Zales “Balloon Proposal” Rhetorical Analysis

In November of 2013, Zales launched its “Let Love Shine” campaign for this holiday season. Having been in business since 1924, Zales has become the “best known name in retail jewelry” (“About Zales”). Since 2010, however, Zales has been attempting to break away from its dry, superannuated image by putting a modern twist on its traditional marketing scheme. By featuring the music and lyrics of young, break-through artists, and starring regular people laden with the struggles of the average-joe in its commercials, the company has begun to target to a younger generation of consumers. Its headlining commercial in the “Let Love Shine” campaign, “Balloon Proposal”, has been aired on cable during ESPN and The Walking Dead in an attempt to advertise to young men (Mahoney). Through its employment of ethos, logos, and pathos, Zales’s “Balloon Proposal” successfully appeals to the company’s target audience.

Zales has nearly been around for 90 years, and since their opening in 1924, Zales has been one of the most widely known jewelry retail stores. The company was founded by Morris Zale and William Zale in Wichita, Texas on March 29, 1924. The brothers endeavored to give customers a high quality product at the lowest possible price. They integrated a form of credit that was associated with their marketing method. They coined the phrase, “A penny down and a dollar a week.” By 1941, roughly 12 stores were established. When America entered the Second World
War, the company’s expansion came to a screeching halt. However, as technology advanced, so did the company. Zale began to discover new technologies in diamond cutting, and started opening businesses in shopping centers. Since then, Zales has surpassed 750 retail stores and is leading in retail. As a matter of fact, Zale sells more diamonds than any other jewelry retail store in North America. These high levels of diamond sales gave the company its name, “Zales, The Diamond Store.” However, the company is also known for gold, pearls, large bridal collection, and their ‘classic and contemporary’ styles. Their bridal collection is the largest part of the business, and it is for what they are most notably recognized. Zales is also a very respectable and well-represented company. On the official Zales website they express their love for customer satisfaction by saying, “Zales, The Diamond Store, has been America’s jeweler since 1924. It is our expertise, knowledge, and size that enable us to bring you the most exquisite diamonds, at just the right value” (“The Zales Difference”). At the time of this commercial airing, Zales’s stock rose. The commercial aired in November of 2013, and the stocks rose and remained relatively the same that month.

In targeting their audience, the advertisement employs many subtleties that link the actors to everyday people. By creating this link, people can relate better and therefore remember the ad better. One of the first things is that the woman the man is proposing to appears to be at work when he comes. This is shown in how there is what appears to be a printer or copy machine in the room and how she is sitting at a computer desk when he arrives. They exchange smiles, and after he brings out the ring she nods and comes out to hug him. In addition, the actors are not like a Barbie and Ken couple in that they look like they were manufactured; they are everyday people. The fact that she is at work, the hugs and smiles, and how they are the average couple all come together to make this commercial something that people can really relate to, and therefore remember.
Finally, the advertisement connects the proposal to their diamonds. Immediately after the proposal, they say, “Let love shine. The celebration diamond collection features three diamonds. Masterfully crafted and expertly cut to be exceptionally brilliant. Zales is the diamond store.” as images of their jewelry rotates. This attaches the images of the diamonds to the ad and now when people remember how cute the advertisement was, they remember Zales and their diamonds.

The pathos in this commercial is very evident because it is a proposal. The man who is about to propose is carrying colorful balloons around a city that is dull and in the middle of winter. Everyone is wearing dark colors and thus the balloons really pop out. These balloons inspire a feeling of “celebration” which is also the name of this diamond collection. It’s also important to note that it is the man with the balloons who is also carrying the Zales diamond, implying that he is the bearer of happiness and celebration. The male perspective of this commercial is different than the female perspective of it. The man proposing is happy that his girlfriend said “yes” and they are shown happy together as she runs to embrace him. The implication behind this is that the Zales diamond brought them all of this happiness and the same could happen to the young, male viewer if he proposes to his girlfriend with a Zales ring. From a girl’s perspective, this commercial inspires a desire of having this scenario happen to her. It evokes a feeling of jealousy almost and a desire to have a man go through all that trouble to propose to her. The commercial is so full of emotions because this man has embarked on a trek to propose to this girl without a single word because the song in the background speaks for him. When he is outside the window the lyrics say: “To the ends of the earth, would you follow me? There’s a world that was meant for our eyes to see. To the ends of the earth, would you follow me?” (Lord Huron). After this, she answers “yes” and then they embrace in a feeling of happiness. The song portrays his feelings; his invitation for her to follow him.
to the end of the world, to embark in this new adventure together. This commercial has a lot of emotion to it and this is why it is so successful in carrying across its message.

The analysis of the ethos, logos, and pathos used in the creation of Zales’s “Balloon Proposal” commercial presents a strong case for the success of the commercial. Since its initial television airing, more than 2 million viewers have voluntarily searched for and watched the commercial posted on the Zales’s YouTube page. Zales had returned to profitability just last May, but its stock rose following the airing of “Balloon Proposal”. Zales’s credibility as “the diamond store”, along with the logic of every component put into the commercial, and its strong appeal to emotion in such a sweeping gesture, combine to create a moving piece of advertising that successfully grabs the attention of the target audience. With such care paid to every detail of this commercial, Zales successfully leaves their name on the mind of any young male with a special someone. As for proposals this season, it can be expected that many women will be saying, “Yes!” to a ring from the diamond store.
Works Cited


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Mahoney, Sarah. “Hot Bands, Young Hunks: Zales Targets Gen Y Romantics.”

