

# DISPATCHES™

*Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front*

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## Targeting Everyone In The Known Universe

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**QUESTION:** *Shouldn't brands in high-penetration/frequent usage categories, like soft drinks, or snacks, or confection, aim communications as broadly as possible (especially when there are very high-efficiency means to do so—like TV--readily available)?*

For more than fifteen continuous years, we were most fortunate to have a client in “true FMCG...” a client whose many Consumer Goods brands were genuinely Fast-Moving—with resulting big, high-turn volumes. Since we have spent a good part of our marketing careers (both corporate and consulting) building brands in similar categories, like soft drinks, juices, and snacks of all kinds, we could readily understand clients such as these wanting to continue with their “mass marketing” successes of the past.

Thinking along these lines, this particular client posed the question above to us. Even during the social media explosion, our client remained convinced that the best communication growth driver for their brands was television advertising. They didn't base this solely upon past marketing plans; rather, regardless of what other media vehicles they tested (including some social media ones) they could find no communication medium that *so efficiently reached so many potential consumers* the way that broad-scale TV did. Plus, they believed that only TV advertising was in any way associated with brand share growth—especially in lucrative new global markets like China, where they were launching some of their blockbuster brands for the first time.

When it comes to “associating” a communication effort with brand growth, as with associating **any** marketing mix effort-investment with brand growth, we are behavioralists. What this means is that we: (1) figure out the behavior our brand needs right now for maximum growth potential; (2) articulate that behavior (adoption, switching, increased use, trade-up) in a Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound way; and then (3) track and report on the progress against that SMART way regularly...to determine that *it's the consumer-behavior that's causing the brand's share and volume growth*. Following a rigorous accounting of the company's investments in this disciplined way ensures that there is no “loosey-goosey growth associating” going on at all: the growth is a demonstrable result of a pre-selected, achieved behavior.

Here, then, is how we answered our client's question:

*The more we've been thinking about this, the more we're convinced there is a more fundamental question to be answered when planning development of new communications—new TV advertising in particular. And that question relates to the ultimate behavior we require our advertising to cause. Messaging is, first and foremost, behavioral. It's behavioral even before it's personal. We want our advertising to cause a "volumetrically significant" amount of adoption, switching, increased frequency or trade-up among a certain number of a population. The thing is, though, as we well know, the same message will not work equally well against all four of these behaviors simultaneously.*

*Getting more practical, while a TV media buy might very well provide us with the opportunity to speak to nearly everyone in a population (at a very efficient price), if the message is about adoption, why would we expect it to also work within that population for gaining switches or increased frequency? For sure, not everyone in the population is naïve (or lapsed) to the category. Many within it are already current users of our brands and some are loyal users of other category brands. So, we would have an efficient message, but probably not such an effective one. We will admit that there are situations in which, say, an adoption-driven message could deliver gigantic volumes: a non-existent to under-developed category in a billion-plus population country like China would obviously argue for such a message. But...importantly, were we to pursue such a broad-scale TV campaign development and media buy, we would absolutely have to ensure that our message was designed to drive adoption, not some other behavior.*

*By way of an analogy, we can think about our Pharmaceutical clients. For years, their go-to-market model had been to blanket the market with bright, young, energetic and well-trained Sales Reps ("feet on the street" as they put it). The basic concept was to ensure that, within a given market, there were sufficient reps to call on every doctor. You could say that this kind of one-on-one selling was akin to a mass-media television buy—lots of reach. In the case of Rx companies, actually, 100% reach. But the analogy to fast moving consumer goods breaks down when it comes to specific messaging: the Sales Rep has the flexibility to deliver an adoption message to a new practice doctor (who has never prescribed in a given drug class before), a switching message to a doctor more loyal in her prescriptions to a competitor, and even a trade-up message (for a new & improved version of the Company's drug on the way) for a current heavy prescriber of the brand. TV doesn't offer this "customized behavioral messaging"—at least not without big bucks for multiple campaigns or executions.*

*For us, then, the lesson in this partial analogy is simply this: what the Pharma marketers have learned is that even when you can mass-cover a market, the same message delivered to everyone will not yield all the volume the brand wants...or requires.*

*To get back to the beginning when we suggested that there is a more critical ad-development question to answer than the one about breadth of Target, we think the real question is something like this: **What behavior will net us the biggest return within a***

***given population, for a given period of time?*** More than anything else in a *Communication-Creative Brief*, this is the question we should do our best to answer. Develop messaging aimed squarely at that behavior, and then construct media plans to maximize the coverage against the “volumetric population” who will be most likely to exhibit that behavior.

One last thought: the notion of attractive efficiency, especially when it comes to marketing investment of any kind, is like a glittering lure, which more often than not creates a blind spot in the eyes of the beholder. Efficiency only has meaning when it works to achieve the effectiveness we seek. Without effectiveness, efficiency becomes a kind of folly...with perhaps the only bigger folly being targeting the known universe!

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