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Advertising Campaign Strategy

A Guide to Marketing Communication Plans

Fifth Edition

ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

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Australia • Brazil • Mexico • Singapore • United Kingdom • United States

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**Advertising Campaign
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Marketing Communication
Plans, Fifth Edition**
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Strausbaugh-Hutchinson**

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F O R E W O R D

How do you develop professional skills that are much in demand but so scarce in the market? Skills that are widely admired yet understood by few? Skills essential for success, yet hard to develop? This book offers a solution to this puzzle. Specifically, it addresses the ability to think and plan holistically in what is becoming a marketplace of ever more narrowly sliced skill sets.

Conceptual thinking is ultimately what drives great marketing ideas—always has, always will. From the early days of mass marketing to today's highly segmented, fragmented, and not always well-integrated marketing, the ability to conceive and execute in complete propositions is what separates the extraordinary from the ordinary. It is what makes icons of brands like McDonald's, Nike, and Target. In a time where there is excess production capacity in virtually every industry, rapid parity in product performance, and an exponential increase in the number of ways of reaching consumers, never has insightful, well-planned marketing been more important.

On a sustained basis, consumers are not moved and brands are not built by loosely conceived tactics that are not much more than a series of one-shot ads. Consumers respond to strategic marketing campaigns—great campaigns that are conceived holistically and executed in a truly integrated manner where the motivations of consumers, the dynamics of markets, and the strengths and vulnerabilities of competitors have been understood and the end game is to have specific objectives, strategies that create sustainable competitive advantage, and inspired execution across all disciplines.

However, developing the skills to think and create at the broadest level is difficult nowadays. There are two key reasons. First, because of the general emphasis on efficiency in business, most firms, client, or agency, don't have the time or resources to develop people at the foundational conceptual thinking and strategy level. Second is a change in the way that marketing services are bought and sold, especially the unbundling of disciplines (creative, media, brand identity, interactive, promotion, etc.) and the development of specialists in each one of these disciplines. There are logical and beneficial reasons behind specialization, but it has made it harder to get experience at the whole-picture level. And this counts, because at some point, in some way, the whole picture—the entire marketing campaign—must come together. How well that happens

is largely based on the quality of the thinking up front and throughout the process.

That is where this book comes in. It is valuable both as a strategic grounding in all of the campaign plan components and as a reference for those who will spend their careers working in specialized disciplines. The more you know about marketing and campaign planning at the broad level, the more effective you will be at having your piece of the puzzle fit best and work its hardest.

I have kept a copy of the earlier editions on my reference shelf. Even after 25 years in the business, and a lot of campaigns, I find the principles here to be great thought starters or “templates” when beginning to organize my thinking. For example, because a problem well defined is a problem half-solved, the preparation of a situation analysis covered in Chapters 2 and 3 is a strong grounding for creating a campaign. I think the structure for making choices in message strategy outlined in Chapter 5 is particularly valuable, because all great campaigns have a clear “point of view” that reflects choices of how to approach the marketing issue. This chapter provides a path for those choices to be more deliberate. Lastly, because contemporary marketing must often “touch” an inclusive range of targets across a broad range of contact points, Chapters 8 and 9 are an excellent overview of the modern media and marketing tools landscape.

When I studied under Don Parente, he emphasized two things that would allow a person to have the best chance at advertising career success and fulfilling professional potential: taking advertising seriously and learning to think conceptually.

This book is a chance to do both.

John (Jack) Phifer

Board of Advisors, Moroch Partners Advertising

Former Managing Director/CMO Moroch/Leo Burnett USA

Former Managing Director Leo Burnett-Mexico



P R E F A C E

The major goals of this textbook are to train, coach, and empower students.

So this is it. You're faced with generating your first truly comprehensive marketing plan. Congratulations! You're now the "expert." Suddenly you have a real client who is looking to your team for savvy business solutions...but, at least some part of you is wondering how you're going to pull this off. You've had some experience, an internship, work with the student-run agency, perhaps some informal freelance jobs here and there. But you're worried that you don't remember all of the bits and pieces you've learned in your classes leading up to this. You're concerned about how to apply what you do know. You're not sure what your individual role or contribution will be to the project. You've heard horror stories about the volume of work involved. But equally true, you've seen so many of your friends make it through the process and witnessed the relief on their faces. You've observed their unadulterated pride when it all comes together and they're amazed at what they've accomplished. And most importantly, you've seen them show their plans books to potential employers and land mind-blowing job opportunities.

Long story short, it *is* a lot of work, there is no doubt. But it's well worth it ... and then some! So like it. No, love it. Embrace every minute of it and learn from each step in the process. By the end of the term you'll know more about the product than you ever thought possible, and you'll be completely in-tune with the target. You might even figure out what you want to do with your life! And then, during the course of your career, you'll become an expert in countless categories and on innumerable audiences. How cool is that? You'll be a more world-smart, well-rounded person for it.

Throughout the process, this text will be your guide, and at times, your best (most reliable) friend. It's written as a literal "how-to" manual for crafting creative and effective communication plans. Rather than a survey or introductory text, it is designed to serve as a nuts-and-bolts guide to walk you through the research, strategic planning, ideation, execution, media planning and evaluation processes in a lockstep fashion. Your team can consult the book as a handbook, following along chapter by chapter, and checking off steps, as you move from getting your head around the marketing challenge, into assessing the situation, identifying your most

promising opportunities, and then into offering sound recommendations as solutions.

Once you get your bearings, you'll be tempted to jump right into brainstorming creative ideas. Resist the urge. Seriously. Follow all of the fundamental steps presented in this book ... and in the *right* order. If you do, you won't go wrong. Your campaign will be grounded in product truths and human insights. And people will encounter your messages in the places where they're most relevant. So your efforts will have the most impact. You will build the brand while selling it. And you'll be a hero to your client. Not to worry. You're ready. In the immortal words of Home Depot, one of the nation's best loved and trusted brands, "You can do it. We can help."

HIGHLIGHTS OF ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

CHAPTER 1

This chapter gives an overview of both the new marketing environment and consumer mindset. It illustrates how recent changes in the landscape have affected communication planning. We discuss the importance of process orientation and present some of the core concepts that should be part of your mindset as you prepare for the campaign, including market segmentation, the communication strategy, integrated market communications, a campaign creative concept, and a well-rounded tactical mix. To close the chapter, we present a general outline that should help sum up the steps in a campaign planning endeavor.

CHAPTERS 2 AND 3

These chapters cover the components and construction of a situation analysis. They emphasize the importance of "finding the fit" between your brand and its audience(s). Chapter 2 focuses on analyzing the company and the consumer. It provides a broad coverage of many of the available quantitative and qualitative methods, and includes a thorough section on searching for secondary research information, online and in a typical university library, and an extensive discussion of syndicated sources. In addition to creating a firm grasp of general audiences, we address (1) special market segments including global, African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and gay/lesbian markets; and (2) special message strategies including multitiered advertising, cause-related marketing, and green marketing. Chapter 3 focuses on mapping out the marketplace, understanding the product, and conducting a thorough competitive analysis so that you know what you're facing before you begin to formulate a plan of action.

CHAPTER 4

This chapter addresses moving from research into findings, such as insights, problems and opportunities, and most importantly, into actionable objectives. We discuss the characteristics and significance of establishing good

objectives and make the distinction between marketing and communication goals. The chapter covers how both are set, what they aim to affect, and the ways in which they are measured. In addition, we emphasize how vital it is to determine where consumers are in the buying cycle when setting appropriate communication objectives.

CHAPTER 5

This chapter is about building your brand through a well-laid-out marketing communication plan. It explains the difference between a marketing and a communication strategy. The chapter focuses on five interrelated elements: the determination of the selling focus, the management of brand equity, the marketing communication expenditure, the positioning of messages, and the targeting and delivery of messages. We point out a migration from the classic advertising “push” approach to a more “invitational” method, as we present a powerful consumer courting metaphor that sums up the product adoption cycle. We also cover ways that you can allocate funds within your overall marketing budget.

CHAPTER 6

This chapter addresses strategic messaging and the crafting of smart, inspiring creative briefs. It examines all parts of the brief itself, including identifying a key fact, determining the prospect need or problem, setting an appropriate objective, defining the target audience and related insights, framing a brand promise, and providing adequate support. We cover a variety of product- and consumer-driven strategic approaches and provide an array of rules for talking to today’s consumer. From there, we delve into a central discussion of the campaign’s “big idea,” aspects that make a creative concept viable, and components such as design elements and tone that can lend consistency to your campaign.

CHAPTER 7

This chapter explores a variety of different brainstorming methods that can yield powerful campaign creative concepts. It contains discussion of techniques such as word association, clustering, dogma/heresy, exaggeration/hyperbole, paradoxical intention, and visual analogy/metaphor. And after you’ve landed on an idea, the chapter emphasizes many important executional considerations, from the development of headlines and visual storytelling in print and out-of-home, to script and storyboard construction in broadcast channels.

