Implications of the Intergrative Models of Creative Strategy

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Introduction

Leo Burnett (as cited in Parente, Bergh, Barban & Marra, 1996, p. 162) said, "if you want to be different, you can come down in the morning with a sock in your mouth." It is easy to be different in advertising, but it is not so easy being different and on strategy at the same time. The key to an effective creative idea is to be both unique and on strategy (Parente et al., 1996, pp. 162-163).

It is widely believed that creative strategy "holds a veto power" (Engel, Warshaw, & Kinnear, 1983, p. 319) over the potential effectiveness of an advertising campaign. Nevertheless, there can never be a single answer to the question "How does advertising work?" because advertising, as an idea, is as wide and varied as the rational and emotional concepts. The purpose of this article is to address this issue and identify the strategic options available in order to compare the effectiveness of various strategies, and find out some insights into how such differences might be implied. The author will first discuss how the notion of creative strategy has been developed from the classical hierarchy-of-effects model, then explain how advertising researchers and practitioners have been trying to encapsulate different strategies into the integrative models.

Reframing Advertising Creative Strategy

Although the meaning of creative strategy has been defined in different ways, the two concepts of main messages and method of presentation are predominantly embodied in a notion of creative strategy adhered to by most researchers. In this sense, creative strategy copes with "what" is said in advertisements as well as "how" it is said. Creative strategy consists of "message, content, and execution" (Ray, 1980; Shimp & DeLozier, 1986).

Although there are some arguments about the weightiness of message content and execution, Aaker, Batra, and Myers (1996, p. 458) state that "both [message content and execution] are necessary--a message must be both on strategy in terms of

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content and execution] are necessary--a message must be both on strategy in terms of 'what' it is communicating *and* highly creative in 'how' it communicates that message. Thus, the best advertising combines both meaningful content and brilliant creative execution."

In this article, creative strategy is focused on the general nature of messages rather than on various executional options, because it is difficult to describe all aspects of advertising execution as well as "how to say" creative messages exhaustively.

The Hierarchy-Of-Effects Model

Developed by Lavidge and Stiener (1961), the Hierarchy-of-Effects Model suggests that consumer purchase of a product occurred via a sequential hierarchy of events from awareness through knowledge, liking, preference and conviction, and purchase. These six stages are divided into the three components: cognitive, affective, and conative, which preserved the Learn-Feel-Do sequence.

This model suggests that advertisers should first create advertising to increase awareness, follow up with a campaign to change attitudes, and subsequently aim to induce trial action. Nevertheless, advertising does not always work in such a clear, straightforward, and logical manner (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). Indeed, the appropriate model will depend upon the situation and a key problem in many contexts is in fact to determine what that model is (Aaker et al., 1996). A tremendous amount of research exists on which model should be the target of advertising situations. A search for a better integrative model is one of the answers to the question: how does advertising work?

Integrative Models

Some researchers combine the cognition, experience, and affect components in lengthier groupings, sometimes with different hierarchies according to the product category (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1996). Three well-known advertising models are the Foote Cone, & Belding (FCB) Grid (Vaughn, 1980), the Rossiter-Percy Grid (Rossiter, Percy & Donovan, 1991), and Laskey's typology of main message strategies (Laskey, Day & Crask, 1989). The researcher will discuss all of the three models and their situational applicability. Finally, the conclusive implications for advertising managers will be provided.

The FCB Grid

Vaughn (1980) of Foote, Cone, & Belding devised the FCB model, which is a two-by-two matrix, where one axis represents thinking versus feeling message types, and the other axis represents high-versus low-involvement products. The basic premise of this model is that consumer entry into a product should be determined for information (learn), attitude (feel), and behavior (do) issues to develop advertising.

The priority of learn over feel, feel over learn, or do over either learn-feel, has implications for advertising strategy, creative execution, media plan, and copy testing.

In this model, four quadrants are developed in the matrix. The quadrants recapitulate four potentially major goals for advertising: to be informative, to induce affective responses, to be habit forming, or to promote self-satisfaction (Vaughn, 1980) as shown in the Figure 1.

