

CREATIVITY

Concept Still Rules

What makes an advertisement great? It's not the latest virtual reality innovation or slickest digital production techniques. It's certainly not the hottest celebrity endorser. Or

how many Instagram followers you have. It's none of that. The answer has been the same since the first cave painting. Great ads begin with a great concept. **The Big Idea. The One Thing.**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Identify the skills needed to succeed as a creative professional.
- 1.2 Describe the job functions of the creative team and learn strategies for controlling the creative process.
- 1.3 Classify the career paths and various job descriptions for creatives as well as the business, science, and ethics of advertising.
- 1.4 Diagnose the connection between creativity and consumer behavior.

This book is based on developing strategies. Discovering insights. Recognizing patterns. Understanding and respecting consumers. Creating a compelling message. Cutting through the crap. Sure, we'll get into the craft of writing and designing. But everything starts with the concept. That's the core of creativity.

We can't teach you how to be creative. No one can. But you may be surprised how creative you are. You may not have been a great English student. But you may find you're an excellent copywriter. You may not be a renowned artist. But you may discover you have a talent for logo design or ad layouts. You may not know much about ad copy. But you may have a knack for building communities online through social media. You may never have to write a broadcast TV commercial. But you may be able to create innovative online videos. You may invent something we have yet to think of. Regardless of your talents and interests, advertising is an industry that keeps reinventing itself, and you will be part of that process. As digital natives, you've never experienced a world without the internet, social media, or mobile devices. So, you may not appreciate the quantum leap from so-called traditional media to digital in terms of advertising efficiency. In a study by Seriously Simple Marketing, the cost to reach an audience of 2,000 was as high as \$900 for direct mail but only \$50 for search and \$75 for social media.¹ Even though digital wins the efficiency battle hands down, developing a complete integrated campaign requires knowledge of all the marketing communication tools at your disposal, even some that are still being invented.

Skills to Succeed as a Creative Professional

Studies suggest we're exposed to at least 5,000 marketing messages a day. We strain all that through a fine filter of self-interest (helped along by digital content providers whose algorithms

provide the filter). Then we respond to a tiny fraction of what's left. That's if we haven't found a way to avoid advertising altogether (we haven't).

So as marketing professionals, your first task is not to fine-tune the message. Your primary focus is finding information your target audience wants to receive. That starts with the concept, shaped by rock-solid strategy. This book will guide you through that process. If you're lucky, you'll take classes taught by working professionals—seasoned creatives, strategists, and account folks who reveal the inside workings of our chaotic sink-or-swim industry. After a lot of trial and error, you'll discover something about creative strategy and tactics—and hopefully a lot about yourself.

You'll need to consider the following skills as you develop those concepts:

- Creating strategy built on fact-based, emotionally driven research
- Aligning strategy with creative concepting
- The correct format for writing copy for traditional and new media
- The basic rules of copywriting and when to break them
- How to put more sell into your copy
- Design basics that apply to all media
- Sensitivity to the wide range of issues that impact society (people unlike you)
- An enduring respect from your consumers
- Awareness of ethical and legal issues
- How to keep continuity throughout a campaign
- Knowing how to use emerging technology as a tool, not as an idea
- Understanding what endures in the face of a rapidly changing marketing environment
- The importance of presenting your work
- Separating the jargon and BS from the basic message you want to deliver

The Creative Team

Traditionally, a creative team has comprised a copywriter and an art director, with participation by web developers, broadcast producers, and the social media team. This team usually answers to a coach—the creative director.

They must understand who uses the product, how it compares with the competition, what's important to the consumer, and a million other facts. No one does it all. Sometimes art directors write the best headlines. Or writers come up with a killer visual. Sometimes the inspiration comes from a comment on Instagram or a tweet. However, the creative leaders need to be able to sift that nugget of an idea from all the white noise that surrounds it. A single picture may tell a story. A headline may paint a mental picture. Art and copy should work together to create a total greater than the sum of its parts. Examples of some ads that creatively synergize copy and visuals include the following.

As shown in photo 1.1, Band-Aid found a respectful sweet spot as it sought to demonstrate an understanding of the range of diversity—or skin colors—in the United States.

The visual metaphor in photo 1.2 is from Australia and shows that McDonald's serves Wi-Fi along with greasy fries and fatty burgers. Internet access makes it easier to find a doctor in case of a heart attack.