CHAPTER 8

This chapter speaks to the endless a la carte menu of message outlets that you can employ to lend strength and momentum to your campaign. We present the consumer touchpoint map and examine application of a

multitude of disciplines, including advertising, public relations, direct response, personal selling, and sales promotions. In addition, we discuss many subdisciplines that are becoming more and more prevalent, such as social media, viral, guerilla, grassroots, experiential, event and influencer marketing. Most significantly, this chapter contains a convenient guide that matches tactics to common communication objectives, making it easy for you to devise a marketing mix that tiers up to fulfilling your goals.

CHAPTER 9

This chapter begins with a brief examination of the elements that make up a media plan, including objectives, strategy, and tactics. The chapter then proceeds to explain how to implement the basic media decisions: first, by examining what is involved with setting both quantitative and qualitative media objectives; and second, by breaking down media strategy into its essential elements. We include an in-depth discussion of fundamental media terms such as reach, frequency, gross impressions, ratings, CPM, CPP, and so on, as well as the distinction between flighting, pulsing and continuous plans. The chapter finishes with an all-important explanation of *how* to execute the media strategy.

CHAPTER 10

This chapter focuses on how to evaluate the effectiveness of your campaign. Clients want ROI, and here you can learn to serve up an assessment plan that measures everything from message reception and persuasion to the value in your individual tactics. We present a comprehensive view of the many tests and techniques that are used to measure a campaign's effectiveness, briefly covering many of the commercial research companies that are involved in this type of testing. Unlike many of the chapters in other books on this topic, this chapter is organized correspondent to when the need for a particular type of research would arise in a campaign. We discuss concept testing, then move to in-depth discussions of copy testing, concurrent testing, and posttesting. And we also include methods for evaluating today's more alternative marketing tactics.

CHAPTER 11

This section addresses the momentous task of crafting your comprehensive marketing plans book and outlines everything you'll need to include in it from cover to cover. It focuses largely on interpreting and presenting the material contained in the previous chapters. The chapter includes the "Top Ten Tips on Putting Together a Plans Book." For this edition, we added recommendations regarding design components, template construction, and how-tos on "selling in" the overall campaign concept and presenting creative executions. The chapter integrates the ideas and advice of various educators around the country who either teach an advertising campaigns course or work with the AAF competition.

CHAPTER 12

This chapter focuses on helping your team prepare a powerful, winning pitch. This section addresses client, agency, and educational audiences; presentation locations; and a variety of presentation software platforms. We discuss both the essential content and preferred order in crafting a compelling campaign pitch. We provide tips for creating visual aids, presenting research data, and powerful “storytelling.” This chapter also includes an extensive discussion of the special problems associated with the National Student Advertising Competition sponsored by the AAF.

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Don Parente
Kirsten Strausbaugh-Hutchinson
2014



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ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

A Guide to Marketing Communication Plans

Embrace the New Media Landscape & Consumer Mindset

Advertising is “e-volving.” The digital realm is the industry’s new zip code, with companies, their consumers, and brand communities now living and thriving there. “Likes” are the new currency. Personal branding has become huge. Local celebrities are emerging, their every move followed in the Twitterverse. The blogosphere is the fast track to getting heard and staying in the know. Patrons are becoming “mayors” of their favorite hangout spots. Epinions are “calling brands out” and giving them “street cred”. Pinboards are the latest form of expression. Americans are selecting the next superstar with a simple call or text. And smartphones are tendering solutions to consumers’ every need. The Internet has made information readily available, enabled people to work, learn, and play at the touch of their fingertips. But moreover, it has allowed brands to track their consumers, interact with them, and build relationships while they do so. As a result of technology, we’re able to serve up relevant content in an instant, engage consumers in a real-time dialogue, or invite them to create a personalized version of our product. Our messages have never been more up-to-the-minute or impactful.

THE NEW CONSUMER ATTITUDE

Meanwhile, consumers’ expectations of brands have never been higher. They want and expect open communication, real-time dialogue. Smart companies have accepted this challenge and invited their audiences “into the hallowed halls”, asking them to contribute to the conversation, to express their needs and wants. There is a new level of transparency in business, with information made readily available. Audiences can now debate with brands. Befriend them. Shape them. Aspire to be them. And become a part of them. Corporations are more accessible, approachable, and responsive. In return, consumers are more naturally accepting brands as partners and as part of pop culture. The mind-set has changed. Life has changed.

■ THE NEW MARKETER MIND-SET

It's been called the era of transformation. What does it mean for marketers? In short, marketing mixes have become more inventive, more expansive, more involved. The investment of time and energy has never been greater. Keeping up vital interaction with consumers is no small matter. And with technology and trends changing by the minute, staying abreast of things is an ongoing challenge. Industry players actively work time into their schedules to read blogs, subscribe to e-newsletters, view podcasts, and attend webinars. Volumes of information and opportunities are there, but figuring out how to make them work for us has become the hard part. We know that we must adapt or die. Or worse, become irrelevant.

What does it mean to have Followers? How do we serve them well? If we create a Facebook page, what will make them come? Do we intentionally set out to make something viral? There are many questions that remain. One thing is for certain, though. Ads today are more creative than ever. New technology and new attitudes are helping spawn spectacular advertising. Writers and art directors are limited only by their imagination. Special effects and programming wizards can translate the dreamable into the doable. What cool stuff will we see tomorrow? Maybe today? There is no shortage of creative brainpower and technological know-how, and all it takes is to bring the two together.

■ ADVERTISING FROM A MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PERSPECTIVE

Good advertising has always been memorable, relevant, and impactful. Beyond that, there are often differing viewpoints. For clients, the test of a good campaign is an increase in sales. For an agency, it may be the winning of a Clio or an Addy, a mention in a trade publication, or nationwide press. But the best campaigns coming out these days, the ones that both sell products and win awards, are insightful, unexpected, and that use an approach that hits target audiences on multiple touchpoints.

From a tactical standpoint, the Super Bowl remains one of the show-cases for new ads and new campaigns. The advertising is so interesting, it is talked about before *and* after the game. One point of debate among ad people is whether the ads are examples of great advertising or merely good film. What is beyond debate is that the ads are usually highly entertaining. Each year seems to highlight new technology or creative techniques. Regardless of whether the ads are funny, smart, shocking, professional, or user-generated, they will get scrutinized. But some ask, "Do these ads really help sell the product?" Even though others counter that sales are not the ads' primary objective, many wonder: Has the role of advertising changed, at least for megabrands?

Discussions about an ad's effectiveness can get complicated. Effectiveness can be difficult to achieve and hard to measure. Because of the increasing sophistication of the market and the nature of the advertising task, running some of these ads requires a good measure of faith.

The public has become advertising savvy and, perhaps, a bit jaded. Not only is the public exposed to countless ads, it is also inundated with promotional messages virtually everywhere it goes—from classrooms and ball fields to the restroom at the local pub. Moreover, it's a parity marketplace, meaning many companies sell products that have no distinguishing intrinsic qualities, nothing to set them apart from the competition other than, perhaps, an image or a personality. In the top agencies, people in every discipline are continually challenged to think creatively to produce advertising that is better and more creative than earlier work—not to mention that of the competition. Writers, art directors, media planners, sales promotion experts, and all others are encouraged to think “out of the box,” or to be “disruptive.” There's a lot of pressure, but when the pieces all come together in the right way, the feeling is exhilarating. The last thing great ad people want to be is mediocre or dull. They want to be groundbreaking.

Truly creative work often exists at the edges of common thinking. The more common the ideas, the less creative or different the work. Creative thinking involves expanding, contracting, or reshaping the boundaries of the way people normally think. Creative work often reflects insights into human behavior, nature, or current society and relates them to the product in a fresh way. The important thing is to be fresh while relevant. Different while accessible. Maybe even original. If people expect one thing, surprise them with another. The forces that lead to creative thinking may produce advertising that is entertaining, but not necessarily ads that sell. Among management, similar thinking often leads to changes in philosophy or procedures. As businesses and markets evolve, changes are inevitable. But the changes may not be for the better. ROI, MBO, TQM, IMC, CRM, EVA, SVA, reengineering, disruption, and under-the-radar are only some of the ideas that have changed the lexicon in the marketing and advertising business. It's likely that some of these concepts do not hold as much promise today as when they were first introduced (or do they?). It's great to be an instrument of change. But for most people, it's enough to be able to evaluate change, to figure out what works, what doesn't—how to survive and thrive in a changing environment. Evaluating change can be as difficult as anticipating change. Telling people how to evaluate and anticipate change can be almost as difficult as bringing about change—but we do have a few suggestions.

■ PROCESS ORIENTATION

Lines are certainly blurring and flexibility is definitely key. So it might seem odd to mention that it can often be helpful to think about change as something that occurs within a **process**—that occurs over time, usually involving many steps. But a good manager **adapts to change** by learning what those steps are and how they interrelate. Otherwise, if you merely concentrate your attention on producing end results, such as an ad, you may wind up seeing what you want to see or believing what you would like to believe about the ad's likely success. And if you pay scant attention to *how* you get results, as markets change, you may not be flexible enough

to keep up. Instead, by understanding how all the parts in a process interrelate, when the environment changes, you can better manage change. Whether your understanding is rigorously analytical or based on intuition, when change comes you can better anticipate it, evaluate it, and be an agent for it.

