

Cassies 2004 Cases

Brand: Gaz Métro

Winner: Off to a Good Start—Silver
Best Insight—Certificate of Excellence

Client Credits: Gaz Métro

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Guylaine Lehoux, Director, Marketing and Commercial Support
Vincent Forcier, Manager, Internal Communications
Stéphanie Trudeau, Advisor, Public and Governmental Affairs
Nathalie Maurer, Manager, Web and Marketing Communication
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Diane Lapointe, Senior Advisor, Web and Marketing Communication, Residential Market
Sandra Lachapelle, Advisor, Marketing Communication, Commercial Market
Ann Dupont, Senior Advisor, Web and Marketing Communication
Nathalie Bondu, Advisor, Marketing Communication, Residential Market
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Agency Credits: Diesel

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Crossover Notes: All winning cases contain lessons that cross over from one case to another. David Rutherford has been extracting these lessons (he calls them Crossover Notes) since Cassies 1997. The notes for this case are as follows, and are attached. The full set can be downloaded from the Case Library section at www.cassies.ca

Crossover Note 5. The Total Brand Experience.
Crossover Note 9. Turnarounds.
Crossover Note 13. Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect.
Crossover Note 26. Awareness Alone.
Crossover Note 1. What the Brand Stands For.
Crossover Note 4. Business Strategy dictated by the Brand Positioning.
Crossover Note 7. Fighting for the Same High Ground.
Crossover Note 12. Changing the Goalposts.
Crossover Note 20. Emotional versus Rational.
Crossover Note 17. Turning a liability into a strength.
Crossover Note 32. Internal Marketing.

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

Executive Summary

Results period: September 8, 2003 to the beginning of March 2004.

Start of Advertising/Communication Effort: September 8, 2003.

Base period: Previous year, and historical references when appropriate.

You don't need cause to be afraid.

- Romain Gary, French novelist.

In Québec, the residential energy market was until recently run by the powerful Crown Corporation, Hydro-Québec. The public saw Gaz Métropolitain—the principal supplier of natural gas—as an industrial firm offering an “old, unimaginative commodity.” They also saw natural gas as frightening. In short, nothing favoured Gaz Métropolitain’s return to the residential market.

This case explains how Gaz Métropolitain solved the problems it was facing. It illustrates the insight that guided the approach. It discusses the aptness of a creative platform that aligns all communication components (both internally and externally). **Crossover Note 5.** Finally, it demonstrates how to overcome a non-rational fear.

Situation Analysis

Gaz Métropolitain is the largest and essentially only supplier of natural gas for the industrial, institutional, commercial and residential sectors in Québec. It has been in the market since 1969 and is a major stakeholder in all of sectors except residential. Faced with this, Gaz Métropolitain undertook a major rethinking of their strategy.

The competition – In 1962, Jean Lesage nationalized the seven largest hydro-electric companies of *La Belle Province* and merged them with Hydro-Québec. This project was the initiative of René Lévesque, and took place during the Quiet Revolution, a period of patriotic fervour. Hydro-Québec took on mythic proportions. It inspired confidence and pride in the hearts and minds of Québécois, probably explaining why the penetration of natural gas in Québec is only 16%, compared to 31% in Canada. Hydro-Québec also enjoyed another advantage: their prices were set by the provincial government.

The consumer – Research showed that Gaz Métropolitain had a heavy, industrial image as the supplier of an old, unimaginative product. It was only noticed when one of its old-fashioned looking trucks was in the neighbourhood to repair a potentially devastating leak. Moreover, natural gas was considered dangerous. One out of two adults had a vague and undefined fear of using it in their home.

The challenge – Until very recently, Gaz Métropolitain had focused almost exclusively on the industrial and commercial markets. With its underdeveloped residential business, it needed a significant transformation—with major impact on brand image and, as a result, medium and long-term growth. **Crossover Notes 9 and 13.**

More specifically, the mandate was:

1. To make Gaz Métropolitain better known. **Crossover Note 26.**
2. To give the company, as well as natural gas, a warm and empathetic personality.
3. To support Gaz Métropolitain's expansion objectives by increasing the number of new residential clients to 10,000 within three years. [For the six-month Results Period of this case this equates to 1,668 new residential clients.]
4. To increase sales in the new housing segment by 3,000 units for the 12 months ending September 04. [For the six-month Results Period this equates to 1,500 units.]

This would require a total repositioning, for Gaz Métropolitain, and also for natural gas. **Crossover Notes 1 and 4.**

Strategy & Insight

One option was to start the re-positioning campaign by explaining why natural gas is a safe alternative to electricity. But considering the grip that Hydro-Québec had on the hearts and minds of Québécois, and the fear factor, it was decided that this head-on approach would not work. Something more subtle was needed.

The “and/or” factor – We decided against “Hydro-Québec or Gaz Métropolitain” in favour of “Hydro-Québec and Gaz Métropolitain.” The “or” option would make heating the battleground, and this would be far too restrictive. With the “and” option, the company could promote other applications (i.e. stove, water heater, fireplace, barbecue, swimming pool heater, dryer, patio heater) where the notion of comfort could explode into a lifestyle which is easier to communicate. **Crossover Notes 7 and 12.**

Fear – If we could not convince consumers that natural gas safe, it would be impossible to communicate its benefits. We came to understand that the fear is non-rational, similar to the fear of spiders: e.g. perceptions do not change, even when people are given the rational argument that spiders are harmless, and afraid of us. So, instead of trying to convince consumers rationally, we decided to create a safe ambiance around gas. **Crossover Note 20.**

We decided to exploit the visual representation of exactly what concerned people about natural gas: the flame. **Crossover Note 17.** It would be made more attractive, friendly, and accessible through sophisticated animation and *design*. In fact, all the company's visual elements would be design-driven. This would make Gaz Métropolitain stand apart from Hydro-Québec, increase the desirability of natural gas, and put fear into perspective. It was also a good tool for promoting all gas applications in an integrated manner.

