



# *Part 4*

# *The tools of marketing communications*

## *Chapters 16–23*

This part of the book explores both the nature and characteristics of the primary tools or disciplines of the marketing communication mix. These are advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling. Attention is also given to the main secondary tools including sponsorship, exhibitions, product placement, field marketing and packaging.

Chapter 16 builds on previous work in Chapter 8 and considers the various models and concepts that have been developed to explain advertising strategy. The following chapter complements this by examining the issues associated with the way in which messages are constructed in order that the intended meaning is conveyed and understood by the target audience. Issues concerning message construction and content, creativity and the emerging power of user-generated-content are reviewed.

Chapter 18 examines the management and techniques associated with sales promotion while Chapters 19 and 20 consider public relations and sponsorship respectively. Chapters 21 and 22 look at direct marketing and personal selling.

The final chapter in this part of the book looks at some of the remaining disciplines, albeit those that do not necessarily command the major share of most communication budgets. Nevertheless, they are important sub-disciplines and many clients are beginning to put an increasing amount of resources into exhibition work, product placement, field marketing and packaging.

## Video Insight Part 4

Part 4 of the book considers the tools and messages of marketing communications. To assist your understanding, the Video Insight starts with Electrolux, highlighting the importance of knowing your target market and the use of tools, messages and media channels that match customer's needs. This fundamental principle of marketing communications is explained in the context of people planning to purchase white goods for a new kitchen or laundry room in comparison to those whose machines or equipment breaks down and which need to be replaced quickly.

In the Land Rover section of the Video Insight, Colin Green refers to their recent campaign to launch the Freelander. He also reflects upon their extensive use of sponsorship as a means of effective communication. He refers to the resonance that their sponsorship of rugby union and equestrianism has with many of its customers. The opportunity to set up mini exhibitions at the events they sponsor serves to reinforce customer attitudes towards the brand and provides a strong pull effect on potential customers. In addition, Land Rover provide 'Experience Centres' where customers can drive the vehicles and get first-hand knowledge of how the vehicles handle in a variety of conditions. These activities constitute what is referred to as 'experiential marketing', a rapidly growing aspect of contemporary marketing activity.

Go to [www.pearsoned.co.uk/fill](http://www.pearsoned.co.uk/fill) to watch the Video Insight, and then answer the following questions:

1. How do Electrolux communicate with its markets?
2. Why is experiential marketing important to Land Rover?
3. Land Rover use sponsorship as a major part of its marketing communications. Why is this and how might the other tools of the mix be used to support the brand?



The background of the top section features silhouettes of a man on the left and a woman on the right, facing each other as if in conversation. The man has a microphone near his mouth. The background is a vibrant orange and red color with stylized, hand-like shapes in various shades of orange and red, suggesting a dynamic or creative environment.

## Chapter 16

### *Advertising and strategy*

An attempt to understand how advertising might work must be cautioned by an appreciation of the complexity and contradictions inherent in this commercial activity. Understanding how advertising might work, with its rich mosaic of perceptions, emotions, attitudes, information and patterns of behaviour, has been a challenge for many eminent researchers, authors and marketing professionals.

#### *Aims and learning objectives*

The aims of this chapter are to explore the different views about advertising strategy and to consider the complexities associated with understanding how clients can best use advertising.

The learning objectives of this chapter are to:

1. consider the role advertising plays in both consumer and business-to-business markets;
2. appraise the use of emotion in advertising and consider concepts associated with shock advertising;
3. explain the principal frameworks by which advertising is thought to influence individuals;
4. appraise the strong and weak theories of advertising;
5. consider ways in which advertising can be used strategically;
6. examine ideas concerning the use of advertising to engage audiences.

For an applied interpretation see Lorna Stevens' MiniCase entitled *Tapping into a new zeitgeist: women consumers, lifestyle trends and the Red experience* at the end of this chapter.

## Introduction

The purpose of an advertising plan is to provide the means by which appropriate messages are devised and delivered to target audiences who then act in appropriate ways. This may be to buy a product, to enquire about a product or simply memorise a single aspect for future action. Guidelines for the content and delivery of messages are derived from an understanding of the variety of contexts in which the messages are to be used. For example, research might reveal a poor brand image relative to the market leader, or the different or changing media habits of target consumers. The nature of the messages and the problems to be addressed will be specified in the promotional objectives and strategy.

An advertising plan is composed, essentially, of three main elements:

- the message – what is to be said;
- the medium – how the message will be conveyed;
- the timing – manner in which the message will be carried.

This chapter is the first of two about advertising and several others in the next part of the book, about media. This chapter explores two main advertising issues, the first is about the way advertising might work, and consideration is given to some of the principal models and frameworks that have been devised to best describe the process by which advertising works. The second issue focuses on the strategic use of advertising, and the chapter is used to introduce a number of concepts and frameworks that have contributed to our understanding.

The chapter builds on the ideas about how marketing communications might work (Chapter 8) and shares some common thoughts. Chapter 17 considers the content of advertising messages, or what is to be said. In addition to these, Chapters 24–27 consider the media and ways in which advertising messages can be delivered.

## The role of advertising

The role of advertising in most marketing communications campaigns is important. Advertising, whether it be on an international, national, local or direct basis, has the potential to engage audiences, albeit on a short-term basis. Engagement is enabled either by changing perceptions and building brand values or by encouraging a change in behaviour, often delivered through a call-to-action.

Advertising can reach huge audiences with simple messages that present opportunities to allow receivers to understand what a product is, what its primary function is and how it relates to all the other similar products. This is the main function of advertising: to communicate with specific audiences. These audiences may be consumer- or organisation-based, but wherever they are located, the prime objective is to build or maintain awareness of a product or an organisation.

Advertising cannot be said to have a single task as it can be used to achieve a number of DRIP-based outcomes. In can be used to differentiate and position brands, it can be used to reinforce brand messages, and it can easily inform and even persuade audiences to think and behave about and around products, services, brands and organisations. However, apart from its ability to reach large audiences, the key strengths of advertising have been to develop brand awareness, values and associations.

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Management's control over advertising messages is strong; indeed, of all the elements in the communications mix, advertising has the greatest level of control. The message, once generated and signed off by the client, can be transmitted in an agreed manner and style and at times that match management's requirements. This means that, should the environment change

unexpectedly, advertising messages can be ‘pulled’ immediately. For example, had a BA image campaign designed to build the reputation of the airline been planned for April 2008 in the United Kingdom, it would have had to have been ‘pulled’ (stopped) following the chaotic transfer to and opening of the new Terminal 5 building at Heathrow in March. Difficulties associated with redirecting over 15,000 pieces of lost baggage, clearing the check-in queues and restoring normal flight schedules, plus the wider debate concerning what caused the problem, and the potential of further ‘disruption’, would have prevented BA’s messages from being received and processed normally. It is more likely that there would have been a negative effect had the planned advertising been allowed to proceed.

## ViewPoint 16.1 Easy advertising

Rather than concentrate on differentiation or the development of brand awareness, the role of advertising at easyJet appears to be essentially about reinforcement. The airline undertakes substantial levels of in-house public relations. This is used to drive awareness levels, and is accomplished by the successful television docu-soap called ‘Airline’. This reality television programme, which has drawn audiences of over 8 million, is about the everyday working life of easyJet’s staff and customers at Luton airport.

All tickets are booked online so advertising’s role is partly to drive site traffic. This is typified by the use of sales promotions, which are all linked to the Internet. This means customers must go online if they wish to take advantage of promotional fares.



