

# Cassies 2004 Cases

Brand: Zumanity

Winner: Best Launch—Gold  
Import/Export—Silver

## Client Credits: Cirque du Soleil

Joanne Fillion, Senior Brand Director  
 Josée Legault, Brand Manager  
 André Bélanger, Internet Marketing Manager  
 Marie-Josée Grondin, Assistant Brand Manager  
 Véronique Desrosiers, Webmaster  
 Anne-Josée Dionne, Cirque Club Supervisor  
 Pierre Desmarais, Artistic Director  
 Renée-Claude Ménard, Corporate Public Relations Director  
 Andrée Deissenberg, Marketing Director Resident Shows  
 Stacy Spahle, Brand Manager Resident Shows  
 Pien Bowler, Public Relations Resident Shows  
 Stefanie Johnson, Vice-President Marketing, NYNY Hotel and Casino  
 SKG, Media Planning  
 Kirvin Doak, Public Relations Agency

## Agency Credits: Diesel

Philippe Meunier, Creative Director  
 Yann Mooney. David Lee. Kris Manchester. Art Directors  
 Tony Babinski. Martin Villeneuve. Copywriters  
 Bertrand Cesvet, Account Planner  
 Julie Provençal, Account Executive

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

- Crossover Note 4. Business Strategy dictated by Brand Positioning.
- Crossover Note 10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged?
- Crossover Note 6. Should the product be improved?
- Crossover Note 2. Brand Truths.
- Crossover Note 15. Baby with the Bathwater.
- Crossover Note 1. What a Brand Stands For.
- Crossover Note 17. Turning a liability into a strength.
- Crossover Note 5. The Total Brand Experience.
- Crossover Note 30. Reach and Frequency versus Large-Space Impact.

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

## Executive Summary

**Results Period:** March 2003 - March 2004.

**Start of Communication Effort:** March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

**Base Period:** n/a, since this is a launch.

*Much of our highly valued cultural heritage has been acquired at the cost of sexuality.*

- Sigmund Freud

With fourteen live shows under its belt, Cirque du Soleil wanted to make number fifteen extraordinary. Cirque wanted to reinvent adult entertainment just as it had reinvented the circus twenty years ago. **Crossover Notes 4 and 10**. The result was Zumanity: an edgy and provocative discovery of sensuality and eroticism, opening as a resident show in Las Vegas on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2003. **Crossover Note 6**.

This case shows how the right communication strategy, to carefully selected (and very different) target audiences, with fully integrated execution, launched Zumanity. It marks a new chapter in Cirque's history, in which new show genres will bring to light "Another Side of Cirque du Soleil."

## Situation Analysis

In early 2001, Cirque du Soleil and its business partner MGM-Mirage decided to explore a new genre for Cirque: live adult entertainment at NYNY Hotel & Casino. This genre has been the mainstay of Las Vegas entertainment since the city sprung out from the desert in the late forties. To succeed, Cirque had to deal with certain key issues.

**The Image Risk** - This new production was not like anything previous. It would have a mood and grandeur different from what people were used to. It would in a smaller and more sensual venue, be less "acrobatic," have more dance, be erotic. **Crossover Note 2**. It needed to be from Cirque, but not positioned too closely. **Crossover Note 15**. The new genre could put Cirque's brand integrity at risk, and this had to be managed carefully. **Crossover Note 1**.

**Social Tolerance to Sexuality** - Care needed to be taken with the potential misperception that Zumanity was "just another erotic show." Cirque had to create a show that was resolutely sexy and astounding, while meeting Cirque's high creative standards. Legal and social considerations also had to be taken into account. Ever since topless showgirls made their 1957 debut at Minsky's Follies on the Vegas Strip, Nevada's rules on nudity have been strict. Social values in the U.S. are also prudish, as we saw with Janet Jackson's "wardrobe malfunction" at the 2004 Super Bowl. We distilled this into the following creative direction for launch materials: **Crossover Note 17**.

*Show eroticism without really showing it.*

**Competitive Landscape: Céline and Co.** – Vegas, with its 3 million tourists a month, is a new market every three days. In late March 03, Céline Dion was launching her new show at Caesar’s Palace, with an estimated media budget of \$10 million, versus \$3.2 million for Zumanity. Also, we had to deal with the media issue of “How much Cirque is too much Cirque?” and watch out for cannibalization. (Cirque already had two resident Las Vegas productions with *Mystère* at Treasure Island and “O” at Bellagio.)

Furthermore, the American economy was in a slump, with unease about the possibility of terrorist attacks, and fear that the country might go to war. All in all, a setting that didn’t favor the creation of yet another Vegas-based adult live show.

**The Cherry on the Sundae** - As if this weren’t enough, Cirque had to overcome another obstacle: to create and promote the show’s image before the show existed (due to the long pre-sell period, no materials or images from the show itself would be available).