In concrete terms, this was a complete re-branding of Gaz Métropolitain. Unlike its previous effort, which had been rational and technical, we were now promoting a lifestyle filled with peace, comfort and ambiance.

Gaz Métro – Heat – 30 sec.



Music: Sway with me (tango version), all the way to the end - words in Spanish.

Visual: On a blue background, a flame appears and begins dancing to tango music. A second flame joins in and the two form a couple, performing classic tango moves.

Signature: Life in blue. **Logo:** Gaz Métro

Gaz Métro – Comfort – 30 sec.

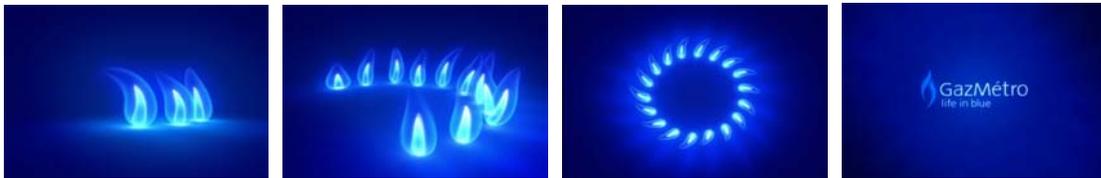


Music: Bossa nova.

Visual: On a blue background, a flame suddenly appears. It begins to dance like algae to the sounds of bossa nova style music. The flame seems to detach itself, swim, its movements are fluid and graceful. You get the impression it is like a fish in warm water.

Signature: Life in blue. **Logo:** Gaz Métro

Gaz Métro – Flavor – 30 sec.



Music: Jumping the line. Words: Eh Eh Eh Senora, come eating in my home.

Visual: On a blue background, a flame suddenly appears. It jumps into the air and flips over like a pancake in a pan. It then begins to dance in rhythm with the music. It is soon joined by a second flame, then a third, and on it goes until a circle is formed following the musical tempo. The circle of flames resembles the burner on a gas stove.

Signature: Life in blue. **Logo:** Gaz Métro

Execution

A new creative platform was developed, with these as the main elements:

- A new name, from Gaz Métropolitain to Gaz Métro. First, this sent a strong message to employees and consumers that the company was re-inventing itself. Second, it made the company closer and more familiar to consumers, since most of them already called it Gaz Métro.
- A new, modern logo. This was to change the image of “old, unimaginative industrial commodity” and create a friendly/safe look.
- The “life in blue” signature; with “life” communicating comfort and “blue” standing for peace, silence and light.
- Aligning all communication elements throughout all contact points, both internally and externally (e.g.. advertising, collateral materials, Website, invoices, employee uniforms, service vehicles, etc.). Everything was reviewed to ensure homogeneity within the first six months.
- A TV campaign (September 8 to October 20, 03) with blue flames burning cheerfully in ambiances created by natural gas.
- Full page corporate ads in the major daily newspapers in greater Montreal, with a brief explanation of Gaz Métro’s change. Gaz Métro was the first to advertise on page A3 in the new colourful *La Presse* (October 8, 2003), and had a banner on the front page of *Le Devoir* (October 8, 2003). This was to increase the perception that Gaz Métro was becoming a company with imposing presence.
- A special section to promote the company’s services. This was included in *La Presse* on Saturday, October 25, 2003, inserted as an editorial section, just after the “Mon Toit” section, in order to reach a targeted readership.
- Print ads for the residential and business markets, in specialized magazines to reach each target group.
- Billboards in the greater Montreal area, from January 19, 04 to March 22, 04.
- Direct marketing effort giving people an opportunity to sign up for natural gas and enjoy special discounts;
- Internal marketing, which played a major role in gaining internal support (i.e. the sales and customer service teams were invited to take part in this major initiative). Like the caterpillar, which must turn inwards in order to transform into a butterfly, the metamorphosis of Gaz Métro could not have taken place without an inside-out process. It revived enthusiasm and gave the employees a strong sense of pride and belonging. The internal launch was the high point of this process. **Crossover Note 32.**

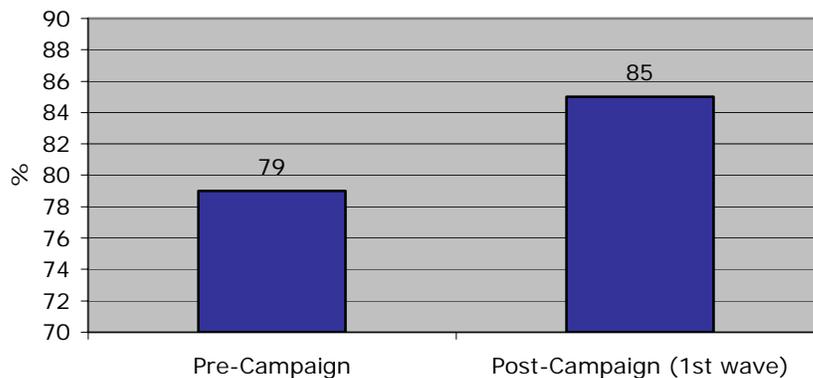
Business Results

Gaz Métro not only exceeded objectives, it also managed to create a strong, new image, energize its marketing and make itself one of the best known companies in Québec.

1. Awareness of Gaz Métro

Overall awareness of Gaz Métro increased quickly from 79% to 85%, after only the first wave of advertising (October 2003).

Table 1 – Awareness of Gaz Métro

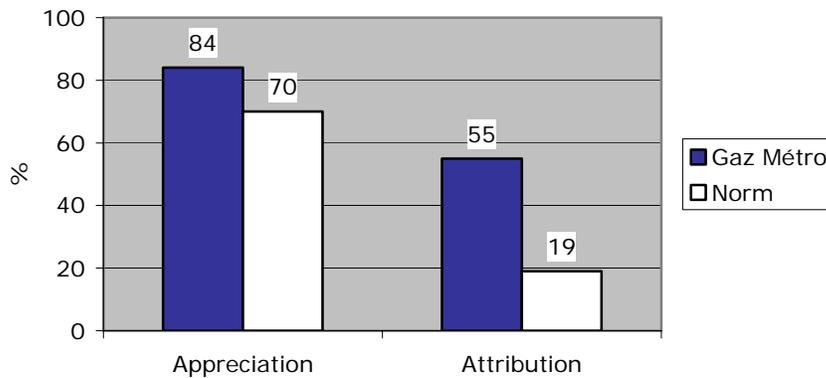


Source: Léger Marketing, October 2003.

