

12 - Radio Creative

What *is* creativity?

How would you define it if someone asked you to?

Steve Jobs once said: *“Creativity is just connecting things.”* The great French chef Jacques Maximin is quoted as having proclaimed: *“Creativity means not copying.”* The English Dictionary echoes Maximin’s quote by describing creativity as: *“The ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.”* Esteemed creative author Robert E. Franken once wrote that creativity *“is defined as the tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems”*

Yet, for all of the various explanations of what creativity is, it’s still *really* difficult to explain in one concise, all-emcompassing definition.

When I first began researching the concept of creative thought (nearly *six years* ago) I had no idea what creativity was. Apart from the generalized and often ambiguous or dreamy definitions given by innovators, writers, philosophers, and artists, it seemed to me that creativity was just too complex a thing to elegantly define.

Which, as I’ve learned over the years, actually makes sense.

Why exactly? What is it about the creative process that makes it so complicated and so difficult to explain?

Some weeks ago I asked that question to the very people who – more than anyone else – should be able to give us the most accurate answer: neuroscientists.

Creativity is a neurological process, so scientists should have answers, right?



While the typical response I got from the scientists I surveyed were very much along the ambiguous and not-entirely-similar quotes from the likes of Steve Jobs and Picasso, one answer from a four-year PhD student of Cognitive Psychology at the University of Pittsburgh, gave me exactly the answer I was hoping to get.

That cognitive scientist is named Joel Chan. Today I'm excited to share some insights gleaned from Joel's answer to my question: *what **is** creativity, from a neurological perspective?*

Joel first starts with this disclaimer:

“The science of creativity is arguably still in its infancy, despite there being volumes of research on it since the 1950’s, in part due to the strong presence of folk psychology, and the difficulty in wrangling it scientifically.”

I've found this to be absolutely true in my own research over the last few years as well.

We're only just beginning to understand the human mind itself, and even the research we do have about the brain from the last several decades is minimal and occasionally disproven by newer research.

This presents the first major dilemma for understanding creativity: **because it takes place in the mind, and because we still have such a basic understanding of the brain, we're fairly far from understanding the science of creativity.**

For all intents and purposes, then: creativity is still very much a mystical/magical subject.

So much so that, in early 2013, the U.S. President Barack Obama launched a \$100,000,000 project to map the human brain. Called [the BRAIN Initiative](#), it's aim is to advance scientific research of exactly how the brain functions.

To quote the President: *"As humans, we can identify galaxies light years away, we can study particles smaller than an atom. But we still haven't unlocked the mystery of the three pounds of matter that sits between our ears."*

Despite setbacks, we have some pretty good ideas

Even though our understanding of the brain is limited today, scientists do have a few fairly good ideas about how creativity works, thanks to continued research like that of the BRAIN Initiative, neurological studies, and even additional exposure in mainstream media.

Joel's research is part of that recent revolution to fully understand the brain and how creativity works. Joel continues:

"I think creativity, from a neurological standpoint, is a collection of cognitive abilities and tendencies, that, when applied to a problem or pursuit, result in the creation of something that is appropriate to the problem/pursuit, and also new/original in some sense."

Ah! Some clarification now, creativity is difficult to understand primarily because it's not one process that takes place. It's actually several, all variously working for either a singular goal (e.g. brainstorming), or which happen to produce a tangible concept related to a problem or pursuit (e.g. eureka moments).

What are the processes exactly behind creativity?

Joel explains that they are:

1. Attention *“Both for focusing in deep work and sustaining oneself through thick and thin to finish the creative work, and for flexibly searching in memory and one’s environment for crucial clues to the puzzle.”*

2. Analogy/metaphorical thinking *“For connecting knowledge bits that might seem unrelated.”*

3. Network organization of memory *“With spreading activation and susceptibility of these activation patterns to be altered by external input, e.g., Priming can overcome Functional fixedness.”*

4. Forgetting *“Natural tendency of memories to decay over time (this might be why Incubation helps when you are stuck on a problem, forgetting allows for unproductive thought patterns to decay and stop hogging memory space)”*

5. Imagination *“Capacity to construct multiple construals of stimuli, and to flexibly combine bits of memory into novel representations”*

I know it’s a little dense, but did you catch the drift of all that?

Joel tells us that there are multiple tendencies and abilities in our thinking and behavior that drive creativity.

Our attention to details (not only in the real world and in our experiences, but in the thoughts and feelings we have as well), combined with the ability to connect related ideas (i.e. through metaphors), the intent to prime ideas for creative output, the ability to forget unimportant or uncreative concepts, and a bit of imagination are what drive creativity.

Not so elegant to describe, is it? Turns out *there’s more*.

Joel tells us: *“Of course, I’m leaving out the ways in which the environment and past experience interact with these neurological structures and abilities...”*

Environmental factors, moods, [energy levels](#), and more, all affect these various aspects to creative thought.

It’s so vastly complex that describing creativity with just a sentence may suffice for the average questioner, but if you’re truly interested in how you come up with those great (and not so great) ideas, this is all stuff to think about.

century as including: “two air polluters, nutritionless sugar water, one reviled carcinogen, two companies infamous for the use of virtual slave labor, one purveyor of savory cardiovascular time bombs, two booze peddlers and one cosmetic product preying on the vanity of women.”

Nevertheless, the campaigns are considered paragons of advertising. Why? And more particularly, what can we learn from the success of those campaigns?

Many of the great brand campaigns have nudged the social boundaries in one way or another. But the push-back to prevailing attitudes is contextual, often far from aggressive and pitched as much as a social message as an advertising one. Clairol for example didn’t just promote hair coloring, they made it the most natural thing in the world (in every sense), even using the suggestive headline “Does she ... or doesn’t she?”. At one level Clairol’s campaign offered women options, but at another, the campaign challenged the very definition of femininity, adding fun, cheekiness and a modicum or three of impropriety. Two decades later, the infamous Brooke Shields’ Calvin Klein campaign carried that same risqué suggestiveness. Later, the infamous “Hello Boys” ad featuring Eva Herzigova for the Wonderbra would literally stop traffic.

A number of the iconic campaigns didn’t just offer an alternative action, they also made the product the absolute symbol of that rebellion. Volkswagen’s “Think Small” campaign was the antithesis of everything that post-War America treasured: a car that was small, fuel efficient, affordable and foreign. Portraying the vehicle this way was a prompt to those for whom consumerism held no attraction to register their protest against such pressure on the road. Equally, the Avis campaign dared to challenge the very definition of corporate success by making second-best a desirable place to be – because, according to Avis, being number 2 was the greatest incentive the company had to try harder. In each case, the advertisers took a potential product weakness and, by actually highlighting it, transformed it into a celebration that challenged deeply pervading beliefs of success.

Some iconic advertising literally invented need, then promptly installed the product at the head of the category. DeBeers, as we all know, made a diamond a symbol of romance with its “A Diamond is Forever” campaign. As [Bob Garfield observed](#), “Now, thanks to the simple audacity of the advertising proposition, the diamond engagement ring is de rigueur virtually worldwide, and the diamond by far the precious gemstone of choice.” Federal Express made overnight delivery into an industry with their promise to get the package to its destination when “It absolutely, positively has to get there overnight.” Other campaigns have sought to create categories, with varying degrees of success. The DeBeers and the Federal Express campaigns were so successful because they found intriguing ways to turn ideas into mainstream rituals (giving a ring, preparing and sending something overnight) and to link their brands to those rituals in ways that made a substitute feel like a compromise. Once again, they challenged the accepted way of doing things.

Others introduced phrases that became memes, long before memes were even recognized as such: “Plop plop, fizz”, for example, “Where’s the beef?” or the infamous “Wazzup”.

These quickly worked their way into the vernacular. Or they introduced characters into the culture who became personalities in their own right – the fast-talking FedEx guy, the Marlboro man and of course that guy with the infamous eyepatch in the Hathaway shirt.

The world has seldom wanted for campaigns that were recognisable or clever. For me, the true icons of brand advertising though have been those campaigns that were about much more than just publicity or sales. In each case, iconic campaigns locked the brand itself to a change in the collective mindset. They instigated challenges to how people felt or what people did or how people expressed things, tying them to images, ideas and phrases that people were bewitched by, so that the brands were linked to those changes in attitude. Perhaps it's no surprise after all that many of these products had few natural attributes to work off. Perhaps that lack of innate reason to buy inspired creators and approvers alike to push the boundaries. So much of today's advertising seems to be missing that gentle bite. It may be cool and smart, but it often lacks a beguiling sense of subversion.

The iconic brand campaigns told stories – and those stories were always human. To a certain extent, it could be argued they were often simpler ads for simpler times, but I think far more importantly people recognised, and identified with, the integrity of what they read or saw. They believed the characters. Perhaps, more advertising should be more stark, more frank – less polished, less technical, more down to earth. Perhaps as Leo Burnett himself did with the Marlboro Man, writers need to develop icons who feel real rather than wheeling in celebrities or mouthpieces who just sell.

With the notable exception of the Apple ad, campaigns were onscreen or in print for many years. People had time to get used to them, to read things into them, to accept them. After a time, the ads stopped feeling like marketing; they became encounters that viewers and readers were relaxed with and that they looked for. It was a slower pitch, a more measured pitch. Sadly, that long, slow boil now feels as good as gone. Campaign gives way to campaign, with little sense of continuity and often with wildly divergent strategies. The discipline of a strong message, well delivered, time and time again seems to have deserted both marketing managers and advertising creators. Everyone it seems wants to tell the next joke, try the next technique, employ the latest channels. Too many advertisers have forgotten that people forget. As a result, too many ads are now just part of the noise rather than part of the culture.

So while there are reasons to suggest that the days of iconic advertising may be over, the lessons from iconic brand advertising should still be teaching brands and brand owners a thing or two.

Are these your [10 Best Ad Campaigns of All Time](#)? If so, why? If not, what's missing?

Most Advertising Doesn't Work. Here's Something That Does

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Dr. Tait Martin, a researcher and authority on communications and behavior, has one real goal: "I try to get people to *do* stuff." Increasingly, he says, companies that want to get people into *stuff-doing* mode need to can some outmoded notions of advertising and publicity.

Do you recall that heartwarming commercial about the man who took his father on a trip to Norway? If so, do you even remember what brand the commercial was for? (Photo credit: Wikipedia)

Before I share Dr. Martin's prescription for getting people to take action, let's pause and reflect on what a waste of time and money most traditional forms of advertising are, especially in today's information-overload society.

Remember that ubiquitous commercial a few years ago, in which a man took his father on a dream voyage to their ancestral home of Norway — only to shift directions quickly when they discovered on a trip to the hall of records that Sweden was their actual home?

You probably do, and it probably made you smile just to think about it. But can you remember what company made the commercial and what product it actually attempted to sell to you?

No, of course you don't. Not even when I hint that the sponsor of the commercial was also for many years the sponsor of the Rose Bowl, the legendary "Granddaddy" feature of New Year's Day.

Best guesses, when I ask friends and colleagues, are that the commercial was for [Visa](#) V -0.03% or Mastercard, or even [Ancestry.com](#) [Ancestry.com](#).

Dr. Tait Martin tells advertisers to worry less about how to make impressions or how to amuse audiences -- and more about how to get people to take real action.

The correct answer, though, would be [Citi](#). It must be doubly irritating for Citi that few remember that it paid millions to be associated with the Rose Bowl. ([AT&T](#) T

+0.34% and Sony SNE -0.74% too should be chagrined that few can associate them with their sponsorship of past Rose Bowl games).

Martin, chief research officer and managing partner of Taproot Creative and an affiliate professor of social marketing in the College of Public Health at the University of South Florida, says that advertisers work under the illusion that, if they just make impressions or entertain the audience, consumers will then remember the sponsor positively and later take positive action. His research bursts such costly bubbles.

The four levers for moving people

Don't spend so much time trying to amuse or even inspire consumers, Martin advises. Rather, if you want to get people to take action—whether to buy something, support a cause, attend an event, or so on, he suggests that you need to take into account four crucial levers:

1. Feeling. "Everything we ask people to do has an emotional component to it," Martin says. You can't just reason people into doing something—you have to appeal to their primal, emotional side. This brings to mind the words of the legendary psychologist-marketer Clotaire Rapaille, who said the "reptilian portion" of our brain is ultimately in the driver's seat in our decision-making.

2. Function. "What's the *purpose* of what you're asking people to do?" he asks. "If it's not explicit, it's likely not going to happen." The audience has to understand *why* taking a specific action is helpful to their (and your) lives and agendas.

3. Compatibility. Martin asks, "Does what you're asking for fit into the lives of the people whom you want to take action?" If it doesn't seem to fit in a logical and organic way into their lives, it again will likely not happen.

4. Cost. "What resources are needed to make things happen?" he asks. He says this can be money, time, ego, reputation, or other forms of capital.

If your message properly takes these four levers or factors into account, Martin says, you have a great opportunity to move people in a new direction.

How it works in practice

Martin has done extensive work in health-promotion efforts, and has found that scaring the wits out of audiences with gruesome images of dying smokers isn't necessarily effective. "Research shows that if you feel something, that doesn't mean you're going to do anything about it."

By contrast, messages that include an easy call to action are far more effective. Take, for example, a helpline number or website. The feeling it inspires is positive. "It says, 'We're here if you need us. You're not a bad person, let us help.' There's also compatibility. I can do this at home. I can tweet or send text messages." Further, the helpline comes at a low financial cost, and its confidentiality also means that there is no shame or cost to one's public reputation.

A great deal has been said and written in recent years about crafting “sticky” messages. “But it’s not an either-or proposition,” says Martin. “Once the concept is sticky in the mind, show them how to take next step. Be explicit about why you want people to adopt a behavior.”

It would be unhelpful to tell others to get active because it will allow them to live longer. This simply seems too incompatible and incomprehensible to the average sedentary person. “But if you say something specific,” Martin says, “like, ‘Exercise 30 minutes a day, or walk a certain number of steps, or walk around the block,’ that can begin to seem compatible with someone’s life.”

This approach has applications in all areas of life. Many churches and nonprofits struggle because they call on their “customers” to act in ways that aren’t compatible with today’s lifestyles; the smarter ones adjust as necessary. In politics, a candidate needs motivated citizens who will show up at a rally and then help get out the vote. She needs to begin by creating an urgent or compelling motivation for involvement (“let’s protect our kids” or “here’s how to raise our property values,” for instance) and then make a seamless experience in which feeling and action organically build on one another.

And here’s a tantalizing thought: If you address the first three levers or factors extremely well, you can hike up the cost, because customers will pay it gladly, Martin says. Think of Apple as a prime example, with evocative and trendy devices that serve practical needs and mesh into one’s life easily—all at a premium price point.

After you consider the four factors for moving people, it makes sense why you can’t recall most of the advertisements that you saw over the past 24 hours—and why even the ones that you *can* recall aren’t likely to change your consumer behavior. The traditional advertising and publicity model works well for many industry professionals, but it fails too many organizations and causes.

10 old school marketing lessons for mobile marketers

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Jeffrey Myers

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Jeffrey Myers is a marketing professor at Emerson College.

There are a number of truths in marketing today that, like the author, have existed for quite some time. Most, like a fine wine, have improved with age, providing greater relevance and insight. We invite you to learn from these time-tested fundamentals and how they apply to today and tomorrow. Or, ignore them at your peril.

1. The consumer is king. And queen.

The consumer – the person who plunks down good money for what you’re selling – must always be dead center in all of your thinking, plans and objectives. Treat them as a friend, someone to be respected. People prefer to do business with other people, brands and companies that they know and like (not the same as a Facebook “like”). Be very likeable. Show gratitude at every opportunity. Never, ever lie or deceive. Provide more and better than expected; it will always be rewarded. The opposite is also true.

Mobile marketing lesson: As in any relationship, find genuine reasons why people should befriend and prefer your brand. Consistently express that in the [product or service](#) itself. In what you say, how you say it, how often you say it, and where. Communicating on a mobile device may seem “free” but it can get very expensive if you do it poorly.

2. You’ll never sell a confused consumer anything

Don’t be in a hurry to explain. Neither over-explain nor obfuscate. **Simpler is better. Clarity is best.** Turn every possible purchase decision into a brand relationship affirmation. Be a good listener.

Mobile marketing lesson: Any relationship takes time to develop (See #9). And by its very nature, a relationship is a two-way street. Don’t just talk to or, worse, at a consumer. Leave plenty of opportunity to hear what’s on their mind. Everyone has an opinion to share. Be a very active and appreciative listener.

3. “Brand” is the second-most misused term in marketing

Is Lady Gaga a brand? In a word, no. She’s a singer, an entertainer, a person. She has style, attitude and talent. But she’s not a brand. Yes, there’s Lady Gaga perfume. But that’s a perfume, not a person. A person is not a brand. But, more and more today, a brand is a person. That’s because consumers are looking for transparency, authenticity and accessibility in what they buy. A brand used to be what the manufacturers said it was.

In large part that was due to the one-way nature of the communication channels available. Technology has turned the tables and, increasingly, brands are what the consumers say they are (see #1, above). So brand managers of today and certainly tomorrow – and their bosses – need to give up trying to control their brand’s imagery.

