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# **Perfect Moments.**

**British Advertising during the 1990s -  
An assessment of determinants**

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Middlesex University

Ph.D.

June 2002



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Poor text in the original  
thesis.

Some text bound close to  
the spine.

## **Perfect Moments.**

British Advertising during the 1990s - An assessment of determinants

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## Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to consider how advertisers and their clients in the 1990s conceptualised social and technological change. In particular, I address how advertisers deduced and represented new characteristics in their customers. By reflecting on changes in the content of adverts, I take a symptomatic approach in considering how new conceptualisations were incorporated into new and broader ad styles.

To do this, in Chapter 1, the Literature Review, I identify my central approach and key issues against existing literature in the field. Given that this study is essentially an industry-oriented analysis of advertising, which not been attempted this way before, I consider the relevance of existing industrial and academic-centred critical models for this study.

Chapter 2 then maps out the key changes in advertising in the 1990s from previous decades. It considers what prompted the ad industries to change their perspectives and how advertisers restructured their operations in an attempt to re-imagine their consumers.

In Chapter 3 benchmarks of the key changes are examined in more detail. Three campaigns are examined to explore how promotional strategies negotiated (perceived) changes in consumers. The campaigns for Britvic Tango (1992), Daewoo cars(1995) and Tesco Clubcard (1997) were chosen because they are symptomatic of key moments during the 1990s in which the way advertising targeted consumers was re-addressed. In the final part of this chapter I consider how shifting methods of advertising during the 1990s registers in the 'bigger picture' of twentieth century communication.

Following the case studies, the next two chapters review two key issues for advertising during the 1990s. Chapter 4 considers how advertisers changed their tone of address. Here issues such as national/personal representation and 'boutiques of history' are considered. Most notably, changes in youth mood is considered against advertising's own strategies for coping with change.

Chapter 5 then considers changes in *modes* of address, and in particular the impact of digital technology on advertising's means of communication. Unlike the previous chapter, which demonstrates how advertising negotiated change, this section shows how the existing agency system was forced to change.

Before 1990 an attitude persisted in the ad industry that changes to the way agencies communicated and did business was (to a large extent) determined by advertisers themselves. This was not the case in 1990s. This study maps out how change was negotiated in a climate of cultural fragmentation and digitised communication.

## Acknowledgements

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Many of my colleagues and ex-BA/MA Graphics & Advertising students (1992-2000) now in the ad industry have, in the course of my research, opened doors to people I would otherwise not have had access to. I would especially like to acknowledge the help of senior advertisers and marketers Julie Wright, Owen Lee (HHCL+P, 1994-2000), Andy Lockley (St Lukes, 1996-2000), Dave O'Hanlon (HHCL+P, from 1993), David Atter (Britvic, 1993-98), Dave Waters (DFGW, from 1990) and Jon Ingall (EHS, 1993-98).

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my Father, Lionel Springer (1924-99).

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## Introduction

In a 1992 TV commercial for the sports brand Nike, the American Basketball player Michael Jordan is seen leaping to slam-dunk a ball into the hoop. Jordan's slam-dunk switches from normal speed to slow motion from the moment he leaves the floor. As Jordan takes off the action cuts to show, simultaneously, snippets from around the world, of people dancing, dodging, singing and working, interspersed with shots of Jordan mid-leap. Finally the action cuts back to witness the ball drop through the basketball net. The extended moment of action made Jordan seem super-human – the perfect sporting specimen. The fast-edit of normal everyday life set against the slow motion grace of Jordan's leap sets the slam-dunk apart as a perfect moment. Yet the success of the advert lay in its construction. It relied on the seamless blending of familiar camera and editing techniques with a fresh proposition (a series of emotive connections). The imagery had been crafted to moments: the moment of its broadcast (chosen to fit with the viewing habits of its target audience), and the moment it chimed with what, in 1992, was a version of social perfection.

While advertising offers many moments of temporal pleasure, these 'perfect moments' stood, in the early 1990's, in stark contrast to wider aspects of social and political change as far as the advertising industries were concerned, where there was a marked resistance to being stereotyped or commodified.

The aim of this study is threefold. My primary aim in mapping the ad industries in the 1990s is to consider how consumers were re-conceptualised through advertising strategies, as methods of address changed. Then I trace changes within the British advertising industry in light of digitisation and new approaches to advertising work. In light of the first two my final aim is to consider how the relationship between products and communication have changed. The period of study is restricted to the 1990s.

The timeframe is significant in that substantial changes in/to advertising took place during the 1990s (in Chapters 1 and 2 for instance, I argue that the ad industries underwent the biggest changes since the 1950s). At the time of writing this period of change for advertising has not been the focus of published literature. In assessing the 1990s as it was taking shape I came to realise that existing frameworks for decoding/contextualising advertising were no longer applicable. Most evidently accounts of advertising have not addressed the inter-relationship of modern advertising with simultaneous popular trends. Furthermore, perceptions of the ad industry were also different to previous periods.

### Hypothesis and distinction of approach

I aim to demonstrate that during the 1990s media advertising lost its sense of authority. By the end of the nineties it was no longer the prime means of selling goods, but one aspect of several options in a broader

landscape of promotional media. This partly caused the most substantial change to the ad industry system since the changes brought about by the first British TV commercial in 1955, and provides grounds for considering the term 'advertising' no longer appropriate to describe the complexity intercalated marketing/publicity/brand promotion activities engaged in.

I also contend that media advertising developed sophisticated strategies of address to negotiate an increasing number of problems advertising had in interpellating consumers. In the course of this study I suggest how adverts shifted from attempting to link products to lifestyle to grounding products into existing use contexts. I demonstrate how a number of strategies for targeting customers were brought together, and how, in doing so, a range of cultural issues became crystallised in advertising. By the end of the period review, analyses and case studies, I aim to have demonstrated my hypothesis, that by 2000 the core advertising message more often resided in the product than on a billboard or in a commercial. Commercial messages had become integrated into the experiences offered by the product and advertising was seen as part of a wider culture of enterprise and marketing.

This argument is distinctive for a number of reasons. First, within texts on consumerism, advertising tends to be seen as one of many aspects of an enterprise-driven culture. Advertising tends to be used as a visual device to illustrate prevalent moods (this is discussed with reference to du Gay and Urry in chapter 2). Rather than fitting advertising into apparent patterns of consumption, my approach considers how advertisers envisaged changing social moods and added their own agendas to campaigns. This study is distinctive in its emphasis on the perspective of the industry and its consideration of the ways in which changes of context and practice mobilised different responses. Second, Advertising, direct advertising and marketing tend to be documented in different texts. In the nineties both practices were increasingly inter-connected. This study is the first therefore that shows how techniques were combined to mount larger-scale promotional campaigns. Third, given that I consider these commercially driven changes in a social context I can claim that my method of approach is cross disciplinary, in that it seeks to establish how complex issues of elements of a changing culture were addressed and engaged by agents of persuasion.

In my case studies of advertising, which combine interviews with (unique layered methods of) close textual readings, this study can also claim to show for the first time how advertisers and marketers changed their perceptions of youth markets, as the mood and means of perceiving/reaching consumers changed.

Because the British ad industry is the object of study I have picked through industry journals and have interviewed some 40 advertising 'creatives', planners, agency directors, marketing directors, brand directors, journalists and commentators of advertising, to construct a clear characterisation of advertising during the 1990s (a selection are transcribed in Appendix 2). For the most part I draw on textual readings of



adverts, which I place alongside my evidence from primary and secondary sources to define the symptoms of advertising strategies in practice. It is through close readings of adverts, cross-checked against the interviews, correspondence and my body of secondary sources, that I investigate changes in the connected practices and strategies of marketers and advertisers in arriving at imaginative (and mostly visual) solutions to the social problems and changes they perceived as existing.

In making deductions based on textual reading of adverts, I needed to consider existing models of deconstruction and the dominant theories that have previously shaped readings of adverts/advertising. Narrative 'readings' of adverts employed in most critical texts on advertising have proved useful in mapping the relationship between commerce, communication and consumers. However, the relationship between commerce, communication and consumers changed so greatly up to and during my period of review. Most texts on advertising use decontextualised critical methods to assess modern ads, and as a consequence glean styles of representation without considering the contexts in which the ads were produced – for instance Judith Williamson's Decoding Advertisements (1978). My 'reading' of modern advertising has needed to understand the broader context more fully than Williamson's text. I have had to consider the relevance of changing social moods, changes to the ad industry and trace the evolution of specific campaigns so that my examples can claim to be representative. To locate appropriate contexts I had to consider texts that re-mapped the relationship between commerce, communication and consumers. It is worth noting therefore that my perspective is unique, in that where most accounts are made from 'outside' perspectives of social commentators and cultural theorists, or 'inside', workers in the industry, my text straddles their two positions.

In approaching my subject I was keen to draw on my own experiences as a professional designer. I was particularly keen to trace the histories of campaigns from concept to final execution, because it is the discussions that formulate strategies that explain the creators own understandings of a products purpose, its intended consumers and the existing market place. Texts by non-practitioners tend to use ads as illustrative reflections of a paradigm. My analysis does not claim to reflect broad cultural moods. Instead it shows how advertiser's understood their target audience at the time a campaign was being formulated. My text is not therefore intended to dismiss sociological texts incorporating advertising, but is intended to be a unique 'view from within', which throws new light on how advertising negotiated significant moments during the 1990s.

In stating my terms of reference therefore, the existing dominant models of advertising make useful period benchmarks but do not play a huge role in my study. That is not to say they are all now redundant. I test the contemporary validity of specific texts in Chapter 1, and in some cases develop my own methods from them. However, to make sense of the way advertisers faced up to changing work patterns, new modes of communication, the way they incorporated digital methods, addressed shifts in mood in one study, I had to

consider the interconnectedness by viewing the evidence from different perspectives. It is because of this that I have arrived a more linear structure from previous thesis drafts.

### Structure and themes

The structure of this study has been problematic, because the aspects of advertising and its cultural contexts under review do not lend themselves to obvious models of critique. To negotiate this, critical methods and advertising material are considered in early chapters before I map out how advertising changed in the review period. Following this, for closer examination of the period's shift in strategy and methods, I explore changes through three case studies. The two final chapters explore issues of representation and digitisation.

Therefore, after setting out a critical framework for this study in Chapter 1, I map out changes within advertising during the 1990s in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 is a much closer study of three ad campaigns spanning the decade, that highlight changes in perspective of the advertising industry's relationship with marketing and the communication industries new perspectives of consumption. The two chapters that follow address changing structures of ads and the ad industry from different perspectives. Chapter 4 addresses changes in the way advertising represented consumers in a social context. The aim in this section is to assess the degree to which advertising responded to social changes they perceived of consumers in Britain. While this section considers how advertising determined its own changes of address, Chapter 5 considers how, in the 'digital era', new uses of communication effected British advertising. I consider how new modes of address fitted into the wider scheme of change in the twentieth century.

Several other themes are interconnected with my study but, for clarity of focus, I do not fully address in this thesis. The most significant is the change in methods of producing adverts. This study engages with this insofar as to consider how the changing nature of employment effected the agenda of adverts. While I acknowledge that there was a 'sea change' in the culture of production, this study largely assumes this in order to concentrate on how the ad industries responded to perceived structural changes through the work they produced. Another key theme is the significance of enterprise culture. As I discuss in Chapter 1, the acceptance of work and enterprise as aspects of culture is significant in re-positioning advertising in the cultural landscape. This has been well documented already, and my study takes this as a given.

There are other themes that are now outside the scope of this study. For instance, the issue of where advertising ('pre'- and 'post'-new forms) could possibly be discussed in the schema of 'Postmodernity'. I acknowledge this as a key debate, but one that warrants a substantial study in its own right. In earlier drafts I grappled with the term Postmodernism, which I initially felt duty-bound to use. In the early versions I considered the 'classical' model of advertising in terms of the practices and methods such as those that

stemmed from the Madison Avenue, New York agency system of the sixties<sup>1</sup>. While one could locate the development of the proposition and strategy development within the planning processes developed in the UK, in the majority of advertising histories Madison Avenue from the 1950s is cited as a model for modern advertising<sup>2</sup>. I considered this period and its methods to be advertising's monolithic Modernism, and the breaks with this systematic approach to be Postmodern. However, this was problematic in a number of ways. It glossed over the complexity of both new and old communication methods. If the eighties was the period of 'post' in breaking with the sixties rules, then it also failed to explain the later 'post' in advertising, that of the audiences knowledge of how advertising works, and the 'knowing' work that emerged from the agencies in recognition of this<sup>3</sup>. They too could claim to be 'after' conventional advertising.

Later in the nineties, with the rapid development of direct advertising, viable alternatives to media advertising were introduced that could be deemed 'post' (conventional model) advertising. In other words when the term Postmodernism was used it disguised the specific developments and subtleties of the change. Although terms familiar to Postmodernity are clearly evident in work produced during the 1990s – irony, layering, 'waning of affect', 'the flattening of cultural hierarchies' – the term Postmodern did not go far enough in explaining advertising's close connection with social changes. It did not explain changes such as the flattening of management structures, nor did it help explain the shifts in media preferences. In later drafts therefore I replaced the term Postmodern with more localised readings of the specific issues.

That said, one characteristic of the period was the sustained use of irony. I discuss this as a tactic in Chapter 4. On the whole its usage in press and TV commercials had cynical overtones, which often located it within laddish moods of the moment. Irony also made it easy for cultural commentators to label the genres of advertising as Postmodern. This was often presented as a form of vindication at pitches and client presentations. Yet increasingly irony became a device by which advertisers bridged the gap between apparent contradictions. Here they were acknowledging the consumer's maturity, their understanding of the repertoires of advertising tactics and advertising's intentions. Agencies however were still going to use the formats to sell to them anyway. One such strategy that was much used was to set a scene with flamboyant animation techniques, then dismiss their own construction as cheap visual gimmickry. The endline (also called a 'strapline') would emphasise the point that the product does not need trickery because its qualities speak for

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<sup>1</sup>It is popularly recognised within the modern agency systems (and in some accounts of the period) that unpublished 'rules' emerged such as 'Never use more than eight words in a headline', 'break the brief down to a single line proposition' and 'establish a unique selling proposition'.

<sup>2</sup>It is in this period for instance at Doyle Dane Bernbach, NY, that creative teams of art directors and copywriters first paired up, which is still a 'given' in the modern agency.

<sup>3</sup>Many newer agencies that mixed advertising formats and extended into other disciplines such as film making and product design tended to be described in the advertising press as '3<sup>rd</sup> Wave', most notably St Lukes, HHCL + Partners and Farm. The First Wave was considered to be in the early 1970s, and was considered to have included companies such as Ted Bates and Doyle Dane Bernbach. In the US and Cramer & Saatchi and Ogilvy & Mather in the UK. The Second Wave agencies from the late 1970s included Gold Greenlees Trott and Bartle Bogle Hegarty, who developed a strong emphasis on creativity that distanced them from the larger existing agencies. This is further described in Du Gay, P. (ed.) Production of Culture/Culture of Production, OU/Sage, London 1997 pp.194–195.

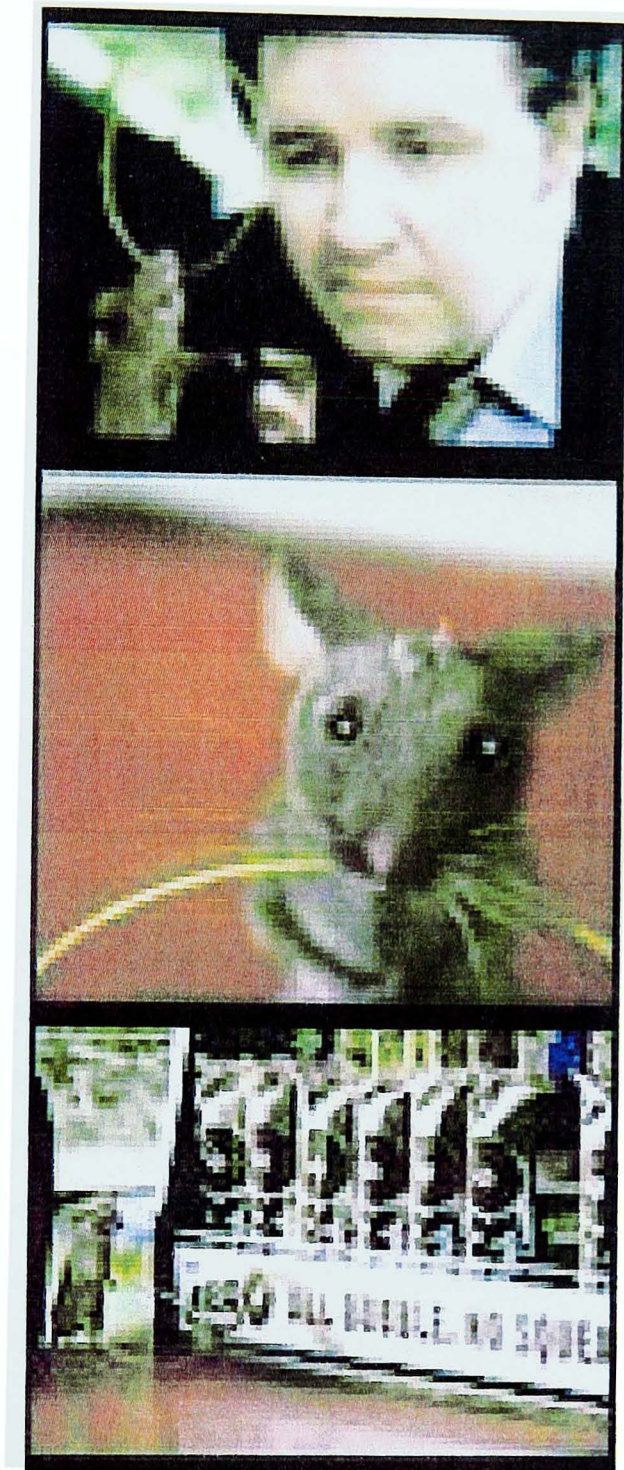
es. 'Straight-talking Guinness' (1990), 'John Smith (beer) is so smooth it can sell itself' (1995) and  
ero chocolate's 'All bubble, and no squeak' (2001) all illustrate a genre that spanned the decade and  
full repertoire of technical crafts available.

For the purpose of this study, irony is taken to mean a knowing play on an assumed expectation or  
ny, where the order of layering and juxtaposition appears at odds with the commonly given order of

For instance adverts had a tendency to play on perceived domestic roles: in 1993 a Renault  
ercial conveyed a middle-aged man preparing a set of golf clubs while a woman (presumably his wife)  
p a vacuum cleaner. He then started vacuuming while she drove off with the clubs. The pre-supposition  
that it was a role reversal – advertisers called it "norm transcending" – where the expected order of 'roles '  
reversed, aside from implicit sexism or moral balance. The layering process in this ad, and the potential  
viable alternative readings of the narrative, are possible because it is 'intertextual', where different  
meanings can be simultaneously generated.

Intertextual irony shifted in nature during the 1990s, although parody was consistently employed.  
Advertisers seemed more confident in assuming audiences were aware of conventions, which enabled them  
to toy with anticipated narrative structures. For instance, one Daewoo car commercial (discussed in chapter  
5b) presented a breakdown of format. The ad's front man, who was presenting a sales message to camera,  
was apparently overtaken by a studio filled with guinea pigs, which served to set up a pun on a Daewoo  
promotion (they were offering viewers the opportunity to be test driving 'guinea pigs' for a year). The format  
was a take on automotive ads of the 60s: the apparent breakdown was used to disrupt the expected outcome,  
while acknowledging the audience's (over-) familiarity with the format. In other words Daewoo were  
developing an older established format, but aimed to give it a fresh, 'post-construction' injection of interest.

For this study, it is significant in that it relied on reference points from earlier viewing experiences.  
The use of irony had a larger role. It meant ad messages were more widely accessible, taking advantage of a  
developing 'archive' culture. In an age where old 'classic' films were constantly replayed enough for audiences  
of all age to recognise them, and adverts were repackaged as TV light entertainment, advertisers understood  
that could take certain old viewing conventions as given. Advertisers could also assume the commonplace  
acceptance of audio-visual digital technology in the home. This was the first full decade where personal viewing  
control impacted on the way mass advertising was received. VCU's allowed viewers to fast-forward through  
adverts while 'flickers' (remote controls) encouraged the skimming of channels to become commonplace.



Nestlé Aero "All Bubble & No Squeak" (Lowe Lintas, 2001)

A man is shown buying a Nestlé Aero chocolate bar from a train platform kiosk when he is offered a promotional item – a mouse. The mouse tries to impress by performing a series of hula-hooping tricks. But the man appears embarrassed and turns it down. The ad suggests that the bar does not need fancy gimmicks to sell. Aero's strapline 'All Bubble, No Squeak' emphasises the product's selling proposition (full of bubbles) and also suggests that the ad itself is not overstated (no squeak).

Much of the ad's budget would have gone into making the mouse appear realistic, but the storyline sends this up as an expensive trick. The art direction juxtaposes high quality animation with a bland everyday setting to make the ironic intent clear. The ad relies on viewers tacitly reading between the lines, recognising the expensive production values that the ad pokes fun at. Such ironic strategies were frequently used in British media advertising during the 1990s.



The rise in over 50% of households having remote controlled electronics impacted on the nineties household – their choice in listening and viewing, and the way they exercised their choice clearly changed. In fact such was the common tendency to skim images that skimming became a music pop video aesthetic in its own right. Montages of reference points – samples – commonly served as located points of reference in the quick mapping of contexts for video and music. Similarly modern musicians and film-makers more frequently ‘riffed’ on established models as a standard to underpin modern interpretations.

As a form therefore, riffing off standards and ironically toying with preconceptions became constant in visual communication – from pop videos to ads – between 1980–2000. Riffing had broader appeal in making visual communication relevant to a wider audience. It relied on commonly accepted ‘standards’, which were particularly meaningful for marginal groups or subjects such as ethnic minority reference points moving into the mainstream. On one level it allowed a growing number of immigrant cultures to adjust and relocate frames of reference by assuming given hierarchies to be the stable structural model. For immigrants and the growing number of ‘hyphenated-British’, it enabled cross-reference between their own experience of national structures and given British authorities. It is wrong however to suggest irony and layering were introduced for immigrant cultures. It was however part of a broadening out of information structures that found common currencies in global cultures. For instance the developing ‘Black Atlantic’ meta culture, which connected Black African, African American and indigenous Black American cultures, can be identified in music video that uses fast editing techniques to mesh nuances from aspects of different Black cultures. Its closed systems of signification are partially opened to locate references to other Black cultures.

In Britain also irony as a play on cultural references became more significant as the sense of British Authority (that is, given constant norms and social standing) was increasingly questioned during the 1990s. Irony often became satirical as ads tended to juxtapose ideal situations against the actual. Travel firms, for instance, juxtaposed colourful holiday experiences with the grey humdrum experiences of 9–5 working patterns. Irony therefore became the dominant form of expression that suited the period. The subject warrants a thesis in itself and is referred to within this study but is not its central issue. Framing the period of study also presented a problem – why ‘decade-ism’? In the past 15 or so years social movements have increasingly become categorised within ‘decades’<sup>4</sup>. Decades are easy handles to review eras that span significant lengths of time, as with the periods pre- and post- the turn of the twentieth century. During the 1990s, the tendency to cross-reference trends from different disciplines made it easier to recognise how prevalent moods took root in different creative outlets (the timelines prepared in appendix 1 were used in the construction of this study, with the purpose of cross-referencing in mind). Decade classification was also used within creative industries to

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<sup>4</sup>Discussed at greater length in the introduction to Saynes, S *et al.* The 60's Without Apology, Univ. of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1984

categorise clipped references to period styles. As generations of archival film and video stock grew, the ease with which one could statistically round down and locate a piece by 'era bracketing' made it easy to classify a variety of images and activity to approximate moments in time.

Such are the inconsistencies of Decadism that I found difficulty in claiming (with absolute certainty) phenomena that were new to the nineties. However, while the phenomena I discuss within this study may well have been shaped within a previous decade, taking into account the knowledgeable 'raiding' (or parody) of historical styles, it is because it took root in my period of study that I claim it for the nineties.

In any case, even in the bluntest of characterisations of the nineties, it is clear the period was shaped by fall-out from the previous decade's social and technological movements. The impact of a free-market culture was felt, as were the possibilities of stronger ties with central Europe. In terms of technology, viewers grew to recognise the possibilities of expanded choice as satellite, cable then digital channels established themselves alongside the pre-nineties commercial channels ITV and Channel 4. The choice of entertainment further expanded mid-decade with the onset of the internet. The nineties therefore saw a great increase in the volume of information at the disposal of consumers. For advertising in particular this made the period significantly distinct from the preceding four decades (since the advent of commercial television).

Writing a study on a period as it was taking shape is problematic in that it lacks hindsight and (to an extent) objectivity. Yet it does contain the social nuances and spirit of the period that tends to be lost in later accounts. Therefore, an aim of this study was to make sense of phenomena as it was being shaped, using reference points available at the moment of inception. It is worth noting that a study of this kind could not have been achieved a decade ago. In its production I have drawn on my own audio and visual archives that stretch back to 1990, while the agencies and archives I have corresponded with have been able to provide video showreels, faxed documentation and (more recently) e-mails as supporting evidence. The problems I have encountered in using (since 1994) three different computers and five different computer programmes echo the problems many, including ad agencies, have had in staying abreast of rapid technological change during the time frame.

## Chapter 1

### Literature Review

The aim of this section is to position this study in relation to the existing literature on advertising. Here I consider appropriate frameworks and establish the difference between this study and what I argue to be exhausted approaches to advertising. The methods of textual analysis I use in Chapter 3 and the context to changes I describe are, in particular, positioned within the framework of existing literature.

This project is motivated by a conviction that the texts on advertising analysis most commonly recommended to students are insufficiently aware of the industry and the realpolitik of the production of ads. I am motivated by a sense of the dense contextual nature of the advertisement, the way it engages a 'memorial metatext' of visual sources from a wide range of media and the ways in which it depends on topical and historical awareness of 'moments'. This study attempts to demonstrate the complex texts, contexts and intertexts that make advertising legible and effective. Of course this process of working with and among existing texts is partly motivated by a desire to install the advertisement as a cultural point of reference, and increasingly, as I go on to demonstrate, advertisements and promotional material become the 'events' that are cross referenced. I am not suggesting that this is entirely new – for over a century advertising materials have been the source and inspiration for various forms of cultural production. I am however arguing for a greater density and a more imbricated 'knowingness', which cannot easily be reconstructed or critiqued by semiological analysis or the image in itself. I regard the medium as equally significant and determining, particularly in a period when technological development has provided different media for transmission and consumption and also had a demonstrable effect on the aesthetics and semiological density of the image.

To create a clear context for this study I have divided this chapter into three sections. This section addresses the literature of advertising in three overlapping categories – overviews of practice in Part 1, academic critical overviews in Part 2 and related contextual material in Part 3. Also, in Appendix 1, there is an annotated bibliography of texts used by practitioners within the industry: there is a difference in form and content between texts for practitioners and contextual material. Practitioner texts tend to presuppose an innate ideology of advertising, that it serves needs, whereas the dominant thinking in academic critical texts is that advertising creates needs. The purpose of removing practitioner texts from this section is to distinguish academic texts that shape and frame this study. In Part 1 I consider literature that profiles contemporary advertising, of which only a few attempt to contextualise advertising practices. Having outlined the territories of advertising literature, Part 2 situates the premises of this study within relevant approaches and theories of modern advertising. I question the dominant models used in the past to critique and put forward alternative



models that serve to map out the context for my study. This includes locating an appropriate theoretical framework for envisaging ad practice and commercial culture. Part 3 considers texts that comment on the changing nature of producing and understanding communication. I demonstrate how my study extends existing literature with respect to institutional and technological issues. I also consider where texts on contemporary advertising stop short of an adequate account of 1990s advertising. Given that the 1990s have been a critical period for advertising, there has been very limited critical consideration. The second half of this section considers which texts on creative commercial practice 'signposted' the reshaping of advertising practice during the period under review.

### 1. Overviews of practice

When I started this project in 1994 my initial literature survey unearthed relatively few published titles on advertising next to, say, graphics or product design. There was a limited quantity of subject-specific material on advertising practice, which was a problem when I started teaching the history of modern advertising in 1992. Less than a decade later, marketing, media studies and visual culture have addressed advertising to considerable effect.

However, there has been a tendency for texts on advertising to fall into one of two categories. They were either ad industry centred (cf. Appendix 1) or sociologically inflected.

There was a basic division in the sense that the industry-based accounts avoided issues of ideology or ethics. They are usually based on the assumption that advertising is a form of information sustained by social understanding, skills involved in communicating and a creativity in finding the perfect formulae of image and words to interpellate the reader/consumer. The socially inflected texts published when I constructed this study could also be subdivided. There were sociological studies concerned with the effects of advertising, such as Vance Packard's The Hidden Persuaders (US, 1957). Packard assumed advertising to be a conspiratorial aspect of the media manipulation of the American public. He described how psychological consultants were used to exploit the 'deep unconscious and subconscious factors that motivate people. In this they were searching not only for insights but also... triggers of action'<sup>1</sup>. Packard's perspective centred on the effect advertising had on unwitting consumers and demonstrated how, in his view, ads moulded consumers into 'packaged souls'. Packard's text therefore expressed concern for the effects of advertising.

More academically derived texts sought to show how advertising worked ideologically, usually by close analysis of the visual and the ways in which the meanings were anchored by texts. These tended to

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<sup>1</sup>Packard, V The Hidden Persuaders Penguin, London 1981 p.27 (first published by Longmans, London 1957).

work from a Marxist, semiological and Structuralist set of precepts. Perhaps the most prominent example of this for my text was Judith Williamson's Decoding Advertisements (US, 1978, discussed on page 14).

Some texts main concern is to locate advertisements as being representative of the concerns of their time – there is a genre of books on 'classic ads' and ads decade by decade. For instance, John Sinclair's Images Incorporated (Australia, 1987), attempted to connect cultural observation and shifts in popular culture with the content of contemporary ads and advertising strategies. Routledge produced a series of texts by the mid-1990s that framed advertising as a topic of media studies. Texts such as Robert Goldman's Reading Ads Socially (1995), Richard Cook's The Discourse of Advertising (1992) examined media up to the early 1990s as a reflection of aspects of modern commercial culture. Cook also suggested advertising had a broad cultural impact<sup>2</sup>, by comparing the use of language in advertising to that used in music, another expression of popular culture. The integration of both (argued Cook) helped tie advertising into the fabric of cultural references. Cook considered the interplay between ads and images as well as values that operated outside the meanings of words<sup>3</sup>. Angela Goddard's The Language of Advertising (1998) also drew parallels between popular culture and the content of advertising, through a series of models connecting common uses of language with existing examples of advertising copy. Both texts assume advertising operates 'hypodermically', where 'consumers' absorb ads without critical resistance. Yet as I explain in Chapter 2, such assumptions of passive viewing no longer held in the 1990s, as consumers became more resistant to advertising and aware of its methods.

The texts by Michael Brierley, The Advertising Handbook (1995) and Martin Davidson, The Consumerist Manifesto (1992) effectively mark the starting point for my study. Brierley set out how the British ad industry operated at the beginning of the 1990s while Davidson contextualised the changing attitudes within advertising in the eighties, as 'read' from the early 1990s. The concern of Brierley's and Davidson's texts' is with British advertising in the early nineties, and a significant component of my thesis is devoted to the specific nature of new developments in the 1990's. As I discuss later in this chapter, Brierley and Davidson both assumed that the 1990s would be the decade in which the media of advertising would reach saturation point, and both remarked that the advertising industries would need to adapt. Both texts stop short of addressing changes in the nineties in any detail. I characterise 1990's advertising as being determined by technology and an intensification of irony partly resulting from 'the archive', which is also technologically disseminated. I do however pick up on themes raised in both texts by addressing how the advertising industry re-envisaged consumers in response to the 'cultural turn' of the 1990s (discussed later in this chapter).

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<sup>2</sup> Others with a similar perspective include Vestergaard, T & Schroder, K The Language of Advertising, Blackwell, London 1985; Cowley, D How To Plan Advertising Cassell/Account Planning Group, London 1989 and Hart, A Understanding the Media: A Practical Guide Routledge, London 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Cook, G. The Discourse Of Advertising, Routledge London 1992 p.30

Both Brierley's and Davidson's accounts were published in the early nineties when there was more expectation that ideological analysis would be materially contextualised. Much of this contextualising had to do with the professional stance from which they were written. Three of the Routledge authors mentioned above were journalists or advertisers. Author of No Logo (2000), Naomi Klein, was also a journalist specialising in anti-corporate activity, while Ted Polhemus, an anthropologist by training, has also been associated with industry activities subsequent to the publication of Street Style (1994) and its linked exhibition. Sarah Thornton's study of Club Cultures (1995), a study of 'sub-cultural capital' led to a career as an advertising planner. As other planners and marketers started to exert greater influence over the direction of advertising in the nineties, so texts on marketing and studies of popular culture have seeped into advertisers' vocabulary to give more reasoned accounts of how advertising has operated within wider contexts of consumption. Within advertising industries too, academic accounts of consumerism and advertising started to effect the thinking and practices of advertising, as account handlers and planners investigated new ways of understanding target markets.

Throughout my analysis I draw on the different types of text as I assess the ad industries' renegotiations of consumers. Locating a theoretical stance and a context for this study proved more problematic.

## 2. Critical overviews

### (a) Questioning the relevant approaches and theories of modern advertising

In this study I argue that advertisers have recognised in consumers an ability to read ads in relation to each other, and make more complex and nuanced readings of advertisements. I make the case that advertisers have adjusted their practices to accommodate their understandings of these complexities. Any study of advertising in this period has to take into account participative readings which draw on historically sedimented cultural knowledge. Unlike Davidson, Cook or Goddard I am not reviewing social change through advertising. Instead I am looking at key campaigns of the 1990s to explain the overdetermined agendas which lay behind the creation of complex addresses to consumers. I am interested in how ad industries reconceptualised their mode of address and the likely reception of their campaigns. This is considered in the context of social change and the emergence of a more complex demographic and cultural context. I argue that this required a more flexible and creative framework for constructing images and campaigns than existed when Williamson was analysing ads at the end of the 1970s. While I am not claiming that reading consumption through advertising was easier in the 1970s, where Williamson chose to address individual ads, I have found it necessary to address campaigns. I am suggesting that an understanding of contemporary adverts more often requires intertextual and contextual analytic strategies. This makes my text distinct from earlier analyses of advertising. Advertising now addresses more segmented audiences that draw on a wider range of reference. The idea of

consensus on a set of assumptions – about characteristics which ‘unite’ the audience – as British, are no longer tenable.

Earlier twentieth century readings of advertising tended to rely on the assumption that mass audiences did not spot other agendas at work in advertisements beyond the actual sales messages. Many studies had a tendency to fit advertising into pre-politicised contexts from the outset. They typically adopted strategies of resistance. F R Leavis’s Culture and Environment, the Training of Critical Awareness (1933) saw new media as instrumental in a breakdown of traditional values. Left wing critiques such as those of the Frankfurt school saw media in terms of ‘false’ consciousness<sup>4</sup>. Of the Leftist models, Theodor Adorno on The Schema of Mass Culture framed commercial activity such as advertising as a bond that fused everyday experience and constructed ‘culture’;

The commercial character of mass-culture causes the difference between culture and practical life to disappear. Aesthetic semblance (Schein) turns into the sheen which commercial advertising lends to the commodities, which absorb it in turn. But that moment of independence which philosophy specifically grasped under the idea of aesthetic semblance is lost in the process... Since the beginning of the industrial era an art has been in vogue which is adept at promoting the right attitudes and which has entered into an alliance with reification insofar as it proffers precisely for (a) disenchanted world.<sup>5</sup>

Adorno assumed that one cannot escape advertising’s ability to manipulate, and Marxist derived texts such as his continued to position advertising as inherently mass (rather than segmented), idealist and propagandist. Appraisals of advertising even in the 1990s rarely updated such presumptions.

The texts on advertising with Marxist leanings are still useful but not as reliable as they had been in demonstrating the social consequences of commercial advertising. A different appropriation of Marx is necessary in order to understand how the new economic determinants underpin the forms of advertising. In using models such as Adorno’s the tendency was to read ads as paradigmatic texts, reflective of concurrent consumer aspirations. For instance, texts such as Judith Williamson’s Decoding Advertisements used ads to ‘read’ aspects of consumer culture in terms of lifestyle, attitudinal outlook and modes of address. The underscored presumption was that advertising idealised the everyday, and was in the business of selling unattainable dreams, ‘persuading people to buy things they don’t need, with money they don’t have in order to impress others who don’t care, (Advertising) is probably the phoniest field in existence today’<sup>6</sup>. On many levels this is difficult to disprove. Advertising was therefore pigeonholed as a means of mass indoctrination.

Williamson’s was the most successful and useful critical model I found, because it refuses the notion of ‘false consciousness’ and introduces notions of pleasure and symbolic functions of consumerism. Williamson’s model has also become most commonly used in advertising since the late seventies. While her

<sup>4</sup>Morley, D Theories of consumption in media studies in Miller, D (ed.) Acknowledging Consumption Routledge, London 1995 p.297

<sup>5</sup>Adorno, TW (Bernstein, JM ed.) The Culture Industry Routledge, London 1991 p.53

<sup>6</sup>Papanek, V. Design For The Real World Thames & Hudson, London 1984 p. ix (preface)

close textual analysis brackets the key tactics of media advertising's Emotive and Unique selling propositions, I contend in this study that the methods are too simplistic for reading 1990s examples. Williamson's work is symptomatic of its period, where critiques of advertising began with the opinion that advertising was a manipulative tool, serving producers of products foremost. Most Marxist texts assume this as a basis on which particular nuances of a capitalist-based culture can be assessed, particularly its tastes and aspirations. In the foreword to Decoding Advertisements Williamson noted that before she analysed her collection of adverts, she knew the adverts were being exploitative, '...but it was a fact that I was attracted. Feelings (ideology), lag behind knowledge (science)'.<sup>7</sup> In her preface to the fourth edition (1981) Williamson remarked, "I still believe what I said in that foreword, that Marxists... cannot afford to reject some of the basic structuralist-semiotic theories. In emphasising *how* meaning is produced these theories move away from the old ideals of essential meaning, of fixed values taken for granted, of social phenomena seen (covertly in isolation), not as part of social systems. They stress that meanings are specific for particular societies, classes, periods of history".<sup>8</sup>

As I explain in Chapter 2, even marketers rejected established demographic segmentation methods<sup>9</sup> in favour of closer and less rigid studies of consumption habits. For instance, marketers changed in the nineties from envisaging consumers by social classification (A, B, C1, C2, D and E) to less rigid groupings based instead on household consumption patterns, such as 'inner directed' and 'early adopters'. Assumptions that British culture could be addressed as an homogeneous mass no longer applied in the 1990s, so reading adverts as a reflection of 'common cultural values' was less productive. The social Historian Richard Hoggart, The Way We Live Now (1995) remarked that 'given' common authorities of previous decades had dwindled, so that an overarching model of cultural identity was no longer representative;

The pattern of authority-conscious... has relaxed, though – as with working-class people – it has lingered longer in those over fifty, especially with some not very high up, who gratefully felt themselves to be the NCOs of the authority-pattern; that allowed them not only to look up but also down. Among younger people in the secure middle-classes the outcome had been much the same as for working-class young people. The sense of external authority (and often parental authority) has virtually gone; there are hardly any injunction-givers, finger-waggers, these days.<sup>10</sup>

The scope for advertising has therefore broadened since Williamson's text. Consumers are more aware they are being sold to (as this study illustrates), but not necessarily how, or to what effect. Rather than rejecting ads that consumers 'see through', there appears to be a willingness to play with ideas relating to consumption and to acknowledge that they are consumers with desires and irrational needs. While writers such as Polhemus have gone further in claiming that there is a strong relationship between consumption and identity creation, the

<sup>7</sup> Williamson, J Decoding Advertisements, Marion Boyars, NY 1978 p.9

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1981 preface (fourth edition).

<sup>9</sup> Like that described in Brierley, S The Advertising Handbook Routledge, London 1995 p.29

<sup>10</sup> Hoggart, R The Way We Live Now Chatto & Windus, London 1995 p.6

relationship between adverts and viewers is clearly complex. There have also been significant changes within the advertising industry since Decoding Advertisements was written. Media ads are no longer the only advertising option and selling is more ingrained within a popular culture than it was in the 1970s, and the onset of comprehensive neo-liberal economics and deregulation. Advertising therefore became pluralistic in terms of illustrating globalism, renewed regionalisms, archivally derived knowledge and cultural and ethnic diversity. While ads may sometimes look similar to those of the late 1970s, the advertising aspect of promotion is now only a constituent of broader marketing strategies, so to judge it as one image is now to view it out of context.

