



By Richard D. Czerniawski

CATEGORIES, COMPANIES, AND BRANDS DOING EFFECTIVE ADVERTISING

This transcript is a continuation of my discussion with Bill Weintraub, former CMO of Kellogg's, Tropicana, and Coors, regarding advertising. This is Episode 3. We talk about what categories, companies, and brands are creating effective advertising in delivering sales growth and some of the factors contributing to their successes.

RDC: When you think about the “bright lights” of advertising, what categories or what particular ads have you seen, and you say, “oh yeah, these are good examples of effective advertising?”

WHW: *Here is where my bias might creep in. I think, in general, Procter & Gamble advertising is the best as a company. Their competitors in those categories tend to be the best as well. Whether it's Colgate or Unilever, I think those consumer package goods companies, and P&G, usually have the leading brands in those categories. I think even their competitors are inspired or find it necessary to develop effective advertising. I think their competitors improve their advertising as well. Rather than a particular category, I would say P&G advertising is still and not always but broadly the best advertising I see on television. Once again, maybe I have some bias because of where I grew up, but I think, for example, General Mills advertising is good. Generally (that in) the larger consumer goods categories the advertising is better than other categories.*

RDC: I cannot dispute that P&G still has some of the best advertising. We are talking of the “best” as defining it as being effective. In other words, it is getting the sales. It is getting the sales through encouraging switching or increased usage. You know it is amazing. I saw an ad for Cascade the other day. They talked about getting those dishes, glasses, pots, and pans in the dishwasher instead of using the sink. Because the sink (in combination with the dishwasher), uses more water than the dishwasher alone. Have you seen that ad? They are looking to increase “frequency of purchasing.” They are probably appealing to more ecologically minded consumers. With all the talk about global warming, etc., I would say that we are all to some degree more environmentally conscious. They were picking up on a very interesting insight there. So, P&G, I believe you are right! They are up there. The other wonderful thing you said was that their competitors are good too. Which, I think, always goes back to our competitors (help) make us better (and vice versa). Do they not?

WHW: *Yes, of course.*

RDC: Competitors have to make us better. When I think of the particular, say, a category that does an excellent advertising job, I would have to say the insurance category. When I think of the advertising for Allstate, particularly the Mayhem, “don’t let mayhem strike.” When I think of the Geico advertising and the fact that most marketers have difficulty getting one campaign aired. They will have three campaigns focusing on different parts of the buying cycle. They will have three different (but) very effective campaigns going. I get a kick out of the latest Progressive campaign, “we can’t help you from being like your parents, but we can help you save money with Progressive insurance.” Very interesting message delivered engagingly.

WHW: I absolutely agree about the insurance companies. Last week I showed my class 5 insurance company commercials. Asked them back-to-back the distinguishing selling point, the focus-of-sale, and the differentiation for each brand? They had no trouble figuring out what each brand was about. Many putting Allstate and Geico and the five major brands. Esurance. It was very easy. I had not thought of that. I believe the insurance companies are doing a good job and spending a lot of money. Must be working for them.

RDC: I think there is something else inherent in what you are saying. That your students were able to pick this out. I tell my marketing clients, whenever we train them in positioning and advertising, I always say that you should be able to infer this from what you see. And if you cannot infer (it), I don’t think it is a shortcoming on your part. I think it is because the advertiser is not very clear.

WHW: I totally agree. One of the exercises my students have to do is turn in a paper for every single class. (The) exercises are easy, and some involve talking about what they read, what they learned in CREATING BRAND LOYALTY, in your book (co-authored with Mike Maloney). One of the most powerful exercises that I’ve been doing for years, which they probably do a half-dozen times each semester, is identifying an ad that influenced them. I ask them to tell me about an ad that influenced you personally. Not to speculate about someone else, but tell me about an ad that caused you to think about switching to that brand? What that does is over time, is it helps them internalize how advertising works. So rather than me just speaking about it, or preaching about it, as they do that (exercise) repeatedly, they say, “oh yeah, that’s how advertising works.” It is influencing “me” as a consumer. I think it is a powerful exercise. By the end of the semester, I think my students truly have a different appreciation and a deeper understanding of how advertising works.

