

STRATEGY AND BRANDING

Putting a Face on a Product

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

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

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

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

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

WHO'S WHO

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

Advertising, MarCom, IMC, or What?

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

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

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

It's About Solving the Client's Problem

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



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

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

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

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

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

The Role of Advertising in the Buying Process

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

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

Here's how AIDA works in advertising:

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

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

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

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

Let's consider six surefire ways to engage consumers in action³:

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

The most popular ways to connect include the following:

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

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



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

Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics

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

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

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-Bound

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

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

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

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



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

© Zambezi LLC

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

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

WHO’S WHO

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

Getting the Facts

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

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

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

▼ TABLE 2.1

Marketing Tasks and What They Mean

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



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

Where to Look for Information

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

Secondary Research

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

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

Primary Research

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

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

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

Ethnography—Immerse Yourself in Their World

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

Projective Techniques—Eliciting Inner Feelings

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

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

Interpreting Research Findings

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

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

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

Who Is the Target Audience?

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

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



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

RISING STAR

PAYING IT BACK BY PAYING IT FORWARD



Courtesy of Olivia Bohringer

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Olivia Bohringer, Strategist, Barkley, Kansas City

Features and Benefits

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

From the Inside: Features

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

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

From the Outside: Benefits

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

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

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

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

TABLE 2.2
Features, Benefits, and Wants and Needs

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

Assembling the Facts


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

The Brief

Some clients deliver a detailed brief with everything a creative team needs to start developing concepts. The most helpful briefs have a narrow focus with specific objectives. But the brief should not be so restrictive that the creative team feels handcuffed. As we'll see in Chapter 6, a million-dollar idea may come unexpectedly, regardless of the brief. Because briefs can vary so much, we can't give you a template. But we can provide a simple outline. One of the best we've seen was used by the Virginia Commonwealth University Brandcenter. If these basic questions are answered in the brief, you've got a good road map to developing ideas.

1. What do we want to accomplish? (Objective)
2. Who are we talking to? (Target Audience)
3. What do they think now? (Current Position)
4. What do we want them to think? (Reinforce Current Position or Reposition)
5. Why should they think this? (Features or Benefits)
6. What is our message? (What Is the One Thing?)

The following is a sample creative brief written by a student for Q-tips.



What do we want to accomplish? The main objective of my campaign will be to introduce Q-tips cotton swabs to the next generation of adults, showing them the many uses as well as the quality that distinguishes Q-tips cotton swabs from the generic competition.

Who are we talking to? We are speaking to people who value a superior product and want the best. More important, we are targeting the emerging Gen Z and Millennial crowds to sway their future buying habits as they make their way through adulthood.

What do they think now? Most of our new audience is indifferent to Q-tips cotton swabs. They consider this a very menial purchase and usually pick the cheapest package on the rack. They have always depended on others to pick up this item, so this will be a brand-new purchase for them.

What do we want them to think? We want to instill a brand image into their minds; when they walk into a grocery store for personal care products, we want them to think Q-tips. We want them to pass over the generic products and choose Q-tips because Q-tips are a personal product as well as a practical one.

Why should they think this? Because Q-tips will be presented in a very edgy and fun way, we will be able to connect to our audience. This will carry over to the point of purchase and influence their buying habits. We want them to realize the importance of taking care of themselves with the highest quality of cotton swabs.

What is our message? Q-tips cotton swabs are a personal item with practical applications.

More recently, briefs also include a diversity review. Some agencies insert this into the brief with prompts such as “Is our message culturally appropriate?” or “Have we missed any opportunities to be more culturally relevant?” Grey Advertising worked with the 3% Movement to create a brief that marries diversity relevance to *key performance indicators*. The brief received a lot of positive press, and Grey gained new business in the process. Regardless of the approach you take, clients now expect this to be part of the briefing process, as they well should. What would your answer be to “Is our message culturally appropriate?” when it comes to Q-tips? It might not sound like it matters with this brand. But, we assure you, you need to be ready to answer the question. And your work will be better for it.

Copy Platform

The copy platform is also known as a creative strategy statement and by several other names. It can be as simple or as detailed as you’d like. No matter what you call it and how complicated it can be, a good copy platform should cover the product features and benefits, competitive advantages and weaknesses, information about the target audience, the tone of the message, and a simple, overriding statement about the product. We call this the One Thing. It can also be called the Central Truth, the Big Idea, or the Positioning Statement.

The best way to start? Ask, simply:

“If you could say just One Thing about this product, what would it be?”

It’s not an easy question to answer. When we begin working with new clients, we sometimes ask them to answer it. You’d be surprised how often they struggle. The most common response is “Nobody really asked that before. It’s really so many things. I can’t think of just one.” Then they provide a laundry list of features. No wonder they needed a new agency.

Another way to think about a copy platform is to distill the essence of the consumer’s identity. Then distill the essence of the brand. Then find the sweet spot that marries both. It’s hard to do, and every agency has its own way of getting there. (Note: None of this is possible without a lot of research.)

