

Television advertising. The proposed reform.

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Spassky Stanislav Vsevolodovich.

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stanislav@spassky.net

It seemed that nothing could be opposed to television advertising as any other criminal structure. However, recent decisive actions against «tobacco mafia» show that there is hope.

An idea of reforming advertising law is brought forward here to eliminate many negative aspects of TV advertising and give it a «human face».

There are many negative aspects of advertising and they are well known. Just some of them, the most prominent, will be enumerated.

The so-called «large systems», among which is also the society (or its subsystems), have a tendency to «fall» «naturally» into some «bad decisions». For example, if restrictions are not imposed, the society will naturally fall into free sale of drugs and boundless corruption. The same also applies to TV advertising. In principle, its purpose is to provide access to public attention (limited resource) for a certain payment. But enterprising people have quickly grasped that if, for example, vodka or beer is constantly demonstrated to the so-called «common man», the sales volume will increase paying the cost of continuous aggressive advertising. They have occupied TV advertising time. The second powerful trend of TV advertising is an outright encoding for a definite product or brand, what, in turn, is a crime. Both of these trends are oriented to «common people». That is why television itself has oriented its efforts to «high rating» in its programmes among «very common people». We have lost television. It has become an adjunct of advertising business. The system has «fallen» into «bad decision» and without restrictions, it could not come out of that situation.

Since the «target audience» for TV advertising is «common people», advertising exploits the primitive, frequently quite dark sides of human nature. There has recently appeared a new trend in TV advertising. Namely, a tendency to form consumers' tastes by itself for the future. All these are oriented mainly to young people. Petty stereotypes of behaviour and taste begin to appear. Especially children are influenced by TV advertising, as they perfectly memorize all repeated «slogans». Children cannot be critical to what they have heard and seen. They take everything for reality and quickly imbibe it.

Every TV advertisement is created for a narrow target subgroup within «common people». But it falls upon all other viewers who consider it as rudeness and undisguised mockery.

Recently some attempts are made to curb TV advertising. Besides time restrictions and small concrete bans, there are also attempts to raise requirements to the truthfulness of advertisements. Nevertheless, to use these restrictions is almost impossible. Advertisers have already realized that the most effective way is to use emotional sphere of a person, which they influence. However, to carp at general phrases, turned to emotions, with the requirement of truthfulness is impossible.

Advertising gives itself the credit for a consumption increase («advertising is the engine of commerce»). In fact, to force people to buy more than they need is an obvious harm to people and the society. It is evident in relation to chocolate for children, quantity of food and «beverages» for people. But it is not clear in relation to other goods. The landfills of almost good, but outmoded things are everywhere on earth. Moreover, consumerism is declared to be the main goal and meaning of human life.

What a simple and effective restriction can be offered for one of the most aggressive and cynical type of business?

The most odious feature of TV advertising is a «defiant rudeness». Generally speaking, there is hardly any direct necessity in that feature for advertisements, but it is used mainly for the following reason. Each advertisement tries to stand out from many other advertisements because of the limited resource of public attention. Not all can achieve it by means of an increase of advertising quality, but each TV advertisement tries to stand out. They try to do it by any means, using the most cynical methods and fully realizing purport of their actions. «The result» of that «competition» falls upon «consumer».

To get rid of that side of advertising, and at the same time of other above-listed sides, is possible by placing all TV advertisements in quite equal conditions, in order to destroy that competitiveness. It can be made by means of the following simple ban: a requirement to remove all artificial methods, technologies and techniques that are obvious and not realized (or poorly realized) by people. Substantiation: each «technique» in advertising is, in fact, a trickery. Who needs trickery? Trickster needs trickery.

At first sight, it seems that this restriction undermines the meaning of advertising. In reality, it is not so.

Whom does that ban hinder in business?

- 1) Those who cynically increase their sales by means of aggressive advertising.
- 2) Those who «hammer» the name of products into public consciousness by means of aggressive advertising with encoding technology.
- 3) The ban will affect TV advertising producers. It is now quite powerful industry. But it is necessary to understand that capable people will find their place in film industry to create their own works. And to tell the truth, mediocre business members deserve no compassion.

