

Cassies 2007 Cases

Brand/Case: Diet Pepsi 2002 - 2007

Winner: Sustained Success—Gold

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Crossover Notes: All winning cases contain lessons that cross over from one case to another. David Rutherford has been identifying these as Crossover Notes since Cassies 1997. The full set for Cassies 2007 can be downloaded from the Case Library section at www.cassies.ca

- Crossover Note 2. Brand Truths.
- Crossover Note 8. Classic Rivalries.
- Crossover Note 14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.
- Crossover Note 20. Emotional versus Rational.
- Crossover Note 21. Likeability.
- Crossover Note 28. Media Learning.

To see creative, go to the Case Library Index and click on the additional links beside the case.

Case Name: Diet Pepsi 2002-2007
Client Name: Pepsi-QTG Canada
Category Entered: Sustained Success
Product: Diet Pepsi

Title: Jeans

Length: 30 second English Television



This commercial opens on a man who turns towards camera.



ANNCR V/O: I see you're drinking Diet Pepsi. Is there anything else youthful you'd like to experience?

The man thinks a moment and then responds.

HERO: Yeah, I'd like my old jeans back.



We cut to a shot of the man checking out his bottom in a pair of skintight jeans.



We see a close-up of the man's bottom as he waddles down the hall at work.



We see him in his office awkwardly attempting to take a seat in his tight jeans.



An older couple sitting across from him watches as he slides off the chair to the floor.



Cut to the man lying on his bed while his wife attempts to get his jeans off. With the last tug we hear a ripping sound.



We cut back to the street corner. The man snaps out of his daydream and says:

HERO: On second thought, I'll stick with my Diet Pepsi.



ANNCR V/O: Taste the one that's forever young. Diet Pepsi.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business Results Period (Consecutive Months):
Start of Advertising/Communication Effort:
Base Period for Comparison:

January 2002 – May 2007
January 2002
Calendar 2001

“Nobody trips over mountains. It is the small pebble that causes you to stumble. Pass all the pebbles in your path and you will find you have crossed the mountain.”

Guo Xiang (c300 AD)

This is a case about stumbling over and then kicking away pebbles to climb a mountain. It’s about learning to crawl cautiously before attempting an enthusiastic sprint.

2002 was good for Diet Pepsi. It won the Cassies Grand Prix for its 1998-2001 campaign, as well as Golds for Packaged Goods and Sustained Success. Since then Diet Pepsi has continued to outgrow Diet Coke, sticking to the belief that a great brand idea—with course corrections—has a longer shelf life than a few TV ads.

The entire story embraces 1998-2007, and for completeness we are including a summary of the 1998-2001 period. However, this submission will focus on what we did to ensure success for 2002-2007, using five executions: “Comb-Over,” “Van,” “Old School,” “Jeans,” and “Make Out.”

Too often, we get bored of our campaigns long before consumers do. Rather than evolution, there’s a tendency to think in terms of revolution. Perhaps we feel it’s easier to come up with a fresh, new idea than keep an established idea vital and relevant. Or sometimes new brand managers want to make their mark. This is a success story about neither of those. It’s about evolution and continuous learning. [Crossover Note 14.](#)

For 2002-2007 Diet Pepsi’s total share grew by 59% while Diet Coke’s grew by 2%. Today Diet Pepsi is neck and neck with Diet Coke and on the verge of being Canada’s favourite diet cola. This compares to 1998, when Diet Pepsi had half of Diet Coke’s share. [Crossover Note 8.](#)

SITUATION ANALYSIS

a) Overall Assessment

Diet Pepsi saw significant growth from 1998 to 2001, with market share growing from 4.8% to 5.8%. This was a direct result of the “Forever Young” campaign. Executions at that time reminded an aging target audience that drinking a Diet Pepsi was an opportunity to celebrate a “moment of youthful liberation” in their increasingly grown-up lives.

Towards the end of 2001, Diet Coke introduced a lemon line extension and a still had a significant share lead over Diet Pepsi. We had to replicate (and surpass) the success of the previous Diet Pepsi work.

b) Resulting Business Objective

This was to surpass Diet Coke long term, and become Canada's favourite diet cola. (This was very aggressive considering that at the end of 2001 Diet Pepsi had a 5.8% volume share against Diet Coke's 9.4%.)

c) Budget Range/Share of Voice

It was expected that SOV would be competitive, and in the early years Diet Pepsi had the advantage. This reversed by 2005-2006 however.

Brand	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Diet Pepsi \$'000	2453	3060	3716	3455	3658	2729
Diet Pepsi SOV	8.3%	11%	12.4%	10.1%	12.8%	18.4%
Diet Coke \$'000	794	1576	4063	5292	3719	896
Coke Zero* \$'000					1386	2328
DC + Coke Zero SOV	2.7%	5.6%	13.3%	10.2%	17.8%	24.0%

Source: ACNielsen

STRATEGY & INSIGHT

a) Analysis and Insight

Back in 1998, Diet Pepsi had identified a core truth: as we grow older we mourn the loss of our youthful side. The 1998-2001 Diet Pepsi advertising leveraged this—using Pepsi's youthful DNA to support the claim that Diet Pepsi will help you remain “young at heart” by giving you permission to celebrate “moments of youthful liberation.” **Crossover Note 2.**

The result was “Dirty Dancing,” “Dancing Can,” “Taxi Unfare,” “Seems Fitting,” and “Spill Saver.” They showcased adults expressing their youthful side in otherwise adult situations—a conference call that turns into a re-enactment of Dirty Dancing, a guy getting caught goofing around in the office, a woman punch-bugging her cab driver, a tailor wedgie-ing a customer, and a thirty-something mom refusing to buy a mini-van.