A copy platform is essential to getting you to the positioning statement. You’ll find an example copy platform in the Appendix. It’s a compilation of several forms used by different agencies. Each firm will have its own way to organize information, but this one will do an excellent job most of the time.

Consumer Profile or Persona

The consumer profile takes the copy platform and creative brief a step further by putting a human face on the target audience. Who are they? What are their wants and needs, their buying intentions, and their attitudes toward the product and competitors? What do they do for a living? What are their hobbies? Where do they live and work, and how does that affect their buying patterns? When are they planning to buy? When do they watch TV or use other types of media? Why should they consider your product or the competitors? Based on demographics, psychographics, lifestyles and values, and other research, a consumer profile puts some flesh on the bare bones of the copy platform. You might consider summarizing the demographics in the first paragraph and include the psychographics in the second paragraph, while you weave the lifestyles and values through the whole profile.

See the Apple Inc. example in photo 2.6.



Photo 2.6 Apple launched a TV spot that featured a new montage of black and white still photos featuring celebrities and others.
© Apple Inc.

The following list should help you develop some basic information about the product and potential customers. And don't forget to consider the ever-important question why.

- Who are the prospects?
- What do they do, and what do they want?
- Where do they live?
- When do they buy?
- Why would they be interested?
- How do they buy?

The following example was written by a student to describe Maria, the ideal prospect for Excedrin Migraine. From this persona, we know that an advertiser can't reach Maria very effectively through traditional media. Through demographics and psychographics, we know our approach must be intelligent and to the point (Maria is smart and doesn't have a lot of spare time). The benefit of a non-prescription remedy that could relieve migraine symptoms without taking time out for a doctor's visit may be the main selling point.

MEET MARIA



Maria Sanchez is a modern 35-year-old working mom with a husband and two children, ages 10 and 3.

Maria graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in management, which helped her land a job in the human resources department of a large insurance company in Chicago. Maria loves the job, but caring for a family, commuting, and problems at work can sometimes trigger a migraine headache. With

such a busy schedule, Maria can't take time off from work and family with a migraine. The increased frequency of her migraines creates even more stress, but there's no time to visit a doctor or make an extra trip to the pharmacy.

Throughout the workday, Maria sneaks a peak at Instagram and Pinterest and spends at least an hour every night updating and responding to social media at home.

At home, Maria and Carlos will stream shows from Netflix and occasionally watch telenovelas on Univision with Maria's mother and sister. Maria surfs SiriusXM and almost never tunes into a local radio station.

Value Proposition

A value proposition can be a long, detailed statement that explains why a consumer should buy a product or service. Or it can be a short sentence. No matter how long it is, everyone on the creative team should know why a product will add more value or solve a problem better than the alternative. Or at least know why the advertiser believes it. The ideal value proposition is concise and appeals to customers' strongest decision-making drivers. In other words, their wants and needs.

We like this simple formula for a value proposition. If you can fill in the blanks, you've got the foundation for building a campaign.

For _____ (target customers)

Who want _____ (specific desire)

We offer _____ (a new product or service functional benefit)

Instead of _____ (inadequate competitive offering)

We deliver _____ (emotional benefit)

Here is a value proposition a student prepared for Halo Top ice cream.

For college students transitioning to a healthier lifestyle who want a satisfying but lower-fat treat, we offer Halo Top ice cream instead of fattening snacks like cake or cookies. We deliver all the taste of fattening desserts without the guilt.

Deciding What's Important

The ad will not write itself based on a compilation of facts. Sometimes a great creative idea stems from a minor benefit and blooms into a powerful image that drives a whole campaign.

David Ogilvy wrote one of the best headlines ever by focusing on a Rolls-Royce clock rather than the whole car. Our advice: Get the facts and use them. When you see a feature or even a rather vague benefit, be sure to ask this question:

So What?

Another way to drive home the importance of asking “Why?” is to reframe it as “So what?” What does that feature do for the consumer? Keep asking “So what?” until you get to the benefit that satisfies a basic want or need. Think about the questions you’d ask if you were buying something. You may not get something for the body copy. But if you keep probing, you might get an idea for a whole campaign.

For example:

Dove soap is one-quarter cleansing cream.

- So what? It’s creamier, less harsh to the skin.
- So what? Your skin looks younger, less dry.
- So what? You feel better about yourself.

Now you’ve got a hook. Don’t tell people about your soap; talk to them about feeling beautiful, free, and just as they are. The Dove brand was launched in 1957, and while it’s changed a lot over the years, its core value is still there. Put yourself in the target customer’s shoes. Luke Sullivan says, “Ask yourself what would make you want to buy the product? Find the central truth about the product . . . hair coloring isn’t about looking younger. It’s about self-esteem. Cameras aren’t about pictures. They’re about stopping time and holding life as the sands run out.”⁶

Tone: Finding Your Voice

You know what you want to say: Now you must figure out how to say it. Whether you create a formal tone statement or just think about it, you need to define the tone. Another way to think about it is finding your voice. Is it loud and obnoxious? Soft and sexy? Logical and persuasive? Fun and carefree? Melodramatic and sensational? Or some other characteristic?

