

Copyright Undertaking

This thesis is protected by copyright, with all rights reserved.

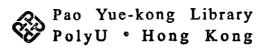
By reading and using the thesis, the reader understands and agrees to the following terms:

- 1. The reader will abide by the rules and legal ordinances governing copyright regarding the use of the thesis.
- 2. The reader will use the thesis for the purpose of research or private study only and not for distribution or further reproduction or any other purpose.
- 3. The reader agrees to indemnify and hold the University harmless from and against any loss, damage, cost, liability or expenses arising from copyright infringement or unauthorized usage.

If you have reasons to believe that any materials in this thesis are deemed not suitable to be distributed in this form, or a copyright owner having difficulty with the material being included in our database, please contact lbsys@polyu.edu.hk providing details. The Library will look into your claim and consider taking remedial action upon receipt of the written requests.

FROM MESSAGE CONVEYANCE TO MEANING CREATION:
A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ON CREATIVITY IN ADVERTISING.

By CHAN Tai Yan Paul, School of Design, for the Degree of Master of Philosophy at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University 2002.



FROM MESSAGE CONVEYANCE TO MEANING CREATION:
A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ON CREATIVITY IN ADVERTISING.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled "From message conveyance to meaning creation: A preliminary discussion on creativity in advertising." has not been, either in whole or in part, previously submitted to any other institution for a degree or other qualification, and contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed

CHAN Tai Yan, Paul.

1 January, 2002

ABSTRACT

This dissertation starts by investigating the validity of focus groups in testing creative concepts in advertising. The philosophy of this test is of direct descent from the marketing philosophy where everything is seen from the perspective of the consumer. This philosophy sees marketing as an activity the sole purpose of which is to satisfy "what the consumer wants". The marketing mix, the 4Ps (Product, pricing, place and promotion) which is inclusive of advertising under "promotion", places advertising as one element whose purpose is also to satisfy what the consumer wants. The use of the focus group, in which a group of targeted consumers is placed in a room to discuss and comment on the tested advertising creative concept to see if it satisfies "what the consumer wants" (i.e. themselves), seems to be only logical and reasonable.

The marketing philosophy fails in two aspects. Firstly, it only sees what the consumer wants as something which is fixed and has to be discovered, and fails to see that what the consumer wants is cultural and always changing according to the changing values and ideologies of mass culture. Secondly, it sees advertising as only part of the marketing mix conveying messages and fails to see advertising as a meaning production process shaping values and ideology. Here the framework is drawn from cultural studies of advertising and the ideas of semiotics are used. Under this new paradigm, the whole process is reversed. Advertising becomes a factor that determines what the consumer wants through attaching new meanings to products in which creativity becomes a vital element in attaching these meanings to the shaping of values and ideology. An understanding of "creativity" becomes imperative when studying why particular signifiers are chosen to generate the signifieds successfully in the meaning production process. A preliminary discussion on creativity is based on three frameworks. Lateral thinking of DeBono, Wish-fulfilment in the dream-work by Freud, and the idea of imagination by DuFrenne.

Discussion into these areas is not limited to the focus group but to the whole scenario of creativity in advertising. This dissertation ends in a study of 3 SUNDAY campaigns to illustrate how creativity works in the meaning production process in the real world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Jackie Kwok for her always inspirational thoughts which makes this course one of the most mind-satisfying event; Mr K.C. Tsang who has given me a lot of confidence and mental support during the entire course; Ms Wong Heung Yan for her invaluable help in sourcing materials; Mr Tony Wong for always challenging me (indirectly) on why to take this course; BBDO, the advertising agency I'm working in, for the financial support and finally my wife Twinkie for her continuous support in every way.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

PART I: WHAT ARE FOCUS GROUPS?

CHAPTER 1: FOCUS GROUPS IN HONG KONG

- 1.1 Who uses focus groups?
- 1.2 What to test in the focus groups?
- 1.3 The practice of focus groups

CHAPTER 2: SUMMARY OF UNSOLVED ISSUES

- 2.1 Compliance
- 2.2 Identification
- 2.3 Internalisation

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION

PART II: WHAT IS ADVERTISING?

CHAPTER 4: THE MARKETING VIEW ON ADVERTISING

- 4.1 The "advertising message" and the "creative execution"
- 4.2 The Shannon & Weaver's model
- 4.3 James Carey's Ritual View of communication
- 4.4 Implications of the Shannon & Weaver's model in defining effective advertising

CHAPTER 5: THE SEMIOTIC VIEW ON ADVERTISING

- 5.1 Semiotics as a communication model
- 5.2 Semiotics and meanings in advertising
- 5.3 Denotation and Connotation

PART III: WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

CHAPTER 6: LATERAL THINKING

- 6.1 How the mind works
- 6.2 Vertical thinking and lateral thinking
- 6.3 The requirement of lateral thinking in the construction of meaning and the dominance of vertical thinking in the focus group.

CHAPTER 7: DREAM / ADVERTISING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

- 7.1 Wish fulfilment in dreams/wish fulfilment in advertising
- 7.2 Manifest and latent dream content/manifest and latent ad content
- 7.3 Censorship in dreams/censorship in advertising
- 7.4 Condensation
- 7.5 Displacement
- 7.6 The interpretation of dreams/the interpretation of advertisements
- 7.7 Imagination

PART IV: THE REALITY IN CAMPAIGN BUILDING

CHAPTER 8: THE MARTELL V.S.O.P TVC CASE

CHAPTER 9: BACKGROUND OF THE SUNDAY BRAND

CHAPTER 10: CASE 1 POPULARITY TVC (HANDSOME MAN)

CHAPTER 11: CASE 2 1622 IDD PROMOTION (CHUK YIP CHIANG)

CHAPTER 12: CASE 3 MIDNIGHT TARRIF PROMOTION (TAXI DRIVER)

CONCLUSION

APPENDICES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1 Shannon and Weaver's model of communication (Fiske 1990: 7)
- Figure 2 Saussure's elements of meaning (Fiske 1990: 44)
- Figure 3 Analogy between the structure of wish fulfilments in dream and advertising
- Figure 4 Relationship between the creative agent and the viewer
- Figure 5 Martell VSOP TVC
- Figure 6 Handsome man TVC
- Figure 7 Chuk Yip Chiang TVC
- Figure 8 Taxi Driver TVC

INTRODUCTION

This project started four years ago as a study into the validity of focus groups in testing TV concepts. The popularity of using such groups in testing TV commercials in Hong Kong is enormous, especially amongst clients having major advertising spending (in the region of \$20-100 million per year). It includes such clients as HSBC, Heineken Beer, Proctor & Gamble, Unilever, Coca Cola, VISA etc. Since the majority of the big brands use focus group, and the exposure of their commercials is high, the influence of the focus group test is significant to the advertising industry because the aired TV commercials resulting from the test represents the accepted norm of the advertising industry. As a result, less sophisticated clients look to advertising that resembles that of these big brands.

However, as a creative person of advertising, I share the view with the majority of my fellow colleagues and creatives that TV commercials resulting from the focus groups are always too conservative, giving the audience the impression of something lacking originality, non-creative and lacking impact. The use of focus groups in testing a TV concept often ends up changing the original creative concept to the extent that it loses its original impact

and idea. To the creatives, this often results in frustration, because in the focus groups, the respondents (who are actually people found on the streets) have so much power that their casual remarks and opinions on the tested TV concept will be taken as important insights which should be addressed, and that the result of the test itself is to re-create the TVC which addresses all these comments from all the respondents. In this way, the resultant TV commercial, having been "fixed" by the focus group and having answered all the concerns of the group, becomes a new TV commercial which is "tamed", usually an "all things to all people" kind of idea which lacks creativity and impact, two elements which are momentarily forgotten as most important in a TV commercial.

This frustration is exemplified by Luke Sullivan, a worldwide award-winning copywriter at Fallon McElligott who comments on the irrelevant judgement of focus groups on the creative production of an advertisement: "...your campaign is taken ...and shown to a "Focus Group"- people who've been stopped on the street the previous week, identified as target customers, and paid a small amount of money for their opinion. ...Here's the amazing part. These people all turn out to be advertising experts with piercing insights on why every ad shown them should be force-fed into the nearest shredder fast enough to choke the chopping blades." (Sullivan 1998: 192) This way of judging the advertising practice reveals that the advertisers have more trust in the respondents (people found on the streets) than in the creative people who are supposed to be experts in creating TV commercials.

Chapter I will mainly discuss what focus groups are in order to understand the differences between the two parties; the clients and the creatives. To clients in general, the methodology of the focus group works in a way that seems to be very logical. It involves the grouping of a sample of target audience (6-8) in a small room in which they are shown the tested advertising concept followed by a discussion of their reactions and comments, the whole process being facilitated by a moderator. A report is then written in which changes to the tested piece of advertising will be recommended. It is logical because the clients can have first hand knowledge of what the consumers (as represented by the

respondents) would think about the tested idea and have modifications to the idea before the TVC is produced and run. However this logic can be refuted by the argument that the modified TVC created by the respondents should also be tested by another focus group in which modifications would also be made. In this way, the focus group testing is endless. The logic of this reasoning makes sense only when an infinite number of focus groups can be tested.

The other reason for the greater trust given to the respondents instead of the creatives is that the clients and the creatives have different advertising viewpoints and hence different definitions of what good advertising is.

Chapter II will discuss these two different viewpoints of advertising. The Marketing viewpoint versus the Semiotic viewpoint.

To clients or advertisers in general, advertising is only part of the marketing programme, the function of which is believed to be the conveyance of advertising messages to the target group in order to service the various marketing activities. The advertising message or the "what to say" in industry terms is thus the most important to the advertising. This "what to say" can be traced back and seen as being dictated by the "consumer benefit" which is offered by the "product" whose existence is to satisfy the consumer needs and wants. This leads us to the very essence of the "Marketing Philosophy" in which the sole purpose of marketing is to find out and satisfy what the consumer wants. As reflected by Pride and Ferrell (1993), marketing "...is a management philosophy prompting a business organisation to try to satisfy consumer needs." Under this philosophy, all marketing starts from the point of view of the consumer to the extent that even the product or the service is designed, marketed at a price, distributed to locations and advertised, all in accordance with what the consumer wants.

This influences the philosophy of advertising agencies in general. It is reflected in the common belief that there are two parts to an ad, the "what to say" and the "how to say". Since the sole purpose of advertising is believed to be the conveyance of an advertising

message in the form of a "consumer benefit" to the target group, this "consumer benefit" or the "what to say" is of primary importance in advertising. It is written in the advertising brief and is the starting point of every piece of advertising. The "execution" or the "how to say" part is seen to be secondary, although it is the part where creativity arises and the part which is believed to give life to the "what to say" and to make it more memorable. Under this believe, the objective of the focus group is simple and straight forward; it is primarily to test whether the single benefit is being conveyed to respondents and also to test the execution. However this way of seeing advertising in the focus group poses a number of questions and drawbacks.

Firstly, seeing advertising as the conveyance of a single message is too simple; e.g. one can write down the benefit in the form of "such product can give you this benefit", air it and the message is conveyed. But in reality, this does not work because no one will be interested in the advertisement and therefore no one will remember the message. Hence, a story line, a mood, a director's treatment or a style (an execution) has to be added, in relation to the advertising message to make it more memorable. However, this execution by the creatives is seen to be only secondary and can be very subjective and thus open to criticism in the focus group. Comparatively, the "what to say" is a lot more objective and easy to judge.

All this reasoning results in many modifications to the execution of the idea by the respondents of the focus groups being acceptable to the advertisers as long as the "what to say" is kept intact.

However, using the above philosophy is only one way of looking at advertising. Another way is the semiotic school which approaches advertising in a larger socio-cultural perspective in which advertising does not convey a single message which is dictated by "what the consumer wants" but is a "meaning construction" device shaping values and ideology. Judith Williamson, in her book "Decoding Advertisements" states that " Obviously (advertising) has a function, which is to sell things to us. But it has another function, which

I believe in many ways replaces that traditionally fulfilled by art or religion. It creates structures of meaning." (Williamson 1978: 11-12) In this statement, we find that semiotics looks at the practice of advertising as a creative act. The created meaning in an advertisement is something new, something not just "what the consumer wants" but something the consumer would desire. These meanings are attached to the product or the brand so that they become one and the same thing. In semiotic terms, the meaning created is the "signified" and the brand, the "signifier". Together they form the "sign". The other difference is that contrary to the Marketing Philosophy, communication is not a one way process conveying a message from the advertiser to the viewer, it is a two way process in which the "meaning" is constructed by the viewer through the process of "negotiation". It can also be shown this way that communication is not a denotative process but a connotative one. Moreover, there is not just one message being conveyed but multiple layers of meanings constructed and that they are always in ambiguous forms.

Bearing these differences, the "execution" part that is only secondary in the Marketing School becomes of primary importance in the semiotic school. The "what to say" or "consumer benefit" which is of primary importance to the marketing school, is only secondary in the semiotic school. How one makes sense of the benefit, or how one gives new meanings to it, is of primary importance. The "execution" which is the employment of moods or feelings, the use of analogies or the use of cultural elements to give sense to the benefit which results in the creation of new meanings becomes central to the advertising. Under these differences, the focus group test as discussed earlier, cannot provide an objective ground for judging "executions" and thus becomes of little value.

From another perspective, semiotics sees that advertising is the practice of meaning production. This perspective would allow us to investigate the advertising practice from an alternative angle. How does one judge what executions should be used, or how is the desired meaning communicated? Why do we choose these symbols to create this meaning? How does one come up with such an execution?

Many scholars have discussed how meanings are constructed in advertisements and a lot of advertisements have been broken down and analysed into how meanings are being coded into the advertisement; (see Williamson 1978) but they have not gone into areas of how one meaning is constructed by choosing various signifiers. Are the signifiers arbitrary? or can one use another signifier to represent the same signified in the advertising? Is there a better signifier for the signified etc? It is of importance that these areas are discussed in order that one has a yardstick to judge the creative executions in the tested advertising.

The answer to these questions points in only one direction and leads us to venture into the discussion of "creativity". Creativity is employed in the synthesis of different layers of signified into one signifier- the brand.

Chapter III will discuss creativity. Among all the works on creative thinking, we see that DeBono's (1970) "Lateral Thinking", Freud's (1901) "The Interpretation of Dreams", and DuFrenne's (1987) "In the Presence of the Sensuous" offers us a thorough way to understand the art of creativity. We will attempt to construct the discussion of creativity in the framework of these three theories.

DeBono shows the difference of vertical thinking and lateral thinking. We identify the logic that guides the focus group in the DeBono context is that of vertical thinking. DeBono's idea is that the human mind, due to its limited memory and its need for producing quick solutions to deal with a changing environment, prefers to follow pre-learned patterns. This constitutes to "vertical thinking" which is logical deductions following existing patterns as the only way of forward thinking. When engaging with problems that are of a different nature to existing patterns, vertical thinking does not provide a "maximal solution". In this case according to DeBono, "lateral thinking" is the only way to provide a maximal solution. In lateral thinking, one has to break existing patterns deliberately. As our minds are trained to think in a vertical way, one needs to think in seemingly "wrong" ways in order to break the existing pattern. A new pattern has to be set up in accordance with that specific problem and this emergence of sudden breakthrough ideas or solutions witnesses the workings of

creativity.

The Freudian idea of dream interpretation and the dream-work provides "the royal road to the unconscious". According to Freud, every dream is the result of wish-fulfilment. The significance of Freud's idea lies in the interpretation of dreams through the dream-work and through this interpretation one can get an impression of how creativity works (see Freud 1994:174-200). Due to the dominance of the "superego" in consciousness, a lot of wishes are being suppressed. Even in dreams the superego exercises strict "censorship" over the dreams so that the remembered dream is the censored part which only upon proper interpretation can provide the fulfilled wishes in conscious thought. According to Freud, every dream has these two components; the "manifest dream-content" which is the censored dream exactly the story in the dream as it is remembered and the "latent dream-content" which is what the dream actually is, or how the wishes are fulfilled. The dream-work is how the latent dream-contents are expressed in terms of the manifest dream-contents. It works in a contextual basis through the process of "condensation" and "displacement".

Condensation in dreams is by means of "composite persons" and "word formation". In condensation, a number of different wishes are expressed and fulfilled by the creation of a composite person or sometimes composite places. Since they are created only in the dream and are unreal, they become a means of avoiding censorship by the superego.

Displacement is another act of the dream-work. It works at two levels. Firstly, the seemingly essential elements in the manifest dream content is normally not the areas in which the latent dream content is revealed. The important elements of the dream- thoughts are to be found only in the peripheral parts of the dream. As Freud described, the dream is "centred elsewhere" (Freud 1994: 196). In the second level, there is a psychic force which takes away elements of high psychic value, their intensity and creates new values from elements of slight value. To conclude, the act of dream condensation and displacement are two areas in the dream work, which act in to avoid censorship in order to fulfil wishes, create new elements (composite persons and words) and attach new meanings to elements of

slight value (as in dream displacement). This can be seen as the basic force behind creativity as revealed in the unconscious.

DeFrenne's ideas discuss creativity in the context of aesthetics and art. He sees the artist not just as someone who can let people see the world in a different way but who has the ability to create a new world, a "possible" world according to his vision. The world is real only according to ones perceptions. In seeing and in recognising things one is actually seeing things as concepts in the mind through imagining. What is the real and what is the world is only in accordance to what is imagined in the mind. The artist, under his power of imagination and expression through his artwork constitutes the "pre-real" (DeFrenne 1990: 144) which is more real than the real giving this world a "possible". (ibid:144) It is in this representation and in the eye seeing this representation of the pre-real that constitutes "pleasure" which is the essence of aesthetics.

Under these three frameworks of creativity, it can be shown that it is the creative person in advertising who is trained and who has the ability to think laterally as in DeBono, who can think creatively employing (unconsciously) the logic of the dream-work. The ad agent, not unlike the artist, uses his imagination to create the ambience of a "possible world" in which the commodity is circumscribed.

Chapter IV offers a reflection of the genuine creative process through the study of three SUNDAY campaigns. I wish to show how new meanings are constructed in these advertisements in the framework of the theories of semiotics; of DeBono, Freud and DuFrenne. Every SUNDAY advertisement has in fact a specific "factual/denotated message". (e.g. a promotional offer or a network attribute) However, the success of these campaigns lies not in the conveyance of these "factual messages"; the ad agent makes the greatest efforts to create layers of meanings to the viewer. The viewer decodes these messages that constitute the "SUNDAY feel".

Under this scenario the different kinds of meanings attached to the SUNDAY brand are of a variety so much so that the brand can lose its image due to inconsistency. However the consistency in every SUNDAY advertisement as envisaged by the viewers and witnessed by

the mass media can lead us only to conclude that there is a higher level of consistency of ambiance apart from the consistency of meanings attached to the brand. This higher level of consistency is the amount of involvement, the process of different and often unexpected meanings produced in every SUNDAY advertising which so characterises the SUNDAY brand that it becomes the SUNDAY brand. Again this breakthrough in consistency can only be attained by creativity.

In the conclusion, I would summarise the contradictions arising from the difference in philosophy of marketing practice and creative practice, and provide suggestions as to how focus groups can be used in a more constructive manner in the creative discipline. PART I: WHAT ARE FOCUS GROUPS?

Focus groups usage has been a major trend in the advertising and marketing field. In the special case of testing advertising ideas including TV commercial concepts, focus groups have been used by the majority of big international clients; e.g. HSBC, Heineken Beer, Proctor & Gamble, Unilever, Coca Cola, VISA etc. In this way, the commercials run by these clients are the ideas having been modified from the focus group test. To the creative people in the industry, it can be said that these commercials all have a common "focus group feel" to them in which the resulting TV commercials always lack impact and creativity, being mostly boring and having that "seen before" feel. Since the media weight of these commercials is usually high, these "focus groups feel" commercials are the ones most often seen by the public (including advertisers) and are regarded as the "norm" of advertising. To all advertisers in general, the standard of this advertising is regarded as the right standard. Any advertising with higher impact or creativity presented to advertisers is regarded as "wrong" and "risky"; in which case they will be brought to a focus group test and modified into another "focus group feel" TV commercial thus completing the vicious circle. In this way there is a never-ending influence from the focus groups which limits creativity in advertising. It is the aim of this dissertation to study into the nature of the focus groups and to find ways of making the practice into a more constructive one so that more creative advertising can be seen in the industry.

Focus group can be described as the grouping of 8-12 targeted respondents in a room in which marketing or advertising issues are discussed. The objective of these discussions is to get insights from the consumers on new product developments or new advertising developments before a large-scale launch is decided. Normally 3-5 groups would meet before a conclusion of the findings was made.

The majority of these focus group discussions are to fulfil the function of a test. Normally tested materials are shown as in taste tests, brand name tests, packaging tests, strategy tests and TV concept tests etc. The discussion should be "focused" into the respondents' reaction to the stimulus materials.

In the case of a TV concept test, there seems to be many conflicting opinions in the focus groups between the advertisers and the creative people. There is a common belief that creative ideas with high impact and controversy will never survive the focus group test. Even if the idea survives, it will be asked to be modified into a mediocre idea that lost all its original impact. However, for the client who uses the focus group test, their concern is how smooth the message is conveyed to the viewer but not the impact of the advertising itself.

Part I will start with a chapter on the current usage of focus groups in Hong Kong. Who uses focus groups? Why use focus groups and how a focus group is conducted? A study into these areas would reveal that there are three levels of problems concerning the validity of the focus group in the testing of a TV concept.

Firstly on a more technical level, how can the presentation materials e.g. hand-drawn storyboards represent the filmed commercial? How does the difference in viewing environment affect the response? What is the standard of professionalism in conducting a focus group in the current scenario in Hong Kong? These questions will be discussed in a case study of the current focus group practice in the testing of a TV concept in Hong Kong and compare it with an international standard by Stewart and Shamdasani (1990).

Secondly, assuming using the international standard in which the practice of focus group is carried out, there are a number of unsolved issues concerning the group dynamics that will influence the validility of findings. These influences will be discussed afterwards.

Thirdly, the validity of the focus group depends on a balance of what the industry requires the group to do in an advertising concept test and what the group can actually do as a research tool. However, the requirements of the industry are a reflection of what the industry sees advertising is. For example, it is one of the key issues that the focus group has to test whether the "advertising message" is getting across to the respondents. This would require a definition of what an advertising message is and how important the message is in relation to other elements of the advertising. In a way this requires a definition of what advertising is and how it is going to have impact on the

viewers to influence their buying behaviour. The second part of this dissertation will go into this issue of what advertising is in relation to the validity of focus group in testing TV commercial concepts.

CHAPTER 1: FOCUS GROUPS IN TV CONCEPT TEST IN HONG KONG

1.1 Who uses focus groups?

Generally, it is both the advertiser and the advertising agency that uses focus groups. A research house e.g. MBL (Market Behaviour Ltd.) or SRH (Survey Research H.K.) is responsible for carrying out all the procedures of the focus group test which include finding respondents, supervision of the groups and analysing the findings leading to the recommendations of changes to the TV commercial. The briefing is normally done by both the advertiser and the agency. Both parties would normally be involved in listening to the group discussion and both parties would normally take part in the conclusion of the findings. The agency is responsible for making the changes to the TV commercial and the advertiser is responsible for overseeing whether these changes are done in accordance with the findings and the recommendations of the research house.

Looking back a bit, it is the advertiser who appoints the advertising agency who is supposed to have the expertise to create a TV commercial that can fulfil the advertiser's objectives. A third party, the research house, is brought in to test the creative concept reveals a certain distrust between the advertiser and the agency. Normally it is the advertiser who brings up the issue of testing. The agency is usually reluctant to bring in the focus group knowing of all the disadvantages that could result, as previously discussed. When the agency is finally forced to use a focus group, its position is naturally to defend the original TV concept. As a result, although it is the two parties who use focus groups, it can be said that it is the advertiser who is really trying to use the findings of the focus group.

