1. **Ethical marketing**

Ethical marketing is less of a marketing strategy and more of a philosophy that informs all marketing efforts. It seeks to promote honesty, fairness, and responsibility in all advertising. Ethics is a notoriously difficult subject because everyone has subjective judgments about what is “right” and what is “wrong.” For this reason, ethical marketing is not a hard and fast list of rules, but a general set of guidelines to assist companies as they evaluate new marketing strategies.

There are distinct advantages and disadvantages to ethical marketing. Unethical advertising is often just as effective as it is unethical and since unethical behavior is not necessarily against the law, there are many companies who use unethical advertising to gain a competitive advantage.

For the first discussion board this week you will be responding to the questions below with a 200 – 300 word primary post.

1. **Ethical advertisings**

Ethical advertisings is a mode of communication between a seller and a buyer. Ethics is the most important feature of the advertising industry. Though there are many benefits of advertising but then there are some points which don’t match the ethical norms of advertising. An ethical ad is the one which doesn’t lie, doesn’t make fake or false claims and is in the limit of decency.

For the second discussion board this week you will be responding to the questions below with a 200 – 300 words for your primary post.

Review the ethical issues of advertising and answer the following question:

Do you think it is okay for advertising to be unethical as long as no one is harmed from the advertising and explain the rational for your response?

**Ethical issues of advertising**

The general ethical defense of advertising reflects both utilitarian and Kantian ethical standards. Advertising provides information for market exchanges and therefore contributes to market efficiency and to overall happiness. Advertising information also contributes to the information necessary for autonomous individuals to make informed choices. But note that each of these rationales assumes that the information is true and accurate. The principle-based tradition in ethics would have the strongest objections to manipulation. When I manipulate someone I treat them as a means to my own ends, as an object to be used rather than as an autonomous person in his or her own right. Manipulation is a clear example of disrespect for persons because it bypasses their own rational decision making. Because the evil rests with the intention to use another as a means, even unsuccessful manipulations are guilty of this ethical wrong.

As we might expect, the utilitarian tradition would offer a more conditional critique of manipulation, depending on the consequences. There surely can be cases of paternalistic manipulation, in which someone is manipulated for their own good. But even in such cases, unforeseen harms can occur. Manipulation tends to erode bonds of trust and respect between persons. It can erode one’s self-confidence and hinder the development of responsible choice among those manipulated. In general, because most manipulation is done to further the manip- ulator’s own ends at the expense of the manipulated, utilitarians would be inclined to think that manipulation lessens overall happiness. A general practice of manipulation, as critics would charge occurs in many sales practices, can undermine the very social practices (e.g., sales) that it is thought to promote as the reputation of sales is lowered. The example of used car sales, once again, is a good example of such a situation.

A particularly egregious form of manipulation occurs when vulnerable people are targeted for abuse. Cigarette advertising aimed at children is one example that has received major criticism in recent years. Marketing practices targeted at elderly populations for such goods and services as insurance (particularly Medicare supplemental insurance), casinos and gambling, nursing homes, and funerals have been subjected to similar criticisms. We can suggest the following general guidelines. Marketing practices that seek to discover which consumers might already and independently be predisposed to purchasing a product are ethically legitimate. So, for example, an automobile dealership learns from its manufacturer’s marketing department that the typical buyer of its car is a college-educated female between the ages of 25 and 30 who enjoys outdoor activities and earns more than $30,000. Sending targeted direct mail pieces to everyone within an area who matches these criteria seems an ethically legitimate marketing practice. Marketing practices that seek to identify populations that can be easily influenced and manipulated, on the other hand, are not. Sales and marketing that appeal to fear, anxiety, or other non-rational motivations are ethically improper. For example, an automobile dealer who knows that an unmarried or widowed woman is anxious about the purchase and who uses this anxiety as a way to sell extended warranty insurance, disability insurance, theft protection products, and the like is unethical. (The manner in which this or other information is collected is also subject to ethical concerns.) Marketing research seeks to learn something about the psychology of potential customers. But not all psychological categories are alike. Some are more cogni- tive and rational than others. Targeting the considered and rational desires of con- sumers is one thing; targeting their fears, anxiety, and whims is another. See the Reality Check, “New Challenges to Old Problems: From Redlining to E-Lining” and, for more discussion of online, viral and other timely marketing techniques, see the reading by Pudner included at the end of this chapter