

**Logic and Emotion:**

**Dissecting the Michelin's famous baby advertisement**

Traver Yates

DeVry University

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Professor Angel O'Keeffe

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## **Logic and Emotion: Dissecting the Michelin's famous baby advertisement**

Spending money is a part of life, and this is something we cannot avoid. We use our money for business, pleasure, and security. However, for many Americans, we like to look for ways to cut costs on some things so that we have more cash to do with what we please. The advertisement campaign that was launched in 1979 by the Michelin Tire Company was aiming to let those same Americans know that we should not cut costs in ways that could cost us so much more than a few extra dollars from our bank account. This was an ad that could not only appeal to consumers on an emotional standpoint but also a logical one.

As one of the leading tire companies, Michelin tires have always cost a bit more in the way of price, in order for you to be able to drive around with the famous Michelin Man adorning your wheels. For many, even in 1979 when the economy was not nearly as rocky as it tends to be today, saving a few bucks by opting for the less expensive brands of tire did not seem like that much of a sacrifice. Imagine a father of three is flipping through the morning newspaper as he sits at the breakfast table when he comes across a full-page ad. It shows off an adorably chubby baby boy sitting next to the same whitewall tire that he passed up buying last week. At the time, he chose to purchase the off-brand tire that had cost him half as much as the advertised tire. The man instantly thinks about how much that little blond rug rat he sees in the paper reminds him of his son. When the man reads the slogan that bounces off the page, "Michelin. Because so much is riding on your tires," he begins to reconsider his original tire purchase. Then, he reads the information off to the side about the extra work that is put into the tires to make them safer. Suddenly, the steeper price tag point does make more sense. Next time he buys tires, he decides to give Michelin a second glance.

While the goal of the advertisement was to show the importance of choosing the right tire, it also hits an emotional cord about making the right choices for your family. This is something that many of us struggle with on almost a daily basis. Things you do not always consider important, like choosing the right tire for your vehicle, are something you tend to underestimate, but making the wrong choice can carry a heavy cost. Michelin wanted people to choose their tires because they spend more time in developing a stronger, safer tire. They are using logic when they point out how much thought is invested in manufacturing a better tire, and longer more rigorous testing is utilized before they make it to consumers. The advert goes on to talk about how the main component for their tires – steel – is manufactured in house, and thereby giving them the ability to directly test and validate the integrity of their products. Michelin is insisting that *they* should be trusted with what is near and dear to your heart, not their competitors.

Not only does Michelin appeal to the consumers with facts and logic but also through reputation. It is clear by the wording of the ad that Michelin considers their tires to be in a higher-class when compared to others. When they say they consider tires the most important piece of equipment on a vehicle, it reasserts the idea that if you do not have the best tires, your family may not be safe. Remember the baby sitting next to the tire, would you want to trust your children and family to a second-rate tire? I know I would want the safest and best tire I could afford to safeguard my family's safety.

Then there is the other side of the argument that could also work to the consumer's benefit. The idea is presented that, safety aside, spending more money on your tire today will cost you less tomorrow. It is usually true that a well-made – perhaps more costly – product tends to last longer, and must be replaced less often, than the more cheaply made bargain brand

product. What better way to persuade consumers to spend more money than to assure them they will save more money down the road?

The goal of the ad campaign was to help draw a parallel between two things: something we would consider almost trivial and, perhaps tedious, like purchasing new tires to something that is much closer to our heart, like taking care of our loved-ones. Throw in the addition of the logic of a well-made product will not only give you peace-of-mind but also save you money in the long run, and you have the perfect receipt for getting people on the same page as you. Then, you top it all off by planting the seed of doubt, making the consumer wonder about the corners Michelin's competitors are cutting in order to make cheaper products.

It is true when they say that many people tend to think more with their hearts and less with their heads, especially when it comes to the ones we love. At first glance, it would seem that this Michelin ad is betting on this. However, upon further inspection, they also seem to have the logic to justify their higher retail prices. It causes us then to ask ourselves, "How can we put a price on the things that are most important to us?" Spending money is an inevitable part of life. It generally comes down to making sure our hard-earned dollars are going in the right direction.

## Reference / References

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