Amongst the advertisers who uses focus groups, it can be said that the majority of them are international clients, who, as mentioned, these advertisers have huge budgets and the TV commercials they run represents the "norm" of advertising. Therefore the focus groups have considerable influence on the industry. Being international advertisers, their company structure is usually complicated with many layers of reporting. The person in charge

of advertising would range from the position of Marketing Manager to Marketing Director. These positions usually have to report to higher levels of the hierarchy e.g. Regional Marketing Director or the Regional Managing Director. The employment of focus groups to test TV commercials is sometimes seen as a safe way to judge advertising. For many international clients the employment of focus groups becomes a standard procedure before any advertisement is viewed in public. In these respects, the practice of employing focus groups becomes a safeguard for the person in the hierarchy responsible for advertising and not because for the ultimate improvement of the advertisement.

Bearing in mind the background of people using focus groups, the next section will discuss what they want to test from these groups.

1.2 What do advertisers want to test using focus groups?

As mentioned in the last part, most of the advertisers using the focus groups treat it as a standard procedure before running a TVC. In these cases, there is no pre-determined plan of what testing is required. Most of them want to see initial reactions of the respondents to the TV idea. Very often the advertiser asks for more than one idea from the agency and the function of the focus group is to select one for final production.

Although it can be said that there are no pre-set rules as to what to test in a focus group, there are usually two bottom lines. Firstly there is a need to test whether an advertising message is being communicated and secondly there is the need to test whether unwanted messages or irrelevant messages are being communicated as well.

The significance of these two points to the validity of focus group findings will be discussed in the chapter concerning is the definition of advertising.

1.3 The practice of focus groups

This section looks into the current practice of focus groups in testing TV concepts in Hong Kong.

The focus group to advertisers, is the most scientific method to test TV commercial concepts. Part of the reason being the use of focus group follows a very simple and seemingly logical process; i.e. "if we don't know whether this TV concept works or not, let's ask a group of target customers to look at it and see what they think."

This simple logic of first letting the respondents look at the presented materials in the form of a storyboard, then asking them to talk about how they think and feel about the tested concept and, from their responses, draw conclusions as to how the presented concepts are to be modified, works under three doubtful assumptions.

- 1. The viewing of the storyboard in an enclosed room in the focus compares equally with the viewing of a TV commercial in a daily life domestic environment in which "meaning" is constructed by the viewer.
- 2. The once or twice viewing of the storyboard can have the same effect as the multiple viewings of a TV commercial through a period of one year in which "meaning" is constructed.
- 3. The presentation media, ie. a hand drawn and static storyboard, can replace the million dollar production of the final TV commercial in delivering the TV concept.

A case study was done on 25th May 1997 at the Survey Research Hong Kong (see appendix 1) in which two focus groups were arranged to test the new Carlsberg TV commercial. This case study was done in order to validate the above three assumptions and to study how focus group practises in Hong Kong compares with those worldwide.

It was discovered that the focus group did not meet the professionalism that existed in the U.S. E.g. some crucial steps like "Formulation of research question", "Identification of sampling frame" and "Identification of moderator" were neglected. In the areas of: 1) design of the focus group, 2) conducting the focus group and 3) interpretation of data many flaws were found.

In this case study doubts were discovered as to the capability of the focus group conducted in Hong Kong. From the analysis (see appendix 1) it shows that the way groups are handled entrenched many problems due to the lack of training of the moderator. The end result is the superficial analysis derived from the data obtained in the focus group.

Apart from the level of unprofessionalism executed by the research houses in general, the usage of the findings from the focus group by three parties the advertisers, the research house and the advertising agency, was also not consistent. To give an example, it is not unusual for the intended use of the focus group to be a preliminary look at how the target consumers respond to an idea. However as more and more groups were done, and the pressing deadline, both the clients, the research house and the agency used "quotes" and other evidence from the group to support their respective beliefs, arguments and even biases. In this case, the interpretation of the focus group findings becomes a highly subjective process. Moreover, the primary reason for using the group that is a preliminary study of respondents' reactions is forgotten, and the results and findings of the focus groups become often ambiguous and arguable within the 3 parties.

Apart from the above technical issues regarding the professionalism of focus groups in Hong Kong that can be solved by treating the practice in a more scientific manner, there is one area which needs discussing concerning some unsolved issues arising from the group dynamics existing in the group and which renders the findings of the group invalid.

CHAPTER 2: SUMMARY OF UNSOLVED ISSUES

The last chapter has discussed the way existing handling of focus groups in the testing of TV commercials in Hong Kong is unprofessional when compared with international standards. More discipline can be put to the conduct of focus groups in Hong Kong in order to make them more professional. However there are a number of unsolved issues arising from the very basic nature of the methodology of the focus group test. There are group dynamics from the group that will influence the findings. Respondents in the group will be influenced during the interactions of group members. In the testing of a TVC these issues becomes magnified when the whole group becomes engaged in heavy discussions which is so typically found in a focus group but not in a normal viewing environment.

2.1 Compliance

Compliance is the individual's behaviour when he accepts other's opinion due to immediate rewards. These rewards include intangible rewards like acceptance by a group, affirmation from someone he respects or avoiding disapproval from someone. The individual doesn't have to believe in what he is saying or think the opinion he gives is trivial and unimportant. As Kelman states:

"Compliance can be said to occur when an individual accepts influence from another person or from a group because he hopes to achieve a favourable reaction from the other. He may be interested in attaining certain specific rewards or avoiding certain specific punishments that the influencing agent controls." (Kelman 1961: 62)

Thus opinions gained this way would only be expressed when there is a person or a group of people who the individual thinks is observing him. In the focus group scenario, the immediate reward would be affirmation and approval from the moderator. The reward could also be in not having to answer the moderator when the individual thinks the question unimportant and not interesting.

"For example, an individual may make a special effort to express only "correct" opinions in order to gain admission into a particular group or social set, or in order to avoid being fired from his government job." (ibid: 62)

The moderator in the focus group need not be the sole "influencing agent". It depends on the kind of rewards the respondent is looking for, thus the specific rewards determines the influencing agent. The influencing agent can also be the other respondents. "... when the individual complies, he does what the agent wants him to do- or what he thinks the agent wants him to do- because he sees this as a way of achieving a desired response from him." (ibid: 62)

2.2 Identification

Identification is when an individual adopts a behaviour or adopts a certain opinion when he gains satisfaction through identifying with a group of people or of another individual. "Identification can be said to occur when an individual adopts behaviour derived from another person or a group because this behaviour is associated with a satisfying self-defining relationship to this person or group. By self-defining relationship, I mean a role relationship that forms a part of the person's self-image." (ibid: 63)

In the focus group situation, there is a danger that the moderator is considered to be a professional or an expert in the field. In the case of a TVC concept test, the moderator is often considered to be an expert in advertising, hence respondents may find the moderator an influencing agent. The other case is when some of the respondents in a focus group seem to be socially attractive or seems to be an expert in the advertising field (very often quoting many other TVCs) others who try to signify affliation may express similar attitudes and opinions.

"The relationship that an individual tries to establish or maintain through identification may take different forms:... the form of classical identification, that is of a relationship in which the individual takes over all or part of the role of the influencing agent... he attempts

to be like or to be the other person." (ibid: 63) When this classical identification occurs, i.e. one respondent thinks that he takes the role of the other person, because of self-satisfaction, the influence to focus group validity can be disastrous because his attitudes and opinions will be the same as the influencing agent. A vicious cycle will occur in which other respondents will react in either of two ways. He might fall into the "group" which in turn will make more people to fall to the group, or he may be opposed to the "group". It is not uncommon to find many focus group situations that turn into a debate between two parties thus completely destroying the value of the group.

"An influencing agent who is likely to be an attractive object for such a relationship is one who occupies a role desired by the individual — who possesses those characteristics which the individual lacks- such as control in a situation in which the individual is helpless... or belongingness in a situation in which he is isolated." (ibid: 63)

Because the depth of answers required of focus groups, it is not uncommon to find the moderator, searching for clarity in the answers, to challenge the respondents' viewpoints that appear contradictory to him. A lot of uneasiness could be experienced. Respondents then would find it natural and safe to join in a group viewpoint, a belongingness in a situation in which some of the other respondents can help him out of the situation. "The more or less conscious efforts involved when an individual learns to play a desired occupational role model ... Here,... the individual is much more selective in the attitudes and actions he takes over from the other person. What is at stake is not his basic sense of identity... but rather his more limited "professional identity" (ibid: 63)

It is this "professional identity" which is more often found in focus groups in which the individual is not too concerned about his basic self-image but rather his more limited "occupational role", a role or a side he has to take in the situation.

Once identification takes place, the respondent or the individual who has taken his identity, would not bother to change his role during the course of the interview for two reasons. Firstly, a change in the role destroys the kind of self-image he has set up in the

social situation and secondly, it would invite a lot of challenges both from the moderator and from other members of the group. From then on the respondent will do whatever he thinks will meet the expectations of the group.

"Identification may also serve to maintain an individual's relationship to a group in which his self-definition is anchored. ...has to model his behaviour along particular lines and has to meet the expectations of his fellow members..." (ibid: 63)

When compared with compliance, identification becomes a deeper level of change because the individual here doesn't comply or acts as if he agrees or answers in a way that pleases the influencing agent. Instead he really believes what he says, he has taken a standpoint, or is forced to take a standpoint without understanding the process of identification. It is interesting to know that since even the individual is unconscious about his own identification process, it would be more difficult for the moderator of the focus group to know or to differentiate which respondents have been identified with which. In this way, we can say that the nature of the group has been changed.

"Identification differs from compliance, however, in that the individual actually believes in the opinions and actions that he adopts. The behaviour is accepted both publicly and privately, and its manisfestation does not depend on the observations of by the influencing agent." (ibid: 64)

"The individual is not primarily concerned with pleasing the other (as in compliance), but is concerned with meeting the other's expectation for his own role performance. Thus opinions adopted through identification remain tied to the external source and dependent on social support." (ibid: 65)

What is really unsettling is that these kind of changes take place more or less randomly, all that happens is a complete social process, which can neither be predicted nor avoided. It can be argued that on the part of the moderator, he can avoid being the influencing agent, but looking back, the criteria of being the influencing agent is that he has the qualities with which others in the group would like to affiliate. In the case of the TVC concept test, it has

to present to the respondents stimulus materials such as the storyboard and explain to the group about the correct attitude of looking at the materials i.e. that the storyboard is only hand drawn and the respondents have to use imagination to visualise it on TV. This would immediately put the moderator into an expert position and being the leader of the group the respondents will have a natural tendency to affiliate with him.

In the part where some of the respondents have the potential of being the influencing agent, again there is not much the moderator can do to avoid identification.

To summarise, it can be said that with identification, not only the individual in the focus group but that it is the nature of the whole group which has been changed. Once identification has taken place, individuals being affected do not want to change positions and their roles due to more group pressure. Looking back to the objective of testing TVC concepts in a focus group situation and any research to find out what the respondents really believe and feel when they are exposed to the stimulus, identification will destroy the validity of the data obtained.

2.3 Internalisation

Internalisation can be said to occur when the individual accepts influence because the influence is in congruence with his/ her deeper inner values. Credibility is a very important factor of the influencing agent. In the focus group, it takes place when the discussion touches on subjects concerning values that the individual himself has not thought about as he is asked his viewpoints and has to give an answer within a very short time. When he has to choose between competing values, he becomes more vulnerable to being affected by the influencing agent.

"...Internalisation can be said to occur when an individual accepts influence because the induced behaviour is congruent with his value system. It is the content of the induced behaviour that is intrinsically rewarding here." (ibid: 65)

The influencing agent could be the moderator since he/she is the one who shows

credibility by knowing the subject of advertising or the category of the product. Respondents who show similar level of credibility could also become the influencing agent.

"The characteristics of the influencing agent play an important role in the internalisation, but the crucial dimension here... is the agent's credibility, that is his relation to the content." "A person may adopt the recommendations of an expert, for example because he finds them relevant to his own problems and congruent with his own values" (ibid: 65)

Once the respondent has chosen his part being internalised, similar and only on a more extreme basis, to that of identification, the respondent is even more unlikely to change his viewpoint. It is important to realise that the whole of the rest of the interview would be based on that set of values which might have been chosen according to which influencing agent appeared to be more of an expert who shows credibility.

In this way, the opinion given in a focus group through internalisation cannot be said to represent the true value on the part of the respondent since it depends on the set of values of the influencing agent and on what contradicting values inside the individual are being triggered and chosen as a result.

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION

So far we've gone through the practice of focus groups in Hong Kong which can be seen as sloppy and careless when compared with the international standard. Under this current mode of practice, it is doubtful whether the findings can have any validity. This can be improved by following strictly with the procedures and professionalism in which the groups are conducted in the West. However even if one follows closely with the international standard, there are a few unsolved issues arising from the group dynamics, namely compliance, identification and internalisation which renders the findings of focus groups invalid due to the influence of the influencing agent.

Taking aside the above two factors, there is one area concerning the fundamental nature of the focus group practice that needs clarification before going any further. Going back to Section 1.2 that discusses what to test in the focus group, it is concluded that one of the main areas is to test whether the advertising message is being communicated. The other area is whether the execution would have negative effects to the respondents and whether "unwanted messages" are being communicated. From these two cases, it can be seen that the advertiser has a certain definition of advertising which leads him/her to believe that his/ her advertising is only to communicate the advertising message and that any other unwanted messages communicated are the result of a poor creative idea. This definition of advertising seems to suggest that the function of advertising is to convey a single message and that the viewer is treated as passive. However many scholars of advertising have contradicting views. The next part will take us into the two contradicting definitions of advertising, one school of thought as seen by the advertiser, the other as seen by the creative agents.

PART II: WHAT IS ADVERTISING? A COMPARISON OF THE MARKETING PERSPECTIVE AND THE SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE.

The last section on focus groups open ups a discussion on the definition of advertising. That whether a focus group works or not is under the user's (advertiser's) definition of what advertising is, and whether the objective of that tested piece of advertising material fulfils the criteria of the objective of advertising thus defined.

Hong Kong advertisers in general still holds a consecutive view on advertising. Firstly, they think that the objective of an advertisement is to fulfil the function of conveying an "advertising message". The advertising message is considered to be so important to the advertiser that it needs to be direct and to be explicitly spoken out in the advertisement. Other meanings (apart from the key advertising message which the advertiser is looking for) generated from the respondents/ viewer are seen as unnecessary messages which are distractions from the key advertising message. When this happens, the fault is seen to lie on the creative product, the tested advertisement, and that the tested material needs to be corrected so that other unnecessary messages are not conveyed. The advertisers usually see viewers as passive audience that is consciously receiving the message of the advertisement.

In Hong Kong not many people in the marketing field see advertising from a semiotic angle. In our view, semiotics sees advertising from an entirely contrasting angle. Firstly, advertising is seen not as a conveyance of a straightforward message but the construction of multiple messages. Secondly, messages in an advertisement are often ambiguous and open to different interpretations. Thirdly, the viewer is seen not as a passive viewer taking what the advertisement is saying to him, but an active player who takes part in the construction of meanings. The advertisement is said to induce the audience to decode interactively in an unconscious way that they desire the commodity.

An understanding of the two philosophies is crucial to identifying the limit and the weakness of focus groups which alters the creative process of advertising.

Marketing and semiotics constitute two very distinct philosophies in the understanding of advertising. The former takes the "consumer wants" as the starting point in which every marketing activity (including advertising) that follows results in satisfying the consumer wants. The practice of marketing as a result is done in a more or less scientific manner, in which the first part is always to find out the consumer wants through research. The semiotic school refuses to see the viewers as having specific and pre-set needs and wants which are to be fulfilled by consumption. It sees viewers as cultural beings consuming "meanings". Since meanings are contextual, advertising works by attaching existing meanings to existing products thereby constructing new meanings. It is these new meanings which are the result of advertising that is "consumed". The success of products depends on whether the constructed meaning is shared by the viewers. In this way, the creating of advertising becomes more of an art.

Under the marketing perspective, advertising is only one part of the marketing mix and that the objective of any advertising is to communicate a benefit of the product in the form of an advertising message to the consumer. This benefit becomes the solution to satisfy what the consumer needs. From this logic, communication through advertising is only seen as a one dimensional, one way flow from the advertiser to the consumer. The effectiveness of the advertising or the communication is judged upon whether that "benefit" is being well communicated from the advertiser to the consumer. In this case, the Shannon Weaver model (1956) of communication is being used and a test to see whether any communication is effective is also available since the objective is very simple; ie: to test whether that "pre-set benefit" is being well communicated to the subjects in the focus group.

This way of looking at advertising from a marketing viewpoint constitutes a paradigm where everything is logical and causal; for everything there is a cause, and the cause here is always around the needs of the consumer; the advertising and everything which follows are the effects due to that cause. "The Marketing concept means that an organization aims all its efforts at satisfying its customers- at a profit" (Perreault Jr & Mc Carthy 1997: 30)

The semiotic approach takes a totally different viewpoint in seeing communication. It sees advertising as the "generation of meaning" Fiske (1997: 39). That the consumers consumed not products, not images of products, not even brands, but "meanings". Taking the semiotic approach, advertising is not a communicator of meanings but a "constructor" of meanings. Culture is identified as a "reservoir of meanings". Advertising thus becomes a constructor and shaper of culture, producing and reproducing culture and ideology. Our viewpoint agrees with Williamson that the creating of advertising resembles an art more than a science in that advertising creates "structures of meanings".

"Obviously it (advertising) has a function, which is to sell things to us. But it has another function, which I believe in many ways replaces that traditionally fulfilled by art or religion. It creates structures of meaning." (Williamson 1978: 12)

According to the semiotic theory, the main aim of the advertisement is to construct new meaning for the commodity. The meaning of the commodity is to be constructed interactively by the ad agent and the audience.

Focus groups are irrelevant when one sees and creates advertising from the semiotic dimension because there is nothing to be tested. One cannot test whether meaning is achievable before the construction of meaning in the media and the audience pool. At best one can only test what meaning has achieved after the campaign has run. Construction of meaning is a sensitive process that doesn't follow a "cause and effect" logic. It is rather a two way process. Meaning has to be "negotiated" As Hodge & Kress states: "meaning is always negotiated in the semiotic process, never simply imposed inexorably from above by an omnipotent author through an absolute code." (Hodge & Kress 1988) Meaning is a dynamic negotiating process to and from both sides of communication: the sender and the recipient.

It can be seen in this introduction that advertising takes different positions in the different paradigms and the focus group as a test is only sensible and logical when put to the marketing paradigm. When put in the semiotic context, focus groups no longer

have any significance. The rest of the chapter takes a more in depth look into each of the two school of thoughts, sees advertising in each of these schools and hence comments on the validity of the focus group test of advertising in each of the paradigms.

CHAPTER 4: THE MARKETING VIEW ON ADVERTISING

Marketing places the consumers at the top of the list and states that every marketing activity is to satisfy what the consumer wants. As Kotler states "The marketing concept holds that the key to achieving organizational goals consists in determining the needs and wants of target markets and delivering the desired satisfaction more effectively and efficiently than the competitors." (Kotler 1986: 15) From this philosophy stems the marketing strategy, a strategy to achieve the satisfaction of consumer needs. It is divided into 4 parts that are the 4Ps: Product, Price, Promotion (advertising) and Place (distribution). "Product" is the product that can provide a benefit to satisfy the consumer's needs. "Price" is the price that is affordable to the consumer thus satisfying their needs. "Promotion" is the advertising that can reach the consumers and can communicate the product benefit to the consumer. "Place" is the distribution or retail outlets which consumers can reach easily.

Advertising as part of the marketing strategy under the 4Ps is also seen to satisfy the consumer needs. Under this single principle, advertising under the marketing philosophy has a structure that defines the elements of importance and uses a communication model that gives rise to what is believed to be effective advertising in the focus group test.

4.1 The "advertising message" and the "creative execution"

Advertising's sole function under the marketing philosophy is to communicate a message; an advertising message that spells out the benefit of the product, i.e. the consumer benefit. It is believed that the advertising message is the most important element of an advertisement and the strength of this message is gained from the study of consumers, i.e. to understand what they need in the first place, thus formulating the advertising message for the product that addresses their needs by providing a benefit. This study of consumers is often accompanied by scientific research. In this way, it can be said that the advertising message also called the "what to say" which is the most important single element in an

advertisement is created by scientific research.

Another element of advertising, the "execution", also known as the "how to say," involves the creation of an idea for advertisements that presents the "what to say" in a creative manner so that it fits into various mediums like a 30 second TVC or a print ad that the audience will better remember. This "how to say" which is believed to be the creative part of an advertisement is only seen to be secondary to the "what to say" because it only serves the purpose of the "what to say".

The marketing philosophy of advertising does not provide any clues as to how the audience receives the message. It sees the audience playing a passive role in receiving a message.

From this logic, communication is seen as a one way flow, from the advertiser to the viewer in that a single message is being conveyed to the viewer. Here we can see that the marketing viewpoint see advertising as comparable with the Shannon & Weaver's model of communication (1949). An understanding of this model will illustrate the dominance of the "advertising message" in the communication alongside with the explicitness of the message itself and finally the passiveness of the viewer in the whole communication process.

4.2 The Shannon & Weaver's model of communication

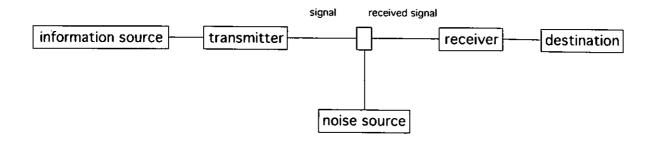


Figure 1 Shannon and Weaver's model of communication (Fiske 1990: 7)

Under this model, communication is seen as a transmission of messages from a source to the destination. The message is transmitted in the form of signals through the transmitter and the received signals is being turned back into the message by the receiver to be received by the destination. The important part of this theory is that it places all the importance on the message being communicated. Fiske (1982) actually states that "It (Shannon & Weaver's model) is a clear example of the process school, seeing communication as the transmission of messages." (Fiske 1982: 6)

As a result, effectiveness of communication is judged by how accurately can the message be transmitted through the signals. Fiske has changed the word message into "symbols of communication" to make the application of the model in a larger communication context. As stated by Fiske (1982) effectiveness of communication is judged by "how accurately can the symbols of communication be transmitted?" (Fiske 1982: 7) Fiske also states that this is the problem that the Shannon & Weaver model was originally developed to solve. He attributes it to a technical problem in which "The technical problems... are the simplest to understand and these are the ones that the model was originally developed to explain" (Fiske 1982: 7)

There is also the concept of noise in which it is anything added to the signal during the

transmission process in which the receiver will receive something which is not intended by the source. As Fiske states "Noise is anything added to the signal between its transmission and reception that is not intended by the source." (Fiske 1982: 8) In this way, noise means a defect in the communication process.

These basic concepts of the Shannon & Weaver's model of communication have major influence on the definition of effective advertising in the marketing scenario hence on the usage of focus groups. Before we go into the implications of this transmission model to the definition of effective advertising, I would like to introduce James Carey's ideas that people's concept of communication is shaped and influenced by the context of the society in which they live and that the transmission view is a "natural" way in which people today see communication.