The 1998-2001 ads were very successful. However, with the new mandate of surpassing Diet Coke and their new product launches, we had to take the campaign to the next level.

One piece of learning from the 1998-2001 work was around the notion of repercussion. In each of the five executions, the “young-at-heart” actions would have led to negative repercussions. For example, in “Dancing Can,” the office worker would have been reprimanded by his boss. Consumers told us that the actions, while amusing and youthful, verged on immaturity; that the puerile antics of youth are sometimes embarrassing. The big a-ha came when we realized that while our target mourned the loss of youthfulness, they didn't want to revert to it; they were happy in their current state. We needed to showcase youthful behaviour without repercussions and immature overtones.

Armed with this insight, we took a different approach to the “moments of youthful liberation” strategy.

Instead of presenting possible “real life” situations we created nostalgic, youthful, “what-if” situations. This allowed us to create risk-free youthful moments without any negative ramifications.

Set to the Flock of Seagulls classic "*I Ran (So Far Away)*" 2002's launch spot, "*Comb-Over*," tapped into the nostalgia a balding man has for his 1980s hairstyle—allowing him to imagine life today with an outrageous coiffure. It finishes on the realization that although happy for the consequence-free moment of youthful liberation, he's better off the way he is today.

"*Comb-Over*" was an instant success. Consumers loved it, the agency loved it, the client loved it, even the industry loved it. It became the gold standard for Diet Pepsi, and ran from 2002 to 2003. Suddenly, it all seemed so easy. We had confidence in the insight, the strategy and the executional direction. We could produce pool outs until consumers told us they were bored. So we went to work ... and drove straight into a road block.

The preliminary concepts we developed to follow "*Comb-Over*" all appeared to deliver the strategy. Yet time and again the ideas simply did not resonate with our target in focus groups. There was some magic missing.

As we compared the new executions to "*Comb-Over*" we realized where we were slipping up. We had never really taken the time to understand why "*Comb-Over*" had resonated so well. We thought we had a simple premise—highlight some embarrassing aspect of the 80s, explore its ridiculousness in today's world, close on contentment with the current lot in life, all backed by an iconic track (a sure fire way to “transport” the viewer back). However, there was a devil in the details!

In 2003 after we produced a second ad (which never ran and as such is not included in this submission) about a woman hankering to be bionic like the 1970s icons. She imagines her bionic abilities proving useful in her current life. The implicit takeaway was that you would be better off today with these elements from your youth. This was the opposite of "*Comb-Over*" which strove to say that your life is actually fine without having to recreate your youthfulness. This led to our first criterion:

1. The overall implication should be that while reminiscing about some of the bizarre aspects from our youth is enjoyable, they are better left in the past.

This led us to develop "*Van*" in 2004 which spoofed 1980s souped-up vans complete with racy paint jobs and outlandish sound systems. It also led to our second learning. Not everyone, especially women, aspired to having a tricked out passion wagon. We quickly realized that this youthful want was not a universal desire! Hence criterion number 2:

2. The featured scenario had to be relevant, something to which much of the target could relate. It had to be an element from their past to which many had at one time aspired.

Our third piece of learning was the result of a false hypothesis we had. We theorized that we had gone too far in the absurdity and it was this silliness that consumers were reacting against in our 2003 and 2004 research. We tested more restrained ideas and they got even worse evaluations. The target was embarrassed and not charmed by the action. Hence criterion number 3:

3. Ridiculousness was good – if we strayed too close to the truth we would incite embarrassment, not amusement.

If we transgressed any of these rules the charm of the spot was jeopardized. The target would feel embarrassed about their past, or worse yet perceive Diet Pepsi drinkers as sad losers seeking to regain the glory of their youth.

“*Old School*” and “*Jeans*” ran in 2005 and 2006 respectively—one leveraging the 1980s B-Boy craze while the other revisits our (former) love of tight jeans. At last we were beginning to hit our stride. Our most recent execution, “*Make Out*,” launched in 2007 and tapped into teenage make-out habits.

b) Business Strategy

We needed to get more than our fair share (in a declining carbonated soft drink segment) at the expense of Diet Coke. To do that, we needed to entice as many Diet Coke drinkers to our franchise as possible, and attract “Transitioners” – maturing Pepsi drinkers who were looking to cut back on the calories.

c) Communication Strategy

Our overarching goal was to demonstrate that “Diet Pepsi is about moments of youthful liberation.” We sought to enhance and improve the campaign’s emotional resonance with the target through ongoing research. [Crossover Note 20](#).

CREATIVE EXECUTION

2002/03 – “*Comb-Over*” As discussed, this tapped into the nostalgia of a balding man.

