

Food Marketing and Advertising

Lesson#2.4

Lesson Description:

In this lesson we will explore the influences of the media on an individual's food choices. We will also examine food marketing techniques, focusing on how different age groups are targeted.

Factors Influencing Food Choice

Family Influence

Family is the major influence on the food choices and habits of its members. It is the first influence on a young child's food choices, since very young children eat the foods that their family provides for them.

As children grow older they begin to develop likes and dislikes. Young children will refuse to eat food they do not like the taste of. At an early age, children will show preferences for certain foods.

Families can restrict what their members eat within the home, but they have little control over what they eat outside it.

Family members use food to celebrate special occasions during their lives. The influence of your family on your food habits and eating practices will last a lifetime.



Peer Influence

Peers are people who belong to the same societal group. They are based on age, school grade, or status. As you get older, your peers will begin to have a greater influence on both your food choices and your food habits.

During the preschool years, the food choices and food habits of children who attend day cares, preschools, and play groups, and who socialize with other children, begin to be influenced by their peers. For example: If a best friend like broccoli, a child may eat it to impress the friend.

As teenagers become more independent of their parents, their peers begin to exert a greater influence on their lives. This influence is extended to food habits, practices, and beliefs about food.



Media Influence

The media has a large influence on all our lives because it is all around us, even though we may not be aware of it.

Advertisers use the media to sell their products. There are many different ways in which they use the media. The following are some examples:

Newspapers. Advertisers use newspapers to reach a broad audience, usually adults.

Consumer magazines. Magazines target special audiences. Advertisers will choose the magazine based on their target audience; they use age-related magazines to target different age groups.

Radio. Each radio station has its own group of listeners. Advertisers will use a station whose main audience is their target.

Television. Television is very visible and has a high impact on consumers. Ads can be placed within shows for specific audiences. TV ads are very costly to make and to air.

Media Influence

Outdoor ads. These are highly visible means of reaching a large audience. Advertisers can choose the location for the ad in order to reach a specific target market

Direct mail. Direct mail targets audiences in a specific location or group

The yellow pages. The yellow pages are used to reach the telephone owner. It is a great way to introduce a product or service to someone who is new to an area

Internet marketing. The internet offers a variety of ways to reach consumers. Advertisers develop websites, pop-up ads, and banner ads for their products. The internet is a medium that is continually growing and offering a world of opportunities to advertisers.



Activity: True/False

Advertisers use the media in many ways to influence your food choices and habits.

Can you share any one ad you followed and had that food once.

Advertising Techniques

Advertising can be informative and entertaining. Advertisers use different techniques to persuade consumers to purchase their products. Food advertisers use these same techniques to convince people that they want to eat their products.

Here are some techniques that are used to influence consumers' purchases:

Limited information / glittering generalities. Advertisements usually only include the facts that will persuade you to buy, without telling the whole story.

Positive images and symbols. An ad may use images of things that people feel good about, such as friendship or a good appearance. The hope is that the consumer will associate these images and feelings with the product

Advertising Techniques

Transfer/ association. Similar to positive images, whereby the advertisement projects positive or negative qualities (praise or blame) of an object, entity or value to another in order to make the second more acceptable or to discredit it. (Also known as card stacking)

Celebrity endorsement/ testimonials. Some ads show popular performers or athletes promoting the product. We don't actually know if the person uses the product in real life.

Appeal to basic needs. Advertisers may focus on ways that product meets a need for security or self-esteem. They try to convince you that the product will make you look or feel better. This techniques is used in different ways for different age groups. For example: a young child's needs are different than an adult's needs. On one side, children will be convinced to buy cereal that tastes good, but parents will want a cereal that provides their children with good nutrition

Advertising Techniques

Scare tactics. Advertisers may play on people's fears of ageing or developing a medical condition by claiming that their product can prevent or relieve the symptoms or provide essential nutrients

False claims. Ads may make claims that are not true, such as fast or guaranteed results

Infomercials. Infomercials are TV ads made to look like regular consumer programs or televised news reports.



Activity: True/ False

Advertising is one of the least visible market development tools found in today's consumer societies.

What do you think? Can you explain a bit.

Separating Fact from Fiction

How can you tell what to believe when it comes to the media messages you see and read?

