

JUST FOR FUN:

AN EMPIRICALLY BASED FRAMEWORK FOR ADVERTISING FUN

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ABSTRACT

Over 97 percent of adults report that having fun is important. The positive psychology movement has sparked new research on fun in various disciplines, yet advertising fun remains an understudied topic. The current research aims to develop new insight into how two core elements of advertising effectiveness – source characteristics and ad execution – intersect to deliver fun. Phenomenological interviews reveal three core characteristics of a fun brand – magnetic energy, authentic benevolence, and adventurous spirit. These core characteristics intersect to create four distinct types of fun, and real-world examples illustrate how advertisers deliver fun. This research contributes to advertising scholarship by (a) expanding the fun discourse into the advertising literature, (b) creating an empirically based framework for advertising fun, and (c) developing a new concept – the zone of unexpected relatability – as an optimal area for wholesome fun advertising.

KEYWORDS

Fun, advertising, brand communication, ad engagement, qualitative research