

DISPATCHES™

Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

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WORDS THAT “WALK WITH YOU”

“Simply focus on the tagline of your ads. Review the message under your logo and use it as a kind of blood pressure cuff to test the health of your positioning. Is the sign-off just okay, or is it electrifying? Does it have surprise value, or is it incurious? Does it separate your brand from the rest?” (from “*Top of Mind*” in *BRANDWEEK*, by Steve Ulin)

Every so often you’ll find an article in one of the leading U.S. marketing magazines—like the one above—that once again exposes the rampant “lameness” of the taglines or slogans (what we prefer to call Key Copy Words) in so many brand’s communications. Only a couple of months ago, *Advertising Age* featured another, similar article, entitled “*Your Advertising Slogans Are Crummy. Can’t You Do Better?*” This one lampooned some of the feckless and meaningless new campaign slogans that brands have been touting—including Wal-Mart’s “*Save Money. Live Better.*” Maybe you’re thinking you’ve already heard these words many times—or maybe you’re simply confusing Wal-Mart’s new slogan with Target’s long-running one, “*Expect More. Pay Less.*” And it just may be that that confusion is why, as the author of the article states, “meaningless taglines—replete with platitudes and too-cute ploys—hamstring the identities of many major businesses.”

But invariably the authors of such articles exhort committed brand-builders and their agency teammates to go back to the basics and create a set of hard-working, compelling words that have the power to, as one of our esteemed clients likes to say, “*walk with you.*” Words that walk with you are not just memorable; rather, they are **worth** remembering because they, and the Brand they belong to, have some relevant meaning to the person they’re walking with. And, you know, when a customer is “in the market” it sure is a nice advantage to have your brand and its core positioning meaningfully alive in his or her mind.

Like some of these other marketing writers, we have also urged our consulting clients and, from time to time, our *Dispatches* readers to insist upon strong Key Copy Words in their communications campaigns. But we have not taken the opportunity in quite awhile to review in one place those essential traits of compelling, winning ones. So, for this week’s Boats & Helicopters we will catalogue those traits that make the difference between “meaningless taglines” and “words that walk with you.”

BOATS & HELICOPTERS:

1. **Benefit-Delivery** - Job #1 of any slogan or set of key copy words is to communicate the benefit or benefits (if more than one) that have been chosen and specified in the Communication Strategy Statement. Naturally, these benefits are also some or all of the

ones contained in the Brand Positioning Statement. Of course, Communication Strategy language is strategic in nature, not intended for customers to see or hear; key copy word language, however, is creative by design, intended for customers to see and hear. So the benefits may be communicated either directly or indirectly - stated or implied. For example, in the previous Lipitor direct-to-consumer ad campaign, the key copy words "*For choleststerol*" use a creative misspelling of the word cholesterol to directly deliver the single benefit the brand stands for: lower cholesterol. On the other hand, the current Bayer aspirin line of "*Expect Wonders*" provides an indirect way to communicate several brand benefits (pain relief, anti-inflammation, heart attack prevention), while still cleverly recalling Bayer's equity moniker of "The Wonder Drug."

2. **Core Dramatization Synch** - Because key copy words are only one-half of a Campaign Idea (the other half being the core dramatization or visualization that delivers the benefit or benefits), they must fit with that visualization. The words should reinforce what the customer sees. When Viagra launched its DTC ad campaign in the U.S. it chose the simple line, "*Let the dance begin.*" And, as you would expect, the TV and print dramatizations showed couples dancing - with love in their eyes, of course. And what has made the Gatorade key copy words, "*Is it in you?*" work for so long now is that those words fit so naturally with their visualizations of driven, winning athletes sweating Gatorade out of their pores...proving, right before our eyes, that the Gatorade is indeed "in them."
3. **Marketing Objective Support (Call to Action)** - Key copy words that are really hard-working not only deliver the benefit but they also **compel** the customer to do something—not just anything, but to behave in a manner that the marketer has pre-determined. What are some of these pre-determined behaviors? Well, things like inciting more frequent consumption or encouraging entry into the category for the first time or switching from one brand to another. Take, for instance, those universally known and therefore oft-parodied words, now in their 15th year, "*got milk?*" Their whole purpose is to remind milk drinkers of those frequent times when milk makes their favorite eats—like peanut butter sandwiches and chocolate chip cookies - taste so much better. And how about Oreo's current line, "*Milk's Favorite Cookie*" which, almost in reverse, suggests that milk occasions are made best only with Oreos. Then, too, there is the longstanding Aflac insurance line, "*Ask about it at work*" which quite literally encourages a non-user of supplemental insurance to get into the category.
4. **Multiple Meanings** - One of the things that makes certain words walk better with you than others is their cleverness1 - particularly in terms of conveying more than one meaning. But, and this is important, these multiple meanings should fit well with what the brand stands for...it's this fit that makes the customer appreciate the relevance of the words. Tylenol's new campaign line - "*Feel Better*" (out just a matter of months now) - seems especially well-suited for the brand while communicating more than one meaning. After all, Tylenol is the nation's leading pain reliever, so taking it does make one feel better. But Tylenol's compound is also known by many consumers to be safer and less detrimental to the GI tract than things like aspirin - so in choosing Tylenol over aspirin one can actually feel better about his or her choice. Another powerful set of key copy words that was used for a time by Viagra, "*Love life again*" also had a wonderfully

memorable way of meaning two things at once: with Viagra you can actually have a love-life again and you can thereby love life again.

5. **Rhythm** - Really good key copy words almost always share this in common: there is either an actual rhyming or some kind of alliteration to the words or an underlying “beat” to the spoken sound of the words that makes them easy play again and again in one’s mind, much like the chorus of a popular song. For over 15 years the Clean & Clear brand has been using the similar “C” sounds: “*Clean & Clear and under Control.*” More recently the car navigation brand TomTom has been saying, “*Find your way the easy way.*” Even the previous Bayer aspirin campaign, while not using a rhyme, found a way to use parallel sound structure for an effective kind of “beat”: “*Take it for pain. Take it for life.*”

These five traits are, in our judgment, the essential ones. There are others that can also help make your brand’s Key Copy Words easier for customers to “walk with” such as **Emotional Connection**. When you consider that the DeBeers line, “*A Diamond is Forever,*” is now the longest-lasting slogan for a brand in the world, you have to conclude that the emotive power of those four simple words has been a major contributor to their longevity. We hope reviewing these traits will inspire you and your agency partners to demand more from your brand’s tagline/slogan/ Key Copy Words

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