

Will it play in Peoria?

It used to be that the primary concern for advertisers was whether their ad “would play in Peoria,” shorthand for would middle America like it. More and more we are seeing ads that don’t play in Peoria or anywhere else than the ultra chic world of Manhattan advertising agencies. Microsoft is a case in point. The company is now withdrawing its weird Bill Gates-Jerry Seinfeld ads after only two weeks. The ads were just too strange and didn’t get across their point. Unfortunately, this is not the only case, nor will it be the last. Now, I am all in favor of “pushing the envelope” creatively and approaching things differently, but ultimately, the target audience has to appreciate the ad or else it is literally missing its target.

This morning, I was watching the news and they were talking about what to do during this financial mess. One of the advisers recommended holding off on any big purchases such as real estate and hanging on tight to any money. Not sure if I agree, but I know that mortgages are hard to get right now. Not five minutes later during commercial break, Coldwell Banker had an ad for its services, ENCOURAGING people to buy now BECAUSE of the economic climate. Huh? Dissonance!!!! I thought to myself, are these advertisers really thinking that people will be buying during this type of economic crisis? Is this another case of not taking Peoria into consideration?

Update on Microsoft: Here’s a story from Newsweek about how Microsoft is failing to shine Vista’s reputation.