

## **Advertising – Jenny Craig**

Advertisers often play on people's insecurities. Our culture is obsessed with appearance. Obesity has become a national problem. It is common knowledge that weight loss is simply a matter of adopting a healthier lifestyle, yet most overweight people still somehow cannot achieve success. These people are seeking a simple solution to the problem. Jenny Craig promises an easy weight-loss system, where Jenny and a personal consultant will guide them through the process.

Jenny Craig is a weight-loss program, in which one buys the prepackaged foods and has the use of a "weight-loss consultant" to help with motivation. Kirstie Alley, a television actress, is one of their current spokespersons. Last year, Ms Alley appeared on the Oprah Winfrey show after she had lost 75 pounds using the Jenny Craig program. The print ad for Jenny Craig with Kirstie Alley appears in the November issue of Oprah magazine.

The introduction of an ad should attract the consumer and express the fundamental nature of the ad (Silverblatt 232).. In a print ad, the introduction consists of the brand name and the headline. The brand, Jenny Craig, brings to mind an actual person. She is someone who can help us with our weight problem. The headline reads "75 lost. 365 & Counting". This relays the information that Kirstie lost 75 pounds and kept it off for 365 days. We get the basics immediately. The text then explains in more

detail. “Jenny” taught Kirstie healthy habits that were easy to implement. She emphasizes that this is not a diet, but a plan. This seems to be a contradictory message-- on the one hand, it is easy; however, it is something that cannot be accomplished without assistance.

In advertising, the media communicator may be comprised of more than one person. The ad features a large picture of Kirstie Alley in a glamorous evening gown. The wording is in Kirstie’s voice explaining about her successful weight loss using the Jenny Craig system.. Usually the actor or model in an ad is not the actual communicator. In this case as Kirstie claims to have used the product, it’s possible she actually contributed to the message. Kirstie was a popular actress in the sitcom, *Cheers*; and, more recently, in the comedy, *Fat Actress*, which focused on her weight problems.. Audiences tend to accept recommendations from celebrities. As Kirstie did struggle with weight issues, she gains even more credibility. As she says in the ad “We’ve all been there—gain, lose, gain, lose.” She’s famous, but she’s also one of us.

The fact that this ad appears in Oprah magazine may give it authority as well. Oprah is well respected and extremely influential. Her hardships with weight issues are renowned. Readers of Oprah magazine would likely be aware that Kirstie Alley has appeared on the Oprah Winfrey show several times, which further cements the association between the two celebrities in the mind of the reader.

It may be thought that Jenny Craig, the woman who developed this weight loss regimen and whose name is on the company, is one of the communicators. One of the

company's slogans on the ad reads "Have you called Jenny yet?" implying that Jenny is personally involved with the company. We could just call her. Kirstie often refers to Jenny as if she were actually helping her with the program. In fact five years ago, Jenny Craig sold the firm to two New York-based investment firms.

It is apparent who the audience for this ad is. Oprah and Kirstie Alley are both women, both about 50 years old. Probably the magazine and the weight-loss program are targeting the same demographic. Most weight loss products are bought by women. Oprah magazine at \$4.95 is one of the higher-priced magazines. Researching some diet reviewers, it was determined that the plan costs \$6/week and the prepackaged food \$125/week. (It was impossible to get information on the price of the food from the Jenny Craig website). The Jenny Craig plan is not inexpensive. These ads are directed at upscale, middle-aged women.

Advertising often reflects our cultural concerns (Silverblatt 222). In our society, appearance has become a top priority, especially for women. When it comes to beauty, being slender is a large component. Most of the ads in this magazine are for beautifying products. There are several articles regarding healthy eating, exercise and anti-aging regimens. While we want to be healthy and beautiful, we really don't want to work that hard at it. According to Kristie "Jenny was easy for me to stick to." It is difficult to have to plan, buy and prepare healthy meals. Jenny Craig, for a price, will do that for us. The plot in this ad is depicted in two pictures. In addition to the large, beautiful one of Kirstie, there is a small insert of the old Kirstie. These two images tell the story of

Kirstie's weight loss using the Jenny Craig plan. In the insert picture, she is, of course, fatter. She is also wearing a frumpy dress, without the fancy jewelry and windswept hairdo. Apparently Jenny is beneficial for the wardrobe and hair as well.

This ad employs qualifier words which are not immediately apparent. The headline states "75 lost\*. 365 & counting\*" (notice the asterisk). The number 75 is  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches tall, and the 365 is  $\frac{15}{16}$  inches tall. At the bottom of the page, in letters  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch tall, it reads "\*results not typical."

Each type of media has its own characteristics when delivering the message to the audience (Silverblatt 215). This same ad has been shown on television, where the product can quickly garner the public's attention. The print ad has its own advantages. The text goes into some detail about the program and includes a telephone number and website address that can be referred back to. The ad gets editorial support in that it appears in Oprah magazine which could be seen as an endorsement by Oprah Winfrey. Other ads and articles in the magazine conform to the same ideology which give it support as well.

Jenny Craig uses the partnership of a likeable actress, Kirstie Alley, who appears in the publication of an admired talk show host to appeal to women of the same frame of mind. This ad wants the audience to believe that a particular woman, Jenny, along with a personal consultant, are there to help them solve their problems. The reader who wants to lose weight will not have to go through the process alone.

