

Animated Television Commercials: Impact and Future

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Abstract

This research is based upon the animated commercials which are done Fast Moving Consumer Goods' (FMCG) sector targeted towards children and young adults at large. The goal of this study is to assess the current scenario of animated advertisements on TV and evaluate its impact on the young consumers. Its main focus is to analyze how animation art displays the function and effectiveness in the advertisement communication. This has been done through primary data by collecting a sample of 50 people from Delhi and NCR. Also, secondary data is taken by examining the research papers, articles, websites, periodicals based upon animated television commercials. The research aims at assessing the animated advertisement in molding purchasing decision of consumers and its future growth with the hope to be useful as a reference for specific application in the animated industry.

Keywords:

FMCG- Fast moving consumer goods

Animericals- Animation + Commercials

Low Involvement Products- Those products and services which have a low cost and requires less time in making purchase decisions.

Celebrity Endorsements-Those commercials which include celebrities that are used for endorsing a product or service.

Brand Recall Value- Ability to recognize and remember a particular brand as and when a particular product class is mentioned.

1. Introduction

Advertisements are now a must for driving any brand's success. Majority of superior brands are exposed through television. Indians still prefer to rely on television commercials for purchasing a product. The Indian TV advertisement industry size is expected to increase from USD 1.9 billion in 2009 to USD 3.3 billion in 2013, growing at a rate of 13% p.a. Also, ZenithOptimedia (4P's - Issue 31st December 2010- 27th January 2011) stated that Television advertisement ruled the market with 41.3% share in 2011. With number of advertisements rising on television, the acceleration of any brand's success is dependent upon the use of out of the box ideas, and one of them is Animation.

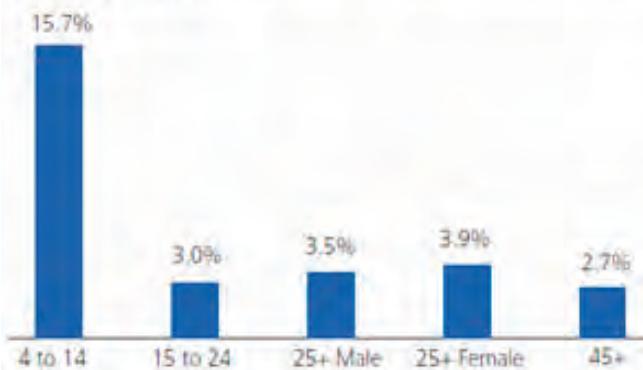
Animation is described as a rapid display of time sequenced frames to create an illusion of continuous movement. Advanced technology, in computer animation, has made animation a more flexible and artistic tool. Animated advertisements are economical yet creative. It facilitated communication irrespective of language and cultural barriers. However, many animated commercials are still depending on imaginary characters to provide visual demonstration or verbal testimony for a wide variety of products. It helps to break the clutter of live action commercials.

From the creation of advertising characters such as the Amul Girl cooing 'utterly butterly delicious', Handiplast Boy, ICICI-Chintamani, Pillsbury Atta's - Doughboy just as mascots to appeal the youth; animation has taken a front row in creation of full-fledged "animercials" for Big Babool, Vodafone - Zozoo, All-Out Mosquito Repellent, Kellogg's, Kit-Kat- "squirrels" and the latest in this category Nestea showing Kangaroo and Fanta- 'Orangy wonderful duniya.' Such ads have helped in grabbing an instant attention of the youngsters.

Not just about Kids

The growth of these animated television commercials is not just limited to kids but also to young adults. According to FICCI-KPMG Indian Media and Entertainment Industry report 2010, the percentage increase in viewership of Pogo and Cartoon Network is 30-35% found in the 15+ age group (refer to the table below)

Figure 11: Percentage viewership across age groups of kids channels



Source: FICCI-KPMG Indian Media & Entertainment Industry Report 2010

Comic characters and cartoon icons affect the youngsters at large. The above report states that as more viewers are watching animation on television. Thus, agencies are finding it a best possible tool for promotion as it creates fantasies which can only be fulfilled after the consumption of marketers' products and services.