In developed markets, changes have become so widespread and massive that they appear to be coming from all directions simultaneously. Still, there is often an underlying order in even the most complex situations. What makes change so difficult to manage in today's sophisticated market, as opposed to a textbook, is that the process is *circular*. In textbooks, the steps in a process often occur along a linear time line, so that a campaign might have a beginning and an end. In a dynamic market, especially one characterized by massive change, conclusions and decisions have to be reevaluated seemingly all the time. Markets today change far more quickly than they did as little as 10 or 15 years ago. We think the steps in the campaign process should be viewed as taking place along a spiral path rather than a straight line. This means that by the time you finish analyzing background information and make decisions, it is often time to gather more information and do more analysis. Viewed this way, the campaign development process strives for continuous improvement. We recommend that you think of the campaign as an evolving work, even though for some people (say, students), the process must have a beginning and an end.

We've organized this book as follows:

- Chapter 1 stresses the perspective needed to develop and execute a compelling communication campaign in today's marketplace.
- Chapter 2 assesses clients' business needs and introduces tools for identifying consumer target segments.
- Chapter 3 examines the marketplace, product offerings, and the competitive landscape.
- Chapter 4 explains turning problems and opportunities into campaign objectives.
- Chapter 5 covers the direction and development of a marketing strategy.
- Chapter 6 addresses message direction, explores a variety of creative approaches and introduces the "campaign concept".
- Chapter 7 explores a variety of brainstorming techniques that can lead to a campaign direction.
- Chapter 8 speaks to the multi discipline/tactical mix involved in today's campaigns.
- Chapter 9 delves into the development of a media plan, including objectives and strategies.
- Chapter 10 discusses how to evaluate a campaign.
- Chapter 11 illustrates the way to put together a comprehensive plans book.
- Chapter 12 focuses on various ways to put together a winning presentation.

Critical to the understanding of this book is the knowledge that each of these chapters is inextricably linked together in what we call the **campaign process**. The purpose of this process is to develop a

marketing communication plan. This plan outlines the activities, ideas, and executions that take place in order to achieve campaign objectives. In marketing plans, objectives are usually defined in terms of sales or market share. In an advertising plan, the goals may be the same or the objectives may be set in terms of communication criteria, such as awareness or image. The best plans are strategic in nature, but it doesn't necessarily follow that all plans are strategic. Plans, like strategy, usually take place over an extended period.

DEVELOPING STRATEGY WITHIN THE PROCESS

Generally, the objective of strategy is to give the company a competitive advantage. Strategy helps keep everyone involved with developing the campaign working toward the same idea and true to the same brand voice. The key to strategic thinking involves anticipating consumer and competitive responses to a variety of alternative actions and planning accordingly. Strategic thinkers plan for the current time frame and *at least* the foreseeable future. So, a plan that focuses on price deals or coupon offerings is not particularly strategic because most of its effect is likely to be felt in the short term. On the other hand, an effort to improve or strengthen the image of a brand is likely to have a much more lasting effect. Strategic plans consist of actions that tend to be general in nature as opposed to tactics that are more specific. Another key to effective strategy is to devise a plan that integrates all the activities, ideas, and executions so that they are directed toward achieving common goals. In an integrated plan, the effect of all the actions taken together is greater than the sum of the individual parts. To develop such a plan, think of the campaign as a series of steps or operations, focusing on the interrelationship of the various elements. This is what we call **process orientation**.

OPPORTUNITY AND THE COMMUNICATION REVOLUTION

The field of advertising is in a state of continuous change. A troubling economy, rapidly changing technology, constantly evolving business models, and new media put pressure on people to change the way they conduct business. Over the last decade, corporations tightened their belts through layoffs and other staff reductions to operate leaner and, some would say, meaner. And budget cuts have taken their toll on agency in-house development initiatives, such as workshops and seminar series, once often required by many agencies for promotion. The downsizing of the last decade and a slow economy following the turn of the century has resulted in a sizable opportunity for beginners to advance their advertising careers. The traditional progression of junior executives coming up through the ranks into middle management positions no longer works as it did in the past. As a result, there is greater opportunity for people who come in with an already clear understanding of the way things really work.

However, advertising operations, whether in an agency or in a department, are relatively small businesses. Opportunities to learn on the job in

an informal or formal training program are much fewer today than they used to be. New hires, especially recent graduates, need a solid conceptual understanding of the advertising process—from day one. Procedures and techniques—the kinds of knowledge students often learn through internships—are less important in a dynamic, changing market. Learning the way things are done today is no guarantee the same procedures will be used next year. People in the forefront of this new era understand that the changes taking place in business are more a function of new attitudes and new ways of looking at advertising than a result of new hardware, emerging technology, or new media.

Yet for many brands, the business and its purpose are fundamentally the same as they were a decade ago. This book strives not only to provide a transition between new and more traditional ways of thinking but also to indicate where a traditional approach is still valid. Over the years, advertising practitioners have referred to our industry as a *problem-solving* business. Typically, the problem involves selling a product, a service, or an idea. Very often these problems are solved through an advertising campaign. Today, marketers are looked at as not only problem solvers but also as *community builders*. They are increasingly aware of the full range of promotional tools from which to choose: from advertising and public relations to sales promotion, social media, infomercials, partnerships, product placement, and event marketing, and they use them in concert with one another to build strong brands and lasting relationships with consumers. This book has been titled *Advertising Campaign Strategy* more out of a sense of tradition than as a reflection of the view that advertising can or should be prepared apart from other types of marketing communication. Consumers tend to view all contacts they have with promotion elements as advertising. *From our perspective, advertising is simply one of the various marketing communication tools businesses use to get their messages to consumers.*

Advertising is, of course, a business. Practitioners are keenly aware of this fact; their customers, clients, and business associates seldom let them forget it. Intellectually, students and people starting out in advertising are aware that advertising is a business, but their lack of work experience sometimes causes them to lose sight of this fact. Some may even think of advertising as an art—a kind of applied art. Professionals understand that there is an art to using advertising creatively, but it is still a business, an important tool of marketing. Its usual goal is to help sell products and services. This book, and particularly this chapter, looks at how advertising interrelates with other aspects of marketing. The challenge to the student of advertising is to reconcile the differences between any new advertising practices or thinking and the principles and procedures that have proven effective over a period of years.

THE NEW MARKETING ENVIRONMENT

To fully appreciate how advertising can solve problems, it is helpful to understand the relationship of advertising to other activities in a marketing program. As many authors have noted, to sell a product effectively,

the 4P's of marketing must be perfectly aligned. It must be the right *product*, at the right *price*, at the right *place*, and with the right *promotion*. Each element must be in harmony with the others. Some marketers are now including “people” as its own “P” in the marketing mix—that is, the development and cultivation of relationships with carefully identified audiences. Admittedly, this isn't really different than the “marketing concept” where company decisions are made with consumers in mind. However, adding to the “P-list” helps keep an emphasis on consumers more top of mind.

The marketing environment has changed quite a bit during the past decade. The forecast for the immediate future: *more change*. To be effective in this new environment, a planner needs to reevaluate exactly what it means to have the right product, price, place, or promotion. To be successful, a company should strive to gain a competitive edge. The alternative is to simply “get by”—which in today's business environment is an invitation for a company to get “passed by.” The reality of the marketplace is that even when the elements may not be quite “right,” the company still has to figure out a way to capitalize on what it is doing right, or it will be forced out of business.

THE RIGHT PRODUCT

Getting this piece of the marketing mix right has become increasingly more complicated in recent years. At a time when different product and size introductions are on the rise, retailers are trying to streamline operations to get a better grasp on the profitability of everything they sell to improve the bottom line. Scanner data systems allow managers to assess the movement of every product variation, or stockkeeping unit (SKU), in a store. But getting the right product to the store requires an understanding of how consumers and the marketplace are changing.

Traditionally, marketing-oriented companies either asked consumers what they wanted or drew an inference from their behavior. Today, when researchers ask consumers what they want, consumers often don't know. Products in many generic categories have become so sophisticated that they do at least a fair job of satisfying consumers' needs or wants. Because it is often easier for consumers to focus on what they feel they lack rather than on what they want, researchers usually get more information if they ask consumers about their gripes or complaints. So researchers are focusing less on consumers' needs and wants and more on their dissatisfactions with current choices.

As consumers become more sophisticated, they seem to be making more decisions based on microissues. About 10 or 15 years ago, car manufacturers seemed ambivalent about where consumers set cups or cans in an automobile. Today, this feature often receives prominent attention in automobile ads, whether the car is inexpensive or pricey. Today, researchers and developers focus hard on consumers' concerns, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant. In the insurance industry, consumers have always bemoaned having to pay a deductible when an auto accident occurs. Enter, Nationwide's World's Greatest Spokesperson campaign and

the concept of a vanishing deductible, which reduces consumers' deductibles every year that they're a safe driver. Simple, but genius. Problem. Solution. Consumers' cries were heard and their good behavior rewarded.

