

# Cassies 2004 Cases

**Brand: The Family Channel**

Winner: Services General —Gold

**Client Credits: Astral Media**

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Team effort. No specific credits.

**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](http://www.cassies.ca)

- Crossover Note 1. What a Brand Stands For.
- Crossover Note 7. Fighting for the Same High Ground.
- Crossover Note 2. Brand Truths.
- Crossover Note 33. Changing the Target Audience.
- Crossover Note 5. The Total Brand Experience.
- Crossover Note 14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.
- Crossover Note 21. Likeability.
- Crossover Note 4. Business Strategy dictated by the Brand Positioning.

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

## Executive Summary

**Results Period:** September 2002 – February 2004.

**Start of Advertising/Communication Effort:** September 2002.

**Base Period:** September 2000 – February 2002.

*Picture, if you will, a family gathered around the television, happily sharing an evening of entertainment together. We start with Dad catching up on the day's political news with 'Meet the Press,' quickly followed by a half hour of 'Queer Eye for the Straight Guy' for Mom. After a quick roundtable discussion about the topics and insights raised on these programs, it's the kids' turn to choose. Mom and Dad observe with satisfaction as their elementary school age son and daughter switch to the Family Channel, and all settle in to watch a double-header of Lizzie McGuire and The Amanda Show.*

A parent's dream. Totally safe, 100% commercial-free programming, that the whole family can enjoy together. Unfortunately, this kind of family time is up there with a visit to the dentist for a chunk of the kid population. It's as likely to happen in this day and age as the whole family sitting down to dinner at the same time seven nights a week.

This disconnect was the challenge facing Family Channel leading up to the Fall 2002 television season. It was a particularly critical because FC's audience and revenue growth had begun to flatten; there was the impending launch of new digital services targeting kids and families; and TV viewership was flat. It was going to be an intensely competitive fall, and it was critical that Family define its value proposition, brand identity and brand position in order to protect market share in what was widely held to be the most competitive kid market in the world.<sup>1</sup> **Crossover Note 1.**

This is the story of how an underdog doubled audience share over 18 months, surpassing one competitor and closing in on the long-reigning leader—through a focused and relevant brand idea, and a unique, smart, impactful campaign.

## Situation Analysis

Since the re-launch on extended basic tier cable in October 1997, Family's subscriber base had grown year after year at double digits until 2002, when revenues flattened. With the impending launch of a slew of new Digital networks, some targeting FC's audience (Discovery Kids, BBC Kids and Connect), Family had to firmly establish its place in kids' repertoire. Additionally, upcoming negotiations with cable affiliates and Disney made the demonstration business strength paramount.

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<sup>1</sup> Family Channel Marketing Planning Document, FY 2002

This challenge was compounded by the fact that Family Channel was far and away the least resourced player—with a \$1.9MM annual sales and promotion budget, compared to YTV’s \$9.7MM and Teletoon’s \$4.8MM. **Crossover Note 7.**

*Figure 1*

	Revenue	Sales & Promotion	
	\$	\$	% of Revenue
Family Channel	41,343,239	1,856,259	4.5%
YTV	78,824,299	9,651,254	12.2%
Teletoon	59,583,689	4,798,371	8.1%

Source: CRTC Statistics 2003.  
Family Channel Business Review, 2003.

There were two issues facing Family Channel. Primarily, its positioning did not reflect family viewing habits. **Crossover Note 2.** The notion of a channel for everyone in the family was extremely appealing (especially to parents).<sup>2</sup> In practice, however, it was totally inconsistent with the way families were watching. The average home had 2.7 TVs, providing ample opportunity for the family to split up based on tastes when they watched.<sup>3</sup>

Hand in hand with this, there was an image issue with kids. Family was too *Pollyanna*, something kids had trouble relating to. It was seen as wholesome, conservative, shy, quiet, caring, old fashioned, and very proper – too perfect.<sup>4</sup> Despite the fact that this safe, “no-censor required,” 100% commercial-free offer was appealing to parents, research showed that kids were the ultimate decision-maker for television viewing, and Family Channel did not appeal to them.<sup>5</sup>

The writing was on the wall. It was time for Family to connect with kids, to strengthen the meaning of the brand—driving loyalty and new users. This needed a powerful brand idea that was the right blend of kid and family sensibility. The right positioning would make it dead simple for viewers to understand what they were tuning in for when they switched to Family Channel.

## Strategy & Insight

To remain true to the mandate of Family Channel, and strike the balance between kid and parent programming, the primary target was defined as kids 8-11. **Crossover Note 33.** Kids in this age group watch a fair amount of television<sup>6</sup> but still want to be with family—they do not yet see parents as a negative.