For example, if you did advertisements for a hospital, you wouldn’t make jokes about kids with cancer. You’d be hopeful, respectful, empathetic, and maybe emotional.

Resonance and Positioning

You’ve gathered, organized, and prioritized the background information on the product. You’ve identified the target audience. You’ve set the tone. What’s missing? How about your branding strategy? How do you put a face on that product or service that connects with consumers? Two key factors that help formulate branding strategy are resonance and positioning.

Resonance: Did You Just Feel Something?

When you achieve resonance, your external message connects with internal values and feelings. It connects to consumers’ emotional sweet spot. Resonance requires a connection with feelings that are inside the consumer’s mind. You don’t have to put in a new emotion—just find a way to tap into what’s already there. Your brand story must be relevant. Relevance leads to resonance, which will strengthen awareness, begin building comprehension, and

First ask...

- How will they be used?
- Are they easy to follow?
- Do they reflect marketing goals?
- Are they scalable?



Brand personality

Professional or laid back?
A personality makes your brand approachable



Brand beliefs

Aligns with personality and marketing to build company character



Social media tone

Use same tone across all social media platforms



Marketing position

Knowing where you want to be gives your brand a goal



Copywriting tone

All copy, including websites, ads, direct mail and collateral

lead to conviction and possibly action. How's that for connecting multiple streams of psychobabble? Want a simpler explanation?

$$1 + 1 = 3$$

The convergence of brand strategy and resonance theory succeeds best in brands that make consumers happy.

Assume the Position

This is the best definition of positioning we've found: Simply stated, positioning is the perception consumers have of your product, not unto itself, but relative to the competition.⁷

The key to understanding and using positioning lies in the consumer's mind. The consumer files product considerations into two broad categories: garbage ("nothing there for me") and "maybe I'm interested." In the second category, consumers use subcategories for various products, often aligning those positions with heavily promoted brand images. For example, Porsches are fast. Volvos are safe. Jeeps are rugged. And so on. Once a position is established, it takes a lot of effort to change it.

Before you develop the position of your client's product, you must ask these questions:

- What is the current position?
- What is the competitor's position?
- Where do you want to be?
- How are you going to get there? (That's strategy.)

Repositioning and Rebranding

There's nothing more exciting to a creative team than a rebrand. It means you get to put your mark on the entirety of a piece of business. And new logos and identity packages look great in portfolios. But remember most clients aren't enthusiastic about undertaking the process. Sure, you may be able to execute that new logo in a small handful of billable hours. But that logo needs to appear on everything from the website to business cards. Be sure the only path forward is a rebrand before recommending one. Here are the main reasons to consider repositioning and rebranding a product or service.

- Society and marketing environments have changed: It's not enough to avoid social issues. Consumers want to know what a brand stands for. Or against.
- The competition has changed.
- Sales are lagging: If you don't have the right products or competitive pricing, consider changing your image.
- Your brand has had a recent crisis or negative publicity.
- Your brand is no longer relevant.

Change is inevitable, so a company should always be evaluating its brand to remain current and connected. In rare cases, a brand image is so strong that colors, type fonts, or package shape may invoke brand recognition without showing the actual package or mentioning the brand in text or audio, as demonstrated in photo 2.7. Doritos used colors, blurred package graphics, and subliminal shapes to promote the brand with no logos or mention of the brand in the whole commercial.



Photo 2.7 Doritos used recognizable colors and shapes rather than logos and other brand images.
© PepsiCo

Strategies for Generational Marketing

When you define target audiences, you can take a *horizontal* approach, as we do in Chapter 4, where we'll discuss the challenges and opportunities of reaching diverse audiences based on race, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and disability. Here we're taking a *vertical* approach by looking at the best ways to reach four specific generational markets. While we certainly acknowledge the intersectionality within and across each age group, for this section we're looking for commonalities that affect strategic planning.

Gen Z: Adulting and Stuff

We'll start with a group you know well. You. While you're experiencing these trends in real time, you might be interested in what marketing experts think about your generation. Born after 1996, Gen Z is the newest generation entering the market on a large scale. These truly digital natives were raised with the internet, social media, and smartphones. Gen Z values individual expression and is known for its passionate use of media technology to mobilize for a variety of causes. The oldest are finishing college, entering the workforce, and beginning to make tough decisions regarding home purchases, graduate education, and vehicles. Totalling 82 million and \$143 billion in spending power, Gen Z is projected to become the largest U.S. consumer population by 2026. Marketers are paying close attention.⁸

Connecting With the Gen Z Market

You'll have your own ideas about the best ways to reach you, but here are some general tips from a consensus of marketing experts. In general, Gen Z audiences:

Prefer brands that are eco-friendly, socially responsible, and aesthetically pleasing.

Spend a larger percentage of their discretionary income on clothing and food than other generations.

Prefer privacy. They'd rather share judiciously than be openly transparent.

Think spatially and in 4D. They are extremely tech savvy and expect user experience to be seamless.

Enjoy puzzles, video games, and friendly competition.