Many consumers report they do not have any problems. When this happens, researchers often shift the focus from consumers' issues to their interests. It's perhaps a sign of relative affluence, but today consumers buy many products not because they want or need them nor because they help them solve problems. Instead, consumers will sometimes buy something even though their interest is minimal. Many consumers are recreational shoppers. If researchers can't find any interests worth promoting, advertisers may try to build psychological value into a product by developing a personality or brand image for the product. For example, Tommy Hilfiger promotes itself as eclectic, preppy athleticism, Ralph Lauren encourages an image of American luxury and sophistication, and Calvin Klein pursues an edgy, minimalism.

However, regardless of the category, the "big" product ideas (e.g., iPod®, Kindle®, Nike Fuel, and the advent of smartphones) are often the result of combining a knowledge of an industry or technology with an "intuitive" understanding of consumers to create a great leap forward in a single step.

THE RIGHT PRICE

Increasingly, the right price seems to mean the right lower price. The success of Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Target, and other mass-merchandise retailers continues to exert downward pressure on prices as value-conscious consumers patronize low-price retailers in ever-increasing numbers. Brand-name manufacturers are no longer able to dictate to retailers suggested retail prices. Eastman Kodak, for example, tried suggesting a "minimum advertised price" (MAP) on its premium-priced Royal Gold film, backing it with dealer rebates for all vendors who held the line on the MAP. The idea was to build a generous margin into the price of each roll of film and thus encourage retailers to do more in-store promotions of Kodak film. However, Wal-Mart disregarded the MAP, gave up the dealer rebate, and priced the product lower than the suggested retail price.¹ Wal-Mart competes on the basis of low prices—and competes very well. In the new marketing environment, there seems little companies can do to stem a retailer's inclination to operate on narrow profit margins.

A landmark date in the trend toward operating on a narrower price margin occurred in the spring of 1993. Philip Morris, the consumer products giant, put a 40-cents-per-pack price cut on its full-price brands of cigarettes. By doing so, the company tacitly acknowledged that the consumer trend toward craving lower prices was here to stay. On what some observers refer to as Marlboro Friday, the response on Wall Street was a drop in the share prices of many consumer product companies, from Procter & Gamble and Sara Lee to Coca-Cola and General Mills. Traders seemed to be saying that if Philip Morris could not maintain its price margins with Marlboro, the number-one brand in the world at the

time, then other consumer product companies would also be vulnerable. Today, companies continue to relentlessly pursue cost-cutting measures.

Small, independent bookstores have long lamented the influx of retail giants like Borders and Barnes and Noble driving down the price of books. But more recently, even these large traditional booksellers got a taste of their own medicine when Wal-Mart and Target entered the book wars and lowered the price of top sellers to \$10 (Wal-Mart)...then \$8.99 (Target)...then \$8.98 (Wal-Mart). Amazon.com and other online retailers also entered the scene with a vengeance, offering consumers the option of both new *and* used books at price points even lower than the big boxes. What's more, these virtual sellers offered the simplicity of keyword searches and the delivery of media straight to consumers' doorsteps, and all with the click of a mouse. The price war and the ability of digital companies (who have less overhead and more inventory capacity) to undercut bricks and mortar retail establishments is what drove Borders out of business. Ultimately, businesses who are more nimble and who can adapt to changing times are those who will survive and thrive.

THE RIGHT PLACE

A revolution in the marketplace has also affected the way marketers view strategies of place—the right place. An aggressively competitive marketplace has led many companies to get the product to the consumer in ways that would not have been considered in earlier times. McDonald's, long a staunch advocate of the freestanding store, now places restaurants in gas stations, convenience stores, universities, hospitals, and other non-traditional locations. Consumer product companies are also steadily losing control over decisions within the channel of distribution to the giant retailers. Wal-Mart is legendary for exacting stringent requirements on its suppliers regarding inventory control and shelf facings.

Many companies are also opting to market their products directly to consumers. With the increasing ease and widespread use of computers in business, many companies are amassing sizable databases that enable them to target narrowly defined consumers with a minimum of waste.

Although the Sears general merchandise catalogue is dead, most retailers—from Abercrombie & Fitch to Wal-Mart—supplement their in-store sales with catalogue and/or online sales. That said, the location of where a product is sold can still communicate volumes about a brand's image and quality. A pair of "Ray Ban" sunglasses sold at a flea market is perceived much differently than a pair of Ray Ban's sold at a Sunglass Hut.

Today, with the advent of e-tailers, all kinds of products are sold over the Internet. Even groceries are sold on the Web, with online grocers like Peapod, NetGrocer, EthnicGrocer, and Safeway vying for virtual customers. Some may question how many consumers will really pay extra to have their groceries delivered. (It's merely a matter of time and habits; many already do for pizza.)

THE RIGHT PROMOTION

Coming up with the right promotional mix in the new marketing environment continues to pose many more questions than we can now answer. Some industry analysts attribute the changes in the advertising business to the splintering of the mass media into narrower interest segments. Much of this effect is the result of developments in the creation of new databases, the growing use of zip code target marketing, the application of GPS-enabled targeting, and the use of checkout scanners in retail stores to analyze product movement. Simultaneously, there is a proliferating array of new media delivery options. Content has become king. Communications are being designed and executed across multiple viewing environments, from TV, to computer, to tablet and smartphone screens. Digital clouds are connecting consumers. And marketers are beginning to connect the dots.

The dizzying activity taking place within the media appears to be driving many of the positive changes in advertising. Media planning is now just as imaginative and resourceful as the creative side of the business. A multitude of direct paths have opened to consumers, a truth that is both inspiring and daunting. Advertisers are more worried than ever that consumers are ignoring their advertising. On Demand and DVRs allow viewers to zip through commercials. Consumers are also suffering from advertising overload and are prone to tune out ads that they perceive are blatantly persuasive (whatever that means). So the key advertising challenge is to develop messages that consumers can't or don't want to ignore, whether it means product placement within a program they love, or content-specific ads served up in reference to their Facebook profile or G-mail content. Advertisers can stay in the game by simply creating more interesting, entertaining, and pertinent advertising (translation: it's good to be cool, it's absolutely essential to be relevant).

Another viewpoint is that the changes in the advertising business are more a reflection of a powerful but natural evolution of the marketplace as it becomes increasingly sophisticated. Changes within the media aren't causing change so much as they reflect the new marketing environment. *And a good idea still always wins.* Building brand equity has become more difficult, yet perhaps more important, as products in many generic categories approach parity and consumers change their priorities about the importance of various products in their lives. Companies cope with this difficulty in numerous ways. To reach narrower consumer segments, advertisers experiment with new media delivery systems. The motivation to use these options is a function of both the need to fine-tune the message to the specific needs or wants of the consumer and to reach the target efficiently. Some zip code marketing systems, such as PRIZM, allow a marketer to zero in on the geographic location of its prime prospects with a minimum of waste. They also enable an advertiser to custom-tailor the message to the target market's values and lifestyles. In the new marketing environment, advertisers are increasingly rethinking their message and media strategy.

Advertisers now frequently size up the differentiating characteristics of their products and conclude that there is not enough opportunity to promote the product based on “functional” benefits alone. They are aware that consumers believe there are no significant differences among products in many categories and, because of active or hectic lifestyles, it may not matter much if there were. As a result, companies strive to “build the brand.” Their approach is to add value—largely intangible—to the brand name so that consumers buy the brand for what they believe it represents. Done right, this approach can lead to powerful brand identities. Done poorly, this approach often ends up prioritizing entertainment values that drive awareness of the ad alone versus providing any lasting consumer equity for the brand.

In late 1992, Coca-Cola jarred the advertising business by announcing that it would use the Hollywood-based Creative Artists Agency (CAA) to create the bulk of its television commercials. This news left its longtime advertising agency, McCann-Erickson, unclear about its future role. Michael Ovitz, chairman of CAA at the time and one of the most powerful people in the field of entertainment, had easy access to some of the more renowned directors in Hollywood. Many in the advertising community wondered if Coca-Cola would set an example for other major advertisers to focus more on entertainment and less on selling its product. CAA created numerous spots often without copy, jingle, or any unifying theme other than the tagline “Always Coca-Cola.”

Advertising Age commissioned two separate studies to gauge the effectiveness of the campaign. The first study attempted to measure “likeability”² and the second, “persuasibility.”³ Not surprisingly, the campaign scored high on likeability, especially a computer-generated spot featuring polar bears, and ranked below average on persuasibility. Was this an effective campaign? It’s hard to measure. Large consumer-goods companies like Coca-Cola are able to reach consumers with various messages or imagery at numerous times through traditional media advertising as well as through packaging and signage. Because of this massive exposure, it is extremely difficult to isolate and measure the true effects of a campaign on sales. The trade-off between likeability and persuasibility is frequently not easy to resolve. Because of the prominence of Coca-Cola’s advertising in the media and the attention it has received in the trade press, this campaign sent mixed signals to advertising practitioners and educators.

