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### Are You an All-Time Great Mom?

These days, mom-guilt is everywhere. Not only are moms supposed to be a super star at home, but they are also expected to perform outside of the home, as well. An ad for milk in *Good Housekeeping* magazine appeals to this mom-guilt to persuade moms to purchase milk. The advertisers successfully persuade the consumer that milk will make them a great mom by using nostalgia, milk branding, and the image of ideal motherhood.

The advertisement is located in an issue of *Good Housekeeping* from 1997. Typical readers of *Good Housekeeping* magazine are middle-aged women, the majority of them married with children with a middle class income. In 1997, readers would probably be in their 30s, having grown up in the 70s and possibly 80s. These readers are concerned with being a good housekeeper, and the articles in the magazine answer this need by addressing home ideas, recipes, beauty, among other things. Articles in the current issue include titles like "9 Homemade Cleaners You Can Make Yourself," "Cuddledown's Hotel Sateen Sheet Set Is Literally 'Wrinkle-Resistant,'" and "30 Easy Valentine's Day Cupcake Recipes to Make in February," clearly appealing to women who are looking for better, easier ways to manage their households, while making life sweet for their families. Advertisements in the magazine offer housecleaning and laundry products, food, beauty products, and medications.

The ad itself contains an eye-catching image of three famous TV moms sitting side by side in a hair salon: Mrs. Partridge from *The Partridge Family*, Mrs. Cunningham from *Happy Days*, and Mrs. Brady from *The Brady Bunch*. The three women are obviously in character, wearing brightly colored, vintage patterned dresses from the 60s/70s. From their perfectly done hair to their vintage shoes, each woman is dressed to impress. All three look impeccable, with jewelry, makeup, and hair done, with the exception of the milk mustache prominently displayed on each of their faces. Each woman is sitting under a vintage hair dryer in a hair salon from the 60s, complete with brown polka dotted wallpaper. The bold "MILK" at the bottom of the page with the famous, "Where's Your Mustached" slogan tell readers that this is an ad for milk. A short paragraph at the bottom of the page finishes off the ad with references to the TV shows, "all-time great moms," and the importance of drinking milk.

Right away, the advertisers catch the readers' attention with the use of nostalgia. The three TV moms remind them of afternoons and Saturday mornings spent watching these shows. They may have even grown up with the children on the shows and probably use references to the shows in everyday life, like "Marsha, Marsha, Marsha!" or "Pork-chops and apple sauce." The vintage outfits and shoes worn by the three moms and the vintage hair salon background help to reinforce the feeling of nostalgia provided by the ad. The text of the ad, which includes references to the shows, like "Don't play ball in the house" and "Joani, go to your room!" help to remind readers of the great episodes where the moms always solve their children's problems in "less than thirty minutes." Even the final word, "groovy," ties into the nostalgic feeling. Together, the image and the text bring readers back to a simpler time. By connecting readers with their childhoods, the advertiser puts them in a nostalgic state of mind, using this emotion to persuade them to purchase milk.

Building on this nostalgia, the advertiser continue to sell milk with persuasive milk branding, connecting milk with the fond memories of these great moms. Right away, readers notice the milk mustaches on the three moms, who smile at the reader, as if to say, "Milk...yummy!" Carol Brady holds a glass of milk up in her right hand—almost as if toasting the audience--, reinforcing the idea that the three moms are drinking milk. The text of the ad connects milk to health, citing milk's "9 essential nutrients" and pointedly saying that "your kids should drink it." The word milk in bold white letters at the bottom of the ad with the well-known tag-line, "Where's your mustache" reinforce the milk brand. Finally, a 1-800 number directs readers to learn more about the benefits of drinking milk. Readers now have connected milk with their happy childhood memories, building their desire to purchase milk.

To really bring the point home, the advertiser uses the image of ideal motherhood to convince the audience that milk will make them a good mom, just like the three moms in the ad. In fact, the three moms are known as iconic mother figures. The ad reminds readers of this with the text calling them "all-time great moms." For modern moms, the image presents an almost impossible standard. None of these women had to work, yet their husbands made enough money for them to dress in style. Who these days has time to get dressed up and go sit in a hair salon?! The three woman have their wedding rings prominently displayed on their left hands, reminding single moms of another "standard" that they have failed to reach. By showcasing these three iconic mothers, dressed as their characters, the advertiser helps readers make an unconscious connection between the image of ideal motherhood in their heads...and the reality in their lives. For this disconnect, the advertiser provides a simple solution: buy milk.

By using nostalgia, effective branding, and the image of ideal motherhood, the advertisers successfully convince the audience that milk will bridge the gap between the reality of their

lives and the impossible standards from their childhoods. Using mom-guilt is the perfect strategy to convince the women who are reading *Good Housekeeping* looking for ways to be a better homemaker in their everyday lives. This advertisement, while it promotes the good memories of childhood, also effectively taps into the guilt that plagues moms today—that they have to be super mom in order to live up to society’s standards. While the ad is very clever and clearly connects to the intended audience, it also taps into a mother’s deepest insecurities. Was it the intention of the advertiser to make moms feel guilty for not living up to an impossible standard? Perhaps not. But it works.