Imagine a world without Oreo cookies. That's why the Global Oreo Vault (photo 1.3), a real asteroid-proof facility, was built in Svalbard, Norway, to protect the Oreo recipe. With all the real



Photo 1.1 Band-Aid found a respectful sweet spot as it sought to demonstrate an understanding of the range of diversity.
© Johnson & Johnson

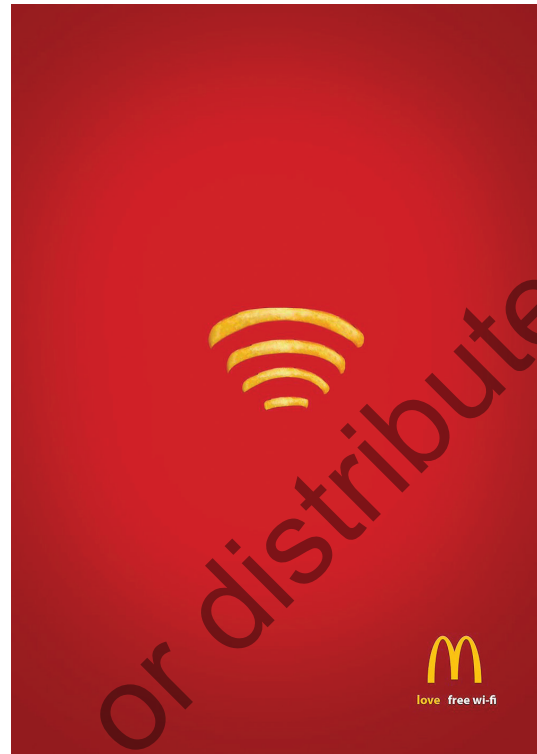


Photo 1.2 This visual metaphor from Australia shows that McDonald's serves wi-fi.
© McDonald's

and imagined horrors during the pandemic, this tongue-in-cheek stunt brought some welcome comic relief and earned *Adweek's* Marketing Moment of the Year award for 2020.

The magic happens when the combination of art and copy creates something entirely new. Steve Jobs, the founder and former CEO of Apple, summed it up nicely: “Our job is reading things that are not yet on the page.”²²



Photo 1.3 Imagine a world without Oreos. That's why the Global Oreo Vault, a real asteroid-proof facility was built in Svalbard, Norway, to protect the Oreo recipe. With all the real and imagined horrors during the pandemic, this tongue-in-cheek stunt earned *AdWeek's* Marketing Moment of the Year award for 2020.
© Mondelez International

What Else Does a Creative Person Do?

Some of the responsibilities besides writing copy include the following:

- **Research**—Researching primary and secondary, and always insight driven
- **Strategy**—Taking the research and working with others on the team, crafting a defined strategic direction that will captivate the target and build return on investment (ROI)
- **Ideation**—Taking the strategy and creating concepts that then become the foundation for your writing
- **Client contact**—Getting the facts direct from the source rather than filtered through an account executive, presenting those ideas, and defending the work
- **Online content**—Writing more digital content than traditional ad copy (more than likely), including websites, banners, articles, videos, blogs, social media posts, and much more
- **Broadcast producer**—Finding the right director, talent, music, and postproduction house to make your vision come to life (that means stepping beyond the usual options)
- **New business**—Gathering data, organizing the creative, working on the pitch, and presenting the work
- **Public relations (PR)**—Writing the news releases, planning promotional events, and even contacting editors
- **Creative management**—Much has been written about whether copywriters or art directors make the best creative directors. The answer is yes.

WHO'S WHO

Leo Burnett—Leo Burnett established a new creative style of advertising, along with many memorable characters that are still working today, including Tony the Tiger, the Jolly Green Giant, the Keebler Elves, the Marlboro Man, and the Pillsbury Doughboy. Burnett believed that creativity made an advertisement effective but, at the same time, that creativity required believability. (With the possible exception of talking cartoon characters, animated bread dough, and cowboys promoting lung cancer.)

Tips for Controlling the Creative Process

Step 1: Get the facts. If you have a research department or account planners, take advantage of their knowledge. But don't settle for someone else's opinion. Talk to people who use the product as well as those who don't or won't even consider it. In short, know as much as you can about the product, the competition, the market, and the people who buy it. Try to make the product part of your life. But remember—don't fall victim to "me-search." Just because you feel a certain way toward a product or service doesn't mean everyone does.

Step 2: Ideation. If you've done your homework, you should know the wants and needs of the target audience and how your product meets those needs. From that base, you can direct the free flow of creative ideas. Concentrate on finding that killer creative idea rather than floundering in a sea of questions.

Step 3: Pick up a pencil before you reach for the mouse. This is critical, because it's all about the creative concept—and ideating with thumbnails and lists is faster, easier, and better off-screen. What's the main visual? How should the elements be arranged?

Step 4: Find the reference or visuals. Can you communicate your vision to the rest of your team? The finished piece may not look like your original vision, but at least you have a point of reference. Browse the web, stock photo books, and awards annuals. The visual selection is a starting point, not the end game.

Step 5: Work with the rest of the team. For most creatives, the happiest and most productive years of their careers are spent collaborating with others. While one person may want to drive the entire process, it's best not to run over your teammates. They may come up with some ideas that will make you look like a genius.



Comparison of Traditional, Earned, and Social Media

Step 6: Step outside the agency box. Most agencies today have protocols for diversity and inclusion in briefing. Those that don't, should. Regardless, always solicit feedback from people who are not like you or experts in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Expand your understanding of the world, while saving your clients a lot of headaches. It's important to stay humble—seek feedback on how your work will be received in a broader social context.

