

Subvertising— Print Media is the Message

Context

The Media Foundation, a Vancouver based organization has challenged us to make a difference in this world of mass advertisement, mass consumption, and mass production. For their *Adbusters* campaign, they want us to be culture jammers rather than mindless consumers. This organization wants us to participate in slowing down consumption by making fun of advertisements.



Problem

Design a print advertisement that spoofs, or subverts, a corporate ad.

Design Constraints

- Original ad must be a print ad (fashion, food, movies, recreation, vice, etc.)
- The spoof ad must be original
- Must *not* involve racially, religiously, or sexually offensive content (text or images)
- Subvertisement can be in black and white or in colour, or a combination
- Subvertisement must appear on an 8.5 x 11 piece of paper or 3.5 card

Design Considerations

- Pay close attention to appropriate principles of graphic design and persuasion
- Unity and repetition are very important design problems to address
- Try to express your own feelings in your ad (funny, playful, spiritual, honest, etc.)
- Content is very important and you will be asked to explain your choices (design, gender, environmental, multicultural, political, etc.)
- Consult forms of subvertising created by [Adbusters](#) and [Guerrilla Girls](#).
- Professional Work!

Sequence

- Choose a print ad to subvert, spoof, or 'bust' (fashion, food, movies, recreation, vice, etc.)
- Study the ad closely to determine what is being promoted: WHAT are the messages (obvious and hidden)?
- Determine WHO the message is for (broad- vs. narrow-casting)
- Determine WHERE the messages are coming from and WHEN they are effective
- Determine WHY the messages are a problem and WHY you want to bust them
- Determine the WHAT, WHO, WHEN, WHERE and WHY of your ad: What are your intentions
- Design about 3 to 6 alternatives to choose from
- Assess your design alternatives— have friends help you to choose
- Begin to formally re/present your ad

Management Issues

- End of Day 1 or 2: Approval of ad to be busted

- End of Day 1 or 2: Approval of alternative ads
- End of Day 4: First completed draft of your redesigned ad
- End of Day 5: Final Draft of ad due for peer assessment
- Remember to be polite to people or agencies who help you!

Related Subjects

- Art
- English Language Arts
- Fashion and graphic design
- Media Studies
- Economics
- Marketing

Honest Peer Evaluation

1. He or She stayed within the design constraints and deadlines _____ out of 5 marks
 2. Her or his ad is from one of the alternative designs _____ out of 5 marks
 3. Her or his ad is unified and well re/presented _____ out of 5 marks
 4. He or she has as nice display of principles and elements of design _____ out of 5 marks
 5. The ad persuasively subverts the original ad _____ out of 5 marks
 6. The ad represents quality work _____ out of 5 marks
 7. The use of resources and media adhered to n/etiquette _____ out of 5 marks
- _____ Total out of 35

Assessment

Peer Assessment	_____ Student Total
Design Principles	
Appropriate Form	_____ out of 10
Unity	_____ out of 10
Style (humorous, political, etc.)	_____ out of 10
Effectiveness of Message	_____ out of 10
Media Sophistication	_____ out of 10
Deadlines and Participation	_____ out of 15
	_____ Total out of 100