4.3 James Carey's Ritual view of communication.

The ideas of James Carey illustrates that it is the predominant view of the American culture to see communication in a transmission view. That this is a phenomenon in industrial cultures because of the importance of transportation of goods and people across regions. It is basically a model based on geography. He states that this view is firmly rooted in our minds. "Our basic orientation to communication remains grounded, at the deepest roots of our thinking, in the idea of transmission: communication is a process whereby messages are transmitted…" (Carey 1989: 15)

Carey contrasted this view with a much older view of communication which is the ritual view. Under this model, communication serves not as passing of information but of an act of sharing within a community so as to keep a society intact. He states "A ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the imparting information but the representation of

shared beliefs" (ibid: 18)

By sharing, the society reinforces and reconfirms its ideals and values. He goes on to argue that it is through this sharing and confirmation that reality is constructed. He states: "...communication is a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed." (ibid: 23)

While Carey uses the ritual model of communication to contrast with the transmission model, the importance of his ideas lies on the fact that people's concept of communication is easily determined and influenced by the context in which they live. As in the case of marketing people (belonging to the industrial culture), it can be seen that their view on communication as based on Carey's argument, is naturally biased towards the transmission view.

4.4 The implications of Shannon & Weaver's model in the definition of effective advertising.

Firstly, since the model places all the importance to the messages being communicated, and that communication is seen as the sole transmission of messages; when applied to advertising, it can easily be seen why the "advertising message" is being treated as the most important element in the advertisement.

As discussed the effectiveness of any communication in the transmission view is judged by how accurately the messages are being communicated. The concept of noise means that any unwanted messages received by the audience are not desirable and are attributed to the fallacy of the creative execution. In the case of advertising, effectiveness becomes whether the "advertising message" is explicit, direct and clear enough in order that the audience can get exactly the same message as transmitted. As a result, any advertising bearing direct, explicit and unambiguous messages is seen to be effective advertising.

The role of the audience is seen as passive taking part only in a conscious response to the advertising. Any other interpretations of the viewer are seen as the "noise" produced by the advertising. As in the case of the focus group, it is the advertising that needs to be modified.

To summarise, the implications of Shannon & Weaver's model are that for any advertising to be effective, it has to:-

- 1) Have an advertising message, though the Shannon & Weaver's model does not say how to come up with a message; the model only discusses how the message is being communicated.
- 2) The advertising message should be communicated in a direct, unambiguous and explicit manner and
- 3) That only the original advertising message as sent by the source should be received totally and accurately by the audience; any other "unintended messages" received are seen as "noise".

It is under these three definitions of effective advertising that formulates the criteria of focus groups in judging the tested advertising.

One of the consequences of the Marketing School is to have placed creativity as of least importance. That the "what to say" which constitutes the strategy decided by the consumers is the most important part of an advertisement. This "what to say" is believed to be found out by consumer analysis and research. Creativity constitutes only to a role of a craftsman, of crafting the "what to say" in a form of "how to say".

We then have to consider the two very basic principles of marketing:

- 1) The idea of satisfying the consumer's needs. It is to question: Does the consumer have a need inside him that is to be found in research, or that the consumer doesn't know what he needs? What is meant by a consumer need? What is it that he really needs?
- 2) The idea of the product as the hero which satisfies the consumer. Is it the product that

the consumer is buying, or the brand, or the benefit, or the perception, or an identity? Or is it none of the above?

The answers to these questions to the marketing school can be found in the semiotic school which sees advertising in a completely different way.

CHAPTER 5: THE SEMIOTIC VIEW ON ADVERTISING

This school takes on a completely different look into advertising and demolishes the discipline of marketing. While marketing stresses the emphasis of the consumer wants in nearly everything, and the whole purpose of marketing is to satisfy "what the consumer wants", that the objective of any advertising is to communicate the "product benefit" from the advertiser to the consumer. The semiotic approach, however, sees advertising as a "generation of meaning", that "what the consumer wants" is determined and influenced by the advertising he reads. Semiotics can go so far that if put into the area of culture, which can be seen as "a reservoir of meanings" in which people consume "meanings", advertising as a whole being seen as generation of meanings, can be said to be constantly producing and reproducing culture today.

How is this possible? This chapter will first go through the semiotic model of communication to contrast as well as answer the semantic problem of the Shannon and Weaver model. It goes on to discuss what advertising is when it is seen in the semiotic model of communication. The part on denotation and connotation will discuss the power of signification in how one constructs meanings and make them believable. The last chapter will summarise the difference between advertising as seen in the marketing philosophy and in the semiotic world. It demonstrates how focus groups as a outdated marketing era product become obsolete in the semiotic world.

5.1 Semiotics as a communication model

One of the ways to introduce semiotics is to look from the angle of the old communication model and see the things which the old model cannot solve. In the Shannon & Weaver model, communication is defined as the transmission of a message from A to B. The message can be a sentence, an object, a feeling or an emotion. Assuming that the transmission is perfect, and that there is no noise source in between so that the message transmitted from A is identical to the message received by B; the question is how does the message that represents the emotion of A represent 100% of the emotion of B? How can one guarantee the emotion generated by B is the same as the emotion of A?

The semiotic theory tackles this problem at a fundamental level. It gets rid of the idea that it is possible to communicate something (either a sentence or an emotion) that is inside A to B. The approach of semiotics is that for any communication to take place, A and B have to come out with something new so that it shares the same meaning between the two parties. In this case communication has taken place. As Fiske states: "For communication to take place, I have to create a message out of signs. This message stimulates you to create a meaning for yourself that relates in some way to the meaning that I generated in my message in the first place." (Fiske 1982: 39)

Communication depends on a shared sign system that is built upon a common culture. Fiske interprets the "shared culture" as a system of codes. As Fiske states: "The more we share the same codes, the more we use the same sign systems, the closer our two 'meanings' of the message ill approximate to each other." (Fiske 1982: 39)

For communication to occur, one has to invent a sign that consists of a signifier and a signified. The signifier is a physical sign, for example, a cross on a piece of paper. According to Fiske: "The signifier is the sign's image as we perceive it- the marks on the paper or the sounds in the air. The signified is the mental concept to which it refers." (Fiske 1982: 40) The signified is a mental concept of the meaning of the cross. When the signifier and the signified are added together it is called a "sign". For communication to have taken place, they became the same thing; i.e. the sign.

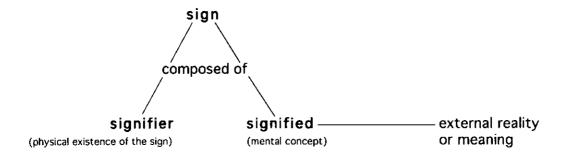


Figure 2. Saussure's elements of meaning (Fiske 1990: 44)

The definition of communication is the creation of a "sign" which contains the "signifier" and the "signified".

One can immediately tell a number of differences of this semiotic model to the process model of Shannon & Weaver's. Firstly, the semiotic model is not linear and there is no direction of the flow of message. Secondly, this model does not assume a series of stages in which the message passes, rather it concentrates on the structural relationships in which signs are used to create meanings. Thirdly, it treats the viewer not as passive but active, who completes the meaning construction process by bringing in his/her experience, culture and context. Fiske states that the decoding by the viewer is as active and creative as the encoding by the creative agent: "Decoding is as active and creative as encoding" (Fiske 1990: 42). The next section will discuss the application of semiotics to advertising.

5.2 Semiotics and meanings in advertising

Using semiotics as a communication model in relation to advertising, we start this part by an example used by Williamson (1978), illustrating the fundamental difference in the "meaning process" between the semiotic school and the marketing school. While the objective of advertising in the marketing school is to communicate a "benefit" of a product which satisfies existing consumer wants, so that consumers will buy the product; the semiotic school sees advertising as how to make sense of the benefit, and in so doing, giving meaning to the product, so that people would buy it regardless of their existing wants. Williamson argues that it is more important to make certain properties "meaningful" to the audience than just to present those inherent properties to them. As she states: "For even the "obvious" function of advertising- the definition above, "to sell things to us"- involves a meaning process. Advertisements must take into account not only the inherent qualities and attributes of the products they are trying to sell, but also the way in which they can make those properties mean something to us."

"... for example, that a car can do so many miles per gallon, into a form that means something in terms of people. Suppose that the car did a high mpg (mile per gallon): this could be translated into terms of thriftiness, the user being a clever saver, or if the mpg was low, the ad could appeal to the "above money pettiness", daredevil kind of person... The advertisement translates these "thing" statements to us as human statements; they are given a humanly symbolic "exchange-value"." (Williamson 1978: 12)

Here Williamson makes use of the fact that a product attribute "a high mpg" which satisfies the consumer benefit of "economising" is of less value unless both the attribute and the benefit have been given a meaning. In her case, economising has been given the meaning of cleverness of the user. She goes one more step to demonstrate that even a negative consumer benefit, a low mpg, can also be given a meaning and can be turned into something positive for the consumer, a daredevil kind of person who is too trendy to be economising.

While economising has already had a meaning by itself, a meaning that every-one understands already, one would ask why in Williamson's case she has to add another meaning to it?

The answer to this is that within a certain product category in the marketing scenario, there are usually many more brands for which the unique benefits can be claimed. For example, in the car category, there might be 10 different brands trying to claim the benefit of high mpg (mile per gallon). Or there may be 10 different cars trying to claim high performance. In order for each brand to get noticed, each has to come up with a unique "meaning" different from all the others so as to set up a point of difference for the product as well as for the consumers who buy it.

The example above shows in theory how different meanings can be attached to a certain attribute. The question now is how those desired meanings can really be attached to the product with the viewer believing in the meaning without questioning its truth.

This can be answered by a discussion of signification. Signification is done in two processes; Denotation and Connotation.

5.3 Denotation and Connotation

According to Roland Barthes, there are two orders of signification: "denotation and connotation" (Barthes 1967: 89-93). Denotation is signification within the sign. When the signifier is shown, it automatically denotes a signifier. This is done when the viewer has knowledge of using the sign themselves or has knowledge of the system with which the sign is used. e.g. a picture of a man on a print ad denotes not a piece of paper with ink but denotes the man himself and his characteristics. As defined by Fiske: "It (denotation) describes the relationship between the signifier and signified within the sign, and of the sign with its reference in external reality. This refers to the common sense, obvious meaning of the sign." (Fiske 1982: 85). Denotation however constitutes no construction of new meanings.

Connotation on the other hand requires the viewer's input from their knowledge; it works in a cultural and emotional context of the viewer in which meanings are subjectively constructed. Fiske describes it as "It describes the interaction that occurs when the sign meets the feelings or emotions of the users and the values of their culture." (Fiske 1982: 86) Connotation can be said as the second order of signification because the first order of signification takes place when a signifier generates a signified by denotation. That signified in turn generates another signified in the second order through connotation. Using the example of a photo of a girl, shot using a soft lens, denotation takes place when the viewer gets the meaning that the photo is not a piece of paper with ink but it denotes a person, the girl. This is the first order of signification. The second order arises when asked what does that girl shot in a soft lens signifies to the reader. Here connotation takes place. The meaning of the soft lens girl to that particular viewer could mean a lot of things according to his knowledge and experience. It is here in connotation that the viewer or reader is to have input and imagination in order to complete the meaning process. It is here that the power of the reader is as great as that of the sign in the creaion of meaning. As Fiske puts it "...it is when the interpretant is influenced as much by the interpreter as by the object or the sign." (ibid: 86)

With connotation in advertising, the viewer feels that it is they who complete the meaning process. Connotation in advertising works in a very subtle way. It has to connote the desired signified without giving too much hints, otherwise the advertising would be seen as "make me believe" without any credibility. When an advertisement gives too few hints, the viewer would completely miss the desired signified. The creator of the advertising has to know that, according to the viewer's knowledge, they can decode the advertising. In connotation, what is connoted is something outside the denoted system. In an advertisement, a lot of signs are being used in combination; a lot of denotation takes place between different signifiers, e.g. the product (a signifier) and a photo (another signifier) put together. However it is what is missed out, what is not said, the gap or the hole in the advertising which the viewer has to fill which is most important to the construction of meaning. This is where connotation takes place.

Once connotation works, the viewer feels that it is himself that makes the connection and generates the meaning hence eliminates the credibility problem. They generate this meaning because they have the knowledge. As Williamson puts it, "we exchange because we know". (ibid: 100) The new signified of connotation becomes to the viewer something transcendental, more or less like some truth. Cape goes so far as to say that the signified of connotation becomes a fragment of ideology. According to Cape: "As for the signified of connotation, its character is at once global and diffuse; it is if you like a fragment of ideology... These signifieds have a very close communication with culture, knowledge, history..." (Cape 1967: 90-92)

Signification does not stop here. Once connotation takes place in an ad in the generation of a new meaning, the new signified becomes a signifier at a different level; generating another signified by connotation also sharing a body of common knowledge. In a macro scale even this body of knowledge changes with new meanings added to it, connotation takes place continuously. It can be said that the effect of advertising is the formation of a metastructure in which meanings are continuously built upon, as Williamson points out "What the

ad does is to provide a "meta-structure' in which these transformations may take place. It draws together disparate objects which are initially signified by their place in a system of knowledge but then made to signify, i.e. become signifiers, in terms of that place so that it is their position, rather than themselves as the "content" of that position, that signifies... since they have been taken out of their positions, these are necessarily empty, merely forms of knowledge." (ibid: 101) In the end, according to Williamson, all these signifieds as produced by advertising and culture when accepted by the mass becomes knowledge.

So far this dissertation has gone through the basic theory of using semiotics in seeing advertising. The meta-structure that advertising provides can be seen as a huge machine constructing new meanings perpetually through the turning of signifieds into signifiers connoting newer meanings. Once the new signifieds have lost their position they become merely forms of knowledge. Brands like Rolex or Mercedes Benz becomes better words in describing certain values and ideologies than any number of words put together. These meanings that advertising has produced become part of our culture, values and ideology.

Conclusion

The above discussion on the two advertising philosophies has already shown that they are in contradiction. While the marketing philosophy sees advertising as communication of messages in a linear, one way flow from the advertiser to the audience, the semiotic model sees advertising as a meta-structure for construction of meanings. While the marketing philosophy sees the importance of conveyance of a key advertising message, the semiotic model sees advertising as the creation of multiple layers of meaning through connotation which emphasise on the viewer. While the marketing philosophy sees the audience as passively taking out what is said to them in the advertising, the semiotic model sees the power of the audience in their imagination, subjectivity and creativity in the process of connotation in which multiple layers of meanings are constructed. Bearing these fundamental differences in the definition of advertising and hence in the definition of effective advertising, it can be seen that the focus group judgement on tested advertising materials which is based on the marketing philosophy's definition of effective advertising has no significance when put into the semiotic world in which effectiveness of advertising is judged.

The study on the semiotic way of seeing advertising only points to what can be achieved by advertising and under what semiotic mechanism it can be achieved. It does not describe how to create an advertisement. Of all the signifiers in the world, how does one chooses what signifiers should be put together in order to come up with a connotation process which connotes the new signified? Or that the process can be reversed, of all the new signifieds that is "possible" how does one choose which new signified should be connoted? Or that it is a two way process; one just "play" with the signifiers and see what new signifieds are connoted? The answering of these questions lead us venture into the area of creativity.

PART III: WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

From the theory of semiotics, we discover that the meaning construction process in advertising is basically an active construction of an ambiguous horizon of meaning, into which the creative agent and the audience involve themselves committing into an active interaction to construct/create the meanings of advertisements.

In this section, we undertake to explore the act of creativity: i.e. How is creative thinking possible? We try to understand this issue through the reading of the theories of DeBono and Freud.

This section is divided into two parts. The first part sees creativity as a means of problem solving through "Lateral thinking" DeBono (1977). Lateral thinking involves the process of "synthesis" in which the creative solution is the outcome of a big mental leap. By showing the difference between synthetic thinking and analytical thinking, we can see that the focus group analytical questioning technique, when applied to a creative product which is the result of synthetic thinking, is not able to provide a fair judgement on the effectiveness of a creative product. i.e. the TV commercial in our case.

We endeavour to compare the creative mental act with the act of dreaming shown in Freudian theory. Briefly, in Freudian theory, dream formation is the basic mental activity of creativity. Sharing Freud's (1901) idea of the interpretation of dreams, every dream is the fulfilment of wishes. Since there is censorship by the conscious mind to certain wishes, a dream can only fulfil these wishes in an indirect way. It is here that creativity is employed in acts of "condensation" and "displacement" to make up a dream so that these wishes are fulfilled avoiding the censorship. Hence there are two parts to a dream, the manifest content (the dream as remembered) and the latent content (the real meaning behind the dream). At the conscious level, these dreams as remembered (the manifest content) are often absurd and illogical. Upon interpretation, these dreams have meanings fulfilling the wishes of the unconscious (the latent content).

By bringing into the similarities of the formation of dreams versus the creation of a TV commercial, i.e. the wish fulfilment nature of a dream versus the construction of meaning of

a TV commercial, the use of dream materials and manifest dream contents to represent the "latent contents" versus the use of existing sign elements to create new semiotic meanings, the use of the "condensation" technique in the dream work versus the use of a similar technique in the creation of an advertisement and, finally, the "displacement" in dreams and a similar "displacement" effect in advertising, it can be shown that the attempt to understand the "creation of meaning" brought about by the TV commercial in the unconscious takes at least the same principles and techniques employed in dream interpretation, but is not found in the focus group.

The techniques employed in the focus groups by comparison seemed far less advanced and can only reach the most superficial part of the logical mind leaving the unconscious untouched and never explored.

Missing totally the regard for the creative act, the analytical questioning of the focus group test which usually takes the TV commercial apart and discusses logically and non-contextually which part of the TVC is relevant, which part is irrelevant, results not only in modifying or minor adjusting the TV concept, but actually re-creating the TVC in a logical and seemingly "safer" way. The last thing needed for any creative product.

CHAPTER 6: LATERAL THINKING

Edward deBono seemed to have unlocked the mystery of creativity in his book "Lateral thinking, A textbook of creativity" (1970) by stating and preaching that creativity can be learned. It is a way of thinking, which can be learned and be mastered by anyone. DeBono tries to separate insight / creativity from lateral thinking in that while the arrival of insight cannot be controlled the latter can. "...whereas insight, creativity and humour can only be prayed for, lateral thinking is a more deliberate process. It is as definite a way of using the mind as logical thinking- but a very different way." (DeBono 1970: 9)

By taking a broader look into the way a human mind thinks, how it treats and process information for the sake of survival and for the promotion of culture, he states that it is vertical thinking (as opposed to lateral thinking) which is in dominance today. His premise is that people are born to be creative, it is only due to education and the dominance of vertical thinking that creativity is suppressed. In order to understand what lateral thinking and what creativity is, one has to understand how the mind works and its tendency to think vertically. By studying the characteristics of vertical thinking and lateral thinking, we can show that the viewing environment of a TVC in a focus group constitutes only to vertical thinking; whereas in a real viewing environment of a TVC, the mind is more relax and has a tendency to think laterally. It is this discrepancy in the viewing environment that renders the findings of the focus group not applicable.

6.1 How the mind works

The mind can be said of as a machine handling information in which the objective is to maximise the use of information within a time constraint. Due to the limited memory space of the mind, a code system is used which is also called "communication by code" (DeBono 1970: 25). In this way the information available to the mind is arranged in the form of patterns. Whenever a need arises, a call for the code triggers out a specific pattern for use, instead of calling up the whole lot of information once again. In this way a "catalogue of patterns" (ibid: 27) is created and stored in the mind, so whenever there is a need, a pattern is called up to be used. There are big patterns and small patterns, and patterns within a pattern. There is no need for having a real code for a pattern because a part of the pattern can trigger the whole pattern out.

As exemplified by DeBono, how the use of the code system can transfer a lot of information very quickly, "Communication is the transfer of information. If you want someone to do something you could give him detailed instructions... It would be much easier if you could simply say to him: "Go ahead and carry out plan number 4.""

"Communication by code can only work if there are pre-set patterns."

"There are great advantages in any code system. It is easy to transfer a lot of information very quickly and without much effort." (ibid: 25)

Another feature of the mind is the "limited attention span" (ibid: 30) This means that only part of the memory surface can be activated at any one time. This feature accounts for the fact that there is a tendency for the mind to use the immediate past pattern or the pattern mostly used. This means that the mind see things and interpret things in terms of existing patterns "naturally".

"The most easily activated area or pattern is the most familiar one, the one which has been encountered most often, the one which has left most trace on the memory surface. And because a familiar pattern tends to be used it becomes ever more familiar. In this way the mind builds up that stock of preset patterns which are the basis of code communication." (ibid: 30)

Under these two ways of thinking, improvement becomes a matter of how to build on existing patterns, a characteristic of vertical thinking. One can make use of logical deduction and the process of selection by exclusion. However this is not always the best way because there are times when that existing pattern simply cannot solve certain kinds of new problems (no matter how one builds on it). In this case a restructuring of existing patterns is needed to come up with new patterns and it is in this area that lateral thinking is needed.

Since it is a tendency for the mind to follow existing thinking patterns, in order to generate new thinking patterns or new insights, one has to fight this tendency for lateral thinking to evolve. The next section will discuss the characteristics of vertical thinking and lateral thinking.

6.2 Vertical thinking and lateral thinking

In order to understand lateral thinking, one has to compare and contrast it with vertical thinking. Following DeBono's logic of how the mind works and its tendency to think in a vertical way, we would show a point by point comparison of the two thinking processes, the difference in solutions given by each process and the difference in environment which gives rise to each of the two processes.

1) "Vertical thinking is selective, Lateral thinking is generative." (ibid: 37)

Since vertical thinking depends on the existing patterns of the mind to solve problems, the process is more of a selection of one or more patterns which suits the problem. Lateral thinking is generative in the sense that it has to bring about restructuring of patterns to "create" a new pattern making use of existing information in order to maximize the outcome of the solution. In this way the solution is more of a "tailor made" one to the specific problem making it a more effective solution.

2) "Vertical thinking moves only if there is a direction in which to move, lateral thinking moves in order to generate a direction." (ibid: 38)

After selecting a pattern, vertical thinking is about refining or developing the se-ected pattern through a step by step logical manner in order to solve the problem, or rather to see the problem in terms of existing patterns. In this way the pattern becomes the direction in which to move forward. It has been argued that existing patterns sometimes cannot provide a solution to some problems no matter how well one develop the pattern or how thorough one thinks in that direction. In these cases a new direction or a new pattern has to be generated, it is in these situations that lateral thinking is needed.

3) "With vertical thinking one has to be correct at every step, with lateral thinking one does not have to be." (ibid: 40)

Logical thinking involves a step by step process. If one step is wrong, the whole process is wrong. It works in a reduction process. But what is right or wrong depends on under what pattern the mind is working on, or under all of the patterns the mind has developed and encountered. In generating a totally new pattern, by definition, one has to be wrong in some steps relative to the old patterns. What is important to lateral thinking is that one has to be right at the end: i.e. to solve the problem and not to be right at every step. The outcome of the solution is more important than the process of coming up with the solution.

4) "With vertical thinking one uses the negative in order to block off certain pathways. With lateral thinking there is no negative." (ibid: 40)

The negative is a very powerful tool for vertical thinking since as mentioned, vertical thinking is about selection. The most logical and quickest way for selection is by negation, since the mind can immediately eliminate the pattern that is "wrong" instead of developing on every single pattern the mind has. Again what is "wrong" depends on under what pattern the mind is using. It is only logical to be "wrong" in lateral thinking in order that a new direction or a new pattern be formed.

5) "With vertical thinking one concentrates and excludes what is irrelevant, with lateral thinking one welcomes chance intrusions." (ibid: 41)

Again this is another case of selection by negation. What is irrelevant is being excluded immediately so that the mind can move forward to the next direction (next pattern). In lateral thinking, chance intrusions are welcome because since the objective of lateral thinking is to open up new directions, irrelevant information can be seen as information outside the pattern that is crucial to creating new patterns. The act of lateral thinking is to actually put deliberate effort into using irrelevant information.

6) "With vertical thinking categories, classifications and labels are fixed, with lateral thinking they are not." (ibid: 41)

Classifications help to arrange information logically into patterns that aid logical analysis. Labeling puts a certain meaning to words or sees things in terms of a specific pattern. With vertical thinking classifications and labels are useful only if they are consistent. With lateral thinking labels may change when looked at it from different angles.