Step 7: Pre-sell the suits. Chances are you will need others who interface with the client to buy your ideas. Maintaining a good relationship with the account service team not only protects your job; it also gives you allies when you pitch your idea.

Step 8: Sell the client. Be prepared to defend your work. Many times, your brilliant reasoning fails when the clients think with their wallets. Over time, you'll know how far you can push a client. Most clients don't mind being challenged creatively if there are sound reasons for taking chances. Then again, a lot of them are clueless (or, more politely stated, they don't understand creative), and you'll just have to produce a piece of garbage. Just smile, cash your check, and hope for a better outcome next time.

Clients will always find something to pick at, but three things you *never* want to hear are:

- “That looks just like the competitor. Didn't you know what the other guys are doing?”
- “I was looking for something a lot more creative. Take some risks.”
- “You obviously don't understand our product or our market.”

You won't hear those things if you take care of Steps 1 to 8.

Step 9: Get it right. Okay, you've sold the client. Now what? Your responsibilities don't end there. Can you make it even better? If others are involved with finishing your work, will they do justice to your vision? Remember this quote from the great Leo Burnett: “Nothing takes the guts out of a great idea like bad execution.”

Step 10: Maintain continuity. Almost everyone can come up with a great idea. Once. The hard part is extending that great idea in other media and repeating it in a fresh way. Over time, elements of a campaign tend to drift away from the original idea. Clients usually get tired of a look before the consumer. Someone on the creative team must monitor the elements of a campaign to make sure they are true to the original idea.

Step 11: Discover what worked and why. If the elements in a campaign achieve their objectives, great! If they win awards, but the client loses market share, look out. Keep monitoring the efficacy of the campaign. Check the analytics. If you never stop learning, you'll never miss an opportunity to make the next one even better.

WHO'S WHO

Gina Grillo—The Advertising Club of New York is one of the oldest and most prestigious organizations in the industry. Gina Grillo is the president and CEO of Ad Club, which has over 5,000 members. Club members can access a network of thought leaders who fuel creativity and work toward greater diversity and inclusion, while offering professional development training. Grillo has been with the Ad Club for more than 20 years and transformed it into the voice of modern advertising. Grillo has also shaped the conversation around diversity of thought, start-up innovation, and support of young professionals. The Ad Club, now more than 120 years old, remains a trusted source for thought leadership, while giving back to the community and fostering young and diverse talent.³

Career Paths

Where Do I Go From Here?

Some entry-level creatives add “senior” to their title after three or four years. But when you’re a senior before you reach 30, where do you go? We are using the traditional job titles here rather than the fanciful descriptions such as “Storyteller,” “Chief Fun and Frivolity Officer,” “Creative Conduit,” “VP of Hustle and Heart,” and our favorite, “Resilience Harvester,” whatever that means.

Copywriter/art director for life: Many people are happy to hone their creative talents throughout their careers. It’s rewarding if you continue to improve and never stop growing. No matter how cute your title is, you’ll still be a writer or art director.

Account service: Do you like fielding client calls at 11 p.m.? Or on the weekends? Or maybe you like getting up extra early to polish a strategy doc or redo a budget for the umpteenth time. And maybe you’re the type that finds all this rewarding—especially in the face of being the one to pull a team together, activate creative, or guide projects and campaigns to completion. If any of this sounds like a “yes,” you could become an account exec.

Account planner: A natural for many writers who like research and enjoy being the conduit between the account manager, the creative team, and the consumer. It involves thorough knowledge of research, marketing, creative, and media, as well as a lot of intuition. Most successful advertising copywriters already possess those skills.

Promotion director: Writers and art directors are idea people. So, it makes sense to use that creativity to develop sales promotions, unique events, sponsorships, specialty marketing programs, displays, and all the other marketing communication tools not included in “traditional advertising.” This is a rapidly growing area with a lot of potential for creative people.

PR writer: Although most PR people won’t admit it, it’s easier to write a news release than an ad. Most advertising writers won’t admit that editorial writing is usually more persuasive than advertising. PR writing involves much more than news releases, though. You need to be an expert in social media, understanding what works and what doesn’t. You may produce videos or schedule events, press conferences, and any number of creative PR efforts.

Internal advertising or PR department: So far, we’ve outlined agency jobs. But other companies need talented creative people. You may write and manage social media for a company or organization. Or handle PR, trade shows, or media relations. In larger companies, you may handle promotional activities not covered by your ad agency. You may even write speeches for your CEO to make that person appear as someone other than an overcompensated egotist.

Web or interactive expert: Any writer or designer today should be a digital native. Or at least be willing to learn very quickly. You don't have to be a whiz at writing code, but having technical expertise is a huge plus. As with any phase of advertising, creativity—*not* technology—is the most precious commodity.

Social media specialist: Beyond being a daily consumer of social media, a creative content provider must know when and how to use it to persuade others. This job usually involves daily monitoring, posting, and content development. It can also mean developing social media marketing strategy. Just remember that any personal post can be connected to your employer or client. So, a profanity-laden tirade against a politician, a racist joke, or trolling your ex may come back to bite you in the butt if the wrong person reads it.