**Exhibit 16.1** easyJet use their aircraft to communicate their identity in a bold way  
AFP/Getty Images.

The advertising strategy, therefore, is intended to reinforce the easyJet brand values that are based around the idea of 'consumer champion' and to drive customers to its web site. The advertising also serves to position the easyJet brand based slightly on anarchy as well as price and value for money. Interestingly, the media used are essentially press, outdoor and radio plus use of its own aircraft as flying billboards. Television is not used partly because of the positive exposure generated by the docu-soap, partly because of the targeting and costs, and partly because of the effectiveness of the media used.

### Question

Would you increase or decrease easyJet's advertising in a recession. Why?

### Task

Compare the advertising messages used by Ryanair and easyJet.

Advertising costs can be regarded in one of two ways. On the one hand, there are the absolute costs, which are the costs of buying the space in magazines or newspapers or the time on television, cinema or radio. These costs can be enormous, and they impact directly on cash flow. For example, the rate card cost of a full-page (colour) advertisement in the *Daily Mail* was £45,612 (April 2008). To show a 30-second ad each day for one week in the 365-seater Screen 6 at the Sheffield Vue Cinema multiplex, costs £175 (April 2008).

On the other hand, there are the relative costs, which are those costs incurred to reach a member of the target audience with the key message. So, if an audience is measured in hundreds of thousands, or even millions on television, the cost of the advertisement spread across each member of the target audience reduces the cost per contact significantly. This aspect is developed further in Chapter 27.

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The main roles of advertising are to build awareness, induce engagement (if only on a cognitive basis) and to (re)position brands, by changing either perception or attitudes. The regular use of advertising, in cooperation with the other elements of the communication mix, can be important to the creation and maintenance of a brand personality. Indeed, advertising has a significant role to play in the development of competitive advantage. In some consumer markets advertising is a dominant form of promotion. Advertising can become a mobility barrier, deterring exit and, more importantly, deterring entry to a market by organisations initially attracted by the potential profits of the industry. Many people feel that some brands sustain their large market share by sheer weight of advertising; for example, the washing powder brands of Procter & Gamble and Unilever.

Advertising can create competitive advantage by providing the communication necessary for target audiences to frame a product. By providing a frame or the perceptual space within which to pigeonhole a product, target audiences are able to position an offering relative to their other significant products much more easily. Therefore, advertising can provide the means for differentiation and sustainable competitive advantage. It should also be appreciated, however, that differentiation may be determined by the quality of execution of the advertisements, rather than through the content of the messages.

Advertising in the business-to-business market is geared, primarily, to providing relevant factual information upon which 'rational' decisions can be made. Regardless of the target audience, all advertising requires a message and a carrier to deliver the message to the receiver. This text concentrates on these two main issues, while acknowledging the wider role that advertising plays in society.

## Emotion in advertising

The preceding material, if taken at face value, suggests that advertising only works by people responding to advertising in a logical, rational and cognitive manner. It also suggests that people only take out the utilitarian aspect of advertising messages (cleans better, smells fresher). This is obviously not true and there is certainly a strong case for the use of emotion in advertising in order to influence and change attitudes through the affective component of the attitudinal construct (Chapter 6).

### ViewPoint 16.2

#### An emotional M&S revival

In the late 1990s and early twenty-first century M&S experienced subsiding financial performance and a wealth of negative press comment. This in particular contributed to the public's loss of confidence in the brand.

The new CEO, Stuart Rose, revised the product range to make it more stylish and fashionable. He lowered some of the opening price points to be in line with the competition, improved service and started the process of refurbishing and redesigning the layout of stores. Only once these actions had been put in place could communications be used to re-engage customers with the brand and to rebuild their confidence. One of the first tasks that communications needed to achieve was to counter the negative public relations and give a reason for lapsed customers to reappraise and revisit the store. Food and womenswear were key to the revival, the former contributes 50 per cent of M&S turnover and the latter drives brand perceptions.

The strapline 'Your M&S' encapsulated the move to be audience-centred, was meaningful and could apply to a range of audiences. The choice of high visibility media was critical to conveying ideas about conviction and critical mass. The 'Your M&S' campaign sought to reassure customers, many of whom could identify with Twiggy, who fronted the womenswear ads. The food ads were underscored by the line 'This is not just food, this is M&S Food', which was backed by emotional, sultry music by Santana.

The success of the communications campaign can be demonstrated at various levels. For example, a blouse worn by Twiggy in one ad sold more in a single week than any other product in the whole history of M&S. The power of M&S' communications spawned press coverage said to worth an additional £6 million pounds in advertising space. The ROI on clothing was estimated at £2.61 for every £1 spent on media while the share price zoomed up to 595p, nearly 50 per cent above the price offered by Phillip Green when he attempted to buy the company in July 2004.

Sources: Sweney, *et al.* (2006); Thompson, *et al.* (2006).

### Question

Discuss the view that once the M&S product range was corrected there was no real reason to use mass communications as word-of-mouth would have kicked in.

### Task

Go to Youtube, find the 'This is not just food, this is M&S Food' ad. How else could food be conveyed emotionally?

Most advertised brands are not normally new to consumers as they have some experience of the brand, whether that be through use or just through communications. This experience affects their interpretation of advertising as memories have already been formed. The role of feelings in the way ads work suggests a consumerist interpretation of how advertising works

rather than the rational, which is much more a researchers' interpretation (Ambler, 1998). Consumers view advertising in the context of their experience of the category and memories of the brand. Aligned with this approach is the concept of likeability, where the feelings evoked by advertising trigger and shape attitudes to the brand and attitudes to the advertisement (Vakratsas and Ambler, 1999). Feelings and emotions play an important role in advertising especially when advertising is used to build awareness levels and brand strength.

Consumers view advertising in the context of their experience of the category and memories of the brand.

Most of the models presented later in this chapter are developed on the principle that individuals are cognitive processors and that ads are understood as a result of information processing. The best examples of these are the hierarchy of effects or sequential models where information is processed step by step. This view is not universally accepted. Researchers such as Krugman (1971), Ehrenberg (1974), Corke and Heath (2004) and Heath and Feldwick (2007) dispute the importance of information processing, denying that attention is necessary for people to understand ads and that the creativity within an ad is more important in many circumstances, than the rational message the ad purports to deliver.

## Shock strategy

Advertising strategy may also be considered in terms of the overall response a target audience might give on receipt of particular messages. Some organisations choose a consistent theme for their campaigns, one that is often unrelated to their products or services. One such strategy is the use of shock advertising. Shock advertising according to Venkat and Abi-Hanna (1995) 'is generally regarded as one that deliberately, rather than inadvertently, startles and offends its audience'.

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Dahl *et al.* (2003) suggest that shock advertising by definition is unexpected and audiences are surprised by the messages because they do not conform to social norms or their expectations. They argue that audiences are offended because there is 'norm violation, encompassing transgressions of law or custom (e.g., indecent sexual references, obscenity), breaches of a moral or social code (e.g., profanity, vulgarity), or things that outrage the moral or physical senses', for example gratuitous violence and disgusting images (p. 268). The clothing company French Connection's use of the FCUK slogan and the various Benetton campaigns depicting a variety of incongruous situations (for example a priest and a nun kissing and of a man dying of AIDS) are contemporary examples of norm violation. Shock advertising is not only used by commercial organisations such as Diesel, Egg and Sony Entertainment but is also used by not-for-profit organisations such as the government (anti-smoking), charities (child abuse) and human rights campaigners (Amnesty International) (see Viewpoint 16.3).

### ViewPoint 16.3

#### Problem? What problem?

In a campaign designed to raise awareness and to shock the public into being less complacent about domestic violence, Amnesty International used posters in the style of cosmetics advertising, featuring models using make-up to hide the damage and injuries caused by violence.

