
*“A great ad pity
they can’t remember
the brand” –
True or false?*

The branding issue in contemporary TV advertising

Wendy Gordon and Roy Langmaid

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Introduction

This is a passionate paper that we both feel very strongly about because it touches on our most fundamental beliefs about advertising, consumers and our fellow professionals. It is written in memory of great advertising that we have both been involved in at the early stages of development that either was never given a real chance or which never saw the light of day. For this we blame advertising, marketing and research professionals who through a combination of ignorance, complacency and hypocrisy have continued to use simplistic methods of evaluating the success or otherwise of branding in advertising.

Those of us who have researched advertising at any stage of its development, whether creative development, pretesting or campaign evaluation, are familiar with the terms ‘well-branded’ and ‘poorly branded’ applied to a commercial or a campaign. A campaign that is said to be well branded elicits smiles of approval from the client and mirrored smiles of relief from the agency, whilst the opposite conclusion that it is poorly branded is like giving the advertising campaign, and often the agency too, a death sentence. This ‘Trial by Branding’ and the subsequent hanging of either individuals or organisations is a fact of our lives. Well-branded campaigns are being given the death sentence by the paucity of imagination of Politburo judges on the basis of flimsy circumstantial evidence provided by heavy-handed KGB research techniques.

Leaving aside the reliance on crude measurement techniques for the moment, what is even more disturbing is the ignorance that exists about the branding process itself. A surprising number of creatives, planners, account handlers and clients have a kindergarten knowledge of branding processes and mechanisms. Gordon Brown observed that branding is far more difficult than generally appreciated and involves more than simply ‘plonking’ the name or pack shot in the middle or at the end of a commercial:

“Branding is perhaps an unfortunate word.

It implies a brand can be ‘popped in’ or ‘tacked on’ to a good creative piece of advertising.”⁽¹⁾

The temptation to solve a branding problem by increasing the exposure of the pack shot, the frequency of mention of the brand name or the size of the logo in the end frame is familiar to us all. It is often adopted as the solution because it involves less energy, effort and creative thought and more importantly is bound to please the client.

Now we come to the hypocrisy in our profession. The very same people who criticise current research methods of evaluating branding when particular campaigns are judged guilty and given the death sentence are quick to cite the same measures of a campaign’s branding effectiveness when the scores are favourable. This ambivalence simply ensures that the status quo remains unchallenged, exactly as has been the case for the last 20 years, and that all attempts at more sensitive measures will be undermined by these double standards.

So the overall objective of this paper is to increase our understanding of branding – what it is, how it manifests itself and how it can be measured. Our objective is to move onwards rather than to revisit the territory that has been so often visited before. What we hope to achieve is a re-evaluation of the kind of evidence that might legally

be admissible in a 'Trial by Branding' court case, and to suggest new ways of conducting fuller and more realistic investigations than are currently practised.

What Do People Understand By Branding

In the advertising, marketing and research industry we use a large number of terms that have no common definition. Only this year, Jeremy Elliott edited a dictionary of common marketing, media and research terms for J. Walter Thompson in an attempt to introduce a common frame of reference and to avoid misunderstandings. He makes the point that some words do not have meanings that are commonly agreed throughout the advertising industry, and that the topics surrounding these words are a matter of current, and sometimes heated, debate. This is certainly true of the word 'branding', but sadly there is no definition of it in the dictionary so we have had to look through the literature and talk to people to obtain examples of how it is currently used.

Since 'branding' is a verb stemming from the noun 'brand' it seems wise to start with the definition of a brand. There can be few professionals nowadays who do not accept that a brand is a combination of rational and emotional benefits. 'Acorn to Zapping' defines a brand as:

"The unique combination of product characteristics and added values (non-functional as well as functional) that have become attached to a product by means of its name, packaging, advertising, pricing, etc – which differentiate it from competitive brands in the consumers' view and which suit it to providing the greatest satisfaction to some consumers." (2)

'To brand' then must be the process of creating the individualistic combination of product characteristics and added value.

We would like to offer our definition of branding. Branding may be thought of as the process of creating a totality of meaning that consumers attribute to a brand – the unique and relevant bundle of values that are internalised and combined with past experience and/or current perceptions of the brand itself.

Branding is the relevant unit of meaning that is inextricably linked to a brand, awareness of which may be conscious or intuitive.

