

## THE ADVERTISING PROCESS

The advertising process involves a lot of people working at different stages of production. There is a great demand for research into consumer habits, needs and desires as well as the development of particular products and brands. Increasingly, this is a worldwide process, especially for companies like Gap which have a global market and therefore try to create a global advertising strategy.

Advertising agencies are used to carry out research, and to design and create the advertisements, possibly using actors, television studios, editing facilities, etc.

## NOTEBOX

When Gap introduced a new range of clothes in the spring of 2000 the advertising campaign was created in America. Gap decided to use as a theme the musical *West Side Story*, what they called 'an American classic', for its 'energy and passion' which they claimed was 'the perfect way to tell the story of these vibrant new clothes'. Called the 'Jean and Khakis Trilogy' they shot three different scenes, the first called 'Jeans', the second called 'Khakis' and the third, called 'Mambo', where 'the Jeans and Khakis collide in a dance-off to ultimately ask, "Are you a jean or a khaki?"'

The manner in which Gap used the rivalry between the two gangs (the Sharks and the Jets) in *West Side Story* as a way of promoting its clothes is an interesting example of intertextuality (see p. 72). The target audience for the campaign is probably much too young to remember the film when it was first released in 1961 yet the campaign's reference to the film seemed to be successful.

The next stage in any campaign is to 'buy' advertising space on television, in magazines, newspapers or wherever the advert needs to appear. The Gap advertisements appeared worldwide but in Britain appeared on Channels 4 and 5, on some regional and national digital television and in magazines such as *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, *Elle* and *FHM* and on billboards. Presumably Gap use Channel 4 and 5 because they have the correct viewer 'profile' for Gap merchandising. (You might like to speculate as to which national digital television channels Gap used.)

Research amongst advertising companies suggests that it is not only important to have advertisements placed in the correct commercial break or publication but also that it is its positioning in the particular commercial break or publication that is as, if not more, important. Most magazines and newspapers have higher rates for particular spots such as the inside covers or back pages but will also have different rates for right- and left-hand pages or different sections of the publication. On radio and television, being the first in a sequence of advertisements in a commercial break is often viewed as being more effective. Increasingly on television, particular advertisements will appear at both the beginning and end of the commercial break to try to create more 'impact'.