

DISPATCHES™

Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

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PRINCIPLES OF REAL 360° CAMPAIGNS

In the olden days of marketing—you know, about two or three years ago—there was something called *integrated marketing*. It was a pretty basic concept: take the brand's television advertising-campaign (especially the "tag-line" or "slogan" part of it—like McDonald's "*I'm lovin' it*") and make sure it showed up in as many retail places as possible. So a brand with a catchy slogan that showed up in point-of-purchase materials such as shelf-talkers, promotion display signs, and on cold vault doors in convenience stores was said to have a fully integrated marketing effort.

The perceived advantage of such an effort was obvious—for the marketer, that is. It meant the brand could speak at the target consumer with a single, more memorable message in multiple (retail) places where said consumer would be likely to purchase the brand. And there was the added value for the brand marketer of providing his or her sales force with a single-minded brand story for a given period of time...a story that, presumably, sales people could then focus upon and rally around.

Then, within the past five to ten years, as traditional media like television, radio and magazine print began losing more and more brand media dollars to the new, digital media, integrated marketing evolved into *360° marketing*. As the new name implied, it was no longer sufficient to merely take a television slogan to POP at retail; rather, it was essential to "surround" the consumer in as many places and occasions as possible—instead of just incenting her or him at places where purchasing might occur. It wasn't uncommon to hear marketers talk of delivering brand "sense-surround" or "surround-sound." There is no question that the new media (even that new media that came before the new *social* media) forced marketers to quickly find ways to employ it—or fall behind their competitors. But, here's the funny thing: while it was called "360," it was still all being disseminated one-way—from the marketer to the consumer.

We say this fact was the "funny thing" because the concept of 360° anything inherently involves two-way or multi-ways of communicating. Take, for example, the still very popular personnel assessment approach being used in most large companies these days, the 360° Assessment. No longer is one's annual performance review conducted only by one's boss; it is also conducted by other senior managers, peers, and subordinates who work with the employee being reviewed. In other words, the employee *hears back* from a surrounding set of all the others he or she gets involved with throughout the year. *Hears back...*

All of which leads us to think that, for any campaign to qualify as truly 360, it **must** include elements that stimulate some ways for the brand's consumers to dialogue, to respond back. More and more we are seeing strong examples of such 360° campaigns; and the more we

examine these, the more we see that they tend to follow a number of similar, “best 360° practices” or principles. For this week’s Boats & Helicopters, here’s a short-list of those.

BOATS & HELICOPTERS—For Real 360° Campaigns:

- 1. Start with a legitimate, productive and compelling Consumer Insight.** By “legitimate” we mean that the insight has (a) been discovered through marketplace research and (b) that it is NOT merely a need-statement, a fact, or what many marketers refer to as an accepted consumer belief. Instead it is a deep-seated truth about consumer attitudes and ensuing behaviors that has heretofore been overlooked, under-appreciated, or unexploited. By “productive” we mean that the brand has in its positioning strategy the means of fully taking advantage of the insight for real or perceived differentiation versus its competition.
- 2. Resist the usual—in developing the Idea.** What’s the usual, you ask? Well, despite so many brand teams adding a digital agency or even a social media agency to their teams, by far the majority still assign the initial tasks of co-authoring a creative brief and subsequent development of initial campaign ideas to their big-city advertising agency. But, actually, these days there is a much higher odds of seeing more, diverse ideas by resisting this habit and (a) involving all creative shops in the drafting of the creative brief, and (b) giving all agencies a shot at developing the initial campaign ideas.
- 3. Come up with a transcending Idea.** In other words, come up with an idea that is not merely a TV or magazine concept that, with some tweaking, can be adapted to other media formats. Until recent times, most brand campaign ideas were created by traditional advertising agencies that were television-driven. You might say, then, that the ideas these shops typically presented were intended to be first and foremost *messaging* ideas—as in messages from the brand to the consumer. But today initial campaign ideas no longer need be limited to messages; they might be other primary outputs such as *networks, services, games/interactive diversions, and user-generated content*. The key is, whatever form the Campaign Idea takes in its first generation, to be 360 it should be capable of going well beyond that form.
- 4. Go and be where the consumer naturally touches the brand.** For sure, this means taking the campaign idea to places other than media outlets...to venues, occasions, and peer-group gatherings where consumers might logically use the brand or feel totally at ease thinking of the brand. Some brands, already thinking in these terms, have gone so far as to add a section called “Consumer Touch-Points” to their creative briefs—as a way of “setting up” the eventual rounding out of a real 360° campaign idea.
- 5. Ensure the inclusion of consumer-generated feedback.** While this sounds like an exhortation to include some social media in the 360 activation mix, it is meant to be more than this: to consciously develop and select ideas that have an inherent “itch” that the target consumer yearns to “scratch.” Take the much-touted Dove “Campaign for Real Beauty.” While it centered around showcasing the real beauty of everyday women (rather than the unrealistic beauty of perfectly formed models), it also included a powerful self-esteem “itch” that so many women had been long wanting to “scratch.” And this self-esteem itch fit oh-so-naturally with the honesty of real beauty.

Come to think of it, given this last example, there is something we now know as *real* beauty...and, given these 5 principles, there is also something we now know as *real* 360° campaigns.

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