One position might be called the David Ogilvy School of Advertising after the legendary advertising great. This position holds that there are factors that make some campaigns succeed and others fail. Advertising educators often favor this approach because it acknowledges that there are principles and guidelines to sound advertising. Another approach to advertising is very (very) loosely associated with the West Coast. It features unconventional, highly creative approaches and techniques, often dramatizing a relationship between people and the product. Many advertisers are increasing the executional creative content of their ads in the belief it will forge a stronger relationship between a brand and consumers. Strategy still drives much of this type of advertising even if the purpose isn’t expressively articulated to consumers. Success with this

approach is more a function of talent or inherent creativity than with what one might read about advertising techniques in a book. Although the notion of having advertising created by entertainment professionals has faded, the importance of integrating marketing and entertainment has grown dramatically. For many national brands, there has been a convergence between advertising and entertainment—what some call “advertainment.” Although academicians might admire “West Coast” advertising, it’s a lot harder to teach.

POSTMODERN ADVERTISING

For lack of a better term, this unconventional approach to creativity might be called **postmodern advertising**. Like postmodernism in art or architecture, it too challenges rationality or convention in its field. Bob Kuperman, former president-CEO of TBWA Chiat-Day North America, believes that “persuasion is an art.” This is the kind of advertising that “moves people.” Unlike science, “its success is dependent on a complex mix of qualities that can be neither measured nor predicted.”⁴ Steve Hayden, Vice Chairman at Ogilvy & Mather, who has long worked on the IBM account, believes that most consumer buying decisions are based on irrational processes and require irrational advertising. On the other hand, a rationalist’s position is that these ads are “creatively self-indulgent and grossly inefficient.”⁵ Not surprisingly, ad people have very different ideas about the value of postmodern advertising.

A second landmark campaign can be found well over a decade later, as an example of this new kind of advertising—advertising that is highly creative, yet perhaps unable to produce the desired results. In 2002, Crispin Porter + Bogusky (CP + B), known for its ability to stir “cultural tension,” began a seven-year run and produced a series of oddly popular campaigns for Burger King. The first featured a quirky, caricatured, mime-like version of “The King.” The advertising was intended to reanimate the brand’s icon from the late 1970s, early 1980s and featured the character in unexpected situations, presenting food with a flourish to hungry late-nighters, construction workers, and so forth.⁶

The campaign garnered a bizarre curiosity and cult following overnight. Then, along the vein of zany characters, the agency introduced the Subservient Chicken in 2004, a website containing a chicken that would literally do as the user commanded, intended to convey the brand’s longtime message of “Have it your way.” The site went viral after receiving 15 million visits within the first week and has had over 450 million hits to date. CP + B was awarded the only Grand Clio during the Clio Awards’ Internet, Content & Contact, Print, Design & Innovative Media ceremony in 2005.⁷ The years that followed would see the entry of multiple other personalities, including the Whopper Family, who emphasized low prices, and even the release of an Xbox Burger King video game series. These increasingly unique tactics put Burger King in the spotlight and earned TPG, its holding company at the time, approximately \$367 million in dividends.

However, by 2011, Burger King's same-store sales decreased by 6 percent in Q1, with its top competitor, McDonald's, increasing by 3 percent. The brand's net income dropped 13 percent in Q2 to \$42.8 million (versus McDonald's 15 percent increase in sales to \$1.4 billion).⁸

In retrospect, in its efforts to return to its roots, the focus shifted to high-level branding and entertainment of a male and teen audience and lost sight of one of its primary targets: moms. Additionally, the constant highlighting of low price points became a problem in a category where "quality" was fast becoming the hype. In August of 2011, under the new management of 3G Capital and the guidance of its new agency of record, McGarryBowen, the #2 fast-food restaurant chain chose to drop the Burger King mascot in lieu of a food-focused campaign that highlights fresh ingredients in a move toward appearing healthy and "wholesome."⁹

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

There have been many successful examples of both the postmodern approach and the more conventional approach throughout the history of advertising. A big question today is whether advertising needs to be more entertaining, creative, and different to break through a seemingly ever-increasing number of multimedia messages or whether the principles and techniques that have evolved over the years are still effective. To answer some of these questions, it is helpful to look at what we call the right attitude.

For a company to have the right product, price, place, and promotion, its employees need the right mind-set. We call this the **right attitude**. Companies can be successful even though they appear to do many things wrong. The marketplace can be forgiving; a company need not operate at optimum efficiency or effectiveness to make a profit. But the marketplace can be brutal in the price it exacts on companies that have to compete against rivals who understand *how to compete*. Some of the concepts beginners should keep uppermost in their minds as they prepare an advertising or marketing communication campaign include:

- The marketing concept
- The communication concept
- The integrated marketing communication concept
- The advertising campaign concept
- A strategic orientation

THE MARKETING CONCEPT

After World War II, many firms adopted what became widely known as **the marketing concept**. Basically, this is a philosophy of how to do business. The marketing concept provides decision makers with a framework for the planning and development of strategies for the right product, price, place, and promotion. Of all the principles associated with this philosophy, consumer orientation is the most important. Implementing this

principle can range from a simple focus on the needs, wants, and problems of specific market segments, to organizing the entire marketing effort to appeal to a single market segment, or niche.

CONSUMER ORIENTATION

A consumer orientation emphasizes the importance of planning all marketing activities to satisfy the needs and wants of consumers. The notion that planning should start with the consumer evolved as the marketplace began to change after World War II. Before the war, firms in the United States were production oriented. The population was rapidly expanding, and the Great Depression had left many Americans hungry for products. The demand for goods exceeded the supply, and the main concerns of businesses were to produce products quickly, efficiently, and inexpensively. Because of burgeoning consumer demand, products generally sold well. During the war, much of industry shifted from the production of consumer goods to wartime matériel, suppressing consumer demand artificially. Nevertheless, because of the tremendous demands of war, industry expanded considerably along with increases in technology. Following the war, American firms realized that they had the capacity and the technology to produce more than consumers would demand. The result was rugged, aggressive marketing competition.

The firms that competed best were those that catered to the specific needs and wants of consumers. Developing products became more important than manufacturing. At first, the idea was simply to give consumers what they wanted rather than what the engineers, designers, chemists, or chefs had in mind when they developed a product. This new orientation produced results, but it became apparent that a firm could neither quite satisfy all potential consumers with one or two products—nor did it have to in order to make a profit. Product diversification increased as firms vied with one another to satisfy the growing sophistication of consumers' needs and wants.

MARKET SEGMENTATION

Increasingly through the 1970s, many firms realized that to satisfy the growing sophistication of consumers' needs and wants, they had to compete through product diversification. Market segmentation, aimed at specific segments of the overall market, became widespread as firms developed, priced, distributed, and promoted a heterogeneous variety of products to heterogeneous groups of consumers (i.e., groups that differ from one another on the basis of some common demographic characteristic, such as age, income, or ethnicity). This segmentation happened in many products and industries, such as shampoo, cigarettes, beer, coffee, and, at a much later date, automobiles.

Firms realized they would be more competitive by dividing up the overall market for the generic product into smaller markets, or segments, often targeting each segment with its own separate brand. Each of these markets represented relatively homogeneous groups whose members were

similar based on a characteristic, such as age, income, or lifestyle. Often, they had the same selective tastes and preferences. Companies appealed to these segments by differentiating their product to cater to these special tastes. The combination of increased brand competition, increasing risks associated with new product introductions, and increasingly involved channels of distribution caused these firms to reevaluate their marketing philosophy.¹⁰

Other firms understood that segmenting the market was not simply a better way to compete, it was the *only* way to compete. Increasingly, companies began to target smaller and narrower segments of the broad market, often by creating a database of current and prospective customers. To reach narrow target audiences, firms sometimes used direct marketing.

At the retail level, stores have for many years offered a fairly narrow product line. Take clothing stores, for example. Shops, such as 5-7-9 and Lane Bryant, cater to a certain-size woman. In the 1980s and the 1990s, this kind of segmented selling would be increasingly referred to as “niche marketing.”

NICHE MARKETING

Niche marketing usually means more than merely segmenting the market. Niche marketers typically offer only products within a narrow range, but within that range they offer a fairly deep selection. Sometimes they will compete against a more broadly based company, such as a department store, on the basis of quality, as Victoria’s Secret does, and other times they will compete on the basis of price, as Office Depot does.

Many retailers, such as Toys “R” Us, are able to compete on the basis of price, quality, and selection. As a broad-based retailer, Interstate Department Stores nearly went bankrupt. When it decided to focus its concentration on the toy business with which it had been successful, it changed its name to Toys “R” Us and became a multibillion-dollar company. Unfortunately for Toys “R” Us, the company continually struggles to compete with Wal-Mart and has considered leaving the toy field and concentrate on its Babies “R” Us division where it competes much better. Still, category killers, as they are sometimes called, are generally enjoying spectacular growth and will likely branch out into other areas in the future.

Bed Bath & Beyond is typical of the new specialty retailers offering domestic goods, such as housewares and linens, in the home furnishings market. Its stores are all superstores, with each retail outlet averaging more than 35,000 square feet. Department stores, big boxes such as Target, and a smattering of higher end retailers like Pottery Barn and Williams-Sonoma are its main competition. Its products are a cut above those of mass merchandisers like Wal-Mart and Kmart in terms of selection and the look of the store. By focusing on quality coupled with “Everyday Low Prices” (EDLP), Bed Bath & Beyond has enjoyed tremendous success.

