CASSIES 2003 CASES

Brand: Aero

Advertiser: Nestlé Canada

Agency: J. Walter Thompson

Winner: Packaged Goods Food—Silver

Credits: Nestlé Canada
Elizabeth Frank, Marketing Champion—Aero, Coffee Crisp, Kit Kat.
Anna Soulias, Marketing Manager—Aero.

Credits: J. Walter Thompson
Laurie Chodelka, Account Supervisor.
Martin Shewchuk, Creative Director.
Steve Bonnell, Account Director.
Jack Perone, Strategic Planner.
Don Saynor, Writer.
Malcolm Roberts, Art Director.

Credits:
In-Sync—Research House.

Crossover Notes: All winning cases have their own story to tell, but they also contain broader learning about how to successfully build brands—lessons that cross over from one case to another. David Rutherford calls these Crossover Notes, and he has been adding them to the published cases since Cassies III in 1997. The Crossover Notes for this case are as follows, and a full set is attached.

Crossover Note 1.	What a Brand Stands For.
Crossover Note 6.	Should the Product be Improved?
Crossover Note 9.	Turnarounds.
Crossover Note 2.	Brand Truths.
Crossover Note 11.	The Eureka Insight.
Crossover Note 26.	Awareness Alone.
Crossover Note 27.	Share of Mind. Share of Voice. Spending.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Results Period for the Case: May 02 to June 03.
Base Period Used for Comparison: Year-ago, and historical trends where appropriate.

In Canada, the confectionery market is extremely competitive, with many of the same brands fighting over places in the Top 10 for decades. Nestlé's AERO was one of these, in 8th or 9th position. It had not had any significant advertising/communication support for a decade, and share was suffering. It was time to renovate.

AERO is a unique milk chocolate bar—established over 50 years ago, and long associated with its bubbles. But continuous tracking showed that brand health (a composite of unaided awareness and brand bought most often) was declining. Brand awareness was half that of the top five supported brands—a critical shortfall in an impulse category. Meanwhile, bubbles differentiated AERO, but consumers were left with a resounding "so what?" Crossover Notes 1 and 6.

The business objective was to move AERO into the top five over the upcoming three years. The critical question, from a positioning point of view, was what to do about the bubbles.

This case is based on the answer to this question, and the remarkable business results that followed. Within 12 months of new creative hitting the airwaves, AERO leapt from #8 in the Top Ten to #3, and share hit its highest level in over ten years. Crossover Note 9.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The Overall Picture: AERO has been well-established for over 50 years in Canada. Historically, it had been a top five brand, but lack of support against a focused message had caused it to dim on the chocolate lover's radar screen—falling to 9th in 1993, and staying at that level for a decade:

Exhibit 1: Chocolate Bar Brand Rankings (tonnage consumption)

	1993	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**
Reese	7	10	8	4	5	8	3	1	1
Oh Henry	2	3	1	1	1	2	1	2	2
Kit Kat	4	5	5	6	4	5	8	5	3
M&M	3	2	4	2	2	1	2	3	4
Caramilk	4	3	3	3	8	6	4	4	5
Coffee Crisp	4	9	6	8	6	3	5	7	6
Snickers				10	10	10			7
AERO	9	8	10	9	9	9	9	9	8
Smarties		6	7	7	3	4	6	6	9
Hershey							10	10	10
Crispy Crunch	8	7	9						
Mars	1	1	2	5	7	7	7	8	

Source: *A.C. Nielsen Marketrack Data – National All Channels, 52 weeks*

Tonnage share was in decline, with minimal share of voice, as shown in Exhibit 2:

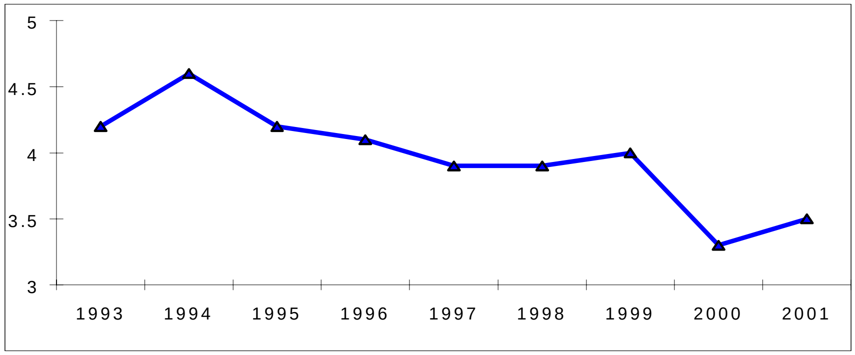


Exhibit 2: Historical Share of Market

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
SOM	4.2	4.6	4.2	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.3	3.5
SOV	1%	0	0	1%	0	0%	1%	0	0

Source: SOM: *ACNielsen, Marketrack, 52 weeks, National All Channels (tonnage)*
Source: SOV: *Nielsen Media Research*

Meanwhile, AERO's competitors (Caramilk and Dairy Milk) were spending aggressively:

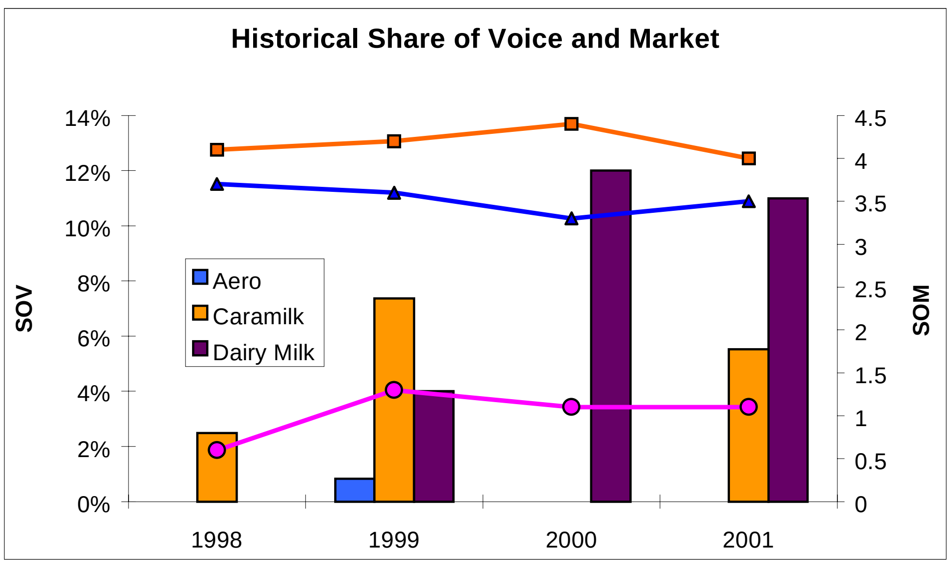


Exhibit 3: Historical Share of Voice and Market Share:

		1998	1999	2000	2001
AERO	SOM	3.7	3.6	3.3	3.5
	SOV	0	1%	0	0
Caramilk	SOM	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.0
	SOV	2%	7%	0%	6%
Dairy Milk	SOM	0.6	1.3	1.1	1.1
	SOV	0	4%	12%	12%

Source: SOM: *AC Nielsen Market track, National All Channels (tonnage share)*
Source: SOV: *Nielsen Media Research*

Two Critical Issues: Not surprisingly, AERO was losing awareness. Unaided brand awareness fell from 18% to 15% between 1999 and 2001. Just as damaging was the question of relevance. AERO was viewed as a classic bar, synonymous with bubbles, but we did not know (in any deep way) how the bubbles affected the enjoyment of the bar, or purchase decisions. Crossover Note 2.

