Chapter 15

Convergence, Contradiction and Collaboration:
Case Studies on Developing Creative Strategies for Digital Components of Integrated Campaigns

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the profound impact of the digital revolution on the advertising business. Specifically, it looks at how advertisers and their agencies are changing the ways they plan media, create advertising ideas, and integrate their campaigns using digital and traditional media. Three key themes are explored: 1) the critical importance of context, which challenges advertisers to fundamentally re-evaluate the relationship between media placement and messaging; 2) the challenge of fragmentation to goals of integration: in the digital scenario, the ability to manage complexity has become a key competitive advantage; 3) the need for a new process to ensure the creative development process is in tune with context and focused on simplicity: this process is called the contextual creative brief. A number of case studies are provided of advertising campaigns that have pioneered in these areas. They are: Mitsubishi's "Which Car?" campaign, Lexus' "Mosaic" campaign, Toyota's "Best in Jest" and "Sketchies" campaigns, Ambien CR's "Points of Stress" campaign, and the Simpsons Movie launch campaign.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the key dynamics in developing digital creative strategies for integrated campaigns. We will explore three

basic themes: convergence, contradiction and collaboration. In doing so, we will consider how the creative objectives of digital and mainstream media converge. This framework will establish recommended steps to deliver effective digital creative approaches, and strategies that integrate into the overall marketing communication mix. We

believe these steps have significance for clients and agencies who are increasingly challenged by the proliferation of digital media and the goal of integration.

Creativity and Media Forms: An Evolution

While creativity has always been at the heart of the advertising business, the industry has found it necessary to evolve due in part to the development of new media forms. When NW Ayer & Son the first full service advertising agency opened its doors in 1869, newspaper and poster advertising was the main advertising form. For over half a century ad agencies and brands built their reputation on their ability to create print ads. However, between 1923 and 1930, 60% of American families acquired a radio set (Carter, 2006), which launched the golden age of radio advertising and with that a new set of creative skill-sets were called on.

Television in the 50's and 60's opened a new era for advertising agencies and creativity. Initially, television advertising was a crude form of radio with pictures, but as advertising agency techniques developed and as audiences became more sophisticated, a creative renaissance of branding and slogans materialized. Coca-Cola wanted to teach the world to sing and Michael Jordon in his Nikes urged consumers to *Just Do It*.

While direct marketing had been well established since the Second World War, it really picked up momentum in the 70's, coinciding with an oil crisis and a recession, which led to increased demand for more sales responsiveness from advertising. This marketing channel continued its steady climb in the 80's with the growth of cable television. During this time, advertising that delivered results, and a higher degree of measurability, formed an entirely different set of creative rules.

Enter the Internet in the 90's. In the same way that television advertising evolved, the general ad industry started with their equivalent of "a radio with pictures," which was essentially putting brochure pictures and copy online. Independent digital marketing specialists led the way, initially combining creative skills with technological savvy and data competencies. A new creative order was established. In addition to a growing list of new media options, the existing *old* media adapted and evolved to attract new audiences. For example, 125 year-old institution, *The Wall Street Journal* is pushing its content beyond its newspaper readership base across cable television, its website, email pushes, a color magazine and mobile. Radio stations are broadcasting on the web, via satellite and through podcasts; while the nation's major broadcasters are investing or acquiring digital platforms. These developments are forcing advertisers and their agencies to adapt and demand creative concepts that can 'live' across multiple digital and traditional media forms.

The Internet Is No Longer a Niche Medium: It Is Mainstream

According to a recent IDC study (2008), Internet advertising will grow 8 times as fast as the advertising industry at large and is expected to be the #2 medium in the US by 2012, outpacing newspapers, cable TV and broadcast TV; to be second in spending only to direct marketing. The IDC report also went on to say that video advertising would be the biggest disrupter of Internet advertising, with advertisers expected to shift advertising online from national broadcast. According to a survey by Netpop|U.S. (2006), four of the top six sources used for influencing purchase decisions are found online, with "browsing in retail stores" only slightly edging out search engines as the most important influencer. Marketers are quickly feeling it is uncomfortable to manage their mass advertising media channels separate from other specialized communication channel disciplines, in particular, digital, but also in-store, sponsor-

ship, marketing PR and trade efforts. Developing digital creative in isolation of other advertising efforts is now far less attractive than establishing digital's role within the collective strategy and overall advertising mix.

Digital Has Caused the Advertising Business to Re-Evaluate Its Processes

The objectives of advertising do not change just because of the emergence of new media. Advertising remains an important channel for marketers to drive sales. However, it does change *how* they communicate. Traditional mass media broadcast and print advertising tended to center around brand awareness and brand building as the primary strategy. At the core of this chapter is the belief that most digital media, like web advertising, *functions* differently than traditional media and is able to add further dimension to existing strategies. Three major reasons for this are:

The Capability to Measure Consumer Response

In some respects, digital media has set higher standards of evaluating consumer reaction and creative engagement. Tracking and optimization tools can provide granular and near real time response to creative material. This invokes not just a higher degree of accountability but the ability to be more sophisticated about influencing buyer behavior.

The Level of Interactivity

The interactive functionality the Internet affords enables a more personalized experience. Users are able to get the information how they want it, when they want it. This means the Internet has become the information medium of choice and a significant factor in *influencing* a purchase decision.

The Peer to Peer or Social Media Factor

According to research undertaken by the Kelsey Group, one in four Internet users use online reviews prior to paying for a service delivered off line in key categories that include restaurants, travel, hotels, legal services, medical, automotive or home services (comScore/The Kelsey Group study, 2007). A Keller Fay Group survey revealed that among teens, 39% of word of mouth about a brand happens online, via text, email, IM, chats and blogs (Hein, 2007).

As a result, consumer's relationship with their digital media presents more powerful opportunities in combination with other traditional media to communicate a brand.

What This Chapter Sets Out to Do

We introduce three clear steps that need to be incorporated into the creative development process to ensure creative strategies are: 1) rooted in relevant consumer use of the digital channels; 2) not just included but integral into marketing communications campaigns; and 3) delivering against business and brand objectives. These are covered under the headings: *Consumer Control and the Importance of Context; Conflict: Digital and Integration; and Context and Content: Conflict or Collaboration?* We will use five case studies to demonstrate the importance of these points. Our experience is that these can be applied universally across business categories, from large considered purchases to fast moving consumer package goods or services. They are applicable whether the work is developed in a full-service advertising agency or across a combination of specialist agencies working on behalf of a marketer. And they can be used as a template to evaluate the quality of a creative strategy.

To this end, this chapter provides a practical framework for advertisers and agencies to improve their marketing effectiveness in a time of revolu-

tionary change driven by the digital revolution. One of the fundamental impacts of digital media has been the vast increase in fragmentation. In a fragmented media world, it becomes critical to match advertising content to the most effective placement or context. Further, given the current pressures on all marketers of downward economic trends, it becomes critical—often a question of economic survival—to insure maximum return on marketing investment (ROMI). We believe our framework for matching content to context is a pragmatic strategy for improving ROMI.

Below we discuss the theoretical foundation of this chapter, *the uses-and-gratifications model*, which emphasizes consumer control of media. Our recommendations are the result of exploring a simple, increasingly urgent, question as it relates to the intended uses and the gratifications that consumers seek. Namely, in a world of increasing consumer control of digital media, can digital advertising be integrated seamlessly into multi-faceted campaigns?

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The theoretical foundation for this chapter is the *uses-and-gratifications* model. Uses-and-gratifications posits that people choose specific media in order to gain specific gratifications, and that different individuals can use the same media messages in very different ways depending on their purposes or needs. It emphasizes that people are in control of their usage and their relationships with various media. A medium's ability to meet a person's needs—or gratifications sought, including desires for escapism, personal relationships, personal identity, and observation of the world around them, will dictate whether a person uses that specific medium (Blumler & Katz, 1974). Uses and gratifications has sometimes been described as "optimistic" or "humanistic" because it emphasizes each person's power of choice, and therefore the media's subservience to individual control.