### Objectives

- To sell 15,000 tickets prior to the opening date of August 14<sup>th</sup> 2003.
- To build show awareness and comprehension.
- To create a new category of show in America, premium erotic live entertainment.
- To integrate “adult entertainment” into Cirque’s portfolio (i.e. successfully introduce this new genre—that could potentially hurt some people’s sensibilities—to Cirque’s traditional audience).
- To increase Cirque’s database with 50,000 new members.

### Strategy & Insight

As its creative staff was working on the upcoming show, Cirque and the agency were developing the marketing communications.

Live  
Entertainment  
Creative

**Creating the show** – Around the world in 730 days. That’s what Cirque’s research and casting teams did to ensure that the new show would get its hands on the best creative and technical resources available. Cirque also found a partner for the new show (MGM), and had to build a theater that would be its home (NYNY Hotel).

Marketing  
Communication  
Creative

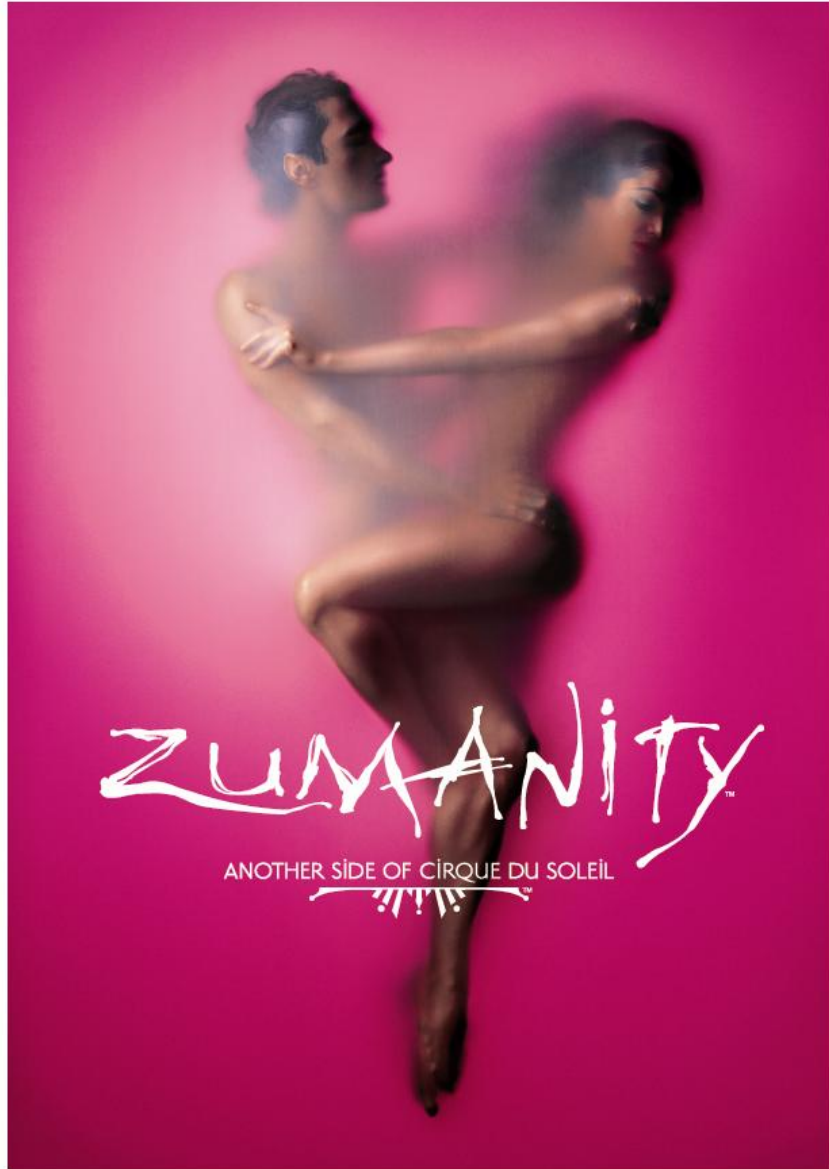
**Creating the name of the show** – Zumanity is from Zoo, which awakens our most primal urges, and Humanity. The show is a tale of humanity, emotion, beauty and diversity. Zumanity expresses a new eroticism, blending movement, acrobatics and beautiful bodies with the sensual caress of the human voice and the insistent pulse of exotic rhythms.

**Creating the brand** - The first step was to define Zumanity's relationship with the Cirque du Soleil brand. In the heart and mind of consumers around the world, Cirque is often an angel that brings love and beauty. An erotic show created a significant challenge in managing expectations. The show had to be linked to Cirque du Soleil because of all that this provided, but it could not be a Cirque du Soleil show. A new brand was possible (e.g. Cirque de la Lune), but that could be confusing. So we created a connection to Cirque by positioning Zumanity as "Another Side of Cirque du Soleil." This leveraged the Cirque equity, while telling the audience they should expect something different.

**Creating the visual identity** - The next stage was to create the marketing communication imagery. The development of a new brand for Cirque is always difficult; we have to do it without really knowing how the show will evolve, since a Cirque show's creative process is highly iterative. We also had to find a way to "show eroticism without really showing it."