RDC: I think that is a fantastic exercise. I have to say that you mentioned upfront that you retired 20 years ago. You have not retired. You have moved into a different role. I say to you that in the past 20 years, you have continued to hone your skills and learn more about advertising.

WHW: I would hope so, but I am not sure. I don’t take any money from the university. I do this for fun.

RDC: When you think about that question, by the way, inherent in that question is getting your students to “realize.” That is something that we need to do with our advertising. We need to get them to realize what our benefit is. Because if we don’t get them to realize that, it is only up here (in the head). We are emotional beings. We use (what’s) up here (in the head) to explain what we rationalize. I love that you are getting them to realize the value of advertising. So, what is an ad that has impacted you, for example?

WHW: What has influenced me recently? I’ve got a lower back problem for some years, but it has gotten worse in recent months. I saw this one, and it caught me. (The brand is) Icy Hot. They have been on the same basic campaign and the same spokesperson for years. For some reason, my back was unusually sore when I saw the commercial. So, I went to Amazon, and I ordered a package of

Icy Hot. I have not started using it yet, but it absolutely influenced me. Because at that moment when I saw the ad, commercial, and my back was hurting, that was really relevant to me. It caused me to go to Amazon and order a package.

RDC: What did they promise you?

WHW: Pain relief, particularly lower back pain relief. They have some other options too. The way it works is a combination of a temperature sensation and a topical anesthetic in the product.

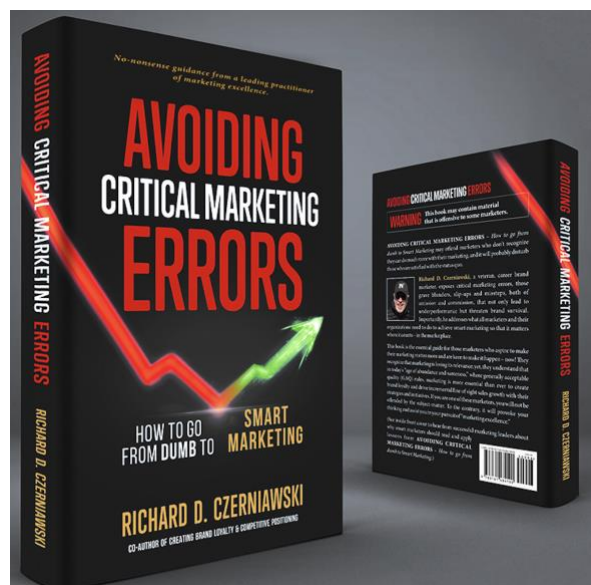
RDC: It will be interesting to see what it does for you because we know that advertising can put a product in the customer's hands. However, whether the customer returns really depends on if it lives up to its promise. Amazon is phenomenal. You see, and right on the spot, you can get it. They/we just cut the purchase cycle down significantly. It's not like, the next time I go to retail, I will buy it, if I remember it. Here you do it instantaneously. My wife and I were watching some show, and they showed an animated version of a cat trying to jump up on the counter. The first time it made it. However, as time goes on, it cannot quite make it up to the counter. It made us realize that our cat Jackson is overweight. This boy is a 15-pound cat. My wife immediately went to Amazon and ordered that Hill's Science Diet. I don't know if it is our imagination or not, but he appears to have lost weight. Certainly, (he's) not having the same amount of difficulty jumping up on the counters, which we do not like. But he does not seem to have that difficulty right now.

WHW: Hills is a Colgate product?

RDC: Yes, I think it is. (It is!) If it is, it would certainly speak to what you were saying earlier that Procter & Gamble's advertising is upping its competitors—And typically ups its competitors in all divisions, not just a given division. It may start in a given division, but it goes elsewhere.

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

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Peace and best wishes,

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