Mobile marketing lesson: The consumer is in control now. Smart managers know this. The others will fail. Management is not control. Control is not management. People have warts. Brands have warts. Get over it, control freaks. The consumer is in the driver’s seat. Buckle up.

4. Communications 101

It's not what you say. It's what they hear. If they aren't "hearing" you – if your message is not resonating with your audience(s) – you aren't inside the consumers' heads, as you need to be. Use every opportunity possible to set up listening posts throughout your organization and your selling process.

Mobile marketing lesson: Mobile phones – audio and video/pictures – are ideal “polling stations” to take in real-world real-time input from a multitude of constituencies. As a wise man once said: You have two ears and one mouth. Use them in that proportion. Be a good listener.

5. Buzz has no value.

To “create buzz” is not a viable objective in any business plan. The business of a business is to make a profit. Banks accept money; they do not accept buzz. Buzz can be a way to generate awareness, interest and preference – three key steps to creating a relationship with a consumer but buzz can also be irritating, especially when there is no clear benefit delivered or promised.

Mobile marketing lesson: Make your buzz better. Think of a cocktail party. You walk up to a group and introduce yourself. Which is better: (a) dominate the conversation by talking non-stop about yourself; or (b) spend most of your time – especially at first – listening to the flow of the talk and jump in when appropriate. If you answered (a) please don't go to my party. If you answered (b) you now know what to do for your business to make it succeed in mobile marketing.

6. Segmentation Kills

We are all far more alike than different. We all want many of the same things (hint: reread Maslow's Hierarchy). We just find different paths to these common destinations. If you slice up your audience into too many pieces you will lose touch with your consumers. There are many fish in the sea. Fish where your fish are.

Mobile marketing lesson: If you create too many small targets to hit you will run out of arrows (i.e., resources like “money”). It's easier to hit a bigger target – and usually far more efficient.

7. Be careful what you wish for

Most research is dangerous because it is biased: The way the questions are framed. The way the answers are interpreted. Who gets asked; where; when and how.

Most research is used to affirm what someone (usually high up) in the organization already believes or to make up for their lack of vision. When doing any research keep your eyes wide open and see what's there, not what you expect or want to see.

Mobile marketing lesson: Use research carefully. It's a support mechanism to guide decisions, not mandate them. The massive consumer input possible on mobile can more than make up for any human biases. Use it often.

8. Customer Satisfaction: The death of brands.

Keep the customer satisfied? Never! A “satisfied consumer” is the equivalent of getting a “C” in school. Above you are the best. Below you are the worst. Your brand needs passionate lovers, BFFs and evangelists. A satisfied consumer is “meh.” A loyal consumer loves you, which, in tough times, is priceless.

Mobile marketing lesson: There will be tough times. You'll mess up. You'll get unwanted news. Competition will set their sights on you. Mobile can help you stay in touch with your loyals. If you drop a ball, fess up to it right away. Reward loyalty. Satisfaction is not a goal. It's just a starting point.

9. Brands take time

A brand is “a promise kept.” It's a genuine relationship that requires a lot of work to build up awareness, preference, trust and confidence. Very few consumers are blindly loyal; they can be forgiving, provided good reasons, but they'll never forget. And the consumer will be satisfied — if not by you, someone else.

Mobile marketing lesson: As the great philosopher, Diana Ross, told us: You can't hurry love.

10. Speed kills

A corollary to #9. Careers and fortunes can be made and lost at the push of a button. Just because you can reach millions of people in seconds does not mean you should. In fact, you almost never should. A fast tweet or FB post is like blurting out a questionable remark after you've downed more than a few. What's said on Twitter stays on Twitter. Just ask the guy at Maytag or Netflix among many others.

If anyone in [your company](#) feels it's better to “get something out there as fast as possible” you need to forfeit their keys to any SM account. Any response – to good news or bad, fact or fiction – needs to be carefully considered prior to hitting “go.” A key to brands and branding is consistency. It's impossible to nurture any brand, new or decades old, at the speed of light.

Mobile marketing lesson: Carpenters have a saying: Measure twice, cut once. How many times have you heard: Better safe than sorry. Or: Haste makes waste. Someone's trying to tell you something.

Digital marketing, especially mobile, is not all that new and different. It is simply another media channel, a sophisticated step up, not unlike radio was to newspapers or TV was to radio. And, like

the early days of broadcasting, digital marketing is in its infancy, a nascent technology that its practitioners are trying very hard to understand and fully leverage. Digital marketing has many powerful benefits. Use them all well. But remember: Age and treachery beat youth and skill every time.

The Attention Span Myth

Commentators say that people today have a shorter attention span than in the past, but Jerry Seinfeld and I don't believe this is true.

"There is no such thing as an attention span. There is only *the quality* of what you are viewing. This whole idea of an attention span is, I think, a misnomer. People have an infinite attention span if you are entertaining them." - Jerry Seinfeld

"If you are entertaining them."

I believe it's presumptive to say that today's generation is more easily distracted than previous generations. It is accurate, perhaps, to say they are *more often* distracted, but might not their forefathers have been just as often distracted had they carried electronic worlds in their pockets?

The truth is that people today have a low tolerance for boredom. Combine this with the constant availability of entertaining attractions and it's easy to see why this question of attention span keeps popping up like a prairie dog.

Of course people today can pay attention. But why should they?

"We frequently forgive those who bore us, but cannot forgive those who we bore." - Francois, Duc de La Rochefoucauld

We are insulted when people turn their attention away from us, especially when we believe what we're saying is important.

You can blame today's generation for bad manners and a short attention span. You can blame video games and smart phones. You can blame poor parenting and too much television. You can blame Alfred E. Neuman. You can blame God.

Or you can realize that attention will always turn toward whatever stimulus is most interesting. You can see the competition for attention is fiercer today than it has ever been. You can see that we need to up our game.

Our ability to gain and hold attention depends entirely upon our ability to stimulate the curiosity of others.

Can you stimulate curiosity? If you can't, you will not hold attention. Not in your ads, not on the telephone, not face-to-face.

I tell my business partners, the Wizards of Ads, not to be offended when someone in the audience begins texting or playing a video game, but to take it as a signal to add some sparkle to their talk; do something more interesting than the distraction; win back the wandering mind. They are now among the most riveting speakers in America.

So what will it be? Will you blame the audience or blame yourself?

If you blame the audience, you eliminate all hope of improvement because there is nothing you can do to fix the audience. You must then conclude that society is circling the drain. "America is in decline, *blah, blah, blah*".

But if you blame only yourself for not rising to the challenge of increased competition, that problem is easily solved:

All you have to do is become more interesting.

Begin by entering your subject from an unusual angle.

"Jerry Seinfeld and I don't believe this to be true."

Use examples that are relevant to the audience.

"...electronic worlds in their pockets."

Specificity is more interesting than generalities.

"...this question of attention span keeps popping up like a prairie dog."

Don't over-explain. Let your listeners figure it out for themselves.

"You can blame Alfred E. Neuman."

Unusual intonations and inflections captivate the ear and make it difficult to quit listening.

Talk faster than usual. Our speed of hearing greatly exceeds the speed of speech.

Nothing bores people faster than taking too long to say too little.

Deliver big ideas quickly like boulders in an avalanche. Rapid distraction is a machine gun that requires you to collect bullets in advance.

You can no longer just make it up as you go along.

The future is a magical world that will belong to those who can gain and hold attention. How much of that magic would you like to own?

We see so much research these days that it's easy to ignore those "so what?" headlines – like this one:

"Americans Fed Up With Bad Ads"

That's the hook from a recent "Research Brief" from the Center for Media Research. **The study**, conducted by InsightsOne with Harris Interactive, finds that 87% of Americans 18+ are fed up with the number of irrelevant ads they're exposed to before they start to ignore a company.

Apparently, **annoying ads** are everywhere. But the biggest culprits are on TV (60%), followed by websites and email/sidebar ads (both above 50%).

Somehow, radio managed to avoid this nasty ranker.

Not surprisingly, men get more pissed off by bad ads, motivating them to boycott companies and even stop using products.

As Waqar Hasan, the CEO of InsightsOne, points out, “...consumers have a real limit on what they’re willing to put up with...”

Apparently so.

While radio may have dodged a bullet by its lack of inclusion in the survey, we all know that commercials are an issue for listeners. In **Techsurvey9**, we asked the 13% of respondents who told us they’ve been listening to less AM/FM why that is. Once we get beyond lifestyle changes (I moved, I changed jobs, etc.), it comes down to dissatisfaction with radio programming *and* the perception there are too many commercials on the radio. All the other “digital drains” like iPods and Pandora are smaller factors in listening erosion.

- **Ad strategy is more difficult to teach than ad writing.**
- **Ad writing, essentially, is to choose:**
 - **1. an intriguing angle of approach into the subject matter and**
 - **2. the sharpest words and phrases to make your point.**
- **Ad strategy, essentially, is to choose:**
 - **1. the point you need to make.**
- **Bad strategy happens when you:**
 - **1. listen to an advertiser's wishful thinking and then**
 - **2. assume that a radio schedule that**
 - **3. delivers great frequency and**
 - **4. reaches the perfect audience**
 - **5. with really good copy will**
 - **6. make that advertiser's dream come true.**
- **If you've been selling radio long enough, you already know that a client's wishful thinking is a lever that will help you sell that client a radio**

schedule, but it takes a lot more than wishful thinking to motivate the client's customer.

- **CLIENT: "I wish I could sell these items."
ACCOUNT EXEC: "Let me help you."
CLIENT: "How can you help me?"
ACCOUNT EXEC: "We have a loyal audience."
(Insert success story here.) "Advertising is an investment in your future." (Insert schedule and contract here.) "Now tell me exactly what makes these items different and special and better than the ones your competitor sells." (You start taking notes like crazy. The client is animated. Sincere. Hopeful. Excited.)**
- **You return to the station with a contract and a run order. Now all you need is great copy, right?**
- **Let me pause here to say that it's not my goal to discourage you. My goal is only to open your eyes. I want you to see the problem clearly so that you no longer walk into a trap from which there is no escape. We will now continue.**
- **You work really hard and write a great piece of copy. Excellent copy. Miraculous copy. World-class copy. The greatest copy that has ever been written. Your co-workers love the ad. The client loves the ad. High-fives all around and champagne for everyone.**
- **The schedule runs. The ad airs. Everyone is commenting on it. Very little of the product is sold. Beyond generating those comments, the ad has minimal impact on the business.**
- **What the hell?**

- Your copy, indeed, was fabulous. You employed an excellent angle of approach, held the listeners' attention and made your point in a clever way. Well done! But your fundamental strategy was flawed; your ad answered a question that no one was asking.
- You walked into the trap when you failed to question why the client was overstocked on the item he wanted you to advertise. The real problem is that no one wants the item. *It's a loser, a dog, a mistake.* Your client assumed - and you assumed with him - that if people "only knew and understood," then they'd rush in to buy the product. So you told the people, you made them understand. And they still didn't want the product.
- Advertising will only accelerate what was going to happen anyway.
- Convince your client to let you offer the public what the public already wants. This is what drives traffic into a store. And many of those people will find other things to buy from your client. In other words, fish with bait that you know the fish love. Don't try to convince the fish to swallow bait they don't really like.
- The inexperienced account executive allows the patient to diagnose his own disease then prescribes treatment under the mistaken illusion that the patient's self-diagnosis can be trusted. If medical doctors did this they would go to jail.
- The treatment - the copy and the schedule - is the easy part. The diagnosis - the strategy - is the tricky

part. A quick glance at the symptoms does not prescribe the cure. Identical symptoms can arise from many different causes. Most account executives are bad diagnosticians because the successful diagnostician must be cold, objective, and suspicious. Not a good way to sell, right?

- The successful diagnostician knows the truth of a statement is not determined by the sincerity of the speaker. In other words, a deeply sincere, passionate client can easily be wrong in their assumptions.**
- If you allow your client to frame the fundamental strategy and choose the principal point your ad will make, you are at the mercy of your patient's self-diagnosis. You and your station will be blamed when that patient fails to recover.**
- The solution is simple. You must separate the selling of the schedule from the creation of the strategy. Selling requires you to be warm, receptive and empathetic. Strategy requires you to be cold, objective, and suspicious of the client's self-diagnosis.**
- Ask yourself this question: "Are customers not coming because they don't know about this client, or are customers not coming because they do know?"**
- Diagnose the real problem. Offer the client's customers what you know for certain they want. I'm not pretending this is easy.**

- Are you beginning to understand why it takes years to become a doctor? But stick with it. Don't give up. Have courage.
-
- **Creative- Mark Gross SVP, Group Creative Director-** however the more radio judging I do, the more I realize that great radio creative is really intangible and undefineable. There's a little something special that propels memorable work to greatness. When audio is all you have, people want to be entertained, not preached to. That is what great radio is supposed to do, stir emotions and engage the listener. I speak for all of us when I say we left Cannes feeling inspired and motivated to preserve the future of radio. Long live the power of great radio..
- **9 Things You Can Learn About Copywriting From David Ogilvy**
- Like it?
- What do Rolls-Royce, Dove, Shell, and Schweppes all have in common?
- The answer: David Ogilvy, known throughout the copywriting and advertising industries as "The Father of Advertising." For a quick snack-break-sized read, scan through these nine tips on copywriting, [content writing](#), and general advertising, straight from the master:

on [BrainyQuote](#)

- "Our business is infested with idiots who try to impress by using pretentious jargon."

- There are a number of phrases – [seven, in fact](#) – that really make me grind my teeth. I’m sure you, Ogilvy, and myself could come up with plenty more. Why use big words when what you want to say is fairly simple?
- "I don’t know the rules of grammar... If you’re trying to persuade people to do something, or buy something, it seems to me you should use their language, the language they use every day, the language in which they think. We try to write in the vernacular."
- Meet your customers where they are. When a reader has to work to translate your message, you can assume you’ve lost them.
- "A good advertisement is one which sells the product without drawing attention to itself."
- On the surface, a lot of content writing today draws attention to itself. This demand for attention is what makes it worth sharing on Facebook, Twitter, and everywhere else. At the same time, this attention-demanding content usually isn’t trying to make the sale; it’s just trying to gain *attention*. When *sale time* comes, make sure your content is clear, direct, and to the point.
- "If it doesn’t sell, it isn’t creative."
- Ogilvy was such a clever writer that he could put a creative (and profitable) spin on any product. If your product isn’t selling, it might not be *the product’s* fault.
- "Advertising is only evil when it advertises evil things."
- Ogilvy wasn’t much for the notion of Big Evil Advertising. It’s the advertiser’s job to sell, and the consumer’s job to know whether or not he really needs/wants the product.
- "On the average, five times as many people read the headline as read the body copy. When you have written your headline, you have spent eighty cents out of your dollar."
- In our current age of SEO copywriting, you could just as easily trade out ‘headline’ for ‘meta tag’ or ‘page title’. Similarly, [Copyblogger claims](#) that 80% of people read headlines, but only 20% read the body.
- "Every advertisement should be thought of as a contribution to the complex symbol which is the brand image."
- Common sense, but commonly forgotten. If your advertisement isn’t reinforcing your brand, then what’s your brilliant reason for bypassing Ogilvy’s wisdom?

“Americans Fed Up With Bad Ads”

That’s the hook from a recent “Research Brief” from the Center for Media Research. **The study**, conducted by InsightsOne with Harris Interactive, finds that 87% of Americans 18+are fed up with the number of irrelevant ads they’re exposed to before they start to ignore a company.

Apparently, **annoying ads** are everywhere. But the biggest culprits are on TV (60%), followed by websites and email/sidebar ads (both above 50%).

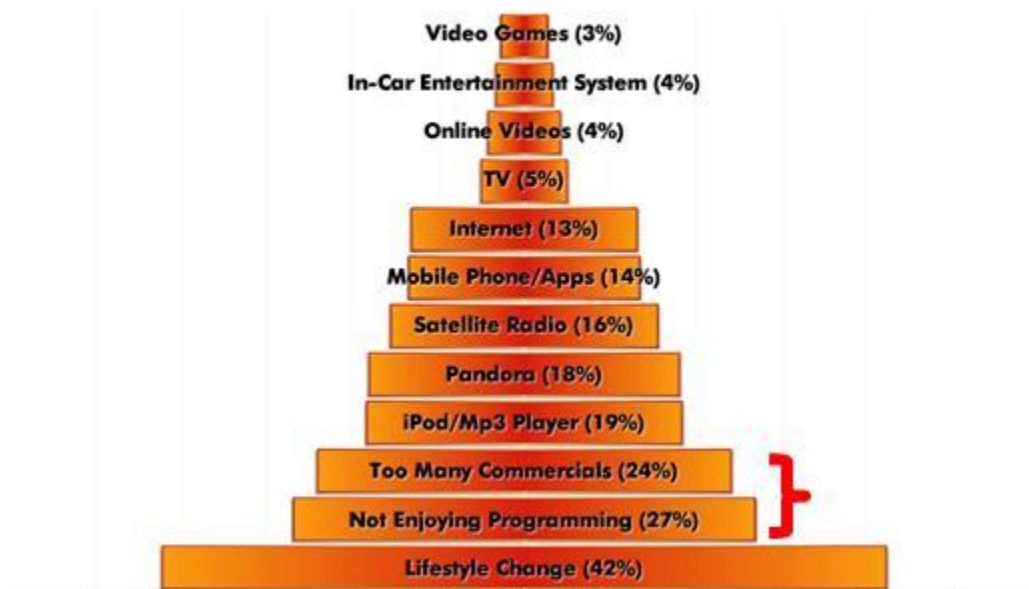
Somehow, radio managed to avoid this nasty ranker.