We shall attempt to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt the existence of branding-advertising associations that are outside the realm of normal conscious recall. This phenomenon should pose an interesting challenge to researchers. It then becomes a moot point whether

our attitudes and behaviour are more readily swayed by conscious brand awareness or the 'unconscious' variety, for you may argue, as powerfully for one's likely persuasiveness as for the other's. Whichever theory you prefer, it is clear that modern recall measures favour consciously verbally reported memories, whereas our evidence, as we shall demonstrate, suggests that any half-way decent enabling technique will facilitate the appearance of all sorts of other branded associations. Surely our assessment of branding should be moving forward to encompass this wealth of undiscovered, possibly vital material.

Before we examine the validity of this definition, we would like to examine the different types of branding mechanisms and processes manifested, in British advertising in the 1980's.

Branding – Its Ways And Forms

One single dose of a night's ITV or Channel 4 viewing will reveal a number of branding forms or signatures varying from simple to complex. It becomes quickly apparent that very often branding is more than a simple memory device. There is superficial branding and deeper structural branding and it is our firm view that the different types or levels need to be evaluated by different research techniques. The diagram overleaf illustrates the different types of branding that we have identified:

Simple

- simple association (verbal) e.g. 'Sch... you know who'
- simple association (aural) Martini melody
- simple association (visual) e.g. Old Spice
- branding devices e.g. Mazda, Horlicks, Biarritz, Scotchtape
- branding symbols e.g. Dulux dog, Andrex puppy, Hofmeister bear
- branding analogies e.g. famous personalities e.g. Victor Kiam,
- Paul Hogan, Maureen Lipman
- branding metaphors* e.g. 'Australianess', 'Olde England'
- branding tone of voice e.g. Toshiba, TSB
- structural branding e.g. Red Mountain, Oxo, B & H, British Airways, Duracell

Complex

- Although properly used for a figure of speech, here we are stretching the term to include cultural or pastoral symbolism.

We are *not* making the case that simple branding mechanisms are not as good as complex ones – the success of the type used depends on the role of the advertising, the life-stage of the brand, the competitive environment and the advertising macro-environment.

Branding by Simple Association

There are two types of branding which operate at a level of establishing an association with the brand name. This association may be either visual or verbal. The most common verbal forms are catchy jingles or end lines that consumers sing or recite at the first mention of the brand. Classic examples are the end lines ‘We’re with the Woolwich’ or ‘the Abbey Habit’; in a different arena the phrase ‘Get the Max’ or the song in the current Nescafe campaign ‘...Nescafe, Nescafe ... the better way to start your day’. These slogans or jingles are easily remembered by consumers who make the assumption, often quite correctly, that the purpose of such advertising is to lodge the brand name in the public’s mind and that repetition is the most effective way of achieving this.

Other brands favour visual (or visual as well as verbal) branding mechanisms. ‘Nescafe’ as a stimulus usually results in consumers shaking their fists to demonstrate recall of a gesture that occurs in the long running Gareth Hunt campaign; the surfer and the sea visually appears in response to ‘Old Spice’.

This is the traditional stimulus-response model of branding which is as alive and well nowadays as it was in the first days of television advertising. The point to bear in mind about this mechanism of branding is that it operates at a conscious level and is accessible through the memory.

Simple memory association is therefore easy to monitor or measure since advertising using this type of branding usually performs well on traditional awareness and recall measures, used in campaign pre-testing or evaluation. Hence its continued popularity .

Although such branding can be extremely powerful in establishing a strong link between the brand and a ‘relevant unit of meaning’ it may sometimes create branding vulnerability, particularly when the catchphrases become attached to generic values of the product category such as building society friendliness and popularity (We’re with the Woolwich) or instant

coffee sociability and acceptability (‘Get the Max’, Nescafe jingle).

Since competitive brands are equally able to offer these generic emotional benefits, the brands become vulnerable to a competitor who achieves the linkage of a brand to a *relevant* and *unique* cluster of values as did Red Mountain in relation to Nescafe and Maxwell House.

The use of simple memory devices are not necessarily a waste of time and effort or evidence of uncreative or ineffective advertising since it depends on the defined role of the campaign, for a particular brand at a particular point in its life-stage. If the advertising objective is to raise awareness, then the use of a branding association reliant on conscious memory is an obvious solution.

However, it is critical that the advertising memory association is linked overtly or covertly with a cluster of meaningful brand values that are unique to the brand. Both Toshiba and TSB that won advertising effectiveness awards in 1984 are examples of this, and will be discussed later.

Branding Devices

Instead of simply using the logo or the pack to illustrate the advertisement (as in the quote given earlier about ‘plonking’ it into the advertisement), many advertisers use these essential components of the brand in a creative way, such that they communicate a message, a unit of meaning, in addition to simple acknowledgement of the name or pack.

