



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## **KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE (ADVERTISING) BALL DURING SUPER BOWL LIII**

Following the football during Sunday's big game will help you track your team's progress down the field, into the end zone, and through the uprights for a score. But, if you want to see who's scoring with advertising, in the grandest extravaganza of the year, where each :30-second spot costs >\$5-million just for the air time, the metaphorical ball to keep your eyes on is the "Key Copy Words."

There's more to advertising effectiveness (i.e., ability to generate incremental sales) than Key Copy Words (KCW), as they are one component of the Campaign Idea, which I refer to as the "center of the plate" of advertising. The Campaign Idea has three parts: the Naked Idea, also known as the creative concept; the Core Dramatization, typically a visualization of the benefit or leads the target-customer to it; and, the Key Copy Words. However, to simplify your assessment of ad effectiveness, and track the other two components, KCW is a great place to start.

The Key Copy Words should not be confused with a tagline or slogan. Typically, neither the tagline nor slogan has anything to do with the advertising. On the other hand, Key Copy Words are integral to the advertising. They serve to transform the strategic benefit into compelling customer language. The entire ad campaign is expressed through the KCW. It connects the Naked Idea, how the strategic benefit identified in the creative brief will be communicated, with the Core Dramatization. It also serves as a sort of post-it-note to establish the brand and its strategic benefit (brand linkage) in the minds of target-customers.

The MasterCard "Priceless" campaign, which has grown the brand for more than two decades, is a terrific example of effective Key Copy Words, and advertising! You may recall, unless you are new to marketing, that the Naked Idea has been a juxtaposition of all the things you can purchase with MasterCard with that one priceless moment money can't buy. The Core Dramatization is juxtaposing the purchase of an item, experience, or place, with a priceless moment. The original KCW that communicated the strategic benefit and integrated the campaign was, "There are some things in life that money can't buy, for everything else there's MasterCard."

Visa provides another telling example of KCW. For years their Key Copy Words were "Accepted in more places than American Express." Ho-hum. While this strategic promise may have been meaningful at one time or other, it lost its relevance, and the KCW fell flat. There was nothing dramatic nor compelling about the language. It sounds like the strategic benefit was a direct lift from the creative brief.

Then Visa made a significant change that lifted the brand, making it more competitive versus American Express. They didn't change the card. It continues to have the same dimensions, contains the same materials, and work in the same way as every credit/debit card. They changed the Key Copy Words to "Visa. It's everywhere you want to be." These KCW supported a BIG Naked Idea of Visa securing and promoting exclusivity with prestige venues such as the Olympics, resorts and so forth. The Core Dramatization was turning away people from the venue who had an American Express card, and not Visa.

Today Visa has returned to the same set of Key Copy Words that they had abandoned when MasterCard was gaining on them with their Priceless campaign. However, the Key Copy Words, "Visa. It's everywhere you want to be," don't have the same meaning or impact. The KCW now support the benefit of payments how and where you want them, and also for everyone everywhere. The Key Copy Words don't carry the weight of the multi-benefit promise and are confusing as its context has changed. Accordingly, to me, it has become a mere tagline or slogan that has no teeth, no bite in compelling customers to switch to Visa or use it more frequently.

So, keep your eyes on the Super Bowl LIII advertising ball to check all ads for the following:

1. Do they have Key Copy Words?
2. Do they capture the (differentiated) strategic benefit in customer language?
3. Do the KCW dramatize the benefit to compel customer behavior (i.e., switch, use more frequently, adopt, etc.)?
4. Do they include the brand name in the KCW to promote sound brand linkage?
5. Do they capture and integrate the Naked Idea and Core Dramatization to deliver a single-minded message?

If an ad doesn't contain Key Copy Words, it is unlikely to be effective in boosting sales, regardless of whether you find it entertaining or the brand "likable." If it contains Key Copy words, as opposed to a tagline or slogan, it is more likely to be effective. However, this is dependent upon the quality of the KCW, and Campaign Idea. The likelihood of driving incremental sales will be positively impacted by answering "yes" to each of the five questions mentioned above.

Now let's settle-in to watch and analyze the advertising. Go team!

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