Not surprisingly, men get more pissed off by bad ads, motivating them to boycott companies and even stop using products.

As Waqar Hasan, the CEO of InsightsOne, points out, “...consumers have a real limit on what they’re willing to put up with...”

Apparently so.

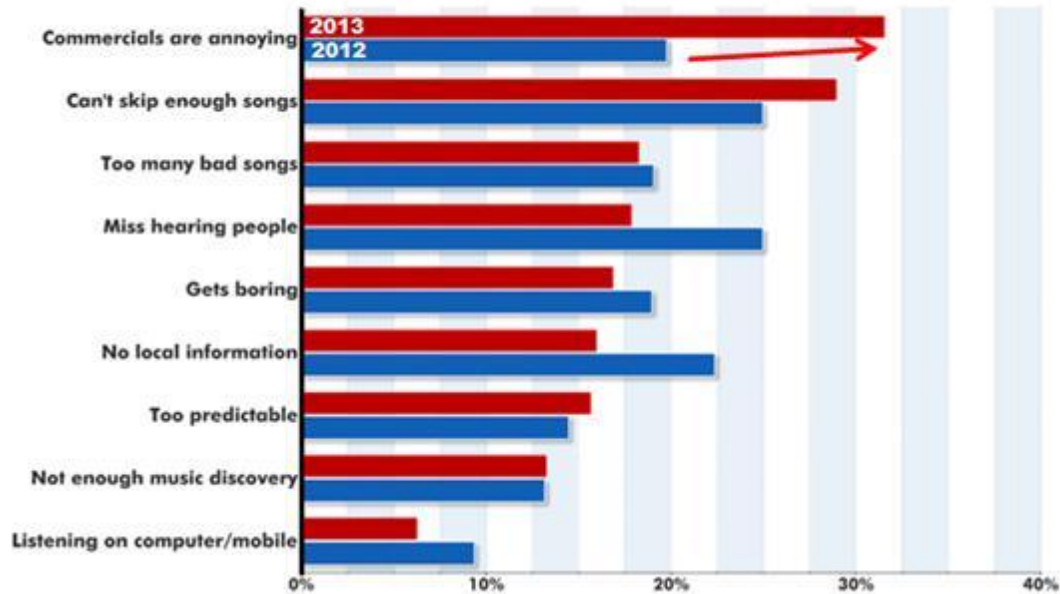
While radio may have dodged a bullet by its lack of inclusion in the survey, we all know that commercials are an issue for listeners. In **Techsurvey9**, we asked the 13% of respondents who told us they’ve been listening to less AM/FM why that is. Once we get beyond lifestyle changes (I moved, I changed jobs, etc.), it comes down to dissatisfaction with radio programming *and* the perception there are too many commercials on the radio. All the other “digital drains” like iPods and Pandora are smaller factors in listening erosion.



And it’s not just broadcast radio’s problem. When we asked Pandora listeners about that the main barriers to listening to the popular pure-play, guess what rose to the top? *Commercials*.

Last year, Pandora users cited a lack of DJs and the inability to skip more songs. This year, the #1 culprit is advertising. Particularly at a service that was built on commercial-free benefits, the addition of commercials is especially noticeable – and irksome:

Pandora's Major Drawbacks



There's a story here, and perhaps it is the universal truth that there's no such thing as a free lunch – or free music. Eventually, even the most enjoyable Internet services have to find a way to make money. (Will one of next year's negatives turn out to be Pandora limiting how much you can listen each week?)

Since commercials are what usually ends up being the price of most entertainment, the need for more creative, effective, and yes, entertaining commercials has never been higher.

Not just for listeners, but for the companies that pay for them.

Why marketers shouldn't always strive to be the funnyman

Fri, 19 Jul 2013 | By [Lara O'Reilly](#)

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Have you heard the one about the marketer who tried to make his ads funny like everyone else? His campaign was a joke that went down with consumers like a lead balloon. With

the deluge of attempted humour in marketing communications, there is a new wisdom that suggests when everyone else is “zigging”, your brand should try to “zag”.

Brands from O2 to Confused.com and Cadbury are attempting humour in their current UK advertising campaigns - some raising more laughs than others.

Paddy Power is famed for its successful, ballsy, sometimes risque, always humorous marketing campaigns – from ambushing Euro 2012 via a pair of Nicklas Bendtner’s underpants to its most recent mischievous effort at The Ashes: beaming an image of Captain Cook on The Oval’s pitch with text stating “Captain Cook: civilising Aussies since 1770”.

Paul Sweeney, Paddy Power’s head of brand, says “sharing is caring” is a motto that has never been more applicable for brands and that “entertainment” is Paddy Power’s “secret sauce”.

He adds: “Funny works, you only have to look at how many pieces of brilliant content are being uploaded every day or the recent Comedy Week on YouTube to know that making people laugh is one of the best ways to engage them.”



Further afield, the majority of brands advertising during this year’s Super Bowl also aimed to create funny content.

Ads must be “extremely funny”, however, to illicit the strong psychological responses that are linked to sentiment and purchase intent as audiences have been subjected to a “glut” of humorous attempts from marketers, according to a white paper from Unruly Media.

The Super Bowl ads that were the least shared on social media were those that triggered low levels of hilarity and surprise and also caused viewer confusion as an unintentional outcome, the report claims. In fact, the most shared ad, Budweiser’s Brotherhood, performed strongly because of the intense feelings of sadness - and not a joke in sight.

Lysa Hardy, chief marketing officer at Holland and Barrett owner NBTY Europe and the former T-Mobile head of brand responsible for its famous “Life’s for Sharing” ads, says

if brands set out to write a funny script the end result can appear “contrived”. Sometimes, however, “it can just happen” and marketers should be flexible to be able to include natural humour in their creative output.

Holland and Barrett’s first ad, for example, was an animation that had a lot of activity crammed into the frame. In the background a hedgehog character is seen being kicked between two squirrels.

“People found it quite funny so now we’ve carried on that theme where something happens to the hedgehog in each ad. It’s only in the background but it’s great for those who notice it,” Hardy says.

“[Similarly], my brief a T-Mobile was to make people smile. So keeping it simple was key and the ad wasn’t about making people laugh, but in filming there are moments that viewers relate to as they’re real people in the ads. It’s good to not take yourself too seriously and overstate your importance as a brand in people’s lives,” she adds.

It is a commonly held belief that the best marketing perfectly combines art and science. John Townshend, creative partner at ad agency Now – which counts Butlins, Petplan, BT Business and Florette among its clients – says it’s the art that makes humorous ideas fly.

Using Cannes Lions 2013 Grand Prix winner Metro Trains Australia’s “Dumb Ways to Die” as an example, Townshend says it was not just the combination of a brutal story with childlike animation and music that made it successful. It was the arrangement of notes, wit of the animation, nuances of the words – together – that made it “magic”, and there is no “formula” with which to make such combinations.

Townshend adds: “I think the point about [avoiding] humour is relevant because everyone’s trying to do it – and that’s why the more serious ad may have cut through in the Superbowl. You can’t say forget humour, but you can have a good principle that says: ‘when everyone zigs, zag’, which is [BBH co-founder] John Hegarty’s mantra – and he ain’t no scientist.”

Hardy agrees on the point that marketing is a science and art, but says some marketers can get pulled too far in that direction, chasing the plaudit of the next best thing since the “Yeo Valley Farmers” or “Volkswagen Star Wars” ads.

She adds: “The viral thing of something being really funny can be quite faddish – while it works quickly, it’s hard for it to hold residence. And does that drive sales? I’m not so sure, so many brands try [hilarity] and so few get away with it.”

Humour is a fickle beast and can easily fall flat. By breaking away from the pack and playing on different emotional triggers – Unruly suggests warmth, happiness, pride and awe - marketers can continue to play to the crowd, without the unwanted heckles

Creativity wins out every time, say big data experts

01 Jul 2013

Paul McIntyre

It's hardly the news many will want to hear, but a groundbreaking study by the Association for Data-Driven Marketing and Advertising has delivered a series of findings which challenge the industry's herd-like stampede to social media, audience targeting and short-term 'response' advertising campaigns.

The underlying tenet of ADMA's report, *Does Campaign Creativity Influence Business Success?*, proves overwhelmingly that more creative brand campaigns which are coupled with activation or response components are far more effective in producing longer-term business profits and sales.

The Australian study – conducted by respected UK strategic planner Peter Field – comes down hard on the side of better creativity in communications campaigns for broader business success, and says the industry faces a mammoth task in turning the momentum away from the accepted norm now of creating marketing activity that delivers fast sales results.

The in-depth analysis of hundreds of ADMA award entries from 2012 throws up striking parallels to a similar research project conducted by Field for the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising in the UK. Field told AdNews the study has received strong support from marketers, although some sectors in the marketing industry were fighting the findings.

The IPA's first report around the effectiveness of creativity was released three years ago, although it only recently published its analysis on the timing of effect between response-driven campaigns and creative-leaning brand and response efforts.

In a nutshell, the ADMA and IPA studies both demonstrate that creative brand campaigns take longer to deliver business success – after six months – compared to short-term response campaigns. But ultimately, creativity wins out with a much stronger impact on the bottom line and for creating less consumer sensitivity to critical areas like pricing.

"There are huge parallels between the ADMA and UK findings, though ADMA is able to look much more closely at short time scales," Field said. The IPA's latest report, *The Long and Short of It*, was released earlier this year. "It is already getting a very supportive response from marketers in the UK but there is some pushback from the digital community.

"The creativity findings were first published in the UK three years ago and have had quite a big impact on thinking. They coincided with the start of the Cannes Creative Effectiveness Lions so quite a few major blue-chip marketing

organisations have come around to the efficiency and effectiveness benefits of creativity and turn up in force at Cannes. Some of them would not have been seen dead there 10 years ago.”

Field has one caveat, however: developing truly creative work is hard. “When brands get it right the rewards are huge. But if you misfire you may have little to show for it. That’s probably an important factor behind why so many brands still pursue the non-creative ‘reason why’ approach to advertising. [Response-driven campaigns] will never achieve stellar effectiveness and may struggle to achieve viable ROI but it is still likely to generate some modest results, however uncrafted the execution.”

Some of the key and controversial findings from ADMA’s study include:

- Short-term response and web and social media traffic do not reliably indicate longer-term business success.
- Campaigns that make use of diverse broad reach channels are more effective. This is further evidence of the ‘false logic’ of tight targeting.
- Traditional direct mail strongly outperforms email marketing. Email may be cheaper but it is associated with reduced campaign effectiveness.
- Optimising campaigns for short-term sales results will not lead to optimum long-term sales or profitability. It is important, too, that success is measured over both short and long term and that short-term results are not used to guide strategy.
- If you measure success over the short term – less than six months – you will not see the benefits of creativity. It does not drive effectiveness over the short term.
- Creativity has a particularly strong beneficial effect on price sensitivity, allowing brands to harden pricing. This has a strong boosting effect on profitability.

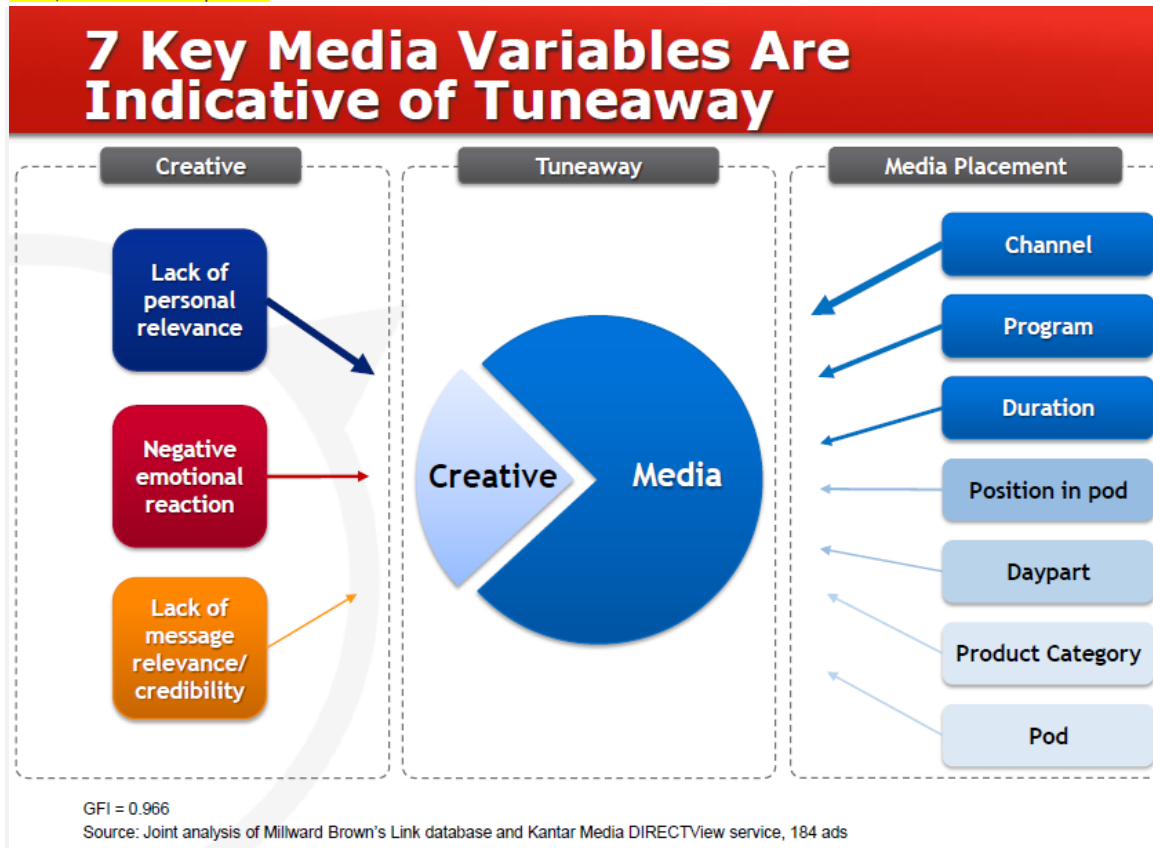
Of particular importance in the Australian study is that it was commissioned by ADMA, traditionally an industry body focused heavily on generating hard results from campaigns in digital, traditional media and direct communications.

ADMA’s strategic overhaul last year to leading the charge in data-driven marketing makes its findings around creativity all the more robust. ADMA chief executive Jodie Sangster has been vocal this year arguing the case for marketing to not ignore the central role strong creativity plays in data-driven campaigns.

“Creativity plays a major role and at the moment it is being sidelined,” Sangster told *AdNews* in the Big Data Report (5 April). “So much is going on with data that it is being overlooked. Creativity is the link between the data and the customer.”

The full report is available from ADMA along with last week's webcast and Q&A discussion on the report's findings with Peter Field, Jodie Sangster and AdNews editor-in-chief Paul McIntyre.

This article first appeared in the 28 June 2013 edition of AdNews, in print and on iPad. Click [here](#) to subscribe for more news, features and opinion.



Learning the commercial case for creative marketing

I'm a fan of marketing that thinks, before it does. And, if I am honest, tired of "digital" marketing that focuses on channels and moving media spend without addressing the real strategic challenges, without putting the customer, and so integrated marketing, first.

It's why I posted recently about [meaningful marketing and brands such as Dove](#), I think wherever brands are seeking to genuinely connect with the consumer, commercial success will follow. If brands act in a commoditised way, expect commoditised results.

Just a few weeks ago the [Coca-Cola Company won 20 awards at the 2013 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity](#), presented with the 2013 Creative Marketer of the Year Award at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, widely considered the world's most

important award for creative excellence in brand communications. So what can other companies learn from this.

“Work that matters”

I'd like to have seen the presentation from Coke's VP of advertising strategy and content excellence, Jonathan Mildenhall, at Cannes, titled [#WorkThatMatters](#) – it looks great. Plus, I've become somewhat of a Mildenhall fan-boy since Coke's 2020 vision was revealed a few years ago – see my [post on that here](#). I can really buy into marketing that's striving to be bigger than the product itself, as with Dove, naysayers might claim it's manipulative and just another form of advertising, for me it attempts to create the win-win between the brand and the consumer, earning and inspiring consumer trust and attention, and I cannot fault that. The [Small World Machines](#) campaign claimed almost half of Coke's Cannes awards. It's clearly a great piece of marketing, you can see the summary of the campaign below and some detail [here on Coke's website](#).

Coke's doing what they've always done here, delivering world-class, creative excellence, but in a way that's never been more relevant to modern marketing, recognising that 30 second TV slots and agency-led advertising creative is no longer the primary focus that it once was. Coke use advertising of course, heavily, but that advertising spend is used creatively to **amplify** bigger, richer ideas.

