

The Iconic Blue Box: A Semiotic Analysis of Tiffany & Company Advertisements

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Introduction

In today's society we are constantly bombarded by advertisements from every direction. Whether it be on the television, the radio, in the magazines we read, or on the signs we drive by, advertisements are everywhere. It is hard to pinpoint exactly how many advertising messages the average person is exposed to in a day. According to award winning brand strategist David Lamoureux, studies say we are exposed to as little as 247 advertisements a day all the way up 3,000. Even if we are unable to figure out an exact number, it is safe to say that the average consumer is exposed to a significant number of advertisements on a daily basis.

With all of these advertisements coming at us it is amazing that certain ones stick out in our minds and that we are drawn to certain brands over others. What is it about those brands that set them apart from others in our minds? To answer this question it is important to know a little bit about how companies create their brands, especially through advertising. It is important to be an educated consumer in today's materially driven society. With knowledge about the techniques companies are using in order to get you to believe in their brand and in turn want to purchase it, you can be a more educated shopper. You will understand exactly why you are being persuaded to go with a certain brand over another and why you developed that brand loyalty in the first place.

Possessing knowledge regarding other companies advertising techniques is crucial for businesses as well. It is a competitive marketplace and brands need to know what type of devices or techniques within advertisements are effectively drawing people towards certain brands. Successful advertising is crucial to a company's success. "Advertising remains a cost-effective means of introducing ourselves and saying something to many

clients and prospects all at once. The media of advertising may change, but its central role in brand strategy does not. First and foremost, it tells prospective clients we're here, and keeps our name fresh in their minds. It can help drive a company's growth, overall brand strength and resilience" (Kelly). With a firm understanding of these techniques companies will have a much higher chance of not only becoming successful, but staying successful for a long period of time.

In order to explore this idea further I will be analyzing the distinguished Tiffany & Company and their advertising techniques. Tiffany & Company is an exceptional business to use in this case study because they have had a long-standing and prominent place in American consumerism. Across generations, genders, and different social backgrounds Tiffany & Company is well known by all. "Tiffany & Co.'s blue box is iconic. Marriage-minded women covet the Tiffany engagement collection and men clueless about jewelry trust it's signature blue bag as a surefire way to impress" (Frazier). Whenever that iconic blue is seen, without missing a beat, it is automatically connected to this company and their products. For some reason there is a common thought among individuals that purchasing jewelry from Tiffany has much more weight and meaning behind it than purchasing it from any other jewelry company.

In order to further understand just how these common thoughts about the brand were created I will be using semiotic analysis to deconstruct ten different Tiffany & Company advertisements. With this form of analysis I will be able to uncover the many messages that lie within these advertisements and better understand what about them made Tiffany & Company's brand what it is today. In order to do that it is important to get acquainted with the history of the company and understand exactly how it got started.

The History of Tiffany & Company

The grand and sophisticated Tiffany & Company that we have come to know and love today was not always so great. The store started off with humble beginnings in 1837 as a “stationary and fancy good store.” The founders, Charles Lewis Tiffany and John B. Young, were able to start their store with a \$1,000 advance from Tiffany’s father. The two founders drew their inspirations for their store and their designs from nature. Their love for “patterns of simplicity, clarity, and harmony” (Tiffany & Co for Press), helped set them apart from older, more established European companies.

The first big break for Tiffany & Company came in 1867 at the Paris World Fair. Not only did the company receive the grand prize for silver craftsmanship, it was also the first time an American company had received such high recognition from a foreign power. From that moment on Tiffany & Company not only set the standard for the United States, but internationally as well.

In 1878 the company hit another milestone when it acquired the world’s largest and finest yellow diamond from the Kimberly Mine in South Africa. After being cut to show off the diamond’s gorgeous brilliance, the gem became the symbol for Tiffany’s excellence in craftsmanship. Also in 1878, another icon of Tiffany was introduced to the American public. The Tiffany Blue, now trademarked by the company, graced the cover of the Tiffany Blue Book for the first time ever. The color has now expanded to covering the company’s packing, from their boxes to their bags.

