

Chapter 12

The Creative Side and Message Strategy

❖ WEB REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **This chapter argues that effective advertising is both a science and an art. Explain what that means.**

There is both a science (the way a message is persuasive, convincing, and relevant) and an art (the way a message is an unexpected idea) driving effective advertising.

2. **What is the ROI of effective advertising?**

According to the DDB Needham agency, an effective ad is relevant, original, and has impact—which is referred to metaphorically as ROI. Ideas have to be **relevant** or mean something to an audience. An idea that is **creative** is novel, fresh, unexpected, and unusual. *Original* means one of a kind. To be effective, the ideas also must have **impact**.

3. **What is the problem with copycat advertising?**

In an industry that prides itself on creativity, copycat advertising—that is, using an idea that someone else has originated—is a concern. The challenge in advertising is to come up with novel, interesting ideas for products that might appear to be rather boring.

4. **What are the four characteristics of a creative concept?**

The concept is novel, fresh, unexpected, and unusual

5. **When a creative director says your idea needs to make a “creative leap,” what does that mean?**

A creative leap means moving from the safety of a predictable strategy statement to an unusual idea that hasn't been tried before; this leap is often referred to as the creative risk.

6. Give an example of a technique you might use as a thought starter to stimulate a creative idea?

Techniques include free association, divergent thinking, analogies and metaphors, and right-brain thinking.

7. What does creative aerobics mean? Give an example?

Creative aerobics is a thought-starter process that works well in advertising because it uses both the head and the heart, which we refer to in strategy developed as rational and emotional appeals. An example would be to come up with a list of facts about a product, then come up with new names for the product, find similarities between dissimilar objects, and finally create new definitions.

8. Explain how brainstorming is used in advertising.

As part of the creative process, some agencies use a thinking technique known as brainstorming where a group of six to ten people work together to come up with ideas. One person's idea stimulates someone else's, and the combined power of the group associations stimulates far more ideas than any one person could think of alone. The secret to brainstorming is to remain positive and defer judgment.

9. What is the difference between a head and a heart strategy?

Two basic approaches to translating objectives into strategy are sometimes referred to as head or heart strategies. Think and feel dimensions are sometimes referred to as rational and emotional or what we are calling the head and heart factors. In the Facets model the cognitive and persuasion objectives on the left generally speak to the head and the affective and transformational objectives on the right are more likely to speak to the heart

10. How do advertisers create the following effects:

- **Interest:** By speaking to the personal interests of their target audience.
- **Memorability:** By using repetition, clever phrases, color, shape, or key visuals.
- **Understanding:** By presenting the facts in a way that makes it easy for people to assimilate the information. Sometimes this means a long-copy approach in print or an infomercial in television. Basic techniques include defining terms—particularly technical terms—and explaining concepts and ideas, as well as steps and procedures

11. What are features?

Features are also called attributes. They refer to the product's characteristics. They can be both tangible and intangible.

12. How and why is product differentiation created?

In addition to importance to the consumer, the advertising might also point to the product's point of differentiation relative to the competition, which reflects its position.

13. What is a claim and what is meant by support?

One type of informational strategy is a **claim**—a product-focused strategy that is based on a statement about how the product will perform. An important part of a selling premise is the proof given for the claim or benefit statement. The proof, or substantiation needed to make a claim believable, is called **support**.

14. How do advertisements touch people's emotions? Describe two techniques.

Emotional strategies highlight the psychological attraction of the product to the target audience through such responses as love, fear, anxiety, or envy. These are all soft-sell strategies because they aren't using a rational approach to present information or reasons. A soft-sell strategy can be used for hard products.

A general emotional goal is to deliver a message that people like in order to create liking for the product.

15. What is an appeal?

An appeal connects with some emotion that makes the product particularly attractive or interesting, such as security, esteem, or fear. Although emotion is at the base of most appeals, in some situations appeals can also be logical. Appeals generally pinpoint the anticipated response of the audience to the product and the message.

16. Explain the four types of selling premises.

- Benefit: Emphasizes what the product can do for the user by translating the product feature or attribute into something that benefits the consumer.
- Promise: A benefit statement that looks to the future and predicts that something good will happen if you use the product.
- Reason why: A type of benefit statement that gives you the reason why you should buy something, although the reason sometimes is implied or assumed.
- Unique selling proposition: A benefit statement that is both unique to the product and important to the user.

17. What is “permission to believe” and why is it important?

Celebrities, product placements, and other credibility techniques are used to give the consumer **permission to believe** a claim or selling premise. It's easier to make people aware of a brand than it is to convince them that the brand is better than its competitors.

18. What is the objective of image advertising?

Image advertising is used to create a representation in a consumer's mind. The image takes on a particular meaning based on the ideas, feelings, and attitudes that a consumer has about a product, as well as the consumer's past experiences with the product and its advertising.

19. It has been said that the basic theory of advertising is association. What does that mean?

An association message strategy delivers information symbolically by connecting a brand with a certain type of person, lifestyle, or other characteristic. This link is often created through visuals. Words are not needed to make the association.

The objective of many branding campaigns is to create a brand relationship, which gives a sense of ownership or affiliation or association to the user. Loyalty programs,

such as frequent flyer and frequent buyer clubs, are relationship marketing programs that lock customers into an ongoing brand relationship.

Self-image appeals are also delivered through symbolism and association.

A common technique advertisers use to force a creative leap is to make unusual associations.

20. What are the six basic message strategies that are derived from the Facets model?

- Awareness strategy
- Information strategy
- Emotion strategy
- Persuasion strategy
- Brand strategy
- Action strategy

21. Explain structural analysis and copy-testing and how they are used in evaluating the creative strategy.

The Leo Burnett agency has an approach for analyzing the logic of the creative strategy as it is being developed. The Burnett creatives use it to keep the message strategy and creative concept working together, as well as the head and the heart appeals. This method, called **structural analysis**, relies on these three steps:

- Evaluate the power of the narrative or story line (heart).
- Evaluate the strength of the product claim (head).
- Consider how well the two aspects are integrated—that is, how the story line brings the claim to life.

A more formal method of evaluating the effectiveness of an ad, either in a draft form or after it has been used, is called **copytesting**. To evaluate the results of the advertising, the objectives need to be measurable—which means they can be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the creative strategy.