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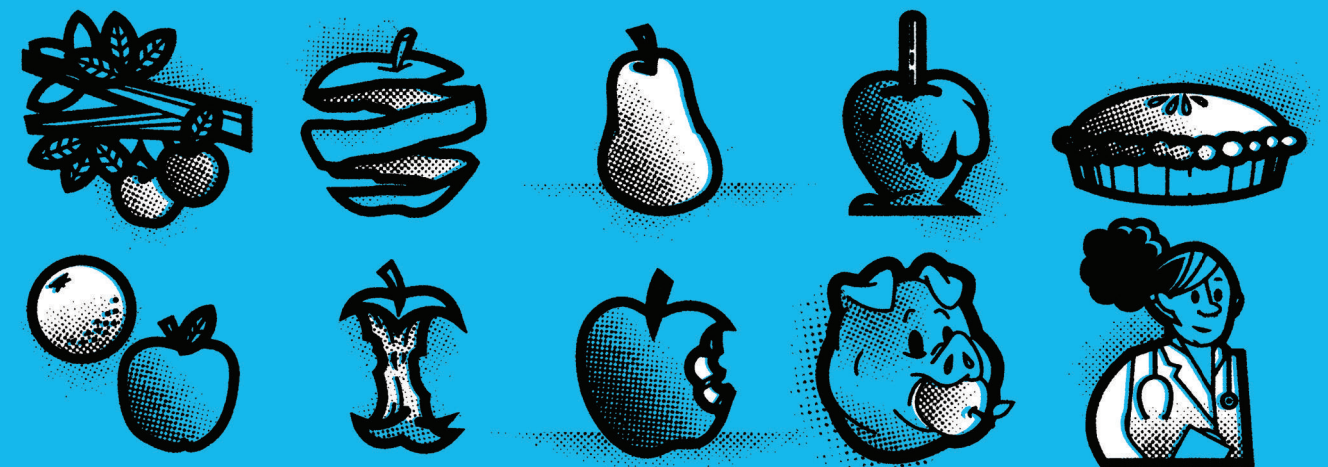
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ADVERTISING CREATIVE  
SIXTH EDITION



SIXTH EDITION



*"A book for all generations that recognizes the paradigm shift  
we're living through and celebrates advertising's role in  
problem-solving and creating world-changing ideas."*

—Laura Maness, CEO, Havas New York (a proud B Corp)



# ADVERTISING CREATIVE

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TOM ALTSTIEL | JEAN GROW | DAN AUGUSTINE | JOANNA L. JENKINS



“The sixth edition of *Advertising Creative* once again delivers. It takes readers straight to the heart of just how essential diversity and inclusion is when it comes to creating great creative work. From deep dives in written content to fabulous examples and exercises *Advertising Creative* challenges readers, and the advertising industry, to do better.”

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# ADVERTISING CREATIVE

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SIXTH EDITION

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# PREFACE

## Why Did We Author this Book?

As with the last five editions, our goal is to engage the next generation of advertising professionals. We go far beyond the narrow focus of advertising to include the whole spectrum of marketing communications, which keeps evolving. While we provide practical advice on succeeding in this field, we don't ignore the challenges, such as lack of diversity in the ranks of advertising practitioners and the images they create. Systemic racism still permeates most institutions from our corporations, to our governments, to our own industry. Our capitalist system, supported by creating consumer demand, generates obscene wealth for a very few and leaves far too many behind. Technology surges ahead in fits and starts while we wait for the promise (or threat) of the Next Big Thing. As authors, practitioners, and professionals, we believe we have a responsibility (as you will) to effect positive change where we are able.

Problems persist, but even if conditions changed overnight, one fact would remain: if you're going to succeed in the advertising world, the work still needs to be based on a **big idea**. And extensive ideas are rooted in strong **concepts**. *The focus of this book is creating strategically sound, attention-grabbing, and impactful messages*, whether they're used to sell toilet paper or raise awareness of social injustice.

## Who Should Use It?

This book is designed for students who have completed entry-level advertising, public relations, and marketing courses and are now ready to explore how strategy, creativity, design, and writing skills can prepare them for careers in marketing communications. Working professionals have also found previous editions of this book to be a helpful resource.

Courses that have used this text include:

- Ideation and content creation
- Advertising copywriting
- Advanced advertising copywriting
- Advertising campaigns
- Strategic planning
- Copy editing for advertising and public relations
- Public relations writing
- Advertising management
- Advanced marketing communications

## Why Is It Different?

From the first edition, our goal was not to write just another textbook. Instead, we wanted to create an easy-to-read informal guide for creating strategically sound and effective marketing communication materials without losing sight of ethical and social issues that impact creative decision making. As our publishers keep telling us, this is not a “normal” textbook. We consider that a compliment.

With every new edition we strive to include new examples of digital, broadcast, print, and ambient advertising. We also include information about business-to-business communication, a huge sector of our industry that most academic texts ignore. As with previous editions, we offer several features that bring in the diverse mix of what makes us all human across a broad range of experiences. Among these are:

- **Rising Stars**—short stories from young professionals about getting that first job or launching their own companies and excelling in this business.
- **Pro Tips**—case histories from working professionals about what went right or wrong and why.
- **What Would You Do?**—fictional case studies that apply principles expressed in the text or test the students’ ethical and moral compass.
- **Who’s Who?**—people you should know about whether they are pioneers of advertising or contemporary superstars in our industry.
- **Survival Guide**—helpful information about landing that first job and thriving in it, while navigating an often-challenging terrain.
- **Student Work**—some of the most creative and inspiring examples in this book were submitted by students from around the world.
- **Exercises**—whether they are in-class or take-home assignments, these exercises were developed and tested by instructors working to inspire students.
- **Making Connections**—new to the sixth edition, these questions will help students and teachers, alike, make strategic connections between the images and learning objectives within each chapter.

## What’s New?

We’ve kept the same 16-chapter format but reformatted some chapters to place more emphasis on digital platforms and content that are shaping streaming media in the ever-evolving social landscape. All chapters have been updated, including complete revisions of about half the book. More than 90% of the examples and infographics are new. You might notice that the subtitle of the book includes “copy” but there are no chapters with that title. This has always been a book that emphasized copywriting, but good writing is needed everywhere. So, you will see references to writing copy in every chapter, even though no single chapter is totally dedicated to it.

We are proud to introduce two new co-authors, Dan Augustine and Joanna L. Jenkins, who bring another dimension to our collective effort. **Dan Augustine** has a 20-year career in advertising, starting out at J. Walter Thompson in Detroit and currently as a creative director



in Wisconsin. Dan has worked both sides of the desk as well as taught courses in advertising strategy, visual communication, and copywriting. In addition, Dan is a gig-poster artist and has been recognized by *Communication Arts* as a top illustrator. **Joanna L. Jenkins, PhD**, is a creative, educator, scholar, and enthusiast of all things advertising. Joanna believes that this institution has the power to change the world for the better, and relies on a strong background as a designer, professor, researcher, and entrepreneur to inspire and prepare corporations, consumers, practitioners, and future generations of young professionals to advance and reimagine advertising possibilities. Joanna is the author of *The Convergence Crisis*, which traces the history of advertising and opportunities that emerge during paradigm shifts.

## Beyond the Book

We've worked with SAGE to develop a new website ([study.sagepub.com/altstiel6e](http://study.sagepub.com/altstiel6e)), as outlined below. You will find a test bank, PowerPoint® presentations, discussion questions, chapter exercises, video links, and other web resources on the website. The digital additions will link you directly to the advertising world. There are websites, blogs, and feeds that will help keep you up to date and ever wiser. You will also find links to some of the digital work discussed in the book.

You may also want to see what we are doing outside of the classroom. We invite you to follow us. Find all of us on LinkedIn. You can also find Jean at @jeangrow and [jeangrow.com](http://jeangrow.com). After pivoting away from academia, Jean is doing great work expanding diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives across the advertising industry as Founder and Chief Truths Teller at GROW DEI—a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion consultancy.

Finally, we want to hear your ideas. So, don't hesitate to share them with us through the "Contact the Authors" link on the SAGE site.

## Ancillaries

The password-protected Instructor Teaching Site at [study.sagepub.com/altstiel6e](http://study.sagepub.com/altstiel6e) gives instructors access to a full complement of resources to support and enhance their courses. The following assets are available on the site:

**Test Bank:** This Word test bank offers a diverse set of test questions and answers for each chapter of the book. Multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer, and essay questions for every chapter help instructors assess students' progress and understanding.

**What Would You Do?** This feature is woven into each chapter with case studies from fellow teachers and questions that will allow students to apply lessons learned in class to real-world marketing problems. We invite submissions for this edition and the next and will be delighted to cite you, adding another line on your CV.

**Discussion Questions:** Chapter-specific questions help launch discussion by prompting students to engage with the material and by reinforcing important content.

**Chapter Exercises and Activities:** These lively and stimulating ideas, found at the end of each chapter, can be used in and out of class to reinforce active learning. The activities apply to individual and group projects.

**PowerPoint® Slides:** Chapter-specific slide presentations offer assistance with lecture and review preparation by highlighting essential content, features, and artwork from the book.

**Video Links:** Carefully selected web-based video resources feature relevant interviews, lectures, personal stories, inquiries, and other content for use in independent or classroom-based explorations of key topics.

**Web Resources:** These links to relevant websites direct both instructors and students to additional resources for further research on important chapter topics.

The open-access Student Study Site available at [study.sagepub.com/altstiel6e](http://study.sagepub.com/altstiel6e) is designed to maximize student comprehension of the material and to promote critical thinking and application. The following resources and study tools are available on the student portion of the book's website:

- Mobile-friendly **practice quizzes** allow for independent assessment by students of their mastery of course material.
- Mobile-friendly **eFlashcards** strengthen understanding of key terms and concepts.
- Carefully selected chapter-by-chapter **video and multimedia** content enhances classroom-based explorations of key topics.

