

WHAT'S UP, DOG?

The effect of openness in a narrowcasting advertisement on brand attitude, preference, sense of urgency and promoted action amongst Olaz' target group in Belgium and The Netherlands.

1. RESEARCH GOAL

Effect of openness in a narrowcasting setting

This research aims to provide insight on the effects of an open and closed version of an ad in a narrowcasting setting within the Olaz target audience. The objective is to assess what the effect of openness is on brand attitude and preference, sense of urgency, and to determine if the participants are encouraged to undertake preventative action. Therewith enabling Olaz to make a well-considered decision which ad can be expected to be the most effective in Flanders and The Netherlands.

2. BRAND

Olaz by Procter & Gamble

Since decades, skin care company Olay is the biggest property of multinational Procter & Gamble. The brand's greatest strength is the success in the anti-aging and regeneration segment. In 1999, instead of Oil of Olay, the brand name Olay was internationally implemented, except for Belgium and the Netherlands. Only in these two countries the brand goes by the name of Olaz.



Image one: Open version



Image two: Closed version

3. ADVERTISEMENT

The open and closed version of the ad

The open ad promotes Olaz' key product, an anti-wrinkle cream, by visualizing two excessively wrinkled puppies and the Olaz logo. One of the puppies however has a completely wrinkle-free smooth face. The closed version helps the consumer solve the riddle by adding the slogan **Voorkom gezichtsrimpels, gebruik** followed by an open jar of Olaz anti-wrinkle cream and a smear of anti-wrinkle cream on top of the nose.

4. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Openness

Open ads have the common characteristic that consumers are not manifestly directed to a certain message (Ketelaar, Van Gisbergen & Bosman, 2004). Semiotician Umberto Eco states that open ads generally allow multiple interpretations and are not easily interpretable. In the authors' view, openness is not a feature of a particular text, but rather the result of an interactive process between text and reader (Eco, 1979). Openness has been shown to lead to changes in attitude towards the ad, and recall of the ad and/or product (Ketelaar & Van Gisbergen, 2006).

Positive and negative effects of openness

Results indicate that openness can have positive and negative effects on the awareness of consumers. Scholars Ketelaar, Van Gisbergen, Bosman & Beentjes (2010), found openness to have an overall negative effect on the attitude towards the ad, brand beliefs, and the attitude towards the brand. However, also positive effects have been found: "The radically open ad was most effective at creating positive feelings, alleviating negative feelings, and creating awareness toward the company and its product" (Pfeuffer, 2015). Unlike closed ads, open ads do not lead the consumer, having seconds to decipher a clear message.

Narrowcasting

"Narrowcasting means sending promotional messages through AV displays aimed at specific (groups of) customers" (Dewan et al., 2002). The research relevance (*gap*) stems from the fact that so far no studies have been published on the effect of openness in a narrowcasting situation, also known as digital signage. The industry relevance is to provide insights into the potential of narrowcasting in open and closed advertising. "Fueled by falling display hardware costs and rising demand, digital signage and pervasive displays are becoming ever more ubiquitous" (Davies, Clinch & Alt, 2014, p. vi).

5. THEORY

Explanations 3 theories

The Elaboration Likelihood Model

The Elaboration Likelihood Model is a dual-process theory designed by Petty & Cacioppo (1986). It describes the manner in which attitudes are formed and changed. The model outlines two different possible routes when recipients process persuasive information (Durmaz, Suher & Bir, 2015; Petty, Heesacker & Hughes, 1997); a central- and a peripheral route.

Indirect Persuasion Theory

The Indirect Persuasion Theory tells us that metaphors, especially those in pictures, make people more open for persuasion. "The use of metaphorical claims in ads appears to make consumers receptive to multiple, distinct, positive inferences about the advertised brand (i.e., weak implicatures), while still conveying the main message of the ad (i.e., the strong implicature). Furthermore, metaphors presented in pictorial form are able to elicit these multiple inferences spontaneously at the time of ad exposure" (McQuarrie and Phillips, 2005). According to McQuarrie and Phillips (2005) the lack of constraints on the interpretation is the source of persuasiveness.

Protection Motivation Theory

The decisions that underpin how people protect themselves from perceived threats are explained by The Protection Motivation theory. This theory describes and predicts what triggers people to change their behaviour, and is dependent on the perceived severity, likelihood of occurrence, ability to mitigate and the level of confidence in one's ability of being able to undertake preventative behavior. (Maddux and Rogers, 1983; Floy, Prentice-Dunn and Rogers, 2000).

