Making your marketing spend go further

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Exploit your brand opportunities

When your brand is established and performing well in the marketplace it is possible to become unwittingly complacent about its position.

Within any consumer product or service category there is always competition, and brands must work hard to maintain and grow market share. As new products come into the market it’s crucial not to lose relevance or become swamped by the increased competition.

What is the most pertinent positioning to motivate competitor buyers?

1. **STAY RELEVANT.** Revitalise your brand to inject a new lease of life and avoid losing relevance in an increasingly competitive category.

2. **CULTIVATE BRAND PERSONALITY.** Conducting research into the emotional archetype of your brand and its competitors will reveal the category’s emotional landscape and opportunities available to develop a stand out brand personality.

3. **REVIEW YOUR POSITION.** Work with brand experts to produce options for an updated and relevant positioning statement. These should be consumer tested to ensure you are best placed in terms of believability, uniqueness, fit and resonance with your brand; leaving you ready to reposition within the category.

4. **EVALUATE THE BIG PICTURE.** To build trust and loyalty a brand has to deliver the same brand image across all touchpoints, from launching new products to marcomms and customer experience. If a brand’s character, or emotional archetype, varies then consumers are confused and lost. Consistency is surprisingly hard to achieve and maintain.

5. **CREATE A POINT OF DIFFERENCE.** Map out a story that raises the energy surrounding your brand to help differentiate it from competitors. This will assist with a successful relaunch leading to increased share of wallet and recognition.
Strengthen the emotional connection to your brand through sponsorship

When your brand sits in a category of infrequent purchase, the effectiveness of your sponsorship campaign isn’t driven by next day sales; you want your sponsorship to plant the seed for consideration in the future.

A multi-platform campaign can command large chunks of your marketing budget, so it’s imperative that it satisfies objectives.

How can sponsorship help to build a deeper emotional connection with your customers?

1. CHOOSE THE RIGHT PARTNER.
   There are many successful sponsorship partnerships, some are so seamless you almost forget a time when they weren’t associated. So explore your options across each platform, undertake consumer research for relevancy and fit, and choose wisely to form a strong partnership.

2. USE THE EMOTION.
   Sports, TV and radio show fans will be tuning in and either consciously or subconsciously ‘seeing’ your brand as a sponsor and fellow fan. Research will demonstrate how well the brand has tapped into the emotional connection fans have with the sponsored programme. Over the course of a successful campaign, positive associations of your brand will increase.

3. MAXIMISE ‘BRAND LOVE’.
   By supporting TV sponsorship with an additional platform, such as radio, social media or events, you can generate more love for your brand. There’s nothing quite like that warm fuzzy feeling, except perhaps a measurement of the incremental value of a multi-platform campaign to your brand.

4. MONITOR CAMPAIGN IMPACT.
   A regular research measurement demonstrates the impact of your sponsorship association and creative on brand KPIs. It can highlight key creative changes for added effect, and potential additional activations to help ensure that positive impact continues. Additionally, research will prove the effect the sponsorship had on future purchase consideration.
Positively influence behaviour with the right creatives

After months of working with an agency to design a new creative for your latest digital, print or TV campaign, you have several options to choose from.

Following many discussions, meetings and endless feedback from the business you’re still in turmoil about which one is the right direction. Fed up with relying on gut feel and preference it’s time for an unbiased assessment of future campaign creatives.

How do you focus your research to uncover which creative will have the greatest positive impact amongst key target audiences?

1 **ASK THE AUDIENCE.** Simple really, you need to get in touch with your public. Focus groups with your target audience will herald much wisdom. They will see things you’ve not even noticed, disclose opportunities you weren’t aware of, and most importantly they will be brutally honest.

2 **ATTENTION TO DETAIL.** As a business you know your end goals and specifically the message you’re trying to convey with this campaign. Market research will establish which creative was most successful at drawing target audiences’ attention to the key message.

3 **GET EMOTIONAL.** Successful advertising campaigns all leave their mark on the audience. Remember Nescafe Gold Blend, Budweiser ‘whassup’ and the infamous GoCompare? Love them or hate them they’re engrained in our grey matter. Measuring implicit emotional responses to campaigns shows the impact each creative has on the emotional connection the audience feels to your brand.