Millennials: #itsamovement

Totalling just under 73 million with \$1.4 trillion in buying power, Millennials in the United States have surpassed Boomers as the largest adult generation. Millennials are now the

second-largest generation in the U.S. population.⁹ Born after 1980 through 1995, Millennials have been shaping and shifting society from retail to religion. Millennials are regarded as more open-minded, supportive of gay rights, and advocates for equity, when compared to other adult generations. Millennials describe themselves as confident, self-expressive, and receptive to the latest ideas and lifestyles. The world's first digital native generation, Millennials grew up with smartphones and personal computers and experienced the birth of social media. Millennials prefer access rather than ownership. Their reluctance to buy sizable items like cars and homes gave rise to “sharing” services and has accelerated the growth of brands like Uber and Airbnb. Millennials are also dedicated to wellness. No other generation is more distrustful of advertising or finds more creative ways to avoid it.

Connecting With the Millennial Market

Here are a few tips to connect with Millennial audiences. As with the Gen Z tips, these are generalizations, and individual preferences can be quite diverse.

When it comes to messaging, Text + Content + Sharing = Success.

Enhance their shopping experience.

Incorporate video content in social and internet marketing.

They're passionate about sharing on social networks.

Mix traditional media into your campaign; don't rely on digital for all the messaging.

Gen X: Small but Mighty

With only 60 million people in the United States and \$2.4 trillion in spending power, Gen X is sandwiched between two larger generations, Millennials and Boomers.¹⁰ Born between 1965 and 1980, Gen X is small in comparison, but has made a big mark in the workplace. Although Gen Xers are not digital natives, they tend to be tech savvy and widely use social media. Marketers cannot afford to ignore them. Gen X was among the first generations to become skeptical of marketing and advertising. As a result, advertisers began to experiment and create some of the new techniques and tactics prevalent today, including product placement, paraphernalia, media linking strategies, and branded content. Also known as the latchkey generation, Gen X grew up with working parents and minimal adult supervision. This shows up in their desire for work-life balance, flexibility, and independence.

Connecting With the Gen X Market

Here are some general tips for finding and connecting with the Gen X market:

Value independence. Give them a goal and let them figure out how to accomplish it.

Be noticeably clear about your offer. Don't feel any skepticism.

Give them options. Let them figure out which offers work best for them.

Consider incorporating direct mail and other traditional media into the mix.

Ramp up your online presence. Gen Xers like to do their own research online. They read reviews and visit opinion sites.

Boomers: Age Is a Matter of Perception

Born between 1946 and 1964 with over \$2.6 trillion in buying power,¹¹ Baby Boomers tend to be wealthier than other generations and, in many cases, a little too smug about how they achieved that affluence. Coming of age in the era of “sex, drugs, and rock ’n’ roll,” they are now regarded as hardworking, goal centric, individualistic, and perhaps a little too blind about the privileges they enjoyed as children of the Greatest Generation. To reach a Boomer population of about 70 million in the United States, marketers must comply with the needs of this generation, specifically primary (and secondary) housing, health care, leisure activities, and estate planning. Although Boomers may have been late to the social media party, most are now fully engaged with the digital world (although they may rely on their grandchildren for technical support). Overwhelmingly, Boomers have embraced mobile devices, smartphones, and tablets and text frequently (spelling whole words and using complete sentences). The internet is huge, and they have the time to surf the web for news stories, sports scores, recipes, and cute puppy videos. Boomers are also the largest consumers of traditional marketing, including television, magazines, newspapers, radio, and direct mail. No matter the platform, for this demographic it’s the message, not the technology, that counts.

Connecting With Boomers

Here are a few tips to connect with Boomers. But remember not to treat this or any age group as a monolith. Race, gender, income, location, health status, lifestyle, and a thousand other factors guide marketing messages. But you can be assured the following tips will keep you out of trouble:

- Boomers are painfully aware of ageism. They experience it on the job, while shopping, and while traveling. They don’t want to be disrespected or stereotyped in advertising. No one does.
- While they may wish to be younger, don’t remind them of their reckless youth. It just makes them feel old (and maybe they weren’t really that wild and crazy).
- Brands mean more, especially if the brands they grew up with are still around. While they may have distrusted authority in the past, they tend to believe advertising more than younger generations.

Many advertisers show little respect for older consumers, even though people 55-plus control 70% of all personal wealth in the United States. One reason for this disrespect is lack of age diversity among those who create the ads. The median age for a manager of an American ad agency is 37, and the average age of a creative person in the industry is only 28: 71% of creative directors are male.¹² That explains why those age 50 and over, who do most of the consumer spending, represent only 15% of adults in online media images.¹³

Throughout this book, we show both good and bad examples of age-related advertising. Photo 2.8 deals with the very real issue of student loans for Gen Z; illustrative skills are essential to social commentary in this student-produced parody print design from Howard University. It gives voice to generational concerns about the costs of higher education and not just at HBCUs, like Howard. Photo 2.9 shows how gaming can build a positive relationship between Gen Z and Boomers.