Continuing on with their pattern of raising the bar of excellence, in 1886 Tiffany introduced the Tiffany Setting engagement ring. Still one of the most sought after settings today, this design was revolutionary for highlighting a diamond’s brilliance by

lifting it above the band. After purchasing the crown jewels of Spain and France, Tiffany & Company become known as the world's authority on diamonds. The company was appointed as the Royal Jeweler to the crowned heads of Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and the Czar of Russia.

Since its beginning Tiffany & Company has also held a strong relationship with the United States government. The jeweler is responsible for designing ceremonial swords for civil war generals, the Congressional Medal of Honor, and in 1885 the redesign of the Great Seal of the United States (Tiffany & Co for Press).

Tiffany & Company went public on May 5, 1987 at a price of \$23 per share. As of March 12th 2015 the price has gone up to \$86.30 per share. The Company now employs over 10,000 people worldwide. Tiffany's world wide net sales for a full year come in at around 3.8 billion dollars. It's hard to find someone who hasn't heard about this company in today's society, and with all its success and many achievements it is easy to see why.

According to an article from Ad Age, Tiffany & Company named Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide, one of the world's largest customer engagement agencies, as its new global creative agency of record in February 2014. Prior to this, the company was only utilizing its internal marketing department. From January to November 2013 the company spent over \$36 million on measured media.

One thing that seems almost ironic about the company is that even though they spend a decent amount of money on advertising it seems as though you hardly see Tiffany & Company advertisements. It is very rare to ever see a Tiffany & Company commercial unless it is around Christmas time and even those air very rarely. According

to the company's form 10-K annual report the company focuses its advertising efforts mostly in newspapers and magazines. Tiffany & Company advertisements are definitely prominent in fashion magazines but never in an over whelming amount. Consumers get the sense that the company and its products are so well known that they do not have a need to advertise. This idea helps create the notion that Tiffany & Company is an elite organization. Although Tiffany & Company may not take advertising to the extreme as some other prominent companies, when they do advertise they help shape an idea in consumers' heads about what buying a Tiffany product actually means. Throughout this paper I will be analyzing different Tiffany & Company advertisements and uncovering how exactly the messages in these advertisements affect consumers.

Selection of Artifacts

According to Earnest Calkins' and Ralph Holden's book, *Modern Advertising*, modern advertising techniques did not develop until the middle of the 20th century. Therefore, in order to keep continuity between my artifacts I will only be analyzing advertisements that were created after 1950. Since commercial advertising was not as wide spread around the 50s I have decided to only look at print advertisements for my analysis. I have two different groups of advertisements that I will be studying. The first group consists of five ads printed during the time frame of 1955 to 1966. The second group of advertisements consists of five ads that were published from 2008 to 2015. I found all of my advertisements online through Google searches. When looking for these advertisements I used the search terms Tiffany & Company advertisements, as well as old Tiffany & Company advertisements.

The earliest advertisement I have is from 1955; it is a black and white Christmas advertisement that has Tiffany jewelry arranged to look like a Christmas tree. My next advertisement, from 1961, is also black and white and features several different types of Tiffany clocks. This was also a Christmas advertisement. The third advertisement in my earlier group is a black and white ad from 1964. It features two women talking on separate phones that are connected by a Tiffany chain. Next, is a black and white ad that features a large variety of different cut and shaped diamonds laid out all over the page. This ad was from 1966. The last advertisement in the earlier group was also from 1966. This is another simple black and white ad that features several watches all lined up next to each other.

The first advertisement from my later group is from 2008. This ad is in color, features an African American woman wearing Tiffany jewelry and the slogan “Some style is legendary.” My next ad is from 2010. The picture is mostly black and white except for the Tiffany blue box that a woman is holding while a man hugs her from behind. The third advertisement to be analyzed from this group is in color and features two pictures. One of a bride with all the groomsmen and the next is a close up of the bride’s face. The two pictures are separated by a Tiffany blue strip. Next is a color advertisement from 2014. The ad is very simple and features just two pairs of sunglasses against a white backdrop. The last advertisement I will be assessing is Tiffany’s newest ad from 2015 that features a male same sex couple in black and white. I will be evaluating all these advertisements using semiotic analysis. In order to fully comprehend how semiotics works and why it is an excellent tool in analyzing advertisements I will briefly cover the history of semiotics.