Using the 1984 advertising effectiveness awards as a source of examples, both Horlicks Instant and Mazda use this form of branding (see illustrations). Horlicks shows the pack of instant Horlicks, blowing off steam like a train in a station to communicate winding down and relaxing. Mazda creatively plays with the slogan ...AMAZED which forms MAZDA (rather like playing Scrabble), where the strategy is to illustrate how surprising a Mazda car is in relation to cars one would not expect to compare it with e.g. a Rolls Royce or a Mercedes. NatWest’s ‘Press for Action’ use of its logo is yet another example.

The strength of this type of branding is that the creative use of the logo or pack together with the end line, encapsulates the essence of the desired communication hence the brand name is linked with a unique or relevant unit of meaning.

This form of branding usually wins the approval of consumers in qualitative or quantitative pre-testing (often described as ‘clever’ and ‘memorable’) and judging from

the 1984 IPA awards, seems to have performed well in post campaign evaluation measures too.

Branding Symbols

Modern advertising abounds with branding symbols, some of which have shown surprising longevity. The Dulux dog, Andrex puppy, Hofmeister bear, Kia-Orang and Tony the Tiger are all examples that come easily to mind.

These symbols have an advantage in that they are inventions and can therefore be controlled in such a way as to encapsulate the desired brand values with which the advertiser wishes to imbue his brand. If the character or the symbol catches on, that is, if consumers find it not only entertaining but also a meaningful and relevant brand encapsulation, such symbols are enormously powerful and build long-term brand equity.

The Dulux dog, so rumour has it, was given a part in the first commercial to communicate a spacious but warm home. The consequences are history. From a simple prop, the dog (or even that breed of dog) stands not only for Dulux but also for subtle colours, space, light and transformation, thus canine shorthand for the brand's values.

Not all symbols are successful. We can think of animated characters such as the Giles family campaign for Quickbrew tea that failed to imbue the brand with a distinctive personality. The inventive use of a symbol must surely be one of the most difficult tasks a creative team has to face – the task of encapsulating the brand values and personality in a distinctive way and integrating the symbol into the structure of the commercial, so it is not simply an appendage.

Branding Analogies

The process of branding by creating a likeness between two things in certain respects is a fundamental principle underlying the use of famous personalities. Analogies make an assumption that if things agree in some attributes, they will agree in others. So too with a brand and a famous person. The latter has a public persona or image that people can describe which agrees with the brand. Because of the agreement of some common attributes, there is a link between the brand and other desired attributes. We call this psychological fit – that is where both the brand and the famous person actually benefit from the association each absorbing the others' attributes by a process of osmosis.⁽³⁾

If, in addition to the fit, the advertising integrates the brand into the scenario, so that it is not simply an observer, then the personality comes in time to represent or personify the brand. Paul Hogan for Fosters, Alan

Whicker for Visa and Daley Thompson for Lucozade are all famous examples of effective branding analogies.

Conversely, there is often a psychological misfit between the brand and a chosen personality because they do not have any overlap of attributes to begin with. In this case, the famous person will always swamp the brand and will never be able to personify it in a meaningful way for consumers. A good example here is the use of Joan Collins by the Bristol & West Building Society.

Osmosis

Brand image	Famous person's image	Brand image	Famous person's image
Overlap of attributes = psychological fit		No overlap of attributes = psychological misfit	
1. Personality as branding device		2. Personality will swamp brand - poor branding device	

The problem with famous personalities as branding devices is that they are human. If successful they demand more and more money, they are vulnerable to scandal or adverse behaviour that may affect the brand and they are mortal. One can hardly run a branding device posthumously!

This type of branding takes time to establish since there is a cognitive process involved before the personality will automatically come to mind in response to the brand name. In our experience, advertising using famous personalities often performs well in pre-tests (quantitative) because of the 'startle-value' of the personality but may perform disappointingly in conventional advertising tracking particularly at the start of the campaign.

Branding Metaphors

Castlemaine XXXX is one of the most successful examples of this type of branding. The campaign uses Australianess – that of the outback, the heat, vast spaces, and simple men – to link with Castlemaine XXXX. The brand now 'owns', as far as U.K. consumers are concerned, a set of Australian images with which no other Australian brand can compete. Fosters use a different aspect of Australianess that creates a palpably different set of brand values. Other brands

use stereotypical facets of a country’s national characteristics to attach to a brand (sophisticated French lovers for Cointreau, traditional English eccentricities for Old England Sherry, the Wild West for Marlboro, etc).

