

DISPATCHES™

Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

Sunday, October 31, 2010

DRAMATIZE TO CONNECT WITH YOUR TARGET CUSTOMER

Dram-a-tize (verb) to express vividly, emotionally, or strikingly

Last week we wrote about the importance of dramatizing the Key Thought (i.e., the benefit or belief we need to instill in the Target-Customer), to behavior-ize it (i.e., stimulate a specific behavior to drive brand growth). Dramatize to behavior-ize. The vehicle for accomplishing this is the Campaign Idea.

The Campaign Idea *dramatizes* the Key Thought in provocative customer terms. The Key Thought is what the customer must *feel* in order to trigger the behavior the marketer seeks. It goes beyond telling (which is not convincing), and selling (people like to buy, not be sold), to be compelling (as in connecting with the Target Customer to trigger the achievement of the intended behavior). This is what effective Campaign Ideas do. BIG Campaign Ideas work hard to achieve stretch business objectives year-in and year-out, for a very long time.

There are three parts to the Campaign Idea: the Naked Idea; Core Dramatization; and Key Copy Words. It's a good idea to review each part and its role in the dramatization of the Key Thought. The highly successful MasterCard "Priceless" campaign, which has been building the brand since 1997, will serve to illustrate the Campaign Idea.

Naked Idea

The Naked Idea is the creative concept. It's not a restatement of the Key Thought (i.e., to communicate that MasterCard can be used everywhere for all purchases, big and small, so that you can savor what really matters in life) but how it will be communicated (juxtaposition of everything you can purchase with MasterCard, big and small, with that one precious moment that money cannot buy). It's the theme of your drama. It's your story, told in dramatic fashion. MasterCard has used their Naked Idea to inform the development of more than 500 television spots, and thousands of print ads, countless promotions, etc., that have touched consumers in more than 100 countries since its launch 13-years ago. That's what an intriguing Naked Idea can do for a brand. The television network TNT runs ads that say, "TNT. We know drama." Well, we all know drama. We know it when the story causes us to laugh, brings us to tears, or brings out our fears. The Naked Idea communicates the Key Thought to the Target Customer in a way that is arresting and/or highly emotional. It can even do that with a product benefit.

Core Dramatization

One of the MasterCard short stories (i.e., TV spot, or print communication, each of which is an Ad Idea – more on this in a future DISPATCHS article), of the campaign's dramatic theme (the

Naked Idea), depicts a father using his MasterCard to purchase hockey equipment for his sons. It shows him purchasing hockey sticks, pucks, gloves, goalie equipment such as face mask and pads), etc. But it also depicts his, and his sons', growing excitement during the buying process in anticipation of the time they will have on the ice, playing hockey, together. The climax captures one of the young sons skating past his father's defense, to score a goal. The Naked Idea is dramatized with the purchases and the game (through the juxtaposition). The core dramatization is the climax, the winning goal and jubilant family members depicting the priceless moment.

As pointed out in our article last week, the core dramatization is far more than the visualization of the benefit. Visualization makes for good audio-visual synch. It also helps the Target Customer to see the benefit, maybe even a payoff. But it doesn't serve to arrest or evoke emotion. It doesn't move the intended Target Customer. It doesn't connect with the gut. Therefore, it's not compelling. This can only be achieved with a dramatization of the Key Thought, or something that will lead the Target Customer to feel (as in "striking a responsive chord"), or relate to, the Key Thought and the brand. A visualization of what is typically a generic benefit, no matter how good the visualization is, doesn't do very much in the way of changing attitudes and, therefore, behavior. A dramatization of the Key Thought (even if the benefit is generic) can capture your story perfectly so that the Target Customer can relate to, and connect with, it and, ultimately, your brand.

Key Copy Words

Ugh, we hate to hear the words "tagline" or "slogan." They're not Key Copy Words. They're empty kiss-offs. Key Copy Words translate the Key Thought from strategy talk to customer talk. In other words, they express the Key Thought vividly and strikingly. There's drama inherent in those words. If not, there needs to be! In fact, really moving Key Copy Words capture the Key Thought and the drama of the Naked Idea. MasterCard captures, in its Key Copy Words, the precious moments you savor with, "There are some things in life that money cannot buy," and the utility value of the card with, "for everything else there's MasterCard." These Key Copy Words also sum up the Naked Idea of contrasting what you can purchase with MasterCard with that one priceless moment that money cannot buy.

Key Copy Words are not warmed over strategy talk. In the feature "Creating: Stephen Sondheim. Composer," appearing in the The Wall Street Journal weekend edition of 30 – 31 October 2010, the award winning composer-lyricist says, "A lyric doesn't have very many words in it, so every line is like a scene in a play and that means every word is like a passage of dialogue." Similarly, there are not many words in the Key Copy Words. So every word must communicate completely, richly, and in a compelling manner the Key Thought and Naked Idea. We need to dramatize the Key Thought with Key Copy Words that are steeped in drama.

And The Envelope Please ...

When we think of the Academy Awards and the really great movies we're stuck by how everything comes together with the award winners. They have an intriguing story to tell, the dialogue is rich and vivid, the casting is perfect, the acting performances are brilliant, the music complements and punctuates perfectly, the editing is precise, and so forth. In other words, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, even though each part is capable of winning an Academy Award in its category. Likewise each part of the Campaign Idea needs to contain

drama, and work together, to express the Key Thought vividly, emotionally and strikingly. In this way we behavior-ize the Key Thought to get results in the marketplace.

In Summary ...

MasterCard is a model we should take time study and emulate in striving for a Campaign Idea. Review each part of the Campaign Idea, and think about how each works to dramatize the Key Thought, individually and together.

Key Thought: MasterCard can be used everywhere for all purchases, big and small, so that you can savor what really matters in life.

Naked Idea: Juxtaposition of everything you can purchase with MasterCard, big and small, with that one precious moment that money cannot buy,

Core Dramatization: The core dramatization is the climax. For example, in “Father and Sons playing hockey,” this is the moment of the winning goal and jubilant family members depicting the priceless moment of playing together,

Key Copy Words: “There are some things in life that money cannot buy, for everything else there’s MasterCard.”

BOATS & HELICOPTERS:

For leadership communications we need to dramatize with a Campaign Idea to behavior-ize. You might well consider the following:

- 1) **Identify the Communication Behavior Objective** – Be clear on what behavior you need from your Target Customer to achieve your Business Objectives of sales, market share and profit. Make certain these are legitimate behavior objectives such as conversion, adoption, frequency of purchasing, etc.
- 2) **Solve for the Key Thought** – What must your Target Customer believe in order to consider taking the behavior you seek?
- 3) **Insist on the development of Campaign Ideas** – The Campaign Idea is the vehicle for communicating the Key Thought vividly, emotionally and strikingly. Do not settle for communications that don’t have a Campaign Idea.
- 4) **Feel it** – Agency creative personnel want the client’s gut reaction to their creative work. It makes sense because that’s what we get from our Target Customers, their gut reaction. Put yourself in the shoes of your Target Customer. If you don’t feel it, if it doesn’t move you, find a way to direct the agency to make the idea more productive. If it can’t be made more productive, as in communicating vividly, emotionally and strikingly, then pass on it. The Target Customer has to feel it, and be moved by it, so do we! It’s the way we get our brand to connect through communications.

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