More demand for animation in FMCG

As products in the FMCG sector involve low cost, they constantly try to break free from the clutter and create something different which catches immediate attention of their target market. KV 'Pops' Sridhar, NCD, Leo Burnett India, on animated ads felt that, "It is very appealing when it comes to target audiences since it connects exceptionally well with the youngsters. Everyone today is trying to break the clutter in the advertising world through innovation. Also, animation nowadays in India is easier than it was 10 years back with the availability of all kinds of latest technology. Plus, Shah Rukh may not be available all the time for shooting a commercial, however an animated Shah Rukh can be available as an when we want him."

This practice is more prominent in FMCG sector as there are numerous products delivering the same benefits which are advertised and thereby, compel and push the consumers to

purchase their products. In FMCG sector the emphasis to target young adults are mostly on Toothpaste, Biscuits, Health drinks, Chips, Confectionary category. Youngsters are not just targeted with "animercials" which include their favorite cartoon characters but also given added merchandise and other innovative selling schemes. This ultimately led to the question of "What to buy?"

Children as Decision Maker

Not just the adults but youngsters also are confused in making their purchase decision due to outburst of FMCG television commercials. Many families now-a-days use multi-brands which provide more scope to experiment with the brands. Naresh Gupta, Head- Brand Strategy, iYogi, stated that "Parents are relieving their childhood through their children, so they take into consideration their opinion before indulging in purchase." Due to this, marketers target young adults to create a "pestering power" over parents. IMRB Kidscan reported that 73% of parents buy the food items that are demanded by their children. Also, 70% of parents feel it's important to ask for youngsters' opinion while making household purchase. Although according to Allan Collaco, Secretary General, ASCI, - "The key thing is that marketers should not exploit the vulnerability of children in any way." But some marketers tap this opportunity as it helps in marketing their product through negative publicity.

This research study thus, helps to analyze the impact of animated advertisements on young adults and children that are shown on television by various FMCG marketers and also in determining the future prospects of animated advertisements.

Review of Literature

A television advertisement or television commercial is a span of television programming produced and paid for by an organization that conveys a message. Advertisement revenue provides a significant portion of the funding for most privately owned television networks. The vast majority of television advertisements today consist of brief advertising spots, ranging in length from a few seconds to several minutes (as well as program-length infomercials). Advertisements of this sort have been used to sell every product imaginable over the years, from household products to goods and services, to political campaigns.

Animation is often used in advertisements. The pictures can vary from hand-drawn traditional animation to computer animation. Early advertisements featured only a single advertisement, but today they will typically involve several different images, which are displayed in sequence to attract attention to advertisements and build up a theme, often ending with a call to action and the injunction to click on the product.

These advertisements are achieved through supplying the ad creative as an animated GIF file with different layers or frames, usually a rectangle of 468 by 60 pixels. Animated advertisements are an example of rich media advertisements.

By using animated characters, an advertisement may have a certain appeal that is difficult to achieve with actors or mere product displays. For this reason, an animated advertisement (or

a series of such advertisements) can be very long-running, several decades in many instances. A notable example is the series of advertisements for Kellogg's cereals, starring Snap, Crackle and Pop. The animation is often combined with real actors.

Case Study 1

Animated Television Commercials

An Overview- by Noell Wolfram Evans

This case is based upon the American animated advertisements.

It states that animated advertisements are special because it's fleeting in nature; it has to be packed with entertainment and information and presented to attract instantly. An animated advertisement encompasses both sight and sound for attracting the consumers. Sound and various animated visuals may comprise of cartoon characters and compel the consumers.

It also works proactively and force consumers into making purchase instantly. Forcing consumers to immediate action and complete participation, make animated advertisements important part of television and a key piece of memory.

Understanding and getting an idea on the number of advertisements that run each year, the study considers that in 2000 more than 1.3 million ads for cereal alone ran on American television (that averages to just over 25 hours a day). Now, multiply this by the number of products that are produced and one can see just how staggering these numbers are.

Study suggested that animation and television have been linked from the beginning. It's been said that the first image ever broadcasted was a picture of Felix the Cat. Thus, stating TV to be a stable medium for animated advertisement broadcasting. In 1941, with less than 5,000 TV sets across the country, the first animated commercial was broadcasted. It was in September of that year when the animated Botany Lamb first pranced across television screens to promote Botany Mills ties (as well as forecast the weather). There were seven of these spots produced for this original campaign, but the series continued through 1948. It was produced by Douglas Leigh but, in an interesting connection with that first ever television broadcast, was animated and directed by Otto Messmer (the creator of Felix the Cat).