Although we are using this model as the foundation of our analysis, it is only fair to mention that there continues to be a lot of controversy about whether uses and gratifications is actually robust enough to be deemed a full-blown theory. Those who believe in the insidious power of media to influence ordinary people in ways they don't always recognize (e.g., media hegemony advocates) fault uses and gratifications for being naïve in attributing complete freedom of choice and interpretation to individuals as they relate to media. Some detractors believe it is a sociological theory that is not supported by a strong psychological theory (Severin & Tankard, 1997). On the other hand, uses-and-gratifications proponents, like Thomas Ruggiero (2000), argue forcefully that the uses and gratifications model has never been more relevant than it is today in relation to digital media. He asserts: "…the emergence of computer-mediated communications has revived the significance of uses and gratifications. In fact, uses and gratifications has always provided a cutting-edge theoretical approach in the initial stages of each new mass communications medium: newspapers, radio and television, and now the Internet" (p.3).

Whether uses-and-gratifications is a complete theory or not, we believe it provides a strong and relevant framework within which to analyze the role of digital media as it relates to the advertising creative strategy process. Ruggiero makes a strong point: the initial stages of any new medium lead to strong levels of engagement between people and that new medium. In the early stages, people are less passive about the new medium: they explore it, play with it, and master it, making strong choices about what they watch, read, or hear. Malcolm Gladwell (2002), in his bestselling book *The Tipping Point*, likens this process to catching a virus: communities of people "infect" each other with an excitement for the new medium. In the case of the Internet for example, the infection has taken a deep hold because it has actually strengthened the connection between the people who created the virus through e-mail, blogs, chat rooms, etc.

We believe that uses and gratifications is specifically relevant for digital media, not only because it is newer than other media, but because of its unique nature. As Rayburn (1996) suggests, the Internet is consumed "intentionally," with people making very purposeful choices about which content they view. They move from site to site, and move within sites, based largely on a mixture of pre-determined and spontaneous needs. In short, digital interactive media engages people in ways more traditional media cannot. Two-way communication creates a stronger sense of on-going engagement. The Internet, for example, allows active participation and a unique level of control over the process of persuasion as consumers can limit and/or change the order of presentation of marketing information at any time based on their preferences or needs (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). Importantly, the engagement is not just intellectual: it is physical as well. People are physically involved to a unique degree in interactive media, whether they are navigating a web site with mouse movements and finger clicks, using a joystick for gaming online, pressing a touch-screen kiosk, or just rolling the wheel on their Blackberry.

Paul Ratzky, Senior Director of Agency Development at Yahoo, sees the difference between digital and traditional media as fundamental: "Digital interactive media can be viewed as 'lean forward' media, while traditional media can be viewed as 'lean back.' The former is usually a very active experience, while the latter is usually very passive." Teen usage of the Internet exemplifies this proactive approach with more than half of online teens creating content on the Internet (Lenhart & Madden, 2005). For marketers and advertising agencies, taking an approach to digital advertising that emphasizes consumer control, like uses and gratifications, recognizes that digital media is a two-way street where the consumer engages the media in at least equal proportion to the media engaging the consumer.

The uses-and-gratifications model is also relevant to our analysis because digital media compresses the hierarchy of effects (McMillan, 2007). Hierarchy of effects models (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Palda, 1996) propose that advertising works in a step-by-step fashion, first providing awareness (i.e., cognition), then providing a feeling or emotion about the product (i.e., affect), and finally persuading the consumer to action (i.e., behavior). In the digital realm a consumer's action—such as an inquiry or purchase—is often available much closer in time to the points of initial cognition and affect of a marketer's message. Action is just a click away, not next Friday's trip to the mall. While this allows advertisers an opportunity to turn messaging into swift action, it also gives the consumer a stronger level of understanding about, and control over, the relationship between persuasion and action. The relationship is clearly recognized by consumers, and digital advertising messages are frequently activated by the user based on their relevance to the user's immediate needs sought.

Uses-and-Gratifications may give too much credit to the control people have over the media they encounter; however, there is a clear consensus that the consumer has more control over media in the digital realm than ever before. As a testament to this newfound level of control, TIME magazine's 2006 person of the year was "You." TIME specifically recognized the power of ordinary people to shape the world around them using digital media. In the words of Time Editor Lev Grossman, "It's about the many wresting power from the few… and how that will not only change the world but also change the way the world changes." In the case of Marketing, the many are everyday consumers; the few are advertisers, their agencies, and media owners. As if to underscore this sea change, recent books and marketing trade publications have started calling the current marketing era "The Era of Consumer Control." In our analysis of the relationship between digital media and the creative process, it seems only fitting for us to start with a theoretical model that emphasizes consumer control as its basis.

Consumer control in digital space is critical for another powerful reason. As we've seen, roughly 40% of brand "buzz" now takes place online and this number promises to get even larger. Digital and traditional advertising messages are only the beginning. Increasingly, consumers actively connecting to other consumers online are deciding the success or failure of the multitude of products and services advertised. In the case studies to be reviewed, creating buzz was essential to success for the Simpsons movie, the Lexus IS, and Mitsubishi's Galant. Control is no longer just about what people choose to see, it is about what they choose to pass on, and how they choose to comment on it, in their virtual communities.

CONSUMER CONTROL AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

One of the most significant changes in the advertising landscape resulting from the growth of digital media has been the increasing importance of *context*. On a simplistic level, context is nothing more than *where* your message appears. Advertisers and agencies have long been interested in analyzing the places where their message appears. For over half a century, advertising agencies and media agencies have poured over viewer data regarding television and radio programs, readership data regarding newspapers and magazines, etc. Their focus has been to find a relevant audience for advertisers' messages. Generally, once that audience was found, it didn't matter which show, program, magazine or newspaper they saw the message in. As long as the message was seen, it was considered a rating point or impression with an equal amount of value to any other rating point or impression. As long as the audience saw the message a certain number of times, the message was considered delivered. In this fashion, context can be seen as having been important to marketers and advertisers as a means of demographic or psychographic segmentation.

Context on the Internet

With the advent of digital media—particularly the emergence of the Internet—context has taken on a new, exciting and more complex meaning. Context has become a search not only for a target audience that is *relevant to the advertiser*, but also a search for places and experiences where the advertisers' messages will be particularly *relevant to the consumer*. Because the web gives consumers the ability to zero-in on narrowly defined areas of interest, advertiser messages are more often successful or unsuccessful based on whether they have specific relevance to the specific media context within which they are imbedded. In other words, they are more successful if they are directly related to consumers' desired uses and the gratifications. Therefore, in theory, ads for a new medicine should be more effective in a health and wellbeing website like webmd.com or menshealth.com. Cosmetic ads should be more effective when placed in sites that women go to for beauty advice like makeupalley.com.

Research in offline media has also shown that context influences ad effectiveness (Plummer, Rappaport, Hall, Barocci, 2007). Unfortunately, an advertiser's ability to match specific product messages to the broad content that people are turning to for information or entertainment is significantly limited in traditional media versus the online environment. Digital environments are more finely tuned to help marketers pinpoint consumers' specific uses and gratifications for media consumption. However, the imperative to take advantage of greater contextual relevance in the online space is not absolute. Shamdasani & Stanaland (2001) tested internet banner ads for two types of products—one considered high involvement (a car) and the other considered low involvement (a sports drink)—on attitude to the ad, attitude to the brand, intention to click on the ad, and intention to purchase. The results were very different for the two ads. For the high involvement product, the effectiveness of the ad was related

strongly to contextual relevance (i.e., strong link between the ad message and the site content) on all of the measures. For the low-involvement product, contextual relevance mattered much less (Dou & Krishnamurthy, 2007). Therefore, according to these results, it might be okay to just look for quality sites for low involvement products (i.e., sites where their audience is concentrated), like advertisers look for quality TV shows. For high-involvement products on the other hand, there is a significant opportunity to match message to media placement, and a creative imperative to construct messaging that makes the most of the context within which the message appears.

