

Cassies 2007 Cases

Brand/Case: SpongeTowels (Quebec)

Winner: Off to a Good Start—Silver

Client Credits: Kruger Products (formerly Scott Paper)

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Agency Credits: PALM Arnold Communication

(team effort)

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 1. What a Brand Stands For.
- Crossover Note 2. Brand Truths.
- Crossover Note 3. Core Equity versus Price and Promotion.
- Crossover Note 6. Should the product be improved?
- Crossover Note 8. Classic Rivalries.
- Crossover Note 11. The Eureka Insight.
- Crossover Note 20. Emotional versus Rational.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business Results Period (Consecutive Months): September 2006 – May 2007
Start of Advertising/Communication Effort: September 2006
Base Period for Comparison: December 2005 – September 2006

The agreement with Kimberly-Clark that authorized Scott Paper to use the ScotTowels brand for a ten-year period was coming to an end in 2007. A 3-year transition from ScotTowels to SpongeTowels had been initiated in the Fall of 2005, and it was now time for SpongeTowels to live by itself for the last year of the transition. This meant that SpongeTowels had to deal with a number of challenges:

- A formidable competitor in P&G's Bounty.
- Quebecers' long attachment to the ScotTowels name (it was the category name for paper towels).
- The prospect that Kimberly-Clark might re-introduce ScotTowels as a competitor.

New advertising managed to increase market share by almost a full point—quite an achievement given the environment, and with the additional fact that this is a category where the purchase decision is often linked to price. **Crossover Note 3.**

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

a) Overall Assessment

At the start of this case Bounty had 17.3% of the market and SpongeTowels/ScotTowels 16.9%.¹ **Crossover Note 8.** Awareness of Bounty was 31%, while awareness of SpongeTowels/ScotTowels was 40%. Awareness of SpongeTowels alone was 15%, indicating that the heritage of ScotTowels was being transferred.² Repeated research also that showed that consumers, in blind testing, preferred SpongeTowels on a number of functional measures. However, Bounty continued to enjoy a *perception* of superiority, and was the favourite brand..³

Bounty long-term advertising strategy had been to present comparative product tests focusing on strength, thickness and absorbency – and it had borne fruit. Bounty was also seen as the leader for innovation. Several “improvements,” (sometimes just a change in embossed pattern), coupled with a demonstration in advertising, had contributed to the image of brand superiority.

Compared to this, ScotTowels/SpongeTowels advertising had historically disassociated itself from the clinical comparative approach, choosing to reinforce the emotional relationship with the brand. SpongeTowels became the users' ally in taking care of big messes. This did create an emotional bond, but it did not manage to surpass Bounty's image of perceived product superiority. **Crossover Note 20.**

¹ ACNielsen, Sales Tonnage Equivalent Case, 36 weeks ending Sept.2, 2006

² Burak Jacobson, Paper Towel Tracking Research – Québec, Spring 2006

There was also the potential re-arrival of ScotTowels to consider, and the price appeal of Private Label. Bounty and SpongeTowels shared more than a third of the market, but Private Label controlled almost half.² Furthermore, a 2006 study of Kruger Products revealed that consumers allotted on average only 11 seconds to their purchase decision.³

As a result of all this, SpongeTowels had to review its creative strategy and find a more aggressive way to demonstrate product superiority. **Crossover Note 6.**

b) Resulting Business Objectives

The objective was to continue reinforcing the SpongeTowels name, while putting forward a differentiating attribute that no other brand could appropriate - obviously with a view to increasing volume and market share.

c) Budget Range/Share of Voice

In 2006, media investments for the category represented approximately \$1.8 million. SpongeTowels had a share of voice of 60%, as against Bounty at 32%. However, the SpongeTowels investment versus 2005 was down by 26%.⁴

STRATEGY AND INSIGHT

a) Analysis and Insight

Consumer research and a segmentation study showed that a strong proportion of the target (women 25-54) saw paper towels as a practical product for cleaning up messes in the home. Nothing more. Bounty-like demonstrations of one product's superiority over another did not really speak to them. Day-to-day situations were much more effective.

There was also the fact that the SpongeTowels name was difficult for Francophones to pronounce, and conferred the identity of a non-Quebec product.

