

Ethical Advertising? Tommy Hilfiger Brand Launch

Ethics in Advertising

Start by viewing the video from a documentary on advertising called Art and Copy. The documentary discusses some of the classic advertising campaigns over time and has interviews with the creative and production staff, along with some key clients.

In this small part of the documentary, the initial advertising campaign to launch the Tommy Hilfiger brand is discussed. As you will see, the campaign was not so much based on strategy, but based upon a strong creative idea. In the documentary, you should note that Tommy Hilfiger himself was very uncomfortable with the campaign initially, primarily because he thought it was too much exaggeration.

Fortunately, Tommy Hilfiger decided to restructure his work and his company around the new promotional message. As a result, he was able to build the strategy (that is, product quality, design and innovation) to support the promotional message.

However, at the start, it was clear that the promotional message was “misleading”, as it did not truly represent the position of the Tommy Hilfiger brand at that time. The Tommy Hilfiger brand has since grown into that positioning, but not at the time of the initial advertising.

Tommy Hilfiger: Advertising Documentary

Search YouTube for: Art and Copy Hilfiger Brand Launch

Student Discussion Questions

1. How truthful do you think the original ads for the Tommy Hilfiger brand was based upon the interviews provided in this video?
2. Given that Tommy Hilfiger was able to construct a strategy to deliver upon the promises made in the advertising, does it matter that the initial advertising could be considered “misleading”?
3. The advertising contained a great creative approach, which was quite effective in generating media publicity as well. Do you think that many new businesses would take this opportunity (that is, to build their brand awareness quite quickly) even though it may not be correct or accurate information being communicated? Why/why not?