

Lesson 36

Snob Appeal

Snob appeal is the opposite of bandwagon. While bandwagon appeals to our desire to be like everyone else, snob appeal uses our desire to stand out from the rest of the crowd.

***Snob appeal* is used when someone tries to persuade us to think his product would make us better or make us stand out from everyone else.**

Nobody wants to think he is merely one person among a crowd. We all like to think we're in a small and special community of people – in the uppity-ups.

ADVERTISEMENT: Why read those boring logic books like everybody else does? You know you're better than that. You need more intellectual stimulation. Read *The Fallacy Detective*, and be more logical than the rest.

Snob appeal uses a ridiculous, but very effective, line: “Agree with me and buy my product because hardly anybody else does.” This is an appeal to our inner snob.

But stop and think for a minute. Maybe there is a good reason why nobody else is doing it.

“Buy Skunk brand perfume. You will stand out from the crowd.”

Military recruiting posters cater to those who want to be “the best of the best.”

“Marines. Do you have what it takes?”

Parents who want their children to be distinguished may fall into this trap as well.

“Harrow Boarding School. Improving education for the brightest minds.”

The fallacy of snob appeal exploits our desire to be raised up to a higher class. We think that if we purchase the item, then greater glamour and prestige will be given to us. We will become better than everybody else.

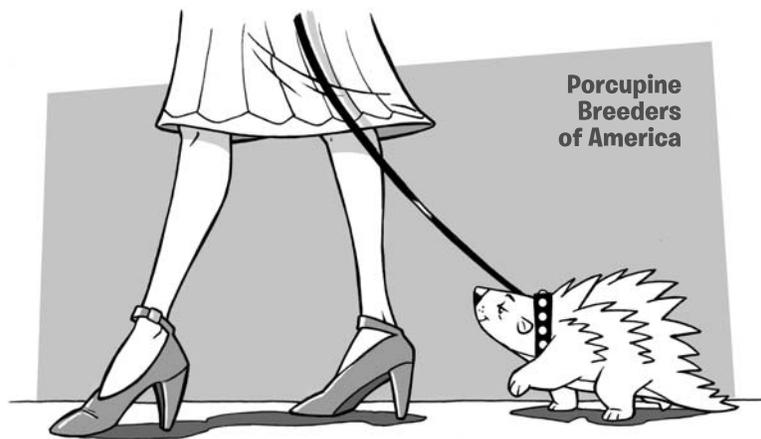


Illustration by Rob Corley.

Porcupines: For the discerning pet owner.

Exercises

What form of propaganda, if any, is being used?

1. “SPURKEY is a nutritious food. SPURKEY tastes good. Doctors everywhere recommend SPURKEY as a dietary supplement. Remember SPURKEY the next time you go to the grocery store. SPURKEY for America and America for SPURKEY.”
2. PICTURE OF AN SUV DRIVING ON ROCKY TERRAIN: It’s a rough world. Use the proper equipment.

3. “Envy is so much more pleasant when you’re on the receiving end.”
– Mitsubishi car advertisement.
4. “The Smiths are doing it.”
5. “We shouldn’t proceed with the trial of the Senator. The American people are tired and want to get this over with. If you proceed with the trial, then you will be doing something the people do not want.”
6. AGRICULTURAL BROCHURE: You don’t own a common herd of beef or dairy cattle, so why consider planting a common rye grass pasture? Your cattle investment is best protected by planting Southern Star.
7. A PICTURE OF A PORCUPINE NEXT TO A BOTTLE OF ORANGE JUICE: Our premium orange juice helps support your natural defenses. It only takes a minute, but the feeling lasts all day.
8. “Hey, I hope you agree with us that squealing to the cops isn’t the most sociable thing to do. I wouldn’t want to lose my best safecracker.”
9. AN EYE-POPPINGLY COLORFUL PICTURE OF A FROG: Wildlife as Canon sees it.
10. RATHER EXPENSIVE TOY CATALOGUE: Join Michael Douglas, John Travolta, and Bruce Willis in owning one of these delightful miniatures.
11. PICTURE OF A FANCY AND FAST-LOOKING SEDAN: Millions of people are perfectly happy driving boring cars. What makes you so special?
12. NISSAN ADVERTISEMENT: May promote feelings of superiority.
13. PICTURE OF PRESIDENTIAL LIMO: On the first day in office, every U.S. president has four things in common with his predecessor. Transporting the Chief on the wings of Goodyear. Goodyear. Specially-designed tires for the leader of the free world.
14. “Florida: America’s most popular vacation destination.”
15. DEFENSE ATTORNEY: My client admits to committing this crime. However, he has cancer and has only a year to live. I think it would be cruel to make a man go to prison when he is in such great pain.
16. “Buy the Chet Atkins Signature Gibson Guitar.”
17. “Are you a rising young executive? Our line of luxury hotels caters to people with a taste for the better things in life.”