The History of Semiotics

In the simplest terms, semiotics is the study of signs. Those who study semiotics are generally concerned with the relationship between a sign and what it stands for, and then the relationship between that sign and the people who are interpreting it. The two men credited for the birth of this field of study are the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, and the American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce. Saussure's beginning with semiotics happened when he published his book, *A Course in General Linguistics*, in 1915. Saussure believed that a sign "is a structure that has intrinsic meaning and is a psychological entity, not the material thing" (Khan 78). Within his book Saussure explained how he believed a sign was broken up into two parts, the signifier (or sound image) and the signified (or concept). He stated that the relationship between these two things was vital for the development of semiotics. There are certain signs such as photographs that require no special knowledge to understand them. These types of signs are called iconic or motivated.

However, there are certain signs that do not intuitively make sense. These signs rely on cultural understanding and are a crucial component in understanding Saussure's semiotics. This idea expresses that the relationship between the signifier and signified is unnatural. "There is no logical connection between a word and a concept or a signifier and a signified, a point that makes finding meaning in texts interesting and problematic" (Berger 8). The question then becomes how do signifiers generate meaning? We, as communicators, create the meanings ourselves through associations and relationships that we have witnessed throughout our lives. "It is the familiarity with these conventions or codes that allows the sign to have meaning for us" (Arnold 255).

According to *Mythologies*, when studying semiotics it is important to remember there is more than just the signifier and the signified to observe. We also must look at the sign, which is the “associative total of the first two terms” (Barthes 113). This idea is exemplified in the figure of Saussure’s sign system featured below.

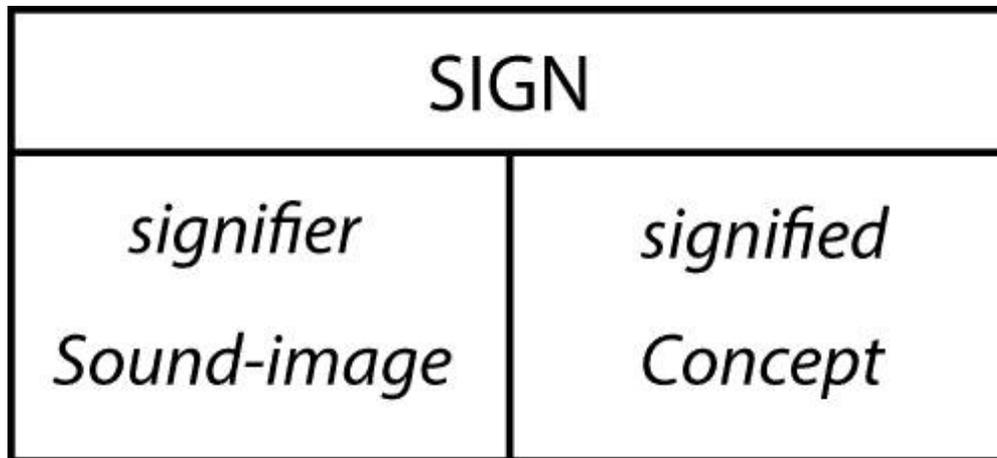


Figure 1. Saussure’s Sign System

Although the two men credited for the beginning of semiotics compliment each other very nicely, Peirce had a slightly different take of the study of signs. According to Peirce, a sign is “anything that signifies something to somebody” (Khan 78). Unlike Saussure, Peirce believed that everything in the universe was a sign (Berger). In Peirce’s theory of signs he believed in a triadic system. This triadic system consists of a sign, an object, and an interpretant. The interpretant is the most central to Peirce’s idea because he believed that it “is not a simple dyadic relationship between sign and object: a sign signifies only in being interpreted” (Atkin). This means that the person viewing the sign helps assign it meaning. The complex triadic relationship is featured in the figure of Peirce’s sign symbol below.

