

COMM 320 Intro to Advertising – Spring 2020 – Geico Assignment

Group or Individual Assignment: you may work in teams of 2-3 students or work individually: If working as team, 1 submission per team

Extending the Geico “Surprising! What’s not surprising.” TV Campaign

Due Date: Wednesday, March 4, 12midnight in Canvas folder

Geico Insurance Company has multiple campaigns running at the same time. All of the campaigns use humor which in turn leads to a simple benefit statement about Geico. For this assignment, you will consider just one of their campaigns. That is the “Surprising! What’s not surprising.” campaign. This campaign uses situations that are humorous and unexpected as the set-up to the selling statement about Geico.

Examples of the campaign you will be extending include:

Ice T at a lemonade stand

The running of the bulldogs

Marco Polo playing Marco Polo

Triangle solo at symphony

In addition to the visual story, the off-air announcer explains the action with some sort of wordplay. For example, the announcer says, “The running of the bulldogs” with an ironic delivery since the “running of the bulls” is the scene being depicted through the streets of the Spanish city of Pamplona except with bulldogs. Note that some of the commercials also have actors speaking such as the Ice T commercial.

Your assignment is to create the next humorous 30 second Geico TV commercial based specifically on the “Surprising! What’s not surprising” campaign. The requirement of the assignment is to develop the set-up situation and accompanying spoken line from the off-screen announcer. As noted, in the Ice T spot, there may also be lines spoken by the actors. In that commercial, several people walking by all ask the same question, “Is that Ice T” with the children saying “No, it’s lemonade.” That set-up leads to the reveal of the actor Ice T who also speaks. The off-air announcer then says, “Ice T at a lemonade stand – Surprising! “What’s not surprising is how much money Mary saved by switching to Geico. 15 minutes could save you 15% or more.”

Note: In every spot, the announcer says the same thing after the set-up: – Surprising! “What’s not surprising is how much money Mary saved by switching to Geico. 15 minutes could save you 15% or more.” You must write the same announcer line to receive full credit.

How to develop the new script: First of all, study the existing Geico commercials. Notice how they create irony through the visual situation. Often, it's a situation that we are familiar with taken to extremes or with an ironic twist. Sometimes it's a reveal: we don't see what's going on until near the end of the spot. (Ice T at lemonade stand.) In the development stage, consider all options that could lead to a humorous and ironic situation.

Irony: a state of affairs or an event that seems deliberately contrary to what one expects and is often amusing as a result.

Note, you must come up with a situation that is new but still fits the Geico campaign. For example, don't have people in a convenience store asking if a product is 50 cent over and over. And, then reveal that the rap artist 50 Cent is in the store. That's far too similar to the Ice T concept. Also, this is a national commercial. Be sure your theme would be understood by people from all walks of life.

My expectations:

This assignment requires writing only – no recording or storyboard required. When you have an idea for the set-up that is of the same style and humor as the existing "Surprising!" campaign, describe the basics of the set-up situation. The announcer must say the exact same words after the "Surprising!" Set-up. "What's not surprising is how much money Mary saved by switching to Geico. 15 minutes could save you 15% or more."

If you work as a team be sure each team member's name is on the Word Document. Submit only 1 Word Document per team into Canvas.

Sample Submission. Based on running of the bulldogs 30 second TV spot

Spot opens with dozens of men in traditional Spanish garb running at full speed down a narrow street in a Spanish town. Cut to man who has fallen down on the street. Cut to woman spectator in a grandstand putting face in hands in great sorrow. Cut back to man who has fallen. He says "Please Please" asking for help but no one stops. He lies on the street and looks to a blind corner for what's to come. Rounding the corner are many bulldogs. Close up of bulldogs. They run around and past the fallen man. One bulldog however stops and licks the man's face. Man whimpers as if in pain – although he's fine. Face licking continues. ANNCR: The running of the bulldogs? Surprising! What's not surprising is how much money Aleah saved by switching to Geico. Cut to woman holding computer tablet with Saved \$307 with Geico on screen. Cut back to man who has now gotten up. He climbs up and over fence. Bulldog tries to follow. ANNCR: 15 minutes could save you 15% or more. SUPER: over scene with man and dog. Geico Logo.

Grading criteria: The grading for the Geico TV project is as follows: Idea for the TV spot 25%*. Irony created 25%. Humor created 25%. Clarity of writing and announcer line 25%.

*Original concept that fits into the Geico campaign but is different in theme, action and spoken language. If you have questions or have an idea you would like me to review, see me before or after class.