2004 – “*Van*” (set to Loverboy’s “*Working for the Weekend*”) showcased a man’s desire to have a ridiculously “smokin” vehicle. As he pulls up to the local school, music blaring, to pick up his embarrassed kids, he realizes how foolish he must look.

2005 – “*Old School*” (set to MC Hammer’s “*U Can’t Touch This*”) portrays a man’s desire to kick it “Old School.” His attempt at break-dancing fails hysterically.

2006 – “*Jeans*” (set to Foreigner’s “*Hot Blooded*”) plays off the ludicrousness of super tight 80s jeans. Our protagonist struts his stuff in a pair of skin-tights! Having his wife pry him out of the pants seals the decision for him – he’s better off today.

2007 – “*Make Out*” (set to Bonnie Tyler’s “*Total Eclipse of the Heart*”) takes us back to the time when we would make out for hours anywhere, at any time, but reminds us that such behaviour would be quite inappropriate today.

Case Name: Diet Pepsi 2002-2007
Client Name: Pepsi-QTG Canada
Category Entered: Sustained Success
Product: Diet Pepsi

Title: Make Out

Length: 30 second English Television

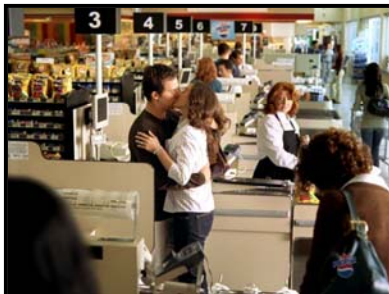


We open on a couple in a parking lot..

ANNCR V/O: I see you are drinking Diet Pepsi. Is there anything else youthful you would like to experience?

The woman thinks for a moment and says:

WOMAN: Yeah, I'd like to make out like we used to.



We see the couple making out at a checkout line of a grocery store.



We cut to the couple making out at a parent-teacher night while the teacher looks on in amazement..



We then see our couple making out at a formal dinner as other party-goers look on in shock.



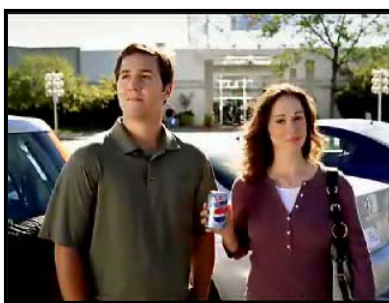
We see our couple making out in their SUV. We pull back to reveal they're holding up a drive thru with their antics.



An embarrassed teenage clerk is unable to fill their order .



We see an unimpressed trucker bang on the car window, having lost his patience with the delay.



We cut back to the woman. She snaps out of her daydream and says:

WOMAN: On second thought, I'll stick to my Diet Pepsi.



ANNCR V/O: Taste the one that's forever young. Diet Pepsi.

MEDIA EXECUTION

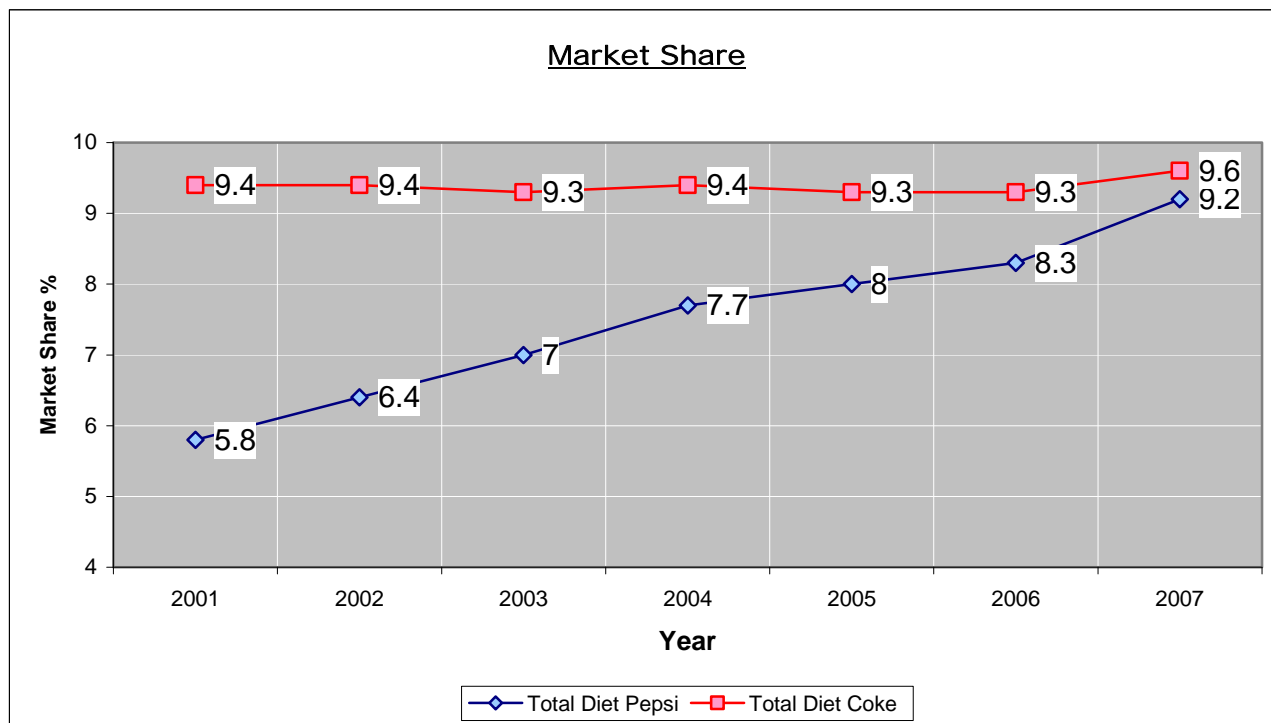
Our message was purely emotional. To do justice to what had proven to be a powerful positioning, television was the lead medium.

