

Book Review:

Fons Van Dyck (2014). *Advertising transformed: The new rules for the digital age*. London: Kogan Page. ISBN-13: 978-0749471484

Reviewed by Amna Mumtaz

Advertising Transformed, first published in the UK and the US in 2014 by Kogan Page, serves as a wonderful guide that how advertising needs to be transformed in this digital era where social media is widespread and have overruled the old concept of advertising.

The author, Fons Van Dyck is a specialist in strategic brand advice and is a branding expert and Managing Director of Think BBDO. Moreover his columns get published in De Standard which focuses on consumer trends. In addition to this he teaches strategic brand management and marketing communication management at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel visiting faculty at Ehsal Management School in Brussels.

Advertising Transformed offers practical insights to marketing and communication professionals who want to keep abreast of the latest developments of the field. Van Dyck picks up three trends that have reshaped the world of advertising, which are; the emergence of light buyers which are often considered as unfaithful in terms of general business rules; the complementary nature of traditional media and digital platforms; and the role of creativity, which actually gives hype to a brand and generates return on investment. Each chapter of the book ends with a real life case study of Effie award-winning campaigns from brands such as Evian, Mercedes and IBM. Idea of brand is reconceptualized as an entity which not only helps a business to flourish but also not to suffer by inculcating a feeling of trust and friendship among the consumers. How this trust should be built and kept this is what advertising is all about. Main thrust of the book is the importance of 'light buyers' which are persuaded over a longer period of time by consistency and creativity of a campaign. With the advancement in technology and with the advent of internet and social media, once again a dramatic change has taken place in the field of communication. Similarly in 1960's when television got popular, it brought a revolutionary change, likewise internet and social media have changed the world of marketing and advertising forever.

Advertising Transformed explains how the old recipes of advertising are no longer workable. It explains the role of advertising on brand

marketing today and its influence on consumers in digital age. The book is divided into three major parts.

The first part *The Essence of Advertising Today* deals with how to shape a suitable target audience. Marketing strategy and advertising models are discussed in the backdrop of traditional and new media landscape and how the transformations are rampant. However, advertising through traditional means is still of great importance advertising gets success when it reaches out to maximum number of people, majority the light buyers. The book explains how advertising has a direct impact on consumers as well as indirect impact through word of mouth. Many people tend to consume a product after they are influenced by their opinion leaders. In this case advertising acts in a snowball effect. The majority of our day to day conversations about brands occur in real life and not on social media. The ARF model explains six spheres that help to improve the mechanism of advertising. Advertising do cause irritation and this problem is faced by both classic and digital media. Therefore in order to lessen this rage an advertisement should be creative. In this way it would not only be much more effective but it will also meet the brand objectives. To make an advertisement creative it should be relevant towards the target audience and varying to the consumers. Emotional element in such advertisements can create a hype and extra word of mouth. Dyck advises the companies to take proactive steps in order to keep the consumers involved in their advertising campaigns.

Part two *Hybrid Marketing*, discusses current advertising practices. Usually two appeals are used in advertisement either USP or ESP and sometimes both serve for the best. Dyck explains that informative advertisements contain more information about the products which help the consumer to easily understand USP, whereas the curiosity of consumers about the brands can be fulfilled by positive emotional messages. Therefore USP is better for the people with high involvement while ESP works best for people having low level of involvement. In the argument of local and global branding, Dyck is for local one as global brands cannot serve everything. Socio-demographic factors and value system which play an important role in the making of a brand cannot be fully considered at global level. The idea of 'Green' in advertisement is explained that how the nature can nourish the attitudes of consumers and allow them to develop environment friendly behaviour but again a company should be careful about what it commits to offer to its target audience and if it fails to meet its claims

then they will soon be called sanctimonious. Consumers get nostalgic and they often look at the past that it was better than today. Therefore companies and brand should inspire its consumers by giving them confidence that how new is better. This point is analyzed in detail with reference to the case study of Procter & Gamble, Old Spice.

The last part *The Reckoning*, highlights the importance of investment in advertising. Research reveals that even at the time of recession the brands and companies who invested more in advertising had greater benefits for stock market price of their share. Dyck also examines the criticism on the advertisement of brands and companies and sees how they are responding towards such criticism. Consumers always seem to punish the companies that do not trade or advertise ethically. In order to avoid this situation a company can ethically advertise along with accomplishing its commercial objectives. In this way the company not only grows but also regains its integrity in the eyes of society.

The question raised by the author is 'what is the need of the hour' as consumers get irritated by watching certain advertisements that do not meet their criteria. Although there are many advertisements that are a bit long but still got viral on social media and liked by many. It is the creativity with good contents that works behind the success of an advertisement. Dyck concludes that twentieth century advertisement is dead now and therefore twenty first century advertisements have to be innovative in order to survive in this demanding era.

The author considers his book not only a guide but also a source of reflection and inspiration for the strategic questions that are emerging in today's practice. Stephen Loerke, Managing Director of World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) appreciates the efforts of Dyck for presenting enthralling views and strategic insights of the new world of advertising to its readers. The book is provides a great combination of scientific research backed by real life case studies. Dyck suggests how to adapt to the new consumer habits and to upgrade day to day technology. However, he accepts that the book does not provide solution to all sorts of problems and there is still a lot of room for improvement so he welcomes the suggestions and opinions of the readers on the website especially designed in accordance to this book i.e. www.advertisingtransformed.com.