The posters, used in over 100 tube stations, depict 'Cachez', a fictional cosmetics brand, and use the slogan 'Gentle skincare for bruising relationships'. The powerful messages show a smiling model with different injuries – a black eye, a cut cheek, a scar below her breast and three red marks on her shoulder. The aim is to address the complacency that exists about the issue and to make people think about the



horror of domestic violence. Through the use of cosmetics to symbolically cover up the issue, Amnesty tried to shock people into not accepting this (or any) form of violence. (see Exhibit 16.2).

Source: [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org).

### Question

Do you believe that the use of advertising to shock people into a change of behaviour is morally wrong.

### Task

Find an ad that uses shock techniques. What are the elements in the ad that generates the shock impact?

THE BEST CONCEALER  
KNOWN TO WOMAN

Cachez  
Concealer stick

Concealer that instantly creates a flawless cover to all bruising

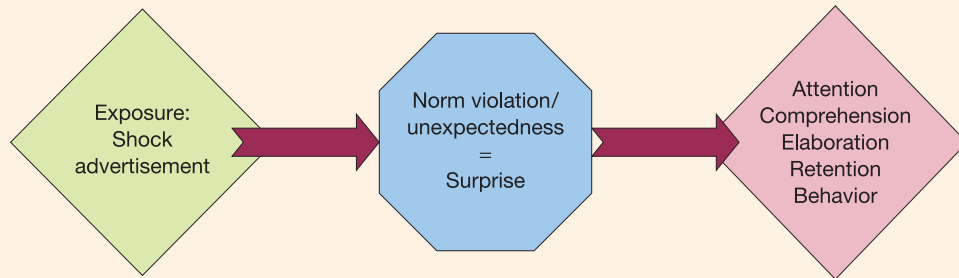
**Cachez**  
Gentle skincare for bruising relationships

**Problem? What problem?**  
[www.problemwhatproblem.com](http://www.problemwhatproblem.com)

STOP  
VIOLENCE  
AGAINST  
WOMEN  
amnesty international

### Exhibit 16.2

Amnesty International – Problem? What problem?



**Figure 16.1**

A preliminary model of consumer reactions to shock appeals  
Source: Dahl *et al.* (2003). Used with kind permission from WARC.

The main reason for using a shock advertising strategy is that it is a good way to secure an audience's attention and achieve a longer-lasting impact than through traditional messages and attention-getting devices. The surprise element of these advertisements secures attention, which is followed by an attempt to work out why an individual has been surprised. This usually takes the form of cognitive engagement and message elaboration in order that the message be understood. Through this process a shocking message can be retained and behaviour influenced. This process is depicted in Figure 16.1.

Shocking ads also benefit from word-of-mouth communication as these messages provoke advertisement-related conversations (Dichter, 1966). The credibility of word-of-mouth communication impacts on others who, if they have not been exposed to the original message, often seek out the message through curiosity. Associated with this pass-along impact is the generation of controversy, which can lead to additional publicity for an organisation and its advertisements. This 'free' publicity, although invariably negative, is considered to be desirable as it leads to increased brand awareness without further exposure and associated costs. This in turn can give the organisation further opportunities to provide more information about the advertising campaign and generate additional media comment.

Shocking ads benefit from word-of-mouth communication as these messages provoke advertisement-related conversations.

The use of shock tactics has spread to viral marketing, a topic discussed in more detail in Chapter 26. Virals delivered through email communications have an advantage over paid-for advertising because consumers perceive advertising as an attempt to sell product, whereas virals are perceived as fun, can be opened and viewed (repeatedly) at consumer-determined times. Furthermore, virals are not subject to the same regulations that govern advertising, opening opportunities to convey controversial material. For example, a Volkswagen viral showed a suicide bomber exploding a device inside a car but the vehicle remained in one piece ('small but tough'). Another for Ford Ka showed a cat being decapitated by the sunroof. As Bewick (2006) suggests, joking with terrorism and pets is a sure-fire way of generating shock, and with that comes publicity.

## Advertising models and concepts

In Chapter 7 a series of sequential models is presented. These models, essentially hierarchy of effects frameworks, were the first attempts to explain how advertising works (AIDA). The sequential nature of these early interpretations was attractive because they were easy to comprehend, neatly mirrored the purchase decision process and provided a base upon which campaign goals were later assigned (Dagmar). However, as our knowledge of buyer behaviour increased and as the significance of the USP declined so these hierarchy of effects models also declined in terms of our understanding about advertising. Now they are insignificant and are no longer used as appropriate interpretations of how advertising works.

In their place a number of new frameworks and explanations have arisen, all of which claim to reflect practice. In other words these new theories about how advertising works are a reflection of practice, of the way advertising is considered to work, or at least used by advertising agencies and interpreted by marketing research agencies. These are examples of information processing models, mentioned earlier in this chapter. The first to be considered here were developed by O'Malley (1991) and Hall (1992) and they suggest that there are four main advertising frameworks (Figure 16.2).

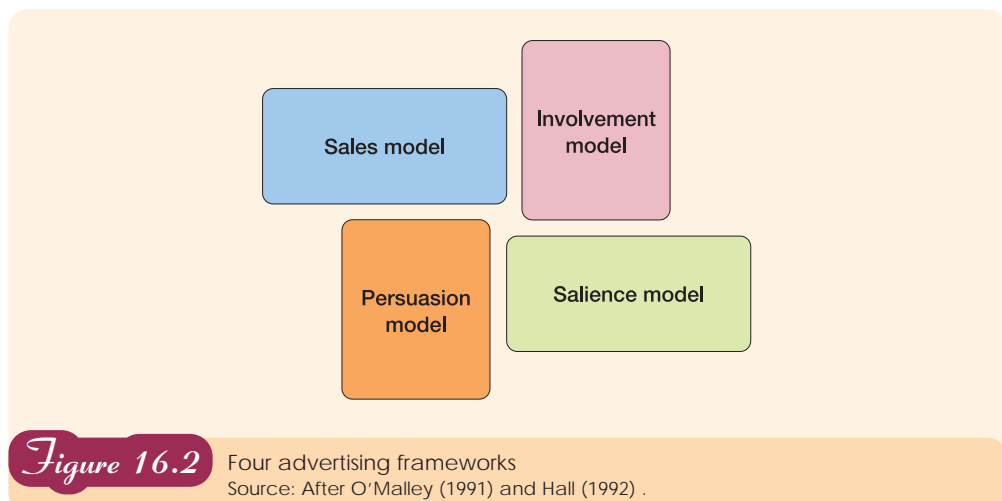
### 1. The sales framework

This framework, oriented mainly to direct-response work, is based on the premise that the level of sales is the only factor that is worth considering when measuring the effectiveness of an advertising campaign. This view holds that all advertising activities are aimed ultimately at shifting product – generating sales. Advertising is considered to have a short-term direct impact on sales. This effect is measurable and, while other outcomes might also result from advertising, the only important factor is sales. On sales alone will the true effect of any advertising be felt.

Advertising is considered to have a short-term direct impact on sales.

### 2. The persuasion framework

The second framework assumes advertising to work rationally, because messages are capable of being persuasive. Persuasion is effected by gradually moving buyers through a number of sequential steps. These hierarchy of effects models assume that buyer decision-making is rational and can be accurately predicted. As discussed earlier, these models have a number of drawbacks and are no longer used as the basis for designing advertisements, despite great popularity in the 1960s and 1970s.



**Figure 16.2**

Four advertising frameworks  
Source: After O'Malley (1991) and Hall (1992).

## ViewPoint 16.4

### Persuasive mobiles

The use of advertising to persuade audiences can be key when launching new brands, when the competition becomes intensive or when the audience experiences high involvement.

In 2008 Sony Ericsson implemented a campaign designed to offset the threat of Apple and the iPhone, plus the push from market leaders Nokia. Sony Ericsson used campaigns to support its latest handsets, Cyber-Shot, Walkman, clamshell and touch-screen handsets. Included within this activity was support for their first sub-brand, Xperia and the first handset, X1.