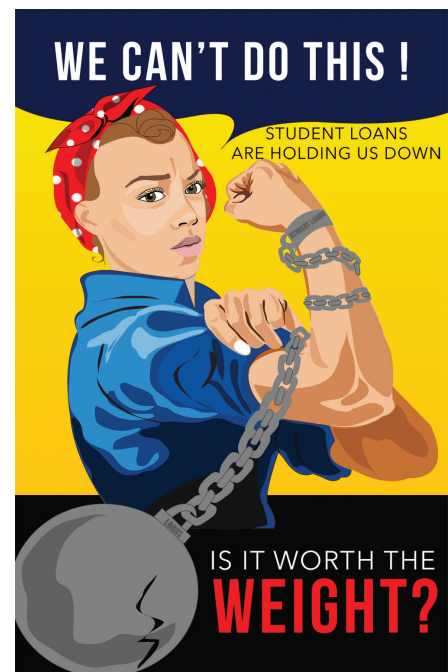


Photo 2.8 A student from Howard University created this parody of the famous “We can do it” ad from World War II. Courtesy of Seattle Ellison

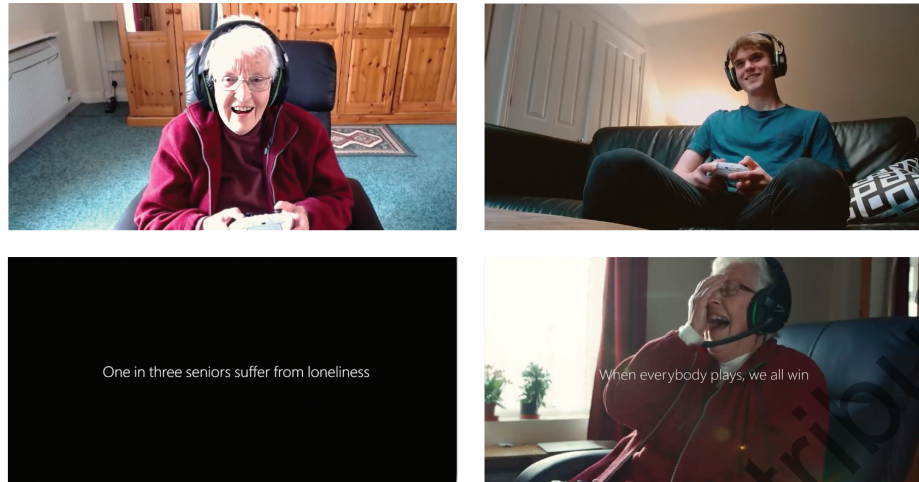


Photo 2.9 This short-form video from the United Kingdom shows how Xbox can bring these generations together, not just to have fun gaming, but also to learn about each other's lives.
© Microsoft Corporation

▼ TABLE 2.3

Companies With the Best Reputation

2021 Rank	Company	2021 Score	Change From 2020
1	Patagonia	82.7	+31
2	Honda Motor Company	81.6	+14
3	Moderna	81.3	--
4	Chick-fil-A	81.1	+7
5	SpaceX	81.1	--
6	Chewy	80.9	--
7	Pfizer	80.2	+54
8	Tesla Motors	80.2	+10
9	Costco	80.1	-2
10	Amazon.com	80.0	-7

Every year, the Axios Harris Poll 100 uses a two-step process that starts by surveying the public's top-of-mind awareness of companies that either excel or falter in society. These 100 "most visible companies" are then ranked by a second group of Americans across the seven key dimensions of reputation to arrive at the ranking. In 2021, Patagonia jumped 31 places to number one, based mainly on their strong environmental activism. Others are new to the list, and some rankings are no doubt related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The company with the least favorable reputation? Let's just say it has the same name as a former president.¹⁵

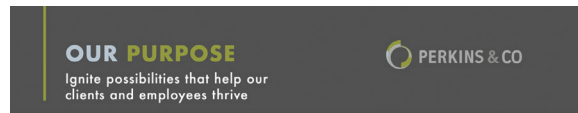
The Power and the Limits of Branding

For years we've been firmly entrenched in what marketing guru Scott Bedbury once called "a new brand world." Today as social media and word-of-mouth marketing mold more opinions, fewer people accept what advertisers say about their brands. In fact, many younger consumers have formed a significant anti-corporate sentiment that has severely eroded once powerful brands.

Before you start supporting a brand with MarCom, you must understand the strengths and the challenges of that brand. Luke Sullivan takes the traditional view: "A brand isn't just a name on the box. It isn't the thing in the box either. A brand is the sum of all the emotions, thoughts, images, history, possibilities and gossip that exist in the marketplace

PRO TIPS

YOUR BEST CUSTOMERS MAY BE INSIDE YOUR ORGANIZATION



The thing about positioning an accounting firm is this: They all do the same thing (by law).

And while Perkins & Co began to differentiate itself with a Wieden+Kennedy line early on (“Less Boring Than the Average Accounting Firm”), the company wanted to amplify their position in a way that reflected their growing stature on a larger scale.