Another problem I confronted was that popular accounts of the discipline tended to address American rather than British advertising. The most widely known text on advertising before the nineties was Vance Packard's The Hidden Persuaders. As I noted earlier, Packard illustrated how methods of emotional manipulation became a powerful political tool in Madison Avenue to an extent that US advertisers could generate a sort of Orwellian 'Big Brother' authority for politicians. Packard concluded that advertising was the main (amoral) power broker in American politics. The Hidden Persuaders raised public fears about motivational research particularly for advertising, and according to several accounts its publication was a factor in causing motivation research (and advertising) to decline in popular respectability<sup>11</sup>. Most critical accounts of late-twentieth century advertising reprised Packard's stance, particularly those produced in the 1980s (advertising's global boom years). For instance, Neil Postman's Amusing Ourselves To Death (US, 1986) adopted Packard's argument that ad images appealed emotively. He claimed this 'infantilised' its audience in that it by-passed their critical awareness rather than rationally informing them<sup>12</sup> (cf. Coke's methods, Chapter 3a). At Postman's time of writing David Ogilvy was championing Emotive Selling Propositions in his best selling text Ogilvy on Advertising in 1983. Postman claimed that advertising was even more intrusive than in Packard's day, in suggesting that ads stimulated desires for unattainable and often immoral unadulterated hedonism. Using sex to sell (Postman claimed) had become the most common ad tactic. Postman claimed that tones-of-voice were less apparent, literal and more seductive in the 1980s, and that desire was being deliberately confused with need. This was a longstanding familiar basis for criticising the effects of advertising, and one that holds as one way in which advertising works. It does not however allow for consumers' sense of enjoyment in being seduced by adverts. For instance, the manipulation of image and text, the associations engaged, the beauty of the image, the ingeniousness of the technology involved or the extent to which adverts recognise and comment on existing images. Some adverts have become temporal

<sup>11</sup>Belk, RW Studies in the new Consumer Behaviour, in Miller, D (ed.) Acknowledging Consumption p.59. Belk cited (among others) Stern B Literary Criticism and the history of Marketing Thought, in The Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 18/4 pp.239–236, in making similar observations about the impact and repercussions of Packard's text

<sup>12</sup>Postman, N Amusing Ourselves To Death Heinemann, London 1986 p. 127. Also cited in Davidson, M The Consumerist Manifesto p.145

reference points because they chime with moments in time, and so in one sense prominent advertising could be seen as being 'intrusive', if not as pernicious as Postman claimed.

During the 1980s, Roland Marchand's Advertising The American Dream (US, 1985) and Michael Schudson's Advertising – The Uneasy Persuasion (1989) also questioned the ethics of America's advertising industry. Schudson examined how advertising entrenched itself within the cultural fabric of the (American) capitalist system. It had (claimed Schudson) moved beyond the direct selling of dreams to a more covert and crafted means of connecting America history with the roots of consumer culture. Schudson illustrated this through studies of Quaker Oats and cigarettes<sup>13</sup>. However, Schudson described advertising as more maverick than corporate compared to other industries. 'If Wall Street is one image of American capitalism – dark, grey, granite – cold, calculating – Madison Avenue is its upbeat counterpart – steel and glass, jazzy and fast-talking, more cynical than serious, more pressed than pressuring, grinning but tense'<sup>14</sup>.

Packard, Postman, Schudson and Marchand's accounts are dated, in that advertising can no longer be read in such simplistic black and white terms. The shortcomings of doing so can be seen in Sinclair's Images Incorporated, where the author describes advertising as putting a 'gloss on capitalism which positions it in firm contrast to the dullness it attributes to socialism'<sup>15</sup>. This has changed as Blairite centre-Leftism has accepted commercial culture as a pedestal on which to develop a Third Way. Kathy Myers writing a decade on from Sinclair argued that Labour values swapped places with Conservative ones in making 'stakeholder' principles appear attractive through advertising. However, the Labour tone of voice was guarded;

Nothing is too different, too radical, too innovative. Labour wants to be seen as fit to govern. No Loony Left here. Nothing weird. This is of course the ultimate irony. Late twentieth century capital has found out that 'staying safe' doesn't sell. Adverts designed to appeal to the masses to push dull products of industry are increasingly avant-garde: flaming fields of corn to sell cars, rubber S & M to sell Dunlop tyres, savage blood-splattered Steadmanesque cartoons to sell Oddbins booze. Strange morphed orange maniacs to sell Tango, surreal flights of Dada-esque fantasy to sell Guinness.<sup>16</sup>

But Labour's safe tones did sell. Even Myers recent perspective is dated. The tone of advertising became more measured in its tones by the end of the 1990s. Because advertising methods were more widely understood and easily read, the level on which advertising operated often involved 'baring' its devices. Terms like 'product truth' became increasingly popular as experiential marketing became acceptable. Like politics, advertising used less covert methods of persuasion, even if the means became more direct. Political assumptions of advertising are therefore no longer as easily pre-supposed as Sinclair suggested in 1987. Some 1990s writers on advertising rejected the hypodermic model of media influence, 'in which the media are seen as having the power to "inject" their audiences with popular messages, which will cause them to behave

<sup>13</sup> Schudson, M Advertising the Uneasy Persuasion: Quaker Oats p.166, and Cigarettes p.178

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.45

<sup>15</sup> Sinclair, J Images Incorporated p.188

<sup>16</sup> Myers, K Loves Labours Lost, in Evans, J (ed.) The Camerawork Essays Rivers Oram Press, London 1996 p.230

in a particular way'<sup>17</sup>. The notion of 'injecting' repressive messages directly into mass consciousness is no longer appropriate when, say, a billboard ad may contain more than one message, multiply coded for different market segments<sup>18</sup>.

(b) my approach in relation to existing texts

Given that potential customers are now more often targeted by consumption habits than by social groupings<sup>19</sup>, the ethnographies of late-twentieth century consumption in Daniel Miller (ed.), Acknowledging Consumption (1995) offer useful frameworks. Miller rejects the Marxist assumption that consumption is inherently capitalist and opposed to sociality (on grounds that capitalism expressed concern for goods rather than concern for people), arguing that 'It might seem more reasonable to see capitalism as itself increasingly dominant in the modern world. But to accept this as an inevitable consequence of mass consumption is to accept capitalism's own assertion that it is the only structure capable of providing the goods for mass consumption'<sup>20</sup>. The Blairite Third Way, of commercially inclusive Labour in the mid-1990s is perhaps the clearest political example that would vindicate Miller's argument. Miller also contended the Marxist notion that consumption has destroyed significant cultural difference, thus rendering consumers an homogeneous mass. Miller's claim went beyond the pleasures of consuming and suggested a process or 'bricolage' where social thinking was made manifest through practices of consumption, ownership and gifting. By consuming goods we may not necessarily be conforming, but 'identical goods may relate to quite different issues in varied local context'<sup>21</sup>. Through objects (claimed Miller) we are more able to express ourselves.

It is those persons who found they were best able to express their relationships through their manipulation of their material worlds who formed the closest social networks, while those who felt unvalorised in their social relations also felt impotent with respect to any manipulation of their material culture. Of course, there are pathologies of fetishism in which people become obsessed with goods which have no redolence of social relations about them, but ironically it may be far more than the narcissistic obsession with personhood which detracts from social relations, not the materialism which is often an expression of social relations through a process of objectification.<sup>22</sup>

While claiming that such linear, overarching Modernist views of consumption are no longer tenable, Miller also claimed that postmodern theories fail to pin down the new authority customers can wield through active exercising of promiscuous consumption:

Socialism, in practice, attempted as a political act to homogenise the population. By comparison an emphasis upon consumption is an acknowledgement of the potential and creative power of diverse human groups to make of their resources what they will. Indeed, consumption stands among other things for the necessity for humility by both theory and politics in the face of actual social diversity,

<sup>17</sup> Morley, D Theories of consumption in media studies, in Miller, D Acknowledging Consumption pp.297 & 298

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.300

<sup>19</sup> By the mid 1990s trends analysts the Henly Forecast Center paid less attention to social classification and used purchasing habits as a more accurate gauge of consumption patterns.

<sup>20</sup> Miller, D Consumption as a vanguard of history, in Miller, D (ed.) Acknowledging Consumption pp.21-22

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.24. Miller expands on this between pp.28-30



which should be neither over-controlled, nor over-generalised. But contra to theories of postmodernism, which also acknowledge the importance of pluralism, this approach to consumption is based on respect for consumption as empowerment.<sup>23</sup>

This is significant for my study. Until the mid-1980s marketers had been accustomed to assuming they had control of consumption, and could survey a clear picture of market movement as an homogenous mass. This changed in the 1990s. Improvements in reaching consumers through improved data gathering methods did enable marketers appear more consumption-led in the 1990s. They realised (before advertising) the profitability in colluding with consumers rather than spending money in an attempt to transform them<sup>24</sup>. As sociologist David Morley noted in 1995, there is a clearer understanding now that one cannot imagine 'media consumers' as mere dupes or victims of the media. The passively consuming audience seemed to be a thing of the past<sup>25</sup>.

From the perspective of this study, it is clear that one can no longer make generalisations in relation to consumption, and that the symptomatic readings I make during the thesis represent perhaps the leading edge of youth consumption, rather than the mass market. Among overarching trends was a movement towards consumption-led promotion, which is evident in the course of my Chapter 3 studies. It is also clear that the fragmentation of markets caused a dilemma for advertising and its methods of mass-representation. How they negotiated this is the central concern of this study.

It became clear in the process of research and formulation that the industry's version of validating 'creative' advertising and advertisements is not useful to my thesis. Advertisers spoke of 'good' adverts, which had already become part of the media advertising industry's self-evaluation and celebration of itself, in a system of values in which commercial success had little relation to sales. There was, I discovered, a strong sense in the industry of what constitutes 'good' or 'bad' practice. For instance Benetton's campaign was hugely disliked within the British advertising industry (cf. Chapter 4 and Appendix 4), and did not sustain Benetton's long term profits. Yet the impact of the Benetton campaign 'mood' influenced other areas of promotion sufficiently to make it relevant for a study of this nature. I am not unique in realising this. Writers such as Balk have noted that contemporary consumption is too complex to warrant simple good/bad value judgements<sup>26</sup>. In many respects this makes my construction of evidence more problematic, in that there are no overarching theoretically driven histories of advertising to draw on, while Industry accounts of 'good' advertising are spurious because, like Benetton's campaign, they tend to overlook newer models of promotion.

As I have noted in this chapter, there is now less scope to view advertising as a reflection of culture or to envisage new promotional tactics as symptoms of changing social aspirations. However, Stuart Hall's

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.41

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.48

<sup>25</sup> Morley, D *Theories of consumption in media studies*. *Ibid.*, pp. 296–308

model for encoding/decoding communication is useful for this study, in that it assumed mass communication to be a structured activity through which issues and agendas could be set. The notion of 'encoding' does relate to the idea of a well constructed ad (or 'crafted' as, in the industry's terms), one that communicates with efficiency and precision to make a precise appeal which specifies the product as a uniquely appropriate item, service or object. Hall's perspective also negotiated Packard's now dated (quasi-Marxist) notion that manipulative advertising makes audiences respond in a set way, but retained the notion of the media setting the tone and terms of reference in which people tended to operate. What makes this method inclusive is that issues are made relevant for consumers to act on/react against. Customers could choose a response to issues confronting them. Hall's model was therefore in tune with my dismissal of 'good' models. It addressed issues of relevance. The more prominent an event (or ad) was in the popular consciousness, the more significant it was for this study. This model also allowed for the possibility that 'events' can be encoded in multiple ways, with several potential readings. Of all the models this is perhaps the most resilient for this study, in particular the case studies (Chapter 3). However, the method is limited when one measures impact. For instance, the renown of HHCL + Partners Tango ad campaign in 1992 would have registered higher in the popular consciousness than EHS's Tesco Clubcard. Yet Clubcard has had the bigger impact. For mass communication campaigns the method worked, but for more segmented tactics its use was limited.

The most useful method of deconstructing a campaign I found was Kathy Myers analysis of Boots perfume brand 'Tu', in Understains<sup>27</sup>. Myers model mixed advertisers intentions with her own interpretative methods. From my perspective preconceptions of advertising's role were suspended for Myers case-study, which allowed the evidence to be explained and explored without a pressing need to enforce moral or socio-cultural perspectives.

Myers (or my mixed) method are still not fully comprehensive. For instance they do not explain the significance of office dynamics in driving approaches. In most campaigns the significant moment in a campaign's genesis was a spark of an idea delivered with conviction to others in the team. Stubbornness and persistence were the most significant aspects in pushing the core ideas through the various stages of clearance. In meeting and interviewing different practitioners involved in producing campaigns it became clear that the mixture of creative 'idea bashers', motivators and co-ordinators had gelled together. In each of the three case studies I could argue that their collective character was evident in the final campaign.

This is not the central thrust of my study however. It is the advertisers and marketers perspectives of consumers that emerge from the case studies, even though their perspectives were effected by the fallout from the re-positioning of advertising and consumerism within commercial culture from the 1980s.

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<sup>26</sup> Balk, RW Studies in the new consumer behaviour, Ibid., p.73

In defining how consumers have been re-conceptualised, Russell Keat & Nicholas Abercrombie in Enterprise Culture (1990) considered changes in the ways that customers were objectified in the 'enterprise discourse' during the 1980s. What emerged from their account is that the complex of attitudes comprised in the discourse of 'enterprise culture' included a sense of advertising, promotion and marketing as essential components of everyday life, extending to recommended aspects of intrapersonal behaviour. This served to normalise the ethics of promotion and self-promotion to an extent which would have been regarded as unacceptable previously. As Keat remarked, the impact of 'commercial speak' spread into most areas of everyday work:

...the most striking and noticeable feature has been the adoption both of specific techniques of marketing and advertising, and the previously alien vocabularies or 'discourses' associated with these. Terms such as 'product differentiation' and 'market niche' became increasingly commonplace; and above all, references to the consumer, a term that displaced others – such as 'student', 'patient' or 'client' – more closely tied to the ways in which the specific nature and purposes of these institutions' activities had been previously understood. Meeting the demands of the 'sovereign' consumer becomes new and overriding institutional imperative. Thus, 'the commercial enterprise' takes on paradigmatic status<sup>28</sup>

The practices of marketing and advertising therefore moved into the mainstream consciousness in the 1980s. This perhaps explains why advertising became more self-referential during the period of this study.

In light of this, my study is grounded in the understanding that the practices of advertising had become a 'given' in the everyday operations of popular culture. Implicit within the mainstreaming of commercial culture was the 'culturalisation' of banal products. As the difference between commercial and cultural values became increasingly blurred during the eighties, so economic and symbolic processes also became interdependent, and even banal consumer products were embraced as cultural artefacts. This idea was developed in Scott Lash, & John Urry, Economies of Sign & Space (1994).

One of the more contentious claims of my study (in Chapter 5) is that increasingly the advertising aspect of artefacts – their USP – has been built into the design of goods such as kitchen equipment, TV sets, VCRs and computers. Lash & Urry argued that an ever-quickening turnover time led more producers to intend their goods to be cultural signs (Barthesian 'signifiers')<sup>29</sup>. The notion of 'designer' goods, and its rise in popularity during the late 1980s, was symptomatic of the new status of branding, and its implied added value. This extended beyond the 'designer loading' of objects to include events and personalities, where the sense in which sponsorship and endorsements increasingly served as implicit recognition and approval of the value of

<sup>27</sup>Myers, K Understains Comedia, London 1986 pp. 54-76, reproduced in Bird, J *et al* (ed.) The Block Reader Routledge, London 1996.

<sup>28</sup>Keat, R, In the introduction to Keat, R & Abercrombie, N Enterprise Culture, Routledge, London 1990 pp.2-3

<sup>29</sup>Lash, S & Urry, J Economies of Signs & Space Sage, London 1994 pp.2-3

cultural enterprises. However, the legacy of this was that goods became exaggerated in form, while over-production and bombardment from too many 'signposted' goods led consumers to become blasé<sup>30</sup>.

The design comprises an increasing component in the values of goods, while the labour process as such is less important in its contribution to the sense of value-added. This is true in the sense of increased research and development or 'design intensity' of even industrial production. And this increased R&D intensity is often importantly aesthetic in nature... consumer durables feature as a sort of built-in micro-environment', of buildings, rooms, clothes, cars, offices and so on.<sup>31</sup>

It is evident from Lash & Urry's perspective that the changes in design/communication emphasis is part of a bigger picture of repositioning. In their re-mapping of the economies of signs and space they claim that the intensity of design/communication in recasting its cultural position ran alongside the recasting of meaning in work and leisure, and the reconstruction of community. This is a valuable perception for my period of study. The creative industries were greatly affected in their means of operation, and the stock value of the communication industries was tied into the rapid growth of the service sectors. The rise of 'thin-air' industries during the 1990s (service, not production-centred) opened up the possibilities for greater working flexibility. The expansion of the service sectors, notably communication and IT industries which were accelerated by rapid take up of the world wide web, made global operation more easily achievable. The service sector therefore underwent fundamental revaluation and restructuring during my period of study<sup>32</sup>. A consequent effect was that local (and national) economies diminished in their usefulness. National and regional identities suffered as a result, their authority having been displaced by commercial corporations. Lash & Urry mapped a modern social landscape dominated by economic activity. In effect, it appears that the service sector effectively 'branded' popular culture, in reshaping leisure activities such as shopping into exercises in experiencing brands (cf. Chapter 5)<sup>33</sup>. This was one of the ways in which, in the West, company personality became increasingly significant, from office culture to dynamics of the ways companies worked. It effected the way brands were read and in particular the performance of "thin air" goods, such as financial services, retailers and other servicing industries. To an extent it was the absence of artefacts in services industries shifted attention to brand personality. According to Lash & Urry this prompted smart consumerism to become more reflexive in 'reading' commercial culture;

...there are large numbers of men and women who are taking on an increasingly critical and inflexible distance with reference to these institutions of the new information society. Owing partly to an increased pervasion of cultural competencies and partly to a tendential breakdown of trust in the 'expert-systems' of the new order, a growing space enables such a critical reflexivity to develop. This growing reflexivity is the first instant part and parcel of a radical enhancement in late modernity of individualization. That is, there is an ongoing process of de-traditionalization in which the social

<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Robins, K Into The Image Routledge, London, 1996 p.32, claimed that media saturation led viewers to compassion fatigue and an apathy even towards shocking programme content. Robins claimed that through television "...we no longer recognise and acknowledge the significance of embodied involvement in the world".

<sup>31</sup> Lash, S & Urry, J Economies of Signs & Space p.4

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.197-207 Lash & Urry describe the nature of post-industrial service sector restructuring.

<sup>33</sup> Alison Clarke makes this point about 'leisure imbued formal shopping' in an analysis of Argos. Clarke, A Window shopping at home: classifieds, catalogues and new consumer skills in Miller, D (ed.) Material Cultures UCL Press, London 1998 p.98

agents are 'set free' from the heteronomous control or monitoring of social structures in order to be self-monitoring or self-reflexive.<sup>34</sup>

The latter point was of particular significance to advertising, which had to engineer new means of reaching more reflexive, autonomous and commercially hardened consumers. De-traditionalization also posed a dilemma for the communication industries, particularly advertisers who had relied on a traditional idea of 'Britishness' for many years (cf. full version of Chapter 4, in Appendix 4). It is perhaps fair to describe Lash and Urry's work as belonging to a relatively new field of academic studies devoted to cultural geography – part of a 'geographic turn' which was conceived, at the time, as one of the aspects of postmodernity. In terms of my study it goes some way towards contextualising the dialectic between local and global markets simultaneously addressed by advertisers during the 1990s. Lash & Urry point to the international media companies whose predatory merger and take-over strategies has led to internationalised markets and a clearer commercial sense of 'global culture'<sup>35</sup>. Perhaps in response to this, local (regional) creative and market cultures have developed, and are flourishing as closer cultural alternatives to the mass-produced, standardised global market<sup>36</sup>. Therefore global and local markets do co-exist, although agencies during the 1990s found difficulty in striking the right balance between local and global meaning. This also had major implications for advertisers in presuming the values of British consumers. The re-negotiation of nationalism alongside internationalism, and the shift in authoritative orders were intertwined, as Lash and Urry concurred.

The old order has been undermined by two processes. The first is the disintegration of the old core with finance, distribution, property, service, and knowledge and R&D functions each taking on their own autonomy. The second is the formation of a new core, one in which the 'post-industrial tail of the old order begins effectively to wag the Fordist and industrial dog'. The new core is clustered around information, communications and the advanced producer services, as well as other services such as telecommunications, airlines and important parts of tourism and leisure. Spatially, many of these services are centred around global cities, located in vast agglomerations, whose industries feed these services. In terms of economic significance, the most developed in localisation is what we might call 'global localization'<sup>37</sup>.

With simultaneous mixtures of local, global and 'glocal' identities, it is hardly surprising that consumers had a tendency to be resistant and reflexive, because re-representations seemed to be rendered as broad characterisations, somewhat outdated in their attempts to be simultaneously local and global. Global identities removed some of the certainties that existed when it was clearer what was local and what was exotic. This bigger picture of renegotiated perspectives and demarcations during the 1990s, in particular the relocation of commercial enterprise within mainstream consciousness, provides an appropriate context for the attempts at globalising campaigns I describe later in this study. It also goes some way towards explaining where London

<sup>34</sup> Lash, S & Urry, J Economies of Signs & Space pp.4-5

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.305-307

<sup>36</sup> Of the sort described at length in Ritzer, G The McDonaldisation of Society Pine Forge, California 2000.

<sup>37</sup> Lash, S and Urry, J Economies of Signs & Space p.307

fits as a communications capital within the current global practices of advertising. In 1990 a concentration of major ad agencies operated within proximity to Golden Square in London. The expansion of the same agencies into new (predominantly Asian and Eastern European) countries still seemed to refer to New York and London as operational models. As Western commercialisation continued to expand in the 1990s (particularly into former Eastern Block countries) the significance of the older advertising cultures grew. This made the dilemmas British advertising faced during the nineties all the more strange, because while the British ad industry became a model internationally, in Britain its means of operation were often superseded by other modes of promotion. For my study of the 1990s therefore, Lash and Urry's account of the cultural repositioning of commercial practices goes some way towards providing a cultural context for the problems the British advertising industries were coming to terms with at home. They also go some way towards contextualising my claim that, in the 1990s, products and retail environments started to encompass many of the promotional attributes of adverts. They argued promotional culture was an aspect of 'the new order', and as I demonstrate in Chapters 3–5, the transformations at a cultural level they describe that advertisers were reacting to, makes Lash & Urry's text valuable in terms of framing the concerns of British advertisers during the 1990s.

The structure of work began to operate within the terms of reference familiar to advertising. New management culture predisposed consumers to consider advertising, promotion and particularly marketing as increasingly familiar terms in this period, necessary to work and commercial success. In terms of the 'new order' Lash and Urry describe, it is perhaps significant that terms such as 'performance' and 'appraisal' began to be used in this period to describe work with the implication that achievements need to be public, visible and capable of being assessed.

Such ideas are taken further in Production of Culture/Cultures of Production (1997), edited by Paul du Gay. 'Cultural economy', which describes the 'cultural' dimensions of economic activities<sup>38</sup>, is a term used by du Gay to explain how the production of modern 'cultural goods' are interconnected with the industrial processes and economic organisation that produced them<sup>39</sup> – including promotional activities. Sean Nixon (in the same collection of essays) recognised the central role of advertising, marketing and design as cultural intermediaries in the circulation of culture, using their 'symbolic expertise' in culturally placing goods and services, to make them significant<sup>40</sup>. Core product values carried by advertising went beyond just the mass communication of ideas. Nixon, du Gay and Graeme Salaman<sup>41</sup> described how values suggested through company's products or services, previously the central concern of the promotion campaign, had a greater bearing on the infrastructure of companies. In particular, Salaman considered how brands projected the ethos

<sup>38</sup> du Gay, P in du Gay, P. (ed.) Production of Culture/Cultures of Production Open University/Sage, Milton Keynes/London 1997 p3

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.319

<sup>40</sup> du Gay, paraphrasing Nixon's positioning of advertising, marketing and design in Production of Culture/Cultures of Production, . *Ibid.*, p.8. Nixon expanded on this idea of 'circulating culture' later in the text, pp.179–182

of their goods to 'culture' their organisation of work, and generate 'from within' the same values suggested by the end 'product' and its means of production. My study supplements such understandings in offering a parallel detailed account of how the industry changed during the 1990s, and how the industry itself 'read' the changes it went through. I look at a wider range of marketing practices than are normally considered 'advertising' – within what Nixon in Production of Culture... would perhaps describe as 'circulating culture'.

Different sections in Production of Culture... throw light on my findings. For instance, where Lash and Urry (and Andrew Wernick in his text Promotional Culture<sup>42</sup>) described 'promotional culture' performing a more embedded role in the 'new order' of popular culture, Keith Negus in Production of Culture... considered that the 'synergy'<sup>43</sup> of integrating different aspects of a company's operation, could develop 'the culture – the ways of life – through and within which music, films and hardware technologies are made and given meaning'<sup>44</sup>. I consider during my case studies (chapter 3) how a much broader span of a brands' activities (of the sort Negus identified,) became an intrinsic part of their promotional campaigns, from the way support services were organised (I consider Daewoo and Tesco in this respect) to the way their goods were re-packaged (I consider Apple's iMac and Nike's 'cathedral' stores).

Negus (siting Adorno and Horkheimer) also provided an appropriate explanation of how 'cultural artefacts' were organised to co-opt existing reference points in a formulaic way, to construct apparently 'original' ready-mades with clearly recognisable signs<sup>45</sup>. Such goods suggested one could purchase a badge of individuality through the goods, via the meanings they generated. While this is not unique to late-twentieth century cultural products, there is clearly a higher level of synthesis between the creation of new goods for a mass market and the ways in which this links to their promotion – as I demonstrate in this thesis. Products are now accompanied by a considerable amount of contextual (and often implicit semantic) information which locates them as culturally meaningful, both in their relation to other objects and the specific ways in which they are offered as 'lifestyle' currency (in terms of conveying leisure ideals as well lifestyles at work and at home).

Popular broadcast media did much to prepare prime audiences to understand the coded currency of goods and lifestyles. For instance, the appropriate relationship between roles, lifestyles and consumables was evident in movies and television drama of the late 1980s. In this period a sub genre of melodrama/comedy/thriller is clearly identifiable with a new urban worker/consumer. Films sometimes referred

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., Nixon, S. pp. 192–3, du Gay, P. pp. 286–8, Salaman, G. pp.236–7

<sup>42</sup>Wernick, A. Promotional Culture: Advertising, Ideology and Symbolic Expression, Sage, London 1991 pp.181–2. Wernick is cited by Nixon, S. in Circulating Culture, in du Gay, P. (ed.) Production of Culture/Cultures of Production pp. 185 and 221–2.

<sup>43</sup>Negus sites Sony's 'synergy' ('total entertainment') strategy from 1988, where, in the wake of acquiring Columbia Studios and CBS records, the corporation sought to develop their identity through both hardware and software. This practice later became referred to in advertising agencies as 'brand stretching'. Negus, K, The Production of Culture, in du Gay, P (ed.) Production of Culture/Cultures of Production p.68.

<sup>44</sup>Negus, K, The Production of Culture, in du Gay, P (ed.) Production of Culture/Cultures of Production, p.69

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p.75

to as 'yuppie' dramas were mirrored in advertisements at the time<sup>46</sup>. The rise in popularity of 'product placement' in films and the introduction of brand-sponsored TV dramas illustrated the extent to which marketing viewed the value of other broadcast media in making their goods culturally meaningful by association (marketers termed this 'borrowed interest').

I argue that advertising, as a cultural intermediary during the 1990s, could occupy a more fundamental role in shaping the direction of products, much earlier in many products' conception. This was true of the iMac's creation and the creation of bi-products such as Tango's 'Gotan' doll, and was evident in the promotional infrastructures organised for Daewoo and Tesco. As du Gay noted in his introduction,

... more of the goods produced for consumers... can be conceived as 'cultural' goods, in that they are deliberately inscribed with particular meanings and associations as they are produced and circulated... The growing aestheticization or "fashioning" of seemingly banal products – from instant coffee to bank accounts – whereby these are sold to consumers in terms of clusters of meaning indicates the increased importance of "culture" to the production and circulation of a multitude of goods and services.<sup>47</sup>

Du Gay's description suggested that goods were located within a framework of values and meanings, which indicated their intended status, as consigned by their authors (a company's management, planning, research and development, design and marketing teams). Goods also conveyed something about how they related to other objects, and transmitted easily read codes of information about their owners. This is certainly evident in the campaigns I review in chapter 3, where a sense of 'clubbiness' – through product promotions and support services – was engineered to convey exclusivity and suggest qualities such as mood, attitude and location as well as identities for the goods on offer.

Nixon in his essay set out key stages of modern advertising, from the product demonstration techniques of American agencies in the 1950s (notably J Walter Thompson's soap powder ads and first TV commercials), to the British Second Wave in the late 1970s, (notably Bartle Bogle Hegarty's Levis campaign and Collett Dickenson Pearce work for B&H cigarettes)<sup>48</sup>, where the accent was on creativity and emotive appeal – 'we don't sell... we make people want to buy'<sup>49</sup>. My period of study in the 1990s followed this Second Wave. In my period, according to Nixon, contemporary advertising was characterised by the impact of new consumer research types, the rise to prominence of account planning (tailored to agency cultures), the perception by advertising practitioners of media pluralization and the fragmentation of mass audiences<sup>50</sup>. I was particularly struck by Nixon's understanding of the significance of segmentation for mass advertising:

The emergence of a more segmented media universe – one in which, in trade terms, there were more media, each with a more tightly defined audience or readership – posed a serious challenge to

<sup>46</sup> The advert most synonymous with this, 'Easy like Sunday Morning' for Halifax Building Society in 1988 is discussed in the extended Appendix 4 essay, and is illustrated on page 378. Films such as *The Secret of My Success* (Herbert Ross, 1987), *Working Girl* (Mike Nichols, 1988), and *Bonfire of the Vanities* (Brian de Palma, 1990) – adapted from Tom Wolfe's popular novel in the 1980s – all made a feature of work and working relationships in their narrative.

<sup>47</sup> Du Gay, P. in du Gay, P (ed.) *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production* p.5

<sup>48</sup> Nixon, S *Circulating Culture*, in du Gay, P (ed.) *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production* pp.191–196

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p.195 citing BBH's company maxim, initially published in *Marketing Week*, 3 March 1989, Haymarket Press p.44

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.197 & 199



some of the established conventions of media buying ...in particular, there was a sense that new ways of categorising audiences and relationships were needed which could grasp these shifts amongst media consumers.<sup>51</sup>

The significance for 'established conventions of media buying', of marketers being able to more closely gauge target markets, is a theme that I pick up in my text (chapters 2, 4 and 5). In the period this study is concerned with, the 'cultural intermediary' activities Nixon described are also particularly relevant to my thesis. Attitudinal and motivational consumer classifications were made central to the advertising process. Similarly, Bernd H Schmitt in Experiential Marketing (1999) encouraged the relocation of emphasis in marketing from the product to the sensation of consumers in using brands. Schmitt urged marketers to 'move along the socio-cultural' and consider the interface between customers and promoted products – 'Think consumption situation, not product. That is, "grooming in the bathroom", not "razor". "Casual meal", not "hot dog". "Travel", not "transportation".<sup>52</sup>. In Production of Culture/Cultures of Production, Nixon pointed to research segmentation for the International Wool Secretariat's 'Woolmark' (conducted by UK research group Taylor-Nelson) because it outlined new consumer values: a desire for emotional experience, polysensuality' (smell, touch, taste, sound and seeing), risk-taking, networking and exploring new mental frontiers<sup>53</sup>.

The outcome of these new consumer values was that target audiences for this approach were similar across Europe, so that many of the existing limitations of pan-European advertising could be overcome. While this thesis does not consider the precise nature of British advertising's orientation to American or European markets, such potential for re-alignment was an undercurrent throughout the nineties.

One famous global perspective was (management consultant) Theodore Levitt's essay Advertising: The Poetry of Becoming (US, 1993). Levitt's (enterprise-driven) view claimed that corporate communication made global commercial cultures more coherent because it made common connections between international cultures. This new corporate and global enterprise also facilitated cultural diversity in making explicit people's desire to belong to local cultures. Levitt claimed that advertising facilitated the flow of commerce on a global scale in an era where there was mistrust of multinational companies' ambitions'. In other words, advertising was a global bonding agent. Levitt's perspective assumes western models of commercial culture form the basis of a global understanding. It was as if Keats & Abercrombie's 'enterprise culture' had become 'given' on a global scale. Levitt argued that, while western culture was saturated with advertising to the point that most wanted to 'get away from it all', advertising remained useful because it was '...straightforward in its purpose. Acting on behalf of whoever is paying, it hides no agenda but blatantly seeks your money'<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p.202

<sup>52</sup> Schmitt, BH Experiential Marketing (the new marketing the branding in the information age) The Free Press, NY. 1999 p.27

<sup>53</sup> Nixon, S. in du Gay, P (ed.) Production of Culture/Cultures of Production pp.205–206

<sup>54</sup> Levitt, T Advertising, the poetry of becoming in The Harvard Business Review, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1 March 1993 pp.35–37

In other words consumers had learnt to 'read through' commercial-speak. Yet Levitt's view that advertising 'hides no agenda' beyond selling of products is spurious. Many successful campaigns sell values beyond the product. For example BBH's 1995 Levi's 501 ads played a significant role in reviving fifties music, style and ephemera. Such was the broad impact of the campaign that, by the second ad in 1996, record labels were doing deals with ad agencies to use tracks from their back catalogue in adverts for fashion goods. Modern Marxist and postmodern accounts assumed advertising sold implicit values beyond the product. In a basic sense adverts sold the principle that one 'needs' to buy new goods, so values were inherently sold along with goods, and campaigns were clearly not as straight-forward in purpose as Levitt presumed. Levitt's view then, was somewhat preoccupied by market opportunities rather than repercussions.

Yet the global mistrust Levitt claimed came with broadcast media did at least signal that audiences knew where they stood with adverts in familiar contexts. They knew they are being sold to. Because media adverts are globally recognised, they have become an integral component of mass communication.

The limitation of Nixon's work for this study is that it stays focused on the developments of mainstream media advertising methods. It does not dwell in as much detail on less apparent 'direct advertising', which proved more effective at penetrating niche markets. Rather than illustrating the spirit of an experiential approach, direct advertising was able to be manipulative as part of the product/consumption interaction, with active participation through voucher schemes, viral techniques and environmental placement (cf. Chapter 3b & c). Nixon spelt out new understandings of consumer markets between lifestyle research and psychographics, yet in the short time since Production of Culture/Cultures of Production (1997) the emphasis has shifted. The relationship between psychographics and database digital marketing has become more of a core issue in re-mapping consumers (it led for instance, to the idea of individualised selling propositions). In terms of this study however it does effectively map the re-identification of target markets to the midway point of my study period.

Advertising was one aspect of the increased visibility and presence of culture in this period. The industry was forced to confront growing diversity and the expanded range of cultural reference as well as the convergence of formats and technologies. I would also like to suggest that the advertising industry, which had, at the beginning of the period been widely acknowledged as the paradigm of consumer culture manipulation and deception, became increasingly de-differentiated in a culture where ordinary working people shared in its assumptions and sought to become familiar with the strategies of marketing and self presentation. Changes were forced on the industry. Perhaps it was because advertising was part of a larger scale of cultural re-positioning that previous writers have been reticent in bringing advertising critiques up to date. The next section considers the speculation of nineties advertising in existing documentary texts on advertising.

### 3. Related contextual material

#### (a) texts that comment on the changing nature of producing and understanding communication

Most late-1980s to mid-1990s texts envisaged the 1990s would be a crisis point for advertising industries (cf. Chapter 2). Most also foresaw it as becoming more layered and problematic to represent in simple terms. For instance in 1987 Sinclair in Images Incorporated acknowledged that advertising was a 'more circumscribed yet more complex phenomenon than the overblown conception of it usually presented by both its defenders and its critics'<sup>55</sup>. This is a key problem with tracing changes to advertising in the nineties, because there were many interrelated factors effecting change while some aspects of advertising remained relatively unaffected<sup>56</sup>. Sinclair predicted advertising would feed on itself to seek more effective ways of promotion. However, he also anticipated budgets being driven up rather than down, until the biggest agencies survived to dominate the market. Advertising was certainly driven by finance in the nineties, but budgets went down as clients sought accountability and value for their money. Sinclair's sense of the agency set up contracting<sup>57</sup> was true at the larger end of media advertising where buy-outs and mergers re-shaped the profile of the communication industries. However, the expanding network of satellite companies and smaller set ups (cf. Chapter 2) generated a different landscape of British advertising to that envisaged by Sinclair.

Martin Davidson in The Consumerist Manifesto, writing in 1992, anticipated a bigger backlash to excesses of the ad industries in the 1980s. According to Davidson advertising had become as inflated on self-importance as the advertising mechanisms had been in driving values of image over substance. The recessions of 1987 and 1991 had (according to Davidson) forced reflection, down-sizing and re-evaluation upon the industry<sup>58</sup>. Like Sinclair, Davidson expected the ad industry of the nineties to be harder to bracket – 'It is no longer clear what consumer dissent is in opposition to. It used to be obvious, because Marxism, psycho-analysis and feminism told us what'<sup>59</sup>. As I concluded in part 2 of this chapter, advertising commentators had been eager to cast value judgements on advertising without re-appraising the increasing resistance of consumers. Davidson like others predicted the key issue in the 1990s would be related to consumerism<sup>60</sup>. The *Post-consumerist* manifesto (Davidson claimed) had to transcend or undercut advertising<sup>61</sup>. As prophecies go this was well envisaged given that the British ad industry tried to do both through its own 'consumption', buying into smaller direct and ambient media advertising.

<sup>55</sup>Sinclair, J. Images Incorporated Croom Helm ('media series'), NY. 1987 p.182

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p.66

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p.184

<sup>58</sup>The only other recession of equal magnitude for the communication industries was in 1964, when manufacturers invested more in price promotion at the expense of media advertising.

<sup>59</sup>Davidson, M The Consumerist Manifesto Routledge, London p.195

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p.200

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 202

Sean Brierley's The Advertising Handbook in 1995 predicted service advertising would expand in the 1990s. This was accurate in that production companies did expand their 'product' to include services later in the decade. For instance in 1999 Unilever called on agency Grey Advertising to develop plans for cleaning services. This could be seen by Brierley's time of writing, given that spending on promotion services nearly doubled during the eighties after de-regulation<sup>62</sup>. With the expansion of business-to-business promotions it is clear to envisage how the commercial climate was ripe for direct marketing/advertising to make in-roads on media advertising's territory. Both service and one-to-one dialogue advertising became specialist areas for direct marketing.

Brierley anticipated media advertising's dilemma, with brands losing authority of markets to retailers and corporations re-auditing their relationship with ad agencies. Brierley cited confectioners Cadbury Schweppes who employed audit consultants Media Evaluation as media controllers. Their role was to centralise all aspects of a TV commercial – employing the agency, concepting, casting, shooting, post-production, space buying *et al.* They were employed because Cadburys Schweppes discovered a 30% discrepancy between agency charges and the price agencies paid for facilities<sup>63</sup>.

Brierley did envisage some promising prospects for media advertising. While advertising could not stimulate demand like it used to<sup>64</sup> adverts could keep consumers 'warm' to brands. Brierley cited Carling Black Label's spoof humour ads of the late 1980s in this respect<sup>65</sup>.

Davidson and Brierley's texts were my initial points of reference when I started this project, and both projected a relatively bleak future for media advertising. I discovered in the course of my primary research that their perspective matched that of agency directors within the ad industries. However, Brierley, Davidson and Sinclair failed to foresee the opportunities for advertising in the 1990s, which were driven by strategic thinking outside its immediate remit. Instead, these opportunities were picked up by writers on branding and design, such as Thomas Hine in The Total Package (US, 1995: cf. Chapter 4).

#### (b) 'signposts' for the reshaping of advertising in my period of study

This section considers which texts on creative commercial practice 'signposted' the re-shaping of advertising practice during the 1990s. It is significant that in this period the texts which were most influential were not written by industry 'insiders' but by a relatively new kind of author, whose work has generally been categorised as 'management studies' and who brought to it a range of economic, managerial, philosophical and spiritual concerns. Among others, like Faith Popcorn and Charles Handy, perhaps the most influential was Charles

<sup>62</sup>Brierley, S The Advertising Handbook p.16

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, p.240

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, p.226

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, p.233

Leadbeater. Leadbeater in Living On Thin Air – The New Economy (1999) addresses the ‘product’ of creative industries – ideas, services, design and words, and characterises it as the commercial commodity of the new ‘knowledge economy’, in place of hardware<sup>66</sup>. In Leadbeater’s description of the new economy operating through creative industries, the organisation of work and labour is more flexible. He describes workers employed in commercial industries (like the author) as ‘...one of Charles Handy’s portfolio workers, armed with a laptop, a modem and some contacts. Peter Drucker anointed people like me “knowledge workers”. Put it another way: I live on my wits’<sup>67</sup>.

Leadbeater’s Living On Thin Air was one of several texts that, in similar a vein to Lash and Urry, considered the new ‘encultured’ role of controlled mass communication in work practices. Leadbeater considered how the ‘information age’ superseded the ‘industrial age’, where digitised communication networks in the 1990s had enabled ideas and service-centred industries to flourish at the expense of production industries (cf. Chapter 5). In the new age of ‘thin air economics’ and digital communication claimed Leadbeater, communication has moved into the centre-ground. Leadbeater described the dilemma of an economy still measured by the production of goods, where much movement of capital is generated by the quality and volume of information. While Leadbeater echoed points made in Lash and Urry’s text, it was Leadbeater’s book that popularised the perspectives within management practices and the communications industries. Where Lash and Urry’s text claimed that ‘promotional culture’ was culturally significant in my period of study, Leadbeater’s text directly attributed the impact of digitisation as part of the cause that led to the popularisation of advertising practices in the national psyche during the 1990s. Where Leadbeater spoke of the commercial manipulation of brands, effectively he was considering the ramifications for marketing and advertising of the opportunities and dilemmas of digitisation. From Leadbeater’s perspective the mainstream take-up of ‘thin air businesses’, with the movement of ideas, words and images in the thick of ‘new economy’ transactions, should have proved advantageous for advertising’s industries in generating more work by the end of the decade<sup>68</sup>.