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*Some information, images, and terms used in this text may be considered sensitive. While our aim is to create an open space for mutual respect and growth as we engage in discussions concerning diversity, equity, inclusion, and power, we recognize that sensitive content can also be triggering or a matter of perspective. You are encouraged to pause, reflect, and rejoin the conversation.*

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**W**e would never have completed this sixth edition without the help of some amazing people. First, you wouldn't be reading this if our previous editions had not been so well accepted. Thanks to the teachers and advertising professionals around the world who have purchased past editions and adopted them for classes. We hope you like this one even more. Thanks to the creative practitioners who have shared their wisdom by contributing more detailed case histories, called Pro Tips. Your views of the inner workings of our business are invaluable. Thanks to the young professionals who shared their inspiring personal stories in our popular Rising Stars sections. Your voices brought an insightful new dimension to this edition. Thanks to the instructors who contribute their wisdom in our What Would You Do? case studies. Finally, thanks to the students who have purchased our book and kept it. We hope it provides wisdom and inspiration for years to come. We are grateful to all of you for your contributions and the passion they reveal.

We can't forget the purpose of this book is to engage the next generation of advertising professionals, so we are especially grateful to our talented students who have contributed their work for this book.

We are very appreciative of the entire SAGE team who have helped guide this book to completion, especially Lily Norton. We'd also like to thank copy editor Melinda Masson, who not only did a fantastic job correcting our many technical errors, but also added insight that improved the content. Also, thank you to Scott Van Atta for designing the new infographics for this edition. It continues to be a pleasure to work with such a helpful and personable group of professionals.

We're especially grateful to the academic and industry reviewers who provided kind words for testimonials: Thomas Clark, University of Houston; Alison Consol, Wake Technical Community College; Matthew Haught, University of Memphis; Robin Landa, Kean University; Candice Lanius, University of Alabama–Huntsville; Mike Mooney, Roberts Wesleyan College; Melissa Pirozzi, Horry Georgetown Technical College; Dorothy Pisarski, Drake University; Jeffrey Ranta, Coastal Carolina University; Edward Roberts Jr., Manhattan College; Debra Sea, Bemidji State University; Ruoze Wang, University of Memphis.

We also gratefully acknowledge the educators who shared their students' work with us, including Professors Mark Allen (Southern Methodist University), Mark Bartley (Howard University), Adriane Grumbein (University of Kentucky), and Monna Morton (University of the Arts). Finally, we thank the many students from all over the world who produced inspiring work, which we accessed from publicly available sources and gave credit where we could. We are grateful to each and every one of you. You've made this a better book.

We'd also like to acknowledge the support of our coworkers, both on the academic and on the professional side, who allowed our passion for this book to encroach on our real jobs.

Finally, we thank our loved ones, who tolerated our late nights and weekends with us sitting with our laptops instead of with them.

## One Last Thought Before You Get Started

You'll note that some of the examples relate to the COVID-19 pandemic, which was raging during the writing of this edition, although by the summer of 2021 there was hope of returning

to some level of normality. By referencing that terrible period, we make the point that advertising should be more than just selling things. It can provide lifesaving information, urge consumers to help their neighbors, honor the essential workers who keep our society intact, and frankly change our perspective on the world, hopefully making it a better place.

None of us can afford to live in a bubble. So, pop yours now. Start taking classes on world religions, ethnography, anthropology, social psychology, and racial and inclusive identity. Explore history—the good, the bad, and the ugly. Understand how economic and governmental systems really work. And how they could work better. Along the way, why not learn another language? Don't focus on your favorite news feed and shut out other viewpoints. Admit there are many sides to a story, even when they contradict your core beliefs. Build a cultural knowledge base that gives you an advantage. Be passionate about what you believe. But don't give in to hate and blind rage that pushes others away. As Ruth Bader Ginsburg famously said, "Fight for the things you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."<sup>1</sup> Isn't that the essence of effective advertising?

One final thought: as we have said in every edition, **never stop learning**.

—Tom, Jean, Dan, and Joanna

- 
1. Alanna Vagianos, "Ruth Bader Ginsburg Tells Young Women: 'Fight for the Things You Care About,'" Harvard Radcliffe Institute, June 2, 2015, <https://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/news/in-news/ruth-bader-ginsburg-tells-young-women-fight-things-you-care-about> (accessed October 10, 2020).

## CREATIVITY

### Concept Still Rules

**W**hat makes an advertisement great? It's not the latest virtual reality innovation or slickest digital production techniques. It's certainly not the hottest celebrity endorser. Or

how many Instagram followers you have. It's none of that. The answer has been the same since the first cave painting. Great ads begin with a great concept. **The Big Idea. The One Thing.**

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Identify the skills needed to succeed as a creative professional.
- 1.2 Describe the job functions of the creative team and learn strategies for controlling the creative process.
- 1.3 Classify the career paths and various job descriptions for creatives as well as the business, science, and ethics of advertising.
- 1.4 Diagnose the connection between creativity and consumer behavior.

This book is based on developing strategies. Discovering insights. Recognizing patterns. Understanding and respecting consumers. Creating a compelling message. Cutting through the crap. Sure, we'll get into the craft of writing and designing. But everything starts with the concept. That's the core of creativity.

We can't teach you how to be creative. No one can. But you may be surprised how creative you are. You may not have been a great English student. But you may find you're an excellent copywriter. You may not be a renowned artist. But you may discover you have a talent for logo design or ad layouts. You may not know much about ad copy. But you may have a knack for building communities online through social media. You may never have to write a broadcast TV commercial. But you may be able to create innovative online videos. You may invent something we have yet to think of. Regardless of your talents and interests, advertising is an industry that keeps reinventing itself, and you will be part of that process. As digital natives, you've never experienced a world without the internet, social media, or mobile devices. So, you may not appreciate the quantum leap from so-called traditional media to digital in terms of advertising efficiency. In a study by Seriously Simple Marketing, the cost to reach an audience of 2,000 was as high as \$900 for direct mail but only \$50 for search and \$75 for social media.<sup>1</sup> Even though digital wins the efficiency battle hands down, developing a complete integrated campaign requires knowledge of all the marketing communication tools at your disposal, even some that are still being invented.

### Skills to Succeed as a Creative Professional

Studies suggest we're exposed to at least 5,000 marketing messages a day. We strain all that through a fine filter of self-interest (helped along by digital content providers whose algorithms

provide the filter). Then we respond to a tiny fraction of what's left. That's if we haven't found a way to avoid advertising altogether (we haven't).

So as marketing professionals, your first task is not to fine-tune the message. Your primary focus is finding information your target audience wants to receive. That starts with the concept, shaped by rock-solid strategy. This book will guide you through that process. If you're lucky, you'll take classes taught by working professionals—seasoned creatives, strategists, and account folks who reveal the inside workings of our chaotic sink-or-swim industry. After a lot of trial and error, you'll discover something about creative strategy and tactics—and hopefully a lot about yourself.

You'll need to consider the following skills as you develop those concepts:

- Creating strategy built on fact-based, emotionally driven research
- Aligning strategy with creative concepting
- The correct format for writing copy for traditional and new media
- The basic rules of copywriting and when to break them
- How to put more sell into your copy
- Design basics that apply to all media
- Sensitivity to the wide range of issues that impact society (people unlike you)
- An enduring respect from your consumers
- Awareness of ethical and legal issues
- How to keep continuity throughout a campaign
- Knowing how to use emerging technology as a tool, not as an idea
- Understanding what endures in the face of a rapidly changing marketing environment
- The importance of presenting your work
- Separating the jargon and BS from the basic message you want to deliver

## The Creative Team

Traditionally, a creative team has comprised a copywriter and an art director, with participation by web developers, broadcast producers, and the social media team. This team usually answers to a coach—the creative director.

They must understand who uses the product, how it compares with the competition, what's important to the consumer, and a million other facts. No one does it all. Sometimes art directors write the best headlines. Or writers come up with a killer visual. Sometimes the inspiration comes from a comment on Instagram or a tweet. However, the creative leaders need to be able to sift that nugget of an idea from all the white noise that surrounds it. A single picture may tell a story. A headline may paint a mental picture. Art and copy should work together to create a total greater than the sum of its parts. Examples of some ads that creatively synergize copy and visuals include the following.

As shown in photo 1.1, Band-Aid found a respectful sweet spot as it sought to demonstrate an understanding of the range of diversity—or skin colors—in the United States.

The visual metaphor in photo 1.2 is from Australia and shows that McDonald's serves Wi-Fi along with greasy fries and fatty burgers. Internet access makes it easier to find a doctor in case of a heart attack.