This form of branding makes use of common cultural stereotypes and implicit rather than explicitly creates a link between the brand and a selected set of national characteristics.

Branding Tone of Voice

Although all but the simplest form of branding requires some period of learning, branding by tone of voice requires both time and exposure. Initially, the consumer may not understand the rules of the commercial but in time as the campaign develops, the tone of voice is so familiar that even if the brand name was not mentioned or the product/logo displayed, consumers would correctly associate the advertisement with the brand.

Toshiba ‘owns’ a tone of voice, a way of addressing the consumer. ‘Hello Tosh – gotta Toshiba’ is much more than the simple associative type of branding described earlier. It certainly has achieved brand awareness and advertising recall but in addition the tone of voice imbues the brand with self-confident ‘street-cred’, a tone of voice that will brand now and build brand equity even if Toshiba is not mentioned. In this particular product arena, no other brand is able to address the consumer in the same way.

The TSB Early Leavers campaign is another example of a youthful, modern, accessible and friendly tone of voice that supports the simple association with ‘TSB – we like to say yes’.

Structural Branding

This type of branding is the most complex and therefore the most difficult to evaluate using the crude measures of many pre-testing and post-testing research procedures. This is because the branding takes place at the level of the structure of the advertisement itself, rather than the manifest content. The way in which the component parts of a complex whole are interrelated to give a distinct shape or form is what structural branding is all about.

The rules vary according to the brand and the campaign. The Benson & Hedges advertisements are a good example of structural branding. The use of certain components such as everyday objects (jars, razors, birdcage) combined with carefully considered use of the colour gold, and the health warning, now automatically ensures a link with Benson & Hedges. It thus owns a distinctive ‘form’ with which no other brand can compete.

With television advertising, exactly the same process can be seen in campaigns such as Oxo or Red Mountain.

The famous Oxo campaign brands by ‘owning’ a particular family with its overt and covert relationships. Red Mountain has developed an advertising form that breaks the rules of instant coffee campaigns by not allowing the characters in the scripts to talk about coffee at all. Milk Tray owns a very specific storyline. Levis with its assumptive stance and tone is yet another example of branding by form (style and tone) rather than content (message delivered).

We hold the view that the more complex types of branding processes that involve a period of learning at a cognitive level, are not given a fair chance in quantitative trails of branding. Our current range of pre-testing and post-testing research techniques have in common two characteristics that are antipathetic to the ways in which complex branding takes place. These are:

- a reliance on recall as a measure of branding effectiveness
- an assumption that branding is a conscious phenomenon, assessable through direct logical questioning.

The next part of this paper examines the validity of these two assumptions.

Whomever you read or consider as an authority in the world of advertising, marketing or research, you will find an underlying assumption that there is more in there – there being the consumer’s mind – than he or she is consciously aware of, and that if only you have the appropriate facilitating technique, be it sensitive interviewing, projective drawing or whatever, you may gain access to this stored but inaccessible material. To quote one writer on this topic:

“... if you accept the view, which I hope you do, that much of the relationship consumers have with brands operates at an unconscious level.”⁽⁴⁾

But does it? Can you demonstrate this? Is this material actually present or merely a component of the ‘Freudian’ hocus-pocus that let qualitative researchers get rich?

As empiricists we should be prepared to examine this underlying assumption, so we designed an experiment to search for and to demonstrate the existence of this so-called ‘unconscious’ relationship and to examine the nature of branding within this relationship, should we find it.

Our experiment was quite simple. Most of us have, at one time or another, experienced the feeling of being mesmerised by the TV. The use of the word

'mesmerised' is important, because we believe that there is indeed a trance-like state into which people descend when they watch TV. Not always, but often.

*"Charles settles in with all his equipment in front of the television set when he comes home from nursery school – his blanket and his thumb. **Then he watches in a real trance.** He'll watch like that for hours ...But even though he doesn't seem quite Awake, it's not as if he were asleep because it doesn't keep him from sleeping at bedtime. He just seems mesmerised."*

Sound familiar ? The passage continues:

"The (child's) facial expression is transformed, the jaw is relaxed and hangs open slightly ... The eyes have a glazed, vacuous look." ⁽⁵⁾

One thing that has worried us consistently is the apparent mismatch between this TV trance and the logical, rational approach, setting and style of market research questioning procedures. We were interested in seeing if we could model this trance-like state and investigate it for stored or unconscious material and accompanying associations.