2. Brand image of Gaz Métro

People are now more familiar and appreciative of Gaz Métro. A study conducted by Descaries & Complices in October 2003 for Infopresse stated that the campaign “will truly reinforce the brand image with Québécois.” This study also stated that “the impact of the message is noteworthy, with each of the advertising effectiveness indices surpassing the norm.”

Table 2 – Appreciation and Attribution of Gaz Métro



Source: Descaries & Complices, Infopresse, October 2003.

3. Increase in purchase intention

Although not as concrete as the sales results described shortly, purchase intention was strong, running at 27% versus a norm of 12.5% (as shown in table below). This result is remarkable given that the campaign focused on image and not generating sales.

Table 3 – Intentions to purchase from Gaz Métro

Gaz Métro	Norm	Difference
27%	12.5%	+14.5 points

Source: Léger Marketing, Post-campaign study, November 2003.

4. Increase in the number of residential clients

For the six-month Results Period, these are running 42% ahead of objectives:

Table 4 – # of New Residential Clients

Goal	Sales	Difference
1,668	2,360	+42%

Source: Gaz Métro.

5. Increase in the number of sales in the new housing construction segment

For the six-month Results Period, these are running 30% ahead of objectives:

Table 5 – Sales of units in housing development projects

Goal	Sales	Difference
1,500	1,950	+30%

Source: Gaz Métro.

6. Recognition

This showed a remarkable turnaround from the “old industrial” image. Based on the study conducted by Léger Marketing for the magazine *Commerce*—concerning the most admired companies in Québec—Gaz Métro ranked first among companies in the energy field, ahead of the much-admired Hydro-Québec.

Furthermore, the “life in blue” campaign received the Grand Prix Média 2004 award for the best media campaign in Québec, along with the Grafika (television advertising and residential brochure) and PCM direct marketing awards.

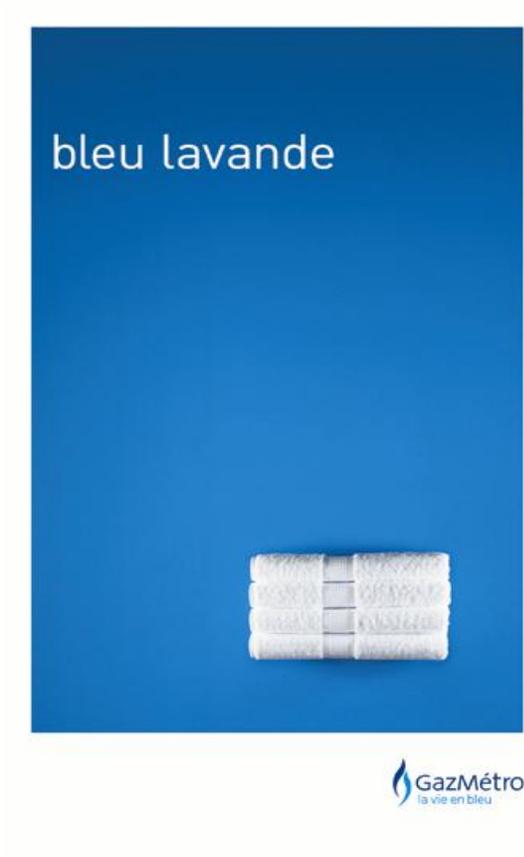
Showing Cause and Effect between Advertising and Results

The only tangible market change for Gaz Métro was the advertising campaign itself. The distribution has remained unchanged, the price is stable, the product has remained unchanged and no other promotional activity has been noted.

Gaz Métro – bleu marine – Full page ad



Gaz Métro – bleu lavande – Full page ad



End of Case. Crossover Notes follow.

INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2004

[Gaz Métro Version]

Crossover Notes have been going for several years, and now run to 30 pages.

We used to attach the full set to each case, but to save a few trees, we are now customizing each attachment. It can still be quite long, but not 30 pages.

The idea of Crossover Notes occurred to me while I was editing Cassies 1997.

I was a consultant by then. But before that I had clambered up to the group product manager level at P&G, and been President and Vice Chairman at O&M—both in Toronto. These companies were passionate about “lessons learned,” and so was I. It’s hard to believe now, but we felt rushed off our feet even then. Compared to today, though, we had time to study if campaigns were working or not, and come to conclusions about why.

There are lessons, like gold dust, in all the Cassies cases. So in 1997 I decided to extract them. This started with bite-sized footnotes about lessons that “cross over” from one case to another. And the idea kept growing. It is still anchored to the winning cases, but I also draw on other thinking for more complex issues.

You can use Crossover Notes in two ways. Although they didn’t start out 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 over 120 published cases. They’re an immense and growing body of experience. I hope I’ve helped pass some of this on.

David Rutherford

Toronto: November 2004.

For comprehensive advice on brand-building, see *Excellence in Brand Communication*—authored by leading Canadians from across the marketing and advertising spectrum.

It is published by the ICA. See www.ica.adbeast.com.