Rather than [dissect the Small World Machines](#) idea or any of Coke's other work, there's a nice [case study here on Coke Zero](#) from last year too, I wanted to get an idea of Jonathan Mildenhall's recipe for creative success. I dug around and found the lecture below, from 2010 and have summarised what I took from it.

Jonathan Mildenhall's guest lecture on Creative Excellence

Creativity is fundamentally important to business

“Creativity is the crucial variable in the process of turning knowledge into value” John Kao (Harvard Business School)

What a fantastic quote to start off around what the real purpose of creativity in marketing is. And in a content marketing era, it's a brilliantly relevant quote. Creativity changes things, it's so often overlooked, even today with big brands. It's so often perceived tied to an agency or a specific role, but it's not about a role, a type of person or a the right type of FMCG business. It's more important than that. The responsibility for creativity and creative marketing therefore lies with everyone irrespective of who leads the agenda – we all need to bring creative and innovative thinking to our organisations.

“Creativity is about seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought” Dr Albert von Szent-Gyorgy (Nobel prize winner)

Creativity pays, that's something I hugely enjoy the thought of. It turns out that the 'creative fancy stuff' has a strong commercial purpose and drives tangible share-holder value. Bloomberg report the correlation to creativity and commercial success through their '[50 most innovative](#)

companies', companies that drive forwards and innovate are the most successful commercially. The message here? Get used to hearing "no" in your organisation and make ideas happen.

It's about people

It's interesting and obvious how creativity starts and ends with being people (audience) centred. It's intuitive, focussed innovation – people centred. That includes people within your organisation and your consumers. Bringing more people into that process is probably the real insight to boost creativity and ideas generation of course it needs to be a process, or at least a managed chaos! Should you consider bringing in new people from other worlds, people who bring different lessons and experience to your team and brand? The right agency partners can do this, it's certainly a primary driver in how our clients at First 10 perceive our value.

Coke's take on why creativity matters...

Creativity creates re-consideration

This is so important when you have a product that does not get re-invented. Unlike consumer apparel brands like Nike or PUMA, a bottle of Coca-Cola largely remains the same, the liquid and packaging is fixed. The only thing Coke can change is the means and method of communication. They have to innovate outside of the product itself. This is what makes them fascinating to me, and [Red Bull too](#), I guess it's also what makes them able to afford to 'over-invest' into marketing in both cash and board-room level focus?

Creativity sparks brand love

Coke's work creates desire, so that people want to literally wear the t-shirt. It's not flippant, inspiring brand love is strategic aim and you can see that, it drives commercial success too since if someone buys two bottles instead of one each week then that's a lot of incremental sales. The insight behind Coke to drive a 'happiness' agenda is the genius behind it. A loftier consumer aspiration than refreshing bubbles – which a number of other products can offer me. Open Happiness – wholly owned by Coke.

Creativity looks for new possibilities

Coke had to invest to follow new trends and develop new ideas – [Coke Zero](#) shows that as a product extension. But so does the way that they've had to rethink marketing through their [2020 vision](#). That's a long way from TV and outdoor advertising led marketing.

Creativity creates new capabilities

Coke's recycling capabilities – from zero to hero in 5 years – form the basis for some powerful story-telling in the market. The fact that they combine that story into something the design-led Coke buyer can rave about through the [emeco 111 chair](#), made from 111 recycled bottles drives the point home. Saying you're a sustainable brand is one thing, doing it and enabling the story to get to market is another. Hats off.

Creativity can be harnessed

Steve Jobs is famous for saying he wanted to design things, even buttons, that look so good that you'd want to lick them. Coke stepped into the vending space with that driver and created a new drinks dispensing unit that will sell 112 different Coca-Cola drinks, the iPod of the drinks industry?

Creativity travels

Ideas need to be seductive enough to travel, irrespective of geography, culture and economic success. Big fat fertile ideas are at the centre of [Coke's 2020 vision](#).

Creativity re-sets the bar and demands better

And, it never stops. The new bar is only there to be bettered by you or somebody else in your industry. I guess you get to decide which it is. As Mildenhall says, "Creativity is behind every leap in science and marketing".

Fulfil your creative purpose – steal from Coke's 5 aims

1. **Partner with brand and marketing teams** to ensure that brand vision leverage a cultural context (get people focussed), that context is relevant and inspiring to consumers and creative partners. Base this upon real cultural insights and tensions that you can push up against, this makes the conversation happen and be worthwhile.
2. **Lead the creation of world-class core creative ideas** that fundamentally shift people's beliefs and actions to the benefit of Coke's business. Ideas that are big, fat and fertile enough tend to have facets that can permeate in different cultures and channels. Coke don't do advertising or campaign-led ideas, they buy ideas big enough to run across pack, mobile, instore, TV ...where Coke can spend (and earn) money as a publisher in a modern media landscape.
3. **Build lasting emotional connections with consumers.** Coke believe that too many brands are driving rational communications, not working with the hearts and minds of consumers. Effective communications make you feel, that emotional connection is what shapes opinion. There's still a huge waste of money in advertising when you look at what's around us everyday.
4. **"Bigger, better, fewer, further"** – Coke's mantra to enable creative productivity. How can you do more for less? Productivity is at the heart of the commercial organisation. Bigger ideas are more effective, requiring less of them as they go further.
5. **Assert creative expertise** to build a universe of creative excellence capabilities across your organisation. It cannot be just about "the creatives", take time to answer and build everyone's creative muscle to help the organisation grow.

"We use our 'BBA process' to create culturally relevant brands... we must do more than give people refreshing products to buy, we must also stand for positive cultural changes that people want to buy into". Jonathan Mildenhall, VP of advertising strategy and content excellence, Coca-Cola

It seems a moot point in a digital era, that your consumer is editing generic, rational messaging out of their lives, brands instead need to strive for bigger, culturally relevant ideas for their busy consumers to buy into. Mildenhall states that this is not about £'s, you can lead a cultural conversation on-pack – Innocent are a great example of this. Those culturally leading ideas can create significant value for brand owners and help brands carve out leadership spaces.

"The Coca-Cola company's powerful position in the global market place affords us the opportunity and the responsibility to create positive change in the world. Every employee needs to help ensure that each of our brands succeed in a way that makes the world a better place" Jonathan Mildenhall, VP of advertising strategy and content excellence, Coca-Cola

I am not convinced that sugared water does the above without damage to society, I don't think that filtered and bottled water achieves that either. However from a pure marketing stand-point, making marketing drive value in and of itself, that gives something back makes perfect sense and is hard to argue against. Mildenhall's example is Fanta, which generates orange playgrounds for deprived inner city areas under the Fanta 'play on' message. Investing in local and run down areas does show the brand living the ideals, over 30 second TV spots, and logically is far more impactful from a marketing stand-point.

Coca-Cola's framework

The simplicity of the graphic undermines the work I imagine goes into enabling the summary, though it's useful to see it. Apologies it's a little blurred – it's the best resolution from the video...



Mildenhall says that all Coca-Cola brands then ladder up to the bigger business mantra of 'Live positively' – a business wide statement of intent that umbrella's everything the drinks giant does.

The video closes on what I think is the secret sauce for Coke's content machine and campaigns such as the 'Small World Machines'.

#1 Emotional based storytelling.

- Emotions drive rational behaviour
- The best ads drive emotional response
- Your work must evoke emotions rather than portray emotions
- The more intense the emotion, the better the business results

2 Create meaningful roles for products to play in every piece of IMC (integrated marketing communications).

There are 4 product roles: functional offering or benefit; object of desire; embodiment of an attitude; and social connector.

“Sometimes the role of the product in our advertising is neither meaningful or credible. Before signing off... ask yourself ‘can this story be told without mentioning the product’ If so... don’t do it” Jonathan Mildenhall, VP of advertising strategy and content excellence, Coca-Cola

Big fat stories and fertile ideas... but not without a clear role for the product.

#3 The creation of exceptional communication ideas

I suppose this is why Coke have large creative teams, in-house and also their agencies. Exceptional ideas are not born of one person, they born of provocations and consumer insight, and a process that drives that big, fat fertile brief for the talented to pick up and answer.

This entry was posted in [Brand development](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

← [Will the impact of Instagram’s new video on Instagram be greater than the impact on Vine?](#)

Clear Channel Takes on a Challenge in Radio: Lame Ads

Partners With Berlin School for Contest That Will Award Scholarship

By:

[Alexandra Jardine](#)

Published: [June 11, 2013](#)

“Talking to creative agencies, we all agreed that radio has been put to one side and not given the level of creativity it warrants, given the importance it has,” said Bob Pittman, chairman-CEO at Clear Channel, parent company of Clear Channel Media and Entertainment, which houses more than 850 radio stations, and Clear Channel Outdoor.

To try to fight the trend, the company has formed a Creative Advisory Council with senior ad agency executives including Jeff Benjamin, CEO of [JWT](#) North America; Andrew Essex, vice chairman and CEO at [Droga5](#); Andrew Keller, partner and CEO at CP&B; and Benjamin Palmer, CEO and chief creative officer at [The Barbarian Group](#). The council's first project is a scholarship for a creative industry executive to attend the Berlin School starting next month and work toward an executive MBA.

Radio spending increased overall in 2012, and according to Zenith Optimedia, will increase again in 2013. But up-and-coming creative talent at agencies often gravitates toward TV or social and digital media according to Tim Castelli, president of national

sales, marketing and partnerships for Clear Channel Media and Entertainment. "We found the best people weren't working on it, or it was an afterthought."

Some advertisers have been more innovative with radio than others, Mr. Pittman said. Geico, for example, runs campaigns that closely reflect its TV advertising, he said. Others have successfully mixed radio with social media, he said, citing Macy's "iHeart Radio Rising Star" campaign with Clear Channel, now in its third year, in which listeners and Macy's shoppers vote for new musicians on Facebook and Twitter.

The Berlin School scholarship is meant to develop creative leadership in audio and in turn drive excitement among the creative community. Entries will be judged by Berlin School instructors and the Creativity Advisory Council.

The council plans to meet regularly throughout the year and to develop research and case studies around audio communications

On What Will You Shine Your Spotlight of Words?

A radio commercial begins, "I'm Ronald Watersdown, and I'm here to tell you about a very important opportunity that I'm sure you won't want to miss. It's an incredible chance for you to..."

What did those twenty-nine words make you see in your mind?

Not much, right? But what about these?

"Owl was neither wise nor old. She was a teenage assassin whose large, dark eyes said she was sleepy or depressed or bored. I was never really sure which."

You saw (1.) a momentary owl, then (2.) a young female assassin with half-shut eyes, then (3.) you considered the emotions she might be feeling and (4.) you wondered about the relationship between her and the narrator. All in just twenty-nine words.

Perhaps you're thinking, "Well, radio ads just can't be as interesting as the opening lines of novels."

But why is that, do you suppose? Why couldn't a radio ad begin with twenty-nine words about a teenage assassin?

"Owl was neither wise nor old. She was a teenage assassin whose large, dark eyes said she was sleepy or depressed or bored. I was never really sure which. But her sister Procrastination was even harder to read. Procrastination... the passive assassin of Opportunity. *Silently killing one day at a time...* Don't let Procrastination take what you love. Give yourself a new [name of item] today and feel on top of the world. Feel like you can fly. Feel like liquid Springtime. Procrastination says 'wait.' But what do *you* say?"

The absence of a real product disallowed the inclusion of specifics in that ad, so we can't be sure it would bring in customers, but it would definitely hold the attention of listeners with a much tighter grip than the limp, wet hand of Ronald Watersdown.

"A great big, bright red..."

English is a language built backwards. We speakers-of-English string together a list of modifiers before naming the thing we modify. I so doing, we require our listeners to commit to memory those modifiers so they can later be applied to the thing we name. I'm told the Romantic languages have solved this problem with a more efficient sentence structure: "A rose, bright red and big."

A good ad is a series of vivid mental images projected onto the movie screen of imagination. Here are a few tips for writing opening lines that will flash and crackle in the mind with the smell of burnt electricity:

- 1. Name** something easily seen.
- 2. Modify** it only after you have a named it.
- 3. Choose** verbs that carry context. I said "flash... crackle... burnt electricity," and you saw lightning even though I never used the word. You were engaged by the language, a willing participant in our co-creation of a vivid mental image.
- 4. Clarity first**, creativity last. A few paragraphs ago I wrote, "We speakers of English..." My original line was, "We speakers of this inverted tongue..." but I decided that was a little too clever. "Inverted tongue" is visual, yes, but it's also potentially confusing.

Creativity that blurs clarity is pretentious.

Creativity that sharpens clarity is genius.

Words carry energy. What will you light with them?

Isaac Newton discovered that impact is mass times acceleration. How big is the idea in your mind? How quickly can you transfer it?

5. Shorter is quicker, and quicker hits harder.

Always hit hard.

Agency creatives commit to making better radio. The Radio Mercury Awards get ad agency creative executives involved in radio for several months a year. What about the rest of the year? Clear Channel has formed what it's calling a Creative Advisory Council to bring a fresh look at audio and out-of-home advertising. Their objective is to "guide the development of innovative approaches" to advertising. And to consider the role radio and outdoor play in the larger marketing mix. One of the other tasks of the Council will be to select a winner of a new scholarship program for senior executives in the advertising creative industry. Clear Channel will pick up the \$70,000 tab to send them to the Berlin School's executive MBA in creative leadership program starting in March 2014. Sheridan Johns, director of the Berlin School, says the scholarship from Clear

Channel adds a new dimension to the mix of students in the global program. "With the rise of social media in recent years, people tend to forget the bedrock and ubiquity of radio on the media and advertising landscape," says Sheridan Johns, director of the Berlin School. By bringing in agency creative, he says they'll be able to share with the industry "exciting, fresh ideas" about audio communication.

What percentage is due to the creative?

- font size
- Print
- Email

This is a very big question, right? And the answer was provided by Ipsos about five years ago, it's 75% because of the creative and 25% of the media.

But what does this mean?

What does the question mean and what does the answer mean? Let's first establish that the answer cannot be right, the only right answer is the creative generates 100% of the effect. Don't believe me? Try doing a campaign while taking away the creative (for example leave the TV screen black for about 30 seconds). I can guarantee that you're brand effect will be zero. (Obviously don't cheat by leveraging this creative idea and the buzz it generates in other media, as obviously the effect that generates would still be attributable to the total creative idea.)

So why didn't Ipsos report 100% but 75%? Because the number represents the analysis of a large number of campaigns and the variance of recall the various campaigns achieve that cannot be explained by media alone. In my mind this means that Ipsos is answering another question, actually one that is much more useful and insightful. The answer represents the state of the industry with respect to the quality differences of creative executions it produces.

So by retrofitting a question belonging to the answer, the conclusion can only be that the state of the creative industry is pretty appalling. The difference between good and bad creative is enormous and we still produce creative so bad that any media buy is a total wastage. No creative is just as bad as the 30" black screen (otherwise Ipsos would have reported 100%) but 75% is still pretty close, some creative is just slightly better than the very cheap to produce 'void'.

Once we'll see consistent quality then the percentage will get smaller and the effect from one creative compared to the next will become more comparable. As the 75% is measured against recall as a proxy for effect I would expect the industry should perform better with this percentage moving to something closer to 25%. Wish Ipsos would have reported this annually so we would have known if there were improvements in the state of the creative industry.

Well, because I love these kind of topics, I would also like to look at the question from a different angle. Why would people ask to understand the effect of the creative vs the effect of the media (if not go gauge the status of the creative industry)? The reason is obvious, because some people are responsible for the creative and others are responsible (and accountable) for the media. But I don't believe you can split them. Creative and media are one package delivering one inseparable experience. I've compared trying to split the two with the question: "When you're having a fun day at the beach, what percentage of the fun is caused by the beach and what percentage by the sun?"

For people that care for the money advertisers spend, this is a very serious matter. I have believed for a long time and I still believe today that the single biggest gain advertisers can make is by combining creative and media into one holistic plan optimizing customer experience: choose the media (or touch point) and creative combination that delivers the right message at the right time. A simple idea but with huge impact on how we view, execute and optimize media planning. An idea that needs the commitment and determination from the brand owner for a proper implementation for its brands.

To end with the good news. Compared to just five years ago, the industry has made huge advances in this area and we've never been more ready to fully implement 'experience planning'. Ipsos, for example, has done great work that I truly respect with regards to creative effects (and testing creative), just google "Ipsos advertising creative" and I guarantee many insightful articles. I've seen media and creative agencies adopting a different way of working and companies like Pointlogic have invested heavily in its ability to cope with experience planning from an analytical and software point of view.

Thanks,

Peter

True ROI Accountability: Media or Creative?

- font size
- Print
- Email

One of the tensions in marketing these days is the fact that the creative execution has the biggest impact in the ROI of an advertising campaign but the money is spent in media. As business' follow the money, the question of accountability has fallen on those responsible for buying media.

I was thinking about this again after looking at a presentation from a competitor (yes, I do sometimes get competitors work on my desk) with sheet after sheet about the contribution of television, outdoor, print, etc. No mention at all of the contribution of the creative material. First let me be clear: I totally disagree with accountability looking at media in a silo. One needs to manage the creative and media simultaneously and look holistically at the successes and failures of marketing campaigns. It is never the media buy that is solely responsible for the failure of a marketing campaign.