It was time for a creative platform that would solidly anchor SpongeTowels in the minds of consumers. It also had to convey a "Québécois" identity. **Crossover Note 1.**

Before the transition in name, the embossed pattern had been identified as a unique technical benefit of the product and named "spongie-pochettes" (sponge pockets). These pockets suddenly became significant because:

The secret is in the pocket! **Crossover Note 11.**

It was a modest technological change, but it differentiated the product, was ownable, and signalled absorbency and strength. **Crossover Note 2.**

³ Envirosell, Bathroom Tissue and Paper Towel Shopping Behaviour Highlights, March 2006

⁴ Nielsen Media Canada, Paper Towel Category Spending, 2005, 2006

b) Communication Strategy

We had to demonstrate the superiority of SpongeTowels while preserving the emotional link that had connected the brand and female Quebec consumers for so long.

Here come the sponge pockets!

The “spongie-pochettes” (sponge pockets) were a clever way to Frenchify the “sponge” portion of the name, but we still had to demonstrate their role.

So we created a “Spongie-in-chief,” a personified sponge pocket who would demonstrate the super absorbency of his sponge pocket friends, and in turn the effectiveness of the entire army of sponge pockets.

CREATIVE EXECUTION

Spongie makes a splash

The new campaign launched in September 2006. A television ad featured children in a spa reacting to their mother showing up with a jug of juice. She accidentally spills it. To the children’s great joy, a character appears: it’s Spongie! He reassures the mother, then jumps on the spill and cleans it in an instant. Then he falls in the spa with the children, absorbing all the water. The message ends on an image of several miniature “spongie-pochettes” shown inside the packaging.

“Spa”



Spongie makes waves again!

In early 2007 a second wave took the form of two additional 15-second spots. A first ad features a woman with plumbing problems. Spongie seals the leak while waiting for the plumber to arrive. The second spot has a couple celebrating the girlfriend's birthday, with the inexperienced boyfriend opening a magnum of champagne with predictable results. Spongie comes to the rescue by replugging the bottle. These two commercials introduced a highly evocative signature for the Quebec consumer: "Absorbant. Pas à peu près." (It translates as "Unbelievably absorbent" in a colloquial tone).

In the second creative phase, we also strengthened the connection with Quebecers, with Spongie being played by the well-known Quebec comic François Massicote. Not only did he make the dramatization of the "spongie-pochettes" possible, he allowed us to give Spongie a more active role and to interact more with consumers.

"Plumber"



Josée di Stasio sponges it up!

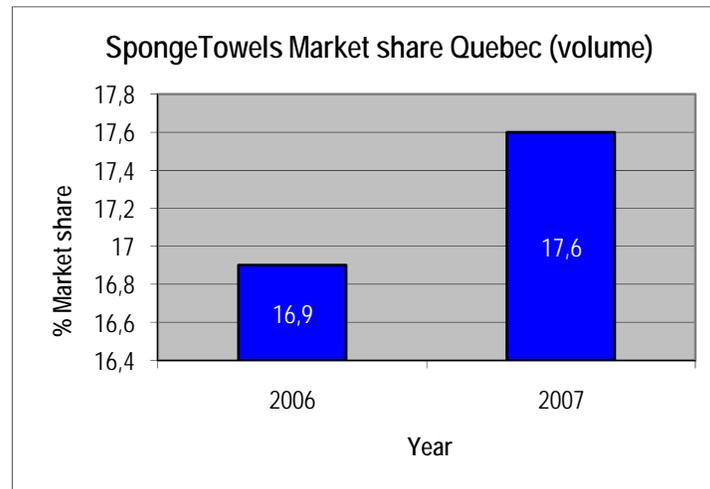
In order to add some emotional bonding, SpongeTowels also sponsored the popular *À la di Stasio* cooking show. The hostess is a highly recognized yet unpretentious personality very close to the heart of Quebecers, just like the brand.

MEDIA EXECUTION

In order to get across Spongie's overflowing energy, television was essential. The budget was limited and, as for preceding years, we ran in two phases: Fall 2006 (September to November) and Spring 2007 (February to May). Sponsorship of *À la di Stasio* also allowed us to generate visibility over a continuous period.

