

all of these demands, the woman still looks like a model. In those few cases in which the harmony breaks down, the woman is shown as being responsible for the breakdown or in need of drugs to cope with the stress. On the other hand, men are seldom seen as responsible for cooking, cleaning, and child care, or in need of drugs in order to cope.

- What kind of influence has advertising had on your own views of beauty, attractiveness, and self-image?
- How does advertising influence our perceptions of social roles based on gender?
- To what degree have your family, friends, and mates been socialized by advertising?

Decision Scenario D NEW, IMPROVED, . . . AND SMALLER

Consumer product companies often face a competitive marketplace where profit margins are slim and manufacturing cost increases frequent. Some companies have adopted a new technique called "downsizing" to respond to these pressures. They decrease product weight or quantity while holding package size and price constant. Consumer research suggests that consumers are less likely to process the label information that discloses the downsizing and the implicit price increase. Consumers, then, are less likely to respond as they would to a more obvious per package price increase. Downsizing can come in a variety of forms, some more creative than others. Perhaps the most common technique is to keep the exact same package but include less product. Some coffee manufacturers have a new twist on that strategy. They decreased the quantity of coffee in the can, but they claimed that a new "flaking" process allowed the consumer to get more brewed coffee per scoop. Other manufacturers reduce the package size and quantity, and lower the package price but increase the unit price. (New low price!) Another approach is to increase package size, quantity, and price but also increase unit price. (A variant of the old "economy size" package that had a higher unit price.)

One drug manufacturer, barred from the continued use of an active ingredient in a prescription asthma drug, changed the formulation so that the new drug was similar in ingredients to an over-the-counter

medication that cost one-tenth the price. The drug company halved the quantity of active ingredient while doubling the suggested dosage for the over-the-counter cold medication.

Some report that a manufacturer of household cleaning agents launched a new brand with very high initial sales. The active cleaning agent, the detergent's most important ingredient, was gradually reduced the level of the active agent while carefully tracking consumer response. When noticeable decreases in cleaning effectiveness were reported, cause decreased sales, the manufacturer increased the proportion of the cleaning agent again.

- Are companies that downsize increasing their sales because they are relying on marketing techniques that shows consumers are less likely to process the information increases?
- Are there ethically relevant differences between the preceding examples?
- What responsibility does the consumer have to protect him- or herself in the marketplace? What responsibility does that responsibility have on the part of manufacturers and advertisers? Are any of the techniques described ones that consumers should be against?

This case was prepared from the following sources: *New York Times*, "Coffee Weighs 13 Ounces," May 21, 1994; *Wall Street Journal*, "Sakson (AP), 'Will People Cough Up \$50 for a \$10 Drug?'" October 14, 1994.

Decision Scenario E EIGHT PITCHES

Consider the following eight attempts to influence through marketing and advertising. Imagine that the techniques described were successful at getting a person to want the targeted product. But also imagine that in each case the consumer failed to purchase the product.

1. An ad claiming, accurately, that the *Blazer* has relatively good gas mileage, high resale value, and high customer satisfaction ratings from *Consumer Reports*.
2. A television commercial for the *Blazer* sports car that shows it zooming down a road.