INDEX OF CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2004

All Cases	Gaz Métro
1. What a Brand Stands For.	✓
2. Brand Truths.	
3. Core Equity versus Price & Promotion.	
4. Business Strategy dictated by the Brand Positioning.	✓
5. The Total Brand Experience.	✓
6. Should the product be improved?	
7. Fighting for the Same High Ground.	✓
8. Classic Rivalries.	
9. Turnarounds.	✓
10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged?	
11. The Eureka Insight.	
12. Changing the Goalposts.	✓
13. Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect.	✓
14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.	(✓)
15. Baby with the Bathwater.	
16. When a campaign stumbles.	
17. Turning a liability into a strength.	✓
18. Keeping it Simple.	
19. Great minds think alike.	
20. Emotional versus Rational.	✓
21. Likeability.	
22. Humour in a Serious Category.	
23. Problem versus Solution.	
24. Tough Topics.	
25. Brand Linkage (when should the brand name appear).	
26. Awareness Alone.	✓
27. Share of Mind, Share of Voice, Spending.	(✓)
28. Media Learning.	(✓)
29. Pre-emptive Media.	
30. Reach and Frequency versus Large-Space Impact.	
31. Transcending Advertising.	
32. Internal Marketing.	✓
33. Changing the Target Audience.	
34. Longer and Broader Effects, and A Closing Thought. (✓)	

The Notes for this case are marked ✓ and are attached. Some of these refer to others—marked (✓) and also attached. This then starts a chain reaction—because some of the (✓) Notes *themselves* refer to others—but we decided to stop at this point. The full set can be downloaded from the Case Library section of www.cassies.ca

GAZ METRO. CROSSOVER NOTES. CASSIES 2004.

- 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 what is the *essence* of this, or the *abiding truth* of that.

But 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 on 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 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, "what the brand stands for" is critical.

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, and evolve? See *Excellence in Brand Communication* : www.ica.adbeast.com

- 4. Business Strategy dictated by the Brand Positioning.** This goes deeper than the "Ps" of Marketing. Product, Pricing, Packaging, Promotion, and Place must all support the Positioning. But some companies allow their concept of "the brand" to dictate business strategy as a whole. Clearnet and i-wireless are examples in Cassies 2001. Family Channel and Gaz Metro are others from 2004. From the broader business world, Virgin is often cited as an example. So is Lou Gerstner's turnaround of IBM. Apple used to be a poster child, and perhaps will be again. People blow hot and cold on Nike, which makes Scott Bedbury's book *A New Brand World* a fascinating read.
- 5. The Total Brand Experience.** Brands have always been built at "every point of contact" with the consumer, but as a turn of phrase, it's a relatively new thought.

It arrived partly because of multiple media choices, and partly with the growth of services (as opposed to products.) Your treatment by a retailer or telco or airline has more effect than fleeting exposure to a beautifully crafted advertisement—and if the experiences are dissonant, then something is wrong.

Cassies cases have historically been about advertising, but they are evolving to include the idea of "every point of contact." At its highest level (*Crossover Note 4*) this is much more than communication, but most of the time now it comes under the heading of Integrated Marketing Communication.

Integrated Marketing Communication is much more profound than making sure all effort has the same "look and feel." In fact, that notion is simplistic, for the obvious fact that the techniques of one discipline don't necessarily work in another.

One of the agencies uses what it calls the "organizing idea." This is analogous to "what the brand stands for." All the communication/ promotional disciplines therefore have the same focal point, but they work to achieve their goals in the way that works best in their medium. Of course, if there are certain words, pictures, icons, slogans etc. that work in more than one medium, they will be used. The point is never to force fit. Over the years, various cases have referred to the total brand experience. This includes the following:

Cassies III: Richmond Savings. Cassies 99: AGF Funds. Cassies 2001: Clarica, Clearnet, i-wireless. Cassies 2002: Bank of Montreal, ED, Lipton Sidekicks, Scotiabank, Sloche. Cassies 2003: Bubba, Dodge SX 2.0, Irving Mainway's Coffee, Manitoba Telecom, MINI, United Way, Université de Montréal. Cassies 2004: Cirque du Soleil (Zumanity), Desjardins. Family Channel, Gaz Metro, Réno Dépôt.

- 7. Fighting for the Same High Ground.** A brand has to be distinctive. Some take this to mean that you should not fight for high ground already held by a competitor. It comes out as “our positioning has to be unique.” This sounds so right, how can it be wrong? Consider Cassies III. Lever wanted to pre-empt the arrival of Oil of Olay bar from the US, and decided to kick-start Dove sales via new advertising. They had a spectacular demonstration of mildness. When Dove is subjected to a litmus test, the paper does not change. With soaps—including Ivory—the paper turns an ugly blue. But Ivory owned mildness. Those against fighting for the same high ground predicted disaster. But Dove attacked anyway. Four years later Dove was up 73% in dollar sales, and Ivory had dropped to half of Dove’s dollar share. And how do you decide whether to attack or not? On winnability. Ivory held the mildness position, but with “litmus” Dove had a superb claim on that territory.

The key is how you think about distinctiveness. It is certainly essential, *but it does not have to come from positioning*. Consider Duracell and Energizer. Duracell staked out “lasts longer,” and Energizer languished in other territory for years. Eventually they decided to attack, and the Energizer Bunny has been going and going ever since. Both brands have the high ground positioning. They get their distinctiveness from *execution*. One last case. Sunlight wanted to attack Tide on cleaning, but decided that a frontal assault would almost certainly fail. So they re-defined “clean” as the joy of getting dirty, and won the Grand Prix in Cassies 99.

[I’m not saying you should *always* attack occupied high-ground—just debunking the idea that it has to be a mistake. In Cassies 2004, Cottonelle, Desjardins, Gaz Metro and Réno Dépôt were all successful by sidestepping or redefining the high ground. Even so, the high ground is still one of the first places I look.]

9. Turnarounds. There are a number of these in the Cassies:

Cassies I

- Crispy Crunch.
- Molson Canadian.
- Pepsi. Quebec.

Cassies II

- Listerine. Quebec.
- Oh Hungry? Oh Henry.

Cassies III

- Dove. "Litmus."
- Molson Canadian. "I AM."
- Philadelphia Cream Cheese.

Cassies 99

- becel. "Young at Heart"
- Eggs.
- Sunlight. "Go Ahead. Get Dirty."
- Wonder Bread

Cassies 2001

- Kraft Dinner.
- Lipton Chicken Noodle.

Cassies 2002

- BMO Quebec.
- Campbell's Soup.
- CFL.
- Easter Seals Relay.
- Sleeman Quebec.
- Listerine.
- Pro•Line.