Throughout my period of study, there was an increasing awareness and respect for the ‘mysteries’ of consumption. This mood is invoked in Gérard Laise’s (edited) text What If We Put The Clocks Back To Zero? (Paris, 1998), and is apparent in the move to ‘permission marketing’ at the end of the 1990’s. A number of other texts speak to the increased cultural penetration of the advertising industry through a tactical infiltration of subcultures. This is most clearly expressed in Sarah Thornton’s text Club Cultures (1995). Thornton illustrated how commercial corporations – and their advertisers – bought into youth culture from the

<sup>66</sup>Leadbeater, C. Living On Thin Air Penguin, London 1999 p.18

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.1

<sup>68</sup>Klein N No Logo p.24 places US fashion label Tommy Hilfiger as a ‘thin air’ brand, by promoting idealised notions of American belonging without actually producing any of their own stock. Hilfiger simply endorsed goods with its own brand insignia.

late 1980s by sponsoring events, producing freebies and ensuring that their brand name was associated with youth activities. She termed this making 'subcultural capital'<sup>69</sup>. Thornton characterised the 'outsider' mood of youths resistant to hard sell tactics. This certainly put into context the efforts of advertisers in buying into the clothes and techniques of youth in the early nineties (see Chapter 2).

In considering why other texts have not addressed the fundamental shifts in 1990s British advertising, it seems that the perspectives may have been considered in other contexts, most notably in "how to practice" texts spanning marketing (Godin), sociology (Thornton) and economics (Leadbeater). For advertising commentators, contemporaneity throws up considerable problems in using appropriate frameworks and finding proven cultural contexts to make sense of the trends, anecdotal evidence and other apparent evidence. I was keen to record the period while it was recent and use information from those involved in its creation. In time such accounts get rationalised and distilled into clearer contexts.

My thesis engages with the ways in which advertising sought to infiltrate and assimilate the intimate details of cultural expression and change in this period. A number of theorists have suggested ways in which these new modes of representation, persuasion and image making can be understood. Nixon in Production of Culture/Cultures of Production suggested that advertising had an increased influence as a cultural intermediary<sup>70</sup>, while du Gay in the same text considered how the re-fashioning of banal products indicated the increased importance of 'culture' to the circulation of goods and services. Both Nixon and du Gay suggested a closer correlation between design, marketing and advertising as cultural intermediaries. Nixon also suggested that market segmentation enabled marketers to more closely understand their target consumers, while Schmitt in Experiential Marketing illustrated how the experience of consumption could be projected through promotions using closer understandings of target markets. These perspectives in particular are clearly apparent in the campaign strategies and adverts I review through the course of this study, and are significant for this study in contextualising advertising practices.

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<sup>69</sup>Thornton, S Club Cultures Polity, Cambridge 1995 p.11,

<sup>70</sup>Nixon, S. in du Gay, P (ed.) Production of Culture/Cultures of Production p.181

Chapter 2The re-organisation of British advertising in the 1990s

This chapter outlines the changes in structure and methods of British advertising during the 1990s, and highlights the social and technological causes that prompted its transformation. In particular the impact of more accurate customer targeting and 'imagining consumers' is considered alongside changing attitudes of consumers to advertising. Other factors are considered and are addressed in turn. These include the declining impact of television commercials, with fewer viewers watching television and the rise in number of commercial network channels<sup>1</sup>. Trade communication journals frequently expressed concerns regarding the exhaustion of media advertising's existing methods – commercials, press and billboard advertising – in the view of consumers increased awareness of (and resistance to) methods of manipulation. This section considers how the ad industry attempted to re-boot familiar advertising media, in the wake of developing digital communication and 'mass-tailored' ads. I consider the significance of improvements in database marketing and how this led to notions of 'one-to-one' advertising. Such issues are put into a context of a changing landscape during the 1990s, where the familiar agency set-up was threatened by new technologies and new types of communications agency. Throughout, the changing relationship between advertisers, their client's marketing teams and 'their' consumers is reconsidered.

Distinguishing concerns particular to nineties advertising

It is always difficult to essentialise the difference between periods. As I noted in chapter 1, a number of key commentators have referred in various ways to a shift which has imbricated what were previously conceived as different 'levels' of the economic and the cultural. What is most significant for advertisers whose business it has always been to create meaning and desire in relation to objects and scenarios, is that it became increasingly ineffective to recommend or promote those as 'heroic' and increasingly necessary to embed the product in meanings which related to cultural narratives and events. The culture of work, production and products came

<sup>1</sup>According to the British Audience Research Board (BARB). The Annual % Share of Viewing Figures show a decline in the terrestrial viewing audience, which has a huge impact on TV commercials audience reach. BARB's table showed a decline in ITV's audience share, which reduced from forty nine per cent in 1981 to thirty one point two in 1999.

	<u>Audience share (edited) between 1981-99</u>				<u>non-commercial</u>
	<u>commercial networks</u>				
	ITV	Ch. 4	Ch. 5	cable/Satellite	BBC
1981	49%				39%
1986	44%	8%			37%
1991	42%	10%		4%	34%
1996	35%	11%		10%	34%
1999	31%	10%	5%	14%	28%

source: based on a table by produced by BARB – website (August 2000): <http://www.barb.co.uk/tvfacts/story/cfm?id=43>

under greater scrutiny, which is one reason why advertising messages had to work harder in promoting the ethos of companies – their ‘brand’ – rather than merely selling ideas of what products were about. Agencies were no longer merely charged with selling products through ads. Instead they had to engage with broader marketing schemes. They had to conform more closely to existing ‘product family’ ethos and they had to compete against many more new methods of promotion. Because of such interconnectedness, advertising therefore had to be more measured and less aspirational in its strategies.

Another distinction effecting the tone of advertising between the 1980s and 1990s was the way advertising was popularly received. Martin Davidson in The Consumerist Manifesto highlighted how significant ad imagery became in constructing believable images of confidence and aspiration;

If you wanted to know what was really happening in the 80's, you watched the ads. Paranoia about hidden persuaders took a back seat as ads were celebrated as a non-stop carnival of images which didn't just sell, but also crystallised contemporary aspirations, fantasies, moods and fears.<sup>2</sup>

This was a far cry from advertising's ability to persuade a decade later, as Sean Brierley in The Advertising Handbook noted;

...by the 1990's the advertising industry had reached a state of crisis. The fundamental ability of manufacturers to control the market had been undermined by the more powerful retailer, the mass media had fragmented and advertising agencies desperately searched for new roles as manufacturers switched to alternative forms of promotion.<sup>3</sup>

Brierley suggested that the ad industry had to change to maintain impact. Retailers he argued, had become more adept at knowing their audiences. By the nineties customers had certainly become aware of advertising's modes of address and cynical of its values (these points are expanded later in this chapter). Such an outlook had developed under the radar of ad strategists – the account planners, creative directors and marketing directors, who between them were more concerned with maintaining profit margins and market values (broadening out) than consumer response (honing in). While creatives in agencies were expressing the localised words and visual language of the street - a youth culture of which they were part<sup>4</sup> – planners and account directors were slow to spot the changing styles of communication. Rather than responding to disruption ads (commercials) or billboard hoardings, youth was picking up fly posters and club flyers placed in record shops and boutiques. Customers *chose* to engage with and take these mini-ads with them. Such new and more ambient formats did not suit media advertisers. By sticking with established media methods, planners could

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<sup>2</sup> Davidson, M The Consumerist Manifesto Routledge London 1992 p.61, citing Stephen King's Developing New Brands, pub. by agency J Walter Thompson, London 1984 p.8

<sup>3</sup> Brierley, S The Advertising Handbook Routledge, London 1995. p.226

<sup>4</sup> Evidenced in the copy and art direction of campaigns such as Saatchi & Saatchi's Club 18-30 campaign, HHCL & Partners for Britvic Tango, Abbott Mead Vickers Nike wear and Leagus Delaney's Regal Cigarette ads



justify their fees by presenting to clients<sup>5</sup>. Flyers seemed comparatively indirect, less obvious and less up-front about their purpose to sell. This made them a harder proposition to sell to clients. Advertising agencies themselves benefited from the production of famous advertising because it attracted new clients, yet youths were increasingly becoming turned off by hard sell. At the turn of 1990 therefore, the problem advertising needed to address was a growing resistance to its methods, in combination with the rise in popularity of youth subculture-driven anti-Capitalist causes.

Marketing industries were more adept at staying abreast of customer mood through more accurate market segmentation and analysis, which developed significantly in the 1990s (see chapters 5b & 5c). A shift in emphasis from quantitative to qualitative marketing research also helped (see chapters 5c and 6). Within marketing there was a more concerted attempt to overcome the sort of concern voiced by Dick Hebdige, that, '...the ideal consumer is now the "psychotic" consumer – completely de-centred, unanchored and irresponsible'<sup>6</sup>. Whether consumers were really as open to changing habits in an 'irresponsible' way is questionable. For instance, patterns of national consumption had not suddenly shifted enough to be spotted by the Government's Central Statistical Office<sup>7</sup>. However Hebdige's perceived a mode of consumption that was characterised by reluctance towards being stereotyped and a tendency to pragmatic consumerism. Therefore, while media advertising addressed shifts in attitude without acknowledging the profound dilemma it was in, covert advertising – marketing and other direct methods – were becoming more efficient at customer targeting.

Therefore, while marketers were better able to exploit the breakdown of social classifications, the changing period outlook caused specific problems for the established British media ad industries. The industries own journals, such as Campaign magazine, tended not to dwell on this. Instead their tendency was to review shifting stylistic trends (such as shock ads, digital imaging, 'grey' advertising) rather than the impact of digital media expansion or ad-wizened consumers. Where leader articles focussed on recession, the role of planning and ad techniques at the beginning of the 1990s, the new potential for media advertising dominated mid-decade news stories. Infomercials, programme sponsorship and promotional stunts ran alongside stories concerning the ad industries ability to censor itself. However, the late 1990s leader articles were more concerned with industry movement – take-overs, mergers and new media advertising dominated Campaign's headlines, so the industrial movement rather than advertising content became more prominent. The presumption within advertising was that growing apathy to its techniques could be overcome with fresh approaches to old methods. A reliance on

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<sup>5</sup>Advertising billings for TV commercials were large enough to be recognised as a percentage of the gross national product. In 1986 for example it was 1.5% of the British GNP. The percentage was the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest proportion of any first world country's advertising billing, behind the USA (2.4) and Australia (1.6), but ahead of Canada (1.4), Spain (1.3) and Japan (0.9). The billings of West Germany, France and Italy averaged 0.7% of their GNP.

Extracted from table 4 of Dunnett, PJS *The World Television Industry: An Economic Analysis*, Routledge, London 1990 p.25

<sup>6</sup>Chapman, R & Rutherford, J. *Male Order – Unwrapping Masculinity* Lawrence & Wishart, 1988, Quoting Hebdige p.179

<sup>7</sup>For instance, only passing reference is made to 'flaky consumerism' in the Central Statistical Office/ Griffin, Tom (ed.) *Social Trends* No. 30, 2000, in the overview given to shifts in consumption habits during the nineties.

archiving as well as shock, irony and exposé formats were aligned with new treatments and image manipulation. By 1997 Campaign magazine and agency directors had to reconsider their position.

**Table 2: Dominant forms of advertising in Britain (cf. timelines, appendix 1)**

	pre-1940's	1950's	1960's	1970's	1980's	1990's
<b>overt:</b>	product demos	product comparison	message over style	sound bites	style led & esoteric	ironic
<b>covert:</b>	brand awareness	infomercials	clipped associations	macro (ABC1, C2, DE)	eclecticism	micro

Sources: compiled from several texts, notably Madison Ave, USA, Ogilvy on Advertising, The Advertising Handbook and Experiential Marketing (see bibliography)

**Table 3: Issues in advertising, as represented in Campaign during the 1990s**

	threats (to media adv.)	opportunity	Issues
1990	infomercials	Eastern block markets	shock adverts (Benetton)
1991	planning	digital imaging (Quantel)	art direction in film
1992	recession	'third wave' (new) advertising	shock & censorship
1993	recession	direct advertising	emergence of below-the-line
1994	internet	'grey' (old) consumers	sex in adverts
1995	ambient ads	TV programme sponsorship	yobbish advertising
1996	promotional 'correctness'	Euro 96/promotional 'stunts'	censorship
1997	stealth ads	brand magazines	'media-neutral'
1998	take-overs	internet advertising	'branding' within film
1999	media group mergers	on-line advertising	internet co. floatation
2000	creative industries mergers	cross-discipline promotion	media integration

Source: compiled from Campaign magazine, Haymarket/ Haymarket Business Press 1989–2001

Digital methods attracted clients because they appeared more cost effective. From the mid-nineties more product and service companies were not renewing established contracts but instead putting them up for tender. If agencies had been reluctant to initiate a shift from their tried and tested formulas, improved technologies of marketing demanded that they did. As advertising copywriter Shaun McIlrath in Admap (A new creative manifesto, 1997) remarked, 'You are driven by the means that best suits the clients and audiences need. You are not driven by your own needs to justify the expense of TV ads with large overheads and profit margins because that is all there is: and clients are realising the potential quicker than the advertisers'<sup>8</sup>

Large corporations with their own highly-tuned marketing departments realised that their own in-house teams had not taken full responsibility for controlling the direction their media exposure took, and were too reliant on their media advertisers. Sticking with an agency for indefinite periods also made their relationship over-familiar and comfortable, which they realised was not conducive to getting the freshest ideas from

<sup>8</sup> McIlrath, S A new creative manifesto in Admap Issue 378, November 1997 pp.2–4

advertisers. This coincided with further realisations, that advertising was no longer the best means of market penetration or the best value for money. There was also a growing awareness that advertising represented just one avenue for raising public awareness.

Qualitative research for direct agencies Impact FCA and Evans Hunt Scott<sup>9</sup> pointed to a gulf between changing markets and agency planners from the early nineteen-nineties<sup>10</sup>. This contrasts with the renowned precision of planners in the previous decade, where they transformed advertising by accurately reading the moods of British consumerism. Similarly, John Sinclair (Images Incorporated<sup>11</sup> in 1987) described advertising's account handlers as a breed who were so renowned in their industry for being in touch with the mood of aspiration, material desire and hi-lifestyle that they could drive tactics through creative teams. Indeed, many ads in the eighties bore signs of being driven by account handlers and planners. Their understanding of audiences often translated directly as a series of layered collages, fast-edited, showing images of the target market's aspired to lifestyles. These were assembled to link desirable landscapes and desirable people to the advertised product. In the eighties therefore the tendency of advertising was to sell aspirations.

This was particularly the case for advertising FMCGs<sup>12</sup>, from Coca-Cola's collages of model Californian roller skaters and beach ambience (in the 1970s) to Southern Comfort (in 1987), positioned as deep-South 1950's Americana. Here they could on the sort of archival repertoire of images made fashionable by such ad genres as Bartle Bogle Hegarty's for Levi's (from 1985), where the artefact is cast as an associated accessory of a particular lifestyle. This genre also drew on advertiser's assumed expansion of their audience's visual repertoire which was drawn on (in the case of Levi's and Southern Comfort) to extract stereotypes. In effect the late twentieth century audiences 'archival consciousness' was drawn on by commercial directors to make the goods advertised appear exotic, by casting them in an unobtainable past.

What ads showed were effectively performing mood-boards like those used by branding agencies to flesh out the brand's visual identity and the target context. Such ad methods were complex association exercises. Little more needed to be added to the edited together aspirational imagery beyond a strapline and product shot to hold the ad together. It also meant that planners ideas could be directly extrapolated with little additional work beyond choice of location. Such treatments (by planners) fitted the mood to the extent that

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<sup>9</sup> Both interviewed for this study; Terry Hunt at Evans Hunt Scott and Shaun McIlrath at Impact FCA. cf. Appendix 2

<sup>10</sup>The Direct Marketing Association published a series of comparative studies illustrating the cost effectiveness and take-up of direct advertising between 1992-95. The DMA had evidence that demonstrated the continual financial growth of the media ad industry, implying the agency-client relationship continued to blossom, but in fact the agency-client trust was maintained from the eighties, through the period of expenditure excess. The declining relationship was deduced at agency level, and direct marketing agencies were quick to illustrate (during pitches) their industries growth at the expense of media advertising.

<sup>11</sup> Sinclair, J Images Incorporated pp 49-98

<sup>12</sup> The industry acronym for Fast Moving Consumable Goods, described as a key 'product type' by Jason Cascarino, creative director, FCB Banks Hoggins O'Shea, 10<sup>th</sup> May 1999. See also Brierley, S The Advertising Handbook pp.14-15

(Sinclair claims) planning projects became an art in its own right. Yet, as Brierley notes, the approach 'drew on planners interpretation of the nature of the target audience but failed to talk about the product'<sup>13</sup>.

Brand marketing directors had tended to trust ad agencies apparent consumer-centred approach. The reputation of advertising's effectiveness in Britain had been reflected by the radical increase in advertising revenue – from approximately £7,000 million in 1979 to over £11,000 million by 1987<sup>14</sup> during the peak Thatcher years. The period under Margaret Thatcher's leadership are most often characterised as being sympathetic to the practice of advertising in Britain. Beyond her public praise for the Conservative's ad agency Saatchi & Saatchi the characteristics of de-regulation, material ownership and a liberal market-led economy played to the strengths of the media advertising industry. It was easy to characterise material desire and de-regulation as contributors to greater market competition, because they required a greater scale of advertising. During this period the profile of ad agencies became more evident in the popular press, particularly the Sunday supplements. Planners, directors and agency heads became identifiable faces beyond the industry as entrepreneurial role models. It seems surprising therefore that the same tier of profession in advertising should apparently lose touch with customers in the 1990s.

This in outline was the dilemma confronting pre-1990s advertising systems in Britain. To define the key causes of change I have structured the rest of this chapter to consider several overlapping issues in turn. The next section addresses the saturation of existing media advertising in more detail. This is followed by a closer consideration of youth's ambivalence to media advertising, and how this effected changes in advertising tone and communication method. I then consider the impact of database marketing, and the success of retail brands in honing their advertising techniques, before addressing the position of media advertising at the end of the decade.

### Over-saturation of advertising media

This section considers the dilemma confronting the profitability of media advertising. The main threat came from improvements in satellite and digital communication. With a rapid increase in broadcast channels during the 1990s the assured audiences of terrestrial viewing between 1955-90 became diluted.

Media saturation was anticipated in the 1980s. Jean Baudrillard's observation that 'We now live in a world that is absorbed into medias: It is no longer just about the signifier and signified'<sup>15</sup> was apparent in the 1990s, with greater personal reliance on digital technology. For instance by 1999, 1 in 2 British people owned a

<sup>13</sup> Skorali, in Cowley 1989:9, cited by Brierley, S in *The Advertising Handbook* pp.141–142. Brierley seems to suggest that the root of differentiating on brand image could be traced back to David Ogilvy in the 1960's. Here Brierley describes the effectiveness of the approach in a more up-beat manner.

<sup>14</sup> Which had only narrowly risen to over £14,000 million by 1998. Media advertising still accounts for over 60% of this. Source: register-MEAL and The Advertising Association. Website (June 2000): <http://www.adassoc.org.uk/inform/>

mobile phone. A complex expansion of media types, which started with satellite channels (1990) then the internet's world wide web (1995) and finished with mobile phone text messaging (1999), developed. So fast was the development of new computer programmes compared to the normal market rate of acceptance for new products, that new digital gadgets such as 'palm pilot' computers and WAP phones were promoted as fashion accessories by style magazines. Daily habits changed with the convenience of mobile communication. Immediate decisions could be made over mobile phones, which replaced the need for forward planning. Leisure services in particular, such as sports centres and film complexes, adjusted their booking methods to accommodate such changes.

The choice for marketing directors had also quickly expanded. The advertising field now consisted of marketing agencies, public relations firms, 'direct impact groups' and retail strategists as well as ad agencies. Paul Clarke, a creative director at Saatchi & Saatchi, similarly noted that;

Targeting people is becoming increasingly harder. This can be attributed to a range of developments within the industry. There is effectively more choice for consumers. The rise of new broadcast channels (TV: Channel 4 & 5, Radio: Virgin, Xfm); new print publications (Red, Mojo, loaded, FHM – until 5 years ago men only had subject-specific magazines). And of course new media, (satellite and cable TV, internet, digital TV) all means that there is more out there for consumers to have to choose between.<sup>16</sup>

In penetrating new markets billboards and television advertising appear to have reached saturation point by 1995. Neil Denny in Campaign magazine<sup>17</sup>, (a pro-media advertising journal) even questioned media ad industry's ability to develop the type of brand icons it had been synonymous with in previous decades, such as the Oxo family, PG Tips chimps, Cadbury's flake and Silk Cut campaigns. Denny noted that such icons had been adept at compressing '...a wealth of meaning into a tiny space' and were capable of lodging a products ident. in the collective consciousness. Yet contemporary media advertising had developed brands meanings in a slightly different manner. Leisure brands such as Nike had successfully developed through association, with a series of selective marketing endorsements. They adopted the personalities of their endorsers, using their attitude as Nike's icon. After establishing their sponsorships they were able to dispense with sound bites ('Just Do It' was dropped in 1996) and other methods of fixing meanings. An image of the endorsed celebrities and the brand logo was enough. In this way. – claimed McIlrath, a copywriter – brands were 'not reliant on any person, visual image, or sound.'<sup>18</sup> This produced broader benefits for brands. It enabled the development of icons (a key asset of media advertising) to reside outside advertising media and outside advertising's control.

<sup>15</sup> Baudrillard, J. Simulation and the Real, in Harrison, C and Wood, P (ed.) Art in Theory 1850–1990, Blackwell, Oxford 1990 p.315

<sup>16</sup> Faxed Correspondence with Paul Clarke, Saatchi & Saatchi, Whitfield St. W1A re: 'The Rise of Below The Line' 4 November 1998.

<sup>17</sup> Denny, N. 'Is the advertising icon dead?' in Campaign, (Haymarket Press) 3 March 1995 pp.28-9

<sup>18</sup> Denny quoting Shaun McIlrath, creative director of Impact FCAI, *ibid.* p.29

Larger companies were therefore striving to become less reliant on media advertising. It was in the interests of media ad agencies to revitalise their best means of income before it ceased to be effective altogether. Advertisers did this by teetering on (their own self-regulated) boundaries of acceptability. Utilising their inherent ability to generate hyperbole, aggressive campaigns set out to test advertising's own regulatory bodies (notably the Independent Television Commission and the Advertising Standards Authority). In doing so, they hoped to provoke a wider public reaction. 'Shock advertising' as it became commonly known used established mass-media, radio and TV commercials, press and billboard ads, to challenge sensibilities and models of authority from previous decades (see chapter 4 and appendix 4). For a large period of the 1990s, particularly between 1991–1997, it appeared successful. The tactic even acquired a more measured name in the advertising profession, 'presence marketing'<sup>19</sup>. Brands such as Benetton (notably between 1990–1995), Tango (1992), Diesel (1996) and French Connection's FCUK (1999) became prominent examples<sup>20</sup>.

Such advertising relied on initial impact. While the energy of the ad was geared to emphasising a brand's sheer presence, the volume of communication content (the actual information imparted) remained necessarily superficial. With shock ads the product tended to be framed with stylised sensation-bites throughout a campaign. Few actual product qualities are fleshed out. Hegarty spoke of Emotional rather than Unique Selling Propositions for Levis and Boddingtons. Britvic Tango, Benetton and Diesel all fitted the mould.

The move towards shock advertising was also a reflection of the dilemma the advertising industry was having in relation to its own organisational methods and work culture. The obsolescence of a creative team is (according to Saatchi & Saatchi statistics) 6 years<sup>21</sup>. Those established in agencies before new media took hold were promoted to positions of senior agency management, re-positioned to man-management or dismissed. The more ad agencies related to the increased pace of turnover, the more apparently temporal the nature of the communications became, which in turn led to a greater expectation of financial instability.

From the early nineties a pattern emerged that saw agencies dropped as soon as campaigns became exhausted. In 1999 the last of the long-held accounts, Guinness, held by Ogilvy & Mather, was split up and put to tender. Such flexible and short term means of doing business<sup>22</sup> in the communications industry provoked more established ad agencies into re-evaluations of their agency size and stature to prevent their bigger clients splitting accounts and types of promotion.

<sup>19</sup>Follow-on interview with Dave Waters, Director of Duckworth Finn Grubb Waters, Gt. Pultney St. London W1F 31 January 1996.

<sup>20</sup>Campaigns by Howell Henry Chaldecott Lury and in-house by freelance Benetton photographer Olivera Tosconi respectively.

<sup>21</sup>Deduced from Saatchi & Saatchi annual reports, held at agency archive in Charlotte Street, WC2.

<sup>22</sup>Keat argued that enterprise culture in the eighties led many industries to restructure with more flexible employment contracts and adaptable workforces. Advertising as an essential component of the enterprise culture would inevitably included in this re-alignment. Keat, R in the introduction to Keat, R & Abercrombie, N (ed.) *Enterprise Culture* p.3

The response by media advertisers was to closely observe and appropriate the mood and styles of youth culture. This was the segment of the consumer market most likely to exercise its (comparatively large) disposable income. It was also characteristically the most sensitive to flow of communication.

They also allowed (apparent) discrepancies to be deliberately designed into adverts, so that the dialogue 'riffed' on viewer's preconceptions and pre-knowledge. By deliberately leaving the advertising message unclosed, brand ads (notably for beers and fashion labels) could generate enough friction by playing with audience's preconceived perceptions of how a commercial works to instil a sense of complicit irony in the viewer. The means of engagement had therefore managed to get under the radar of youth to appeal by playing on their resistance to TV commercials. The sense of knowing cynicism worked into commercials matched the growing mood of anti-Capitalism and brand apathy evident in late-eighties youth cultures. The coded double-meaning incorporated in the advertisers construct of irony became a commercial hook in itself. Viewers were deliberately made uncertain whether the ad was deliberately ambiguous or whether their reading was unperceived by the makers.

Such friction between apparently opposite meanings fuelled such campaigns as those for Boddingtons beer from 1993, and the fashion label Diesel, whose press and commercial ad narratives played on the appearance of ethical dysfunctionality from 1997. Both campaigns provoked word of mouth response, becoming the topic of 'have you seen' conversation.

John Grant from the ad agency St. Lukes described at an MTV conference in 1996 the youth he advertises to as '...having more sensory experiences than ever before' (discussed in Appendix 4)<sup>23</sup>. This provides a means to differentiate between the surface and the superficial; where the substance may have been shallow the emotive response to the 'skin' was more considered. There was a sense of increasing frustration from brand managers that advertisers were engaged in the glorification of the image over (USP) content - perpetuating myths of a product over reachable product performance. Yet Grant, in line with other third wave agency planners suggests that adverts operate on another level of association, which avoids attaching fixed values to products all together I'm talking about not producing ads which glorify the image - but rather ads which are immersive and reach the other senses - which are an experience. The whole premise of the simple, clever, visual ad idea needs to be rethought. Otherwise we'll look as pitiful and stiff as the missionaries who first blundered into the old tribal societies<sup>24</sup>. Grant appeared to suggest that advertisers would rather effect the posture of youth than the styles already familiar to advertising. Many of the shock adverts produced by St Lukes (for instance, a spoof poster and stunt campaign for Radio One in 1997) and Howell Henry (for instance the

<sup>23</sup> Article by Bishop, L. 'The heart of smartness' reviewing MTV's WORM (word of mouth) conference, London, October 1996; in Creative Review, November 1996 pp.69-72

<sup>24</sup> ibid., p.70

Blackcurrent Tango TV ad discussed in chapter 3a) appeared to react against their format as they tapped into the values of contemporary youth.

The examples mentioned above were unique amongst other expensive efforts in shocking young Grant appeared to suggest that advertisers would rather wear the guise of youth than that familiar to advertising. Many of the 'shock' adverts produced by St. Lukes (for instance, a spoof billboard/stunt campaign for Radio 1, 1997) or Howell Henry (for instance the TV ad for Blackcurrent Tango, 1997, cf. Chapter 3a) appeared to react against their format as they tapped into values of contemporary British youth consumers into paying attention. Campaigns for charities including the RSPCA and NSPCC were not as successful because the final 'product' did not provide an up-beat ending. The brands for whom aggressive advertising worked were not connected to serious social issues, and the 'shock' conveyed was interpreted light-heartedly. Furthermore the ability to shock was temporary. For the most part, the medium had passed the point where it still had the ability to shock, because the audiences were smaller in scale.

The popular press picked up on this. Journalist Meg Carter in 1993<sup>25</sup> described ad agency WCRS's extravagant attempt to launch the games company Sega's 'Mega CD', aimed at 16–25 year olds, 'an age group notoriously light fingered with the channel zapper if its interest is lost'. WCRS had planned to incorporate billboards within a promotional stunt. First the ad team put out posters for spoof products A La Kat and Ecco washing powder. '...Then came the pirates (who turned out to be in Sega's pay), apparently defacing their posters to announce the imminent arrival of 'Pirate TV'. This was followed up by press adverts to bolster the message and spark interest in watching the first TV commercial<sup>26</sup>. Carter claimed the ad made 22 appearances over the weekend, and cited the account director responsible, Peter Cowie, in saying, 'The build up to the ad was crucial... when you spend that much on a two-and-a-half minute ad (Sega in 1993 estimated £10-15m spent on advertising annually<sup>27</sup>) you want to make sure people watch it'.

Significant here is the account director's recognition that a TV channel alone could not generate enough viewers for its commercial break.

Increasingly, advertisers must battle against audience fatigue: more and more viewers are switching over during the breaks and, a growing number of advertisers maintain, broadcasters are adding to the problem. Viewers now have to wade through television companies own promotions and sponsors credits before being exposed to the advertisers' messages.<sup>28</sup>

It wasn't just viewer fatigue that dented viewer's interests. Improvements in digital technology enabled viewers to cut out unwanted disruptions. Throughout the decade viewers were armed with new audio-visual technology

<sup>25</sup> Carter, M 'Zap! That's another £1m down the tube'; in *The Guardian* Media section, 12 May 1993 p.17

<sup>26</sup> Screened on Channel 4, 7 May 1993

<sup>27</sup> Carter, M 'Zap! That's another £1m down the tube' p.17



– Britain had the quickest take-up of video recorders in Europe<sup>29</sup>. Viewers could shift ‘through time’ on tape and edit out the bits they didn’t want to see. By the mid-nineties videotape recorders were being sold that automatically edited out breaks.

Advertisers tried other tactics to make adverts themselves as entertaining as the programmes they linked. McCann Erickson reshaped Nescafé Gold Blend ads as mini-soap operas<sup>30</sup> and benefited from additional pre-release PR before each fresh instalment. Satellite network Sky followed a US formula by setting up its own “advertorial” channel QVC, where the output was geared to selling products as entertainment. From 1991 a change in advertising legislation allowed independent network programmes to seek production sponsorship, so that either side of ad breaks a brands ident could associate itself with the programme’s content. In 1999 M&C Saatchi even put out ‘the first ever commercial for cats’<sup>31</sup> to launch a new variety of Whiskas cat food.

These efforts ran against television’s declining ability to stimulate demand, which Brierley claimed could have been foreseen in the 1960s when ‘...agency pundits shifted from claiming that advertising was powerfully persuasive... (in) increasing sales, to claiming that it created the “environment” to improve sales’<sup>32</sup>. Caught between a business culture that measured itself against profit margins and a ‘creative’ culture that measured success by awards given for creativity, account teams were in a dilemma.

Where TV commercials were becoming shocking or highly stylised in the early nineties, billboard and press advertising developed a tendency to be more aggressive in the wake of Benetton’s pan-European campaigns from 1989, after the ad industry’s initial uproar. However, the in-yer-face tones of British ads were culturally specific. They tended to adopt an unreformed male laddishness that made campaigns appear risqué. The tone echoed the glossy male-oriented youth magazines such as Loaded (1994), which aimed to be exclusive in their use of entendres and reference points<sup>33</sup>. Ads assumed the tone of marginalised outsiders, cynical and ironic (see images on pp.380, 383 and discussion of Regal campaign in Chapter 4). Billboards and press ads therefore tried to engage young consumers by using their tones of communication.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.* Carter claims that, in 1993, only three million two hundred thousand households had access to cable and satellite were deemed as potential ‘problem zappers’, although its implications were already apparent.

<sup>29</sup> Britain was behind Japan and the US in VTR market take-up. Video recorders acquired a mass-market in central Europe by 1990, but 35% less than the take-up in Britain. Source: Toshiba UK marketing department, London W2, 21 May 1991.

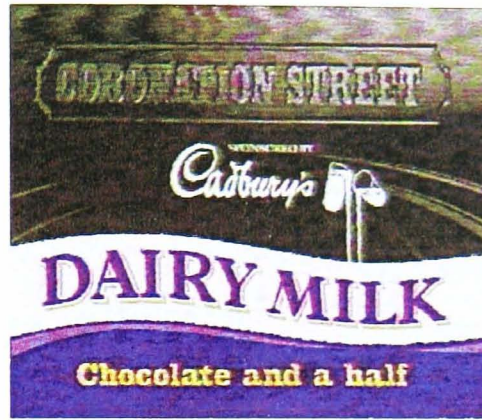
<sup>30</sup> Between 1987–1998

<sup>31</sup> Broadcast 27.01.99 at 7.45pm on ITV networks, when the anticipated viewing figures were sixteen million. The popular press ran PR-orchestrated feature articles prior to its broadcast, including one by Shannon, S. ‘In out test 3 out of 6 cats said they couldn’t give a XXXX for a new advert’, in the London *Evening Standard*, 27.01.99 p.3

<sup>32</sup> Brierley, S *The Advertising Handbook* p.227

<sup>33</sup> This spilled over into HHCL’s inter-active work for Tango, where pseudo-‘groups’ of hardcore ad followers were catered for as an off-shoot of the inter-active marketing for Tango in 1996.

## Strategies employed to revitalise media advertising



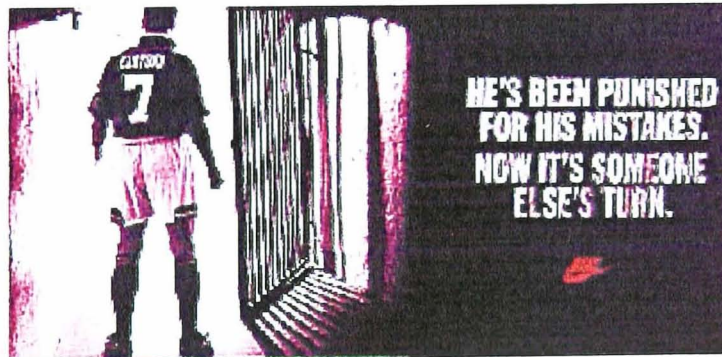
Gold Blend commercial series (above left, JWT, 1989–97) Cadbury's Coronation Street sponsorships (centre, Triangle, 1994) Budweiser label, connecting with a TV campaign (right, DDB Direct, 1997)

Among strategies devised to broaden the appeal of commercials was the mini-series, where a continuing narrative spanned several ad episodes. The introduction of programme sponsorship in the mid-1990s meant that the mood of programmes could be linked with brands through idents at the beginning & end of ad breaks. Products packaging became extensions of commercials, as the 'total package' of all promotional material and packaging increasingly became inter-connected.

Nike ad featuring Eric Cantona, on his return from a long-term playing ban (below left, SPD, 1994)

Ford Cobra commercial, posthumously featuring Steve McQueen (right, O&M, 1997)

Nike harnessed the publicity surrounding footballer Eric Cantona's infamous 1993 punch up with a spectator, by restricting the star's public comments and using advertising as his mouthpiece. The agency was able to elevate his persona to iconic proportions, later casting him as a matinee idol on the side of good v evil (p.380). O&M took advantage of the latest Quantel digital technology, by manipulating stock footage of Steve McQueen with freshly recorded film of the Ford Cobra. The seamless integration fitted the period fascination with visual trickery. One BBC primetime show, 'How Did They Do That?' even featured such ads to show how they were constructed. With this commercial, O&M we launched the new Ford with a firm association to classic 1968 film Bullitt.



This often took the form of parodying previous advertising paradigms, which aimed to capture a youthful spirit that stood outside popular consumerism<sup>34</sup>.

It is worth remembering that, at the time the significance of below-the-line advertising was not known. In 1992 Heinz dropped their ad agency Leo Burnett and shifted their budget to a firm called WAVV Rap Collins, which described itself as a direct marketing agency. WAVV Rap mixed marketing devices such as strategic price positioning with direct ad methods such as mail shots. The ad industry's press at the time considered Heinz's decision a watershed. They presumed other brands would follow, when in fact most companies split their communication budgets between media and direct advertising. At the time it was assumed that the existing practices of media advertising might be displaced. The somewhat aggressive strategies appearing in media adverts were partly sparked by this fear. It seems apparent therefore that changes within media advertising were driven by the movement of client revenue, as well as the changing patterns of consumption directly. Advertisers did however confront the changing moods of consumption in a last attempt to make media advertising the principle means of selling goods.

#### Media Advertising's response to the dilemmas of the 1990s

During the 1990s, media advertising's planners realised consumption patterns were more indiscriminate between brand leaders, because customers were increasingly less likely to stick with one brand. The term 'repertoire buying', where consumers stuck with a product type but swapped brands, became more significant in the promotion of confectionery, beers, sports and fashion brands (previously it was thought the cigarette market was fairly unique in provoking such promiscuous consumption). Ad campaigns in the early nineties reflected this complexity. Beer ads for instance tended to introduce esoteric references that rewarded the viewers archival knowledge. Holsten Pils ran a campaign that re-edited famous film scenes from, amongst others, Ice Cold in Alex and Some Like It Hot, with new footage featuring Griff Rhys-Jones (p.381). The re-worked storyline featured Holsten Pils. Other campaigns set out to nudge their distinct identity by developing a single 'treatment' over a large span of ads. They assumed viewers were tracking the evolving campaign and spotted the esoteric references. John Hegarty is often credited with shaping this particular method through his company's (Bartle Bogle Hegarty) Levi's 501 ads. Hegarty spoke of the need to 'develop a rapport with an audience. When you (the advertiser) parody or play with an idea you're using the audiences' knowledge of the product – you're reinforcing its history and context. It is important to stretch and test your audience'<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Thornton, S. Club Cultures pp.87–115

<sup>35</sup> John Hegarty, explaining contemporary media advertising processes in a lecture at Buckinghamshire Chiltern University College, May 1996.

Hegarty cited his agency's campaign for Boddington's Beer, which parodied ad genres including ice cream, cigarette and perfume advertising to illustrate his point. Boddingtons was successful in creating a regular demand and distinct personality for the brand.

Similar tactics of longevity could be found in other early nineties beer promotions. For instance a campaign for Guinness Draught (Ogilvy & Mather, between 1988–93), similarly developed a thematic treatment through some 14 separate commercial spots and poster variations. Throughout the campaign blond haired actor Rutger Hauer played a sophisticated drinker dressed in black (a metaphor for Guinness: p.379). By the end of its 5 years run, the 'sophisticated drinker with suave looks and a surreal line in chat had become a weird man who sat in the corner and talked rubbish'<sup>36</sup>. Ogilvy & Mather faced the problem of being contracted to use Hauer even though his marketability and relevance had waned.

The limitations of a short 'shelf life' became more apparent throughout the nineties, where post-broadcast ad recall statistics (note: not sales statistics) started to show a trend for a quick rise then sudden slump in sales. In other words, advertising was failing in its basic task of raising awareness. The commercial industry's creative directors and planners took this to mean more visual content and punchier delivery, hence the layered, visually loaded advert with impacting imagery. In the wake of popular music 'promos', shot on video to allow cheaper, easier and more vigorous editing<sup>37</sup>, adverts have incorporated multiple-coding to account for the audiences probable re-viewing, de-coding and re-learning the supposed content and significance of the advert. While this enabled adverts to mean different things to different audiences without ostracizing viewers, it also extended the life span of an ad in what is an expensive format.

To the cynic, this did not appear to be a re-working for the good of product or client. Rather (one could argue), advertisers were sticking doggedly to their biggest earning means – TV commercials – because it was not in their interests to use cheaper options (the more expensive the project, the larger the commission). Yet the problem was only partially to do with an ads 'believability'. Maintaining mass relevance was a bigger problem. With an increasing volume of media types and channels in the 1990s, there were many different voices of 'authority' claiming similar things, not just one (as the BBC had been since World War Two). From 1990 ads began to respond to audience scepticism: the industry, associated with excess and heavy costs reacted by questioning its own conventions. Unlike marketing, advertising often responded to the prevailing mood of distrust by devising campaigns that were self-parodying. Guinness in 1982 for instance<sup>38</sup> showed (what the viewer had been lead to believe was) the lead character walking into a pub wearing a sharp white suit, accompanying two girlfriends and ordering a sophisticated cocktail. The concoction's ingredients

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<sup>36</sup> John Cheese, UK Marketing Director (1987–1994) of Guinness Distilleries PLC., giving an advertising briefing outline on 17 March 1993 at Guinness, Perivale, London.

<sup>37</sup> Since 1977: the first satellite channel devoted to showing promos, MTV, started in 1981.

<sup>38</sup> By Ogilvy & Mather, 1982



Efforts to revive media advertising

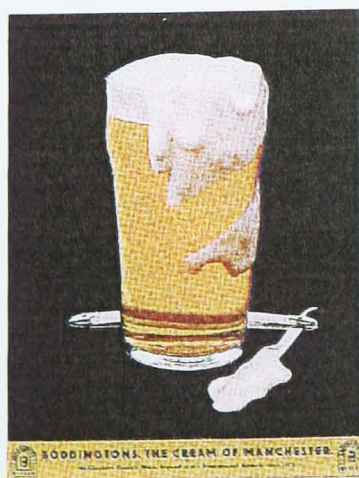


Boddingtons Bitter TV campaign (BBH from 1993; the ad above 1996)

The commercial starts in the style of a European perfume ad. But 10 seconds in the actress dips her hand into a pint glass of beer and rubs the froth into her face. Her date smells her, and says in a Mancunian accent "Bye eck, ya smell gorgeous!". The agency drew on Boddington's town of origin, Manchester, for regional character and juxtaposed this with a familiar aspirational ad style. In this case the scene is of the pan-European perfume variety: no narrative, a modern setting, sharp focus, strong colouration, cryptic angles and orchestral music (the music grinds to a halt when the man delivers his punch line). Subverting well-known methods with witty, down-to-earth twists highlighted discrepancies between advertising's reconstructions of the everyday and the audience's own experiences. The format became a running gag through Boddingtons commercials...