We based the visual identity on an erotic shot, but taken through a latex screen.

This was highly effective because: (a) it created a very evocative, quality image that would stand out from the big and brassy visuals of typical adult shows in Vegas, (b) by veiling the eroticism, we could develop images without yet knowing the content of the show, (c) by veiling the images, we avoided any legal battle about exposure of skin and private body parts.



## Targeting

In order to be successful, this show would have to appeal to (1) the Creative Class, (2) the Vegas visitor and (3) the Vegas resident. This is an overview of the thinking.

	CREATIVE CLASS	VEGAS VISITOR	VEGAS RESIDENT
<b>Description</b>	Urban, highly-educated, liberal, artistically inclined, spend a lot of their disposable income on travel, parties, shows, fashion, etc. Includes gays, bisexuals, lesbians and transsexuals.	Mainstream. With 36 million visitors a year, Vegas is the second most visited destination in the world, after Paris. An average visitor stays only 72 hours.	Lives in Vegas. Is becoming weary of having to bear yet another new show.
<b>Objectives</b>	Build show interest & awareness  Use these opinion leaders to spread word-of-mouth  Ultimately drive ticket sales  Build a database	Drive instant ticket sales  Create a sense of bigness behind the show  Build show awareness and comprehension	Same as Vegas Visitors + Get them to endorse the show.
<b>Challenges</b>	Get enough reach (since the Creative Class is rather hard to reach with mass media)	Be perceived as THE show in town (get out of clutter)  Multiply point of contact	Explain.  Overcome cynicism
<b>Strategy</b>	Use the show personality to drive interest & curiosity (tease)  2 phase strategy:  Buzz marketing – drive to web  Launch – sell the show	Big Show approach  Concentrate in print media  Impact media – large surfaces  Presence during launch period	Big Show approach  Presence during launch period (concentrated time period)
<b>Tactics</b>	Special Parties, Web (Newsletter + Viral); TV; Outdoor; Bar/ Restaurant presence	Outdoor; Airport Video Ads	TV; Newspaper; Outdoor

### Creative Class Program

To reach the Creative Class it was decided to use an innovative blend of advertising, web-based direct marketing and marketing/PR stunts. All these actions aimed at creating a buzz for the new show.

### Vegas Program

The Creative Class strategy was replaced by a blanket approach dominating local coverage—from the airport arrival area to in-room entertainment. Zumanity was (and still is) ubiquitous in outdoor and TV advertising.

### The Right Tools for the Right Target

With three distinct target audiences, we needed the right tools for the right target. In addition, Cirque felt that Zumanity—because it’s so different—called for a new approach strategically. **Crossover Note 5**. Instead of the traditional marketing/PR approach, the strategy was more “bottom up”—more underground. It unfolded in two phases.

### PHASE 1: March to July 2003

**Public Relations and Launch Event** – This involved traditional channels to generate articles and coverage, and non-traditional channels to get key people talking about the new NYNY show, and just wanting to be part of it. So, instead of having a press conference to announce the name of the show, a party would be thrown with selected media, but also with “in crowd” influencers from the Creative Class. If they start to believe that Zumanity is the next hottest thing, so will the mainstream.

**Buzz Marketing & Word-of-Mouth** – This was a bits and pieces leak-driven approach (1) to create a buzz and awareness, (2) to initiate people to the language and style of Zumanity (e.g.. Madame’s Diary newsletter). We launched parties or events in key Creative Class markets (Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, and Miami), with a “drive-to-web” strategy. Specific activities included a suggestive leave behind, viral email and/or direct mail.

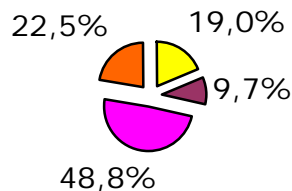
### PHASE 2: July to September 2003

**TV, Non-Traditional Media and Web** – The objective here was to unveil more and more information about the show, little by little. (More details are under Execution.)

www.zumanity.com leaked information and progressively become more specific, until it had point of purchase ability. It was specially designed to be different, thus creating buzz.

As per Fig.1 below, the Zumanity media strategy is a vivid example of multiple elements working together.

