

ADS FOR LAXATIVES, TOILET PAPER, CONDOMS AND TAMPONS, HUSH-HUSH NO MORE: UNMENTIONABLES COME OUT OF THE CLOSET



Ads these days are becoming more forthright and blunt and products that were earlier taboo and mentioned only in murmured undertones are being unabashedly being advertised and touted for their quality and usefulness. That ads have become franker and more up-front is evident from a huge display, an inflatable 18-foot tall pill bottle that contains laxative pills, put up at Penn Station. The display is targeting people suffering from constipation an embarrassing ailment that people did not discuss with anyone, save their doctors. To think that it has now become a focal point of public discussion in a marketing effort for a consumer product, shows how avant-garde advertisement has become. Societal mindsets have changed and they are coming out of their conservative frame of mind and accepting ads for products like laxatives, toilet paper, condoms and tampons just as they would for other products of daily use. It is not that such ads were not advertised earlier but they were done in hush-hush tones. Modess sanitary napkins, years ago, advertized their product using just two words, "Modess ... because." Menstruation in those days was a topic that if discussed in the open would be considered most discourteous and uncivil. These days not only have ads for these once 'unmentionables' become more frequent and open, even the language has changed. Ads for Pedia-Lax recommend that parents brush up on their knowledge of the digestive health of their children, using the tagline, "Get the scoop on poop." Ads for Cottonelle Fresh Care, flushable wipes sold by Kimberly-Clark want users to coin funny names for their product whilst Charmin, Procter & Gamble's toilet paper brand, introduces itself on Twitter saying, "We all go to the bathroom. Those who go with Charmin really enjoy the go!" Marcie Klein, senior vice president at Pollock Communications in New York said that people will not object to "frank dialogue" about "previously unmentionable subjects" if they feel that is "done in an authentic, relatable and tastefully humorous way." The pill-bottle prop was set up to make people aware that the medications that they are taking could be the cause of their constipation and that taking their pills could relieve them of their problems. Charlene Bailey, director of product management for products that can be marketed over-the-counter said, we emphasize that our products works gently and through the night, "Research shows us that at times, people are a little embarrassed to discuss" constipation but once they do, they're glad, because they realize they're not alone." Moreover once they have overcome their initial hesitation in discussing the taboo topic they will find it easier to discuss it with others who share their agony. She said that is the reason why the brand has a presence on social media like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube is because the new openness makes it easier for them to "recommend the brand to family or friends." Analysts however, feel that it was still not certain whether such a forthright way of promoting a taboo product was the right way and feared that it could push away a certain section of the people. Bailey said that she would not like to alienate prospective buyers and would respect the mindset of the conservative and traditional older generation, but the younger customers, who hold contrary opinions on such subjects, have also to be taken into consideration.