

Image gives edge to endorsers, study shows

By Jolayne Houtz

Of the Emerald

The use of celebrity endorsers for products is not always as effective as advertisers may think, according to a new marketing research study by two business school professors.

Unless the image of the endorser matches the image of the product, advertisers may have a difficult time selling their products, say Lynn Kahle and Pamela Homer, whose study was published in the current issue of the quarterly Journal of Consumer Research.

The two researchers found that men don't buy "Edge" disposable razors, a fictitious product used in the study, because they like celebrity endorser John McEnroe — they buy the product because McEnroe's physical image matches what they want from razors: good looks.

Kahle says the study contradicts the popular conception among advertisers that celebrity likability sells products.

If the images of the product and the celebrity are congruent, the message ought to get across

very well," Kahle says.

The researchers tested 200 undergraduate University students over a period of six months to see how the students rated advertisements for "Edge" razors with a variety of celebrity endorsers.

The celebrities were selected on the basis of their familiarity to students and student ratings of their physical attractiveness and likability.

The celebrities were:

- Robert Redford and Jaclyn Smith, whom respondents rated as both physically attractive and likable;

- Bo Derek and John Travolta, whom students saw as physically attractive but unlikable;

- Woody Allen and Jean Stapleton, rated as physically unattractive but likable; and

- Howard Cosell and Billy Jean King, rated as both physically unattractive and unlikable.

McEnroe, who has been featured in an advertising campaign for real disposable razors, was rated physically attractive but unlikable.

The study found that physical

attractiveness was the real selling point for "Edge" razors, and likability was not a very important consideration in the students' ratings.

The overall conclusions of the study lead to a message for advertisers, Kahle says — get celebrities whose public perceptions match the perceptions of the product they are promoting.

And Kahle says this kind of thinking is becoming more prevalent among advertisers as they realize the celebrity's likability is not the only selling point they should be considering.

A familiar example is Karl Malden endorsing American Express Traveler's Checks. Malden is considered tough, street-wise, trustworthy — everything people expect in their traveler's checks, Kahle says.

Although many advertisers seem to be changing their conceptions of effective advertising, they still seem to flock to popular figures to endorse almost anything.

For instance, Mary Lou Ret-

ton, the 1984 Olympic gold medalist in gymnastics, is well known and liked as well as the endorser of everything from Wheaties to McDonald's because advertisers think her likable personality will sell their products.

"Wheaties' use of Mary Lou

Retton was probably not a bad choice," Kahle says. "She is a prototypical champion."

As for her McDonald's endorsements, Kahle suggests the company "would probably be better off sticking with Ronald McDonald."

PARENTS

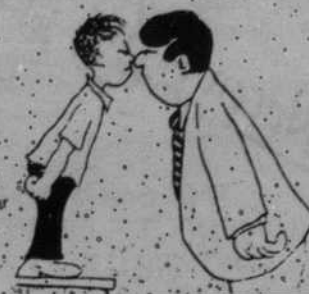
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Legislative Update

Here are highlights of the Oregon Legislature last week

Higher Ed

The Joint Ways and Means salary subcommittee probably will approve the \$40 million State System of Higher Education faculty salary increase today, Sen. Ed Fadeley, D-Eugene and subcommittee chair, said Saturday.

Although the subcommittee had not voted yet, Fadeley said all of those on the committee indicated they would support the \$40 million increase, the amount recommended by Gov. Vic Atiyeh.

The salary increase will "catch up for the past and provide some improvements as well," Fadeley said.

The salary increase was the state system's top funding priority for 1985-86 and was the subject of intense lobbying by University faculty.

Taxes

In an attempt to balance the state general fund budget, the Senate approved a package of bills that would raise cigarette and income taxes by \$255 million.

The Senate tax increase, which is \$8 million more than that approved by the House, extends the cigarette tax to include cigar, pipe and chewing tobacco and makes some depreciation allowances retroactive to 1984 income tax returns.

The three bills approved by the Senate would continue an \$85 tax credit per person instead of a \$1,000 personal exemption, increase state tax on cigarettes by 18 cents a pack, and link state laws to federal income tax codes with less generous depreciation allowances.

Oregon/Daily Emerald

Expenses

The Joint Ways and Means Committee has approved a budget for the Legislature's operations that includes money to raise expense allowances for the 90 lawmakers.

But the money cannot be spent unless the Legislature passes a separate bill to raise the allowances.

The measure, which goes to the House, provides \$12.4 million for general expenses of the current session, interim expenses and estimated costs of the 1987 session. The appropriation is up 8.8 percent from the current budget.

In addition, separate budgets pay for the Legislature's staffs of lawyers and revenue and budget analysts. Overall, the Legislature costs about \$14 million a year to operate at current spending levels.

The bill includes funds that would raise members' expense allowances during sessions from \$44 to \$51 a day, increase the allowance between sessions from \$300 to \$400 a month and give larger mileage payments to

lawmakers who represent large, rural districts.

Miscellaneous

- The Senate Judiciary Committee approved a bill (House Bill 2001) that would divest state funds from companies doing business in South Africa, except those following the Sullivan Principles, which are non-discriminatory standards.

- The Senate passed a bill (Senate Bill 482) that would require businesses that serve liquor to have insurance to cover damages by drunken drivers who had been patrons of the establishment.

- The Legislature approved and sent to Gov. Vic Atiyeh a bill (SB 30) that would make it a felony to tamper with the odometer of a used car. The offense would be punishable by five years in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

- The House approved a measure (HB 2740) calling for annual legislative sessions. The bill would replace the current biennial sessions with annual sessions not to exceed 75 days in odd-numbered years and 60 days in even-numbered years.

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