We did know that AERO had a loyal user base of chocoholics, with the following characteristics:

- Mainly women, and within that, mainly 18-34.
- They eat *a lot* more chocolate than average.
- Their resistance is weakest in the afternoon.
- Though chocoholics, they are otherwise careful snackers.

The Challenge: Find a way to make AERO bubbles relevant and motivating to women.

The Sudden Insight: Early in 2002, we ran innovative qualitative research among AERO enthusiasts. It was an eye-opener. We watched the way women bite into an AERO. And they didn't! Most broke it into smaller pieces and, instead of biting it, let it melt slowly on their tongues. There seemed to be a secret among those in the know about letting the bubbles *melt*. Why let them melt? Because it enhances and prolongs the pleasure of pure chocolate. Solid chocolate *sans* bubbles doesn't behave like that. The indulgent sensation is missing.

This was an "aha!" moment. Crossover Note 11.

The Selling Idea: There is a right way and a wrong way to eat an AERO bar. The secret to AERO's chocolate pleasure is in *HOW* it is eaten.

The Advertising: In a :30 spot called "Vending Machine", a woman introduces a female friend to the unique pleasures of eating AERO. The friend doesn't know why it feels so good to keep it on her tongue until *she* experiences the melting bubbles. The women extol the indulgent virtues of the bar and its bubbles in 'AEROspeak' – the way you speak when AERO is melting on your tongue. The call to action is "Have you felt the bubbles melt?"

"Vending Machine" was pre-tested using the Millward Brown LINK test. The spot achieved a 10 on the Awareness Index; double the average for confectionery. It also exceeded category norms on key attributes such as credibility and persuasion. Crossover Note 26.

Exhibit 4: Vending Machine Link Test Results

	Vending Machine	Average
Persuasion (Top Box Score)	46	30
Credibility (Top Box Score)	57	25
Distinctive Branding (Top Box)	84	41
Relevance	50	31
Offers bubbles	97	n/a
Offers pure melting pleasure	87	n/a
Melts effortlessly	81	n/a
Tastes great	77	n/a

Source: *Millward Brown Goldfarb*

Media: The launch was divided into two waves, the first starting May 2002 in high-profile season finales like *Friends, Will & Grace* and *Survivor.* This was a 7-week flight that included an Ontario heavy up as well as specialty buys targeting women 25+. The second wave hit September 9th with a specialty buy targeting women on niche networks like *W, Life* and *MuchMoreMusic.* Note, however, that despite a strong media plan, AERO was still outspent by direct competitors.
Crossover Note 27.

Exhibit 5: 2002 Share of Voice: AERO and Key Competitors

2002	Share of Voice
AERO	4%
Caramilk	12%
Dairy Milk	8%

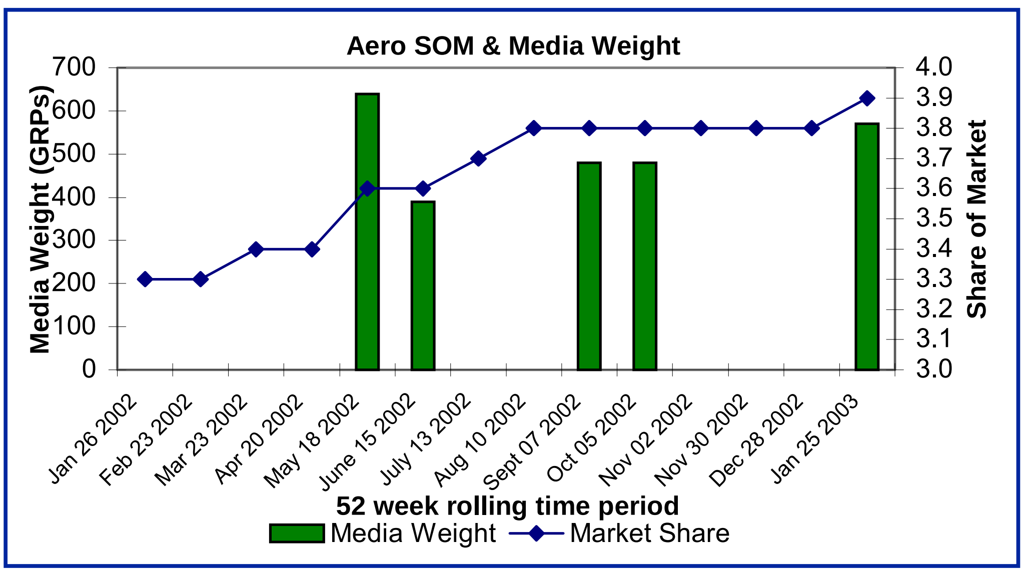
Source: *Nielsen Media Research*

RESULTS

In the two months following the first flight, AERO tonnage grew 48% and boosted AERO from #9 to #5 among chocolate bars. This was a phenomenal achievement, considering that ranking changes within the top ten are, traditionally, glacially gradual.

As of December 2002, after two media flights, AERO was maintaining its #5 ranking and was successfully defending a 3.8 SOM for four weeks ending December 28 2002 (plus 18% VYA).

Exhibit 6: AERO SOM and Media Weight – January 26, 2002-January 25, 2003



Source: *AC Nielsen Market track, National All Channels (tonnage share)*

This success continued in 2003. “Vending Machine” was modified to carry 5 second tags, supporting the brand variants—Peppermint and Dark Chocolate.

This flight launched in January 2003 and ran until March 16th, and AERO jumped to the #3 ranking. Volume grew at 32% versus a year ago, and share hit 5.0, the highest level in more than 10 years. (See the table below.)

Exhibit 7: Brand Rankings by Tonnage.

