

DISPATCHESTM

Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

Sunday, October 15, 2006

WINNING AT THE AD COMMUNICATIONS GAME

The development of advertising is a lot like a game. Like every game there are winners and losers. The winners produce ad campaigns that ring the cash register in the immediate term while building brand equity over time. The losers squander their companies' media dollars and cause opportunity losses from poor resource allocation.

Winning can be an individual brand thing – such as in the case when one of the company's brands is successful in producing effective advertising. It can also be an organizational kind of thing where many more of the company's brands experience success in producing winning advertising, rather than not, on a consistent, predictable basis.

The ad game is similar to a game of chance. It's like playing craps or roulette. You put your money down, throw the dice and wait to see the outcome. In other words it is a "probability game." We really don't know what the outcome is going to be from our ad development until its effects have been measured - in the marketplace versus competition! Similar to playing craps or roulette, there are many more losers than there are winners in the ad game. It seems the only consistent winner is the house – or media companies, not the brands themselves.

However, the ad game is a probability game in which we can improve the likelihood of success by adopting best practices and proven principles. It's no secret as to what contributes to the development of effective advertising on both the individual brand and organizational level. We just have to put in the work to adopt best practices and proven principles while building the requisite skills such as coaching to add value to agencies' creative submissions.

Let's roll the dice and play with the probabilities:

- Advance your chance of winning if you are knowledgeable in best practices and proven principles through participation in a seminar, readings on the subject and/or thoughtful analysis of effective advertising;
- Fall back and recast the dice if the organization doesn't share best practices as evidenced by a quality process, common language and appreciation for proven principles such as developing campaigns as opposed to individual spots or ads;
- Advance if you've employed the Creative Brief Scorecard to guide the development of a strategically appropriate, clear brief that provides single-minded direction;

- Fall back if the Creative Brief was not developed in a collaborative effort with your agency (including creative team members) and/or you have not received written confirmation of approval to the brief from the senior most client manager responsible for approving running the advertising and/or the senior most agency manager responsible for delivering the advertising;
- Advance if your brief is guided by a “legitimate” and “productive” Customer Insight;
- Advance if you and the agency have engaged in a “tissue” meeting where they have shared a plethora of Campaign Ideas that dramatize the benefit/belief of the Creative Brief in compelling customer language;
- Fall back if the agency proceeded directly to presenting storyboards and/or print ad comps;
- Fall back again if the agency’s ad submissions do not contain Campaign Ideas or you have nor been able to recognize their Campaign Ideas, or the ideas are not capable of motivating the customer behavior specified in the Marketing Objective;
- Advance if you have developed and exhibited the skill set to coach the agency in adding value to their work product (i.e., the customer communications) by identifying and directing the agency to work on what you don’t see but need to see to make their work more compelling, as opposed to talking about what you see that you don’t like;
- Advance if the agency and you have shared those Campaign Ideas with management responsible for approving the advertising to gain added value from their experience and insights, and concurrence to move forward with comps for dialoguing with customers;
- Fall back if you skip the step to dialogue with customers and proceed to storyboard development or production, or if you take the step with customers and it suggests you do not have a compelling idea;
- Advance if you’ve dialogued with customers to confirm you have a Campaign Idea that clearly communicates the relevant, meaningfully differentiated benefit/belief from the Creative Brief, in a compelling manner;
- Fall back if the storyboard phase fails to showcase the Campaign Idea or lacks impact in either failing to capture and/or engage the customer’s attention, and/or has poor brand linkage;
- Advance if the storyboard captures and showcases the Campaign Idea and an execution that has a high perceived impact;
- Fall back if the finished spot does not capture the storyboard;
- Advance if the finished spot does capture and bring added dimension to the storyboard;

- Fall back if the finished advertising message does not achieve predetermined, acceptable dashboard levels in copy research;
- Advance if the advertising is working in the marketplace in contributing to the achievement of the Marketing Objective;
- Advance if you can identify the communication elements driving the campaign, and have captured them in a pool plan to ensure the continued growth of the Campaign Idea.

Employing best practices and proven principles can help in advancing your probability in winning the ad game – ringing the cash register in the immediate term while building brand equity over time. Importantly, this game needs to be played-out on both an individual brand as well as an organizational level to ensure consistency of success.

BOATS & HELICOPTERS:

Learn to win at the ad communications game. Register to participate in the BDNI Leadership Communications Conference to be conducted 31 October through 3 November 2006 (Tuesday through Friday) in Evanston, Illinois. The conference is made-up of four workshops. These workshops provide best practices, processes and productive tools for developing leadership ad communications. Specific programs and dates are as follows:

- Day 1 - *Discovering* Customer Insights College (Tuesday, 31 October)
- Day 2 - Creative Brief Development College (Wednesday, 1 November)
- Day 3 - Developing the BIG Campaign Idea (and Coaching to Add Value) College (Thursday, 2 November)
- Day 4 – High Impact Communications Execution (and Coaching to Add Value) College (Friday, 3 November)

Register for one or more programs. Go to www.bdn-intl.com or call Lori Vandervoort at 800 255-9831 for more information or to register. But register now since we only have availability for only a few more managers.

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*Please forward any comments regarding the newsletter to Lori Vandervoort at our Central Division Offices of BDN International, 800-255-9831 or 620-431-0780.
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Registration is filling up quickly and time is running out to take advantage of early registration discounts (up to \$1400 per person). Call today 800-255-9831 or 620-431-0780 to register for the upcoming Leadership Communications College which begins Tuesday, October 31st through Friday, November 3rd, 2006 just go to our website www.bdn-intl.com and click on the blue registration at the bottom left of the page. You may also call Lori Vandervoort at 800-255-9831 for additional help in registering.

Have you visited us on our new blog site yet? Let us know what you think. We welcome your comments.

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