Early strategic discussions led us to the realization that the greatest threat to the company was not an inability to get new clients, but an inability to service them. Therefore, the key to success was winning the war for talent. We agreed that if they could hire well and keep the work moving through the organization efficiently (while doing their jobs well, naturally), finding new clients would take care of itself (or would at least be a secondary consideration). Keeping up standards and their reputation was job one.

So, we looked inward. To recruit the best and brightest talent, we needed to understand why current staff decided to join Perkins and why they chose to stay. We interviewed shareholders and held workshops with a few groups of staffers. Projective techniques revealed that they felt that Perkins was a different kind of accounting firm—not because of what they did, but because of who they were,

how they went about their work, and, ultimately, who they recruited that fit within this culture. We found that staffers believed there was nothing sexier than studying accounting in school. They lived for accounting. They loved it. And they didn’t know that other people didn’t feel that way until they got out into the “real world.” These people wanted to feel proud of their industry and the company they worked for. Making accounting sexy was a mission that Perkins *uniquely* could fulfill.

All this insight turned into a brief, a manifesto, and a brand persona that captured the essence of what made staff proud to work at Perkins. The brand’s poster child was Veuve Clicquot (the orange-labeled champagne). Like Perkins, Veuve is a super-premium brand that is confident enough to let its personality shine through. These brand pieces and the creative brief were used across the organization in several ways: creating a new logo, brand presence, physical space update, new website, and strategic plan. Everything became evidence that staff happiness was foundational to the company’s success.

Further work has involved documenting the values and “rules of engagement” that keep the (now large) firm unified and harmonious (and keeping with the firm’s vision). These values were integrated into a notebook to make them available and useful—not out of sight—and visible across all seniority levels of the organization. These notebooks are not only onboarding tools, but artifacts that keep the culture alive.

Ultimately, Perkins found success by focusing their marketing efforts on their staff—and celebrating their culture as the key to staff happiness. Perkins has doubled in size while remaining one of the best places to work in Portland, OR—a “one-two punch” of goals that were both required for them to say they “won big.”¹⁴

Lynette Xanders, Founder and Chief Strategist, Wild Alchemy

about a certain company.”¹⁶ You might even simplify that further. A brand is simply a promise made to consumers. Companies marketing brands that have positive images, with a promise that consumers believe and the companies live up to, experience billions of dollars in extra brand equity, worth far more than the physical assets of their firms. They protect those brands and all the symbols associated with them like a mama bear. Put an unlicensed NFL team logo on a jersey, and you’ll see how sharp those claws can be. Brands that are losing their luster have backed away from the most blatant identification on their products to stop their losses.

WHO'S WHO

Margaret Johnson—In 2017, upon being named Agency Executive of the Year by *Ad Age*, Margaret Johnson was an executive creative director. Today, Johnson is the chief creative officer and a partner at Goodby Silverstein & Partners (GS&P). In 2012, *Business Insider* named Johnson the 10th most powerful woman in advertising. Under Johnson's leadership, in 2021, GS&P was named "Most Innovative Advertising Agency" by *Fast Company* and "Agency of the Year" by *Campaign* and *Forbes*. Before joining GS&P, Johnson was an art director at the Richards Group and attended Miami Ad School in Atlanta after graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.¹⁷

Brand Image

Brand image advertising and promotion sell the personality, the mystique, and the aura surrounding or emanating from the product or the company that makes it. Think of the old cliché "Sell the sizzle, not the steak." Every product has a brand image, whether weak or strong, negative or positive. Remember what we said about a promise? Consider these two aspects of branding:

What it is: A brand is a promise. It's shorthand for all the product's attributes, both good and bad.

What it does: A brand makes its promise personal by conveying the product's personality, which reflects on the people who buy the product. It's really about relationships. To support a brand's image, advertisers use simple, unique, and easily recognized visuals. Over time, the brand (and all its attributes, good and bad) comes to mind when a consumer even catches a glimpse of these visuals.

Some brand images are so strong they can be used to highlight a totally different product or service as shown in a student-designed ad for Fix-a-Flat in photo 2.10.

Before most consumers can identify the make and model, they recognize the emblem on the car. So, this student played with that strong brand identity to create a series of print ads to promote Fix-a-Flat, in a campaign that went on to win an ADDY award.

Branded Storytelling

Self-described marketing heretic Mark Di Somma has stated, "Stories are the backbones of powerful brands. Every strong brand is backed by a powerful brand story that weaves together all the brand elements into a single and compelling tale packed with truth, insights and compelling ideas."¹⁸ Stories are driven by emotions, and consumers are expressing these emotions through their consumption choices. Think of how Nike has managed to direct all its communications toward one underlying message—the will to win. They must do this



Photo 2.10 This student played with strong brand identity to create a series of print ads to promote Fix a Flat, in a campaign that went on to win an ADDY award.
Courtesy of Ricky Funes

through telling the story of individual athletic success, but always in the context of the athletic community—the Nike community. In the process, consumers see themselves within these stories and thus within the Nike community. They, too, dream of winning, and Nike’s stories represent their stories—or at least their mythological possibility. Nike’s advertising provides the context for this mythology to grow. It also demonstrates how branding and the unique selling proposition shape consumers’ experiences. See photo 2.11, featuring renowned tennis player Serena Williams.