We were striving to stand out in a heavily supported category so we wanted talk value and impact. We determined to sacrifice continuity for presence in high profile event programming. We focused on high visibility events – the Super Bowl, the Academy Awards and the Grammy Awards. **Crossover Note 28**. We complemented this with prime, cherry-picked programming supported by highly targeted specialty cable and print.

In order to bridge TV gaps we ran promotional radio to keep the brand top of mind. We also layered in more youthfully spirited, experiential elements such as sponsorship of the 2006 Canadian tour of the 80s rock band, INXS.

BUSINESS RESULTS

Diet Pepsi's market share began to grow faster than in previous years. From 1998 to 2001, it had gone from 4.8% to 5.8%. By 2007, it grew to 9.2%, virtually catching Diet Coke at 9.6%.

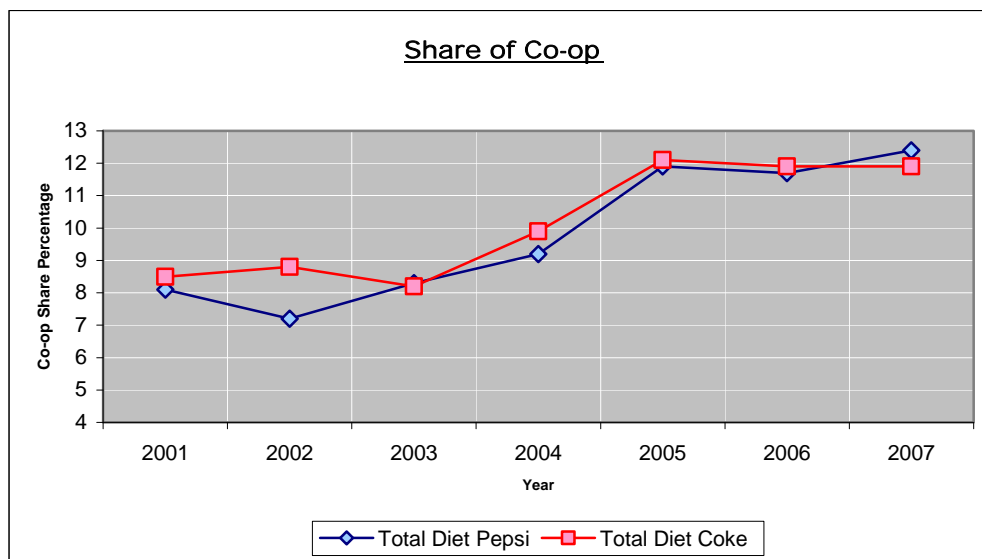


Source: ACNielsen, English Canada. Diet Pepsi includes Base Brand, Caffeine Free & Twist.
Diet Coke includes Base Brand, Caffeine Free & Lemon

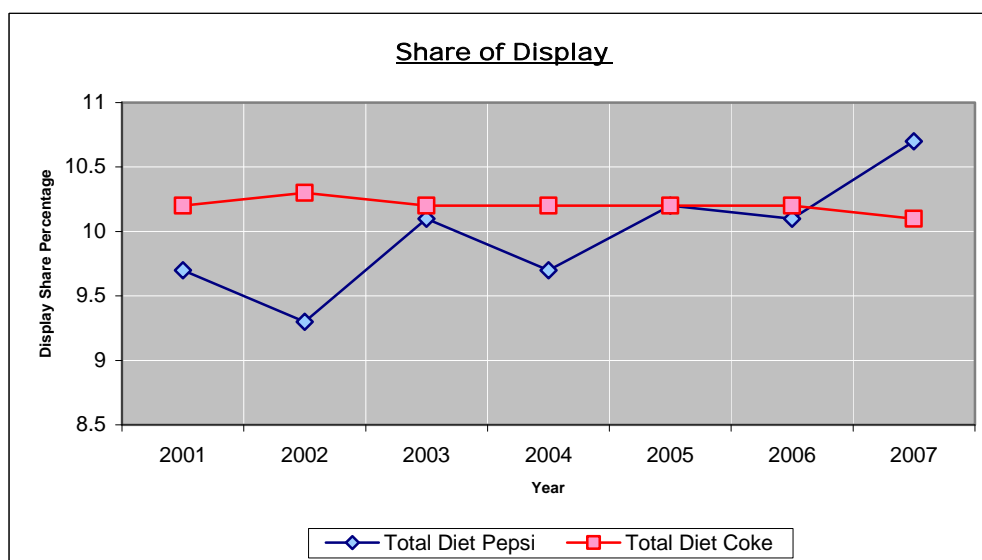
CAUSE & EFFECT BETWEEN ADVERTISING AND RESULTS

Media Spend: This is not the variable. See the exhibit at the beginning of the case.