Where could we find or model 'trances' and how might we explore people's recall of branding and advertising material in this state? After careful consideration we decided that using hypnosis would provide us with the best and most accurate reflection of the TV trance and that we would probe hypnotised subjects for recall and responses to branding.

The mere mention of hypnosis tends to produce cries of protest and derision from the scientific and rationalist part of all of us. One of the main reasons for this is that hypnotic or trance-like states have traditionally been associated with mystical, religious or magical experiences. Many of us regard this kind of thing as mumbo-jumbo, or mere fakery used to hoodwink gullible audiences.

Let us try to dispel some of this superstitious nonsense by defining our meaning of the trance state. By this term we are simply referring to an altered state of consciousness – a daydream, a distraction, a loss of intention, whatever. It is exactly this, an altered state of consciousness that we experience on engaging with films, poems or music when we enter into or produce our own representation of the poet's or composer's mood or feeling.

This kind of thing is by no means limited to artistic endeavour, salesmen too try to produce this altered state of consciousness in a resistant prospective purchaser:

"I swore I'd never buy anything from a door-to-door salesman, but he just talked me into it."

There are obvious direct links between advertising and hypnosis or the trance-like state in which many of us consume TV – the most obvious of which is the power of suggestion. It seems reasonable to assume that just as they may be of different height, some people are much affected by the phenomenon of suggestion, others highly resistant to it. Advertising easily persuades some people, others resist it to the bitter end. Remember as far back as '67 Timothy Joyce was thinking about this phenomenon.

"People are more or less suggestible and can often be induced to do what someone else wishes by suggestion alone, and there seems no reason why this should not extend to the advertising media." ⁽⁶⁾

Consumers experience this attempt to influence them and report it straightforwardly in virtually any type of interviewing experience:

"I feel we're being brainwashed by the ads, the politicians and even the programmes sometimes."

"They just pop up in my mind from nowhere. Jingles, I mean. They get hold of me and won't let go. I just go on and on singing them to myself."

Accepting, if you will, that many of us watch TV in a trance-like state, what we did was to model this state by hypnotising people and comparing their recall and associations with brands in the trance state with their responses to standard advertising awareness and advertising recall questions in a conscious state.

The details of the experiment, together with a recruitment questionnaire and the standard questions used in the experiment are appended to this paper.

Of the ten subjects in the experiment, five were successfully hypnotised. In this state all five were able to recall advertisements that consciously they had no memory of. All five were surprised, if not amazed, by this phenomenon and were able to recall the newly remembered material after the hypnotic session.

We shall quote briefly from three male subjects here. The first, Jonathan's recall of the Heineken commercial seems to have been facilitated by the hypnotist asking Jonathan to imagine that he was in an off-licence and encouraging him to look at the packs there. The visual accessing of the Heineken pack in his mind's eye seems to trigger Jonathan's recall of the commercial:

Jonathan:

"...I can see Fosters, Skol, Castlemaine XXXX, Heineken, Tenents, Holsten, Carlsberg, Carling Black Label ... and Harp."

Hypnotist:

"Are any of the ones you just mentioned – Ones you didn't think you could remember. Earlier on today when you were doing the Recall test?"

Jonathan:

"Yes ..."

Hypnotist:

"Which ones Jonathan?"

Jonathan:

"I didn't remember the Heineken one ... it's very clear now."

Hypnotist:

"What really for you stands out in the advertisement – the Heineken one you have just remembered?"

Jonathan:

"I remember the one that takes the micky out of another advert that was advertising Volkswagen cars a long time ago. And about the letters ... the trend in the collection of VW badges ... with the pop group ... the Beastie Boys."

Interestingly, our second subject Berry's recall of the commercial for Lamot lager seemed also to be triggered by searching the off-licence for the brand in his mind's eye. This was supported by his head moving from side to side, up and down as he re-experienced the display in the store. Moreover, as his words show, his experience of the commercial is that it is strongly branded.

Berry's verbatim:

Hypnotist:

"I wonder if when thinking about this particular lager, you recall anything that you have seen or heard regarding it?"

Berry:

"The advert. Some type of advert. A man in armour ... some sort of Modern armour. And a large panther-type cat. Walking through water ... some sort of water... shallow water ... that's all."

Hypnotist:

"Can you hear anything? Any sounds? words or music?"

Berry:

"Lamot ... It's heavily emphasised ... Lamot. I can see it."

Hypnotist:

"I wonder how those memories came to you. Did you hear them? Did you see them, feel them, taste them?"