Imagine a world without Oreo cookies. That's why the Global Oreo Vault (photo 1.3), a real asteroid-proof facility, was built in Svalbard, Norway, to protect the Oreo recipe. With all the real



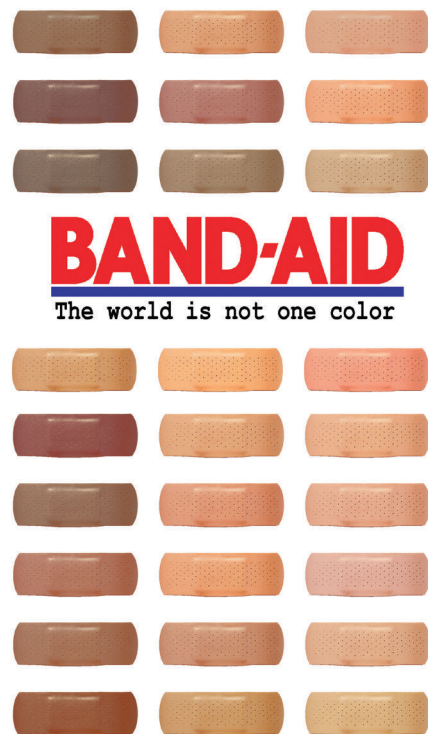


Photo 1.1 Band-Aid found a respectful sweet spot as it sought to demonstrate an understanding of the range of diversity.  
© Johnson & Johnson

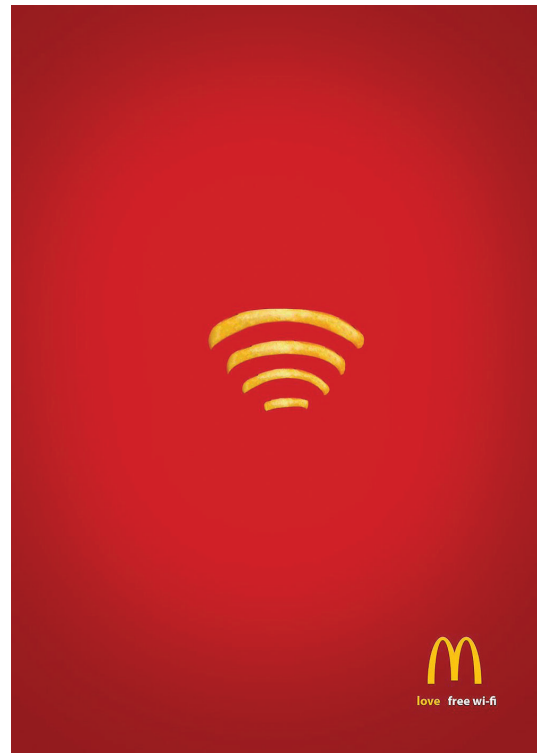


Photo 1.2 This visual metaphor from Australia shows that McDonalds serves wi-fi.  
© McDonald's

and imagined horrors during the pandemic, this tongue-in-cheek stunt brought some welcome comic relief and earned *Adweek's* Marketing Moment of the Year award for 2020.

The magic happens when the combination of art and copy creates something entirely new. Steve Jobs, the founder and former CEO of Apple, summed it up nicely: “Our job is reading things that are not yet on the page.”<sup>2</sup>



Photo 1.3 Imagine a world without Oreos. That's why the Global Oreo Vault, a real asteroid-proof facility was built in Svalbard, Norway, to protect the Oreo recipe. With all the real and imagined horrors during the pandemic, this tongue-in-cheek stunt earned *AdWeek's* Marketing Moment of the Year award for 2020.  
© Mondelez International

## What Else Does a Creative Person Do?

Some of the responsibilities besides writing copy include the following:

- **Research**—Researching primary and secondary, and always insight driven
- **Strategy**—Taking the research and working with others on the team, crafting a defined strategic direction that will captivate the target and build return on investment (ROI)
- **Ideation**—Taking the strategy and creating concepts that then become the foundation for your writing
- **Client contact**—Getting the facts direct from the source rather than filtered through an account executive, presenting those ideas, and defending the work
- **Online content**—Writing more digital content than traditional ad copy (more than likely), including websites, banners, articles, videos, blogs, social media posts, and much more
- **Broadcast producer**—Finding the right director, talent, music, and postproduction house to make your vision come to life (that means stepping beyond the usual options)
- **New business**—Gathering data, organizing the creative, working on the pitch, and presenting the work
- **Public relations (PR)**—Writing the news releases, planning promotional events, and even contacting editors
- **Creative management**—Much has been written about whether copywriters or art directors make the best creative directors. The answer is yes.

## WHO'S WHO

**Leo Burnett**—Leo Burnett established a new creative style of advertising, along with many memorable characters that are still working today, including Tony the Tiger, the Jolly Green Giant, the Keebler Elves, the Marlboro Man, and the Pillsbury Doughboy. Burnett believed that creativity made an advertisement effective but, at the same time, that creativity required believability. (With the possible exception of talking cartoon characters, animated bread dough, and cowboys promoting lung cancer.)

## Tips for Controlling the Creative Process

**Step 1: Get the facts.** If you have a research department or account planners, take advantage of their knowledge. But don't settle for someone else's opinion. Talk to people who use the product as well as those who don't or won't even consider it. In short, know as much as you can about the product, the competition, the market, and the people who buy it. Try to make the product part of your life. But remember—don't fall victim to "me-search." Just because you feel a certain way toward a product or service doesn't mean everyone does.

**Step 2: Ideation.** If you've done your homework, you should know the wants and needs of the target audience and how your product meets those needs. From that base, you can direct the free flow of creative ideas. Concentrate on finding that killer creative idea rather than floundering in a sea of questions.

**Step 3: Pick up a pencil before you reach for the mouse.** This is critical, because it's all about the creative concept—and ideating with thumbnails and lists is faster, easier, and better off-screen. What's the main visual? How should the elements be arranged?

**Step 4: Find the reference or visuals.** Can you communicate your vision to the rest of your team? The finished piece may not look like your original vision, but at least you have a point of reference. Browse the web, stock photo books, and awards annuals. The visual selection is a starting point, not the end game.

**Step 5: Work with the rest of the team.** For most creatives, the happiest and most productive years of their careers are spent collaborating with others. While one person may want to drive the entire process, it's best not to run over your teammates. They may come up with some ideas that will make you look like a genius.



Comparison of Traditional, Earned, and Social Media

**Step 6: Step outside the agency box.** Most agencies today have protocols for diversity and inclusion in briefing. Those that don't, should. Regardless, always solicit feedback from people who are not like you or experts in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Expand your understanding of the world, while saving your clients a lot of headaches. It's important to stay humble—seek feedback on how your work will be received in a broader social context.

**Step 7: Pre-sell the suits.** Chances are you will need others who interface with the client to buy your ideas. Maintaining a good relationship with the account service team not only protects your job; it also gives you allies when you pitch your idea.

**Step 8: Sell the client.** Be prepared to defend your work. Many times, your brilliant reasoning fails when the clients think with their wallets. Over time, you'll know how far you can push a client. Most clients don't mind being challenged creatively if there are sound reasons for taking chances. Then again, a lot of them are clueless (or, more politely stated, they don't understand creative), and you'll just have to produce a piece of garbage. Just smile, cash your check, and hope for a better outcome next time.

Clients will always find something to pick at, but three things you *never* want to hear are:

- “That looks just like the competitor. Didn't you know what the other guys are doing?”
- “I was looking for something a lot more creative. Take some risks.”
- “You obviously don't understand our product or our market.”

You won't hear those things if you take care of Steps 1 to 8.

**Step 9: Get it right.** Okay, you've sold the client. Now what? Your responsibilities don't end there. Can you make it even better? If others are involved with finishing your work, will they do justice to your vision? Remember this quote from the great Leo Burnett: “Nothing takes the guts out of a great idea like bad execution.”

**Step 10: Maintain continuity.** Almost everyone can come up with a great idea. Once. The hard part is extending that great idea in other media and repeating it in a fresh way. Over time, elements of a campaign tend to drift away from the original idea. Clients usually get tired of a look before the consumer. Someone on the creative team must monitor the elements of a campaign to make sure they are true to the original idea.

**Step 11: Discover what worked and why.** If the elements in a campaign achieve their objectives, great! If they win awards, but the client loses market share, look out. Keep monitoring the efficacy of the campaign. Check the analytics. If you never stop learning, you'll never miss an opportunity to make the next one even better.

## WHO'S WHO

**Gina Grillo**—The Advertising Club of New York is one of the oldest and most prestigious organizations in the industry. Gina Grillo is the president and CEO of Ad Club, which has over 5,000 members. Club members can access a network of thought leaders who fuel creativity and work toward greater diversity and inclusion, while offering professional development training. Grillo has been with the Ad Club for more than 20 years and transformed it into the voice of modern advertising. Grillo has also shaped the conversation around diversity of thought, start-up innovation, and support of young professionals. The Ad Club, now more than 120 years old, remains a trusted source for thought leadership, while giving back to the community and fostering young and diverse talent.<sup>3</sup>

## Career Paths

### Where Do I Go From Here?

Some entry-level creatives add “senior” to their title after three or four years. But when you’re a senior before you reach 30, where do you go? We are using the traditional job titles here rather than the fanciful descriptions such as “Storyteller,” “Chief Fun and Frivolity Officer,” “Creative Conduit,” “VP of Hustle and Heart,” and our favorite, “Resilience Harvester,” whatever that means.

**Copywriter/art director for life:** Many people are happy to hone their creative talents throughout their careers. It’s rewarding if you continue to improve and never stop growing. No matter how cute your title is, you’ll still be a writer or art director.

**Account service:** Do you like fielding client calls at 11 p.m.? Or on the weekends? Or maybe you like getting up extra early to polish a strategy doc or redo a budget for the umpteenth time. And maybe you’re the type that finds all this rewarding—especially in the face of being the one to pull a team together, activate creative, or guide projects and campaigns to completion. If any of this sounds like a “yes,” you could become an account exec.

**Account planner:** A natural for many writers who like research and enjoy being the conduit between the account manager, the creative team, and the consumer. It involves thorough knowledge of research, marketing, creative, and media, as well as a lot of intuition. Most successful advertising copywriters already possess those skills.

**Promotion director:** Writers and art directors are idea people. So, it makes sense to use that creativity to develop sales promotions, unique events, sponsorships, specialty marketing programs, displays, and all the other marketing communication tools not included in “traditional advertising.” This is a rapidly growing area with a lot of potential for creative people.

**PR writer:** Although most PR people won’t admit it, it’s easier to write a news release than an ad. Most advertising writers won’t admit that editorial writing is usually more persuasive than advertising. PR writing involves much more than news releases, though. You need to be an expert in social media, understanding what works and what doesn’t. You may produce videos or schedule events, press conferences, and any number of creative PR efforts.

