

“How to get advertising that works”

BY ROBERT C. SHAY

April 12, 2010

Millions of dollars is spent daily running ineffective advertising. After reading, listening to, or watching an advertisement ask yourself “what was the message?” Granted, some advertising is for Company branding purposes and is created to make you feel good/positive about the Company. However, most advertising attempts to clearly point out how a product/service is unique and why you should purchase it. How effective is your advertising and can it be more effective?

How to get effective advertising

The effectiveness of advertising efforts is primarily the result of the direction given the Agency leadership and their ability to translate that direction into advertising – print, broadcast, direct marketing, and electronic. Advertising Agency leaders can do their best work when given clear and specific written direction that sets the parameters for advertising strategy development. This information, or blueprint, has to be well thought out and researched and includes marketing objectives, marketing strategies, and in-depth competitive analysis.

Marketing objectives

The marketing objectives are numerical, factual, and concrete. For example, increase volume by 450M units, or increase share to 10 percentage points, and/or deliver \$15MM in revenues.

Marketing strategies

Marketing strategies are how you plan to achieve those marketing objectives. These strategies include product definition, product use, product positioning, source of growth, pricing strategy, and spending strategy.

Product definition – what is the product/service and in what category does it belong.

Product use – how you intend the product/service to be used so that it supports the overall brand positioning

Product positioning – how should the consumer perceive the product/service compared to the competition. Who is the competition and what makes the product unique.

Source of growth/new business – who will be purchasing this product/service, what are they using now and why will they switch. As you become more knowledgeable about your customer prospects the definition of source of business will become more segmented.

Pricing strategy – how much will this product/service cost compared to the competition and why is there a differential in price.

Spending strategy – how much will be spent on advertising and promotion. What will your share of spending be versus your share of market and why. Highlight any seasonality and any split between national and local spending.

You may also provide the agencies with the future company direction such as what products/services/markets you plan to enter. This information may help them craft an advertising strategy that will hold up over time.

The competitive analysis

A complete and thorough outline of the competitive framework is required. This should include each competitor's brand positioning of unique features and end benefits, target audiences, amount of spending, and media selection. If possible, provide a detailed understanding of prospective customer's needs, desires, and aspirations as it relates to the product/service category as well as the consumer's response to the competitor's product/service and advertising. Only with a complete knowledge of the competition will the Agency leadership be able to

understand why consumers are making choices and be in a position to influence that decision making process.

The advertising strategy

The Agency leadership will take the marketing objectives, strategies, and competitive analysis and craft alternate advertising strategies prior to developing the advertising. In its most simple form, each advertising strategy will consist of three items – a definition of who the product/service is selling against, what target audience do you want to reach, and what is the message, unique point of difference, you want to communicate to that audience.

The tighter and more complete your marketing objectives, strategies, and competitive analysis, the better job the Agency can do in crafting alternate advertising strategies. For example, a target audience can be defined in a variety of ways including demographic, psychographic, brand attitudes, and behavioral profiles such as users and non-users, and within the user group - heavy, moderate, and light usage.

Having several alternate advertising strategies to discuss is an ideal outcome. At this point, you can add value to your Agency leadership's thinking by helping them refine their advertising strategy alternatives and fill in information gaps with facts from customer research and other proprietary sources. Together, you can select the best advertising strategy that will deliver your marketing strategies and objectives.

Once an advertising strategy is selected, your Agency leadership will use this information to develop a creative strategy, media strategy, and alternate advertising campaigns for your review and selection.

Know when to ask for help

The process of developing advertising from marketing objectives, strategies, and competitive analysis is results and time proven. An experienced marketing expert can help improve the direction given to your Agency leadership to ensure the

most return for your resources, time, and money spent in the advertising development process and final product(s).

Robert C. Shay has over 20 years of executive marketing and general management experience in Fortune 100 companies including American Express, Citibank, Sears, and JP Morgan Chase. He can be reached at RShay@RCSAdvisors.com.

www.RCSAdvisors.com