

# Cassies 2005 Cases

**Brand: Activia Yogurt**

**Winner: Packaged Goods Food—Certificate of Excellence**

**Client Credits: Danone Canada**

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**Crossover Notes:** All winning cases contain lessons that cross over from one case to another. 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 2. Brand Truths.
- Crossover Note 20. Emotional versus Rational.
- Crossover Note 24. Tough Topics.

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

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Results Period (Continuous Months):** June 2004 – May 2005.

**Start of Advertising/Communication Effort:** June 14, 2004.

**Base Period for Comparison:** n/a (New Product Launch).

Launching a new product involves enormous investment, but despite such costs success is by no means guaranteed. It is estimated that 30,000 new food products are introduced every year, yet only a fraction of these remain as permanent items in the local grocery store. (Source: Doug Cook, RD, M.HSc., “A Nutritional Compass,” 2004.)

Fully aware of this, Danone, Canada’s leading yoghurt company, decided to launch a new sub-brand called Activia in 2004. It contains a probiotic culture called Bifidobacterium Lactis, an ingredient proven to promote regularity and healthy function of the digestive system. With this product, Danone had the chance to be a pioneer. They wanted to market test the proposition, and Québec became the guinea pig, starting in Summer 2004.

The launch came with challenges. Canadians knew very little about bacterial cultures or their intestinal benefits. In addition, regulations prevented Danone from claiming the health benefits of Bifidobacterium Lactis. Even though they had been recognized in many countries, they had not yet been recognized by Health Canada.

By December 2004, seven months after launch, total brand awareness had reached 78%. Sales volume was exceeding already aggressive expectations by 27%, and a full launch in the rest of Canada was taking shape.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

### An Attractive Business Opportunity with a Strong USP

Two-thirds of Canadians have concerns about their digestive regularity. (Source: Bases Sept. 2003). The marketing team decided it was time to introduce Activia to Canada.

Activia is the only probiotic yoghurt in Canada with scientifically proven benefits. Its probiotic culture B.L.<sup>TM</sup> is unique and exclusive to Danone.<sup>1</sup> It promotes regularity and healthy function of the digestive system.

### First Challenge: Legal Limits

The *Food and Drugs Act Regulations* restrict claims. They must not refer directly or indirectly to the treatment, mitigation or prevention of any disease, disorder or abnormal physical state, or symptoms of same, nor may they refer directly or indirectly to correcting, restoring or modifying organic functions.

In other words, Health Canada would not allow us to communicate the benefits of Activia until the dossier of support was fully approved—which was not possible before launch.

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<sup>1</sup> The exact name of this bacterium, exclusive to Danone, is Bifidobacterium DN-173 010. We call it B.L.<sup>TM</sup> in order to make it more consumer friendly.

## **Second Challenge: Consumer Unawareness and Squeamishness**

In qualitative research by CROP in August 2003: [Crossover Note 24](#).

- We learned that “probiotic” and “functional foods” are not consumer vocabulary. Understanding and familiarity was to all intents and purposes non-existent.
- We presented three concepts, each explaining the health benefits of Activia in a more or less precise fashion. The first established the regularity benefit, the second the improved function of the digestive system, and the last the importance of interior well-being and how it shows itself on the outside.

Almost all participants preferred the third concept: that Activia is a yoghurt “that will keep your inner self happy.” As a result, the ads should be suggestive rather than descriptive in execution and language. [Crossover Notes 1 and 2](#).

### **Launch Objectives:**

- Generate a total volume of 1,400 tons in Québec between June and December 2004. (This was higher than the typical target of 1,000 tons over the same period.)
- Build brand awareness.
- Establish brand credibility, despite the regulatory restrictions about product benefits.

## **STRATEGY & INSIGHT**

### **Two Targets**

Activia had to attract women of 30 and over—the principal sufferers of digestive problems.

The second target was health care professionals (doctors, dieticians, etc.) and journalists. They would play an important role in giving the product credibility.

### **Key Consumer Insight**

Qualitative research revealed that when you feel good on the inside, it shows on the outside. Consumers believe and understand that the digestive system is important to physical and mental well-being. In other words, the principal benefit of a digestive system that functions properly is *vitality*.

*Vitality* became the basis of all communications. On this, we would build an emotional link between the brand and the consumer. [Crossover Note 20](#).

