Michael Wuta

Storytelling as a critical success factor in video advertisements

An empirical analysis of storytelling elements deployed in the most viewed video advertisements

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Storytelling as a critical success factor in video advertisements: An empirical analysis of storytelling elements deployed in the most viewed video advertisements.

Research dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MSc in Global Brand Management

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Dedication

I would like to thank my family and friends for giving me the strength to undertake this research project. Without their support, this achievement would not have been possible.
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Abstract

**Storytelling as a critical success factor in video advertisements: An empirical analysis of storytelling elements deployed in the most viewed video advertisements.**

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In this dissertation, it was shown that storytelling is a critical success factor in video advertisements, and storytelling elements are a permanent and significant feature of the 30 most viewed video advertisements as determined by the YouTube Ads Leaderboard for the years 2014, 2015, and 2016.

While the role of storytelling in advertisements and its persuasive power on the consumer behaviour have been widely researched, empirical studies on the presence and significance of storytelling elements deployed in successful video advertisements are missing. The research objectives of this study were to identify and analyse the storytelling elements deployed in the 30 most viewed video advertisements, and to provide guidance for marketers and advertisers so that they can understand the vital storytelling elements in video advertisements and consequently make the most of this technique. This exploratory research is based on an interpretivist research philosophy and qualitative research methodologies for the data collection and analysis were applied. Using qualitative content analysis, this study empirically examined the storytelling elements deployed in the 30 most viewed video advertisements. As a result, 12 elements are identified as vital elements for video advertisements: message, conflict, characters, beginning/middle/end, authenticity, reversal, connectedness, the basic plots, archetypes, fictional story, emotions, and music. These findings provide insights for marketers and advertisers aiming to convey their messages through storytelling in video advertisements. While there is no set formula for a successful video advertisement, this study revealed that a few vital storytelling elements appeal to a global audience and some of the most viewed video advertisements have these elements in common.

Keywords: storytelling, narratives, video advertisements, YouTube Ads Leaderboard, storytelling elements, online advertising, rich media