

Do you buy celebrity?

If a celebrity you admire is touting a product, do you buy it? Apparently, you do. Today, the New York Times has a very interesting article about celebrity endorsements. It discusses among other items, Totes' (umbrella makers) decision to use Rihanna (pop singer) as a celebrity endorser. Rihanna had a hit song called, aptly enough, Umbrella, which made Totes' executive think this was a good match.

I think celebrity endorsements are overrated. The article talks about Nicole Kidman appearing for Chanel #5 and Ellen Degeneres appearing for American Express. I like both these actresses yet I would not get either product. I happen to think the AmEx ads are great—always entertaining. It boils down to relevance and need. I don't need another credit card, so it is irrelevant that Ellen hawks AmEx. Sometimes, I just don't believe the celebrity actually uses the product. You are going to tell me that Queen Latifah uses Cover Girl? Or that Jennifer Love Hewitt uses Hanes? Please! One of the most annoying ads on TV today, in my opinion, is the Jamie Lee Curtis ad for Danon Activia. Why on earth is this a good idea?

Celebrity endorsements are almost a way to get rid of advertising creativity. Here, look, this celebrity uses the product, and so should you. So the adoring masses go and buy the product. That is the thought process the marketing execs are using. Instead, a creative team would have to think of all the great product attributes and come up with an interesting/funny/smart way to promote the product. Hmm...which is more labor intensive?