	2001		**2002**		**2003 (YTD June)**	
1	Reeses	6.2	Reeses	5.1	Kit Kat	6.2
2	Oh Henry	5	Kit Kat	4.9	Reese	5.7
3	Kit Kat	4.6	Oh Henry	4.6	AERO	5.0
4	M&Ms	4.1	Caramilk	4.4	M&Ms	4.7
5	Caramilk	4.0	AERO	3.8	Coffee Crisp	4.5
6	Coffee Crisp	3.6	Coffee Crisp	3.6	Smarties	4.2
7	Snickers	3.5	Smarties	3.6	Caramilk	4.2
8	AERO	3.5	M&Ms	3.5	Oh Henry!	3.9
9	Smarties	3.4	Mars	2.7	Mars	3.4
10	Hershey	3.3	Hersheys	2.7	Hershey	2.9

Source: *AC Nielsen Marketrack, National All Channels (Tonnage Share)*

ISOLATING CAUSE AND EFFECT BETWEEN ADVERTISING AND RESULTS

1. The product did not change during the course of the campaign. Pricing stayed in the $0.75 - $0.77 range, and was comparable to competitors. Distribution was not a factor, and nor was promotional spending.

2. Brand tracking clearly showed that the new message was getting through. Unaided brand awareness increased from a baseline of 14% pre launch to a high of 30% by the end of 2002. Unaided brand awareness continues to increase and hit 37% in the first half of 2003.

3. Brand health (the composite of unaided awareness and brand bought most often) increased from 11% to 18% during the same period, driven by the advertising.

4. Perhaps most striking, leapfrogging up the Top 10 rankings is extremely rare, and could only be attributed to the new news in the marketing mix—namely the way we turned the feature of bubbles into the benefit of indulgence.

The reinvigoration of AERO has been a huge success, surpassing all its goals and objectives in half the allotted time.

Crossover Notes are attached.

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2003 CASSIES CROSSOVER NOTES

Before I became an advertising and marketing consultant, I learned my trade at Procter & Gamble (seven years through the mid 70s) and Ogilvy Toronto (a decade and a half through the early 90s) where I finished up as Vice-Chairman. It's hard to believe, but we felt run off our feet even back then. Compared to today, though, we had much more time to study the effectiveness of advertising and—very important—pass that learning on.

I was thinking about this as I was editing Cassies III in 1997. That year, I started to add simple footnotes where a valuable piece of learning in one case "crossed over" to a similar point in another. With each new Cassies, this has expanded, so that now the Crossover Notes run to several pages, under 31 different headings. They are still mainly about Cassies cases, but I also draw on academic thinking for some of the more complex issues.

You can use Crossover Notes in two ways. Although they didn't start out as a crash course in advertising, they cover a lot of territory, and are worth reading in their own right. Alternatively, you can dip into them selectively, to see if they have anything to say on an issue you are facing. The 31 headings are attached to help with this.

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

We now have close to 120 Cassies published cases. They are an immense and growing body of experience. I hope these Crossover Notes help capture and pass on the lessons of success.

David Rutherford

Toronto: December 2003.

For detailed advice on brand-building, see *Excellence in Brand Communication*, the best practice book published by the ICA. For information on this book, visit www.ica.adbeast.com.

INDEX OF CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2003

~CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2003~

(by David Rutherford)

1. **What a Brand Stands For.** A brand is more than the functional product. This "moreness" is proved by blind and identified tests. With a strong brand, the preference goes up in the identified leg. Why? Because of the values embodied in the brand. (See *What's in a Name* by John Philip Jones.) This "moreness" can be worth a great deal of money, so all the players in marketing and communication have beliefs (some radically different) about how to build brands. Virtually all agree that a brand is not physical, but something that exists in the mind. Most also agree that you have to stake out—definitively—what your brand stands for.

   This can't be done by empty promises. You have to discover the symbiotic combination of what the consumer wants and what your product delivers—and then stake out that territory more effectively than your competitors. Years ago, the late Gerry Goodis (who gave us "At Speedy You're a Somebody") said, "Find the greed and fill the need." But nowadays it isn't that simple. What the consumer wants can be hard to pin down, and what the product delivers is a melting pot of perceptions and reality. This is why all the "brand" ideas have sprung up—Brand Image, Brand Personality, Brand Character, Brand Essence, Brand Equity, Brand Footprint, Brand Truth, Brand Soul, and so on—to say nothing of old faithfuls like Positioning, Basic Stance, Focus of Sale, Selling Proposition, Features, Attributes, Benefits, and Values. Whatever the terminology, though, all the Cassies winners reflect the benefit of finding the symbiotic combination that underpins all brand-building.

2. **Brand Truths.** It's generally agreed that successful advertising (in fact all successful communication) must resonate with its audience. As a marketer, you may want people to believe that you have the best-tasting coffee, but saying "I have the best-tasting coffee" will probably not get the resonance you need.

   This has led to the idea discovering Brand Truths (the names vary). These operate on a deeper level than simple claims. One of the top UK agencies described this as "we interrogate the product until it confesses its strength." Many of the Cassies winners are based on a compelling Brand Truth. See also *11.The Eureka Insight.*

3. **Core Equity versus Price & Promotion.** A brand may exist in the mind, but from a financial point of view it is not an abstract notion. It has to be valuable if you want to sell it, and it has to make good money as long as you hold onto it. A brand under price and promotion pressure has to make tough decisions. If you don't fight fire with fire, you will lose business in the short term. But if you don't invest in brand-building, you will likely lose much more over the long term. This is the choice between a "clear and present danger", and a "worse but less immediate one." It's hard to get it right, but we probably succumb more than we should to short-term responses. Fido in Cassies 99, Clearnet and KD in Cassies 2001, Nautilus and Sidekicks in Cassies 2002, and a fair number in Cassies 2003 (Bubba, Dodge SX 2.0, Manitoba Telecom, MINI, Sola Nero, and Toyota Matrix) faced this issue. All decided to build their business through emphasis on brand value, rather than price and promotion.

   Core Equity has more than one meaning. One is the "bundle of meanings" in the audience's mind. Another is the equity in hard financial terms. This is a developing area, and for more information contact the ICA about the publication *Brand Valuation. Measuring And Leveraging Your Brand.*

4. **Business Strategy dictated by the Brand Positioning.** This goes deeper than the "Ps" of Marketing. Yes, 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 is another in 2003. From the broader business world, Virgin is cited. So too 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.** Although the Cassies have historically been about advertising, they are evolving to include the idea that brands are built by "every point of contact" with the consumer. At its highest level (See Crossover Note 4) this is much more than communication, but most of the time now it comes under the heading of Integrated Marketing Communication.

   A challenge of IMC is to find what one of the agencies calls the "organizing idea." This gives a focal point for all the different disciplines, without cutting-and-pasting visuals and slogans from one medium to another. The organizing idea guides all effort on the brand. Cassies examples include 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, Manitoba Telecom, MINI, United Way, Université de Montréal.