Obviously, this is happening for a reason

It's much more difficult to take the creative into account and understanding norms for the effectiveness of media is certainly useful. However, the industry needs to push this step further. We've moved past looking at only reach and frequency, and we're creating accountability for media plans that show what is actually being delivered for the brands. The next step is to boldly put R&D budgets into understanding the

interaction between creative and media in a way that we can predict the effectiveness of campaigns considering creative and media as one and the same.

Peter Kloprogge, Co-Founder

Wednesday, 18 May 2011 20:12

Maximizing the Online Video Viewer & Advertiser Experience



Cortney Henseler

Director, Consumer Research
& Analytics
AOL

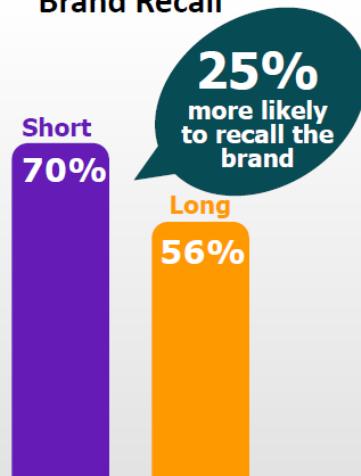


Joseph Blechman

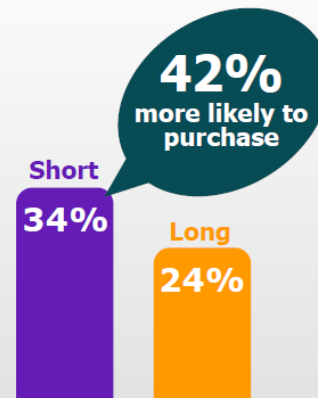
Senior Manager, Consumer
Research & Analytics
AOL

Ads in Short-Form Content Create Stronger Brand Recall and Purchase Intent

Brand Recall



Purchase Intent



All Differences are statistically significant at a 95% confident level

As a result,
people have
adopted
TV ad-
avoidance
behavior

"I'll go on
my phone
or do
something
else."

"When the
ads come on
I go onto my
other work."

"I usually
look away or
try to do
something
else."

I do recall seeing ads,
but I don't remember
which ones because I'll
go onto another
website while
they play."

ARF



Audio is now key in video ads!

"I think the ad should use more *audio* because I'm not always focusing on the video and if I can hear it and it's clever or something sticks in my head that could be more beneficial."
– Jared B

- Nearly all consumers talked about doing something else when any video ad comes on (be it on TV, or online)
- However, if the audio is engaging, they will turn their attention back to the ad
- Advertisers should consider re-focusing their creative efforts from more visually-focused creative, to adding more emphasis to audio

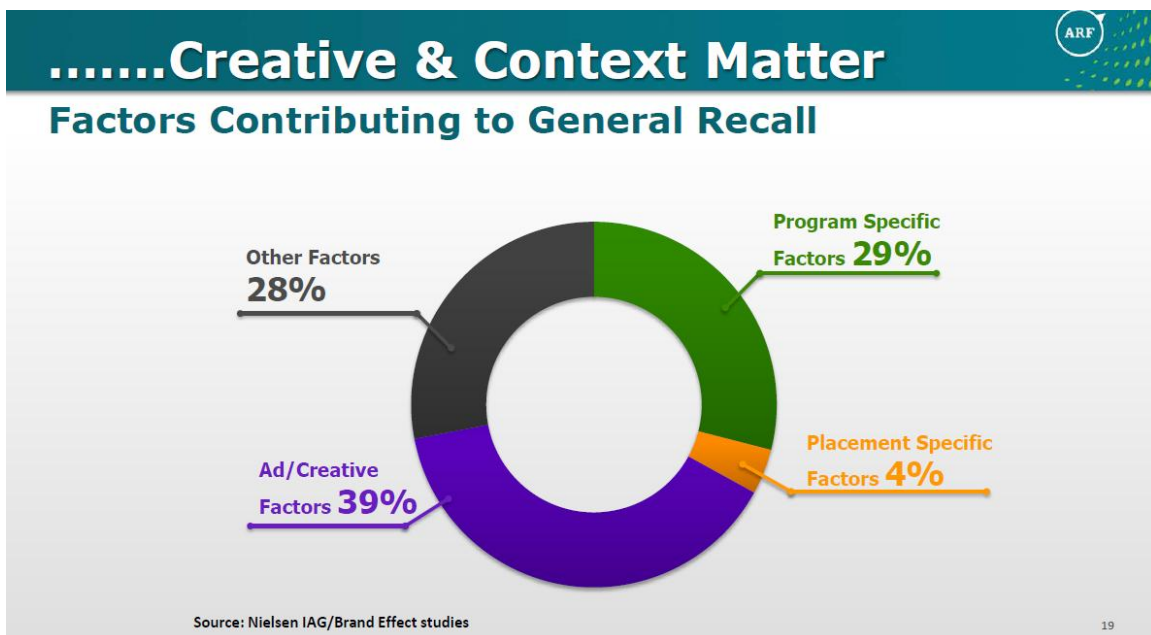
With Online Video, Advertisers get More with Less



- When it comes to brand metrics, ads in short form videos perform better
 - Ads in long form detract from the viewing experience and lead to consumer frustration
- In fact, the shorter the ad, the better, as 2 different :15sec pre-roll ads are the winning approach for all online video content, no matter the length
- Creatively, advertisers need to adjust how we think about "video" creative, as audio is now much more important and has a greater likelihood of garnering attention

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If You Think Short Copy Sells More, Think Again!

Ira Kalb, Marshall School of Business, USC | May 25, 2013, 5:54 PM | 3,178 | 6

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Much of the marketing that is done is based on conjecture with little application of knowledge or bona fide data. **Marketers, who never really learned marketing deeply enough, base their judgments on their opinions, which are too often shaped by misconceptions.**

One of the most common misconceptions is that people nowadays will not pay attention to ads or communications that have more than a minimal amount of ad copy. The reasons most commonly given to support this notion include people...

1. Do not like to read,
2. Have short attention spans,
3. Are in the habit of reading short messages in texts,
4. Are too distracted with multiple media channels,
5. Have their noses buried in mobile devices.

While these reasons are often true, the conclusion that short copy sells better is not.

Everything is relative

Good marketers know that only members of the target audience can decide what is “too long” and what is “too short.” When I saw the movie Titanic, it was over 3 hours long. I thought it was too long. [Teenage girls](#) thought it was too short and watched the movie [over and over again](#). [Leonardo DiCaprio](#) was not on the screen enough for them. If people are really interested in something, they want more. If they are not interested, they want less. You cannot have too much of a good thing, but any amount of a bad thing is too much. One of my favorite T-shirt’s of all time has a picture of Albert Einstein on it with a headline that reads, “Sit on a hot stove for a minute and it seems like an hour. Sit next to a pretty girl for an hour, and it seems like a minute. That’s relativity.”

Less can be more since we are busy or lazy

Of course, if the content creator can get the essential information into the consumer’s head with less copy, that is usually a good thing because it saves the consumer’s time – a clear benefit since most of us are either busy or lazy. However, it is nearly impossible to pick out who in the target audience wants more and who wants less. What is a good marketer to do? The answer is format the information into “bite-sized” pieces using sub-headlines and graphic elements. For those that want less, they can read the headline, look at the photo, perhaps read the subheads and then skip to where they can buy it. For those that want more, the longer body text can provide that too.

Yes, less can be more, but the way marketers should look at this is well-written long copy is usually a far more concise version of text that would otherwise be a lot longer. Most importantly, good marketers format it in a way to allow “busy or lazy” consumers to pick out the main benefits without reading, viewing, or listening to the entire content.

What marketing legends say

In his book [Ogilvy on Advertising](#), David Ogilvy says, “All my experience says that for a great many products, long copy sells more than short ... advertisements with long copy convey the impression that you have *something important* to say, whether people read the copy or not.”

Dr. Charles Edwards, former dean of the Graduate School of *Retailing at New York University* is quoted as saying, “[The more facts you tell, the more you sell](#). An advertisement's chance for success invariably increases as the number of pertinent merchandise facts included in the advertisement increases.”

In his book, *Tested Advertising Methods*, John Caples says, “Advertisers who can trace the direct sales results from their ads use long copy because it pulls better than short copy... Brief, reminder-style copy consisting of a few words or a slogan does not pull inquiries as well as long copy packed with facts and reader benefits about your product or service.”

There are many more quotes from many more experts, but in deference to my recent [post](#), I will stop here.

More recent proof from the fast-paced online world

I know what some of you are thinking. The people I quoted above are “old guys” that are long gone. What they said is no longer relevant in our fast paced, distracted, short-attention span world. While those “in the know” understand that the wisdom of these “old guys” is more powerful today than ever, I need to address this objection head on. The fact is that data shows that long copy typically sells better than short copy online too. [Marketing Experiments](#) did a series of tests for clients to show the effect of copy length on Website conversion rates. In all their [tests](#), the long copy outperformed the short copy by wide margins. Need more proof? On the [Conversion Rate Experts](#) Web site, they share how they were able to boost Crazy Egg's conversion rate by [363%](#). Can you guess how they did it? They made the home page 20 times longer!

Why longer copy typically outsells shorter copy

Even though it is counter-intuitive, why does longer copy typically outsell shorter copy? While the list of reasons could be very long, I will limit them to [seven](#). Longer copy enables the advertiser to...

1. Provide more benefits, which in turn, shows more people how the product or company can help them.
2. Show the product or company is more important since it has more capabilities.
3. Answer more questions and generate more sales since selling involves answering objections.
4. Target the customer better so those that respond are more likely to buy.
5. Give those that want more information the information they need so they will be more comfortable buying your product or doing business with your company.
6. Give those that are “busy or lazy” and don't want to read a lot the ability to skim the important points without requiring them to read, listen to, or watch it all. This requires good formatting.
7. Provide more keyword-rich copy to boost organic search engine results.

Hopefully, this post will help you convince the skeptical throngs who still believe that shorter copy sells better. Since it is a counter-intuitive notion, you need proof to support you.

Ad Strategy vs. Ad Writing

Ad strategy is more difficult to teach than ad writing.

Ad writing, essentially, is to choose:

1. an intriguing angle of approach into the subject matter and
2. the sharpest words and phrases to make your point.

Ad strategy, essentially, is to choose:

1. the point you need to make.

Bad strategy happens when you:

1. listen to an advertiser's wishful thinking and then
2. assume that a radio schedule that
3. delivers great frequency and
4. reaches the perfect audience
5. with really good copy will
6. make that advertiser's dream come true.

If you've been selling radio long enough, you already know that a client's wishful thinking is a lever that will help you sell that client a radio schedule, but it takes a lot more than wishful thinking to motivate the client's customer.

CLIENT: "I wish I could sell these items."

ACCOUNT EXEC: "Let me help you."

CLIENT: "How can you help me?"

ACCOUNT EXEC: "We have a loyal audience." (Insert success story here.)

"Advertising is an investment in your future." (Insert schedule and contract here.) "Now tell me exactly what makes these items different and special and better than the ones your competitor sells." (You start taking notes like crazy. The client is animated. Sincere. Hopeful. Excited.)

You return to the station with a contract and a run order. Now all you need is great copy, right?

Let me pause here to say that it's not my goal to discourage you. My goal is only to open your eyes. I want you to see the problem clearly so that you no longer walk into a trap from which there is no escape. We will now continue.

You work really hard and write a great piece of copy. Excellent copy. Miraculous copy. World-class copy. The greatest copy that has ever been written. Your co-workers love the ad. The client loves the ad. High-fives all around and champagne for everyone.

The schedule runs. The ad airs. Everyone is commenting on it. Very little of the product is sold. Beyond generating those comments, the ad has minimal impact on the business.

What the hell?

Your copy, indeed, was fabulous. You employed an excellent angle of approach, held the listeners' attention and made your point in a clever way. Well done! But your fundamental strategy was flawed; **your ad answered a question that no one was asking.**

You walked into the trap when you failed to question why the client was overstocked on the item he wanted you to advertise. The real problem is that no one wants the item. *It's a loser, a dog, a mistake.* Your client assumed - and you assumed with him - that if people "only knew and understood," then they'd rush in to buy the product. So you told the people, you made them understand. And they still didn't want the product.

Advertising will only accelerate what was going to happen anyway.

Convince your client to let you offer the public what the public already wants. This is what drives traffic into a store. And many of those people will find other things to buy from your client. In other words, fish with bait that you know the fish love. Don't try to convince the fish to swallow bait they don't really like.

The inexperienced account executive allows the patient to diagnose his own disease then prescribes treatment under the mistaken illusion that the patient's self-diagnosis can be trusted. If medical doctors did this they would go to jail.

The treatment - the copy and the schedule - is the easy part. The diagnosis - the strategy - is the tricky part. A quick glance at the symptoms does not prescribe the cure. Identical symptoms can arise from many different causes. Most account executives are bad diagnosticians because the successful diagnostician must be cold, objective, and suspicious. Not a good way to sell, right?

The successful diagnostician knows the truth of a statement is not determined by the sincerity of the speaker. In other words, a deeply sincere, passionate client can easily be wrong in their assumptions.

If you allow your client to frame the fundamental strategy and choose the principal point your ad will make, you are at the mercy of your patient's self-diagnosis. You and your station will be blamed when that patient fails to recover.

The solution is simple. You must separate the selling of the schedule from the creation of the strategy. Selling requires you to be warm, receptive and empathetic. Strategy requires you to be cold, objective, and suspicious of the client's self-diagnosis.

Ask yourself this question: "Are customers not coming because they don't know about this client, or are customers not coming because they do know?"

Diagnose the real problem. Offer the client's customers what you know for certain they want. I'm not pretending this is easy.

Are you beginning to understand why it takes years to become a doctor? But stick with it. Don't give up. Have courage.

An ANOVA (analysis of variance) function was used to predict the AdImpact scores. The contribution of commercial copy to variance was more than 10 times larger than the contribution of program genre (23.2 percent versus 1.9 percent). These were the two significant elements in the ANOVA (both with a Pr(F) well below 0.0000). Thus, the contribution of copy to the effectiveness of advertising is substantial and by far the largest driver of effectiveness

Apollo: Our initial perspective is that creative continues to be the biggest source of variation in advertising response, but program effects are also very sizeable

- **An Afterthought**
- A recent **creative advertising** roundtable, co-sponsored by the RAB and the **VCU Brandcenter** produced some revealing - if not depressing - takeaways about why radio is positioned as a second-class citizen in the media world. You can watch the video to hear these creative types discuss their views on developing campaigns for radio, but **the accompanying Ad Age article** reveals so much more.
- First and foremost, radio's position in the advertising world feels like it's somewhere between **Valpak coupons** and **sandwich boards**. Described as "an afterthought," radio at the agency level is often overlooked in a digitally dominated world. And other "old

media" - like television, newspapers, and magazines - while severely challenged, are still in a more respected position in the minds of these advertising mavens.

- This roundtable is a valuable object lesson that strongly suggests that even when advertising returns to some level of spending normalcy, radio is going to get an even shorter end of **an already shrinking stick**. **As one of the participants noted, "Agencies are not desperately seeking ways to recommend radio right now."** So along with radio's other problems, **the medium's positioning with the ad community leaves a great deal to be desired.**
- Here are some of my key takeaways from this session, and as always, **I'd love to get your read on this dilemma:**
- The quality of radio advertising sucks. **Crispin's Bill Wright notes that "Even when you do a good radio spot, it's still the best-looking house in a bad neighborhood."** Ouch. But of course, it's true. On the local level, there is (at best) one poor guy cranking out spots for an entire cluster. Yes, in the good old days, just about every station had a production director who created campaigns, spec spots, and actually worked with local agencies to **make spots better**. By slashing and burning expenses in this crucial area, radio has sent an indelible message to advertisers that it simply doesn't matter what commercials sound like, and that most stations just don't care about the quality of commercials. We just want to get the buy.
- When you watch a show on TiVo, I'll bet there are many moments when a commercial catches your eye. I typically stop speeding through stopsets to watch the new Apple "**Mac vs. PC**" spot, or to catch a new movie trailer, or to see what the new Pepsi commercial is all about. **On radio, you never laugh at a commercial, talk about a spot with someone else, or even happily notice a great branding effort.** **Radio spots are usually annoying, and we've taught listeners that they are to be avoided.** Guess what? Advertisers have gotten the message.