### **Using the Right Message in the Right Medium to Get the Best Results**

Within the regulatory limits, we built an integrated plan in which each medium delivered a specific message designed to attain a precise objective.

Here is an overview of the thinking:

Objective	Message	Medium	Target
1. Awareness	Activia with B.L. <sup>TM</sup> = Vitality	Television	Women
2. Familiarity/ Education	Activia with B.L. <sup>TM</sup> = Good for digestion	PR Internet	Women Health care professionals Journalists
3. Purchase consideration	Activia with B.L. <sup>TM</sup> = Tastes good and is good for digestion	Samples Coupons	Women
4. Purchase	Activia with B.L. <sup>TM</sup> = Vitality, tastes good and is good for digestion	Packaging	Women

## EXECUTION

### Reinforce Awareness Using Colour, and a Key Visual

In order to maximize brand registration, we tapped into the brand colour “Activia Green,” a unique colour in the yoghurt market. This was exploited because it is the brand colour, and it is associated with vitality by consumers. If you were a woman, a journalist, or a health professional, we wanted you to see Activia Green. In store, you would be attracted to “green block” displays. On TV, you would see spots dominated by Activia Green.

We also developed a key visual. This was a yellow arrow pointing downward on a woman’s abdomen, and we used it in all media.



### Suggest, Evoke, but Never Reveal

TV is regulated, and all reference to digestion was taboo. We found an entertaining metaphor for the Activia benefits in belly dancing, with vitality and freshness running throughout the message.



### The Internet and PR

Recognizing that consumers and health care professionals would have questions about the product, we created Activia.ca. This allowed us to say more about Activia's health benefits. Along with this, we put together a 15-second TV spot ("Two Friends") to drive people to the website.



Website

We used direct mail to reach dietitians, gastroenterologists and GPs, giving them scientific data on Activia. The mailing also contained tear-off pads with information for the general public.

We created the "Activia Grand Tour," with dietitian Marie Breton—known for her impartiality and professionalism. The tour covered radio stations, magazines and newspapers in all of Québec's major cities, and popularized BL's unique benefits.

## One Mouthful, and You're Hooked

At the same time, we sampled in Montréal, Québec and Sherbrooke, sharing the health facts through banners, kiosks, Activia specialists, and leaflets.



Truck Sides

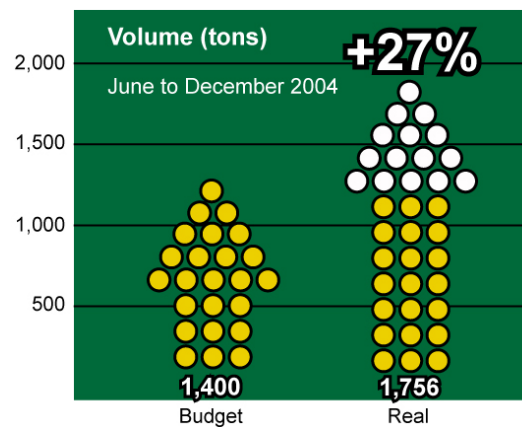


Consumers Pamphlets

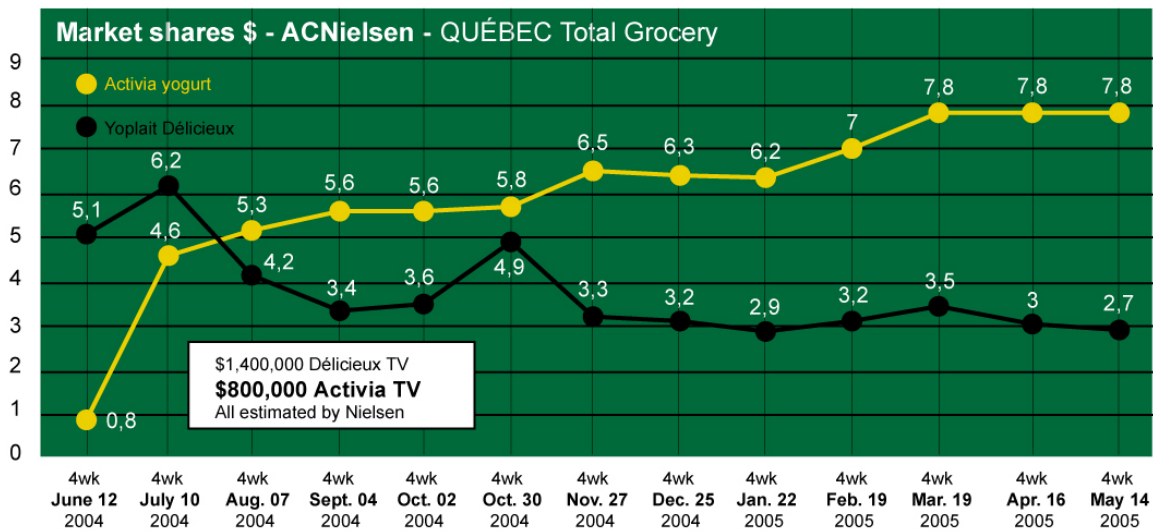
Finally, all disciplines worked together to make sure the whole communication plan was fully integrated.