Gradually more and more companies started producing animated advertisements. The Fletcher Smith Studios produced a campaign in 1946 for a raceway where they took horses and animated their mouths to make it appear as if they were talking. Other studios utilized stop motion animation to sell their products. Many of these ads were completely realized as they were produced with budgets ranging from \$3,000 to \$5,000 dollars. In 1947 Shamus Culhane Productions produced a popular ad for Ajax. The Ajax Elves were animated by Grim Natwick (the 'creator' of Betty Boop and the animator of Snow White) and Art Babbit (who had animated Goofy among other stars) and voiced by June Foray (who would go on to star in numerous Jay Ward cartoons) and Hans Conreid (the voice of Captain Hook and many other cartoon stars) among others.

The list of advertisers who used animation to sell their products

continued to expand as more and more companies jumped in with television. As the years have gone by though, this list has shrunk considerably with many advertisers preferring to go the live action route, relying more and more on special effects (which often does utilize some form of animation) and outrageous humor.

In 1951 Kellogg's-Sugar Frosted Flakes was advertised, while Post debuted Captain Jolly (who sold CornFetti). By the end of 1954 Cheerios, Kellogg's Corn Flakes and Snap, Crackle and Pop were all popular program interruptions. Marky Maypo, perhaps the biggest early animated cereal star, debuted in 1956. These ads for Maypo were the creation of StoryBoard which was founded and led by John Hubley. The ads were so popular that Maypo sales increased by 78 percent and the tagline 'I want my Maypo' became an instant catchphrase. In this popularity, the marriage of medium and consumer was consummated.

Study also quoted that the best example of animated advertisements is done by the creation of Jay Ward Productions. Known mainly for Rocky and Bullwinkle, Jay Ward spent nearly twenty-two years creating a number of animated campaigns for the Quaker Oats Company. His studio put together spots for Scooter Pies, Aunt Jemima, Mr. Chips Cookies and the popular Quisp and Quake cereals (the characters of Quisp and Quake were created by Ward veteran Bill Scott). His longest running series was the promotion of Captain Crunch. In 1962, Ward brought Captain Crunch (actually Cap'n Crunch thanks to an early voice over 'flub') to the television sets of America, a place where he remains today (even though Ward's association with the brand stopped in 1984). These commercials were amazingly popular, and made Quaker frontier in the breakfast cereal market. In fact, Quaker even had to build a separate production plant to concentrate solely on Captain Crunch (and its eventual spin-offs).

The study concluded by stating that as Television industry grew, the popularity of using animation as an advertising form increased. It was so successful and influential that many political action and moral groups also started using it to 'prey' on the minds of the youth.

Case 2

Animated characters becoming face of brands

An Article - by Purva Bhatia & Mahima Puri, TNN, Nov 26, 2007

This article is based upon Indian Advertisements

The article states that with the growth in technology and dynamic advertising environment, experimentation is required constantly. This experimentation has led to rise of animation in advertisements which is considered to be an alternative for celebrity endorsements. The article quoted examples of Amaron Battery, Vinita Cucine, Tata sky, ICICI Prudential are a few of the several companies that have succeeded in presenting the brand in an animated version.

Animated characters are created to match similar characteristics as brand to create a fresh look for promotion. As Triton Communication director Sanjay Chakraborty says- "An endorser must convey the character of the brand. Though celebrities help getting quick recognition there is a problem of multiple

endorsements. Often celebrities become more powerful than a brand, which is known as 'dwarfing of the brand'. This is not the case with mascots". These characters have high recall value and stay for longer duration without making consumers tired of watching them again and again.

Article mentioned that celebrities now-a-days are associated with too many advertisements, so it confuses the consumers in brand recognition and recall. Animation is thus, a boon in such cases. An animated mascot gives a new, different and fresh look to advertisements. "When I think of Shahrukh Khan several brands such as Pepsi, Airtel, Santro, Emami come to my mind. Fido, however, will instantly remind me of 7 UP. The strength of mascots lies in effectively communicating the ethos of the brand and registering in the minds of consumers," agrees Mr Chakroborty.