Boddingtons Bitter press ad, (below left, 1993) and Radio 1 poster (below right, St Lukes 1997)

... and press ads, which played on the style and proportions of cigarette ads. In a Radio 1 stunt at the 1997 Glastonbury festival, furry toys called 'gonks' were dropped indiscriminately from a helicopter into the festival. Posters around the festival featured the gonks as youth mascots, participating in typical festival activities. St. Luke's objective was to fix Radio 1's identity to the experience of 'being there'.



were described in detail, complete with embellishments – cocktail stick and umbrella. The scene reflected an understanding of the audiences expectations of constructed sophistication. Then a lone drinker, (a precursor to Rutger Hauer) entered wearing casual clothing and orders a 'straight-talking, smooth black, no ice, no frills and no umbrella' Guinness. This prompted one of the cocktail man's girlfriends to remark 'Pure Genius'. She is the measure in the ad, exchanging affected dressed-up sophistication for direct, under-sold simplicity. Even in the early eighties the sense of wanting to see the product beyond its advertising was evident.

Yet this Guinness campaign still presented the same means of communicating, and still required a huge budget. The sense of directness, of 'undressing' the product and getting under the skin of hard sell was no more than a selling strategy.

Advertising planners had noted in focus-group tests that viewers were looking for the cracks in ads dialogue, casting their own version of the everyday and their own product experiences<sup>39</sup>. Planners used this form of expectation as a 'pay-back' at the end of the commercial, by presenting their argument then setting out the contradictions in the strapline. This version of irony also became a standard technique (still apparent in 2001), where ironic humour bridged the gap between the viewers pre-knowledge of ad constructs and the agency's keenness to get a standard message across. The joke was on the advert, which in a backhanded manner is seen to reflect confidence in the product by 'carrying off' the gag. This was evident in the genre of 'ad break-downs' that was used in campaigns ranging from Churchill Insurance (from 2000) and Daewoo (in 1996 discussed in Chapter 3b) to Molsen Dry beer (in 1991), which told viewers 'don't buy this beer'.

The assumption by agencies that a commercial's audience knew it was being sold to made a wider impression. Treatments became more exaggerated (mostly in the advertising of Fast Moving Consumable Goods (FMCGs), fashion, automotive and black goods) and dressed down (mostly FMCGs, services, domestic products and white goods). The tone-of-voice in narrative and treatment became increasingly significant as copywriters trod a fine line between acknowledging methods and appearing patronising.

It is apparent therefore that advertising was in a brittle state before the economic recessions impacted from the late-eighties. In fact it is possible to link these changes to economic determinants of the period. The post-election economic depression (1992), withdrawal from the European Monetary Union (EMU in 1993) and the perceived instability of Britain's economy effected an ad industry that was still coming to terms with the last major share crash in 1987 (the latter led directly to client companies closure, ad agencies collapse and mass redundancies). From the mid-1980s the larger agency groups had been setting up in other major world wide capitols, so Britain's 1993 withdrawal from the EMU was problematic. The lack of market confidence was also

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<sup>39</sup>Noted by Shaun McIlrath of Impact FCAI (anecdotal; not included in transcription)



attributed to the hesitancy of manufacturers in launching new goods through expensive mass-media campaigns. The knock-on was a lack of assumed demand which led many producers to consolidate their market and reassess the worth of existing ad spend. In many cases the lack of ad industry growth led a number of advertising-gearred owners, who had built up agencies from start-up, to sell their stock to financiers more geared to controlling businesses. Many agency founders either retired (like David Ogilvy) or became agency figureheads (like Tim Mellors) with positions on the board. This in turn led to a consolidation of creative skills to make media agencies appear stable. New media owners also aimed to offer a wide repertoire of disciplines within one group by buying up other creative "facilities" (a term used by the press to describe smaller direct advertising agencies).

There were several significant mood-shifts located within these changes. The notion of 'leasing facilities' made the nature of work seem short-term and more widely accountable. Technological changes (print-setting and later computer graphic gear and databases) involved a more rapid rate of obsolescence than agencies had been used to, so more agency fees went back into covering overheads. It was also during the late-eighties/early nineties that the employee dropout rate soured and staff-turnover accelerated. This was in common with the flow evident in other office-based practices. The general nature of contracted work had shifted from fixed term to project, and from regular wages to performance-related pay. A portfolio work culture among employees soon became the norm.

The dilemma was not unique to Britain. Hard sell was a constant characteristic of advertising worldwide. For instance, Sinclair from an Australian perspective wrote that 'the study of advertising is often like advertising itself. It can attract exaggerated claims which the product on offer could not properly measure up to, but does in a way which can tell us much about the changing social and economic arrangements of our times and the illusive cultural meanings that became attached to them'<sup>40</sup>.

It was not just that agencies were unaware of popular cultural change. It was more that they were unable to make as much commercial capital from other forms of address. Agencies were not prepared to risk being inexplicit, so hard-sell propositions (USP or ESP) were the only options. They did not want to rely on customers finding information when their methods were geared to projecting messages *at* them. They did not therefore consider soft sell and under-statement as more effective means than aspirational (automotive ads), aggressive (FMCGs) or seductive (fashion) 'mood' tactics. Advertising agencies clients – the marketing directors of brands or services – also wanted to see their product clearly demonstrated, so approaches to promotion tended to be literal and figurative, rather than abstract and emotive. Therefore agency planners and their clients marketing directors missed the subtleties of youth cultures that communicated through politically unloaded gestures and moods.

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<sup>40</sup> Sinclair, J. Images Incorporated: Advertising as industry and ideology Croom & Helm, Kent 1987 p.1

Instead they stuck with impacting, audience-punching imagery, which in itself was a judgement of orthodox politics, a reaction against given social norms.

As if to combat the tide of advertising revenue running away from established agencies, media agencies attempted to re-present the profession in a more transparent light. There was tacit acknowledgement that the audience knew someone was paid to promote the product. For instance, a 1998 commercial for Snickers encouraged the viewer to *perhaps* try it, while Pot Noodle (1996) sent up the genre of in-trade promotional films with an advert that looked amateurish. Alongside other ads in a commercial break it appeared raw in its low-tech visual treatment. VW Passat commercials in 1998 'exposed' cameramen, boom operators and production crew all within shot to imply a sense of product integrity beyond the ads construction. The commercial launching Blackcurrent Tango similarly included a panned shot through the brands marketing offices to 'expose' the company behind the product (cf. Chapter 3a). The intention was to demonstrate that, beyond the marketing construct, Tango's brand personality ran through the company. Taking 'expose' a stage further, direct ad agency Grey Direct put out promotional material showing themselves as an agency 'with nothing to hide': their press shot showed a line up of Grey employees naked<sup>41</sup>. Such tactics pre-supposed that even potential clients saw advertising as a medium of duplicity<sup>42</sup>. Apathy was harder to break down than direct resistance to mass advertising. It was not the methods but the medium that had become the problem. Ad agencies had been so concerned with getting their 'method' of address right that they did not address a broader change in mood, of apathy towards mass mediums of communication.

The problem of advertising was compounded because, in a period when "value for money" was accorded higher priority, idealised product associations had less impact than a products 'integrity' – its ability to deliver on its advertised claim. Advertiser McIlrath observed that the ad industries were over-acclaimed and over-funded to the extent that, 'like the worst clients, we have grown obsessed with the importance of our own product, to the exclusion of all other truths'<sup>43</sup>. He went on to cite the numerous awards – notably D&AD which annually rewards 'creative excellence', not sales returns or customer popularity – as further proof of the profession's obsession with aesthetics at the expense of content. Fresh talent recruited by media agencies also centred on art and craft skills rather than issues more relevant to client need. The past decade of young art directors and copywriters were for the most part educated in Art Schools where, beyond advertising,

<sup>41</sup> This attracted wide media coverage - from day-time television chat shows to tabloids: The Sun , 12 February 1998 p.5

<sup>42</sup> Notably throughout Schudson, M Advertising - The Uneasy Persuasion. Routledge, London 1984 (notably chapters 3, 6&7); see also the overview of advertising in Sinclair, J. Images Incorporated Chapter3.

<sup>43</sup> McIlrath, S A new creative manifesto p.3



## Stripping away layers of advertising

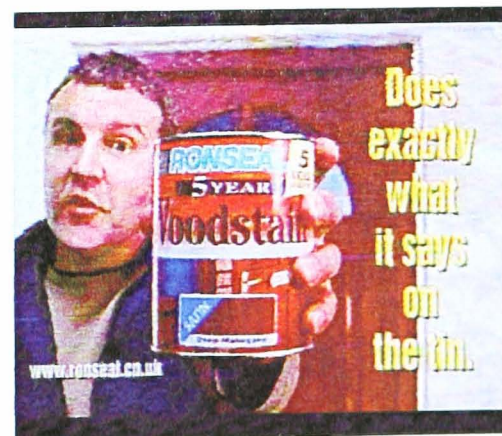
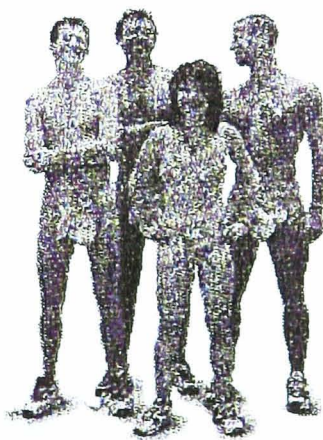


Pot Noodle TV campaign (HHCL + Partners, 1996) & Holsten Pils TV ad (AMV, 1995)

Re-launching the (then) unfashionable fast food, Pot Noodle's ad agency stripped away existing conventions for commercials: no staged setting, quality camera work or slick art direction. In the wake of HHCL's Tango work (where sales increased tenfold) the agency shot 2 cheap-looking ads in a shopping mall and small living room. They were crudely edited on low-grade videotape. The final quality made it look like a home movie – amateurish, cheap, accessible and 'honest' in the sense that it didn't appear to have been dressed up for the ad. Pot Noodle was promoted on the idea of being down to earth and attainable, matching the more modest and limited aspirations of 1990s viewers. The comedian Dennis Leary stripped away the layers of digital imagery during a commercial to let the drink 'stand for itself'. The claim was that Holsten Pils doesn't need gimmicks because the product itself is good enough. At the end of the ad Leary is shown literally pulling the plug on special effects: They were 'sucked' back into a computer, leaving Leary and his bottle of Holsten Pils in an empty TV studio.

Grey Direct (self-publicity, 1998) & the Ronseal man (right, HHCL+P, 1996)

To change the industry's perception of Grey Direct as a clinical hard-sell direct ad company, the agency did a stunt where their employees posed naked. According to their publicity, they were showing 'they had nothing to hide' – up-front with no hidden costs. The image made the ad teams more accessible and not as their name suggested, 'grey'. Images were used to promote Grey for over a year. By the mid-1990s ad agencies were casting harder streetwise characters that did not have a staged presence. The Ronseal man' addressed the camera directly. This made the message 'punch' through its format.



frameworks, composition, and use of language they developed the vocabulary of aesthetic communication through art, design and film history. Since 1989 the number of specialist advertising courses grew to harness art school techniques for the communication industries<sup>44</sup>. With this as a basis, creatives had a better grasp than the previous decade's advertisers of 'time and place' to apply their acquired knowledge. Between 1991–1995 in particular, reference to this background knowledge was apparent in television commercials. Adverts for transport services and products (British Rail, Mazda, Dunlop and Pirelli tyres) most prominently demonstrated this (see timelines, Appendix 1). The creative on these campaigns were mostly graduate teams.

The consequence in the early nineties was that the most appropriate means of selling were overlooked. 'Awards are creative currency' in advertising, McIlrath noted, 'and therein lies the problem. The more effete we get, the less effective we get... as a result, most have absolutely no grasp of their marketing realities.'<sup>45</sup> That, by 2000, there was interplay between advertising and art testifies to the wanton smartness of advertising's output. Commercials were being used as a platform for creative expression at the expense of product-centred functionality. While advertising creative directors could 'wow' their client's market directors with hi-style commercials (marketing directors could then in turn impress to their bosses with advertisers arresting visuals) it became increasingly apparent as the decade progressed that slick ads bore little relevance to assured high turnover. The ad styles of the 1980s had ceased to have widespread impact. Sales-pitch wary consumers, commented McIlrath, '...want simple benefits, so why do we insist on being so damn clever?'<sup>46</sup> McIlrath concluded that advertising had been giving out the wrong signals:

We must breed creative businessmen rather than artists... common sense is what sells and it's what we sell, but clients do not pay millions for something that, once it has been presented, seems absolutely obvious – so we have dressed it up in all manner of pseudo-scientific babble, and in doing so we often lose the plot.

Whether the agencies complacently 'lost the plot' by adhering to proven formulas<sup>47</sup> or whether increased budgets made planners reticent to risk new approaches is open to question. It is clear however that between 1988 and 1993 the structure of London advertising agencies barely changed, albeit the recession forced reductions in employees. A change in mood was evident in the tone of ads. For instance Levi's toned down their 'original' claim and made witty ads that poked fun at their earlier work. Self-depreciation was one of several tactics used to combat the increasing sense of resistance to advertising.

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<sup>44</sup>Since the first BA (Hons) were awarded for practical advertising courses in 1989 at Newcastle University. Others followed from 1992, including BA's at Plymouth and Buckinghamshire College as well as advertising options at Manchester and Central St. Martins

<sup>45</sup>McIlrath, S A new creative manifesto p.3

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>McIlrath also remarked that '...today's school of advertising is imitation' – which is certainly reflected in the 'method' led approach to teaching advertising at established industry feeder courses, notably art colleges such as Watford College of Art (HND), Buckinghamshire College and Falmouth College of Art (both BA). Source: Ibid.



Utilising viewers visual repertoire: remember our heritage?



The Levi's 501 'Original' commercial (left, 1985) and 'I hate them because they look so scruffy...!' (right, 1996)

Levi 501 press ads (1992-97) Laundrettes (below left, 1992) Soap powders (below right, 1992)

Knowing their audience was familiar with Levi's Original ad of 1985, BBH's simple strategy of nudging the original theme kept the campaign relevant and easily identifiable for nearly a decade. As the derivative campaign developed BBH established new ways of celebrating Levi's robust identity. They made reference to the laundrette ad and poked fun at the brand (albeit in a back-handed complimentary way).



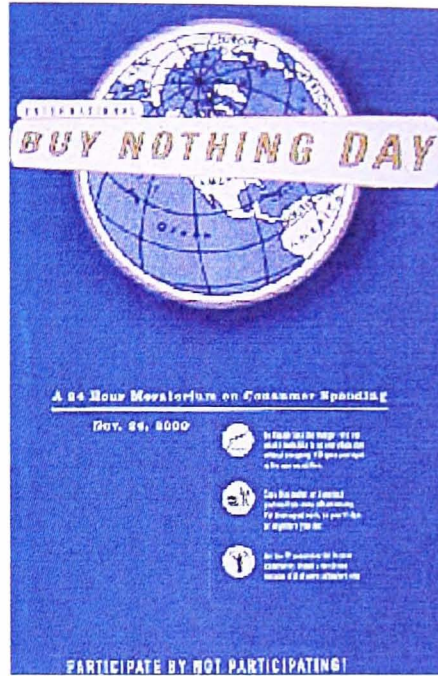
Southern Comfort 'Who are you mixing it with tonight?' (Leo Burnett, below centre and right, 1987)

As if the all-American, deep South Mississippi setting for Southern Comfort were not exotic enough for British viewers, the ad kept period placement ambiguous. The couple's sense of fashion is set in the eighties. The ad's soundtrack, the Supremes 'Why do fools fall in love?', suggested the sixties. Coloration and setting – a riverboat, bar and jazz band – suggested the twenties. By associating with its place of origin Southern Comfort's export pitch, like Coca-Cola, reinforced an assumption that it was an old all-American brand – 'Authentic' Americana.





Resistance to marketing

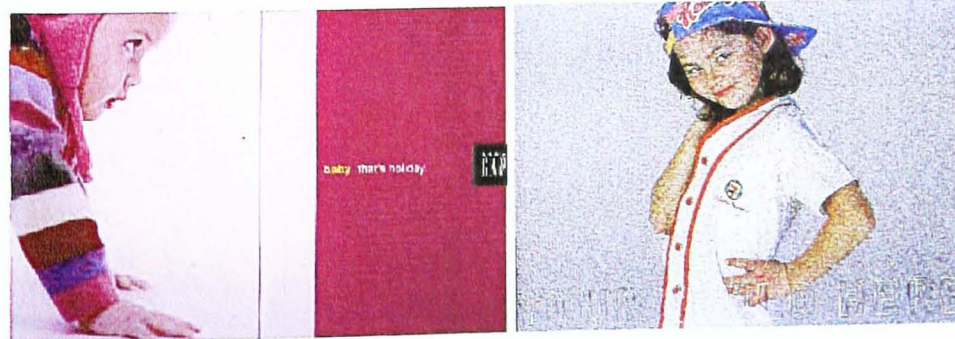


Anti-Capitalist protester, May Day 2001. (left) National Consume Nothing Day, organised annually by Adbusters (centre) an image from the journal Viewpoint (Amsterdam, 1999, right).  
 Political awareness became a common thread running through 1990s sub cultures. By 1999 protests against 'megabrands' (Klein, *No Logo*) led to organised global anti-Capitalist May Day protests and (in North America) 'Buy Nothing Days'. In common with the spirit of late 1980s ravers, *Viewpoint*, a Dutch trend forecast magazine, predicted young consumers would eventually disconnect with big brands. In their own example illustrations however (above right), the presumption was still that one is what one wears. This youth 'unbranded' himself from Nike, but retained a Nike link by using the brand as a stated point of reference.

Adbuster's pastiche of a Gap press ad (below left & centre, 1997).

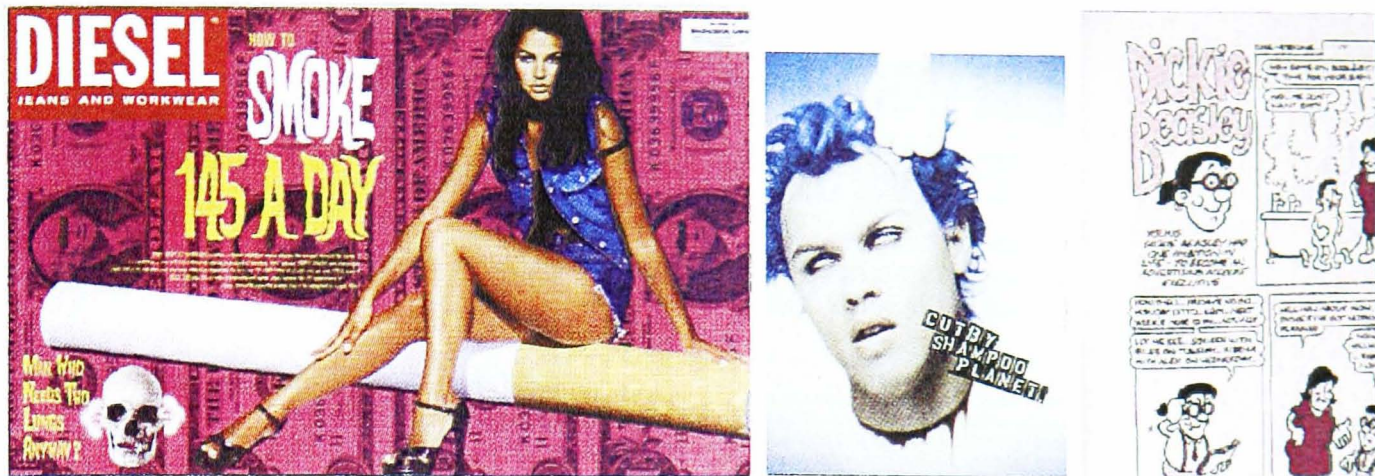
Benetton Colors magazine editorial, illustrating the over-packaging of products, (right, 1992)

Adbusters, a Canadian journal, carries articles expressing concerns for over-production and consumption. They produce spoof ads that draw attention to disparities between the identities put out by brands and the amorality of their operations. In the example below, Adbusters image (centre) reads 'Your child here', highlighting Gap's tendency to sell on wholesome US values when they were using Third World child labour to produce goods. Benetton's *Colors* magazine span the fashionability of moral protest by highlighting the politicality of consumption. One edition of *Colors* magazine (right) drew attention to the over-packaging of commodities – in this instance cream crackers – by mapping out the different layers of packaging.



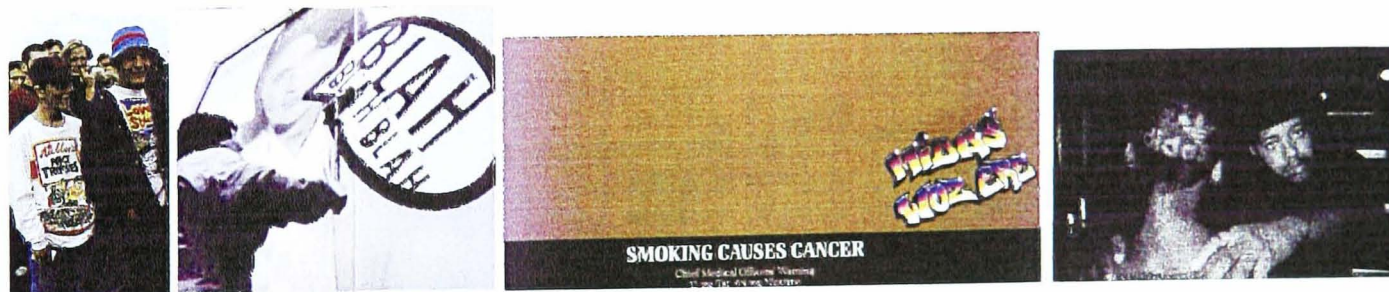


## Counter-advertising and plays on familiar advertising models



(above from left) Diesel (Kesselskramer, Sweden, 1996), Shampoo Planet (1997), a stereotype of advertisers, the cartoon strip character 'Young Dickie Beasley' from Viz magazine (c.1990)

The press ads above pre-suppose viewers familiarity with advertising formats. Diesel's ad is constructed from familiar image genres – the model could be from a car ad, where the cigarette is a (masculine) car. Her pose – pouting with a dropped bra strap – is reminiscent of a soft porn shot. The headline 'Smoke 145 a day' pastiches the sort of copy synonymous with 1950s advertising, while the skull is a derivative play on FHK Henrion's anti-nuclear post-war poster. The small copy and background imagery help in playing up the knowing contradiction. It is as if the brand were adopting the tones of cynical readers. Shampoo Planet's ad is more obvious in its play on conventional ad formulas: decontextualised (note the plain background, shadowed to emphasise the severed head) with punkish cut out type. The ad relied on its placement (in FHM magazine) to be immediately read as ironic. The ad industry had a bad reputation in the early 1990s for flamboyance, inflated costs and for quick-fix solutions. Viz, a satirical comic, picked up on this. 'Young Dickie Beasley' was a cocky youth and would-be ad account executive. He wore red braces, thick-rimmed red glasses, a ponytail and an earring. To explain any idea he used a flip chart. Storylines followed a familiar pattern. Dickie's 'solutions' to everyday problems were over the top and expensive. They always foundered, and his mother would have to bail him out.



(above, left to right) Ravers at Newbury in 'brand corrupted' gear (1989), guerrilla flyposting (1996) billboard drawing on codes of counter culture (1994), Adidas haircut in the US (1989)

The dissatisfaction of many youth subcultures with corporate power manifested itself in a number of ways. Brands and their advertisers were seen as manipulators and their logos were seen as symbols of corporate control. Fans of rap band the Beastie Boys stole and wore VW car badges, while familiar marques were corrupted and reclaimed for youth. Ford for instance, was changed 'Fuct' on T-shirts, worn as symbols of resistance to marketing. This became mainstream fashion ware. Even brands such as Rice Krispies were doctored to cartoon-like drug motifs (above left). It did not take long to commodify the spirit of counter-culture. B&H drew on its mood (above right) where tobacco legislation was cast as the Authority (crisp 'Smoking Causes Cancer' lettering). B&H are on the other side of the line, where the composition is 'corrupted' with graffiti. In the ad the brand (communicated through its gold packaging colour) was on the side of the subversives. Rebellious youth were also re-negotiated through sponsorship. US Rap band Run DMC were sponsored by Adidas (below left) to make a virtue of 'belonging' to a label associated with black American sporting success. One Run DMC track, 'My Adidas', even echoed to the brand's ideal of belonging.

'Under the radar' of youth: the rise of 'ambient' advertising

A larger proportion of youth were beginning to see advertising as part of a dominant conformist authority. Advertising for them espoused precisely the sort of mainstream values they would not like to be identified with. Sarah Thornton in Club Cultures argued that a myth persists in assuming that 'authentic' youth subculture exists outside mass media and commerce and, by extension, the mainstream. Within this myth advertising is part of the mainstream. Thornton fleshed out this view in a 'schema' of mix and match oppositions:

*Table 4: Thornton's schema of oppositions<sup>48</sup>:*

<i>US</i>	<i>THEM</i>
Alternative	Mainstream
Hip/cool	Straight/square/Naff
Independent	Commercial
Authentic	False/Phoney
Rebellious/radical	Conformist/conservative
Specialist genres	Pop
Insider knowledge	easily accessible information...

Thornton points out that subcultures are in fact formed within the domain of commercial culture. Therefore this represents a failure to follow changing market moods by planners, who are responsible for locating products within consumer markets. Instead of tracking change they stuck with familiar media tactics, contributed to a progressive loss of fluidity of contact with youth<sup>49</sup>.

Barrister Chris Cleverly in a 1999 article for The Guardian noted that, 'There is a tacit understanding by those in advertising that the simple forms of print and television are no longer able to reflect the true complexity of a brand's meaning or to create fresh impact.'<sup>50</sup> The article attributes the shifts (in part) to a smarter form of consumption that assumed the populace were ad literate. This enabled campaigns to operate on a more sophisticated level. Cleverly argued it reflected '...that the boys and girls in matt black (have) got savvy': the new buzz words 'for cool hunters in 1999', Cleverly claimed, were "ambient" and "stealth"<sup>51</sup>. Cleverly described a form of promotion that had been emerging from nightclub projections at the beginning of the decade (see p.61). Where the Ministry of Sound and Manchester's Hacienda projected spoof logos, record labels were quick to seize the medium to project their own logos at dance events.

While this form of tacit advertising was seen by advertisers and clients as being more adventurous, it could also be interpreted as another means of agencies making themselves appear hip – an opportunity for self-promotion at their client's expense. It is noticeable for instance, that most of the articles on promotional

<sup>48</sup> Thornton, S. Club Cultures Polity Press, Cambs. 1995 pp.114-117; illustration on p.115

<sup>49</sup> Thornton specifically dates the change to 1988 and the change in outlook it bought - acid house. Thornton, S. Club Cultures p 89

<sup>50</sup> Chris Cleverly cited Flora Skivington, an account planning director at McCann Erickson in San Francisco. He goes on to list many of the media-seductive strategies in his article "Life's a pitch - and then you buy" in The Guardian Monday 14 June G2 Media supplement, p 8

stunts profile the agency responsible – as if they were auteurs<sup>52</sup> – rather than the 'advertised' brand. It was therefore difficult to distinguish brand from self-promotion. The broadsheets such as The Guardian, The Times and The Independent, drew parallels with other multimedia 'events' such as the projection onto Battersea Power station (WCRS for Wonderbra, 1997). They also assumed such stunts had overtones which were counter to mainstream culture. A counter cultural strategy which was termed 'edgy'<sup>53</sup>.

Ambient advertising had a number of advantages over billboard advertising. In many respects they were representative of a more aggressive means of grabbing attention. The speed with which information was received, discarded and superseded was one factor that had notably changed in the decade. For example, an advert in production since the mid-nineteen-nineties could have a life span of less than a day (even less on the internet), where in the eighties the average commercial ran for 45 seconds<sup>54</sup>. There was, by 1999, a case in practice for greater acceleration enabled by digital media, new production and mediating (mostly marketing) procedures.

Ambient ads were part of a 'bigger picture' of communication. Such promotional stunts usually tied in with a further media advertising campaign to reinforce a core advertising message. Like other forms of media advertising, ambient stunts were one aspect of a bigger 'total commercial package'. The greater flexibility afforded by the variety of newer and more targeted advertising gave the advertisers greater scope for planning. Ads even became adept at shifting tack mid-campaign, and could tailor a product's identity to acknowledge regional variations in taste<sup>55</sup>, conveying several contrasting identities simultaneously across the country.

The potential for such flexible marketing was not lost on brands that needed to advertise. Producers of Sony and Heinz (see discussion in latter section of Chapter 4, in Appendix 4), service industries like Cellnet and retail companies like Tesco and Safeway all re-directed large proportions of their promotional budgets from media advertising to below-the-line agencies. For these brands the specialism in regional direct response advertising was preferable to wider, less striking national campaigns. Their own market research acknowledged that established mass media was no longer the most penetrative means for persuasion. Brands were also becoming more adept at defining what their customers wanted, and by extension were able to

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid.* Ambient and stealth methods such as landscape branding and projecting are discussed later in this chapter

<sup>52</sup> Which refers to the mode of acknowledgement in other art forms – painting, sculpture or *film* – as in Monaco, J How To Read Film Oxford University Press, Oxford 1981, describing the *politique des auteurs*: '... (it) consists, in short, of choosing the personal factor in artistic creation as a standard of reference, and then assuming of that it continues and even progresses from one film to the next' (p.332). Agencies acknowledge the different crafts within an ad but, according to Brierley in The Advertising Handbook p.63, present their leading creatives as gurus to bolster their pitch and reinforce the enigmatic illusion of how fresh concepts come about. The 'auteur' model is an easy journalistic handle which all parties, perhaps with the exception of the junior teams who came up with ideas, seem willing to perpetuate. This is considered further in the extended Appendix 4 chapter.

<sup>53</sup> A term used by the creative director behind the projection, Trevor Beattie of WCRS, interviewed July 2000 (interview not included in appendices transcriptions)

<sup>54</sup> Lury, G The incredible shrinking ad, in Campaign, London, 10 May 1991 pp.56–57

<sup>55</sup> This is not unique: H G Wells describes promoting his Uncle's health remedy 'Tono-Bungay' in similar vein. Wells seems critical of advertising's methods and means of persuasion early in the twentieth century. Wells, HG Tono-Bungay Collins, London 1953 pp 136–149



deduce the best means of advertising to them. Data marketing became increasingly accurate throughout the nineties in accumulating enough detailed customer evidence for effective quantitative and qualitative research. Towards the end of the decade companies were able to consider means of 'mass tailoring' their products to negotiate national values, regional variations in attitude and individual tastes simultaneously.

This close understanding of modern consumption was not strictly unique. The manufacturers of ice cream Häagen Dazs utilised detailed qualitative market research in the early nineties to define their niche in adverts<sup>56</sup>. Such was the precision of Häagen Dazs's preliminary analysis of flaky Western homogeneous consumption that its marketers at TPC realised it had to be risqué to conciliate the multiplicity of values surrounding luxury and sex. The burst campaign would not have anticipated the level of provocation required without such precision marketing, and as the brand became a popular marketing benchmark of the early nineties so too did its marketing analysis. In terms of determining new niche markets.

The refining of media advertising's use came at a time when 'relationship advertising' was emerging. Relationship marketing blended academic analyses on consumption with data analysis. Subsequently agencies recruited staff from business schools and with humanities background. The mix resulted in the testing of experimental techniques such as 'experiential marketing'<sup>57</sup>. With the increased levels of competition, faster flow of fashion and product trends marketing firms were aware that the cultivation of brand loyalty demanded more than media advertising. Relationships could not be built on ads alone.

Such developments enabled young advertisers with industry expertise and digital know-how to make a virtue of their professional and social knowledge. New agencies such as Mother, Cake, cross-discipline bodies like Tomato and buy-outs such as St Lukes employed young advertisers who had learned from large industry agencies and were commercially adept at instigating their own enterprises. Significantly they were sufficiently within age range of the clubbers (and Mac-literate) to deploy the codes and outlook of popular youth culture.

Start-ups were more adept at reaching the pockets of youth – a group most politically aware and resistant to advertising. According to Thornton British club scenes (in 1987) were characterised by anti-mass consumer tendencies and as a result evolved new promotional methods. In making clubs such as Cream in Manchester accessible to mass youth the club's marketers used samples, brand marques and advertising, but presented 'messages' couched in ironic tones. Initially clubbers corrupted existing branding material and re-appropriated the images to T-shirts, postcards and flyers. As clubbing gained mass popularity it up-graded in

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(first edition 1909)

<sup>56</sup> Häagen Dazs was launched in the UK through BBH in 1991. BBH were renowned for their use of emotive selling propositions, which made them appropriate for the promotion of such a highly stylised product geared to the luxury end of its market

<sup>57</sup> A term to describe relationship marketing, coined in the introduction of Schmitt, BH Experiential Marketing The Free Press, New York 1999



scale and ambition to become more popularised. Backdrop projections were used in clubs to project stylised brand marques, which also adorned albums and merchandise to promote clubs, DJs and the promoters themselves<sup>58</sup>. Such media techniques were extended from the clubs into the streets and other public spaces (for instance the landscape projections for the Ministry of Sound) as a more provocative means of promotion with subversive overtones. In projecting its corporate identity onto parliament the Ministry of Sound produced an ironic juxtaposition.

Through such stunts, ambient and stealth strategies became a recognised form of 'guerrilla' advertising by clients<sup>59</sup>. By taking their ambient selling methods out of clubs and onto streets, "New Media" artists as they became known<sup>60</sup> moderated their sentiments against mass consumption. Now they were working with ad agencies for the very brands clubbers stood against earlier in the decade.

It wasn't just club-originated projection artists that moderated their anti-Capitalist sensibilities. Many more artists were incorporating brand promotion within their work. A team of art-trained events organisers worked collectively as Labyrinth, projecting ambient images on London city monuments and incorporating promotions for brands such as Reebok (1995). Former nightclub projectionist Annie Palmer's company Cunning Stunts projected onto the buildings of parliament promoting club-cum-music brand the Ministry of Sound (1997), then famously repeated the stunt to promote the men's magazine FHM (1999). The tabloid press coverage it attracted encouraged others to copy the stunt in search of press coverage<sup>61</sup>.

Such stunts also encouraged marketers to re-thinking the potential of outdoor media events. In May 1996 Ocean Blue PR promoted internet company MarketingNet by turning unsaleable cows in roadside fields into advertising hoardings (at the height of the BSE crisis). The cows had been decked out in branded covers<sup>62</sup> to arouse passing curiosity and to generate a newsworthy spectacle.

Palmer described the event as "Guerrilla art", while PR companies claimed it as "Guerrilla Marketing". According to Palmer it operated in the same vein as phone box call cards. It was, she says, '...the seamless promotion over advertising and marketing... (the medium is effective in) representing what the core value or

<sup>58</sup> Rietvelt, H This Is Our House Ashgate, London 1998 p.67

<sup>59</sup> Ambient is defined by Cleverly, C. in his article 'Life's a pitch – and then you buy' as non-traditional outdoor advertising. Cleverly also described Stealth advertising as '...the hip kid brother of product placement... you won't know what's been done until you've been done'. He cites sportswear companies that have graffitied their logo in urban centres and a Japanese sports car company that paid to get its car mentioned by characters in romantic novels.

<sup>60</sup> Admap, Campaign and Archive magazines all referred to such alternative commercial communication as 'New Media'.

<sup>61</sup> The first – the Ministry of Sound's – received mostly magazine coverage. The most notorious – For Him Magazine's projected naked image of media personality Gail Porter – was treated as a news event 'exclusive' by tabloids in the following day's press (12 May 1999)

<sup>62</sup> The farmer received £250 per cow per week (8 cows were used); according to Campaign, crucially the PR firm pitched the story as a desperate farmer's idea to generate revenue in hard times, which attracted coverage from all British TV stations and American networks CNN, CBS and European channels. The agency briefed the farmer to mention the brand in every interview, with the net result of a 300% increase in interest for the website. The campaign is described at length in Cook, R & Woolgar, T What Is Ambient Media? in Campaign, 11 October 1996 pp.37-38.

quality of the product is.<sup>63</sup> Palmer evoked parallels with New York's Guerrilla Girl artists and the spirit of politically active eighties youth<sup>64</sup>. The stunts were an extremely effective alternative to billboards for burst campaigns, because the context of the projection site carried metaphoric significance. At least four agencies projected ad messages onto the same 'medium', Parliament, because of its symbolic magnitude and metaphoric significance as an image of authority.

Such tactics became commonplace as the contexts for advertising widened. The Chapman Brothers bought sports brands to life in galleries displaying modern art, with the jarring installation "Zygotic acceleration, biogenetic, de-sublimated libidinal model" sporting Fila trainers at the Sensation exhibition<sup>65</sup> (one of several exhibits bearing endorsements). Their 'Zygotic' figure in the Saatchi Gallery's exhibition Ant Noises (2000) bore Nike trainers. Like product placement in film, both sculptures assumed the sort of shared values Williamson describes between a brand and its celebrity endorsement<sup>66</sup>. In the context of a gallery the Chapman brothers attract the same provocatively edgy reputation both Fila and Nike seek, which is inherent in the latter's associations with Eric Cantona and James Barclay.

Such was the blurring of distinction between art and promotion that ambient advertising became a subject for some contemporary artists. John Haywood, who worked under the title 'backspace. org.' produced an on-line vending machine of brand names and products, drawing on an array of sponsorship in return. The group FAT put taps on street lamp-posts and set up a bar in the centre of Piccadilly Circus. Simon Poulter produced publicity 'performance piece' with a spoof privatisation of Stonehenge under the title 'UK:Ltd.'. It attracted several big brand sponsors to its much publicised press launch. After the event, it was the branded promotional paraphernalia that became the 'art artefact'<sup>67</sup>. Such stunts added to the broadening realisation that momentary spots at public events could potentially be used as adverts. Ambient strategies were significant on two counts. Firstly, the re-awakening of advertising's ability to shock. The adrenaline-rush such primary experiences evoked meant that the sensation of consuming the advert was particularly memorable.

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<sup>63</sup> Annie Palmer speaking on Stunts, a programme for Radio 4 broadcast 9.30am, 30 September 1999.

<sup>64</sup> A swastika projected onto the South African Embassy during a freedom picket became a striking image of late-eighties protest in the popular press

<sup>65</sup> An exhibition of 'young artists from the Saatchi collection'. Sensation, which ran from 18 September- 28 December 1997 at the Royal Academy, London.

<sup>66</sup> Williamson, J. Decoding Advertisements p.28

<sup>67</sup> Simon Poulter also established 'Art Critic' (from 1999) –a collaboration of several artists who sought to subvert other art events, notably the 1999 Turner Awards at the Tate gallery (12.99) with provocative, questioning projections.

## Ambient advertising ('subverting' environments)



London projections (left to right). Wonderbra ad projected onto Battersea Power Station (1997). Ministry of Sound onto Parliament (1997). Reebok onto scaffolding around Marble Arch (1995).

In a manner not far removed from Benetton's reclaiming of events as 'Benetton moments', several brands subverted landmarks with projections to associate with a youthful sense of urban non-confirmism. The MoS's projection punned on their branding as a 'subcultural ministry' while Reebok's pun on Marble Arch used old form of ad copy, FHM, in projecting a naked image of TV presenter Gail Porter onto Parliament, attempted to enhance their edgy identity by using Parliament's symbolic value as an Establishment. By 2000 the shock value of projecting had waned, although Marmite's projected message seemed 'live' next to billboards, while Sky's strategic placement associated it with ITN's opening news frame – the timeslot Sky were seeking to displace.

London projections (left to right). FHM magazine onto Parliament (1999), Marmite onto Wandsworth cooling tower (2000) and Sky News at Ten onto Big Ben (2000)



Guardian leader article 'Logo louts last blast' by Jeremy Myerson (below left, 1992) was one of several noting the 'post-boom road to recovery for the bruised duo of advertising and design'. MarketingNet's sponsored cows (right, 1994): less than 2 years after press articles declared brand advertising dead, even cattle next to a motorway were mediums hyping brands as competition grew.





## Testing 'authorities'



*Imagine owning shares  
in a company  
as rock solid as this one...*



**THE 1995 UK LTD  
0% INTEREST SHARE ISSUE**  
A complete portfolio of deregulated services

**Plot your path to instant prosperity**

(left) Gavin Turk's posters of Che Guevara, billboard sponsored by site owners More O'Ferrall (1999)

(right) 'Share offer in UK Ltd,' marketing scam 'performance piece', by Simon Poulter (1995)

Turk's posters, commissioned for Channel 4 'This is modern Art' series, used the format to reflect on the iconic status of the Warholesque Guevara image, and the monumentality of billboards as a medium. The artist Poulter's stunt for selling the notion of privatising London's landmarks, 'UK Ltd', was part-satire, part-subversion and part-art event. He received several hundred applications and made the national news. Unlike Turk, Poulter's work is not authorised by what he calls 'The Establishments' (of arts and marketing). While Turk seeks corporate sponsorship to cover his working costs, Poulter, whose work is often called 'counter-marketing', has been approached on numerous occasions to produce advertising stunts in the 'style' of his work.