Coop and Display: The brands have matched each other's relative spends on this.

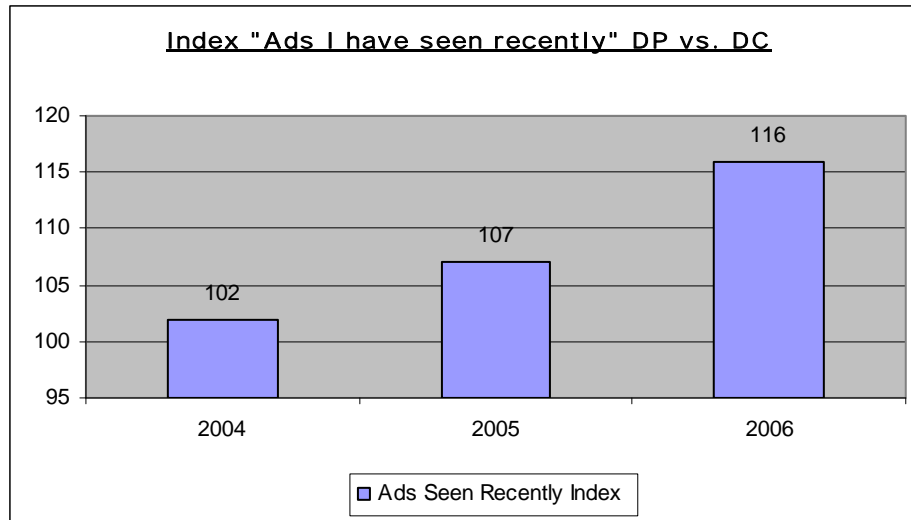


Source: ACNielsen



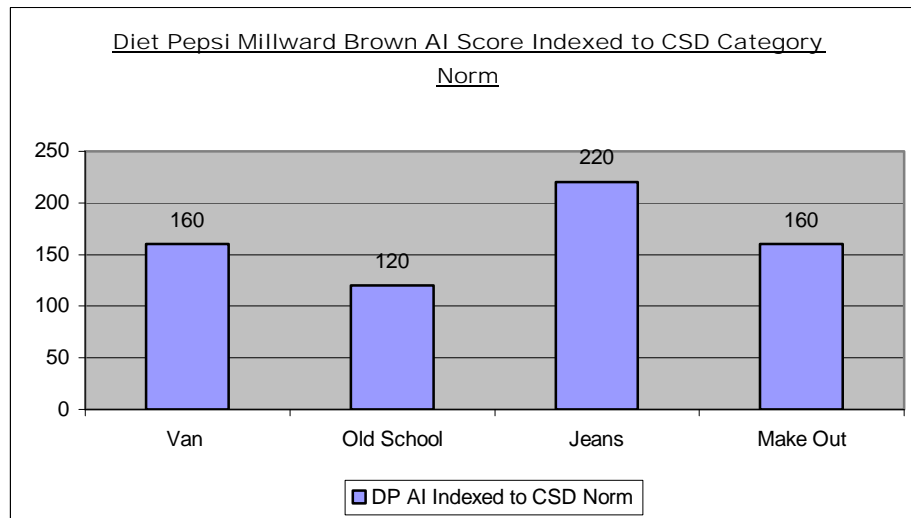
Source: ACNielsen

Tracking: For awareness (current data available from 2004 onwards due to methodology change in 2003), Diet Pepsi over-indexes against Diet Coke on “ads I have seen recently.”



Source: iTrac 2004-2006

Creative Testing: Millward Brown's Link methodology (used from "Van" onwards) supports that the ads were winners with strong AI scores (Awareness Index, predictive of in-market success):



Source: Millward Brown

Most impressively, after over 5 years, 90% of the target agreed that they'd like to see more ads from the "Forever Young" campaign (Source: 2007 Millward Brown Link Evaluation). [Crossover Note 21](#).

Conclusion

For an advertising campaign to continually move the needle—not just in growing the business but also in appeal and likeability—means that it must be doing something right. The lesson for us was to continually revisit the work, each time asking, "what's working and what's not," and then making course corrections. It's all about dusting off after little stumbles, because once the pebbles are cleared away, it's easier to climb the mountain.

INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2007

[For Diet Pepsi

Each year I update these Crossover Notes. If you've read this cover note before, you can skip it. If not, it's worth a quick read.

My career started with a seven year sentence in brand management at Procter & Gamble. Then I clambered up the ladder at O&M, becoming President and later Vice Chairman, all of this in Toronto. Then I set up as a consultant.

P&G and O&M were passionate about "lessons learned" from advertising effort, and so was I. All the Cassies cases have great lessons in them, though at the pace we work today these lessons are not necessarily easy to find.

