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Mass media advertising: Information or wallpaper?

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Citation for published version (APA):

Smit, E. G. (1999). Mass media advertising: Information or wallpaper?. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.

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For most consumers, advertising is less important than advertisers might think. Advertising appears to function as 'wallpaper', something in the background that is hardly noticed. The advertiser, however, wants the consumer to use his advertisement as a piece of information, for example, when standing in front of a shelf thinking what kind of detergent is 'best' or 'cheapest'. Mass mediated advertising campaigns should therefore at least function as a reminder when making all kinds of choices concerning brands, products or services.

This book describes consumers' use of advertising. The question to be answered is: "How and why do people use advertising?". Are they searching for information or simply watching commercials because they are funny? Are they avoiding ads because they find them irritating? And to what extent is (claimed) advertising use related to remembering having seen specific ads? The five studies in this book use different methods and research designs for addressing these questions, to understand and explain advertising use. These include: a meta-analysis of more than 50 studies on advertising, several in-depth interviews, a nation-wide telephone survey with follow-up by mail, an experiment, and a face-to-face survey.

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