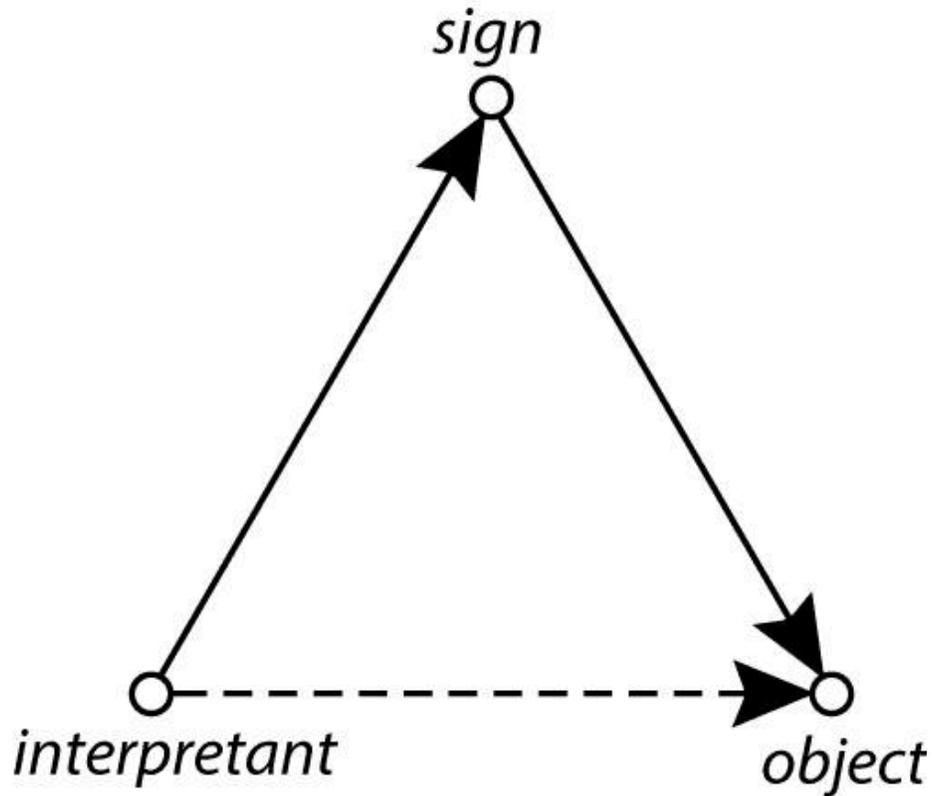


Figure 2. Peirce's Semiotic Triangle

Pierce believed that signs were broken into three different types. These types included the iconic, indexical, and symbolic. “Icons represented resemblance, pictures and statues, such as the Statue of Liberty. Symbols represented things such as flags, and that one must learn what the meaning was. Indexes implied causal relationships, an example being that fire causes smoke” (Baker 6). No matter which type of sign a person is looking at they still need to pull from their personal experiences to interpret those signs and give them meaning.

In the 1950s French philosopher, Roland Barthes, took the ideas of Saussure and Pierce and applied them to his idea of structuralism. Barthes insisted, “that we see texts as a complex intersection of social, political, and textual ‘structures,’ often expressed as

two-sided or binary oppositions like *high/low*, *self/other*, or *nature/culture*” (Arnold 254). Barthes argued that we understand the meaning of a given sign because there is a binary opposite we can use to provide context for said sign. The meaning of a sign is not in the sign itself but in the relationship it has with its opposite.

Since the birth of semiotics this form of analysis has been applied to many different topics that deal with communication and the transfer of messages. One place where it has really taken off is in the field of marketing. In 1986, the first ever Marketing and Semiotics Conference was held at Northwestern University. Since then research on the use of semiotics in marketing and consumer advertising has become much more common (Dinu, Eisenstat and Epure).

The understanding of semiotics is so crucial to marketing because the essence of this industry is to use symbols and pictures to create a powerful enough persuasive message to influence a person’s consumer behaviors. Barthes was one of the first people credited with using structuralism and semiotics as a way to analyze advertisements. He stated that marketing instruments are divided into two levels. The first is the “denotative” level where signs are used to create personality for a product and the second is “connotative” level, which reveals the hidden meaning of the images, text, and sounds used. This notion goes hand in hand with semiotics as you can relate the specific details used within advertisements as the signifiers and the meaning the consumer draws from those details as the signified.