I was thinking about this as I was editing Cassies 1997, and I had the idea for Crossover Notes. They started as bite-sized footnotes pointing out lessons that "cross over" from one case to another. Then, as time had gone by, they've evolved to what we have today.

You can use Crossover Notes in two ways. Although they weren't designed as a crash course in advertising, they are worth reading as a whole. You can also dip into them selectively. The headings on the next page will help you choose.

I've tried to be even-handed on controversial issues, but here and there you will sense my point of view. For this I thank the Cassies for not editing their Editor.

We now have close to 200 published cases. And I hope I've helped pass some of the learning on.

David Rutherford

Toronto: January 2008.

For more on brand-building see *Excellence in Brand Communication*—by leading Canadians from across the marketing and advertising spectrum. See also *Vulcans. Earthlings and Marketing ROI*, commissioned by the ICA, and published by Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

See www.ica.adbeast.com.

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The Notes for this case are marked ✓ and come next.

Note: Cassies uses “advertising” in its broad sense. It not only stands for advertising through the main media of broadcast, print, out of home etc. Where appropriate, it also stands for Direct Marketing, PR, Interactive Marketing, Buzz Marketing, Event Marketing, Product Placement etc.

DIET PEPSI CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2007

- 2. Brand Truths.** Successful advertising (in fact all successful communication) resonates with its audience. As a marketer, you may want people to believe that you have the best-tasting coffee, but simply saying, “I have the best-tasting coffee” will not usually get the resonance you need. One school of thought believes in saying the obvious as loudly and even as crassly as you can. We could call it the Bad Boy syndrome. Another has led to the idea of Brand Truths. These operate on a deeper level than simple claims. One of the top UK agencies described the process as “we interrogate the product until it confesses its strength.”

I was once the Brand Manager on Tide, and when we were asked, “What does Tide stand for” we said, “Superior cleaning. Not whitening. Not Brightening. Not Fabric Care. Superior *cleaning*.”¹

Superior cleaning was the religion on Tide, and Tide delivered, despite the cliché that all detergents are alike. But this was only a glimmer of the Brand Truth. If you “interrogated” Tide the most startling truth was the *intense belief* of Tide users. This came to life in the immensely successful “Two for One Swap” campaign. Hidden cameras watched as women who had just bought Tide were offered two boxes of another good detergent in exchange. They adamantly refused, delivering off-the-cuff endorsements that no copywriter could ever have written. The campaign ran for years, and only came to an end because of its success—women knew it so well that the “candid camera” interview became impossible. Many Brand Truths are also insights, and for a list see [11. The Eureka Insight](#) and [12. Changing the Goalposts](#).

- 8. Classic Rivalries.** Examples in the Cassies are as follows:

- Canadian versus Blue. Cassies I, III, and 2001.
- Energizer versus Duracell in Cassies I, and also Cassies 2005.
- Pepsi or Diet Pepsi versus Coke. Cassies I, 2002, 2005, 2007
- Dove versus Ivory. Cassies III.
- Richmond Savings versus the banks. Cassies III.
- Lipton versus Campbell. Cassies 2001.
- Sunlight versus Tide. Cassies 99 and 2001.
- Labatt Bleue versus Molson Dry. Cassies 2002.
- Listerine versus Scope. Cassies II and 2002.
- Desjardins versus the banks. Cassies 2004.
- Cottonelle versus Charmin. Cassies 2004. And as Cashmere in Cassies 2007.
- Dentyne versus Excel in Cassies 2005.
- workopolis versus Monster in Cassies 2006.
- SpongeTowels versus Bounty in Cassies 2007.

- 14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.** When I was at P&G and O&M, all the big advertisers and their agencies thought in terms of campaigns. If you presented new advertising, and got the comment “that’s just a one-off,” it was the kiss of death.

¹ P&G defined “what the brand stands for” by a document they called the Creative Strategy. In those days, if anyone dreamt that the Tide Creative Strategy should include whitening, brightening etc. it was seen as an offence against all that was holy. Since then, P&G has changed its views, and now takes a broader view—as recent Tide advertising for fabric care and Tide-with-Febreze attest.

In those days, a campaign was usually defined by television. There would be one commercial, or a pool, refreshed over time. Nowadays, a campaign is more complicated. But it's fair to say that we (clients and agencies) still believe that campaigns are the right/best way to build a brand.²

Recently, the idea of “the brand relationship” has taken hold. This is the notion that we treat brands like friends.

Relationships can be very different, but for most people, the good ones are based on things like trust and consistency. This has led to the idea that brands should present a consistent – though not dull and predictable -- face over time (assuming, of course, that they are standing for the right thing.)