<sup>2</sup> Peter D Hart Research Associates, Cable Subscriber Study

<sup>3</sup> Insignia Marketing Research, Inc. Family Channel Subscribers – Attitudes and Viewing Habits, 2001

<sup>4</sup> Attitudes and TV viewing habits of Canadian Teens, Family Channel Qualitative 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Attitudes and TV viewing habits of Canadian Teens, Family Channel Qualitative 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Nielsen Media Research Limited, 1998/99 Season

Through focus groups in major Canadian cities we generated insight into kids and their perceptions of ideal television. High energy and humour were the key. They wanted “no thinking required,” but were starting to move beyond cartoons to real life entertainment.

The real-life family of today was a perfect representation of the things kids appreciated: full volume, full throttle chaos and constant stimulation. Because of its name, Family had the potential to own this picture of the contemporary family. In essence, the chaos of the home could transfer to the tube.

The idea that best communicated this insight was “*there’s never a dull moment on the Family Channel.*” The Channel would stand for full-on, unpredictable fun from morning to night. Programming that would deliver laugh out-loud funny, edge of your seat action and heart-pounding suspense. **Crossover Note 5.**

Kids have the attention span of a nanosecond and the media challenge was not only to be where kids are, but to grab their attention and be there continually. Choices are limited, and none of the traditional options had the elements needed to make the connection. This gave us the media mission—to mirror the strategy. It too couldn’t be dull.

## Execution

“*Never a dull moment*” launched across English Canada in September 2002.

**Phase I:** The strategy and plan looked like this:

### 1. Be there:

- a. Knowing that kids spent most of their time at school, the goal was to saturate that environment with a twist. We looked for a way to get on school grounds without the heavy price tag traditionally attached. Recycling bins gave us that on-campus presence and we dominated that medium, buying all units available that targeted kids (304). We also bought a combination of posters and full unit wraps to maximize impact.
- b. Fully branded buses (exterior and interior) hit the streets of Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary. They featured “never a dull moment” situations inside and out. Larger than life visuals on the outside depicted “real-life” situations—a boy being pulled by a St. Bernard dog, and a dad falling over some building blocks. The interiors highlighted programming blocks—including Mad Dash (after school) and Non-Stop Weekend (weekend mornings).
- c. We ran three DPS magazine ads in high profile kids magazines.

## 2. Grab their attention:

The creative focused on exaggerated family hi jinks – like grandma slam-dunking her 6 year-old grandson, a Dad wrecking himself on a skateboard ramp, another Dad turning the backyard into a three alarm blaze. It promised action on Family Channel in a real but crazy family-based way.

Focus groups told us that kids need constant stimulation. So we also looked for ways to add action and surprise. Silverbox™ recycling bins gave us the opportunity.

In partnership with OMG, and working with an industrial designer, we used audio technology to create something entirely new. When kids went up to the box, they could see the Family Channel ad on it. Then, when they put something in, motion sensors triggered crazy 15-second audio messages that played off the ad. This really worked, as evidenced by comments from school principals:

*“The kids were playing with it a lot. The battery needed to be changed almost immediately.”*

*“We thought it was great! The kids kept using it just to hear it talk.”*

## Phase II

There were substantial gains in audience share in 2002 (over 50% in the first 6 months), but there was still the opportunity to further entrench the positioning in the minds of kids.

The second phase started in October 2003, and featured another innovation. The objective was to further drive awareness of “never a dull moment,” and increase viewership and loyalty among boys and girls 8-11. **Crossover Note 14.**

We invented an imaginary sitcom called *The Harrisons*. They were an everyday family, in a quirky kind of way. There was always something weird happening at the Harrison’s, and you could never be sure what was going to happen next. There was 10-year old Rusty at the center, a geeky older sister, a Dad who always messed things up, an unassuming Mom with some very unexpected interests, a Grandpa who was off in his own world—you get the picture.

The show itself never ran, of course, but we promoted it at full throttle. We created 30 different spots, from 15 – 55 seconds long. They showed the chaos and high jinks of this typical (well, almost typical) family, and ran on Family Channel in promotional slots.

