

\$15.95



SPECIAL REPORT

COULD-BUT BECAUSE-BECAUSE

Elements of Successful Advertising Copy

Mark Dahl

mark@accountablemarketing.com

© Copyright 2008 Accountable MARKeting, Inc.



COULD-BUT-BECAUSE-BECAUSE

Objective of this Special Report: To help the advertiser create advertising that will cause the target market to complete the following statement in a manner that favors the advertiser:

“I **COULD** have bought this from Competitor, **BUT** I bought it from Advertiser and paid more **BECAUSE** Advertiser promised this Specific Consumer-Desired Benefit Presented as a Phrase that Pays, and I bought it today **BECAUSE** reason.”

(Example of a phrase that pays: when it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight (FedEx))

How Advertising Works

"Simon Broadbent of Leo Burnett claims that there are a total of 456 theories about how advertising works. And that was back in 1992." (Broadbent, S: *456 Views of How Advertising Works- and what if anything, they tell us*. Admap, September, 1992; and Miller, S & Berry, L: *Brand Salience versus Brand Image: Two Theories of Advertising Effectiveness*. Journal of Advertising Research, Sept-Oct 1998).

AIDA-One Theory

Proponents of the AIDA formula (Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action) suggest that *a*wareness of a product or service via advertising leads to *i*nterest in the advertised product or service. Interest then leads to *d*esire (“now that I know about it, I think I like it and want to buy it”). Finally, in this hierarchy of effects, desire leads to taking the *a*ction suggested in the advertising.

A Second Theory

Some advertising practitioners endorse the theory that says for advertising to succeed consumers must not only be *aware* of the product or service, but must *like* the advertising.

Liking the advertising is critical they say, because:

- 1) Most consumers are not in the market to buy any product or service being advertised today; and
- 2) Future buyers can't be motivated to buy today. Therefore, the objective is to induce the future buyer to implant your consumer-desired benefit into their long-term memory so they think of you first when they are finally ready to buy.

Future Buyer Versus Now Buyer

While it is essential that we implant our consumer-desired benefit into the long-term memory of the future buyer, we know

any one of us can be, and I suspect most of us have been, motivated to buy something today that we had no intention of buying an hour ago. *We can be persuaded to buy today* if we become convinced that buying now will benefit us in some way that buying later will not.

We do want consumers to *like* our advertising. To break through the advertising clutter- the average American is impacted by as many as 5,000 advertising messages daily according to Yankelovich Consumer Research – and to motivate future buyers to remember us, our advertising does need to be interesting and topical enough to hold the attention of self-involved prospective consumers that are busy living their lives.

And, certainly, our *call-to-action* must be *attractive* enough to motivate both the *now* and *future buyer* to at least take a moment to consider their potential gain should they buy from us today, versus purchasing at some point in the future.

In short, your advertising must 1) motivate the now buyer to buy from *you* today; 2) induce future buyers to think of you first when they are ready to buy; 3) motivate some percentage of future buyers to become now buyers; and 4) create positive word-of-mouth.

Benefits and Proof

To accomplish these four objectives you must provide a consumer-desired *benefit*, coupled with *proof* that you deliver the promised benefit. Further, you must be so persuasive

consumers believe they have *permission to buy today* and have *permission to buy from you, specifically*.

Provide the Opportunity

Consider this: mom and dad just received their tax refund. They now have disposable income burning a hole in their pocket. They decide to purchase *something* that will help them create a ‘family bonding’ experience. They consider buying a big screen TV, taking a trip to Disneyworld, buying a computer, or purchasing a pool table. *Consumers have unlimited options to buy your product from you and your direct competitors, or to buy from indirect competitors that sell products that substitute for your product.*

Your marketing must *persuade* mom and dad, by communicating to them via well-crafted advertising, to *include you* as a viable provider of that benefit. Your marketing must answer these three questions:

- 1) *Why* should I buy your product/service from you? *Because:*
- 2) *Why* should I believe you? *Because:*
- 3) *Why* should I buy from you today? *Because:*

Right and Left Brain Advertising

A *right brain* advertising appeal addresses the often unconscious (yet *real reason*) people buy; it presses emotional *hot buttons* such as the family bonding *benefit* mom and dad desire.

A *left brain* advertising appeal gives consumers *permission* to buy by providing proof, *real-reasons-to-believe*, that purchasing what you sell, from you, makes sense (Could-But-Because-Because). A left brain presentation gives consumers permission to *justify* and *rationalize* their emotional purchasing decision.

All purchase decisions are driven by *emotion*, but we *require*, and actively *seek*, persuasive *rational* that allows us to *justify* making the purchase. We like to “kick the tires.”