According to Barthes there will never be an advertisement that we can take as a literal image. There are many layers within an advertisement to help deliver a stronger message to the consumer.

We never encounter (at least in advertising) a literal image in the pure state. No drawing or photograph in this context comes to us except as part of a message, part of someone's attempt to communicate something. This is the image's connotative meaning, a culturally specific message superimposed on the image's already-present denotative meaning. To decipher this message one must first determine how it has "encoded," that is, the degree to which what is otherwise a sign in its own right has been pressed into service to suggest things beyond its denotative value (Arnold 256).

With the use of semiotics one can understand how advertisers use certain symbols in order to invite their audiences to view their product in a certain way. In today's society we are all constant consumers of advertising, and with a firm understanding of semiotics we can understand why we are drawn to certain brands over others. Semiotic analysis is the most effective way to analyze the selected Tiffany & Company advertisements in order to understand what signifiers they use to persuade consumers to purchase their products.

Analysis of Artifacts

Just like any other company that uses advertising, Tiffany & Company's first and foremost goal is to sell their product. However, within their advertisements Tiffany uses many different types of signifiers to persuade consumers to buy into the idea of their brand and that there is a certain lifestyle one obtains by purchasing Tiffany products. According to the company's form 10-k annual report from 2013, "The Tiffany &

Company brand is the single most important asset of Tiffany and, indirectly, of the Registrant. The strength of the brand goes beyond trademark rights and is derived from consumer perceptions of the brand.” Getting consumers to identify with the brand and the perceived lifestyle associated with Tiffany is key for marketing Tiffany products because a consumer becomes more invested in wanting the product in order to achieve that lifestyle or level of status. From the same annual report, Tiffany & Company explains how they believe consumers view their brand. “Management believes that consumers associate the brand with high quality gemstone jewelry, particularly diamond jewelry; excellent customer service; an elegant store and online environment; upscale store locations; “classic” product positioning; distinctive and high quality packaging materials; and sophisticated style and romance.”

According to an article by Robert Maxwell, “Consumers use different brands because they help them express who they are or who they want to be to themselves and to others” (Maxwell). Owning Tiffany products is a way for consumers to achieve the “ideal” lifestyle they associate with the qualities listed above. In order to uncover how consumers extract these meanings and qualities from Tiffany advertisements I will be using semiotic analysis. With the use of semiotics I will identify the signifiers within different advertisements and see how they signify the qualities that management believes people associate with their brand.

One of the first signs that is most common with the earlier group of Tiffany & Company advertisements is the idea of gift giving. In the 1955 ad several different types of Tiffany products, such as earrings, bracelets, and brooches, are arranged to look like a Christmas tree. Underneath this jewelry tree are the words “Merry Christmas.” This ad is

suggesting that Tiffany products make the perfect Christmas gift for the people in your life. Following along with the Christmas gift theme is the 1961 advertisement. This ad features a variety of different Tiffany clocks. All these clocks are arranged in a way that gives off the illusion of an upside down Christmas tree. At the top of the picture the slogan “A Tiffany clock for Christmas” can be found. Similar to the last advertisement the slogan and the shape in which the products are arranged suggest that a Tiffany clock would make an excellent Christmas gift.

To the untrained eye many Tiffany & Company advertisements may seem very simple and clean but they are in fact full of signifiers. In the 2014 advertisement all that is featured is two pairs of sunglasses stacked on top of one another with a bright white backdrop. The brightness and purity of the white backdrop could be suggesting that these sunglasses are of high quality and will protect your eyes from the bright light of the sun in a superior way. Also, the contrast between the dark black background and the bright white diamonds in the 1966 advertisement suggests that the stones are of high quality. It is common knowledge that the clearer and brighter a diamond is the higher the quality. Tiffany & Company used the contrast of the dark background to show that their jewels are only of the finest quality. This advertisement also features the phrase, “She doesn’t expect the Tiffany Diamond... just a Tiffany diamond.” This phrase eludes to the fact that Tiffany diamonds are not like any others you can buy. A woman expects a Tiffany diamond because she wants the best and the highest quality for her jewelry. With the understanding of binaries it can be easily seen that Tiffany & Company is working to show that their diamonds are a step above the rest. Woman who have refined taste and have come to expect the best only settle for a Tiffany diamond. The company is leading

consumers to believe that no other jewelry store will compare because they do not possess the quality of gemstones that Tiffany & Company does.