Berry:

"I can see them."

The third subject, Sean's approval of and identification with the Hofmeister Bear – and the induction of the desire to drink the product through association – were important discoveries that he had deleted from his recall questionnaire. What grown up young man wants to admit a giant teddy bear as a role model to a (usually) female interviewer in a hall test? Quite clearly this commercial is motivating to Sean, yet one would not have thought so from his conscious responses.

Sean's verbatim (trance state):

Sean:

"A bear ... comes down a room and dances ... some people, they throw him in the air. He falls on their backs ... spirals down. Stands up ... he's wearing red braces."

Hypnotist:

"Is there anything else you notice About the bear?"

Sean:

"He's got a hat on."

Hypnotist:

"Anything else?"

Sean:

"The way he walks."

Hypnotist:

"How does he walk?"

Sean:

"With his shoulders."

Hypnotist:

“Does he say anything?”

Sean:

“I can’t hear him.”

Hypnotist:

“Can you hear anybody else in the disco?”

Sean:

“Just music.”

Hypnotist:

“What is the meaning of this Advertisement to you?”

Sean:

“Having good fun and enjoying Yourself.”

Hypnotist:

“And are they advertising the lager In this way?”

Sean:

“They’re trying to.”

Hypnotist:

“Does it work for you? Does it make You think of Hofmeister as fun?”

Sean:

“Yeah, it does, yeah.”

Hypnotist:

“How does it make you feel?”

Sean:

“I want to try some. Feel as good as The bear.”

Sean’s verbatim (as taken from his recall questionnaire):

“It’s the one with the bear in the disco. He’s dancing around with all the people.”

(“Anything else?”)

“Just fooling around in the disco. All I remember is the disco and the bear in the disco.”

(“Anything else?”)

“No.”

In our view, the experiment demonstrated two fascinating insights into the grey and misty landscape of memory:

- It provided irrefutable proof of the presence in the consumers’ mind of advertising messages that are sometimes inaccessible to conscious recall.
- It demonstrated the importance of creating an appropriate context to facilitate recall, be this a mood of relaxation, an environment such as the point of purchase, point of consumption or point of receiving the advertisement (living room, street); a visual stimulus such as the pack, a tune or set of sounds.

This context-bound recall phenomenon is known to researchers as state dependent memory and has been the subject of a great number of investigations:

“During many ordinary and extraordinary situations our constantly shifting psychophysiological states can encapsulate memory so that it is not available to our usual conscious frames of reference.” (7)

Information stored in this way is said to be statebound and appropriate contextual triggers must be found in order to make it available to the conscious mind – in Berry’s case the Lamot pack which he must have accessed or *visualized in his mind’s eye in order to search for it*. In other words, in order to facilitate recall we should be prepared to recreate the context of the situation in which the stimulus was experienced or in which it is most relevant.

If then we have access to a whole new set of memories in the trance state, how does this relate to the purchase environment, where ‘there must be a conscious process of consideration of the advertiser’s message’ (8), but is there? Consider the following:

“I often go around the supermarket on autopilot – when I get to the checkout I can’t remember buying half the things in my basket.”

“Sometimes somebody recognises you in the shop and speaks to you and it doesn’t register. Then you wake up and see them.”

“I stand in front of the shelves and all of a sudden one of the packets is in my hand.”

These automaton-like states are a long way from the rational conscious list-making process of the organised shopper or the logical question and answer format of much market research. Nonetheless, retailers have recognised their existence and attempted to utilise or

encourage them. What else is muzak if not an attempt to promote a relaxed, euphoric trance-like state in which consciously organised defence mechanisms are lulled into acquiescence to more primitive impulses.

Researchers have discovered that statebound recall may be facilitated not only by imagery, melodies and other symbols but also simply by inducing the particular level of physiological arousal which prevailed in the initial experience:

“The very occurrence of a ‘flashback’ is often predicated by the duplication of a level of arousal that accompanied the initial experience.”⁽⁹⁾

Examples quoted by Vives as long ago as 1538 and Marcel Proust in the nineteenth century are supported by more recent research in their suggestion that a single, rather than repeated, experience may be sufficient to establish statebound learning.

In our own field, the implications are obvious; a single viewing of a commercial might be sufficient, given the right situation for accessing it, for complete recall of the advertisement to be achieved. The more evocative the commercial, perhaps the more likely this is to be so.

