

CREDIBILITY

“A claim lacks inherent credibility to the extent it conflicts with what we have observed or what we think we know—our background information—or with other credible claims.”

2 Key Considerations:

1) How credible is the *claim* itself?

-Does the claim conflict with our own observations?

Note that our observations can be influenced by a variety of factors!

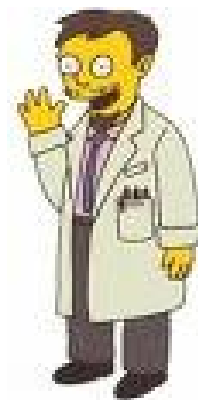
-Does the claim conflict with our background info?

The extent to which a claim fits with our background information will determine its *initial plausibility*.

2) How credible is the *source* of the claim?

-Does the source have real knowledge about the issue in question?

Relevant factors: Education, expertise, accomplishments, and reputation



“Dr.” Nick: Expert or no?

-Do we have reason to doubt the source’s honesty, objectivity, or accuracy?

Advertising

All product advertisements are predicated on a common agenda. Namely, they aim to convince us that the following claim is true:

Our lives will be better if we have the product than if we don't.

Advertisements attempt to persuade us to believe this in one of two ways.

-Some ads provide *reasons* for purchasing their product.

-Some ads provide no explicit reason for purchasing their product.

What reasons are given in this ad?

AN ADVERTISEMENT OF R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.

FROM PIANO MOVER TO HOLLYWOOD STAR ...

MARIO LANZA

SINGING TO HIMSELF AS HE HOSTED A PIANO ONTO A CONCERT HALL STAGE, MARIO LANZA WAS OVERHEARD BY A NOTED CONDUCTOR. THE MAESTRO, REALIZING HE HAD A "FIND," TOLD MARIO TO DROP THE PIANO AND TAKE UP A NEW CAREER.

ARMY VET BARREL-CHESTED* MARIO LANZA'S GOAL IS OPERA. MEANWHILE, HE'S SUNG AND ACTED HIS WAY TO STARDOM IN THE MOVIE CAPITAL. LIKE MILLIONS OF HIS ADMIRERS, MARIO SMOKES CAMELS. SAY THEY'RE A GREAT-TASTING, MILD CIGARETTE!

* Mario Lanza is one of the few tenors who has sung D-FLAT over high C in a public performance!

HANDSOME, SIX-FOOT MARIO DEVELOPED HIS IMPOSING PHYSIQUE AS A YOUNG WEIGHT LIFTER! HE ALSO STARRED AS A HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETE.

I CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE CHANCES WITH MY VOICE. I SMOKE CAMELS! THEY SUIT MY THROAT AND TASTE TO A 'T'!

In a coast-to-coast test of hundreds of men and women who smoked Camels—and only Camels—for 30 days, noted throat specialists, making weekly examinations, reported **NOT ONE SINGLE CASE OF THROAT IRRITATION DUE TO SMOKING CAMELS!**

See for yourself why **MORE PEOPLE SMOKE CAMELS** than any other cigarette

Make your own **Camel 30-DAY TEST IN YOUR "T-ZONE"**
(T for Throat ...
T for Taste)



Are any of these *good* reasons for purchasing the product?

Can all of the following claims be true?

- "The medicine in Anacin is recommended by doctors four to one over substitutes like Tylenol."

—Anacin commercial

- "Aspirin is recommended by doctors four to one over substitutes."

—Bayer commercial

- "Tylenol is recommended by doctors more than any brand of aspirin."

—Tylenol commercial

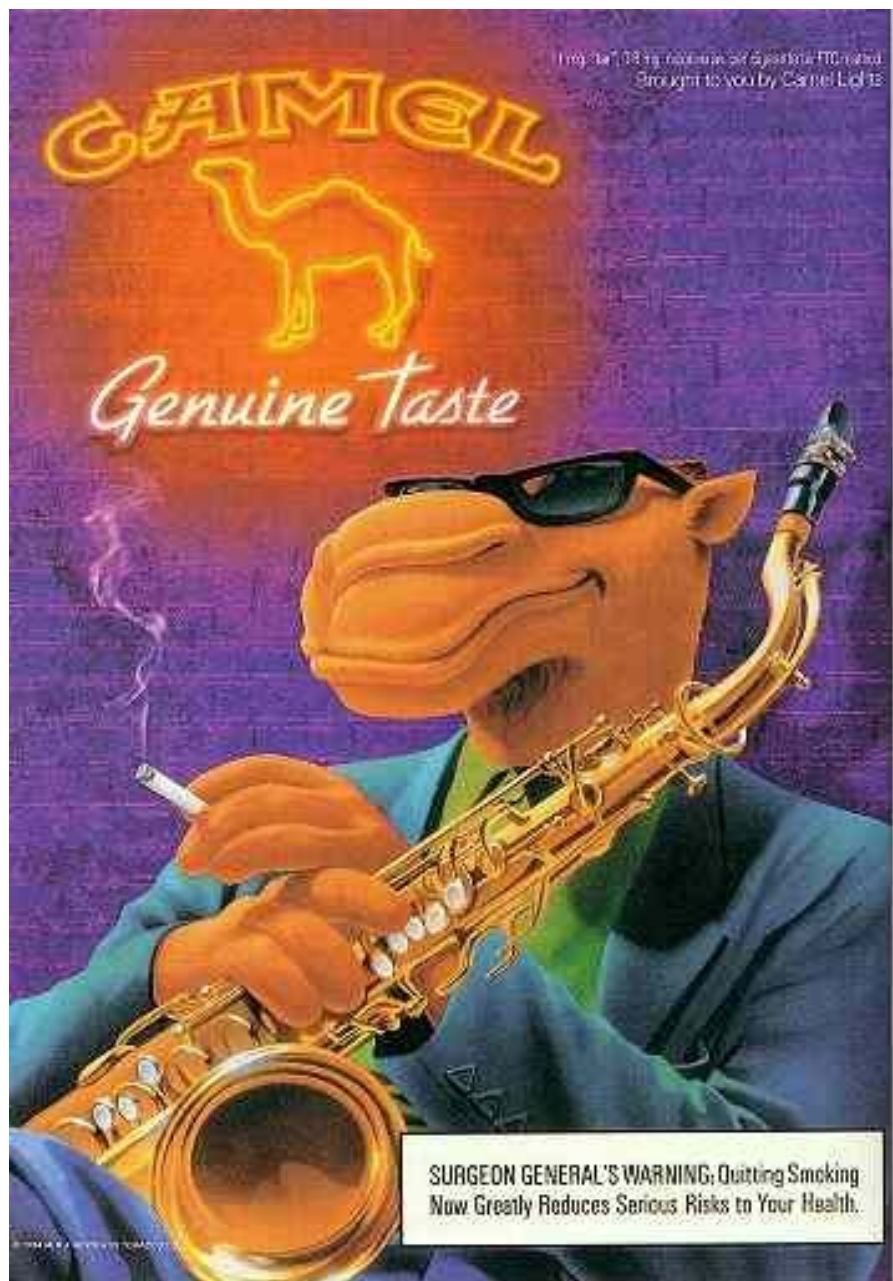
- "Four out of five doctors surveyed recommended Excedrin's formula."

—Excedrin commercial

- "Bufferin works better than any other pain reliever tested."

—Bufferin commercial

How does this ad try to persuade you to purchase the product?



Advertising and Credibility

What sort of credibility should we assign to advertisements?

Can an advertisement ever *justify* the purchase of a product?

Whose benefit *really* motivates advertising?