Samsung were also experiencing pressure and used a £16m pan-European awareness campaign to introduce Soul, its key handset for 2008. Motorola meanwhile sought to back its Z10 kick-slider phone using television to demonstrate key attributes.

Source: Jones (2008).

### Question

Why did Motorola use television to demonstrate the key attributes of their Z10 brand?

### Task

Visit [www.sonyericsson.com/x1/?lc=en&cc=gb](http://www.sonyericsson.com/x1/?lc=en&cc=gb). Watch the film for X1. Good?

### 3. The involvement framework

Involvement-based advertisements work by drawing members of the target audience into the advertisement and eliciting a largely emotional response. Involvement with the product develops as a consequence of involvement with the advertisement. Yellow Pages developed a highly successful series of television commercials that centred upon a fictional character called J.R. Hartley. This elderly gentleman was shown using Yellow Pages as a means of resolving a number of problems and served to provide warmth and character that involved people not only with J.R. Hartley but also helped establish brand values.

Involvement-based advertisements work by drawing members of the target audience into the advertisement.

Another example of this approach can be observed in the Nescafé Gold Blend coffee advertisements. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, UK viewers witnessed the development of a relationship between an aspirational couple with a mutual liking for the Gold Blend brand of coffee. Each advertisement presented particular events in the development of the couple's relationship. Each ad was eagerly anticipated by audiences, many of whom were obsessive about the unfolding drama. By involving the target in the drama, the brand became part of the involvement, a crucial part of each of the ritualistic playlets. Later, the couple were reincarnated as a younger couple and presented in a more adventurous context. Again, the theme was romance, which was allowed to unfold over a series of different advertisements.

### 4. The salience framework

This interpretation is based upon the premise that advertising works by standing out, by being different from all other advertisements in the product class (see Exhibit 16.4). The launch of Radion, a soap powder that used the twin propositions of cleaning and removing odours, was remarkable because of its ability to 'shout' at the audience through the use of lurid colours and striking presentations. Cillit Bang, Injurylawyers4u, and Sheila's Wheels are some of the ads consumers report that they find irritating.

## ViewPoint 16.5 The day Cillit went bang

Cillit Bang is a brand of household cleaner, owned by Reckitt Benckiser and introduced to the market in 2004. Since then the brand has been supported by a heavyweight ad campaign that features a fictional spokesperson, Barry Scott. The message is delivered through demonstration of the power of the brand to clean various surfaces, including a 1p coin dipped into the fluid. 'Members of the public' provide testimonials to the power of the cleaners and Barry Scott constantly repeats the brand name loudly, supported by heavy music, to the point that the message becomes annoying and for many, exceedingly irritating.

These ads are designed as if they are spoofing 1960s commercials. Yet despite the old-fashioned approach the brand became a market leader with a 12 per cent share (Mintel) and the ads have spawned a wave of look-alikes and remixes.

Sources: Various including Tiltman (2008).

### Question

Why has an ad that irritates the audience so much become a market leader?

### Task

Use Google to find some of the remixes of the Cillit Bang ads.

Acceptance of the persuasion and salience frameworks is based on the assumption that the audience are active, rational problem-solvers and are perfectly capable of discriminating among brands and advertisements. Furthermore, the models bring to attention two important points about people and advertising. Advertisements are capable of generating two very clear types of response: a response to the featured product and a response to the advertisement itself. As discussed earlier in Chapter 8, the cognitive responses that people make when exposed to marketing communication messages, in this case advertisements, and the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) are important means of understanding how different motivations affect decision-making.

## *The strong and the weak theories of advertising*

The explanations offered to date are all based on the premise that advertising is a potent marketing force, one that is persuasive and which is done *to* people. More recent views of advertising theory question this fundamental perspective. Prominent among the theorists are Jones, McDonald and Ehrenberg, some of whose views will now be presented. Jones (1991) presented the new views as the strong theory of advertising and the weak theory of advertising.

### The strong theory of advertising

All the models presented so far are assumed to work on the basis that they are capable of affecting a degree of change in the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs or behaviour of target audiences. Jones refers to this as the strong theory of advertising, and it appears to have been universally adopted as a foundation for commercial activity.



### Exhibit 16.3

#### Cillit Bang

This brand uses a hard hitting, loud, and repetitive message to get attention and maintain awareness levels. Typical of the strong theory's persuasive approach. Photo courtesy of Cillit Bang and Reckitt Benckiser.

According to Jones, exponents of this theory hold that advertising can persuade someone to buy a product that they have never previously purchased. Furthermore, continual long-run purchase behaviour can also be generated. Under the strong theory, advertising is believed to be capable of increasing sales at the brand and class levels. These upward shifts are achieved through the use of manipulative and psychological techniques, which are deployed against consumers who are passive, possibly because of apathy, and are generally incapable of processing information intelligently. The most appropriate theory would appear to be the hierarchy of effects model, where sequential steps move buyers forward to a purchase, stimulated by timely and suitable promotional messages.

Under the strong theory, advertising is believed to be capable of increasing sales at the brand and class levels.

### The weak theory of advertising

Increasing numbers of European writers argue that the strong theory does not reflect practice. Most notable of these writers is Ehrenberg (1988, 1997), who believes that a consumer's pattern of brand purchases is driven more by habit than by exposure to promotional messages. The framework proposed by Ehrenberg is the awareness-trial-reinforcement (ATR) framework. Awareness is required before any purchase can be made, although the elapsed time between awareness and action may be very short or very long. For the few people intrigued enough to want to try a product, a trial purchase constitutes the next phase. This may be stimulated by retail availability as much as by advertising, word-of-mouth or personal selling stimuli. Reinforcement follows to maintain awareness and provide reassurance to help the customer to repeat the pattern of thinking and behaviour and to cement the brand in the repertoire for occasional purchase activity. Advertising's role is to breed brand familiarity and identification (Ehrenberg, 1997).

Advertising's role is to breed brand familiarity and identification.

Following on from the original ATR model (Ehrenberg, 1974), various enhancements have been suggested. However, Ehrenberg added a further stage in 1997, referred to as the nudge. He argues that some consumers can 'be nudged into buying the brand more frequently (still as part of their split-loyalty repertoires) or to favour it more than the other brands in their consideration sets' (p. 22). Advertising need not be any different from before; it just provides more reinforcement that stimulates particular habitual buyers into more frequent selections of the brand from their repertoire.

According to the weak theory, advertising is capable of improving people's knowledge, and so is in agreement with the strong theory. In contrast, however, consumers are regarded as selective in determining which advertisements they observe and only perceive those that promote products that they either use or have some prior knowledge of. This means that they

## ViewPoint 16.6 Nudging chocolate

Our choice of preferred chocolate brands is fairly clear cut and considering that the amount we eat each year is so large, it is difficult to see how the volume of purchases or the frequency of consumption could be improved. The role of advertising in this market is not to inform or improve awareness, as these are high enough already. The real task in this market is to assist those who are lapsed brand users to try the brand again, in other words to nudge them back to the brand.

So, rather than build brand values the focus is on consolidating or changing behaviour. Consumer buying of chocolate has also changed as impulse buying has declined and been replaced by mass purchasing at supermarkets. Consumers get cost savings and control consumption through a single weekly purchase. This pressurises advertising into helping to secure the trade listings necessary to get product on to the supermarket shelves.

### Question

Do you agree with this nudging perspective or does advertising really persuade us to buy more than we would normally purchase?