## BUSINESS RESULTS

For June – December 2004 we reached the aggressive 1,400 ton target volume, and then beat it by 27%.



Market share took off, and reached 7.8% by May 2005. For comparison, Délicieux by Yoplait was launched at about the same time, with almost double the media budget. (\$1,400,000 in TV in 2004 versus \$800,000). Their share trends are as shown:

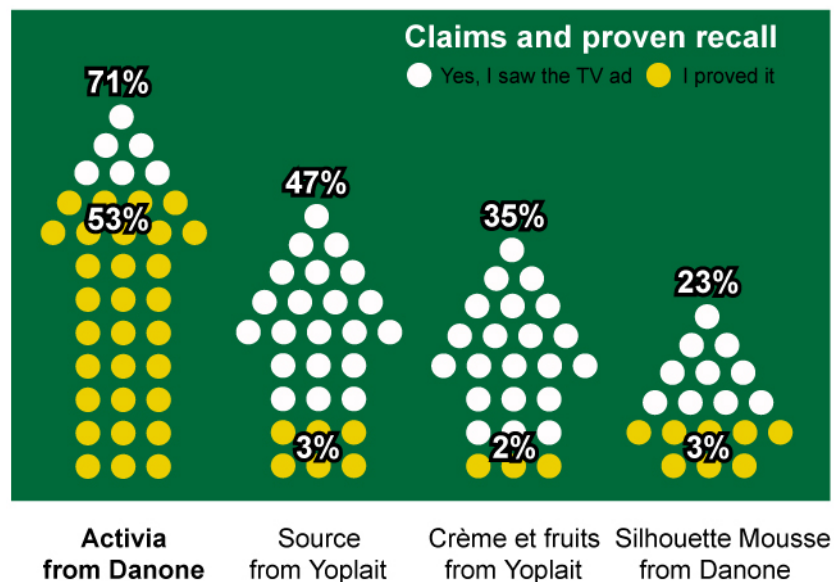


Source: ACNielsen Key Fact, Québec.

## CAUSE & EFFECT BETWEEN ADVERTISING AND RESULTS

### An Ad With Real Impact

The chart below demonstrates that the Activia ads outclassed all other spots tested. More than 71% of respondents said that they had seen the Activia spot, and 53% of those were able to describe it. Activia's closest rival was Source, a brand that had been on the market for two years, with thousands of media dollars invested in it.