7) "Vertical thinking follows the most likely paths, lateral thinking explores the least likely." (ibid: 42)

Vertical thinking uses an existing pattern with which one is familiar. It follows the most likely paths since thinking within a familiar pattern is like travelling down a familiar road, knowing which direction is correct. However in lateral thinking, since the objective is to create a new pattern, or to find out a new direction, one has to think of the least likely path, to explore routes that haven't been explored before. In the context of all existing patterns, one has to deliberately think in directions that are "wrong". It is this part which is most difficult to master since our education taught us only to think logically and to do things that are "right".

8) "Vertical thinking is a finite process, lateral thinking is a probabilistic one." (ibid: 42)

Vertical thinking promises a solution every time. The solution may not be a complete solution but vertical thinking promises at least some solution. When there is a time constraint to the problem, the mind would approach it in a vertical way. Lateral thinking doesn't guarantee any solution but when there is one, it is better than any solution vertical thinking

can offer.

Under the different characteristics of vertical and lateral thinking, it can be shown in the next section that the working of a TVC in the creation of meaning requires the viewer to think laterally. It can also be shown that the viewing environment of the focus group constitutes vertical thinking. Bearing in mind these differences, the findings of the focus group under the dominance of vertical thinking are not applicable to predict the outcome of a TVC seen in a real environment where lateral thinking dominates.

6.3 The requirement of lateral thinking in the construction of meaning and the dominance of vertical thinking in the focus group.

For the focus group to have a valid test on any piece of advertising, it is not only the piece of advertising that is tested, but the viewers as well. This is because according to the theory of semiotics, it is both the viewer and the advertising that contributes to the construction of meaning. As Fowles proposes: "Successful communication takes the work of advertising's receivers as well as its senders." (Fowles 1996: 93). Goldman stresses the importance of the participation of viewers in what advertising is about "...turning an advertiser's preferred interpretation into a commodity-sign requires that viewers participate in completing the transfer of meanings in the advertisement." (Goldman 1995: 9)

The question now becomes whether the focus group test can be said to have any validity, and whether the thinking pattern of the respondents to be tested in a focus group environment can represent the thinking pattern of an audience in a real viewing environment.

In order to answer this, one has to understand in what way a TV commercial works with the thinking behaviour of the audience in order to achieve the combined effect of the construction of meaning. Firstly, it has to be understood that a 30-second TV commercial has a very limited time to say much. The construction of meaning usually requires much more "content" than 30 seconds. A TV commercial works by borrowing various "signs" from the existing culture, and by calling out these signs and mixing them with other signs, or using some specific signs in a different context, together with the interpretation of the audience within a context so that the meaning is finally constructed. Fowles states that: "An advertisement or commercial does not stand alone but enters into a number of inter-textual relationships, which supply further dynamics to the message." (Fowles1996: 90)

What is important is that the creator of the TV commercial takes into account all of the sign values and contextual elements in order to "communicate". One of the main contextual elements is that of the viewing environment of the audience. This environment takes place in the typical household living room in which the audience is in a relaxed frame of mind, having time with the family. In this relaxed environment, the audience usually doesn't pay much attention to the TV commercial, (they are usually cooking, reading magazines, going to the toilet, playing with the children, etc.) unless there is something which really attracts them or something which they haven't seen before. Goldman defines a term called "state of distraction": "We decipher ads routinely, automatically, even absentmindedly, in what Walter Benjamin called a "state of distraction". (Goldman 1996: 1)

Construction of meaning under this relaxed environment and this "state of distraction" are by connotation. It has been discussed in the previous part that connotation do not require the viewers to rationally "understand" (by vertical thinking) the connoted meanings but to "believe" in the meanings because it is they who take part in their construction. Since the connoted meanings are new to the viewers, they do not have any previous patterns to follow. It can be said that it is a generative way of thinking which brings about a "restructuring of patterns" which have been discussed in point 1, 6.2, which characterising lateral thinking.

The other contextual element is that of the program and other TV commercials that an audience will watch in a real environment. "All the other advertising on the television program or in the magazine will influence the reception for one particular advertisement and, to the extent that the advertising agency is attuned to this, will also influence the make up of the message." (Fowles 1996: 91)

When comparing the real watching environment with the environment of focus group testing, in which respondents are placed in an alien environment, such as a room with a two way mirror, then paid to make comments that are, discussed, criticised and argued in front of strangers, it is not difficult to see how the interpretation of the respondents might differ from that of an audience in a real environment.

The rest of this section goes on to argue that the requirements of the audience in a relaxed environment in which lateral thinking is employed to decode a TV commercial to complete the construction of meaning, cannot be found in the focus group environment

where vertical thinking dominates.

Firstly, even before entering the group, everyone already has the feeling that they have to give comments or make some contribution to a problem that has to be solved. This state of mind contributes partly to the vertical thinking of the respondents.

Secondly, is the fact that everyone has to give his/her comments. Although the moderator will elaborate that one doesn't have to analyse the TV commercial but to give one's first spontaneous reaction to the tested TV commercial, the act of consciously speaking out one's comments involves a logical presentation of one's thinking. On top of that, the other respondents' reaction to one's comments creates pressure on whether one is logical or not in reasoning their comments.

Thirdly, it can be observed that many respondents are being forced to say something, especially during the analytical questioning technique brought about by the moderator.

The above three factors arising in the focus group's respondents mentality i.e. 1) that there is a problem, 2) ones comments have to be tabled to be discussed and 3) there is an urgency to come up with something to say, all contribute to vertical thinking which when applied to decoding a TV commercial, cannot complete the construction of meaning.

It is to be stated once again that the construction of meaning in a TV commercial doesn't have to be done by creative geniuses but by someone with a relaxed mind as found in the living room. In contrast, the focus group environment with the sequencing of questions will make the viewers highly logical and critical, the conditions least needed in the construction of meaning.

We have covered the difference between lateral thinking and vertical thinking and the difference between the real viewing and the focus group viewing environment. It can now be safely deduced that the focus group employed a totally different principle in seeing what a TV commercial is and how it works when compared with the real case. In reality, a TV commercial is supposed to invite the audience to complete the construction of meaning through an unconscious process, a lateral thinking process. Whereas in the focus group, the

respondents have to analyse the storyboard to see if a preset "message" is got across, or if the execution is "right" in getting across that message, a vertical thinking process. Under these two different philosophies, it can be said that the findings of the focus group cannot represent how the viewers would respond to the aired TV concept in the real environment.

CHAPTER 7: DREAM/ADVERTISING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

The workings of creativity can be compared to dreaming. The work "Interpretation of Dreams" (Freud 1901) can be seen as a conscious attempt in understanding the unconscious working of creativity. By understanding how the interpretation of dreams work, one understands more about the inner working of creativity.

Freudian theory states fundamentally that all dreams are the fulfilment of wishes.

According to Freud, some wishes can never be realized so they are fulfilled in dreams.

There are two different nature of contents to a dream: "the manifest dream content" (Freud 1901: 174) and the "latent dream content" (ibid: 174). The manifest dream content is the arrangement of dream materials or the story in the dream that is remembered by the dreamer. This part of the dream is sometimes illogical and fragmented and is absurd to the dreamer. The latent dream contents (also called the dream thoughts) are the contents where the dream is interpreted, the contents where there is meaning to the unconscious in which wishes are fulfilled.

The reason why the latent dream contents are hidden, only to be found out and understood by the conscious after interpretation, is that there is the agent of censorship which prohibits the wishes fulfilled in the unconscious to be made aware by the conscious. In this way, the absurdity of manifest dream contents witnesses the presence of censorship.

The relationship between the dream materials and dream thoughts needs to be understood in order to understand the workings of the unconscious in acquiring meaning from manifest dream contents; i.e. under what criteria are the dream thoughts represented by the dream materials? Freud coined this very activity the "dream-work" "...that of examining and tracing the relations between the latent dream thoughts and the manifest dream content, and the process by which the latter has grown out of the former." (ibid: 174)

There are two important techniques in the dreamwork that the unconscious employed in order to encounter censorship. "Condensation" (ibid: 175) and "Displacement" (ibid: 196).

Condensation involves "bizarre word-formation" or the creation of "composite persons". Each of these creations can represent multiple meanings so that a relative short dream can fulfill a number of wishes and since the creation is something entirely new to the conscious mind, condensation is also a means of avoiding censorship. Displacement is an act of centering the important elements of the dream thoughts in the trivial areas in the dream so that censorship is avoided. Sometimes these essential elements need not to be represented at all in the dream. Condensation and displacement are the two underlying techniques of the dream-work in which the unconscious makes sense of the seemingly absurd dream materials. It can be said that these two techniques constitute the structure of a dream. As Freud states: "Dream-displacement and dream-condensation are the two craftsmen to whom we may chiefly ascribe the structure of the dream." (ibid: 199)

7.1 Wish-fulfilment in dreams /Wish-fulfilment in advertising.

Freud explicitly states that every dream is the result of a wish fulfilment. "...that frequently, and under the most complex conditions, dreams may be noted which can be understood only as wish-fulfilments, and which present their content without concealment." (Freud 1901: 37) In dreams, there are two levels of wish-fulfilment. On a superficial level, wishes can be simple like thirst for water during the night. On a deeper level, it could mean wishes that can never be fulfiled in real life. These wishes are fulfiled in dreams, though in a sinuous way.

Looking at the logic and the messages delivered by advertisements, we find that the practice of advertising is very similar to that of the process of dreaming. In our view, what advertising aims to achieve is to fulfil wishes of the public.

As Davidson states: "All brands are products, but not all products are brands, and the difference is advertising. That extra is called added value" (Davidson 1992: 23).

What is the "value" that is added? Davidson explains by illustrative examples; "Not just mints, but the elegance and sophistication of After Eight's; not just a hamburger bar, but the fun and optimism of McDonalds; not just a cube of artificial flavourings, but the quintessence of Oxo family life...".(Davidson 1992: 23) Values added to the chocolate After Eight's are elegance and sophistication; to McDonalds, fun and optimism; to Oxo, the quintessence of family life; etc. These are the values that most people treasure.

Looking at advertising on a macro scale, one would never fail to notice the sheer power of advertising in our society. Ads transform our society, teach the mass what is good to do, what is bad; what is trendy and what is not. It adds values to brands so that people consume not the product that solves a problem in their life but the meaning attached to using the product. The important implication is that this "meaning" becomes much more important than the benefit given by the product itself. This meaning becomes the wish fulfilment in the audience. Goldman states that it is the important social qualities that when achieved, derive pleasure. "Modern advertising thus teaches us to consume, not the product,

but its sign. What the product stands for is more important than what it is... We begin to derive pleasure from using up the symbolic properties of goods so that we might be allowed to consume again. We draw pleasure from the image-making process itself, the glorification of the product by associating it with important social qualities becoming our satisfaction too." (Goldman 1995: 19)

We would like to draw an analogy between the structure of wish fulfilment in dreams and wish fulfilment in advertisements. In a dream, the wishes are in the form of dream thoughts attached in the dream contents. In an advertisement, the wishes to be fulfilled are in the form of "important social qualities" aspired by the public attached to the brand.

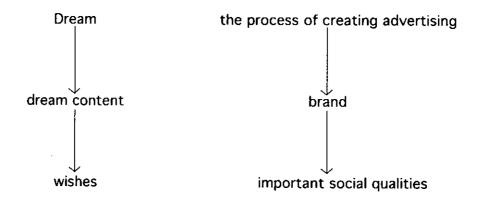


Figure 3. An analogy between the structure of wish-fulfilment in dreams and advertising

7.2 Manifest and latent dream content /Manifest and latent ad content

The dream materials that made up a dream are the ingredients of the manifest dream content. As Freud states, there are various sources in which these materials are found. One of the most common sources is from everyday experience. Freud even states that one can find from most dreams the presence of materials from experience of the previous day. "... that in every dream we may find some reference to the experiences of the preceding day." (Freud 1901: 71) The other source is from infantile experiences. As Freud states: "...that impressions from our childhood may appear in dreams." (ibid: 91)

In advertising, the creative agent usually uses daily life experience as material for constructing the content of the advertisement, in order that the audience get used to a commodity in a familiar ambience so they understand how the commodity is used in daily life. These daily life experiences are normally a reflection of the present society that bears resemblance to the experience of "the preceding day" in the dream materials. Another source of advertising material is from local culture, including its traditions and history.

7.3 Censorship in dreams /Censorship in Advertising

The emergence of censorship in dreams force dreams to be created in a way that the meaning of the (dream) message is not delivered in an explicit and clear way. The outcome is that dreams are often ambivalent and ambiguous so that multiple interpretations can occur. Dreams are also indirect and illogical to avoid clear understanding by the conscious mind. Freud states that strict censorship is often the cause of creative and ingenious means to disguise the meaning. "The stricter the domination of the censorship, the more thorough becomes the disguise, and often enough, the more ingenious the means employed to put the reader on the track of the actual meaning." (Freud 1994: 52)

Similarly in advertising, in order to "persuade" the audience to "believe" in the added connotation of the commodity, advertising needs to avoid logical reasoning to investigate the function of the object, "meanings" have to be indirectly communicated. Viewing an advertisement, the audience arrive to their own conclusion, constructing their own meanings so that they think that it is themselves who have arrived at the conclusion which makes the meaning believable. For connotation to happen, it has been discussed that the advertisement has to be ambiguous and indirect, with the meaning in itself ambiguous or hidden. The audience becomes thus the interpreter of the advertisement. They are not discovering truth, but the approximate indication of such symbolic act. It is at this level that advertising is similar to a dream.

The means of avoiding conscious logical reasoning in advertising works in the same way as the means of avoiding censorship in dreams. Viewing an advertisement, the audience will be led to believe but not understand that such and such a product means something. Advertising has to allow the audience to construct their own meaning to the commodity, but within a certain context.

The next part will discuss how similar techniques to dream-condensation and dream-displacement work in advertisements.

7.4 Condensation

According to Freud, dream condensation is the construction of composite persons (such as "by combining the actual features of two or more persons in a single dream-image" (Freud 1901: 186)) names and composite places. In this way, the messages delivered in dreams are usually ambivalent and ambiguous but have multiple meanings. Similarly advertising is to make the ad believable by allowing the audience to construct their own meanings. The advertising messages are also ambivalent and ambiguous only to be decoded by the audience so that multiple layers of important latent contents in advertisements can be constructed.

The making of advertising is parallel to dream condensation. Advertising employs the play of contextual elements so that a signifier can connote a variety of meanings. As condensation in dreams use composite persons or bizarre word formations to signify much more than one person or one meaning in a bizarre word, condensation in a TV commercial works in a similar way. A subject featured can have several meanings since the TV commercial is not created by the viewer, unlike in a dream, subjects chosen are normally unknown to the viewer but represent someone in the context of the whole commercial. For example, a subject in the TVC can signify either the viewer, the viewer's friend, the viewer's enemy, the viewer's future or the viewer's dreams. A house featured can signify a dream house, or a nostalgic past or the viewer's own home, etc. The kind of different significations are according to the context of the story and of the current usage of these signs.

Meanings in advertising are both denotative and connotative. Signifieds constructed by creative advertising agents are treated as signifiers by the audience. New meanings evolve out of these new signifiers and generate into what Goldman describes as "semiological chains" (Goldman 1992: 66)

7.5 Displacement

Displacement in dreams is explained in two levels. Firstly, displacement occurs when the important elements of the dream-thoughts are displaced in the rather unimportant areas of the dream. Secondly displacement occurs when the dream thoughts find their way from the dream materials in a very indirect and ambiguous manner. This finding its way is the work of the unconscious whose activities can be said to be the "play of signifiers".

In a TV commercial, the main parts or the latent contents, are normally not heard. They are decoded by the audience in some hidden parts of the TVC by means of connotation. Conversely, the main part of the manifest TVC content, normally the end claim in the form of a slogan or an end line does not provide the meaning construction. As Williamson puts it "... 'meaning' is always absent from a system that asks to be deciphered... it (advertising) conceals the meaning we create, by making us seem to discover the meaning 'already' there." (Williamson 1978: 77) The real meaning is always displaced and is up to the viewer to find. It is through this finding out process that the meaning appears to the viewer as real and as "already there" as discussed in the last section.

It can therefore be said that displacement is the one way in which connotation occurs in an advertisement. While connotation makes use of the viewers' "knowledge" in the act of signification from the turning of the signified into signifiers again, displacement works in the same way by the psychic force "creating new significant values from elements of slight value" (Freud 1994: 199) Freud also said "they establish a connection, often a forced and far fetched connection between the dream-content and the dream thoughts.." (ibid: 198) This connection is possible when taking in the contextual elements of the dreamer; which work in the same way as the "knowledge" of the viewer which drives the connotation as proposed by Williamson.

This can simply be seen as the dream content being the signifiers and the dreamthoughts, the signifieds.

7.6 The interpretation of dreams/the interpretation of TV commercials.

The interpretation of dreams by Freud shows that the dreamwork is the basic mental activity behind creativity. In dreams, wish is fulfilled creatively at the unconscious level, avoiding censorship. Meaning is produced at the unconscious level from the manifest dream content by acts of condensation and displacement in the dream-work. The preceding sections establish an analogy between dream-interpretation and ad-interpretation, by first looking into the structure of the "dream-work" (ibid: 174) and comparing it with the structure of how an ad works. Finally, by siting the similarities between the two, it can be shown that the interpretation of TV commercials or advertising in general uses the same techniques of understanding condensation and displacement.

By comparing how Freud interprets dreams to that of focus group research into interpretation of tested TV commercials, the latter provides only a superficial level of interpretation, which is not enough to reveal the latent and deeper meanings of advertising that hit the unconscious. Hence it cannot present a viable interpretation and presentation of whether or not an advertisement works. .

The techniques of condensation and displacement in the dream-work have another effect. Freud states that one cannot entirely be sure to have interpreted a dream completely. There are layers and layers of interpretation due to condensation and displacement; "even if the solution seems satisfying and flawless, it is always possible that yet another meaning has been manifested by the same dream. Thus the degree of condensation is -strictly speaking- indeterminable." (Freud 1901: 176) Similarly, Williamson states that the creation of meaning by connotation can be endless by turning signifieds into signifiers again ready for other significations. Williamson states: "In signification, signifieds are continually being formed as signifiers. ...What the ad does is to provide a 'meta-structure' in which these tranformations may take place." (Williamson 1978: 101)

In this way ad-interpretation does not stop. Second degree signification occurs when the viewer's own signifieds are turned into signifiers providing a second layer of signification. A second source of second degree signification comes from the views of the public, and newspaper articles from the press about the advertisement. These elements arising from other people's reactions/ significations of the advertisement become signifiers for the viewer who encounters with in the mass media. In this way other second degree significations occur. This "semiological chain" as described by Goldman becomes multiple, from various sources, going on to provide multiples of third and fourth degrees of significations.

The diagram below summarises the relationship between the creative agent and the viewer and illustrates how multiple connotations of advertisements can be seen in parallel to the multiple dream-interpretation.

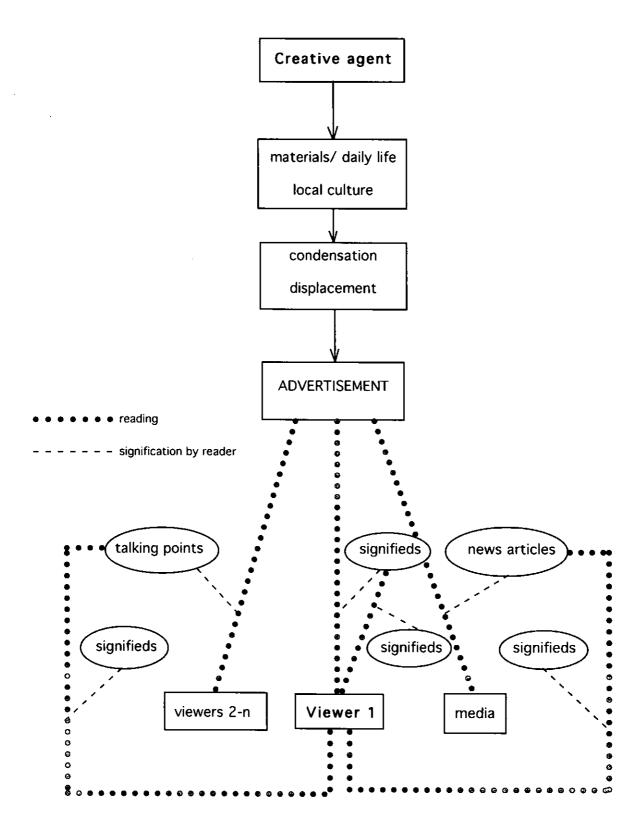


Figure 4 Relationship between the creative agent and the viewer

7.7 Imagination

We have discussed that the employment of focus group to test a TV concept arises from the fact that advertisers see advertising as a conveyance of message and that the viewer is treated as a passive recipient of messages. As a recipient, the viewer applies logic to judge the advertising according to his perspectives and values. However, semiotic theory sees advertising as a construction of meaning. The viewer is treated as active because the advertising invites him to be involved in the construction of meaning. This involvement cannot be achieved without the viewer applying his imagination.

After reading the theory of DuFrenne, we understand more on the subject of imagination in the area of creativity, and of the linkage between the viewer, the creative agent, and the advertisement. DuFrenne states that imagination is not a passive recording of the given but an "act of mind", meaning it is active in creating something; "...imagination must always be present to perception in order for it to be genuine, that is, not merely the passive recording of the given, but an act of mind." (DuFrenne 1990: 45)

What people express is what they imagine. Usually they express what is noble to them. What they think is right in relation to the world. It also expresses what they desire. DuFrenne states: "Thus the man expresses himself in what he imagines, ...he expresses what is most noble in him. ...he initially expresses himself in relation to the world according to what he perceives of it, what he expects, desires, and wants for it, as in utopian thinking." (ibid: 46) The creative agent expresses himself in advertising, attaches his desires, wants and what he expects of the world, to the brand in which viewers are invited to involve their own imagination. Thus viewers of an advertisement, not unlike the creative agent, express themselves through viewing, constructing their own idea of an ideal world.

This ideal world through imagination and through which the subject expresses, is a world out of the subject's desire. But desire is "born in a certain experience of the world", in a way desire is something lost within the current world. DuFrenne states: "This other world is not the other of the world; it is the same world, but lived otherwise." (ibid: 56)

PART IV: THE REALITY IN CAMPAIGN BUILDING.

This section on the reality in campaign building uses real case studies to illustrate the differences in the theories, the process and the results of real life advertising created under the two different and contrasting viewpoints; i.e. the marketing and the semiotic viewpoint. It is divided into two parts.

The first part makes use of a case in which a TVC idea is created under the marketing viewpoint and is finally put to the focus group test. The creative direction follows that of the marketing viewpoint in which it is to convey a single message to the audience. The TVC is then put to the focus group to see whether that message is being conveyed accordingly. The result is that the TVC idea is very well received by the focus group, however when it is finally produced and put on air, the TVC didn't have any impact on the audience. As one of the creators of this TVC, I cannot recall any talking points being aroused by the public at the moment after the launch, neither do I recall any noise on the press talking about this TVC. This is a case illustrating that creativity being used from a marketing viewpoint in which it is in the form of an "execution" of the advertising message in which the audience is treated as passive receiver of messages works well in the focus group but fails in the real world.

The next part makes use of the SUNDAY advertising campaign to illustrate that the success of this campaign is based on creativity in the construction of a "meaning horizon" in which the audience construct their own meanings and derive pleasure through a cultural dialogue between the advertiser and the audience. On this "meaning horizon" the meanings created by the audience are often various. The talking points aroused by both the public and the mass media are sometimes not expected even by the advertiser and the creatives of the advertising. Sometimes the feedback from the mass is very positive like the Independence Day campaign and sometimes it is very negative like the Midnight Promotional TVC (the ghost TVC). However the final result of advertising does not depend on whether the feedback is positive or negative. (It is not the aim of the either the advertiser or the creatives to make every SUNDAY ad positive) It is this employment of creativity to arouse the degree of involvement on the audience's part in the negotiation of meanings which makes the SUNDAY campaign different

from other campaigns and which makes it successful.