Cassies 2003

- Aero.
- Bait Cars.
- Crown Diamond Paint
- Dodge SX 2.0.
- Motrin.
- Pro•Line.
- Super 7.
- Université de Montréal.
- VodKice.

Cassies 2004

- Cottonelle.
- Gaz Metro.
- Kit Kat.
- Milk (Quebec and Prairies).
- Toyota Sienna.

12. Changing the Goalposts. Some insights come from suddenly seeing what was always there to be seen. (Sunlight's Cassies 99 joy of getting dirty would be an example.) Others re-frame the problem, such as:

- Cow Brand Baking Soda's extended usage.
- Johnson's Baby Shampoo's adult re-positioning.
- Cereals trying to get eaten as a late night snack.

Insights can also spring from what is *not* being said. The Eggs case in Cassies 99 is an example. Word-association tests played back any number of benefits, but did *not* identify that eggs are natural. Somehow, this omission caught the agency's eye, and they turned "natural" into a powerful campaign using real farmers. This turned around a 17-year decline.

Purina is another example. At one time, everyone sold dog-food on taste and nutrition. Not surprisingly, consumers played back that these were important, reinforcing the conventional wisdom. Suddenly, the team at Scali/Purina saw the significance of the unspoken (and deeper) truth—that a dog is part of the family. This led to the immensely effective "helping dogs lead longer lives" campaign.

Purina also points up another way to get insights—by looking beyond Canada. Similar thinking had produced the famous "prolongs active life" campaign for PAL dogfood in the UK.

13. Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect. The effects of advertising (a) at all and (b) in the short and/or long-term have been hotly debated for years. I'm can't do justice to all the points of view in this space, but here is a fairly lengthy overview:

In physics, the search continues for a theory called the theory of everything. Einstein came across the Theory of Relativity about 100 years ago. It explained a lot, but not everything. Twenty or so years later, Planck and others came up with Quantum Theory, and Hiesenberg advanced his Uncertainty Principle. They did not explain everything either. Since then, physics has been a hotbed of enquiry, but there's still nothing that explains it all. In a less cosmic way, advertising has followed the same course. A top UK researcher identified over a hundred theories of how advertising works, all capturing part of what happens, but none explaining the full picture.

This may seem academic, but it's not. In the absence of a single agreed theory, we've all pieced together our own notion of what effective advertising is all about. Our mental models³ (while right some of the time) are not right all of the time. But (a key point) *we all make the mistaken assumption that our own model is right.*

For example, there used to be a view (diminishing, but still there) that creativity gets in the way of effectiveness. Some years back, the CEO of one of the big packaged goods companies unrepentantly took this line. I'm sure that in his own mind he was criticizing "irrelevant creativity" or "self-indulgent creativity." But to others this was the mental model that is suspicious of anything that isn't tried and true.

³ I'm not sure who coined this term, but I first saw it in a Paul Feldwick paper.

13. Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect (cont'd).

At the other extreme, there is the mental model that creativity is all that matters. When people say this, they don't mean "outstandingly irrelevant" or "outstandingly self-indulgent creativity" though there are people at the other end of the spectrum who suspect that they do.

Between these extremes is a view with accumulating evidence in its favour—that creativity (relevant of course) is a *partner* in effectiveness. All the big Cassies winners bear this out, and an even longer list of examples comes from 20+ years of the IPA Effectiveness Awards in the UK. (Cassies was modelled on these Awards.)

In terms of the theories of how advertising works, many of us carry a subconscious version of the 100 year-old AIDA model in our heads: Attention >> Interest >> Desire >> Action. But there is a lot of evidence that advertising does not work this way, especially for established brands in everyday categories (I dislike the term "low interest" or "low involvement"). Many campaigns act by positive reinforcement.

It seems self-evident that advertising has to "cut through the clutter" but even that is being re-examined. In neuroscience, there is something called "Low-Involvement Processing." It seems that we, as a species, take in huge amounts of data through the primitive parts of our brain. It does not blast its way in. It goes in without our knowledge. To people with an AIDA mental model, this is about as whacky as it gets. LIP is unproven, but I think there could be something to it, based on a common sense test. If you examine all the thoughts, feelings, knowledge and memories you have, isn't it true that a great many of them have somehow got in by osmosis? (For more, see papers by Robert Heath and Jon Howard-Spink in Admap.)

In any event, there is no "theory of everything," and hence there are scores of different mental models. This explains a lot of the tension when advertising is being developed, discussed and evaluated.

On the issue of immediate versus long-term effect, there is an "experience" view, and an "academic/research" view. The experience-based view has four scenarios, based on the different degrees of visible success:

1. Shipments/share etc. respond within days/weeks of new advertising.⁴
2. Advertising has helped an established brand deliver good volume/share/profit. But it is no longer causing growth—it has more of a "retention" role.⁵
3. The advertising is not working, confirmed by careful analysis.
4. The situation is hard to read, either because it is "too early to tell" or there is not enough information to sort out what's happening.

⁴ And hopefully a long-running business-building campaign—See *14. Refreshing a Continuing Campaign*.

⁵ This is a big topic in itself. See *Crossover Note 34*.

13. Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect (cont'd).

Scenarios 1 and 3 (when assessed correctly) are relatively straightforward. Scenario 2 can be more difficult, because some decision-makers are not satisfied with a “retention” role for advertising—even though this is sometimes more cost-effective than trying to make a brand grow.

Scenario 4 needs great care. Imagine a new campaign, a couple of months in-market. Media weight has been sufficient, but the business has not taken off. Angst creeps in as you face the question, “Is it working?” The following could all be valid:

- **The advertising is working, but the effect is masked.** Pricing, promotion, in-store activity, distribution etc. can all have a greater short-term effect than advertising. If they are masking the underlying trend, then given time, the masking effect will recede, and all should be well.
- **The “slow burn” situation.** This accepts that the advertising needs time to wear in, and when this has happened, all will be well. Some researchers reject wear-in, saying that if a campaign does not have a quick effect, it is unlikely to have one at all. On the other hand, campaigns like “I AM” for Canadian were spectacularly effective, but only after a slow burn.
- **The “arm wrestler” stand-off.** Two equally matched arm wrestlers can hold each other immobile for an agonizing length of time. This can happen with offsetting ad campaigns i.e. you have to assess the strength of the competition’s campaign before coming to a conclusion about your own.
- **The advertising is not working.** It may be too early to know for sure, but this may be the early sign—in which case you need to be preparing some sort of fix.

