The Effects of Visuals on Social Media Engagement Poster

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Introduction
Future employers and recruiters often seek marketing candidates with a Photoshop skillset. Throughout my time at the University of Rhode Island, I was not required to take a class that would enhance my ability in this particular software. To change this, I wanted to have an experience in which I could learn this skill and incorporate photos I took from studying abroad in Australia. I decided to utilize Photoshop to create different ad sets that would allow me to view engagement levels on social media platforms and discover the most successful variables.

Methods
In order to create A/B testing or split testing on Facebook, I had to decide what stimuli I wanted to use and create hypotheses of which ones I thought would perform better. After I found secondary research on possible variables to use, I decided to test the following: a photo with and without a person in it, a photo with mostly blue versus a photo composed of mostly red, a photo with and without a hashtag, and a black and white versus a more saturated photo. Afterwards, I utilized Photoshop to edit photos I had previously taken during my study abroad experience to Australia during the spring of my junior year. I had to ensure everything between each ad set was kept constant with the exception of the stimuli being tested and the Bitly link I provided in both the photo and ad description. I used Bitly to help shorten the link of the study abroad website I was directing people to in order to track which ad was enticing users to the site. From this experience, I was able to learn more about Photoshop by adding text, changing the colors within a photo, removing objects from a photo, and more. The purpose of creating these ads was to get college students in the United States interested in studying abroad in Australia. Each Bitly link led people to information about Bond University on the TEAN website. TEAN stands for The Education Abroad Network and this is the company I went through when I studied abroad. Since people who study abroad are in college, I wanted to set my target audience to college students in the U.S. I was able to view the different CPC or cost per click for each ad tested in Facebook’s Ad Manager which is where I was able to create each ad set. As Facebook explains, split testing “lets you test different versions of your ads so you can see what works best and improve future campaigns.” I used the same target and spent the same amount of money on each ad set. All four ad sets ran for the same amount of time which was six days. By using a split test, I could target similar groups of people. This means that one group would see Ad A and the other group would see Ad B. This helped me view which stimuli had higher engagement levels and determine a winning strategy.

Results

Discussion
I was able to prove some of my hypotheses. Facebook Ads Manager allowed me to view my results and I was able to find that one out of four of my hypotheses was correct. I predicted that the winning stimuli would be the photo with a person in it, the mostly blue photo, the photo that included a hashtag, and a saturated photo. The only hypothesis that I predicted correctly was the one that included a hashtag in it.

Based on the Cost per Click (CPC), I was able to find the following information:

• Photo without a person had a CPC of $1.67 versus $4.00 with a person in it
• Photo with blue had a CPC of $0.95 versus $3.33 without a hashtag
• Photo with a hashtag had a CPC of $2.86 versus $3.33 without a hashtag
• Photo in black and white had a CPC of $1.67 versus $2.86 for a saturated photo

The winning ad is framed in a yellow outline under how many link clicks there were, the reach, impressions, amount spent, frequency, and the number of unique link clicks.

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Literature Cited