MASS CUSTOMIZATION/PERSONALIZATION

The marketing concept puts a high value on satisfying consumers. This philosophy has progressively led companies to develop and provide products to smaller and narrower segments of the market and, in many cases, to individuals. Although individuals have always been able to custom-order some products to their own unique specifications, many companies now offer customized products on a *mass* basis. Gilmore and Pine note how companies can take four different approaches to mass customization:

- Create a customized product after a dialogue with individual consumers to learn their specific needs and wants (e.g., Mustang car interiors, computers, clothes, and shoes).
- Offer a standardized product that can be modified to some extent by its users (e.g., Burger King—"Have it your way," Amazon.com, iGoogle, Toyota's Scion with its aftermarket customization, and NikeiD.com which invites and enables consumers to personalize their athletic shoes online).
- Market a standardized product differently to different users (e.g., office furniture and lighting).
- Provide individual customers with unique products without letting them know that they have been customized for them (e.g., Kroger, Food Lion, and the A&E television network track the behavior of registered users and sends them personalized pitches).¹¹

In many cases, the products are not exactly unique nor is the message. Still, many marketers are having success micromarketing their products to smaller and smaller segments. Former Toyota Scion Vice President Jim Farley addressed the importance of this trend, saying, "The youth market is all about personalization and specialization."¹² The personalization trend includes more than customized products, methods of delivery, and selling messages; it may also lead to more variation in pricing. Coca-Cola is experimenting with "smart" vending machines that are linked to its internal computer network, thus allowing the price of a can of Coke to vary by time of year or temperature.¹³

Figure 1-1 provides a rough approximation of the development of the marketing concept over the past 50 years. There are, of course, wide differences in the way companies within an industry apply the marketing concept and, similarly, there are great differences among industries. For example, the cigarette industry applied the principles of market segmentation much earlier than the beer industry. Although it seems that companies will be forced by market pressures to apply marketing concept principles, it does not mean they will end up as niche marketers. The opposite may in fact be the case. As niche marketers become more successful, they will likely broaden their product line. Already this seems to be happening with Bed Bath & Beyond and Office Depot. Nor does it necessarily follow that companies that offer personalized products will continue to provide this customization in the future. There is some evidence that too much variety and complexity can *decrease* consumer

FIGURE 1-1 THE MARKETING CONCEPT ERA

1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Consumer Orientation	Market Segmentation		Niche Marketing		Mass Customization/ Personalization

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satisfaction. For some consumers, simplified choices can lead to increased satisfaction.¹⁴

Marketing concept notions, such as “the consumer is always right” or “give the consumers what they want,” have been around for many years. What is different in the new marketing environment is that consumers have access to much more information than ever before. Many car buyers shop online before visiting a dealership. When they do, they’re arming themselves with information on dealer costs.

MARKETING INTEGRATION

To implement marketing concept principles effectively, firms coordinate decisions within their major areas, such as production and finance, with those of marketing. All activities then become part of a total system to produce want-satisfying products and services. In the process, marketing decisions usually take precedence over those of finance or production. Within marketing, product planning precedes decisions on pricing and distribution for the determination of product policy. The marketing concept philosophy encourages executives in and out of marketing to integrate their decisions and activities for the achievement of common goals. Decisions about product quality, pricing, and distribution are often beyond the authority of advertising planners even though decisions made in nonadvertising areas have a direct influence on the effectiveness of an advertising campaign. Many firms recognize this relationship and involve advertising specialists in marketing decisions at the planning stage.

OTHER EMPHASES

The basic principle of the marketing concept is that a firm should marshal its activities toward producing products or services that satisfy existing needs and wants of the consumers. Rather than emphasizing its own resources as its first priority, a company will instead establish giving consumers what they want as its top priority, or as Ford Motor Company likes to say, “Job One.” Ford concluded that what consumers want most

in a car is quality or durability, and, in the slogans “Quality is Job One,” or “Built Ford Tough,” Ford is telling consumers that it understands what they want, and their needs are the company’s highest priority. In this kind of environment, certain other philosophies, or ways of doing business, become common.

Firms tend to be research oriented. Product development evolves out of consumer research. The needs, wants, and problems of the consumer are ascertained through an evaluation of factual data and rigorous observations. Focus groups, one-on-one interviews, attitude and opinion surveys, lifestyle and ethnographic studies, product-usage observations, sales analyses, consumer complaint feedback, and test marketing are but some of the ways a research-oriented firm gets information about the consumer. In contrast, new product ideas in many firms come from the president or the research-and-development (R&D) staff. They are often intuitive and frequently reflect the views of manufacturing or engineering.

In fields that are driven by technology, it often makes more sense to allow technical people to lead the way because consumers may not be sufficiently sophisticated to know which kind of features are possible in a new product line. In this environment, the focus is less on satisfying needs and wants and more on *exceeding* needs and wants. Computers, telecommunications, consumer electronics, and automobiles are some examples of product categories where, in recent years, technical people are producing innovations faster than consumers can articulate their want for them.

Another principle associated with the marketing concept is the policy that activities should be planned. With the growing sophistication and competitive nature of the marketplace, firms need to anticipate problems, uncover opportunities, and forecast demand. Planned activities are an efficient and effective way to deal with a complex marketplace. A marketing campaign is the execution of a marketing plan. Plans provide direction for all those involved in the marketing effort. It is common for marketing plans to be written. In advertising, the larger agencies deem it almost mandatory in the planning of an advertising campaign.

The advertising firm BBDO Worldwide Inc. (BBDO) gives the following reasons why a written plan is necessary:¹⁵

1. It encourages clear and logical thinking.
2. It demonstrates a management approach to advertising by relating media, copy, and art to marketing facts and goals.
3. A written plan offers a factual basis for advertising direction, execution, performance, and appropriation.
4. It provides a complete guide in writing for everyone working on the account, as well as a ready source of information for new personnel joining the client or BBDO.
5. It registers what needs to be done for future improvement and provides an annual benchmark of accomplishment.
6. A plan informs BBDO’s top management of an account’s goals and progress.

7. It serves as an as-needed policy document for client advertising management to use with other departments, corporate management, and directors.
8. It promotes understanding of, and agreement on, objectives and tactics among both client and BBDO organizations.

■ THE COMMUNICATION CONCEPT

It is not enough to have the right product; a company has to communicate what is right about the product, even if it's simply an image or identity. Like the marketing concept, the communication concept suggests that all planning begins with consumers. This concept requires the originator of the message to encode information, whether in words or pictures, *in terms of the consumers' needs, wants, interests, or problems*. To be effective, the message creator has to have a solid understanding of the social and psychological makeup of the target market. In other words, the writer has to understand what makes consumers tick so that he or she can better relate to them—the audience. Many of the successful appeals are subtle and psychological or social in nature. One reason ad agencies have so many young people working for them is to help the agency relate to the very important youth market. For many older adults, talking to your own kids in terms of what's cool, current, or meaningful is hard enough. Talking to others can be mystifying. For some it's like trying to speak a foreign language. Even when you get the words right, there is often the lingering feeling that one of the parties doesn't quite get it.

With consumers connected to brands and to each other in so many ways, it also means advertisers must stay abreast of the dialogues that audiences are having about their brand and with their brand, regardless of whether those dialogues are in blogs, comments, reviews, or social networks. The surplus of consumer conversations can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, digital media have allowed brands to be more fluid and responsive to consumer feedback. On the other hand, the speed with which communication can be disseminated from consumer to consumer means brands can be skewed by bad reviews and commentary within days. All that said, don't lose sight that smart strategy and smart ideas are paramount to any execution—digital or otherwise.

Failure to interpret a message in terms of consumers' needs or wants may mean the ad fails to communicate. Consumers will either ignore the ad, not understand it, or may simply feel that the message is not meaningful. Moreover, because of hectic consumer lifestyles and the vast number of messages consumers are exposed to every day, a message may communicate well enough, but may be forgotten unless it is attached to a distinctive advertising property. Motel 6 and Red Roof Inns both offer budget-priced rooms. Part of what makes Motel 6 sound economical is its name—some people realize or at least think that at one time it had rooms priced at six dollars per night. Red Roof Inns gets across its message in a memorable way with a simple slogan: “Sleep Cheap.”

The above proposition seems fairly straightforward and sensible. Yet it appears that many ads are developed more from the perspective of the advertiser than from that of the consumer. When this happens, the advertising tends to focus more on the qualities of the product that the advertiser thinks are important but not, unfortunately, on those the potential consumer thinks are important. A related and potentially more serious problem occurs when advertising is created without focusing on consumers' needs or problems but is created instead to look or sound good. Sometimes this is called creativity for technique's sake. An advertisement can be very entertaining, but it may not help sell the product. Every year after the advertising award shows, people in the industry talk about how the best ads did not win. In fact, advertisers often indulge in a sardonic humor contest trying to predict the first award-winning agency that will lose the account for which it had won the award.

Along with a focus on consumers' needs, wants, and problems, the communication concept implies an understanding of what communication can or cannot accomplish. Specifically, communication affects the way people think, believe, or feel. By itself, it is seldom enough to sell the product. Communication, especially advertising, needs to operate in harmony with the other elements in the marketing mix. It is crucial that planners understand precisely the role advertising needs to assume to influence consumer behavior. Because advertising is a form of persuasive communication, its role is often best defined in terms of communication criteria that have the ability to stimulate purchasing behavior, such as awareness, comprehension, attitude, or image.