**Internal advertising or PR department:** So far, we’ve outlined agency jobs. But other companies need talented creative people. You may write and manage social media for a company or organization. Or handle PR, trade shows, or media relations. In larger companies, you may handle promotional activities not covered by your ad agency. You may even write speeches for your CEO to make that person appear as someone other than an overcompensated egotist.

**Web or interactive expert:** Any writer or designer today should be a digital native. Or at least be willing to learn very quickly. You don't have to be a whiz at writing code, but having technical expertise is a huge plus. As with any phase of advertising, creativity—not technology—is the most precious commodity.

**Social media specialist:** Beyond being a daily consumer of social media, a creative content provider must know when and how to use it to persuade others. This job usually involves daily monitoring, posting, and content development. It can also mean developing social media marketing strategy. Just remember that any personal post can be connected to your employer or client. So, a profanity-laden tirade against a politician, a racist joke, or trolling your ex may come back to bite you in the butt if the wrong person reads it.

**Content provider:** Content includes native advertising, feature articles, white papers, online newsletters, and a lot more. You can provide content as part of an agency, in house, or as a freelancer. You need to find that sweet spot where the wants of the target audience intersect with the brand message.

**Freelance writer or designer:** Some people like the flexible schedule and variety of clients. Others like the prolonged periods of inactivity and thrive on rejection. Success requires tremendous discipline and endless self-promotion. In many cases, freelancers are last-minute hires when full-time creatives are not available, so deadlines are usually tight.

**Video and broadcast producer or director:** Maybe you have the knack for writing scripts, selecting talent, editing, and doing other elements of audio and video production. Creative talent and a logical mind are the keys. Technological expertise can be learned on the job. Some of the most effective videos are created on smartphones.

**Creative strategist:** Some agencies specialize in strategic thinking—the view from 30,000 feet. Once the strategy is sold, the strategic agency collects the money before anything is created. The people who make things—copywriters, designers, art directors, web developers, and the rest—get paid when the real work is completed.

**Consultant:** Some companies (and agencies) hire outside talent to provide a fresh point of view. Other times, consultants set the strategy that gives the creatives their marching orders. Too often *consultant* is another word for unemployed. Sometimes they are no more than repackaged freelancers or relatives of the marketing manager.

## What's In It for Me?

Let's be honest. If you want a creative career, you're likely interested in three things: fame, fortune, and fun. Not necessarily in that order.

**Fame:** Everyone wants recognition. Especially entry-level creatives. Advertising is unsigned. So, there are only two ways to get recognized—winning awards and having people say, “You’re *really* the person who did that?” Awards may prop up your fragile self-esteem. But they can also be the key to building your career. If your stuff is good, be sure to enter your local ad club’s competition. If you win, you will get noticed, and it could help you land that dream job. Continue entering and winning to build that reputation. Or if you keep losing, try to discover what the winners are doing right. Being in the club is more important than the work you create.

**Fortune:** Experienced creatives can earn as much as or more than other people in our business, although the pay for most entry-level positions sucks. It all depends on your talent, the economy, who you know, and a lot of luck. Senior creative directors at big shops can earn more money than most doctors—without all those tedious years of medical school, internships, and



residency. You just need to know how to do something important, like selling cheeseburgers or auto insurance, instead of saving lives. But, again, like the clubby awards shows, creative departments tend to lack diversity. Just be aware that for some people the road to fortune may be harder. We'll talk more about that in future chapters.

**Fun:** You can be famous and well compensated and still be unhappy in any business. You can still get a kick out of solving problems creatively, even if you're not well known or a multimillionaire. It's still a treat to work with other creatives; interact with musicians, actors, and directors; land accounts; win awards; travel to exotic locations; and, most of all, be treated as a partner instead of a vendor. When the work becomes too boring, the clients become intolerable, and the daily grind of cranking out mediocre work starts wearing thin, it's time to move on. Many promising creatives are burned out by the time they turn 45. If you're sick of the crazy agency life, you can go freelance or launch your own gig (minus the benefits and the headaches). Many creatives redirect their creative energy to a worthy non-profit. These organizations need great ideas too, and they're grateful for the help.

## WHO'S WHO

**Mary Wells Lawrence**—While CEO, chair, and president of the legendary Wells Rich Greene agency, Mary Wells Lawrence developed innovative campaigns for Braniff, Alka-Seltzer, Benson & Hedges, and American Motors that brought a fresh look to established brands. At age 40, Lawrence became the youngest person ever inducted into the Copywriting Hall of Fame. That success is even more extraordinary given the systemic sexism that permeated the business environment of that era.

## Business, Science, and Doing the Right Thing

The rules that guide successful advertising continue to evolve. But one rule will always be true: Advertising is a business, albeit populated by crazy people. Too often, we feel forced to persuade people to buy something they don't need, with money they don't have, to impress people they don't like. You'll need a killer portfolio to get a decent job. When you land that job, you'll probably be forced to do a lot of junk that looks terrible, and you may not want it in your portfolio. So, hold your nose and smile. Throughout your career, you're going to do a lot more than award-winning stuff. When you do something that looks great, sells something, and maybe wins an award or two, everyone's happy. Until the next project.

Psychologists have spent years studying creativity. Some have used a lot of pretentious right-brain/left-brain gibberish to describe how we have moved from the Information Age into a new Conceptual Age. They say our new Conceptual Age is based on changing demographics as much as the changing needs in the marketplace. Creative, empathic ideas do not come from a homogeneous group of individuals. They come from a highly varied mix of individuals—a mix of people bringing diverse backgrounds and experiences to the creative process. Diversity of thought and experience is a game changer. It's the driver of optimal flow. No matter what you call this “age,” let's just say diversity feeds creativity.

Today too many ad agencies lack a diverse professional workforce. Especially in their creative departments. ADCOLOR, founded in 2007, is an industry organization dedicated to championing diversity and inclusion in the creative industries. It has since expanded its focus beyond “color.” Leo Burnett was one of the first agencies that acknowledged the lack of diversity and in 2014 helped launch the No2Six6 movement. The acronym calls out data that demonstrate that as of 2014 it would take 66 years, at the current rate of hiring, to reach equality in hiring of diverse talent. That's a long time.



Photo 1.4 Nike boldly featured Colin Kaepernick in this famous 2018 ad.  
© Nike



Photo 1.5 In this GLAAD-sponsored commercial, a LGBTQIA+ child tells a conservative parent how Republican policies hurt both of them.  
© GLAAD



Photo 1.6 A Chinese civil rights group in Canada started a campaign to “Stop the Spread of Racism” in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.  
© Chinese Canadian National Council for Social Justice

In 2018, a group of 140 women ad executives signed on to launch TIME’S UP Advertising to speak to the inequities, and harassment, women in advertising often face. Then, in 2020, 600 & Rising launched, dedicated to advocating for Black employees of U.S. advertising agencies. Today it has over 1,100 members. Agencies have begun to step up with most of the larger agencies hiring diversity and inclusion leaders. However, many of the small to midsize agencies are still playing catch-up, in an environment where it is not uncommon for clients to keep “diversity scorecards” during agency reviews. Suffice to say the advertising industry is a difficult space to work in if you are not white, male, cisgender, and able bodied. We will have a lot more to say about this in the coming chapters.

Black Lives Matter is our business too. And this means more than adding more Black talent to the creative ranks. It also requires a sea change in the way white people view the advertising industry and the consumer landscape. We hope that there will be some serious soul-searching followed by verifiable positive action across all industries, including advertising. As you’ll see in subsequent chapters, diversity of thought and experience is at the heart of advertising’s future.



As examples, we have included advertisements that address these and other critical issues in our society. See the photos that follow.

When most consumer brands stood silent in the face of systemic racism and police brutality, Nike boldly featured Colin Kaepernick in the famous 2018 ad shown in photo 1.4. Nike's stock surged in the days after the campaign debuted, increasing the company's value by more than \$6 billion two weeks later,<sup>4</sup> proving that you can do well by doing good.

In the GLAAD commercial we see in photo 1.5, a LGBTQIA+ child tells a conservative parent how Republican policies hurt both. This spot ran on conservative-leaning networks with the faint hope that just a few fair-minded viewers might think for themselves.

Photo 1.6 shows a Chinese civil rights group in Canada that started a campaign to "Stop the Spread of Racism" in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Street teams handed out bottles of hand sanitizer with pointed messages about anti-Chinese xenophobia.

Photo 1.7 represents consumers today who want to know what a brand stands for, and the brand with the most friends wins. For several years, cosmetic giant L'Oréal Paris has showcased "Women of Worth" who have volunteered to serve their communities. The site encourages donations to each woman's selected charity. Programs like this help build brand loyalty, recognize women in our society, and support worthy causes.

In photo 1.8, Canada's *Medical Marketing + Media (MM+M)* developed a series of ads tying the murder epidemic in the United States to a gun-loving culture. There's an opportunity to support worthy causes even in business-to-business publications.

The exceptional student ads in photo 1.9 were developed as part of a campaign to call into question how women are portrayed every day in advertising.

Students wanted to raise awareness of addiction to pornography. Photo 1.10 is a notable example of a well-executed integrated campaign from advertising's next rising stars. What kind of impact will your work have?

## Creativity and Consumer Behavior

Decades ago, advertising giant Leo Burnett famously said, "If you can't turn yourself into your customer, you probably shouldn't be in the advertising business at all."<sup>6</sup> It's still true today. The study of consumer behavior involves psychology, sociology, and marketing and the ability to take data and create insight. What do they buy? Where? When? How often? Why? With the latter, why, being the most important question anyone doing strategy needs to ask—over and over and over. Marketers attempt to dissect buyers' decision-making process, both for individuals and for groups. Researchers study demographics, psychographics, and lifestyles to understand what people want and how they want to get it. Account planners turn all of that into actionable insights. Clients spend billions to test new products and the consumer's willingness to buy. Billions more are spent developing programmatic advertising based on sophisticated algorithms that let marketers invade every corner of online activity. Yet most new product introductions and line extensions fail. In the end, the marketplace decides what sells, not the advertiser.