Animated advertisements involve 2-D, 3-D and clay animation which are of same cost as regular advertisements. Quoting an example of ICICI bank- Chintamani animated advertisement, Lowe Advertising creative director Delna Sethna says: "The first Chintamani ad cost around Rs 7 lakh. We made three such ads, but the third one cost around Rs 15 lakh, because of more detailing in terms of sets and props." It provides space for creativity and flexibility. Animated mascots are dynamic in nature and adapt with time. The effectiveness of the same lies in conveying the brand values and the ideals that consumers would associate with. Sethna also said that Chintamani was scripted as it helped in relating to middle- class Indian, who are haunted by tax and less savings.

Though it involves big risks as well but ending on a light note the article suggested it is worth endorsing.

Research Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature which attempts to analyze the usage of products/services that are promoted by animation advertisements.

For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire is prepared to find out the relevant primary data pertaining to analyzing the impact of "animercials" on consumers.

The data was collected on the basis of information provided by:

1. Marketing professionals in advertising firms.
2. Customers who are projected to animated advertisements.

Besides the primary data collected with the help of the questionnaire, relevant secondary data from various sources like magazines, books and Internet and newspapers was also collected.

Based on the relevant primary and secondary data, a comprehensive analysis has been done so as to find out the impact on purchase decision.

Future growth and potential of "animercials" is being identified based on factual information, in light of which recommendations and suggestions have been provided.

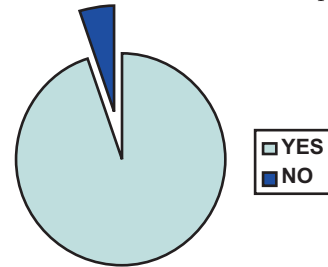
This research was conducted in Delhi and NCR, India; so the information is relative to this city.

Analysis and Inferences

For this study, the data has been collected from 50 people in the age group of 10-35 years residing in Delhi and NCR. On the basis of the questionnaire, following data was collected.

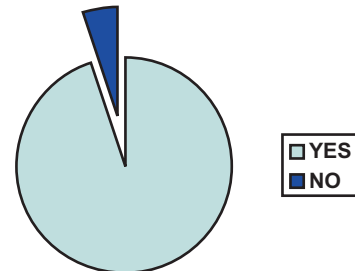
Here is the analysis of the questionnaire

Q: Can you understand animated advertisements?
 Yes 95% No 5%



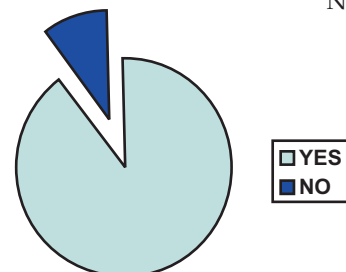
95% of the respondents know and understand animated advertisements. According to them they are computer graphics which are 2-D and 3-D in nature. Some respondents also stated them as 'colorful cartoon advertisements.'

Q: Have you seen any animated advertisements?
 Yes 95% No 5%



95% of the respondents have seen animated advertisements. So there is general awareness about animated advertisements. Also, comprehensive understanding related to animated advertisements in various other mediums like OOH, Transit and Internet is shared by many respondents.

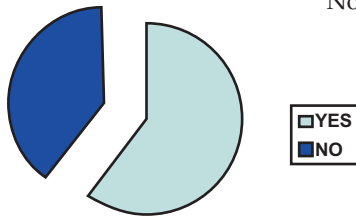
Q: Do you recognize them as a form of advertising?
 Yes 90% No 10%



90% of the respondents recognize animated advertisements as a healthy form of advertisements. They think they are unique, colorful and out-of-the box. According to some marketing

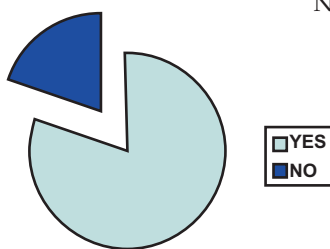
professionals, animated advertisements are fresh concepts for creating advertisements. The cartoon characters develop fantasy hard to resist.