- Radio sounds the same. In this blog, we have discussed the notion that radio seems to be hermetically sealed in the '70s. DJs aren't much different, music formats are little changed, we're still taking the 9th caller, and "Twofer Tuesday" is a fixture. Radio commercials are the same, too, from obnoxious car dealers to droll jewelers to screaming mattress salesmen.
- Here's a quote from the video that stood out: "I played a radio spot that was from the '60s - it sounded like it could've been...made yesterday... That's part of the problem... the medium sounds the same."
- As media and **cool new gadgets** have been invented, or have evolved and morphed, radio - in the mind of advertisers - is about boomboxes, **goofy stunts**, and repetitive music.
- A number of years ago, Paul and I found ourselves in a high-powered **New York ad agency**, pitching an Internet concept that we were proposing could be powered by **key morning shows** in target markets. We saw radio as a way to drive eyeballs to our web project, and the meeting was going well until one of the agency principals blurted out, "Morning radio - isn't that where DJs run around with underwear on their heads?"
- **Dynamic Logic: -Because you often only have a moment to influence a viewer, each frame of an ad should be able to stand on its own--each frame should work to drive brand awareness and communicate the benefits or differences and provide reasons to purchase a product or service.**
- **-"Reveal" ads, in which a brand or product is not shown initially, are almost always ineffective: This is seen across all industries as a key component that differentiates best and worst campaign performers.** A few exceptions to this rule: video ads, which are much more likely to succeed in this format but are still risky, as well as ads with high entertainment or comedic value.

- **-Keep messaging very simple: No more than two messages should be conveyed in an online campaign. Copy-cluttered ads were especially prevalent in the financial services, consumer electronics and pharmaceutical categories. (Pharma ads work better when legal information is presented in formats that let users roll over or scroll down ads.)**
- **“It’s a luxury to have sound only.” Tony Mennuto and Gregg Singer are on a mission to make radio sound better one commercial at a time. Their New York radio production company Radio Face is working with advertisers and agencies, and increasingly with radio groups themselves on developing better spots. Mennuto thinks the time’s come to break the traditional “rhythm” of radio commercials which have become too cluttered with details that couldn’t be squeezed into a TV ad. Consider a one-minute commercial recently produced for a car wash chain. They used the sound effect of a finger rubbing over a squeaky-clean car for nearly half the ad with no voiceover. “If you’re driving and you hear this comedic squeak go on for that long you’re going to pay attention — that’s what we’re about,” Mennuto says. He rejects the idea that shorter-length spots mean less creativity. “You can’t blame the medium. You change your creative and embrace it,” Mennuto says as he and Singer break into a string of ten-second ad ideas they’re contemplating for clients. “Stations are being more open to new forms of media buying. We can do a five second commercial now that will have the same effect of driving past a billboard at 80mph,” Mennuto says. On the flipside, he notes Radio Face was behind a popular two-minute champagne ad that aired on urban radio a few years ago. Television networks are one of Radio Face’s biggest sources of work. Comedy Central director of advertising Katie Zimmerman is among their clients, explaining a radio ad requires more skill than what many will admit. “You have to rework the spot; look at the language,” she says. Singer thinks too often radio ads fall flat because the product is put into a creative mold. He says, “The agencies are form-fitting products into radio spots that are being done all the time. It’s the stuff that’s cluttering the airwaves.”**

With a team of copywriters that includes “Saturday Night Live” veterans, Singer and Mennuto agree humor is one of radio’s biggest creative tools. “Funny or informative is the key,” Mennuto says. “But too many brand managers think the most interesting thing is their apple juice has 50% less sugar than the next competing brand.”

- Think about the best books you have ever read, or the best speeches you have ever heard. **What did they have in common? In all likelihood, they were presented to you by great storytellers.**
- And what separates bad books from good or boring speeches from the enthralling also sets the best companies apart from the rest. **The greatest of companies are also great storytellers. Tom’s Shoes has gained notoriety** for donating a pair of shoes for every one purchased. As the company’s CEO notes, “People don’t just wear our shoes, they tell our story.”
- **Storytelling is as old as language itself.**
- Before written history, it was storytelling that allowed humans to pass down knowledge and information in a way that could be easily remembered and passed on again and again. Not only are stories the best way to remember and relay, they represent something imperative to human interaction—connection.
- Just about any CEO would tell you that connection with their customers is crucial to the company’s success. Yet most business leaders focus little on storytelling, instead spending their time delving into mounds of marketing data and the latest sales techniques to find the next best solution to selling their product. **They rarely pause to look within, find their story, and tell it.**
- But when they do, profound things can happen. When two motivational speakers compiled a list of stories in 1993, little did they know that they were about to publish the start of one of the bestselling book series of all time, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. And as the co-authors themselves admit, “What drove initial interest was not media attention or celebrity endorsement, but rather word-of-mouth promotion from ordinary people around the country who bought the book and loved it.”
- As of today, more than 112 million copies of the books have been purchased in the U.S. and Canada alone, and nine out of 10 people not only recognize the brand, but *understand* it. That’s the power of storytelling.

- **Even if storytelling does not make your brand one of the most recognizable in the world, it will undoubtedly help you advance your mission and sell your product.**
- Take my company for example. A nonprofit organization focused on promoting free market public policy solutions in Tennessee, we once emulated the “think tank model” of churning out 50-page white papers, hoping someone would read and take note. Few did.
- Over the course of time, however, we became effective at achieving real public policy victories in our state. But it wasn’t because somebody finally took note. It was because we changed from within.
- We continued to conduct top-notch research, but we didn’t just use that research to sell our ideas and policy solutions to the public and policymakers. Instead, we found real people with real stories...and we told them. We told the story of the farmer whose family, due to Tennessee’s death tax, would lose the farm he had spent decades building. We told the story of the doctor who had stopped delivering babies out of fear of lawsuits. We told the story of the food truck vendor who faced being shut down by crippling regulations proposed by competing brick and mortar restaurants.
- These stories allowed us to take sometimes-obscure public policy debates and make them matter to everyday citizens. They helped lead to a repeal of Tennessee’s death tax, the enactment of tort reform, and a compromise on regulations that allowed Nashville’s food truck entrepreneurs to stay in business.
- It was these stories, not our white papers and studies, that changed hearts and minds. When someone hears a story and says to herself “that could be me,” you have made your connection. You have won the story war.
- Whatever your idea, solution, service, or product, you can sell it better than ever through storytelling. Storytelling allows you to make a connection with your customers that is far deeper than any television ad or sales pitch. And not only will that newfound connection keep customers coming back to you time and again, they will take your story and tell it to others, just like our storyteller ancestors passed on information for generations.
- Whether your business is a startup, a large for-profit company, or even a nonprofit, your greatest opportunity for success comes in winning that story war. Who knows, one day nine out of 10 people may not only recognize—but understand—your product.
- *Justin Owen is president & CEO of the Beacon Center of Tennessee. Its mission is to change lives through public policy by advancing the principles of free markets, individual liberty, and limited government.*

Free from the constriction of visuals

Tugging at the heartstrings: an eternal tactic of marketers of everything from coffee and peanut butter to long-distance phone services and those charities for abused and neglected animals.

But a pickup truck?

A tender spot for the tough Ram, "Farmer" turned out to be one of the most popular ads in all of Super Bowl XLVII—though flashy it wasn't. The creative, via The Richards Group, was a simple, two-minute slideshow featuring dramatic stills of American farmers set to the thunderous intonation of the late radio personality Paul Harvey. At the end, the screen fades to black before we're shown the truck's logo and the tagline, "Guts. Glory. Ram." No music, no humor, no action—just good old-fashioned sentimentality.

Again, it's a strategy that's as old as advertising itself, and one lately employed to great success by marketers as diverse as Subaru (a dad reluctantly puts his little girl on the bus on her first day of school), TD Ameritrade (everyday people live out their dreams not having to worry about their retirement), the Anti-Defamation League (which, to the soundtrack of John Lennon's "Imagine," envisions what the world would have been like had Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Anne Frank and Harvey Milk not been taken away from us) and Southwest Airlines (whose earnest, inspiring new spots stand in stark contrast to the carrier's usual fun-loving brand persona).

Brands that once turned to yuks to sell product are in many cases focusing on inspiring consumers, relating to them on an emotional level and vying for their affections. And as with any good love story, authenticity and honesty are among the most prized traits.

Much has been written about what's driving such brands' embrace of sentimentality now. The Great Recession? Consumers grown weary of financial instability, terrorism, ineffectual governance and the plight of the bees? The desire, in a wireless, social media-centric world, to form real connections over fleeting, superficial ones? Not that it means brands are done with laughs—consider the buzziest ad of the moment, Kmart's

sidesplitting "Ship My Pants," viewed more than 10 million times since being posted on YouTube April 10.

Still, marketers—again, often those not exactly known for their earnestness—are trying it on for size, as consumers signal they're very much drawn to ads that reflect realism and relatability but thankfully are free of schmaltz.

Take the Southwest campaign, TBWAChiatDay's first brand-image work since winning the assignment last year. The first in a series of spots that broke last month not only feels uncharacteristically "big" for an airline that has always emphasized personality and playfulness, but it is also as down-to-earth a positioning as the carrier has ever embraced.

In the spot, that bigness comes in the form of a series of trailing shots of a pilot, a basketball player, a ballerina and a corporate executive, each about to enter his or her given "arena"—be it a court, dance floor or boardroom. But just as you think, "Oh man, here comes another over-the-top paean to an industry rife with problems," the imagery softens to include a surfer, a farmer and a baby taking his first steps. The music also lightens the message, with the singsong chorus of band fun.'s "Some Nights" driving the action.

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Aside from Ram, another memorable Super Bowl spot that aimed for the heart came from Anheuser-Busch, which has become famous for its touchy-feely image ads in the big game. This year's entry, "Brotherhood," from Anomaly, did not disappoint, exploring the touching bond between a Clydesdale foal and its trainer—and topping both USA Today's Ad Meter and Ace Metrix Super Bowl rankings.

"Brotherhood" is certainly not emblematic of the kind of creative that has scored for the brewer in years past. Compare it to the A-B spot that ruled the Ad Meter back in 2000, one in which a dog called Rex dreams of chasing after a Budweiser truck, only to comically slam into the side of a

parked van. (Don't worry, it doesn't actually show impact.) In subsequent years, the marketer would continue to rely on a recipe of slapstick, celebrity and sex: Cedric the Entertainer ruining a hot date with an exploding can of Bud Light, for example, or a guy lured into the bedroom by his girlfriend who proceeds to skid straight out the window on slippery satin sheets.

And Ram and A-B were far from the only advertisers taking the sentimental journey on advertising's biggest day. Another atypically low-key yet impactful spot in the game was Jeep's "Whole Again," from GlobalHue. Narrated by earth mother of us all Oprah Winfrey and centered around the theme of veterans returning home to their families, the ad is one of the standout tear-jerkers in recent memory.

"Ten years ago, brands just sold stuff," notes Scott Goodson, founder of StrawberryFrog. "Now they're like your friend."

"You can't express yourself in a false way now because you'll be found out," adds Guy Barnett, founder and creative director of the agency Brooklyn Brothers. "It's transformed how brands behave."

Some of the most impactful campaigns go beyond mere sentimentality to rally consumers around a mission. Take the Ram ad, whose imagery of those who work the land was no mere trope. As part of the campaign, the brand declared 2013 the "Year of the Farmer," partnering with the national Future Farmers of America with the aim of "highlighting and underscoring the importance of farmers in America."

Then there's the struggle of getting physically fit—perhaps the universal mission. In Nike's "Find Your Greatness" campaign, which broke during last summer's London Olympics, Nathan Sorrell, a 200-pound 12-year-old from London, Ohio, is seen lumbering down a rural road stretched out before a dusky sky. The voiceover intones, "Greatness is something no more unique to us than breathing. We're all capable of it. All of us." The ad featured everyday people from towns and cities across the globe called London, accomplishing their own, modest victories—a far cry from the worked-out bodies and pro athletes who have dominated much of the brand's creative.

Again, it was a message that proved inspiring for consumers. One commented on YouTube that the ad motivated him to "get off my butt and lose 50 pounds."

"These things are all about tapping into something larger," says Andy Pearson, interactive associate creative director at Crispin Porter + Bogusky. "It's really just about looking for a cultural moment and capitalizing."

"It's no longer about making something up and pushing it out—it's about finding something on the rise and aligning with it," observes StrawberryFrog's Goodson, who chronicles the rise of movement-based marketing in his 2012 book *Uprising: How to Build a Brand—and Change the World—By Sparking Cultural Movements*. Today, Goodson says, consumers are "truth junkies," looking not just to figure out which products to buy but also for ways to use their purchasing power to make connections and become part of cultural movements. "They're looking for real brands that have real impact on their daily lives," he says.

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Published: April 24, 2013 at 7:15 AM PDT

As has been noted here and elsewhere, the Great Recession is widely seen as fueling the trend. At a time when many consumers faced unprecedented financial difficulties, images that mirrored real life and messages that spoke to real-life issues were what hit home. Inspiration trumped aspiration, reality beat out fantasy. As economist and Nobel laureate Joseph E. Stiglitz put it in a New York Times opinion piece, "The gap between aspiration and reality could hardly be wider."

All that is not to say an ad cannot be humorous at the same time it is inspirational. In Taco Bell's "Viva Young," which was the most rewatched Super Bowl ad on TiVo this year, a group of mischief-making, partying-hardy grandmas and grandpas sneak out of the retirement home for a night of debauchery to another tune from fun., "We Are Young." The ad, from Deutsch LA, was funny to be sure, but also spoke to simple human truths. "It was just an example of living life with a little bit of excitement," says Jeffrey Blish, partner and chief strategic officer at the agency. The spot, he explains, was meant to present something that was "interesting and different" but also "within the realm of possibility."

Consumers reacted to the humor (drunk and heavily made-up old folks carousing) and related to the sentiment (not only the pretty and young

have fun). Not surprisingly, the ad went viral, racking up some 3 million views on YouTube and 200,000 shares on Facebook and Twitter. It stands to reason that as ads aiming for the heart resonate, marketers are finding that superficial messages can often fall flat. During the Super Bowl, the spots that performed most poorly in the Ace Metrix poll were for Calvin Klein underwear and the Web-domain giant GoDaddy—two executions that were the polar opposite of sentimental and the quintessence of that other standby of advertising: fantasy. GoDaddy gave us an eyeful with a never-gonna-happen make-out session between an über-geek and smokin' hot babe—and resonate with consumers, you may recall, it did not. ("The No. 1 word people used to describe that ad was 'gross,'" says Ace Metrix CEO Peter Daboll.) Meanwhile, the Calvin Klein ad—30 seconds of a fresh-off-the-mannequin-assembly-line male model, rippling in all his sunbaked glory—was simply unrelatable to viewers. (Said one respondent in the Ace Metrix poll: "Tired of ads featuring bodies that consumers just don't have.") "It wasn't really relevant for men, and it wasn't really relevant for women," says Daboll. "So who was it [relevant] to?" Looks like certain advertising creatives could use some inspiration of their own.

Bad Ads Hampering Sex Lives

by [Tanya Irwin](#), 8 hours ago

Eighty-seven percent of Americans are fed up with bad ads. So much so that 19% say bad ads are even getting in the way of them having sex, according to a Harris Survey.

The 2013 Bad Ads Survey, to be unveiled Thursday by InsightsOne, was developed to see how Americans react to the best -- as well as the most annoying -- ads.

It found that Americans will ignore a company completely if it sends too many bad ads: 23% after just one ad and 43% after as many as two.

Eighty-three percent say bad ads actually get in the way of their activities: Web surfing (51%), online shopping (37%), working (20%), having sex (19%) and sleeping (13%).

“While the results of the study may seem amusing, they point to a real concern in American life,” says Waqar Hasan, CEO of InsightsOne, in a release. “People are fed up with seeing ads and other communications that aren’t relevant to them as individuals.”

The survey also found the types of ads Americans find most annoying are pop-up ads (70%), lottery scams (70%), male enhancement ads (66%), emails from deceased African leaders who have left them money (64%), ads for products and services they do not need (58%) and female enhancement ads (54%).

Over 2,100 adults ages 18 and older were surveyed Feb. 27 to March 1. The study was aimed at determining American attitudes and behavior around the ads they see every day.

The results may create challenges for ecommerce companies that advertise and sell over the Web. In fact, 88% of Americans say they have even been “flooded” with online ad spam, and 91% of those say they take action when it occurs.

Thirty-six percent of those who have ever been flooded with online ad spam say they would leave a Web site because of too many irrelevant ads, and many more would begin to feel that the company doing the advertising doesn’t respect their time (26%). For email, 60% will unsubscribe from future messages, but a surprising 45% will simply ignore future communications.

Men were statistically more likely than women to take certain actions, which include stop using the product (17% vs. 11%), completely boycott the company doing the advertising (16% vs. 10%), respond angrily (7% vs. 3%), hit their computer or mobile device in frustration (5% vs. 3%) and especially feel the company doesn’t respect their time (30% vs. 22%).

Women were more likely than men to be annoyed at both male and also female enhancements ads (71% vs. 61% and 63% vs. 44%, respectively).

“The American people are tired of companies that appear to not respect or understand their needs,” says Hasan. “The results of the study show that consumers have a real limit on what they’re willing to put up with, and this very real problem will have a negative impact on a company’s income statement if they don’t do something about it.”

The Myth of Marketing: How Research Reaches For The Heart But Only Connects With The Head

By: Douglas Van Praet

Douglas Van Praet discusses the importance of emotion in decision making (and everything else) and how his agency’s blockbuster “The Force” may not have made it through the traditional research process.

Marketers are supposed to be the experts on connecting emotionally with customers. But ironically, their current market research practices make it almost impossible to do so.