Emotion-based decision making means *price* is highly over-rated as a motivator. As a matter of fact, studies, as reported in the Harvard Business Review, place price *fourth* in the consumer decision-making hierarchy. The order of importance of your five resources is: Place, People, Product, Price and Promotion.

While *price is most often not the critical motivator* leading consumers to purchase, it's important to remember that consumers are not stupid; if they believe they can get the ‘same thing’ from another supplier at a lesser price-*if they believe what you're selling is a commodity*-they will buy from the competitor offering a lower price.

On the other hand, if a consumer is convinced he or she is getting a benefit *above and beyond* what the lower priced competitor is providing, *if you're actually perceived to be delivering a superior value*, consumers will pay you a *premium*.

The Could-But-Because-Because Rational

This is the *Could-But-Because-Because* consumer rational. Here's how it works: Consumer A, explaining a recent purchase, says: "I COULD have bought this product from Business A, BUT I bought it from Business B, and paid more, BECAUSE Business B (insert consumer-desired benefit only Business B is perceived to offer) and I bought it today BECAUSE..."

If you're competing with any of the Big Boxes or Category Killers, for you, marketing is about convincing consumers that you're delivering a *quantifiable difference in value* that justifies paying what they *perceive* to be your higher price. *Consumer perception is reality.*

What happens to advertisers that fail to communicate a differential, a consumer-desired benefit that truly matters to consumers? *They lose their customers to Wal Mart., Home Depot, Walgreens, etc.*

We do want consumers to like our advertising, but every academic study I can lay my hands on suggests that a consumer merely *liking* our advertising is not sufficient to motivate that consumer to *action*. This is why most 'image' or 'branding' advertising most often fails to ring the cash register.

What consumers actually mean when they say they "like" an ad is quite interesting:

"... 'likability' may have little to do with the traditional concept of entertainment." Consumers "seem to respond to the question

about liking more in terms of communication and persuasiveness than for entertainment value. The specific adjectives that accompany a positive commercial liking response are generally associated with a *commercial's content* rather than its form." (Greene, W: *Observations: What Drives Commercial Liking? An Exploration of Entertainment vs. Communication. Journal of Advertising Research*, Mar-Apr 1992).

Credibility, Tastefulness, Empathy, Stimulation & Clarity

What *commercial content* causes consumers to "like" an ad? Stanley Muldovan (*Copy Factors Related to Persuasion Scores. Journal of Advertising Research*, Dec-Jan 85 & 86) presents five key content-liking factors:

"...persuasion is a function of credibility, tastefulness, empathy/self-involvement, stimulation and clarity" *with credibility being the most important of the five.*

Credibility, Muldovan continues, is "how realistic, sensible, believable, and frank the commercial was considered. The specific items measured by this factor are as follows: *realistic, sensible, frank* (not misleading), *showed how I feel, convincing.*"

Commercials that are well-liked *are those that consumers consider credible.*

Creativity

I'm not suggesting that advertising creativity is unimportant.

Creativity, *properly applied*, meaning the *advertising makes the product interesting* versus *creativity that makes the advertising interesting*, is critical to effective advertising. After all, one of the five factors Muldovan emphasizes is empathy/self-involvement, which he defines as "...personal and intimate. Consumers had empathized with the characters, with the situations. Commercials had to be involving ...had to involve the respondent."

Make your *product* memorable by involving the consumer in your advertising. You do this by including a right brain, emotional appeal. Follow Muldovan's advice: create scenarios consumers can relate to; help consumers visualize themselves happily enjoying the benefit they desire when they are using your product or service.

Perfect Timing

I recently rented a movie from Movie Gallery. I was late in returning it. This meant I'd be assessed a late fee. As I was contemplating this unfortunate state of affairs a Blockbuster TV commercial, announcing *an end to late fees*, appeared on my TV screen. Is it possible to get better timing than that?

Because I was, literally at the time the commercial appeared, upset that I would have to pay a late fee, *one commercial* presenting the "no late fee" benefit burned Blockbuster as a replacement for Movie Gallery into my long-term memory. I'll rent my next movie from Blockbuster. If the promised benefit-no late fee-is supported by the reality, that is, no late fee is

charged if I bring the movie back late, Blockbuster will become my movie rental provider.

Why Buy from You Today?

Your advertising must do more than create awareness. It must be more than merely likeable. It must give consumers compelling reasons to buy from you *today*.

Every advertisement you run, in any medium, must:

- 1) Present consumers with a benefit they truly desire and perceive they cannot get from your competition;
- 2) Communicate the fact that your resources (place, people, product, price and promotion) consistently deliver the consumer-desired, differentiated benefit;
- 3) Fortify your consumer-desired benefit with value-added benefits that motivate consumers to purchase from you today. What added value, beyond lowering your price, can you provide to consumers to motivate their acting on your offer right now? A *Special Report*, like the one you're reading right now, is one such added value.

