

DISPATCHES™

Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

Sunday, October 17 2010

CONNECT THE DOTS ...

We offer Boats & Helicopters each week in our DISPATCHES articles. These are recommended, practical actions you can take to drive customer preference, and build healthy brands. Where do these Boats & Helicopters come from? They come from our experiences as marketing practitioners, teaching our highly successful training programs, and learning from our consulting practice, working with leading companies throughout the world. They also come from connecting the dots of what we observe, or glean, from our daily life, to discover insights for more productive marketing.

Boats & Helicopters come from being awake, being open to connecting the dots. We can realize a boat (related to marketing mix elements and tactics) or helicopter (which refers to strategic issues) from the most unlikely places, such as talking with our barber, reading a novel, travel, attending a play, shopping. The sources are limitless. All it takes is being awake, fully aware in the present moment, and connecting the dots back to our brand, business, or life.

A good illustration of discovering Boats & Helicopters can be found in our connecting the dots with what we read in the weekend edition of the Wall Street Journal to different aspects of marketing management.

Let's start with the article, "Creating: Elizabeth Diller, Architect," by Ellen Gamerman. This article profiles Ms. Diller, who along with her husband, Ricardo Scofidio, became the first architect to win a McArthur Foundation "genius" grant. Ms. Diller is a most creative architect. She and her husband drew international notice at the 2002 Swiss Expo with their creation, which they titled the "Blur Building." It was made from the mist from 35,000 high-pressure fog nozzles. Far out!

Here's what we learned of this exceptionally talented and successful architect, and what it suggests for *more productive marketing management*:

- She and her team start a project with the question, "What would failure look like?" Good question! *Perhaps, if we start with the same question when launching a new product, or developing a new ad campaign, we may be able to avoid failure, or catch it early, by identifying what failure looks and feels like, rather than blindly plowing forward into the unknown.*
- According to Ms. Diller her creative breakthroughs come when she is not working. It could come to her while attending a play, reading – anything from academic journals to People magazine, among other activities. We suspect her subconscious is always on

alert, always working to solve problems and exploit opportunities. *It might be fruitful for us to keep our subconscious on active alert, tuned into what is going on in the world around us. It's about making ourselves responsive to potential boats and helicopters that are always in motion, always available to us.*

- Inspiration, she claims, does not just come at the start of a project. She has come to realize that “in that 99% perspiration, there's a lot of creativity.” *When we execute an idea we should be mindful that we need to use our, and the collective resource team's, creativity to solve problems that arise, and build upon the idea to make it more productive in the marketplace. This goes for advertising campaigns too. We start with a nugget of a leadership Campaign Idea and find ways to build upon it with each execution so that we can realize its full potential.*
- Ms. Diller does not like to overload her senses. She says, “There's a point at which too much information gets in the way.” *Well, let's be honest and wake-up to the fact that too much gets in our way that keeps us from devoting our focus on what will really make a difference for our brands. We, marketers, are bombarded with 60 or more emails a day. Our workloads force us to multitask. We feel the need to reply to emails and/or take calls while in meetings, when we should be committing our attention and thinking to adding value, or permitting our minds to grasp the situation and offer a thoughtful solution. It makes sense for us to do, and expose ourselves to, less, so that we may do more with that which really matters.*
- She likes to get everything down on paper quickly, even if she is going to abandon the idea later. *We tend, in our organizations, to be hypercritical, in the name of analysis, of the possible. If we treat our thoughts as hypotheses, as opposed to absolutes, we are free to express and explore them. We free ourselves to expand options. Options are like shots on goal. The more we create, and allow ourselves to explore, the better the opportunity to score. Besides if we don't think something out we can never fully appreciate its potential. Finally, we learn from that which we mindfully choose not to do.*

In the same section of the WSJ, on the same day, there is another article that provides insight into developing more effective advertising. No, the article is not about advertising. It is in the feature titled “Word Craft,” written by Scott Adams on “How to Write Like a Cartoonist.” Mr. Adams is a cartoonist and author. You know him from his syndicated comic strip, DILBERT. Here's what we can learn regarding the *development of more effective advertising* from his article:

- According to Mr. Adams the topic is the thing. He believes that 80% of successful humor writing is picking a topic that is inherently funny. *Hey, is this not an important reminder that the Key Thought is the thing!?! We must offer a benefit or belief in the Key Thought that is relevant to our target customer, and meaningfully differentiated versus competition, if we are going to connect successfully with that target customer to motivate the achievement of the Communication Behavior Objective.*
- He also feels that danger and humor go hand-in-hand. If you are not willing to entertain some danger then you cannot be a (successful) cartoonist. *What might this mean for us? We need to take risks. We have to step out of our comfort zones, which lead us to doing the same thing in the same way as each of our competitors. We don't believe he is talking*

about being reckless, nor are we. We need to take calculated risks. It is less of a risk to do and be something different in advertising when we follow proven principles and best practices (like ensuring we have a Campaign Idea consisting of the Naked Idea, Key Copy Words and Core Dramatization), and engage in a dialogue with our customers to learn and adapt before launching it.

- *Humor is about people, how they think and act. Advertising is about people too. It's about how we need for them to think about our brand in order to get them to act consistent with the Communication Behavior Objective. We cannot, and should not, forget this.*
- *Mr. Adams counsels aspiring cartoonists to add "exaggeration," but to exaggerate wisely. "Dramatization" is advertising's exaggeration. We must dramatize the Key Thought, found in the Essential Creative Brief, in order to make it come alive for our customers, and compel them to action.*
- *Use funny words to be funny. He says that some words are funnier than others and, therefore, a better choice if our goal is to make the audience laugh. We, too, need to be mindful of our word choice in the entire advertising development process, not just what goes into publications, or on-air. When writing the Essential Creative Brief we should be mindful, as one of our clients is fond of saying, "that every word should be like a word in a poem." Avoid "fat" words that have many meanings. Be precise. In our advertising each word should resonate with our target. Use the language that speaks to the heart of the customer. Avoid strategy talk!*
- *Mr. Adams suggests that the writer end his work with a "call back." This is a "clever" association to something notable in the body of the work. Well, relating this to advertising, the call back is our Key Copy Words. The "something notable" is what the Key Copy Words and Campaign Idea communicate, the Key Thought. Moreover, the Key Copy Words should communicate the Key Thought in provocative customer language, not strategy talk (see previous point).*
- *Good humor writers lead their readers to connect the dots. He believes it is important to let his readers do some of the work. According to Mr. Adams the more savvy the reader then the wider the author can spread the dots. Well, our customers are pretty savvy. Never, ever underestimate them. Perhaps, we should consider spreading the dots in our advertising to help our target customers discover the brand's advantage rather than merely telling them. Discovery is more powerful than telling. Discovery creates a sense of reality, and ownership. Discovery is connecting the dots to the target customer's needs and life.*

BOATS & HELICOPTERS:

This week's Boats & Helicopters are highlighted in *italics* throughout the body of our article. If you would like to learn more about Boats & Helicopters and you're reading this article directly from our bdn website, [click here](#).

But there is one more thing you might consider doing. Get practice, practical practice, in spotting

the boats and helicopters that are available in your world, and connecting the dots to your brand and business. Specifically, read through today's newspaper. Select an article from any section of the newspaper. Read between the lines of the article to identify boats and helicopters that will help you make your marketing more productive.

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