Gasoline, Motor Oil: Which Is More Important? Essay, Research Paper

Gasoline, Motor Oil: Which is more important?

Any driver will testify that they want to feel safe in their cars, motor oil and gasoline advertisers argue that each product is important to the driver while striving to accomplish the goal of making this feeling a reality. With drivers being put through more and more rigorous conditions on this nations roads and highways, how could anyone not want to feel safe in their cars? Travel by automobile has become increasingly viewed as one of the safest modes of travel. Automobile travel has continued to increase – a testament to its growing status as the leading mode of travel within the U.S. Gasoline and motor oil advertisers have sharply tuned in to this trend. The advertisers must decide on how to use the statistics to their advantage. They need to decide what types of people they want to target with their ads – the old? young? male? female? – and what values and desires this group may share. Two uniquely different targets are apparent in recent newspaper ads for Amoco Ultimate gasoline and Quaker State motor oil.

The ad for Amoco Ultimate gasoline consists of a picture of the Grand Canyon with the Amoco Ultimate sponsored race car heading right for the cliff. The main picture of the Grand Canyon shows the wide gaping gorge with a beautifully colored sky overhead. With dust flying behind it, the race car appears to be speeding towards the cliff. The car is painted red, white and blue. The advertisers have typed “ultimate car”, with the word ultimate bold faced, in the upper left hand corner of the page with a line drawn to the car. Underneath the photo is the slogan ” You expect more from a leader. And you get it.”

The ad for Quaker State motor oil shows a bottle of motor oil with the word Re-Formulated stamped in red across the top of the bottle. The word Quaker State – stamped in big bold White lettering – lies on the middle of the bottle. A picture of a mid-size car, possibly a Ford Taurus, is underneath the Quaker State lettering. Typed in yellow are the words “for protection beyond 3000 miles” and followed in white by the phrase “Under any driving conditions”. Typed below the bottle in big black letters is ” This doesn’t mean missing your 3000 mile oil change is okay. It just means you’ll still have a car to abuse tomorrow.” The word “this” is circled in red and an arrow is drawn to the phrase typed in yellow on the bottle. There is an odometer in the bottom left hand corner rolling over from 3000 to 3001. Written in the bottom right hand corner are the words sensible technology.

What is the target audience for these two ads? What characteristics might someone find appealing about these ads? Clearly the Amoco Ultimate ad is aimed at the younger, faster, wreck less driver, especially the racing fan. As NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) has shown lately, the age of race car drivers has become increasingly younger. Amoco is focusing in on this fact and using it as a sales technique. My perception of the Amoco Ultimate ad is that it is targeting those drivers who tend to feel the urge to drive fast. The ad is telling them ” Be free, driving fast is not only for race car drivers. Have faith that no matter how fast you drive your car; we will still keep it purring like a race car.

What were the advertisers choices in making this ad to portray this message? The Grand Canyon – with its auburn colored walls and crevices, its cloud cover with the purplish tint – creates a sense of comfortable, pleasant, lovely, and calm environment. Figuring out the rest of the ad becomes a bit more complicated. Why the race car? Why does it appear to be speeding towards a cliff? Why is it called the Ultimate car? This is the only car in the picture and it appears to portray the vision of control. Why? To operate a race car, the driver must have total control of the car and that is what the ad is trying to say.

While the Amoco Ultimate ad tries to sway drivers to think that gasoline is the most important asset to cars, the Quaker State ad relies upon the fact that motor oil is just as important to cars. This ad is geared more towards the family driver and not the younger and faster driver. This ad is a little easier to figure out: Re-Formulated Quaker State motor oil offers car owners protection beyond 3000 miles, under any driving conditions, keeping engines running clean and trouble free. Quaker State put a family car on the front of the bottle to symbolizing the average size family car. The statement “RE-Formulated” lets me know that they made changes to the product. For protection beyond 3000 miles is a bold statement. The average oil change happens at 5660 miles and is increasing 5% annually. This ad doesn’t say that it is okay to drive more than 3000 miles before you change your oil. The ad mearly suggests that if you do drive more than 3000 miles your car will still be safe. This ad makes the driver feel more secure about when to change the oil. This ad promotes a sense of security in the type of motor oil used.

Now we see two different ways that a driver can feel safer in a car. The Amoco

Ultimate ad tries to stress the fact that no matter how hard a driver pushes their engine, it will still

continue to function as well as a race car. It appeals to racing values associating gasoline with

race cars, and showing that people who drive fast can feel safe and secure. In contrast, the

Quaker State ad shows that oil is just as important as gasoline because you can have protection

beyond 3000 miles even if you forget to change the oil at the 3000 mile mark. It is clear that

gasoline and oil are very important to an engine. Together they make a driver feel safer on the

road.