### Task

Find out who the target market is for three different brands of chocolate.

already have some awareness of the characteristics of the advertised product. It follows that the amount of information actually communicated is limited. Advertising, Jones continues, is not potent enough to convert people who hold reasonably strong beliefs that are counter to those portrayed in an advertisement. The time available (30 seconds in television advertising) is not enough to bring about conversion and, when combined with people's ability to switch off their cognitive involvement, there may be no effective communication. Advertising is employed as a defence, to retain customers and to increase product or brand usage. Advertising is used to reinforce existing attitudes, not necessarily to drastically change them.

Unlike the strong theory, this perspective accepts that when people say that they are not influenced by advertising they are in the main correct. It also assumes that people are not apathetic or even stupid, but capable of high levels of cognitive processing.

In summary, the strong theory suggests that advertising can be persuasive, can generate long-run purchasing behaviour, can increase sales and regards consumers as passive. The weak theory suggests that purchase behaviour is based on habit and that advertising can improve knowledge and reinforce existing attitudes. It views consumers as active problem-solvers.

These two perspectives serve to illustrate the dichotomy of views that has emerged about this subject. They are important because they are both right and they are both wrong. The answer to the question 'How does advertising work?' lies somewhere between the two views

Where elaboration is likely to be high if advertising is to work, then it is most likely to work under the strong theory.

and is dependent upon the particular situation facing each advertiser. Where elaboration is likely to be high if advertising is to work, then it is most likely to work under the strong theory. For example, consumer durables and financial products require that advertising urges prospective customers into some form of trial behaviour. This may be a call for more information from a sales representative or perhaps a visit to a showroom. The vast majority of product purchases, however, involve low levels of elaboration, where involvement is low and where people select, often unconsciously, brands from an evoked set.

New products require people to convert or change their purchasing patterns. It is evident that the strong theory must prevail in these circumstances. Where products become

established their markets generally mature, so that real growth is non-existent. Under these circumstances, advertising works by protecting the consumer franchise and by allowing users to have their product choices confirmed and reinforced. The other objective of this form of advertising is to increase the rate at which customers reselect and consume products. If the strong theory were the only acceptable approach, then theoretically advertising would be capable of continually increasing the size of each market, until everyone had been converted. There would be no 'stationary' markets.

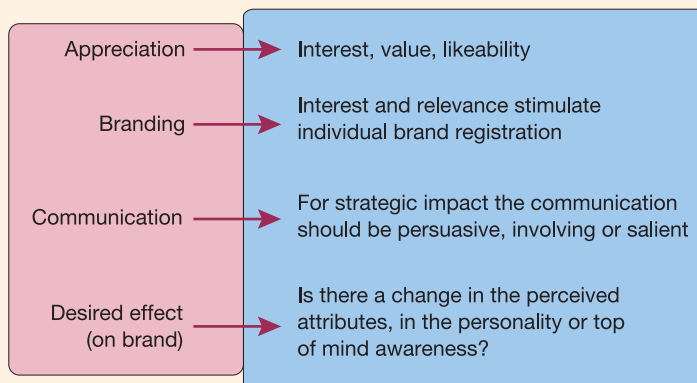
Considering the vast sums that are allocated to advertising budgets, not only to launch new products but also to pursue market share targets aggressively, the popularity and continued implicit acceptance of the power of advertising suggest that a large proportion of resources are wasted in the pursuit of advertising-driven brand performance. Indeed, it is noticeable that organisations have been switching resources out of advertising into sales promotion activities. There are many reasons for this (Chapter 18), but one of them concerns the failure of advertising to produce the expected levels of performance: to produce market share. The strong theory fails to deliver the expected results, and the weak theory does not apply to all circumstances. Reality is probably a mixture of the two.

### The alphabetical model

Prue (1998) presents a framework entitled the alphabetical model, based upon the premise that advertising should be interpreted from a customer orientation. His model is an attempt to return to the simplicity inherent in the AIDA and other sequential models (see Figure 16.3). This is not so much a theory as a rather wide depository for all known interpretations of how advertising might work.

## Using advertising strategically

There are many varied and conflicting ideas about the strategic use of advertising. For a long time the management of the tools of the communication mix was considered strategic. Indeed, many practitioners still believe in this approach. However, ideas concerning integrated marketing communications and corporate identity (Chapters 9 and 13) have helped provide a fresh perspective on what constitutes advertising strategy, and issues concerning differentiation,



**Figure 16.3**

The alphabetical model of advertising

Source: Adapted from Prue (1998) *An all-embracing theory of how advertising works?*, *Admap*, February, pp. 18–23. Reproduced with permission of the publisher.



brand values and the development of brand equity have helped establish both strategic and a tactical or operational aspect associated with advertising.

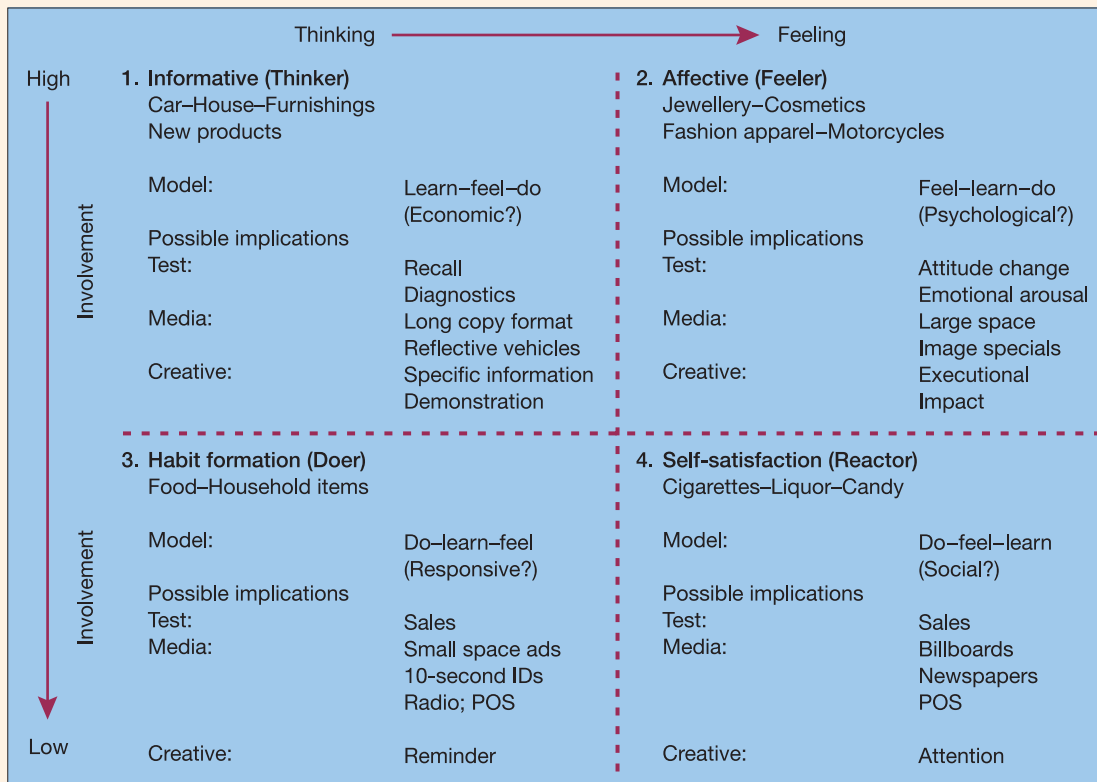
One of the first significant attempts to formalise advertising’s strategic role was developed by Vaughn when working for an advertising agency, Foote, Cone and Belding. These ideas (see below) were subsequently debated and an alternative model emerged from Rossiter and Percy. Both frameworks have been used extensively by advertising agencies, and although their influence has now subsided the underlying variables and approach remain central to strategic advertising thought.

### The FCB matrix

Brain specialisation theory suggests that the left-hand side of the brain is best for handling rational, linear and cognitive thinking.