6. **Should the product be improved?** Some years ago it was an axiom of marketing that your product, at a functional level, must have an advantage over its competitors. In packaged goods, for example, it was considered foolish to launch a new brand unless it was a blind test winner over its major competitor—ideally overall, and at least for a highly desirable benefit.[1]

   That thinking has shifted, and it's commonly said today that it's impossible to sustain a functional advantage; that competition can match you in a matter of weeks or months, or even days with some technological products. This has had a paradoxical effect. Some people are almost frenzied in their desire to keep their product (or service) improving—fearing that if they don't, they will be left behind. Others go into a slipstream mode—letting others face the headwinds, then matching what they do.

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

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

   There's no question that the cost to upgrade a product can be daunting, especially with the financial pressure to deliver short-term returns. Nevertheless, many Cassies cases reflect the investment. For example:

   - Listerine in Quebec in Cassies II, with an improved taste.
   - Chrysler in Cassies III, with the NS Minivan.
   - Pontiac Sunfire in Cassies III.
   - St Hubert in Cassies 99, upgrading their entire operation.
   - Sunlight in Cassies 99, with improved cleaning.
   - Home Furnace in Cassies 2002.
   - Lipton Sidekicks in Cassies 2002.
   - Irving Mainway Coffee and Source Yogurt in Cassies 2003.
   - MINI in Cassies 2003.
   - Motrin in Cassies 2003, adding stronger skus.
   - VodKice in Cassies 2003, remodeling the Boomerang portfolio.

[1] There was still the "pre-emptive" possibility i.e. staking out a convincing claim for a parity benefit before anyone else—but in general, having a product edge was seen as important

6. **Should the product be improved? (cont'd).** Still others achieve their gains with no change in product—though the existing product is in all cases good, and sometimes better than the competition. These cases would include:

   - Crispy Crunch in Cassies I.
   - Pepsi in Quebec in Cassies I.
   - Oh Henry! in Cassies II.
   - Buckley's, Dove, and Philadelphia Cream Cheese in Cassies III.
   - Eggs, becel, and Wonderbread in Cassies 99.
   - Kraft Dinner and Lipton Chicken Noodle in Cassies 2001.
   - Campbell's, Diet Pepsi, Listerine, and Pro•Line in Cassies 2002.
   - All the major beer winners over the years.
   - Aero, Dodge SX 2.0, Familiprix, Super 7, in Cassies 2003.

   The technology cases (and some others) are harder to categorize, but generally have ongoing improvement. In these situations, as argued by Clearnet in Cassies 2001 and Lipton Sidekicks in Cassies 2002, if you know that any functional advantage will be quickly matched, you had better also develop an advantage through brand personality/character/equity. There is no cookie-cutter answer. Each situation has to be assessed on its merits.

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 advertising) before Olay arrived. Dove had the litmus test—a spectacular demonstration of mildness. But Ivory Bar owned mildness. Those who felt you shouldn't fight for the same high ground predicted a disaster. But Dove attacked anyway with the "Litmus" advertising. Four years later Dove was up 73% in dollar sales, and Ivory had lost half its share.

   How can the two views be reconciled? Distinctiveness is essential, *but it does not have to come from positioning.* 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. Duracell/Energizer are another aspect. Duracell staked out "No other battery looks like it, or lasts like it" and Energizer chose not attack this "lasts longer" high ground for years. Eventually they did, and the Energizer Bunny has been going and going ever since. One last example. Sunlight wanted to attack Tide on cleaning, but they knew that a frontal attack would almost certainly fail. So they re-defined "clean" as the joy of getting dirty, and won the Grand Prix in Cassies 99.

   [A caveat: I'm not saying you should always attack the high-ground—though I have to confess it is the first place I look.]

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

- Canadian versus Blue. Cassies I, III, and 2001.
- Duracell versus Energizer. Cassies II.
- Dove versus Ivory. Cassies III.
- Richmond Savings versus the banks. Cassies III.
- Lipton versus Campbell. Cassies 2001.
- Sunlight versus Tide. Cassies 99 and Cassies 2001.
- workopolis.com versus monster.com. Cassies 2001.
- Labatt Bleue versus Molson Dry. Cassies 2002.
- Listerine versus Scope. Cassies II and 2002.
- Pepsi versus Coke. Cassies I and Cassies 2002.

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

- Crispy Crunch. The "Someone Else's" campaign in Cassies I.
- Molson Canadian. The "What Beer's All About" campaign in Cassies I.
- Pepsi. The Quebec "Meunier" campaign in Cassies I.
- Listerine. The "Oncle Georges" Quebec campaign in Cassies II.
- Oh Hungry? Oh Henry! in Cassies II.
- Dove. The "Litmus" campaign in Cassies III.
- Molson Canadian. The "I AM" campaign in Cassies III.
- Philadelphia Cream Cheese and the "Angel" campaign in Cassies III.
- becel. The "Young at Heart" campaign in Cassies 99.
- Eggs. The "Real-Life Farmers" campaign in Cassies 99.
- Sunlight. The launch of "Go Ahead. Get Dirty." in Cassies 99.
- Wonder Bread and "Childhood" in Cassies 99.
- Kraft Dinner in Cassies 2001.
- Lipton Chicken Noodle in Cassies 2001.
- Bank of Montreal in Cassies 2002.
- Campbell's Soup in Cassies 2002.
- CFL in Cassies 2002.
- Easter Seals Relay in Cassies 2002.
- Sleeman in Cassies 2002.
- Listerine in Cassies 2002.
- Pro•Line in Cassies 2002.
- Aero in Cassies 2003.
- Bait Cars in Cassies 2003.
- Crown Diamond Paint in Cassies 2003.
- Dodge SX 2.0 in Cassies 2003.
- Motrin in Cassies 2003.
- ProLine in Cassies 2003.
- Super 7 in Cassies 2003.
- Université de Montréal in Cassies 2003.
- VodKice in Cassies 2003.

10. **Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged?** The tried-and-true might be right, but if it isn't, it can be hard to shake. When US Pepsi executives saw the prototypes for the Pepsi Challenge, they apparently said, "that's not Pepsi," and refused to approve it. In a similar way, the Dove Litmus campaign ran into a fusillade of criticism at client/agency global head offices—and only survived because the Canadian team stuck to their guns. Other examples:

- Crispy Crunch in Cassies I, making a virtue of greed.
- Dove Litmus in Cassies III. (See Crossover Note 7.)
- Richmond Savings in Cassies III, poking fun at the Humungous banks.
- Sunlight in Cassies 99, saying it's OK to get dirty.
- Fido and Clearnet, using dogs and frogs. Cassies 99 and 2001.
- AGF in Cassies 99 and Clarica in Cassies 2001. Along with Richmond Savings, they deliver serious messages with wit and charm. So do the Bank of Montreal and Scotiabank in Cassies 2002.