Content provider: Content includes native advertising, feature articles, white papers, online newsletters, and a lot more. You can provide content as part of an agency, in house, or as a freelancer. You need to find that sweet spot where the wants of the target audience intersect with the brand message.

Freelance writer or designer: Some people like the flexible schedule and variety of clients. Others like the prolonged periods of inactivity and thrive on rejection. Success requires tremendous discipline and endless self-promotion. In many cases, freelancers are last-minute hires when full-time creatives are not available, so deadlines are usually tight.

Video and broadcast producer or director: Maybe you have the knack for writing scripts, selecting talent, editing, and doing other elements of audio and video production. Creative talent and a logical mind are the keys. Technological expertise can be learned on the job. Some of the most effective videos are created on smartphones.

Creative strategist: Some agencies specialize in strategic thinking—the view from 30,000 feet. Once the strategy is sold, the strategic agency collects the money before anything is created. The people who make things—copywriters, designers, art directors, web developers, and the rest—get paid when the real work is completed.

Consultant: Some companies (and agencies) hire outside talent to provide a fresh point of view. Other times, consultants set the strategy that gives the creatives their marching orders. Too often *consultant* is another word for unemployed. Sometimes they are no more than repackaged freelancers or relatives of the marketing manager.

What's In It for Me?

Let's be honest. If you want a creative career, you're likely interested in three things: fame, fortune, and fun. Not necessarily in that order.

Fame: Everyone wants recognition. Especially entry-level creatives. Advertising is unsigned. So, there are only two ways to get recognized—winning awards and having people say, “You're *really* the person who did that?” Awards may prop up your fragile self-esteem. But they can also be the key to building your career. If your stuff is good, be sure to enter your local ad club's competition. If you win, you will get noticed, and it could help you land that dream job. Continue entering and winning to build that reputation. Or if you keep losing, try to discover what the winners are doing right. Being in the club is more important than the work you create.

Fortune: Experienced creatives can earn as much as or more than other people in our business, although the pay for most entry-level positions sucks. It all depends on your talent, the economy, who you know, and a lot of luck. Senior creative directors at big shops can earn more money than most doctors—without all those tedious years of medical school, internships, and

residency. You just need to know how to do something important, like selling cheeseburgers or auto insurance, instead of saving lives. But, again, like the clubby awards shows, creative departments tend to lack diversity. Just be aware that for some people the road to fortune may be harder. We'll talk more about that in future chapters.

Fun: You can be famous and well compensated and still be unhappy in any business. You can still get a kick out of solving problems creatively, even if you're not well known or a multimillionaire. It's still a treat to work with other creatives; interact with musicians, actors, and directors; land accounts; win awards; travel to exotic locations; and, most of all, be treated as a partner instead of a vendor. When the work becomes too boring, the clients become intolerable, and the daily grind of cranking out mediocre work starts wearing thin, it's time to move on. Many promising creatives are burned out by the time they turn 45. If you're sick of the crazy agency life, you can go freelance or launch your own gig (minus the benefits and the headaches). Many creatives redirect their creative energy to a worthy non-profit. These organizations need great ideas too, and they're grateful for the help.

WHO'S WHO

Mary Wells Lawrence—While CEO, chair, and president of the legendary Wells Rich Greene agency, Mary Wells Lawrence developed innovative campaigns for Braniff, Alka-Seltzer, Benson & Hedges, and American Motors that brought a fresh look to established brands. At age 40, Lawrence became the youngest person ever inducted into the Copywriting Hall of Fame. That success is even more extraordinary given the systemic sexism that permeated the business environment of that era.

Business, Science, and Doing the Right Thing

The rules that guide successful advertising continue to evolve. But one rule will always be true: Advertising is a business, albeit populated by crazy people. Too often, we feel forced to persuade people to buy something they don't need, with money they don't have, to impress people they don't like. You'll need a killer portfolio to get a decent job. When you land that job, you'll probably be forced to do a lot of junk that looks terrible, and you may not want it in your portfolio. So, hold your nose and smile. Throughout your career, you're going to do a lot more than award-winning stuff. When you do something that looks great, sells something, and maybe wins an award or two, everyone's happy. Until the next project.

Psychologists have spent years studying creativity. Some have used a lot of pretentious right-brain/left-brain gibberish to describe how we have moved from the Information Age into a new Conceptual Age. They say our new Conceptual Age is based on changing demographics as much as the changing needs in the marketplace. Creative, empathic ideas do not come from a homogeneous group of individuals. They come from a highly varied mix of individuals—a mix of people bringing diverse backgrounds and experiences to the creative process. Diversity of thought and experience is a game changer. It's the driver of optimal flow. No matter what you call this "age," let's just say diversity feeds creativity.

Today too many ad agencies lack a diverse professional workforce. Especially in their creative departments. ADCOLOR, founded in 2007, is an industry organization dedicated to championing diversity and inclusion in the creative industries. It has since expanded its focus beyond "color." Leo Burnett was one of the first agencies that acknowledged the lack of diversity and in 2014 helped launch the No2Six6 movement. The acronym calls out data that demonstrate that as of 2014 it would take 66 years, at the current rate of hiring, to reach equality in hiring of diverse talent. That's a long time.



