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English 1301

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Text Analyzing

Change is in the Air

Bank of the West is a daughter company to WestStar Bank Holding Company, Inc—which is also parent company to C Leasing as well. For nearly two decades Bank of the West has been serving the El Paso community with a unique knowledge of El Paso's border region. The bank recently placed an ad in The El Paso Times to encourage readers to switch to Bank of the West. The black and white ad is complete with three paragraphs about the benefits of choosing Bank of the West, large bold text, and an image of a compass at the very top of the ad along with the bank's logo, contact information, and proof of its FDIC membership. The Bank of the West ad has three intended purposes: first, to encourage the reader to question their current bank's judgment and the validity of the decisions it has made; secondly, to make its reader reflect on all of the unexpected, inconvenient—or otherwise negatively impacting—changes that their current bank has made; and lastly, to convince the reader that Bank of the West has a greater stake in the community than any other bank. The ad achieves each of these purposes by using the image of a compass, the literary device repetition, and language that reflects and emphasizes the grass roots nature of Bank of the West.

The first thing the ad presents the reader with is a relatively large picture of a compass which serves two purposes. Traditionally, a compass is used when one is lost or is verifying the direction they're going in because they're uncertain if it is correct or not. Thus, the image's first purpose is to imply that the reader's current financial institution is theoretically lost.

Furthermore, this implication is supported in the text by a list of the types of changes the reader's bank is making—name, account, and policy—which portray the reader's current bank as unsure and without a clear course or path. The second function of this image is to specifically attack Bank of the West's competitor, Compass Bank. Compass Bank BB BB—once State national Bank and later Compass Bank—has changed its name numerous times, and this image groups Compass Bank BB BB with all of the other “lost” banks. In addition to the use of this image, the ad also uses repetition in order to portray any recent changes the reader's current bank may have made in a negative light.

The word ‘change’ is repeated in three different forms, eight times throughout Bank of the West's ad. One of the most important of these instances is in the opening of the ad's question, “tired of all the changes taking place at your bank...?” By framing a question around the word ‘change’, the ad forces its reader to reflect on the changes their banking institution has made and, of course, is worded for an affirmative response which is meant to help the reader identify their discontent with their current bank. This ad effectively uses repetition to (a) display all of the negative “name changes, account changes, and policy changes” the reader's current institution has implemented, and (b) to assist the reader with coming to the realization that they are “tired of all the changes.” The ad's final device is the use of language that strongly emphasizes the great stake Bank of the West has in the reader's community.

This ad uses language that is meant to display Bank of the West's strong concern for El Paso while implying that the reader's current bank is untrustworthy and that its decision making body does not have the reader's best interest in mind the way that Bank of the West does. Bank of the West advertises that it is “El Paso's largest home-owned bank,” and, by doing so, implies that this bank—more than any other—is comprised of people and community members just like

the reader. This implication is intended to make the reader feel more comfortable trusting Bank of the West with their money because it is owned by the reader's coworkers, friends, neighbors, and even—by association—the reader themselves. The ad boasts that its decisions are made by “people [the readers] know and trust”. This statement more explicitly tells the reader that Bank of the West's base is made of people just like them. Putting a familiar face on Bank of the West's shareholders is intended to make the reader feel less removed and polarized from the institution entrusted with the reader's hard earned money than they currently feel—an epiphany this same ad catalyzed into fruition. Finally, the ad uses empathetic language to state that it “has always been committed to making El Paso a better place to live.” Using the words ‘always’ and ‘committed’ was very effective in the way of further conveying to the reader the amount of concern Bank of the West has for the reader's community. Collectively, the language the ad uses implies, or explicitly says, that Bank of the West has a strong stake in the reader's community not only because it's locally owned and operated but also because it has been dedicated to improving El Paso.

In many advertisements, like that of Bank of the West, the main goal or focus is to relate to its readers. Bank of the West's ad used empathetic language throughout the third paragraph of its ad in order to convey to the audience that this bank—more than any other—was sincerely and irrevocably invested in its reader's community. The advertisement also attempted to make the reader cognizant of the inconvenient changes their current bank made in order to make the reader upset about them. The language used in the ad's opening question also instigated a highly negative feeling toward that current institution by using the word ‘tired’ as in “sick and tired”. The ad's last goal was to make the reader skeptical about their current institution's motives, morals, and judgement. Bank of the West's advertisement was able to accomplish all of the

goals by using the image of a compass, repeating the word 'change' eight times throughout the advertisement, and using language that reflected and emphasized Bank of the West's genuine concern for the reader's community.