Creativity plays a central role in all of SUNDAY's TVCs. It comes into play when a scene is set up, chosen or created to spell out a promotional offer, or a network attribute that is usually irrelevant to the central theme of the creative idea. The measure of creativity can be judged upon the kind of audience excitement and involvement in the creation of meanings from the TV spot.

The SUNDAY campaign is not thematic in nature; i.e. it does not just talk about moods and feelings. Like most advertising, there is a tangible fact that needs to be communicated, e. g. a promotional offer or various attributes of the SUNDAY network like wide coverage or popularity. Under this criteria, it can be said that most SUNDAY ads are divided into two parts, the tangible part and the intangible or cultural part, or in conventional saying, the "what to say" and the "how to say". Every SUNDAY ad is built around a single rational message, a "what to say", be it a promotional message or a network attribute. This rational message is actually very common and can be found in a lot of telecommunications advertising. This is definitely not the part that makes the SUNDAY brand different. It is the way the message is delivered which makes SUNDAY advertising different. i.e. the "how to say" part. It is in this part that creativity is employed to the extent that a cultural message is delivered in which the audience is trying to make sense of in the creation of meanings.

The SUNDAY ads make use of controversy, shock, humour, wit and even stupidity. It can be said that every ad is intended to surprise the audience in order to get their involvement. The reverse is also true. The feedback from the audience and the talking points in the mass media also come as a surprise to the creatives which will in effect influence their creation of the next ad. Another dialogue takes place.

The interaction on this meaning horizon is not simple and does not follow a cause and effect manner. The advertisement is only a starting point. When the TVC is shown to one individual, he is usually perplexed but interested in the TVC, but is unable to make a judgement of whether it is good or bad. He doesn't have to, at this point. He will then talk to friends who

have seen it and gather their reactions. Very often the mass media itself will have a reaction to this TVC, giving feedback through written articles in newspapers and magazines. The individual will again be influenced by the mass media. He will talk then to his friends and comment on what the mass media said about the TVC. (Note that they are not talking about the TVC but about what others said about the TVC). Sometimes this can get one step more complicated, he discusses what others think of what the mass media think of the TVC.

This interaction can go on for several weeks until the TVC airing stops or until the topic goes out of fashion. The point is that under these interactions which are more or less chaotic in nature, the meanings created by the TVC are usually of a wide variety, sometimes contradictory in nature. In this respect, the use of a focus group in the testing of a TVC in which the respondents have to appear to agree on one meaning in an hour's discussion is too simple to reflect the interaction in the real world.

The objective of a focus group which is to correct the tested TVC into one that keeps all the positive things said about it (in the focus group) and taking away all the negative things is fundamentally against the nature of a polysemic communication. Again what is important to a SUNDAY TVC is not whether people like it or hate it (nearly every SUNDAY commercial is either liked or hated by the audience). The importance is that people talk about it and be involved in it and derive the kind of pleasure from it as described by Easthope "That pleasure, and ours, comes from the work/play of the signifier." (Easthope 1999: 113), hence producing meanings out of it.

The rest of the chapter will use specific SUNDAY TV commercials to justify this argument. Every commercial will be discussed along these three lines. 1) What is the client's objective in the TV commercial and why does he buy the idea? 2) What is the possible chain of significations from the viewers? 3) How do the mass media publications open up another chain of significations, and what are they?

Newspaper clippings on the SUNDAY ads will be shown in Appendix II, III and IV to illustrate the reactions of the mass media.

CHAPTER 8: THE MARTELL V.S.O.P TVC CASE

This Martell case shows how advertising is created under the marketing viewpoint which follows a step by step manner and tested finally using the focus groups. This case is used here as a controlled case to compare with the SUNDAY cases in the following chapters in which advertising is done according to the semiotic view. The results and the process of the TVCs done under the two views are very different and are discussed accordingly.

Before going through this case, the thinking and the process of how advertising should be done "ideally" under the marketing view is to be reitterated. Firstly under the Marketing view, since any product is to satisfy the needs and wants of the consumer, communication is to fulfill the purpose of transmitting the message fulfilling these needs. The "message" or the "what to say" is of paramount importance. It is being developed by planners or account servicing people only after a thorough study of the consumers through consumer research. After the message is developed, it is taken to the creative department to develop the execution or the "how to say". After the creative is developed, it is then taken to the focus group to test whether the execution can communicate the "message". According to the marketing view that sees communication as the transmission of messages from one point to another, effective communication means that the message is 100% transmitted to the audience. A TVC that passes the test means that the message is being communicated solely and entirely.

In this case of the VSOP TVC, all the steps of the marketing view are being closely followed. Firstly, the advertising message was developed after numerous consumer research by the account servicing department and is concluded to be "French appeal". Secondly, this advertising message is taken to the creative department to develop the execution or the "how to say" in order to convey the message. Thirdly, the creatives in which I was one of them, came up with the following idea which was finally to be tested by the focus group.

The TVC opens on a wide shot of a magnificent 15th century French chateau during

the magic hour. A hot air balloon is just landed in the grand garden whereby a young and beautiful French girl comes out running towards the owner. We reveal the owner is played by the actor Tony Leung, a well known celebrity. Tony and the French girl embraces each other in the romance of the candle light. Suddenly someone shouted "cut" and reveals that the preceding romance scene is in fact the shooting of a movie. We cut to a wrap party where we see the director chatting with Tony and the crew. They are all drinking Martell VSOP (product consumption shot) The commercial ends when the French actress emerges from an elegant staircase and Tony approaching her obviously stunned by her beauty and ended with the director saying "Tony, the movie is over". (a bit of humour at the end).

The creatives created this idea bearing in mind to pass the focus group test. The message of "French appeal" is executed as a story with a combination of elements such as romance, chateau and movie star. All the mandatories are present e.g. consumption shot and party shot (symbolizing consumption during happy occassion).

This developed idea is then taken to the focus group to test whether the it can convey the "advertising message" of French appeal. Five focus groups were carried out. All the five groups reflects that the "French appeal" is being well communicated. The final conclusion was that the tested TVC was "almost the perfect ad".

This idea was then taken to full production which includes a 10 days shooting in France.

The final film was shot beautifully and demonstrated "French appeal" almost perfectly.

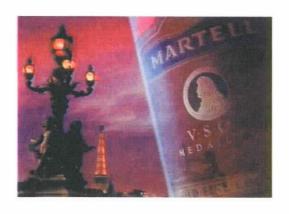
However after the TVC has run for a few weeks, it has no impact on the audience, there was no talking point and there was no media talking about the TVC. It didn't have much effect on the sales either. We can therefore conclude that this case shows that a TVC which is done in a calculated way using the marketing view of communicating a "message" and has scored nearly perfect in a focus group test does not mean that it works in the real world. We can reasonably assume from this case that there is certainly a number of inadequacies of the marketing viewpoint and the way advertising is done accordingly.

Figure 5 Martell V.S.O.P TVC









CHAPTER 9: THE BACKGROUND OF THE SUNDAY BRAND

When the SUNDAY brand was launched on October 1997, the telecommunications industry was close to saturation point. There were already 9 existing network brands in the category and SUNDAY was the last to enter the telecom battlefield. It was well known that the telecom industry was highly competitive in terms of pricing and price per minute airtime has been falling rapidly making the business less and less profitable, thus making it a long term threat to the smaller operators.

At that time the two market leaders, H.K. Telecom 1010 and Hutchison Telecom owned more than 50% of the market with Smartone closing in on the two leaders. The other smaller operators were struggling to survive. There were three different hardware systems and each has its own perceptions. 1010 and Smartone use the GSM system which is very mature and perceived as very reliable while Hutchison uses the CDMA system which has the perception of bad coverage. The other smaller operators were using the PCS system that was very new at that time with most of the operators at the stage of adding cell sites to improve coverage. Therefore, the PCS system suffered poor perception, and even worse user experience. SUNDAY is one of the PCS networks and was in a very bad position during its launch. To make matters worse, the perception of telecom operators lies at two extreme ends of a spectrum. Either the perception is of a very prestigious business with a high pricetag e.g. 1010 and Smartone, or the perception was very "cheap" both in the sense of pricing and image e.g. People's Telecom. SUNDAY, being a PCS network, was classed as one of the cheap brands at that time.

SUNDAY however has some advantages. First it has a good name which can reflect its character of being something quite new to the telecom category with a relaxed and carefree personality. Secondly it has created a lot of noise during its launch with a breakthrough pricing of \$88 unlimited call time. Instantly it has captured around 70,000 subscribers. Thirdly, it is the first operator to launch a number of enhanced services such as Mobile

Concierge, in which the user can ask the SUNDAY operator for information e.g. where to find a good restaurant in Causeway Bay, or, Mobile Assist for a plumber or a towing service etc. However the breakthrough price offer of \$88 unlimited call time was only valid for the first six months so there is a high tendency for the 70,000 subscribers to switch to other operators once the promotional period finishes. It is up to various marketing activities and advertising to develop the SUNDAY brand.

Under the above circumstances, it is vital for SUNDAY to avoid the cheap image. Being a PCS operator and riding on the cut-throat pricing as the launch of the brand, it is again difficult if not impossible to own a prestigious image, not to mention that 1010 is already very strong in that area. It has been mentioned that the perception spectrum of the audience falls into two extremes; very cheap or very prestigious. In many ways, no matter how any advertising is done, people will have a tendency to classify SUNDAY's image according to this spectrum. One job of SUNDAY advertising is to open another perception spectrum of the audience towards the telecom operators.

The three years of SUNDAY campaign has helped it become today's fourth largest operator in H.K. (in terms of subscribers) with subscribers approaching 400,000. In 1999 an Asian regional media magazine Media and Marketing ranked SUNDAY as the Number 1 brand in H.K. (see appendix II).

One of the characteristics of the SUNDAY advertising is their consistency. No one single SUNDAY TVC would be mistaken as a TVC for other brands. Whereas TVCs for other brands which have similar creativity, could be mistaken for SUNDAY's. This element of consistency becomes even more striking when one realizes that throughout all the SUNDAY TV advertising, no sort of similar structure, talent, humour, director's treatment or concept has been used. It can be said that inconsistency is the only constant in the SUNDAY advertising. The creative agent is consciously trying to make every SUNDAY ad different.

Three case studies on three SUNDAY TVCs will be done to illustrate the creation of a meaning horizon in each of the TVCs. Each case study will start by introducing the advertiser's

objective. Then we will discuss the creative idea along the lines of generating different levels of significations. Finally the reactions of the mass media in the form of articles written in different publications will be analysed. These articles are seen as signifieds from the publications which, when read by the public and viewers, will be treated as signifiers further generating another chain of significations. In this way a "meaning horizon" is constructed by the advertisement.

CHAPTER 10: CASE 1 - POPULARITY TVC (HANDSOME MAN)

This commercial was launched in July 1999. It is one of the most talked about commercials of SUNDAY and it won a Gold award in the client's category in the 2000 4A's Awards. Around three months after the Independence Day campaign, SUNDAY had to regain presence in the market so a series of TVCs had to be launched. Since there was nothing much left to say, (there was no promotional offer and the audience was well informed of SUNDAY's network attributes) the agency was briefed to think of something substantial to say. Popularity of the network was finally agreed to be the key message of the commercial. It has to be made clear that in terms of absolute popularity, SUNDAY was quite a distance from the leaders, i.e. 1010 and Hutchison. However research showed that in the "becoming more popular" category, SUNDAY was the leader. This meant that when asked "which operator is getting more and more popular?", the majority of respondents said SUNDAY. The client and the creatives had to be very clear on this point, otherwise the commercial would have been accused of over claiming.

The solution turned out to be one of the very few cases in which the brief was not answered directly. The TVC opens on a close up of a mobile phone lying on the ground; cut to reveal a young girl picking it up, asking herself "Whose SUNDAY is this?" with the same super on the frame. Then it cuts to various scenes of wide shots in which the same girl asks different young men if the SUNDAY phone is theirs. All of them said no by showing the girl that he has his own SUNDAY phone. Finally the girl finds the one man who phone is lost. He vaguely nods his head without showing much appreciation. The commercial ends with a split screen showing nine young men with voice over and super saying: From unofficial findings, "Nine out of ten SUNDAY users are handsome men."(十個SUNDAY用戶 九個靚仔)

By literally interpreting the TVC it doesn't say that SUNDAY is getting more popular. However the visual and the story line gives the impression that everyone in the commercial, i.e. everyone that the girl finds, is already a SUNDAY user. This already demonstrates that

Figure 6 Handsome Man TVC









SUNDAY is very popular (at least among the younger group).

It can also be said that the whole execution of the TVC is very commercial and resembles the most conventional way of advertising. This is reflected in jokes about commercials in typical variety shows in the TV stations; i.e. shouting out the name of the brand for the most number of times in 30 seconds. The SUNDAY ad did exactly that. In the first second, the user already knows it is a SUNDAY ad. During the whole story of the girl trying to find the person who has lost his phone, the "SUNDAY?" super shows up when the girl shows the phone to the boy, the boy answers the girl, with super "SUNDAY" meaning "I already have my SUNDAY phone. This was done repeatedly eight times. Although the situations chosen are quite stylised, and the talents are quite good looking and trendy, it doesn't stop the audience from suspiciously asking "Why is SUNDAY doing this "commercial" commercial"? This is in fact a typical commercial up to this point. But knowing SUNDAY, the audience would also know that there has to be a trick at the end and cannot wait to see it.

The pun at the end, the core of the commercial which gives a number of meanings to SUNDAY, was finally delivered: "From unofficial findings, nine out of ten SUNDAY users are handsome men." Firstly, it comes from a famous colloquial Chinese saying "Nine out of ten bald men are rich." (十個光頭九個富) which is quite old fashioned. However when changed and put into the context of this story featuring fashionable youngsters, it immediately gives the new meaning of trendiness; making the construction of a "second degree kitsch". "Just as the retrieval of decades-old home movie footage spoke to a higher level of authenticity, second-degree-kitsch ironically turns both the plastic religious icon and the plastic stiffness of a 1950s deodorant commercial into signs of a refined sensibility." (Goldman & Papson 1996: 258)

The result is such that people can now have a good excuse for using SUNDAY, jokingly telling their friends that they use SUNDAY because they are "handsome". (People have been making up excuses to their friends of why they use this or that brand knowing subconsciously that their excuse is false; the only real excuse being that the brand offers a cheap

tariff, which they are reluctant to tell their friends) The advertising has made this joke and false excuse seem even fashionable.

More importantly, this claim immediately catapults the viewer to a position that he can see the existing context of advertising he is in contact with everyday. In all advertising, no matter how far the idea and the creative goes, one must come back to a rational and beneficial claim. This SUNDAY TVC challenges that assumption by putting a somehow ridiculous claim at the end. By so doing, it lets the viewers realise that all advertising is in fact trying very hard to make them believe in their benefit. SUNDAY did a very "advertising" advertisement to intentionally make them disbelieve the end claim, showing a level of honesty and sophistication in communication on SUNDAY's side and, more importantly, respecting the audience at the same time. Such is in accordance with what Goldman and Papson termed reflexivity in advertising in which the viewer is recognized by their knowledge of advertising. "Reflexivity in advertising, however has emerged as a strategy to reroute viewer criticism... Such positioning gives the viewer status, by recognizing the viewer as a holder of cultural capital, someone who has knowledge of the codes ... the advertiser appears to speak to the viewer as a peer." (Goldman & Papson 1996: 74)

The claim of SUNDAY users being "handsome" is in fact a false claim that everyone knows but is also something the viewers wish to believe. The claim itself is so fake as to be believable. This is seemingly contradictory but if one looks into the reality of how existing viewers see advertising, they are often very sceptical towards advertising and are quite afraid and embarrassed of being cheated by advertising in general. A claim that is so fake reduces this fear to a minimum and suddenly puts the viewers into a position where it becomes a pleasurable experience to believe in something so fake.

This TVC is in effect anti-advertising. On a superficial level it is very hard sell and shows all the elements the client would like to see (19 logos throughout the commercial); however on the second level it questions the basic workings of advertising, of attaching meanings to products making them signs. It lets the viewers see this "reality" in advertising and, at the

same time, treating them as equals. Hence, as Goldman & Papson interpret as turning the "self-reflexive awareness of advertising codes into an object of consumption, into a sign the viewer can clothe herself in and thereby use to indicate a certain immunity from the manipulative effects of swallowing too much code." (Goldman & Papson 1996:74)

Apart from the multiple meanings which can be constructed by reflexivity and honesty and which recognise the audience as a "holder of cultural capital", the press also introduced a number of significations to be used as signifiers for further significations. (see appendix II)

Don't Touch featured a vote of the most handsome man in the TVC. Oriental Daily used a spoof of the TVC's headline stating "Nine out of ten SUNDAY advertisements are being praised." (Oriental Daily, 2 August 2000) It is a rather academic article and examines the issue of "hard sell" being twisted in the idea of this commercial. Another section discusses the relationship between the advertiser and the audience through advertising and explores the idea of being not too serious with of the audience to gain empathy.

The "handsome TVC" was also featured in a section of Oriental Daily 4, April 2000 featuring news from the telecommunications industry. While the topics in the section are usually around new services from the operators e.g. "Extra launches online auction" or "wap.Peoples introduces chat room" (Oriental Daily, 11 April 2000), there was a headline on SUNDAY which states "Nine out of ten SUNDAY advertisements are award winners." (ibid) again playing on the spoof of the end line. The article was around SUNDAY advertisement winning 7 awards in the Asian Advertising Awards and ends with "reminding other operators that while service quality is important, the quality of the advertisements should not be neglected." (ibid)

From the press, the discussion of this TVC leads to opening up of topics like creative awards and issues of whether or not hard sell advertising works or not. These topics generate a chain of significations.

The popularity of using the spoof of the end line in the mass media influences the viewers to invent spoofs of their own to use in daily life e.g. "Nine out of ten bosses are

mean" etc. In this way, the usage of this spoof becomes almost trendy and entertaining, thereby constructing the signification of the SUNDAY brand being influential.

The TVC started off from the brief of communicating the "message" of popularity. In the end the use of reflexivity in the advertising itself can be seen as starting up a series of different significations. E.g., signifying the self-image of the viewer being holder of "cultural capital", and being seen as a "peer" to the SUNDAY brand. Furthermore from the different articles in newspapers and magazines, it started up another chain of significations, especially when viewers take the spoof in the end line to invent their own saying in their daily lives. The subject matter of these new spoofs invented by the audience continues the chain of significations.

CHAPTER 11: CASE 2 - 1622 IDD PROMOTION (CHUK YIP CHIANG)

This commercial was launched in December 1999. At that time the IDD market was very competitive. Every operator was running advertising on price- cutting, or the cheapest rate. The spots done by the main competitor CTI were very effective with high cut-through using the CTI superman. SUNDAY's objective was to announce their new rate for U.S. and Canada.

The old saying "If you have something really different, you don't have to make a song and dance, you just have to spell out your offer..." did not apply because every time, each operator has something really different to spell out that the audience became indifferent to these messages.

The uniqueness of the whole IDD market is that it has become a low interest category. The market was super-mature and all that can be done is pricing only. The problem is that the audience has been bombarded with these pricing messages for a few years (since CTI started the price war) that they become totally indifferent to this tactic.

Hard sell, shouting out the price commercials would not work since everyone has been doing them. In keeping with the SUNDAY brand the creatives had to come up with a breakthrough in the category.

This time the idea is a "spoof" (a paraphrase) of a very old commercial that everyone knows; the Chuk Yip Chiang (竹葉青) which is a traditional Chinese wine. The SUNDAY IDD commercial is different only in changing the line "You are smart, so am I" (你精我都精) to "You are cheap, so am I." (你cheap我都cheap) and the treat at the end instead of the food the SUNDAY TVC offers an IDD call.

The idea is simple, not much creativity was involved in the story plot of the production. However the meanings created from this commercial are numerous. An understanding of this commercial requires the understanding of the meanings of the old Chuk Yip Chaing commercial. There are two different meanings. The first is the meaning of

Figure 7 Chuk Yip Chiang TVC









the old commercial when it was run in the old days. Since this commercial has been running for more than a decade, another meaning comes out when it is run as a very old commercial in the present day.

The commercial was run in the early eighties in H.K. The story opens on a construction site, the workers are finishing their day's work and one of them happily announces: "Tonight there is a treat from the boss!". The commercial cuts to the interior of the boss' big house in which the workers are treated to a big meal. The atmosphere is very happy and it shows that the boss is a Westerner, probably an architect, and is very friendly towards his subordinates. Much to the workers' surprise the drink the boss offers is a traditional Chinese wine, the Chuk Yip Chiang. The workers are very happy giving the thumbs up for this special treat. Cut to close up of the boss talking to camera "You are smart, so am I." Cut to end shot showing the group at the table shouting out together: "You are smart, so am I, let's drink Chuk Yip Chiang."

In the early eighties, a Westerner had the image of superiority and it is not uncommon to find a lot of advertising for luxury goods and fashion using Westerners as models to symbolize a western way of life. The objective of the Chuk Yip Chiang commercial can be said to uplift the image of the brand. It can be understood that the target market is the blue-collar worker. The need to uplift the image of this Chinese wine might be because of threats from local or imported beers that carry a relatively better image. The scene in which the workers, surprised that their Western boss shares their same taste for drinking Chuk Yip Chiang, provides the meaning that Chuk Yip Chiang is in fact a trendy drink and there is no need to be ashamed of drinking it with friends. The boss himself even declares that it is a smart drink

The re-run of the commercial more than ten years later provides a different meaning. To everybody, even though the commercial features a Westerner drinking the product, it is because of the age of the commercial and the changing role of the Westerner in today's Hong Kong. society that makes the brand even older. The use of a Westerner today to

enhance aspiring value is a very outdated practice. The pre-1997 period can be said to be a period in which H.K. establishes its own identity. "In this final stage, Hong Kong advertising can be seen to move from projecting Western people and images to represent its own identity, to a stage in which it clearly tries to construct an image of a unique cultural identity for Hong Kong and its people." (Wong 1999: 170) At this stage, any advertising that uses a Westerner to create aspiring value to a product will only meet with the strongest resistance and disrespect.

The "spoof" SUNDAY IDD TVC, although using exactly the same plot and execution, has totally different meanings due to the different context in which the same story is used. During the first 15 seconds, the audience is lead to believe that they are seeing an old Chuk Yip Chiang commercial. Not until the shot where the waiter opens the dish to reveal that there is a telephone inside does the audience realise that there is something wrong. The end line delivered by the look-alike boss "You are cheap, so am I." wraps up the whole idea that this is in fact an IDD promotion commercial.

The line "You are cheap, so am I." has at least three different meanings. Firstly the boss is seen as the spokesman for the advertiser commenting on the cheapness of the current IDD market. The "you are cheap" meaning "other operators' pricing is cheap, so am I". This is a self-mocking way of addressing the promotion in a confident way. The second meaning, the "you are cheap" the "cheap" representing a personality, a cheapness in character implying all the operators know it is to cut the price. The "so am I" part represents a reluctance to behave "cheap" as well. The third meaning, the "you" representing the audience, wants to have a cheap price that's why we are offering a cheap price to you. This is the meaning of a caring operator understanding the needs of the consumer. The fourth meaning, the "you" representing the audience but the "cheap" representing a "cheap personality" and works in the same way as the second meaning. The fifth meaning, the "so am I" part (我都 cheap) carries the meaning of "I do a cheap commercial for you" since you are so cheap. Also self-mockery but mocking the audience as well for being so cheap.