Photo 1.4 Nike boldly featured Colin Kaepernick in this famous 2018 ad.
© Nike



Photo 1.5 In this GLAAD-sponsored commercial, a LGBTQIA+ child tells a conservative parent how Republican policies hurt both of them.
© GLAAD



Photo 1.6 A Chinese civil rights group in Canada started a campaign to “Stop the Spread of Racism” in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.
© Chinese Canadian National Council for Social Justice

In 2018, a group of 140 women ad executives signed on to launch TIME’S UP Advertising to speak to the inequities, and harassment, women in advertising often face. Then, in 2020, 600 & Rising launched, dedicated to advocating for Black employees of U.S. advertising agencies. Today it has over 1,100 members. Agencies have begun to step up with most of the larger agencies hiring diversity and inclusion leaders. However, many of the small to midsize agencies are still playing catch-up, in an environment where it is not uncommon for clients to keep “diversity scorecards” during agency reviews. Suffice to say the advertising industry is a difficult space to work in if you are not white, male, cisgender, and able bodied. We will have a lot more to say about this in the coming chapters.

Black Lives Matter is our business too. And this means more than adding more Black talent to the creative ranks. It also requires a sea change in the way white people view the advertising industry and the consumer landscape. We hope that there will be some serious soul-searching followed by verifiable positive action across all industries, including advertising. As you’ll see in subsequent chapters, diversity of thought and experience is at the heart of advertising’s future.

As examples, we have included advertisements that address these and other critical issues in our society. See the photos that follow.

When most consumer brands stood silent in the face of systemic racism and police brutality, Nike boldly featured Colin Kaepernick in the famous 2018 ad shown in photo 1.4. Nike's stock surged in the days after the campaign debuted, increasing the company's value by more than \$6 billion two weeks later,⁴ proving that you can do well by doing good.

In the GLAAD commercial we see in photo 1.5, a LGBTQIA+ child tells a conservative parent how Republican policies hurt both. This spot ran on conservative-leaning networks with the faint hope that just a few fair-minded viewers might think for themselves.

Photo 1.6 shows a Chinese civil rights group in Canada that started a campaign to "Stop the Spread of Racism" in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Street teams handed out bottles of hand sanitizer with pointed messages about anti-Chinese xenophobia.

Photo 1.7 represents consumers today who want to know what a brand stands for, and the brand with the most friends wins. For several years, cosmetic giant L'Oréal Paris has showcased "Women of Worth" who have volunteered to serve their communities. The site encourages donations to each woman's selected charity. Programs like this help build brand loyalty, recognize women in our society, and support worthy causes.

In photo 1.8, Canada's *Medical Marketing + Media (MM+M)* developed a series of ads tying the murder epidemic in the United States to a gun-loving culture. There's an opportunity to support worthy causes even in business-to-business publications.

The exceptional student ads in photo 1.9 were developed as part of a campaign to call into question how women are portrayed every day in advertising.

Students wanted to raise awareness of addiction to pornography. Photo 1.10 is a notable example of a well-executed integrated campaign from advertising's next rising stars. What kind of impact will your work have?

Creativity and Consumer Behavior

Decades ago, advertising giant Leo Burnett famously said, "If you can't turn yourself into your customer, you probably shouldn't be in the advertising business at all."⁶ It's still true today. The study of consumer behavior involves psychology, sociology, and marketing and the ability to take data and create insight. What do they buy? Where? When? How often? Why? With the latter, why, being the most important question anyone doing strategy needs to ask—over and over and over. Marketers attempt to dissect buyers' decision-making process, both for individuals and for groups. Researchers study demographics, psychographics, and lifestyles to understand what people want and how they want to get it. Account planners turn all of that into actionable insights. Clients spend billions to test new products and the consumer's willingness to buy. Billions more are spent developing programmatic advertising based on sophisticated algorithms that let marketers invade every corner of online activity. Yet most new product introductions and line extensions fail. In the end, the marketplace decides what sells, not the advertiser.



Embracing the Beauty of Women

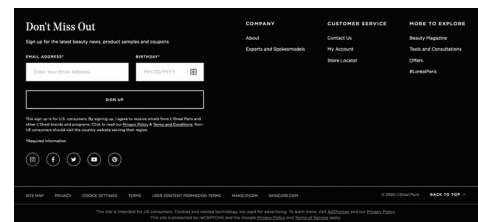


Photo 1.7 Consumers today want to know what a brand stands for and the brand with the most friends wins.
© L'Oréal Group

Sometimes the most successful marketing concepts spring from some crazy idea no research could predict. Google, Uber, Amazon, and Snapchat to name a few. Steve Jobs relied on intuition instead of focus groups to develop products that consumers didn't even know they wanted. In the process, Jobs and others at Apple created one of the most valuable technology companies in the world. We'll explore some of the ways you can discover consumers' wants and needs. But unless you're the next Steve Jobs, you may need some research to guide you. Plus, a lot of luck.