Fig.1 - Media Strategy



■ Outdoor Bulletins ■ Out-of-Home ■ Broadcast (TV/Vidiad) ■ Print

## Execution

Execution	Program	Phase
<b>Oscar Nominees Invitation:</b> For the Academy Awards, we produced a high-value, high impact package inviting all Oscar nominees to attend an international gala premiere of a new Cirque show on September 20 <sup>th</sup> 2003 at the NYNY Hotel & Casino. The piece was so striking that US Today wrote an article about it.	Creative Class	1
<b>Parties and Collateral:</b> Cirque created Zumanity parties as a VIP event at all premieres of Cirque shows in major US markets (NYC, San Francisco, etc.). Since the media, celebrities and key local influencers usually attend these parties, this created more buzz. Drive-to-web matchboxes and postcards were distributed at influential bars, restaurants and parties.	Creative Class	1
<b>DM:</b> Everyone in the MGM-Mirage and Cirque data bases (more than 1.5 million people) got on-line or traditional direct marketing offers to see Zumanity.	C Class and Vegas	1
<b>Zumanity Website:</b> For the first time ever, the public was invited to discover the creative process for developing a new Cirque show. The site was updated regularly with high-value content such as footage of rehearsals, sketches for Thierry Mugler costumes and interviews with the show's creators. The site also prompted visitors to leave their name in a database—to have the privilege of being among the first people to attend the show.	Creative Class	2
<b>Online Advertising:</b> The Website was promoted by online advertising on all major creative class Websites in America (Salon.com, Villagevoice.com, etc.).	Creative Class	2
<b>Print:</b> Given the limited budget, we ran a highly targeted high impact print campaign. Our “frequency of one” advertising strategy focused on multiple page inserts in influential magazines such as Vanity Fair and various cultural weeklies. <b>Crossover Note 30.</b>	Creative Class	2
<b>Posters:</b> Cirque ran a poster campaign (Zoom Media) at key restaurants and nightclubs in NYC, LA, San Francisco and Miami.	Creative Class	2
<b>Television:</b> For three weeks after the August 14 <sup>th</sup> launch we ran TV on cable (VH1, MTV, etc.) in Las Vegas and LA.	Vegas	2
<b>On-property:</b> There were visuals of the show outside and inside the NYNY Hotel (9 stories high). <b>Crossover Note 30.</b>	Vegas	2
<b>In-Transit Media:</b> Billboards, airport signs, etc.	Vegas	2

## Results

The Zumanity campaign was a huge success. It was effective in meeting (and exceeding) the campaign's objectives. Here is an overview.

### 1. Zumanity is sold out

Before the show premiered on Thursday August 14<sup>th</sup> 2003, we sold 26,567 tickets—67% ahead of the 15,000 objective. Furthermore, as shown in Table 1, occupancy stayed really high throughout the one-year case period.

*Table 1 – Zumanity occupancy*

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Results</b>
Average occupancy for the first 3 months	91.3%
Average occupancy for the first 6 months	90.5%
Average occupancy for the first 12 months	91.8%

Source: Cirque du Soleil.

### 2. The message was clearly getting through.

There was explosive traffic on the Zumanity website. It received (and still does) approximately 15,000 visits per day, and these visitors on average spend 5.3 minutes on the site. During the entire length of the campaign, the website received 606,375 unique visitors for a total of 1,254,963 visits. Furthermore, with a click-through rate of 5.1% (the industry average is below 0.2%) the Zumanity banner ad campaign contributed to the show's awareness and comprehension objectives.

Meanwhile, overall awareness was strong. Research based on the adult American population showed awareness at 4%. While this number may seem low, it represents several million people, and compares very favourably to the awareness achieved by other Cirque shows (numbers were supplied).

### 3. Cirque's database was expanded

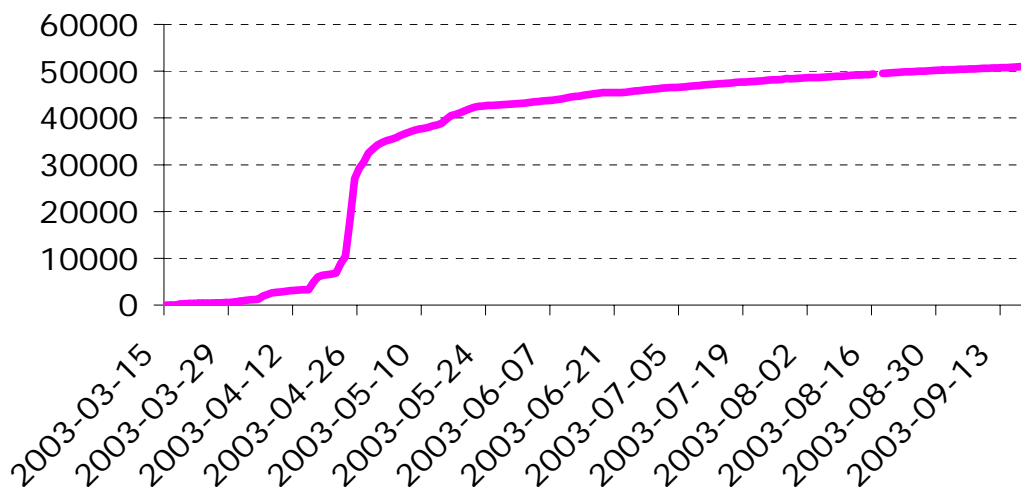
Through the drive-to-web activities, we helped Cirque create a fan database of 143,000 people willing to receive personalized Zumanity communication, and this translated into 42,276 online ticket sales. Moreover, 102,056 new members came into Cirque's database, which is 104% more than the 50,000 objective.

Cont'd.

## Isolating Cause and Effect between Advertising and Results

From the start of the marketing communication efforts on March 15<sup>th</sup> to September 19<sup>th</sup>, a daily tracking of the Zumanity online registration was completed (as per table below).