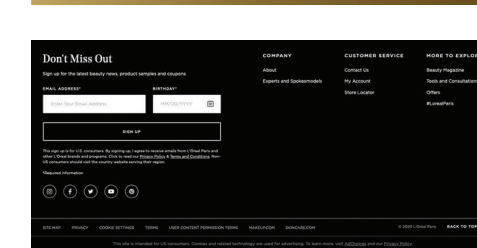
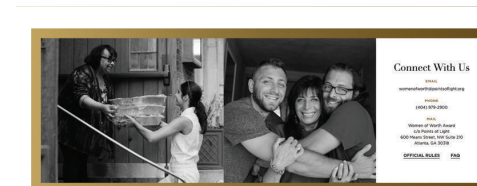


Photo 1.7 Consumers today want to know what a brand stands for and the brand with the most friends wins.  
© L'Oréal Group



Sometimes the most successful marketing concepts spring from some crazy idea no research could predict. Google, Uber, Amazon, and Snapchat to name a few. Steve Jobs relied on intuition instead of focus groups to develop products that consumers didn't even know they wanted. In the process, Jobs and others at Apple created one of the most valuable technology companies in the world. We'll explore some of the ways you can discover consumers' wants and needs. But unless you're the next Steve Jobs, you may need some research to guide you. Plus, a lot of luck.

If you remember nothing else from this chapter, remember this:

People do not buy things.  
They buy satisfaction of their wants and needs.

You may have studied Abraham Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs. This model is usually depicted as a pyramid, ranging from the most basic needs to the most complex and sophisticated. This is how we sum up wants and needs from a marketing communication standpoint:

- Comfort (convenience, avoid pain and discomfort)
- Security (physical, financial)
- Stimulation (aesthetic, physical)
- Affiliation (esteem, respect)
- Fulfillment (self-satisfaction, status)

You need to figure out where your product or service fits in that hierarchy. Where does it intersect with the consumers' wants and needs? That's the sweet spot. Once you discover that, you must convince consumers your product or service will satisfy their wants and needs. One of the best explanations can be found in this simple sentence: **Don't tell me about your grass seed; talk to me about my lawn.** People aren't looking for seed. They need a play area for their kids. They want a calm green space for relaxing or a yard the neighbors will envy. Security. Comfort. Fulfillment. Wants and needs. A \$50 Timex will tell the time just as well as a \$5,000 Rolex. What wants and needs are satisfied by spending 1,000% more? It's not about being on time.



Photo 1.8 Canada's *Medical Marketing and Media Magazine* (MM&M) developed a series of ads tying the murder epidemic in the U.S. to a gun loving culture.  
© Haymarket Media Inc.

## WHO'S WHO

**Sarah Hofstetter**—Now president of Profitero, Sarah Hofstetter has driven tremendous growth in multiple disruptive environments over the past 20+ years. Before joining Profitero, Hofstetter spent 13 years at award-winning advertising agency 360i, most recently as Chair and CEO, growing the agency from \$5 million to \$180 million by continuously pivoting company offerings to be aligned with changes in consumer behavior. Hofstetter started the company's social media capability before Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram existed.<sup>7</sup>

## Creativity and the Real World

You'll discover that most of the creative people in our business skew toward the left. Even though they serve their capitalist masters, successful creatives have interests outside of work. They're curious. They search for truth. They get more than one opinion. In short, they're smart. And most of them want to challenge the status quo. Years ago, Apple created a campaign claiming "the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones that do."<sup>9</sup> Having said that, we still have a way to go to achieve meaningful diversity, equity, and inclusion inside creative departments. We also have a long road ahead to weed out racist, sexist, ageist, and homophobic concepts, verbiage, and images in marketing communications. What seems funny to a young white man may be totally offensive to older persons, people of color, and women. Perhaps the biggest hurdle is converting personal progressive sentiments into meaningful action, which requires more than just being sensitive about advertising messages. If you decide advertising is your career path, we hope you're one of the crazy ones who will change the world.

Photo 1.9 These exceptional student ads call into question how women are portrayed every day in advertising.  
Courtesy of Emily Ebert



Photo 1.10 Students wanted raise awareness of addiction to pornography.  
Courtesy of Meriel Upton

# PRO TIPS

## BUILT FOR THE REST OF US



© Kia Motor Company

**D**espite years of being the butt of late-night jokes, Kia earned high marks in design, quality, and safety that made it one of the fastest-growing car companies in America. But because of its reputation for making “value” cars, Kia struggled with poor brand perception.

With its new flagship premium SUV, the Telluride, Kia had its work cut out as it sought to launch one of its most expensive models in a fierce segment dominated by established brands.

### VALUES THAT UNITE

Conventionally, premium is about “badge value”—a marker of status or success. But for challenger brand Kia and its buyers alike, premium means something different.

Premium is about the investment of challenging work into something worthwhile. Consumer focus group research uncovered that those who were attracted to the Telluride had a lot in common with the Kia brand: they share a grit-to-great philosophy on life. What’s more, the Telluride is manufactured in West Point, GA, America’s backyard, with a dedicated focus on quality reflecting challenging work and pride. There was a significant opportunity to shift perceptions by sharing an unstoppable challenger spirit.

Rooting for the underdog is quintessentially American; it’s what unites us. The social and cultural climate at the time made this classic truth even more relevant. While culture celebrated the rich and famous, most of us were concerned with how to make a living. Consumer culture celebrated the baller lifestyle, but what about the rest of us?

With the Telluride, Kia set out to introduce Americans to a vehicle built not for the famous but for the great unknowns. People like the rest of us.

### A CAMPAIGN THAT PUT THE UNKNOWN ON CENTER STAGE

Kia set out to celebrate the unsung people who reflect Kia’s challenger spirit on the Super Bowl stage. So, Kia ditched the celebrities and focused on the hardworking people at their West Point plant to tell the Telluride’s story. Which, in turn, gave rise to stories that the rest of us could connect to in meaningful ways.

To drive anticipation, Kia teased its “Great Unknowns” campaigns on social and out-of-home and announced that the money that would have been paid to celebrities would be redirected to a scholarship program to help other Great Unknowns—hardworking students with college aspirations who, like Kia, may have been overlooked.

Then on Super Bowl Sunday, Kia’s 90-second TV spot placed the spotlight on the hardworking people of West Point and showed how their unstoppable spirit goes into the making of every Telluride. The spot ended with a tagline that only Kia could say: “Give It Everything.”

### GIVE IT EVERYTHING. AND THEN SOME.

Kia’s demanding work paid off, and the campaign successfully delivered on all key metrics. Following its Super Bowl launch, positive opinion of Kia jumped 15% while overall purchase consideration of Kia reached a five-year high, increasing by 13% the following quarter. These gains were driven primarily through a shift in brand perceptions with key attributes such as “adventurous,” “exciting,” and “innovative” increasing by 29%, 32%, and 12%, respectively.

The Telluride finished the year at 175% over initial sales objective, with demand that outpaced supply and waitlists around the country. To date, 32 students enrolled in U.S. universities and colleges are now receiving scholarship funds from Kia.

And perhaps most importantly, Kia beautifully showed that, for brands, authenticity, purpose, and action matter.<sup>5</sup>

*Jasmine Spraglin, Senior Creatist, David&Goliath*

# RISEING STAR

## RESILIENCE IS A SPORT



Courtesy of Derek Smith

**Y**ou would've thought I'd call it quits. After a fractured hip, a broken leg, a sprained PCL, two torn ACLs, and a broken heart—packing up and going back to Alabama would've been easy.

Instead, I chose to turn the obstacles into fuel that would push me to go even further. Sports took me far, but life after sports genuinely required going the distance.

I'm a former D1 athlete who took a different route. Although I was ranked among the top 50 high school running backs in Alabama, the first person from my high school to receive a full ride to play collegiate sports, and a captain on my college football team, I knew it could all be taken away on any given play. This turbulent interference of being at a high point when disaster hit not only built character—it showed me the importance of pulling others up who might be facing similar situations. I hope my story is an energy source and an inkwell to persevere toward your ambitions.

Despite the injuries, nothing could take me out of the game of demanding work and determination. Lately, I've played my hand at art direction, finding the game is much the same: Colors bleed, pencils break, and even pages tear.

I got my start at Publicis Seattle. There, I spent the past several years entrenched in all things T-Mobile. You could say the current quarter of my career is serendipity, as I've been tasked with bringing the artistry of Buffalo Wild Wings' raucous commitment to die-hard sports fans to a whole new atmosphere. I've also been helping DoorDash keep restaurants open.

COVID-19 ravaged the U.S. restaurant industry, as patrons stayed home, and many dining rooms were forced to close. According to the National Restaurant Association, the situation has threatened the livelihoods of 15.6 million hardworking people. Within days of lockdown, I helped launch the "Open for Delivery" national campaign that vaulted DoorDash from third in its category to first (according to YouGov BrandIndex). U.S. restaurants on DoorDash were found six times as likely to survive the pandemic versus those not using the app. If that's not a worthwhile notable change, I don't know what is.

With a name change inspired by boneless wings, my creative team and I helped Buffalo Wild Wings hit a new level of WTF?! Boneless Thugs-N-Harmony merch, including 24-carat-gold-dipped boneless wing necklaces, sold out in 36 hours. Garnering 450+ million earned impressions in the likes of *Rolling Stone*, *Vice*, *E! News*, *ESPN*, and more—this humble product launch blew up the wing debate while chomping away at previous product dunks.