The importance of context can be highlighted by the increasing importance of the once lowly online search ad. Search now commands 41% of all money spent on Internet advertising, compared to just 19% for Internet display advertising(IAB, 2006), and it is expected to stay at that percentage through 2010 (eMarketer, 2006). Why is search now described as the "King Kong" of digital media? It is because of the power of its relationship with searchers. "Beyond 'everyday research' more than 90% of people find or launch websites through search, even when they know the URL" (Plummer, et. al., 2007, p.101). Search has a special relationship with consumers. Its context is almost pure. It brings people the exact content they seek in the exact place they want it. In addition, it provides the information in a way that makes the searcher feel comfortable and in control. When a consumer searches for a specific car, for example, and they get results for that car, the results are highly relevant to an extraordinary degree. Historically, search placement was something brands just did. Today, search placement strategy is one of the most demanding, creative and competitive areas of marketing. Search seems simple, but the special contextual place it holds with consumers make it a one of the most hard-fought battlegrounds in marketing today. Unfortunately, even today, for some marketers and agencies, search is seen as a technical specialty as opposed to a core marketing function.

Consumer control and the importance of context in digital media require us to *fundamentally re-evaluate the relationship between the way media is planned and the way the message is developed*. This affects the creative strategy process, the creative development process, and ultimately, the process for evaluating creative effectiveness. Based on the research noted above, it would be quite easy to jump to the conclusion that this re-evaluation need only be considered for high-involvement products like cars or golf clubs, but that would be a mistake. As noted, the very nature of digital media—its interactivity and its compression of the hierarchy of effects—means that creative messaging in the digital realm is a very different proposition than creative messaging in traditional media. Simply, when developing creative for digital media, context matters: it really matters.

These observations directly support the implications of the uses and gratifications model. Context represents the end result of consumer control of digital media. The consumer starts with their usage intent then search—usually through a search engine—for the most relevant context. As more media become digital, search becomes more important as consumers continue to drive the specific context within which they see their advertising and consider it for relevance.

CONFLICT: DIGITAL AND INTEGRATION

Digital media is by no means as new as it is made out to be. Although it is commonly referred to as "new media," it is a proverbial babe in swaddling clothes compared to its more mature stable-mates, such as television and magazines. In fact, digital media has been utilized by major marketers and agencies for the best part of the last decade. It is now quite decidedly in the mainstream of marketing efforts. Agencies and clients who have not developed interactive capabilities are considered

nothing short of dinosaurs. In that case, you might rightly ask yourself, "Is this chapter really so important?" or "Is the relationship between digital marketing and the creative strategy process really such a groundbreaking subject?" We think the answer to both questions is a resounding "yes." The reason it is so important and groundbreaking has little to do with the nature of digital media or consumer behavior; it has a lot to do with the structural transformation that is taking place in the advertising industry, within client organizations, and media owners. It's about where clients and agencies have been, where they are going, and where they are now. It has a whole lot to do with the industry's biggest single goal: *integration*.

Fragmented Messaging

As media and messaging have multiplied in the last decade, advertisers and their agencies have realized there is an urgent need to manage the consistency of their messaging. Not so long ago, when an advertiser produced a few TV ads or print ads a year, consistency was relatively easy. Today it is normal for a single brand to have television, print, outdoor ads, websites, online display ads, email campaigns, direct marketing campaigns, experiential marketing events, PR releases and stunts, community outreach and cause-related marketing programs all running simultaneously. Within each of these messaging channels, it is not uncommon for there to be multiple communications approaches modified to reach different demographic and psychographic targets. With different marketing groups within clients—and different agencies—handling various aspects of the brand's messaging, the core message can become hopelessly fragmented. It is not unheard of for there to be so many messages and programs going on for one brand that no one person on the client side or agency side has actually seen all of the messages until after they appear in the marketplace, much less tried to manage them all.

In this world of fragmentation, driven in part by the most fragmented of all media—the Internet—the idea of integration has become an ideal. In fact, advertising agencies now often eschew the very idea that they do "advertising," preferring to label themselves as purveyors of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). Not surprisingly, advertising agencies are trying very hard to convince their clients they have not only the capabilities to develop every area of messaging, but also the discipline and processes to manage a brand's portfolio of messages in an integrated way. In the world of integrated marketing, the whole is significantly bigger than the sum of its parts. This is sometimes called the "marketing multiplier principle," where one plus one can equal three. Advertisers for their part value integration with equal fervor, whether they allow one agency to lead it for them or whether they choose to manage integration themselves by bringing a number of advertising agencies and suppliers together to achieve a common goal.

The Establishment of Specialist Agencies

Where integration gets tricky is not necessarily between one medium and another, but rather between media planning and creative development processes on the one hand and between digital creative development and traditional creative development on the other. The reasons for both situations are surprisingly similar. In each case, organizational silos develop over time around areas of very specific organizational expertise. In the case of media and creative, a split in expertise was created within advertising agencies. Based on market forces in the 1990s, the media expertise within big advertising agencies was recognized as having a higher market value outside of those agencies. Media departments moved out of advertising agencies and were re-born as media agencies. With the help of advertising agency consolidation into larger holding companies, they were able to create a level of scale that made their

purchasing power—and their subsequent invest-ment in research and media tools—immense. The focus was decidedly on media buying. Clients perceived big purchasing to be a strong benefit. In an environment where media supply was in-creasing, stand-alone companies that planned and bought media made sense. As a result, agency holding companies created new independent media companies *within* their overall organiza-tions. Omnicom's agencies created companies like OMD and PhD, and Publicis' agencies created companies like Starcom and Zenith.

In the case of creative development, the explo-sion of the Internet created a need for technical expertise that traditional agencies did not possess, and which they could not develop quickly. Small technical, entrepreneurial companies in places like Silicon Valley understood the Internet better; and they already had the digital expertise traditional agencies coveted and were racing to acquire. Here a new silo was being created entirely outside the traditional advertising agency structure. Signifi-cantly, the work these companies were doing was in direct competition with agency hegemony over the creative development process. For many brands this would be the first time that any aspect of their brand's advertising creative would be developed by someone other than their "agency." Likewise, for many brands this would be the first time that multiple pieces of creative developed by differ-ent companies or creative groups would be in the market simultaneously. Today, the landscape has become extremely complex with many ad-vertising agencies offering media planning and digital expertise to clients in addition to working in collaboration with stand-alone media agencies and digital companies. In some cases all of these agencies may be owned by the same holding company, and in some cases not. An agency with 20 different clients may have 20 different combi-nations of resources, both internal and external. To further confuse matters, many client marketing departments are now struggling to regain control of digital media, which they had handed to their e-commerce or technical groups because the marketing department either didn't know how to handle it or misunderstood its potential.

The Need to Manage Complexity

As we can see there are many divisions and com-plications when looking at ways to improve the effectiveness of digital media advertising. To help simplify matters, this chapter focuses specifically on ideas for managing media strategy development and creative development for digital media used in integrated campaigns.

Over the past few years, the dynamic changes highlighted above have led to a variety of different ways for brands to manage the creative strategy process. In some cases, different creative strategies are developed for different marketing messages with the client managing their integration to the brand's equity or a brand's over-riding mission statement. In some cases, the traditional agency acts as a "brand navigator" making sure all the brand's marketing agencies are working to the same creative strategy for any given campaign. No matter how many agencies an advertiser uses, whether it is one or ten, the goal is the same: to drive the creative messaging as consistently as possible in a complex world where many mes-sages and messengers are employed.