Q: Do you think animated advertisements are just only for kids?
Yes 60% No 40%



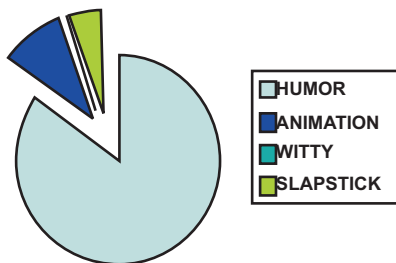
Almost about 60% respondents think that now-a-days animated advertisements are no longer watched by kids. Some respondents within the age group of 18-25 years watch animated advertisements with keen interest. Though 40% still consider cartoon and animation are for kids and mentioned that adults like for real people in advertisements.

Q: Do you feel an animated advertisement attract your attention and why?
Yes 80% No 20%



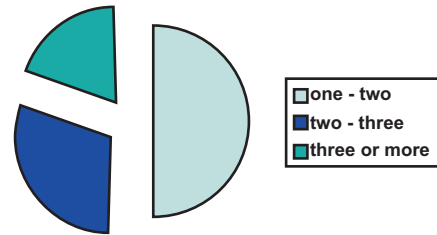
80% of the respondents claimed that an animated advertisement does attract their attention. They consider them as innovative and different than the rest. According to many respondents they like it because they create fantasy characters which revive freshness and feel good factor in most of them. Whereas, 20% feel that cartoon/comic and animation does not attract them.

Q: What according to you are important characteristics of an animated ad?
Humor 85% Animation 10% Witty 0% Slapstick 5%



85% of the respondents feel that animated advertisements are humorous and funny. 10% feel that animation is the essential ingredient in animated advertisements. 5% believe it's generally slapstick.

Q: How many animated ads can you recognize?
1-2 50% 2-3 30% 3 or more 20%

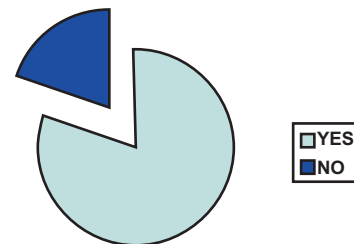


The recall of advertisements is gradually getting high. 50% respondents aged above 15 years agreed to recognize and recall 1-2 advertisements, whereas 30% can recall more than two animated advertisements. Many respondents feel that this increase in animated advertisements is because it is new and different from other ads and interesting to watch.

Q: Which is your favorite animated ads and why?
Vodafone-zozoo-60%
Fanta-20%
Kitkat-Squirrel-10%
ICICI-Chintamani-4%
Others-7%

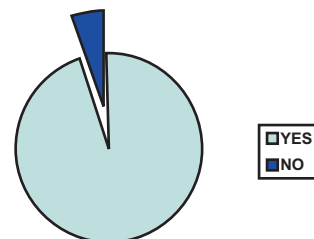
Nearly 60% of the respondents could recall the Vodafone-Zozoo ad and 20% recalled the Fanta advertisements. The rest recalled other advertisements like Kitkat, ICICI and Big Babool etc. They even mentioned about the animated mascots which helps in relating them to advertisements.

Q: Would you like to watch animated mascots every time the product or service is advertised?
Yes 80% No 20%



Almost 80% respondents would like to watch mascots associated with animated advertisements. Respondents feel that animated mascots help them to connect with the product or service so offered and also helps them to enjoy the feeling of "ownership".

Q: Do you think animated ads play an important role in promotion and why?
Yes 95% No 5%



People, who responded affirmatively, mostly gave the following reasons:

It relates to the brand easily.
 Animated mascots have visual impact that helps retain the recall value.

Animated advertisements are used in interesting and meaningful way.

The creativity attracts.

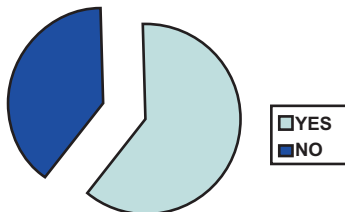
It is also dependent upon what product or brand is advertised.

People, who said No, mostly gave the following reasons:
 Animated ads are for youngsters.

Animated ads can only be done for selected products. For E.g. Beverages, food items etc. can be advertised through animation.

95% of the respondents feel that animated advertisements play an important role as they have a better recall value. It is also easy to relate to the brand. They also mentioned that selected brands can only be advertised through animation.