This works a bit like the double meaning in a sentence in which the audience can derive pleasure in jumping from one meaning to another and back. Not all five meanings are intended to be acquired by the audience but one of the interesting areas of this commercial is to have a multiple meaning line, to let the audience form their own versions. From any of the five meanings (signifieds) one can have further significations when turning the signifieds into signifiers.

From the press Sing Tao PC fun (see appendix III), the interpretation is around the nostalgic quality and "retro 70's" style of this commercial in an era of "cyber look around the city", that "awakens the cyber dream in Hong Kong". During an interview of the creative agents, they mentioned many icons of the Hong Kong 70's that had influenced them like "Foresthill (sports shoes), Dorman (iron print T-shirt), Sam Hui (pop singer), etc." (Sing Tao PC fun, 29 Dec 1999). The significations of these items on the way of life of the 70's will be immense in the context of life in the 2000's.

The Apple Daily, one of the top tabloids has chosen this commercial as one of the most "creative" commercials of 1999. It mentions that "the deliberate copy of the 'Chuk Yip Chiang', commercial of the 80's with the end line 'you are cheap, so am I', has the quality of the SUNDAY brand which is naughty and fun" (Apple Daily, 29, Dec 1999). Don't Touch, a pop magazine on lifestyle trends, dedicates a full page to do a shot by shot comparison of the SUNDAY and the old "Chuk Yip Chiang" commercial. The main focus of the article was on the issue of paraphrase. It brought out another SUNDAY commercial "Nine out of ten SUNDAY users are handsome men" and illustrated that a popular movie by a local director paraphrase this commercial in a shot by shot manner with the end claim "Nine out of ten men are non condom users". (Don't Touch, December issue)

These two publications seemed to imply that "paraphrase" is now the trend which creates impact and is in contrast to the common believe that paraphrasing implies non-originality. It leads the viewer to reconsider the issue of copying in a totally different perspective.

One more important meaning comes from the reason for picking this specific old commercial. It has been discussed that H.K. people are in search of their new identity that is reflected in the advertising at this stage. When shown a commercial of the previous stage in which they aspired to Western values and lifestyles, they are reminded of their own past, which they are a bit reluctant and embarrassed to admit. The power of the SUNDAY "spoof" TVC is that it makes fun of that old commercial, thereby making fun of the whole era in which H.K. people were aspired to Western lifestyles. From having the courage to make fun of oneself, it only meant that one has matured. The SUNDAY "spoof" did just that, reinforcing and establishing the idea that H.K. people are in fact moving into another stage of development, into a phase which is more advanced, away from the time that they were aspiring to the West. A time that now we are able to laugh about.

This feeling is best summarised by Olalquiaga who states: "...a perspective wherein appreciation of the "ugly" conveys to the spectator an aura of refined decadence, an ironic enjoyment from a position of enlightened superiority" (Olalquiaga 1992: 51)

CHAPTER 12: CASE 3 - MIDNIGHT PROMOTION (TAXI DRIVER).

This TVC was launched in September 2000. It is the TVC with a historical record of complaints from more than 1800 H.K. people and because of that was finally banned. It is also the campaign according to the client that works very well, to the extent that it has launched the most effective promotion, with the highest sales throughout any promotional period in the history of SUNDAY.

From the mere figures, one might be tempted to think that there must be a very breakthrough price-cutting promotion idea. However the contrary is true. The promotion is a \$0.1 per minute during the hours 1 am to 7 am. In itself it is not a very attractive promotion because the offer is restricted to the time when most of the users are sleeping. The client's target is those people who are working during the night, i.e. taxi drivers, newspaper delivery people, security people and people working in the night life industry. It is also part of the brief that the creative has to feature this group in the TVC.

The idea makes use of interesting things that could happen at night and, bearing in mind that there has not been any really scary ghost TV commercials, it might be a fresh start. The commercial opens on a medium shot of a taxi driver, driving around routinely in the countryside looking for customers and listening to the radio. Suddenly a girl all dressed in red is standing at the roadside with no intention of catching the taxi. The taxi driver, out of curiosity, slows down and takes a good look at her. Cut to close up of the girl she turns towards the driver and has eye contact. Her eyes are devilish green in colour. The taxi driver is shocked and steps on the accelerator to escape the situation. The girl in red chases the taxi. The taxi driver increases speed and checks his mirror to find that the girl is no longer there. He is relieved. All of a sudden the girl slides right outside his side window, banging a huge sticker of the promotional offer "\$0.1 per minute, really scary rate." The taxi driver is shocked and faints.

On the surface, there is actually nothing really creative about this commercial. The

Figure 8 Taxi Driver TVC









plot of the story is quite common, with all the elements of a scary ghost story; i.e. a scary night, something unusual, running away, escaping and finally the ghost coming back. This kind of plot must be quite common to the audience and most of them have seen something similar before. The end super in the form of a huge sticker saying "scary rate" as a wrap up to this commercial is also quite average when comparing to "Nine out of ten.." and " you are cheap..." It doesn't have that kind of magic to it.

The really creative part in this TVC is the play of different contexts. First of all, a ghost story is quite uncommon in TV commercials. When shown for the first time in an advertisement, the audience would not expect something scary to happen. They would feel that this is at most some ghost movie promo aired by the TV station. The level of scariness they expect of these promos is not much. Moreover, these promos normally feature vignettes of the story, so normally the story is not shown in totality, thus reducing the scariness. A 30-second spot featuring a rather complete ghost story in an advertising airspace is in this sense a very new experience for an audience. Hence the response of the audience is often of a very scary nature, which reflects in the cutthrough and the talking points of the TVC. It is also a new direction started by SUNDAY.

The other feature that is evident when this TVC is compared to existing SUNDAY TVCs, is that usually the SUNDAY spots will make people laugh but this time it makes people frightened. Note that the audience won't misinterpret it for a TVC by other brands because the same "creativity" as used in other SUNDAY TVCs is familiar and this sudden change of direction will only make the commercial more SUNDAY, thereafter expecting the SUNDAY advertising to change every time. This time it is the change itself that shocks them, but the fear is only temporary. When the viewer finally discovers that this is a SUNDAY ad that has surprised him, it becomes almost fun.

The ghost story makes use of a very H.K. ghost story setting with which the audience is familiar. Moreover, it is widely known that a lot of taxi drivers listen to ghost stories on the radio at night and, as a passenger, one is generally delighted by the

suspense of these stories. The executional treatment is taken from the local ghost films of the mid-80's. The whole plot and execution is deliberately chosen not to be different or creative. It is deliberately done in a way that has been seen before. This is important because the spot tries to make the audience scared of something so familiar; that they would feel a bit embarrassed and stupid of being scared by a typical ghost story that they had encountered sometime ago.

Why is this spot so successful in customer acquisition? Being scary seems to have nothing to do with the price offer apart from the rather superficial link to the offer as "scary price". (Although superficial, it justifies SUNDAY using this topic and stops further rational thinking on why to use a ghost story.) Some background to the telecom industry is needed here. The telecom industry today is in the process of maturity. People's interest in the subject is not as high as 18 months ago. Most operators have been on a price-cutting strategy and the consumers have been indifferent to all these offers. There is not much attraction to a \$5 difference in monthly fee. Therefore, the actual price being cut is not the main focus of attention but perception of a great value deal is. In this case \$0.1 per minute has little meaning to consumers. They know it is cheap, but they do not know how cheap. Is it very cheap or just cheap? The kind of cut-through and the shocking power of the ghost TVC has given a sense of reference to the value of the offer. It has given meaning to the offer by simply juxta positioning the shock value of the commercial to the shock value of the offering. In this way, according to the client, this commercial has induced a lot of traffic to the shops with customers asking for more details thus giving the salespeople an opportunity to close a deal with added offerings.

The shock value of the commercial is more so confirmed by the press and the media. There were a total of six articles by the press discussing the shock value of the TVC and two articles asking the creatives how they came up with this idea and whether they thought it would scare viewers etc. (see appendix IV)

The first publication to react was Oriental Daily, which has an article the day

immediately after the TVC was aired. The headline was: "SUNDAY ghost TVC has at least ten complaints" with subhead: "A three year old girl was shocked to shout and cry." (Oriental Daily, 27 December 2000.) It briefly described the storyline of the TVC with visuals of the "ghost" and then described how various audience were shocked by the commercial. Another article by Apple Daily was published on 1st October 2000. Headline said: "226 complaints. Broadcast Authority looking into the matter." (Apple Daily, 1st October 2000) The public relations manager defended the commercial in the article by stating that the concept was in line with the promotion offer of "scary rates"; he hoped that the viewers wouldn't be so scared after watching it a few times. Two days later, on 3rd October 2000, two magazines published articles. Don't Touch interviewed the creative agents on whether they felt that the TVC was too "scary" for the average viewer. It then interviewed four taxi drivers on whether they were frightened by the TVC. The creative agents said that the kind of ghost stories were common and could be found in radio programmes at night. Of the four taxi drivers interviewed, one supported the idea saying it was creative. One hadn't seen the TVC and the other two complained about the TVC saying that it was too scary. Easy Finder was another publication that had an article on the same day. The headline was: "Taxi driver: 'Don't use SUNDAY'". (Easy Finder, 3rd October 2000) It used a superstitious approach and interviewed a fortune-teller taxi driver. Also interviewed were two taxi drivers and a form 4 student. One taxi driver was very negative about the TVC and asked other taxi drivers not to use SUNDAY. The other one said he was not afraid of the commercial. The form 4 student said she was very scared when the red ghost appeared. It did a survey that ranked three shots selected from the TVC in terms of scariness.

Oriental Daily did an article purely interviewing the creative agents on how they came up with the idea and the technical problems of how to make it scary in 30 seconds. They were then asked how they feel about so many complaints. Leslie, one of the creative agents, said that the idea came from ghost talks between friends. They said that

in order to make the TVC scary, they have to "borrow existing typical ghost scenes" to have the instant scary feel. When asked how they feel about the complaints, both of them said that it was "because of the conservative nature of the Chinese culture" (Oriental Daily, 7 October 2000). They said they were not disappointed because they believed that there were many who liked the TVC, but would not admit it.

On 8 October 2000, the Hong Kong Daily News interviewed another creative agent. The story was around the background of the creative agents who made this TVC. Other works like the light hearted Kowloon Motor Bus campaign was shown to contrast with the scary ghost TVC. Other issues like the ability of the viewers to adapt to innovative ideas in Hong Kong were discussed.

On 13, October 2000, the TVC was instantly banned. Two publications did articles to discuss the matter. Apple Daily's headline states: "Viewers were scared. More than 1800 complaints." (Apple Daily, 13 October 2000) A social organization states that the "reaction of the Broadcast Authority was slow" (Apple daily, 13 October 2000). The same day, Oriental Daily headlines read: "SUNDAY ghost TVC finally banned". It interviewed the advertiser, whose reaction is mild, stating "the commercial has achieved its advertising objective" (ibid). It further states that the creative direction of the SUNDAY advertisements "would not be affected by this incident" (ibid)

Two weeks later approaching Halloween, another tabloid newspaper, The Sun, did an experiment on the street in Kowloon Tong using a girl dressed in red to scare the taxi drivers in a way mimicking the SUNDAY commercial, to see if it was really scary in real life. It was reported that a number of taxi drivers "fled instantly at high speed" (The Sun, 28 October 2000) when the woman in red waved at the taxis. There were only three drivers who stopped and were interviewed.

It can be seen that from this series of articles, many different significations can be formed:

• The TVC started off as a night time promotion

- The issue of complaints was brought up
- The issue of whether taxi drivers were scared
- Taxi drivers asking other drivers to stop using the SUNDAY network
- The reason of sticking "fortune items" in taxis
- How the creative agents feel about the complaints
- What the backgrounds of these creative agents were
- The ability of Hong Kong viewers to adapt to innovative creative work
- The immediate banning of the TVC
- Whether the Broadcast Authority was too slow to ban the TVC
- How the advertiser feels about the banning of the TVC
- Whether this story line, when put to real life, would scare taxi drivers.

All of this free publicity can be seen as the signified of other parties which when published becomes the signifier to the people who read them. Hence multiple second levels of signification similar to that illustrated in figure 4 of 7.6 take place.

As was said in the introduction to this part, people don't just talk about the commercial, but about what is being talked about in the commercial. All in all, the interest level to this commercial (whether people hate it or not) becomes so high that the TVC becomes only a starting point of the whole affair. People are in fact doing free advertising for this offer and for the SUNDAY brand which explains a great deal of the success of this campaign.

A TVC that started different levels of signification in a way so complicated by the media response and the level of interest shown by the audience cannot be expected to be revealed and forecast in the focus group. The element of alarm (if it can be represented in a focus group) that is so crucial to this idea, would also be the reason for it being killed instantly in the group.

CONCLUSION

The study on the validity of focus groups four years ago was based on one single feeling common to nearly all the creative agents in the industry: "Why is it that the TV ideas surviving the focus groups always come out as boring and expected?" In this thesis, the question was first tackled from the technical side in which the questioning techniques of the focus group were studied. The viewing environment of the tested TVC was examined and finally the methodology of the test was scrutinised. We find that there is a fundamental problem within the system of the test itself that needs to be addressed.

The structure of the focus group test can be divided into three parties; the advertiser, the creative agent and the research agent. It is discovered that a fundamental problem arises in the difference in definition of advertising amongst the two crucial parties, the advertiser and the creative agent, such that the validity of focus groups in testing TV concepts was seriously endangered. The difference is so great that one can say that the two definitions of advertising are contradictory and mutually exclusive. It can be seen here that the original study into the validity of focus groups in testing TV concepts opens up a new view of the study and consequences of the different philosophies of advertising as used by marketers and scholars.

The Marketing philosophy gives rise to one definition of advertising by the advertisers. It sees marketing as the satisfying of inherent consumer needs. The consumption of commodities can provide consumer benefits that satisfy those needs. Advertising plays the part of communicating the consumer benefit in the form of an advertising message to the audience through various advertising media e.g. a 30-second TV commercial or a print ad. In this way advertising can be seen as divided into two parts; the "what to say" and the "how to say". The "what to say" is the advertising message carrying the consumer benefit. It is often decided by consumer research. The "how to say" is the creative execution which fulfils the function of translating the "what to say" into a 30 second TV commercial or a print ad. The function of the focus group test is to test whether this "how to say" is able to convey the "what to say" to the audience.

If the focus group test is to be really efficient, advertising should be constructed according to the following criteria. 1) there is a simple advertising message to be found out by research, 2) this message should be communicated in a direct, unambiguous and explicit manner and 3) that only this original message as sent by the source should be received solely, totally and accurately by the audience; any other unintended messages received are treated as undesired. This model sees the viewer as a more or less passive recipient of messages. The importance is placed on the "what to say" or the advertising message based on consumer research. The "how to say" or the creative execution is only secondary whose job is to translate the "what to say" in various advertising media. In this way it can be said that creativity is not the most important factor in the formation of an advertisement. However this philosophy is contradicted by another school of thought which sees advertising as communication using the semiotic model.

Under the semiotic model, it does not see advertising as conveying messages from the advertiser to the audience. It is basically a creative based model placing emphasis on the "how to say" or the creative execution. It sees advertising as a construction of meaning through signification, a process brought about by denotation and connotation. The meaning constructed has a sense of transcendental realness because it involves the participation of the viewer who fills in the gap in the completion of the meaning. In this case the desired meaning constructed is always not direct and explicit in the advertising as defined by the way in which effective advertising is seen under the marketing philosophy, but "hidden" to be decoded by the viewer. Signification in this way in the meaning construction does not stop when the first layer of desired meaning is achieved. It goes on with the viewer in which multiple layers of meanings are constructed. Effective advertising is judged by how much the viewer is involved in this continuous meaning construction process. Talking points, gossips and irrelevant meanings around the advertisement are welcomed because this will facilitate a continuous interactive process hence constructing more meanings. Again, this is contrary to the marketing practice that sees any other messages received as undesired. The

semiotic model empowers the viewer in that the viewer is allowed and expected to put in creativity in the unconscious construction of meanings and does not treat him as a passive and conscious recipient of messages. Under this school, creativity is placed as the most important element in shaping meanings both in the creator of the advertisement and its reader.

Given these fundamental differences it can be said that the focus group, under the current practice of testing advertising concepts, has no relevance in its findings when advertising is seen along the theory of semiotics.

However, even under the semiotic view of advertising, one can also use focus groups as a tool to test advertising effectiveness. Here I would propose to use the focus groups to test advertising or TVC after it has been aired. There are a few advantages to this method. Firstly, the focus group test now is not about testing a story board in which the audience has to imagine how the TVC would look like when it is filmed. Knowing that the respondents are not film experts, it is much easier for them to comment on a real TVC which they have seen several times before in an environment which is also real; i.e. the living room. In this case two of the major difficulties involving the technicalities of the focus group test as elaborated in Part I of this thesis has been solved i.e. 1) How does the hand-drawn story board represent the real TVC which is filmed? and 2) the difference in viewing environment in which the TVC is shown to the audience.

The other advantage of doing the test after the TVC is aired is that one is now "finding" what meanings have constructed through the mass media instead of testing what meanings will be constructed by the story board. In this way the findings are then more objective and realistic. These findings are more valuable because if the aired TVC doesn't work, one would know the reasons why it doesn't. Is it because the desired meanings are not constructed or that even if the desired meanings are constructed, they cannot translate into sales figures. One can also test what additional meanings are constructed and how they will affect the brand.

For those commercials which work, it is also worth doing the focus group test because one can know why the TVC works; is it because of the desired constructed meaning being rightly constructed? or is it because of some additional meanings other than the desired meanings which makes the TVC works? For commercials which works very well but are seen as risky ideas involving complaints from the audience, one can test why these ideas works and might consider more "risky" ideas for the next TVC.

These lessons from the audience's reaction to the advertising are valuable in determining how future advertisements should be created and what directions or elements of the creative should be avoided. To the creative agent, the focus group can then be a source of information to confirm their previous judgement or to tell them that their previous judgement is wrong. To the advertisers, it serves as a checkpoint as to whether the preferred signified is connoted along with a check on other meanings being constructed. If the TVC doesn't work, it can tell the advertisers why it doesn't. In marketing terms, maybe their "what to say" is not communicated or that the "what to say" is communicated so well that the audience has no reaction to the TVC.

The advertising industry has always believed the idea of creativity accompanying risk. With the proposed usage of focus groups after the airing of advertisements, the industry or individual advertising agencies can arrange focus groups to test "risky" advertisements, that has aired, the findings of which will be valuable to the industry as to how much risk they can take or certain risks that they shouldn't take. In this way the advertisers and the creative agents have more reason and backings from the findings of the post-focus group tests to support the use of more creative work so that the whole industry benefits from an advancement in creative standards.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE CASE OF CARLSBERG BEER

A. DESCRIPTION

On 25 May 1997, two focus groups were conducted under the commission of Bozell Worldwide to test the new concepts of the Carlsberg 1997-98 thematic TV commercial campaign.

The research house used was SRH (Survey Research HK) the largest H. K. research house in 1997. Billy Yu (Associate DIRECTOR SRH) headed the project team.

Briefing was conducted on 20 May 1997 and the agency's objective was to test the TV concepts in terms of strategy and execution. The moderator was alarmed at the inconsistencies in the agency's presentation of the three TVC concepts. Although only two were in VHS and one in concept board, the moderator said that he could handle the discrepancies.

All the procedures of the research were conducted in a standard and professional manner between agency and research house except for one thing. The results and recommendations of the focus group test would NOT influence the final production of the TVC to be broadcast.

The research house was not informed of this fact.

The procedure of the focus group was as follows:

The group with Heineken drinkers was done first. All the respondents were invited into an enclosed room with a big couch, and a coffee table in the centre with snacks and soft drinks. The moderator was seated on an armchair facing the group. The whole process was recorded by VHS.

As with all focus groups, this was started with a warm up session in which the moderator asked the group a lot of casual questions. After about 10 minutes, the moderator began to lead the group into discussing their attitudes towards "happy hour", which lasted for about 25 minutes. After this the discussion was lead into the respondents' current percep-

tion towards the brands Carlsberg, Heineken and San Miguel, which lasted about another 20 minutes.

The moderator then told the group that they were going to see a new TVC concept for Carlsberg. He announced that the tested TVC campaign was in a video format but with rough and unfinished footages taken from movies and other sources, and that the final one would be much better quality. He asked the respondents to use their imagination to visualize the final version.

The first tested TVC "Tennis" was then shown once (watch VHS tape). The TV set was turned off and the moderator handed to every respondent the "Tennis" TVC script on paper with all the voice-over and the final announcer voice-over written in Chinese. The respondents were given about 3 minutes to read the TVC scripts. After that the same "Tennis" TVC was shown once more.

The second tested TVC "Chasing girl" was then shown. Likewise the script was also handed out and read by the respondents. The second TVC was then shown a second time.

The third TVC idea "UFO" was in the form of a "concept board". The moderator showed the board to the respondents without any preamble and explained the visuals of the concept board being the story of a man telling his friends that aliens abducted his cat. The TVC script of "UFO" was also handed out to the respondents to read.

After all the tested concepts were shown, the discussions on their understanding and feelings towards the tested TVC concepts were performed rigorously. Respondents were also asked which one of the three TVC concepts they liked best and were also probed into which aspects of the TVCs they liked or disliked.

For the Carlsberg group, the procedures were more or less the same, except that the warm up exercise was not done.

After the two groups finished, the moderator and the agency sat together and talked about preliminary findings.

The qualitative report was faxed to the agency a week later.

B. ANALYSIS

A focus group is one of the most commonly used preliminary research methods. It involves several steps of which each play equally important roles in the effectiveness and relevance of the data obtained. The steps include: formulation of research questions, identification of sampling frame, identification of moderator, generation and pre-testing of interview guide, recruiting the sample, conducting the group, analysis and interpretation of data and writing the report (Stewart & Shamdasami 1990). Any flaws in any of the aforementioned steps may lead to incorrect conclusions drawn.

A focus group on testing creative concepts has been conducted. This case study would be used to compare with the world standard of focus group usage. We found that there is a gap between the Hong Kong and world standard in terms of professionalism. We would focus on three area where most flaws are found and should be avoided - design of the focus group, conducting the focus group, and interpretation of data.

Design

Construction of interview guide

Having an interview guide beforehand is very important because it "sets the agenda for a focus group discussion... It should not proceed until the research agenda and all of the questions related to it has been articulated clearly and agreed upon by all parties with an interest in the research." (Stewart/Shamdasami 1990.) In our case study, we were not given any research questions nor interview guide ahead of time. Without any agreement, the questions asked in the interview might not generate the desired answers. This not only affects greatly the interview process but also the accuracy of the data obtained.

Not having an interview guide may lead to inconsistency in the question format. For instance, participants of Heineken first started their discussion about commercials on beer brands (Heineken tape 01:23:17). This warm up exercise "serves the useful function of getting the topic on the table without revealing all the specific issues that are of interest." (Stewart 1990.) However, in the Carlsberg group, this kind of warm-up exercise was not undertaken. If an interview guide had been prepared, this kind of inconsistency could have been avoided.

According to Stewart 1990, "respondents can give meaningful responses only to questions they comprehend." So as in the case study, the moderator showed the creative board ("UFO" concept) to the participants without any explanation (Carlsberg tape 01:21:20). This might lead to confusion and misinterpretation of the concept. In fact, the "UFO" concept is the least liked by the respondents. If an interview guide had been prepared beforehand, the result might have been different.

Recruitment of sample

Recruiting the sample is generally perceived by many researchers to be of low priority. But in fact, it is of great importance because "the intent of sampling in content analysis is to provide a representative subset of the larger population." Thus, it "is relatively easy to draw incorrect conclusions from a focus group if care is not taken to assure representative sampling of the content of the group discussion" (Stewart 1990.)

