

Worksheet #9: Ad Busting

Directions: In this activity, you will have an opportunity to talk back to companies that market harmful products or use questionable messages and images to sell their products. You will do this by creating a parody of the ad to reveal truth or express a very different point of view - you will become an adbuster! Follow the steps below:

1. Find an advertisement. It may be an ad for an obviously harmful product such as beer or cigarettes, but you may choose an ad for clothing or a cosmetic product, etc.
2. Identify the persuasive message used to emotionally hook the consumer; what *message* is the ad truly selling? For example, “people have more fun when they drink beer,” or “smoking makes a person sexy” or “rebellious youth wear Levis.” To help you identify the message, consider these messages commonly used in ads from the book *Consuming Passions* by Ellen Mohr Catalano and Nina Sonenburg:

If you use this product you will. . .

1. Join a wonderful group of people.
2. Fee appreciated.
3. Be rewarded.
4. Be respected by others.
5. Have more love or sex in your life.
6. Be more like famous or wealthy people.
7. Be associated with success, humor, tradition.
8. Be on the cutting edge; rebellious.
9. Find deep satisfaction.
10. Enjoy escape or adventure.

*If you do **not** use this product, you will:*

1. Face social isolation or career failure.
2. Face failing health or death.

3. Now that you have chosen an ad and identified its message, you will alter that ad so that it says or shows the opposite of what the advertiser intended. For example, an advertisement for “Cool Beer” could now say “Fool Beer.” Or, pictures in a cigarette ad that are intended to make smoking look adventurous could be altered to show people looking bored.