

IS IT AN ADS OR AMBUSH MARKETING? TAKE THE NIKE FIND YOUR GREATNESS (LONDON 2012) AS AN EXAMPLE

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Abstract keywords

ambush marketing, semiotics, the London Olympic Games

Aim of abstract/paper - research question

the purposes of this study aimed (1) to explore the meanings of symbols in the commercial; (2) to analyze the connotation derived from symbols; (3) to realize how Nike utilize the symbols to affect the cognition of consumers.

Theoretical background or literature review*

To increase media exposure, the enterprise might be through becoming the Olympic Partnership (TOP) which allowed sponsors to sell their products directly to consumers in the games to establish favorable relationship and improve the visibility of the product or service that set up the good corporate image in the minds of consumers. It has upon the consumer that distinguishes sponsorship from other forms of promotion in terms of the effect (Meenaghan, 2001). The modern Olympic Games are not only the stage for the best athletes, but also the wrestling battlefield of the enterprise. In order to obtain the same benefits as the Olympic sponsors, non-Olympic sponsors try to affect the cognition of consumers for the misconnection between them and Olympic Games in some ways such as holding activities around the Olympic competition arenas, patronizing the broadcast media for athletes. These innovative marketing strategies tactfully circumvent the convention of sports sponsorship to enhance consumers' images of the corporation. Without the clear definition of damaging rights of the official sponsors, it only can be described as the corporate ethic. This innovative marketing is commonly known as ambush marketing. The aim of ambush marketing is to "bring about miscomprehension in the consumer's mind about who the sponsor is" (Susan, 2009). Nike adopted ambush marketing tactics in the past Olympic Games and it has always been the best case (McKelvey & Grady, 2008). As a non-Olympic sponsor on 2012 Olympic Games, the sports brand "Nike" had bought a lot of television commercial time intervals during the games to broadcast the "Find Your Greatness (London 2012)" in Taiwan. This commercial was inserted the symbol of London and different kinds of sports to mislead the cognition of consumers that Nike is a patron of the big games. The commercial is a symbolic transfer platform. To realize how Nike utilizes the symbols to affect the cognition of consumers, the researchers use theory of semiotics to analyze the meanings of symbols in the commercial.

Methodology, research design and data analysis

This study took the commercial "Find Your Greatness (London 2012)" as the text analysis. The researchers divided the commercial into three symbols such as London, sports and people. Adopting the R. Barthes' theory of semiotics as a theoretical basis to explain the denotation of the symbols and deconstructing the connotation of the symbols.

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions**

Results: The results were displayed by statistic quantification and quality description as follows: First, there was 16 times of London symbol, 12 different kinds of sports and 5 variable backgrounds continuously used as the foundation of the commercial. Secondly, Nike connected to London by the repeated its symbol, various sports were characterized as varied games of Olympics, and the four variable backgrounds symbolized the Olympics spirit – Sports for all. Finally, the commercial described the scenario to construct the bridge between Nike and the Olympic Games in the consumers' mind.

Conclusion

Nike manipulated the symbolic meanings and the existent time to try to misunderstand people that Nike was one of the Olympics partners. The findings showed Nike was able to legitimate cross-border and reach ambush marketing. Therefore, Sports organizations should contract with relay stations to ensure that the sponsor has the power to give priority to purchasing the commercial time slots.

References

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