutter including lower rating for TV shows as consumers spend more time online and the fact that many marketers are reducing their spending on television advertising and shifting these monies into digital ads. Thus, TV networks are inserting more commercials into programs to offset these factors and avoid revenue declines.

Clutter levels have been increasing as the four major broadcast networks and cable networks have also increased the amount of time allocated to commercials. Broadcast networks average just over 14 minutes of commercial time per hour while cable averages 15 and a half minutes, with some networks averaging more than 18 minutes. Thus, a viewer watching three hours of prime-time programs on the major networks would be exposed to more than 100 commercials in addition to programming promotions, and PSAs. The problem is even greater during popular shows, to which the networks add more commercials because they can charge more. And, of course, advertisers and their agencies perpetuate the problem by pressuring the networks to squeeze their ads into top-rated shows with the largest audiences.

The clutter problem is even higher on many cable networks and during daytime programs. Recently some cable networks such as TBS and TNT have been using compression technology to speed up the transmission of programs and allow more time for commercials, which is adding to the clutter problem. Advertisers and agencies want the networks to commit to a minimum amount of program time and then manage the nonprogram portion however they see fit. If the networks wanted to add more commercials, it would come out of their promos, PSAs, or program credit time. The problem is not likely to go away, however, and advertisers will continue to search for ways to break through the clutter, such as using humor, celebrity spokespeople, or novel creative approaches.
Summary

This chapter focuses on the controllable variables that are part of the communication process—source, message, and channel factors. Decisions regarding each of these variables should consider their impact on the various steps of the response hierarchy the message receiver passes through. The persuasion matrix helps assess the effect of controllable communication decisions on the consumer’s response process.

Selection of the appropriate source or communicator to deliver a message is an important aspect of communications strategy. Three important attributes are source credibility, attractiveness, and power. Marketers enhance message effectiveness by hiring communicators who are experts in a particular area and/or have a trustworthy image. The use of celebrities to deliver advertising messages has become very popular; advertisers hope they will catch the receivers’ attention and influence their attitudes or behavior through an identification process. The chapter discusses the meaning a celebrity brings to the endorsement process and the importance of matching the image of the celebrity with that of the company or brand.

Key Terms

- persuasion matrix 185
- source 186
- credibility 187
- internalization 187
- sleeper effect 191
- attractiveness 192
- identification 192
- source power 203
- compliance 204
- primacy effect 205
- recency effect 205
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- comparative advertising 209
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Discussion Questions

1. The chapter opener discusses how Under Armour has been very successful in its use of athletes as endorsers for the company/brand. Evaluate the strategy used by Under Armour in selecting and signing athletes to endorsement deals. Why do you think the company has been able to compete so effectively against larger companies such as Nike and adidas in signing athletes as endorsers? (LO 6-2)

2. Discuss how marketers can use the persuasion matrix shown in Figure 6–1 to plan their integrated marketing communications programs. Choose a TV commercial or print ad and use the persuasion matrix to evaluate how it might influence consumers’ response processes. (LO 6-1)

3. Discuss the three primary source attributes noted by Herbert Kelman and the different processes by which they can influence attitude and/or behavior change. Find an example of an advertisement or other type of promotional message that utilizes each attribute. (LO 6-2)

4. Find examples of an advertising message or campaign that uses the company CEO, president, or founder as the spokesperson. Do you think this individual is an effective spokesperson for the company? Why or why not? (LO 6-2)

5. IMC Perspective 6–1 discusses the series of problems Nike has had with some of its endorsers because of controversies that have arisen in their personal lives. Discuss how the problems surrounding these endorsers might impact the image and reputation of Nike. How long do you think Nike should stand by endorsers when they run into personal problems? (LO 6-2)

6. Find a celebrity who is currently appearing in an advertising campaign for a particular company or brand...
and use McCracken’s meaning transfer model (shown in Figure 6–4) to analyze the use of this individual as a spokesperson. (LO 6-2)

7. Discuss the rise in popularity of YouTube stars such as Smosh, the Fine Brothers and PewDiePie among young people. Do you think these YouTube personalities can replace more traditional celebrities such as athletes, actors/actresses, and entertainers as advertising spokespersons? (LO 6-2)

8. Evaluate Domino’s decision to run an advertising campaign acknowledging the problems with the taste of its pizza as a way to promote its new recipe. Do you think this strategy was an effective way to promote its reformulated product? (LO 6-3)

9. Visit the website for the Montana Meth Project (www.methproject.org) and choose three ads that use various levels of fear in the message. Discuss why each ad may or may not be effective. (LO 6-3)

10. Discuss the pros and cons of using humor as the basis for an advertising appeal. Find an example of an advertising message that uses humor and evaluate its effectiveness. (LO 6-3)

11. Discuss the problem of advertising clutter and how it is a problem in various media such as magazines, television, and radio. What are some of the ways the media can address the clutter problem? (LO 6-4)

12. What is meant by a qualitative media effect? Select a television program or a magazine and discuss the nature of the media reception environment created by the show or the publication. What type of companies or brands might be attracted to advertising on this program or in this publication? (LO 6-4)