Analysis of Advertisements by the National Security Agency

National Security is the backbone of any great society or country in today’s world. Without National Security, there is no safety for the masses. The National Security Agency is a branch of the United States government that was formed on November 4, 1952 ("National Security Agency"). The NSA specializes in maintaining safety and security of the United States through means of technological advances and security. The main aim of the NSA is to ensure the safety and security of the country through means of cryptology ("Mission & Strategy"). Therefore, they ensure security by the study of computer code and its effects on systems. Their core beliefs are honesty, respect for the law, integrity and transparency. Their mission statement states that the NSA is at the front of different forms of cryptology that contains different information products and services so as to be at an advantage for the USA and their allies ("Mission & Strategy"). The NSA’s main aim is to ensure the safety and security of the citizens, and they achieve this goal by going through any methods at their disposal, even if these said methods are legally questionable. Their message with respect to the two images chosen for analysis is the issue of safety and providing for the masses. They are using the rhetorical appeals of Ethos, Pathos, Kairos and Logos.

The first image to be analyzed is an advertisement by the NSA targeted specifically for potential applicants. There is more than one purpose of this image. The first purpose is to request able individuals to apply for a job at the NSA so that they can help serve their country. The second purpose of the image is to inform people that the NSA only ‘discriminates’ based on the ability of a job applicant. They want the people to know that they do not discriminate but rather employ only the best, irrespective of any discriminating factor. As stated earlier, their audience are specifically potential applicants. The rhetorical appeals in the image include Ethos, Pathos and Kairos.

An element of ethos is shown at the bottom right corner of the image. The seal of the NSA is visible. The seal shows that this is an advertisement by the NSA. It lends to their credibility of being one of the top cyber security agencies in today’s modern world. They also include their URL at the bottom of the image. The URL is to the career application portal for the NSA. There are different instances of pathos used in the image. At the top of the advertisement are the words ‘We Discriminate’ in bold block letters taking up a sizable section of the image. This phrase is present so as to instantly grab the attention of the reader. It makes the reader wonder why a reputable agency such as the NSA would state that they discriminate. However directly below the image is the sentence ‘He’s the only person in this group smart enough to work at the NSA.’ This sentence is followed by a red line that points to a singled out individual. The red color is used so as to once again regain the audience’s attention. The sentence about who is ‘smart enough’ gets rid of the earlier notion that the NSA discriminates but rather means that they only employ the cream of the crop.

Another element of pathos are the individuals used in the advertisement. The usage of a person with color leads the audience to feel for the past history of racial inequality and how people still face forms of racism today. The racial composition of the rest of the group is distributed by individuals of different sexes and cultural backgrounds. There are people of different Asian, Caucasian and Arab ethnicity. As for the religion aspect, there is also a woman with a Hijab that shows that the group is not confined to one religious belief. The body language of the individuals is another interesting aspect. They all seem welcoming and there is a form of positivity. At the bottom of the image, the usage of the word culture to form the sentence ‘Where cultural intelligence goes to work’, goes to show how the NSA cares about culture and understands how the country is strong due to its cultural diversity. The word cultural is in yellow, a color that is contrasted to the other words in the sentence and grabs the reader’s attention. As for Kairos, the bottom of the page urges individuals to visit the NSA careers website so as to apply for a job there. Another element of Kairos is directly below the first element. The NSA has given details for prospective employees to meet them at the Morgan State University Student Union’s diversity fair. There is a sense of urgency and timeliness in this advertisement. The NSA wants potential candidates to apply as soon as possible. It makes the audience think about the urgency of the situation.

The second image to be analyzed is an advertisement by the NSA targeted specifically for the armed forces of the United States of America. The purpose of the second image is to urge the armed forces of the United States of America to keep all confidential information secure. They are urging the armed forces to use secure communications so that no terrorists gain information. At the bottom of the image, the blurred lines state the following:

The success of America's campaign against terrorism depends on you. Don't help America's enemies plan another attack. Use secure communications when discussing classified or sensitive information. Handle and discard memos, documents, correspondence and emails appropriately. Practice good computer security when accessing the Internet. Our enemies are unlike any we've encountered before. Don't arm them with information that can harm us.

The rhetorical appeals in the image include Ethos, Pathos, Kairos and Logos.

An element of ethos is shown at the bottom right corner of the image. The seal of the NSA is visible. The seal shows that this is an advertisement by the NSA. It lends to their credibility of being one of the top cyber security agencies in today’s modern world. They also include their URL at the bottom of the image. The URL is to the career application portal for the NSA. In the second image, an element of pathos is the flag of the United States of America. Many Americans are patriotic, especially those who serve in the armed forces. This is an effective element of pathos as the audience of this advertisement are specifically those who serve in the armed forces. Another element of pathos in this advertisement is the picture of the soldier, as stated above the armed forces take great pride in their work and their fellow service members. The last sentence at the bottom of the advertisement is another element of Pathos. The sentence ‘Don’t arm them with information that can harm us’ appeals to the constant wars that the United States of America has fought with terrorism and different terrorist organizations. It evokes a strong emotional response from the reader. It makes the reader feel for those who have been directly impacted by terrorist attacks in the past. It urges the armed forces to be extra careful so as to ensure the safety and security of the American people. There is an appeal to nationalism in this advertisement. An appeal to nationalism is a logical fallacy and is apparent throughout the advertisement through the usage of the soldier and the American flag.

An element of Kairos is the statement ‘Information Security Begins with you!’. The usage of this statement urges the armed forces to enact appropriate security measures with immediate effect. Furthermore, the usage of present tense in the advertisement conveys urgency. An element of Logos is in the statement ‘Use secure communications when discussing classified or sensitive information. Handle and discard memos, documents, correspondence and emails appropriately.’ This is because it is stating common security practices that should be enforced so as to ensure maximum cyber security. The usage of information technology protocols appeals to the usage of logic in this case.

Both images use the rhetorical appeals of Ethos, Pathos, Kairos and Logos while the second image has Logos as well. For both images, the element of Ethos is the same. The significance of the seal of the NSA is explained above and their image of credibility is used in both images. Both images use Pathos in different form. The first image appeals to the matter of cultural diversity, whereas the second image appeals to the care of the safety and security of the American people. As for Kairos, the first image urges potential candidates to apply for a job at the NSA whereas the second image urges the armed forces to ensure security protocols are put in place as soon as possible. The first image does not have a direct rhetorical appeal of Logos. However, there is a case for implied Logos. The NSA obviously has a high standard for applicants and therefore their employees must have ample information and knowledge to be employed. The second image however talks about the proper information technology safety protocols to use.

To conclude, both images use very effective rhetorical appeals that impact the audience in different ways. The usage of Ethos, Pathos, Kairos and Logos have different impacts on the audience and overall both advertisements have clearly sent out their respective messages. The objectives of both advertisements reinforce the mission statement of the NSA. By urging able applicants to apply and by urging the armed forces to focus on security, the NSA is able to stay true to its mission statement of ensuring the safety and security of the county.

Works Cited

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