Moreover, "focus group participation can be maximized by increasing interpersonal attraction through appropriate blending or selection of participants" (Stewart 1990.) As a result, the recruiting process should be taken seriously.

In the case study, the researcher fell into the trap of ignoring the importance of this stage and requested us to recruit the sample ourselves. We were instructed to find 7 Carlsberg and 7 Heineken drinkers aged 25-40 for the focus group discussion. Not to mention the professionalism the researcher lacked, this malpractice actually led to insufficient participants and false identification of participants.

In the Carlsberg group, there were only 5 participants who were insufficient to obtain supportive data. According to Stewart 1990, "most focus groups are composed of 6 to 12 people. Fewer than 6 participants makes for a rather dull discussion, and more than 12 participants are difficult for the moderator to manage." The moderator should have the experience to acknowledge any "no-show" incidents since "a good rule of thumb is to assume that at least 2 participants will not show up for the interview" (Stewart 1990.) In our case study, he should have selected at least 8 Carlsberg drinkers in the first place or, when he noticed the insufficient number of participants, call off the focus group session and arrange another time.

The composition of the group is also important. In the Carlsberg group, we find one of the participants confessed that "I seldom drink Carlsberg" (Carlsberg tape 01: 01:08:14). The same thing happened in the Heineken group. One of the participants said "I drink Carlsberg" (Stewart 1990). This wrong identification of participants greatly

affects the accuracy of the data obtained. This is a consequence of using an inexperienced recruiter. If the researcher had done the recruitment himself, the problem could have been avoided.

Since "physical characteristics of the individuals" such as "size, height, general health and appearance influence the behavior of others toward the group, it is probably wise to suggest the manner of dress to group members at the time they are recruited, and the moderator should dress accordingly" (Stewart 1990.) In our case, as the client recruited the participants, they were all dressed differently. For example, one of the participants in the Carlsberg group wore a T-shirt and shorts while the moderator was dressed in a pastel suit and sandals. The totally different look might have lead to bias among the group.

Conducting the group

The moderator is very crucial as he is the one who conducts the focus group discussion. "The moderator is the key to assuring that a group discussion goes smoothly. The focus group moderator generally is well trained in group dynamics and interview skills" (Stewart 1990). So a bad moderator would definitely destroy the whole exercise. As a result, "it is important to recognize that the amount of direction provided by the interviewer does influence the types and quality of the data obtained from the group" (Stewart 1990.) However, even the good moderator would "bias results by knowingly or unknowingly providing cues about what types of responses and answers are desirable" (Stewart 1990.) Bias can be minimized if the moderator has undergone substantial training and possesses sound related experience.

The serious mistake which the moderator made in the case study is the "unconscious needs to please the client - the predisposition to welcome and reinforce the expression of points of view which are consistent with those of our clients, those for whom we are doing the research. Most often, by greeting favourable comments with appreciative nods, smiles or reinforcing comments, and by responding to unfavourable comments with indifference, perplexed stares, or body movements which reflect discomfort" (Stewart 1990.) The moderator in the case study best illustrates this when he showed over enthusiasm towards favorable views of Carlsberg made by respondents (Carlsberg tape 01:32:20:13).

The moderator in the case study is not sufficiently skilled to do any quick assessment of personality characteristics and make adjustments accordingly "a personality trait represents a tendency or predisposition to behave in a certain manner in different situations" (Stewart 1990). In the Heineken group, one of the participants was extremely quiet and contributed nothing to the whole discussion. The moderator should take the initiative to extract answers from that participant.

Interpretation of data

"It is unfair to suggest that all focus group research involves highly subjective analysis" (Stewart 1990). This is certainly the case in our application, with the report containing a number of subjective analyses. In analysing the impact of the presented advertising concepts, the researcher concluded that "consumers will associate the brand, Carlsberg, with the fun element of drinking beer. Whenever they drink beer for enjoyment with friends, Carlsberg will be recalled" (Qualitative Report) This is proof of over-claim. There is doubt that this claim was an act of the researcher who wanted to please his client as the statement corresponds with result of the focus group discussion.

Another flaw in the analysis is the researcher mentioned that the participants "have a strong resonance with the three stories" (Qualitative report). This is contradictory with his description of the UFO concept as "too far-fetched with the daily life of the consumers" (Qualitative report.)

The researcher should not make any conclusive statements without any concrete proof. For instance, he mentioned "if more than one talent is speaking, the voice over of each individual should be clearly heard. The flow and conversation should be understandable and logical" (Qualitative report). Flow of the commercial and logic of the conversation should not be judged by the clarity of the voice over.

Moreover, the researcher tends to jump to conclusions too quickly. For instance, in page 13 of the qualitative report, the researcher states that "to enhance the identification and aspirational elements of the commercials, consumers would like to see more shots of the drinkers." From the small sampling of the focus group, the researcher should not make that kind of subjective judgement.

Conclusion

The capability of focus groups conducted in Hong Kong is doubtful. From the analysis above, it shows that the way groups are handled, contained many problems, such as lack of training of the moderator. The end result is a superficial analysis derived from data obtained from this group.

APPENDIX II

Sunday cuts through HEADLINES clutter with humour

Ry Iris Lai

Advertising campaigns which use humour and an unconventional approach have clearly won the hearts of Hong Kong's audience amid the clutter of corporate and celebrity-driven campaigns.

With its trademark humour, creative execution and innovative media schedule, two-year-old telecom service provider Sunday outclassed established blue chip brands

In the January-December 1999 Ad Recall list compiled by Market Behaviour, Sunday tied with Hutchison Paging & Mobile Communications for first place

The result is significant for a new brand in a market, which is usually dominated by established, blue chip names.

Sunday group managing director Craig Ehrlich told MEDIA the company had made "deliberate efforts" to use an unconventional advertising approach to build up awareness in one of the most competitive market sectors in Hong Kong.

The choice of Sunday as its brand name offered greater creative freedom in advertising and public relations activities, allowing the company to take a more innovative approach in brand-building.

In a market where companies seek to protect their corporate

TOP TEN TV RECALL

HONG KONG

1) CTI IDD (Superman): client,

network): client, Sunday Telecoms, agency, BBDO

3) HUTCHISON (mobile phone

network): client. Hutchison:

4) PARK 'N Shop: client, Park 'N

2) SUNDAY (mobile phone

agency, O&M.

Leo Burnett

Burnett

Shop; agency, DDB.

5) SAN MIGUEL: client, San

Miguel Brewery; agency, JWT 6) YAKULT: client, Yakult;

agency, DY&R. McDONALD'S (Ice-cream):

client, McDonald's; agency,

network): client, SmarTone:

9) MAXFACTOR SKII (Kei Kei):

client, P&G: agency: Leo

10) HKT 0060 (IDD service):

client, HKT; agency, JWT

(Hong Kong) LTD, on behalf MEDIA.

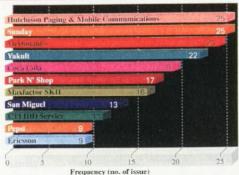
Data on TV ads scoring the highest

recall among consumers polled was ollected by MARKET BEHAVIOUR

7) SMARTONE (mobile phone

agency: Leo Burnett.

n - Dec 1999 Top 10 Brands from TV Ad Recall Frequency on the Top 10 TV Ad Recall List



Marbet Behaviour (H.K.) Ital

image with cautious and conventional ad campaigns Sunday's effort has been a breath of fresh air.

Despite being a newcomer in an industry dominated by brands backed up by Hong Kong's leading conglomerates, Sunday's extensive use of humour and creative ideas enabled it to break through the telecom marketing clutter

Sunday's strategy stands as proof that celebrities and grand productions are not enough to lure and sustain viewers' attention, particularly as the major

advertisers had employed similar ideas and approaches, said one advertising analyst.

Panoramic shots of Hong Kong or movie-like production may grab audience attention when the TVC is launched, but is unlikely to retain their attention if the concep looks similar to other advertising in the category, said the analyst.

Among the top 10 most recalled advertising brands, Sunday, CTI and Yakult appear to have captured audiences' attention without having to resort to celebrities or big production budgets.

ATV bucks trend by increasing ad rates

Beleaguered Hong Kong terrestrial station ATV will raise advertising rates by 25 per cent, a bold step since most media owners are still treading cautiously

ATV's move is in marked contrast to rival station TVB. Hong Kong's top-earning media company has decided to freeze rates this year, and is even offering discounts to loyal advertisers.

The station plans to offer a 46 per cent discount, up 3.6 per cent from the year before, to advertisers, who commit the same budget level as the previous year at its super upfront rate (prime

TVB sales and marketing controller K W Pandora Ip Leung said the station would offer more flexibility to advertisers in terms of rescheduling and changing of spots "We want to give them the breeding ground when the economy picks up again," he said.

With its latest hike. ATV has significantly narrowed its cost per rating gap with TVB, from 20-30 per cent to below five per cent.

In some cases, media inflation at ATV has been as much as 67 per cent, when discounts (around 25 per cent) and package deals are

removed from the pricing equation Media planners and specialists have dubbed ATV's rate hike as unreasonable

Despite the fact that ATV has significantly lifted its ratings, buoyed by improvements in its drama category with the importation of overseas programming, the station's overall

programming and viewership performance remains inconsistent.

Mediacom Hong Kong general manager Pandora Ip expected TVB to continue dominating the SAR's TV adspend pie. given its more stable viewership levels.

The Media Edge media director Daniel Kong said ATV's rate rise would

only make the medium a more expensive option for advertisers.

'Advertisers may consider not using TV as a whole because the advertising cost, as well as the production cost, are so expensive, said Mr Kong, noting that clients were now demanding more accountable media placement

With cheaper entry cost and greater flexibility, Mr Kong noted that secondary media such as radio and outdoor were fast emerging as a favourable advertising option

Burnett wins Wyeth accounts in China

Wyeth China has ditched Bates and awarded all its baby milk powder accounts to Leo Burnett.

Wyeth sells four brands in China -

Promil, Progress and S26.

Bates' slide from grace began more than a year ago when Burnett took Promise away from Bates following a competitive pitch.

That account was worth up to HK\$10 million (about US\$1.3 million) and Burnett's strategy went against the grain of the conventional product-driven advertising approach normally associated with baby

(about US\$3.9 million).

milk powder formulae. "Highlighting the ingredients and saying 'it's good for the heart and the brain' is alright but our approach was driven by consumer insight and we embraced the emotional appeal between baby

and mother to create a stronger bond between the brand and the mother," Dennis Wong, Leo Burnett China/Hong Kong managing director told MEDIA. Satisfied with the change in direction, Wyeth dropped Bates altogether and handed Burnett the other three accounts, worth up to HK\$30 million

James named MD at Batey Ads S'pore

Batey Ads has appointed Addison James as managing director

At 31, Mr James, who was previously Board Account Director at TBWA London, is among the youngest country agency heads in the region. However, Batey Ads Singapore chairman Rick Scott Blackhall told MEDIA that the new MD has "tons of energy, ideas and ambition to complement his very impressive credentials in the marketing of FMCG,

tood and travel/leisure in the United Kingdom and pan-Europe".

He added that Mr Addison's arrival would free up Rod Pullen to concentrate on his group MD job. Mr Pullen has been holding two posts for the past year, group and Singapore MD.

Lowe KL finishes 1999 on a high note

Lowe Lintas & Partners Kuala Lumpur has won three new accounts Dumex Plus Milk, Jotun Paints and Hagemeyer-Olympus — with billings worth MS3 million (about US\$2.1 million).

The agency's MD Khairudin Rahim said the most recent wins were the

icing on the cake for his agency in 1999.

"We've had a terrific husiness year with a total gain of 13 new assignments, including HSBC Corporate and Adidas. This will translate to M\$14 million (US\$3.7 million) in new billings for 2000, "he said.

BBDO HK to spruce up KMB's image

Kowloon Motor Bus (KMB) has appointed BBDO Hong Kong to TV campaign to raise its corporate image.

The agency won the US\$3 million account in a competitive pitch

against Bates, IWT and the incumbent Euro RSCG. The aim of the campaign is to showcase KMB's continuous efforts and accomplishments in upgrading and improving various aspects of its service to the public

Morgan & Banks wins top honours

Morgan & Banks has won the China Staff Human Resources Award 1999 for Hong Kong Recruitment Firm of the Year.

"The key to our success continues to be our people and the strength of the partnerships we have formed, and continue to form," said Morgan & Banks regional director, Russell Yeomans.

Centro grabs best visual effects prize

Hong Kong's Centro Digital Pictures has taken the award for Best Visual Effects for "A Man Called Hero" at Taiwan's 36th Golden Horse Film Festival — the Chinese-language film equivalent of the Ose It's the second year in a row that Centro has won the accolade and Centro's CEO and founder, John Chu, said, "We'll continue to push the

oundaries in digital effect MEDIA organises creative workshop

MEDIA is organising a creative workshop for junior to middle level creatives in Hong Kong on February 16. Speakers at the workshop will consist of judges of the upcoming Asian Advertising Awards, including Michael Conrad (Leo Burnett, Chicagol, Edward Shen (DDB Hong Kong), Barry Owen (O&M Thailand), and John Merrifield (Saatchi & Saatchi Japan). Topics include: Creative Hamstrings, Humour in Advertising, Youth Advertising, 360-Degree Creativity, Internet Advertising and Creative Facts and Myths.

To book your seats, contact Ms Betty Ng on tel: [852] 2577-2628, fax: [852] 2576-9171, email: betryng@media.com.hk.

Publicis handles Ericsson HK/China

The Top Ten TV Recall in the December 10 issue of MEDIA stated that Ericsson Mobilephones Hong Kong and China was handled by DY&R. It is, in fact, handled by Publicis Ad-Link.

▲用天氣先生實廣告 可見創作人都

始人原受機案撰等。」 聲。不過·度據以外都有好多外國現作基礎·包括技場對客。·與您懷·對同豐者每了解 可以用繁箱作業均形容,每次都會展出門。飲飲食食,班問會場出施也期,致義后用 行政創作思想曾屬權和陳大仁可認是SUNDAY電視廣告的靈魂人物 1 」是真是假? K.C. (曾之洋名) 解釋 (創作班告係有靈感現)

> 唱就赚到SUNDAY錢·真係很死隔離咯。 啊·唔使做就赚到SUNDAY錢·易過我哋呢 以下是一個廣告的一段告白

: 「你就好

度橋過程 最緊要好玩

於東非。Brand自言為次國籍和會由東自己。「一個數別個人等國心,是自己的工作學 有其戰役。一個突襲到自己責計製役,等指是Competitor,一定更認思學用國信義。」因 K.C.表示。別人見到他們就是度稱時間緊握,一樣暗暗哈哈,可能會好悅憎。然而對極們 Paul認為皮膚透程最繁要開心。如果經常愁眉苦臉,懷失失,俾思力操弦最後肯定藉藉 創作人有好多種,有的廳長建型。有的廳桌觀型,K.C.和同Paul(陳之洋名 米说 · 医链线病聚出。

留意生活事 反而冇橋?

阿Paul甚至被應該唔留應至最好,是唱反調嗎? 不是 5.不少都會国意身遷發生的事情,從中發溫創作材 只是他們便 日陰住「死啦」「弊像伙」・點 度到好機呢! 影響

人。本身要有敏銳的觸環、所以不用则意去留意生活事 下機段數最多人發突,給住溫橋、點知最終可能也應發現都有。」阿Paia機得做動作 一只無我韓田

己,「可以做到不經應地將四周國得應事業用在廣告上,就是最高沒界屬!」









有者甚麼特別的主張,而是好似问觀單階

心個觀任」這段片。皆





,我想又覺得有乜所讀,不想

出秦會民教好。照其

可是SUNDAY廣告似乎少了點歷光。對此阿Pa

不太問用

明星廣

。而家廣告行最大戰隊最就領的客戶班政回人

以為發展創意的K.O.相同Paul會有同樣的母故,其不知他問對於能質「數日數」服告有另一篇專法,「以很好多廣遊創作人,因若我集在 產品的做法不太認同。原 好的問題。因為廣告要是有數得計、就會失去 中元東市 医位射杆 人居斯坦威斯特里。 For #E. 如 好球疾责告,保有排Formulalf出现疾苗、光智族 告好轉極有限!」所以他們拍廣告前,不會進去 但市場調查,亦不會想着其便元素好甚至元素不

數日欖」 好多廣告人對於廣告-

廣舌

不多律人用題 一樣好掂







拉近廣告與消費者的關係

人还属意味黄杏、华母信因为酱地画面与特别好,而像文化包括、香油人财演名指示好景观,死对中国政好电、有好成分后会有人知意下。我地式资布整合SUNDAY报告回回费看有幸饱翻译,方法就够通道一些有能学又Fefend与模块级,例如十四SUNDAY用产九億數行毛期实活,去建立美币费者集姻接。」 到消費者的關係。阿Paul表示 不代表言主題,他們拍攝SUNDAY攜告時,其實是朝着一個方向做,就是要拉近沒告 「相對於外國、香港人間廣告裝置係似乎唱得緊密、以倫敦為與、賴度團

在玩Gimmick呢?一系列SUNDAY平面廣告Show線你面前,似乎要話你知廣告人的確唔易想。今天,不論廣告行內行外,對

於由天高廣告創作的SUNDAY廣告系列·都是十個有九個都被

▲阿Paul表示成 大仁活你知佢哋專 晤知? 就等呢系列廣告 制作人曾鄭程以及陳 推崇恂至,对後的故事你又知

迈周期片,源城镇 LZ

SUNDRY電視

近3月1號。越多熙繼衛特現象 一治宗整器

日流動電話用戶獨立日 探咗部舊機、免費攜部新嘅走 1 大家担嚟、支持3月

沒有甚麼不妥,只是暗聲他們同SUNDAY而已。 道,他游戏篇「思维只像One of the way,西语像The only way。」學們有人獲意提明是專款招奖,領學上 KC打磨的表示 :「等於破朋友一樣,你都會接觸有應看人做朋友,透明緩應阿爾悶旦玩吧!」不

第、這個標榜種即用/

Oriental Daily News 2-8-1999





的應徵信,表示希望成為其中一分子。但究竟大家對這個行業的認識又有幾深呢? 加入廣告行列的朋友,一定要聽聽以下兩位現職廣告人的現身說法。 廣告創作給人的印象每每是要夠出位及有創意,這又是否人人可以做得到?有志 廣告,一直被人視為多姿多采的行業,所以廣告公司每日都會收到有心者



的幕後主順人。 是有「廣告+公

之稱的其中兩位命

限公司年

來這些強

本港+As廣 当有沒有

撰稿美術**拍**住上

耶22名成員之

- 但出今各異

及Leilie雖然同是天高的

位是思的作應問

從專案告前作工作。大致有層大條 路可走。 身的人物任。 (Copywriter) · 主要負責损告的文 字創作。因此中英文都要有一定水 其一是成為京務員 另一條出路便是負責美術設計 on)·国常田建設計出

質量熬不同,但問點「度橋」的時 H-SCop An Director所组成。两者的工作性 天馬市一個創作部小組通常會 writer & - & Assistant

班文:Karen 攝形:海湾强 严填Portfolio Sell自己 湯湯: 8800

們與資告的關係十分密切。因此課程十分 為當時數段們的都是一些現職廣告創作人 有漢學與是一因此營報證一個有關沒去的課 期間修讀工商管理課程 - 當時Tony已對廣告

廣告公司的創作部。雖然並不是改次漢以郡成功,但有機會與創作人交談。已愿到賽並不 惠伯來得更有說服力 重新再做。」Tony認為一份Portfolio比一封自 - 他還数大家一些求職廠門: 「在帝自薦信 大學學業後。Tony便不斷者自薦信住太小 ,這些廣告可以提針對現有廣告的問點 不妨夹一份Portfolio (一些自己氧作的值



新人費自創風

路缐及風格。」 战那些工作。一個所人應用放自己,找尋屬於自己的 格走。請惟是絕對沒有意思的。倒不如我們自己完 避免走回舊人的路場,如果一個新人與著舊有風 告的美概设计行列。對於有志人行的年輕人, Lesile的患者是要突破前人的框框:「新人患盡量 期於一間Graphic Design House工作。不適有感 平面設計工作的影響力不及廣告大、決定加入廣 至於Lesile。他會於加拿大遺級計、畢業後初

及《服吟榜》等

互作辛苦但滿足

苦。」相信大家都同意熱愛工作。做起事來會事半功倍的 們異口同聲表示: 問到兩位要或為廣告人的是大景件時一也 「一定要非数设备 不怕辛

的苦說。不過Lealiz補充:「母常看到自己創作 的廣告出街時,便會感到很滿足,將過往李苦 以把像 時間,每日都由朝早10點工作至後展2點 然而废告人的工作有多辛苦 相俗外人實在整 报序晚工作至凌晨2时·曾屈有



從生活中找靈感

即使你對演告有誠意又不怕辛苦,但要創作出一些出位版告時,又是否人人繼得到?「創作其實也不是將世界上沒有的元素「英硬」弄出來。相反,完作是將生活中現有的養元素,如以組合及獲用。」Leatie等了一個眼镜版告為 會產生化學作用 : 「姊弟情與戴眼鏡其實是兩樣氣馬牛不相干的事 : 但將它們沒在一起 有模括一版的形式。

好奇心有助創作

要經常當自己是小朋友。對每件事都要有好奇 · 并思多维机长回题型的证据 · 维及 至於Tony,他亦認為創作可以靠後天培

數、畫量環照自己的形光、培養 數說的聚聚能力、留意身連的人和 事。」就算像他們這類有經驗的沒售 - 仍然要不断進步 - 免受淘汰

爾及維馬給大家·如(D&AD) 版告界工作了30年的人,不一定比一個 工作了10年的人優勝‧因此一定要不断 此外Tony更推薦了一些有關廣告的语 「废告並不像其他行業・一個在



Oriental Daily News 10-8-1999



十個Sunday廣告 九個攞獎?

