CHAPTER 3
DECEPTIVE ADVERTISING: OVERVIEW OF BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

Advertising Processing Issues and Deception

After reviewing the legal issues associated with deceptive advertising in the previous chapter, the current chapter will present a brief overview of information processing concepts relevant to the understanding of deception as a behavioral phenomenon. The overlap of these two areas is probably best explained by Richards (1990), who states:

Whereas the findings of law, which involve whether the facts found indicate the existence of a violation, are wholly within the expert domain of the lawyers, the facts themselves lie within the expert domain of the behavioral researchers...That is because deceptiveness is a phenomenon that lies inside people’s heads, and thus is an aspect of human behavior. (Richards 1990, p.27)

The remainder of this chapter will describe an admittedly oversimplified yet helpful model of the concepts involved in processing advertising information. Where appropriate, the relationship between the legal elements and the behavioral issues relevant to deception is discussed.

The Advertising Stimuli

The obvious input to a model of advertising processing is the advertising message (see Figure 2). Regardless of the communication medium, the content of advertising messages usually consists of product information and claims about general performance (Bovee and Arens 1989). However, there are numerous ways in which information can be creatively conveyed through the creative execution and delivery of the message. The