In developing our own hypotheses we would offer these findings as support for our contention that the imagery, emotions and ‘units of meaning’ that are attached to brands are stored as statebound experiences or are, more simply, unavailable to normal memory, but may be triggered by images, symbols or physiological states that occur in everyday life. We would suggest that the more complex these images, emotions and meanings, the less amenable they would be to recall in the straightforward question and answer session of the standard questionnaire. In other words, that because of the very type and nature of the stimulus, complex branded commercials require a more open-ended and flexible approach to enable recall. Furthermore, that because of its complex nature, such branding once evoked may be far more evocative and strongly linked to the product than the simple association type.

Towards A More Flexible Structuring Of Context And Improving Access To Recall

Although we have strongly argued that **conscious recall** should not be the only admissible evidence in a trial by branding case, it would be foolish to suggest that recall itself should be discarded. Everything we do in the course of market research other than direct simple observation, is based on memory. Whether qualitative or quantitative, much of our information is gathered on the basis of reported or recalled behaviour, and although we try as hard as we can, through the use of projective techniques to uncover intuitive and

emotional responses^{(10) (13)}, recall is and always will be a cornerstone of our methodology.

So too is the reality of the market research interview. However much we might wish it to be otherwise, it has to be conducted whilst out and about on doorsteps, in living rooms, on the streets or in-halls, all of which are situations far removed from the purchase and consumption contexts.

Bearing this in mind, how can we facilitate recall of ‘unconscious’ or intuitive branding and/or branded associations and indeed how can we re-create contexts that are more relevant to brands than to advertising?

- We should use visual, auditory and kinaesthetic cues to aid consumers in accessing stored material. We might show real packs or logos rather than the brand names listed on cards. Lowenbrau, for example, in Germanic script on the pack, is a very different property from the letters typed on a card. So too with any brand name – the symbol of the name may well trigger memory to a far greater extent than an abstract distillation. Why not use a tape of jingles (without brand names) to establish what the auditory cues evoke? Why not use a reel of commercials with the brand name and pack deleted to establish the ‘unit of meaning’ linked to the brand name? If the commercial employs a form of complex branding, a key frame from the commercial, a character or an event within it, may successfully trigger recall of a great deal of the content. After all, we should be trying to measure the unit of meaning that is linked to the brand name, not simply the number of times it is mentioned in isolation.
- We should concentrate our energies on re-creating the actual purchasing or consumption context to aid access of advertising or other messages linked to the brand. Simple projective bubble drawings emanating from brands on a supermarket shelf or a High Street environment are remarkably successful in evoking advertising branded messages.
- We should place less reliance on consumers’ ability to operate in a verbal descriptive response mode, ie. words and explanations rather than images and pictures. It is a well known fact that over 65% of face-to-face communication is non-verbal (25). Most people store information in the form of sounds, pictures, melodies or textures, so why do we persist in using only one interactive mode of stimulus and response ie. verbal?

We should seriously question standardized ‘reel of 5’ pre-testing techniques which purport to measure branding effectiveness. Usually the ‘test ad’ (notice terminology) is placed in the middle position of 5

commercials, simulating a commercial break. When respondents are placed in front of the TV set, and asked to watch a reel, it is not at all surprising that the majority (usually well over 80%) can remember them. Like children at school who know they might be asked a question, powers of concentration increase. Are we really concluding that a commercial that achieves 92% brand recall will be better branded in real life than one remembered by 87%? If we place the 'test ad' in a reel of ten commercials are we closer to simulating reality? The percentage levels of brand recall may drop but how does that relate to the real world where respondents never see ten commercials in a row?

And what about norms? Does the fact that a commercial performs better or worse than the 'norm' mean anything at all, given that each brand is at a different stage in its life-cycle, is targeted at a different market, is being advertised to meet different objectives, uses branding of different types and may even be for different product categories?

Pre-testing has an important role to play in evaluating such aspects of an advertisement as communication, comprehension, brand imagery (product, user, occasion, personality), involvement and relevance, and can help to understand how the branding mechanism is likely to work. If it is branding that employs a visual device, do consumers understand the symbol and can they remember it visually (e.g. can it be drawn or coloured in); if it is branding that is more complex, can consumers identify which elements and combinations signify the brand rather than any others? We should be campaign-specific in designing a pre-test methodology and questionnaire. Off-the-peg pre-testing solutions make for wealthy research companies and reassured clients but so often what appears to be satisfactory evidence of branding strength turns out to be an inherent branding weakness at a later stage of post-campaign evaluation.

