

## **ASMR-ADVERTISING AS AN ELEMENT OF IKEA MARKETING STRATEGY**

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## **АСМР-РЕКЛАМА ЯК ЕЛЕМЕНТ МАРКЕТИНГОВОЇ СТРАТЕГІЇ КОМПАНІЇ ІКЕА**

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The current stage of humanity development is determined by such peculiarities as rapid pace of life, all-pervasiveness of the mass media and internet technologies, information and technocentrism. Therefore, the relaxing, anti-stress direction of product advertising, which helps to overcome the protective barrier of human psyche in cases of excessive information rejection, becomes more and more topical.

That is why consideration of the prospects for usage of so-called ASMR-technology as the newest method of soft influence on the consciousness of the audience with an expressive relaxation effect and its introduction into advertising seems topical and appropriate. The aim of our research is to consider the features of ASMR technology application in advertising on the example video presented by the IKEA corporation.

The ASMR phenomenon is decoded as Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response. This feature of perception, characterized by "expressive, pleasant sensation of tingling on the scalp or other parts of the body in response to certain visual, audio and (or) cognitive stimuli, has a therapeutic effect" [3, с. 173]. Under ASMR-content, we understand such videos, which are distributed mainly on the internet, which are aiming bring viewers into a unique state of pleasant relaxation, calm, accompanied by physiological pleasure from sound and visual image-triggers. The videos are meant for long-term watching; they are expressly slow, slowly moving, and even static, as opposed to the traditional dynamic "clip" organization of mass media materials.

ASMR-content has become widespread during the last few years. In particular, today Instagram has more than 6 million videos with the hashtag #asmr, it is recognized as the main trend of 2018 in this social network [4]. YouTube search shows over 12 million videos of this type, with a large number of views and supporters [2].

Such features, inherent in the ASMR-videos, as popularity, relaxation anti-stress effect, stimulation for reviewing – make the idea of the usage of this type of content for advertising purposes attractive. So now, this field is actively mastered by advertisers. The most interesting are the commercial video ads, which are based on the usage of ASMR-technologies. Recently, their number is increasing. Therefore, videos with the usage of autonomous sensory meridional reaction were filmed to promote their products by such well-known brands as Coca Cola, KFC, IKEA, Tic Tac, Taco Bell, Dove Chocolate, Michelob Ultra and others.

However, we note that such videos have a small timing and composition close to traditional commercial advertising. Instead, the IKEA Corporation has shot a full ASMR-video that goes beyond the rules for commercial videos. Significant duration (the timeline of the video titled "Oddly IKEA: IKEA ASMR" [5] is over 25 minutes), slow change of foregrounds and backgrounds, underlined-everyday actions shown in the video, deliberately performed in a smooth and slow manner, silent sounds, emphasis on tactile perception of objects – all this creates the effect of relaxation, typical for videos with autonomous sensory meridional reaction. That is, the video does not parody or borrow the methods used by the creators of ASMR-videos; it is a typical example of video content of this type.

The storyline of IKEA video is quite simple. The girl, whose face is not shown (in the frame we can see only her hands), tells about the popular brand goods that will be needed to equip the student room. In particular, she will lay a bed slowly and carefully (this fragment lasts more than 13 minutes), emphasizing the tactile properties of bedding, pillows, pillowcases. At the same time, she taps on the mattress and blanket, passes her hands and nails over the blanket for creating specific sounds, demonstrates their softness and elasticity. Next, the heroine shows how to arrange conveniently a wardrobe for clothes and other things and a workplace, using various products of the advertised brand. At the same time, the emphasis is placed on the sounds of interaction with the objects – the scratching of the textured surface, the ringing of the clothes hangers in the wardrobe, the rustle of the boxes, the creak of the table lamp etc. A detailed demonstration of the usual household items properties, calling the attention to everyday actions with them, an extensive description of their range and properties in a muffled, slightly monotonous voice – everything adds soothing effect and persuasiveness to the IKEA ASMR-video.

It is worth noting that the usage of ASMR-video arsenal in the video is a precisely calculated element of the brand marketing strategy. The analysed video ad from IKEA is clearly focused on the youth audience, in particular, on students moving to college, and is dedicated to the release of a new "student collections" of goods. The corporation, releasing the video, said it hoped to help students to adapt more easily to new environment and to fight stress and fatigue after a hard day because of the effect of relaxation and pleasant tingling caused by the triggers of ASMR-video [1]. Today IKEA USA has almost 2.5 million views of the video on the YouTube channel and is the third most popular video [5].

Using ASMR technology in its video, IKEA Corporation was able to implement successfully several important goals. Yes, so far, the main audience of advertising messages were people in marriage, with children. Because the company was one of the first to shoot long ASMR-video, using the wave of popularity of videos with autonomous sensory meridional reaction, this video attracted significant attention of young people to the new collection of products, making them the core of product consumers in this segment. In addition, the physiologically pleasant feelings that arise during the watching of this advertisement with ASMR-triggers, at the subconscious level, establish positive associations with the brand products, link the advertised interior with comfort, calm, relaxation, etc., which will also stimulate sales.

To sum up, creative approach to promoting a new product collection with the help of ASMR-technologies allowed IKEA to demonstrate to the important segment of its audience its own familiarity with the latest trends, modernity, orientation to the needs of young people, understanding of their problems. They also managed to suggest the ways to resolve such problems, which allowed increasing of sales in "student" segment products.

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