

Clichés used in advertising

Men are tired of their portrayal in advertising, according to a new book by Michael Buerk. But images of men behaving stupidly are not the only cliché which irritates writer John Camm.

Dad in muddy boots walking blithely across a kitchen floor just cleaned by an exasperated mum who just gives a frustrated but loving smile to her giggly children, who cry out: "Da-a-ad!".
Just one advertising cliché and just one where no-one behaves like people really do.

It's the kind of thing which irritates John Camm. "It's tiresome to see male characters in adverts that don't resemble anyone you know," he says. "But what's perhaps worse is the absolute reliance of advertising on its own regurgitated clichés."

He has drawn up a list of seemingly unwritten rules which, he concludes, might as well be the Advertising Bible. Add your views to his list at the foot of the page.

1. Men are obsessed with sex but will forego sex in order to watch football or drink beer.
2. Women are locked in a constant battle with their weight/body shape/hairstyle.
3. Career success is entirely based on your ability to impress your boss.
4. Mums are often harassed but NEVER depressed/unable to cope.
5. Any act of male stupidity (e.g. walking across a clean floor in muddy boots, putting the dog in the dishwasher, etc.) will be met with a wry smile, not genuine annoyance/anger.
6. Married men will flirt with other, younger women but NEVER act upon it.
7. Anyone with a scientific career will have a bad haircut and dreadful clothes.
8. If you work for the emergency services, you are a better person than the general population.
9. Elderly relatives NEVER suffer from senile dementia.
10. Scandinavians are, without exception, blonde and beautiful.
11. Women have jobs they never do in real life, e.g. dockworker (who looks like a model).
12. Children will not eat fruit or vegetables, ever.
13. Both men and women find driving deeply pleasurable, never boring, or stressful.
14. Men are inherently lazy / slobbish; women are the reverse.
15. Chocolate, however, will cause women to immediately fall into the languor of the opium eater.
16. High Street bank staff are (A) friends of the customers, and (B) of slightly above-average attractiveness (only if female).
17. Modern men own a cat.

18. Hot beverages have miraculous rejuvenating effects.
19. Professional people have strangely trivial preoccupations, e.g. a female barrister who is morbidly obsessed with finding a healthy snack bar.
20. All women (except stay-at-home housewives) have interesting and enjoyable careers.
21. Any over-the-counter medical product will work instantly and 100% effectively.
22. Children know more than adults.
23. Women never merely hop in and out of the shower, instead preferring to act out some sort of soapy Dance of the Seven Veils.
24. School is a happy experience for all children.
25. Tortilla chips are the most exciting experience any group of young people can experience.
26. Playing bingo is THE number one pastime among 18-25 year old British women.