Others from Cassies 2002:

- Bud Light, not going after the young, legal-age, male heavy drinker.
- CFL, going aggressively against younger viewers, accepting the risk that they might alienate the older, loyal, core franchise.
- ED, going high-profile with a taboo topic.
- Five Alive, switching from the Mom target to young males.
- Irving Home Furnaces, using age as a plus for attracting attention.
- Labatt Bleue, breaking the Christmas “Happy Holidays” tradition.
- Pine-Sol, breaking the conventions of household cleaner advertising.
- Sleeman in Quebec, with the “honest frenglish” campaign.
- Sloche, rejoicing in being politically and nutritionally incorrect.

From Cassies 2003:

- Bait Cars, talking directly to criminals.
- Crown Diamond Paint, playing off the fact that men hate painting.
- Familiprix, using humour to sell health products.
- Irving Mainway Coffee, making a virtue of the caffeine hit.
- Toyota Matrix, breaking all the Toyota “rules.”
- Sola Nero, could not be further away from wine snobbery.
- Super 7, reveling in the excesses of the super-rich.
- Université de Montréal, no smiling students and ivy covered buildings.

Note: it takes courage to go against conventional wisdom, but this is often what is needed to be distinctive.

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.
- Buckley's. Bad-tasting medicine is supposed to be good for us. Rather than side-step their bad taste, Buckley's relished it. Cassies III.
- Chrysler NS Minivan. Minivans were "my most expensive household appliance." Even so, the team realized that *emotion* was the key to an immensely successful launch campaign. Cassies III.
- Philadelphia Cream Cheese. In research, people often do not own up to what they really want. The team realized that consumers wanted "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 *Changing the Goalposts* next.) The farmer campaign brought “natural” to life and turned around a 17-year decline. Cassies 99.
- Sunlight. People want clothes clean, but getting them dirty is fun. This brilliant insight was diametrically opposed to 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.
- Virtually all of us have a KD truth in our lives (Cassies 2001). The insight was to realize the *power* of this. See also Lipton Chicken Noodle in Cassies 2001, and Campbell’s Soup in Cassies 2002.
- Diet Pepsi found a way to be youthful without being “young” in the ‘forever young” campaign. Cassies 2002.
- Listerine in Cassies 2002: the shift from bad breath to healthy gums.
- Pro•Line in Cassies 2002: “Anyone can win.”
- Aero. Seeing the power of “melting” in Cassies 2003.
- Crown Diamond. Using the fact that men hate to paint in Cassies 2003.
- Motrin. Realizing that pain is personal, and using this to tell the story of three levels of strength. Cassies 2003.
- Sola Nero. Debunking wine snobbery in Cassies 2003.
- Super 7. Ignoring the political correctness of being tasteful about wealth, and reveling in the excesses of the super rich. Cassies 2003.
- Virtually all the cases in Crossover Note 10.

12. Changing the Goalposts. Some insights see what was always there, but had simply not been noticed before. (Sunlight's joy of getting dirty would be an example.) Other 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 change the goalposts by seeing what is *not* being said. Eggs (referred to in C. Note 11) are 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.

Purina is another example. At one time, everyone sold dog-food on taste and nutrition. 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.

This is a reminder of another way to get insights—by looking beyond Canada. Similar thinking to Purina had produced the famously successful "prolongs active life" campaign for PAL dog-food 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 not sure I can do justice to all the points of view in this space, but here is an overview:

In physics, the search continues for a theory, aptly enough called "the theory of everything." Einstein came across the Theory of Relativity almost 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 researchers has 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 matters a lot in practice. Whether we realize it or not, we all piece together a customized notion of how advertising works. These "mental models" (while right some of the time) are not right all of the time, but—and this is the key point—*we tend to treat our mental model as the correct one.*

13. **Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect (cont'd).** For example, there used to be a view (it's diminishing, but it's still there) that creativity *gets in the way of effectiveness.* Some years back, the CEO of one of the big packaged goods companies unrepentantly held this view. What he was criticizing, of course, was "creativity that detracts from the message" or "irrelevant creativity" or "self-indulgent creativity." But in his mental model, he was suspicious of anything that was not tried and true.

    At the other extreme, there is the mental model that outstanding creativity is, in and of itself, the essential ingredient. Again, when people say this, they do not mean "outstandingly irrelevant" or "outstandingly self-indulgent" though the people at the other end of the spectrum suspect that they do.

    Between these polar opposites is a view with accumulating evidence in its favour—that creativity (relevant of course) is a *partner* in effectiveness. All of 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 modeled on these Awards.)

    Then there is the question of how advertising works. Many of us carry the 100 year-old AIDA model in our heads: Attention >> Interest >> Desire >> Action. But there is any amount of evidence that advertising does not work this way, especially for established brands in everyday categories (I dislike the term "low interest"). Many effective campaigns act by positive reinforcement.

    And now there is a hotly debated theory that humans take in immense amounts of information through "Low-Involvement Processing." To people with an AIDA mental model, this is about as whacky as quantum mechanics. It argues (with evidence from neuroscience) that a great deal of what we learn do not come from the "high involvement" process that almost all learning theory (and advertising) is based on. I think there could be something to this, in the sense that there are any number of things that we seem to pick up by osmosis. (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 some of the tension that goes on when advertising is being evaluated.

13. Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect (cont'd). On immediate versus long-term effect, there is an "experience" view, and an "academic/research" view. The experience-based view has four scenarios, with different degrees of visible success:

1. Shipments/share etc. respond within days/weeks of new advertising.[2]
2. A brand has a good level of volume/share/profit that long term advertising helped create. But advertising is no longer driving the brand ahead in leaps and bounds—it has more of a "retention" role.
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.

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, in fact, working.** The effect, however, is masked by pricing, promotion, in-store activity, distribution etc. If this is true, then given time, as the masking effect recedes, all should be well.
- **The "slow burn" situation.** Here, the advertising needs to wear in. When this has happened, all should be well. [Some researchers reject wear-in, saying that if a campaign does not have a quick effect, it is unlikely to have one long term. 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 eventual conclusion—in which case you need to be preparing for some sort of fix.

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[2] And is hopefully evolved into a long-running business-building campaign—See *14. Refreshing a Continuing Campaign.*

13. **Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect (cont'd).** From the academic/research side, one question has been, "If advertising works in the short-term, why is this so hard to see?" Another has been, "If advertising has a long-term effect, is it the accumulation of short-term effects, or some other long-term process?" These issues are still debated, but the following have been influential:

- **John Philip Jones and STAS (Short-Term Advertising Strength).** In the mid 90s Jones (a leading academic) designed a study to uncover short-term advertising 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. (He found it in 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. See Crossover Note 28 for implications.)
  c) The short-term effect was often followed by a one-year effect (he reports it in 46% of all 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.]