*Table. 3 – Zumanity online registration*



Source: Cirque du Soleil.

The only thing that could bring online registration was online advertising, (banners, email blast, etc.) or offline advertising (drive-to-web matchboxes, postcards, posters, etc.). This online registration-tracking program makes it apparent that the driving force behind the Zumanity campaign was the advertising.

## INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2004

[Zumanity Version]

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

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

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

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

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

You can use Crossover Notes in two ways. Although they didn’t start out as a crash course in advertising, they are worth reading as a whole. You can also dip into them selectively. The headings on the next page will help you choose.

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

We now have over 120 published cases. They’re an immense and growing body of experience. I hope I’ve helped pass some of this on.

*David Rutherford*

Toronto: November 2004.

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

It is published by the ICA. See [www.ica.adbeast.com](http://www.ica.adbeast.com).

## INDEX OF CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2004

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

## ZUMANITY. CROSSOVER NOTES. CASSIES 2004.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>2</sup> How do you do this, and evolve? See *Excellence in Brand Communication* : [www.ica.adbeast.com](http://www.ica.adbeast.com)

- 2. Brand Truths.** Successful advertising (in fact all successful communication) resonates with its audience. As a marketer, you may want people to believe that you have the best-tasting coffee, but simply saying, “I have the best-tasting coffee” will not usually get the resonance you need.

One school of thought is to say the obvious as loudly and crassly as you can. We could call it the Bad Boy syndrome. Another has led to the idea of Brand Truths. These operate on a deeper level than simple claims. One of the top UK agencies described their search for Brand Truths as “we interrogate the product until it confesses its strength.”

I was once the Brand Manager on Tide, and when we were asked, “What does Tide stand for” we said, “Superior cleaning. Not whitening. Not Brightening. Not Fabric Care. Superior *cleaning*.”<sup>3</sup>

Superior performance was a religion on Tide, and Tide delivered, despite the cliché that all detergents are alike. But this was only the glimmer of a Brand Truth. If you “interrogated” Tide the most startling truth was the *intense belief* of Tide users. This came to life in the immensely successful “Two for One Swap” campaign. Hidden cameras watched as women who had just bought Tide were offered two boxes of another detergent in exchange. They adamantly refused, delivering off-the-cuff endorsements that no copywriter could ever have come up with. The campaign ran for years, and only came to an end because of its success—women knew it so well that the “candid camera” interview became impossible. Many Brand Truths are also insights, and for a list see [11. The Eureka Insight](#) and [12. Changing the Goalposts](#).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 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.<sup>4</sup>

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 parity is the way of the world.

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

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

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, remodelling the Boomerang portfolio.
- Cirque du Soleil in Cassies 2004, by adding Zumanity to their portfolio.
- Kit Kat in Cassies 2004, keeping Original the same, but launching Chunky.
- Toyota Sienna in Cassies 2004, with multiple upgrades.

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.
- Cottonelle and Milk in Cassies 2004.

Technology cases are harder to categorize, but usually have improvements. Service companies (e.g. Desjardins, Gaz Metro, Réno Dépôt in Cassies 2004) may not have radical surgery, but often make improvements as part of the "total brand experience." Some cases make the point (e.g. Clearnet in Cassies 2001 and Lipton Sidekicks in Cassies 2002) that if your functional advantage is going to be matched, you had better develop an advantage through brand personality/character/equity. There is no cookie-cutter answer. Each situation has to be assessed on its merits.

**10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged?** Conventional wisdom will sometimes be right. But it can also be a roadblock. When US Pepsi executives saw the Pepsi Challenge, they apparently said, "that's not Pepsi," and rejected it. The Dove Litmus campaign (*Crossover Note 7*) ran into a fusillade of disapproval at client/agency global head offices—and only survived because the Canadian team stuck to their guns. Here are others that went against the tried and true:

- Crispy Crunch in Cassies I, making a virtue of greed—a taboo in confectionery.
- 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.
- Various financial accounts—so many that humour, wit and charm have almost become the new conventional wisdom for the category: AGF in Cassies 99, Clarica in Cassies 2001. BMO Quebec and Scotiabank in Cassies 2002.

***Others from Cassies 2002:***

- Bud Light, not going after the young, legal-age, male heavy drinker.
- CFL, against younger viewers, accepting they might alienate the core franchise.
- ED, going high-profile with a taboo topic.
- Five Alive, switching from Moms 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, embracing the English heritage with "honest frenglish."
- Sloche, rejoicing in being politically and nutritionally incorrect.

***From Cassies 2003:***

- Bait Cars, talking directly to criminals.
- Crown Diamond Paint, advertising 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, with no smiling students and ivy covered buildings.

***From Cassies 2004:***

- Cirque du Soleil—as a corporate philosophy.
- Elections Ontario, resisting the temptation to use social responsibility.
- Miller campaign, throwing out the conventions of political advertising.
- Réno Dépôt, investing in the brand, rather than "price and item."
- Toyota Sienna, with their "cool minivan" thinking.