Despite lip service paid to emotions, businesses routinely make multimillion-dollar marketing decisions on the false premise that respondents in survey research can consciously explain the unconscious origins of their actions. They fail to recognize that most of the business of life happens through our emotions, below the threshold of awareness.

As the neuroanatomist Jill Bolte Taylor puts it, “We live in a world where we are taught from the start that we are thinking creatures that feel. The truth is, we are feeling creatures that think.”

The word “motivation” and “emotion” share the same Latin root, “movere,” which means to move. Emotions are automated actions. They evolved not for our amusement but as purposeful behavioral responses to ensure survival. The challenge for marketers is that they originate without our knowing. We don’t consciously choose our feelings. They often choose for us.

For too long, standard marketing theory has had it backwards. The most startling truth is we don’t even think our way to logical solutions. We feel our way to reason. Emotions are the substrate, the base layer of neural circuitry underpinning even rational deliberation. Emotions don’t hinder decisions. They constitute the foundation on which they’re made!

Neurologist Antonio Damasio observed this phenomenon through the peculiar behavior of one of his patients. Elliot had suffered brain damage to a part of the brain known as the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, which is implicated in the risk and benefit analysis of decision making.

Elliot ostensibly seemed normal, with one glaring exception. He lacked the ability to make decisions, deliberating endlessly in the face of simple, mundane choices such as whether or not to use a black or blue pen or when to schedule his next appointment. Because brain damage had severed the connection between his emotions and his rational thinking, Elliot was strangely devoid of feeling and even emotionally numb to his own tragic inability to make decisions.

When we ask respondents in traditional copy, tracking, and concept tests to report their emotional motivation to buy brands, we are asking their chatty, limited, linear mind to interpret the responses of their immensely more powerful, holistic, creative mind. Cognitive science experiments have shown that our left brain rationalizes stories in attempt to organize and categorize the sensory experiences of the right brain. As Taylor explains, “My left brain is doing the best job it can with the information it has to work with. I need to remember, however, that there are enormous gaps between what I know and what I think I know.”

The left brain speaks in words and numbers, and the right brain communicates in feelings and images. So asking someone to reduce their emotions to numerical ratings and explain the causes of their feelings in verbal accounts is like asking someone who only knows English to interpret Mandarin. Describing joy or sorrow as an arithmetic mean is like describing a van Gogh painting as a binomial coefficient.

Emotions, not words, are the innate universal language of humans and the primary means by which we learn new behaviors. We learn best kinesthetically, through feeling not thinking, which is why “a picture is worth a thousand words” and “talk is cheap.”

The left brain creates an intellectual understanding of “self” and a sense of separation from others. Our right brain creates a feeling of “we,” that wonderful sense of connection with one another and the ineffable awe of living in the moment--the essences of better lives and great brands.

We need to generate smiles, tears, or goose bumps--not significant differences correlated at the 95% confidence interval! These are the things that these data tabulations will never capture, but they are also the things that make us buy brands.

I have created a 7-step process on how to inspire ourselves so that we can inspire customers. These are the seven steps:

- 1) Interrupt the Pattern
- 2) Create Comfort
- 3) Lead the Imagination [\[Link to previous article\]](#)
- 4) Shift the Feeling
- 5) Satisfy the Critical Mind
- 6) Change the Associations
- 7) Take Action

Step 4 is: Shift the Feeling. If you want to generate action, you have to generate emotion.

Take for instance a commercial we created for Volkswagen for the Super Bowl. Traditional ad testing indicated that the spot generated a below-average persuasion score--the measure of stated purchase intent that has achieved exalted status in the industry despite its weak correlation to actual sales.

That ad was the story of a miniature Darth Vader who comes to believe in the power of The Force when his dad uses the remote-start feature of a Volkswagen. And it might never have run if we only relied on these tests and measures.

March 21, 2013 at 5:02 pm

by Eliot Van Buskirk

Besides hard work, **there are usually four key elements in a great ad**: a disruptive and relevant visual, strong brand identification, a brilliant headline, and “*something else*”. The something else is a variable. In the cases I mentioned above the variable is curiosity. “*What’s going on here? It looks interesting.*”

This Blender Ad May Drive More Actual Sales Than Every Super Bowl Commercial Running This Year

George Parker, AdScam | Jan. 23, 2013, 6:22 PM | 2,651 | 2

Let’s begin with a little story.

A couple of years ago I was at a conference where GE and their agency, BBDO, made a presentation of their new “Imagination” campaign.

After showing some nice TV spots and explaining that they’d spent \$300 million on media over the last year, they proudly declared that brand awareness had increased substantially.

This generated polite applause.

Next up was the Marketing Director of blender manufacturer Blendtec who proceeded to blend a brick, some ball bearings, an 8 ft garden rake and finally a Blackberry donated by a member of the audience (which had to be a plant, right?)

He then put up a single slide showing that every time they posted a self-produced, ten dollar video on YouTube in their long-running “Will It Blend” campaign (which to-date has had more than 220 million views,) sales went up by an accurately measurable percentage.

Understandably, the crowd went nuts.

The point being, GE spent hundreds of millions and couldn’t quantify with any certainty what they had achieved for all that money. Blendtec spent pennies and achieved consistently significant and measurable results.

In two weeks many companies will be paying close to \$4 million a pop for thirty seconds of air time on the Super Bowl. They and their ad agencies will pronounce that this is money well spent, but there will be little data to substantiate this.

A recent study of CMO’s demonstrates that the majority don’t establish their budgets according to ROI targets. It also showed that the four major “brand valuation” companies put GE’s brand value in a wildly variable range, with two having it rising, and two having it falling in exactly the same period. And these are the experts.

As one of the authors of the study put it... “That more than a fifth of marketers use brand awareness as their primary metric is disturbing, since it could be good or bad. After all, TWA had terrifically good brand awareness just before they went out of business.”

And the current obsession with social media hasn’t helped the situation, in fact in some ways, it has exacerbated it. There’s lots of talk about engagement metrics, re-tweets on Twitter, Likes on Facebook and clicks on everything else, but this is rarely correlated to sales.

For while the audience for digital is easier to measure because there’s a ton of data attached to it, the question rarely asked is, what is it that’s being measured? It certainly isn’t the ROI. As I mentioned earlier, this is primarily the fault of the CMO who is using the wrong components to build his/her marketing plans, but it’s also the fault of their agency, which is merrily going along with the latest flavor du jour the client may have read about in the Harvard Business Review, or Wired, or heard about on the golf course.

The agency goes along with it to show they are up to speed with the latest and greatest, but also because it will provide them with a bit more sustenance from the increasingly shrinking fees clients are paying their agencies these days.

And there, we have the suppurating nub of the problem.

Clients now see their advertising agencies in the same light as vendors who supply janitorial supplies or delivery services. They have become purveyors of a commodity product, and they have helped dig this hole for themselves. Over the years, I have seen many arguments expounding on how advertising agencies should be fairly compensated for their services.

Most were written by ad agencies, so, per force, smacked of the expected smoke-and-mirrors-brand-building rubbish I talked about at the beginning of this rant. But then recently, I came across a white paper from the Blamer Partnership, a consultancy dealing with client/agency relationships, with particular emphasis on compensation issues, which spells out a kind of AAAA (not AA) seven step approach to how clients may get a better ROI from their agencies, whilst their agencies may be fairly recompensed for their efforts.

This is a long overdue, urgent discussion that with the increasingly frenetic obsession with new media, social networking and big data, needs to be addressed in order to achieve, as the Blamer Partnership describes it, a purposeful relationship between clients and their agencies that is accountable, measurable and honest. Good luck with that. We've certainly been waiting long enough.

George Parker has spent 40 years on Madison Avenue. He's won Lions, CLIOs, EFFIES, and the David Ogilvy Award. His blog is adscam.typepad.com, which is required reading for those looking for a gnarly view of the world's second oldest profession." His latest book, "Confessions of a Mad Man," makes the TV show "Mad Men" look like "Sesame Street."

CBS Interactive CTO Peter Yared contributed to this report. August 22, 2012

With 38 ads on average airing per minute across national TV*, breaking through the clutter is essential. According to a recent analysis from Nielsen, there are five common characteristics of TV ads that resonate with consumers.

The top-five characteristics for ads that scored highly on "breakthrough," an ad's memorability, per consumers, are:

- Audience-Appropriate Humor – Tickling America's funny bone is a proven winning tactic for making an ad memorable.
- Relatable Characters & Situations – Audiences will connect with personalities and scenarios with whom they can identify.
- Simple & Upbeat Storyline – Ads should do more than convey information– they should tell a story.
- Character Dialogue to Tell a Story – Changing a message from simple prose to a conversation will give the story life.
- Build an Emotional Connection – The brain identifies an emotional experience as important enough to remember, which in turn resonates with the audience.

"The ability to create a true winning commercial is an undeniable art form, but there's science behind it too," said Joe Stagaman, EVP, Advertising Effectiveness Analytics for Nielsen. "Recent Nielsen research has found that nothing helps consumers feel connected to an ad like a good laugh, tugging at the heart strings or connecting with them on a personal level."

Methodology

As the leading provider of in-depth analysis and advertising effectiveness insights, Nielsen provides comprehensive insight into a commercial's ability to achieve breakthrough and attitudinal metrics. Breakthrough reflects how memorable an ad was, and is available through Nielsen TV Brand Effect, which measures the impact of commercials by surveying viewers exposed to the ad on TV.

**Ad units calculated based on Monitor-Plus' universe of national television distributors (Broadcast,*

And, Nielsen conducted an in-depth custom research study of advertising effectiveness of ads before, during and after the "Great Recession" to find out how advertisers reach and resonate with an increasingly diverse, demanding and connected audience.

The findings of the study to determine to what extent, if any, has the tumultuous economic climate and subsequent attitude shifts impacted consumer responsiveness to various creative tactics are summarized in the report as:

- Humorous ads have consistently resonated best with viewers, regardless of the economy or year
- During the recession, there was a notable lift in effectiveness of sentimental and value-oriented ads
- Ads focused on product features and promotion/price do not resonate with viewers even during tough economic times
- The performance of narrative and sentimental ads has improved since 2006

Resonating Ad Genres

Ad Type	Appeal Index (100=Average)		
	PreRecession	DuringRecession	AfterRecession
Funny	147	133	133
Sentimental	88	107	107
Price/promotional	71	73	60

Source: Nielsen, June 2012; (e.g. Funny ads were 47% more appealing to consumers than the average pre-recession ad, and 33% more appealing during the following recession)

The report concludes that economic cycles can now help predict ad effectiveness and consumer responsiveness to various creative strategies. The author recommends that marketers "...look for the rise of the global middle class, urbanization, the new female economy and a notable shift in advertising spending to all be engines for change and the future growth of consumer spending..."

To read more from the Nielsen blogs, please visit [here](#) and [here](#)

Radio creative-To embrace the new pace:

1. Talk faster, say more.---WE DISAGREE. DOESN'T TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE MANNER IN WHICH PEOPLE LISTEN TO COMMERCIALS
2. Use big ideas, presented tightly.

3. Introduce a new mental image every 3 to 5 seconds.
4. Use fewer adjectives.
5. Embrace unpredictable timing and intonation.
6. Say things plainly. Bluntly, even.
7. Emotion is good. Even negative emotion.
8. Allow distinctly different voices to finish each other's sentences.
9. Prepare for lots of complaints. *Listeners want to be able to ignore radio ads. When they can't ignore your ads, they complain. A lot.*
10. Prepare to make more money.

The 'I Think' Syndrome Destroys Many a Campaign

It Doesn't Matter If You Like an Idea, Will the Target Audience Like It?

By: *Darryl Ohrt* Published: *October 31, 2012*

How many times in a brainstorming meeting have we heard statements that begin "I think that ...," followed by a personal experience related to the idea at hand. Or one of the team will say something like, "I would never watch that," in reference to a proposed concept.

When conceiving ideas, we all want to relate to our audience target, and identify with the market. But the reality is, **our targets are far different than most of us as individuals**. Comments like these have killed great concepts, and can lead ridiculous concepts to execution and launch.

We demand comprehensive creative briefs prior to digging into a project. So why are we so apt to throw them aside in favor of a personal opinion? Because we're bad scientists.

In psychology, personal construct theory professes that people act as scientists, channeling their thoughts and actions based on what they predict and anticipate. A 35-year-old single, male marketer might expect that a 45-year-old mom with three kids will act in a particular manner, based on his personal experiences. But does he have the life experience to properly identify with a busy mom?

As creative people, we're opinionated. We want great ideas to see the light. We like our own ideas and project their success on our intended targets. And this is mostly wrong.

How can you avoid bad science? As a practice, I've done my best to remove "I think..." from rationalization of concepts. It's a simple trick, but it forces you to focus on the core rationale for what you're presenting -- not why you think it's important or destined for success. A response of "the target has shown a propensity toward this type of entertainment" is more impressive than "I think this will be huge. I know that I would totally use it." Whenever possible, prove it out with research, strategy, evidence or experience.

Sounds like common sense, right? It should be, but once you begin listening for it, you'll be surprised at how many clients, accounts and creative people suffer from the "I think..." syndrome. **In some circles, it's an epidemic. I've heard the phrase uttered by junior creatives, senior creatives and people who should really know better.**

Where I don't see anyone fighting, however, is in trying to understand the persuasive content of advertising. If I reach 80% of the country, but only 1% are persuaded, that has a cost. **If I create a better ad that only persuades 2% of the people who view it, I have halved my media costs.**

Mark Gross SVP, Group Creative Director DDB- however the more radio judging I do, the more I realize that great radio creative is really intangible and undefineable. There's a little something special that propels memorable work to greatness. When audio is all you have, people want to be entertained, not preached to. That is what great radio is supposed to do, stir emotions and engage the listener. I speak for all of us when I say **we left Cannes feeling inspired and motivated to preserve the future of radio. Long live the power of great radio..**

The message absolutely changes. **Targeting is not just for selecting media vehicles.** It's for the messaging; for choosing promotional partners; for all marketing. **If you don't change the message on a by-consumer basis, then your message plays to the lowest common denominator, which defeats the purpose of being targeted with your media vehicles**

Researchers found that creative work must rate "high right out of the blocks," said Carl Marci, CEO and co-founder of Innerscope.

Mr. Marci pointed to a Burger King ad developed by Miami's Crispin Porter & Bogusky that showed declining viewer engagement the longer it went on. In the commercial, a woodsman comes across the burger chain's popular and inanimate King character, and then is handed the restaurant's enormous omelet sandwich. Because the product being pitched was introduced relatively late in the ad, viewers began to tune out, Mr. Marci told an assemblage at a conference held by the Advertising Research Foundation today.

A recent Hyundai Motor ad that appeared in this year's Super Bowl fared much better. In the commercial, created by Omnicom Group's Goodby Silverstein & Partners, a number of executives read reports about Hyundai winning an industry award and begin screaming the company's name. Later, an announcer dryly notes that it's funny how everyone says a company's name right after it wins an important

honor. More viewers stayed to watch the whole ad, Mr. Marci said, because it quickly told a story and hewed closely to it.

Orienting effect: Creative- paying attention to the radio, television, or computer screen is a result of both personal intention (i.e., “I’m interested in this program.”) and automatic processes that individuals cannot consciously control (Schnieder, Dumais, and Shiffrin, 1984). These automatic processes are conceptualized as being activated by structural attributes of the message itself (Lang, 2000). For example, human beings automatically allocate cognitive resources to encoding television messages immediately following a cut—a change from one visual scene to another (Lang, Geiger, Strickwerda, and Sumner, 1993). **Similarly, the occurrence of a change from one announcer to another in a radio message automatically calls cognitive resources to the task of encoding information in that message (Potter)**

A Creative director once said there is no greater ROI for advertising than improving the creative work

Humor In Ads: Laughs Fall Along Gender Lines

Just watch the Super Bowl ads each year and it’s pretty clear that marketers feel laughter is a calling card. But with broadly targeted products, creative development takes time to discover the interplanetary middle ground to reach both Mars and Venus.

Nielsen research indicates that males and females embrace ads with different types of humor. Using a study of millennials ages 13 to 34, Nielsen found that males like “slapstick, edgy, sarcastic” comedy, while females appreciate an “off-beat, but not mean-spirited” approach.

Of course, humor isn’t the only area where males and females react differently to 30-second spots. With characters in advertising, males like “normal guys” and “exaggerated situations.” Females go for “happy situations” and an “I could be her” tack.

Which might explain why females like themes that highlight “strong female celebrities” and “having fun.” Males go for “competition” and/or “extreme imagery.”

With tonality, females like liveliness and “hip music,” while males go for a “whimsically

humorous” approach.

According to new Nielsen data, females in the 18-to-49 demo watch about 11 hours more of TV a month than males. In a 2-to-17 segment, TV viewing is about the same between the genders.

Males 18 to 49 do consume video on the Internet and mobile phones slightly more than females.

Image by Shutterstock

TARGETING TIPS

How to market to the boomer brain vs. the millennial brain

BOOMER BRAIN

COLOR WITHIN THE LINES:

Boomers can have trouble processing visual presentations that are too complex, and fail to see anything in the borders of advertising.