Brand name (Pepsi and Coke) and home brand (Sainsbury's and Tesco) cola cans in 1992

In 1992 Coca Cola faced stiffer competition not just from Pepsi but from supermarket brands aping their corporate identity. Coke prosecuted British supermarket chain J Sainsbury for aping their packaging. They claimed Sainsbury's had 'borrowed brand values and standing' from Coke, then undercut them on price. The stigmas of 'brand value' became a topic of the popular press. J Sainsbury eventually changed their packaging before the courts reached a verdict.



Jean Ash, media group head of advertising agency Rocket remarked that 'ambient media has opened up a new realm of creative opportunities, tapping into consumers lives consumers lives when they least expect it'<sup>68</sup>. Rocket's adverts for North-West radio station Big City FM included heat-sensitive stickers placed in lavatories which, when urinated on showed images of footballer David Beckham and rock band Oasis<sup>69</sup>.

Secondly, the engagement with recognized artists indicated that advertising transcended the equation of commercialism with 'selling out'. It signified that youth culture operated in a realm where commercialisation was a given component. In comparison, the stigma of media advertising was associable with television, part of the "media game" Thornton considered youth were keen to avoid<sup>70</sup>.

In effect the methods of advertising described by David Ogilvy (Ogilvy On Advertising, 1983), which had been consistently used since the advent of TV commercials in 1955 to 1990, were pared down to the basic need for publicity, and attached to a medium of appropriate significance.

Therefore, in addressing one of my main research questions (what prompted advertising to change substantially during the 1990s?) it is evident that shifts in outlook – especially in attitudes to commercialisation - had been a central cause in advertising's repositioning. It could appear less mainstream and still be a creative centre-ground medium for young British people. Re-casting artefacts and moments as commercial selling tools was certainly more relevant to a youth that had been exposed to conventional commercials from an early age<sup>71</sup>.

'New media' also introduced slightly different creative role for advertisers. Where 'above-the-line' media advertising had pushed the possibilities of art direction to a point that it often usurped the branding, with ambient advertising the placement of the name, not the claim, occupied the advertising creatives. Advertising did not have to shape a USP claim because it was implicit in the context of the ambient ad.

Such projects marked a change in the way agencies were required to work with a brand's marketing team. Previously in the eighties media advertisers were given carte blanche, often by-passing clients and their marketing departments with style-heavy treatments, notably in the wake of BBH's emotive Levi's campaigns. Earlier I cited the shift from familiar ad formulas as a reason for the lack of common visual language in the nineties. Ambient ads filled this void by making the context part of the message, by asserting the 'naturalness' and ubiquity of advertising itself.

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<sup>68</sup> Cleverly, C p.8

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Thornton, S. *Club Cultures* p.145

<sup>71</sup> The average 18 year old in the US is estimated to have seen some 350,000 TV commercials. British children have developed similar viewing habits, according to advertiser Law, A in his article *How to ride the wave of change* published in *Admap*, Vol. 29 No.1 issue 336, January 1994 p.28; Brierley, M. *The Advertising Handbook* also cites Law, p.1.

Ambient stunts also anticipated the way ads were received in the urban landscape. In renting prominent city centre spaces, ambient promotions had to tailor promotional material to the landscape, where the billboard format screened of sections with little consideration for context. For instance, Nicotinell, an antidote to smoking, had metal plaques positioned underneath No Smoking signs on the London Underground. The copy read 'At times like this, it needn't be hell with Nicotinell', appealing to smokers at a point where they were more likely to empathise with the message<sup>72</sup>. While this example contradicts my earlier statement that ambient ads present a name rather than make a claim, it is still the juxtaposed context that makes the ad work. It was the case with such first generation stealth ads as Nicotinell's that the means of working tentatively borrowed from familiar ad tactics – in this case a seven-word strapline. It assumes the No Smoking plaque to be the sign for the added enamelled plate to be the signifier. By 1998 ambient ads tended to drop most media advertising methods altogether.

Such new communication methods recognised the sophisticated way in which the advert-consumer dialogue had developed. The 'dialogue' as it was described (note: not one singly transmitted message) became layered, and the viewer has to locate themselves more within the ad:

*Table 5: The layered 'dialogue' between ambient ads and viewers*

<i>VIEWER</i>	<i>AMBIENT ADVERT</i>
	1) placed ad
2) sees ad	
4) realises its selling something> is it trying to manipulate me?> reject or consider how it works: relevant to me?	3) communicates associations
	5) communicates secondary message; significance of location & pre-knowledge of product
6) realises ad is layered: reject or read on> acknowledge ads tacit recognition of my resistance to advertising	7) communicates further layers of association and double-meanings
8) draws on archival knowledge, then viewer rejects or re-views the ad> Viewer feels initiated and included	

Associations made by the ad's recipient are key to the ad working. With many possible interpretations, depending on the condition of the viewer, the more striking the ambient was, the greater chance there was of stoking wider-spread publicity. The greater chance there was also of isolating and re-anchoring the personal meaning of a space, time of day or mood or a particular segment of the audience. The ability to associate a space or feeling with a particular brand was precisely the type of communication 'experiential marketers' had been seeking.

<sup>72</sup> Barney Cockerall, copywriter at GGT Direct, to students at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, 22 October 1999



Ambient ('stealth') advertising



Ads aimed to appeal at opportune moments...

The effectiveness of 'ambients' over billboard & press ads lay in their ability to appeal at opportune moments, when consumers were most sensitive to the message. (left to right) 'At times like this it needn't be hell with Nicotinell', metal plaque placed below a smoking sign at Holborn London Underground station (1997). An ambient promotion placed on a petrol pump handle at J Sainsbury, Worcs (1999) and an ambient ad placed in a golf hole, advertising Lloyds Bank sports insurance.

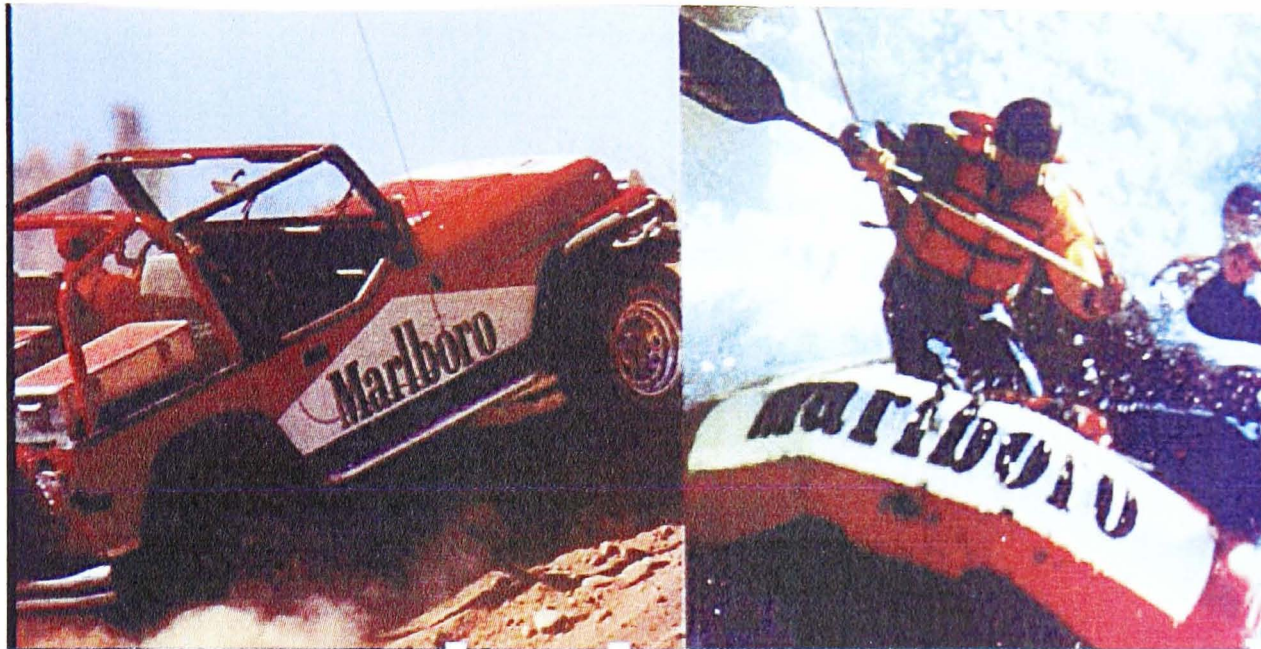
2 ambient adverts awarded by the Direct Marketing Association in 1999

(left to right) In-store ad for Safeway cat food. Customers were effectively pushing adverts around the store. During a live Sky broadcast featuring Chelsea playing in Norway, it became apparent that Channel 5 had bought advertising space on revolving hoardings around the ground. Throughout the match TV viewers were reminded that 'Liverpool (were) on the other side now'.



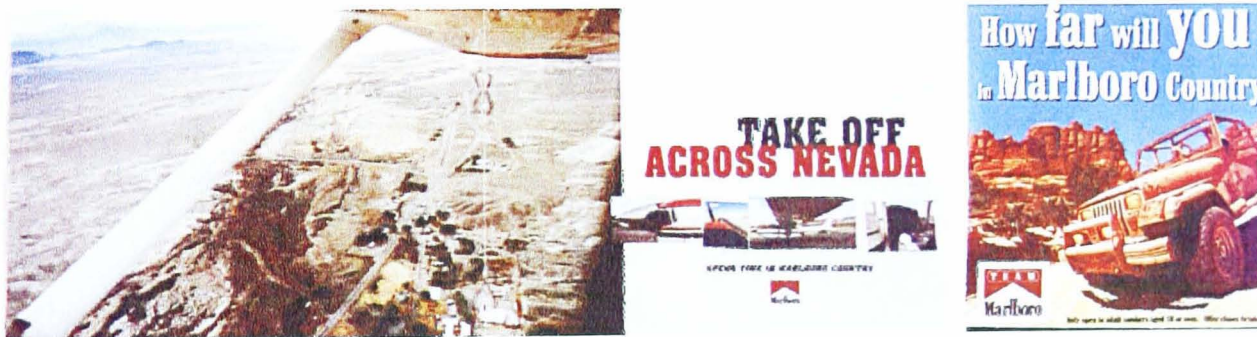


'Marlboro Country'



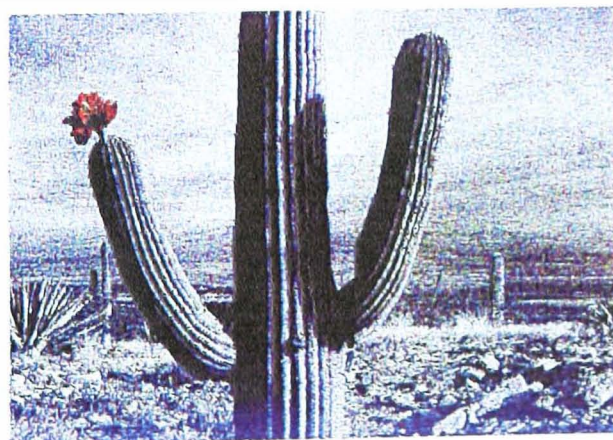
Marlboro's ambient promotions (Tequila London, above, from early 1990s)

Marlboro's 'below-the-line' ad agency extrapolated the essence of 'Marlboro country' from its media ad campaigns (bottom, press ad by BST, 1990) by reinforcing the Nevada desert as a Marlboro's landscape. This developed into the Marlboro brand experience (below). Restrictions governing cigarette advertising are tight, so alternative 'brand stretching' tactics are often employed. Motor and water sports now have a sponsored Team Marlboro's (above), which negotiates tobacco advertising legislation in most countries.



'Marlboro country' press ad (BST, 1990)

In the wake of CDP's successful cigarette press ads for Benson & Hedges, an ad 'format' emerged where health warnings served as a prompt for readers to recognise the product type. BST used it to iconise their identity. This Marlboro press and billboard campaign started in the late-1980s.





The second generation of ambient ads tended to be simpler, often taking the form of marque placements. They were put on pavements in front of newsagents kiosks, on risers of subway steps and as appendages to street signage. Even the names of landscapes and venues were re-branded to include the names of products. For instance Hammersmith Apollo became Labatts Appollo in 1998, while Middlesbrough Football Club moved to the new Cellnet Stadium and Bolton Wanderers moved the Reebok Stadium in 1997. This re-anchoring of brands was not new to the nineties: in 1978 Guinness placed branded stickers reading 'This Advert Insults Women' on their own ads to make it appear as if Guinness also operate on a level of counter-marketing (the stunt coincided with the popularity of Punk especially in London). In the nineties however agencies selling in the guise of 'counter marketing' had larger budgets at their disposal. For instance, throughout Europe and the US, a communications agency re-branded a motor racing team as the 'Marlboro Adventure Team', bearing the visual codes of the Marlboro brand. The association is reinforced in national press campaigns (where tobacco ads are not outlawed), which show the Marlboro bike team speeding through 'Marlboro country'. The \$2.5m investment was seen by Marlboro and their agency as the most effective way to consolidate the brand's identity and standing globally<sup>73</sup>.

It is at such thresholds of restrictive advertising legislation that manufacturers have pooled sources to develop more sophisticated forms of advertising. In Britain the body representing the tobacco industries, British Allied Tobacco (BAT), appointed the promotions ad agency Tequila to develop strategies worldwide. In Singapore they developed a chain of themed brasseries, named and branded in the style of Benson & Hedges, using anagrams of the name and variations of the B&H marque. In 1998 the B&H Bistro became one of the capitals most renowned hang-out joint, cited in tourist books. In Britain a chain of Peter Silveston Travel agencies have opened, offering tours to exotic destinations and developing the associations made with the Silveston brand<sup>74</sup>. This brand diversification acted in a manner familiar to media advertising, in that it fixed connections between the brand and exotic travel. It also effectively side-stepped the tougher ranges of tobacco advertising legislation introduced throughout the 1990s<sup>75</sup>.

Garath Hallberg in All Consumers Are Not Created Equal<sup>76</sup> described '360' advertising' where, at a given point in the urban landscape, the routine journey is jarred by a view that promotes just one brand. Its familiarity in the landscape not only re-affirms the brand's presence but also heightens the *experience* of being

<sup>73</sup> Edward Shore, art director at Tequila London, responsible for Marlboro ad imagery on direct mail work, in correspondence, March 2000.

<sup>74</sup> Cigarette brand Kent followed suit by travel agencies opened in their name

<sup>75</sup> Ron Fielding and Tracey Fox, art directors at Tequila Singapore, interviewed 22 May 1999. Similar plans for international motor racing branding are scheduled to be introduced with the abolition of cigarette advertising in Britain. Further experiments with different types of ambient selling led Tequila to explore electronic promotions. According to Tequila MD Tom Wass (interviewed 2 May 2000) in a charity campaign for Comic Relief's 'Drop the (world) Debt', Tequila orchestrated public awareness publicity for one week in June 1999. The response of 'hits' was measured in terms of further information requests. Press adverts in The Daily Mail and The Sun generated little response. ITV and Sky commercials generated a reasonable amount but the electronically mailed 'newsletter', sent as an E-mail chain letter, made a significant impact over a the period of a month. The company opened a new facility – 'digital strategy' – in 2000.

in a particular place and making a specific association with a brand. This is not far removed from the sort of 'psychological advertising' Vance Packard (The Hidden Persuaders) was deeply sceptical of in 1960's US agencies. Packard called it 'subliminal persuasion'. Ads such as those for Nicotinel, Reebok and MarketingNet were euphemistically coined by the commercial industries as Mood Marketing (another claim for marketing, perhaps).

That is not to say ambient advertising did not have problems of over-saturation. Cleverly remarked that 'No one bats an eyelid... at multi-coloured taxis and buses... ambient media, at it's best, is surprising, and at it's worst, pollution'<sup>77</sup>. Such was the proliferation by 1999 of ambient ads that many, like Cleverly, expressed concern for a cluttered, over-branded landscape.

Similar concerns expressed in the middle of the decade led to further developments in marketing technique, which aimed to cut out the need for a fixed space branding altogether. 'One-to-one advertising' used a variety of techniques – direct mail shots with money-off coupons and attaching free samples with product purchases were the most used methods. Price promotions also became increasingly competitive from 1993, with tobacco companies slashing the cost of packets to win over customers from rival brands. Perhaps most significantly, money back reward schemes were developed in conjunction with database customer tracking (see Chapter 3c). In terms of media advertising ploys, injunctions against celebrities were issued *preventing* them from wearing brands. This recognised that bad publicity generate positive high-exposure news stories – as Eric Cantona's post-brawl publicity for Nike in 1994 demonstrated.

Like media advertising however, the ability to stoke attention was short-lived for advertising. As Cleverly remarked, people became used to seeing strange stunts. Digital media however offered more incisive, longer lasting alternatives to the established advertising systems.

One-to-one and honed database marketing:  
Hegemony, revised consumerism and changes to the working culture of advertising

While media ad agencies were operating in a short-term manner, overlooking new ways that target audiences could be assessed and reached, marketing industries had recognised the necessity of change. This had as much to do with technological advancement in customer tracking as it had to do with close anthropological study. Rather than linear methods of audience grouping (class, gender and age), data assimilation became more flexible in assuming less rigid patterns of *personal* consumption. Where, at the beginning of the decade, marketers merely defined purchasing habits, within 10 years they were using a larger scope of data to define what motivated consumers to buy. Objectives became more ambitious – '...to get into the consumer's mind...

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<sup>76</sup> Hallberg, G. All Consumers Are Not Created Equal: Differential Marketing Strategy For Brand loyalty and Profits J. Wiley & Sons, New York 1995 p.27

(Emily Booth quoting Jonathan Plowden Roberts, head of Database group) "It's no longer 'how many customers have I got', it is 'who are they and what do they want from me'".<sup>78</sup>

Demographic and geodemographic research was replaced by behavioural data, which was based on what customers actually buy and was more useful to retailers and producers. Such lifestyle-centred data, according to Emily Booth in Marketing magazine, is constructed from around 25 million consumer surveys and gives a broader perspective on habits and tastes. Database analysis developed further by 1999 to address 'attitudinal information', where data is scrutinised to deduce customer values and beliefs, as well as their perceptions of commodities<sup>79</sup>. As methods of consumer mapping developed, so the means of measuring 'advert recall' – how a marketing message is received – progressed. Marketers were then in a position to advise clients whether their interests were best served by advertising or by other newer means.

Market research agencies (notably MORI and trend analysts the Henley Forecast Center), devised more effective customer tracking methods and means of re-configuring data for easier cross-reference. Tesco's agency Evans Hunt Scott similarly adapted data technology for retail, connecting point-of-purchase machinery with data analogue technology, to turn checkout data into an on-going source of customer profile knowledge (cf. Chapter 3c). This is one means by which new technology was able to impact on advertising. While actual adverts showed little signs of being 'technological', the means by which they operated did.

In 1998 Volkswagen used their database information in conjunction with a psychographic tool they called 'Total Visual Imagery', which used direct mail dialogue (a series of fliers with gifts attached) to keep consumers 'warm' while waiting for their car to be delivered<sup>80</sup>. The gifts got larger nearer the car delivery date to build up anticipation. Volkswagen UK's managing director remarked that customers responded far more frequently to mailing linked to their requirements, as their mailing illustrated<sup>81</sup>. Such 'joined up' opportunities for advertising/retail became increasingly common. The number of potential communicative outlets had multiplied within a matter of five years.

Larger agencies addressed this from 1995 by buying in a wider range of communication facilities. These were agency start-ups that were in a better position to diversify. They tended to be smaller and more flexible, so larger firms bought into them for their adaptability. This offered media agencies a way out of their dilemma of being committed to large scale, high cost advertising.

<sup>77</sup> Cleverly, C p. 8

<sup>78</sup> Emily Booth, Inside the mind of the consumer, in Marketing, Haymarket Business Pub., 3 June 2000 pp.42-45 re-printed in The Guardian supplement The Editor, June 11 pp.12-13

<sup>79</sup> Described as 'psychographics', *ibid.* p.12.: cf. the role of geodemographics in market research, in Brierley, S. The Advertising Handbook pp.34-35

<sup>80</sup> Devised by marketing company Manifesto, and described by Emily Booth, *ibid.*, p.13

<sup>81</sup> Keith Johnston, of Manifesto, cited by Emily Booth, *ibid.*

The companies media advertising bought into had sprung up in the tide of the new marketing-oriented commercial landscape, Companies such as Stretch The Horizon, Impact FCA and Limbo, that used understood advertising but placed emphasis on marketing facilities. In many respects they were moulded by the small business, marketing-oriented climate of late-Conservative Britain. Their practice became known as either 'below-the-line', direct advertising or advertising design. In practice they blurred the supposed divide between advertising and marketing disciplines, then compressed them. They had more detailed control and worked on smaller budgets.

The somewhat derogatory term 'below-the-Line' was originally a trade expression used by account handlers in advertising agencies<sup>82</sup>. For expensive communication material – TV commercials, press ads or billboards – media agencies charged a standard 17.5% commission. This percentage commission was 'the line'. When clients wanted direct mail they usually farmed the work out or did it quickly then charged a nominal fee. This type of work didn't make the sort of money the large agencies required to maintain their overheads, and – according to advertiser Lou Klein, 'till around 1996 the big agencies didn't want to get involved in work that didn't pay'<sup>83</sup>. When the smaller agencies started to cut into their revenue, The business directors of media agencies realised the value in owning the companies they farmed work out to. The tendency (approximately from 1998) was to buy below-the-line companies as a more flexible facility in their service repertoire.

As Klein noted, below-the-line had the ability to '...cater for specific tastes within this advertising form - you tell the right people in the right spirit what may interest them. And it doesn't offend other people'<sup>84</sup>. Barney Cockerall, a direct advertising copywriter at GGT Direct, described how his agency re-counted a re-appropriated Chinese proverb at pitches, which he says became a direct marketing credo:

"Tell me, and I'll forget..  
Show me, and I may remember.  
Involve me and I'll never forget."<sup>85</sup>

The sense of personal involvement (or 'dialogue' as relationship marketers described it) was significant here. It assumed the recipient of direct advertising has been specifically sought, as if it were a mark of individual consumption being acknowledged and valued. Press advertising, billboards and commercials were most effective when they conveyed non-exclusive, easily accessible messages, yet this made them easy to ignore where narrowcasting put the onus on the recipient to respond.

<sup>82</sup> It is worth noting that advertising and marketing journals have developed their terminology for direct advertising. Its common description moved from "below-the-line" (between 1994-96) to "integrated advertising" (from 1997) as its perceived status within the advertising industry shifted.

<sup>83</sup> Lou Klein, former advertiser and graphic designer in the US and UK, interviewed at Queensway, London, 4 March 1998

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. The same point is made in the prologue to Bond, J & Kirshenbaum, R *Under The Radar* J Wiley/Adweek, New York 1998

<sup>85</sup> Barney Cockerall, during a GGT presentation at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, 22 October 1999

From the communication industry's perspective, direct advertising had not had the exposure media advertising industries received in the eighties, so it did not have a preceding reputation. Nor did it inspire the same degree of resistance. As Cockerall put it, 'People have bullshit detectors, they can see an ad coming a mile off'<sup>86</sup>. Agencies realised that, potentially, direct advertising could make new use of existing resources. It made immediate use of better market relationship techniques and client's better understanding of conspicuous consumption, and used the facilities that agencies already had – hard statistical evidence (database information) academic analysis (planners), and co-ordinated communication (the ad teams).

By 2000 few companies had remained under the same ownership throughout the decade, and virtually all have been subject to at least one buy-up or buy-out. The larger media ad groups had realised the tendency of clients to who sought more personalised and direct approaches to selling from the mid-1990s. However, many established agencies that have operated in the same way since their foundation now own their own direct advertising subsidiaries. Ogilvy & Mather, who were one of the first established companies that, in part, helped shape the present ad industry format<sup>87</sup>, also ran a separate facility OgilvyOne<sup>88</sup> (in London). Lowe Direct, Grey Direct, BBH Unlimited and Saatchi Direct are representative of at least 20 other major media agency subsidiaries. The many mergers between 1990-2000 reshaped and inter-connected media groups. The biggest was businessman Martin Sorrell's collection of design and ad agencies. They traded under their original names, but were represented on the stock market collectively under the acronym WPP<sup>89</sup>. This was the largest communications group to stem from the rapid expansion of design and communications industries in the late-eighties, and it was WPP that went on to buy up direct agencies that, like WPP, showed potential for expansion. In terms of "start-ups", many junior and senior creative teams from large established agencies left to set up their own subsidiaries. Their projects may have been smaller in scale operating on smaller budgets than they were used to, but with a smaller team and the likelihood of less expensive material required, the profit margins were proportionately larger. Agencies such as Mother, Farm, Cake and Fallon – media start-ups from the late nineties – became prominent examples.

In many cases start-up direct advertising agencies<sup>90</sup> have tended to take their existing clientele with them, while their former employers and rival media ad firms may farm out work. From a clients perspective the percentage of commission on top of costs for the actual ad work may have been a prohibitive factor in re-employing large agencies. Often the 17.5% commission charged could not justify the overheads of bigger

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> David Ogilvy's work in helping to set up American Express is claimed by Ogilvy & Mather to be the first modern version of 'direct advertising': from interview with Anthony Tasgal, media and direct advertising planner with OgilvyOne, 7 March 2000.

<sup>88</sup> From its inception in 1992 up to 1997 they called this facility 'O&M Direct' - which was meant to sound snappy and abbreviated, to reflect the nature of the practice. Employees found limiting in that it only suggested direct mail shots. Their remit is, budget permitting, more open-ended.

<sup>89</sup> WPP originally stood for Wire and Plastic Products - the first company he bought; The acronym is kept because it demonstrates long-term market stability (it was first floated in the early nineteen-eighties)

agency's methods that were reliant on expensive media types – notably press, television and billboard – to maintain their in-house facilities.

In his postscript to The Advertising Handbook Brierley described how the commission system had protected agencies from inflation and rising media costs, which had been passed onto clients. However, in 1992 clients challenged this. At pitches more clients were asking for commissions ranging from 4% to 8%. In the wake of a recession agencies were eager for new accounts. Consequently pitches were won by agencies at reduced rates. The commission system was effectively broken and full-service agencies lost authority<sup>91</sup>.

In one sense, this had a knock-on effect where established agencies reduced their number of full-time employees. More advertisers worked on short-term renewable contracts. Laying off staff and re-employing them when pitches were won became more of a norm. This gave smaller direct ad agencies a market advantage. Bigger firms were committed to the technology they invested in. Newer agencies owned less, and were less committed to specific media types or advertising formats. They could easily adapt to the purpose and budget limitations, and were flexible enough to take on graphics, marketing, strategy-spinning and research-based projects.

One repercussion of this was that contracts for small scale work – direct mail, e-advertising, one-to-one correspondence or any of the other new media methods – was financed on a 'per project' basis. Expertise was bought in to suit the nature of the task, and as the variety of expertise required is broadening the profile of the work force was (by 2001) starting to resemble a high-tech form of 'cottage-industry'. Employees could work from home, reachable at by mobile phone or e-mail. They tended to be more multi-tasking than before, 'serially committed' to different projects and were 'facilitators', negotiating broad-ranging requirements from casting and ad shoots to creating landscape promotions. They no longer tended to be employees responsible for single art direction, planning or copywriting tasks<sup>92</sup>.

A distinct benchmark in the transition was HHCL + Partners on-going work for Britvic Tango after 1991 (discussed in Chapter 3a). The direct advertising input became well known because it was attached to a pre-existing shock-oriented media campaign. The addition of below-the-line techniques made it interactive, which enabled it to encroach on other creative territories and give campaigns greater depth. For agencies the step towards marketing was justified a logical industrial progression on several fronts. It kept the increasingly complex dialogues and visual puns in tune with the shifting outlook which, throughout the 1990's, had fragmented and had swung from late-Thatcherist enterprise autonomy to more introspective, devolved

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<sup>90</sup>Such as Archibald Ingall Stretton, whose accounts included Virgin.net. They are backed by the Havas group – a consortium that has a number of design and communication firms.

<sup>91</sup>Brierley, S The Advertising Handbook p.241

<sup>92</sup>The Quarterly Journal published by Demos, Issue 5 1995, titled The time squeeze outlines the changing nature of work in the Western world. Jonathan Gershuny in his article 'Time Keynesianism' pp.42–44 argued that 'In Britain we (tend to) work longer hours than others in Europe'. This he argued, made Britain more productive but over-looked the 'negative consequences of long hours - bad health, gender

condition. Subscribing to Britain as a nation-state seemed less important on one hand - increasing foreign trade, increasing numbers travelling abroad. At the same time Britain's status in an international context seemed to diminish, with the nations poor sporting performances<sup>93</sup>. Yet there was also the sense that Britain as an independent market was preferred over a broader European identity, as the debate over single currency became more significant in the middle of the decade. (cf. Chapter 4).

As marketing agencies kept close reins on this shifting mood and its significance for consumerism - particularly youth markets – early in the decade, media adverts characteristically attempted to 'do a Tango'. This was partly a consequence of the climate in which constant mergers and buy-outs were numerous and where re-structuring meant that the employees were continually required to prove themselves. Making their work (and CV) stand out in a portfolio-oriented climate was important for career-minded advertisers. Sean Nixon in Production of Culture/Cultures of Production similarly noted that in modern work individuals were tied into (self) 'promotional culture' via promotionally-based, public representations in circulation, from dating and shopping to attending a job interview<sup>94</sup>. Like the products they sold, advertisers were required to advertise themselves via a portfolio ('book') of their track record. Like brand marketing managers, advertisers were recruited for their track record, and high profile projects carried more weight. Where the average working life in advertising for a creative team of copywriters and art directors is 8 years, and where promotion is mostly achieved by swapping agencies, it was little wonder that advertisers were keen to make their mark quickly with famous adverts. Therefore it was inherent in media advertising that more localised agendas were underscoring approaches to campaign work. Yet direct advertising aimed to produce effective campaigns that generated a high level of response from recipients. The ads themselves were not necessarily high profile.

#### The impact of digital retail data on advertising

An equally low-key but more profound change in the way sales could be motivated was being developed in the retail sector. Within the supermarket industry the link between digital technology, data systems and marketing was being developed that would shape the way retailers would utilise direct advertising.

As supermarkets developed their checkout systems to directly re-order stock, marketers together with data systems analysts realised the potential of monitoring purchasing habits. Initially it was thought this might inform the selection of product ranges and the direction of promotional material. Then it was realised that it could be used to develop better understandings of consumer motivation to enhance the retail

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inequality' and pressure on personal relationships: A comparative 'then and now' chart comparing such issues between 1990 and 2000 is included in chapter 6 and expanded upon in Appendix 1.

<sup>93</sup> Failure to qualify for the 1994 World Cup was followed by only one gold medal (for rowing) at the 1996 Olympic games. The British tabloid press used the undercurrent of this to underpin a more far-reaching assumption of Britain's diminishing significance abroad.

<sup>94</sup> Nixon, S. in du Gay, P (ed.) Production of Culture/Cultures of Production p.185

experience. By the mid-nineties they were able to make the shopping experience a leisure activity – a strategy that arrived from the US with American labels. Brands such as Disney (in Regent Street from 1990) and Nike Town (Oxford Street from 1999) could heighten the retail experience by shaping it entirely. Even the purchasing process became a stylised ritual while the theme-park like shopping experience became a form of advert in itself (see Chapter 3d). In their own retail space brands such as Nike could imbue their products with added significance, and imbue customers with such a reverence for the brand that it could give added depth to ad campaigns. This was often reinforced with seasonal in-store activities.

Supermarkets competed aggressively with named brands as the balance of power shifted from product brands to retailers to the supermarket and department stores that controlled their distribution. Brierley in The Advertising Handbook noted that between 1971–1985 supermarkets expanded in size to hypermarkets, while decreasing in number from 11,000 to 4,500. Their grocery market share grew from 44.3% to 70.1%<sup>95</sup>. Home-brand products made significant in-roads on name-brand consumable goods such as Heinz and Kelloggs from 1994. In particular, competition between cola brands is often cited by journalists in accounts of the ‘brand-wars’ of 1995. The retail battle between Coca-Cola, Virgin and J Sainsbury nearly shifted to the lawcourts, with Coca-Cola distributions claiming that J Sainsbury had replicated their packaging to assume their cola had similar qualities of taste and brand standing. The supermarkets, it was claimed, had an unfair trading advantage because they under-cut on price, chose better shelf positioning and used their own distribution networks.

In the 1990s supermarkets also devised other ways of capitalising on their retail space. Strategies for growth were broadened to take on other facilities in the service sector. Tesco developed plans for internet shopping from 1995. Then Safeway, J Sainsbury and Tesco (see Chapter 3c), developed their in-line services to set up their own financial services, taking on established high street banking networks in 1999<sup>96</sup>. They were able to exploit their own high street presence, and in particular their reputation for being in touch with changing consumer tastes. By 2000 the idea of ‘One Stop Shopping’, where customer loyalty was rewarded, had become common retail practice. Such brand-stretching exercises<sup>97</sup> were catered for by the new breed of marketing *cum* advertisers – communications groups offering a variety of advertising services (cf. Tesco Clubcard, Chapter 3c).

The broadening of services made the value of brand identity more significant. In many respects this re-engaged with media advertising because services were reliant on mass-familiarity, and media advertising

<sup>95</sup>Brierley, S The Advertising Handbook p.226

<sup>96</sup>Safeway and Tesco deposit savings accounts were launched nationally between November and January 1997-1998. J Sainsbury, Asda, Safeway and Tesco each make a point of offering better long term rates than the High Street banks and building societies. In addition to savings accounts, mortgages and investment schemes were added to their repertoire of extended services by 2000.

<sup>97</sup>Described by Tracey Fox of Tequila Singapore, interviewed at Tequila London, 22 May 1999.



was able to make brands household names. One could argue that as the strength of a service during the nineties became more dependent on its brand's standing, its presence and value became more significant than its utilitarian ability to function. Jobling and Crowley make the point in Graphic Design: Representation and Reproduction<sup>98</sup>: 'A business, for example, is not represented by the things that its workers produce but by the way it is represented on the stock exchange and the confidence that shareholders have in its image'.

They cited Baudrillard's observation that 'our age' is one of simulation where the real has taken flight into images<sup>99</sup>. Yet where media agencies had previously devised product strategies (up to the late-eighties) in the nineties they were being deployed pre-determined strategies, and were simply required to produce mass-media executions.

During the nineties many more trademark brands began to compete on brand confidence through diversification<sup>100</sup>, including FMCG's like Guinness and Marlboro, megabrands like Virgin and service industries and building societies such as Nationwide<sup>101</sup>. In some cases the original artefacts or services by which their renown was established – such as Levi's 501's – were represented as flagship brands. Some brands opted for 'sectoring', where associations were forged with related products, services or events in different markets that bore a similar brand image. The shared interest, often called Third Party Advertising, mutually helped brands of equal standing to forge partnerships through joint promotions. For instance McDonalds 'Happy Meals' ran a series of third party promotions with Disney, where free toys with Happy Meals related to films Disney were about to issue. This created a pre-release demand for Disney's films (see Chapter 6) by contriving to develop anticipation with ambient and direct advertising techniques mixed with experiential marketing techniques.

Strategic promotional devices tended to be in the repertoire of the new and flexible 'integrated' agencies (so-called because their creative work could turn out as either a media or below-the-line solution). Such an agency, Triangle Communications, linked FMCG's Cadbury's Crunchie bars and Britvic Tango to create a 'limited edition Tango Crunchie', which had a short run but developed the reputation of both brands. Britvic Tango had added presence (akin to free ad space) on the chocolate bars, while Cadbury's Crunchie benefited from Tango's strong brand identity

By the decade's end marketers had begun to find more incisive means of consumer analysis than broadband market bracketing by social, age and gender. This was at a time when marketers were reporting more 'promiscuous' purchasing habits, where patterns of consumption pointed to frequent changes in

<sup>98</sup> Jobling, P & Crowley, D Graphic Design: Representation and Reproduction, Manchester Univ. Press, Manchester 1996 p.273  
<sup>99</sup> Poster, M (ed.) Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings, Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge 1988 p.166 – cited in Jobling P & Crowley, D, Graphic Design p.273

<sup>100</sup> In marketing terms, this is called 'trademark diversification'. Source: Ron Fielding. Tequila Singapore, interviewed 22 May 1999.

<sup>101</sup> Guinness and Marlboro 'stretched' into clothing lines, Virgin into travel services, investment and insurance schemes while Nationwide sponsored football to 'reinvest in the fabric of our culture' - as they claim in their building society paraphernalia

individual shopping habits. It seemed that consumers - particularly youths - were keen to avoid being stereotyped. Through consumption it became apparent that people were exercising choice by mixing brands enough to express their own sense of individuality. For media advertising this posed a potential dilemma. How could brands be made to appear personable and appeal to their audiences sense of being individual, when the messages are broadcast through a mass medium?

There was no uniform means of addressing this. Nike drew on illusions of associated 'greatness' in building a Team Nike of sport stars<sup>102</sup>, where a number of outstanding sporting individuals were developed through ad campaigns. This allowed young consumers to attach their identities to Nikes brand of individuality (cf. Chapters 3d and 4). Supermarkets drew on their ability to establish personal contact with their customers – from one-off shoppers to regular customers. Retailers were therefore competing on a mixture of their brand identity (developed through media campaigns) and the quality of their customer service (using a marketing/below-the-line advertising mix). In effect they were selling experience of service quality as a unique selling proposition. All aspects of the retail experience were re-examined, and in many cases sharpened. The 'four-deep maximum queuing policy', bag packers and checkout-to-car attendants were all examples of the emphasis placed on service and retail experience. What had been a straight-forward ad strategy at the beginning of the 1990s had become a much more complex project encompassing brand ethos. Advertising was expanding as an aspect of strategic planning, and had to withstand cross-reference all other aspects of a company that 'interfaced' with the public, from production to promotional pitch<sup>103</sup>. Advertising was effectively becoming 3-dimensional, operating beyond the billboard to evidence and support its promotional claims.

This inevitably effected the tone of media advertising, in that claims for retailers had to become more measured and achievable. For instance, if there appeared to be a discrepancy between the claims of an advert and the retail experience, the legacy would be that a supermarket would not be living up to its promotion. Retailers were therefore seeking to consolidate a 'total brand experience' in all promotional material. The tendency in such experiential marketing was to appear customer-centred. For instance Blue Water, the shopping complex in South East London, had such 'total experience' arrangements in place prior to its launch in 1996, where the unique experience conveyed in all promotions was tightly geared to the visitor experience.

The champions of integrated advertising – such as Terry Hunt of Evans Hunt Scott (the agency that originated reward card schemes) – argued from the early 1990s that this was the key to future forms of advertising. Yet because many communications industries had heavy investments in established mediums,

<sup>102</sup> This is discussed at length in Goldman, R *Nike Culture: the sign of the swoosh* Sage/Thousand Oaks, California 1999.

<sup>103</sup> Klein explores discrepancies between the two aspects in Klein, N *No Logo* Flamingo, London, 2000.

working relationships between them had become inter-dependent. The inter-operational needs of creatives, production teams, film services, post-production units and others were understood by all parties because they had been in operation for some years. Because there were so many interests tied into existing practice methods, there was the possibility that little in the commercial communications business would change if the media industries exercised their monopoly. In terms of the movement of advertising revenue, there were indications that the impact of technology on the ad industry was not as severe as the advertising press made it out to be. Media advertising still accounted for the majority of advertising revenue - McIlrath cited over 65% of total annual ad spend<sup>104</sup> in 2001. Plowden Roberts of Database Group remarked that,

People spent the eighties building their databases, piling up information. It was a question of how big their database was... In the 90s we're trying to get value from data. Its no longer "how many customers have I got", it is "who are they and what do they want from me".<sup>105</sup>

The potential of the information was realised in a variety of ways. In 1997 post-data changes included discount vouchers targeting products in new areas of interest for individual consumers, in-store food tasting sessions for regular Tesco customers who showed up on the database as being experimental in their choice of food and free in-store lifestyle magazines. Yet a balance between knowing about customers and intruding on their privacy still needed to be maintained. The term 'permission marketing' became significant as the debates around data protection became more prominent in the popular press during 1997 (this coincided with a number of instances where confidential banking data was reported to have been sold on to commercial companies via listing agencies). The issue became significant for many forms of direct advertising.

In a 1997 promotion for British Telecom, the agency Tequila sent letters to BT customers outlining more effective ways of utilising their service's special deals. The letter from Tequila (in British Telecom's name) detailed how often the recipient had called their 'Best Friend' and how effective their selection of 'Friends and Family' had been. It even listed the recipients more frequently used numbers so that changes could be made. Tequila had not reckoned on detailed advice being interpreted as corporate intrusion. The Advertising Standards Association received a large number of complaints accusing BT of being over-familiar with their 'phoning habits'<sup>106</sup>.

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<sup>104</sup> McIlrath, S. citing the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) statistics, in McIlrath, S A new creative manifesto p.4

<sup>105</sup> Roberts, cited by Booth, E. in 'Inside the mind of the consumer' pp.12-13

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Tracey Fox and Ron Fielding, Art Directors at Tequila Singapore, interviewed in London, May 1999.