There is still the question, though, of what is a campaign? At one time, packaged goods advertisers (and some agencies) believed in strict pool-outs. But campaigns don't have to be so formatted. The following list doesn't pretend to be exhaustive (some types of campaigns are hard to categorize) but it starts at rigid end of the spectrum, and extends to the holistic. All versions have their successes and failures, and I hope this listing will help free up some of the rigid thinking:

- **Strict Pool-Out.** Campaigns like "Who wants Gum? I do. I do." They have a repeated format, often with a USP demo or slogan. Some people think this type of advertising is passé. Others remember it fondly.
- **Hall of Fame Pool-Out.** Some think pool outs are dull, predictable and clichéd. Not necessarily. The 20-odd year campaign for Hamlet cigars in the UK is rigidly formatted, but spectacularly creative and effective. Familiprix is the same.
- **Situational Pool-Out.** These don't have the format of the strict pool out but still have a clear connection between executions. Diet Pepsi's "Forever Young" and Pro•Line's "Anyone can Win" are examples. Huggies "Happy Baby" is one of the longest-running. Clearnet/Telus is in this camp too.

This category also includes campaigns based on spectacular executions like "Manhattan Landing" and "Face" for British Airways, though it can be hard to keep coming up with ideas this big. Kit Kat is a different type of example, where the "break" continues, and the challenge is to keep it up to date.

- **Icons.** These can anchor a campaign (Maytag Man, Marlboro Cowboy) or be a property (Tony the Tiger, Pillsbury Doughboy). Some see icons as yesterday's idea, but I think that's a mis-call. Absolut Vodka uses its bottle as an icon, and it's brilliant. The Familiprix pharmacist is hilariously effective.
- **Spokes-people, and Spokes-animals.** Dave Thomas and Colonel Sanders, god rest their souls, are examples, as is Morty the Bison for Manitoba Telecom.
- **Storytelling with continuing character(s).** The Oxo family in the UK is a long-running example. Bartles and Jaymes was a wonderful success story in the US. Personalities have been very successful in Quebec e.g. the Pepsi and Listerine Grand Prix winners in Cassies I and II.

² A young creative friend once said to me, “where does the belief in campaigns come from? Young people want constant change. What's wrong with a stream of one-off ideas?” This would have been heresy at one time, and perhaps still is. But it's food for thought.

- **Music-Based.** Music sometimes goes beyond a supporting role, and becomes part of the brand character. Soft Drinks, Cars, Fast Food, and Beer have all built campaigns this way. In packaged goods, becel's "young at heart" campaign would be an example.
- **Consistent "Voice and Attitude."** These campaigns are held together by something more subtle. Perhaps the most impressive was Volkswagen in the 60s. Individual executions were different (serious, comical, ironic, dramatic) but they all had the Volkswagen voice and attitude. Brands like Nike are in this category. Benneton is an extreme example.
- **Same core message. Customized execution.** To people with a strict "pool-out" mindset, this hardly qualifies as a campaign at all. But the overall effect can be powerful. The best Cassies example is the 4-year Dove Case from Cassies III.³

The campaign started in late 91 with "Litmus," a strikingly simple demonstration, with no people or voice over—just haunting music, and some supers. Then came a raucous candid-camera commercial of focus group women doing the litmus test. Then a talking-head commercial with the scientist who invented Dove. Then another demonstration, similar to "Litmus," with the haunting music again.

The first three executions are so different that some people would not have approved them. Given the subsequent results, that would have been a pity. What holds it all together? The continuing promise of mildness. A scrupulously honest and consistent brand character. And an element of surprise in each execution. Note that there are no continuing slogans or visual icons.

More generally, It's an open question whether today's obsessively short-term attitude is causing us to lose the drive we once had for great campaigns. I hope not.

20. Emotional versus Rational. There's a great quote that "a brand is a bundle of meanings." Many of these meanings are rooted in emotion rather than reason, so if we showed a Vulcan a typical Creative Strategy (especially one from the packaged goods companies in their heyday) he would be puzzled. The key consumer benefit is always rational, and the rationale is, well, rational too. Our Vulcan would say that it is not logical to be so logical, because Earthlings are, well, not logical.

It's worth asking why Creative Strategies are this way. First, there's the tendency to assess issues analytically rather than intuitively. This was fertile ground for the ideas of Claude Hopkins, writing *Scientific Advertising* in 1922, and Rosser Reeves, writing *Reality in Advertising* in 1960. The resulting hard-sell advertising appealed to the mentality of many North American advertisers. Hard sell then had enough successes to make the beliefs self-fulfilling. Selective perception expunged the failures.

Others, led by Bill Bernbach, argued for a more intuitive approach, and recently the "emotion" approach has shone more brightly on the radar screen. But even today, there are Creative Strategies that tuck emotional benefits in under Brand Character, or don't mention them at all. I used to make that mistake. When I was Brand Manager on Tide we said implacably that Tide stood for cleaning. At an unwritten

³ Another example is Budweiser in Quebec. Its 10-year campaign has always been centred on rock 'n roll, but it has always evolved.

level, we knew that Tide also stood for *trust*, but this emotional benefit did not appear in the Creative Strategy—and we could easily have overlooked it.