There was a tremendous response from kids. A tracking study in early 2004 showed that after only 3 months on air, 42% of kids were aware of *The Harrisons*, and likeability was an impressive 74%. **Crossover Note 21.**

The relationship kids had with *The Harrisons* became evident when the network reduced the rotation of spots. Concerned feedback flowed in to the Suggestion Box at family.ca (typos and all):

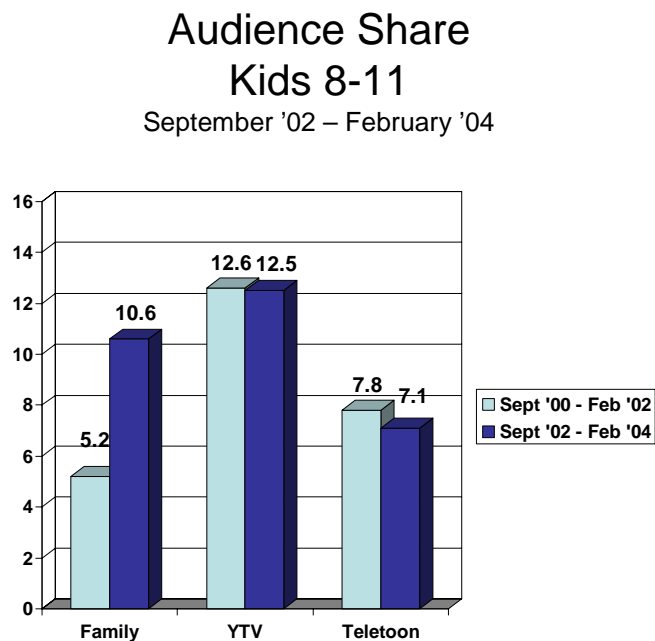
*To whom it may concern,  
i am just writing as I am a huge fan of your show the harrisons. I am really upset as i observed that u have been showing less of the show these days i wish you would please play more episodes as that is what makes my day a good one.*

*OMG I LOVE THE HARRISONZ!! WHERE DID IT GO!?!?!? YOU HAFTA SHOW IT MORE OFTEN ITZ THE FUNNIEST SHOW EVER ME AND MY FRIENDS ARE ALL OBSESSED WITH IT!!!*

## Business Results

In the eighteen months following the launch of the campaign, Family Channel audience share with kids 8-11 grew by 103% versus the base period while YTV shares remained flat and Teletoon share declined by 9%.

Figure 2



Source: Nielsen Media Research – English Language Cabled Households

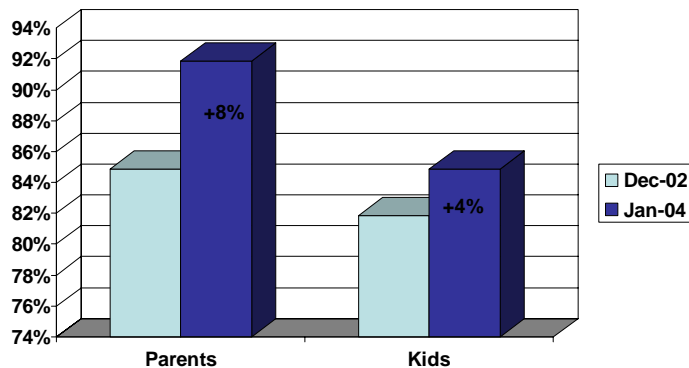
This took FC from a distant third to a relatively close second to YTV, while surpassing Teletoon. This is even more significant given that YTV had almost double the subscriber base (8.5MM, versus 4.5 MM for Family) and five times the marketing budget.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> CRTC Statistics 2002. See Figure 1

Tracking research in early 2004 indicated that the campaign had a positive impact on Family Channel awareness—particularly among the important target of non-subscriber parents and kids. Non-subscriber parent awareness grew to 92% (+ 8 points versus a year earlier) and non-subscriber kid awareness grew by 4 points.

Figure 3

### Family Channel Awareness Non-Subscribers

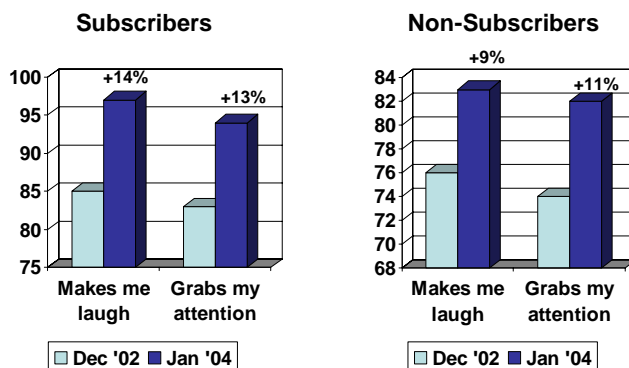


Source: Family Channel Tracking Study Wave 2

The study also indicated that FC subscribers and potential subscribers scored the network very strongly on the two attributes targeted in the advertising, i.e. positive movement on the image issues identified at the outset.