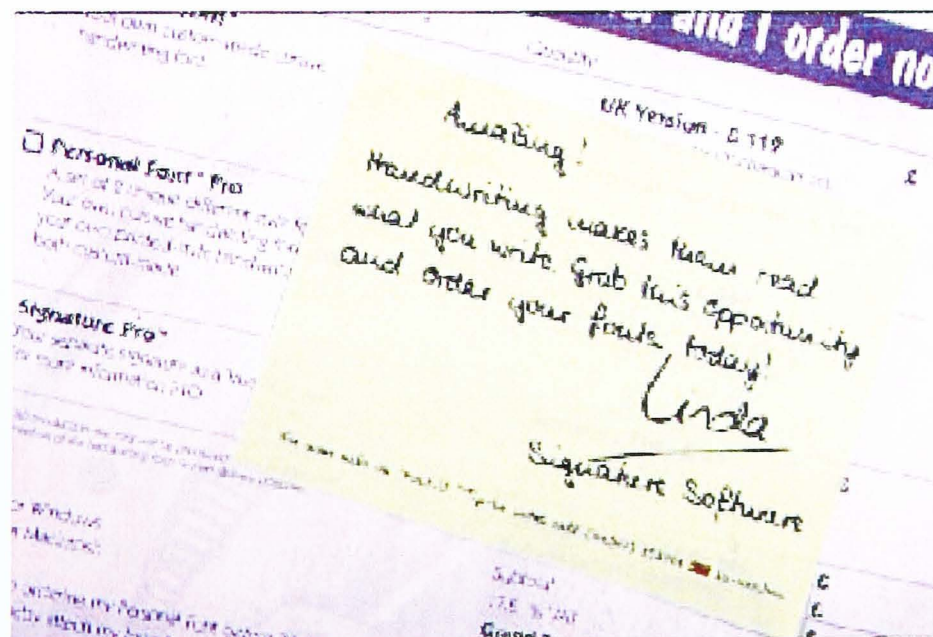
## Direct mail as Advertising

British Telecom direct mailers (Tequila, 1996-2001)

BT's corporate colour and graphic branding ran through all aspects of direct mailer work. The oval envelope window echoed BT Cellnet's mobile phone styling. The colour even featured as a backdrop to BT's commercials. Equally consistent was the letter's content (also part of the ad work) which had over 70 paragraph variants. Paragraphs were selected using BT's customer database, which profiled individual customer's habitual phone use.

Advert for a mass-production writing service (1998)

Signature Software developed a printing system that reproduced individual handwriting styles. This promotion (placed in Marketing Direct) claimed the method could be used in circulars. Such systems of mass tailoring were popular with below-the-line advertisers because they were economical yet bared the hallmarks of appearing personal.



As this example illustrates, the degree to which technology is apparent in transactions has been held in check by social attitudes to technology and privacy (discussed in Chapter 5). While marketing attempted to make its methods of operation appear transparent, it would have been easy for data analysts to impinge on privacy legislation. To an extent database marketing was driven by technological innovation, as much as it was by the emerging importance of 'customer relationships' – a term which gained increasing usage by the mid-decade. Databases had the ability to record the buying habits of customers and automatically re-align the data to establish individual profiles, which potentially impinged on personal privacy laws. Much depended on whether one considered purchasing profiles to be sacrosanct or public information.

By 2000 the activity of advertising had expanded. The 'communications industry' could be called upon to conceive new marketing methods such as 'brand extensions', where a brand diversified into other relative fields, and 'third party associations' (described earlier) both sprang from 1990s developments in database technology (discussed in Chapters 3c and 5). This had potential to impact on most creative commercial disciplines. It has even become synonymous with politics and power-broking, where ethics were, like advertising, often frowned upon. It was media advertising that was seen as the most obviously manipulative, and by extension the most corrupt communicative form. Its prominence as a selling medium was however re-cast in a much broader scale of advertising before the end of the 1990s.

*'Burst': the relocation of media advertising*

With more sophisticated means of defining buying habits marketers re-briefed their clients, adjusted target markets and methods of audience-reach. This meant that brand teams were more informed and equipped to know the wants of their consumers than the agencies they had previously employed to reach them. This appears to be the issue on which the power-knowledge ratio between advertising, their clients and consumers changed. Rather than advertisers dictating to clients what customers wanted, it was the client's marketers who were monitoring their customers purchasing habits that dictated more specific, narrower advertising remits to their agencies. It is noticeable in the leader editorials of both Campaign magazine and Design Week – the biggest selling weekly ad and design industry journals – that in the early nineties tendered accounts and payments for pitches were burning issues. More agencies were ditched in the first half of the nineties than in any previous decade of the twentieth century, and clients were more often renegotiating the tasks of the advertisers and basis of employment. The tendency in new agreements was to limit the remit of ad agency responsibilities and implement incremental stages of payment.

In some cases this led to awkward relationships between brand marketing directors and advertising's account planners. Both had previously been assumed to represent the mutual interests of customers and their

creative teams (with brand managers), but they now planners found themselves dealing with empowered marketers who had their own more defined specifications, of which advertising was merely a part<sup>107</sup>.

Hallberg drew similar conclusions. In his overview of advertising he conceded that its existing authority was diminished by differential marketing. Its role – he claims – is now ‘...more precisely defined to complement the role of the brand-loyalty program’<sup>108</sup>. Hallberg envisaged that conventional media advertising would remain effective for brand building, maintaining ‘share of voice’ and stoking public interest: ‘Research has proven that advertising works best by generating more sales from current buyers... Nothing matches advertising’s ability to provide a cost-efficient means of reaching a broad-based audience, creating brand awareness, favourable attitudes, and purchase interests across all profit segments’<sup>109</sup>. Paul Clarke, a creative director at Saatchi & Saatchi, also stressed that in the UK commercials are still have the furthest reach for launching burst campaigns and generating maximum awareness: ‘There is no doubt’, he claimed, ‘that if you can afford to advertise on TV, it is by far the most cost-effective way of reaching high coverage (what percentage of your target audience view the ad) and frequency (how many times they see it). Herein lies the balance of media planning’<sup>110</sup>.

In other words, with greater competition the medium needs to be utilised more specifically and more sparingly. Clarke added that ‘There is little point in running a prime-time TV campaign communicating the benefits of a new Speedo swimming cap... when your audience could be more effectively reached through... sports centres or at point-of-sale in sports shops’.

Compared to new means of audience address, commercial television and radio networks still attracted huge viewing figures, compared to the potential audience reach of any below-the-line methods or ambient stunts. In selling ad space, network managers and programme producers still argued that theirs is the more as effective promotional medium because it has reach potential. That so many short-wave radio and cable TV networks still existed in 2000 was testimony to broadcast media’s effectiveness as a mass-messenger. In launching new products through burst campaigns, the potential of commercial’s audience-reach was still unrivalled, if less than it was before network deregulation in the mid-1990s. One key advantage for independent terrestrial television (and radio) was its established longevity as a selling medium. Media adverts survived the introduction (and apparent success) of other forms such as teletext, billboard vans and other brief ad spectacles.

<sup>107</sup> Brands such as Unilever, Procter and Gamble and even the Government’s Central Office of Information split their agency accounts up so that different agencies were handling different aspects of their business.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p.195

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., pp.195–196

<sup>110</sup> Paul Clarke, correspondence, November 1998.



According to market research co-ordinator Bob Worcester, the BBC and ITV remained institutions that Britons trust. He cited a 1991 MORI poll (when both were diminishing in popularity)<sup>111</sup> that showed both register positive percentages in the 'Satisfaction Index' (BBC=4%, ITV=3%). In Britain, he remarked, '... people regard the pillars of their society with a strange mixture of deference and contempt'<sup>112</sup>. In authorising news stories the terrestrial channels remained unrivalled. During times of political upheaval the BBC has been invariably cast as the nation's chief message barer. Such formalising qualities hadn't escaped advertising planners.

The significance of establishing one's own network of endorsements became the subject of qualitative advertising research by the end of the decade. As the leisure industry in Britain became less of a communal experience – more watched videos, played computer games or went out rather than watched terrestrial TV – media advertisers had a diminished range of shared mass experiences to draw on for ads. For instance, the reduced accessibility of sporting events on terrestrial television made key moments of national unity fewer<sup>113</sup> (cf. Chapter 4, Appendix 4). Therefore advertising's ability to bond at regular moments became fewer, as television the up fewer moments of collective significance. This is perhaps partly why brands such as Nike built up the profile of the sport stars before they become established household names<sup>114</sup>.

The agency saw the benefit of building the golfer's dynamics in an effort to change the widespread perception of the sport before they could then capitalise on it by utilising the extra press coverage Nike's publicity had generated<sup>115</sup>. By association they were able to develop a broader media interest in the sport, rendering it another platform for marketing in which they already had a presence. Such is the brand standing of Nike that publicity follows their endorsements. In itself this is a marketing device belonging to the late-twentieth century. In the case of Nike the TV commercials were the high profile front to a much wider long-term marketing strategy.

### Conclusions

It is apparent that media advertising had difficulties with the pace and extent of cultural change Direct advertising – with the potential to exploit technologically intelligent databases – introduced new modes of

<sup>111</sup> Jacobs, E & Worcester, B Typically British? Bloomsbury Press, London 1991. pp. 115-118

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, pp.115–116

<sup>113</sup> The disenfranchisement of live coverage rights created a spirit of exclusivity which lessened the frequency of shared events 'witnessed' in the same real time through television, until watching matches in pubs took off from 1992 (cf. Chapter 4). Satellite network Sky's coverage of sport (from 1992–99) constantly repeated the line, 'Live and exclusive on Sky' as if it were part of their branding, throughout any real-time broadcast.

<sup>114</sup> For instance, it was advertisers Abbott Mead Vickers that told us USA golfer Tiger Woods was the name to look out for when he was plugged before the 1998 British Golf Open for Nike. He was presented as a role model before he became a household name: the ad featured a variety of children of different ages and creeds, repeating the line, 'I am Tiger Woods'.

address, yet media advertising was able to regenerate. There was no other medium that had the potential mass-audience reach of commercials, press ads or billboards. During the 1990s ad agencies re-appraised their position and addressed social and technological shifts by buying in newer, more adaptable and digitally in-tune agencies as facilities. Hence the range of facilities grew, and ad agencies became broad-based communications groups. The deployment of mass media became more specific. It was rarely the sole means of promotion by 2000, but was still the most high profile means by which new brands were launched. Effectively however, media advertising played a more diffuse and complex advertising role in the communication landscape that, in little over a decade, had become more visually complex, while targeted viewers had become more resistant.

In terms of the way changes in advertising were recorded in the popular press during the 1990's, for the most part shifts in revenue and mergers were kept to the financial pages. Marketing sections of the (broad sheet) press tended to monitor the shifting strategies of the largest clients – often quoting the Haymarket journals Marketing and Campaign. The movement of ad revenue to smart cards received more 'serious' comment in marketing sections, while 'ambient' adverts tended to be connected with shifts in youth culture. Ads were presented as a 'craft in-touch', while direct marketing was associated with commerce.

By 1999 the shifts of strategy were more prominent in the press – they were presented as youthful, radical and 'pop' in the popular media.

While the use of ambient and guerrilla marketing tactics waned at the end of the decade, they were prominent in characterising an important moment in marketing/advertising's transition. Campaigns like Tango (see Chapter 3a) created fresh means of multiple targeting. Britvic Tango's campaign extended beyond its target audience, generating enough additional free press coverage to elevate the ad agency (HHCL & Partners) to prominence and appease Britvic's marketing directors with the excess coverage its tactics stimulated. Such strategic planning became a much-aped strategy of "media neutral" integrated marketing.

Unlike media ad methods, ambient advertising negotiated resistance to its methods by 'hitting' the consumer at moments when their mood would be conducive to the product, while direct advertising tailored the ad message to individuals – adding a marketing technique 'Individual Selling Proposition' (ISP) to advertising's Unique and Emotive Selling Propositions. In 1999 the communications agency Bartle Bogle Hegarty suggested the mixing of advertising means and came up with 'Dynamic Selling Propositions'.

Throughout this chapter it is apparent that, beyond economic recession, the existing pre-nineties model of media advertising had great difficulty in negotiating the break-up of established social British norms.

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<sup>115</sup> in comparison, this strategy back-fired on footballer Ronaldo, who was equally publicised prior to the 1998 World Cup finals, the pressure of being centre of a media circus for the months leading upto and during the tournament effected his health immediately prior to the final itself, where he under-performed.



They were aided however by their own recognition of consumers extended visual archival repertoire. Ads generally avoided the sort of typing evident in earlier decades, yet were keen to provoke discussion by transgressing perceived social values.

John A Walker in Art in the Age of Mass Media paraphrased McLuhan's argument that '...the consequence of the invention of a new medium is to displace older ones... A new medium often causes older ones to decline or change their character. Furthermore, the older media usually become the content of the newest'<sup>116</sup>. In terms of re-positioning the media ad industry's profile, when media advertising found re-locating youth problematic it became appropriate to undermine its own industry because it was perceived as oppressively corporative, at a time when youth subcultures were countering commercial orthodoxies.

In the 1990s marketing and advertising became more closely associated. They also drew extensively on a broader span of knowledge partly derived from academic studies of society, consumption and the science of behaviour. A new terminology emerged to describe the more complex modes of address and the more intimate involvement with the consumer ('experiential' and 'relationship' marketing).

Media advertising was characterised by the difficulties experienced by planners in trying to classify consumers as a 'mass' and trying to understand the grounds for collective experience as society became more multicultural and national identity started to be conceived in European terms.

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<sup>116</sup> Walker, John A Art in the Age of Mass Media Pluto Press, London 1994 p.11

## **Chapter 3**

### **Introduction to three case studies (Chapters 3a–c) and a contextualisation (3d)**

In this chapter I trace the development of three model campaigns in order to examine changes in the way advertising addressed consumers in the 1990s. In particular I address how marketing, research, branding and business organisation integrated with existing advertising structures to develop closer, more layered promotions.

I selected a media advertising campaign (Britvic Tango, work started in 1991), an integrated marketing/ad campaign (Daewoo, work started in 1994) and a below the line promotion (Tesco Clubcard, developed between 1991–96) because they are symptomatic of advertising's shifts in focus. The analyses trace the way customers were identified and targeted, and considers the backgrounds to strategies.

These are read in conjunction with campaigns to assess issues and dilemmas advertisers faced during the 1990s. For instance, the re-launch campaign of FMCG Tango addresses issues of nationality and personal identity, and problems of ad mediums such as hype fatigue and more knowledgeable viewers. Daewoo's campaign combined advertising with marketing techniques. Here consumer resistance and post-sales service become considerations in developing the roles of promotion and retail. Tesco's Clubcard went further, involving customer analysis systems, notions of brand/customer 'relationships' and contemporary database technology. All three campaigns developed engagements with other promotional devices that at the time were avant-garde.

It is worth noting that the period of review span saw an increasing fascination for new business management theories. For instance texts by marketing 'gurus' such as Faith Popcorn, Charles Handy and Tom Peters chimed with the re-organisation of labour in office-based work. The impact of the 'How to manage change' texts is one determinant I do not address in this section, but undoubtedly the re-shaping of modes of ad work could be 'read' through the campaign developments I examine here. Instead I use the case studies to outline the movement of advertising against a bigger picture of commercial and communication activity. From this I consider issues most apparently concerning their target audience and their advertising industry. The construction of the sections in this chapter are therefore honed to address the most prominent changes they represent – Tango as a snapshot of Britishness through media advertising, Daewoo as a construct of advertising merging with other commercial practices and Tesco Clubcard as a construct of advertising as direct marketing. A review section (3d) then places the case studies within a wider context of late-twentieth century commercial communication.

Chapter 3a

**De-constructing Tango: a snapshot of Britishness and youth in the 1990s**

Context

Bracketing football with the 'New Lad' made it easier to commodify British male youth, as youth magazines and pop bands of the day demonstrated<sup>1</sup>. Early nineties popular literature, notably in Nick Hornby's Fever Pitch (1992), also caught the mood of adolescent male-oriented sporting passion:

What happened was, Chris Roberts bought a sugar mouse from Jack Reynolds, bit its head off, dropped it in the Newmarket Road before he could get started on the body, and it got run over by a car. And that afternoon Cambridge United, who had hitherto been finding life difficult in the Second Division beat Orient 3–1, and a ritual was born. Before each home game we all of us trooped into the sweet shop, purchased our mice, walked outside, bite the heads off as though we were removing the pin from a hand grenade, and tossed the torsos under the wheels of oncoming cars. Jack Reynolds would stand in the doorway watching us, shaking his head sorrowfully.<sup>2</sup>

Imbedded in this are key attributes of the 1990s male youth: a sense of community, group-specific rituals of belonging to and being understood only by the group (reinforced by the shopkeeper's incomprehension). There is also the sense of a running commentary, where everyday innocuous moments may be replayed later and recast as significant. Like a football match, the 'logical narrative' only becomes apparent at the end.

As a description, Hornby's scene contains the sort of closely observed behaviour that became popular in comedy and advertising because its sense of familiarity was accessible. It was in this period, when a new sense of youth and masculinity was taking shape, that Britvic were re-booting their soft drink brand Tango at the beginning of the nineties. This was against the backdrop of Italia 1990, where England's first loss on penalties to Germany in the World Cup semi-finals attracted record TV viewing figures<sup>3</sup>.

Tango's re-launch in 1992 was perhaps the first (post-Benetton) campaign to court controversy and generate national press attention in the 1990s<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Magazines such as Loaded, TV comedies such as Men Behaving Badly and the front men of Brit Pop bands (Liam Gallagher of Oasis and Damon Albarn of Blur, amongst others).

<sup>2</sup>Hornby, N Fever Pitch, Penguin, London 1992; this extract taken from Hornby, N Sugar Mice and Buzzcock Albums, published in a compendium of writings on football by Kelly, SF (ed.) A Game of 2 Halves, Kingswood Press/Hamlyn, London 1992 p.403

<sup>3</sup>BARB figures reported in excess of 21m British viewers tuned into the England v Germany match in June 1990.

<sup>4</sup>Campaign magazine put the burst Tango TV commercial, Slap, fourth in its all-time 'Hall Of Fame' list because it 'set the tone for the 90s genre of cheaper-looking, jerky hand-held camera commercials'. Hatfield, S (ed.) Campaign's Hall of Fame..., Haymarket Business Pub. Ltd. London, 20.12.99 p.17



Britvic Tango: burst commercial



*broadcast ITV February 1992*

(1/4) Opening Shot: Street scene, distant drilling

Set out to appear as an ordinary uneventful street scene. Note the props – a bike with basket, red pillar-box (made less conspicuous by painting the shop front tango orange), the colourful fruit & vegetables – to render a pre-nineties idyllic suburban street corner.

(2/4) Break 1 – Narrative Disruption

The stillness is broken as the film grinds to a halt. Then a voice-over – a continuity announcer-cum-commentator – requests a replay. The tape drags back and replays the scene, but this time it includes an orange man, who appears at odds with the earlier scene. He runs up to the three lads.





Britvic Tango: burst commercial

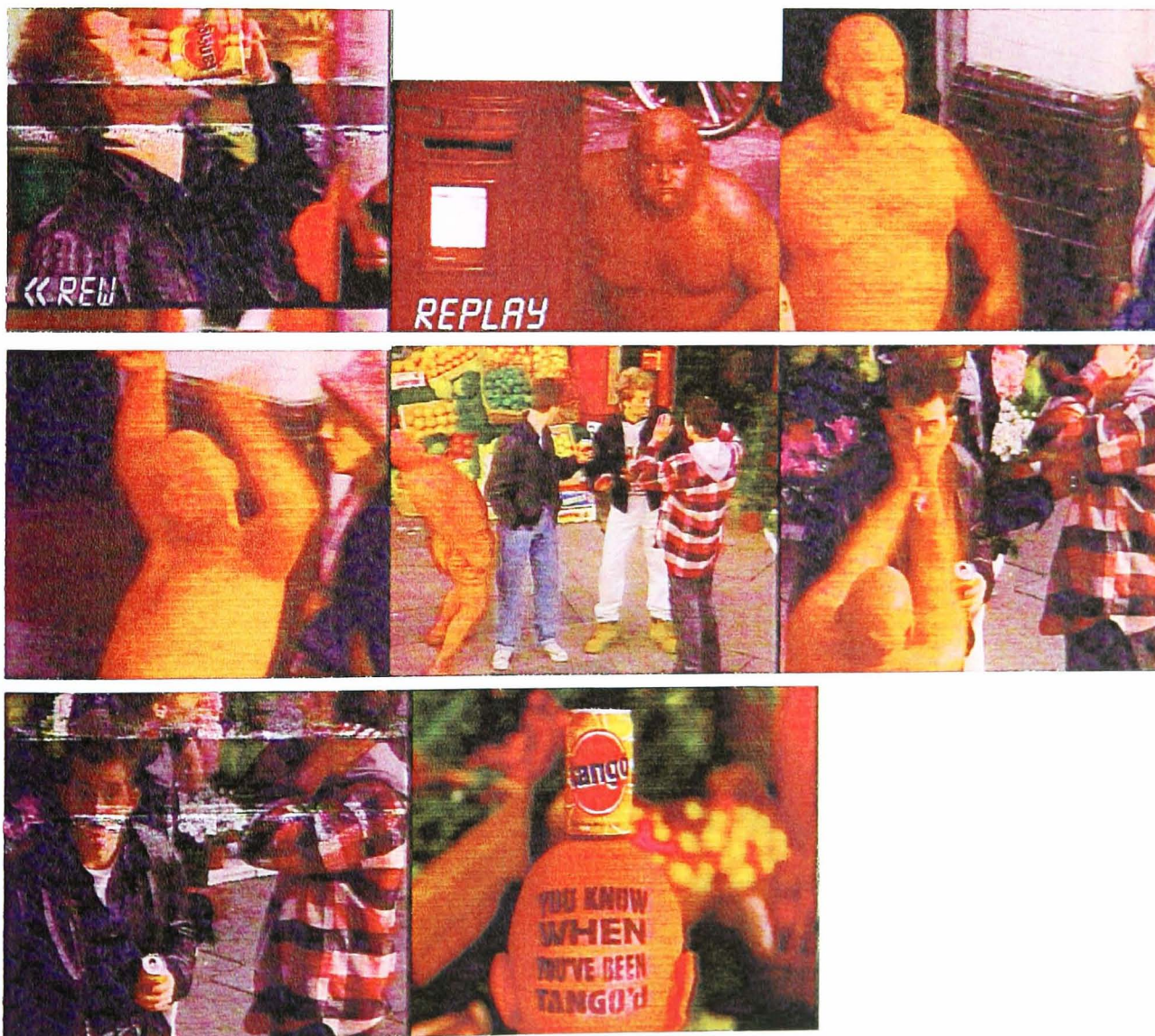


(3/4) The Slap

The camera cuts to show the three lads. In a sweeping theatrical gesture, the orange man taps the drinker on the shoulder then delivers a two-handed, swinging slap on his cheeks.

(4/4) Break 2 – Second Rewind & reaction shot, leading to end frame (aka product frame)

This time the camera trails the orange man in close-up as he runs up to the drinker and slaps him. After showing the drinker's shocked reaction the film cuts to the strapline – linking the slap and reaction shot with the end message. This places the emphasis on the very moment (the sensation) of the tango drinker's first sip of Orange Tango. The strapline reinforces this moment as a common memorable experience – 'You know when you've been Tango'd'.



This is somewhat misleading: most of the 30 second spot maintains a stylised camera technique which did set a trend for more disposable looking home movie ads, because it seemed to possess the rapid movement and energy of youth. It's style was familiar, borrowing from football broadcast (the format of edited highlights), police surveillance footage (popularised in news features and later home-video) and out-takes from late 1980 TV shows. Tango's abstraction of familiar reference points was the first to utilise the appearance of spontaneity as a commercial virtue, as opposed to the controlled and crafted imagery of most ads.

#### Outline analysis of 'burst' ad

In 'Slap' the narrative (re)plays the same supposed moment three times. It was shot throughout a mid-November morning on a paved street corner in Chiswick in 1991. Extras were cast to give the impression of a busy mid-afternoon suburban street. Props, including a bicycle and red post boxes had been carefully placed to inject strong colour and a sense of British ordinariness. A corner off-license, seen in the opening frame, had been re-painted and decked out to resemble a corner grocer's store-cum-newsagents. The initial scene-setting 'action' hones in on three casually dressed young men chatting outside a typically suburban British corner grocer's store<sup>5</sup>. One in the group takes a swig from his can of Tango Orange – innocuous enough. Then a voice-over commentary disrupts the scene; the moment is re-wound, then re-ran with a voice-over commentary in the style of a broadcast football-cum-darts commentary<sup>6</sup>.

The replay re-traces the action in the manner of a significant sporting incident. This time however our view is from a panning camera as we follow the actions of a new character – a bald, fat, totally orange man in a loin cloth, running in an exaggerated slap-stick motion. The hyperbolic commentator – 'Ralph' – re-frames this disruption as the impact of the 'quintessential taste sensation'. The camera picks up an orange man as he springs out from behind a red post box, and weaves his way down the pavement with arms flailing theatrically. He circles the lads, who are in mid-conversation and appear oblivious to his presence, then delivers a melodramatic swinging two-handed slap on both cheeks of the drinker. The Tango drinker gapes open-mouthed in shock. The slap serves as a metaphor for the sensation of the initial fizzy sip, and is punctuated by commentary, a verbal serenade of the orange mans slap – 'Wyeye-eye' – in a colloquial regional Geordie accent. This eulogises the 'hit' of the drink is and reinforces the narratives disruption. The drinker looks stunned, and the camera lingers on his frozen reaction to the slap.

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<sup>5</sup>It was considered by HHCL that less than three drinkers implied the drinker was either a loner or may be gay, and could be problematic. This is referred to by Creative Director John Webster on The 100 Greatest TV Ads, broadcast on Channel 4, 29 April 1999.

<sup>6</sup>The two forms are blurred; the contrast of dry understated 'expert analysis' narrative from football commentator Ray Wilkins is a foil for the comparatively hysterical commentary in the style of darts commentator Sid Wardell (voiced by impersonator Hugh Dennis: Wardell couldn't reproduce the same over-excited delivery in voice tests).



The strap line 'You know when you've been Tango'd', delivered in the Southern American drool of Blues singer Gil Scott Heron adds both a last change of pace and gives a more distanced continental context to the final word on the 'event'. It also crams in a third narrative style to go with the third filmic style, making the action too terse and fast to consume and understand with ones usual critical faculties. The sense one is left with is the disruptive impact of the shown slap, which in both replays is shown at accelerated pace while the remainder of the re-run is in slow motion.

The entire 40-second commercial is crafted to flag up its sense of vibrance – more so than Coke or Pepsi – and to reinforce the sense of Britishness. The film frame was constructed with national reference points – including the vibrant red pillar-box from behind which the orange man first emerges. The located narrative accents and commentary style support this overall aspect of the ad.

The location is significant in establishing this emphasis. The opening frame is shot from a crane looking down at a supposed everyday scene in front and to the left side of a grocer's corner shop. The pavements are deep enough for street displays – in front of the shop there's a colourful range of flowers and on the left pavement a variety of vegetables; their vibrant green and orange colouration picks up the frame and signage of the shop, which was strengthened in post-production. Five old ladies mull around the vegetables to convey a sense of casual movement. This was reinforced with distant drilling noises, building construction perhaps, to effect the sense of everyday 'suburban-ness'. In the foreground (partially in shot) there is a small billboard with a pushbike leaning against it. In this opening frame therefore, the intention is clearly to set up a snapshot of a typical suburban street scene.

In fact both Slap's copywriter Al Young and the film director Matt Forrest's notes pointed to the inclusion of props and a landscape that drew on references familiar with middle-England – suburban flow rather than urban grit. Everydayness had been established before the 'disruption'<sup>7</sup> was introduced. Even the central characters – the three lads – seem understated as the camera closes in on them. The swigging drink gesture of the lead man is nullified by an exaggerated gesture from one of the others in the group. The scene's tempo and banality seems at odds with the strengthened colour, so the narrative fits in this respect, even if the hurriedly exited tone seems odd. After the first re-wind the tempo seems to run in fast-time, before the advert attempts to self-deconstruct.

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<sup>7</sup> Al Young, Creative Director from 1994 at HHCL+P, interviewed 24 March 2000: cf. Appendix 2.

Table 6: SLAP advert structure and camera work abstract

Time	Action	Narrative
0"	Scene set: outside corner shop	
4"	commentary starts	Ralph: Hello Tony – I think we might use a video replay here
7"	re-wind 1	Tony: Super Ralph, lets do that
12"	replay 1: pan shot	R: Ooooooh Yes! We could be in for a quintessential taste
12"	orange man runs along street...	sensation here...
18"	... and delivers a slap.	... Wyyyye-eyee – Tony – lets look at that again.
22"	Reaction, then re-wind 2	T: Yes Ralph. The big orange fella run in from the left, and gives
24"	replay 2: tracking shot	him a good old slappin' R: It just illustrates the bite and buzz...
31"	slap – reaction shot, then ...	... Ohhhh! – of real oranges in Tango.
	... back to normal (revert to frame 1	T: Yes Ralph. Super taste sensation, smashing drink, lovely.
37"	Product frame and strap line	You know when you've been Tango'd
40"	END	
	<b>Abstract</b>	<b>camera Work</b>
0-4"	street scene set	scene 1: crane shot; camera zooms in slowly
5-11"	re-wind 1	
12-19"	replay 1 – 'magical transformation'	scene 2: panned crane shot follows action
20-21"	re-wind 2	
22-32"	replay 2	scene 3: ground tracking shot follows orange man
33-36"	end of 'magical transformation	revert to scene 1. fixed crane shot
37-40"	cut to strap line and product shot	still posed shot – can on orange mans head

### The Tango Campaign Background: how the strategy was constructed

By 1991 Howell Henry<sup>8</sup> had developed a reputation for provocative work. For Danepak 'Lean and Low's bacon range they showed bacon-grilling naturists who, with carefully placed props extolled the virtues of non-spitting low fat bacon (August 1991. Promoting Fuji film they were embroiled in a debate of whether social issues should be used in advertising to shift commercial products<sup>9</sup>. Footage appeared to show forms of discrimination while their copy ran 'we're not concerned about disability... integration... language barriers: Our concern is making the best film we can, so that way photographers can change the way people think' (June 1991). Such provocative campaigns made Howell Henry's relationship within the industry, other agencies and regulating bodies, somewhat strained,

The Independent Television Commission (ITC) announced it had 'serious reservations' of attempts to merge social and commercial messages. Adam Lury, a MD of Howell Henry in 1991, maintained that it was disingenuous of the advertising industry, '...to wash their hands of the social impact of advertising or to claim that ads don't use social issues. Portraying idealised families, attractive young men, middle-class mums with white washing and women as fat or bimbos are all social issues as much as racism or old age.'<sup>10</sup>

In the wake of the press debate over Benetton's provocative ad images, which the British advertising press condemned *en masse*<sup>11</sup>, Lury's opinion clearly ran against the grain of commonly held industry stance. Ads –

<sup>8</sup>Founded in 1988 as Howell Henry Chaldecott Lury: They reduced their name to the acronym HHCL + Partners in 1994.

<sup>9</sup>Archer, B Advertising's social problem in Campaign, 9 August 1991 p.10

<sup>10</sup>ibid.

<sup>11</sup>cf. Chapter 4. Besides a sizeable volume of opinion voiced in the popular press, the advertising trade journal Campaign, which branded it 'The Great Benetton Debate', criticised it for apparently having little to do with its product (20 September 1991 pp. 15 and 19). The British Advertising Standards Authority criticised Benetton for displaying 'a conspicuous disregard for the sensibilities of the public' (6 September



oremarked Lury – should reflect contemporary Britain as it is, and that advertising shied away from making authentic social observations: ‘There is a deep-seated shame within the industry that advertising is dirty and reprehensible, and because it is, we mustn’t do anything positive. But the industry should grow up and start taking responsibility for a change.’<sup>12</sup>

Lury’s remarks put a curious spin on the direction (and zeitgeist) of advertising in 1991. The industry was in a recession and many agencies still found currency in archiving period moods and exotic styling, rather than embracing the familiarity of ordinariness. For instance, Levis 501 were popularly aping the sixties styling of *The Swimmer*<sup>13</sup> while D&AD were awarding Carling Black label’s *Dambusters*, Renault Clio’s exotic *Papa/Nicole* ads and Tony Kaye’s stylised mono-chromed ad VW Polo. One legacy of the mid-1980s art-styled ads was parody that knocked ad formulas in a self-referential and knowing way. There were debates on the nature of modern advertising driven partly by recession-wary clients re-introducing quantitative pre-testing<sup>14</sup> and fresh government legislation on price advertising. Benetton’s strategy rippled on to the mid-1990s. Few adverts appeared to be set (or indeed shot) in Britain, and even fewer attempted to reflect everyday British ways of life – let alone tackle social issues.

Aspects of Tango’s ads can be found in earlier agency commercials for Maxell,<sup>15</sup> set in (abbreviated) urban scenes where actors addressed the camera directly. Maxell ads were spun on a product ‘message’. They showed a disdain for existing conventions of advertising with a strategy born out of a product ‘truth’ – a quality that could be deemed specific to the advertised commodity. As Tango’s copywriter Alan Young noted, ‘The big thing then was Levi’s, like a 80s hangover, but the ideas (in ads at that time) were never really based in the products. Why it (Tango) seemed such a radical idea at the time was that it was about the product’<sup>16</sup>.

It was against this backdrop that the ‘product truth’, the ‘Taste Sensation’ of a carbonated fizzy orange drink, became the lynch-pin of a strategy geared to seeking fame. The heightened sensation it was hoped, would draw attention to the experience of consumption (in this case to look for the taste) that would differentiate the ‘kick’<sup>17</sup>

1991 p.5) while Benetton’s photographer and art director Olivera Tosconi was chastised for pushing self-regulation beyond its limits (letters column, 27 September 1991 pp.5, 15). One agency, Leagas Shafron David Chick, even took out a double-page ad in *Campaign* asking of Benetton’s billboard image featuring a new born baby: ‘why wasn’t it killed at birth?’, 20 September 1991 pp.17-18.

<sup>12</sup>ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Frank Perry and Sidney Pollack, 1968

<sup>14</sup>Anon., (editorial) *Campaign*, 1 November 1991 pp.22-3

<sup>15</sup>Howell Henry’s track record before Tango included a campaign for Maxell tapes in Autumn 1989 which won many industry plaudits. The planners on the Maxell campaign ball-pointed superior recording quality of Maxell tapes; the ads played up the unintelligibility of many pop lyrics, with the strap line, ‘At least I think that’s what he said – but I need to hear it on a Maxell’. The ads in the campaign reflected the British urban cosmopolitan mix – a point re-iterated by Adam Lury at the *Black In Media* seminars organised by, and held at the Design Museum, November 1992: Lury remarked that it was an advertisers responsibility to accurately reflect the make-up of British society.

<sup>16</sup>Al Young, cf. Appendix 2

<sup>17</sup>It later became a ‘hit’ because a ‘Chaplinesque’ kick on the backside was deemed unsuitable for ad broadcast by the BACC. Research during development also led Howell Henry to realise a slap had a greater visual impact than a kick: cf. interviews with Al Young and Dave O’Hanlon, in Appendix 2.

The ad was an extrapolation of the idea Howell Henry's presented at pitch stage to Britvic in August 1991 when the brand were looking for a big creative idea to establish a wider public awareness of the brand through 'famous advertising'<sup>18</sup>. Campaign's editor Stefano Hatfield noted at the time that 'The task is to persuade consumers to love the brands, and – in the case of the colas – lifestyle'<sup>19</sup>. Other brands had emulated the colas style, appearing out-dated. While earlier Tango campaigns<sup>20</sup> were street-wise, Howell Henry's team<sup>21</sup> needed to embed the Tango brand in the psyche of 18–24-year-olds if it was to emulate the three bigger selling carbonated drinks – Coke, Pepsi and Lucozade.

Howell Henry's pitch, suggested Britvic, present Tango as an experience rather than a brand attitude, which both market leaders Coke and Pepsi were operating on. Where Coke and Pepsi had a rich history of brand development to draw on, they were fixed by the need to connect modern attitude with established brand values. Tango could re-launch on a fresh agenda, tapping into contemporary ethos to strike chords with nineties youth<sup>22</sup>.

#### In the context of the Colas

Up to this point in 1991 Coca-Cola's campaign had evolved over four decades in a manner that allowed absorption of present-day values with core Coke values – which in essence was youthful American spirit. A wholesome archiving of Americana, evoking a 1950s sense of innocent adolescent consumption and a spirit of free choice that accompanies ones first disposable income was tapped by Coke as 'period flavour'. This periodisation has subsequently been ascribed the roots of subculture.

Coke's 'generation' was also a period where youth and establishment values could be mutual. Coke's core persona also encompassed an air of USA-as-world role-model and early nineties Coke packaging evoked this by tapping into imagery associated with the Americanisation of the Western world during and immediately post-World War Two. From 1992 Coke's winter campaigns revived associations with Santa and 1940's US troops. The image of Santa Claus swilling from a bottle of Coke in his coke-coloured regalia as commissioned and rendered for Coke by Haddon Sundblom in 1931. Sundblom's brief was to create a friendlier, more human version of Santa, which he did in soft Norman Rockwell style.

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<sup>18</sup>Britvic brands marketing director (1991) Tony Hillyer, quoted in anon. (editorial) Campaign Magazine 23 August 1991 pp.5&8

<sup>19</sup>ibid., p.8

<sup>20</sup>The Tango's Streetwise campaign was by Allen Brady Marsh, who were renowned for Britvic's R Whites 'Secret lemonade drinker' in 1973 (which HHCL later revived in 1994). A larger agency, Publicis, had produced a brand-wide 'Britvic got there first' campaign, and were responsible for most of the products in Britvic's range: in 1991. Allen Brady Marsh was merged into a larger agency, Lowe Howard Spink, while Publicis had to resign the Britvic work after they won a £10m. account for rival Orangina. Both appeared to prompt Britvic's strategic re-think, from which it was decided to consolidate the Britvic portfolio under one agency with an initial £8m budget.

<sup>21</sup>The original orange Tango team were Al Young (copywriter), Trevor Robinson (art director), Robin Aziz (account director) and Mike Leach (planner), assisted at junctures by other creatives and management in the company.

This is perhaps the most exported and (still) globally resonant image of the Coke and national US identity intertwined<sup>23</sup>. The connection of the Cola brand with nation-state had its halcyon period in the decades following the War, as the taste for Coke and all things American became global.

Such past and present juxtapositions were easily appropriated between 1950 and 1990: in the fifties corporate culture was a key ingredient of the post-war boom in the US, and Coke (a disposable luxury good) became *the* metaphor (along with streamlined cars) for free-spirited lifestyle. In the 1960s and seventies global youth culture were branded by Coke with their most renowned broadcast advert celebrated the exportation of US-styled youth culture – ‘I’d like to teach the world to sing’ – with Coke – ‘I’d like to buy the world a Coke’ (1971). As business and enterprise culture spawned an accelerated demand for consumer goods and youthful artefacts, so Coke benefited by being an all-American success and a solid brand not given to transient novelty. Coke as a metaphor for American values meant that, for Americans, Coke had high cultural status – as one church board proclaimed in Orlando during the 1980’s, ‘Coke is like God – The Real Thing’.

#### Coke & counter-culture

Coke’s commercial success in previous decades became a dilemma in the nineties, as the 1987 market crash led to a shift in mood. This was the antithesis of, and antidote to the previous decades values that led to a rejection of the eighties Western outlook. Because Coke was synonymous with success in the ‘me’ outlook of the 1980s its attitude was seen as remote and uncaring – one Coca-Cola Company chairman even proclaimed if they took their opportunities Coke could be the world’s most consumed beverage ahead of tea and coffee and even water. Coke had a heavy corporate interest in state-endorsed youth culture, from which they gained sub-cultural capital<sup>24</sup>.

This was at odds with the spirit of counter-culture evident both in the USA where Grunge and slacker culture dismissed mainstream US constructs, and in Britain where an outlook punctuated by understatement and irony found a ‘community’ in dance culture. Two prominent youth subcultures, Grunge and dance, both prodded at corporations which they saw as uncaring profit-led exploiters, and rejected established expectations of a culture which educated for careers that were not available after graduation. The terms ‘slacker’ and ‘losers’ – coined initially to classify the drop out trend – were readily and ironically adopted by a sub-culture that saw itself as a victim of a commercial enterprise culture that celebrated conforming winners and branded non-conformists irrelevant. The visual manifestation of this was a subversion of familiar corporate brand labels. Beastie Boys followers wore VW

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<sup>22</sup>Research by Britvic in 1999 suggested this was the case. Consumption of fizzy drinks rose by 10% between 1997-99, (source: Britvic Plc press release 24/04/00). This reinforced evidence from 1995 market research that showed Tango’s share of the British market had risen by 39% and sales of their top five multiples rose 57% year-on-year between 1992-96 (source: Britvic promotional video, 1996).

<sup>23</sup>An association which started with the Raymond Loewy-styled coke dispensers that travelled with US troops as they freed occupied territories during World War Two.

<sup>24</sup>Thornton, S Club Cultures p.11.

badges, plundered from cars, as medallions while clubbers in Britain corrupted conglomerate logos. The sense of counter-culture in the sixties again seemed evident (where youth had worn t-shirts with a corrupted Cola logo, reading 'Cocaine'). This time however it seemed to directly address (counter-) corporations, as symbols of global greed and power. This clearly made it difficult for Coke to 'reclaim' youth. When Oasis sang 'I want to buy the world a Coke...' in their 1994 song Shakermaker, they were being ironic and cynical in a manner that Coke were not positioned to utilise<sup>25</sup> Coca-Cola's brand face did not stretch to self-effacing mockery.

#### Coke & a 'society of the surface'

To consolidate their position, Coke's ads developed a different formula. They showed gangs of active youth, typically in a fast-moving, rigorously edited collage of different action shots moving at such a pace that, replacing a narrative, one was washed with a general flavour of the ad theme. The rapid speed of the rigorous editing exaggerated the 'hit' of the action, while the inclusion of one slower-tempo clip (a stylish youth drinking from a bottle – not a can – of Coke) reinforced the branding with the attitude.