Poor management of integration leads to fragmentation of message, which in a world of fragmented media can be a recipe for disaster. In an industry where integration is creating a cen-tripetal force in relation to advertising creative development and the proliferation of media and messages is creating a centrifugal force, a practi-cal approach to creative strategy that reconciles the two forces is essential. We will propose just such a practical approach which we hope will be significant for optimizing creative development in an advertising environment that needs to be both digital and integrated. Measuring the success of such an approach over time will form the basis of further meaningful study.

CONTEXT AND CONTENT: CONFLICT OR COLLABORATION?

So far we have looked in detail at the importance of context when presenting a message to consumers and the challenges of integration in a world where many hands touch the creative process. Now we will look at how these things relate to each other in the real world of developing digital advertising creative. We will make the assumption that for most brands the digital advertising campaign is part of their overall advertising campaign and that integration of their overall message is desired. Based on what we've reviewed so far, an obvious goal for creative strategies that include digital elements would be to infuse them with a thorough understanding of how consumers interact with and even control particular digital media. Further, they would include an appreciation of what is unique about the specific context of the digital media being used in the campaign.

The Traditional Briefing Process

Before we talk about how the creative strategy can be improved today, it might be helpful to review how creative strategies were traditionally developed within advertising agencies. Historically, there were two important briefs for any campaign: the creative brief and the media brief. These two briefs were developed by the account service or planning group and then presented to the respective creative and media personnel who would do the actual work of developing the creative ideas and media plan. Unfortunately, it was not uncommon for the two teams to be working in complete isolation from each other. The creative would often be developed without any knowledge of what the media team was doing—a rating point being just a rating point after all. Likewise, the creative executions would often be developed and go to air or press without the media team ever seeing them before they were finished. The team developing

the brand's media plan might see the brand's ad while watching TV at home before ever seeing it in the agency.

Given the great changes in the media landscape over the past decade, you might guess that media departments and creative departments working to separate briefs is no longer the case, and you would be right. You would also be wrong. Already, there is strong movement towards greater integration and communication between media and creative groups. There is a growing consensus about the importance of recognizing consumer control of digital media and the context of specific digital platforms like websites and mobile phone applications. However, integrating media expertise and creative development expertise is not always easy, even in the strategy development stage. The explosion in the number of new media types leads to complexity. Today, media planners have to consider a plethora of digital options as well as shopper media, experiential media, and ambient media, just to name a few. Another reason is that creative agencies and media agencies look at things differently and often have different ideas about how to solve specific marketing problems. In the cases where a separate digital agency is doing the digital creative development, the link between the digital agency and the creative agency can be even weaker than the one between creative agencies and media agencies: old habits die hard.

To complicate matters further, media owners with digital capabilities now work routinely with media agencies to develop and produce specific digital creative ideas that can get approved, produced and executed without the creative agency's creative director ever being involved. At one end of the spectrum, the creative strategy process for integrated campaigns with digital elements can result in creative developed with no insight into the specific media context that makes the message relevant to consumers. At the other end of the spectrum, it can result in contextually relevant executions that fall flat conceptually because the

best creative talent was not employed. That's the worst case. Now let us talk about the best case.

The Contextual Creative Brief

Integration is increasingly becoming a coordinated way of working (i.e., an integrated working process), versus just coordinating all of the various pieces of an advertising campaign. Maximizing the effectiveness of digital advertising starts with the creative briefing process. We believe that creative briefs should be transformed into ***Contextual Creative Briefs*** in order for digital advertising to be most effective. We recommend that *Contextual Creative Briefs* adhere to three simple guidelines provided in Table 1.

These are simple, but important requirements for delivering more engaging and effective digital messaging. For digital advertising to succeed as part of integrated campaigns, media expertise must become part of the creative development process, and digital creative strategy must be unified with creative strategy for the rest of the campaign. By following the steps above, integration is improved, while flexibility to execute different media differently within the campaign is enhanced. Ultimately, this process ensures that consumers' increasing

control over the relevance of their digital context, through such things as search engines, is matched by advertisers' ability to embed a relevant message in that context, as outlined in Figure 1.

The left side of Figure 1 illustrates that each consumer now has an unprecedented tool at their disposal for gathering relevant digital information and/or entertainment: their search engine. The information and/or entertainment gathered by Google, for example, is the specific context within which an advertisement may appear. Because the results of the consumer's search are so granular (i.e., finely sifted by the search engine's algorithm, from among millions of potential contexts, to be specifically what the consumer is looking for), it makes it vital that the advertising message fit that finely-tuned context to be seen as relevant by the consumer. Relevance of the message, therefore, becomes a key determinant of potential success. On the right side of Figure 1, consumer complexity and media fragmentation have led to the potential for many different types of messages for the same product or brand. The *Contextual Creative Brief* process helps insure these messages are both well matched to the specific context within which they will appear and consistent with each other across a variety of contexts.

Table 1.

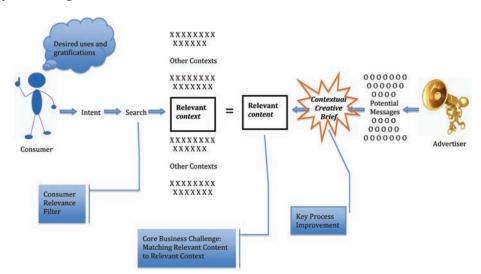| |
|---|
| 1. Digital elements should be included in a single Integrated Communications Plan (ICP)–There should be only one communications strategy. Every person working on the campaign—whether they are developing creative executions, media plans, promotions, etc., or whether they work at the creative agency, media agency, interactive agency, etc.—should be working from a single comprehensive brief. The ICP should include a single, ***unified messaging objective*** as well as the specific role of each medium being used. |
| 2. The ICP should call out the ***contextual media insight***–The unique context of an individual medium may call for a very different creative execution to maximize that media opportunity. Contextual insights are vitally important for digital media given consumers' level of control, but they can also be useful for traditional media when the product or message lends itself to leveraging a medium's context. The contextual insight, as opposed to the more common consumer insight, asks: "In what unique way does the consumer relate to this specific medium?" Consumer insights are still vital: they tell us how consumers relate to the product, category or benefit. The contextual insight does not replace the consumer insight, it adds to it. |
| 3. The digital executions should be a seamless part of the campaign's organizing creative idea, yet be as executionally unique as they need to be–Every element of the creative campaign should clearly be part of the campaign's core creative idea. The core creative idea is defined by message, tone, and character. Digital executions should not be allowed to create their own creative platform. However, to properly use contextual media insights to enhance the effectiveness of digital media within an integrated campaign, flexibility in execution is required.
Without flexibility, integrated campaigns can become the equivalent of a matched set of luggage, where every execution, in every medium, looks and acts exactly the same. This can be comforting to marketers, who at the very least can claim successful integration of many elements. But this can also mean the digital components of such campaigns are woefully underdeveloped, and eventually under-perform, because "lean back" messaging didn't engage people in a "lean forward" environment. |

Figure 1. Content meets context: a model for creating contextually relevant digital advertising campaigns in an era of increasing consumer control

CASE STUDIES

In order to demonstrate the power of a ***contextual creative brief***, we will look at a number of case studies where following the rules noted above led to outstanding digital campaigns that were seamless parts of outstanding integrated campaigns. Each of these examples demonstrates an outstanding use of media context to enhance creative effectiveness. The first three cases come from the automotive industry. The automotive industry was one of the first to invest in big digital advertising programs. The automotive category is consistently ranked as one the biggest categories in total media spending (in 2007 auto marketers spent over $12 billion), so the auto companies were also among the first to have the financial resources to invest heavily in digital. Automotive is also a high interest category, which means they have a lot to gain by creating engaging and interactive experiences.