Vaughn (1980) developed a matrix utilising involvement and brain specialisation theories. Brain specialisation theory suggests that the left-hand side of the brain is best for handling rational, linear and cognitive thinking, whereas the right-hand side is better able to manage spatial, visual and emotional issues (the affective or feeling functions).

Vaughn proposed that by combining involvement with elements of thinking and feeling, four primary advertising planning strategies can be distinguished. These are informative, affective, habitual and self-satisfaction (see Figure 16.4). According to Vaughn, the matrix is intended to be a thought provoker rather than a formula or model from which prescriptive



**Figure 16.4** FCB grid  
 Source: Vaughn (1980). Used with kind permission from WARC.

solutions are to be identified. The FCB matrix is a useful guide to help analyse and appreciate consumer/product relationships and to develop appropriate communication strategies. The four quadrants of the grid identify particular types of decision-making and each requires different advertising approaches. Vaughn suggests that different orderings from the learn–feel–do sequence can be observed. By perceiving the different ways in which the process can be ordered, he proposed that the learn–feel–do sequence should be visualised as a continuum, a circular concept. Communication strategy would, therefore, be based on the point of entry that consumers make to the cycle.

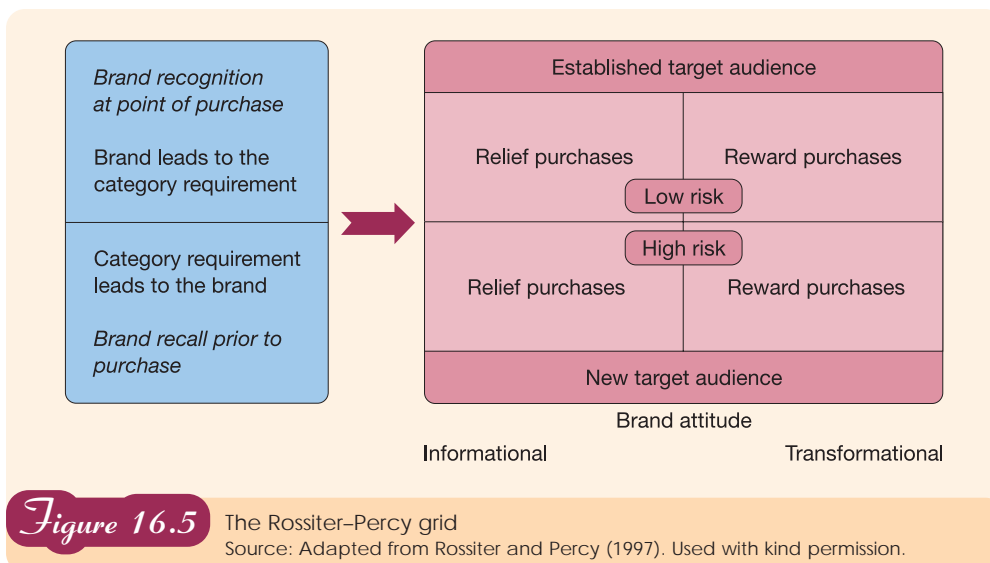
Some offerings, generally regarded as ‘habitual’, may be moved to another quadrant, such as ‘responsive’, to develop differentiation and establish a new position for the product in the minds of consumers relative to the competition. This could be achieved by the selection of suitable media vehicles and visual images in the composition of the messages associated with an advertisement. There is little doubt that this model, or interpretation of the advertising process, has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the advertising process and has been used by a large number of advertising agencies (Joyce, 1991).

### The Rossiter–Percy grid

Rossiter *et al.* (1991), however, disagree with some of the underpinnings of the FCB grid and offer a new one in response (revised 1997) (Figure 16.5). They suggest that involvement is not a continuum because it is virtually impossible to decide when a person graduates from high to low involvement. They claim that the FCB grid fails to account for situations where a person moves from high to low involvement and then back to high, perhaps on a temporary basis, when a new variant is introduced to the market. Rossiter *et al.* regard involvement as the level of perceived risk present at the time of purchase. Consequently, it is the degree of familiarity buyers have at the time of purchase that is an important component.

A further criticism is that the FCB grid is an attitude-only model. Rossiter *et al.* quite rightly identify the need for brand awareness to be built into such grids as a prerequisite for attitude development. However, they cite the need to differentiate different purchase situations. Some brands require awareness recall because the purchase decision is made prior to the act of purchasing. Other brands require

Some brands require awareness recall because the purchase decision is made prior to the act of purchasing.



**Figure 16.5**

The Rossiter–Percy grid  
Source: Adapted from Rossiter and Percy (1997). Used with kind permission.

awareness recognition at the point of purchase, where the buyer needs to be prompted into brand choice decisions. Each of these situations requires different message strategies, and these are explored in Chapter 17.

The other major difference between the two grids concerns the ‘think–feel’ dimension. Rossiter *et al.* believe that a wider spectrum of motives must be incorporated, as the FCB ‘think–feel’ interpretation fails to accommodate differences between product category and brand purchase motivations. For example, the decision to use a product category may be based on a strictly functional and utilitarian need. The need to travel to another country often designates the necessity of air transport. The choice of carrier, however, particularly over the North Atlantic, is a brand choice decision, motivated by a variety of sensory and ego-related inputs and anticipated outputs. Rossiter *et al.* disaggregate motives into what they refer to as informational and transformational motives. By detailing motives into these classifications, a more precise approach to advertising tactics can be developed (Chapter 17). Furthermore, the confusion inherent in the FCB grid, between the think and involvement elements, is overcome.

It should be understood that these ‘grids’ are purely hypothetical, and there is no proof or evidence to suggest that they are accurate reflections of advertising. It is true that both models have been used as the basis for advertising strategy in many agencies, but that does not mean that they are totally reliable or, more importantly, that they have been tested empirically so that they can be used in total confidence. They are interpretations of commercial and psychological activity and have been instrumental in advancing our level of knowledge. It is in this spirit of development that these models are presented in this text.

There are parts in both of these frameworks that have a number of strong elements of truth attached to them. However, for products that are purchased on a regular basis, pull strategies should be geared to defending the rationale that current buyers use to select the brand. Heavy buyers select a particular brand more often than light users do from their repertoire. By providing a variety of consistent stimuli, and by keeping the brand alive, fresh buyers are more likely to prefer and purchase a particular brand than those that allow their brands to lose purchase currency and the triggers necessary to evoke memory impressions.

For products purchased on an irregular basis, marketing communications need only touch the target audience on a relatively low number of occasions.

For products purchased on an irregular basis, marketing communications need only touch the target audience on a relatively low number of occasions. Strategies need to be developed that inform and contextualise the purchase rationale for consumers. This means providing lasting impressions that enable consumers to understand the circumstances in which purchase of a particular product/brand should be made once a

decision has been made to purchase from the product category. Here the priorities are to communicate messages that will encourage consumers to trust and bestow expertise on the product/brand that is offered.

## *Advertising to engage*

Advertising has traditionally been used to develop brand identities by stimulating awareness and perception. Marketing communications have evolved such that identity and values are insufficient. The growth of direct marketing and one-to-one, preferably interactive, communications have become paramount, and marketing budgets have swung more towards establishing a call-to-action, a behaviour rather than attitudinal response. The issue that remains is what is the role for advertising and what strategies should be used? One approach would be to maintain current advertising strategies on the grounds that awareness and perception are always going to be key factors. The other extreme approach would be to call for advertising to be used solely for direct-response work. Neither of these two options seems appropriate or viable in the twenty-first century.