- **The IRI findings on long-term effects.** IRI run split-cable test markets in the US called BehaviorScan. They are state-of-the-art, with the test group of consumers exposed to marketing effort, while a closely matched control group is not. In the early 90s IRI published the accumulated learning from 400 individual tests—originally designed to explore different TV creative, different media weight, different promotion support and so on. From this, they were able to analyze 44 tests for long-term advertising effect. Test areas (Plan A) were measured against control areas (Plan B). Note that Plan 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 created in Year I held up over three years, with the cumulative 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.)

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

- **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.

14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.

It is almost universally agreed that brands build *relationships* with consumers, and vice versa. This leads to the idea that brands should present a consistent face over time (assuming, of course, that they stand for the right thing in the first place.) This then extends to a belief in *campaigns.* Some people see this rigidly. At one time, for example, packaged goods advertisers demanded strict pool-outs, where successive ads had the same structure, a continuing ad property, and a continuing slogan. Such campaigns can be effective, but campaigns do not have to be this tightly formatted. The following is not a comprehensive list, but it gives an idea of the possibilities:

- **Strict Pool-Out.** Campaigns like "Who wants Gum? I do. I do." They have similar situations and format, repeated over time. Some practitioners regard this type of campaign as old-fashioned. Others seem to regard them fondly as the way it ought to be.
- **Hall of Fame Pool-Out**. The formatted pool-out can still deliver fabulously effective and creative advertising—for example the UK campaign for Hamlet cigars, with 20-year longevity and spectacular creativity.
- **Situational Pool-Out.** Not the template of the strict pool-out, but still with a clear connection between executions. Diet Pepsi and Pro•Line would be examples. So too, in their way, are Fido and Clearnet/Telus. The Huggies "Happy Baby" campaign is one of the longest-running.

14. Refreshing a continuing campaign (cont'd).

- **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 that is a mis-call. Some icon-based campaigns are dated, but others are fresh and current. Absolut Vodka uses its bottle brilliantly. So does Familiprix with its pharmacist.
- **Spokes-people, and Spokes-animals.** Dave Thomas and Colonel Sanders, god rest their souls, would be examples. Morty the Bison tells the story for Manitoba Telecom.
- **Storytelling.** Continuing character(s). The Oxo family in the UK is one of the longest-running examples. Well-known personalities have been very successful in Quebec e.g. the Pepsi and Listerine Grand Prix winners in Cassies I and II.
- **Music-Based.** 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."** This type of campaign is 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.
- **Same core message. Customized execution.** To people with a "pool-out" mindset, this hardly qualifies as a campaign, because individual executions are totally different. But the overall effect can be very powerful. The best Cassies example is Dove, which built its business spectacularly. It started in late 91 with "Litmus," a demonstration commercial with a haunting music track, no voice over, no people, and the story in supers. Then came a candid-camera commercial of women in a focus group doing the Litmus test. Then came a "talking head" with the scientist who invented Dove. Then back to another demonstration.

  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.

I think 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.

15. **Baby with the Bathwater.** Campaigns can run out of steam. It is sometimes right to throw everything out, as mentioned in other Crossover Notes. But it's worth checking to see if anything should be kept or re-expressed. The "I am Canadian" line was part of the successful "I AM" campaign in Cassies III, but was discarded as that campaign faltered. It came back with "Joe's Rant," interpreted differently. The Campbell's Kids re-appeared in Cassies 2002 after years in oblivion. It will be interesting to see how this plays out.

    Quite often, long-running properties get discarded because the people who love them move off the brand. (This happened with "Red Ones Last" and Smarties.) Sometimes they are discarded for good reason. The "pour shot" had appeared in every Dove commercial since launch. For Litmus (Cassies III) the Canadian agency/client team decided to drop it—because they wanted consumers to see Dove in a new way. Despite this logic, the international powers-that-be (at client and agency) reacted as if there was an imminent death in the family. Their sense of bereavement turned into horror when their advice was ignored. Litmus ran without the pour shot, and was immensely successful. Interestingly enough, when people were asked if the commercial had the pour shot in it, a goodly number said yes.

    This is an important point about long-running properties. Many practitioners believe they should be used in every piece of communication—and in the normal run of things, this is a good idea. But if you have reason to drop a property for a while, consumers will not forget it. These images have a grip on long-term memory. As evidence, imagine you want to erase an image that has got its hooks into the consumer's mind. I watched Lever try for years to erase Wisk's "ring around the collar" image. It wouldn't budge.

    My own view is that we are too quick to change things—probably because of the desire to leave our imprint on the brands we are entrusted with.

    One of the main reasons that brands are valuable, as covered in Crossover Note 1, is that they accumulate added values over time. There is no mechanistic formula for doing this, but all the evidence says that it does not happen if a brand keeps changing the face it presents to its consumers.

    I need to stress that I am *not* advocating a no-change model, but something closer to Paul Feldwick's "exercise" model mentioned in Crossover Note 13. Let all the effort on the brand be part of a coherent program, evolving as needed as time goes on, and all building brand muscle.

16. When a campaign stumbles. This can be a difficult situation. It might be a momentary stutter and (if we were clairvoyant) we would make the necessary minor fix, and keep a long-running campaign going. But it might be the first clue that something is going dangerously off the rails. There's no crystal ball, and the pressure of the situation can lead to snap (and wrong) judgments. The best answer usually comes from a blend of experience, judgment, intuition, vision, and research. Here are some pointers.

1. **Dig deep into trends and tastes.** As explained in Listerine's 2002 case, "fighting bad breath" had been the high ground for as long as anyone could remember. But the tectonic plates were shifting towards the idea of a healthy mouth. These shifts can lead to market upheaval. At one time, Pepsodent was the market leader, based on whitening ("you'll wonder where the yellow went…") Crest knocked Pepsodent off its perch, by being the first brand with fluoride (and dental association endorsement). Over time, though, cavities stopped being the problem they once were.[3] The market started to shift towards "mouth health" and Colgate got there first with Colgate Total, knocking Crest off its #1 perch. Crest responded with Crest Complete, and now the whole market has come full circle with a furious battle for whitening again.
2. **Look at the goalposts**. If they really haven't changed, then it's likely that you just have a short-term stutter to fix. But if they have, try to envisage the new game. See the Crossover Notes *1. What a Brand Stands For*, *11. The Eureka Insight, and 12. Changing the Goalposts.*
3. **Think through the nature of the change.** A campaign can be defined in many different ways. See *14. Refreshing a Continuing Campaign*.
4. **Be careful about the degree of change.** It's broadly true that long-running campaigns—kept fresh and relevant—are great brand-builders. And it's sadly true that new people, wanting to make their mark, make change for change's sake. But once in a while, wholesale change is right.