	THINKING---------------------------	------- ----------→ FEELING

HIGH	1. INFORMATIVE
	    e.g. Cars, Houses,
	    New Products
		2. AFFECTIVE
		    e.g. Jewelry, Fashion,
		    Motorcycles

I	MODEL: Learn-Feel-Do	MODEL: Feel-Learn-Do
M	MEDIA: Long Copy Format	MEDIA: Large Space
P	Reflective Vehicles	Image Specials
O	CREATIVE: Information	CREATIVE: Executional
R	and Demonstration	Impact
T		

A	3. HABIT-FORMATION
	    e.g. Food, Household
		4. SELF-SATISFACTION
		    e.g. Cigarettes, Candy,

N	Items	Liquor
C	MODEL: Do-Learn-Feel	MODEL: Do-Feel-Learn
E	MEDIA: Small Space Ads	MEDIA: Billboards
LOW	P.O.S.	P.O.S. and Newspapers
	CREATIVE: Reminder	CREATIVE: Attention

Figure 1   FCB Planning Model (Vaughn 1980, 1986)

Quadrant 1 represents the informative strategy for highly involving products or services where thinking and economic considerations prevail. This quadrant represents high importance/thinking which requires a great need for information with regard to the importance of the product and thinking issues related to it. The classical hierarchy-of-effects sequence abbreviated to LEARN-FEEL-DO is the designated model for big-ticket items such as cars, appliances, and insurance.

Quadrant 2 represents the affective strategy, which is for highly involving and feeling purchases. This strategy is suitable for more psychological products fulfilling self-esteem, subconscious, and ego-related impulses requiring perhaps more emotional communication. In this high importance/feeling quadrant, the strategy of FEEL-LEARN-DO necessitates emotional involvement on the part of the consumers.

Quadrant 3 represents the habitual strategy, which is for low involvement and thinking products with such routinized consumer behavior that learning occurs most

often after exploratory trial purchase. The strategic model is a DO-LEARN-FEEL pattern achieved by providing a reminder for the product.

Quadrant 4 represents the satisfaction strategy, which is for low involvement/feeling products, items of personal taste such as beer, cigarettes, and candy. This is a DO-FEEL-LEARN strategic model because product experience is a necessary part of the communication process.

According to the FCB model, an advertising strategy is determined by specifying (a) the consumer's point-of-entry on the LEARN-FEEL-DO continuum and (b) the importance of learn versus feel versus do for making a sale. Specifically, the strategy issue is whether to develop product features, brand image, or combination of both. Applying the matrix in practice suggests that the marketing strategy and analysis of the consumer decision should together shape advertising strategy (Vaughn, 1980).

The Rossiter-Percy Grid

Rossister et al. (1991) offer an improvement on the FCB grid with the notable expansion of the FCB think-versus-feel dichotomy into one with many more "motives" as to why consumers might wish to buy brands in different product categories. They, then, show how ads can be designed to address each buying motive.

As shown in Figure 2, the Rossiter-Percy Grid posits brand awareness as a necessary communication objective for advertising prior to brand attitude. Brand attitude without prior brand awareness is an insufficient advertising communication objective. The Rossiter-Percy approach distinguishes brand awareness into brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition is where a brand is chosen at the point of purchase while brand recall must be remembered before the point of purchase. After brand awareness tactics are determined, the next step in the Rossiter-Percy Grid involves brand attitude strategy. In the Rossiter-Percy model, the grid again has four cells, with low and high involvement crossed with informational or transformational motive. In their view, ads on the low-involvement-informational quadrant need to focus on one or two key benefits, perhaps exaggerating them enough to provoke a trial purchase, and use a simple problem solution format without being concerned about likability. Ads in the high-involvement-informational quadrant need convincing and logical brand claims, perhaps using refutational or comparative formats. Ads in the low-involvement-transformational cell need a unique and authentic emotional benefit, delivered through a frequently repeated likable ad which might use the "drama" format.