TRY SOUND:

Boomers are more likely to struggle retrieving words on the “tip of the tongue,” so brands should use mnemonic devices to aid memory.

BEWARE THE GENDER GAP:

Boomer women do read, particularly competitive comparison ads, while men don’t respond to text-heavy ads but do respond to imagery.

DON’T THREATEN:

Boomers are more likely to pay attention to positive emotion in ads, so scare tactics are less likely to work.

MILLENNIAL BRAIN

ROLL OUT THE BELLS AND WHISTLES:

Millennial brains have a much easier time responding to complex, moving and cluttered images and screens.

GRAB ATTENTION QUICKLY:

The millennial brain is still outgrowing the teen tendency to act first, think later, as the prefrontal cortex is still maturing (a process that isn’t complete until about 25). There may not be time for a complex, nuanced message.

SIMPLIFY THE MESSAGE:

While the delivery of the message can be more complex than with boomers, the message itself shouldn’t be. Millennials have more trouble than older folks processing complex messages.

SOURCE: NIELSEN NEUROFOCUS

KMS - Radio Creative Best Practices

Speak “to” them not “at” them:

Keep listener profile in mind. Mirror your targets values

Avoid unnecessary words.

Be clear, concise and focused. In TV they review a commercial frame-by-frame.

Need same discipline with Radio.

Know what to leave out.

Tell Stories.

Stories arouse emotions.

Keeps the listener intrigued/ attentive.

Listener fills in the blanks, personalizing the message

Stories generate imagery, impacting the most powerful of all screens- the listeners mind

Recognize gender difference

Men think and are more rational, Women feel and tend to relate to emotional messaging

Err on the side of emotional.

Avoid voices made for radio.

They are easier to ignore.

Unpolished, amateur voices command attention.

Avoid smooth and worn out phrases.

Vary pace and Tone.

Pauses are the opportunity for the brain to process the preceding information

Write the way we talk.

Effective ads often feature broken sentences. Half sentences. Non-sequiturs. This is how we speak. Awkward wording and weird phrases capture attention.

Monotonous delivery turns into “white noise” and leads to tune-out.

Silence- can be powerful.

Silence is a stark contrast to constant sound on radio. The deft use of silence compels an audience to listen more closely.

Strive for a certain degree of edginess .

Otherwise can get lost in commercial pod

The old bromide, trying to please everyone, pleases no one applies

Humor

Is not easy. If trying to be humorous makes sure it is really humorous

Humor can create word-of-mouth but your target must find it funny.

Audio consistency

Consistency of voice, music bed or audio logo is key. Want the listener to immediately identify the commercial as yours and associate with your product's attributes even if engaged for only a few seconds

Similar music, theme between Radio and TV.

Start strong.

You have 3 seconds at the beginning of the commercial to grab their attention

End it strong. Strong finishes reinforce your messaging

Mention your name throughout

Listener's attention to commercials ebb and flows.

Avoid reveal ads. They are very tough to pull off and if not properly done will result in no advertiser awareness

Consider multiple voices.

Testing conducted by Sensory Logic shows that 75% of national radio commercials include a single voice. And that only 10% of single-voice spots are engaging. "By adding a second voice you dramatically improve the engagement of a commercial"

Consider rotating more than one commercial.

Not putting all of your eggs in one basket in case the commercial doesn't resonate IAG Radio testing showed it is better to limit # of commercials in rotation unless you are a huge advertiser similar to GEICO

U.K. RAB

Questions to ask when judging creative radio proposals

We know that creative treatment can make an enormous difference to the effectiveness of a campaign – that's true in all media, but even truer with radio, we believe, because people are doing something else while listening. But how can you judge a creative proposal?

Here is a framework for judging creative ideas. Like all frameworks, it's not perfect or exhaustive, but it's worked for a lot of the marketers who attend RAB Training.

The 5 I's are...	
Involvement...	... notice, engage and be drawn in? Will the ad involve the target audience?
Identity...	... recognise and remember who the ad is from?
Impression...	... take away an appropriate impression of the brand (including after multiple hearings)?
Information...	... understand and remember the message being communicated?
Integration...	... consciously or otherwise hear the ad as part of a wider campaign (other radio ads or other media), so achieving a multiplier effect?

The RAB uses the Five I's Framework to quantify creative effectiveness within its ongoing radio campaign measurement tool, RadioGAUGE. With over 500 commercials having been measured using this method to date, the RAB has extracted some headline radio techniques for optimising a commercial's impact against each 'I' (detailed below). Whilst it is acknowledged that this doesn't cover every creative eventuality, it should provide advertisers with a helpful checklist when evaluating radio advertising concepts/scripts/demos for their brand.

INVOLVEMENT

– Nine out of ten people are doing something else when listening to radio, so it's important that your ad is able to engage them in what you have to say. Higher scoring ads involve the listener either through building a sense of curiosity or intrigue, or through recognisable and valued audio constructs, such as voices and/or music.

IDENTITY

– How can you ensure that the listener is instantly aware of who is speaking to them, especially when most advertisers have visual brand guidelines but very few have audio brand guidelines. The most effective ads clearly differentiate the brand through sound, using recognisable voices, music, strap lines and catchphrases. Collectively, these may add up to create an instantly recognisable scenario in the listener's mind.

IMPRESSION

– How your ad leaves people feeling about your brand depends upon both the message and execution. As the message is derived from the brief, the key question when evaluating radio scripts/demos is whether it is being executed in a manner that will make the listener feel more positive about the brand. Better performing ads tend to be more respectful of the listener – both straightforward and conversational in tone – or use music to set a suitable mood. To score positively on this measure, try to avoid shouting at the listener, or using jarring sound effects.

INFORMATION

– Many advertisers use radio to get important short-term tactical messages across that aren't practical to execute in other media, so it's vital to ensure that your ads are working optimally in this respect. The highest scoring ads

present a single-minded message (multiple messages require multiple executions), often dramatising it through relevant sound or dialogue.

INTEGRATION

– It is extremely rare for radio to be the sole medium used within a brand campaign, so how can you best ensure that people link your radio commercial to the wider media campaign, to make sure that you benefit from the cross-media multiplier effect – especially when RadioGauge evidence highlights that ‘Integration’ is the most important ‘I’ in terms of driving overall creative effectiveness. The best performing ads use consistent audio elements from other media (especially TV) such as recognisable catchphrases or slogans, and/or voices and music. When done well, ads can stimulate a listener to subconsciously recall associated images from the related TV commercial, and effect we call ‘Virtual TV’, but at a fraction of the price.

Remember: Judging a script on the page can be difficult! Radio is all about atmosphere, tone of voice and mood. Ask for the idea to be brought to life in some way – acted out, a demo recording etc

Leave room for performance. Good actors will always have ideas for changes which can turn a good script into great radio – sign off the idea rather than the exact words

Economy-Proof Ads: Funny Beats Frugal in Advertising

June 21, 2012

By James Russo, Vice President, Global Consumer Insights, Nielsen

In 2011, worldwide ad spending totaled \$488 billion, \$72 billion of which was spent on U.S. television alone. Over the next decade, estimated global consumer spending will exceed \$450 trillion. With so much at stake—and many markets continuing to face tough economic realities, how do advertisers reach and resonate with an increasingly diverse, demanding and connected audience? Nielsen conducted an in-depth custom research study of advertising effectiveness of more than 4,000 ads before, during and after the “Great Recession” to find out.

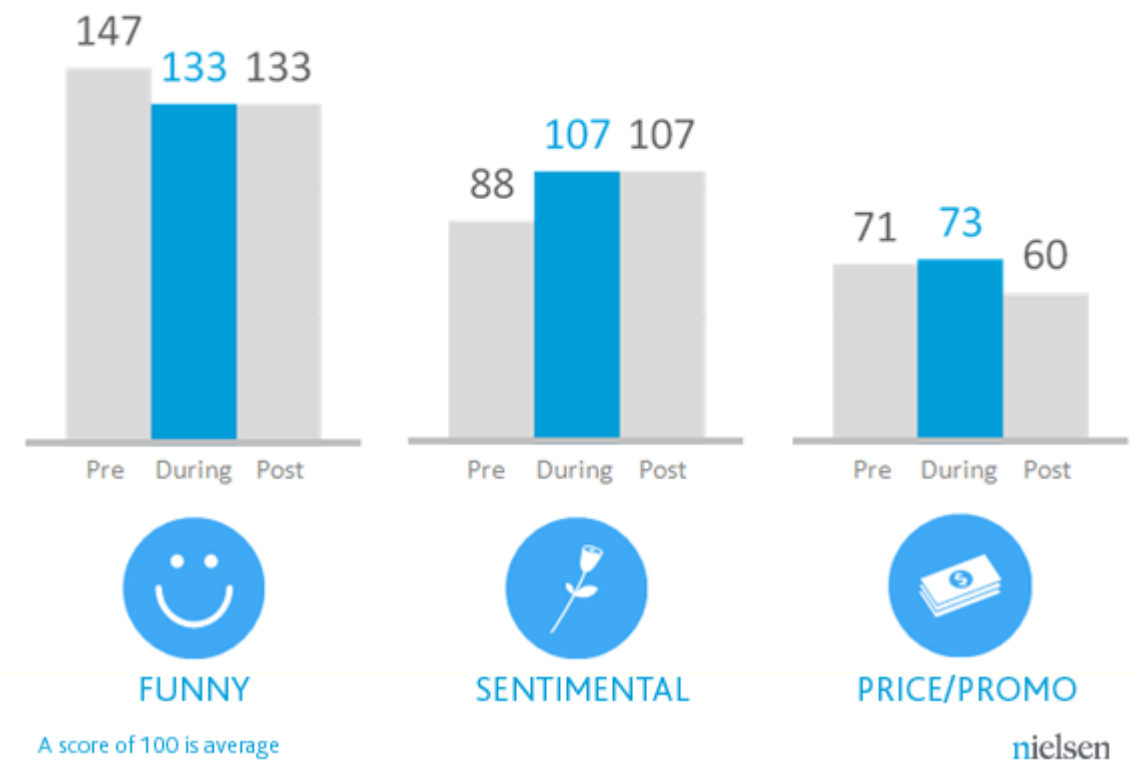
What we wanted to know: to what extent, if any, has the tumultuous economic climate and subsequent attitude shifts impacted consumer responsiveness to various creative tactics?

The Findings

- Humorous ads have consistently resonated best with viewers, regardless of the economy or year
- During the recession, there was a notable lift in effectiveness of sentimental and value-oriented ads
- Ads focused on product features and promotion/price do not resonate with viewers . . . even during tough economic times

Ad Genres & the Recession: What Resonated Before, During and After

Funny ads were 47 percent more appealing to consumers than the average ad pre-Recession, and 33 percent more appealing during and following the Recession.



The performance of narrative and sentimental ads has improved **Trends to Watch**

Advertising effectiveness has never been more closely tied to consumer confidence. The global recession shook consumer confidence. Economic cycles can now help predict ad effectiveness and consumer responsiveness to various creative strategies.

Look for the rise of the global middle class, urbanization, the new female economy and a notable shift in advertising spending to all be engines for change and the future growth of consumer spending.

Methodology:

- Nielsen looked at more than 4,000 U.S. CPG ads from 2006 to 2011 and categorized the ads by creative approach: humor, narrative, sentimental, product, promotional and value. The study then evaluated the “effectiveness” of each creative approach through different phases – pre (2006-2007) during (2008-2009) and post (2010-2011) – of the most recent recession cycle since 2006

“Pauses” are the opportunity for the brain to process the preceding information

Radio advertisers need to develop a consistent template of advertising creative from campaign to campaign- the messaging will change but the template, i.e. delivery, voice, music should remain the same. This way the advertiser is not starting from scratch with each new campaign. The listener identifies the commercial as that particular advertiser’s and then absorbs the new messaging.

Borrowed from our friends @ the U.K. RAB

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5/12 Thumbs up or down, Jelli to begin offering listener feedback on radio spots to ad buyers. Starting next week it will give listeners the opportunity to label radio commercials a “hit” or “miss.” Brands that use the system will get back analytics and insights about how the audience reacted to the ad. “Advertisers can see if one version of the audio creative is more engaging, and Jelli can break that down by demographic, age, gender and region.

Creative should influence the media plan:

Planners should know what the creative is to properly plan reach/frequency goals...

If it is a new campaign without a “creative link” (similar sound, same voice, same theme, same music, same audio signature) to previous messaging/campaigns, it will likely require more media weight (GRPs) to break through. There should be a difference between the media parameters of an ad for an advertiser who has not been a consistent advertiser with consistent commercial messaging and a campaign that is debuting entirely new creative.

If the new campaign has no link via a sonic brand/identify, spokesperson or music, etc. then it will likely require more weight over fewer weeks for the messaging to break through. If there is consistency in messaging, i.e. the same spokesperson and/or music from previous campaigns then it would likely require fewer weekly GRPs for the messaging to take break through. Fewer GRPS could then be aired over a longer period of time taking advantage of “Recency”, a planning strategy resulting in continuing brand presence. The bottom line is that Creative should influence the weekly GRPs and how the campaign is flighted and right now this is not. In most cases the planners have no familiarity with the creative that will be aired.

FACT: The biggest cost of advertising is airing creative that doesn’t work and it’s well known within the advertising community that it’s the ad itself that ultimately determines the size of the audience. In a media environment focused on eliminating ALL inefficiencies within a

media plan, improving radio creative becomes more important than ever.

Creating effective radio ads is hard work and an acquired skill. Each medium has its inherent strengths and interacts with its consumers differently.

Harnessing “emotion” is critical in turning viewers, readers and listeners into consumers. **Sound is the most effective sense to generate emotion.** Many researchers believe emotions are the gatekeepers for further advertising processing. People tend to buy emotionally and then justify with logic. If the commercial is not compelling enough to touch them emotionally all of the logical reasons to purchase will probably not make a difference.

FACT: Good creative can make 100 GRPS of a mediocre commercial perform like 150 or 200 GRPS. Poor creative can take 100 GRPs and generate the impact of 50 GRPs.

Over the past year, Katz Marketing Solutions on behalf of the radio industry has been working with advertisers by providing diagnostics regarding their creative.

Few radio commercials are ever tested prior to airing. Thus far KMS has tested 43 different radio commercials over the past 18 months. The following shows the large difference between effective commercials and poor ones. The top performing radio commercials are more than twice as impactful as the lowest performing commercials.

The Top Quintile on average generates over two and one half times the impact versus the bottom Quintile

	Likeable	Emotive	Moody	Laid Back	Soft Sell	Factual	Informative
Top Quintile	53%	39%	36%	49%	47%	62%	63%
Bottom Quintile	29%	16%	13%	14%	18%	28%	22%
% Difference	+81%	+143%	+184%	+243%	+157%	+121%	+180%

	Motivating	Differentiating	Newsy	Funny	Entertaining	Buy	Believable
Top Quintile	32%	41%	39%	59%	73%	71%	79%
Bottom Quintile	15%	16%	11%	13%	38%	27%	54%
% Difference	+117%	+152%	+262%	+368%	+94%	+159%	+46%

	Talking to Me	Share	Search	Unique	Confusing
Top Quintile	65%	56%	63%	72%	23%
Bottom Quintile	42%	26%	36%	42%	6%
% Difference	+56%	+117%	+72%	+70%	+286%

Katz/OTX has tested 43 different creative executions to date.

To be read: The Top Quintile on average was ranked as likeable by 53% of the respondents vs the Bottom Quintile averaging 29%

On average, if the top Quintile of creative “delivered” 100 GRPS, then the bottom quintile would have delivered the equivalent of 39 GRPs across the 19 creative diagnostics.

Radio’s ability to impact and engage consumer’s is comparable to any medium. The listener becomes the co-author of the commercial, which engages the mind similar to the way a good book engages us. Great radio creative requires us to paint our own pictures. It can only take us in our minds to places we have personally been which is why in many ways, radio is the first fully addressable medium. When a person hears a radio commercial they are recalling emotional triggers from their past and when a person views a TV commercial they are seeing what the producer of the TV spot wants you to see. Radio let’s you think and engage the mind with “thinking” leading to engagement and when you are engaged, you remember.

Below are some findings that we’ve culled from the OTX studies that we’ve determined contributes to strong radio creative:

Key Creative Findings

- “Talk to” rather than “talk at”
- Mirroring TV can result in powerful Imagery Transfer
- Same voices, same music—Consistency between TV and Radio commercials
- Mention the advertiser’s name throughout the ad- not only in the beginning or the end
- “Reveal ads” are tricky. Get to the point quickly
- “Likeability” is the key to aided and unaided recall
- Commercial Tags- Don’t rush. Best to slow them down
- Consistency of voice, music, messaging from campaign to campaign
- Commercial needs to have some “bite”. Don’t want too bland- Some polarization is ok

[SOLUTIONS]

The U.K. RAB findings via their RadioGauge research regarding effective radio creative are similar to our OTX findings:

They evaluated 400 different radio commercials. Reviewed the top 25% of performing ads. For the most part each had 5 similar characteristics:

-Established creative

-Music consistency with TV

Presence of a sonic ID

Consistent voice with TV