

The Secret Meaning of Secret Embrace

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It is hard to live in America without hearing the phrase “sex sells.” It is even harder to live in America and not realize the validity of that statement. Because of this, it seems that the job of the advertising team at Victoria's Secret would be quite easy. As a famous lingerie chain, the Victoria's Secret brand name is practically synonymous with sexiness. However, the advertising executives at Victoria's Secret realize that relying solely on sensual images to sell their products would cause them to isolate a huge portion of their market. Victoria's Secret does not wish to turn feminists and empowered women off by turning men on. Instead, they have found a way to market their lingerie in a way that uses sexiness to empower women, rather than to degrade them. The Victoria's Secret commercial for the Secret Embrace line of brassieres successfully shows the style as high-tech, comfortable, and fun-as well as sexy.

The Secret Embrace line from Victoria's Secret is what the company calls a new “technology” in women's undergarments. Previous technologies have been the IPEX bra and Infinity Edge. Secret Embrace bras are designed to be comfortable and versatile while providing shape. They have a secret, enclosed underwire and are label and seam-free to offer extra comfort. The technology also makes the bra wearable under virtually any shirt or dress, a great help for women who have shirts in different shapes and materials. They come in a wide variety of Victoria's Secret collections, including the “Body by Victoria” and “Angels” collections. This means customers can buy a bra with Secret Embrace features in many different shapes, styles, and colors.

The comfort this bra provides makes it highly appealing to women. Because women will buy this bra for themselves, advertisers must focus on them and not the men who buy lingerie for

their significant others. While Victoria's Secret runs a number of advertisements during the holiday season that appeal to men, the Secret Embrace collection premiered in early 2007, after the holidays, and so such a commercial would be ineffective. Victoria's Secret advertisers had to add other elements besides sex to their commercial to get women to buy the bra.

By marketing the bra as an advanced technology, Victoria's Secret attempts to portray an empowered woman. The advertisers cleverly allude to the mechanically sophisticated aspects of the bra without wasting time to explain them. They realized that if they had listed the characteristics of the bra, viewers would take their attention off of the models and lose interest in the commercial. To compromise, the commercial describes the bra as revolutionary and a reinvention. It also says that the bra “looks like nothing else” and “feels like nothing else.” While these phrases are ambiguous, Victoria's Secret hopes that viewers will perceive the bra to be a new technology. The one technologically advanced aspect of the bra highlighted in the commercial is the bra's seamlessness. Seamless technology means that the bra can be worn under any type of shirt, no matter how tight or what material. Victoria's Secret wants to convince women that a seamless bra is the only bra they need, as it is comfortable and goes with everything. As comfort has been a strong selling point for women's clothing since the feminist revolution, the use of technology to make women feel more comfortable and beautiful shows progress for females.

In order to show how the technology of the Secret Embrace bra benefits all women, Victoria's Secret uses specific images to portray their new concept as versatile. The models in the ad are from all over the world, with Brazil, the Czech Republic, and the Cayman Islands represented. The models show that the line is adaptable and will suit the needs of every woman. The models are also healthy looking; they are not like the extremely skinny models seen walking

down most runways. This makes women feel like they can attain the look that the models in the commercial exhibit. By using more realistic-looking, yet still extremely beautiful models, viewers can imagine themselves in the bra rather than obsess over the size of the models. The models' diverse nationalities and the fact that they wear different colors and types of Secret Embrace bras bring variety to the ad and help it to appeal to all types of women.

In addition to highlighting the versatility of the bra, the commercial also uses phrases and body language to make it appear fun and exciting. The commercial begins with the line, "Fasten your seatbelts, ladies!" while a model is shown dancing in the bra. This aspect of the commercial is aimed at making women excited about the new technology and reminds them that it can be fun to be sexy.

Enhancing both the messages of fun and technological advancement is the way the commercial is filmed. The commercial is shot from many different camera angles, showing the different views of the bra. The bright and colorful lights mix with camera technology that produce mirror images, adding new dimensions to the shot. By using innovative effects with lighting and cameras, the commercial itself is high-tech and adds to the overall theme that the company is trying to convey. By appealing to the senses of sight and sound, the creators of this advertisement manage to show the bra as youthful, innovative, and exciting.

While the ad uses many visual effects to emphasize the bra's characteristics, these are subordinate to the use of Victoria's Secret's brand name in the marketing of the Secret Embrace technology. Victoria's Secret is aware that their brand name and commercials are well-known, and the company does a good job of using brand loyalty and recognition to sell the product. Many women are very loyal to the lingerie chain and buy all of their undergarments from the company's stores and catalogs. The speaker in the commercial says "Victoria's Secret has

reinvented the bra. Again,” suggesting to women that if they like the other bras at Victoria's Secret, they will enjoy this one as well. The name “*Secret Embrace*” cleverly stems from Victoria's *Secret*, conjuring more brand recognition than past technologies IPEX and Infinity Edge. The commercial features Gisele Bundchen, Adriana Lima, and Karolina Kurkova, popular models who are known for their work with Victoria's Secret. By mentioning the store name many times and using these models, the Secret Embrace bra can sell itself based on brand alone.

Out of all the aforementioned aspects of this ad, the most important one is sex. It would not be a Victoria's Secret ad without gorgeous models in sexy lingerie. This aspect of the ad appeals to both men and women. Men want their wives and girlfriends to wear these undergarments, and women want to wear them for their husbands and boyfriends, as well as for themselves. The ad does not put the models in scandalous or controversial positions, and keeps them covered at all times. Aside from the inherent sensuality of the bras on the models, there are the playful smiles and intense stares on their faces that add to the sex appeal of the commercial. All models have smoky black eye makeup, which magnifies their eyes and infuses more sexuality into their stares. The commercial alternates between showing models with seductive pouts and others with small, inviting smiles. These small details make the ad sexy but not racy, and help Victoria's Secret to successfully appeal to both men and women.

The Secret Embrace ad conveys that this style of bra is at once high-tech, comfortable, fun, and sexy. Appealing to the senses of the viewers, advertisers make sure to use more than just sex to sell the merchandise, tailoring the ad towards women without ignoring the male audience. This quick, thirty-second ad engages a viewer's interest and imagination rather than simply listing the features of the product. The creators of the ad found an intelligent way to produce a commercial that is both interesting and effective.