For example, when Gillette was ready to introduce its revolutionary (for the time) Sensor razor, it knew that its advertising would have to do more than tell consumers that it was a better razor; it would have to explain to consumers that the razor was better because the blade was mounted on flexible coils that float along the contours of a person's skin. The approach was so successful that the Gillette Sensor became the number-one nondisposable razor in the world. That was awhile ago. Gillette learned from its experience in introducing double-edged razor blades in 1971 that sometimes you have to get consumers to understand how something works before they will believe a product claim. Before double-edged razors came along, it is doubtful that many consumers ever gave much thought to the idea of using more than one blade at a time. Gillette worked hard to get consumers to understand why double-edged razors provide a closer shave. The Gillette message was that "the Gillette Trac II gives you a closer shave, because the first blade lifts each hair, the second blade cuts it off at the skin line." In 1998, Gillette introduced the Mach3 triple-blade razor. Once again Gillette found it necessary to explain how the product delivered on the advertising promise of offering the consumer "a closer shave in fewer strokes." In 2003, the Mach3Turbo was marketed as a "revolutionary blade [that] lets you shave both up and down." In 2004, Gillette introduced the battery-powered M3Power razor with pulsing action that "stimulates hair upward and away from the skin, making it dramatically easier to shave more thoroughly in one easy power stroke." Today, the brand promotes its latest

addition to the product mix, the Gillette Fusion ProGlide Razor, whose attributes include a lubrication strip, improved suspension for a closer shave, and a microcomb.

Deciding on an appropriate role for advertising is of course not easy. The advertising planner has to project what the effects of each possible strategy might be on consumers' behavior. For example: Would establishing or increasing brand awareness lead to greater sales? Would it be more effective to reinforce or change the attitude of the consumers? Should advertising try to improve or intensify the image of the product?

It is easier to establish awareness than it is to change consumers' attitudes or get consumers to understand how a product operates. Moreover, there are no guarantees that if these tasks are achieved, they will result in increased sales. Not surprisingly, many advertisers opt for the conceptually simpler tasks of increasing awareness or working with a brand's image. With those approaches, however, advertisers run the risk that the copywriter or art director will become misguided and focus more on the creativity or the technique in the advertisement and less on what would be an appropriate selling message.

INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION

The idea that a firm should coordinate, or integrate, all of its communication or promotional activities has been around for more than two decades. What is different now, from the past 20 years, is that firms better understand that to compete in an increasingly sophisticated marketplace and that the messages they disseminate must blend together to achieve interrelated objectives. In the past, companies were often content to let an ad agency take care of its advertising, a public relations agency to handle the PR, and its own marketing department to manage the sales promotion and e-commerce assets. Very often the advertising would go off in one direction, the public relations program in another, and the sales promotion in still another. Although the efforts might produce interrelated results, a marketer might question whether this is the most efficient and effective way to operate. The integrated concept embodies the idea that all parties involved in a campaign blend their efforts into producing seamless marketing communications.

Propelling the new emphasis on integrated marketing communication are marketers who understand that the old ways of doing business no longer work. Today's marketplace has become increasingly sophisticated. Media outlets are splintering, while at the same time, "convergence" is a given. No longer are sales always the paramount goal. Everything has become transactional—time and energy spent with a brand is considered a win. The formation of brand communities is a powerful influence on the marketplace. Although academicians have discussed integrating and coordinating elements of the marketing and promotion mixes since at least the 1960s, especially by using what was then referred to as a "systems approach," it has been only relatively recently that the concept has caught on.¹⁶

As the physical distinctions among brands in many categories become negligible, the role advertising plays in creating a psychological difference

has become more important. At the same time, other types of communication may become even more important in stimulating short-term sales, such as sales promotions and direct marketing. Increasingly, the strategy for many large advertisers is to surround consumers with as many points of contact with the brand as is efficient, in essence, stacking their tactics across a variety of vehicles and often disciplines. As a result, nontraditional media and other marketing communication tools often take on added importance, with traditional channels receiving less weight. For example, one-to-one and one-to-some messages have become nearly as important as mass channels, as the use of social media, behavioral targeting, and contextual advertising online have come into play.

As firms apply the lessons of market segmentation and product differentiation, they target smaller parts of the overall market. As firms speak to consumers with an increasing number of voices, locating the sources of all of a company's communication within the same organization can be more efficient. Typically, there is better communication within an organization than between organizations.

Because of the tremendous increase in communication technologies, marketers need to be flexible enough to revise strategies, tactics, and even their agency partners and reporting structures to meet changing situations. Sometimes it can be more efficient and quicker for all of a firm's messages to come from one organization. *Whether it is more effective is a matter of some debate.* Thus, we get the duality of today's marketplace and the discussion regarding specialist versus generalist.

For some people, the concept of integrated marketing communication sounds better as theory than it works in practice. Locating the sources of a firm's message in one marketing communication company will only make the operation more efficient and effective if each specialized area of that group works harmoniously with the others and avoids the political infighting that sometimes occurs as each unit vies for a piece of the promotional budget. From a specialist argument, advertisers may want more expertise than an ad agency typically possesses. The solution is to go elsewhere. If a frozen food company wants a sales piece for a new product launch, does it want an agency's creative person or someone who is an expert in frozen food? The expert may have 20 years of experience at Kroger. The expert will likely know from experience what is likely to motivate the trade people—a key to many new product launches. The creative person at an agency may have experience that is generally with consumers.

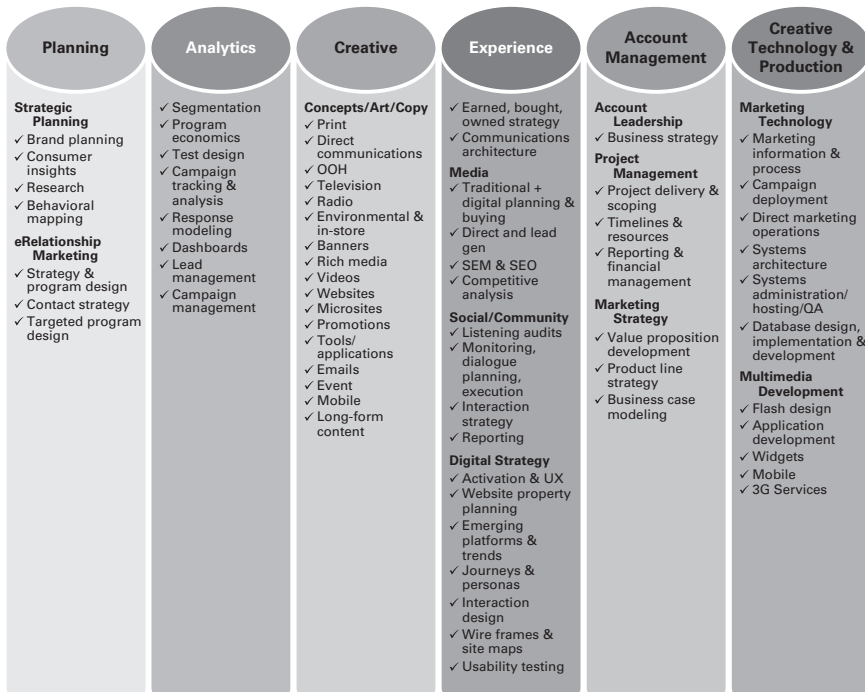
In some cases, not only are advertisers telling agencies they don't want them to handle other types of marketing communication, but frequently they want them to handle only parts of their advertising as well. Agencies are “**unbundling**” their services and offering them à la carte. So an agency may get the media assignment on an account, but not the creative and vice versa. It's also common these days for an advertiser to give creative assignments for the same brand to *different* agencies. Although agencies may suggest that the combined effect of all the messages work best when one source handles everything, ad managers within the company retort that it is *their* job to see to it that all messages are compatible (not the agency's).

Conversely, from the generalist standpoint, there is also an equally growing desire for jack-of-all-trade agencies. Some advertising agencies are absorbing PR and interactive firms and hiring those with experience across a variety of unexpected backgrounds in an effort to create “think tanks” and cultural influence shops. These “hybrid” agencies would be able to supplement a traditional campaign with the development of environmentally friendly packaging, a “branded movie,” the management of a social media channel, a viral or grassroots initiative, the crafting of a music video, or the creation of programming/content and channels.

J. Walter Thompson (JWT), the world’s first full-service advertising agency, currently executes an innovative agency services model that illustrates a real-time, integrated working approach to marketing communication (Figure 1-2). The agency’s structure includes the well-established planning and account management divisions, along with contemporary interpretations of creative, media, and production departments. These are coupled with an analytics branch that ensures agency accountability.

In response to industry trends and consumer demands, JWT places a huge emphasis on an “Experience” model in terms of earned, bought, and owned media strategies, which encompass traditional and nontraditional media, social media, emerging technologies, etc. Their creative teams

FIGURE 1-2 JWT ADVERTISING AGENCY SERVICES MODEL



Source: J. Walter Thompson Agency

develop messages across a limitless number of platforms, from print to microsites, events to guerilla, viral to promotions. And the agency merges digital, print, broadcast, and new media production under the “Creative Technology & Production” unit, bringing to life truly innovative, integrated campaigns for their client base.