Make sure your mental model of advertising rings true to what people are like. Often, we are too rational. John Bartle of Bartle Bogle Hegarty (the UK agency famous for creativity *and* effectiveness) calls for us to think in terms of the

~Unique Emotional Proposition~

Agencies and clients are factoring this in more than they used to, but it still doesn't get pride of place. Given what we are learning about Emotional Intelligence, this seems illogical, and lord knows what a Vulcan would say. Here are winners that *could* have focused on the rational, but chose emotion:

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cassies III | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chrysler NS Minivan. It had functional improvements, but the campaign was heavily infused with emotional benefits. • Philadelphia Cream Cheese. The Angel captured "permission to indulge," and the rational benefit of 60% less fat than butter or margarine. • Richmond Savings. The Humungous Bank campaign. |
| Cassies 99 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGF Funds. The "what are you doing after work" campaign charmed its way into people's pocketbooks. • becel. With hard-hitting print, and a strong doctors/nutritionist plan, it reached #1. Then they added TV, but regulators forbade hard-hitting claims. This led to the "young at heart" campaign, and spectacular long-term business growth. • Clearnet MiKe. It appealed to the self-image of its pragmatic, project-driven target audience. • Fido. It includes rational benefits, but the main pull is user-friendliness. • St-Hubert tapped into chez-nous. • Sunlight captured the joy of getting dirty. • Wonder Bread. They could have sold on taste + nutrition, but instead used the joy of childhood. |
| Cassies 2001 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joe's Rant made us proud. • Clarica made it all look simple. • Clearnet gave us the future is friendly. • Kraft tugged at our heartstrings with KD moments. |
| Cassies 2002 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manitoba Telecom gave us Morty, the talking bison. • The Bank of Montreal and Scotiabank made us smile. • Campbell's gave us the less-than-perfect family. • CFL fanned the flames of rivalry. • Diet Pepsi (also in 2007) gave us back our youth. • ED made us think. • Home Furnaces tickled the fancy of an older audience. • Nautilus gave us joie de vivre. • Philly showed us that a less-than-perfect angel was still working. • Pine-Sol took a quirky look at keeping the house clean. • Sidekicks gave the family a helper. |
| Cassies 2003 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sloche appealed to teen rebelliousness. • The SAAQ campaign scared us to death. • Manitoba Telecom showed that Morty the bison was still working. • Toyota Matrix went for emotion rather than reason. • Sola Nero made wine youthful and hip. |

- Viagra was, well, Viagra.
- The United Way cast off its “administrative” image.
- Cottonelle talked to women as women.
- Gaz Metro dealt with the fear of Gas.
- Prairie Milk appealed to teens’ need for growth.
- Toyota Sienna positioned itself as the cool minivan.
- Smoking is just “Stupid.”
- Energizer Lithium found that the rational approach was not working.
- Coricidin II had to find a way to get a blood pressure benefit across.
- Activia had to do the same with the “digestive” benefit.
- Run for the Cure, not surprisingly, found that emotion was appropriate.
- IKEA appealed to the need to feel *smart*.
- Yaris found a way to add aspirational appeal to a sub-compact.
- Eterna did something similar with film and Directors of Photography.
- Pourquoi Commencer used harrowing images to reach drug users.
- Monster appealed to our feelings about our bosses.
- Wonder Plus clearly linked it to the emotional appeal of Wonder Bread.
- Reversa appealed to Cougars in a decidedly non-rational way.
- SpongeTowels sold a rational benefit emotionally.
- Never Stop Milk in the Prairies consciously avoided a rational sell.
- Honda Quebec and La Parisienne did likewise.

28. Media Learning. Many years ago, studies (mainly in packaged goods) led to the idea of “effective frequency.” It was based on two broad notions:

- a) That advertising (assuming the creative was effective) had its best effect after 2-3 exposures in a purchase cycle.
- b) That exposure beyond this led to diminishing returns.

This thinking matched the agreed learning theory i.e. that it takes repetition before a message sticks, but then boredom sets in, and repetition does not increase learning much, if at all.⁴ This thinking has dominated media planning (particularly in TV) for years, and I think many planners still embrace it today, not necessarily knowing its origins. It has gone by names such as effective frequency and 3+ planning. The idea is to try to give the audience 2-3 exposures in a purchase cycle, without wasting excessive frequency on them.⁵

Other models also exist. There are “pulsing” models. There’s an “impact” model for making a big splash. And there are markets like beer, with heavy seasonal spending, and their own notions about the best way to schedule effort.

Then, in the mid 90s, John Philip Jones—formerly of JWT UK/Europe and for some time Professor of Communications at Syracuse University—published a study that seemed to say that *just one* TV exposure (in the week before purchase) was enough. See **13. Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect.**

⁴ There are even findings that continued exposure *depresses* learning, though I find that hard to believe.

P&G built very strong brands on its soap operas, and those daytime viewers saw the same ads repeatedly.

⁵ It has traditionally been hard to avoid the excess frequency, especially with heavy TV viewers.

This put the cat among the pigeons. Some have embraced the thinking. Some have attacked it. Jones's findings were in harmony with those of Erwin Ephron (see the Pepsi paper in 2002) and the whole field has come to be called Recency Planning.

It proposes lower weekly weights than have historically been recommended, with longer weekly duration. TV Programmes are also selected to avoid high frequency on the same shows. This is drip-drip rather than impact, and it flies in the face of some long-held beliefs.

It seems to have worked for Pepsi, but detractors say that it has its failures too. For more on this controversial topic, the WARC website is invaluable—with papers by Jones, Lodish, and McDonald being a good place to start.