Mitsubishi Crashes the Super Bowl

During the 2004 Super Bowl, Mitsubishi took a chance, actually two chances. First, a brand that did not have the budget firepower of automotive big boys like Ford or Toyota decided to take advantage of a discount on a still very expensive Super Bowl spot. These are the sort of decisions that can make or break a marketing director. Just ask Ian Beavis, who was Mitsubishi's senior vice president of marketing at the time. He knew that using that big a percentage of his budget to drive awareness alone was a bad bet. He knew they had to use the opportunity to do something for their brand that would generate an unprecedented level of interest and excitement. He, and his advertising agency, Deutsch, gambled that they could use the highest profile media space a company can buy as a teaser whose job it was to drive viewers to the web for the payoff. With these two gambles dancing in his head, Beavis may not have slept very well the night before the Super Bowl. After the spot ran—and the gamble had paid off—Mitsubishi had created something that, in the words of one reporter, "was enough to make people want to get back into advertising again" (Jaffe, 2004, ¶3). The reporter noted that it had "more drama, intrigue and suspense" than an episode of 2004's most popular TV show, "Survivor."

The Mitsubishi spot was simple and effective. It featured a comparison test between a Mitsubishi Galant and the best-selling Toyota Camry. As the two cars drove side-by-side at high speeds, each was preceded by an 18-wheel truck that started dropping hazards in their way. The cars swerved to avoid such flying obstacles as bowling balls and garbage cans. But the big surprise came when two full-sized sedans came rolling out of the trucks, landed on the road in front of the speeding Galant and Camry, and started rolling and flipping in front of the two cars. It seemed as if a NASCAR-style chain-reaction pile-up was just about to begin. Which car would avoid the tremendous collision? Both of them? One of them? Neither of them? Just as the viewer was about to see, the film froze and a superimposed headline simply said: "SeeWhatHappens.com." Beavis and his agency believed that if they could create enough suspense they could drive millions of viewers to their website to see how the cliffhanger was resolved. While they were there, Mitsubishi believed that they could get enough people who would never have been interested in a Galant to take a closer look and ultimately buy one. Their faith was strong because they knew that 70% of people buying a Mitsubishi went to the web first. As a smaller manufacturer, they also knew that people had to learn more about a Mitsubishi before buying one, and the web was the perfect place to give them more information in an engaging way. This expensive, high profile commercial was merely a tool to do that on a tremendous scale.

So how well did it work? From a marketing point of view it worked extremely well, far exceeding its objectives. According to Ian Beavis, who is a colorful and straight-talking Australian, "It bloody near blew the back off the servers!" He notes people spent an inordinate amount of time on the website and the campaign had what he calls a "long tail effect," with a consumer pass-along component that went on for weeks after the initial campaign ran. The numbers were staggering: 31 million visits to SeeWhatHappens.com between the Super Bowl and August 2004; 11 million visits within six hours of the broadcast; 8 million unique visitors; two-thirds of visitors watched the full commercial two times or more; and web leads to its dealers tripled. The ad generated more web traffic in 24 hours than Mitsubishi.com generated in an average month.

What was it that made this campaign so powerful that it moved 31 million people to do something they probably never would have done: visit a site for the Mitsubishi Galant? Obviously a great, suspenseful creative idea had a lot to do with it. But the Super Bowl is chock full of great creative ideas that make us laugh, make us cry or make us sit on the edge of our couches. They rarely make us do anything, and with rare exception do they make us—on the basis of one spot alone—have a different relationship with a company that we may have had no relationship with before. Such breakthrough success is the domain of Apple's "1984" commercial and the stuff of advertising legend. Mitsubishi's success was based on something very simple, and at the time, in 2004, still quite novel: an appreciation for media context.

The contextual insight that drove the Mitsubishi idea at every stage was that people go to the Internet to get quick answers. When there is something a person wants to know or a dilemma that they need to resolve, the quickest answer is to go to the web; they are looking for quick usage to deliver immediate gratification. Mitsubishi simply created a dilemma on television where the only way to see for yourself what happened was to go to their website. It sounds painfully simple. Yet it is the difference between what Mitsubishi did and a typical creative brief that results in a simple side-by-side demonstration on TV where everything gets resolved in 30 seconds. Such a spot would not get consumers to take the step that Mitsubishi desperately needed: to get more engaged with a smaller brand that might disappear from consciousness the minute the spot ends— Super Bowl spot or not. Mitsubishi and Deutsch

appreciated the contextual difference between a "lean forward" medium such as the web, and a "lean back" medium, such as television, and integrated them perfectly into a seamless, powerful campaign. This understanding permeated the entire creative development process. When we asked Ian Beavis how they coordinated the media brief with the creative brief, he said, "The web people, the media people, and the creative people were always on one page. There was only ever one brief: drive people to the web."

Lexus Lives in Many Dimensions

In 2005, Lexus was a brand on a roll. For five years running Lexus had been the number one selling luxury automotive brand in the USA. Lexus had cemented its reputations on a car and SUV line-up that included sedate and elegant sedans such as the LS 400 and the ES 300, as well as the wildly popular RX 300, which dominated the segment that it had virtually created in the late 1990's, the entry-level luxury SUV. Lexus had also cemented its brand image with the stolid promise of "The Relentless Pursuit of Perfection."

Despite Lexus' seeming dominance of the luxury space it had some chinks in its armor. Lexus had fewer younger luxury buyers (buyers in their 30's and early 40's) than their key competitors Mercedes Benz and BMW. Lexus also trailed far behind both brands in the minds of consumers on performance attributes. Lexus had launched a product in 2001 aimed squarely at both the youth market and its performance image. The product was the IS 300. Although a moderate success initially, sales of the car had dropped to only about 8,000 units by 2005. It had not brought in as many young buyers as Lexus wanted and it had not significantly improved Lexus' image for performance.

For the newly re-vamped 2006 model, Lexus had big plans. They overhauled the product completely offering two engine options and a level of performance that would challenge the segment

leader, BMW 3-Series, head on. They added the level of luxury on the interior that made the car feel like a true Lexus (the original model being a bit Spartan for a luxury car), and they gave the car a sleek and aggressive exterior that would please Lexus stalwarts as well as people who turned their nose up at the first generation IS. Lexus set a sales target that was no less aggressive: 40,000 units. Considering that the first IS in its heyday never exceeded 25,000 units per year, this was a tall order.

When Lexus and its agency, Team One Advertising, began researching the car with thirty-somethings, they realized two things. First, the car was a winner. It had attractive styling, a terrific interior package, and impressive performance. Second, they realized that younger buyers had changed significantly since they last launched the IS 300 five years earlier. The biggest change was their lifestyle, which had been revolutionized by the emergence and proliferation of digital technology and digital media. Younger luxury car buyers were now living their lives in a constant state of multi-tasking. Multi-tasking was not just a phenomenon for younger luxury buyers: people all over society, and just about every businessperson with a laptop or PDA, were multi-tasking. What made this group unique was that they loved it; they felt that multi-tasking added value to their lives. Digital devices, websites and the like made their lives better and more fulfilling. This was a far cry from fifty-something consumers who bemoaned multi-tasking as a necessary evil.

It did not take the agency long to see a connection between the strengths of the new IS and the values of younger luxury car buyers. The new car performed well in a number of dimensions (e.g., styling, luxury, technology, performance) as opposed to its key competitor, BMW 3-Series, which was seen as doing one thing (i.e., performance) very well. At the same time, digital technology was seen as increasing the number of positive dimensions of their lives. They could do more, experience more, and have more stimulation in any

finite amount of time. The campaign theme "Why Live in One Dimension" was born. On top of being a rallying cry that connected a new lifestyle and a new car, it was a not so subtle swipe at BMW.