BUSINESS RESULTS

Over the 9 months after the launch, market share of SpongeTowels increased by approximately one share point. (Volume grew by 1%, while the market shrank by 3%.⁵)



Source: ACNielsen, Sales Tonnage Equivalent Case, 36 weeks ending Sept. 2, 2006 and May 12, 2007

CAUSE & EFFECT BETWEEN THE ADVERTISING AND THE RESULTS

From the outset it was clear that the Spongie character had great power of attraction and brand attribution.

Spongie was a memorable character who was directly reinforcing the distinctiveness of SpongeTowels - the sponge pockets - with the ultimate demonstration of his power of absorption. In Adlab research⁶ 82% of respondents attributed the message directly to SpongeTowels. In fact, after being exposed to the ad, more than 60% of respondents mentioned that they would probably buy SpongeTowels the next time round.

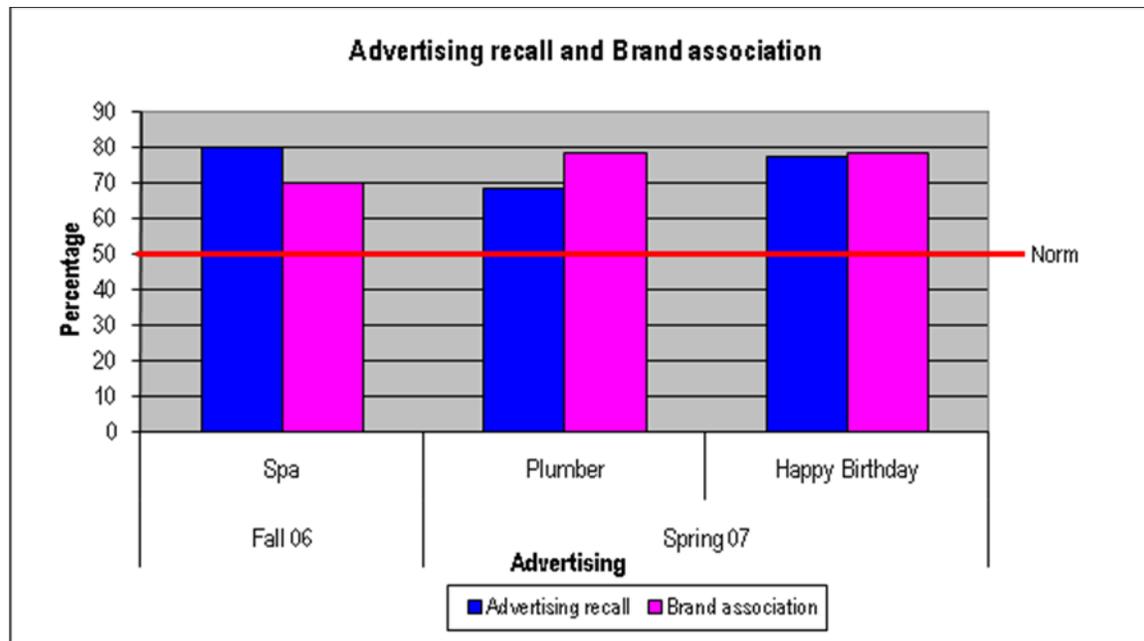
Advertising recall also showed exceptional scores, with 80% of consumers claiming to have seen the “Spa” commercial, the generally accepted norm being 50%.⁷ The second wave of the campaign with “Happy Birthday” and “Plumber” also had scores well above the norm.⁸ Brand attribution scores for all of these commercials were again well-above the 50% norm.

⁵ ACNielsen, Sales Tonnage Equivalent Case, 36 weeks ending May 12, 2007

⁶ Camelford Graham Research Group, Montreal Ad Lab, March 2006

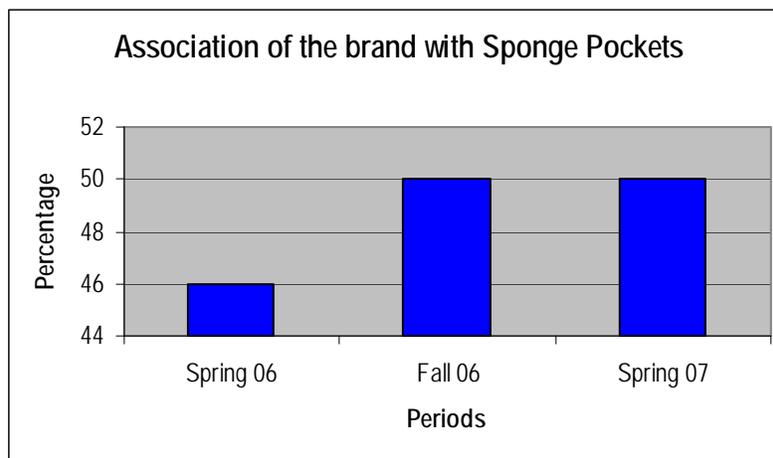
⁷ Based on 1000 GRP's for a new campaign

