

DISPATCHES™

Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

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EXPECT MORE FROM YOUR TAGLINE

First there was “*Expect More. Pay Less.*” from Target...

Then there was “*Save Money. Live Better.*” from Wal-Mart...

And now there is “*Life. Well Spent.*” from Sears.

About two years ago, there was a lead article in *Advertising Age* with the headline, “Your Taglines Are Crummy. Can’t You Do Any Better?” And in that article the writer called out a number of recently debuted ad campaign taglines that he felt were, well, not all that motivating or memorable for the intended target. Among those was one of the above—the new (at the time) Wal-Mart line about getting more out of life, for less. But the writer left out what is, most obviously, the biggest shortcoming of the Wal-Mart line: it is essentially a copy of the longstanding Target line. Oh sure, the words in the two lines are different; and no doubt Wal-Mart marketers would argue that their new line took their brand to a “higher order” benefit (“Living Better” versus “Expecting More”). But for most of us everyday folks who tend not to think too much about these subtleties, the meanings of the two lines are basically the same (not to mention the same parallel-sounding, two-word sentences in each).

And now, more recently, comes the new Sears line—perhaps constructed a tad more cleverly than the Wal-Mart line, with the double-entendre in the “Well Spent” part. But, again, the takeaway meaning is virtually identical to that of Wal-Mart’s, and indirectly to Target’s line as well. What gives? What would motivate the world’s mega mass merchandise leader, Wal-Mart, to copy one of its lower-volume competitors? And then, what would incite a retailer still struggling to get out of yesteryear, Sears, to copy Wal-Mart? Maybe each had a strategic intent: Wal-Mart intending to neutralize what they long perceived as a strong (and for them, frustrating) Target promise-line; Sears intending to piggyback on the high awareness resulting from Wal-Mart’s heavy ad spending behind “Live Better.” But even if we give hypothetical credit to these strategic intents, it doesn’t change the end-result in the marketplace—namely, that these three lines are so much alike they fail to differentiate one brand from another. Really now, seeing these three in sequence above, would you honestly expect your target to appreciate a *meaningful* and *memorable* difference?

The guy who wrote the *Ad Age* article had it right. More and more we are seeing and hearing brand taglines that neither differentiate nor make more memorable their brand’s benefit...and not just in the retail sector, but in nearly every category. Maybe it’s time to re-visit the basics—those several principles that, when adhered to by agency creative teams (and, more importantly, expected by their brand-builder clients), lead to communication campaign taglines that

meaningfully separate a brand from the pack. So, for this week's Boats & Helicopters we offer an "expect more" checklist of principles for your brand's next campaign tagline.

BOATS & HELICOPTERS—Toward More Competitive & Memorable Campaign Lines

1. The tagline communicates the benefit (or, benefits) contained in the Communication Strategy. This communication may be direct or indirect, explicit or implicit. For example, when Pantene's campaign included the tagline, "For Hair So Healthy It Shines," it was communicating two functional benefits: healthy hair and beautiful hair. When Viagra's campaign line was "Love Life Again," it communicated two benefits: a functional return to a love-life, and an emotional feeling of loving your life again. And when Lipitor said in its tagline, "For cholesterol" it focused squarely on one functional benefit. More than anything else, the tagline must communicate the brand benefits—ideally, this communication states or implies a differentiation...as in HBO's long-lasting line, "It's not TV. It's HBO," or in Tylenol's "Feel Better."

2. The tagline fits with the campaign's Core Dramatization, that key "drama" that communicates the brand's benefits. When Michelin said, for about twenty years, "Because So Much Is Riding On Your Tires," this line fit perfectly with the unusual, iconic visual of the "baby in the tire." And when Gatorade was running its most recent "Is it in you?" campaign, that line matched up well with the core drama of each spot: athletes performing to the max and *sweating* Gatorade (instead of perspiration)—proving that the Gatorade liquid was, indeed, in them.

3. The tagline is consciously "built" to be memorable. In other words, the creative team has transformed the strategic language of the Communication Strategy into provocative customer language—by using a rhythmic pattern in the tagline, by rhyming the line, or by adding some multiple dimension to the line. When the Tide campaign used the line "If it's got to be clean, it's got to be Tide," there was an inherent, repetitive "beat" to the language. And years earlier, when the brand said "Dirt can't hide from intensified Tide," there was a rhyming beat. Even a line like "Clean & Clear and under Control" (which has run for the Clean & Clear brand for more than fifteen years) has a certain repetition—of the consonant "C." All of these creative moves are done with a purpose: to make the tagline easier to recall, as with a line of music that sticks in the mind. In this way the tagline for your brand "walks with" the target, often subconsciously, wherever they go.

4. The tagline links the brand name and the benefits. The Tide examples above are among the best at doing this because in each set of words the *brand name* is the most important noun in the sentence. And it's perfectly clear that Tide's benefit is either removing dirt from clothes, or in later years, getting clothes cleaner. Obviously, too, that Clean & Clear line above employs the brand name consciously to link to at least three or four benefits: cleaner skin, skin clearer of acne, skin condition more under control, and (perhaps) a teen's social life more under control.

5. The tagline only works for your brand—not all others in the category. When Pepcid Complete launched it was originally named Pepcid AC; its introductory campaign tagline only worked for Pepcid: "You Can Be Heartburn Free with New Pepcid AC." That strong benefit could not be communicated nearly as memorably by its number one H2 Blocker competitor: "You Can Be Heartburn Free with New Zantac 75" just doesn't work—the rhyme

fails, and so does the ease of recalling it. Before the Lays potato chip brand launched its Lays Stax line, it was sold only in traditional bags. So, for many years, when Pringles used the tagline, "Once You Pop, You Can't Stop," it only worked for Pringles.

Take a few moments to apply this week's Boats & Helicopters Tagline checklist to your brand's current tagline. Chances are you and your agency creative teams have some opportunities to "do better" with your next new campaign. Maybe you won't end up with a "Just do it," but you sure shouldn't settle for a line that looks and sounds the same as your competitors'. Go ahead, Expect More from your brand's taglines.

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Just a reminder to those of you who are thinking of attending the upcoming Brand Positioning & Communications College April 27-29, 2010 in Kansas City, Missouri but have not yet registered. Space is very limited and we are quickly approaching a full roster. Please give Lori Vandervoort a call to reserve your spot before it is too late to do so. You can reach her at the Central Division Offices at 800-255-9831 (620-431-0770)



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