From the academic side, one question has been, “If advertising works in the short-term, why is this so hard to see?” And, “If advertising has a long-term effect, is it just the accumulation of short-term effects, or a different long-term process?” These issues are still debated, but the following have been influential:

- **John Philip Jones and STAS (Short-Term Advertising Strength).** Jones designed a study to uncover short-term effect, if it exists. He used single-source data to examine “advertised” and “non-advertised” households—and the brands they buy within a week of exposure to advertising. The study needs to be read in detail [there are detractors] but the findings seem pretty clear:
 - a) There is a definite, short-term effect from advertising. (70% of cases.)
 - b) In Jones’s words, *a single advertising exposure was shown to be all that was necessary to achieve an immediate sales increase.* (This flies in the face of conventional wisdom about frequency. *Crossover Note 28.*)
 - c) The short-term effect was often followed by a one-year effect (46% of brands) though the sales response at one year was always lower than at one week.
 - d) When brands do not show the STAS response, it is likely that the creative is not as strong as it might be, or that it is being out-muscled by more powerful creative from a competitor. [A stronger arm-wrestler: see above.]

13. Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect (cont'd).

- **The IRI on long-term effects.** IRI run state-of-the-art split-cable test markets in the US. Test consumers are exposed to marketing effort, while a matched control group is not. In the early 90s IRI published the learning from 400 tests that had explored TV creative, media weight, promotion support and so on. From this, they were able to analyze 44 tests for long-term advertising effect. Test areas (A) were measured against control areas (B). A only got special effort in Year 1. After that, the test and control plans were identical. In other words, the long-term effect was caused entirely by the effort that occurred in Year I. Results were:
 - a) In Year I, Plan A markets averaged +22% volume over Plan B.
 - b) In Year II, Plan A markets held their advantage, at +14%.
 - c) In Year III, they still held an advantage, averaging +7%.

The momentum in Year I held up, with the 3-year effect double the one-year effect. The study concluded that payout for one-year effort should be calculated over three years. (See the reference at the end of *Crossover Note 27*.)

- **The Millward Brown Findings.** Millward Brown have immense databases in the UK, USA, Canada, Europe and elsewhere. They see a short-term advertising effect in their continuous tracking, but also a long-term effect. Through sales modeling, they estimate that this long-term effect may, on occasion, be as much as 7 times greater than the short-term effect.
- **The Observations of Paul Feldwick.** Paul Feldwick is a top researcher/planner in the UK with impeccable credentials. He has proposed a fascinating metaphor for short and long-term effect, based on "brand muscle." When we exercise, the result of any individual activity is small and hard to measure. But over time, results can be dramatic. This is more than just a clever analogy. There is a huge amount of evidence that as consumers get more used to buying a brand, it moves into their habitual (and perhaps even loyal) repertoire.

For more, see publications by John Philip Jones, Leonard Lodish (IRI), Millward Brown, and Paul Feldwick. For some academic fireworks, see the disputatious views of Andrew Ehrenberg of the London School of Business.

17. Turning a liability into a strength. Some examples:

- Buckley's—Tastes awful but it works. Cassies III.
- Irving Home Furnaces—Made a virtue of age. Cassies 2002.
- Listerine—Was seen as “Margaret Thatcher.” Cassies 2002.
- Pine-Sol—Seen as too strong. Softened this with “thorough clean.” Cassies 2002.
- Sleeman in Quebec—Honest frenglish. Cassies 2002.
- Pro•Line—Anyone can win. Cassies 2002 and 2003.
- Crown Diamond—Appealed to men who hate painting. Cassies 2003.
- Super 7—Made a virtue of excess. Cassies 2003.
- Cirque du Soleil—“showed eroticism without really showing it.” Cassies 2004
- Gaz Metro—They made the (feared) gas flame the hero. Cassies 2004.
- Short Film Festival. Made a virtue of brevity. Cassies 2004.
- Johnson's Baby Shampoo—Repositioned against adults washing their hair every day, despite being a blind test loser, and took over as market leader.
- Heinz ketchup—Making a virtue of s-l-o-w.

20. Emotional versus Rational. A brand is a bundle of meanings, with many rooted in emotion rather than reason. If we showed a Vulcan a Creative Strategy (especially 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. A Vulcan would say t 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 is the tendency of many clients to assess issues analytically rather than intuitively. This was fertile ground for the rationalist ideas of Claude Hopkins, who wrote *Scientific Advertising* in 1922, and Rosser Reeves, who wrote *Reality in Advertising* in 1960. The resulting hard-sell advertising appealed to the aggressive mentality of many North American advertisers. It had enough successes to make these beliefs self-fulfilling, and selective perception expunged the failures.

Others, led most notably by Bill Bernbach, argued for a more intuitive approach, and recently emotional appeals have shone more brightly on the radar screen. But even today, there are Creative Strategies that just tuck them in under Brand Character, or do not 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 crucial emotional benefit did not appear anywhere in the Creative Strategy—and we could easily have overlooked it.

If you examine your “mental model” of advertising, make sure it rings true with what people are really like. Often, we in marketing are too rational, and that could be tragic. John Bartle (of Bartle Bogle Hegarty, the UK agency famous for creativity that works) has called for us to think in terms of the *Unique Emotional Proposition*.