⁸ Source: Burak Jacobson, Paper Towel Tracking Research – Québec, Spring 2007



Source: Burak Jacobson, Paper Towel Tracking Research – Québec, Spring 2007

The campaign also raised the level of brand attribution for SpongeTowels thanks to its unique differentiating product attribute - the “spongie-pochettes.”



Source: Burak Jacobson, Paper Towel Tracking Research – Québec, Spring 2007

INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2007

[For Sponge Towels, Quebec]

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.

INDEX OF CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2007

All Cases	Sponge Towels, Quebec
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4. Business Strategy dictated by the Brand Positioning.	
5. The Total Brand Experience.	
6. Should the product be improved?	✓
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10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged?	
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13. Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect.	
14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.	
15. Baby with the Bathwater.	
16. When a campaign stumbles.	
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21. Likeability.	
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25. Brand Linkage (when should the brand name appear).	
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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.

SPONGE TOWEL, QUEBEC CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2007

1. **What a Brand Stands For.** People in real life hardly give the deeper meaning of brands a second thought. They know that some appeal more than others. They may have a sense that brands jostle for their attention. But that's about it. They certainly don't agonize over the *essence* of this, or the *brand truth* of that.

That said, branding goes deeper than we in marketing may realize. Before marketing was even thought of, branding was part of life. Everything from national flags, to coinage, to the uniforms of soldiers, boy scouts and Supreme Court judges, to the plumage on peacocks (human and otherwise), is a form of branding. Business had an early example in the 1800s when Harley Procter of P&G heard a pastor quote a biblical text about ivory palaces. Goodbye Procter & Gamble White Soap. Hello Ivory. More recently, Tom Peters published *A Brand Called You*. And Tony Blair tried to re-brand the UK as "Cool Britannia."

A brand, in the fullest sense, is hard to define. Dictionary definitions tend to focus on the trademark aspect, and yes, branding does involve some sort of identifying mark. But this misses the point. What makes a brand valuable?

*The answer is The Advantage of Belief.*¹ Charles Revson of Revlon famously said, "In the factory we make cosmetics. In the store we sell hope." In other words, a brand is not a product; it's what people *believe* about a product. These beliefs can be immensely powerful. The most astonishing is the placebo effect. In clinical trials, many patients respond to the "sugar pill," even when they have serious diseases. We see the same thing with blind and identified product tests. With a strong brand, the preference jumps. (See *What's in a Name* by John Philip Jones.) And when the Advantage of Belief takes hold, it leads to a long list of benefits:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| a) Customer loyalty | e) Facilitating brand extensions |
| b) Higher price | f) Withstanding competitive attack |
| c) Higher cash flows | g) Motivating staff and attracting new talent |
| d) Higher long-term profitability | h) Potentially augmenting the stock price |

This doesn't, of course, answer the question, "how do you build these beliefs?" There are widely varying notions, but most people agree on the basic principles: (1) stake out what the brand can and should stand for (2) stick with this over time (3) evolve to account for lessons learned and market changes.²

This can't be done by empty promises. We have to assess what consumers want against what the product delivers—and tell the story better than competitors do. We have a melting pot of perceptions and reality to work with. All the "brand" ideas are there to help—Brand Image, Equity, Personality, Character, Essence, Relationship, Footprint, Truth, Soul, Identity, and so on—along with old faithfuls like Positioning, Focus of Sale, USP, Features, Attributes, Benefits and Values. Whatever the terminology, though, the brand has to stand for something relevant and different in the consumer's mind. See also *Crossover Note 26*.

¹ This is a phrase of mine, though the idea that a brand is "more" has been described by many authors.

² How do you do this? See *Excellence in Brand Communication*: www.ica.adbeast.com

- 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*.”³

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](#).