Lexus and Team One quickly realized that by embracing their new campaign idea they had a tiger by the tail. Their advertising campaign had to walk the talk. In order to be relevant and credible, the new IS campaign had to be present in the dozens of dimensions of the target audience's life, most of them driven by digital devices and technology. That meant a fully-integrated campaign where the digital components were in the driver's seat and the traditional components were passengers. And the digital components needed to be everywhere the audience was multi-tasking: on the web, on mobile phones, on digital outdoor, and especially experimental media. It would be even better yet if the campaign could invent some new form of digital media and create a new dimension.

Ultimately, Lexus created a massive integrated campaign that included television, print, outdoor, websites, e-mail, online ads, brochures, special events, and even cool mobile phone applications. But where the campaign really stood out was with two ideas that elevated the IS by breaking new ground in digital media and delivery. By their very existence, Lexus communicated that it not only understood the many dimensions of the lives of young luxury buyers, but that they could add to those dimensions. The two ideas were called the "Mosaic" and the "Hologram."

The Mosaic

The Mosaic was an ambitious idea from the start. Lexus Vice President of Marketing, Deborah Wahl Meyer, had called all of her marketing people and all the key players from Team One and her other marketing partners together for a working session. The session was designed to build team-work, generate new ideas, and make sure all the players touching this unprecedented launch were on the same page. The Mosaic idea came out of a

breakout session in the meeting and was met with immediate, enthusiastic, and unanimous excite-ment. It was a great idea and everyone knew it.

The idea was that Lexus would create a spe-cial website for the IS where people could share personal pictures of the many dimensions of their lives. The pictures would be uploaded to the site and become components of a mosaic picture of the IS online. This would be the first view people would have of the car's new styling. Imagine a modern-day Georges Seurat painting where every colored point that makes up the image of the car is really a photograph contributed by someone over the internet. The site was very sophisticated. When people revisited the site, they would see the mosaic picture of the car and then zoom in to their specific pictures to reveal exactly what part of the mosaic their pictures comprised. It had a viral component making it a fun and surprising way to share your pictures with friends. The site was very deep, offering a personalized "IS Experience" which was like a virtual test drive where you set the car's color, the weather, the road conditions and even the music. There were also mobile phone downloads allowing you to get information on your phone from Lexus or a number of your favorite sites, like Fox Sports.

Lexus wanted to go far beyond just having a viral, fun, and interactive website. This idea had to live in many dimensions. So Lexus rented a huge billboard in Times Square to broadcast the mosaic live. At regular intervals the billboard would show the mosaic of the car and then zoom in to show some of the specific pictures that comprised it; so anyone's humble pictures could be featured in Times Square. This feature became a big incentive to get involved with the site.

To make things even more interesting and multi-dimensional, Lexus hired street teams to roam Times Square sporting digital cameras. The street teams would take pictures of the people, their families and friends, many of them tourists who were thrilled to be in Times Square. Through a special program, the street teams were able to

upload the pictures to the mosaic and feature them on the giant billboard within minutes. For many it was the thrill of a lifetime to see their picture on a four-storey electronic billboard in one of the busiest and most famous intersections in the world. Life even imitated art with many people taking pictures of the billboard featuring their likeness to show their friends at home or even re-load onto the site.

In this case, Lexus created new modes of relevant usage to provide unexpected gratifications that engaged and delighted their audience.

The Hologram

Lexus added yet another interesting dimension to the Times Square experience by renting a storefront on the corner of 42nd Street and Broadway and using it to create a new type of media experience. Lexus had recently been exposed to a new technology from Europe that they found interesting, and they were looking for just the right project to use it. The IS launch was it. The technology involved a battery of high-tech projectors that could create an incredibly lifelike 3-D hologram of the new IS. Kiosks allowed the Lexus team to bring the idea to the next level by allowing pedestrians walking by on the street to control the hologram. People walking by could rotate the car, looking at its different angles. They could change its color. They could even drive it in and out of the storefront.

The hologram had all the best features of a cutting-edge automotive website; but instead of being limited to one laptop it was in the middle of one of the world's busiest intersections for large crowds to see, interact with, and enjoy. In fact, the 42nd Street storefront got so much pedestrian attention that New York City police officers had to regularly move the crowds on to avoid jamming the intersection. After its New York premiere, the hologram was featured in other big cities like Los Angeles, and a smaller version of the hologram was used at events and large dealerships.

The results of the "Why Live in One Dimension" campaign were astounding. Lexus ran past their sales targets, selling over 50,000 units in the first 10 months. They brought in significantly more young buyers to the brand, and the campaign drove up all of the Lexus brands' key image attributes, with the largest increase being in the area of performance. At the end of 2007, the IS series was still selling over 50,000 units annually. By taking advantage of breakthroughs in digital technology, Lexus was able not only to claim relevance to younger drivers' multidimensional, multitasking lives, but also to deliver a new multidimensional experience. The IS 300 walked the talk, not an easy task for a staid brand with little previous connection to younger luxury drivers.

The key to the success of the campaign was the combination of new technology, smart contextual insight, and creative thinking. As Deborah Meyer noted: "The best aspects of the campaign, for example the Mosaic, were things we worked on together. There were no silos. The creative people, media, interactive, client, and agency were all working to the same strategy. There was a simple and shared vision." Team One's creative director, Chris Graves, believes success came from a new type of insight: "We are always looking at insights about how consumers relate to our products. What made the IS launch so successful was that we had a deep insight about the way our consumers related to digital media and technology. This put our media experts and interactive experts right in the middle of our traditional creative-development process. We learned a lot from this."

Toyota Laughs It Up with YouTube

For the launch of the 2008 model Corolla, Toyota was also trying to court youth, but unlike Lexus "youth" meant young adults in their late teens and early twenties. Marketers know that this group is hard to reach at the best of times. With the emergence of digital media, this job is even tougher. As one of the USA's top television spending brands,

Toyota knows that television viewing by late teens and twenty-somethings has been plummeting in recent years. One solution has been to shift more money for youth-oriented products like the Toyota Yaris to online advertising and events. Yet, the problem with advertising strategies that "push" the message over the web is the tremendous number of sites available to youth. The audience is finely fragmented and many sites don't lend themselves to the kind of relevant, non-interruptive messaging that younger audiences value.

Toyota, and its agency, Saatchi & Saatchi Los Angeles, solved this problem with a neat combination of consumer insight, contextual insight and good old-fashioned media planning basics. The first insight was clear: if you wanted to reach a young audience, you needed to be on the web. Whether you were on the web or on TV, you needed to find broad reach channel. Toyota was trying to sell hundreds of thousands of Corollas; it had its sights clearly set on making Corolla the best-selling car model in the USA in 2008. On the web, there are few sites that offer this kind of reach. Examples are sites like Face Book and YouTube. But these are not the kind of sites where users want to be interrupted by lots of advertising. The key was to find a way to work with such broad-reach sites to enhance the users experience instead of detracting from it. This was particularly important for Corolla, a car with a boring heritage, but which now offered a model that was perfectly styled, optioned and price for young people. That's where the contextual insights came in.

John Lisko, Executive Communications Director at Saatchi & Saatchi LA, set his team to the task. They quickly came up with a simple, powerful contextual insight: what made YouTube different than television was that the content people were looking at were predominantly short, funny films. With this thought in mind, they realized that they could do a lot more than just push a digital advertisement on YouTube. They could use it as a "pull" medium, offering young viewers a chance to see the best of the best of what they were look-ing for, and a chance get involved in the comedy content that they loved. From this insight, two YouTube/Toyota Corolla initiatives were born: "Best in Jest" and "Sketchies."