- We should spend far more effort in translating ways of accessing the stored images we have described into a quantitative approach so that a jury can be provided with a summing-up enabling a just rather than pre-determined verdict. Qualitative research, because of its open-endedness, means we have learned that visual references may be followed up with visual probes, auditory with auditory ones, and so on. We need to teach interviewers to be sensitive to the consumers' own preferred mental modality in order to understand what type of branding we have, and in what sense the brand-consumer association is being set up.

Appendix

Methodology

First, let's outline the parameters of the experiment – who we talked to, our topic areas and how we did it. Of course there were exceptional recruitment and methodological difficulties in conducting such an experiment and it seems proper to start with these. Following this is a recruitment questionnaire including a hand-out that we left with suitable respondents who agreed to participate in the experiment.

We told people that we would film the experiment, that they would be shown their own-filmed interview and that we would use no part of it in our paper without their express permission. The filmed extracts you will see have, therefore, all been cleared for viewing by the people involved. In the written version of the paper you will find key still frames and edited verbatims from the videotapes.

Ten subjects, five men and five women, volunteered to take part in the experiment. The research was conducted at The Research Centre in Islington on Sunday 13 December 1987. The entire proceedings were filmed. Edited clips from these recordings will be presented (with the participants' approval) at the Conference version of this paper.

The one-day session was divided in two parts; five participants attended the morning session and five the afternoon one. Both sessions followed the same procedure:

1. A 45 minute talk to the group about the nature and principles of hypnosis. No mention of commercials or products was made during this talk. The purpose of this session was to relax and reassure the participants and to answer their questions.
2. Informants were taken individually to separate rooms, where under the guidance of an interviewer they completed the recall questionnaire.
3. They had no prior knowledge of the areas of interest (lager and coffee).
4. All discussions of these questionnaires was banned whilst respondents waited for their hypno-sessions. Research staff monitored this while participants waited.
5. Participants went for their hypno-sessions, which lasted between 30-40 minutes. After this they were accompanied by a researcher to another part of the building to watch their video. They had no further

contact with the participants who had not yet had their sessions.

6. Participants met together with researchers and the hypnotist to discuss their experiences.

Appendix II

Recruitment – Sample and Questionnaire

10 respondents, all BC1.

Age ranges, with 1 male and 1 female per age group:

- 20 – 25
- 25 – 30
- 30 – 35
- 35 – 40
- 45+

No respondent had previously been hypnotised, nor had hypnotherapy in the past.

All respondents watched at least the following amount of ITV television, according to age:

- Women aged 20 – 40 and all men, more than 10 hours of ITV per week.
- Women aged 45+ to watch 20 hours or more of ITV per week.

Respondents were asked to estimate the amount of television hours watched per week for both BBC and ITV so as to disguise the area in which we were interested.

The following section of the recruitment questionnaire was handed to respondents:

1. Would you like to take part in a paid experiment involving hypnosis?

If YES or MAYBE, continue.

If NO, close interview.
2. We're doing an experiment on memory and we would like to compare people's memories before and after hypnosis. The material you will be asked to recall will not be of a personal, embarrassing or

political nature at all. It will simply be to do with things seen on TV.

3. The experiment will run over a morning or an afternoon session, each session lasting 4 hours. You will be paid £40 for attending and will be taxied to and from the Research Centre.
4. We would like to film the sessions and, with your permission, use edited clips from some of these films at a conference.
5. You will be shown the entire film of your particular session before you leave and we will ask your permission as to whether we can use it or not. If you do not give your permission, the film will be erased in your presence.
6. If you would like a copy of your film, it can be made available on VHS at a later date.
7. There will be a buffet lunch and snacks throughout the day. Also, we will be showing videos while you wait.

Above all the day will be a lot of fun and we hope that you will enjoy taking part.

Appendix III

The Recall Questionnaire

1. What brands of instant coffee/lager* can you think of?

PROMPT: Any others?

2. Which of the brands on this list have you heard of?

PROMPT: Any others?

3. Which of them do you buy nowadays?

PROMPT: Any others?

4. Which of these brands have you seen advertised in newspapers or magazines recently?

PROMPT: Any others?

5. And which of them have you seen advertised on TV recently?

PROMPT: Any others?

6. Can you describe the last advertisement you saw on television for ...?

PROMPT: Can you remember anything about it?
PROBE FULLY.

* Coffee for women, lager for men.

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Acacia Avenue
353 City Road
London N1 2HH
T 02070149500
F 02078373988

wendy@acacia-avenue.com
www.acacia-avenue.com

ACACIA AVENUE