- 3. Core Equity versus Price & Promotion.** From a financial point of view, a brand is not an abstract notion. It has to make good money, and it has to be valuable if you want to sell it. If a brand is under price and promotion pressure you have to make tough decisions. If you don’t fight fire with fire, you lose business in the short term. But if you don’t invest in brand-building, you’re likely to lose more over the long term.

This is the choice between a “clear and present danger” and a “worse but less immediate one.” It’s hard to get it right, and we probably succumb more than we should to short-term pressures. Fido in Cassies 99; Clarnet and KD in Cassies 2001; Nautilus and Sidekicks in Cassies 2002; Molson’s Bubba, Dodge SX 2.0, Manitoba Telecom, MINI, Sola Nero and Toyota Matrix in Cassies 2003; Cottonelle, Réno Dépôt and Toyota Sienna in Cassies 2004; All Bran, K&G Stores, Energizer Lithium, Hubba Bubba, Moores, Stouffer’s Bistro and Familiprix in Cassies 2005, and Telus and Honda Quebec in Cassies 2007 all faced this issue. All emphasized brand value, rather than price and promotion.

Note: “Core Equity” is one of those terms with more than one meaning. One relates to the “bundle of meanings” in the audience’s mind. The other is the equity in financial terms. This is a developing area, and for more information contact the ICA about the publication *Measuring And Valuing Brand Equity*, and the book *Vulcans, Earthlings and Marketing ROI*.

³ 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.

- 6. Should the product be improved?** Some years ago it was an axiom that your product, functionally, had to have an advantage over competitors. In packaged goods, it was considered foolish to launch a new brand unless it was a blind test winner over its major competitor—ideally overall, and at least for a desirable benefit.⁴

That thinking has shifted, and it's commonly said today that it's impossible to sustain a functional advantage for very long; that competition can match you in a matter of weeks or months—or even days with some technological products.

This has had a paradoxical effect. Some people are almost frenzied in their desire to keep their product (or service) improving, fearing that if they don't, they will be left behind. Others go into a slipstream mode—letting others tackle the headwinds, then matching what they do.

John Philip Jones (the Professor of Communication at Syracuse University) is vocal in saying that we do *not* live in a parity world—that imitators may try to match the innovators, but they often don't quite succeed. His view (and I share it) is that it is dangerously complacent to assume that functional parity is the way of the world.

Another danger is the belief that “marketing” can compensate for a weak product. This led to the debacle a decade or two ago when North America systematically under-invested in product. The Japanese, and later the Europeans and others, did exactly the opposite—and carved out the market shares we see today.

There's no question that the cost to upgrade can be daunting. Nevertheless, many cases reflect the investment. For example:

- Listerine in Quebec in Cassies II, with an improved taste.
- Chrysler with the NS Minivan, and Pontiac Sunfire in Cassies III.
- St Hubert in Cassies 99, upgrading their entire operation.
- Sunlight in Cassies 99, with improved cleaning.
- Home Furnace and Lipton Sidekicks in Cassies 2002.
- Irving Mainway Coffee, Source Yogurt, MINI and Motrin in Cassies 2003.
- VodKice in Cassies 2003, remodelling the Boomerang portfolio.
- Cirque du Soleil in Cassies 2004, by adding Zumanity to their portfolio.
- Kit Kat in Cassies 2004, keeping Original the same, but launching Chunky.
- Toyota Sienna in Cassies 2004, with multiple upgrades.
- Coricidin II in Cassies 2005. (Re-launching after the original brand had been withdrawn.)
- Penaten, Hubba Bubba, Stouffer's Bistro, & Juicy Fruit line extensions in Cassies 2005.
- Wonderbread and Trident in Cassies 2006.

Still others achieve their gains with no change—though the existing product is in all cases good, and sometimes better than the competition. These cases include:

- Crispy Crunch and Pepsi Quebec in Cassies I.
- Oh Henry! in Cassies II.
- Buckley's, Dove, and Philadelphia Cream Cheese in Cassies III.
- Eggs, becel, and Wonderbread in Cassies 99.
- Kraft Dinner and Lipton Chicken Noodle in Cassies 2001.

