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## Marketing Discourse and Semiotics

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In everyday life we are regularly exposed to, and interact with, many different forms of advertising. For example, through television and radio commercials, billboards, direct (or junk) mail, and carefully staged large-scale public relations exercises, advertisers draw upon different narratives and discourses to communicate the benefits of their brands, products, and services to us as potential consumers. Within the context of marketing, discourses serve as the places where the advertiser and the consumer communicate, interact and engage in choreographed events within the position of a particular semantic context (Oswald, 2012). Such advertisements are often comprised of several interactive elements which may draw upon images, photographs, music, societal observations, paralanguage, language, scenarios and situations, and the existing preconceptions of consumers in order to spread an advertising message in an effective and entertaining way (Cook, 2001).

There are often extremely strong relationships between the images used and the language employed in advertisements. This study of signs is called *semiotics*. Here, signs, text, and symbols serve as crucial elements of the consumer experience and are vital tools employed throughout advertising and marketing. Language, gestures, art, heritage, television advertisements, films, and even sales pitches and conversations, all contain signs that are used to convey specific meanings or are used to share a precise communicative purpose in marketing a product or service (Cook, 2001). For example, phrases such as 'your flexible friend' (Access credit card), 'naughty but nice' (fresh cream cakes) or 'it's the real thing' (Coca-Cola) have passed into British vernacular from advertising copy. However, contemporary marketing communication is not only concerned with catchphrases and levity, nor is it solely focused on furthering the commercial interests of organisations. Politicians and their advisers also utilise discourse and marketing communication tools to appeal to their followers and voters. As such, this chapter aims to