Action Means...

In the AIDA model Action is the final step in the commercial communication process.

Of course, we want that action to be the consumer buying today, from us. But purchasing is *not* the *only* possible action a consumer could take in response to your advertising.

Preston and Thorson (*The Expanded Association Model: Keeping the Hierarchy Concept Alive*. Journal of Advertising Research, Feb-Mar, 1984) demonstrates this by suggesting that *action* can and does encompass a variety of behaviors:

ACTION: Search--Search Perception--Search Evaluation--Search Stimulation that *could* lead to:

ACTION: Trial--Trial Perception--Trial Evaluation--Trial Stimulation ('trial' is why positive word-of-mouth is so critical; consumers *will* substitute what others have to say about your product in place of actually trying it out themselves) that *could* lead to:

ACTION: Adoption-Adoption Perception-Adoption Evaluation-Adoption Stimulation.

In other words, consumers could read, see or hear an ad, become aware of a product or service, like the ad, become interested in and desire the product, then take one of a great many 'actions,' *none of which includes buying*.

Negative Word-of-Mouth

A consumer is driving to work. He's listening to his favorite radio station, which is broadcasting an ad for a restaurant he has not heard of before. The ad promises great food and service. He thinks "Hey, that place sounds great! I think I'll take my wife there Friday night!" He arrives at work and, while pouring himself a cup, he says to an associate "I just heard an ad for

Joe's Restaurant. It sounds great! I'm going to take my wife there Friday."

His associate says "Oh, no! Don't go to Joe's! My husband and I went there last night. It was awful. The service was slow and the food was terrible." Our consumer, *having put the restaurant on trial without having ever eaten at the restaurant*, thanks the person for the information and decides not to go to the restaurant.

Here's the question: did the ad *work*?

I say "Yes! It did exactly what it was supposed to do!"

It *persuaded* the consumer to take *four actions*; 1) he decided to take his wife to Joe's; 2) he committed the name of the restaurant to memory; 3) he announced his intention to go to Joe's to a co-worker; and 4) he changed his mind *because* of *negative* word-of-mouth.

Consistency is Critical

This is why delivering on your benefit promise *every time* is *critical*! Negative word-of-mouth torpedoed the persuasiveness of the ad for Joe's Restaurant because, according to his associate, Joe's failed to deliver on its advertising claims: Joe's *did not deliver* great food and service. But *that's not the fault of the advertising*!

Awareness and Liking Are Not Enough

Advertising *awareness* and *liking* are not enough when it comes to creating effective advertising. *Every resource plank* in your marketing bridge (place, people, product, price and promotion) must be solidly constructed if you're going to get your *fair* and *unfair* share of business. *You must deliver on your advertising promise every time to earn positive word of mouth.*

Your Phrase that Pays

In addition to motivating the now buyer to buy from you today, your advertising must also implant, in the *long-term memory* of your future buyer, the consumer-desired benefit only you provide, or that only you are *perceived* by consumers to provide, in the form of a phrase that pays. *Diamonds are Forever* is the phrase that pays for De Beers. *When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight* is the phrase that pays for FedEx. An effective phrase that pays is: 1) short (10 words or less is ideal); 2) simple (it quickly communicates your differentiated benefit promise); 3) memorable (it's easy to implant in long-term memory); and 4) its *viral* (easy to pass along via word-of-mouth).

Include Your Phrase that Pays In 100% of Your Marketing

You must include your phrase that pays in every advertising communication endeavor you undertake. This includes, but is not limited to, your radio, TV and cable ads, your yellow page and billboard ads, it must be on your business card, letterhead,

envelopes, brochures, in short, include your phrase that pays in every marketing communication effort you make.

As the *focus* of your marketing effort, your phrase that pays *campaign theme* must communicate, in one simple, easy to understand statement, the consumer-desired benefit you promise to provide to your customer.

Thank you for your interest in this special report and have a productive day!

Mark Dahl
Accountable MARKeting

Mark Dahl owns Accountable MARKeting, a copywriting firm located in Columbia, MO. Mark has 30+ years of marketing experience, including 20 years of national travel, helping small business owners across the country create advertising that works. For a copywriting quote call Mark at 573-443-8610. Mark's workbook Your Phrase that Pays, A How-to Advertise Workbook for the Small Business Owner that Demands Results, is available as an E-Book at www.yourphrasethatpays.com. You can order a hard copy from Mark by calling: 573-443-8610 in Columbia, MO., or 800-324-4804 toll free. Mark's e-mail address is mark@accountablemarketing.com. His mailing address is Accountable MARKeting, PO Box 7434, Columbia, MO 65205