

My name is Courtney Kelly and I did not discover my love for advertising until I was 19. Before that moment, I had always imagined the advertising world to be boring, straight-laced, and inside the box. I obviously had no idea what advertising was actually about. Despite my preconceived notions, I was somehow talked into becoming the advertising editor of my high school newspaper. I wanted something to add on to my college application, and all I had to do was collect ad contracts from staff writers. It seemed easy enough, but I remember saying at one point, "I don't know why I'm doing this. I know for a fact that I don't want to work in advertising."

It wasn't until college that I realized how well this field fits into my interests. My sophomore year of college, I spoke to an advertising student at a Mass Communication Department mixer. As I looked through the course list, she explained to me what she was studying and everything that advertising really entails. Listening intently, everything suddenly clicked.

As melodramatic as it may sound, I saw how the universe steered me towards this field of study. At my preschool graduation, I proudly announced to my classmates and their parents that I wanted to be an artist. Sadly, I learned later on in life that even some of the best artists lived in poverty. I decided that was not the career for me (despite my mother's pleas), but I still practiced what I loved in my free time. In high school, one of my best friends and I would exchange jokes everyday that other people considered cheesy, but we loved coming up with new wordplay. And since I've started college, I have noticed just how organized and detail-oriented I am, especially when it comes to visual arts.

Considering all of this, advertising fit perfectly around my interests. I didn't have to mold myself or hide any of my passions—advertising brings them out. I get to be creative and I even have some design practice from some things that I used to do that other people considered useless at the time—such as creating Photoshopped images of me and my celebrity crush in front of a castle, complete with a go-kart track, a pool, and helicopter landing pad in the front yard. I get to practice art, put creative spins on common phrases, and put my eye for detail to work. Advertising and all of my passions fit together like puzzle pieces, and the high school-me is now eating her words about this creative, exciting field.

Courtney Kelly

Binge Drinking Ad Research

I initially set out to define binge drinking. After comparing several definitions I found, they mostly seemed to agree with the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's definition that binge drinking occurs when men consume five or more drinks, and when women consume four or more drinks, within two hours. After labeling what exactly binge drinking is, I looked up the effects. I wanted to include the effects in the ad because those are really what people will remember, not a bunch of numbers. Even though people may not remember exact numbers of statistics, I wanted to include at least one statistic offered by the CDC. Almost all of the statistics were about how common binge drinking is, and I felt that providing one of these statistics after describing the harmful effects would make the reader think about the gravity of the situation and just how big of an issue binge drinking really is in the United States. If they know how common it is, maybe they'll spread the message and try to help others.

While creating this ad, I aimed to educate. I think that when it comes to college students, just knowing that something is considered taboo will not stop them from doing it. They need to know *why* it is negative. In this case, I sought to include information about the physical effects of binge drinking. I did include a statistic, but my priority was to include the effects because those are more personal and memorable than a slew of numbers.

My first step in the process of coming up with the creative concept for this ad was thinking of a twist on a common phrase that would spark interest and curiosity from the reader. After brainstorming a few ideas, I selected “There's danger in numbers”—a twist on the phrase “There's safety in numbers.” I ultimately chose this over the others because of the clients' interests. Beer distributors would not want an ad that would disapprove of beer in general, but that would disapprove of drinking large and dangerous quantities of alcohol. I wanted the headline to be in all caps to grab the reader's attention and to emphasize the power and urgency of the phrase. I put the word “danger” in red because the color conveys the proper emotion associated with the word.

After thinking of the headline, I came up with the idea of an image of five bottles of alcoholic beverages that would each have a harmful effect of binge drinking listed on them. I wanted to include five bottles because the CDC defines binge drinking (for men) as having five or more drinks within two hours. After clearing the labels to avoid specific company names, a blank canvas was available on each bottle. By labeling each drink as an effect, the tagline “Think about what you're really drinking” immediately came to mind. The call to action, “Be responsible,” was another way to emphasize the clients' interests. It conveys that the general consumption of alcohol is okay as long as people are responsible and do not binge drink.

I included the underline, “Binge drinking accounts for 75% of alcohol consumption in the U.S.” to elaborate that the ad is not in opposition to alcohol but to binge drinking. “Binge drinking” is in all caps and red so if the reader quickly glances at the ad, “danger” from the headline and “binge drinking”

would immediately be associated with each other.

The target audience is college students, but binge drinking is more common among men than women. (This concept is more elaborated in the research summary.) I wanted to make the ad appeal to all types of college students, but lean a little more towards men. I did this through the use of dark colors, specifically the black background, which also makes the mood of the ad ominous but does not drive away female readers.

THERE'S **DANGER** IN NUMBERS



BINGE DRINKING

accounts for 75% of alcohol consumption in the U.S.

**Think about what you're really drinking.
Be responsible.**