In the fourth high-involvement-transformational cell, the Rossiter-Percy model suggests that an ad must not simply be liked but also create a feeling of lifestyle
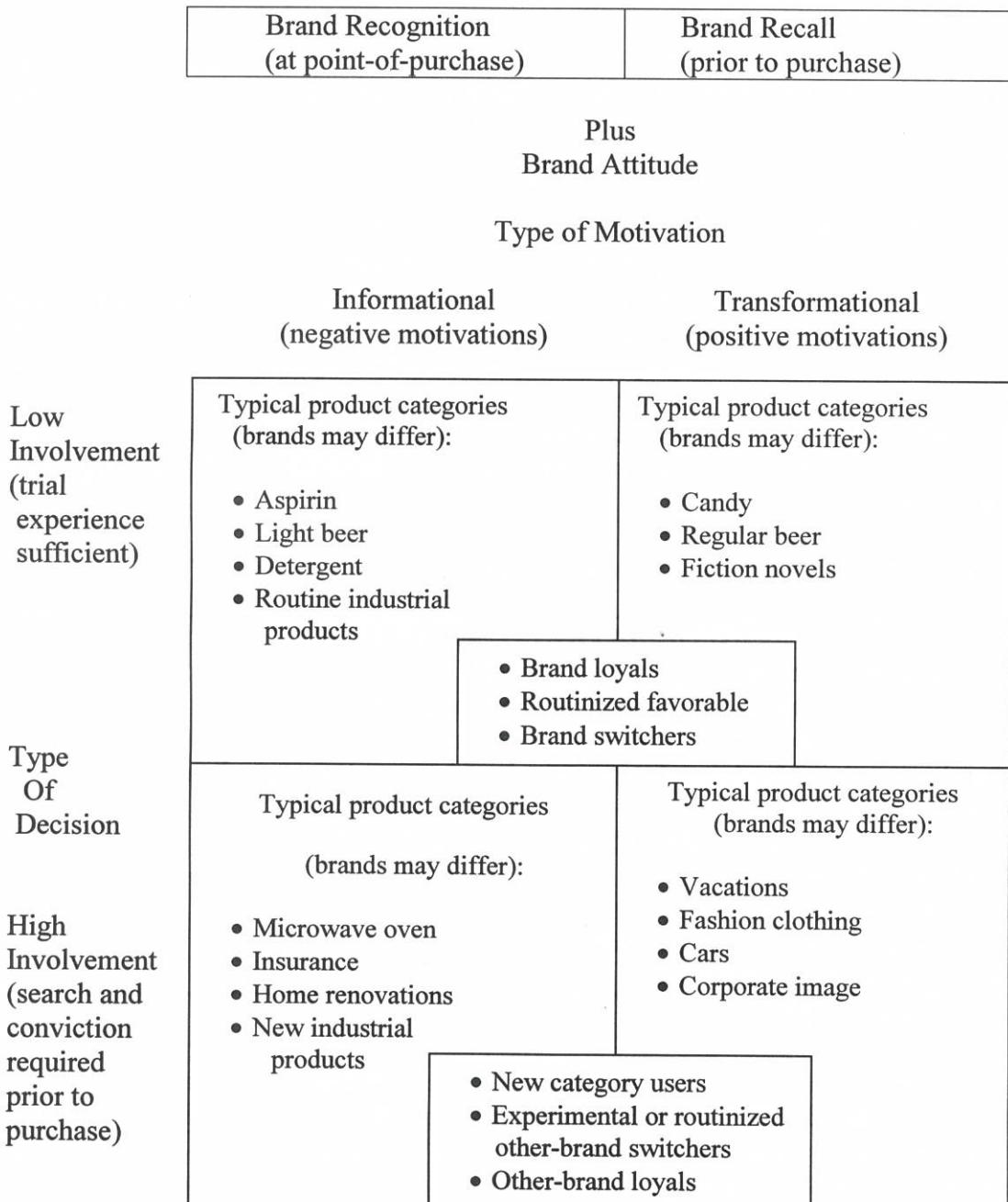
Brand Awareness

Brand Recognition (at point-of-purchase)	Brand Recall (prior to purchase)

Plus
Brand Attitude

Type of Motivation

	Informational (negative motivations)	Transformational (positive motivations)
Low Involvement (trial experience sufficient)	Typical product categories (brands may differ): • Aspirin • Light beer • Detergent • Routine industrial products	Typical product categories (brands may differ): • Candy • Regular beer • Fiction novels

• Brand loyals
• Routinized favorable
• Brand switchers

| Type Of Decision

High Involvement (search and conviction required prior to purchase) | Typical product categories

(brands may differ):

• Microwave oven
• Insurance
• Home renovations
• New industrial products | Typical product categories (brands may differ):

• Vacations
• Fashion clothing
• Cars
• Corporate image |

• New category users
• Experimental or routinized other-brand switchers
• Other-brand loyals

Figure 2 The Rossiter-Percy Grid (Rossiter et al., 1991)

identification for the consumer, with some supportive "hard information" thrown in. High repetition may be needed here.