In an age where values and response are both necessary ingredients for effective overall communication, advertising strategy in the future will probably need to be based on engagement. Customers will want to engage with the values offered by a brand that are significant to them individually. However, there will also be a need to engage with them at a behavioural level and to encourage them to want to respond to the advertising. Advertising strategy should therefore reflect a brand's context and be adjusted according to the required level of engagement regarding identity development and the required level of behavioural response. Advertising will no longer be able to rightly assume the lead role in a campaign and will be used according to the engagement needs of, first, the audience, second, the brand, and third, the communication industry, in that order.

Advertising strategy should reflect a brand's context.

## ViewPoint 16.7

### Ding Dong attacking advertising

Following BSkyB's share purchase of 18 per cent of ITV in 2007 a dispute erupted with its arch rival Virgin Media. Virgin claimed it was a move designed to prevent them from buying the organisation. Not long after this Sky and Virgin agreed to disagree about a fee for the Sky Basics TV package, which led to those channels being unavailable to Virgin Media viewers.

The dispute has two sides. Sky claim the dispute is about Virgin's refusal to pay the asking price to continue carrying the channels. Virgin on the other hand believe that Sky is trying to compel Virgin's customers into switching providers by denying them access to the basic channels (BBC).

Since then the two companies entered into a public spat and used advertising to make allegations and claims designed to inform the public of the real situation as each side saw it.

For example, Virgin Media used a print campaign to compare the TV, broadband and phone services of the two companies. Called 'The Real Deal' the campaign sought to show their superior service. However, Sky brought six complaints about the ads, claiming them as misleading or untrue. These were upheld by the Advertising Standards Authority (Sweney, 2007).

In November 2007 Virgin announced that it was to cease its campaign against Sky, after having spent £32 million on the advertising. James Kidd, Managing Director of Marketing at Virgin Media is reported to have said 'There's no point in spending any more time or money whacking the crap out of each other' (Jones, 2007).

Sources: BBC (2007); Jones (2007); and Sweney (2007).

### Question

What value might Virgin have generated from this £32 million spend?

### Task

Find two other brands that have been engaged in a public spat and what was the outcome?

Cohen (2003) refers to the gap between advertising used to develop brand identity and the need to encourage audience responses. He develops an OPC model where O refers to the offer, P to the product and C to the call-to-action. Advertising therefore should attempt to bring these elements together in a single, significant presentation. Key to his model is the brand/response (B/R) ratio, which relates to the relative levels of emphasis on the brand and response elements. The ratio refers to a line or spectrum of effects between these two elements. Traditional brand-based advertising equates with a B/R of 100/0 and direct response has a B/R of 0/100 where the sole intention is to maximise the likelihood of a response. The strategic claim behind this approach may be in need of elaboration to be operationally robust, but the principle of moving the focus of advertising strategy to one that recognises the need to incorporate brand experiences is essentially sound.

## Summary

In order to help consolidate your understanding of advertising strategy, here are the key points summarised against each of the learning objectives:

### 1. Consider the role advertising plays in both consumer and business-to-business markets.

The role of advertising in most marketing communications campaigns is to engage audiences. Engagement is enabled either by informing, changing perceptions and building brand values or by encouraging a change in behaviour.

Advertising can reach huge audiences with simple messages that present opportunities to allow receivers to understand what a product is, what its primary function is and how it relates to all the other similar products. This is the main function of advertising: to communicate with specific audiences. These audiences may be consumer- or organisation-based, but wherever they are located the prime objective is to build or maintain awareness of a product or an organisation.

### 2. Appraise the use of emotion in advertising and consider concepts associated with shock advertising.

Advertising does not always work through rational information processing. Feelings and emotions play an important role, especially when advertising is used to build awareness levels and brand strength.

Audiences are offended by shock advertising because there is 'norm violation, encompassing transgressions of law or custom, breaches of a moral or social code, or things that outrage the moral or physical senses', for example gratuitous violence and disgusting image. The main reason for using a shock advertising strategy is that it is a good way to secure an audience's attention and achieve a longer-lasting impact than through traditional messages and attention-getting devices.

### 3. Explain the principal frameworks by which advertising is thought to influence individuals.

The hierarchy of effects frameworks (e.g. AIDA), were the first attempts to explain how advertising works. The sequential nature of these early interpretations was attractive because they were easy to comprehend, neatly mirrored the purchase decision process and provided a base upon which campaign goals were later assigned (Dagmar). However, as our knowledge of buyer behaviour increased and as the significance of the USP declined so these hierarchy of effects models also declined in terms of our understanding about advertising. Now they are insignificant and are no longer used as appropriate interpretations of how advertising works.

In their place a number of new frameworks and explanations have arisen, all of which claim to reflect practice. In other words these new theories about how advertising works are a reflection of practice, of the way advertising is considered to work, or at least used by advertising agencies and interpreted by marketing research agencies. The first of these information processing models were developed by O'Malley (1991) and Hall (1992) and they suggest that there are four main advertising frameworks: persuasion, sales, salience and involvement.

### 4. Appraise the strong and weak theories of advertising.

The strong theory of advertising reflects the persuasion concept, and has high credibility when used with new brands. However, the contrasting view is that advertising should be regarded as a means of defending customers' purchase decisions and for protecting markets, not building

them. Reality suggests that the majority of advertising cannot claim to be of significant value to most people and that the strong and the weak theories are equally applicable, although not at the same time nor in the same context.

### 5. Consider ways in which advertising can be used strategically.

Advertising, once considered the prime form of mass persuasion, is now subject to many different views. Those who are sceptical of advertising's power to persuade consumers to change their purchasing habits now explore ideas concerning advertising's strategic role in reinforcing brand messages and repositioning brands.

The FCB and Rossiter–Percy grids represent formalised attempts to interpret the strategic use of advertising. Intended to provide agencies with a method that might ensure consistency, meaning and value with respect to their clients' brands, these are no longer considered by agencies to be sufficiently flexible, rigorous or representative of how contemporary advertising performs.

A more current perspective of advertising strategy suggests that advertising should become more engaged with the customer's experience of the brand and not be rooted just in the development of brand values.

### 6. Examine ideas concerning the use of advertising to engage audiences.

In an age where values and response are both necessary ingredients for effective overall communication, future advertising strategy will probably need to be based on engagement. Advertising strategy should therefore reflect a brand's context and be adjusted according to the required level of engagement regarding identity development and the required level of behavioural response. Advertising will no longer be able to rightly assume the lead role in a campaign and will be used according to the engagement needs of, first, the audience, second, the brand, and third, the communication industry, in that order.

## Review questions

1. Find two advertisements and write notes explaining how they depict the roles of advertising.
2. Write brief notes outlining the difference between absolute and relative costs.
3. Name the three elements in advertising, identified by Dahl *et al.* (2003), which cause audiences to be offended. Find an example of each.
4. What are the essential differences between the involvement and salience frameworks of advertising? Find four advertisements (other than those described in the text) that are examples of these two approaches.
5. Write a short presentation explaining the differences between the strong and weak theories of advertising.
6. Select an organisation of your choice and find three ads it has used recently. Are the ads predominantly trying to persuade audiences or are they designed to reinforce brand values?
7. Evaluate the contribution of Prue's alphabetical model of advertising.
8. Draw the FCB grid and place on it the following product categories: shampoo, life assurance, sports cars, kitchen towels, box of chocolates.
9. Prepare a report explaining the differences between the Rossiter–Percy and FCB grids.
10. Write brief notes outlining the strategic role advertising plays within an organisation's overall promotional activities.