I think it's fair to say that agencies and clients are trying to factor this into their thinking more than they used to, but it still doesn't get pride of place. Given what we are learning about Emotional Intelligence, this strikes me as illogical, and lord knows what a Vulcan would say. Here are winners that *could* have focused on the rational, but chose emotion:

- Cassies III
 - Chrysler NS Minivan. It had a number of functional improvements, but the campaign was heavily infused with emotional benefits.
 - Philadelphia Cream Cheese. The Angel campaign captured the emotional benefit of "permission to indulge," along with the rational benefit of 60% less fat than butter or margarine.
- Cassies 99
 - Richmond Savings. The Humungous Bank campaign.
 - 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, becel reached #1. They then wanted to get on TV, but regulators forbade their hard-hitting claims on TV. 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. The campaign includes rational benefits, but its 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
 - 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.
 - Manitoba Telecom gave us Morty, the talking bison.
- Cassies 2002
 - 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 and Five Alive 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.
 - Sloche appealed to teen rebelliousness.
 - The SAAQ campaign scared us to death.
- Cassies 2003
 - 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.
- Cassies 2004
 - 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.

26. Awareness Alone. It seems self-evident that awareness is important, and many Cassies cases refer to increases in brand or ad awareness (unaided, top of mind, aided etc.) Awareness needs to be kept in perspective, however. Bud Light had high awareness but a miniscule share. Nautilus had high awareness, but business was suffering. Familiprix, Pro•Line and Viagra all said that awareness was not the issue. The old cliché, “I don’t care what they say as long as they get my name right” is too simplistic.

Strong brands are based on *relevant differentiation*. Of course, you must imprint what the brand stands for—and “awareness” shows you are doing that. But relevant awareness is what counts. Young & Rubicam has conducted an enormous and ongoing study of this, called the Brand Asset Valuator. It has a worldwide database with hundreds of brands in it. The key findings are in the public domain. For example, they’ve found that brands are a combination of Relevance & Differentiation on the one hand, and Knowledge & Esteem on the other (awareness is part of Knowledge & Esteem). Very important, though, Relevance & Differentiation are more important than Knowledge & Esteem. This shows up with new and growing brands, and with old and declining ones. With new brands, Relevance & Differentiation “lead” Awareness and Esteem. With old but declining brands, it turns out that they often retain Knowledge and Esteem. It is the loss of Relevant Differentiation that causes the decline. In other words, a brand can have high awareness, but still be in trouble. This is why awareness alone is not enough.⁶

32. Internal Marketing. When the Cassies started in 1993, internal marketing, in its own right, hardly existed at all. Now it’s seen as crucial to brand-building, and it had an important role in most of the cases listed under **5. The Total Brand Experience**. Laurie Young and Guy Stevenson give a spectacular example in the ICA book *Excellence in Brand Communication*:

Between 1990 - 1995, British Airways flew every employee from around the world to London, in batches of 100, to explain the idea behind the World’s Favourite Airline campaign. The brand idea wasn’t just about serving business travelers. It meant treating coach passengers (World Traveler Class) with great respect and dignity, because their once-a-year trip most likely had more emotional impact than any trip a frequent business traveler took. And British Airways was the world’s most profitable airline during that era.

Cont’d

⁶ This will vary by category and brand, of course. But even in high impulse categories (I worked for some time on confectionery brands) pure awareness, if it was not relevant awareness, did not seem to be enough.

ADDITIONAL (✓) CROSSOVER NOTES

14. Refreshing a continuing campaign. When I was at P&G, and later at O&M, all big advertisers and agencies thought in terms of campaigns. If we were developing new advertising, the comment “that’s just a one-off” was a kiss of death. In those days, a campaign was usually defined by what a brand did on television. There would be one commercial, or a pool, and they would be refreshed over time. Nowadays, influenced by the ideas of “media neutrality” and “every point of contact,” 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.⁷

The belief in campaigns evolved intuitively. But more recently, the idea of “the brand relationship” has taken hold. This is the notion that (in a way) we treat brands like friends. Brand Truths can come out of this type of thinking, as can other insights. I know of one researcher who says, “I want to know what you think of the brand, but I also want to know what the brand thinks of you.”

Relationships themselves can be very different, but for most people, they are based on things like trust and consistency, without being boring or predictable. This has led to the idea that brands should present a consistent face over time (assuming, of course, that they are standing for the right thing in the first place.)

So the intuitive belief is in line with the “relationship” view. 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 do not have to be this tightly formatted. The following list starts at the most rigid and extends to the most holistic. All the examples have successes and failures, and the list is not a comprehensive one because some campaigns don’t lend themselves to being categorized. It will give an idea of the possibilities, however and (I hope) free up what can be rigid thinking:

- **Strict Pool-Out.** Campaigns like “Who wants Gum? I do. I do.” A similar situation is pooled out time after time, in a repeated format, often with a USP demo or slogan. Some people think this type of advertising is passé. Others remember it fondly, and wonder what happened to the way it used to be.
- **Hall of Fame Pool-Out.** Some think pool outs are dull, boring, predictable and clichéd. Not necessarily. The 20-odd year campaign for Hamlet cigars in the UK is rigidly formatted, but is spectacularly creative and effective.
- **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. So are Fido (dogs) and Clearnet/Telus (flora and fauna). Huggies “Happy Baby” is one of the longest-running.

This category includes 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 example, where the idea of “break” continues, and the challenge is to keep it up to date.

⁷ A 30-something creative friend said to me, “where does this belief in campaigns come from? Young people today want constant change. What’s so wrong with a stream of one-off ideas?” This would have been seen as heresy at one time, and perhaps still is. But it’s food for thought.

- **Icons.** These can anchor a campaign (Maytag Man, Marlboro Cowboy) or be a property (Tony the Tiger, Pillsbury Doughboy). As I write this Michelin is trying to make more of the Michelin Man. Some see icons as a yesterday idea, but I think that's a mis-call—it depends how it's done. Absolut Vodka uses its bottle as an icon, and it's brilliant. The Familiprix pharmacist is hilariously effective, and could become an icon (the creative is in the case history section at www.cassies.ca)
- **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 one of the longest-running examples. 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.
- **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 than anthems, slogans, structure, and icons. Perhaps the most impressive was Volkswagen in the 60s. Individual executions were very different (some serious, some comical, some ironic, some dramatic) but they all had the Volkswagen voice and attitude. Brands like Nike are in this category. Benneton is an extreme example. As I write this, I'm remembering some Fedex ads that would fit this category ("I have an MBA" and "You're a heck of a man doing a heck of a job, Lewis.")
- **Same core message. Customized execution.** To people with a "pool-out" mindset, this hardly qualifies as a campaign at all, because individual executions are totally different. But the overall effect can be very powerful.