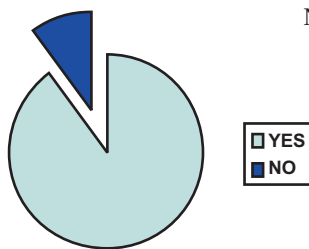
Q: Did any animated advertisement compel you to purchase their product or service? If yes, then how many times?
 Yes 60% No 40%



60% respondents agreed that they have purchased products that are advertised by animation. Out of which; 40% have purchased it 2-5 times, 20% have purchased it Once and only 10% have purchased products more than 5 times. Respondents also suggested that children pressure compels them to purchase products so advertised.

Whereas, 40% respondents still feel that animated advertisements are fictional and does not cater to projecting real experiences related with consumption.

Q: Do you want more animated ads?
 Yes 90% No 10%



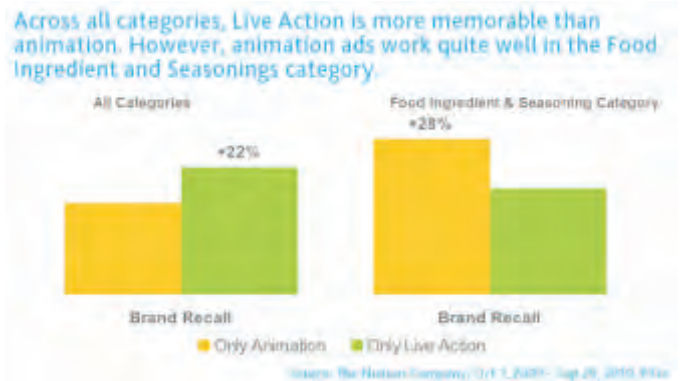
90% of the respondents are expecting more animated advertisements with intelligent humor and creativity. The rest 10% are not bothered or are not looking forward to it.

Conclusion

Due to emerging Internet and the continuation of the logical convergence of all media there is a great opportunity for animated cartoon commercials. They are considered easiest way to attract attention and gain mindshare. Animated characters and mascots help in creating a colorful and vibrant appeal in the minds of target audience. They create a fantasy world for them to re-live. Animated ads have humor factor attached to it. Thus, it incites enjoyment when advertised.

Quoting the case of Vodafone - Zoozoo, ICICI, Kellogg's, 7UP and others, marketers and industry analyst feel that it is cost effective and easier to attain success in advertisement campaigns. The returns on ROI are much better received in animated advertisements than celebrity endorsements advertisements. Animated mascots increase the recall ratio in adult audience. Although, some feel that they are generally for youngsters and recall is short lived but many still favor such ads. Another reason is smaller studios help to create such animations resulting in creative outputs with less production cost.

The research stated that many still are not pushed to purchase products or services that are advertised through animation. According to them, animation should be limited to selected product class. Some FMCG like confectionaries, beverages and other low involvement products can be done through animation. The below report by Nielsen Company clarifies that live action and real people is preferred by many in advertisements in most product sectors. Personal product category requires real experiences than animation.



In the above report, Brand Recall was 27 percent stronger for females and 17 percent stronger among males than for animated ads. Adults 35 to 49 saw a 24 percent increase in brand recall for advertisements that used live action vs. animated. The gap shrunk, however, among viewers aged 13 to 35, who only showed an 11% change between live action and animated creative's.

But with busy and hectic work schedule, people prefer entertainment which is creative and fun to watch. Clutter of products and services in the market is inevitable and the challenge is to bring something new and out-of-the-box. Animation thus, provides such opportunity to deliver above the edge.

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Annexure

Questionnaire

- Q: Can you understand animated advertisements?
 Yes No
- Q: Have you seen any animated advertisements?
 Yes No
- Q: Do you recognize them as a form of advertising?
 Yes No
- Q: Do you think animated advertisements are just only for kids?
 Yes No

- Q: Do you feel an animated advertisement attract your attention and why?
 Yes No
- Q: What according to you are important characteristics of an animated ad?
 Humor Animation
 Witty Slapstick
- Q: How many animated ads can you recognize?
 1-2 2-3 3 or more
- Q: Which is your favorite animated ads and why?
- Q: Would you like to watch animated mascots every time the product or service is advertised?
 Yes No
- Q: Do you think animated ads play an important role in promotion and why?
 Yes No
- Q: Did any animated advertisements compel you to purchase their product or service? If yes, then how many times?
 Yes No
- Q: Do you want more animated ads?
 Yes No

