

International advertising campaigns

What is an advertising campaign?

An **advertising campaign** is a series of advertisement messages that share a single idea and theme which make up an integrated marketing communication (IMC). Advertising campaigns appear in different media across a specific time frame.

International advertising **can use the same strategy of communication** in all targeted countries. The advantage of this approach lies mainly in the economies of scale generated by the standardization of the campaign.

Many arguments are used to justify this choice such as the **standardization of consumer behavior**, the **homogenization** of their **needs** or the introduction of **international themes and icons** thanks to the television networks and the pop music (movie stars and supermodels)

But it is also obvious that the risks of a forced standardization are not insignificant. The relevance and the influence of the local **culture** are still very substantial in numerous countries around the globe including in Western Europe. It is indeed **very risky** not to adapt communication to some local markets especially in countries where the cultural tradition is still very present.

What is culture?

A set of values, traditions beliefs and attitudes that are shared by the majority of people living in a country or, alternatively, in a local community that is distinguished from the rest of the national society by major traits such as language, religion or political and legal system. (Torresi: 2010, 156)

Conveying a message across languages = carrying it across cultures.

Different cultures have different ways of encoding information, emotion, expression.

Localization of international advertising campaigns consists of **adapting** the company's communication to the specificities of the local environment of the hosting countries targeted by the campaign.

The socio-cultural component: religion, mores, social and commercial habits, rules of conduct and ethical norms.

The politico-legal component: the nature of the political system, the stage of opening onto the world, the restrictions imposed on advertisements and the regulations related to information and to certain products (such as spirits and tobacco)

The Ikea campaign



Translating culture

When translating advertising there are some aspects it is important to deal with:

Highly creative and emotional language (B2C advertising): it has a prominent role in translation and copywriting. Creative devices involve readers in the recreation of advertising message = **better retention**, emotional devices promote identification and participation = **increased relevance of the message** for the target addressee. It is thus important that advertising translators (transcreators) learn how to **render creative and emotional style in the target language in a way that is equally creative and emotional as in the source text**.

It is also important to bear in mind that the amount of cultural acceptance of creativity and emotion may vary from country to country

examples: We cater to cowards (dentists) difficult to use in Italy where we tend to go for more traditional and reassuring solutions (traditional family). In Germany adverts (except for those aimed at young people) prefer using a more formal register than in English.



Translating culture/2

Use and translation of **culture-specific** references. CSR make the text specifically relevant for one culture. They might require heavy adaptation to avoid "**culture bumps**".

Culture bumps are situations in which the reader of a TT has problems understanding a source-cultural allusion because it is not part of the target language culture.

Culture specific references might be national habits or traditions as, for example a national sport (football/soccer in Eu countries, cricket in India, football in USA).

Use of taboo words/concept, colors in the name of the brand (Ex. Sega) or the color: white in some asian countries is the color of death.

Translating culture/3

Representation of products that in some cases are strictly linked with national identities.

It is a strategy that is widely used for brand names:



Additionally certain national identities are attributed internationally or in given cultures, specific positive traits are automatically transferred onto products or brands.



These three adverts play with the international cultural stereotype of the unemotional, over-serious, perhaps even boring German. But these ads implicitly stress another German trait that ends up to be beneficial for the product and brand image because it stresses the professionalism, reliability and rationality, all positive qualities when associated with technical products.

Translating culture/5

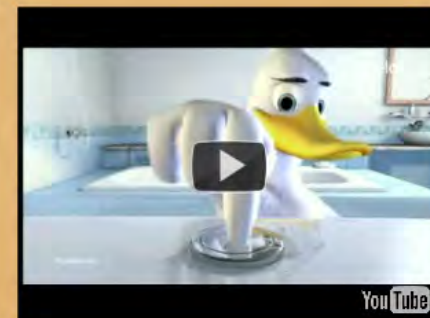
Finally culture plays a fundamental role in advertising all those promotional text whose claim is based on widespread and uncritically accepted values and fears that can be called "**cultural stereotypes**".

The culture-specificity of stereotypes is difficult to detect because they are often seen as universals by most members of a given culture and may resist cross-cultural contact and rational arguments. Some examples of italian (and not only) culture-specific stereotypes:

Family



Cleanliness



The tone of voice

The tone of voice is the character of a brand as expressed through the written word/the advertising choices made in an advertising campaign.

In writing the tone of voice governs what you say and how you say it, the content and the style of textual communication. Having an **inconsistent** tone of voice or graphic style gives a dissonant and self contradictory impression that readers will find discomforting. That's why consistency is important, also when translating!

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There are many different registers for the tone of voice:

Formal ----- Chatty

Detached ----- Warm

Professional ----- Wacky

Serious ----- Humorous

Laid back ----- Lively

The tone of voice might vary slightly depending on the mood, medium and potential audience of an advert, for instance if you promote a product using social media marketing, the tone should be friendlier than in more traditional media. Even so consistency is extremely important.

That's why, when translating it is **EXTREMELY** important to always be consistent and try to respect the brand tone of voice.

A few examples of tone of voice

Ryanair (even though it has recently changed)



Dove: campaign for real beauty