Ad agencies, especially the big ones, are also at a disadvantage in terms of cost-effectiveness. Advertisers can often outsource promotional work to suppliers who operate with a lower overhead, particularly in terms of real estate and health benefits. Other advertisers find that they can maintain direct control at a lower cost over promotional elements, such as direct marketing, sales promotion, and packaging, by locating these specializations within the company. Regardless of the source of each promotional element, the effect of all of the activities should be synergistic; that is, each individual or unit’s activity should be coordinated so that the combined effect of all contributions is greater than the sum of its parts.

■ THE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN CONCEPT

The key to successful advertising is being strategic with your choices: in the target you select, what you choose say to them and how you actually deliver your message. A campaign’s concept is not an arbitrary one. Careful steps are taken to identify the “sweet spot” between a brand and its users. How does it fit into their lives? Consumers often approach a purchase decision or an advertising message with the mind-set, “what’s in it for me?” The answer to that question is called the brand’s *promise*. And in the end, a campaign’s *concept* is one that interprets and creatively conveys the brand’s promise to consumers. It could be the use of toddler spokesmen and their antics to show how easily consumers can manage stock portfolios online. Or making people suddenly care about boring old milk by showing how unsettling it is when you run out. How about likening cigarettes and their manufacturers to weapons of mass destruction? What it comes down to, is showing consumers how to look at something they may or may not already know in a whole new way.

Once the campaign’s “umbrella” concept or creative direction is identified, you must decide how to bring it life. How and where will it appear? Sometimes you will be working within a predefined set of message vehicles. Other times, you may have complete freedom, and the sky is the limit in terms of what you can develop. In this case, ask yourself two things, how will the idea best come across? And when and where will the target be most receptive to it? No matter what your tactical mix, a true campaign interrelates all of its activities. Interconnected ads that hit consumers on a variety of levels have greater additive, retentive value than a series of different “one-off” ads. Consumers remember advertising longer when each advertisement helps support, reinforce, or even intensify the others.

There are both highly visible and unseen aspects to an advertising campaign. To the average consumer, an advertising campaign is simply a series of ads that look or sound alike. To the student or the practitioner, a campaign may involve all the activities that help produce advertisements

designed to achieve interrelated goals, such as consumer surveys, brainstorming, or media analyses. Considering this broader range of activities, we define an **advertising campaign** as **a series of advertisements, and the activities that help produce them, which are designed to achieve interrelated goals.**

This definition works in situations where the advertiser relies exclusively on advertising. However, in many cases the advertiser will broaden its focus to include other types of marketing communication, such as sales promotions, publicity, direct marketing, and so forth. These days, the latter is true for most brands. This broader focus requires more than a new definition; it also requires a new way of looking at a campaign. Therefore, it may be more accurate to think of an advertising campaign as a *marketing communication campaign* that is comprised of a full (and necessary), healthy array of many disciplines and their underlying tactics.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

In a sense, all ads for the same product are interrelated. They generally try to achieve the same ultimate objective—sell the product. What separates a campaign from a collection of ads is the degree to which each execution is connected and consistent. The main qualities that distinguish a campaign from an arbitrary collection of ideas and ads *include the continuity of a message, its packaging, and its portrayal of the brand's image or personality*. Upon seeing or hearing an ad from a unified campaign, people can tell that it belongs to a family of other ads that have preceded it.

For example, from a *continuity* standpoint, for nearly two decades Chick-Fil-A has used the simple, yet consistent brand message, “Eat More Chicken.” Developed over 17 years ago by the Richards Group in Dallas, TX, the Cow Campaign continues to appear on calendars, television ads, and countless out-of-home venues. The bull-headed bovines tirelessly apply their beefy wit and basic communication skills to sway consumers away from the burger market. They have their own Facebook page, a sizeable Twitter following, and can be purchased on everything from mugs to kites, clocks to board games. Now, when people see a Chick-Fil-A billboard from a distance, they know from over a mile away who it's for, just by its look and feel. They may not know exactly what product it's promoting until they draw nearer, but they know immediately who is speaking to them and what the major message is going to be.

With regard to *packaging* a campaign, to unify a series of ads, there should be a set of visual elements that weave a thread of continuity throughout and tie everything neatly together (e.g., consistent layout formats, tone, recurrent color themes, application of texture, similar styles of photography/illustration, use of particular fonts, a solid tagline, etc.). For example, in promoting its vast product line, from iPads, iPhones, Macbooks, and iMacs to countless accessories, Apple has established a distinctive pattern to its look and feel. The brand very often uses clean, crisp layouts, with colorful, high-definition products silhouetted against a white

background. The ads are shot to appear almost as if the reader could reach out to touch the device, to interact with it and experience its unique, creative capabilities. This approach accents the technology itself, with the “white space” lending an uncluttered sophistication. The “Mac look” is unmistakable. Their simple ads have somehow brilliantly “dumbed down” some of the most innovative technology in the world and brought creativity to the masses. Previously the brand appealed only to a niche market of professional designers. Today, glowing apples illuminate classrooms and office desktops around the world, and anyone can be their own desktop publisher, film maker, etc.

In ensuring a uniform *brand image* or *personality* it's important that all messages within a campaign assume the same tone, and one that is appropriate to the brand itself. This mood could be humorous, heartfelt, serious, satirical, highly exaggerative, etc. It can be accomplished in part by aesthetics, but often is more reliant on the “voice” of the brand. Who is doing the telling? Is the brand speaking directly to the consumer through the voiceover of an announcer? Is there a spokesperson, such as a company executive? A brand mascot, like an animal or character? An endorser, such as a pop star, athlete, or average joe? Also, what is the approach contained in the ads? A straightforward demonstration? A slice of life? A feel-good brand montage?

In delivering its core message, a campaign should achieve its goals. Sometimes that's a change in consumers' thoughts or attitudes. Others it's a call to action. But all the while, the campaign itself leaves an impression of the brand on its audience. The consumer takeaway being – “this brand is....” hot, trendy, knowledgeable, credible, edgy, cool, desirable, etc.

For example, in an effort to rejuvenate a mature brand, in 2010, Weiden + Kennedy reintroduced the Old Spice brand to a younger, hipper audience in an utterly unforeseen, humorously deadpan fashion, using spokesman Isaiah Mustafa in simulated romance scenarios, as “The Man Your Man Could Smell Like.” Old Spice product sales doubled, as consumers immediately responded to the “attitude” and new brand personality conveyed in the campaign. In 2011 the continually successful slapstick executions shifted to include everyday spokesmen pretending to be important figures, e.g., a sea captain, a jet pilot, and a billionaire executive. In the end, the campaign has brought “swagger” to countless young American males, and back to the brand itself.

■ GETTING IT RIGHT AND KEEPING IT GOING

Many advertising launches start out as cohesive, coherent campaigns, but somewhere in development the advertising loses its focus because of weak leadership, poor planning, or executional problems. Inadequate execution can result from a variety of problems, such as changes in leadership, lack of talent, deficient work habits, personality problems, or insufficient motivation. Problems with leadership or planning often stem from the wrong kind of orientation. The best campaigns are oriented and executed strategically.

STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

If creative ideas are the heart and soul of a campaign, then strategy is the brain. Strategy is the general plan designed to give the campaign its competitive edge. It is more like an outline than a blueprint. The guidelines that are a part of the plan provide direction over the course of the campaign period. Strategy provides the framework within which all those involved in the campaign should operate. Strategy implies that all members of an organization work as a team toward common goals. Strategic plans result from team members who can anticipate the future and who are able to develop the ideas, operations, and procedures to achieve the organization's goals.

A major problem with some strategic plans is that they simply take too long to develop. As part of the strategic-planning process, companies need to build into their operations a strict time schedule and a way of limiting discussion of the items in a plan or they run the risk of what is sometimes called paralysis by analysis. About 10 or 20 years ago, it was common for firms to talk about contingency plans to describe the course of action a company would implement if the situation changed. Today, markets change so quickly and frequently that one can be sure the situation will change and in ways that are often difficult to anticipate. It is therefore imperative that firms integrate options into their strategic plans that provide sufficient flexibility so firms can respond to changing situations in a timely manner.

Although it is easy to talk about strategic plans, it is another thing to deliver them. Advertisers often demand highly creative campaigns—the kind of out-of-the-box thinking that sometimes resists strategic or conceptual analysis. To deal with this potentially conflicting situation, advertisers sometimes assign their advertising requirements to an agency and their strategic planning to a management consultant, such as Booz, Allen, & Hamilton.

A CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

To understand corporate thinking, you need to understand upper-level management. Because upper-level managers are not always available, the next best place to start is with the corporate strategic plan (assuming one exists). There are a number of elements common to all strategic plans, although different disciplines may call them by different names.¹⁷ Among these elements are:

- Organization mission
- Strategic analysis
- Long-term objectives
- Strategy
- Integrated programs
- Financial projections
- Executive summary

Although the above elements are part of a typical, strategic corporate plan, they should be an integral part of all ad campaigns. In an advertising