If you remember nothing else from this chapter, remember this:

People do not buy things.
They buy satisfaction of their wants and needs.

You may have studied Abraham Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs. This model is usually depicted as a pyramid, ranging from the most basic needs to the most complex and sophisticated. This is how we sum up wants and needs from a marketing communication standpoint:

- Comfort (convenience, avoid pain and discomfort)
- Security (physical, financial)
- Stimulation (aesthetic, physical)
- Affiliation (esteem, respect)
- Fulfillment (self-satisfaction, status)

You need to figure out where your product or service fits in that hierarchy. Where does it intersect with the consumers' wants and needs? That's the sweet spot. Once you discover that, you must convince consumers your product or service will satisfy their wants and needs. One of the best explanations can be found in this simple sentence: **Don't tell me about your grass seed; talk to me about my lawn.** People aren't looking for seed. They need a play area for their kids. They want a calm green space for relaxing or a yard the neighbors will envy. Security. Comfort. Fulfillment. Wants and needs. A \$50 Timex will tell the time just as well as a \$5,000 Rolex. What wants and needs are satisfied by spending 1,000% more? It's not about being on time.



Photo 1.8 Canada's *Medical Marketing and Media Magazine* (MM&M) developed a series of ads tying the murder epidemic in the U.S. to a gun loving culture.
© Haymarket Media Inc.

WHO'S WHO

Sarah Hofstetter—Now president of Profitero, Sarah Hofstetter has driven tremendous growth in multiple disruptive environments over the past 20+ years. Before joining Profitero, Hofstetter spent 13 years at award-winning advertising agency 360i, most recently as Chair and CEO, growing the agency from \$5 million to \$180 million by continuously pivoting company offerings to be aligned with changes in consumer behavior. Hofstetter started the company's social media capability before Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram existed.⁷

Creativity and the Real World

You'll discover that most of the creative people in our business skew toward the left. Even though they serve their capitalist masters, successful creatives have interests outside of work. They're curious. They search for truth. They get more than one opinion. In short, they're smart. And most of them want to challenge the status quo. Years ago, Apple created a campaign claiming "the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones that do."⁹ Having said that, we still have a way to go to achieve meaningful diversity, equity, and inclusion inside creative departments. We also have a long road ahead to weed out racist, sexist, ageist, and homophobic concepts, verbiage, and images in marketing communications. What seems funny to a young white man may be totally offensive to older persons, people of color, and women. Perhaps the biggest hurdle is converting personal progressive sentiments into meaningful action, which requires more than just being sensitive about advertising messages. If you decide advertising is your career path, we hope you're one of the crazy ones who will change the world.



Photo 1.9 These exceptional student ads call into question how women are portrayed every day in advertising.

Courtesy of Emily Ebert



Photo 1.10 Students wanted raise awareness of addiction to pornography.

Courtesy of Meriel Upton

PRO TIPS

BUILT FOR THE REST OF US



© Kia Motor Company

Despite years of being the butt of late-night jokes, Kia earned high marks in design, quality, and safety that made it one of the fastest-growing car companies in America. But because of its reputation for making “value” cars, Kia struggled with poor brand perception.

With its new flagship premium SUV, the Telluride, Kia had its work cut out as it sought to launch one of its most expensive models in a fierce segment dominated by established brands.

VALUES THAT UNITE

Conventionally, premium is about “badge value”—a marker of status or success. But for challenger brand Kia and its buyers alike, premium means something different.

Premium is about the investment of challenging work into something worthwhile. Consumer focus group research uncovered that those who were attracted to the Telluride had a lot in common with the Kia brand: they share a grit-to-great philosophy on life. What's more, the Telluride is manufactured in West Point, GA, America's backyard, with a dedicated focus on quality reflecting challenging work and pride. There was a significant opportunity to shift perceptions by sharing an unstoppable challenger spirit.

Rooting for the underdog is quintessentially American; it's what unites us. The social and cultural climate at the time made this classic truth even more relevant. While culture celebrated the rich and famous, most of us were concerned with how to make a living. Consumer culture celebrated the baller lifestyle, but what about the rest of us?

With the Telluride, Kia set out to introduce Americans to a vehicle built not for the famous but for the great unknowns. People like the rest of us.

A CAMPAIGN THAT PUT THE UNKNOWN ON CENTER STAGE

Kia set out to celebrate the unsung people who reflect Kia's challenger spirit on the Super Bowl stage. So, Kia ditched the celebrities and focused on the hardworking people at their West Point plant to tell the Telluride's story. Which, in turn, gave rise to stories that the rest of us could connect to in meaningful ways.

To drive anticipation, Kia teased its “Great Unknowns” campaigns on social and out-of-home and announced that the money that would have been paid to celebrities would be redirected to a scholarship program to help other Great Unknowns—hardworking students with college aspirations who, like Kia, may have been overlooked.

