

TELEVISION A POTENT FORCE FOR IMPROVING SOCIAL PLEDGES



During an Advertising seminar held in Cannes earlier this year, former President Bill Clinton had beseeched how Advertising can help build a better world. Marketing body Thinkbox has commissioned research into how television ads can assist in making positive and affirmative changes in the behaviors of viewers. They are seeking to find the relationship of ads in inducing people to be more inclined not only towards charities, government initiatives but also for the socially-oriented agendas of more commercial organizations. The marketer had earlier focused its studies on how investing money on TV can generate a financial return on investment for advertisers. The study is hoping to tell advertisers that ads, apart from helping them recover money on their investments can also help them achieve their social goals. Advertisers prime objectives are to make ads that would attract prospective buyers and clients to their products and services and social-concerns are not in their list of priorities. The study will help demonstrate how commercial organizations can go beyond charities to fulfill their social responsibilities. This could include recycling schemes or other similar schemes. Or by telling viewers that part of what they spend on any particular product will be used for a pre-determined social project. Do we care? Are our buying decisions based on ethics? Can the feel-good factor influence our buying decisions? Is it enough for an advertiser to tilt his campaign toward addressing such an audience, if one exists? For example all of Apple's advertising the product is supreme. But suppose Apple were to advertise and say that we were eliminating arsenic and flame retardants from their products, there products would lose their appeal and could put a large number of potential buyers off. The study will seek to find if the advertisers would like to exploit, a segment that was likely to be small, or do they not have social concerns at all. Adman Don Draper says, *"Advertising is based on one thing, happiness. And you know what happiness is? Happiness is the smell of a new car. It's freedom from fear. It's a billboard on the side of the road that screams reassurance that whatever you are doing is okay. You are okay."* How much better it would be if that happiness would come from the knowledge that the business you're buying from is doing valuable social service, that buying from them is helping to make things okay and eventually will benefit society at large. The study promises to shed light on advertising's contribution to economic growth as well as the moral and social role it can play in everyday life and society.