Figure 4

### Family Channel Imagery Kids 8 - 11



## Showing Cause and Effect between Advertising and Results

As with all strong, effective integrated marketing plans, the “*never a dull moment*” brand idea had an influence beyond advertising, and it affected programming and other on-air content to some extent. **Crossover Note 4.** However, the advertising and media campaign were the primary drivers of improved audience share and perceptions. This is evidenced by the image and awareness among non-subscribers—who have limited access to FC’s on-air programming and promotion.

It is also supported by the dramatic increase in audience share in the first 6 months of the campaign (+53%) when advertising took the lead in communicating the new positioning.

All in all, Family Channel see the brand idea and the ensuing media and advertising campaign as the cornerstone of significant improvement in share and brand image that exceeded expectations and over-achieved marketing objectives.

While addressing a positioning weakness that could have been sufficient to cause the demise of the brand, this success has put Family Channel in an extremely strong position—for cable affiliate and programming negotiations, and marketing/promotional partnerships.

It is a demonstration of how pushing the right buttons can result in more than just brand awareness and share, but also financial success.

## INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2004

[Family Channel 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](http://www.ica.adbeast.com).

## INDEX OF CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2004

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2. Brand Truths.	✓
3. Core Equity versus Price & Promotion.	
4. Business Strategy dictated by the Brand Positioning.	✓
5. The Total Brand Experience.	✓
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7. Fighting for the Same High Ground.	✓
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9. Turnarounds.	
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12. Changing the Goalposts.	(✓)
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34. Longer and Broader Effects, and <b>A Closing Thought.</b>	

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](http://www.cassies.ca)

## FAMILY CHANNEL. 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.

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

<sup>2</sup> How do you do this, and evolve? See *Excellence in Brand Communication* : [www.ica.adbeast.com](http://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 is to say the obvious as loudly and 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 their search for Brand Truths 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*.”<sup>3</sup>

Superior performance was a religion on Tide, and Tide delivered, despite the cliché that all detergents are alike. But this was only the glimmer of a 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 detergent in exchange. They adamantly refused, delivering off-the-cuff endorsements that no copywriter could ever have come up with. 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](#).

- 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.

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<sup>3</sup> P&G defined “what the brand stands for” by the document they called The Creative Strategy. In those days, if anyone even dreamt that the Tide Creative Strategy should include whitening, brightening etc. it was seen as an offence against all that was holy.

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.]

**14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.** When I was at P&G, and later at O&M, all the big advertisers and their 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.<sup>4</sup>

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.

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<sup>4</sup> 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](http://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.

**21. Likeability.** Nowadays, It's generally felt a brand's advertising should be *likeable*. But there was once an opposite school of thought. The poster-child was "Ring around the Collar" for Wisk—highly disliked *and* highly effective. Dissonant views on likeability, in part, reflect the long-running feud between creativity and selling power—do they work together, or does creativity get in the way? Cassies winners convincingly demonstrate that *they work together*, and the day may finally come when this ancient vendetta is put to rest.

The idea that likeability might correlate with effectiveness hit the headlines in the mid 80s, with a paper by Alex Biel of the Ogilvy Center for Research and Development. Later, in the early 90s, the Advertising Research Foundation caused another stir. The ARF Copy Research Validity Project<sup>5</sup> examined the predictive power—on shipments and share—of major “copy tests.” The results showed modest predictive ability, but none of the techniques did particularly well. This caused a blizzard of rebuttal and counter-rebuttal from the stakeholders. But it also caused a surprise. The likeability of advertising, which until then had been considered a bit of a non-issue, was (apparently) one of the better predictors of in-market success.

A bandwagon started. Quite a lot of people have a mental model that advertising has to (mostly) entertain to do its job. They seized on the “entertaining” meaning of liking. Others pointed out that liking is one of those words that means different things to different people—what researchers call a portmanteau word. Alex Biel found that liking was anchored more to “meaningfulness” than “entertainment.” Others think it equates to positives (Entertaining, Relevant, Newsworthy, Empathetic) and/or the absence of negatives (Unfamiliar, Confusing, Alienating). In other words, it's simplistic to assume that liking means “entertaining” to the exclusion of other factors.

In the Cassies, much of the advertising is likeable in the ordinary sense, but some (Big Brothers Vancouver, Dove Litmus, Ethical Funds, Pfizer's ED, SAAQ's anti-speeding, Canadian Blood Services, Motrin, and the United Way come to mind) could only be called likeable in the “meaningful” sense. Tim Broadbent, in his speech at the 2004 Cassies, showed a very unsettling UK example from the 2003 IPA Awards—a police recruitment commercial in which Lennox Lewis, talking about wife abuse, smoulders with repressed rage.