Then on Super Bowl Sunday, Kia's 90-second TV spot placed the spotlight on the hardworking people of West Point and showed how their unstoppable spirit goes into the making of every Telluride. The spot ended with a tagline that only Kia could say: “Give It Everything.”

GIVE IT EVERYTHING. AND THEN SOME.

Kia's demanding work paid off, and the campaign successfully delivered on all key metrics. Following its Super Bowl launch, positive opinion of Kia jumped 15% while overall purchase consideration of Kia reached a five-year high, increasing by 13% the following quarter. These gains were driven primarily through a shift in brand perceptions with key attributes such as “adventurous,” “exciting,” and “innovative” increasing by 29%, 32%, and 12%, respectively.

The Telluride finished the year at 175% over initial sales objective, with demand that outpaced supply and waitlists around the country. To date, 32 students enrolled in U.S. universities and colleges are now receiving scholarship funds from Kia.

And perhaps most importantly, Kia beautifully showed that, for brands, authenticity, purpose, and action matter.⁵

Jasmine Spraglin, Senior Creatist, David&Goliath

RISING STAR

RESILIENCE IS A SPORT



Courtesy of Derek Smith

You would've thought I'd call it quits. After a fractured hip, a broken leg, a sprained PCL, two torn ACLs, and a broken heart—packing up and going back to Alabama would've been easy.

Instead, I chose to turn the obstacles into fuel that would push me to go even further. Sports took me far, but life after sports genuinely required going the distance.

I'm a former D1 athlete who took a different route. Although I was ranked among the top 50 high school running backs in Alabama, the first person from my high school to receive a full ride to play collegiate sports, and a captain on my college football team, I knew it could all be taken away on any given play. This turbulent interference of being at a high point when disaster hit not only built character—it showed me the importance of pulling others up who might be facing similar situations. I hope my story is an energy source and an inkwell to persevere toward your ambitions.

Despite the injuries, nothing could take me out of the game of demanding work and determination. Lately, I've played my hand at art direction, finding the game is much the same: Colors bleed, pencils break, and even pages tear.

I got my start at Publicis Seattle. There, I spent the past several years entrenched in all things T-Mobile. You could say the current quarter of my career is serendipity, as I've been tasked with bringing the artistry of Buffalo Wild Wings' raucous commitment to die-hard sports fans to a whole new atmosphere. I've also been helping DoorDash keep restaurants open.

COVID-19 ravaged the U.S. restaurant industry, as patrons stayed home, and many dining rooms were forced to close. According to the National Restaurant Association, the situation has threatened the livelihoods of 15.6 million hardworking people. Within days of lockdown, I helped launch the "Open for Delivery" national campaign that vaulted DoorDash from third in its category to first (according to YouGov BrandIndex). U.S. restaurants on DoorDash were found six times as likely to survive the pandemic versus those not using the app. If that's not a worthwhile notable change, I don't know what is.

With a name change inspired by boneless wings, my creative team and I helped Buffalo Wild Wings hit a new level of WTF?! Boneless Thugs-N-Harmony merch, including 24-carat-gold-dipped boneless wing necklaces, sold out in 36 hours. Garnering 450+ million earned impressions in the likes of *Rolling Stone*, *Vice*, *E! News*, *ESPN*, and more—this humble product launch blew up the wing debate while chomping away at previous product dunks.

When it comes to art direction, I've been part of award-winning campaigns while never straying from my roots. My story is important, because there are kids out there facing some of the same things I had to go through. We all need reassurances sometimes. Remember, you can accomplish whatever you put your mind to. When it's all said and done, the grind never stops—nor can we.⁸

Derek Smith, Senior Art Director, The Martin Agency

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

STRATEGY VERSUS IDEAS

Advertising campaigns can be divided into two groups: (a) strategy driven and (b) idea driven.

It's not uncommon for a **client**, a brand or marketing manager, to approach an agency's account manager, the liaison between the agency and the brand, and express an interest in having the agency do some work. Or they might put out an RFP (request for proposal) and have several agencies pitch them.

Once the agency has the account, the **account manager** will share the client information with the **account planner** (aka strategist), who'll do extensive research; identify consumer behavior, target audience, product benefit, and so on; and develop a strategy for the campaign. That strategy will then be passed on to the **creative team** (art director/copywriter), which will develop ideas for the campaign and work with the production team to produce the campaign.

It's not always a linear process but rather a back-and-forth discussion between the various team members. However, the simplified version looks something like this, with client approvals along the way:

Client > Account Manager > Account Planner > Creatives > Production

I call this type of process *strategy driven* because it is the strategy written by the account planner (with a clear target audience, product benefit, and goal in mind) that drives ideas for the campaign.

Other agencies start their process with creativity rather than strategy. Some are called Creative Boutiques, many founded by people with a creative background. They

believe that the best creative ideas come from a creative process and are unencumbered by research that can limit (or kill) great ideas. They like to explore as many possible ideas before settling on a strategy that they see as creatively driven.

I call this type of process *idea driven* because it is the idea developed by the creative team that drives the campaign's strategy.

Now, consider which approach will work best in various situations.