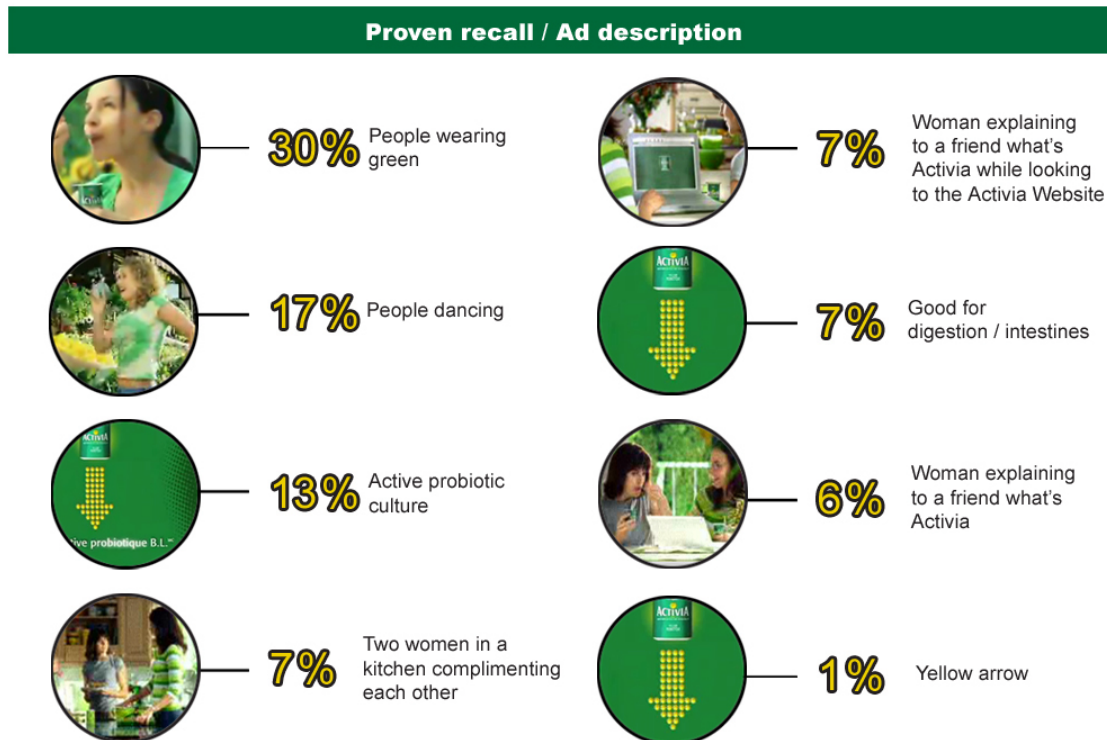


Source: Ad Graph by IPSOS-ASI, November 2004

In addition, total awareness of Activia in Québec reached 78% in just four months, according to an IPSOS-ASI study conducted in October 2004.

## Key Visuals Open Up the Consumer's Imagination

According to the IPSOS study, this is how respondents described the Activia ad:



We also ran qualitative research in October 2004, to confirm what consumers had seen, understood and retained from the campaign. Several positive points came out:

- Advertising helped build a very positive brand image + high awareness
- “Belly Dance” promises vitality and well-being
- It creates a strong emotional connection
- The characters, the music, the images, are fresh, lively, and authentic
- The green packaging stands out in stores
- Sampling has won over many consumers
- The information on the Website is pertinent

(Source: Maggy Faddoul, “Activia Exploratory Research”, October 2004)

Regarding the Website, it had received 22,000 unique visits by the end of the year. And thanks to the PR campaign, there were more than 30 articles on Activia in magazines and newspapers, including *La Presse*, *Le Journal de Montréal*, *Châtelaine*, and *7 jours*.

Finally, Activia won the *Prix des Meilleurs Nouveaux Produits 2005* in the dairy products category. This prize, awarded after polls with 5,000 Canadian consumers, was based on product attributes, intention to purchase, and innovation (health, nutrition, family, ease of use, value and environment). As Activia was available only in Québec at the time of the poll, it is remarkable that Activia won.

End of Case. Crossover Notes follow.

## INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2005

[For Activia]

Crossover Notes have been going for several years, and now run to 28 pages.

We used to attach a full set to all cases, but to save a few trees, we now include only the Notes particular to any case.

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

I was a consultant by then. Before that I had reached the category manager level at P&G (what they quaintly called the Associate Advertising Manager). I had then clambered up the ladder at O&M, eventually becoming President and later Vice Chairman—both in Toronto. P&G and O&M were both passionate about “lessons learned,” and so was I. In those days (it seems hard to believe now) we felt rushed off our feet. But we did have 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 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 150 published cases. They’re a growing body of experience. I hope I’ve helped pass some of the learning on.

*David Rutherford*

Toronto: December 2005.

For 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 2005

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

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

## ACTIVIA. CROSSOVER NOTES. CASSIES 2005.

- 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 it 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 cleaning was the religion on Tide, and Tide delivered, despite the cliché that all detergents are alike. But this was only a glimmer of the Brand Truth. If you “interrogated” Tide the most startling truth was the *intense belief* of Tide users. This came to life in the immensely successful “Two for One Swap” campaign. Hidden cameras watched as women who had just bought Tide were offered two boxes of another 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](#).

