

Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in Advertising

Ethos in Advertising

Advertising with ethos is about convincing a consumer that your company is more reliable, credible, and trustworthy than any other one. That's why they should buy from you and patronize your stores. Ethos often uses celebrity endorsements, factual statements, and real-life examples to certify their prominence.

Ethos examples in ads

Any celebrity endorsement is the work of ethos.

I like to focus on the Michael Jordan commercials here. Specifically, the one where he and Mia Hamm face off. This black and white commercial asserts them both as athletes at the top of their game. They have command in their sport, and any other sport you can think about.

The dueling here allows them both to endorse the one thing they agree on; Gatorade.

Pathos in Advertising

Pathos is all about audience manipulation. You want to make sure you gather emotional responses from viewers. It can be positive or negative, but each has to pop. Think about ads for acid reflux. We see people in pain, but medicine makes them better. Or think about ads where we see people having fun or doing good works. How can your product help improve their lives?

Pathos examples in ads

What kinds of ads rely heavily on pathos?

How about beer commercials?

Sure, many of them focus on people having a blast, but Budweiser also knows how to tug at your heartstrings. They've become perennial favorites with their animal ads during the Super Bowl.

The "lost puppy" one is one of my favorites.

It stuck with me and brought a tear to my eye.

Other moving ads that deal with Pathos can be targeted at certain groups.

Toys R' Us ran an incredibly successful campaign targeted at parents who wanted to share Star Wars with their kids.

This ad not only has cute babies but the maturation of a kid who grows to love and understand her father. It uses humor to sneak into your heart and stays there.

Logos in Advertising

An advertisement using logos will give you the evidence and statistics you need to understand what the product does and how it can make your life even better than it was before you used it. The facts used here should be the "straight facts." things like "You get 100% of your vitamin D from a glass of milk," or "an hour of play helps prevent childhood obesity."

Logos examples in ads

Facts are mostly used to sell products and services in print ads. They are taglines on the bottle like "10% more than other brands" and "get 100% of your daily dose of XYZ."

But they definitely occur in digital ads as well.

Think about Billy Mays and Oxy Clean.

His popular infomercial was just a showcase of the cold, hard, facts about his product.

Sure, it had glitz and glamour, but at the end of the day he was leaning into practicality.

And what about other ads?

Like something for toilet paper.

Charmin wants you to know how soft they are. To do that, they measure the size of their sheets and so them side by side. We see that Charmin stacks up higher and must be softer.