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Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

OGILVY ON ADVERTISING

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David Ogilvy, founder of Ogilvy and Mather Advertising Agency, was a lion in advertising. He is considered by many the "Father of Advertising." His advertising roared, generating brand preference and deepening consumer loyalty for the brands his agency represented.

Mr. Ogilvy's definition of creativity is simple: "It's not creative unless it sells." This one sentence makes evident the role of advertising— triggering sales growth.

He was also a champion of ideas. Why? According to Mr. Ogilvy, "It takes a big idea to attract the attention of consumers and get them to buy your product."

He cautioned that the advertising would be ineffective without a big idea. Mr. Ogilvy stated, "Unless your advertising contains a big idea, it will pass like a ship in the night." In other words, target customers will never see or realize it.

I want to take Mr. Ogilvy's statement one step further: "Unless your advertising contains a big idea, it will pass like a ship in the night "with all its lights turned off." (Italics mine.) If you've been out to sea in the dark of night, you know that you can't see the horizon. You won't even see the hand in front of your face with the lights turned off.

No big idea: no capturing target customer attention, recognition, or realization of your brand's promise. Nada. Nothing. Without a big idea, marketers are squandering advertising funding, pouring it down the drain.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of the ads we see lack a big idea, or any idea at all. Mr. Ogilvy says, "I doubt if more than one campaign in a hundred contains a big idea." He recognizes that big ideas are challenging to create. "... in my long career as a copywriter, I have not had more than 20, if that."

I've long evangelized the development of Campaign Ideas, which are comprised of three elements:

- The first is the naked idea, the creative concept of *how* the advertising will communicate the *what* of the messaging—its strategic benefit.
- The second element is the core dramatization. An image or two gets target customers to realize the benefit.
- The final component is the key copy words. These are also a dramatization. They capture the benefit and naked idea in compelling customer language.



Let's take the successful MasterCard campaign, that drove brand growth for some 20 years as an example.

- Naked Idea: Juxtaposition of all the things one can purchase with MasterCard with that one priceless moment that money can't buy.
- Core Dramatization: The use of MasterCard to purchase something (e.g., tickets for father and son for a major league baseball game) with the priceless moment (e.g., father and son enjoying time together experiencing a major league baseball game).
- Key Copy Words: "There are some things that money can't buy; for everything else there's MasterCard."

The "Priceless" MasterCard campaign fueled thousands of executions via various media vehicles and changed target customer behaviors to build the business. That's what we must demand from ourselves and ad agencies when developing advertising.

However, as previously noted, developing big ideas is challenging. While it's our agency's job to create the big idea, it's our job as marketers to recognize it. This, too, is not an easy task. On this subject, Mr. Ogilvy admits, "It is horribly difficult to recognize a *good* idea. I shudder to think how many I rejected."

How might we recognize a big idea? Mr. Ogilvy posed these five questions we can use as a checklist:

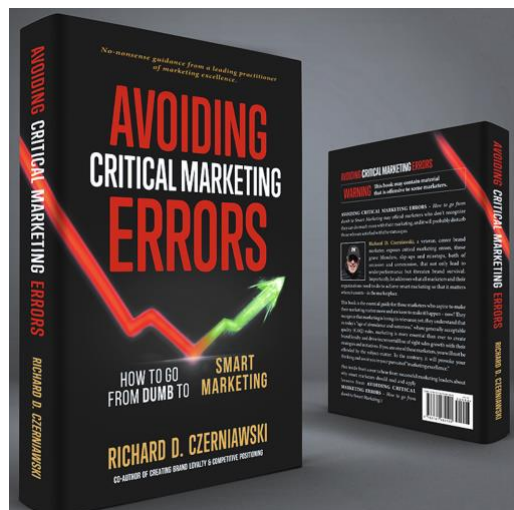
1. ***Did it make me gasp when I first saw it?*** Yes, most advertising makes me gasp but not in the way Mr. Ogilvy wants us to gasp. The advertising makes me gasp because it's awful! It doesn't contain any idea—bad, good, or big. Mr. Ogilvy wants us to gasp because it takes us by surprise, followed by its impact on target customers' perceptions, behaviors, and the potential for generating brand preference and triggering purchases. James Doyle, President of Domino's Pizza, appearing in ads recognizing consumer complaints and admitting to delivering a poor product with a promise to turn the situation around, made me gasp for its audacity, transparency, and honesty.
2. ***Do I wish I thought of it myself?*** Ah, I love this question. Whenever I view advertising with a big idea, I say to myself, "I wish I had thought of that" or "I wish I had worked on that campaign." This response swelled inside my heart when I first viewed the MasterCard campaign. I felt it was brilliant and would build the business.
3. ***Is it unique?*** So much advertising in any given category says the same thing in the same way. You could insert any brand from the same category in each other's advertising. They're interchangeable. When they say the same thing in the same way, target customers believe it is their brand being advertised. So, if your advertising is "same-o, same-o," you're likely advertising for your competitor. We need to be unique. However, the uniqueness must tie to your brand, which Mr. Ogilvy addresses in the following question.
4. ***Does it fit the strategy to perfection?*** This is a tricky question for many marketers as they *do not know* what they want to communicate. This difficulty traces to the creative brief, notably the communication (i.e., messaging) strategy embedded in it. The problem is that the brief is not single-minded. The direction is scattered. It includes a benefit that's different from the stated need or addresses what the marketer wants the target customer to think that's different from the benefit. So how might we expect our advertising to fit the strategy when it is open to interpretation as to the focus of communication? Additionally, our strategy should be unique to our brand.
5. ***Could it be used for 30 years?*** Let's get beyond the literal 30 years. What Mr. Ogilvy intends here is that the advertising campaign can go on for a long, long time. Yes, 30 years is a long time. When I worked on P&G's Folger's Vacuum Coffee, we ran the Mrs. Olson campaign for nearly 30 years. It was replaced with "The best part of waking up is Folger's in your cup," which has been running for

around 40 years. As mentioned, the MasterCard "Priceless" campaign has run for about 20 years. I worked on the "Stuck on Band-Aid Brand" advertising, which continues to be rebirthed some 45 years after its introduction (the music from Barry Manilow with young John Travolta featuring prominently in the first ad). The Marlboro Man campaign outlived the man, who died from cancer.

Our advertising must sell. Better yet, our advertising must compel. Big ideas compel. What's compelling? A final word from Mr. Ogilvy, "When Aeschines spoke, they said, 'How well he speaks.' But when Demosthenes spoke, they said, 'Let us march against Philip.'" Demosthenes' words were so compelling that they marched to their death.

Make your advertising matter more: Seek and don't settle for anything less than a big, juicy, Campaign Idea. Use Mr. Ogilvy's five questions to help you recognize one.

For more on making your advertising matter more, read Chapter 9, "Communications that Suck," from my most recent book, **AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS**. It will reveal errors of omission and commission and how to achieve advertising excellence.



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Peace and best wishes,

Richard Czerniawski