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### Don't Be Left Out Like the Dancing Man

AT&T's "flash mob" ad shows an example of why fast technology is a necessity. The ad is successful because it directly addresses a very real fear we all have—being left out—and makes a promise that with their product, we won't be.

The "flash mob" ad is a commercial broadcast on TV. The ad opens in a crowded train station where several people stand casually in brown raincoats. The camera focuses on one raincoat-wearing man, holding a newspaper; a clock is heard ticking in the background. The man looks up at the clock, and when it strikes 12:00, he rips off his raincoat and breaks out in dance, while everyone else stops and stares. The audience of the ad can feel how much this man stands out, dancing in a train station. The only sounds as he dances are his breath and his feet tapping on the floor. Two fellow raincoat wearers show him looks of frustration. When the dancing man sees everyone watching him, he stops dancing and pulls out his cell phone. It reads, "Downloading urgent update," and after the loading bar reaches 100%, says, "Flash mob moved to 12:30." The man realizes what happened, and says to the people around him, "Got it." The copy says, "Don't be the last to know."

The audience of the ad can infer that the dancing man, unaware plans had changed, started dancing too early. He embarrassed himself and ruined the flash mob for everyone else.

This ad is successful on many levels, mainly concerning emotion. First off, it's funny. Who is this guy ripping off his raincoat and dancing in a train station while everyone stares at him? I think we can all identify with something embarrassing like that. Also, the ad is based on

a hip concept: flash mobs. Flash mobs became popular only recently, and were made possible by new, fast methods of communication, as **viewed** on YouTube. The message is best understood by people with the desire for hip technology, because those people would understand the joke that the commercial is trying to tell. Doesn't everyone have a desire for hip technology, though? That's why the characters in the ad are middle-aged, different races, male and female. This message is meant for everyone.

The most important way the ad is successful is that it so clearly addresses a big fear we all have: being left out. We might not get caught dancing in a train station, but being left out because of old technology in modern times is definitely a real possibility. This fear is addressed in such a direct way, one couldn't really see this commercial without being able to identify with it: I've shown up to wrong addresses before because my phone didn't have service. I've been late because of the performance of my cell phone, and it is indeed embarrassing.

Not only do people not like to be left out—because it's our instinct as humans to fit in with one another—but as our dependence on fast, efficient technology grows, a fast, reliable cell phone is a necessity for survival. This ad makes a promise that with AT&T's product, you won't be left out. You'll be safe if you choose to use AT&T's cell phone service.

I've heard other cell phone companies talk about how fast they are. Speed and cost are probably most addressed in cell phone ads. In all those commercials, though, I never felt the need for the product that I got from this one. The other commercials tell me I could have a phone that's cheaper or faster than the one I have, but AT&T's commercial tells me that if I don't get their service, I'll be left out. Like the dancing man in the train station, I'll end up standing out from people around me, alone, and embarrassed.

Ad URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bd8ppk0UCx8>

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**Comment [1]:** This is unclear; it sounds like the new, fast methods of communication are viewed on YouTube.

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**Comment [2]:** Give a full citation, not just the URL, using MLA or APA style – see Writing @ RRCC or this link for how to cite an online video clip:  
<http://libguides.longwood.edu/content.php?pid=17276&sid=117078>