Laskey's Main Message Typology

In order to facilitate classifying a multi-dimensional stimulus, such as a television commercial, Laskey et al. (1989) designed a main message strategy which is well known as Laskey's main message typology. This typology is a two-stage approach in which advertisements were first placed into one of two basic categories, informational or transformational, based on the primary focus of the main message, and also placed into one of several subcategories.

Laskey's typology consists of informational advertising and transformational advertising. Within the informational category are five subcategories of message strategies. The comparative category mentions the competition explicitly. The unique selling proposition category uses explicit claims of uniqueness. The preemptive category offers testable claims of superiority based on an attribute or benefit. The hyperbole category offers untestable claims of superiority based on an attribute or benefit. The generic category focuses on a product class rather than on a particular brand. Table 1 shows Laskey's typology of main message strategies. This typology involves two main categories: informational advertising and transformational advertising.

Table 1
Laskey's Typology of Main Message Strategies

INFORMATIONAL ADVERTISING
Comparative: competition explicitly mentioned
Unique Selling Proposition: explicit claim of uniqueness
Preemptive: testable claim of superiority based on an attribute or benefit
Hyperbole: untestable claim of superiority based on an attribute or benefit
Generic: focus on product class
TRANSFORMATIONAL ADVERTISING
User Image: focus on user
Brand Image: focus on brand personality
Use Occasion: focus on usage occasions
Generic: focus on product class

(Laskey et al., 1989)

Unlike informational advertisements, transformational strategies are not information-based; they contain a dominant psychological element. The four transformational subcategories correspond to a primary focus on either persons, places, or things, respectively. The user image category focuses on the users of a brand and their lifestyles. The main thrust of these commercials is on persons who use the brand, rather than on the brand itself. The brand image category focuses primarily on the image of the brand itself in an attempt to convey a brand "personality." The third category called Use Occasion focuses primarily on the

experience of using the brand, or on those situations where use of the brand is most appropriate. Finally, the fourth category is generic which focused on the product class and is clearly transformational.

Laskey's typology was tested through the coding of nearly 900 television commercials over a wide range of consumer-packaged goods. The results show that the typology not only appears to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive but also seems to generate reliable classification results.

Implications for Advertising Managers

In summary, the implications of these three integrative models suggest that when consumers are highly involved in a purchase and are knowledgeable about the product category, rational creative approach or informational advertising might be appropriate. The consumer must not only be able to recall something about the advertised brand, but what they recall must be something they consider useful in choosing the brand. In addition, it must set the brand apart as being competitively superior (Aaker et al., 1996).

On the other hand, when consumers lack the motivation and ability to process such brand information, or when they are in low-involvement situations, emotional creative approach or transformational advertising along with ad execution plays a major role in a consumer's attitude change. That is, the name of a product advertised is remembered may matter more than exactly what is remembered about the brand, so recall is very important and may itself lead to choice (Aaker et al., 1996).

It should be noted that, however, although these models of creative strategy can be seen as tools used by academics and market researchers for measurement and understanding, no one model fits all advertising types and occasions. Taylor (1999) suggests that any management strategy model is likely to have weakness because by including some dimensions in a model means excluding others.

Advertising manager, thus, should accept that there is no single factor in which advertising works. Rather, how it works depends on the advertising situation: the type of product, the nature of the target audience, the purchase motivation, and the importance of the decision to the consumer (Rossiter et al., 1991). In the last words, *how* experience, and emotional and rational response interact to shape an individual's response in an advertising message is more important than the *order* in which they are evoked (Vakratsas & Ambler 1996). ◆◆

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