One sign that has appeared in both the earlier set of advertisements as well as the modern one is the right of passage or achieving milestone. The watches advertisement from 1966 suggests that a Tiffany watch is the perfect gift for graduation due to the phrase featured in the advertisement, “time for graduation.” The double meaning of this slogan is important in understanding the signifiers present within the advertisement as well. Not only is it literally time for a graduation to occur, but the time also relates to watches and giving “time” as a graduation gift. The way the watches are displayed in the ad play an important role in signifying that a graduation is taking place. The watches all have black bands and are arranged to appear as though they are standing in two orderly rows. The black bands of the watches look strikingly similar to graduation caps and gowns, and the faces of the watches similar to the faces of people.

The event of graduation is associated with a transition or change in life where one moves into adulthood. Generally, the time following graduation is seen as a time when one gains more responsibility and truly discovers who they are as a person. This advertisement is suggesting that graduation is a right of passage and a Tiffany product is the perfect way to mark that event. A Tiffany watch signifies that you have passed onto this new phase of life and are on your way to becoming an adult.

A different right of passage or milestone is displayed in the later set of advertisements in the 2011 wedding advertisement. Getting married is yet another huge life change and transition. The act of marriage signifies the merging of a man and woman becoming one and agreeing to share their lives with each other. The signifiers in

this ad include the woman in a wedding dress, revealing she is a bride, and all the men dressed up in suits, showing they are the groom and groomsmen. These elements come together to signify that a wedding is taking place. In this first picture it is important to notice that the bride is the only woman featured in the picture. She is completely surrounded by men. This sets her apart from the rest of the group and signifies that it is her special day and that she is the center of attention. The men are all there to make sure the day is just how she wanted it. This is something that many women hope for on their wedding day, and Tiffany is creating the idea that with their rings your wedding day can be just like that as well. The contrast between the bright white of the bride's dress and the dark of the groomsmen suits is also a signifier. The white in this situation symbolizes purity or an ideal to strive for as a woman, especially on your wedding day.

In the second picture in the advertisement, where it features a close up of the bride, the Tiffany ring is front and center in the ad in front of the bride's face. It is important to take note of how the bride's hand placement is also a signifier. She has her left hand covering her chin with two fingers lightly placed over her smile. This signifier is suggesting that her happiness is because of the Tiffany ring that is so prominently displayed in the picture. The diamond that is featured in the picture is also quite a large diamond. The size of the ring may signify that the larger the diamond the bigger the smile, and ultimately the happier the bride will be. The ring also shows how Tiffany & Company played an important role in this life transition. Their ring marks the milestone of marriage, and achieving another right of passage.

These messages lead consumers to identify Tiffany & Company with being accomplished and making it through life's milestones. Building off of the last signified

element of quality, with Tiffany products not only does it show that you have accomplished some of life's most important achievements, but you have done so elegantly and with status. You did not choose to mark your life's greatest achievements with just any old products. No, you chose the best, to signify that your achievements and you as a person are worth the best.

In the 1964 ad, from the older group, and all but one ad from the newer group, attractive and desirable men and women are featured. There are several signifiers of these models' desirability throughout the different advertisements. In the 1964 ad, two women are featured talking on different phones connected by a Tiffany chain. Both women have their hair perfectly done up signifying they are well groomed and they take pride in their appearance. The signifiers of their beauty include their long eyelashes, their flawless appearing complexion and their desirable feminine features such as their small noses and full lips. The fact that they are connected by a Tiffany's chain signifies that when you purchase Tiffany products you are connected to other people of status and desirability just like yourself. The phrase "In the best of circles" featured in the advertisement signifies that by owning Tiffany products you enter into an elite circle of other people like you who have the status and the class to also own Tiffany products.

