Verbal Vs Nonverbal Communication in Social Marketing

Nicole Schultz
Syrianni Tidball
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Communication, as defined by Wikipedia, is a two-way process in which there is an exchange and progression of thoughts, feelings or ideas towards a mutually accepted goal or direction. There are two kinds of communication: verbal and nonverbal. In the world of advertising, both are used. There are some that prefer using verbal communication and there are some that prefer nonverbal communication, whichever will make their campaign more successful. There are some advantages and disadvantages to each. CSR, or corporate social responsibility, plays an important role in advertising. Advertisements must be in good taste. CSR marketing mostly affects visual advertisements because images can be misinterpreted. There are many case studies that provide information as to why companies chose to use verbal or nonverbal communication and how it works for them.

According to Wikipedia, verbal communication is a reciprocal conversation between two or more entities. Conversation holds many purposes but there are three methods to carry intentions (Verbal and Nonverbal Communication). The first is to tell people who we are, second is how we experience the world, and third is the meaning we attach to our experience (Verbal and Nonverbal Communication). Sometimes things like our personalities, attitudes, morals, beliefs, values and biases can get in the way and distort communication (Verbal and Nonverbal Communication). This could cause problems and send the wrong message. A wrong message can then become socially irresponsible and the ad will not do as well as what one would have hoped. "There is a myth that there is a way to ‘say it right’” (Verbal and Nonverbal Communication). Many times people know exactly what to
say to the other party because they know what they want to hear. In order to omit controversy, people will say the right thing, even if it conflicts with their own ethics. Again, this ties into CSR marketing. “Messages may be different from what we intend” (Verbal and Nonverbal Communication). Advertising in a social market can be risky because “one-way communication is highly inefficient in that there is no way to determine whether what is heard is what is intended” (Verbal and Nonverbal Communication).

Wikipedia defines nonverbal communication as the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless messages. A kind of nonverbal communication is visual communication. It is communication through visual aid (Nonverbal Communication). “It explores the idea that a visual message with text has a greater power to inform, educate or persuade a person” (Nonverbal Communication). Colors also play a part in communication. Red can increase one's blood pressure, respiration rate and heartbeat (Meade). Blue is a calming color (Meade). Colors are carefully chosen in advertising. Besides photographs, nonverbal communication also consists of our clothes, hair, jewelry, and makeup, just to name a few. They all tell our own personal story. Actions speak louder than words and this works for advertisements and should stay within the boundaries of socially responsible marketing. Kinesis is the science of nonverbal communication (Verbal and Nonverbal Communication). Even the way we carry ourselves is a way of nonverbal communication. Touching is the most powerful form of nonverbal communication and eye contact, posture, and gestures are also important (Verbal and Nonverbal Communication).
When communication is mentioned we automatically think of telephones, radio, television and books (Khan). Even though these mentioned are good sources of communication, it all started with nonverbal communication. According to Nonverbal Communications: Fact and Fiction, generations and generations of ancient tribes made do with nonverbal means of communication (Khan). 93% of communication is nonverbal (Meade). Out of that 93%, 55% of nonverbal communication is through facial expression, posture, or gestures, and 38% is through tone of voice (Meade).

According to Advertising and Nonverbal Communication, there are four theoretical subcategories for nonverbal communication. These four are classical conditioning, information processing, distraction, and mood induction (Advertising and Nonverbal Communication). This category has an unconditioned stimulus, the nonverbal element, and a conditioned stimulus, the brand (Advertising and Nonverbal Communication). “The ‘meaning’ of the nonverbal element is paired with the brand so that eventually the brand stands for or assumes the value of the nonverbal element in the advertisement” (Advertising and Nonverbal Communication). The second category, information processing, says that the nonverbal elements are processed in similar ways in the brain as verbal communication but the information retained is different from each other (Advertising and Nonverbal Communication). The third category, distraction, explains that nonverbal elements can be a distraction from the item’s attributes in an advertisement because the viewer’s attention is drawn more to explaining the nonverbal element if it is not clearly stated in the ad (Advertising and Nonverbal Communication).
Communication). Some cognitive processing is also interrupted by music when viewing television commercials (Advertising and Nonverbal Communication). The fourth and final category, mood induction, says that mood effects evaluations of things (Advertising and Nonverbal Communication). It said, “if a nonverbal element in an ad can influence a viewer’s mood toward being positive, then those positive feelings will be transferred to the brand in the ad” (Advertising and Nonverbal Communication). The visual nature of nonverbal elements is very effective and remembered easily (Advertising and Nonverbal Communication). “Nonverbal elements invoke positive feelings in the viewer and will increase the chance of the brand picking up a halo of those positive feelings,” says Advertising and Nonverbal Communication.

Nonverbal advertising seems to be more effective and the winner of the battle. Advertising and Nonverbal Communication says that there is a “rise of more nonverbal focused ads, such as image ads and ads that focus on affective qualities of a brand rather than tangible benefits”. Advertisers have to find a way to overcome clutter and make an impression on the audience without obtaining the audience’s full attention (Advertising and Nonverbal Communication). They also say that the recall of nonverbal elements in ads tend to be better than recall of verbal elements. Since most nonverbal elements are visual, they are processed faster and are more effective than text (Advertising and Nonverbal Communication). Renita Coleman, a professor at the University of Texas, states that visual images appeal to our subconscious. She says that we don’t process visual information critically the way we do verbal information. Mrs. Coleman explains that visuals are processed more
emotionally more so than verbal information. Sciencedirect.com also reiterates the fact that nonverbal communication works better than verbal communication; they state “findings suggest that the responses to the nonverbal (musical) cue evoke more responses involving images and visual associations”.

