

DISPATCHESTM

Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

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BEHAVIOR-IZE THE BENEFIT!

Back in the days of our early training with Procter & Gamble, whenever the subject of brand-building advertising principles came up, among the most common principles mentioned was always “Visualize the benefit. Visualize the benefit. Visualize the benefit.” It became a kind of mantra (as you can see). Sometimes the same principle was more loosely expressed as, “If it—the benefit—isn’t in the pictures, it isn’t there.” Naturally, when agencies presented any creative work to us, the first thing we checked for was how well the benefit stated in the ad strategy was being visualized. And, just as naturally given the analytically-based culture, there was considerable marketplace data proving that advertising which visualized the benefit typically helped to grow brand market share... whereas, advertising which did not visualize or poorly visualized the benefit did not.

To P&G’s credit back then, most of the benefit-visualizing being done was pretty compelling: highly credible, “torture-test” treatments that drove home a product’s superior performance; unusual, side-by-side demonstrations versus a key (often un-named) competitor that left little doubt about how much better the P&G brand was; even “surprise-reveal” live testimonials in which consumers discovered they weren’t drinking caffeinated coffee at all, but were drinking de-caf—with such a full-flavored taste it completely fooled them.

A lot has changed since then. Among the most obvious changes is that so many products in so many FMCG categories or drug/device classes perform at parity to one another; real, superior performance is not nearly as prevalent as it was thirty years ago. Along with this change has come another one: in so many categories, not only is product performance similar, but so is the way that brands advertise or communicate that performance. And this means that “visualize the benefit” is more and more being done by many brands in the same, not-so-compelling way.

You need only flip through any woman’s magazine to see how leading skincare brands such as Garnier, Nivea, Neutrogena, and L’Oreal, month-after-month, visualize their “younger-looking, beautiful skin” benefits in exactly the same way—via a close-up of a model’s face. Or, do the same with virtually any medical journal, and you’ll quickly see that nearly every brand relies on a smiling, recovered patient (for pharmaceuticals) or a confident surgeon next to his equipment (for medical devices)... each with the aim of visualizing the benefit. (Okay, to be fair, sometimes you’ll see a little more variety in medical device ads: sometimes the confident surgeon is wearing a surgical mask with his equipment in the operating theater.)

This, now long-running, trend to visualize the benefit in such similar ways got us to long ago change the mantra we had learned by heart. Instead of repeating “Visualize the benefit,” we

began preaching “*Dramatize the benefit. Dramatize the benefit. Dramatize the benefit.*” But we didn’t merely preach it; we also consistently packed our training programs and consulting events with compelling examples of various brand communications that didn’t just visualize something in a pedestrian way, but actually added the element of involving, intriguing, and often-unexpected drama to that visualization. In fact, we have featured a good number of these dramatized benefit communications in our *Dispatches* over the years; for example: Polaroid’s “See what develops” campaign that so cleverly depicted how many ways an instant photo could lead to unexpected pleasures; Duracell’s “Trusted everywhere” campaign that honestly contrasts the importance of reliable power for life-savers and for life-enjoyers; and in medical journal advertising, Risperdal’s (an anti-psychotic drug) starkly dramatic “Snapshots” of real patients having a real psychotic episode.

We continue to encourage and admire the creation of communications that go beyond ordinary visualizing to dramatizing. But, truth be told, there is an even higher standard when it comes to communicating a brand’s benefit. That higher standard has to do with the ultimate aim of any communications: to sustain or change a *behavior* that will lead to increased volume, profit, and market share for the brand. In other words, dramatizing the benefit is good, but *behavior-izing* it is better. What’s *behavior-izing*? It’s dramatizing the benefit in a way that makes perfectly clear to the intended target what behavior the brand seeks: bringing in a new user, urging switching, driving increased frequency of use, incenting brand loyalty, and so on.

The best way to understand and appreciate the added value of *behavior-izing* over dramatizing or even mere visualizing of the brand’s benefit is to look at a few examples of brands that have been doing it well. That’s our Boats & Helicopters for this week.

BOATS & HELICOPTERS—Some Brands *Behavior-izing* Their Benefits

- 1. NiQuitin** (Smoking Cessation Brand)—Fairly recently in the UK, this brand of parity-performing pills and patches, began a most unusual campaign of “Reality Quitting.” The brand asked people struggling to quit smoking to video-cam themselves each day—before starting the NiQuitin regimen and then each day for weeks thereafter. These self-recordings were then aired in sequence on television and on-line for other would-be quitters to watch...and to empathize with. The aim, of course, was to incite either a switch from another regimen (that had likely failed) or to get smokers who had “given up” to re-try, to re-enter the category with a brand that could help them share their anxieties and give them moral support (the NiQuitin benefits!). The brand gained a 40% volume increase.
- 2. MasterCard**—The “Priceless” campaign is a classic example of behavior-izing the benefit because it never fails to show the target how more frequent use of the card—for both one-time and everyday purchases—can result in more priceless moments shared with family and friends. And the brand’s growth in almost every measure has been impressive and well-documented.
- 3. McDonald’s**—In Sydney, Australia, the kids’ fun-favorite destination tackled a tougher behavioral challenge: how to get adults to come back to McDonald’s again and again *without* their children? So they literally built an adult-sized McDonald’s playground in the center of Sydney and invited adults of all sizes and occupations to come in, re-connect with the fun, and find out what they had been missing. Naturally, they filmed

these “adult-as-kids-again” playtimes and ran them on-line and in other media. They behavior-ized the fun-enjoyment benefits of a return visit to McDonald’s.

4. **Oreo**—After all these years, the Oreo Brand still dramatizes its one-of-a-kind indulgence when dunked in milk (it is “Milk’s Favorite Cookie” after all). The benefit comes through as grandpa and his grandson challenge which one can eat an Oreo faster, since both are missing some teeth; it comes through as triplet sisters solve the dilemma of wanting to dip into 3 too-tall glasses of milk by pouring all their milk into one glass. And what’s even better about the way this indulgent-experience benefit comes across is that it tells the consumer all the while: drink milk and Oreo’s more often!

As you take a closer look at communications within your category, ask yourself which brands are simply visualizing their benefits (similar to everyone else); which ones are going one better and dramatizing their benefits; and, which brands are making the behavior they want from their target so clear that they are actually *behavior-izing* their benefit. Maybe **your** brand can be the first in category to do the latter.

Richard Czerniawski & Mike Maloney

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Richard Czerniawski

.....
430 Abbotsford Road
Kenilworth, Illinois 60043
tel 847.256.8820
fax 847.256.8847
.....

reply to Richard:
rdczerniawski@cs.com or
richardcz@bdn-intl.com

Mike Maloney

.....
1506 West 13th Street, #17
Austin, Texas 78703
tel 512.236.0971
fax 512.236.0972
.....

reply to Mike:
mikewmaloney@gmail.com or
mwm@bdn-intl.com

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