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RHET 102

Essay I: Rhetorical Analysis (Revised)

To Buy Fast or to Buy Performance?: Toulmin Analysis on VW Ad

The non-fiction source I chose to examine is an advertisement by Volkswagen. This advertisement is best represented mainly with a large image and a minuscule amount of text under the image. The first noticeable object in the image is two cars stopped at a red light in the middle of a city at night. The cars are the first noticeable objects because they are in bright vibrant colors, which make them stick out from the background of dull colors from the city buildings at night. The scene seems to be calm and motionless, however it looks like a drag race is about to happen between the two cars because they are lined up at the red stop light neck and neck. Also this can be told by the text, since the first words are in bold saying “You can’t fake fast.”

Volkswagen is trying to promote their brand and make consumers go out and buy the Volkswagen Golf R. The car manufacturer is saying that consumers should buy their car because it is the perfect performance car for them. The thesis of Volkswagen’s advertisement makes a claim that the Golf R is “finely tuned.” The support used by Volkswagen further backs up their statement by defining “finely tuned.” Their support stands out by listing options that the Golf R comes with. The manufacturer relates its “finely tuned” car to their “total performance package” options that come standard in the Golf R. Volkswagen says, “But the Golf R stands out from the crowd with a total performance package – 256 hp, 4MOTION AWD, a sport suspension, and the only transmission a car like this needs... a 6-speed manual”. All these options are qualities that consumers look at when buying a performance sports car. They tend to give a certain appeal to buyers. The advertisement demonstrates card stacking because it talks about the many nice options the car comes with. The article *Propaganda: How Not to Be Bamboozled* states, “card

stacking involves a selection of facts that make people feel a certain way, allowing them to make decision without considering a wide variety of evidence” (Cross). The facts that are included seem to be very nice and reasonable to many car buyers that would make them want to buy it, but there are other cars out there that have those similar options and many more, which should be considered as well.

The advertisement Volkswagen has created does a great job in reaching out to a wide audience. Including vibrant colors such as the light blue and purple makes the image stand out and appeal to not only male drivers but females as well. This can also have an appeal to younger car enthusiasts that do not have a license to drive, but dream of buying the Golf R in the future. The medium really presents a driver’s car with a certain maturity level while maintain a fast look. The Volkswagen’s maturity level is compared to the car next to it, which shows that it is simpler, clean, and less flashy. As the writer, Volkswagen wants people to buy this car by establishing their own manufacturer credibility within the text. The text uses specific word choices that stand out and appeal to the audience such as “finely” and “total”. The advertisement uses ethos by stating the specs and options the car includes in which makes it a fast performance car. The options leave the audience with different emotions. For example, 256 hp and a 6-speed manual transmission can make the audience feel excited to shred some tires and urging them to experience some fun, which is going fast. However, some people might feel a bit uneasy with that idea which is why the advertisement creates a good balance to conserve the idea that the Golf R is still a great car. Having 4MOTION All-Wheel Drive and a sport suspension can leave an impact on the audience making them feeling safe because even though the Golf R is fast, the All-Wheel Drive system and sport suspension helps the car’s stability in different weather conditions allowing it to stick on the road.

Volkswagen assumes that the Golf R is fun. Even though it is not directly stated, Volkswagen assumes that car buyers are looking for a car like the Golf R that is versatile and enjoyable to drive every day is important so they make its qualities stand out. Volkswagen backs up their warrant by stating that the Golf R has 256 horsepower and a 6-speed manual transmission, which screams fun for car enthusiasts. These options are what allows the Golf R to go fast and show its true overall performance. The advertisement reveals begging the question because it says, "This is more than just speed, this is what performance really looks like." In Cross's article, she reveals that begging the question is a statement that is made which is questionable or debatable assuming the statement has already been established before or after. The statement made by Volkswagen is begging the question because there are many other similar car manufacturers out there that can compete or come close to resembling that statement. Volkswagen assumes that all their cars, including the Golf R is built with quality. Even though it is not directly stated, Volkswagen assumes that car buyers are looking for a fast car that is reliable and built with fine quality. The backing the manufacturer uses to support this warrant is stating, "That's the Power of German Engineering". This allows the car buyers to think about the factors of how well the car was made and the process in making it. It is made by Germans, so it has to be made to almost near perfection. Germans are known for making great cars and ones that are reliable.

Volkswagen does not include a qualifier in the advertisement. However, Volkswagen could have used a qualifier to help their claim. Volkswagen could have said from a customer's point of view for example: I don't always drive fast, but when I do I use a Volkswagen Golf R. The advertisement provides objection as well even though it is not directly stated. Further analyzing the picture, the purple car behind the Golf R has a great significance as well. The

purple car's significance is briefly mentioned in the text. It does not only represent the Golf R's competitor, but other car enthusiasts that like to customize their own car. Volkswagen states, "[...] you'll find plenty of imitators, wannabes, and pretenders. You may also notice purple spoilers, flame graphics, and faux air scoops". In general, people are out there on the market trying to buy other different cars. The advertisement exemplifies false analogy because it talks about the car being "finely tuned" and that buyers do not need to add more parts to it to improve it. Cross' article clarifies that false analogy is a comparison between two ideas. The ad assumes that all people do not like to tune their cars and would buy a Volkswagen because it is perfectly made. The ad does not consider that there are people or car enthusiasts out there that do like to customize their cars and add parts to them to make them better. Volkswagen's rebuttal is that buyers are buying the car for the performance, which is included with the car already. If I were to be looking to buy a car, this advertisement would have persuaded me pretty well. The reason is because I am also a part of the audience Volkswagen is trying to reach out to. Being a car enthusiast I really do look at all the qualities that they have already listed. I am also a future buyer in the car market and potentially would like to know my options and what is out there.

Works Cited

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Image Link: http://www.g4a.co.uk/news/news2012_images/ag_vw_golf_ad.jpg



You can't fake fast.

Look behind the finely tuned Volkswagen Golf R and you'll find plenty of imitators, wannabes, and pretenders. You may also notice purple spoilers, flame graphics, and faux air scoops. But the Golf R stands out from the crowd with a total performance package — 256 hp, 4MOTION® AWD, a sport suspension, and the only transmission a car like this needs...a 6-speed manual. This is more than just speed, this is what performance really looks like. That's the Power of German Engineering.