When it comes to art direction, I've been part of award-winning campaigns while never straying from my roots. My story is important, because there are kids out there facing some of the same things I had to go through. We all need reassurances sometimes. Remember, you can accomplish whatever you put your mind to. When it's all said and done, the grind never stops—nor can we.<sup>8</sup>

*Derek Smith, Senior Art Director, The Martin Agency*

# WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

## STRATEGY VERSUS IDEAS

Advertising campaigns can be divided into two groups: (a) strategy driven and (b) idea driven.

It's not uncommon for a **client**, a brand or marketing manager, to approach an agency's account manager, the liaison between the agency and the brand, and express an interest in having the agency do some work. Or they might put out an RFP (request for proposal) and have several agencies pitch them.

Once the agency has the account, the **account manager** will share the client information with the **account planner** (aka strategist), who'll do extensive research; identify consumer behavior, target audience, product benefit, and so on; and develop a strategy for the campaign. That strategy will then be passed on to the **creative team** (art director/copywriter), which will develop ideas for the campaign and work with the production team to produce the campaign.

It's not always a linear process but rather a back-and-forth discussion between the various team members. However, the simplified version looks something like this, with client approvals along the way:

Client > Account Manager > Account Planner > Creatives > Production

I call this type of process *strategy driven* because it is the strategy written by the account planner (with a clear target audience, product benefit, and goal in mind) that drives ideas for the campaign.

Other agencies start their process with creativity rather than strategy. Some are called Creative Boutiques, many founded by people with a creative background. They

believe that the best creative ideas come from a creative process and are unencumbered by research that can limit (or kill) great ideas. They like to explore as many possible ideas before settling on a strategy that they see as creatively driven.

I call this type of process *idea driven* because it is the idea developed by the creative team that drives the campaign's strategy.

Now, consider which approach will work best in various situations.

- You are the brand manager of a new type of soft drink. You have not yet identified a clear target audience, benefit, and so on, so you'd like to hire an ad agency. Keep in mind that the soft-drink category has little product differentiation and, thus, it's hard to develop a strategy that's based on product benefit. Since you don't have a strategy, would you rather hire a strategically driven agency to help you figure out the strategy or an idea-driven type of agency?
- You recently graduated, and you're excited to start a career as a creative (an art director or a copywriter). You got two job offers (lucky you!). One is from a strategically driven agency, where your ideas are most likely based on a solid strategy. The other is from an idea-driven boutique agency, where you'll get a lot more creative freedom and be less limited by a strategy. Which one would you pick, and why?

Assaf Avni, Professor of Advertising Creativity, California State University, Fullerton



# EXERCISES

## 1. CREATING THE NEXT BIG IDEA

*Contributed by Mark Addona, Assistant Professor, Ithaca College*

Have the class generate a list of brands that they use or interact with often. Then create in-class groups or break-out rooms of 3–5 students and have the groups pick a brand from the list the class generated.

Take 15 minutes to brainstorm lofty ideas for the brand. Generate three ideas that can each fit on a sticky note. The goal is one sentence to convey the whole idea.

Groups return and pitch their ideas to the class.

## 2. GET OUT OF YOUR HEAD

It's easy to get caught up in all the advertising jargon and buzzwords when you're studying this field. But ultimately, it's a communications job. You're talking to other people. Human beings. Not only is it vital to empathize, but it's also equally as important to get out of your own head and experiment with other voices and perspectives. Here are a couple of writing prompts that can help you do just that:

- You are an older high school football coach who is retiring after the season. Your team is in the state championship, down by a lot. Write a half-time speech that will spark a comeback.
- Your lifelong best friend is getting married. Write a toast for the rehearsal dinner.
- You're a first-time director who's just won a major award. Write an acceptance speech. Be mindful of the length, because the orchestra is queued up

and will play you off in less than 60 seconds. We can hear the string section already.

- Okay, for a bonus, take what you've written and try turning it into a script for a radio commercial for a brand, product, or service.
- Be prepared—you just might have to share this in class.

## 3. PERSONAL BRANDING TIMELINE

- Create a map moving across your life in 5-year increments. Begin with birth and end with your current age (which might be less than a 5-year gap). For each 5-year stage, generate a list of the brands you associate with that time of your life.
- After each brand, write a single sentence about what that brand meant to you at that time.
- Now extend this map out by 10-year increments: 30, 40, 50, 60, and 70. List brands you think will be a part of your life. Again, write a single sentence about why you believe each brand will be relevant to you at that time.
- Now discuss what factors are influencing your choices: familiarity, aspiration, current use, personal or family associations, trends, and so on.
- Next, see if there are any brands that were constant over an extended period. Discuss what makes those brands have traction over time. What inherited qualities and brand messages enable brand loyalty?

## Making Connections

1. Although it's not a technical skill, understanding the wants and needs of consumers is essential to creating effective advertising. Look at the ads featured in photos 1.1, 1.4, 1.6, and 1.7. Do you think the messages in the ads resonate with the customers? Why or why not?
2. You may find more fulfillment in developing creative for worthy causes rather than commercial clients. Study the messages in photos 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9. What other issues could be effectively addressed through advertising and promotion?
3. Understanding consumer behavior is a critical approach to developing a message that resonates with the intended audience. Review the ads in photos 1.2, 1.10, and 1.11. Can you explain how their message connects with the consumer?



Photo 1.11 This student's ad recognizes that people who love nature are also looking for sustainable products.  
Grace Peek, Southern Methodist University





# STRATEGY AND BRANDING

## Putting a Face on a Product

**C**ongratulations! Your agency has been invited to pitch the Gilmore Gizmo account. Your job is to develop a creative strategy and build an integrated marketing communications campaign that will knock the socks off Gilmore management. You really need this account. If you don't win, half of your agency will be laid off, including you. Right now, you

know nothing about the company, its products, its customers, its competition, or its market. How will you develop something that differentiates Gilmore from the competition? Something no one else has done before. And something that might even win some creative awards. By the way, you've got two weeks until your presentation. **Once again, congratulations!**

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Identify the various components of and their role in an integrated marketing campaign.
- 2.2 Define objectives, strategies, and tactics in a marketing campaign and plan how to prioritize them.
- 2.3 Discuss the role of research as an essential component of ideation.
- 2.4 Explain the difference between features and benefits of products.
- 2.5 Compose a brief and copy platform successfully.
- 2.6 Describe tone, resonance, and positioning.
- 2.7 Review the strategies of reaching various generational groups.
- 2.8 Compare the benefits and limitations of branding.

The scenario in the introduction happens every day somewhere. The good news is you're invited to the dance. But unless you're a close relative of the CEO or you have incriminating Snapchats of the ad manager, you'll have to earn the business with a lot of demanding work and a lot of luck. There are few things more validating than winning a new business pitch. But the euphoria quickly dissolves into the daily grind of trying to keep the business.

Most textbooks say you just can't start creating an ad from scratch. Of course you can. And you just might get lucky the first time. But can you repeat that success? That's why we need to discuss the foundations of marketing communications. First, let's review a few definitions.

## WHO'S WHO

**Keith Weed**—A graduate of the University of Liverpool, Keith Weed is Unilever's former chief marketing and communications officer. Under Weed's leadership, Unilever committed to sustainability and transparency. Weed's team delivered a digital experience that empowered consumers with better, faster, and more relevant content. Weed led two other efforts: transforming the digital ecosystem and stamping out stereotypes. To achieve the latter, Weed formed a partnership with UN Women to create brands with purpose. Weed fundamentally believed that sustainable, living brands meant faster growth—and was right.<sup>1</sup>

## Advertising, MarCom, IMC, or What?

You've probably learned that advertising is paid communication to promote a product, service, brand, or cause through the media. Is direct mail advertising? Well, if you consider mail a medium, yes. How about a brochure? Probably not. However, it can be mailed or inserted into a magazine as an ad. The internet? Yes and no. A website by itself is technically not advertising, although a banner ad on that site is, and most websites are branded or somehow monetized by brands. Social networks? They can be a platform for ads. But they are usually more effective without advertising. Public relations? No, because the advertiser is not paying the editor to publish an article. PR professionals talk about earned media—where the quality of their content and their relationship with editors earn mention of a product without a direct media payment. With earned media, you're asking permission to share information rather than hitting people over the head with a commercial. Then there's native advertising—when the ad message is blended with other content. Does it also become PR, product placement, branded content, sales promotion, or sponsorship? Or something else? Confused? Don't feel alone. Many marketing professionals can't make the distinction between advertising and other forms of promotion.

Over 50 years ago, David Ogilvy complained, "Our business is infested with idiots who try to impress by using pretentious jargon."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, not much has changed. *MarCom* is a commonly used term in our business, and everybody has an idea what it means, although they may use it to describe various aspects of marketing communications. To some people, MarCom covers every form of marketing communications. Others describe MarCom as any form of promotion that's not traditional advertising. "Traditional" advertising usually covers newspapers, magazines, television, radio, banner ads, and outdoor. Those media easily fit the textbook definition of advertising. And that's where most of the money still goes.

"Non-traditional" promotion is a little harder to define. It may include direct marketing, sales promotion, point of sale, content marketing, search engine optimization, mobile, social, experiential, and specialty advertising. And anything else you can stick a logo on. It's all marketing communications to be sure. But it's not advertising. Integrated marketing communications (IMC) unites traditional and non-traditional elements into a single campaign. Smaller agencies and in-house departments have been doing it for years. It's called "doing whatever it takes."

## It's About Solving the Client's Problem

Don't think about the tactics first. Think about the client's wants and needs. If you were working on the Gilmore Gizmo account, where would you start? The first thing to do is ask this: What's their problem? Every client has a problem. Otherwise, they wouldn't need to promote their products, services, or ideas. Some clients state the problem in general terms, such as sell more Gizmos in the next fiscal year. That's not the problem. The problem is this: What's going to make it difficult to sell more Gizmos, and how can we overcome those difficulties?



