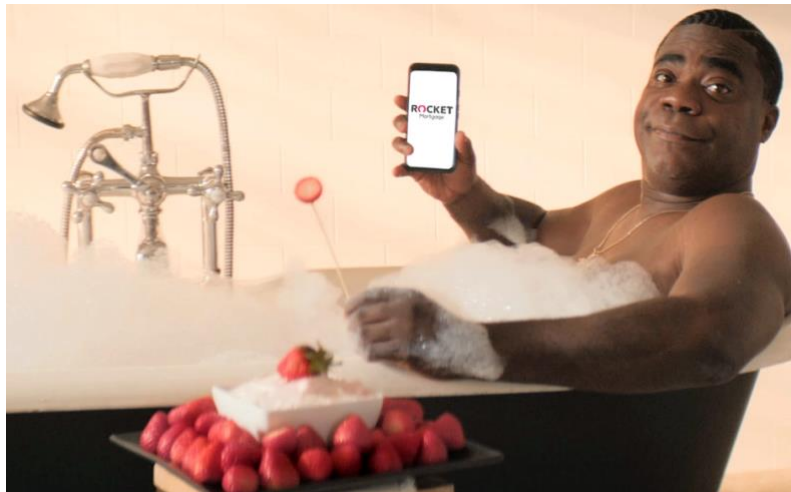


Marketing Matters

By Richard D. Czerniawski

THE BEST SUPER BOWL LV ADVERTISING?

I'm going to go out on a limb. I'm going to assess the highest-rated Super Bowl LV advertising according to the USA TODAY Ad Meter.



The advertising is for Rocket Mortgage, which aired two 60-second ads featuring comedian Tracy Morgan. This is the first time in 14-years that two ads from the same brand scored 1 & 2 in the Ad Meter ratings.

Yes, I'm going to go out on a limb and declare that "*while it has potential, the Rocket Mortgage campaign needs additional work.*" My assessment traces to an unclear strategic benefit—what can the home buyer who chooses Rocket Mortgage be “sure of,” and is the promise (if there is one) relevant and meaningfully differentiated for the target customer? Also, while they have a campaign idea, it lacks key copy words to bring home the benefit in compelling customer language. Finally, I'm not certain that the execution fits the brand.

See the top ad here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMgA-y2nRWE>

The *messaging strategy* (aka the copy strategy, which is the heart of the creative brief) needs to be made more explicit and promise a relevant, meaningfully differentiated benefit from other mortgage companies. The *target customer* is undoubtedly home buyers. However, I can't discern whether it is first time, dream home, highly anxious buyers, etc. As per *customer needs*, one of the ads is about

affordability, and the second is if "everything" is together. Consequently, the *benefit promise* of going with Rocket Mortgage is vague. I don't know what they are delivering beyond promising that the home buyer can "be certain." However, it is unclear what they can be certain of.

There is a *campaign idea* that serves as the center of the plate for the ads, enhancing the likelihood of effective advertising. However, it, too, needs more work. The *naked idea* (i.e., creative concept—"how" the benefit is communicated) is: Dramatize potential, dire consequences if you proceed when you are not absolutely certain of the outcome in significant situations (e.g., whether aliens have come in peace). *The core dramatization* is Tracy Morgan proclaiming he is sure of something and seeing the outcome (e.g., aliens laser bombing the city). It creates FUD (fear, uncertainty, and doubt) about going with another mortgage company. Finally, it does not have campaign *key copy words*. Perhaps, it is "When it comes to home buying, pretty sure isn't sure enough." Or, maybe it is "When you need to be certain, Rocket can." However, these same copy words do not appear in both commercials. Moreover, the ads lack a "super" of the key copy words that would make them more transparent and memorable.

On another note, while I appreciate the campaign idea, I don't believe, in the words of the late, great advertiser, David Ogilvy, that "it fits the brand to perfection." Instead, in my current state of "uncertainty" regarding the relevance to the target customer and suspected lack of differentiation versus their competitors, this campaign idea might work better for insurance companies. Allstate has addressed when "mayhem strikes," "you can be sure you're in good hands with Allstate. Somebody in the insurance industry needs to address the uncertainty of whether target customers' claims or treatments will be covered (particularly in the healthcare industry).

Finally, a word or two about the execution: Tracy Morgan is brilliant. He takes us through a series of vignettes that are attention-grabbing and engaging.

In *conclusion*, I'd urge the agency to undertake additional work. However, I would not begin creative development until we—Rocket Mortgage client and agency—are certain we have a relevant, meaningfully differentiated benefit promise. Assuming we can make the campaign idea fit (to the new benefit promise), I'd also direct the agency to share and super key copy words. The key copy words must translate the strategic benefit into compelling customer language and unite the campaign idea (i.e., naked idea, key dramatization, and key copy words).

“NINETY-NINE PERCENT OF ADVERTISING DOESN'T SELL MUCH OF ANYTHING.” David Ogilvy

Is your advertising among the ninety-nine percent? Read Chapter 9, Brand Communications that Suck, in **AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing**. It will identify those critical errors and, importantly, point the way to developing advertising in the Top 1%. Learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>

Peace and best wishes,





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