

# Lecture 7

Scripts for PSA and TV commercials

# Copywriting for visual media

- Seeing local ads in some movie theatres before the programmes start.
- Television provides access to the majority of home and, therefore, the largest audience.
- It is the most expensive advertising medium
- It has driven the writers and producers of commercials to refine their technique so as to deliver a complete message in a small amount of time.

- PSA (Public Service Announcements) are messages that broadcast for the public good.
- TV stations help the community to which they broadcast and fulfill an obligation to broadcast over public airwaves.

# Clients needs and priorities

- PSA and TV ads are commissioned by a client.
- Commissioned programming does not have an audience measurement expressed in terms of box office revenue.
- Advertisers expect to measure the effect of an ad in increased sales.
- A PSA is often aimed to change people's behaviour.

# 20, 30 and 60 second playlets

- Ads in the form of 20 and 30 second playlets are almost a new art form.
- They are a popular art form born of the television age and the need to compress visual messages into very short and expensive timeslots.

- A copywriter is not a full range scriptwriter and also usually has to write print media ads.
- Although this book primarily serves the interest of scriptwriters, the visual thinking that underlies billboards and transport ads relates to both copywriting and scriptwriting.

# Visual writing

- Television advertising needs visual idea.
- The scene description contributes to a visual idea that transcends the screen moment and rests on many of the moments.
- A dialogue itself is not visual writing but a necessary component of it.

# Types of Ads and PSAs

- Humour
  - People are attracted by humour.
  - Either the characters are funny, the spoken lines are amusing or have clever turns.
  - It carries a risk of not being funny enough for your audience.
  - Bad jokes or unfunny humour can be a turn-off.

- Shock

- It is a way of getting audience attention.
- It can take many forms; violence, funny, etc.
- It is easy to shock audience but hard to fold the element into an effective message.

- Suspense

- Suspense is a different way of getting an audience's attention.
- Shock images often lead into suspense.
- Suspense means that the device makes the audience hold its breath until it knows the outcome.
- Suspense, like shock, is easy to start and hard to finish.

- Drama

- Drama in ads can become mini series that audience become intrigued about the next episode.
- The strategy is to mime little dramas typical of real life and organise a happy ending on the use of the product.

- Kids

- People respond to cute kids and cute animals.
- Temporarily, they stop using their brains and respond emotionally.

- Testimonial

- There are two types of testimonials: real and fake.
- Simulated testimonial occurs on TV everyday in ads for painkiller and cold remedies. Cosmetics, perfumes and beauty products often use an actress as a poster girl for their products.

- Special effects
  - There are many software toolkits on PC that can create stunning graphics and animation that contemporary scriptwriters can fantasise scenes without a problem.

- Sexuality

- Sexual innuendo is the oldest technique of all.
- A strong seductive technique of persuasion is the look straight into the lens.
- A shampoo ad confers sexual power on the woman who uses it.

# Conclusion

- Advertising and promotional budgets often allow writers and producers to exploit all the special effects and all the technology of the medium.
- They require visual writing and rely on strong visual communication.