**15. Baby with the Bathwater.** Campaigns can run out of steam, and it may be right to throw everything out (*Crossover Notes 14 and 33*). But it's worth checking to see if anything should be kept. "I am Canadian" from the "I AM" campaign in Cassies III was discarded when the campaign later faltered. It came back with "Joe's Rant," with a twist. The Campbell's Kids re-appeared in Cassies 2002 after years in oblivion. It will be interesting to see how this plays out. Cottonelle in Cassies 2004 knew that they had properties in the cottony soft jingle etc. But these were also dating the brand. So they found a way to use the jingle in a tongue in cheek way.

Quite often, long-running properties get discarded because the people who believe in them move off the brand. On Smarties, this happened with "Red Ones Last," though I see that it has come back, in a back-handed way. (I'm referring to the ad with two nerdy guys in the office who—in their own minds at least—get the girl.) Sometimes they are discarded for a good reason. Dove's "pour shot" had appeared in every commercial since launch. For Litmus (Cassies III) the Canadian team decided to drop it—to help consumers see Dove in a new way. Despite this logic, the international powers-that-be (at client and agency) reacted as if Dove was at risk of imminent death, and said so in no uncertain terms. Their sense of bereavement turned to horror when their advice was ignored. The "Litmus" commercial 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 people 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<sup>5</sup> consumers will not forget it. These images have a grip on long-term memory. Think about it this way. Imagine you want to *erase* an image that has got its hooks into the consumer's mind. Could you do it? I watched Lever try for years to erase Wisk's "ring around the collar" image. It wouldn't budge. That said, my view is that (in general) we are too quick to change things—probably because we want to leave our imprint on the brands we are entrusted with.

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

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

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<sup>5</sup> On Prairie Milk in Cassies 2004 they dropped the classic pour shot because it is a cliché to teenagers.

**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—Seen as "Margaret Thatcher." Displaced this image. Cassies 2002.
- Pine-Sol—Seen as too strong. Softened this with "thorough clean." Cassies 2002.
- Sleeman in Quebec—Honest Frenghish. Cassies 2002.
- Pro•Line—Anyone can win. Cassies 2002 and 2003.
- Crown Diamond—Appealed to men who hate painting. Cassies 2003.
- Super 7—Made a virtue of excess. Cassies 2003.
- Cirque du Soleil—"showed eroticism without really showing it." Cassies 2004
- Gaz Metro—They made the (feared) gas flame the hero. Cassies 2004.
- Short Film Festival. Made a virtue of brevity. Cassies 2004.
- Johnson's Baby Shampoo—Despite being a blind test loser, repositioned against adults washing their hair every day, and took over as market leader.
- Heinz ketchup—Making a virtue of s-l-o-w.

**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 today, there are Creative Strategies that just tuck them in under Brand Character, or do not mention them at all. I used to make that mistake. When I was Brand Manager on Tide we said implacably that Tide stood for cleaning. At an unwritten level, we knew that Tide also stood for *trust*, but this crucial emotional benefit did not appear anywhere in the Creative Strategy—and we could easily have overlooked it.

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

**~Unique Emotional Proposition~**

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

Here are winners that *could* have focused on the rational, but chose emotion:

- Cassies III
  - Chrysler NS Minivan. It had a number of functional improvements, but the campaign was heavily infused with emotional benefits.
  - Philadelphia Cream Cheese. The Angel campaign captured the emotional benefit of "permission to indulge," along with the rational benefit of 60% less fat than butter or margarine.
- Cassies 99
  - Richmond Savings. The Humungous Bank campaign.
  - AGF Funds. The "what are you doing after work" campaign charmed its way into people's pocketbooks.
  - becel. With hard-hitting print, and a strong doctors/nutritionist plan, becel reached #1. They then wanted to get on TV, but regulators forbade their hard-hitting claims on TV. This led to the "young at heart" campaign, and spectacular long-term business growth.
  - Clearnet MiKe. It appealed to the self-image of its pragmatic, project-driven target audience.
  - Fido. The campaign includes rational benefits, but its main pull is user-friendliness.
  - St-Hubert tapped into chez-nous.
  - Sunlight captured the joy of getting dirty.
  - Wonder Bread. They could have sold on taste + nutrition, but instead used the joy of childhood.
- Cassies 2001
  - Joe's Rant made us proud.
  - Clarica made it all look simple.
  - Clearnet gave us the future is friendly.
  - Kraft tugged at our heartstrings with KD moments.
- Cassies 2002
  - Manitoba Telecom gave us Morty, the talking bison.
  - The Bank of Montreal and Scotiabank made us smile.
  - Campbell's gave us the less-than-perfect family.
  - CFL fanned the flames of rivalry.
  - Diet Pepsi 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.
- Cassies 2004
  - The United Way cast off its "administrative" image.
  - Cottonelle talked to women as women.
  - Gaz Metro dealt with the fear of Gas.
  - Prairie Milk, appealed to teens' need for growth.
  - Toyota Sienna, positioned itself as the cool minivan.