⁴ There was always the “pre-emptive” possibility i.e. staking out a convincing claim for a parity benefit before anyone else did. But, in general, having a product edge was seen as important

- Campbell's, Diet Pepsi, Listerine, and Pro•Line in Cassies 2002.
- All the major beer winners over the years.
- Aero, Dodge SX 2.0, Familiprix, Super 7, in Cassies 2003.
- Cottonelle and Milk in Cassies 2004.
- Crescendo, Jergens Ultra Care, Whiskas, Twix, Energizer Lithium, Moores, and Familiprix in Cassies 2005.
- Chocolate Milk, Gatorade, Listerine, Baileys in 2006.
- Brita in 2007.

Technology cases usually have improvements. Services usually improve as part of the “total brand experience.” Some cases (e.g. Clearnet in 2001 and Lipton Sidekicks in Cassies 2002) say that if your functional advantage is going to be matched, you'd better develop an advantage through brand personality/character/equity.

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.

11. **The Eureka Insight.** These feature in many cases. Some examples:

- Oh Henry! Gut-fillers had tried to own hunger. Cassies II and *Crossover Note 7*.
- Buckley's. Rather than side-step their bad taste, Buckley's relished it. Cassies III.
- Chrysler. Used *emotion* as the key to an immensely successful launch. Cassies III.
- Philadelphia Cream Cheese. Creating "permission to indulge." Cassies III.
- Richmond Savings. Creating the "Humungous Bank." Cassies III.
- Eggs. (See also *12. Changing the Goalposts*.) Farmers brought “natural” to life.
- Sunlight. Getting dirty is fun. This is diametrically opposed to the conventional wisdom, dominated by Tide, that clean is good and dirt is bad. Cassies 99.
- Fido in Cassies 99. In an echo of Apple vs. IBM, Fido saw that consumers needed the human touch. See also Clearnet and “the future is friendly” in Cassies 2001.
- Diet Pepsi in Cassies 2002. The “forever young” campaign.
- Listerine in Cassies 2002. Healthy gums, after a century of bad breath.
- Pro•Line in Cassies 2002. Appealed to non-experts with “Anyone can win.”
- Aero. Saw the power of “melting” in Cassies 2003.
- Super 7. Ignored the political correctness of being tasteful. Cassies 2003.
- Quebec Milk. Saw the obvious. Asked people to drink more. Cassies 2004 and 2005.
- Toyota Sienna. Realized that the answer lay not in what SUV buyers do. Cassies 2004.
- Irving's Cruisin' to Win. Saw the power of *small* prizes. Cassies 2005.

- Crescendo. Like Oh Henry! saw unoccupied high ground. Cassies 2005.
- Butter. Saw a way to use “natural” to connote taste and health. Cassies 2005.
- Anti-Smoking. Saw the power of “Stupid.” Cassies 2005.
- Jergens Ultra Care. Saw a way to reposition skin. Cassies 2005.
- Whiskas. Saw things from the *cat’s* point of view. Cassies 2005.
- Moores. Used the fact that their target audience hates shopping. Cassies 2005.
- Harvey’s. Realized the significance of The Grill. Cassies 2005
- Quebec Lotto 6/49. Realized that 6/49 winners are generous, so be nice to them.
- United Way. Saw power in the Hand icon. Cassies 2005
- CIBC Run for the Cure. Saw the power in the Pinnie idea. Cassies 2005
- Juicy Fruit. Saw how to build a new image by destroying the old one. Cassies 2005
- Yaris. Realized that you *could* use aspiration in the sub-compact category. Cassies 2006.
- WestJet saw the power in the “owners” idea. Cassies 2006 and 2007.
- Monster saw the power in the “best boss” idea. Cassies 2006.
- Dove. Saw the leverage in the Self-Esteem Fund. Cassies 2007.
- Brita. Changed how we think about tap water for ever.
- SpongeTowels. Brought absorbency to life, almost literally.
- Benylin. Realized what we really want to do!
- Newfoundland. Realized that the problem was the opportunity.
- Plus virtually all the cases in *Crossover Note 10*.

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 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. • AGF Funds. The "what are you doing after work" campaign charmed its way into people's pocketbooks. |
| Cassies 99 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. |
| Cassies 2004 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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." |

Cassies
2005

- 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.

Cassies
2006

- 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.

Cassies
2007

- Never Stop Milk in the Prairies consciously avoided a rational sell.
- Honda Quebec and La Parisienne did likewise.