For myself, I've found the best approach is to think of liking on the broader lines defined above, and to merge that with the dominant idea in brand-building: *relevant differentiation*.

For more, see such papers as *Love the ad. Buy the product?* Alexander Biel. Admap 1990, *Do our commercials have to be liked?* Colin McDonald. Admap 1995. *Like it or Not, Liking is not Enough.* Nigel Hollis. Journal of Advertising Research 1995.

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<sup>5</sup> The idea was to test commercials that were already known to be effective (or not) and find out which “copy test” was best at picking winners from the losers. This required pairs of commercials for the same brand (to remove the “brand” effect), with valid knowledge about their effectiveness (shipments and share). To be certain of this, they took commercials that had proven results (good and bad) over at least a year in split-cable test markets. It was hard to find the necessary pairs of such commercials, but eventually five pairs validated. The ARF then replicated the major techniques, and “pre-tested” each commercial. The results, while modestly positive, did not show especially strong predictive ability for any tested technique.

**33. Changing the Target Audience.** Many brands aim at the same target for years. It's not necessarily wrong, though it's always worth zero-basing conventional wisdom.

From time to time, a brand keeps the same target, but someone sees a new way to think about them. This is fertile ground for insights—see *Crossover Notes 11 and 12*.

Occasionally, the target is radically changed. The most famous is probably Marlboro. Marlboro was originally positioned against women, complete with red filter tip so that lipstick didn't show. I have an extraordinary B&W commercial, featuring a night-club vamp, fluttering her false eyelashes and crooning, "wouldn't a Marlboro be good right now..." The Leo Burnett people changed all that with the Marlboro cowboy. This type of shift looks easy with hindsight, but when the decision has to be made in real time, it can be tough. There's usually a fair amount of angst about losing current users, leading to the sort of creative brief that says "appeal to X without alienating Y."

I recall two spectacular IPA examples where, to get maximum impact on the new target, they were prepared to alienate the previous one. The brands were Batchelor's SuperNoodles and Peperami meat snacks (chewy, spicy sausagey things that look a bit like liquorice sticks). The advertising for each brand had been aimed at Moms for years. They decided to aim at young men, a smaller group, but heavy users. Batchelors came up with hilariously unseemly ads in the "men behaving badly" school. Peperami came up with a riotously sadistic cartoon campaign—bringing Peperami sticks came to life, and subjecting them to dreadful indignities. These couldn't be further from "Mom" advertising, but in both cases the business took off.

That's not to say we should always crash around in the china shop, wilfully alienating longstanding audiences. But there may be less risk than we think.

Cassies winners who switched targets, and successfully took the risk of alienation, include the CFL and 5 Alive in Cassies 2002, and Family Channel in Cassies 2004. I think that Pizza Pops—the campaign with the filling splatting all over the place—is also in this camp.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Not a Cassies case, but I've been told anecdotally that it was very effective.

## ADDITIONAL (✓) CROSSOVER NOTES

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

- Oh Henry! None of the gut-fillers had tried to own hunger, even though it was the high ground for the category. Cassies II. See also *Crossover Note 7*.
- Buckley's. Rather than side-step their bad taste, Buckley's relished it. Cassies III.
- Chrysler. Minivans were "my most expensive household appliance." Even so, *emotion* was the key to an immensely successful launch. Cassies III.
- Philadelphia Cream Cheese. In research, people often do not own up to what they really want, which in this case was "permission to indulge." Cassies III.
- Richmond Savings. Almost everyone hated banks, but it still took insight to turn this into the "Humungous Bank." Cassies III.
- Eggs are natural, but in word-association tests, consumers did not say so. (See *12. Changing the Goalposts* next.) The farmer campaign 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. Competitors were fighting on promotion/price. 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 found a way to be youthful without being too young in the "forever young" campaign. Cassies 2002.
- Listerine in Cassies 2002: healthy gums, after a century talking about bad breath.
- Pro•Line in Cassies 2002: Appealed to non-experts with "Anyone can win."
- Aero. Saw the power of "melting" in Cassies 2003.
- Crown Diamond. Used the fact that men hate to paint in Cassies 2003.
- Super 7. Ignored the political correctness of being tasteful. Cassies 2003.
- Cottonelle. Talked to women as women, not as "family." Cassies 2004.
- Quebec Milk. Saw the blindingly obvious. That just asking people to drink more milk might cause it. Cassies 2004.
- Toyota Sienna. Realized that the answer lay not in what minivan buyers do, but in what SUV buyers do. Cassies 2004.
- Virtually all the cases in *Crossover Note 10*.

**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.

### **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*