There was little in the ad that literally connected to the Coke idea – 'The Real Thing' nor is there a strap-line to qualify the frame of action. But as O'Hanlon noted of Coke in his analysis for Tango's campaigns:

...its a feel for impulse, the form of the thing. The form of the advert is effectively a metaphor for the drink, so they use hot colours, (the) music, fast editing, vignettes to disrupt the narrative, they show you a horny girl or hunky bloke for three-quarters of a second, just long enough for you to realise what the image is about but not long enough to take it all in – 'danger intensity' I call it. They (the art directors and the commercial's directors) bombard you with audio-visual information at such a rate that it puts you into a child state. It forces you out of a state where your resistance level is high. In that child-state, which is one of 'feeling', it just feeds you the experience ...(which is the) argument (the USP) of the ad; the ad feels as much a part of the argument of the thing.<sup>26</sup>

One can assume that Coke had gauged their audience accurately, given that the ad ran for several years. It assumed youth<sup>27</sup> grazed on the adverts visuals rather than read the narrative. Such superficial readings suited this style of product. It wasn't the unique content but the character of the brand that historically underpinned Coke's brand confidence. For a consumer that dealt in signs rather than messages Coke's position was already appropriate to a consumer that read no further than the surface image. Their unique selling proposition had been social rather than physical product in benefit.

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<sup>25</sup>Unlike Adidas, who 'borrowed interest' from Run DMCs 'My Adidas'. At a time when many labels sought closer affiliation to sub-cultures, Coke's bonding was problematic because it had already been there.

<sup>26</sup>Interviews with Dave O'Hanlon, planner at HHCL: cf. Appendix 2.

<sup>27</sup>Western youth; the ads were pan-Atlantic, and the same treatment and style of art direction was re-shot in the different European countries using more localised actors to give the campaigns a sense of 'globalisation'.

As Williamson remarked<sup>28</sup>, the images it connected with were part of the treacle one drank in consuming Coke. Further, it legitimised drinking Coke as a social activity, and in drinking it one was taking part in a street credible, ritualistic gesture with a commodity that contained a sense of belonging to youth. This was the premise of Coke's advertisers McCann-Erickson. It was the unattainable assumption of pretty youth that jarred alongside other ads of the period that also put a polished front to products in a period of post-eighties global recession.

Compared to their advertising in earlier decades, Coke had switched to a more emotive selling proposition that avoided the need of definite statement or clear singular associations. The speed of the ad certainly communicated the tone of the product without making a statement about its brand. While this was effective for connecting the broadcast of the Sundblom Santa to the use of the image on cans of Coke, imagery adorning cans could either be interpreted as innocent nostalgia or sugary depending on context. In the nineties it had more in common with soft, corporate hard-sell tones and developed a more sinister counter-meaning. It bragged of past achievements rather than contemporary relevance.

The dilemma Coke faced was how to re-think their strategy. This in itself was enough to attract press comment. The Sunday Times wrote at the time that;

After 107 years of global success, the fizz has gone out of Coca-Cola's image... The world's best known brand has just announced the most radical (and only ever) re-think in its history... a massive 180-degree turnaround. ...The fact that Coca-Cola has decided that 'one sight, one sound, one sell' can no longer communicate properly with us says something very important about the world we live in: that the 'global village' has failed to materialise: that we are more divided in attitudes and tastes than ever before. Or, of course, Coke may have got it wrong.<sup>29</sup>

As Coke's global ad agency McCann-Erickson had noted, change tended to work against the resonance of Coke's identity. Having billed itself as 'The Real Thing' since 1942, 'it' was an idea that could not be improved on. Coke had miss-fired in 1995 with 'New Coke' and was forced to re-introduce The Real Thing as 'Coca-Cola Classic'<sup>30</sup>. Coke's re-think was taking place as the British ad industry was in its worst recession for 30 years thus many columnists were drawn to make analogies of 'Advertising's Broken Dreams'<sup>31</sup>. One remarked that;

The last decade (the 1980s) was a time when the thing you *bought* was the advertising, and you didn't mind, because the status your purchase conferred on you seemed to be genuine. It was a kind of spiritual inflation. You knew you were being conned, but being conned was something you *invested* in, because it enabled you to con others.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>After Barthes, R. *Mythologies* pp. 63-4

<sup>29</sup>Edwards, M *Shaking up the real Thing in The Sunday Times*, 7 March 1993, *Inside* supplement pp.2-3.

<sup>30</sup>As one journalist remarked, 'I had always thought that Pepsi wished it... could taste more like Coke. When I found out that Coke wanted to be more like Pepsi, a long-standing aspect of my world-view turned upside down', *ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>31</sup>*Campaign* cover story (editorial), 28 January 1993 p.1 pub. Haymarket Press. Also a lead story, Leith, W *Advertising's Broken Dreams - 'It's thicker because it's got more tomatoes in it'*, in the *Independent on Sunday*, 7 February 1993 pp.2-4.

<sup>32</sup>Leith, W *Advertising's Broken Dreams - 'It's thicker because it's got more tomatoes in it'*, in the *Independent on Sunday*, 7 February 1993 p.2



In other words, people wouldn't buy the attitude because its tone-of-voice was no longer in keeping with newer, less flamboyant renderings of the everyday. Many advertisers switched to more transient, meaningless ads – as Andrew Cracknall remarked, 'you can't say; "drink this, it's good." The consumer says; "bollocks, I'll be the judge of that!"<sup>33</sup>.

Against this backdrop and that of the impending boom in media scope Coke shifted to a multimedia strategy. It set about developing an in-house 'big idea' and switched budgets from their ad agency to American media agent Mike Ovitz, who deployed different communications tasks to specialist media producers<sup>34</sup>.

Three years later, Coke's commercials became more ephemeral in tone. In 1995 they ran an animated ad campaign (called Always) featuring an infant polar bear swimming to its mother before drinking from a bottle of Coke. Polar bears had been used in advertising before, but the warmth in the mother-infant relationship conjured wholesome overtones that again referred back to Coke values from earlier decades.

Coke's in-house marketing team later decided to reinforced the fizzy drink's connection with 'break times', and chose to emphasise drinking Coke as a social activity. The ad campaigns reverted back to conveying narratives when Coke launched their 'Coke break' campaign (1997) to compete with coffee-breaks (USA) and tea-breaks (UK). To reinforce it as the more modern day snack beverage they added a sense of sexual desire to remove the denial both for sex and the sugary drink (the coke break drinkers were female office workers gazing from an office block, watching a shirt-less male builder outside). Their commercial was an apparent inversion of the cliché that men look at women while women watch themselves being at looked at<sup>35</sup>.

Pepsi on the other hand latched onto a series of vogue youth culture icons for endorsement. As the pop celebrities they promoted through became less 'of the moment', they were phased out and replaced by fresher stars. In the nineties this started with Michael Jackson (1990), worked through the Spice Girls ('Generation Next' in 1997) and finished with The Corrs<sup>36</sup>. Each pop act was well established outside their large teen following. Typically the action featured short vignettes (approximately three-quarters of a second each) of the artist performing a melodic segment of their work. Typically the ad was shot with low camera angles against a dark background, while the artists were brightly illuminated with a hint of red and blue filter (the brands colours). Quick dance movements and tight editing left one with a hint of aggressive rebellion, although none was actually shown. The speed of the ad makes one struggle to catch what's happening. In the case of the Spice Girls who were at the height of their fame, the advert set up the sense of exclusivity by selectively airing the ad and only releasing the specifically scored track via a special offer on Pepsi. The ads appeared as a pop promotional, so it seemed natural the Pepsi should shift

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<sup>33</sup>ibid. Andrew Cracknall was then executive creative director of agency BSB Dorland.

<sup>34</sup>Described in detail by Bell, E *The Observer (Arts) Review* 19 March 1995 p.7.

<sup>35</sup>Berger, J. *Ways Of Seeing* BBC books, London 1972 p.47.

<sup>36</sup>With Tina Turner, Hanson, Janet Jackson, Boyzone and Eternal in between.

their marketing budget more specifically to music sponsorship. As for the choice of artist, each press release that announced Pepsi had endorsed a new celebrity was as greeted like a music industry accolade in the tabloid press.

The transient nature of pop popularity meant they were more connected to endorsement<sup>37</sup> than establishing a single directional persona for their brand. As a more accelerated FMCG product than pop music and with a far longer obsolescence Pepsi suffered a sinking public profile because it wasn't uniquely differentiated enough. In 1995 Pepsi globally re-defined itself from other cokes by re-branding their corporate identity blue. Project Blue spanned all parts of their profile from packaging on in all parts of the globe<sup>38</sup>. The objective was re-establishing their rivalry with Coke and supermarket home brands, to allow for a hipper set of connotations. Unlike Coke, they dispensed with their original paradigm to adopt the language and values of the present.

This saw them associate with images of their target audience (18–24 year olds<sup>39</sup>) who were into sampled music, clipped MTV pop promos and into extreme sports. For an ad promoting sugar-free Pepsi, caricatured Pepsi Max 'dudes' cast in a commercial in 1997 ad spoke (down to-camera) in jargon sound bites. Viewers saw them from a worms eye view camera, and heard them speak of the taste sensation and 'Living life to the Max' in the manner of an extreme sport 'experience'<sup>40</sup>. The shaky action camerawork pastiched US rap videos and in keeping with Coke had such an accelerated tempo. Like Coke, they showed short inter-cut bursts of action, to prevent the ad being studied by the viewer. While this allowed for multiple re-viewings one was never allowed to engage with the imagery, but simply to glean its flavour from the treatment.

#### Howell Henry's placement: how the Tango campaign was constructed

While Tango emulated Pepsi and Coke's sense of 'magical transformation' through its drink, Tango needed to create a heightened sensitivity for the impact its product needed to be distinct. The ad did this through:

- 1) exaggerated colour
- 2) character contrasts in their casting
- 3) the shock of the disruptive narrative, and
- 4) accelerated pace to numb ones critical faculties

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<sup>37</sup>Pepsi sponsored pop concerts (1988) then a range of events from 'The Drop' a roller coaster ride on Blackpool pleasure beach (1996) to the Cosmopolitan Show (1998) in a 2-brand affiliation

<sup>38</sup>It engaged its public relations operations globally to co-operate in an international Project Blue Pepsi day, where the revised logo was projected onto the moon, the MIR space station was turned blue as was the cosmonauts space suits. In Britain, the tail of Concorde and the mast-head of The Mirror went blue for the day: promotional recall surveys showed that 70% of the UK population were aware of the re-branding within 48 hours of the day-long project (in May 1995). It took two years before the revised detailing was fully implemented. Cook, R. and Woolgar, T. What is Ambient Media? in Campaign 11 October 1996 p.37

<sup>39</sup>Younger people aspire to this age, it is popularly understood by drinks manufacturers (extracted from Britvic promotional paraphernalia, issued December 1999)

5) the consistent 'nuttiess' of the tone and treatment reiterates the sense of surreal logic, which holds the narrative together but doesn't prevent it jarring against other ads in a commercial break.

As O'Hanlon noted, the speed of delivery (like the cola adverts) forces one 'into a child like state where resistance is low'. It kept the information intense, in keeping with the fast, transient nature of fast moving consumable goods. The effervescent speech of the commentators apes the metaphoric qualities of the fizz<sup>41</sup>.

Britvic's own marketing department also played up to the burst campaign by introducing a covert 'code of silence' before its launch in January 1992. Neither Britvic nor Howell Henry staff were permitted to discuss it apart from the directors, who suggested that 'there was little scope for controversy in the soft drinks market'<sup>42</sup>. Britvic treated the campaign as if it were surrounded in mystique, and while they were unsure how it would work they felt that a corporate silence would best pre-empt their ads impact.

One of the less apparent strings to Slap was that it offered handles for a layered means of de-construction. The commentary during the ad offered one a contorted 'logic' to connect the images with the product. The simultaneous press coverage that engulfed its release provided notoriety, and also added a sense of renegade attitude to the campaign. The run-ins with the advertising industry's (self-) regulating bodies re-spun Tango as the *enfant-terrible* – which was utilised in subsequent campaigns. The slap was seen as not aggressive but more slapstick derived from a nineteenth century tradition of Vaudevillian British humour, revived in music hall (the Crazy Gang) and TV sketch shows (The Morecambe & Wise Show and The Benny Hill Show in the sixties). However it provoked the type of playground mimicry that concerned teachers and the press. In turn it became the concern of the advertising bodies and was censored. As its writer Al Young (and Triangle's Nick Presley) pointed out<sup>43</sup>, this placed Tango in an ideal position. 'We weren't on the side of the state, we were on the side of the people'. It also cemented the 'famous campaign' Britvic had sought. Rather than mere fame, it had the added cache of infamy.

Howell Henry withdrew the ad after two months (in March) after complaints by parents, teachers and doctors to the ITC. These centred on the potential damage to eardrums caused by children imitating the slap. They replaced the slap with 'a smacker<sup>44</sup> on the lips', which presented the same advert with a kiss delivered by the genie rather than a slap. In effect, the follow-up parodied reactions to the first ad, more an ironic reposte than self-effacing.

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<sup>40</sup>Observation made by Dr. Jamie Brassett in conversation with author, 10 June 1999 after his article New Tribes, New Design: Extreme Sports for Extreme Cities, in Ottogono No. 126 Pub. by Editrice Compositori, Bologna Italy March 1998 (extrapolated from PhD – Brassett, J. Extreme Sports, Unpublished, University of Warwick 1997)

<sup>41</sup>Dave O'Hanlon, cf. Appendix 2.

<sup>42</sup>Stefano Hatfield paraphrasing both client and agency beliefs in Campaign 23 August 1991 p.8.

<sup>43</sup>For interview transcriptions see Appendix 2.

<sup>44</sup>Coined by Stefano Hatfield in his news story Howell Henry to revamp Tango film after ITC ban, in Campaign 10 April 1992 p.2.

In the wake of the debates around advertising morality and Benetton in the late-eighties<sup>45</sup>, the furore around Tango transcended industrial press coverage to become a subject of the national press, thus moving issues of contemporary advertising further into the mainstream. This gave rise to a number of adverts using more anarchic tones (cf. Chapter 4), because like Tango and Benetton they realised the promotional capital to be gained by moving commodity advertising into mainstream debate by embracing issues of acceptability.

Nick Presley, group Creative Director of Triangle who from 1999 handled Tango's direct advertising output, refers to Tango as 'a naughty schoolchild who may get suspended but will never get expelled'. This became an inherent part of Britvic's strategy. 'They have this rule that they call 'The Cliff of Okay-ness: Tango's on the edge of it but never falls over'<sup>46</sup>. It is naughty, but charming.

#### Analysis and connections

Such a spirit of anarchy, or more appropriately 'creative counter-culture', perhaps places Tango's nineties persona in a typically British context, of late-twentieth century practitioners flouting (apparent) codes of behaviour in their given disciplines. The Sex Pistols in Music, Vivienne Westwood in fashion, Oliver Reed in acting, George Best in sport, Nick Roeg in film-making, Damian Hirst in art, Neville Brody in Graphics *et al.* all operated in the mainstream (most seemed to emanate from the punk spirit of the late seventies). In common with Hirst, within its field Tango was seen to respond to their audience, without losing their sense of edginess. Tango was different in that it was perceived as a commodity, and as such the end result, Tango's constructed identity, was more or less contrived from the outset.

Tango also resembled the tone of Hirst's work in that its central message was driven by a sensation. Where the profanity is the experience of walking between two-halves of a dissected cow in Hirst's 'Mother And Child Divided' (p.391), the visual impact of the slap, shout and kiss provoked a parallel disruptive moment in its context of a commercial break. Both jarred, both heightened awareness of ones senses and yet the significance of the moment was subjective and open-ended on both counts.

Where previously advertising sought to fix the meaning of image to a product<sup>47</sup>, Slap, by offering a clearly unhinged interpretation of the consumption moment allowed a wider interpretation to be shaped in the wider popular discourse.

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<sup>45</sup>A good account of this is given in an essay by Falk, Pasi The Benetton Effect, in Nava, M *et al* (ed.) Buy This Book, Routledge, London 1997 pp.64-83.

<sup>46</sup>For interview transcriptions see Appendix 2.

<sup>47</sup>An argument made by Williamson, J in Decoding Advertisements, 1979: Williamson considers the connection within an advert between actress Catherine Deneuve and the perfume Chanel No.5 in this vein, p.25.

Orange Tango therefore, was positioned in early nineties British popular culture cloaked in icony and contemporary, sensing a spirit of change. Howell Henry 'riffed' off Tango's infamy in follow-up ad, where the brand appeared to be reactionary in its context as an ad. Its counter-cultural appeal equated to sub-cultural capital<sup>48</sup>. HHCL presented the Britvic marketing department in an advert to 'reveal' Tango's brand culture in a self-referential and ironic manner. In doing so the ad peeled away an imagined layer of gloss which the ad-savvy and cynical target audience were already aware of. This served a number of functions. It showed the eccentricity to be more realistic (relying on a contrast being made with other ads in a commercial break) thereby implying a separation with existing ad genres. These were made to appear removed from conventional everyday experiences. The product was shown as an embodiment of an unusual personality (lively, unpredictable and visually witty) that was shared. In common with earlier Tango TV commercials, the narrator's tone (he talks to camera) has the same type of assertiveness familiar to sports commentators in their 'framing' of significant sporting action. It also made the product in the mind of the consumer a portal through which to access wider associations within this spirit of eccentricity. These involved a greater 'edginess' and of being up-front and outgoing in one's typical environment. Like the 'Coke break', it created a sense of escapism attainable through the product.

The quasi-(sur)real spots were shorter and disjointed enough to get across the jarring, disruptive sense of developed brand attitude, which was on par with the emerging attitude BritPop band brands displayed in the early nineties (notably Blur, Elastica, Suade and Oasis) with music that was punctuated with ironic understatement<sup>49</sup> and a Moddish sense of swaggering confrontation. In some respects this is later manifested in Tango's re-positioning as 'Britain's fizzy drink'<sup>50</sup> which, given the political climate during the early nineties, struck a similar (anti-eurocentric) chord.

### Tango as British

Jeremy Paxman in his book on The English reasons that the nation takes pride (as in inverted snobbery) in being able to act as a nation of philistines ('a God-ordained right'<sup>51</sup>), which certainly comes through in the abrupt tones of Slap. It has currency in its freedom of not having to conform to constructs of social behaviour, which has continually been a defining marque of Tango throughout the nineteen-nineties<sup>52</sup>. This sense of British unreason, freedom of

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<sup>48</sup>Thornton, S. Club Cultures p.14.

<sup>49</sup>A hybrid of American Grunge: Nirvana's titles included 'Oh me', 'come as you are' and 'Royal Tea', where the lyrics listed pain-numbing drugs and laxatives.

<sup>50</sup>Nick Presley, cf. interview transcription, Appendix 2.

<sup>51</sup>Paxman, J. The English – A Portrait of a People Michael Joseph, London 1998 p.4.

<sup>52</sup>While Nick Presley, Creative Director at Triangle Communications, defined Tangos personality as an errant child that could be suspended – not expelled, Tango has constantly maintained its development outside the frame of what is considered to be acceptable, as this letter of complaint in marketing Marketing (16/3/00 opinion page – Tango must reject bullying ads – p.17) re-iterated: '... perhaps Mr Marsden (head of Britvic Tango) should instead have the courtesy to listen to those who are offended or concerned by it... I condemn his



behaviour and directionless aggression (the slap, the scream, the explosion and sarcastic kiss which were the first four 'hits' in subsequent commercials) all became emotional 'added value' in one's consumption of Tango. In this respect it operated in a similar manner to Coke's connections with street youths and Pepsi with its street credible celebrities.

In fact such associations were freely and knowingly made viable by the Howell Henry planners who intended to create 'hooks' in the manner of sound-bites and original reference points for consumers to latch on to. Initially the stylised slapping gestures and referential narrative style were the constructed reference points, with the catch-phrase strap line appropriate for the sort of sampling and corruption familiar in contemporary music<sup>53</sup>.

This was extrapolated in later campaigns where the hooks were given as reference points for consumers to increase their involvement: Telephone contact numbers were introduced in place of straplines. These led callers to special offers (cf. Tango Gotan doll, Chapter 3b). 'The campaign' remarked O'Hanlon, 'was about the portability of references'. It allowed for an expansion of the advert's themes and also allowed active customers to buy their way further into the brand attitude.

In passing off soundbites as common parlance, where the strap line 'You've Been Tango'd' become a widely used catchphrase, the brand (deliberately named in the phrase) become a by-word for being a stooge of a 'hit'. Hoover managed a similar transference, from brand name to descriptive term for cleaning, in the 1920's. One obvious benefit is that it assumes named brand to be the most significant associated with the phrase's context. In popular usage it also keeps the product's brand name relevant. Making the word 'Tango' a portable reference for everyday usage would therefore help sow its significance in popular British culture (for a list of prominent 1990s soundbites, cf. timelines, Appendix 1).

In effect it helps Tango to root itself more freely into different areas of working class culture (tailored and localised). For example on the football terraces it can be owned by a set of supporters because they can tailor its particular meaning to them. By extension so does the fizzy drink. As Presley noted, 'at the end of the day its just a fizzy drink; the brand is bigger. It's an emotional relationship you have with the brand'.

Britvic Tango was pushed as an intrinsically British experience. Yet the 'taste sensation' concept hatched for Howell Henry's Britvic pitch was initially intended for Britvic's fruit juice range, and was to be narrated by American Football commentators. American commentator John Madden had already been ball pointed to saturate

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irresponsible attitude and urge him to reconsider the ethics of his strategy against the proven influence that such advertising has over young people.' Jane Armstrong, Head of Planning, Fox Kalamaski (a marketing group).

<sup>53</sup>A later version of this, from Budweiser's 'Wassup' campaign (DDB Chicago, launched in the US, January 2000), was lifted and became a novelty rap pop record entering the UK Top 20 in October 2000, after the phrase had become common currency as a mobile phone slang greeting.

the action with a deluge of statistical over-analysis of Tango and the drinker, one Big Bill Wigitarr of Idaho State<sup>54</sup>. At the time Channel 4's coverage of Super Bowl had acquired a late-night following among teenagers<sup>55</sup>. During pre-production research the planner John Leach re-assessed a reel of earlier Tango ads, which had included urban street hockey and skateboarders, and realised the advertising heritage of Tango was its Britishness. This differentiated it from rival brands<sup>56</sup>.

The voice-over was subsequently re-shaped as a British football commentary featuring one eccentric northern accent, and one less pronounced understated southern accent, with a twang of suburban London. This inadvertently served as a send up of the north-south divide.

Where Coke famously had a Coke delivery van to cue their 'magical transformation' of people spontaneously dancing (as O'Hanlon remarked), Leach and team figured a cruder transformation would make a funny parody: hence the 'fat orange bloke'<sup>57</sup>.

It also sent up an eclectic mix of reference points from early 1990s British television. It took part of its narrative from TV football coverage, which during 1991 football was broadcast on terrestrial networks BBC1 and ITV. Italian 'Gazetta' football was also from 1991 on Channel 4 (on which Ray Wilkins commentated). It also 'borrowed' its commentary style from BBC2's coverage of The World Darts Championship (commentated on by Sid Wardell). Both styles of presentation would have been familiar to the viewer. Such commentaries made ordinary the flitting between the recent past and present, re-analysing moments and seeing the 'moment' from different perspectives, as Genette observed in Narrative Discourse...<sup>58</sup>. Genette elaborated on 'repeating narratives', where the same event is 'told' from different perspectives to crystallise its significance. As Marriott expands;

The replay sequence is composed of material which has already appeared on the screen, albeit in a different temporal and spatial manifestation. The broadcast is thus partially composed of an earlier segment of itself, which is occurring for a second...possibly...a third (time, showing)...the same phenomenon from different spatial perspectives. From the point of view of the commentator, an element of the television event is unfolding again in an iterative loop, simultaneous with the unfolding of the original event itself in a 'real' time which will itself become the stuff of the television event again shortly after.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Another proposed execution – later dropped – featured an 'invasion of orange cossacks', who in turn slapped the Tango drinker. This was considered to dilute the impact of the slap and in any case could be deemed derogatory to Russian custom. Anecdotes re-counted by copywriter Al Young and planner John Leach, cf. transcription in Appendix 2

<sup>55</sup>Channel 4 had covered American Football from 1984, and it had gained a core late-night following in Britain.

<sup>56</sup>The development then shifted to consider the 'loudness' of Britvics orange Juice' Source: John Leach, Planner on Slap at Howell Henry (conversation on 4 April 2000. Rival brands in 1991 included Coke, Pepsi, Lucozade, Limbo, Fanta, Lilt, Sunkist, Gini, Tizer, Dr. Pepper and Quatro. By 1993 the amount of Tango sold had trebled since Britvic Soft Drinks had bought the brand from Beechams in 1986.

<sup>57</sup>The other idea was to have lots of kids jumping about – 'Tango-farin'. Beyond that there was nothing edgy about it – the idea was dropped.' Source: Dave O'Hanlon, second interview, 19 April 2000: cf. Appendix 2.

<sup>58</sup>Genette, G Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method. Cornhill University Press, New York 1980 p. 115, cited by Marriott, S Time and time again: 'live' television commentary and the construction of replay talk, in Media Culture & Society, Vol. 18 No. 1 January 1996 pp. 77-78

<sup>59</sup>Marriott, 1996 *ibid.*, p.78.

In terms of the viewer, the first un-commentated run-through is left to the discerning mind of the viewer. The following re-runs re-iterates the action but subverts its meaning, so the legacy is a sense that the whole ad frame – the commentators, the orange man and the product – are ‘screw-ball’. In the frame of the ad they mean the same thing, which amounts to a surreal and frisky humour that’s rooted somewhere in suburban England (it could be one of many street corners in the nearest town).

In some respects the humour seems related to a new form of post-Python comedy, where an absurd event is commented on in a recognisably ‘authentic’ way. This appeared around the time of the closely observed TV styles mimicked in KYTV but pre-dates its more obvious satirical counterpart, BBC2’s *The Day Today* (from 1994: see Appendix 1 for comedy timeline).

Slap’s visual direction also assembled an array of British reference points. It morphed the speed of chase scenes<sup>60</sup> with the short sketch format of BBC2’s comedy series<sup>61</sup>. The ‘impact’ of their sketch disruptions (dropped weights and man-eating buses) are also resonant in Tango commercials. The first we see of the (absurdly out of context) orange genie he is leering from behind a red Royal Mail pillar box- another recognised British marque. The visuals made clipped references with a collage of British recognisable television themes; the type of (national) nuance they picked up on could not readily translate to other cultures. Hence the ad was deliberately exclusive – esoteric – and ‘localised’ in keeping its reference to a sort of national vernacular. As such it was appropriate in its national eclecticism for 1992. This was a time when national identity was being re-negotiated with a pending Channel tunnel and an uncertain relationship with the European Community. Britvic also made a strategic decision to bolster their claim as ‘the nations fizzy drink’ by not selling Tango in France. This was a clear (and historically referential) gesture that tapped into an ingrained prejudice.

In another sense it captured the spirit of the age in encompassing the depressive nature of late-teen male adolescence. O’Hanlon noted that ‘we deliberately sought to introduce gender parallax: We played with the free and easy notion of “Life’s A Game”’. The narrative in the advert is a fleshed out scenario of this take on life. The commentary in the advert is the imaginary narrative of a youth’s life as a ‘key moment’ happens, with the optimistic and pessimistic interpretations mirrored in the exaggerated and understated narratives. In each case the Tango drinker is the victim – the recipient of the slap, kick, shout and kiss. This struck a chord with the depressive psyche of slackers and ravers in early nineties Britain. The period was, in part, marked by post-cold war uncertainty, as national boundaries became changeable and the clarity of ‘East versus West’ subsided, as former world powers no longer had the same authority. For the first time since World War Two there was therefore a lack of clarity in world affairs. In uncertain times the sense of self-worth and escapism offered by a cynically ironic outlook married with a

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<sup>60</sup>The Benny Hill Show was re-run on ITV in 1991.

boom in the sale of computer games<sup>62</sup> and a resurgent drug culture seemed appealing to urban youth. Their uncertainty in a period of national depression rendered them victims of their age in their collective psyche. The Tango 'victim' encapsulated this.

The narrative in Slap also suggests that, in the mind of the drinker, 'life's a game' with a running commentary (presumably in the drinkers own mind). According to ad agency myth<sup>63</sup> the idea for the voice-over commentary emerged when the art director and copywriter were playing on their computer during lunch breaks. As the treatment was being defined, Robinson and Young would 'escape' the problem by playing computer golf to which they added their own commentary. As Al Young remarked, 'Trev (art director) and I used to do stuff that amused us – even though we were a bit old (they were both 28). If we didn't laugh and it didn't entertain us, then we knew it wouldn't work on other people'. In doing so they mimicked familiar sporting styles – hence the contrast of Wardell and Wilkins<sup>64</sup>.

In terms of its relevance to early nineties youth, computer games provided an engaging distraction from everydayness by setting up a removed and compressed version of existence where the starting point, tasks and gradations of success were fair and equal. This was unlike real life expectations<sup>65</sup>. They also offered more action and drama than one could really experience, and rewards for success were immediate.

#### Spin-off from Slap

In terms of establishing Tango with a 'famous' and appropriate face the ad agency more than fulfilled their brief. They propelled Tango brand awareness beyond the frame of conventional advertising and lifted sales above Lucozade and next to Pepsi<sup>66</sup>.

Notoriety gave the brand's presence an edge that set it apart from other FMCG's that year. Yet taking the brand's identity further appeared to be problematic. How could they improve on Slap? Four further executions elaborated on the same idea. Shout was set on a train platform. Kiss was a variation on the original with the same cast and landscape. A balloon seller by a boating lake (The Serpentine in Kensington Gardens, London) was the pre-text for (an exploding) old lady while a roadside bus-stop was the scene for (a demented rubber-handed)

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<sup>61</sup>In 1991 BBC2 ran a popular sketch show, *Absolutely*, which in turn aped the short abstract sketches of Monty Python.

<sup>62</sup>Nintendo 'Playboy', an electronic portable game console, was the years biggest selling toy in 1991 (source: Hamleys information bureau)

<sup>63</sup>The story has subsequently been repeated to new staff working on Tango campaigns; both Al Young and Trevor Robinson acknowledge some truth in the rumour.

<sup>64</sup>See transcriptions in Appendix 2.

<sup>65</sup>Conrad, CR *Art and Society* unpublished 1996 MA thesis at Brunel University (held at BCUC library) Chapter 2 *Arts attendance: factors that increase arts wider social appeal – leisure today/modern leisure today* pp.7–11.

<sup>66</sup>Source: Maureen Warner, marketing director, Britvic Marketing Department 19 May 2000: According to their in-house statistics, Tango brand awareness rose by over 300% (sales are measured in terms of market percentage; a sales figure is more effected by outdoor temperature than advertising. Hence, the best period for sales in the 1990s was Summer 1996 – the hottest season of the decade).

Napoleon to 'Tango' his victim. In each case an absurd cartoon-esque character disrupted a distilled scene of innocuous suburban everydayness – with the same voice-overs.

In the wake of the publicity these ads generated, extrapolating the essence of Slap was less contrived. In many respects the reprimand and re-shoot set a precedent for a responsive approach that made capital from the broader censorship discourse it had provoked.

The strategy sprung out of a hybrid of analysis and observation. As O'Hanlon explained:

Many people thought I was stuffed. Two books were companion pieces to thinking the approach, both by John Fiske (Reading the Popular and Popular Culture. Part of the problem was) getting over the rules of communicating in a confined space... people have to make do with what they have, the idea of using the words and signs of the state against themselves. Fiske uses the example of a shopping mall. I struggled with this for a more pertinent clear-cut example that was relevant to our project. Then, a couple of years into Tango, I was leaving our building<sup>67</sup> and I noticed that they had traffic-cordoned our street, which was obviously a safety measure. About a week after they'd done it I saw a kid on a bike, about 12 years old, who had turned it into a ski-jump – he had subverted it, and turned it into an adventure playground which was more dangerous than it was before. That made me realise we needed to subvert what was already around.<sup>68</sup>

The resulting ads (the first was titled 'Re-run'<sup>69</sup>) masqueraded as an apology. Highlights from the first three ads were re-edited to Zorba The Greek-styled folk music, which fitted because it was familiar in tone – reminiscent of a wild night out a Greek restaurant. This rendered the action slapstick and crescendoed at the 'hits' in the re-edit. Sampled bits of the original commentary were cut into the music. Along the bottom of the screen in a chunky black Helvetica type – official and serious in appearance. The apology ran –

Sorry,  
we're late with the new commercials  
and the air time was already booked.  
So we've had to cobble this together  
until they've finished.  
Rest assured...heads will roll.  
Sorry.

In effect, the copy foregrounded the brand's developers, the Tango Marketing team and ad agency, as the radicals behind earlier ads, implying that the attitude ran deeper than the fizzy drink. If one peeled back the skin of the advert there was a consistency in depth – a further dimension – to Tango's persona. Further, the inference implied was that beyond the core brand the plethora of activity around it essentially had the same attitude. To an extent this picks up on the point in du Gay (ed.), Production of Culture/Cultures of Production (cf. Chapter 1) that the culture of business became significant to the overall perception of a companies corporate culture – its brand personality. Work/working environments were increasingly seen as an integral part of culture and, as du Gay pointed out,

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<sup>67</sup>The Market Place, WC1.

<sup>68</sup>Dave O'Hanlon, Planner on Tango, first interviewed 4 April 2000: cf. Appendix 2.

<sup>69</sup>It was the planner O'Hanlon's first campaign for Britvic; having a degree in Philosophy and a professional background in accounts and account planning O'Hanlon's approach was more academic.

primacy was accorded to 'culture' in the battle to make enterprises more appear in-keeping with the way people think, feel and act in organisations<sup>70</sup>. Foregrounding the typicality of the Britvic office made Tango appear in-tune with consumers.

This, in hindsight, became the platform for the later ads to celebrate the company's assumed notoriety and extrapolate the core personality outside the brackets of a TV commercial. Consumers could use phone, internet and e-mail to find out more as a means of getting closer to the core brand source. Another outcome was that the synonymy between Howell Henry and Britvic Tango tightened. The ad industry's perception of Howell Henry tended to make exclusive reference to their Tango work.

Yet 'Re-run' was deliberately under-pitched and attracted little broader press attention. While not seeking to be a 'good' ad in a conventional sense<sup>71</sup> it was still significant. On one level it was a triumph of planning in that it persuaded the Britvic marketing team to agree to an untested, dressed down strategy that ignored the expectation generated by the previous ads. On top of its less sparky treatment it also sold on an apparent negative. Such an approach would alienate it from US or European advertising, which tended to equate big brand revenue with low-risk strategies. It was also significant in that it relied on the irony being de-coded by an early evening audience<sup>72</sup>. As Naomi Klein observed of Coca-Cola branding in *No Logo*, at the end of a decade '...it makes a good deal of sense that High-School kids would have a more realistic grasp of the absurdities of branded life. They after all, are the ones who grew up (being) sold (at)'<sup>73</sup>.

While ads in the eighties explicitly acknowledged the audience's pre-awareness of their earlier ads, perhaps for the first time Tango's Sorry ad presumed the viewers ability to read between the lines enough to risk a mock self-exposé. Other brands had used irony with a knowing wink incorporated into its endline, or had parodied other ads and ad formulas or had responded satirically to press comment<sup>74</sup>. In comparison Howell Henry had parodied the ad mechanism without offering up any specific product quality to 'sing up': this was an ad without a discernible message other than to stoke the impact of Tango's first ad. To this end it took 'the game' of its earlier ads one step further, in that it was neither cryptic (as Silk Cut and Benson & Hedges were in 1991) or emotive (as

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<sup>70</sup>Du Gay, P (ed.) *Production of Cultures/ Cultures of Production* p.1.

<sup>71</sup>It was unoriginal in the context of its art direction, treatment of copy or placement, which are the recognised areas of advertising excellence by award giving bodies such as Campaign and D&AD.

<sup>72</sup>On ITV it was placed in ad breaks for early evening entertainment, around soaps Coronation Street and Emmerdale Farm. On Sky it tended to be pitched between movies and during Sky Sports Special.

<sup>73</sup>Klein, N *No Logo* p.61.

<sup>74</sup>In 1992 Ogilvy & Mather, in a 10 second Guinness short, featured Rutger Heuer remarking 'some people have being saying I take myself too seriously... (dipping his nose into Guinness froth, then facing camera) Not guilty.'. This played up to Guinness' unique product quality of maintaining a thick froth.



other drinks brands). Unlike the other disarming campaign at the time, Regal cigarettes Reg<sup>75</sup>, Tango didn't attempt to stress the brand name in such a literal fashion.

HHCL's planners and Britvic marketers had correctly estimated that media advertising was starting to occupy a more central place in the national psyche. They deduced that TV viewers of the 1990s had an extended awareness of marketing and televisual styles, and understood the political dimension – how ads connected with cultural policy issues. It was the strategy of the ad rather than the end message that was being discussed – for instance, Tango's Slap elicited re-enactments in school playgrounds, which in turn attracted press column inches debating if the ad should be banned. The playground incident alone was the subject of network morning chat shows. In other words, Tango's tone and style had usurped the ads actual message, 'You know when you've been Tango'd' as the focal point of Tango's identity. In terms of re-booting the Tango brand, the ad enabled Tango's identity to operate outside the conventional frame of advertising, and developed its reputation from 'shocking' to 'radical'<sup>76</sup>. This afforded Howell Henry the room to experiment with different types of medium and method in promoting Tango.

After two somewhat more aggressive translations of the Slap theme<sup>77</sup>, HHCL (as it had become known) disrupted a broadcast of their Napoleon ad by inserting an apparently pirated message in the guise of a news item. This involved a police officer responding to a journalist about a Tango bash in Strathclyde where people will be 'in good spirits... I'm sure our officers can deal with the day's events'. The Tango Strathclyde fun day made the first actual (rather than implied) connection with youth into the adventure of extreme sports. This was soon followed by the launch of Still Tango, an orange juice that targeted club ravers. The strap line highlighted Tango Still as an antidote to dehydration in clubs – 'it doesn't have bubbles so you can drink it quick'<sup>78</sup>. The ads featured hand-held camera footage, which gave the impression of not being an ad. It showed crowd shots and distorted snippets of close-up pranks cut into the action; its crudeness was evocative of homespun movie and akin to 'being there'<sup>79</sup>.

This 'pirate' ad appeared unqualified in that it had no clear authorial voice-over other than that apparently of the cameraman, who (deliberately crudely dubbed) shouted over the music that the 'black plastic cylinder of liquid

<sup>75</sup>It won countless industry awards in 1991, most notably a D&AD Silver Pencil, and became a reference point for cigarette brands – notably Royals, Slyversone and later Benson & Hedges – to switch to a less sophisticated strategy.

<sup>76</sup>A term later adopted by HHCL, 'The Radical Professionals' in their own branding. During the time the ad was aired in 1994 Tango achieved its highest market share, outselling Lilt, Fanta, Sinkist and Gini combined. (source: Britvic marketing dept., customer liaisons dept/ Britvic soft drinks press releases between 1997–2000)

<sup>77</sup>In the Tango commercial B'ig Foot, a legless, kilted grotesque bounds up to the Tango victim. The terrified Tango drinker comes face to face with the 'in yer face' yobbish creature. But the creature says in a somewhat passive tone, 'nice day for it', before bounding off, leaving a terrified drinker contemplating the 'impact' of his Tango sip. A follow-up commercial – 'Football' – featured a witch wooing a Tango drinker until his head shoots off, as if he'd been guillotined. The copywriter for both ads, Al Young remarked 'we just wanted to see how aggressively we could push the idea. After that, we 'd had enough of it – we couldn't do any more with it'. For transcription of Al Young's interview see Appendix 2.

<sup>78</sup>Clubbers on Ecstasy tablets need to take in larger quantities of still liquids to prevent dehydration. An inference could be drawn that Tango Still was suitable for clubbers on E.

<sup>79</sup>From 1988 – 25 years after Abraham Zapruder's amateur footage of JF Kennedy's assassination – shaky camera work started to become popular in television and film drama, perhaps because many documentaries replayed the evidence on the anniversaries of the assassination. Spike Lee and Quentin Tarrantino pointed to the 'Zapruder technique' to evoke a sense of authenticity, of being close to the action.

orange is “*excellente, ambassador-ey*”<sup>80</sup>. The voice-over sounded unrehearsed, and could well have been a clubber making a home-movie style video. No one directly addressed the camera to contextualise the action: in keeping with dance clubs at the time, the mass audience of dancers rather than the DJs were the ‘stars’. The product however remained superimposed over the action throughout. The follow-up (also 1994) was presented as a public information message. Tango marketing director Steve Kaye addressed the camera directly from his office desk to disclaim the product: ‘...we need your co-operation... Tango Ltd. do not make still drinks. This orange drink is being marketed as ‘Still Tango’. It is not being traded under franchise and I urge you not to stock, buy or consume this product. If you see it anywhere call this number immediately’.

While the method of urging people *not* to buy the product wasn’t new to Howell Henry<sup>81</sup> the context was different in that it expected the audience to respond in a contrary way to the authoritative ‘Talking Heads’ instruction. In counter-culture parlance ‘don’t buy’ meant ‘buy’. Further, it assumed its audience would want to react against dictatorial instruction – especially when it appeared commercially driven and litigious. The phone number, which replaced the strap line, led to a spoof answer phone message that made the irony explicit and let the caller know they’d ‘been Tango’d’<sup>82</sup>.

