

# 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)

R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

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

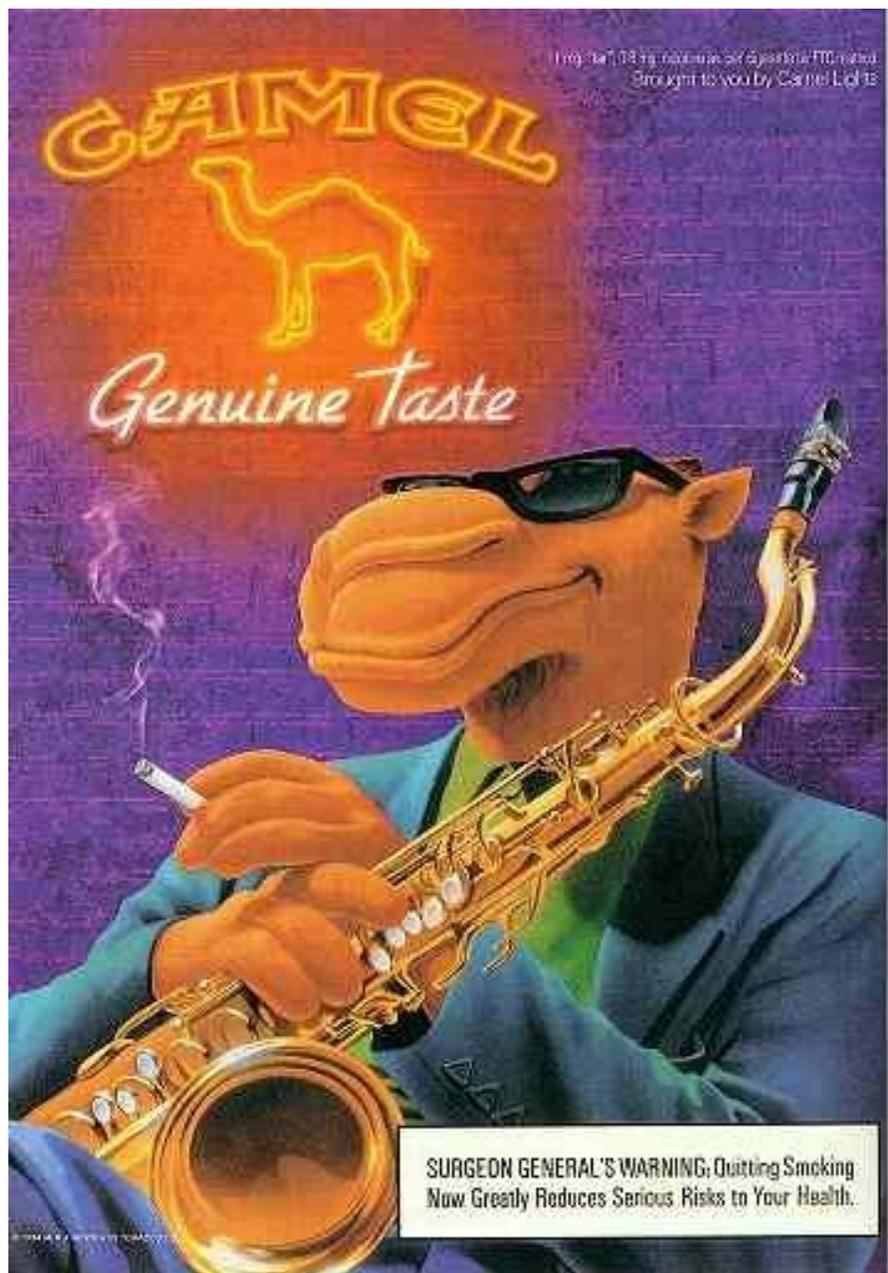
- "Four out of five doctors surveyed recommended Excedrin's formula."

—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?