

Blog 2: Images Everywhere

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April 7, 2003

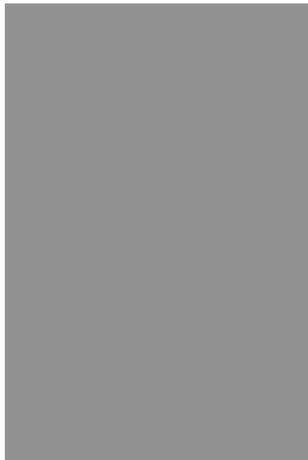
PWR 2: Multimedia Magazines

Dr. O'Brien

Babies Images Everywhere!

I woke up at 9:30, grabbed my towel, and headed for the bathroom. However, this wasn't the usual, peaceful trip to the bathroom. I was flooded – nay, attacked – by the plethora of flyers that plastered the billboard next to the bathroom, the bathroom doors, and the bathroom walls. It is even impossible to use the urinals without staring directly at an advertisement trying to persuade the innocent (and often uninterested) bathroom patron. I often disregard the flyers or maybe just read the headlines. But, today I took notice. Today, I was compelled by my PWR 2 class to read, analyze, and delve into the very essence of the flyers. I did not know how my journey would fare, but I would march through the very depths of hell with this heavenly cause (Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*).

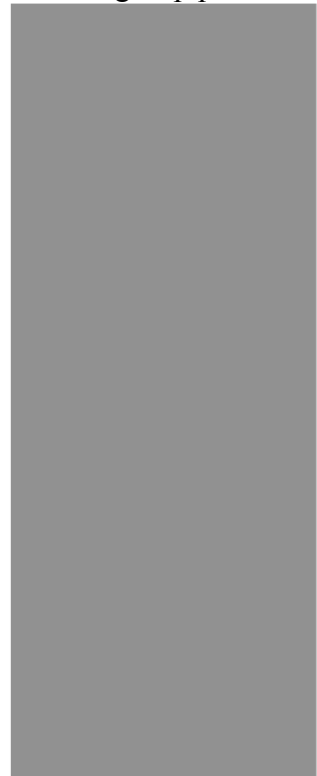
Student elections had announced their arrival with a confetti parade of leaflets, pamphlets, flyers and signs. What was often considered to be popularity contests in high school becomes an advertising battle in college. Especially at the end of freshman year in college, when it is impossible to know more than a few hundred of your 1600 fellow classmates, the elections are often dependent upon effective advertising to sway the unknown masses. Inevitably, many different campaign tactics are used, from comedy to serious appeals to trust. It is the chosen style that interests me, and how visuals are used in their rhetoric (*i.e.*, the **VISUAL RHETORIC**).



On the bathroom door, I came face-to-face with a picture (see right) of Omar “O Shak” Shakir, a freshman in Rinconada and candidate for the ASSU senate. The flyer is dominated by his picture and the text “O SHAK GOT YOUR BACK.” The picture and the text both push Omar’s advertising principles of trust and friendliness. He’s smiling, looking, and pointing directly at the reader with both hands, bringing the viewer closer to him. His smile adds friendliness, and his clean cut appearance coupled with his clean Stanford shirt tells the reader that he is trustworthy. The primary text furthers the rhetoric of the picture. He states that he’s “got yo back,” meaning that he will watch out for the students. But, the casual use of slang makes him personable. The icing of the flyer is the statements around the rest of the page stating his qualifications, ideas, and main concerns. These show that Omar is indeed a candidate who will take his position

seriously. Also, the use of various text fonts emphasizes that he is fun. This is a very effective flyer with a good layout emphasizing the picture and essential quote of his campaign.

Over a urinal, I noticed a flyer for the sophomore class president group promoting itself with the catch phrase "All In." When I turned around, I saw a competing campaign for president known as the "Unity Slate." The ads use very different techniques. The "All In" campaign seductive flyer portraying an attractive of emphasized well-endowment. Their line, "Will You Go All In? 'Cause I will" removes any doubt of the nature of their campaign advertising. The picture and the line are both flagrantly sexual. They are appealing to the stereotypical image of college guys (sex-crazed beings who often make decisions based on the wrong impulses). To this audience, the flyer might be effective, but it is definitely memorable to everyone. After all, the most important part of any campaign is being memorable. As P.T.Barnum's said, "I don't care what you say about me as long as you spell my name right." Also, two members of the "All In" ballot are women. They therefore show a true politician's perspective of giving the people what they want, not what interests yourself. It is important to note that this flyer appears in a men's bathroom and probably only there. It is likely, however, that there is a comparable version for females in the women's bathroom. Although curious, I did not find my quest to analyze visual rhetoric to be a valid reason for entering the women's bathroom. Also, any inquiries into the subject would probably make me look rather sketchy and questionable. I therefore let the question sit as one of life's great mysteries.



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The "Unity Slate" takes the approach of devotion and seriousness, a vastly different tactic than "All In." The American flag and the suits emphasize the dedicated nature of these individuals. They want to show that they will work hard. Being the "Unity Slate," the group obviously wants to show that they will bring together the diverse student body of Stanford. Their ideal is illustrated by the diverse ethnicities of the group itself. Also, the firm statement of goals under the picture shows that they will work hard with purpose. This is a group of hard-working, unified individuals working in the best interests of the students. Well, that's at least what they want people to think.

Looking at these flyers gives me a better idea of what kind of magazine I would enjoy working on. Of all the candidates, Omar seems to be the strongest. His flyer makes me believe that he is going to work hard and be personable. I also find the "All In" campaign to have a great tinge of humor. Basically, I realize that I would like to

work on something that approaches important topics in an accessible manner, but it does so without being entirely serious.