- You are the brand manager of a new type of soft drink. You have not yet identified a clear target audience, benefit, and so on, so you'd like to hire an ad agency. Keep in mind that the soft-drink category has little product differentiation and, thus, it's hard to develop a strategy that's based on product benefit. Since you don't have a strategy, would you rather hire a strategically driven agency to help you figure out the strategy or an idea-driven type of agency?
- You recently graduated, and you're excited to start a career as a creative (an art director or a copywriter). You got two job offers (lucky you!). One is from a strategically driven agency, where your ideas are most likely based on a solid strategy. The other is from an idea-driven boutique agency, where you'll get a lot more creative freedom and be less limited by a strategy. Which one would you pick, and why?

Assaf Avni, Professor of Advertising Creativity, California State University, Fullerton

EXERCISES

1. CREATING THE NEXT BIG IDEA

Contributed by Mark Addona, Assistant Professor, Ithaca College

Have the class generate a list of brands that they use or interact with often. Then create in-class groups or breakout rooms of 3–5 students and have the groups pick a brand from the list the class generated.

Take 15 minutes to brainstorm lofty ideas for the brand. Generate three ideas that can each fit on a sticky note. The goal is one sentence to convey the whole idea.

Groups return and pitch their ideas to the class.

2. GET OUT OF YOUR HEAD

It's easy to get caught up in all the advertising jargon and buzzwords when you're studying this field. But ultimately, it's a communications job. You're talking to other people. Human beings. Not only is it vital to empathize, but it's also equally as important to get out of your own head and experiment with other voices and perspectives. Here are a couple of writing prompts that can help you do just that:

- You are an older high school football coach who is retiring after the season. Your team is in the state championship, down by a lot. Write a half-time speech that will spark a comeback.
- Your lifelong best friend is getting married. Write a toast for the rehearsal dinner.
- You're a first-time director who's just won a major award. Write an acceptance speech. Be mindful of the length, because the orchestra is queued up

and will play you off in less than 60 seconds. We can hear the string section already.

- Okay, for a bonus, take what you've written and try turning it into a script for a radio commercial for a brand, product, or service.
- Be prepared—you just might have to share this in class.

3. PERSONAL BRANDING TIMELINE

- Create a map moving across your life in 5-year increments. Begin with birth and end with your current age (which might be less than a 5-year gap). For each 5-year stage, generate a list of the brands you associate with that time of your life.
- After each brand, write a single sentence about what that brand meant to you at that time.
- Now extend this map out by 10-year increments: 30, 40, 50, 60, and 70. List brands you think will be a part of your life. Again, write a single sentence about why you believe each brand will be relevant to you at that time.
- Now discuss what factors are influencing your choices: familiarity, aspiration, current use, personal or family associations, trends, and so on.
- Next, see if there are any brands that were constant over an extended period. Discuss what makes those brands have traction over time. What inherited qualities and brand messages enable brand loyalty?

Making Connections

1. Although it's not a technical skill, understanding the wants and needs of consumers is essential to creating effective advertising. Look at the ads featured in photos 1.1, 1.4, 1.6, and 1.7. Do you think the messages in the ads resonate with the customers? Why or why not?
2. You may find more fulfillment in developing creative for worthy causes rather than commercial clients. Study the messages in photos 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9. What other issues could be effectively addressed through advertising and promotion?
3. Understanding consumer behavior is a critical approach to developing a message that resonates with the intended audience. Review the ads in photos 1.2, 1.10, and 1.11. Can you explain how their message connects with the consumer?

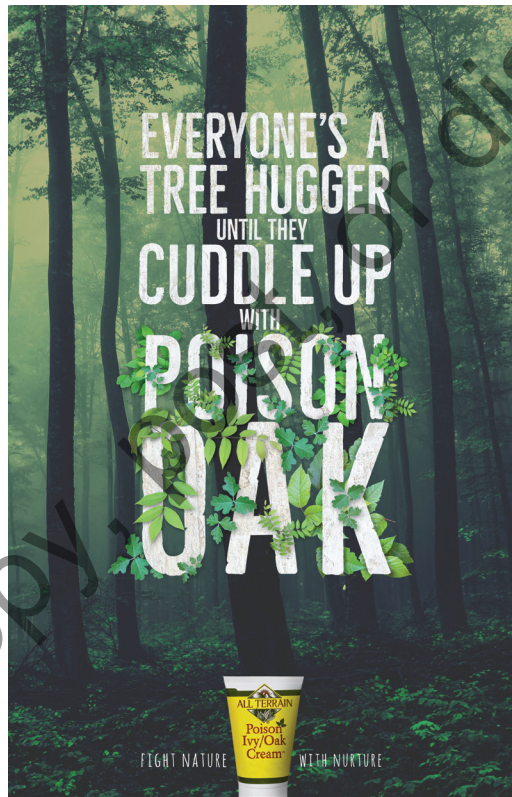


Photo 1.11 This student's ad recognizes that people who love nature are also looking for sustainable products.
Grace Peek, Southern Methodist University

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