Photo 2.1 This anti-ad criticizes Coca-Cola's sponsorship of the World Cup in Qatar. Source: Ads of the World

The client may tell you, but these may not be the only problems. You must identify the pain points. Examples could be product shortcomings, weak warranties, non-competitive pricing, or racial or gender bias. Often the client doesn't have an in-depth understanding of the target audience. An even more challenging situation emerges when the client can't even identify the problem.

Today, algorithms define consumer behavior in nanoseconds. Marketing messages and media change directions in an instant based on online choices. If you don't believe it, check native content, banner ads, emails, and social feeds minutes after you search for any given product. But that only provides part of the picture. The principles of strategy development and branding aren't limited to promoting consumer products. Look closer.

If you want to dive deeper into consumer behavior, you'll need more qualitative information. That's where *account planning* comes in. It's all about finding the consumers' sweet spot. Account planning lays a foundation before you get to the strategies and tactics. Account planning blends qualitative (and quantitative) research, psychology, marketing, and economics, all in search of elusive insights. Media

choices bring the message to the consumer, but account planning helps make that message believable and actionable.

## The Role of Advertising in the Buying Process

Many people describe a clever TV commercial or a slick catalog as "good marketing." They're subsets of *promotion*—one of the four Ps of marketing. The others are *place*, *product*, and *price*. Many marketing directors can't control the product, its distribution (place), or its price. They can only deal with the promotion side of the marketing mix. Any director of marketing worth their salt also considers a fifth P—*people*. If you're not interested in taking the time to understand what motivates people, you should consider another line of work, perhaps studying primeval bacteria in frozen layers of sea ice.

The buying process for some products may take a couple seconds, such as picking out a sandwich at the drive-through. Or it may take years, as with buying a multimillion-dollar piece of industrial equipment. No matter the time frame, there is a process that starts with awareness and ends with the sale. One of the best ways to describe the process is using the acronym AIDA, which stands for *attention*, *interest*, *desire*, and *action*. Understanding AIDA helps you, as a creative person, guide a consumer from just recognizing your brand to demanding it.

Here's how AIDA works in advertising:

1. **Attention:** How do you get someone who is bombarded with hundreds if not thousands of messages a day to look at your ad or commercial? If you're a writer, one way is to use powerful words, and if you're an art director, you need a picture that will catch a person's eye.
2. **Interest:** Once you capture people's attention, they will give you a little more time to make your point, but you must stay focused on their wants and needs. This means helping the reader or viewer quickly sort out the relevant messages. In some cases, you might use bullet points and subheadings to make your points stand out.
3. **Desire:** The interest and desire parts of AIDA work together. Once people are interested, they need to really want the product. As you're building readers' interest, you

also need to help them understand how what you're offering can help them in an authentic way. The main way of doing this is by appealing to their personal needs and wants. Another component of desire is conviction—the willingness to buy when the opportunity is right. So even if your message does not result in an immediate sale, keeping your messages on track and on time could eventually trigger a sale.

4. **Action:** Okay, they're hooked. Now what do you want them to do? Visit a website? Take a test drive? Call for information? Plunk down some cash now? You should be truly clear about what action you want your readers or viewers to take.

This fourth step in the AIDA process is the one that drives the bottom line. The Call to Action is the little voice you've planted in the consumer's head that keeps saying, "Do something." But it's up to you to plant what that "something" is. And it's true that if you can get the reader or viewer to contact the advertiser, most of your work is done. Although you will continue to reinforce the brand and encourage future sales to consumers who act, your primary job is to connect buyers to sellers. It's up to them to close the deal.

Let's consider six surefire ways to engage consumers in action<sup>3</sup>:

1. Begin with a strong command verb.
2. Give the target a compelling, emotive reason to act.
3. Build in a fear of missing out on something big.
4. Know the platform your message lives on or in and leverage it.
5. Spice it up with tantalizing details.
6. Add numbers that translate into a tangible value.

The most popular ways to connect include the following:

- Social media platforms
- Websites with live chat
- SMS interface for text marketing
- Hashtags that convey a message as well as connect
- Email
- Mobile apps encouraging continued interactivity
- Encouraging test drives, taste tests, and free samples
- Prepaid reply to cards to request more information or an appointment
- Recommendation from your favorite influencer
- QR codes leading to mobile sites
- Toll-free phone numbers (yes, they still work)

An effective, emotion-driven Call to Action is based on knowing what makes consumers tick and converting that into an effortless way for them to connect with the advertiser. You could show a staged photo of an Amazon driver handing a package to a person wearing a bathrobe in soft early morning light, or you could tell the same story with an even stronger branding message in a much simpler, and much less expensive, concept as in this ad in photo 2.2 from India.



Photo 2.2 This Amazon ad from India uses simple graphics to promote morning deliveries.  
© Amazon.com, Inc.

## Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics

The difference between strategy and tactics stumps a lot of people. Without clear objectives, failure is guaranteed. A creative person needs to follow a strategy. Otherwise, you're working for the sake of creativity rather than solving a problem.

**Objectives:** MarCom objectives (or marketing goals) establish what you need to accomplish so you can achieve sales or marketing goals. They should be:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime-Bound

**Strategies:** How are you going to achieve your objectives? What's your position? Who are you targeting? How will you segment markets? What is your brand strategy? Creative strategy? Media strategy? Digital strategy? Strategies deal with the big picture. They should be quantifiable in terms of time and money. In summary, the strategy describes what you want to do.

**Tactics:** Once you know what you want to do, you need to figure out how. Those are tactics. They are narrower in focus and outline specific action items that fit into the strategic plan. If strategies are the blueprints, tactics are the tools.

Think of building a house. The objective is to build a home for a family of four, in a nice neighborhood, with good schools, and not too far from your place of employment. The strategy involves designing the home, deciding how many rooms are needed, and figuring the square footage. The architect is the strategist, and the blueprint and budget are the strategies. Tactics involve what materials to use.

The hierarchy of objective > strategy > tactics can be applied beyond product promotion. As the example in photo 2.3 shows, the objective was to fight racism, the strategy was to show positive responses, and the tactics included a variety of MarCom tools. It's not enough



Photo 2.3 Zambezi created a social media and out-of-home campaign which conveys messages such as "My Solidarity is Action" and "My Silence is Deadly," and signs off with the promise of "I Will Act".

© Zambezi LLC

to oppose racism. We need to be actively anti-racist to start making a change. Zambezi, the largest female-owned full-service agency in the United States, created a social media and out-of-home campaign that conveys messages such as “My Solidarity Is Action” and “My Silence Is Deadly,” and signs off with the promise of “I Will Act.” The campaign was elevated to 58 billboards in 11 major markets across the country. Smart strategies can be developed to sell more than consumer goods.

So, it’s objective > strategy > tactics. It all starts with what you’re trying to accomplish. Then, how are you going to get there, and what action items are required to make it happen? One, two, three.

## WHO’S WHO

**Jason Norcross**—In 1995, Jason Norcross graduated from Boston College and moved to Los Angeles. Norcross wanted not just to geographically move, but also to move to an edgy start-up, instead of an established agency. Norcross joined 72andSunny, as a writer, and got just that. Today, Norcross is a partner and executive creative director. The results—an award-winning powerhouse that has redefined brands such as Coors, LG, Adidas, and Carl’s Jr.<sup>4</sup>

## Getting the Facts

The first step in planning for any type of research is gathering and organizing information. You must answer the basic questions listed in Table 2.1.

Notice that these creative development questions include some of the basic journalism questions—who, what, and why. Where and when are media questions, which may also influence your creative strategy. Primarily the most important question you can ask, and ask repeatedly, is why. Yes, just why. Every time you think you’ve landed on the right answer, to any part of the strategic process, just ask yourself why. Why is this the “right” answer? It’s about making sure every answer is valid and you’ve got the data to back it up. Never stop asking: Why? Why? Why?

Smart strategies involve knowing the target market—geographically and psychologically. For example, Russians know the drawbridges in St. Petersburg pictured in photo 2.4 are raised every night no matter how old they are, and it doesn’t take an expert to see what a raised drawbridge looks like. For bridges that stay up for more than four hours, consult your transportation department.

▼ TABLE 2.1

### Marketing Tasks and What They Mean

Marketing Tasks	What They Mean
Define the target audience.	Who are we talking to?
Identify features and benefits.	What makes this product better?
Clarify the current position.	What do people think about the product?
Align wants and needs with the product.	Why should people buy it?
Determine Call to Action.	What do we want people to do?





Photo 2.4 Russians know the drawbridges in St. Petersburg are raised every night no matter how old they are.  
© Pfizer Inc.

## Where to Look for Information

Research can be divided into two basic categories: primary, where you gather the facts directly, and secondary, where you assemble research done by others. You generally begin with secondary research first because it's usually more accessible. It also is an indicator of what's missing and thus what primary research you'll need to conduct.

### Secondary Research

You can find a wealth of information about markets, products, and consumers. Most of it is quantitative—

think Simmons and GfK/MRI. Learning how to read and understand statistics benefits anyone going into advertising. A lot of it is available for free on the internet. However, most of the good stuff comes from subscription services. University libraries offer the same information that companies pay thousands of dollars for, although it's usually a little out of date.

### Primary Research

A lot of the primary research that will help you as a planner is qualitative. Most people think of focus groups or interviews. But primary research can be very informal and personal, and, honestly, that's often where the juicy tidbits that lead to great insights are found. Ethnography and projective techniques are hot right now and with good reason. With ethnography, you'll find yourself immersed in the consumers' world. There's no faster way to find consumers' sweet spot than spending time with them. With projective techniques, you'll use psychological tools to find out how people, often unconsciously, feel about or perceive your product. This can help you define your insight and develop a strategy that really connects with consumers. Start thinking like an anthropologist or a psychologist. Then you'll learn what links your consumers' desire with your product. You'll find the emotional sweet spot. As you might imagine, these kinds of techniques pose some ethical considerations. Not the least of which is, how far is too far? So, before you begin your research, take the time to know exactly how far is too far—and don't cross that line.