4 **MAKE FRIENDS & INFLUENCE PEOPLE.** Understand your audiences’ current attitudes and behaviours and gain a measurement of which creative has the greatest impact on positively impacting these. Research can provide compelling evidence to support the creative that best resonates with audiences; the one that most accurately explains and transfers the key message.
Maximise ROI for your marketing budget

With marketing budgets tight and expectations high, companies face a hard task to grab audience attention with their advertising campaigns. Businesses must ensure they’re getting the best out of their media spend.

In order to compete against the big boys and their significantly larger marketing budgets, it’s essential for small businesses to stand out from the crowd.

How can you achieve maximum effect on minimal expenditure?

1 SET YOUR KPI’S. Know what each campaign is to achieve and then set the KPIs; is it awareness raising, sales generating, educating etc? Research will tell you which platforms used in your campaign delivered on which KPIs. For example whether online, OOH, spot or social media drove awareness, brand warmth and purchase intent.

2 EVALUATE PREVIOUS CAMPAIGNS. Calculate the ROI of campaigns in terms of reach and impact. It is important to understand which platform in a multi-platform campaign under, or over, perform in relation to spend both for cut-through and impact on the other brand KPIs.

3 SPEND WISELY. Visualise how your advertising campaign could have been more effective with a different media spend using our Campaign Optimiser simulator. Ensure future budgets are allocated to activities that have the best impact on brand KPIs.

4 LOOK TO THE FUTURE. Be aware of opportunities to expand to newer advertising platforms as they develop. For example, adding streaming media adverts to an existing online and social media campaign should increase performance and enhance a well-balanced and effective campaign.

5 GET CREATIVE. Never underestimate the impact of the creative route on outcomes. Traditional, targeted or disruptive advertising – which will perform best for your brand? A pre-campaign evaluation will help direct you.
Maximise the impact of your research

You’ve been running a fantastic piece of brand tracking research for many years. Individuals rely on specific stats to complete their reports; teams track success via closely monitored KPIs; and management are bonused on results.

In the early days it was the go-to report that had stakeholders chomping at the bit to see how the brand was performing on a week by week basis; but over time it seems to have lost a little of that initial excitement. There’s no doubt that understanding exactly how the brand performs is of huge value for the business.

So how do you inject a new lease of life to re-energise the research, improve its reputation amongst key internal stakeholders, increase user-ship and maximise value to the business?

1. DEFINE THE PURPOSE. Speak to key stakeholders to understand their expectations of the tracker, and their ideal scenario for the program moving forward. Think information, accuracy, regularity, accessibility, simplicity, value.

2. REVIEW PERFORMANCE. Get involved with the end users of the research. Spend time to assess how deliverables are received. How are they being used? How might they be improved? And how could you help the results travel further? Employ a collaborative approach to results interpretation and recommendations between client and agency teams.

3. ASSESS OUTPUTS. Explore the optimum method(s) for communicating findings. The development of a simple online portal can improve accessibility, distribution and long term reference. Within an organisation there’s several audiences so understanding what, how and when each needs is key to maximising the value of the research to the business.

4. EVALUATE VALUE. Regular reporting is a given with any tracker, but are stakeholders satisfied with the value it provides, or are there options for expansion? The introduction of quarterly deep dives to answer emerging business challenges and understand movements in top level metrics will maximise the value of the research and keep it relevant.

5. TAKE ACTION. It’s time to make those changes. Moving forward, regular action planning workshops will facilitate stakeholder discussions to assess implications of the research and identify actions to be taken to keep the program fresh and relevant.
Future Thinking takes a consultative approach to market research with commercial focus driving everything we do. That’s why we focus our attention on the three key areas that drive competitive advantage: Launch, Communicate, Experience.

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Our mission is to deliver consumer and business insights that tells stories, inspires action and travels within an organisation, long after the debrief.

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Emily is a Senior Director in Communicate, joining the brand and comms team a year ago. Over the last 20 years her experience has ranged from branding to employee; from retail to mobile; and across B2C and B2B markets.

Recently her focus has been helping clients to grow their customer base, retain and maximise their value. At Future Thinking she has been working with clients to maximise the value they get from their brand research, and focusing on finding the barriers and triggers to moving customers and prospects up the value chain.

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