

## Sample Commercial Summary Analysis

In 2008, Time Warner released a commercial to differentiate itself from DIRECTV. The commercial begins with a man standing in the middle of a kitchen holding and petting an adorable black lab puppy. The man upsettingly declares that DIRECTV hates puppies, something the company “won’t tell you.” He then explains to the viewer how he was able to reach this conclusion: he first explains that they charge “every month for HD service” and follows this statement with the word *fact*. He then juxtaposes DIRECTV and Time Warner Cable by explaining that the latter does not charge for HD. The speaker concludes that a person can save hundreds of dollars if he or she were to switch to Time Warner, and that same person could use that extra money to buy dog food, which puppies love. While emphasizing the previous point, the speaker points emphatically at the puppy and draws the following conclusion: “puppies love dog food; therefore, DIRECTV hates puppies.” He finally corners the viewer by posing the following rhetorical question: “Who hates puppies?”

Although the creators of the commercial present a logical argument as to why a person should purchase cable through Time Warner, they are clearly trying to depict Time Warner as a more cost-friendly, superior cable company by humorously using an ad hominem fallacy. The speaker begins by stating one of his central premises: that DIRECTV hates puppies. He implies his ultimate conclusion -- that a person should choose Time Warner over DIRECTV -- because the latter hates puppies. Instead of emphasizing and focusing on the logical merit of the case Time Warner is presenting, the company chooses to focus on a subject that typically elicits an emotional response: cute puppies. By underscoring the cute nature of puppies and how most people love these adorable animals, the speaker is able to -- in a nonabrasive manner --

somewhat discredit DIRECTV, the implied message being that the cable company is so horrible that it hates puppies, an animal that no one hates. The problem with this logic lies in the relationship between the premise and the conclusion: Time Warner -- in lieu of a logical argument -- uses a personal attack -- that the company hates puppies -- which does not illustrate DIRECTV's limited or poor-quality service, rendering its key premise fallacious.