   Molson Canadian (Cassies I) was a niche player when it launched "What Beer's all About" in the late 80s. This re-shaped the market, and Canadian took over from Labatt Blue as market leader. With this success you would think they would want to keep going with "What Beer's all About." But they realized that tastes and trends were shifting. To stay ahead of this, they launched "I AM" in the mid 90s (Cassies III). This was very successful but eventually it too ran out of steam, and Canadian re-incarnated again with "Joe's Rant," as described in Cassies 2001
5. **See also** *15. Baby With The Bathwater*.

[3] Ironically, Crest had also helped make this happen, by driving the whole market in this direction.

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—Were seen as "Margaret Thatcher" and displaced this image with the Action Hero campaign. Cassies 2002.
- Pine-Sol—Seen as far too strong. Softened this with the 'thorough clean" campaign. Cassies 2002.
- Sleeman in Quebec—Took an Anglo-heritage beer in a declining category and re-vitalized it with the "honest frenglish" campaign. Cassies 2002.
- Pro•Line—Made the un-knowledgeable sports fan realize that 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.
- Johnson's Baby Shampoo—JBS was a blind test loser against adult. shampoos. Even so, they used their mildness heritage to reposition for adults washing their hair every day, and took over as market leader.
- Heinz ketchup—Making a virtue of s-l-o-w.

18. Keeping it Simple. Almost everyone agrees in single-mindedness—until its time to approve the creative strategy. Then, there's this urge to cram things in. We all know that if something is complicated it goes over our heads. But given what's at stake, it's easy to see why a client finds it hard to keep things focused. But it has to be done. Procter & Gamble called it "the pain of leaving things out." Supporting this, the research companies have clear evidence that complicated messages do not get through.

Many times, I've seen the people *working* on a brand forget what their ads have said, and I have to believe I'm not alone in that. Scott Bedbury (of Nike and Starbucks) blames clients for wanting too much in creative strategies. He has a point. It's hard for an agency to say no when the client says "why not just leave it in." (Note: most Cassies advertising is conspicuously simple.)

There is a sub-set of this problem when a brand has an emotional benefit *and* a rational claim. Examples would be (1) Philly in Cassies III with "permission to indulge" and "60% less fat….." (2) Scotiabank in Cassies 2002, selling individual services and creating an overall image (3) Campbell's Soup in Cassies 2002, wanting to modernize its image, and get nutrition facts across.

In reality, something has to give i.e. the more points you want to make, the lower the impact of any one of them. My experience is that agencies do not always speak up when they think the objectives are too high. This is where experienced research companies can help, with evidence-based answers as to the trade-offs involved.

19. Great minds think alike. In Cassies 2002, Diet Pepsi, Five Alive and toronto.com came to similar conclusions about their young adult male target group i.e. that they are media savvy, cynical about marketing effort, know that responsibility is looming, but don't want to give up on the best and craziest parts of being young. Fido and Clearnet in earlier Cassies came to similar conclusions about a confused and intimidated public. In Cassies 2003, the three car cases (Dodge SX 2.0, MINI, and Toyota Matrix) came to similar conclusions about drivers.

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

It's worth asking why Creative Strategies are this way. First, there 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 to this day, 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 are too rational, and that could be tragic. John Bartle (of Bartle Bogle Hegarty, the UK agency famous for using creativity that works) has called for us to think in terms of the:

~Unique Emotional Proposition~

Very few, if any, Creative Strategy documents have such a section. 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.
- Richmond Savings. The Humungous Bank campaign.

Cassies 99	• 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.

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? The Cassies 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. In the early 90s, the Advertising Research Foundation caused another stir. In the ARF Copy Research Validity Project[4] the well-known methodologies did not do particularly well. Not surprisingly, these results caused a blizzard of rebuttal and counter-rebuttal. But they also contained a surprise. The likeability of advertising, which until then had been considered a bit of a non-issue, was one of the better predictors of in-market success.

A bandwagon started. Those who see advertising as entertainment seized on the "entertaining" meaning of liking to support their view. Others pointed out that liking is a portmanteau word—it carries many meanings—and we don't know what a consumer means by it. For example, Alex Biel found that liking was anchored more to "meaningfulness" than "entertainment." Others have suggested that it equates to various positives (Entertaining, Relevant, Newsworthy, Empathetic) and 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. 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 on this, 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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[4] They took five pairs of commercials—for each of five different brands. For each pair, one was known to be markedly more effective than the other, based on at least a year's worth of results from split-cable test markets. The ARF replicated the major pre-testing techniques, and "pre-tested" each commercial, to find out if any technique would accurately pick out the winners.

22. **Humour in a Serious Category.** It doesn't make sense to trivialize what you are trying to sell, but this does not mean that humour cannot sell in serious categories. Money is serious stuff, but Richmond Savings (Cassies III) blew the doors off with its "Humungous Bank" campaign. Other examples include Buckley's, Claritin, and Goodwill in Cassies III; Fido and AGF in Cassies 99; and Clearnet and Manitoba Telephone in Cassies 2001.

    The two financial cases in Cassies 2002 (Bank of Montreal and Scotiabank) both use humour. In fact, we can now say from an advertising point of view that the financial category has lost its "serious" straightjacket.

    Sometimes humour is a temptation that must be avoided. One such case was the conspicuously serious ED campaign in Cassies 2002. Notably, though, the "Good Morning" Viagra advertising in 2003 is distinctly jaunty. Antothe example is Familiprix, the Grand Prix winner in 2003. This campaing is explosively funny, even though they are selling health-related products. Similarly, the Université of Montréal brings wit and charm to their effort.

23. **Problem versus Solution.** There is a widespread idea that advertising works better when it is positive—with the "mental model" that advertising should spend more time on the solution than the problem. Notwithstanding this there is a fair amount of evidence that this conventional wisdom can be challenged. The Cassies has the following:

    - Quebec's "Buckle Up" campaign in Cassies I.
    - The campaign against Quebec's Medical Bill 120 in Cassies I.
    - The Heart and Stroke campaign in Cassies I.
    - Oxfam Canada in Cassies II.
    - Buckley's in Cassies III. (The advertising spends most of its time on the awful taste.)
    - Dove Litmus in Cassies III. (Most of the commercial is on the problem of harshness.)
    - Big Brothers Vancouver in Cassies 99.
    - Ethical Funds in Cassies 99.
    - Sunlight in Cassies 99. (Most of the time is spent on getting dirty.)
    - Erectile Difficulties in Cassies 2002.
    - SAAQ anti-speeding in Cassies 2002.
    - Bait Cars in Cassies 2003.
    - Familiprix in Cassies 2003.
    - Motrin in Cassies 2003.

    Note: When I tell people that the Dove and Sunlight commercials spend most of their time on the problem they quite often disagree, until they re-look at the commercials. This is why the conventional wisdom needs to be re-examined. The issue shouldn't be how much time a commercial spends on this or that, but on the *net impression* the consumer takes away.

