

# DISPATCHES™

Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

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## IS IT, OR ISN'T IT, AN INSIGHT?

The pursuit of consumer (or customer) insights—particularly for the development of advertising and other communications—continues to be challenging for marketers. Even with newer market research methodologies such as ethnographic studies and “consumer closeness” interviews conducted by marketers themselves, the actual discovery of a legitimate insight is often elusive. Of course, the very fact that an insight is typically something “discovered” (or at least, seen from a fresh perspective) means that it is not an everyday finding. But we think there is a more fundamental stumbling block to the discovery of real insights: coming to a common and helpful definition of what an insight is...or, better yet, what one *looks like* when articulated.

Knowing what real insights look like when written down is important because this is the ultimate form they take when incorporated into a Creative Brief. And, just to review, the reason insights are in the Creative Brief—what insights bring to the creative development party, so to speak—is simply this: to give creative teams a “leverage tool” for the development of *ideas* capable of communicating the brand’s point-of-difference. When articulating these “leverage tools” as insights in the brief, many of our clients use a technique that we also prefer—namely, to express them in consumer/customer language, as if a real consumer were talking. But even with this technique, more times than not what ends up written in the insight section of the brief is not a legitimate insight at all. Instead of an insight, what you more likely see articulated are one or more of the following: a Fact, a Need, or an Accepted Consumer Belief (ACB).

Facts are typically the most obvious non-insights. They appear as something lifted from a Usage and Attitude Study and are almost always expressed with some numbers...such as, “47% of consumers stated they definitely or probably would consider a color contact lens.” But such data rarely gives creative teams leverage for coming up with advertising or communications ideas. Needs, on the other hand, can be a little more deceiving because they are often associated with the development of a new product or a product improvement. Indeed, an overlooked or important emerging need **can be** a legitimate insight for marketers and R&D as they search for *product news ideas*. But need statements such as, “I wish someone would invent a more convenient, less time-consuming way to...” are not much help either for creative teams seeking an in-depth understanding of the consumer’s behaviors and the attitudes driving those behaviors.

Many marketers are familiar with the ACB. In all likelihood, Accepted Consumer Beliefs were at one time newly discovered insights. To say that moms want their babies to have the best possible nutrition so they will have the best chance to be healthy and succeed in school might at one time have been a new finding. But this thinking is so universal and so frequently reflected in marketing communications that it’s safe to say it’s now an accepted belief. Even the accompanying belief that moms want to give their kids good nutrition so they (the moms

themselves) will be seen as a good mother is hardly an insight any more. What mom doesn't want to be perceived as a good mom?

Why is it that Facts, Needs, and ACB's so often show up in place of Insights? To be sure, there are a number of reasons. But among the biggest must be that marketers and their research partners simply do not have (or take) the time required to dig deeper into the consumer's mind and get at those over-looked and under-appreciated *attitudes, dis-satisfactions, and biases* that drive *behaviors* the marketer would like to affect. To us, a legitimate insight, when expressed in a Creative Brief as a leverage tool for advertising or communications ideas must include these core attitudes and resulting behaviors (or non-behaviors).

We said up-front that the pursuit of insights for creative development is challenging for marketers. We include ourselves in that as well! It is not always so easy to articulate an insight, or even to distinguish some insights from some ACB's. But we've found that the more attempts we make at writing down an insight versus an ACB versus a Need versus a fact is helpful in better understanding the differences among these...and, ultimately, at getting more leverage for ideas into the Creative Brief. For this week's Boats & Helicopters, we've assembled an "Insights Quiz" that comprises actual statements from client Creative Briefs. Naturally, not all of the statements qualify as an Insight—some are more like Facts, Needs, and ACB's. Take the quiz and see how many Insights you find. Our answers are at the bottom; you may not agree with all of them, but that's part of the point isn't it? Insights are often hard to pin down.

## **BOATS & HELICOPTERS**

### Insights Quiz: Pick the Legitimate *Insights* (for developing communication)

1. "I wish there was yoghurt that wasn't so sweet – I don't need all the sugar."
2. "42% of all mothers believe that consuming 3 milk products per day provide the right level of calcium for growing children."
3. "As I've gotten older, I seem to have lost the 'relationship' with milk that I used to have as a child... I just don't drink it anymore. I guess I've 'outgrown' milk."
4. "I don't really like the taste of yoghurt, but I eat it anyway because I know it's good for me."
5. "No, I don't drink milk. I find it boring. I'd rather have a Coke or something similar that's a treat or refreshing. No, I don't put Coke or Bud on my cereal. That's silly. Well, then, yes, I guess I DO consume some milk."
6. "When it comes to my favorite foods – like chocolate chip cookies, peanut butter & jelly sandwiches – a soft drink or iced tea just doesn't work for me. For those real pleasure times, there's no substitute for the smoothness of milk."

7. "My kids just won't drink milk anymore. I wish someone would come up with a milk drink that's nutritious and fun. Give me some help here, please."
8. "Nestle Classic is preferred in taste tests 70-30 vs. other yoghurts."
9. "I have my dreams. Some things are out of my hands, but I know I can eat or drink the right stuff to help me get closer to my dreams."

Richard Czerniawski & Mike Maloney

(Answers: Insights=3, 5, 6, 9; ACB's=4; Facts=2,8; Needs=1,7)

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