

Smart Advertising: Reaching Out to Customers

At first, advertisements were just meant to inform consumers about a product or service. These advertisements did not try to persuade would-be customers to use or purchase a product or service, only to let them know about it and where it might be available. As more products and services became available, advertisers tried to persuade people to choose their product rather than one from someone else. In order to do this, advertisers developed certain techniques that would appeal to people's basic needs:

- **Social Needs** – The need to be accepted or to be part of a group.
- **Security Needs** – The need to feel safe or to create a feeling of well-being.
- **Personal Needs** – The need to feel attractive or wanted by others.

In appealing to these needs, advertisers try to change our attitudes or feelings about certain products and to get us to want that particular product or service. They try to make the ads different or catchy so they will be remembered and recalled when making purchases. **Often these ads sell you ideas rather than the products or services.** They try to persuade you to purchase a product because it tells you about something you would or wouldn't like to do or have to be. This product will take care of that for you.

The people who produce advertisements and sell goods need to follow certain guidelines. They have to provide truth in their advertising. **The Code of Ethics of the American Association of Advertising Agencies states the following:**

We, the members of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, in addition to supporting and obeying the laws and legal regulations pertaining to advertising, undertake to extend and broaden the application of high ethical standards. Specifically, we will not knowingly produce advertising which contains:

- False or misleading statements or exaggerations, visual or verbal.
- Testimonials which do not reflect the real choice of a competent witness.
- Price claims which are misleading.
- Comparisons which unfairly disparage a competitive product or service.
- Claims insufficiently supported, or which distort the true meaning of practicable application of statements made by professional or scientific authority.