Verbal and nonverbal communication has advantages and disadvantages. Although they go hand in hand, separately, they are both lacking in ways. Advertisers have to practice CSR marketing when using each of these tactics.

Wikianswers.com says there are two advantages of verbal communication. The first is it has the opportunity to make sure the message was understood and second it has the opportunity to utilize nonverbal cues (tone, body language, inflection) (What are the advantages and disadvantages of verbal communication?).

Wikianswers.com says the advantages of nonverbal communication are:

1. They can communicate with someone who is hard of hearing or deaf.
2. They can communicate at a place where you are supposed to maintain silent.
3. They can communicate to save on time and use it as a tool to communicate with people who don’t understand your language (foreign markets).

These two ways of communication also have disadvantages. Wikianswers.com says that miscommunication is a disadvantage of verbal communication as well as what the listener hears is often no what is meant. The disadvantages of nonverbal communication are they can’t discuss the particulars of the message, it’s difficult to understand and requires a lot of repetition, and it can’t create an impression upon listeners (What are the advantages and disadvantages of
nonverbal communication). According to the site, Culture At Work, Communicating Across Cultures, some disadvantages of nonverbal communication are:

1. It’s imprecise.
2. It can’t explain complex ideas.
3. It’s hard to convey sarcasm.
4. It’s easy to misread.

As you can see, it depends on the market and what message an advertiser is trying to convey in order to produce a verbal or nonverbal campaign. It varies and the advertiser has to figure out which way of communication works the best through research.

Here are case studies that talk about the uses of nonverbal communication, or visual communication, and how well it worked for them. The first one is on the America Diabetes Association. According to Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaigns, 16 million people in the United States have diabetes, five million of which don't know. They informed millions of Americans of the dangers of the disease (Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaigns). They were to convince the people to call for a free screening and with that in mind, the ADA produced a visual campaign that “makes drives home a life-or-death point without being visceral” (Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaigns). Their goal was to quickly grab the viewers’ attention so the campaign illustrated many dangers of untreated diabetes such as blindness, heart disease, nerve disease that can lead to amputation, and more (Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaigns). These visual photographs in their campaign worked very well for them because the ADA
reported that there was an increase in phone traffic (Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaign). This is what they were hoping for and requests for appointments and free screenings also increased (Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaigns). This specific campaign received an ADDY Award and was a finalist in the New York festivals (Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaigns). While using images in their campaign, they used them responsibly and avoided controversy.

Another effective case study was about Roberto’s Taco Shop. According to Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaigns, all Mexican food is pretty much the same and that this food business is very competitive. When Roberto’s was forming its research, it found that its employees never seemed to be around for very long and every week there were new people (Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaigns). Roberto’s didn’t quite know where they went, possibly the Culinary Institute of America, but it turned out that the INS had them (Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaigns). This led the team to “tell the truth” (Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaigns). The results were “dramatic” and word-of-mouth worked well for them after the campaign pieces were released (Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaigns). One piece basically said that they get their cooks from trunks of cars that are crossing the border. Each piece had the tagline “So Good, It Should be Illegal”. This campaign had a feature story in a surfing magazine and made restaurant traffic increase a lot (Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaigns). This campaign became popular and people requested copies of the posters (Advertising Case Study, Effective Ad Campaigns). Although
this campaign was truthful, it was in good taste and they used their power responsibly.

Another infamous visual ad campaign is by Benetton. Their advertising philosophy is quite different than others’. According to the United Colors of Benetton’s website, it was “a trademark that became the driving force behind the ‘United Colors’ message, which formed the basis of the advertising visuals designed to create a growing network of ‘United People’”. Their visuals portray religious, race and political controversy. Benetton’s plan was to “integrate opposites, to unite differences under a single flag” (About Benetton-Our Campaign). Due to their controversial images and no explanation of what is being advertised with the ads, people talked and looked into what Benetton is. United Colors of Benetton said, “The reaction to these real-life photos was sometimes violent.” Some companies refused to print the ads because of the conflict that came with the campaign (About Benetton-Our Campaign). Benetton is the front-runner when it comes to ethical advertising and abused their power to use socially responsible marketing.

After my research of finding effective ad campaigns, I couldn’t find one that was successful without visual images as the main part of the campaign. Yet again, research says that nonverbal, or visual, communication seems to be the most effective.

So why do I care about the differences and results of verbal and nonverbal communication? After researching this topic, I have found that I want to be a visual advertiser. Through the research I found, most effective and successful campaigns rely on strong images. Since people remember pictures more easily than words,
advertising photos is the better route to go. When I reach the “real” advertising world, I want to have all the knowledge I can get, through research, through classes, anything that will make me a better advertiser. I need to know what my audience wants and what they will react to. I want to be inside their heads and predict how an ad will affect them. I strongly believe in the saying, “actions speak louder than words” and this can relate to advertising. People get emotionally attached to photos and erupts certain feelings. People remember feelings and how the feel about something. As people drive, passing billboards, their mind isn’t going to process text as well as seeing a picture. I want people to notice my advertisements but I don’t want to form negative attitudes toward them. I’m going to be a socially responsible and effective advertiser. By finding information on verbal and nonverbal communication, I have increased my knowledge database and can use the information when I advertise to better reach my audience.
Works Cited


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"What are the advantages and disadvantages of nonverbal communication?"


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[http://wiki.answers.com/Q/what_are_the_advantages_and_disadvantages_of_verbal_communication](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/what_are_the_advantages_and_disadvantages_of_verbal_communication)