

## Be Alert, Be Aware – The Holiday Manipulation Season is Here



Ah yes the seasonal crunch is ready to start. Can you see the players all lined up at the starting line?



Take a look at the stores around, shopping centers and malls have all their decorations up. Advertising commercials started before Halloween and are increasing daily.



This is all a marketing pitch to manipulate us into purchasing all the stuff they are selling. Commercials are going to go way beyond their usual "if you purchase this, you show the world your status" advertising pitches. Oh they are very subtle about it but materialism and elitism are the main thrusts or selling points of these advertisements.



Behind the scenes prices have slowly been climbing, so that when these stores put on sales, they are getting their usual price. This scam usually starts around August/September so that by the time Black Friday and Cyber Monday roll around we are chomping at the bit to get that “bargain”.



Oh sure, now is a great time (NOT) to hear about this. Think of it this way, you can start your New Year with a pocket book bang by keeping this in mind and start shopping for this time next year. Half the battle is being AWARE that we are being tricked and manipulated! Until then it will be the same old stuff, different day.



Now you can still “enjoy” the mad dash and crunch of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, just realize that your bargains may not be bargains at all and above all else Stick To Your Budget!



Through the inclusion of claims, advertisers attempt to attach a value or an urgency to a product that distinguishes it from its competitors. The push those psychological buttons we all have. You know the ones: “Look at me I wear this designer”, “I am successful, see the car I drive”, “I have money, see the stuff I have that is an investment”, “I am ready for winter because I have a “Winter Car” with “Winter Accessories” and so on and so on.





Then there are also the stimulation of the senses tricks. Colors, smells, sounds, various textures and the like. From the packaging itself to the layout of the stores themselves. We see these methods everyday in the supermarket and you can bet your last dollar you will see them during the holiday marketing crunch too.



Here are some other things to look out for, year round, and not just holiday season.



Testimonials are where the endorsement of a product by a well-known person or organization. Example: "Joe Hockey uses Face Power aftershave lotion."



The transfer of the qualities of one idea/image to those of another. Example: “Smoke Mint Fresh and get a breath of springtime.”



Plain folks and ‘Good Ol Boys’ is the use of terms like; “home style” or “small town” and family to imply a special value in the product. Example: “Homestyle Soup” with that small town good taste only Mom used to make.”



Getting you on the Bandwagon is the suggestion that everyone is doing it and therefore you’re being left behind the crowd. Example: “Sparkle! Canada’s #1 best-seller.”





The ever present association of wealth, power and status with a particular product. Example: “She lives in Oakville. She spends her winters in the Alps. She drives a BMW. Her perfume is – TUSK.”



The implication that experts, figures and statistics prove a point beyond a doubt. Example: “Experts agree that Everbetter batteries last 40% longer, with 20% more power.”



Or how about the “implied” science and “magical ingredients”?! Example: “Drink Eau-Boire, the mineral water with more pure H<sub>2</sub>O.”



Advertisers love to exploit hidden fears, insecurities and dreams. Example: “Don’t lose friends. Use Sweet-Pit, the friendly deodorant.”





They say that repetition is the foundation to learning, it's also the foundation to indoctrination. Example: "Finally – Natural Glow! The natural shampoo with nature's ingredients to bring out your natural glow."



Last but not least, the use of qualifiers or disclaimers (IE: weasel words), such as "helps", "fights", "up to", and "virtually" to mislead the consumer into thinking the product is better than it really is. Example: "Use Zit-Kwit, the only skin medicine that helps fight virtually all skin blemishes."



Now that we know, we can be alert, we can be smart and we can start the New Year with a strong plan.



**Good luck and have a happy and safe set of holidays!**