

"Advertising is a form of communication that typically attempts to persuade potential customers to purchase or to consume more of a particular brand of product or service." ~ Wikipedia

Advertising is clearly a necessary part of business. It is not inherently a bad thing. We all participate in advertising one way or another. For some of us advertising is our profession, and it is our job to persuade potential customers. For others, like myself, I have to advertise to make others aware of our company. Sometimes advertising is very subtle like the hats I wear with other company logos on them. Other times, like on television or billboard ads, it can be very direct. In fact advertising is often it's own form of entertainment. We all look forward to the Super Bowl ads. Who can forget our three favorite frogs or the rancher herding cats.

There is absolutely no doubt advertising is effective. Companies spend millions upon millions of dollars and go as far as to employ psychologists to study the best ways to persuade us. Logos and jingles are all designed to make us remember companies and the great things about the products they are selling. I have even started to notice that department stores all have a similar smell now. Have you noticed that? The smell almost puts you in a buying mood. The power of advertising is amazing.

Have you given any thought to advertising and it's impact on your children? This was a scary and sobering question for me the first time I considered it. As am writing my book, "Not My Kids©", I became curious to just how many commercials were impacting my children per hour of television. I was absolutely stunned to see over 60 commercials in an hour. This wasn't the worst part. It was the message in the commercials that were horrifying. The commercials were fast paced with lots of color and action. They were clearly designed to engage kids. The horrifying part was the relationship between parents and children in these commercials. Parents were often made to look, out of touch, dumb and not cool. Teachers were made to look weird and boring. The kids who were enjoying the products were made out to have superior wisdom than the adults in their lives. The only time an adult was made to be cool was if the adult was advocating the product.

This kind of advertising is hitting our kids at an average pace of 60+ commercials per hour of TV. Is there any wonder that children are growing up with a lack of respect for adults. Is it any wonder that they are growing up to always desire the latest and greatest gadget with little self-control. Our children are being programmed to be consumers. You may have no problem with the commercials on television, PDAs, or computers and their messages to your children. I don't know. What I do know is without parents standing up for their children's education and influence, the advertising companies of the world will be happy to do it for you.

I do not want to over criticize the advertising industry as a whole. There are many quality creative ads that I enjoy. We all must market our products and services. My own company has a website and promotional material. But as parents we need to be sure that the messages reaching our children are quality messages. As companies, we can advertise in a manner that represents our products well, engages our customer, and is still respectful to others. As parents we can teach our children the principles they will need to make good sound decisions regardless of the commercial influence. Stand up for your little ones. Teach them the the 5 rules of money for kids.

We have to learn from our past and seize the opportunity of our future, which is our children.

Sincerely,

*Grant Magers, CEO*