No product can guarantee good health or weight loss. It is important to make you decisions based on facts, not false promises.

Developing Consumer Skills

There are two important food-consumer skills you must develop:

1. **Critical thinking**
2. **Communication**


As a **critical thinker**, you learn to look for the “angle” in a given message. For example: understanding that advertisers have something to sell, and therefore, may not be the most reliable information sources

An effective **communicator** learns to consider the source of the information.



Consumer Awareness and Food Marketing

Follow these shopping tips to make better choices as a consumer:

- ☐ Read labels carefully to determine ingredients. Be label wise
 - ☐ How much salt or sugar has been added?
 - ☐ Does the cereal contain calcium, or is it in the milk that you add to the product?
 - ☐ Does the fruit-flavored food actually contain fruit?
 - ☐ Make a grocery list to help you resist in-store marketing and advertising of products. You'll buy fewer items on impulse.
 - ☐ Check the reliability of the product's sources
 - ☐ Who is guaranteeing what and why?
 - ☐ What must you do if you are not satisfied with the product?
 - ☐ Is the company that is making the promises in this country?
 - ☐ Coupons are used to make products more attractive
 - ☐ Is saving ten cents off the product really worth it?
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Activity: Targeting the consumer

Question:

What is a safe assumption to make regarding companies and their marketing practices?

- a) Companies know that competition is fierce for consumer dollars.;
- b) Companies spend millions of dollars and do extensive research on advertising
- c) Companies use all angles to aggressively compete for your money
- d) All of the above

Social Science Skills

Question:

Primary and secondary research are terms used to define the *distance* from the research.

Primary research refers to research where the researcher is the first person (primary) to view the research. This means that the person who actually performs the research is the person reporting the research. You will be a primary researcher when you design and implement a questionnaire or survey.

A **primary source** is an *original* document or account that is not about another document or account but stands on its own. For example, any novel, poem, play, diary, letter, or other creative work is a primary source. The data from a research study also constitutes a primary source because it comes straight from the participants' responses. If you were doing a paper on the physical effects of stress, talking to someone who is under stress would be about as close to your topic as you could get. That's what is meant by *distance*.

Social Science Skills

Primary research involves the collection of *original data* on a specific research topic.

There are 3 methods of primary research.

1. Survey Research

- gathers brief answers from many people
- involves using questionnaires by mail, phone, in person
- needs a representative sample
- questionnaires must be carefully planned and well written
- quality of data is dependent on quality of questionnaire
- least expensive form of data collection
- good way of collecting a lot of information in a short period of time, but it is not an in-depth method of collecting information

Social Science Skills

2. In-depth Personal Interviews

- costly and time-consuming method of research collection
- allows for greater understanding of lifestyles and personal feelings
- may encourage participants to project their feelings and attitudes and to talk at length on topic; not as structured as a questionnaire
- interviewer's personality and skills will affect the outcome of the interview

3. Personal Observation

- family interaction can be studied through observation
- one-way mirrors, or observation in natural settings
- participant observation sometimes used by becoming a member of the group
- need to be well trained in the skills of observation
- must be careful not to let bias show through

Social Science Skills

Secondary sources are ones that interpret primary sources or are otherwise a step removed. A journal article or book about a poem, novel, or play, or a commentary about what an interview signifies is a secondary source. When you perform secondary research on a subject and write a paper on it, it becomes a secondary source.

Secondary research involves researching information and/or data that someone else has collected. You can find this type of information in printed sources (books, magazines, and newspapers) and in electronic sources (Internet). Whenever a primary or secondary sources is used, it must be referenced.

For example:

Source: Ontario, Family Studies Leadership Council and Ontario Family Studies Homes Economics Educators Association (2002).

In Summary

- ✓ Advertisers use media, including TV, the internet, newspapers and magazines, radio, outdoor ads, direct mail, and the yellow pages to market food products and food-related businesses, such as restaurants and fast-food outlets
- ✓ Advertisers use different techniques to convince consumers to purchase their products
- ✓ Critical thinking and communication skills can help you learn to distinguish between true and false information
- ✓ Read labels carefully, make a grocery list, and check reliability of product sources when at the store or supermarket