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A4: Visual Rhetorical Analysis

Introduction

Venfield is a non-profit organization that created the “Save Water. Save Life.” campaign in order to raise awareness of the consequences of wasting water. They wanted to reach the general public, evidenced by the advertisement showing up in subways, bus stops, and city billboards. Venfield uses a combination of a thought-provoking visuals, simple layout, and an emotional appeal in order to achieve its goal.

Visuals

At first look, the eye is immediately drawn to the only colored object in the ad, the goldfish. The next item we are likely to notice are the words “Save water. Save life.” which are clear and centered in the visual, making them easy to understand. The color scheme is simple, using essentially two colors, orange and various gradients of gray. The orange is bright and eye-catching, so it is the first thing we notice, and first



Figure 1: “Save Water. Save Life.” Advertisement

impressions last, so we are likely to remember this part of the advertisement if nothing else. The rest of the advertisement is in different shades of gray. According to Cameron Chapman, a

professional web and graphic designer with over 6 years of experience, gray is used where “formality and professionalism are key.” This is successful in convincing the audience of the designer’s credibility. The gray color scheme also serves as a flexible background, allowing it to fit into many locations for easy ad placement, reaching more people.

Layout

Although the visuals play a big role in this advertisement, the layout is what pulls everything together. As noted earlier, our eyes are first drawn to the fish due to its bright color. Since we read from left to right, the next thing we notice are the words: “Save water. Save life.” Finally, we take in the entire visual as a whole, making the connection between the words and the image of water in the fishbowl slowly emptying out, leading to the fish’s demise. The water is not being used for anything else, it is just forming a puddle and going to waste. This is thought-provoking, calling attention to the fact that we can help save lives simply by saving water which is not even being used for anything else. It would be so easy to close the tap to save the fish, and likewise it would be so easy for us to save water and save many lives over our own lifetime. The visuals, with the help of the layout, help us come to this conclusion fairly quickly.

Pathos

The combination of a simple layout and visuals helps us understand the message at once, and the message itself connects to our emotions. According to the 2019-2020 National Pet Owners Survey conducted by the American Pet Products Association (APPA), sixty-seven percent of U.S. households, or about 85 million families, own a pet. Seeing a goldfish left to die for no reason will connect to many people, and even if one does not own a pet, they almost definitely know someone who owns a pet, still giving them a personal connection to the ad. At

any rate, seeing a goldfish die will not sit well with the majority of people and will force them to think about how their actions could have negative consequences. Studies have found that “emotionally arousing events are usually better remembered than neutral ones” (Sommer, Gläscher, Moritz, and Büchel, “Emotional enhancement”). This is known as emotional enhancement of memory (EEM). Venfield understands that EEM will make their message have a lasting impact with the masses and allow them to achieve their goal of raising awareness and making a difference to help save water.

Conclusion

This advertisement for the “Save Water. Save Life.” campaign is successful in its goal to raise awareness to the general population about the dangers of wasting water and how easy it is to help. They use the colors and organization to allow a glance at the advertisement to intrigue us and quickly understand the message. Their point itself is simple but provocative by using an emotional appeal almost everyone will respond to. This allows the advertisement to have a long-lasting impact that leads us to want to make a change in our lives.

Works Cited

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