WHO’S WHO

Shirley Polykoff—When most copywriters were men, Shirley Polykoff began working for *Harper’s Bazaar* magazine as a teenager. After a career of retail copywriting, Polykoff took over the Clairol (hair coloring) account at Foote, Cone & Belding (FCB) and penned the classic “Does she . . . or doesn’t she?” (“Only her hairdresser knows for sure”), written in an era when blondeness was considered the height of fashion for white women. Polykoff reached the position of executive vice president and creative director at FCB and left to found a successful agency.

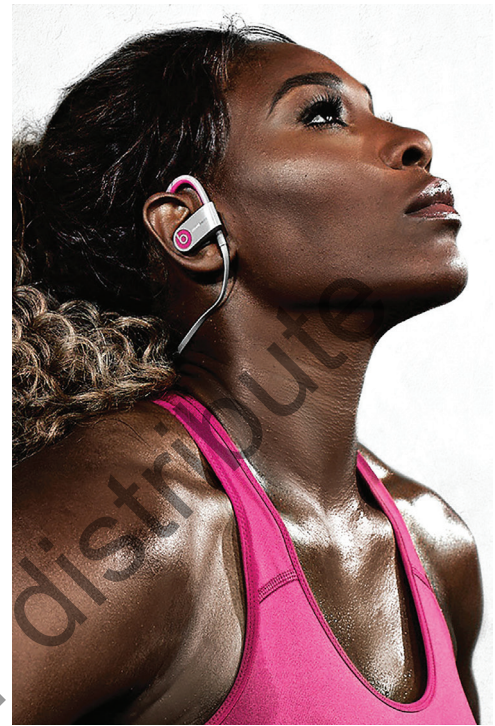


Photo 2.11 Celebrity endorsers can give a brand instant recognition and credibility.
© Apple Inc.

Parent Brands and Their Relatives

Even with changes in how brands are perceived, marketers still need to establish recognition, differentiation, and relevance for their brands. In earlier times, the solution was to saturate every advertising medium and slap that logo on anything that wouldn’t move. However, advertising funds are limited, even for huge companies, so a more sophisticated approach was required to make that brand stick in the minds of consumers.

David Aaker, brand consultant and author of more than 14 books, suggests that the value of a brand is often rooted in the parent brand. Subbrands are the value brands. Marriott is the parent brand, while Courtyard by Marriott is a value-based subbrand. Aaker suggests there are three types of relationships between parent brands and subbrands: endorser, codriver, and driver brands. Let’s use Nike to walk you through. Nearly every extension of the Nike brand, from Nike Golf to NIKEiD (now known as Nike By You), carries with it the cache of the parent brand. Now let’s see how it plays out.

- Endorser brand: This brand is endorsed by the Nike parent brand—Nike+ (running gadgets).
- Codriver brand: This brand is equal to the parent brand in terms of its influence with consumers and sometimes appears as a competitor—Adidas.
- Driver brand: With this brand, the parent maintains primary influence as the driver, and the subbrand acts as a descriptor, telling consumers that the parent company is offering a slight variation on the product or service they have come to know and trust—Nike Women.

Examples in photos 2.12 and 2.13 show logo treatments and packaging for brand extensions of Virgin and Coca-Cola.



Photo 2.12 The Virgin brand grew to become a multibillion-dollar venture capital conglomerate.
© Virgin Group Ltd.



Photo 2.13 Coca-Cola maintains consistent branding for the various versions of the company's flagship products.
© The Coca-Cola Company

Brands Can Take a Stand

Most consumer brands and many business-to-business marketers have adopted a policy of corporate social responsibility. This can range from supporting worthy causes with cash contributions to active participation in social justice and environmental initiatives. As it's often said, the brand with the most friends wins. And being on the right side of today's most critical issues is a sure way to win brand loyalty, even at the risk of turning others away.

You'll see many examples of this throughout this book.

As Brand Specialist Molly DeWolf Swenson states, "A brand isn't a bystander. It's an 800-pound gorilla that has an opportunity—or dare I say, the responsibility—to leverage not only its corporate social responsibility dollars, but also its products, audiences, media, and yes, advertising, in support of the side of history it wants to be on."¹⁹ Consumers want to know more than what the product will do for them. Brands like Chipotle, Dove, McDonald's, Nike, Oreo, Subaru, and many others take a stand on social or political issues. In 2021, a Texas law entitled citizens to sue anyone they suspected of assisting an abortion, even rideshare drivers. Uber and Lyft responded by covering any legal fees for their operators in connection with this law. Bud Light, as shown in photo 2.14, demonstrated support for LGBTQIA+ rights. Yes, brands can take a stand on controversial

issues, but they have to consider the consequences. In most cases, there is very little downside in doing the right thing.

It takes more than a quick shot of cause marketing to establish a brand position that sticks. It makes the most sense when a brand supports a cause directly connected to its products. As we'll see throughout this book, advertisers can no longer "expect to play Switzerland while the rest of the world takes sides."²⁰ The good news is they can do well by doing good.