- Check out the competition. Review ads and other promotional material for your product. Track what competitors are saying online and what's being said about them. Study their visual structure and symbolism. Study their claims. Where are they weaker or stronger compared with your product? Which claims are getting the most traction with consumers?
- Check what media your target uses, especially social media. Analyze when, where, and how they use media. What does that tell you about your target? What might this tell you about the competition?
- Talk to the people who buy, or might buy, your product. Observe them using it. Why did they buy it or not buy it? Would they buy it again? If not, why not? What are their emotional triggers?
- Talk to people who considered, but did not buy, your product. Why didn't they? What would make them change their mind?

- Immerse yourself in the fine-grained details of your consumers' everyday life. Where do they live, work, and play? What makes them tick?
- And always return to why, why, why.

### Ethnography—Immerse Yourself in Their World

- Visit a store and check how your product and its competitors are displayed. How does the shelf appeal of your product compare? Watch how consumers interact with your brand and its competitors. What does that tell you about their expectations? And take photos and lots of notes to share with your team.
- Observe the salespeople who sell your product. Eavesdrop. What do they tell customers about it, and how do consumers respond? What comments and actions get traction with consumers?
- Sometimes it's helpful to take a factory tour. Observe with all your senses. And don't be afraid to talk to the people who make the product. You'd be surprised by what you can learn from them. Is there a key insight waiting to be shared with consumers?
- Hang out with the consumers. Go to their homes. Explore the rooms in which they will use your product and how they use it. Observe them at play. Where are they playing, and who are they playing with? More important, what does their play look like? What do you observe that can help you successfully pitch this product?
- The devil is in the details. These little moments are gold strategically and creatively. What personality ticks do younger shoppers exhibit that older ones don't? Watch a group of people buy fruit—some touch and squeeze every cantaloupe, while others just grab one and toss it in the cart. Watch a parent with kids walk through a department store versus a twenty-something; how do they behave? All of this may seem innocuous and tedious, but it could lead to the next Big Idea.
- And, as always, ask why, why, why.

### Projective Techniques—Eliciting Inner Feelings

- Provide some images or words related to the product and ask consumers to make associations. What can you learn about how they feel about your brand? Or ask them what three words come to mind when they think of said product or service.
- Ask them to draw pictures or create collages that remind them of your product or something you're trying to find out or verify. What images begin to repeat themselves? What's happening inside your consumers' minds? What is the predominant emotion that seems to appear?
- Give them sentences to complete based on what you want to find out. Do you notice any word patterns? What do they tell you about the emotional state of consumers when they think of your brand?
- Show them a storyboard about the product and ask them to tell you what they think about the main character (the consumer) within the story. Do you think they might be projecting themselves into that story? Chances are you're right.
- Tell them to think of the product or service as a human—who just died. Ask them to write an obituary. You will be amazed by the emotion that comes pouring out.
- And yes, you already know where this is going . . . Why? Why? Why?



You can find subjects to observe or interview in several places—malls, restaurants, sporting or music events, chat rooms, online games, trade shows, basically anywhere members of your target audience may gather. You might even consider conducting more traditional research, such as focus groups with members of the target audience. These groups, professionally moderated, can explore attitudes and opinions in depth. And as we’ve learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, online chats are a fantastic way to access people and engage in facilitated discussions (aka remote focus groups). There is also the tried-and-true survey. Whatever you decide on, the goal is to find the sweet spot—without crossing ethical boundaries.

## Interpreting Research Findings

There’s a funny thing about research—if it confirms the client’s opinions, it wasn’t really needed; if it contradicts the client’s opinions, it’s flawed. While the “facts” may be gathered and presented objectively, the interpretation is often subjective. But remember the client hired you for that subjective knowledge of advertising and consumer behavior. So, if you keep your subjective knowledge balanced with an objective look at the consumers, you should be in decent shape.

No matter how much research you gather, always remember . . .

- Research does not replace insight.
- Facts are not always emotionally true.
- Objective research is evaluated subjectively.
- Data are a perishable commodity.
- You can never ask why often enough.

## Who Is the Target Audience?

Who are you talking to? “Who” is important, but unless you know “why” the consumer is buying the product—or not buying it—your creative strategy is likely to fail.

In photo 2.5, cosmetic giant L’Oréal applies a lot of marketing muscle to support worthy causes—in this case, hiring more women in leadership roles. The ads are aimed at men (“we’re all worth it”), but women make the buying decisions, so who’s the real target?



Photo 2.5 L’Oréal not only promotes their products, but also a lot of worthy causes—in this case, gender equality.  
© L’Oréal Group

# RISING STAR

## PAYING IT BACK BY PAYING IT FORWARD



Courtesy of Olivia Bohringer

I like to joke that I was born for this job. My dad was a copywriter, hopping across different ad agencies before opening his own with the help of my mom, an account manager. The two of them passed down genes fit for a strategist: left-brain analytics complementing right-brain creativity.

My aspirations veered from advertising as I grew up, but fate would beckon me back by the time college rolled around. I was a candidate for two decisive scholarships: one program that would allow me to pursue pre-law and another that would require me to enroll in the College of Communications at Marquette University. The latter was where I ended up.

Arduous work isn't enough, though. To garner success, it must come with focus. My path narrowed after taking a course in account planning, where I saw for the first time how art can meet science in an ad career. Strategy internships were exceedingly rare, so I cut my teeth elsewhere, if at least to say that I'd tried each discipline.

These gigs carried me through graduation, where I faced a decision: accept an offer for a full-time account manager role at the Milwaukee shop where I'd been for a year, or take a strategy internship (and pay cut) with an agency in a brand-new city. I started at Periscope in Minneapolis as a brand strategy intern one month later.

The internship turned into a few promotions and a wealth of opportunities. I got to learn from brilliant, thoughtful, empathetic leaders who were as invested in my success as they were our clients'. I worked on Effie-winning work while learning the ins and outs of industries ranging from candy to health care to entertainment.

Eventually, I grew comfortable . . . a stifling feeling when you're riding the momentum of your early 20s. A timely opportunity popped up with Barkley in Kansas City, thanks to a past mentor. And so, the cycle began again: Someone else's investment in me became encouragement to reach higher, work harder, and excel further. I took the job.

There's a certain level of drive that can only come from the knowledge that someone else has invested in your future, invested in you. That a benefactor was willing to bankroll my education based purely on my *potential*—that brought on the pressure to justify their investment. Their belief became my drive. I'll spend decades working to prove each "investor" right . . . while working to do the same for future talent, empowering the next generation just as the last generation fueled me. The constant paying it forward by mentors in the industry is the reason many of us are where we are. They've taught me that gratitude begets gratitude—a working practice I intend to employ for as long as the industry will have me.<sup>5</sup>

*Olivia Bohringer, Strategist, Barkley, Kansas City*

## Features and Benefits

You may not be selling a tangible product. It may be something you can't hold in your hand, like the local bus company, an art museum, or a government agency. It may be about corporate image to promote the integrity or strength of a company. Good examples are hospitals, utility companies, and multinationals like General Electric. You could also develop creative for an organization, such as the American Cancer Society or Amnesty International. For the sake of simplicity, we will call the object of promotion the "product."

From the Inside: Features

Products have characteristics and personality traits just like people. By themselves, these features are not good or bad. They’re just there. That’s why listing product features without putting them in context usually is not effective. Sometimes the benefit is so obvious that the reader or viewer will connect the dots. But other times, writers just include a list and hope people will figure out what’s important.

Sometimes the benefit is much more emotional and woven into a branded story. On a luxury car, for example, features can be technical (collision avoidance), aesthetic (hand-stitched leather), or functional (keyless ignition). The overriding benefits? Safety, luxury, convenience. The more technical and abstract the feature, the greater the need to tie it to a tangible benefit to the consumer.

From the Outside: Benefits

Not all products have features you can promote, but all have benefits. A benefit leads to the satisfaction of a consumer’s wants and needs. “Cool, crisp flavor” is a benefit (it quenches thirst and tastes good). “Firm, smooth ride” is a benefit (it pleases the senses and gives peace of mind). “Kills 99.9% of viruses” is a benefit (you’re protecting your family’s health).

Anyone can write a feature ad. But to make an impact, you must translate those features into benefits that resonate within the customer. Sometimes it’s as simple as listing a feature and lining up a benefit. Table 2.2 gives some examples of features, benefits, and how they satisfy a consumer’s wants and needs.

Another way to think about features and benefits is to consider benefits in terms of Maslow’s hierarchy and how they satisfy wants and needs in highly emotive and self-expressive ways. Some people also talk about this as laddering. It seems to us that more consumers would like to quietly project their brilliance about wellness than talk about improving their eyesight.

As we’ll discuss shortly, you should think of an overriding benefit. Remember the adjective you need to tack on to the brand name—if that adjective is positive, it’s likely an overall benefit. You might also consider the fact that many of the choices consumers make today are based on symbolic product attributes. Don’t discount intangible emotions. Finally, when spinning your benefits, think back to your brand—to its promise. Can your benefit engender positive emotion leading to trust? If so, you have leveraged the feature to its maximum potential, creating great strategic advantage.

TABLE 2.2  
Features, Benefits, and Wants and Needs

Feature	Benefit	Wants and Needs
Contains fluoride	Prevents tooth decay	Saves money, saves time
Automatic shutoff	Shuts off unit if you forget	Safety, saves money, convenience
Electronic ignition	Easier starts in chilly weather	Convenience
Slow nutrients release	Greener plants, more flowers	Aesthetically pleasing, convenient

Assembling the Facts

You’ve gathered a lot of information. Now it’s time to organize it into something you can use. The following are four basic ways to turn data into creative content.