



By Richard D. Czerniawski

SOME PLAIN & SIMPLE PERSPECTIVES ON ADVERTISING

Advertising works; argue if you may. However, it doesn't work for every brand.

Promotion works too. But again, not for every brand.

It's too bad because spending behind what doesn't work reduces the bottom line. The bottom line is what funds your brand and organization.

Let's not forget that growth opportunity losses are also a consequence of ineffective spending. Spending is not the same as investing in the brand.

Investing provides a positive return and spurs incremental growth. Spending sucks the lifeblood out of the brand.

So, why is advertising for some brands effective and not for others?

It's not that the vehicle or marketing mix element doesn't work. Instead, how marketers use or misuse it makes the difference between working and not.

Yes, we must get beyond the product we sell and market the brand experience.

The experience resides in communicating our brand's distinctive value to prospective customers and delivering it in a way that helps them realize it and, in turn, compels them to use our product or service.

The realized experience leads back to our brand's value proposition. It helps us create a virtuous cycle.

The way we deliver it (namely the vehicle) can be an experience, but it is no substitute for the brand experience of realizing, using and feeling rewarded from it.

Changing terms about what we're delivering (e.g., advertising, messaging, digital, value proposition, customer experience, unique selling proposition, etc.) could help lead us to new thinking and solutions.

However, changing terminology alone is insufficient without an appropriate strategy delivered via a BIG Idea—regardless of the vehicle.

Learning how to skillfully message can pay even richer dividends than relabeling what you're doing or what new vehicle you select. Therefore, we should not ignore increasing our knowledge and improving our skills.

If you believe the medium is the message or will make your brand more successful, think how much more successful your advertising can be if you are skillful in developing it.

Advertising without a BIG idea is noise. If it's a BIG idea, it becomes a multi-dimensional campaign that goes way beyond TV or the vehicle du jour.

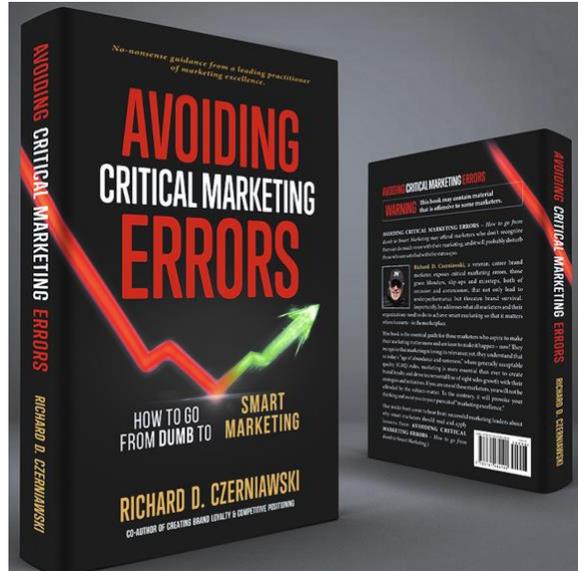
High-Impact advertising is messaging a relevant, meaningfully differentiated value proposition via a BIG Idea so that your target customers may realize it and moves them to action. Plain and simple.

Simple but not easy, particularly if we are not skillful.

Stress Test Your (Advertising) Messaging

1. ***Does your advertising strategy advance a relevant, meaningfully differentiated promise to your target customers?*** Relevant as in important to them? Sufficiently differentiated such that your target customers can experience it? If the answer is “no” to these questions, then the likelihood is poor that your advertising will be effective.
2. ***Does your advertising contain a BIG Idea?*** Well, it starts with having what we refer to as a Campaign Idea. The Campaign Idea is comprised of three elements: a) the "Naked" Idea, which is the creative concept of how we communicate the brand's strategic promise; b) the core dramatization (namely a visual or two); and c) key copy words that translate the strategic benefit in provocative, compelling customer language. "BIG" means it drives incremental sales and market share. If we don't have a Campaign Idea, it is unlikely the advertising will be effective. If it contains a Campaign Idea, then the likelihood of effective advertising increases. However, effectiveness will depend upon the quality of the idea.
3. ***Have you tested your advertising messaging?*** If not, you are gambling with the company's resources. You're spending versus investing. We should use advertising research to test our messaging and the vehicles carrying it to ensure they contribute to the brand's success in generating incremental sales and market share.

Learn how you can make your advertising matter more. Read chapter 9 in **AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing**. You'll discover many errors that contribute to sabotaging the development of “high-impact” advertising. Importantly, you'll learn what it takes to avoid and fix them. Learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>.



Peace and best wishes in making your advertising matter (even) more,

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