## MiniCase

### Tapping into a new zeitgeist: women consumers, lifestyle trends and the *Red* Experience

Lorna Stevens: University of Ulster

In 1998, EMAP Elan launched a new woman's magazine called *Red* onto the already crowded UK women's monthly magazine market. The decision was based on the EMAP Elan's belief that there was an emerging sensibility in women in their thirties and forties that was not being catered for. This new 'zeitgeist' (spirit of the age) was the notion that age was a state of mind, and that contemporary women were taking youthful values and behaviours into their 30s and beyond. These 'middle-youth' women wanted a lively and vibrant magazine that helped them escape from their busy, day-to-day lives. EMAP Elan would offer women readers 'the precious experience of time to oneself' in a 'time poor world' (Rainey *et al.*, 1999).

The challenge for the *Red* team was to entice women in their 30s and 40s to buy the new magazine, and to do so they reckoned they would need to stress the pleasurable *experience* of consuming it. The advertising campaign revolved around three television ads, called 'Defining Moments', 'The Strip' and 'Me-Time'. Each of these advertisements made a direct appeal to the experiential aspects of consumption, namely the emotions and sensory feelings associated with the act of consumption (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).

Women's monthly magazines, while they are undeniably rich in information and advice for women, also have very strong experiential appeals for women. The editorial team at *Red* was convinced that women's magazines needed to provide an oasis of calm and pleasure in the midst of 'time-poor' everyday lives. Instead of addressing women in their 30s and 40s according to their numerous roles in life, then, the *Red* team decided that their unique proposition would be to focus on *Red* magazine as a self-indulgent, pleasurable *experience* that enabled women consumers to take time out from the demands of their daily, juggling lives. The name '*Red*' was chosen because it was considered 'quite sexy, quite glamorous, quite modern' (Anne-Marie Lavin, EMAP Elan). It also conjures up passion, warmth, feistiness, challenge, readability and simplicity. The focus of the marketing strategy would be on attitude and lifestyle, encapsulated by the core concept '*Red* Time is Me Time'.

The first television ad, 'Defining Moments' comprised a series of fleeting and evocative images, filmed

in black-and-white, of a woman at work and at play, with soothing, classical music in the background. Its emphasis was on lifestyle rather than demographics. A female voiceover relates the following lines as the various scenes unfold:

'If you think life's too short for communal changing rooms/If you're madly in love with your garden/If you buy things and hide the receipts/If you're having an affair, or not/If you've grown up without growing old/And you don't want to have it all, you just want to have what you want/Then it's probably time you saw *Red*.

The ad has an almost documentary quality as we see a quick succession of scenes from the woman's life. She is slim and attractive, dressed simply in a white shirt and dark trousers. We see her dining with friends, out of doors with her red setter dog; driving her car; dancing in a glamorous cocktail dress. We see her pensively looking out the window at bare winter branches, and a man leaving the house – an illicit lover or a devoted husband? Then we see her at a drawing board, talking on the phone; having her back scrubbed in a bath tub; on a bicycle with a child. The final image is the front cover of *Red*'s first issue, with the caption 'Go on, treat yourself.'

The advertisement's attractive and evocative cinematic style and its romantic images are clearly designed to appeal to women consumers' senses and emotions. By the end of the ad nothing is known about the magazine's contents, but the ad is designed to enable the target market to recognise aspects of themselves in the series of so-called 'defining moments'. Anne-Marie Lavin, the then marketing manager of *Red*, observes: 'I think you can launch a magazine quite easily, but it's more difficult to launch a brand, and everything that we do – and that's everything in the magazine used to market it – reflects those values.'

The second advertisement in the series is called 'The Strip', which was launched a year after 'Defining Moments'. This ad caused considerable debate at its inception stage, as it shows a woman doing a striptease. The *Red* team were somewhat anxious about this concept, and were worried that if the ad was too sexually suggestive it might alienate the target

market. They therefore worked closely with the ad agency to ensure that the ad portrayed the woman in a humorous way, as a likeable, human subject, rather than an objectified sex object.

An attractive 30-something woman enters a dark room wearing a black coat and high-heeled shoes. She switches on a lamp, and picks up a red note from the console table. Grinning, she tosses the note away from her, and her bag. Next she slowly removes her coat, shoulder by shoulder, and we realise she is doing a striptease. A woman's smoky voice sings '*I dreamt that I was chasing – the monster out of me*'. There are several cream sofas in the room, with scarlet cushions. The woman strikes various exaggerated, humorous poses as she gradually strips off to her underwear. At one point she kicks off one of her shoes, and it flies through the air, knocking over a tall vase of white lilies. She pulls a face, but continues to smile. We notice a bright green toy on the floor behind her. One of her stockings drifts onto a console table beside a framed photograph of a man, and she blows an exaggerated kiss at it. She walks over towards a sofa, tripping over the soft toy as she does so. She laughs and makes a face at herself in the mirror, and snatches some clothing from the back of the sofa. The next scene is of her reclining on the cream sofa, surrounded by rich red cushions, dressed in tracksuit bottoms and a fleecy top, smiling and reading a copy of *Red* magazine. A woman's voice now says '*Red* magazine – drop everything', underlining the humour that pervades the ad. Despite its somewhat risky and indeed risqué marketing strategy, the ad worked, and indeed sales of the magazine increased by 30,000 on the previous month.

The third advertisement, 'Me-Time', was launched a year after 'The Strip'. This ad was very different from the two previous ads, but once again there was a clear focus on the concept of 'me-time'. The ad focuses on ideal reading scenarios, and gives centre stage to a red sofa, which is used in every frame in the ad to symbolise the concept of 'me-time'. An elegant scarlet sofa is shown in a variety of idyllic places: a lush, flower-filled summer meadow, complete with butterflies; a sandy beach by moonlight; the sofa surrounded by a circle of candles; a sunny Mediterranean terrace; a rugged, mountain landscape overlooking a still lake, against a backdrop of a blue and white streaked sky. The final image is of a woman sitting on the sofa in an Italianate-style terrace, complete with elegant columns, urns and a water fountain. She sits, her bare feet drawn up beside her, absorbed in a copy of *Red* magazine,

smiling. At the end of the ad a woman's voice says '*Red* magazine – your sofa awaits.' We are then shown the current issue of *Red*, against a luxurious red satin background, underlining its magical and precious qualities, and its associations with sensuous pleasure and relaxation. 'Your sofa awaits' clearly recalls the famous line from the Cinderella fairytale 'Your carriage awaits'. And just as a pumpkin can become a glass carriage, a sofa can become a magic carpet when combined with a very special ingredient, *Red* magazine. In short, it can carry its readers off to better places!

The *Red* marketing campaign was a great success: against the odds, the magazine was able to squeeze its way into the crowded women's magazine market, and more importantly, hold its own there, a feat it has continued to perform in the 10 years since its launch. Much of *Red*'s success is down to the clear focus of EMAP Elan's marketing strategy, and its memorable TV ads, all of which were based on the concept of 'me-time'. The *Red* case is testimony to the fact that consumers are very receptive to ads that appeal to their emotions, feelings and senses. *Red* magazine's development team recognised that it was not just about getting the contents of the magazine right; it was about creating the right ambiance around the magazine, and developing a strong and appealing brand image and personality for *Red*. It was also about understanding its market, and positioning the brand in such a way as to reflect current lifestyle trends. By creating a brand that encapsulated the notion of me-time and self-indulgence, *Red* appealed to 'middle-youth' women in their 30s and 40s who wanted a lively and pleasurable read, and the chance to put their feet up and indulge in some 'me-time'!

## MiniCase questions

1. Can you think of other marketing campaigns that have recognised a new consumer trend or 'zeitgeist' and developed their campaign around this?
2. Do you think that experiential appeals have become more commonplace than informational ones in advertising? If so, why do you think this is the case?
3. The women's magazine market is holding its own in the face of increased competition from the Internet, TV and newspapers, and in fact magazine readership is rising, with Keynote predicting that this trend will continue. Why do you think women's magazines continue to appeal to women?



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