In the newer group of advertisements, the men and women's desirability is not only displayed by their beauty but by several other signifiers as well. In all four of the advertisements featuring people, their clothes are a signifier of their wealth. In the 2008 advertisement, the woman is wearing a beautiful ball gown, consisting of many layers and an intricate pattern. The advertisement also features the phrase "Some style is legendary," suggesting that this woman's style is in fact legendary and a step above the

rest of society. In the 2010 advertisement, it can be seen that the woman is wearing yet another beautiful dress with a sophisticated beaded style and the man is wearing a suit. In the 2011 wedding advertisement, it is easy to understand that the clothes of the models are of high quality because the woman is wearing a wedding dress and all the men are sporting tuxes. Lastly, in the 2015 advertisement, both men look sophisticated in collared shirts with one wearing a blazer and another a sweater. The signifiers of high quality and beautiful clothing signifies that all these people are wealthy and can afford to spend large amounts of money on their clothes.

The model's wealth and desirability is also reinforced by the activities these models partake in and the locations at which they are featured. In the 2008 advertisement the woman featured is holding a pair of binoculars. These are a signifier of her attendance to an opera, where it is quite common to use binoculars in order to better see the performance. The fact that she attends operas signifies that she is part of an elite class. Binaries come into play when analyzing this advertisement. Operas are not for your everyday person, they are a special event in which sophisticated and refined people attend. Tiffany is displaying that their customers are not your average members of society; instead they are a step above the rest. They partake in high society activities, which many ordinary people never have the chance to attend.

The couple in the 2010 advertisement is on the balcony of a high building in a metropolitan city, most likely indicating that they can afford a penthouse in an expensive city, such as New York. The couple featured in the 2015 ad is sitting on the front steps of what a consumer can presume to be their city house or apartment. The beautiful detailed

railing behind the men signifies that the building, which is featured out of the shot, is one of high value.

Due to what is signified in these advertisements consumers learn to associate the Tiffany lifestyle with desirability. If a consumer owns Tiffany products they will become desirable not only because they will be perceived as beautiful, like the models, but they will be associated with wealth and the ability to spend money on Tiffany products, as well as other high end things such as clothing and properties. In today's society it is not far fetched to say that being beautiful and possessing wealth are two of the most desirable qualities a person can have. Once again binaries help reinforce this ideal by showing that only desirable people own Tiffany products. The company wants you to believe that you don't just stumble across Tiffany owners on any ordinary occasion; they are a special elite group of their own.

Another sign that occurs in many different Tiffany ads is that of love. In the 2010, 2011, and 2015 advertisement there are very obvious showcases of love in all three. For example, in the 2010 ad the woman is shown holding a Tiffany box while a man embraces her from behind and leans his head on her back. It is natural for the consumer to assume that the man gave her the Tiffany box and that is why they are embracing in an obvious display of affection. The 2011 advertisement features a wedding, the ultimate display of love, with a Tiffany diamond ring prominently featured in the picture. This signifies that this ultimate act of love occurred because the groom bought a Tiffany engagement ring for his beloved. Essentially, this ultimate act of love would not have occurred if Tiffany & Company had not been a part of the equation. Lastly, in the 2015 advertisement the two men are clearly displaying love between one another. They sit next

to each other on the steps as one man rests his hand on the other's knee and then his partner gazes lovingly at him. To the side of the picture there are two wedding bands signifying that a proposal will occur in the future.

After viewing these different signifiers of love in the Tiffany & Company advertisements it becomes natural for a consumer to recognize that part of the Tiffany lifestyle consists of having love and romance. The advertisements even suggest that some acts of love would not be possible without Tiffany playing an important role. This can lead the consumer to associate true love with Tiffany. If you want your love to last you don't just go to any jeweler. You go to Tiffany because they have the best quality and their jewelry even sparks the beginning of many acts of love.

