



London

PLANNING GUIDE

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I AN APPROACH TO PLANNING ADVERTISING

Most people would agree that advertising, like any other job, benefits from being tackled systematically. But advertising is different from most jobs, and it requires a rather special approach to planning.

Advertising involves producing a long series of unique solutions. Each piece of work requires innovation. Every script, every layout, every recommendation is in some way different from any that has gone before. Each client operates in a different market, and each brand in a market has different needs.

So any systematic approach to planning advertising has to do more than simply provide controls and disciplines. It must actively stimulate imagination and creativity too.

In fact, the ideal advertising planning methods should be:

1. Realistic. They must be based on what we have found in practice to be 'best' for planning advertising. They must not simply impose an external structure on the normal patterns of work. They must be capable of development and evolution by individuals.
2. Pragmatic. They must actually work. They must actively help people produce advertising that is both creative and relevant. That means in practice that they must be reasonably simple, memorable and easy to follow.
3. Fundamental. Though simple in form, they must be soundly based on coherent theories of how advertising contributes to marketing; how communications work; how people create new ideas; and how people work together most productively.
4. Structured. They must set a framework within which imagination is to work. They must help by breaking down complex processes into stages: by setting disciplines; by providing for regular evaluations of work done.

In line with these requirements, this document aims first, to summarise the theories on which our planning methods are based
secondly, to set out a framework for planning which represents what the best planners are doing anyhow.

II ADVERTISING'S CONTRIBUTION TO MARKETING

1. How do brands appeal?

In any competitive market, people's choice between brands normally depends on the total impression that they have of each brand. They do not usually run through a catalogue of relative virtues and vices as they stop before the shelves or the shop window.

In most markets, people establish buying habits and have a mental short-list of a few acceptable brands from which they would normally choose. The strength and nature of the total impression that they have of any brand governs whether or not it is on the short-list and whether it tends to be first or second or third on the list.

This totality of a brand's appeal has been built up over time by three different sorts of appeal:

- (i) appeals to the senses: how the brand looks, smells, tastes, feels, sounds (either in the pack or as a product in use)
- (ii) appeals to the reason: what the brand does, what it is for, what it contains, how it performs
- (iii) appeals to the emotions: what the brand's individual nature or style is, what its associations are, what mood it evokes or satisfies, what are the psychological rewards of using it.

These different elements combine in various ways and interact with each other, so that for any brand there is a unique blend of appeals.

In this sense brands are like people. People have physical attributes, skills and abilities. They have their own style, their own way of talking, moods, idiosyncrasies, friends, clothes, possessions and so on.

We recognise that our view of one particular person is affected by all these things, in a very complex way, but we have no difficulty in thinking of him as an individual. In just the same way, we normally think of a brand as a single entity, but can recognise that there are many elements that go to make it up.

And as with people, each brand has a unique identity or personality. This is not normally because each of its specific appeals is different from those of competitors. Brand personality more often depends on the particular blend of appeals to the senses, the reason and the emotions.

Motivators and discriminators

There is another sort of distinction we can make between the specific attractions of a brand.

Some appeals are very important in motivating people to buy, but are common to all brands in the product field. Indeed, the more important they are, the more likely they are to be common; as, for instance, the ability to get clothes clean in a washing powder.

Some appeals are much less important in motivating people to buy the product type, but add an extra value that makes all the difference between one brand and another.

Any successful brand has a blend of motivating and discriminating appeals. Without the motivators it would undoubtedly fail. But without the discriminators to add values and make the brand unique, it would not have a distinct enough total appeal to succeed - except on a cut-price low-margin basis.

Factors affecting brand personality

There is a huge number of different factors that affect a brand's personality - its combination of appeals. Some of those shown in the chart opposite are under the manufacturer's control, some not.

He can control the physical product and its packaging; and many forms of communication about the brand - its naming, pack design, advertising and promotions. Pricing, distribution and many associations are only partially controllable. Past history and competitive activity are totally out of his control.

Even the controllable factors do not affect the total impression of a brand directly. They are all filtered through the receiver's mind, are related to existing ideas, attitudes, prejudices and predispositions; and are finally moulded into a totality. My total impression of any brand is made up of my experience of using it and whatever I have received, digested and accepted from the communications about it.

Perhaps most important, my view of a brand's personality depends on my impression of its competitors. Everything is relative.

