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COMD 3504
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A CAPSULE
A DAY FADES
DARK SPOTS
AWAY.

20% Pure Vitamin C Serum.
High concentration. Proven results.

1 WEEK
for smoother, brighter skin.

4 WEEKS
visibly reduces the look
of dark spots.

#1 dermatologist recommended brand

Neutrogena[®]

Neutrogena
Rapid Tone
Repair
20% VITAMIN C SERUM
30 Serum Capsules

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The photo above is of a print advertisement by Neutrogena. It features a vile, filled with a bronze metal capsule, filled with a skin cream. An orange peel is laying next to the vile, which is laying on its side. Beneath the vile and orange peel is a square piece of glass. Dropped around the vile, orange peel, and glass are a few of the capsules, one of which is opened showing the skin cream that it holds. The rest of the vertical print ad is covered with some text, all in six different size weights. The ad background is white, while the color of the text is either a really dark green or dark blue.

The vile is clear, looks like it's made of glass, and has a white top. It looks as if it is no taller than four inches. However, the product is blown up immensely to show the detail and emphasize the focus of attention is on it. On the vile, it has writing, and inside of the vile, it has thirty metallic-looking bronze capsules. The vile itself rests on top of what looks like a glass coaster. The vile and the glass coaster are angled toward each other making an x shape when they meet. The orange peel that is laying next to the vile is thin and long. It also curls, making it look like a garnish and very decorative. The four capsules that are dropped around the other items give off that same decorative feeling. One of the capsules is opened, showing the skin cream that it contains, but some of the skin cream is also laying right in front of it.

The layout of the ad is simple but strong for the product. Going from the top to the bottom, the first element of the ad we interact with is some text that takes up the center to the right side of the page. Moving on to the middle of the page, the next two elements we interact with is the image of the product with another image that is associated with the product. That takes up the left half of the page. The right half is then taken up with more text. Then the bottom of the page is completely text, going from passed the center to the left of the page.

Proceeding to the typography within the advertisement, we see that a modern serif typeface is being used for the title and headings. Then a sans serif typeface is being used for the body copy.

The quality of the image is incredibly crisp and sharp. Given that it's a product shot, it should be high quality because it had to be blown up to show the detail in the product and focus people's attention on it.

Moving forward to the linguistic message, the denoted message within is "Neutrogena. Rapid Tone Repair." which is on the vile containing the bronze, metallic-looking capsules. There is also the other text, the heading, that says "A Capsule A Day Fades Dark Spots Away". The body copy says "20% Pure Vitamin C Serum. High Concentration. Proven Results." The literal meaning of this message is that the capsules will get rid of people's dark spots, which is also the anchorage. However, while the denoted message effectively communicates the purpose of the product, the power in the text comes from the connoted message. As I review the advertisement, the word that I perceive to be most valuable is the one on the product itself, which is "serum". This is an incredibly strong use of the word because of the underlying ideas it carries. For example, when people hear the word serum, they think of a cure, and quite possibly think of a serum in the same way they think of an elixir. That kind of meaning is powerful in a word. An elixir is primarily thought of as a magical potion, able to do what's impossible by nature, such as granting immortality or healing unhealable wounds. However, the word elixir is also used as a way of describing a medicinal solution. Therefore, the connoted message within the linguistic message is healing. Overall, the linguistic message of the advert is that you will heal your unhealable dark spots with this product.

Moving on to the non-coded iconic message, we see a vile containing capsules of this “serum” which its purpose is to heal dark spots. While it shows the product, the ad doesn’t actually show what the product does and has to be supported by the text in order to get its message across. When looking at the ad in a literal sense, without paying mind to the text or underlying ideas, its reality communicates not much. Its reality shows a solution to a problem, without showing the problem.

Contrary to the non-coded iconic message, the coded iconic message tells us a lot more. Starting with the capsules themselves, notice how their shape isn’t geometric. It’s organic, almost resembling the shape of a teardrop. It communicates that it’s natural and perhaps even living because when you think about the purpose of the serum, it is a moving process like a living organism. Then, if we look at the color of the capsule, we see that it is a metallic bronze. The meaning behind the color bronze is strength and support. Knowing that symbolism, we can apply it to the purpose of the serum as well, which is to support the skin by healing it and nourishing it. Additionally, the texture on the capsule is incredibly important to the image of the product because shine gives it a nod that it is luxurious. By making it seem as possibly luxurious, it implies that one, it isn’t cheap, and two, not everyone can get it. This builds a feeling of scarcity and subconsciously a sense of urgency. To further add to that idea, healing itself takes time and if there is one thing that makes people spend money, it is getting back time. Getting rid of dark spots is a form of going back or stopping time because it gives the appearance of stopping aging. So, this serum essentially gives back time to the user. Moving on to the container which holds the capsules, the first thing that pops out is the size. It isn’t big, even though it is in the ad. How do we know this? We can tell by comparing the size to the size of the orange peel right next to it. Having knowledge of how big an orange can get, we are able to assume the size of the product.

Additionally, the small size of the container reinforces the idea of scarcity and introduces a new idea of power, in the sense of how effective it is. Why? The reason is that it's showing you don't need a lot for it to work. Going back to the orange peel, it's an important supporting actor to the product because of the main ingredient that is active in repairing dark spots; vitamin C. Since vitamin C has a strong association with oranges, it makes perfect sense to show an orange peel.

In conclusion, the advertiser's rhetoric is extremely effective. The text within the ad does an excellent job of communicating the purpose of the product, while also communicating a sense of uniqueness. However, it was the images that communicated the most, without saying anything. Overall, the combination of everything created a really impressive and competent advertisement.