

Seduced by Jenny

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Greta Garbo was once “named the most beautiful woman that ever lived” (Guinness World Records, 2013). As a Hollywood movie actor in the 1920s and 30s, she had grace, style, talent, drive, and sex appeal. She also invariably had a cigarette in her hand with the sultry smoke highlighted by high-key lighting. The significant dangers of cigarettes were unknown to the public in the 1930s and 40s. Smoking at the time was part of daily life and women like Greta Garbo gave it tacit endorsement. In the 1950s, Lucille Ball and Ronald Reagan were the faces on American cigarette advertisements. By the 1970s just prior to ban on television advertising of cigarettes, super-model and actor Cheryl Tiegs was on billboards and television ads with a cigarette in her hand while living the healthy life. Since the beginning of modern advertising sex appeal has been used to influence buyers. However, all of the sexy and sultry lifestyle ads for cigarettes came to a screeching halt until the development of the eCig or electronic cigarette. The eCig does not qualify as a tobacco cigarette and is not subject to the advertising laws as cigarettes. This makes the blu eCigarette advertisements a new way to introduce Madison Avenue advertising techniques to a new generation of smokers. The new ad campaign for Lorillard’s blu eCig shows how sexuality used in the glory days of cigarette advertising is still a very effective way of selling cigarettes.

E-cigarettes are a class of medical devices known as electronic nicotine delivery systems. These devices deliver nicotine along with flavorings to the lungs through a plastic tube that holds a micro-vaporization system that converts a lightly heated liquid to simulate the feeling of smoking a cigarette. The design is brilliant enough to include the production of vapor to simulate smoke, and a light at the tip of the cigarette to substitute for the burning end of a real cigarette.

The vapor does not contain tar or other chemicals found in cigarettes that burn. This is an attractive feature of the product.

blu eCigs' 2013 television commercial titled "Freedom" featuring Jenny McCarthy is a sixty-second seduction selling the new electronic cigarette. Jenny is the vixen who is helping perpetuate the message that eCigs are a smarter alternative to traditional cigarettes now that she has switched to blu (Blu Ecigs, 2013).

The blu eCig ads appear on television, the internet, and in print. McCarthy is an attractive model, actor, author, and activist who came on the scene in 1993 with her appearance in Playboy Magazine. Over the next ten years, she appeared in more than eighteen pop films, The View talk show, and today is the host of The Jenny McCarthy show (Biography 2013).

The ad is set in a trendy lounge with McCarthy dressed seductively in a cocktail dress. The other guests are in subdued lighting and slightly out of focus, but recognizable enough to know they are of similar age to McCarthy. The production designer transitions back and forth between color and black and white cinematography while McCarthy shares her reasons for using blu eCigs. The lighting highlights on the set are color matched to the electronic cigarette's blue tip, clearly distinguishing the blu eCig from a regular red-tipped burning cigarette. Even when the scene transitions to black and white, the blue highlights are superimposed making this a very inviting ad playing into the visual emotions of the viewer. The blue color suggests not only a cool temperature factor but also conveys a sense of cleanliness, trust and confidence (Mofarah, 2013). The setting is inviting to those who like drinking, socializing, and smoking.

Choosing McCarthy is effective for this ad. She appeals to both men and women of a certain age and genre. McCarthy is likeable; she makes the viewer feel as if she is having a personal conversation with them. She uses language that is hip, casual, light in tone, but also has

a sexy tone to it. She will use phrases such as, going out to the club, hanging out with friends, whip out my blu, and getting close with that special someone. Most of the sentences end with a raspy tone (vocal fry) on the last word that adds some authority and a little sex appeal to every statement (Quenqua, 2012). McCarthy uses her sexuality successfully in a Sex in the City sort of way. It is clear that the writers are using Aristotle's pathos means of persuasion here. The language McCarthy uses helps reinforce the reasons for smoking blu.

The visual images reinforce her casual yet sophisticated style but also infuse confidence in McCarthy as a spokesperson. The photography takes advantage of the viewer's point of view, by starting with a close up of McCarthy. The director then cuts to an establishing shot of her sitting in a chair in the lounge with other people around her. This backs off the up-close and personal aspect and brings the viewer into the overall gathering with other people. By cutting to medium shots of her smoking, and holding the blu pack during the conversation one begins to believe that smoking is a natural act for this environment. Now with the blu eCig, people can socialize, have a cocktail and smoke without the stigma that had become associated with smoking traditional cigarettes.

The message McCarthy conveys uses all of Aristotle's rhetorical styles. She uses a combination of ethos, pathos, and logos with just a few sentences that help the viewer decide that blu eCigs are a product worthy of buying. She uses expressions like, "I finally found a smarter alternative to cigarettes;" helping persuade the viewer with logic. In addition, "Blu satisfies me. I get to have a blu without the guilt because there's only vapor not tobacco smoke;" this brings in emotional appeal by minimizing guilt that some feel about smoking. Furthermore, she adds "it doesn't make my hair smell or my teeth yellow;" making the viewer value her credibility by being concerned about the way she looks (Blu Ecigs, 2013). These are all highly convincing

reasons for a current cigarette smoker to switch to blu. In addition, McCarthy makes smoking the blu eCig look like a lot of fun.

The blu eCig advertisement is effective. Measuring the effectiveness of the blu eCigs ad during its initial three-month run on the air is a bit challenging. Yet, initial research results and anecdotal evidence help support the effectiveness of the ad. Lorillard, the third largest manufacturer of cigarettes in the United States owns the blu eCig brand. Since the introduction of these ads, Lorillard has seen an increase in profits due to the blu eCig at a time when regular cigarette sales volumes have declined (Covington, 2013). In addition to profits increasing, the visits to the blucigs.com website have more than doubled to where it is ranks at 9,500 of all U.S. websites based on visits (Alexa, 2013). This early data, combined with heavy internet chatter and observing people purchasing blu eCigs in local markets, helps support the effectiveness of the advertisement. Study that is more extensive is necessary over time to measure the full effectiveness of this campaign.

The idea that sexuality sells reinforces the effectiveness of the “Freedom” advertisement for the electronic cigarette. Decades after cigarette advertisements were outlawed from the television airways a legal loophole allows the electronic cigarette to slip back onto the television screen. Moreover, with that small chink in the system manufacturers like Lorillard did not waste any time returning to their old successful ways of selling cigarettes. If they use a petty girl, show some skin, and add a sultry voice, the message becomes clear. Take back your freedom with blu eCigs and you can live the jet-set life of a sexy celebrity just like Jenny McCarthy.

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