Sunday嘅廣告不嬲都幾出位,而最近喺一本雜誌所舉辦嘅「亞洲廣告大獎1999」中,Sunday更勇養7個獎。

呢幾個由天高廣告製作嘅得獎廣告·包括電視

廣告企業傳訊組嘅大獎:天氣報告—「雷暴」,與及其他組別嘅6個廣告:十個Sunday用戶九個靚仔 Sunday1622IDD、天氣報告—「寒冷」、天氣報告—「間中天晴」、天氣報告、達爾文—sunday.com。 奉勸各大網絡商一句:服務質素固然最重要、但廣告威力亦不可忽視。



Extra推出網上拍賣

繼早前Extra同環球唱片合作,推出WAP上睇唱片資訊外,家下又有新動作。

依家Extra客戶用WAP手機,可以接通hkevents.net網站,即時睇到一啲音樂會、演唱會、Rave Party、戲劇等表演資料;又或者上iMerchants進行競投手機、影音等產品。

收費:月費\$30(包括60分鐘免費WAP使用時間,其後每6秒\$0.12)

查詢: 2880-2688





搵數碼通着數

相信你同我都知·假如你係數碼通嘅客戶·只要上台超過一年·買機會有8折以上嘅折扣優惠·但可能你唔知·就算你介紹朋友上台,一樣會有着數。

透過呢個「客戶推薦計畫」,推薦人同新客戶每人每期都可另享250分鐘嘅額外通話費(每人10期,只俾推薦人及新客戶互通電話)。此外,推薦人更可享有兩期(每期\$25)嘅現金回贈:而新客戶則可享6個月免費嘅「來電顯示」或「所有來電轉駁」服務。

查詢: 2880-2688

新世界儲值卡可7折增值

新世界嘅「智啱傾」循環儲值卡依家可以7折增值,你只要到各新世界門市或7-11,就可以7折價錢 購買到呢啲面值\$150或\$300嘅增值券。

講番呢張儲值卡,除咗本身有電話號碼外,亦會有來電顯示、飛線、留言信箱、Phone中傳信、*10 資訊熱線及國際長途電話等服務。

通話費: 繁忙時段(星期一至六09:00至18:59) \$1.2/分鐘

非繁忙時段(星期一至六19:00至08:59,星期日及公眾假期全日):\$0.8/分鐘。

查詢: 1231

wap.Peoples新增聊天站

Peoples推出WAP服務至今差不多3個月,最近就新增咗幾項服務,除一般如新聞資訊等服務外,依家佢哋仲同Cyber On Air合作,推出聊天站俾WAP用戶識新朋友。此外,呢個WAP網站更可以用「心意卡」傳送電子賀卡俾朋友,或者睇佢哋嘅「網想漫畫」。至於Keyzhk嘅購物飲食資訊,或者Foodstreet嘅飲食好去處,甚至係科技大學嘅網站,都可以喺Peoples嘅WAP服務wap.Peoples內搵到。

收費:由即日起至5月31日免月費(原價\$35)·上WAP收費則依通話費計算。

查詢: 2945 8888

撰文: Ivan

APPENDIX III

124



向主攻後生客的 One2Free ,今年吹上日本風,把今夏大 H

信念。但一樣不變的是:廣告又是去到老媳的澳洲昆土 Orange 建立溝通無疆界、束縛,深信未來生活盡情采的 果然一反常態。找來一班不同增色的小朋友



Motorola A 伽藍題物。

去。照例邂逅新闻 May 之餘,自然不忘為當時 過天山滑過雪後 - 今夏移師瓊亞美梅攤滑浪 的和記電訊,仍然由黎明做其新幹線代表。攀 每年雙在「十大電視廣告」 選舉榜上有名



最頻頻出外取景大獎 和記電訊

を加印を面百度。 便教你即時認清 SUNDAY 形象同、沉實、平和、溫擊的盡而,即為服務的 sunday.com 時,大人提供 完全 完全 大人 人名俄克里纳 Com 時,大人但保、一旦開平未來科技

係觀任」的誇獎 99年的廣告攻勢依 凌厲。例如有你我 有接獲 55 宗投訴 SUNDAY 用戶 用」開始、SUNDAY 当然 的 1622 IDD 宣傳片 其暴力意識教壞細路 不會苟同的 -日係流動電話獨 打從標榜

提明車馬抄八十年代廣告經典 你 cheap 我都 cheap」 資微 SUNDAY

来經倫。除了和記御用代表、新人類Leon

翻 99 年電訊廣告的帳 一如以往

(竹葉青) 又游影凯的

向獨鬼作風

流動通訊日漸多元化,手機可収發 E-mail 亦屬平常事。為帶出突碳溝通限制。 權人先進電子生活新紀元的訊息。Leon 今 便自黨自導自演。更跑到日本取景、再樣 合電腦視覺效果。排一個 15 秒的清通無界 限體驗、親自勉製呈現你眼前。



一股翻拍熱潮,先有CTI翻拍幪面超人,而出晒名廣告多搞鬼嘢嘅Sunday亦食住呢個勢,如意 一輯廣告便將十多年前經典廣告「你精我都精,飲杯竹葉青!」翻拍。《便利》採訪咗50個被訪者,超過7成人第一次睇報 以為係竹葉青廣告,依家就等我哋解構呢個Sunday廣告同原裝竹葉青有幾似俾大家知!



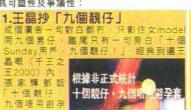






Sunday多出位廣告

Sunday今年拍咗超過10多套電視廣告,當中除咗竹葉青外,重有以下兩套部長 具可塑性及爭議性:



廣告內鬼佬見 人就打·就 女人亦唔 就連 女 人 亦 唔 放 過,兼且好似 拳拳到肉添。

2. 隨街打人被投訴

其後影視處便



街訪:「好似!有九成似竹葉青 《便利》喺街頭訪問咗50位途人,當中超過7 成人表示第一次睇呢個廣告時誤以為係竹葉 青廣告,做司機嘅阿文重誇張到話:「個竹 葉青咁經典梗記得啦,呢個Sunday廣告做到

有9成似噪!」

香港經典電視廣告大全



http://home.netvigator.com/-catlai/main.htm

APPENDIX IV



Sunday女鬼廣告接逾十宗投訴



■ 兩眼發青光女鬼在螢

特

以古怪廣告作招徠的電訊公司 Sunday又有出位之作,本報昨晚接獲 最少十宗投訴,指Sunday一齣似抄襲 電影《午夜凶鈴》橋段的電視廣告令 人產生不安。

廣告講述夜間的士司機駕車途經 僻靜的山路,突然看見一名身穿紅衣的長髮女鬼,在背景觀 托鬼古音樂下空中飄過,兩眼發出青光,司機立即將的士急 煞掣,女鬼突然消失,正當的士司機以為逃過一劫之際,女 鬼突然在的士窗前出現,嚇得的士司機即時暈低,然後一句 「一毫子一分鐘,平到你驚」。

三歲女童嚇到大哭大鬧

讀者劉先生向本報投訴,指其三歲女兒看罷該恐怖廣告後立即大哭大鬧,認為會嚴重影響小孩心智,指廣告商為吸引客戶而不惜嚇壞觀眾。另一名讀者朱太則說,其二十歲女兒看完廣告後感到不安,曾打電話到廣播事務管理局投訴,要求立即停止該廣告,惟一直打不通。

不過。Sunday發言人陳先生則表示。廣告的原意,是希望以「夜鬼」為題材。推廣凌晨一時至七時的優惠時段,他並不認為會引起不安。陳先生坦言,自己第一次看時只感到好笑。

事實上,Sunday廣告遭投訴已非首次,其中一輯「肥人學跳健康舞」的廣告,則被指歧視肥人,另一輯廣告,最後顯示女性酥胸的一個鏡頭,廣播事務管理局收到超過五十宗投訴。
■記者鄭華坤

Oriental Daily News 27-9-2000



廣告、令觀眾看後大感不安。 新一輯以女鬼為賣點的「平到你驚」電視 多位市民投票 SUNDAY 上周二推出

然,更恐怕會對心智未成熟的青少年及兒 **佈,多位市民均表示,看後令其毛骨悚** 司機被嚇至不支量倒,廣告畫面氣氛恐 穿紅衣、眼帶青光的長髮女鬼突然飄至, 該廣告講述一的土司機駕車時,有一

声、带来聚影響。

訴。該處現正研究廣告內容,作出跟進。 十六宗市民對上述 SUNDAY 廣告之投 截至九月二十八日止,該處共接獲二百二 影視及娛樂事務管理處發言人表示。

時的優惠時段,並以「平到你驚」為主 廣告乃推廣該公司最新推出後晨一時至七 SUNDAY公關經理陳先生表示,有關

未考慮停權

原味を幾次之後會有単態」。 司不會考慮停播此版告、他並謂「希望觀 内容、除非政府提出禁播要求、否則該公 他強調、廣告意念及畫面均切合優惠

(0元二九二四)





随着的全境。



本來「搞鬼」,有「搞笑」

· 不過上周出對第Sunda

紅衣女鬼」廣告、笑就搞

唔成·反而首播兩晚就收到

86字雷話投訴,話鄉路、甚

至的十块那牌呢循稿鬼魔

告購報!Sunday 應告人就

赶逐搬热烧,不漏的

士佬文层咪莫探唔會

驚?好似唔係!迷!





收咗咁多投訴,但度 撟嘅
Tony同Leslie一啲都唔覺廣告「過火」:「要講平得好緊要,玩鬼最出唿啦!至於專揀夜晚播,都係因為Target係夜遊人嘛!」佢哋仲好串咁話:「哈哈,其實都冇人話過個女仔係鬼,其實佢追到嚟的士,係身手好啫,女運動選手至真。唔得人驚吖,搞笑咋嘛。」講到嚇親的士佬,Tony同Leslie就起勢話:「見過好多的士佬專登夜晚聽電台鬼古添,咁咪仲驚,廣告小兒料啫,你話佢會唔會驚吖!」



萨装鬼古話你知

唔知問下有方俾個廣告警視・但原來廣告係根據西貢一個好「堅」嘅 真鬼古啟發・Tony同Leslie話:「真鬼古嘅主角・唔係的士佬・佢係 擅私家車嘅。咁啱去到西貢,見到位紅衣女士,咪駛慢喲啲望真下, 緊知就咁潔潔吃位小姐,司機已經好薦,車勤開快,佢(小姐)仲死 追,仲係咁拍個玻璃,幾駕呀!」

均十佬回應

講到嚇親的士佬,Tony同Leslie就話的士佬唔會驚,不過問過啲的士大佬,佢哋就唔係個個咁勇噃。



的土切哥雷生(率略2年) 強項:「一見唔對路就鬥 寶死德」 實死後:「 支持理由:「Sunday廣 告,一一向都 哪。今次 番佢地一貫作



職司體(單數12年) 職項:神打 開事大法:a.)掛宗教小飾物 b.)去洗手間 c.)講「暗該借空」 -主要控訴:「有啲司機真係好 紹贈:成日形住 影 概 項 項 無 數 名



度人安哥(車約14年) 通項:「要惡!但忌你好過你 忌佢。」 等事大法:a) 海車周尿 b) 撤銀仔 c) 叫佢「過主」 有聯過廣告原因:「番到展



老具(車數22年) 強項:行得正企得正 辦事大法: 「指意大統,至怕有有 食。」 主要搜訴:「呢個廣告。 完寫異投於:成日廣告。 「時只數親司報 學係辦親的報行。」





Hong Kong Daily News 8-10-2000



■廣管局指 SUNDAY 女鬼廣告氣氛陰森恐怖,令人驚慌和不安。

電視圖片



■ SUNDAY 廣告內女鬼貼近的士車窗



■廣告內女鬼面色發白

觀眾極不安 投訴千八宗

明光社:反應慢

明光社總幹事蔡志森

全因廣管局向電視台發出

及價錢 廣告已收宣傳之效 結,昨日提早停播是鑑於 播放期原定於本周內完 睇過啦。」他強調,廣告 投訴,即係證明好多人都 客戶有關服務的優惠時間 接受本報查詢時表示 女鬼」廣告主要希望帶 SUNDAY 發言人昨 ,「既然接到咁多

均表示已全面停播 告」,指廣告場面真實兼氣 創下近年最高投訴紀錄 到不安,三問電視台昨 氛陰森恐怖,令觀眾均感 廣播事務管理局昨日向 收到逾一千八百宗投訴 電視廣告播放僅兩周內共 電視台發出「嚴重 SUNDAY的「的士女鬼 電訊服務公 警 欣賞恐怖電影前均有選 般恐怖電影不

利及心理準備,

但 作 選 擇

慢,

因為有關廣告與 管局對事

評廣

一件反

如日 穿紅衣,兩眼發出青光有僻處時,突然遇上一名身 名的士司機在晚間行駛偏 觀眾知道廣告內容 電視廣告,卻無法預早 女鬼一廣告,內容講述一 年 本電影中的「貞子」 被指令兒童甚至不 觀眾受驚和不安的

鬼突然在他右邊車窗出以為已經避開女鬼時;女角色的長髮女鬼,當司機 得知廣告性質及內容,故陰森恐怖,觀眾事先無法 該廣告場面真實、氣氛 鐘,平到你驚」語句 後畫面出現「一毫子 ,把他嚇至立即暈低 廣管局昨發表的聲明

公眾人士對採取如此

一勝人







●三個電視台播Sunday的士女鬼魔告 遺廣管局發嚴重警告。 (電視畫面



■本裝記者 牙髓和意識不良等。 指斥渲染女性胴體、歧視觀化 故語-女伴屁股的廣告,也曾分別招意不少不應股的廣告,也會分別招待不多可能是一管理老弟無壞 電訊CSL模特兒全身所與一點油、數碼運 訴指僧別廣告聽化肥胖女性。其他如 告先後被指題分暴力、色情,又有权告被市民投訴,其中Sunday的多難廣告被市民投訴,其中Sunday的多難廣過往亦有多個涉及電訊的電視廣 禹畝如獨闕交嚴煙多蘊安涵。

司機遇女鬼魔告晏嚴重,遭魔管局向

民技薪,而以今次的土 后现际 百以今天均上而一玩出火一,惹來市同一玩出火一,惹來市因涉及歧視或意識不良 因涉及均相的 化阿出位,卻往往 的電視廣告除門明星 **密烈 - 各電訊公司炮製** 海岸市越来浓粗重



船出 創下歷來最高投訴紀錄

聯出 告在興論群起攻之的壓力下,終於昨日起停播。廣播事務管理局認為該的士女鬼廣告氣氛陰森恐怖,整個廣告不僅令兒童,甚至不少成人觀眾受驚、不安,故此決定向播出該廣告的三間電視台發出嚴重 的Sunday的士女鬼廣

廣管局昨日開會討論Sunday的士女鬼廣告、核廣告在上月二十六日開始播放。至本月十一日短短半個月內。廣管局共收到一千八百二十三宗市民投訴。創下該局歷來最高投訴紀錄。

廣管局決定向播出此廣告的亞洲電視本港台 翡翠台及有線電視發出嚴重警告。

Sunday:已收宣 宣傳效果

有線電視發育人指出,雖然該台沒有在黃金時間播放店 廣告、但亦尊重及接受廣管局的意見。在昨日起立即停攝房 告。亞洲電視亦發表聲明,表示接受廣管局擴決,即時停射 該廣告。 另外,繼於電視通用業務守則草擬本及電台業務守則其 提本引起社會各界廣泛討論,廣管局決定把草擬本的諧詢房 延長兩周至下月四日為止。

核發盲人又說,不會因為今次專作而影響該公司未來的 廣告製作,他表示,Sunday的廣告一向具爭議性。 無線電視節目及外事節總監察者實表。Sunday廣告原 播至後日,但由於廣播事務管理局錄情指進反了廣播守則 故無線電視已在昨日立即停止播放該廣告。

廣管局半個月內已收近二千宗投訴。 ● Sunday的土女東廣告著人程度職人

業務守則諮詢期延長

、無談簿視

類

劉



The Sun 28-10-2000

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALTHUSSER, L. 1976/1984. Essay on Ideology. London: Verso

ASCH, S.E. 1952. Group Forces in the Modification and Distortion of Judgements. In Social Psychology (Chapter 16). Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice-Hall

AXELROD, M. 1975. Marketers Get An Eyeful when Focus Groups Expose Products, Ideas, Images, Ad copy, Etc. to Consumers. Marketing News, 8, 6-7

BARTHES, Roland. 1972. Mythologies. London: Vintage/ NY Hill and Wang

BARTHES, Roland. 1975. The Pleasure of the Text, Trans. Richard Miller. Oxford: Blackwell

BAUDRILLARD, Jean. 1981. For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Signs. Teleo Press

BELLINGER, BARNHARDT & GOLDSTUCKER. 1976. Qualitative Research in Marketing.

Chicago: American Marketing Association

BERGER, John. 1972. Ways of Seeing. London: BBC and Penguin

BOGEN, Joseph E. 1977. The Human Brain. Prentice-Hall

BRIERLEY, Sean. 1995. The Advertising Handbook. Routledge 1995

CALDER, B.J. 1977. Focus Groups and the Nature of Qualitative Marketing Research. Journal of Marketing Research, 14, 353-364

CAREY, James W. 1989. Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society. Boston:

Unwin Hyman

DAVIDSON, Martin. 1992. The Consumerist Manifesto. London: Routledge

DeBONO, Edward. 1970. Lateral Thinking: A Textbook of Creativity. Harmondsworth: Penguin

DeBONO, Edward. 1990. Lateral Thinking: Creative Step by Step. New York: Haper & Row

DOUGLAS, J.D.. 1985. Creative Interviewing. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

DRUCKER, Peter F. 1993. Concept of the Corporation. New Brunswick, N.J.; London Transaction Publishers

DRUCKER, Peter F. 1997/1998. Adventures of a Bystander. New York: John Wiley

Duffenne, Mikel. 1990. In the Presence of the Sensuous. Humanities Press International, Inc.

EASTHOPE, Anthony. 1999. The Unconscious. London: Routledge

EWEN, S. 1976. Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture. New York: McGraw-Hill

- FALK, P. 1994. The Consuming Body. London, CA: Sage
- FEATHERSTONE, Mike. 1990. Theory, Culture and Society. Sage
- FEATHERSTONE, Mike. 1991. Consumer Culture and Postmodernism. Sage
- FERN, E.F. 1983. Focus Groups: A Review of Some Contradictory Evidence, Implications, and Suggestions for the FUTURE RESEARCH. Advances in Consumer Research, 10, 121-
- FISKE, J. 1982/1990. Introduction to Communication Studies, Second Edition. London & New York: Routledge
- FISKE, John. 1987. Television Culture. Routledge
- FISKE, John. 1989. Understanding Popular Culture. Methuen
- FOWLES, Jib. 1996. Advertising and Popular Culture. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage
- FREUD, Sigmund. 1994. The Interpretation of Dreams. Modern Library Edition
- GAINES, Jane M. 1991. Contested Culture: The Image, the Voice, and the Law. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina Press
- GARDNER, Howard. 1997. Extraordinary Minds: Portraits of Exceptional Individuals and an Examination of Our Extraordinariness. New York: Basic Books
- GAZZANIGA, Michael S. 1977. "Review of the Split Brain" in the Human Brain by M.C. Wittrock.

 Englewood Cliffs, NJ Prentice Hall.?
- GAZZANIGA, Michael S. 1985. The Social Brain. Basic Books
- GOLDMAN, Robert. 1992. Reading Ads Socially. Routledge
- GOLDMAN & PAPSON. 1994. Postmodernism and Social Enquiry. "The Postmodernism that Failed". New York Guilford Press
- GOLDMAN & PAPSON. 1996. Sign Wars. The Guilford Press
- GOMBRICH, E.H. 1981. Image and Code. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- GREENBAUM, Thomas L. 1998. The Handbook for Focus group Research, Second Edition.

 Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications
- GREENBAUM, Thomas L. 2000. Moderating Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Group Facilitation. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications

HALL, Stuart. 1980/1996. Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms. In J. Syorey (Ed.), What Is Cultural Studies? A Reader (pp. 31-48). London, New York, Sydney & Auckland: Edward Arnold HALL, Stuart. 1980. Culture, Media and Language. London: Hutchison & Co.

HARRIS, David. 1996. A Society of Signs. London: Routledge

KATZ, E. 1967. Diffusion III: Interpersonal Influence. In D. Sills (Ed.), International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (Vol. 4). New York: Macmillan

KELMAN, H. 1961. Processes of Opinion Change. Public Opinion Quarterly, 25, 57-78

KOTLER, Philip. 1984. Marketing Essentials. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall

KRUEGER, Richard A. 1998. Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

KRUEGER, Richard A. 1994. Focus Groups. Sage

KRUGMAN, Herbert. 1971. Brain Wave Measures of Media Involvement. Journal of Advertising Research II, No. 1

LACAN, Jacque. 1993. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-60; Trans. Dennis Porter. London: Taristock/Routledge

LACAN, Jacque. 1993. The Psychoses, 1995-56; Trans. Russell Grigg. London: Routledge

LEVI-STRAUSS, C. 1960. Structural Anthropology. New York: Basic Books

McLUHAN, Marshall 1964. Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. New York, McGraw-Hill

McLUHAN, Marshall. 1967. The Medium is the Massage. Hardwired San Francisco

McLUHAN & ERIC. 1988. Laws of Media. University of Toronto Press

MERTON, FISKE & KENDALL. 1990. The Focused Interview. New York. Free Press

MESSARIS, P. 1997. Visual Persuasion: The Role of Images in Advertising. Thousand Oaks & London: Sage

MITCHELL, Stephen A. 1995. Freud and Beyond: a History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought.

New York: Basic Books

MORGAN, David L. 1988. Focus Groups as Qualitative Research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage MORGAN, David L. 1992. Designing Focus Group Research. Paper presented at the American

- Sociological Association Conference, Washington, DC
- MORGAN, David L. 1993. Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications
- MORGAN & SPANISH. 1984. Focus Groups: A New Tool for Qualitative Research. Qualitative Sociology, 7, 253-270
- O'BARR, William. 1994/1996. Culture in the Ad: Exploring Otherness in the World of Advertising.

 Boulder, Co.: Westview Press
- PACKARD, V. 1957/1981. The Hidden Persuaders. London: Penguin Books
- PERREAULT, Jr. & McCARTHY, Edmund Jerome. 1997. Essentials of Marketing: A Global-Managerial Approach, 7th Edition. Chicago: Irwin
- PETOCZ, Agnes. 1999. Freud, Psychoanalysis, and Symbolism. New York: Cambridge University Press
- POPE, D. 1983. The Making of Modern Advertising. New York: Basic Books
- POSTER, M. 1997. Cultural History and Postmodernity: Disciplinary Readings and Challenges.

 New York: Columbia University Press
- PRIDE & FERRELL. 1993. Marketing: Concept and Strategies, Eighth Edition. Boston: Houghton

 Mifflin
- RIES & TROUT. 1986. Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind. New York: McGraw-Hill
- RIES & TROUT. 1993. The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing. New York: Harper Business
- RUBIN, Capers. 1988. Freud's Theory of Dream Interpretation and Some Considerations on the Nature of Psychoanalytic Knowledge. Ann Arbor, Michigan: U.M.I.
- SARUP, M. 1988/1993. An Introductory Guide to Post-structuralism and Postmodernism, Second Edition. New York & London: Harvester Wheatsheaf
- SAUSSURE, F. de. 1959. Courses in General Linguistics. New York: Philosophical Library
- SINCLAIR, J. 1987. Images Incorporated: Advertising as Industry and Ideology. London & New York: Routledge
- SINGER, B. 1986. Advertising and Society. Don Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley
- SLATER, D. 1997. Consumer Culture and Modernity. Oxford: Polity Press

- SMITH, David Livingstone. 1999. Freud's Philosophy of the Unconsciousness. Dordrecht;

 Boston: Kluwer
- SPRINGER & DEUTSCH. 1981. Left Brain, Right Brain. W.H. Freeman & Company, New York.
- STEWART & SHAMDASANI. 1990. Focus Groups: Theory and Practice. Newbury Park, Sage
- SULLIVAN, Luke. 1998. Hey Whipple, Squeeze This: A Guide to Creating Great Ads. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- TAYLOR, Benjamin. 1995. Into the Open: Reflections on Genius and Modernity. New York: New York University Press
- TAYLOR & BOGDAN. 1984. Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: The Search for Meanings, Second Edition. New York: Wiley
- TROTTER, R.H. 1986. The Other Hemisphere. Science News (3 April 1986)
- VAN DE VAN & DELBECQ. 1971. Nominal VS Interacting Group Processes for Committee

 Decision Making Effectiveness. Academy of Management Journal, 14, 203-212
- WAKEFIELD, Neville. 1990. Postmodernism: Twilight of the Real. MA: Pluto
- WAX, Murray Lionel. 1999. Western Rationality and the Angel of Dreams: Self, Psyche, Dreaming. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield
- WILLIAMS, R. 1962/1980. Advertising: The Magic System. In Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays (pp. 170-195). London: Verso
- WILLIAMSON, Judith. 1978/1984. Decoding Advertising: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising.

 London & New York: Marion Boyars
- WILLIAMSON, Judith. 1986. Consuming Passions. Marion Boyars.
- WONG, S.Y. 1997. Construction of Ideal Childhood: Reading and Decoding Television

 Advertisements Directed at Children in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong Cultural Studies

 Bulletin, 7:75-84
- WONG, S.Y. 1999. Advertising and the Transformation of Hong Kong Culture & Society since 1945. Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- ZINKHAN & HIRSCHHEIM. 1992. Truth in Marketing Theory and Research: An Alternative Perspective. Journal of Marketing, 56 (2), 80-88