The best Cassies example is the 4-year Dove case, which has been used to illustrate a number of points in these notes. The campaign started in late 91 with "Litmus," a scrupulously simple demonstration, with a haunting music track, no voice over, no people, and the story in supers. Then came the exact opposite: a raucous candid-camera commercial of women in a focus group doing the litmus test for themselves. Then another shift—to a talking-head message from the scientist who invented Dove. Finally, back to another demonstration—this one like "Litmus" in tonality, repeating the haunting music.

Someone with a strict pool-out mental model What held the campaign together was a continuing promise (mildness), an element of surprise, and a straightforward & honest brand character. The format varied completely, with no continuing slogans or visual icons.

Note: It is usually not a good idea to pre-set the type of campaign you need. Best practice is (1) define the issue (2) create the best solution (3) let the type of campaign fall out of this.

It's an open question whether today's obsessively short-term attitude is causing us to lose the drive we once had for creating great campaigns. I hope it isn't.

27. Share of Mind, Share of Voice, Spending. When we assess media effort vs. competition we usually measure spending and share of voice. Everything being equal, SOV is important. But there are many times when things are *not* equal. What do we know about weight versus creative content? Split-cable markets show that extra-spend tests work quite often, but far from all the time. The conclusion is that weight alone is not enough. This is why Share of Mind (what gets through) is a better measure than Share of Voice (what is spent).

A host of research studies show that creative effectiveness has much more leverage than media weight. This means that if you have effective creative, increased media spending *may*⁸ work. But without proven creative, there is not much point in spending more on media. This field is far more complicated than a Crossover Note can cover. If you are interested, you should get on the WARC website and find papers by Lodish, Jones, Blair, Ehrenberg, McDonald, Feldwick, Hollis and others. You'll find a kaleidoscope of views amongst these experts, from guarded agreement to withering attacks cloaked in academic politeness. A good place to start is the paper that summarizes the split-cable results: *General truths? Nine key findings from IRI test data*, by Lodish and Lubetkin, Admap 1992.

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

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

This matched 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.⁹ This has dominated media planning (particularly in TV) for years, and I think that many planners embrace it today, not necessarily knowing its origins. It has gone by names such as “effective frequency” and 3+ planning. The idea is for the audience to get 2-3 exposures in a purchase cycle, without wasting excessive frequency on them.¹⁰

Other models also exist. There are “pulsing” models. There is an “impact” model. And there are markets like beer that have developed their own notions. In the 90s, John Philip Jones published a study that seemed to say that *one* TV exposure (in the week before purchase) was enough. See **13. Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect**.

This put the cat among the pigeons. Some embraced the thinking. Others attacked it. Jones's findings mirrored those of Erwin Ephron (see Pepsi in 2002) in what is called Recency Planning. It proposes lower weekly weights, with longer duration. Programs are also selected to avoid 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 its detractors say that it has its fair share of failures too. For more on this fascinating and still controversial topic, the WARC website is invaluable—with papers by Jones, Lodish, Ehrenberg and McDonald being a good place to start.

⁸ The reason for the “may” is that most models of media effort show diminishing returns as weight increases past a hard-to-find optimal level. See also **28. Media Learning**.

⁹ There are even findings that continued exposure *depresses* learning, though I find that hard to believe.

¹⁰ In practice, this is hard to do.

34. Longer and Broader Effects. This aspect of advertising came from the IPA Awards in the UK. They turned their attention to it because their early winners were mostly “growth and turnaround” cases. This is one way that advertising can, in the words of the Cassies mandate, be a prudent commercial investment that pays out. However, such cases don’t capture another value of advertising—often a greater one—its role in helping build a powerful and enduring brand that stands the test of time.

Andrex is a case in point. It is a toilet tissue in the UK—a good but not especially great product. It had been supported by a long-running campaign, always featuring a Labrador puppy getting up to a host of high jinks. Over 20 years, through the early 90s, Andrex added 5 share points, going from about 30% of the market to 35%. In itself, that may not seem so spectacular, in that it’s an average of about a ¼ point a year. What is spectacular is that those 5 points came in a rising market. As a result, Andrex’s sales tripled. More spectacular still, they did this at a 20% price premium to the market. This threw off enormous amounts of money. Econometric modelling showed £300 million in incremental sales, for an advertising investment of £54 million. Andrex is an example of a “longer” effect, and we have similar (though not as long) examples in the Cassies with Dove (Cassies III) and becel (Cassies 99).

The “broader” effect can also be massive. Orange was an upstart UK telecom, with any number of disadvantages vs. established companies. It launched with an extraordinary campaign—very little about features and benefits; more a vision of optimism for the future. It was highly successful in building the business. It also had a profound effect on the City. The winning IPA paper included a calculation by Lehmann Brothers, assessing the effect of advertising on subscriber growth, revenue and churn, and hence share price. It showed that Orange’s share price was almost double its “unadvertised” value. This made Orange one of the most valuable brands in Europe, and the company eventually sold for £33 billion.

These broader effects can be hard to isolate, and UK brands often have econometric modelling and other research to support their argument. Here, the case has to be more inferential—such as the correlations made by Molson Canadian between the Joe’s Rant campaign and Molson’s stock price.

A CLOSING THOUGHT

Throughout my career the unspoken assumption is that advertising has to help make things *grow*—brands, businesses or both. And what could be wrong with that?

But the engines on an airliner not only help it climb, they save it from falling out of the sky. There is inescapable evidence that if a brand is unsupported, it may glide for a while, but eventually it will fall. Or, to use another analogy, a successful brand is like a goose laying golden eggs. If it didn’t lay as many eggs as you wanted it to, would you starve it? I don’t think so. But that is what we seem to do with brands.

David Rutherford