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

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

Others, led by Bill Bernbach, argued for a more intuitive approach, and recently the “emotion” approach has shone more brightly on the radar screen. But even today, there are Creative Strategies that just tuck the emotional benefits in under Brand Character, or don’t mention them at all. I used to make that mistake. When I was Brand Manager on Tide we said implacably that Tide stood for cleaning. At an unwritten level, we knew that Tide also stood for *trust*, but this emotional benefit did not appear in the Creative Strategy—and we could easily have overlooked it.

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<sup>3</sup> P&G defined “what the brand stands for” by a 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.

Make sure your mental model of advertising rings true to what people are really like. Often, we are too rational, which could be tragic. John Bartle of Bartle Bogle Hegarty (the UK agency famous for creativity that works) calls for us to think in terms of the

### ~Unique Emotional Proposition~

Agencies and clients factoring this in more than they used to, but it still doesn't get pride of place. Given what we are learning about Emotional Intelligence, this 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  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chrysler NS Minivan. It had functional improvements, but the campaign was heavily infused with emotional benefits.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Richmond Savings. The Humungous Bank campaign.</li> </ul>  |
| Cassies 99   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AGF Funds. The "what are you doing after work" campaign charmed its way into people's pocketbooks.</li> <li>• becel. With hard-hitting print, and a strong doctors/nutritionist plan, it reached #1. They then wanted to get on TV, but regulators forbade hard-hitting claims. This led to the "young at heart" campaign, and spectacular long-term business growth.</li> <li>• Clearnet MiKe. It appealed to the self-image of its pragmatic, project-driven target audience.</li> <li>• Fido. It includes rational benefits, but the main pull is user-friendliness.</li> <li>• St-Hubert tapped into chez-nous.</li> <li>• Sunlight captured the joy of getting dirty.</li> <li>• Wonder Bread. They could have sold on taste + nutrition, but instead used the joy of childhood.</li> </ul> |
| Cassies 2001 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joe's Rant made us proud.</li> <li>• Clarica made it all look simple.</li> <li>• Clearnet gave us the future is friendly.</li> <li>• Kraft tugged at our heartstrings with KD moments.</li> </ul>  |
| Cassies 2002 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manitoba Telecom gave us Morty, the talking bison.</li> <li>• The Bank of Montreal and Scotiabank made us smile.</li> <li>• Campbell's gave us the less-than-perfect family.</li> <li>• CFL fanned the flames of rivalry.</li> <li>• Diet Pepsi and Five Alive gave us back our youth.</li> <li>• ED made us think.</li> <li>• Home Furnaces tickled the fancy of an older audience.</li> <li>• Nautilus gave us joie de vivre.</li> <li>• Philly showed us that a less-than-perfect angel was still working.</li> <li>• Pine-Sol took a quirky look at keeping the house clean.</li> <li>• Sidekicks gave the family a helper.</li> <li>• Sloche appealed to teen rebelliousness.</li> <li>• The SAAQ campaign scared us to death.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>  |

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Cassies 2003 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manitoba Telecom showed that Morty the bison was still working.</li> <li>• Toyota Matrix went for emotion rather than reason.</li> <li>• Sola Nero made wine youthful and hip.</li> <li>• Viagra was, well, Viagra.</li> </ul>   |
| Cassies 2004 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The United Way cast off its “administrative” image.</li> <li>• Cottonelle talked to women as women.</li> <li>• Gaz Metro dealt with the fear of Gas.</li> <li>• Prairie Milk appealed to teens’ need for growth.</li> <li>• Toyota Sienna positioned itself as the cool minivan.</li> </ul>  |
| Cassies 2005 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoking is just “Stupid.”</li> <li>• Energizer Lithium found that the rational approach was not working.</li> <li>• Coricidin II had to find a way to get a blood pressure benefit across.</li> <li>• Activia had to do the same with the “digestive” benefit.</li> <li>• Run for the Cure, perhaps not surprisingly, found that emotion was appropriate.</li> </ul> |

**24. Tough Topics.** The Cassies don’t have a lot of cases 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.
- Elections Ontario in Cassies 2004.
- The “Stupid” campaign against tobacco in Cassies 2005.
- United Way in 2005

Note: The British and Australian databases have more cases on tough topics.

End of Activia Crossover Notes