The last sign that I will be analyzing from this selection of Tiffany advertisements is the use of black and white in their photos. Of course all the advertisements from the first group were featured in black and white because that was the technology that was available at the time, but two of the advertisements from the newer group are also featured in black and white. In the 2010 advertisement, the entire picture is black and white except for the blue Tiffany box. Then in the 2015 ad the entire picture featured in the advertisement is black and white. The strategic use of black and white is a signifier of reverting back to a past time. The affection for using elements from the past, such as black and white pictures, signifies that Tiffany & Company places importance on its products being timeless and classic. Tiffany will never go out of style because no matter what age we are in the products will still feature the same sense of quality and status that they always have.

It is key to look at the importance of using black and white in the 2015 advertisement. This advertisement features a gay male couple and engagement rings signifying that a wedding between them will take place. In order to reinforce the relationship between the two men the ad also features the following text: “Will you promise to never stop completing my sentences or singing off-key, which I’m afraid you do often and will you let today be the first sentence of one long story that never ever ends?” Even though society has been moving forward with its acceptance of homosexual relationships and gay marriage this is still a radical move for an advertisement. It appears to be one of the first of its kind, especially from such a long-standing and well-known company. Despite the content of the picture itself being quite radical, the fact that it is printed in black and white signifies that Tiffany still is sticking with their founding values and principles. Even though times and society may have changed the black and white signifies that Tiffany’s dedication to what it originally believed in has not.

This signifier persuades the consumer to believe that with Tiffany’s products they will be viewed as timeless and classic themselves. Time may change a person, but if they own Tiffany products they will always exude the sophistication and class that is associated with those items. They will always be viewed as someone with great taste because Tiffany’s never goes out of style.

From the signs that are displayed throughout all of Tiffany advertisements it is clear to see that consumers have certain expectations of what their lives will be like when they purchase something from the company. Through complex combinations of signifiers and signs they have come to associate Tiffany & Company with gift giving, status and quality, accomplishments and rights of passage, being viewed as desirable, possessing

true love, and being viewed as timeless. Many consumers do not have the funds to purchase a penthouse apartment with a balcony overlooking New York City, like the models do in the advertisements, but they do have enough funds to buy something smaller, such as a Tiffany bracelet. With the purchase of a Tiffany bracelet, or any Tiffany product, it allows the customer to feel as though they are achieving a little bit of that lifestyle and are exuding the same characteristics associated with the jewelry company.

Conclusion

As was established in the beginning of this paper, we live in a consumer driven world. New companies are created daily with the hope that you will become a loyal consumer of their products and purchase their goods over others. With the consumer's ever-growing access to information and the ability to instantaneously research and compare products this is becoming an increasingly difficult feat. In order to stand out a company must have a strong understanding of what tactics will be the most beneficial for their brand.

Tiffany & Company is an excellent advertising model for companies. After reading this case study it is easy to see that one of the many reasons Tiffany has been so successful with their advertising is because they have stayed loyal to their original themes and symbols throughout their existence. These themes include gift giving, status and quality, accomplishment, rights of passage, desirability, true love, and timelessness. This dedication to the persistent use of their themes is also what has created such a prominent and distinctive brand. In order to be successful a company should pick several different

characteristics they want signified by their brand and then make sure all their advertising efforts reinforce those characteristics.

Another smart tactic that Tiffany & Company uses when creating their advertisements is the invention of the Tiffany lifestyle. The company has created this desirable and almost fairytale like lifestyle that consumers have come to associate with owning Tiffany products. It is an intelligent move for companies to not only create a brand but a lifestyle to which consumers can become emotionally attached. With this technique consumers come to believe that if they purchase one of the company's products they can achieve a part of that certain lifestyle they are hoping to obtain.

There is no guarantee for success for businesses today; however, creating a strong brand is a vital step in the journey for success. With a prominent and recognizable brand a product will become so much more to a consumer than something they buy. It will signify their hopes and their desires in becoming more like that brand. The product will also help personify those ideals to others. When a consumer becomes emotionally attached to your brand and it becomes a part of their "lifestyle", that is when a company knows they have truly won the consumer's loyalty. Once a consumer becomes loyal to a brand that is an extremely difficult bond to break.

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