Expectations 3 theories

Expectation The Elaboration Likelihood Model

The participants are part of the brand's target group and thus expected to be motivated and able to interpret the open ad. Linking back to the Elaboration Likelihood Model, this suggests that participants are more in favour of the open version than the closed version of the ad. Therefore, the expectation is that **the open version** will be the preferred ad and have a more positive and long-lasting effect on brand attitude than the closed ad (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Expectation Indirect Persuasion Theory

According to the Indirect Persuasion Theory, an ad that conveys multiple meaning is more likely to persuade. As it is less receptive for counter-arguing. **The open version** is therefore more likely to persuade the target audience, if the audience is able to construct multiple meanings from the pictorial claim (McQuarrie and Phillips, 2005).

Expectation Prediction Motivation Theory

According to the Prediction Motivation Theory, an ad that conveys a clear and severe threat, combined with a clear promoted solution, is more likely to persuade the target audience, if the audience is able to undertake preventative action. **The closed version** with a clear mitigative directive will boost the confidence of the ability to undertake preventative behaviour more than an open ad with a call to action which is left open to interpretation.

6. RESEARCH

Research questions

- RQ1: "What is the effect of openness in a narrowcasting advertisement on brand attitude and preference amongst Olaz' target group within Belgium and the Netherlands?"
- RQ2: "What is the effect of openness in a narrowcasting advertisement on a sense of urgency and promoted action amongst Olaz' target group within Belgium and The Netherlands?"

7. METHODOLOGY

Sampling

- Sampling method: Convenience Sampling within Olaz' target audience, participants selected based on availability and accessibility (Elfil & Negida, 2016)
- 18 females: 6 Flemish and 12 Dutch residents, interviewed in native language. Participants were rewarded with a small cosmetic gift.
- Age range: between 31 and 50 (O'Reilly, 2019)
- No further selection on profession, education or cultural background
- All participants were familiar with brand (not users of the brand per sé)

Research Design

- Pretesting conducted, June 30th, on 14 persons in order to select the most accessible open advertisement
- Qualitative research through in-depth interviews: conducted via video calls with mimicked narrowcasting situation
- Semi-structured interviews, max. 45 min. (conducted: July 7-9, 2020)
- In-between subject design with questions on brand attitude, open version shown to half of the participants, closed version shown to the other half, evenly spread amongst students: questions on brand attitude, brand preference and sense of urgency and promoted action towards ad
- Question about preference for open or closed version
- Motivation and Ability (ELM theory) was rated on a 5-point Likert scale

Materials

- Two versions of ad for narrowcasting in a Kruidvat drugstore
- Recorded video conferencing
- Questionnaire

Limitations

- Due to coronavirus-related restrictions, we could not conduct interviews in a Kruidvat drugstore. Therefore, we mimicked this narrowcasting situation online
- Respondents: were asked to assess the ad. This could influence the results; familiar with brand and therefore have a possible bias; were also familiar with the interviewers. Although instructed to ignore this fact, this could lead to modified answers
- Interviews are done online and not in a personal setting
- Female product focus may influence response to male interviewers

8. FINDINGS

Conclusions

RQ1: ELM - All respondents find the message relevant and all but one find the open version easy to understand. Moreover, all respondents find both the open and closed version to have a similar appeal in a narrowcasting setting. Despite the overall high motivation and ability, we can only note one positive change in brand attitude and no change in preference for the brand.

RQ1: IPT - The indirect metaphorical claim of the two dogs renders a very positive attitude with nearly all respondents. Although the open version results in a positive association compared to the closed version, this has no positive effect on brand attitude or preference.

RQ2: PMT - None of the respondents feel threatened by either version. A small majority of the Dutch respondents mention both versions to give a sense of urgency, this is not experienced by the Flemish respondents at all. Both versions elicit preventative behaviour amongst all respondents, not to prevent wrinkles, but to delay the process. Linked to the promoted action in the closed version, two Dutch respondents consider buying the product. None of the Flemish respondents consider this option.

Advice

The closed version presented in a narrowcasting situation has a slightly bigger effect on a sense of urgency compared to the open version. On promoted action, the closed version has more effect on the Dutch respondents, in comparison to the Flemish respondents.

Based on the results, we advise Olaz to use the closed version of the ad in a narrowcasting situation.

Recommendations

- The influence of language could be further explored to find differences in preference between versions in Flemish and Dutch
- Target audience selected based on deliberate selection of the researchers (purposive sampling) e.g. inside a clinic
- Measuring the effectiveness of narrowcasting by call-to-action follow-up (e.g. buy one, get one for free)
- The influence of cultural differences, for admitting the preventive use of anti-wrinkle cream, between Belgium and the Netherlands could be further investigated (cognitive dissonance)

"Ik zou wel bij die display stoppen omdat die hondjes echt de aandacht trekken"

"Ik voel geen bedreiging, rimpels horen erbij"

"Voorkomen kan niet denk ik, het proces vertragen misschien wel"

"Al die rimpels zetten me wel aan het denken over mijn ouder wordende huid"

"De humor bevalt mij wel. En rimpels: doe er wat aan!"

"Liefst heb ik een gladde huid zoals die rechter hond..."