24. Tough Topics. The Cassies do not have a lot of stories about complex social issues. However, we do have the following:

- Quebec's "Buckle Up" campaign in Cassies I.
- The Heart and Stroke Foundation in Cassies I.
- Oxfam Canada in Cassies II.
- Goodwill Industries in Cassies II and III.
- ABC Literacy in Cassies III.
- Big Brothers Vancouver in Cassies 99.
- Erectile Difficulties in Cassies 2002, and Viagra in Cassies 2003.
- SAAQ anti-speeding in Cassies 2002.
- Bait Cars and United Way in Cassies 2003.

Note: The British and Australian databases have more cases of this type.

25. Brand Linkage (when should the brand name appear). People often say "I saw this great ad last night…but I can't remember what it was for." This is a brand linkage problem, and it is two-edged. Highly engaging advertising can drown out the brand identity (the old terminology was "video vampire"). But advertising that sells crudely runs the risk of being zapped.

In assessing advertising, your view of brand linkage will be affected by your mental model. But there are no paint-by-numbers answers. Some executions with seemingly bullet-proof linkage don't work. Some with seemingly minimal i.d. find a way to hook the brand into the consumer's mind. The challenge is to be relevant *and* different at the same time. Relevant, by the way, is *not* the same as familiar. Something can be relevant, but still be expressed in a totally new way. If "familiar" is part of your mental model (knowingly or not) you run the risk that you will only approve advertising that has been seen before.

One of the (supposed) ways to ensure brand linkage is to say/show the brand name "early and often." This idea took hold in the 60s.[5] A great many Cassies winners do *not* reflect this. This includes Chrysler NS Minivan, Dove, Imperial Margarine, Molson Canadian, Budweiser, Claritin, Pontiac Sunfire, Richmond Savings, Metro Toronto Zoo, Goodwill, Sunlight, becel, St-Hubert, Clearnet, Clarica, Manitoba Telecom, Lipton Chicken Noodle, i-wireless, Pro•Line, Pine-Sol, Bank of Montreal, Scotiabank, Aero. Even Familiprix fails the "early and often" test.

Some very successful advertising puts the brand name front and centre, but it's also possible in today's over-hyped world that "early and often" is a turn-off. My view is that each situation has to be assessed on its merits. But it's clear that an unthinking belief in "early and often" should come to an end.

[5] This belief came largely out of Day-After-Recall testing. It's important to know that DAR has since been largely discredited as a tool for predicting advertising effectiveness in-market.

26. Awareness Alone. Many Cassies cases refer to increases in brand or ad awareness (unaided, top of mind, aided etc.) Awareness alone 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 enough. “I don’t care what they say as long as they get my name right” doesn’t apply in advertising.

Brand-building is 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’s Brand Asset Valuator uses a worldwide database to throw light on this. Brands reflect Relevance & Differentiation on the one hand, and Knowledge & Esteem on the other (awareness is part of Knowledge & Esteem). BAV shows that Relevance & Differentiation should take priority over Knowledge & Esteem. When brands first grow, Relevance & Differentiation are in the driver’s seat. When they decline, it’s usually from a loss of Relevance & Differentiation, even though Knowledge & Esteem may still be high. A brand can have high awareness, but still be in trouble. This is why awareness alone is not enough.

27. Share of Mind, Share of Voice, Spending. When we assess effort vs. competition we usually measure media spending and share of voice. Every-thing being equal, SOV is an important measure. 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 clear conclusion is that weight 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* [6] 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, 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.

[6] 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.*

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

a) That advertising (assuming the creative was 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 a certain amount of repetition before a message sticks, but then boredom sets in, and repetition does not increase the learning much, if at all.[7] This thinking has dominated media planning (particularly in TV) for years, and 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.[8]

Other models also exist. There are "pulsing" models. There is an "impact" model for making a big splash. And there are markets like beer, with heavy seasonal spending, that have developed their own notions as to the best way to schedule effort.

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

This put the cat among the pigeons. Some have embraced the new thinking wholeheartedly. Some have attacked it. Jones's findings were in harmony with those of Erwin Ephron (referred to in the Pepsi paper in 2002) and the whole field has come to be called Recency Planning. It proposes lower weekly weights than have historically been recommended, with longer weekly duration. Programs are also selected to avoid load up 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.

[7] There are even findings that continued exposure *depresses* learning, though I find that hard to believe.
[8] In practice, this is hard to do.

29. Pre-emptive Media. Quite often media budgets are not enough to deliver a high SOV by sheer muscle. Budweiser in Cassies III, Tourism New Brunswick in Cassies 2001, and Campbell's in Cassies 2002, all started *early* in order to stand out. It was quite a break with conventional wisdom to advertising beer ahead of the summer, and to advertise summer vacations to Quebecers in the depth of the Quebec winter—but it worked.

30. Reach and Frequency versus Large-Space Impact. There's rarely enough budget to build the ideal plan. There has to be a trade-off between reach, frequency and coverage—and the size/length of ads. The reach/frequency numbers of a "large-space" plan will always be lower than for a smaller-space plan, and, although I shouldn't generalize, it seems to me that large-space plans usually get rejected because of their lower numbers.

Chrysler in Cassies III and New Brunswick Tourism in Cassies 2001 break that pattern. Chrysler, a Grand Prix winner, is particularly interesting. The launch would make or break the company, and the media budget was 18% less than the previous year. Even so, they decided that they needed long commercials to get their emotional benefits across, and opted for a TV plan that was virtually all in :60s. See also *20. Emotional versus Rational.*

P&G used to call this a decision between "depth of sale" and frequency. As far as I know, there is no research technique to assess depth of sale—in fact on paper all the usual techniques seem to show that a :60, though usually delivering better numbers, does not justify its higher cost. But the same arithmentic holds true for :30s versus :15s. But over time we have come to realize that :30s are, in general, a better choice. With this in mind, I'd like to suggest that we reconsider the value of "depth of sale."

31. Transcending Advertising. Wendy's had "Where's the Beef." Budweiser gave us "Whassuup," and Benetton feeds us a diet of controversy. Richmond Savings in Cassies III got tremendous publicity from the "Humungous Bank." Joe's Rant, Tourism New Brunswick and Manitoba Telecom tell a similar story in Cassies 2001. So do the Bank of Montreal and ED in Cassies 2002, along with Familprix, Irving Mainway Coffee and Motrin in Cassies 2003.. Generally, advertisers and agencies are pleased when their advertising takes on a life of its own—though there are always some nay-sayers asking "Is it on strategy? Is it relevant? Is it really building the business?"

Viral marketing is the latest incarnation of effort that transcends advertising. There has not yet been a Cassies winner based on this, but it would be good to see one.

End of 2003 Crossover Note