"Best in Jest" was launched in March of 2008 and was a new destination powered by YouTube and custom designed for Toyota. It was a re-pository for the funniest videos of the week. It is sponsored by Corolla and also features funny videos of Corolla for those who wish to view them. "Best in Jest" adds value to the YouTube experience, allowing people to see the funniest videos quickly without having to find them via countless hours of searching.

"Sketchies" is a YouTube-powered site that Corolla sponsored. The site allows the YouTube viewing community to submit short comedy sketch videos to be judged for cash and prizes. The videos had to include a road trip (for obvious reasons) and a musical instrument (just for fun). "Best in Jest" and "Sketchies" allowed Corolla to be relevant when advertising in YouTube because they understood the context and made the most of it for YouTube users.

The results were outstanding. Saatchi & Saatchi LA reported that recent research on the campaign showed significant increases in brand favorability, purchase consideration, and a variety of Corolla product attributes for respondents who had visited the sites. Impressively, 55% of the "Sketchies" contest visitors said they would consider purchasing a Corolla.

Saatchi's Lisko attributes the success to the power of the original media insight: "This campaign was the difference between advertising on YouTube and creating a new YouTube experience that was relevant to a young audience and a perfect fit for Corolla. Corolla was adding value, not taking away. Working with new media is about understanding three things: context, context, and context. When media insights get a seat at the creative table amazing things can happen."

In the case of Toyota, a savvy advertiser aligned their message directly to their consumers' desired

usage and the specific gratifications sought. Content met context.

TWO CASES THAT GO DIGITAL AND BEYOND

In this chapter we have been emphasizing the importance of contextual insights to maximize the effectiveness of the digital components of integrated campaigns. However, contextual insights are important for every medium and every element. We emphasize their importance for digital media because, as we have seen, digital media has a fundamentally different relationship and interaction with consumers. When an integrated campaign is done right all media are maximizing their specific context within the lives of consumers. Ambien CR and The Simpsons Movie are two good examples

Ambien CR–Advertising at the Point of Need

Adweek described it as a wake-up call for one of the country's most popular prescription sleep aids. For the first time since it went on the market, the Ambien brand would be facing new competitors as its base brand went generic. Its maker, Sanofi-Aventis, needed a marketing plan to launch its new formulation *Ambien CR* a new 2-layered sleep-aid that is "controlled released." The first layer puts you to sleep while the second layer helps you stay asleep through the night. It promised "A good night's sleep from start to finish." Its lead competitor, Sepracor's Lunesta, was planning to spend some $200 million on a media marketing blitz, more than double its annual budget.

Ambien CR's media agency, Optimedia US, immediately recognized the importance of having both a consumer emotional insight and a consumer contextual insight. According to John Potenzano, Communications Planning Director at Optimedia: "For the advertising to resonate, it needed to work at both a creative and a media environment level."

Consumer groups uncovered two telling insights. The first insight to be uncovered was the emotional one: Insomnia sufferers know they don't get enough sleep, but they tend to tough it out. It is not until they are suffering from stress that they become more receptive to messaging from products like Ambien CR. That insight was important as it helped lead to the second insight which was contextual. This insight was in answer to the question: What kind of relationship do insomniacs have with various media when they are under stress? The answer was striking.

Insomnia sufferers have a very different relationship with all kinds of media when they are under stress. They actively seek out media to help keep them occupied and calm them down. They watch late night and early morning TV more than non-sufferers. They are more likely to up watching TV or on-line on Sunday nights before the start of the workweek. They are more likely to be visiting travel websites, thinking they need a holiday. They watch TV to relax and use the web to keep occupied.

The agency reasoned, if we could tap into the *points of stress* consumers would be more receptive to the advertising messages. This simple question about context gave Optimedia plenty of clues about when to advertise, where to advertise, and how to advertise. Ambien CR combined television and online in a complementary way, where TV built awareness of the benefits and online gave the detailed explanation of how it worked.

Late night and early morning became important times to advertise. As did Sunday night/Monday morning. Monday became the day most would see an Ambien CR ad on TV or be served an ad online. To reach people who lose sleep Sunday night, the agency ran a heavy concentration of Ambien CR commercials during the "morning papers" segment in NewsNight with Aaron Brown on CNN on Monday nights. Ambien CR sponsored the prime-time movie slots on Sunday and Monday nights. They sponsored travel websites.

Their media plan also targeted business travelers who experience time-zone changes.

Daylight saving weekend (i.e. when the clocks shift forward an hour) is a reminder that people are going to lose an hour of sleep and the media gives extra attention to insomnia issues. Ambien CR sponsored a CBS Healthwatch feature about clock change and sleep awareness. They also sponsored Lifetimetv.com's fourth quarter 2005 "Holiday De-stress" minisite, which featured music, aromatherapy, yoga, games and astrology. On-air promos on Lifetime TV drove viewers to the site. Ambien CR also sponsored programming around the New Year's Day marathon.

Search was also an integral part of the media mix as search campaigns were maximized around high awareness peaks driven by the television and print advertising. Sanofi-Aventis realized that search strategy was vital: it is where consumers express their specific usage intent in the hope that what returns to them, in both editorial and advertising content, will achieve their gratification needs.

Without focusing on media context, it would have been very easy to just do a demographic analysis of insomnia sufferers and run media based on research as to where those demographic audiences could be reached. Ambien CR would have missed a huge opportunity to send highly targeted messages when and where their potential buyers were most engaged with the specific media being used.

In the end, Optimedia came up with a plan for Ambien CR that cost half of what its new competitor spent. Ambien was able to maintain the lion's share of the sleep aid market— while exceeding the client's goals of converting Ambien's base brand to Ambien CR.

The Simpsons Movie: Blurring Media and Reality

There is no more hotly contested market than the box office. New big budget movies from Hollywood's largest production companies slug it out every week to see which movies will have a big opening weekend and which will be also-rans. Being number one for an opening weekend can be the difference between making $100 million and losing $100 million. Few movies survive long after a weak opening. The Simpsons movie had one advantage: a big pre-existing base of loyal fans. Yet the franchise was almost 20 years old and it had no guarantee that its popular 30-minute format would entice fans to pay eight dollars to watch a full-length movie.

20th Century Fox Studios realized that relying on advertising that focused on the popularity of the show or its characters to drive ticket sales would be a mistake. Had they done that, a simple television campaign on high-rated shows would have given them all the reach they needed to get the word out. Instead, they took advantage of the special opportunities created by emerging media. Their goal was to create a level of involvement with the Simpsons that went way beyond awareness of a new movie launch. By carefully manipulating the contextual opportunities presented by both digital and experiential media, Fox made the launch of the Simpsons movie less like a typical movie launch and more like a cultural event.

For starters, Fox created fun TV commercials and an engaging website. The site had lots of cool stuff ranging from the usual (e.g., wallpapers & screen savers) to some silly yet surprisingly addictive games, complete with lots of "D'oh" & Aye Carumba! sound effects. It had a virtual tour of Springfield and a tool that let you create your own Simpsons avatar. Just the sort of thing to get Simpsons fans engaged. But understanding context often means understanding the people you want to reach will not necessarily go to your site. So, Fox created a cross-promotion on Burger King's site where people could submit a photo and "Simpsonize" themselves. This was a viral application that was fun do and share whether you were a Simpsons fanatic or not. Where the campaign really shined, however, was when it used the web and even went out into the real world to turn context on its head.