## ADDITIONAL (✓) CROSSOVER NOTES

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

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

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

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

- Oh Henry! None of the gut-fillers had tried to own hunger, even though it was the high ground for the category. Cassies II. See also *Crossover Note 7*.
- Buckley's. Rather than side-step their bad taste, Buckley's relished it. Cassies III.
- Chrysler. Minivans were “my most expensive household appliance.” Even so, *emotion* was the key to an immensely successful launch. Cassies III.
- Philadelphia Cream Cheese. In research, people often do not own up to what they really want, which in this case was “permission to indulge.” Cassies III.
- Richmond Savings. Almost everyone hated banks, but it still took insight to turn this into the “Humungous Bank.” Cassies III.
- Eggs are natural, but in word-association tests, consumers did not say so. (See *12. Changing the Goalposts* next.) The farmer campaign brought “natural” to life.
- Sunlight. Getting dirty is fun. This is diametrically opposed to the conventional wisdom, dominated by Tide, that clean is good and dirt is bad. Cassies 99.
- Fido in Cassies 99. Competitors were fighting on promotion/price. In an echo of Apple vs. IBM, Fido saw that consumers needed the human touch. See also Clearnet and “the future is friendly” in Cassies 2001.
- Diet Pepsi found a way to be youthful without being too young in the “forever young” campaign. Cassies 2002.

### 11. The Eureka Insight (cont'd)

- Listerine in Cassies 2002: healthy gums, after a century talking about bad breath.
- Pro•Line in Cassies 2002: Appealed to non-experts with “Anyone can win.”
- Aero. Saw the power of “melting” in Cassies 2003.
- Crown Diamond. Used the fact that men hate to paint in Cassies 2003.
- Super 7. Ignored the political correctness of being tasteful. Cassies 2003.
- Cottonelle. Talked to women as women, not as “family.” Cassies 2004.
- Quebec Milk. Saw the blindingly obvious. That just asking people to drink more milk might cause it. Cassies 2004.
- Toyota Sienna. Realized that the answer lay not in what minivan buyers do, but in what SUV buyers do. Cassies 2004.
- Virtually all the cases in *Crossover Note 10*.

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

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

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

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

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

**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 can't do justice to all the points of view in this space, but here is a fairly lengthy overview:

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

This may seem academic, but it's not. In the absence of a single agreed theory, we've all pieced together our own notion of what effective advertising is all about. Our mental models<sup>6</sup> (while right some of the time) are not right all of the time. But (a key point) *we all make the mistaken assumption that our own model is right.*

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>6</sup> I'm not sure who coined this term, but I first saw it in a Paul Feldwick paper.

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

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

1. Shipments/share etc. respond within days/weeks of new advertising.<sup>7</sup>
2. Advertising has helped an established brand deliver good volume/share/profit. But it is no longer causing growth—it has more of a “retention” role.<sup>8</sup>
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 working, but the effect is masked.** Pricing, promotion, in-store activity, distribution etc. can all have a greater short-term effect than advertising. If they are masking the underlying trend, then given time, the masking effect will recede, and all should be well.
- **The “slow burn” situation.** This accepts that the advertising needs time to wear in, and when this has happened, all will be well. Some researchers reject wear-in, saying that if a campaign does not have a quick effect, it is unlikely to have one at all. On the other hand, campaigns like “I AM” for Canadian were spectacularly effective, but only after a slow burn.
- **The “arm wrestler” stand-off.** Two equally matched arm wrestlers can hold each other immobile for an agonizing length of time. This can happen with offsetting ad campaigns i.e. you have to assess the strength of the competition’s campaign before coming to a conclusion about your own.
- **The advertising is not working.** It may be too early to know for sure, but this may be the early sign—in which case you need to be preparing some sort of fix.

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

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<sup>7</sup> And hopefully a long-running business-building campaign—See *14. Refreshing a Continuing Campaign*.

<sup>8</sup> This is a big topic in itself. See *Crossover Note 34*.

- **John Philip Jones and STAS (Short-Term Advertising Strength).** Jones designed a study to uncover short-term effect, if it exists. He used single-source data to examine “advertised” and “non-advertised” households—and the brands they buy within a week of exposure to advertising. The study needs to be read in detail [there are detractors] but the findings seem pretty clear:
  - a) There is a definite, short-term effect from advertising. (70% of cases.)
  - b) In Jones’s words, *a single advertising exposure was shown to be all that was necessary to achieve an immediate sales increase.* (This flies in the face of conventional wisdom about frequency. *Crossover Note 28.*)
  - c) The short-term effect was often followed by a one-year effect (46% of brands) though the sales response at one year was always lower than at one week.
  - d) When brands do not show the STAS response, it is likely that the creative is not as strong as it might be, or that it is being out-muscled by more powerful creative from a competitor. [A stronger arm-wrestler: see above.]
  