The ban will probably not hinder:

- 1) Honest advertisers having a real quality product.
- 2) Those who have used «techniques» only to stand out its advertisements from the rest. If one of them loses, he will lose a little, but on average no one will lose.
- 3) It may seem that television will lose, because advertisements earning from its aggressiveness account for 99%. Almost 20 TV advertisements are constantly broadcast over all TV channels, filling normal people with disgust at television. What will remain to television, if to block the road to such TV advertising? But you must understand that most potential «normal» advertisers don't use mechanism of TV advertising, just because they realize the hopelessness of being seen in the stream of extremely aggressive advertising and in the atmosphere of viewers' negative attitude towards advertising.

Surely, there will be an objection that to remove «technology» by means of the law enumerating all «technologies» is very difficult, actually impossible. Quite another approach must be used. We should give the expert group complete control over appraisal of the «technology» presence in advertising. Simple and clear. If one third of experts, for example, considers the presence of such techniques in TV advertisement, the advertisement will be immediately taken off. If two thirds of experts agree, the advertiser will be fined. If 90% of

experts agree (i.e., an obvious use of technologies) - also TV channel shown that advertisement will be fined.

Nevertheless, what then is allowed? One can tell about the real and concrete positive features of a concrete product in comparison with analogues. One can tell about a company, its intents and purposes, that it sets in its activities in relation to the consumer. Simple, clear, concrete and definite.

As examples, we enumerate just some aspects of advertising, which should disappear on request to remove «technologies».

All kinds of «stories» will disappear. Well-known popular people will no more act in TV advertisements. Pseudo-doctors in white coats. Vulgar and cheeky boys and girls. «Purring» undressing women. Women showing beautiful hair, which has become so beautiful supposedly due to advertised shampoo. Sweet children faces and their plump bodies. Sound reinforcement in advertisements. And so on, so on. Frequent broadcast of advertisements as one of techniques of aggressive advertising should also disappear. As for «subliminal message» and various sound encoding - all these are already criminal.

As an example, we consider an advertisement of tinned fish.

An ordinary man (woman) says (or voice-over): «Our company offers tinned fish of high quality. It is made of newly caught fish on shipboard. The process can be observed online on such-and-such website. Please taste our products». At this moment a concrete company's product (to identify it in the window) and a company's trademark are demonstrated, for example, on the quarter of screen in normal colours, without any flashes and so on. The company's name must be repeated no more than 3 times. Everything is decent.

If, for example, a steam iron is advertised, it is quite enough to show how it functions with no frills. If comfortable nappies are advertised, it is enough to show how they are comfortable but on a doll.

The meaning is clear. Advertisements «with a human face».

Someone, perhaps, will say that such advertisements are boring. These people are like children. They can eat any «dish» with «delicious sauce». But without «sauce» - nothing.

The given restriction should be applied also to the methods of broadcasting TV advertisements. It will be nice to impose time restriction on advertisements, for example, to show them in every 19-20th minutes (i.e. 19-20th, 39-40th, 59-60th minutes of every hour), regardless of time of day. It is unethical to increase advertising in popular programmes. For instance, no more than 3 repetitions per day on one channel with a break in the broadcast for at least an hour, and no more than 3 consecutive days with one week break after that. Otherwise, it becomes a «technology». Such mode of advertisement broadcast will provide access to public consciousness and overwhelming majority of viewers.

When a ban will be imposed on «technology» and advertisements will have a «human face», it is quite acceptable to broadcast counter-advertisements. As advertisers, enumerating good qualities of the product, mustn't enumerate bad qualities. But counter-advertisements must be correct and responsible for every used word.

In case of ban imposition on «technologies», advertising will become correct, business and worthy of public attention, its audience will expand. People will listen to it. There will be no need to reduce level of TV-broadcasts.

To «vivify» the process of advertising is possible by means of a «game» organized

around it. For example, the viewers who have noticed the use of technologies can copy a controversial episode and send their comments to the expert group. When TV advertisement will be taken off because of «disparity», the channel itself must announce about it in Prime Time, show a fragment, give explanations and reveal names and cities of the first three viewers who have sent comments.

Such «game» will probably raise the level of people's criticality to the information they receive (as well as to life).

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