Three ideas really stand out as outstanding examples of reinventing the way people relate to media in its broadest sense. The first was an online contest that pitted 14 different American cities named Springfield for the honor of being named "the" Springfield of Simpsons fame, giving the winner the right to hold the movie's premiere. The contest got not only the populations of these cities engaged, but became a public relations extravaganza with the contest and results covered by sponsor USA Today and various news organizations around the country. When little Springfield, Vermont beat the likes of sizeable Springfield, Illinois, the residents of the winning town were described by USA Today as being in a Simpsons "Frenzy." The second idea was an online campaign in partnership with JetBlue Airways. As one might expect, different Simpsons became spokespersons for different JetBlue destinations. But the campaign started to bend reality by having mogul Montgomery Burns take over the regular blog that had been set up by Jet Blue's chairman. The hijacked blog led off as follows: *"Hi I'm Montgomery Burns, Here's my newest attempt at robbing a man of his livelihood. I have temporarily taken over David Neeleman's blog as I believe I have more efficient ways to run this airline. I could crush him like an ant."*

The third, and perhaps most spectacular, contextual idea was a joint promotion with 7-Eleven. Eleven 7-Eleven stores around America were physically transformed into Kwik-E-Marts (patterned after the show's convenience store helmed by Apu Nahasapeemapetilon), complete with loads of Simpsons-based products. All of the signage inside and out was changed. For people on the street, or stopping by for their morning cup of coffee, the world was just a little bit different. The line between fantasy and reality had been crossed. They not only knew there was a movie coming out, but they were deeply engaged in the Simpson's experience. People didn't have to be Simpsons fanatics to be caught up in the amusement and to feel that life would be a little more fun if they went to the movie.

Fox's creativity in challenging the usual uses of media, and even reality, led to tremendous results. The film earned over $30 million on its opening day and $74 Million for its opening weekend. It was the third highest non-sequel opening of all-time. For a July opening of a non-sequel, it was number one all-time. Had this animated movie, with its quirky sense of humor, looked at media the traditional way, or even used digital media in a non-creative way, there is a good chance that only Simpsons fans would have shown up, with the Simpsons movie relegated to the list of big-time money losers.

CONCLUSION

We began this chapter with a reminder that consumers' control over their media choices has never been more important. They have unprecedented control over what advertising messages they choose to see. Due to this increasing control, advertisers and markets need to be far more cognizant of the specific media context within which their messages appear. On a simplistic level, this will allow them to better match their message to its environment.

The proliferation of messages for brands, the history of how brands developed their advertising and the emergence of media and interactive agencies that are vying with traditional creative agencies to control messaging have combined to create a crisis for many marketers and agencies. Our research and our personal experience lead us to recommended three essential steps to help improve the situation:

- Digital elements should be included in a single Integrated Communications Plan (ICP).
- The ICP should call out the contextual media insight.
- The digital executions should be a seamless part of the campaign's organizing cre-

ative idea, yet be as executionally unique as they need to be.

The purpose of these recommendations is to help increase integration while simultaneously taking advantage of the opportunities created by understanding the unique context of each medium. We believe that such contextual insights have never been more important than they are now with the explosion of digital media. A simple way to think about the difference is to think of emotional insights as the answers to questions like "How does the brand fit uniquely in the lives of the people who use it?" or "How does this category of product improve people's lives?" A contextual insight on the other hand can be seen as an answer to a question like "How do people interact with this medium in a way that's different than other media?" Both types of insight are necessary to develop great campaigns, but unfortunately the creative departments of many agencies don't explore contextual insights when developing campaigns. Our advice above is intended to place these media-based insights right in the middle of creative development. Nowhere is the integration of these contextual insights more important than with digital media, which are as diverse as they are increasingly plentiful.

We highlighted five case studies. They are excellent examples of campaigns that have a single, integrated creative thought across media, as well as outstanding contextual insights. Each case shows that when advertisers and their agencies respect consumers' increasing control of media, and also respect each medium's ability to engage consumers in ways unique to that medium, great things can happen. The centripetal force of integration and the centrifugal force of digital media proliferation can be brought into equilibrium. What it takes is the right balance of emotional and contextual understanding throughout the creative development process. We believe that this balance can in part be achieved by the following our recommendations above.

Our suggestions are more about process than creativity. When people who work on great campaigns—like the ones we've outlined in this chapter—talk about what led to success, the most common themes we heard were "Everyone was on the same page," "There was only one brief," or "We had a different kind of insight." One unified brief, one over-riding creative idea, and meaningful contextual insights combining for success.

Malcolm Gladwell provides us a word of warning in the Tipping Point that we ignore at our peril. When he talks about "social epidemics," like the emergence of websites, blogs, and email as forms of social networking, he notes that like any real epidemic, signs of immunity can start to grow. He tells a story we can all relate to:

I remember when I first got e-mail, back in the mid-1990s. I would rush home with great anticipation and dial in on my 4800-baud modem and I would have…four messages from four very good friends. And what would I do? I would immediately compose four long, elegant responses. Now, of course, I get up in the morning and go to my computer and I have sixty-four messages, and the anticipation I once felt has been replaced by dread…. So how do I respond? I compose very, very short e-mails…and I often take two or three days to get back to people…. (p. 274)

The warning for advertisers is clear. When new media stops being new and becomes overloaded with unwanted and irrelevant messages, consumers stop participating as actively. The best way to avoid this fate is to make sure our messages are as relevant as possible: relevant in content, relevant in approach, and most importantly, relevant in context.

Theoretically, one of the oldest ideas about media usage is turning out to be one of the best. Observations of increasing levels of consumer control validate the uses-and-gratification model. More specifically, the digital revolution has allowed consumers to communicate their desired

usages, and their gratifications sought, directly to advertisers. They communicate these by the content they pull in through search engines and the context within which the content is embedded. When advertisers observe closely, they can create the equivalent of advertising nirvana: a relevant advertising message in a relevant context that matches, exactly, the consumers' initial usage and gratification demands.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

We have reviewed a number of case studies where contextual insights at the creative brief stage led to a successful nexus between advertising content and context. A natural area for further study would be to take an experimental view towards the *Contextual Creative Brief*. Comparing the effectiveness and ROMI of a random sample of campaigns developed to the criteria of the *Contextual Creative Brief* to a control sample of campaigns developed using a traditional creative briefing process would be instructive. Our prediction is that, over time, agencies and clients who adopt the *Contextual Creative Brief* will show significant improvements in effectiveness and ROMI vs. traditional creative briefing approaches.

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APPENDIX

Table 2. Campaign summaries

Mitsubishi Campaign Summary	
Unified Messaging Objective:	*Demonstrate that Galant handles better than the best-selling Camry*
Contextual Insight:	*The internet is where people go for immediate answers*
Organizing Creative Idea:	*See What Happens!*
Lexus Campaign Summary	
Unified Messaging Objective:	*Communicate that the new Lexus IS offers much more than just great performance*
Contextual Insight:	*Digital media offers the connectivity to create multi-dimensional experiences and the technology to create entirely new ones.*
Organizing Creative Idea:	*Why Live in One Dimension?*
Toyota Campaign Summary	
Unified Messaging Objective:	*Communicate that Corolla's style, features and price fit young people's lives.*
Contextual Insight:	*Interrupting Young consumers with ad messages on entertainment sites like YouTube do more harm than good.*
Organizing Creative Idea:	*Corolla appreciates what's funny, like it being the perfect car for you.*
Ambien CR Campaign Summary	
Unified Messaging Objective:	*Communicate Ambien CR's unique controlled release properties that provide a more effective sleep aid.*
Contextual Insight:	*Insomniac sufferers have a very different relationship with their media, and when stressed are more receptive to advertising messaging*
Organizing Creative Idea:	*A good night's sleep from start to finish.*
Simpsons Campaign Summary	
Unified Messaging Objective:	*Create engagement and buzz beyond simple awareness that engages non-Simpson's fanatics.*
Contextual Insight:	*Digital and experiential media offer opportunities to immerse people into their own real-life Simpsons' experiences.*
Organizing Creative Idea:	*The Simpsons movie is REALLY here!*