- **The IRI on long-term effects.** IRI run state-of-the-art split-cable test markets in the US. Test consumers are exposed to marketing effort, while a matched control group is not. In the early 90s IRI published the learning from 400 tests that had explored TV creative, media weight, promotion support and so on. From this, they were able to analyze 44 tests for long-term advertising effect. Test areas (A) were measured against control areas (B). A only got special effort in Year 1. After that, the test and control plans were identical. In other words, the long-term effect was caused entirely by the effort that occurred in Year I. Results were:
  - a) In Year I, Plan A markets averaged +22% volume over Plan B.
  - b) In Year II, Plan A markets held their advantage, at +14%.
  - c) In Year III, they still held an advantage, averaging +7%.

The momentum in Year I held up, with the 3-year effect double the one-year effect. The study concluded that payout for one-year effort should be calculated over three years. (See the reference at the end of *Crossover Note 27.*)
  
- **The Millward Brown Findings.** Millward Brown have immense databases in the UK, USA, Canada, Europe and elsewhere. They see a short-term advertising effect in their continuous tracking, but also a long-term effect. Through sales modeling, they estimate that this long-term effect may, on occasion, be as much as 7 times greater than the short-term effect.
  
- **The Observations of Paul Feldwick.** Paul Feldwick is a top researcher/planner in the UK with impeccable credentials. He has proposed a fascinating metaphor for short and long-term effect, based on “brand muscle.” When we exercise, the result of any individual activity is small and hard to measure. But over time, results can be dramatic. This is more than just a clever analogy. There is a huge amount of evidence that as consumers get more used to buying a brand, it moves into their habitual (and perhaps even loyal) repertoire.

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

**14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.** When I was at P&G, and later at O&M, all the big advertisers and their agencies thought in terms of campaigns. If we were developing new advertising, the comment “that’s just a one-off” was a kiss of death.

In those days, a campaign was usually defined by what a brand did on television. There would be one commercial, or a pool, and they would be refreshed over time. Nowadays, influenced by the ideas of “media neutrality” and “every point of contact,” a campaign is more complicated. But it’s fair to say that we (clients and agencies) still believe that campaigns are the right/best way to build a brand.<sup>9</sup>

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

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

So the intuitive belief is in line with the “relationship” view. There is still the question, though, of what is a campaign? At one time, packaged goods advertisers (and some agencies) believed in strict pool-outs. But campaigns do not have to be this tightly formatted. The following list starts at the most rigid and extends to the most holistic. All the examples have successes and failures, and the list is not a comprehensive one because some campaigns don’t lend themselves to being categorized. It will give an idea of the possibilities, however and (I hope) free up what can be rigid thinking:

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

This category includes spectacular executions like “Manhattan Landing” and “Face” for British Airways, though it can be hard to keep coming up with ideas this big. Kit Kat is a different example, where the idea of “break” continues, and the challenge is to keep it up to date.

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<sup>9</sup> A 30-something creative friend said to me, “where does this belief in campaigns come from? Young people today want constant change. What’s so wrong with a stream of one-off ideas?” This would have been seen as heresy at one time, and perhaps still is. But it’s food for thought.

- **Icons.** These can anchor a campaign (Maytag Man, Marlboro Cowboy) or be a property (Tony the Tiger, Pillsbury Doughboy). As I write this Michelin is trying to make more of the Michelin Man. Some see icons as a yesterday idea, but I think that's a mis-call—it depends how it's done. Absolut Vodka uses its bottle as an icon, and it's brilliant. The Familiprix pharmacist is hilariously effective, and could become an icon (the creative is in the case history section at [www.cassies.ca](http://www.cassies.ca))
- **Spokes-people, and Spokes-animals.** Dave Thomas and Colonel Sanders, god rest their souls, are examples, as is Morty the Bison for Manitoba Telecom.
- **Storytelling with continuing character(s).** The Oxo family in the UK is one of the longest-running examples. Bartles and Jaymes was a wonderful success story in the US. Personalities have been very successful in Quebec e.g. the Pepsi and Listerine Grand Prix winners in Cassies I and II.
- **Music-Based.** Music sometimes goes beyond a supporting role, and becomes part of the brand character. Soft Drinks, Cars, Fast Food, and Beer have all built campaigns this way. In packaged goods, becel's "young at heart" campaign would be an example.
- **Consistent "Voice and Attitude."** These campaigns are held together by something more subtle than anthems, slogans, structure, and icons. Perhaps the most impressive was Volkswagen in the 60s. Individual executions were very different (some serious, some comical, some ironic, some dramatic) but they all had the Volkswagen voice and attitude. Brands like Nike are in this category. Benneton is an extreme example. As I write this, I'm remembering some Fedex ads that would fit this category ("I have an MBA" and "You're a heck of a man doing a heck of a job, Lewis.")
- **Same core message. Customized execution.** To people with a "pool-out" mindset, this hardly qualifies as a campaign at all, because individual executions are totally different. But the overall effect can be very powerful.

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

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

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

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

### A CLOSING THOUGHT

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

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

*David Rutherford*