Photo 2.14 Bud Light took a stand for LGBTQIA+ rights.
© AB InBev

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

RACE IN ADVERTISING: AUNT JEMIMA

Aunt Jemima has changed its name. Why? The original name and brand image is deeply rooted in the image of a mammy, a term given to Black women who were tasked with the caring, or nursing, of white children. She was in fact a servant, and primarily an enslaved woman. This image was originally based on the "blackface characters" popular in the 1800s. Though the person who the image was modeled after was paid, the imagery and ads were indeed disgustingly racist. In 1989, the bandana was removed, and her hair was relaxed to remove the stereotype of the mammy image and to appeal to a modern audience. These modifications still could not erase its racist past. In June 2020, Quaker Oats, the parent company, announced that the name and the image would be removed in 2021 and rebranded as Pearl Milling Company, the original owners of the pancake mix.

There are some who feel this is doing an injustice to the memory of the women who were the face of the brand. The original Aunt Jemima was an enslaved woman named Nancy Green who originated the role with the apron and bandana in 1893. Later, a woman named Anna Short Harrington became the face of the brand. Her great grandson disagrees with the removal of the image and the name. He sees this as erasing the history of her and the other women who played that role.

As I look at the decision to change this brand and to reintroduce it, I wonder if the public will have the same admiration for the product that once carried the image

of a Black woman, now appearing with an unfamiliar name, though the packaging carries the original brand color palette.

When brands make changes to the product name, logo, packaging, or ingredients, it is often met with adverse reactions from the public. With the Aunt Jemima pancake product line, the name has changed. Is just changing the name enough, or the only way to approach this problem? What would you suggest for a brand rollout to the public and how to use this as a teachable moment of race in America, and how advertising played, and continues to play, a role in the construction of race?

- Is there a way to maintain the familiarity with the brand by updating it from its offensive past without a complete name change?
- What would you recommend for a new name and an image that does not invoke a racist past?
- Could or should this brand take advantage of an opportunity to open a dialogue about positive imagery in brands we love and trust?
- What if the Aunt Jemima name remained? How could you create a positive story around the brand, and what would be the advertising strategy? What story could the ad campaign tell?

Monna T. Morton, Senior Lecturer, University of the Arts

EXERCISES

1. BRANDING IDENTITY

Contributed by Susan Westcott Alessandri, Associate Professor, Suffolk University

A brand's identity includes its name, logo, tagline, and color palette. While a brand's identity is unique, many brands in the same category have similar brand elements. Consider McDonald's, Burger King, and Wendy's: All three share the colors red and yellow, although each of the brand identities is remarkably different from the others. Although the meanings associated with color are culturally specific, color theorists say that red is often associated with heat, while yellow is associated with happiness. These two associations are certainly positives for the fast-food industry.

- Choose a product category to study and then do some research to find the top three competitors in that category.
- Analyze the brand name, typography, logo, and color palette of each of the competitors.
- What elements do the brands have in common, if any? What elements are completely different?
- Explain how similar identity elements contribute to the consumer's understanding of the brand and the category.

2. MAPPING THE MESSAGE WITH A BACKWARDS BRIEF

Contributed by Karie Hollerbach, Professor, Southeast Missouri State University

A creative brief is the road map for advertising message development. It describes where a brand is, where a brand wants to be, and how the brand intends to get there using messaging strategy. As consumers, we see the finished products of creative briefs: the ads! But we can reverse the course and deduce what the brief might have looked like that generated the ad.

- Find and share an ad from within the last 12 months and map it backwards by using the elements in the ad (copy, visuals, sound, people, etc.) to answer these questions:
 - Who is this ad talking to? What makes this consumer unique?
 - What does this brand represent? What makes this brand unique?
 - What is the Big Idea presented in this ad? How does it connect what makes both the brand and the consumer unique?

3. BRAND STRETCHING

- As a class, generate a list of five brands, from five different product categories. Now, individually generate a list of brand extensions for each product. Consider what areas the parent brand already owns and in which areas of the brand you find growth opportunities.
- Now pick one brand. Post your brand and list of potential brand extensions. Explain the rationale for each brand extension choice.
- Then, as a class, generate other possible brand extensions.

Making Connections

1. The first part of this chapter outlines the hierarchy of objective > strategy > tactics. Analyze the ads in photos 2.1 and 2.2 to determine their objectives, strategies, and tactics.
2. An essential part of advertising research is to determine the intended target audience. Look at the ads in photos 2.4, 2.5, 2.11, and 2.14 and name the target audience for each. Do you think this is an approach that resonates with this intended audience?
3. Look at the Apple ad in photo 2.6. Based on what you know about the Apple brand, can you develop a simple value proposition where this ad would be effective?
4. Tailoring messages to specific generational cohorts strengthens their appeal. Review the ads in photos 2.3, 2.8, and 2.9. Do these messages hit their target effectively?
5. A key element of branding strategy involves logo development. Analyze the ad in photo 2.7. Do you think that the approach is effective in supporting the Doritos brand? Compare that approach to the examples in photos 2.10, 2.12, and 2.13.

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