



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## REMEMBER, KEY COPY WORDS

We recently had our neighbors over to our home for dinner. One of them brought up the subject of “taglines.” I explained that there’s a difference between taglines and key copy words (KCWs). Do you know the difference?

"Key copy words" are essential to the advertising. They convey the strategic benefit in clear and compelling customer language. Additionally, they harmonize with the "core visual dramatization" and reinforce the "naked Idea" (i.e., the creative concept of how, not what, the strategic benefit—"key thought"—is communicated to the target audience).

The KCWs are one element comprising the trinity of the Campaign Idea. The other two, previously mentioned, are the naked idea and core visual dramatization. KCWs serve as a post-it-note to help the strategic benefit stick in the target audience's minds regardless of whether they are consumers, HCPs (Health Care Practitioners), B2B, etc.



KCWs often appear at the end of an ad. Thus, they appear as and are frequently referred to as a tagline. However, a tagline is a mere throw-away. It is not linked to the strategic benefit (i.e., the key thought), nor is it a component of the Campaign Idea.

Consider an ad for the return of the Ford Mustang. It shows a man with graying hair driving a Mustang convertible. Snuggled up beside him is a young woman. The air is blowing through their hair as they cruise in the countryside. What do you expect would be the KCWs?

Given the picture the ad paints, I would expect something along the line of “Mustang – Revive your youth.” Or “Bring back the joy of driving.” Or “Win her heart.” OK, the last one is ridiculous. However, what I’m offering are the benefits of driving a Mustang.

The ad did not have KCWs. It had a tagline: “Ford. Quality is Number 1.” As you can easily judge, it has nothing to do with the strategic message for the Mustang.

Now that we had that settled, we talked about KCWs. I brought up the subject of cigarette ads. None of us are smokers or ever took up this nasty habit. In fact, I detest the very idea of smoking. My father died from esophageal and lung cancer, undoubtedly caused by smoking three-plus packs of Camels daily. He smoked so much that the nicotine stained his fingers. When my mom and brothers and I pleaded with him not to smoke, he would joke that he wasn’t smoking; the cigarette was.

So, we are not apt to focus on cigarette ads. Additionally, President Nixon signed legislation banning TV and radio cigarette commercials on April 1, 1970. The last cigarette ad ran on the Johnny Carson show on January 1, 1971.

As a result of the ban, broadscale cigarette advertising is ancient history, as are the four of us sitting at our dinner table. I named some brands, going back to the 1950s and 60s, and lo and behold, one or more of the three remembered the KCWs.

See what you can do? Here are the KCWs. Name the brands. (Given that the ban has been in effect for 50-years, you’re not expected to nail them. But give it a try. Regardless, there’s much to be learned from them.) Answers appear at the end of the article.

1. I’d walk a mile for a (xxxxx).
2. (yyyyyyy) tastes good like a cigarette should.
3. Come to where the flavor is. Come to (zzzzzzzz) country.
4. you’ve come a long way, baby (no caps nor period)
5. Us (wwwwwww) smokers rather fight than switch!
6. LS/MFT

Cigarette marketers and their advertising agencies were very shrewd in attempting to differentiate one brand from another. It starts with the strategic benefit, what we refer to as the “key thought.”

The key thought is what you must get into your target customer’s head (and heart) to drive preference and achieve the communication behavior objective (i.e., switching, adoption, increased frequency of usage, etc.).

Among the strategic benefits in cigarette ads of the 1950s and 60s are:

- Rich-tasting
- Mildness
- No throat irritation
- Safe
- No cigarette hangover
- No Unpleasant After-taste

- Satisfying flavor
- Not feel over-smoked
- Soothing
- Calming

Ha! In the movie *The King's Speech*, King George VI's physician recommends that the king smoke to remedy his stuttering. Absurd!! It is Lionel Logue, an Australian actor and speech therapist, who helps the king. Not cigarette smoking!



Here are some of the KCWs appearing in cigarette ads back, back in the day when they ran on television and radio:

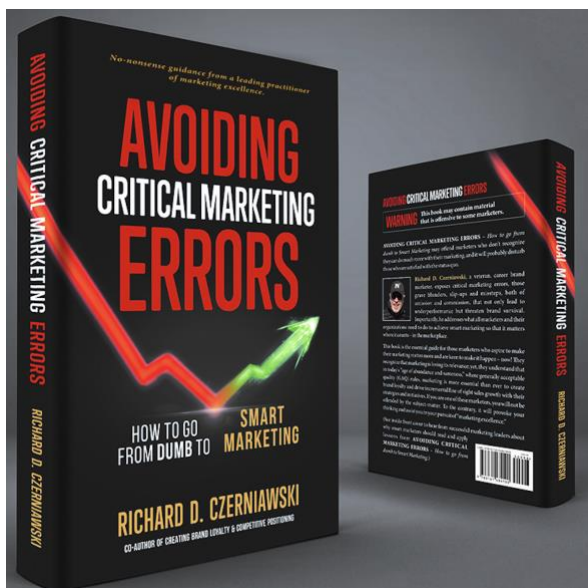
- Newport refreshes while you smoke.
- Kent: Treat your taste kindly with Kent.
- Kool: As Kool and as clean as a breath of fresh air.
- Raleigh: Something extra in smoking pleasure.
- Chesterfield King: Tastes Great. Smokes Mild!
- Pall Mall: No cigarette hangover.
- Camel: No other cigarette is so rich-tasting yet so mild!
- Marlboro: You get a lot to like with a Marlboro, filter, flavor, pack or box.

Mildness, overcoming harshness are frequent themes (i.e., strategic focus). With similar promises, reasons-to-believe and execution are employed to help differentiate one brand from another—more on this in another issue of *Marketing Matters*.

In the meantime, employ KCWs to help target customers remember your brand and its strategic benefit.

**“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>



Answers to quiz:

1. Camel
2. Winston
3. Marlboro
4. Virginia Slims
5. Tareyton
6. Lucky Strike Means Fine Tobacco



Peace and best wishes,

*Richard Czerniawski*



**Richard D. Czerniawski**

1812 Yates Avenue  
Pensacola, Florida 32503  
847-312-8822

[richardcz@bdn-intl.com](mailto:richardcz@bdn-intl.com)

[richardcz@me.com](mailto:richardcz@me.com)

[www.bdn-intl.com](http://www.bdn-intl.com)