By 1994 the strength of the Orange Tango brand had reached a position where, Britvic realised, that to consolidate the product range had to expand and diversify. The orange carbonate market had been shrinking, and while Tango’s success helped arrest the decline it was felt that other flavours – and formats like Orange Still (which was initially intended as a short-term brand extension<sup>83</sup>) – were needed to consolidate their market and capitalise on their brand’s popularity. Three flavours were added and encrypted with a separate emotive character to ‘maximise the development of each’. The new flavours were given characteristics to develop a distinct sub-branding from the existing Orange Tango. Effectively HHCL and the marketing team switched a product-specific identity (Orange Tango) to be an umbrella identity for the brand. Added to ‘the hit of orange’ was ‘the euphoria of lemon, the seduction of apple and the charge of blackcurrent’<sup>84</sup>. While apple evoked biblical connections of sexual temptation<sup>85</sup> and lemon referred to airy zestfulness, Blackcurrent’s associations were multiple.

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<sup>80</sup>Referring to a sound bite from a pan-European ad for chocolate brand Ferrero Rocher. The advert was popularly mimicked because it appeared unknowingly out-dated. Its dialogue soon became synonymous with poor copy.

<sup>81</sup>For Molson Pils (Danish) lager in 1991, a small, gruff character ‘Jim Dunk’ told the audience that ‘its terrible stuff.... The strap line ran ‘Jim Dunk says don’t drink it’. This was of course a pre-tense to re-iterate Molson was imported in small quantities, so Dunk didn’t want to make its availability scarce. The 10 second ads extrapolated from this simply ran with one of Dunks disparaging lines.

<sup>82</sup>The ad introduced the broader family of Tango fizzy drinks, orange, apple and lemon: Blackcurrent was introduced separately in ‘St George’.

<sup>83</sup>Outlined in Blackcurrent Tango, 19.7.95 TV (and who knows what else) brief 1995, unpublished. Source: HHCL&P archives.

<sup>84</sup>Devised jointly by Britvic Tango marketing and planner Dave O’Hanlon at HHCL in 1994.

<sup>85</sup>The Garden of Eden and cover to soft-porn film Emmanuelle were mentioned in briefs.

Britvic Tango: following the 'Slap'



Tango 'Apology' (1992)

This ad was an adjustment of the original. The only change was an apologetic line running along the bottom of the screen. It blamed the 'people at Tango' for not preparing another ad in time. This second ad strategy had been to foreground the creators (agency and brand), and make them out to be synonymous with the anarchic spirit of the 'Slap' ad. This suggested there was more to the product and company than a snappy ad campaign.

Tango Still as anti-authority: 'Clubbers' (below) & Steven Kaye's 'Warning' (bottom: HHCL+P, 1994)

Shaky camerawork, fast action, crude edits and bad sound quality make the ad appear like an unconstructed amateur ad, as if it were made by clubbers, not just about clubbers. To contrast, HHCL put out a partner ad warning viewers 'this is an unlicensed drink – do not buy it'. This made Tango Still look subversive. Steven Kaye, then–marketing director for Tango, was chosen to be the staid face of corporate authority. Kaye's orthodox delivery to a fixed camera made the ad seem like an authentic warning. It wasn't. It was part of making Tango appear outside the rules. Thus Tango Still was launched as an outsider, a counter-culture brand.



As 'The darkest fruit in colour and in attitude' of the Tango range, its red berry associations with wine, its feisty full flavour and blood colouration shaped a 'rush of blood' story line that connected with its core audience, 'young, relatively down-market males: in a nutshell lager drinkers'. It provided scope for mainstream cultural capital.

Blackcurrent was the last (in an initial series of four) launched in July 1996. For this Atter and O'Hanlon decided to create an epic ad; this would give Blackcurrent Tango presence and topicality at a time when England's identity was at issue. This would also elevate Tangos presence on a par with Coke – which became a realistic proposition in the nations consciousness, having surpassed sales of all non-coke brands combined.

The launch was pitched during the party political conference season, between Labour and Conservative conferences in the year before a general election and during the run-up to the 1996 European Football Championship which was being staged in England. The English press were focusing on the England team's somewhat boisterous build-up, while the merits of the Chunnel was a hot political issue. This in turn was pertinent to the (Conservative) government's long-term 'wait and see' policy on the countries membership of the exchange rate mechanism – a step towards European Monetary Union.

This led to a somewhat retrospective and sentimentally conditioned backlash that, beyond scepticism for non-elected and non-British bureaucratic rule, seemed wary of an a-historical allegiance that suggested a surrendering of national autonomy. The opposition labour party had also forwarded plans to devolve central power to separate assemblies in Scotland and Wales. In nationalistic terms therefore, political and sporting events were imbued with increased metaphoric significance.

Blackcurrent Tango made a virtue of this, stressing Tango as a British brand to differentiate it against Coke and Pepsi (building on the capital made by Orange Tango). HHCL discovered Tango wasn't to be distributed (at the time) in France, which the agency treated as a PR coup. They latched on to the national mood at a time when French lorry drivers were forming port blockades preventing the exportation of British livestock.

#### Shaping the humour

While seeking mischief rather than danger, HHCL were aware of the value in striking a chord. As the Blackcurrent brief noted, 'the copyability or adoptability of the ads by consumers is a real acid test of something getting into popular culture. Something to aim for'. The brief recognised that audience were weaned on comedy that was intrinsically British in treatment: 'the generation who grew up on Monty Python, through Viz readers and Vic Reeves fans of today'<sup>86</sup>. HHCL were suggesting a twist on social satire that drew on an inherently national perspective – a

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<sup>86</sup>ibid.

forerunner to becoming 'the nations fizzy drink'<sup>87</sup>. Three agendas were then shaped. The first, relevant in the mid-1990s, located the British tabloid's much-exposed stance of French Veal export protesters. There French were, in sporting and political terms, positioned as the old enemy. The second agenda was to distance Tango from the children's drink Ribena, by pitching Tango as a more aggressive apposite. The third considered evoked darker associations with exorcism, referring to similarities between the colour of blackcurrent and blood.

**Table 7; ST. GEORGE advert structure and camera work abstract**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Narrative</b>
0"	Scene set: suited man looking out of office window, turns to camera	Gardner: Hello. I'm Ray Gardner, a spokesperson for Tango.
3"	looks at letter. Gestures with it, then reads from it	This letter is from Sebastian Lois – a French exchange student
9"	walks into camera; camera backs off; walks out of office (3/4-view)	Sebastian says, "I tried Blackcurrent Tango and didn't enjoy it as much as Tango's other flavours".
14"	slips out of jacket; its picked up (by PA?) scurrying behind; other staff follow	Well Sebastian, all I can say is sorry. We've done all we can. We tried to provide satisfaction for all Tango drinkers,
20"	though office to white corridor, pursued by staff; hands back letter	even if you're only visiting our great nation
24"	met by 'Geoff'; given open BCT can; exits building to carpark; its snowing	(swigs, hands can back) Ah, its not easy. My friend Geoff here has been working on BCT for three years
29"	marches through, with staff in pursuit	You're an exchange student, aren't you Sebastian.
32"	takes off tie, rips off shirt, handed to female follower; Music starts.	All hair gel and fancy loafers.
35"	strides through carpark island foliage; drops trousers to reveal boxing shorts and boots. Passes Tango sign	What are your credentials Sebastian? What drives you? When did you last get up at four in the morning for something you believed in
39"	to camera; gestures exaggerated	passionately? We don't need you here –
40"-45"	top & bottom boarders expand; pace speeds; pass in front BCT lorry	you're one dissenting voice in a billion, Johnny French – you're that !(hand gesture)
48"	landscape now green; swigs from Geoff's BCT; hands back can	Yes – blackcurrent is a charge to the tastebuds. Yes – its feisty. Yes – its got guts. But so have we Sebastian –
52"-59"	crowd join from background verge; music pause; quiet; then crowd noise	Look at us ( <i>Silence</i> – gestures to joining throngs)
1:00"-1:02"	Gardner + supporters jog; tightens shorts, puts on boxing robe	( <i>music kicks in louder; than before; crowd chant in boxing/night-club-like manner</i> )
1:02"-1:05"	enter 2 supporters with BCT flags	
1:05"-1:06"	camera pans back to reveal cliff white edge; a distant Gardner shouts;	Come on then Sebastian...
1:06"-1:09"	boxing ring in shot; Gardner climbs in camera pans over ring to reveal Dover cliff edge and rendered sea.	Come on – right here... right now.
1:15"-1:26"	camera circles ring (x2) & landscape	You, and me. Come on – you, the world – I'll take you all on.
1:26"-1:30"	birds eye view; camera drops to reveal 3 harrier jet; format + frame now film/music loud; no product shot	I'm Ray Gardner. I drink Blackcurrent Tango. Come and get me!
1:30"	END	
	<b>Abstract</b>	<b>camera Work</b>
0-3"	office set; in house marketing promo. scenario set	scene 1: still camera – illusion of tripod shot
4-8"	Gardner starts walk	hand-held; shaky
9-20"	through open-plan office marketing>TV action format	tracking shot
20-45"	through carpark	Scene 2: seamless switch to outdoor camera; continual tracking shot holding Gardner centre-frame
45-48"	in front of Tango lorry	track on Gardner; lose and regain followers: seamless join (between Gestures) with a morphed insert
48-59"	along cliffs of Dover	Scene 3: from lorry to Dover edge; continuation of tracking shot using an under-slung camera from a helicopter over cliff edge
59-1:05"	TV action format>film action format dialogue more clearly over-dubbed	technique changes; camera pans back, moves up to a birds eye view and turns round ring and crowd
1:10-1:15"	top + bottom boarders in film format	helicopter/camera circle ring, crowd and Gardner
1:15-1:30"	action film shot, dialogue dubbed	drop in height and pan shot to show jets

<sup>87</sup>'Britvic Brief for the future direction of Tango', November 1999: cf. David Atter and Dave O'Hanlon interviews, appendix 2



Britvic Tango: Blackcurrent Tango 'St. George' commercial



*broadcast ITV, 1996*

Blackcurrent Tango 'St. George' (HHCL, 1997)

Note the transformation between the first and last frame: from amateurish marketing video to the balanced styling and proportions of a feature film. Also note the shift in reference points. It starts where Orange Tango left off, with the Gotan doll, then transforms to a bigger frame of issues (protecting Britishness) and references (battle films). The commercial appears to look pinker as the scene develops: film cells were touched up to make the pink haze more apparent. This served to reiterate the Blackcurrent product.



The resulting campaign – called St George – was launched between the Conservative and Labour Summer Party conferences, and sought to suggest the rhetorical British euphoria (of Land Of Hope and Glory and We'll Keep The Red Flag Flying) that both parties seemed geared to conjure.

If one considers the ads organisation, it passes through a number of transitions that, on first viewing, appear disturbing because the narrative continually develops out of the framework one is used to watching. One is not allowed to feel comfortable with a format of shifting tempo and style and tone so – in O'Hanlon's terms – it has a constantly disruptive narrative.

The ad sets out in the same vein as Disclaimer by foregrounding the 'reality' of the marketing department. The opening frame alludes to a dour marketing promotional video, set in an office block looking over a motorway – on a shelf are recognisable Tango marketing gismos. This format allows the leading character to introduce himself directly – 'I'm Ray Gardner<sup>88</sup>, a spokesperson for Tango'. This reinforces the assumption he may be the marketing director. Gardner reads out a letter he received from a French exchange student, who mildly states he prefers Tango's other flavours. As he speaks he stands up and walks into the camera – marking the first subversion of the format. This moves from a stereotypical format (with fixed camera, addressing the audience in earnest) to that of a hand-held amateur home movie<sup>89</sup>. Gardner's response is at first measured – he apologises – before his tone shifts to defend the efforts of the staff. The tones are still measured and representative of an office-speak – he refers to BCT, an in-house Britvic acronym for blackcurrent Tango aiming to keep the reference points localised. The narrative transgresses<sup>90</sup> (as Gardner first sips from his can of Tango) from a measured corporate response to a passionate and personal rebuke of the French student – who he describes as 'all hair gel and fancy loafers' and later 'Johnny Frenchman'. Here is a play on the dismissive British colloquial 'Johnny Foreigner' and the title of a 1950s Ealing film.

The camera pans alongside Gardner as he walks through a stereotypical open-plan UK office (standard desks bulging with paperwork, with mulling office staff) then out of the office building in an industrial estate<sup>91</sup>. He

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<sup>88</sup>Gardiner was an actor cast in the role: to fulfil the ITC regulations he was made an employee of Britvic for the duration of the commercial shoot to make his title claim true. Film critic Stan Berkowitz commented on the nature of watching film in *Emmy* (vol.6 no.2 March-April 1984 p.12), that the mind can grasp characterisation in two seconds; in which case the opening lie sets the viewers familiarity with the scene and character; the unravelling scene serves to distress the grasp one has established.

<sup>89</sup>A well-established TV film director, Colin Clegg, was picked because he had experience working on techniques for BBC comedy programmes, and was renowned for his outside broadcast expertise. The art director was aware that, to make the edit seem like it was shot in one take, the film's director would have to have a clear sense of the type of footage required for post-production manipulation.

<sup>90</sup>The narrative was initially written by Chas Bayfield, and developed between Bayfield and David Atter. While Bayfield was keen not to dilute the idea Atter was concerned the branding didn't become diluted – hence the addition of the pen-ultimate line – 'I drink Blackcurrent Tango...' – after Bayfield and Bolton dispensed with the usual product end-frame.

<sup>91</sup>The scene was in fact shot coming from a multi-storey car park in SE London in March 1992, on a snowy day. After three takes, where the clothes needed to be dried between each take – It was decided that the snow added to the intensity of the setting, and made the industrial estate a starker setting. The Tango sign was placed in the foliage to imply the offices were Tangos headquarters; Tango is part of Britvic, and while the sign had been styled to resemble that of Britvic's, the headquarters appear less clinically urban in Chelmsford.

continues marching through the Tango staff carpark<sup>92</sup> handing his jacket, tie and script<sup>93</sup> to an assembling throng of office staff (which re-affirms his senior position). Club-style dance music is picked up in the background behind Gardner's dialogue as he removes his tie and rips off his shirt. Still pursued by office staff, Gardner passes in front of a blackcurrent Tango delivery van<sup>94</sup>, gesturing more provocatively about the injustice and defensively questioning 'Sebastian's' credentials as a hard worker. The action subtly transfers to (what appears to be) a field, where the art direction becomes more three-dimensional with supporters running in to join the march from the background. The camera continues track alongside Gardner, until he refers to the crowd. The music then pauses and picks up pace as the crowd start chanting. The camera pulls back<sup>95</sup> and pans over the scene as Gardner (now robed and in boxing gear) runs with the crowd to the ring. By now the dialogue has become terse and confrontational, in the manner of a late-night pub brawler. The camera pans round to reveal the size of the crowd and its location (the White cliffs of Dover) and the stark cliff-edge landscape. While the visuals at this stage become more filmic in their dramatic use of scenery (with flattened colour and highlighted purple details<sup>96</sup>), the language contrasts in its sweeping exaggeration – 'You, the world – I'll take you all on!'<sup>97</sup>. Finally the scene ends with 3 Harrier jump-jets hovering overhead (then most readily associated with the British Royal Air Force during Falklands war, and the films *Cliffhanger* and *True Lies*<sup>98</sup>). Unusually there is no final product shot or printed strapline. The action ends as an action-movie trailer.

Throughout there are contrasting transitions on many levels. In terms of dialogue it shifts from measured diplomacy to an aggressive uncontrolled rant. The camera technique moves from bland, still and amateur to dramatic, actioned and professional. The screen also shifts to a wide cinematic format. The transitions also

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<sup>92</sup>As the walk-through starts, the camera ceases to film Gardner face-on – even though he turns to the camera at key linking moments; this makes lip-synching less of an issue and allows the three location changes. The first, from office to car park to the cliffs of Dover, seamlessly blends with the evolving dialogue. This also facilitates the jump from fifth floor office to ground floor entrance, between which the action jumps but the dialogue remains fluid.

<sup>93</sup>HHCL showed early rushes to the ITC, who noted that dropping the letter would be irresponsible, amount to condoning littering. Therefore the 'letter of complaint' and clothes were handed to his 'supporters', the office staff. Later, as Gardner walks through the car park, he drops his trousers as he marches through foliage so that it not interpreted as littering.

<sup>94</sup>This is the first and only time the full-pack detail is shown in the ad; an abbreviated drink logo is shown on 2 flags and the boxing ring floor later. The lorry in fact was a plain white screen, to which the graphics were later added. This allowed a plain background so the change between industrial estate to the Dover hills could be done by morphing the 2 location shots together. To achieve this, Gardner had to exaggerate a gesture at the end of the urban excerpt to throw the viewers attention from his face and to enable him to pick up the pose and continue at Dover. the takes were shot a week apart.

<sup>95</sup>This freed up Bayfield to make minor adjustments, because Gardner – now distant in the camera shot – no longer required lip-synching. The footage thread to achieve this wherever possible to avoid re-shoots.

<sup>96</sup>Splashes of purple were added to the ring, flags and to smoke so that the branding would not be lost against the striking camera work

<sup>97</sup>The confrontational line was lifted directly from the storm scene in *Forrest Gump* (Robert Zemeckis, 1994), the 6 times academy award-winning film in 1994. The march of Gardner into 'battle' was, according to planner Dave O'Hanlon and art director Jim Bolton, partly inspired by the charging battle scenes in the 1995 Academy-awarded best picture, *Braveheart* (Mel Gibson, 1995).

<sup>98</sup>*Cliffhanger* (Renny Harlin, 1993) and *True Lies* (James Cameron, 1994). *Cliffhanger* had impressed upon the art director most; they hired the stunt pilot and air film crew that shot the film's cliff action sequences.

parodied Britain as a nation of contrasts<sup>99</sup>. As well as the change in landscape from urban to rural, the walk became a march, and the language became passionate, and more working class (pseudo-union phraseology – ‘when did you last get up...for something you believed in passionately?’). When Gardner’s march became a run the language became hyperbolic, confrontational rhetoric appropriate to sport.

The mock heroism both conceals and celebrates the ‘real’ drama of producing ads, implicitly asking the audience (albeit ironically) to enter into the ‘work’ of producing ads.

There is also a sense of time-shift. While in the office Gardner is contemporary figurehead (corporate and dispassionate) the narrative treatment becomes more nationalistic as Gardner becomes increasingly gladiatorial. Given the location there is a suggestion that he is located on a final frontier between Britain and France – ‘our’ last protector; in this context, defending Britain and blackcurrent Tango becomes mutual. The scene resonates with the re-worked version of Henry V and annual replaying of war films on Anniversaries, for instance *The Battle Of Britain* was shot in the same landscape as St George. This hooks into another jingoistic terrace reference point (as echoed in the taunt by English to German football crowds ‘Two World Wars and One World Cup’ and the chant to other European nations ‘If it wasn’t for the English you’d be Krauts’: cf. Appendix 4).

In establishing an on-screen ‘community’ it also mimicked the dated sincerity of Coca-Cola’s epic ‘I’d like to teach the world to Sing’. Yet rather than evoking spurious global connections Tangos ad reinforces British community at the expense of others. The cliff serves as a clear dividing line between ‘us’ and the (unseen) ‘others’. In the same manner Abram Games World War 2 posters either created a sketch of the ‘others’ – ‘Know Your Enemy’ – or alluded to them as a presence beyond the picture frame – ‘Careless talk cost lives’. Tango adopts such familiar propaganda techniques – the overhead jets set against a clear blue sky (a metaphor for freedom) is another recognisable device. This heightens the sense that this Gardner’s is vitriolic war-talk. The ‘adrenaline rush’ (and the irony) is not in the rhetoric but in the over-reaction to such innocuous provocation.

#### Locating associations

While avoiding jingoism, the carefully worded ad recalled the historic rivalry between Britain and France, but still drew specifically on an exaggerated anti-(German/) French sentiment that satirised unreconstructed prejudices in England during the late eighties and early nineties. A later campaign was more clearly politicised, when Tango

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<sup>99</sup>Peter York noted this in his talk The Englishness of English Design at the Aspen conference in 1985 (later broadcast on ITV’s The South Bank Show Special in May 1996) that Britain was essentially pre-and post-industrial in outlook. He claimed that its North-South divide was still apparent and a past and future outlook, which he described as ‘punk and pageantry’ what also a distinguishing national characteristic.

megaphones were put up for sale to 'out' non-Tango drinkers (inspired at the time by the outing prominent celebrities and politicians by Gay activist groups<sup>100</sup>).

Gardner is transformed through drinking Blackcurrent Tango to become the embodiment of the lairy English drinking lad, who, 'when they lose their inhibition mouth off about the French.'<sup>101</sup> The ad's tone-of-voice starts to resemble a form of lyrical drunken bonding as the marching procession gains the shape of a political onslaught complete with a stereotypical cross section of supporters. These are presented in the manner of a resurgent rally or growing communal crowd gathering momentum as if approaching a football ground. Here Tango becomes the metonymic 'beef' of Britishness.

We see a variety of different character types join the procession as it develops, and the scenario becomes more far-fetched as the 'magical transformation' starts to reveal itself. The progressive layering of the action makes the narrative and appearance of the ad a continually intense experience. It makes the commercial build to a climax. It is when it starts to become unusually far fetched that the camera pans away to reveal the grandiose absurdity of the situation – a big boys playground battle and play on terrace chants – 'come and have a go if you think you're hard enough', or 'you and whose army?'

On one level it associated the 'adrenaline rush' (read: drunk or altered state) was born out of the fizzy liquid (read: alcohol or drugs) and the surreal culture (read: the distorted world of drink/drugs) that produced it. On another level, a sense of sporting occasion is evoked with a mix of familiar working class associations. On the one hand the English job and on the other an adrenaline rush that accompanies the anticipation in the build-up to an event. As Gardner's conversation becomes more of a rhetorical rant, the sense of 'event' escalates as he strips and strides his way towards the boxing ring on the edges of the White Cliffs of Dover. The cliffs themselves are a metaphor perhaps for Vera Lynn's evocative and sentimental song made popular during the Second World War. This is also the geographical threshold between England and France. There are several seamless changes of location<sup>102</sup> as Gardner's procession flits from modern to traditional Britain, from office to industrial estate to a field (revealed as Dover's white cliffs). In effect, the transition is from literal contemporary to metaphoric myth, with the cliffs a loaded signifier as a frontier and a wealth of embedded historic ties.

Throughout there is a persistent theme of Englishness, and particularly the closeness to the surface of myths of isolation and inviolability which are replayed in films, on terraces and in adverts (such as this). These are delivered with a sense of achievement but – given the political turmoil of the late Conservative government's

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<sup>100</sup>Nick Presley, Triangle interviewed 20 March 2000: cf. Appendix 2.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

European alignment – conveys an image of national certainty at a time of national identity crisis. The ad was, in other words, a topical sideswipe satire on an issue much in the foreground of the national psyche.

There are other social contemporary references, given the number of protest marches of previous decades (from Miners marches to the annual Orange order marches) the pseudo-protest-cum-supporters rally eclectically mixed a number of quintessentially English reference points. As O'Hanlon (planner) flagged up in the brief for (copywriter/art director) Bayfield and Bolton, 'Tango gets much of its energy by blurring distinction, making it difficult to pin down. Uncertainty is always a more long-lasting, intense experience than something you're sure about. (It) gives the brand its frisson and charisma'<sup>103</sup>. Beyond 'blurring distinction' it confused satirical and obscure references to affect a sense of profanity, which was key to its art direction in giving the frisson and charisma O'Hanlon craved for the ad.

The commercial had again used juxtaposition (Monty Python/Vic Reeves physical humour), by switching assumptions and associated language of one situation with another – be it an iron for a parrot or a domestic fight with the exaggerated over-reaction of a Tom & Jerry cartoon. In the case of St George, it is the exaggerated response to a mild letter of complaint and the drunken effect aroused by swigs of the drink, which is secured in irony – mock heroism and pathos.

It certainly caught the moment. The pop promo for The Verve's 'Bittersweet Symphony' later in the same year featured lead vocalist Richard Ashcroft in a 'pavement movie' brushing past an odd array of street characters. Where Gardener's march attracted supporters, Ashcroft's was a lone march, but in similar vein nonetheless. Aping this and blackcurrent Tango, 'Vindaloo' by Fat Les (released as an alternative English football anthem) featured a Verve-styled urban walk-through and latched onto a different concoction of British television oddities including Rod Hull (and Emu) and ITV wrestling personalities from the seventies. Peter Greenaway had utilised long panning shots in *Prospero's Books* (1991) but used narrative only to connect the action. In terms of common currency the Tango ad created a visual canon.

The entire 90 second advert was – according to those involved in the development phase<sup>104</sup> – meticulously contrived initially between Atter, O'Hanlon and Bayfield<sup>105</sup>; the serendipity was only in the planning<sup>106</sup> which according to Atter involved lateral interpretations of the brief, then a tighter phase refining, detailing and executing the concept. The ad begins and ends with a reference to the product, so there's no need for a final

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<sup>102</sup>The first was shot in Britvic's offices in Chelmsford. The second transformation shows the office staff marching out of the office across Tango's works carpark – which is in fact the entrance to a multi-storey car park in Chelmsford. The third is shot on the Cliffs of Dover. The three scenes were shot in the cold period of early April.

<sup>103</sup>HHCL Blackcurrent Tango brief 1995.

<sup>104</sup>See Appendix 2

<sup>105</sup>David Atter, interviewed 15 May 2000: see Appendix 2.

product shot. The unravelling dialogue and constructed settings are layered with references to allow the avid footnoter to trace the heritage back to the product and the creative team. 'Clues' (esoteric references) are littered throughout the commercial. The 'Tango' plated sign outside the office block aped that outside Britvic's headquarters. 'Geoff, my colleague here who worked on BCD' (note the use of Britvic's in-house marketing slang for 'blackcurrent drink') was the name of a well-known member the Britvic team and many of the extras were Britvic employees<sup>107</sup>. Again, this chimes with du Gay's observation in Production of Culture/Cultures of Production, that the culture of work itself became a cultured commodity. Unlike the Apology ad, Britvic's working environment appears normal at first, but the extraordinary lengths its office workers collectively went to in supporting their boss emphasised the depth to which the company culture was (apparently) distinct from its market rivals. The company, it appeared, was as madcap as its promotions through and through.

The next layer of de-coding was constructed to be open-ended, to throw up more questions than it resolved (which offset the 'fixing' of action against the brand. Thus one is drawn to ask if Gardner *really* is an employee of Tango; *if* it is all one continual shot; was that Tangos HQ? *How* did they do the Harrier jet sequence at the end<sup>108</sup>? Were they Britvic people, or actors doing a pastiche? Was it jingoistic? Were they the cliffs of Dover? Did they shoot it that close to the edge? In other words, it assumed a level of knowingness, enough to perceive that the structuring of the ad frame was at least as important as the content.

#### Locating gender

In some respects this open-endedness is the first hook geared to both sexes. The creative team were all male. The one female member of the Britvic team was a regular attender through the development stage<sup>109</sup>. Generally the strategy appears geared to young males. According to Atter, then-Brtvic marketing director, 19 year olds. Boys as young as 12 would aspire to this older group, where those up to 40 would still like to associate with the attitude of youth. Yet Tango sales were bolstered by the sales of supermarket multi-packs, which their research suggested was mothers buying the drink for their children<sup>110</sup>. The thinking was that children would aspire to its roguish

<sup>106</sup> in the first outdoor shoot at an industrial estate the snow was not an anticipated mood ploy but was kept in to make a virtue of the chill – realising the ad was to be launched mid-Summer.

<sup>107</sup> People holding flags up were Britvic employees, who had a group outing to Dover for the shoot. Jenny Collins – running in foreground – worked on brand packaging from a subsidiary firm Focal brand design,

<sup>108</sup> This fitted in at the time with a BBC1 series 'How Did They Do That?' which explained how visual trickery, stunts and curious camerawork such as those in adverts were created. While St George never appeared on it, the methods of construction were certainly discussed in trade and national press. In terms of the ad, the jets were filmed separately and edited in post-production. Purple smoke from the jets was also added post-production when more purple colouring was added to prevent the branding being lost to the action (one wouldn't see smoke from a harrier jet from head-on).

<sup>109</sup> Anita Andrews, Tango brand manager working for David Atter, Manager of the Britvic marketing team.

<sup>110</sup> Tesco sales data in 1995 showed that 2 litre fizzy drinks were the top-selling product for 'families with older kids'; home-brand Cherry Coke sold most followed by Coke then Pepsi and Tango closely ranked. For Tango, the sales of Tango – all varieties – went up during the St George run by 239%, a figure that is perhaps bolstered by the high temperatures during the summer of 1996. According to Dunn Humby the temperature is usually balanced against sales to produce a realistic measure of promotional penetration; in Tango's case this still represents double the rate of



persona, which (through the children) acquired a charm that appealed to parents, who spotted the childish cheek in the Tango brand – roguish but charming. In this respect its appeal was earthier in its less-than-idyllic representation of children's taste.

It conjured a satirical picture of young British men in that it was transparently a metaphor for getting drunk, as the closing time brawl language 'right here, right now...I'll take you all on!' reiterated. The clubiness of the music (a popular dance track in 1991) and the chanting crowd mixed the reference between sports and club crowd, while the qualities noted of blackcurrent in the brief – charge, feisty, got guts are all explicit in Gardner's dialogue.

The ad assumes accessibility to women through a form that seems inherently macho. Only in the second Orange Tango ad (Shout) is the Tango victim female. In St George the 'typical' office presents women in supporting roles behind the male brand manager. However behind Gardner there is no positional hierarchy, which in effect deflects the issue.

The gender balance is more noticeably neutered in the re-casting and translation of its televisual reference-points. In most of 'sixties-to-eighties' comedic references, their original context was removed which, particularly in Benny Hill, Monty Python and (to an extent) The Young Ones, tended to cast women as sexual provocateurs in sketch scenarios. Therefore the Tango ads carried much of some of the political luggage from the original comedy formats they borrowed from.

This does not remove Tango's inherent sexual over-tones which drove the orgasmic 'hit sensation' of Orange Tango. The 'magical transformation' in St George for Blackcurrent Tango, and abrupt physical and emotional altered states could easily be deemed metaphors for orgasm. The more literal 'seduction' of apple Tango makes a virtue of this while the 'euphoria' of lemon supplants this with semi-religious fervour. Within the blackcurrent St George ad the drinker is not a victim but a winner (the Tango manager) a metaphor for Britain's patron Saint<sup>111</sup>. The drink transforms the character, who starts neutralised in his office environment but turns into an aggressive fighting crusader. Here is a shift back in time from contemporary work-oriented 'success' to a measure of authority rooted in the dark ages. That they end up in the boxing ring (signalling contemporary machoness) on the cliffs of Dover (a frontier with seventeenth to twentieth century connotations of battle<sup>112</sup>) adds fuel to the notion that Britain and Tango are mutual in this ad. The battle references range from St George (the gladiator) to the type of 'all-in' wrestling shown on ITV's World Of Sport during the seventies. These amount to a

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turn-over which – according to David Atter – was required because earlier campaigns had stressed brand awareness – which didn't consistently amount to increases in sales. Source: Evans Hunt Scott, Dunn Humby, March 2000 (phone enquiry), David Atter and David O'Hanlon, May 2000.

<sup>111</sup>Women in the ad are actors, while their characters are undeveloped it is worth noting they are suited to imply they are not secretaries. On the Dover coast the one woman running along the edge in casual clothes is the Britvic production manager.

<sup>112</sup>A last British frontier at which, historically, Britain has never been defeated.

multi-faceted, eclectic pastiche of British masculine icons. The exaggeration marks it as knowing satire and, perhaps on this level, the ad operates equitably across genders.

Given that the campaign had a long lead-in time<sup>113</sup> for a 1990s ad, it was a risqué strategy in keeping it quiet for several months before unveiling it in a broadcasting blitz, given the number of extras (over 400) and production crew involved<sup>114</sup>. The HHCL media planners ensured St George had saturation coverage with over 20 airings on independent terrestrial TV and Sky during its first week. It was assumed the ad would be seen many times over, hence the pace and open-referencing because (Atter and O'Hanlon noted) if viewers understood the gist of their ad on its first airing there would be nothing left in it to hold interest<sup>115</sup>.

#### Meta-viewing and the viewer

Such 'meta-viewing' seems to have developed in the nineties, where there was a consciousness of a canon that as would be commented on and reviewed. There seemed to be a tacit understanding by ad and filmmakers that the medium needs to carry more open (and loaded) messages in codes. In BBH's 1985 'Laundrette' ad for Levi's 501, the attention to nineteen-fifties Americana detail made the advert withstand multiple viewing, while Tony Kaye's direction of Saatchi & Saatchi's 1988 British Rail advert Relax allowed the magical transformations to hold the attention of the re-watcher.

The difference in mid-1990 in animated viewing – in films (Toy Story in 1995<sup>116</sup>), TV cartoons (The Simpsons from 1992) and adverts (Creature Comforts for the British Electricity Board in 1990<sup>117</sup>) – was that they appealed on different levels and to different age ranges, such was the multiple-coding of the art-direction and dialogue. The Disney/Pixar collaborations A Bugs Life and Toy Story 2 (1999) even included spoof animated 'out-takes', which assumes that even the youngest viewer was aware that the characters were construct, and other layers of activity operated beneath the story line. By foregrounding the culture from where it came (in the case of both animations, film studios; in the case of Tango, a marketing department) the tacit recognition disarms the sceptical viewer. But it is also ironic because, however far it goes in suspending one's own disbelief, the audience are party to the idea that the animated caricatures are reconstructed in the credits as actors.

<sup>113</sup>Briefing and planning from October 1994, shooting March and April 1995, post-production finished and ad finished by late-April 1995; it was then not released until July 1995.

<sup>114</sup>Some 40 staff were involved (which is standard), plus a specialist helicopter film crew. The camera operators were picked because they filmed the cliff-edge scenes using an under-slung camera mounted beneath a helicopter in the 1993 film *Cliffhanger* (US A Marshall *et al*) and *Broken Arrow* (US 1996 M Gordon *et al*); this allowed for a sweeping panorama shot at the end, whilst being a newsworthy 'hook' in its own right.

<sup>115</sup>Archer, B *The Guardian: Media* section, 15 May 2000 pp.4&5: Archer made a similar point about the launch of the Lager GB. The humour required in 2000, she notes, is less about quick-fire gags and presenters, and more about subtleties. Archer quotes the GB lager commercial's director Steve Benbelack in claiming '...its about minutiae and nuance. The TV comedy programmes Smack The Pony (UK 1998) and League Of Gentlemen (UK 1998) are all an accumulation of small performances.'

<sup>116</sup>*Toy Story* (US 1995 R Guggenheim *et al*) and *A Bugs Life* produced by Pixar and The Disney Corporation, *Antz* by Dreamworks; both based in California.

All these examples assume that the scenes are re-run, studiously read and that the audiences reading of the slot operates simultaneously on different levels.

The expense of defining brands has led many a planner to re-spin earlier campaigns to emphasise brand resilience, continued presence and sustainable relevance. The assumption is viewers read 'around' the ad and look for different aspects of the content during repeat viewings. This means that one is conditioned to read information on many levels – not just to consume the corporate 'face' that is presented. Where O'Hanlon described Coke's efforts to numb an audiences critical faculties with fast-moving imagery, so the audience has learnt to graze information and build up an understanding after re-runs. To operate effectively in an exhausted medium (broadcast commercials) the ads needed to create a depth to account for what the product is about. In terms of Blackcurrent Tango's exaggeration, it still points to the fact it is a construct by foregrounding the marketers; references about the product and company. These were all well-founded before being shaped into a cryptic 'game' of an advert.

On balance, the Blackcurrent Tango ad transcends obvious communication of the qualities that brand managers, account planners and advertisers want to convey. Key to the ad – and key to this part of the thesis – is that it places a vision of the brand accurately in a social, political and cultural context of its target audience. As such it is a snapshot of the moment and a studious collection of instances that, collectively, typify England's basic national psyche.

It also demonstrates the extent to which a campaign needs to be driven if it is to work as a broadcast advert. While guaranteed mass exposure, it needs to assume that it doesn't have the viewers' attention; watching adverts is diluted by distractions, as film theorist Dennis Giles remarked;

Watching television is so intertwined with other domestic activities that to disentangle it from the world that pervades it and informs it would be an 'academic' activity in the worst sense of the word... Receiving television is, in other words, more than just watching television; it is messy, impure, contaminated with non-television.<sup>118</sup>

This partly explains why the soundtrack has become a more loaded signifier as imagery has become grazing material. Raymond Williams<sup>119</sup> noted that the biggest obstacle facing programme producers was the (small) scale of the image and the viewing environment. It is the distractions that happen in one's viewing environment that set it apart from, say, the participatory ritual and transactions involved in going to see (and participate in watching) a film. A suspension of disbelief is hard to achieve, hence adverts have tended to emphasise on exaggeration (to

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<sup>117</sup>The ad's signature tune of Diana Washington revived from the late 1950s.

<sup>118</sup>Giles, D *Journal of Film and Video* Vol. 37 No.2; 'Television reception' pp.12-28.

<sup>119</sup>The tenre of a point made by Williams, R., in the forward to *Television, Technology and Cultural Form* Routledge, London 1982 (second edition) preface. Referred to in Springer, P *Framing Design* unpublished MA thesis at The Royal College of Art, 1991 (held in the National Art Library, London).

attract attention) and irony (in case the impact doesn't work in the viewing context). This also partly justifies the necessity of a layered approach.

A study (1978) published in the Journal of the University Film Association<sup>120</sup> suggests Tango's market had a tendency towards shorter concentration spans – three minutes for young viewers. Whereas an older audiences' span ('primed by more primitive types of communication...') may stretch up to 100 minutes.

Without wishing to over-determine the viewing experience, it is difficult to ascertain how representative such evidence on attention spans is, as concentration is more contingent on context than age. There was a sense however that ads in the nineties became shorter and snappier (Campaign assumed this in several feature articles during the nineties). TV commercials and ways of reading it have changed greatly over three decades, and the trend in the ad industry towards shorter spots<sup>121</sup> serves to highlight the need for sound and visual bites. Tango's 'You've been Tango'd' strapline, like the sponsored 'moments' of ambient advertising, are very much a product of their time in advertising, and symptomatic of the shift towards brief 'byte-size' communications of the early nineties. Tango's 90 second ad for Blackcurrent Tango<sup>122</sup> required the terse rhythm of speech familiar to stand-up comics so that bits of the dialogue and visual references could be sampled and understood in small portions.

Contemporary comedy writers<sup>123</sup> commented in interviews about the need to organise sketches outside the normal narrative conventions to give a more removed and considered (juxtaposing) in-view of the banal everyday. This is consistent with other creative disciplines where the subject matter has become more about character observation rather than broad political polemics. The brevity (like that of a soundbite) is similar to that of the short ambiguous pop video, TV and film trailers in that its familiar, teasing and incomplete. Higson's sketches for the Fast Show are open-ended and tap into references else where, much like Tango's open-ended advertising they are more writerly than readerly.

#### Placing Tango ads in a theoretical context

In many respects, like the (less) tenuous, (more) arbitrary connection between message and image in the First Direct ads, Howell Henry more clearly tap into what many social commentators such as Fredric Jameson label the 'Postmodern Condition' – at least on a superficial level. Here connections are arbitrarily sought with little other luggage than their visual association. As with many of the details in the Tango campaigns, the creatives

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<sup>120</sup>Berkowitz, S & Zettl, H The Rare Case Of Television Aesthetics, in the Journal of the University Film Association, Volume 30 no. 2 Spring 1978 pp.3-8.

<sup>121</sup>Lury, G The Incredible Shrinking Ad in Campaign 10 May 1991 pp.24-25; Lury notes that in the 'Sixties '60 second and even 90 second (commercials) were more common... shorter commercials are cheaper and attractive in this difficult economic climate'. Yet Lury later notes that 'There aren't many 13' or 23' spots (made) available on TV at the moment', which perhaps has as much to do with the economic viability of TV networks selling off smaller segments of air-time.

<sup>122</sup>A shorter version was never put out – it was always intended as a full-length ad to keep it a rarity.

constructing the ads were intuitively responding to the needs of immediate situations, and not every aspect had a pre-planned 'logic' to it. However, if one overviews the ad in its context there are many characteristics that reflect the issues of the period. For instance, the Tango strategy needed to mimic references that the audience would pick up on, to make the ad relevant. This was a requirement of its format, just as TV programmes are renowned for mimicking everydayness in a carefully constructed frame (as soap operas do) rather than reflecting everydayness in real time. To affect everydayness the Blackcurrent Tango 'St George' ad had to distil the idea of what a typical office looked like, and the shift between locations did not seem strange because, watching television, viewers are conditioned to seeing times of day and movement between locations compressed. The editing makes it appear fluid and helps the viewer make the effortless leap of imagination.

The first Tango ad, Slap, unusually presents the 'Tango moment' as if it were real time, and only requires repetition to reinforce impact. Again (ironically) it becomes more 'real' because it is capable of being analysed from a number of different points of view, which reinforces its open-endedness. St George set the viewer at ease with a familiar starting reference (the marketing video) before 'de familiarising' it. Planner O'Hanlon called this a 'disruptive narrative' where American sociologist Michael Woal describes such methods as necessary tactics to heighten the viewing sensation<sup>124</sup>. The handles used to do this are clearly evident. The collectivity of terrace culture is both evocative and tribal – of which all the audience were included (given the breadth of gender, caste and age represented in the extras in St George).

In terms of the layered 'meta' treatment of Tango ads, the campaign from its outset in 1992, accurately observed that the audience had been conditioned to read information in simultaneous (post-modern) way. Stephanie Marriott paraphrasing J Ellis in Media Culture & Society<sup>125</sup> remarked that a sort of 'psychological reality' is evoked by the construction of segments in continuous takes' so that events keep 'strictly to the continuity of their performance' and subsequently unfolds in the real time of the viewer. Likewise, claims Marriott, sports events are 'live' in the sense that the event, transmission and reception are simultaneous yet controlled in that they are 'framed'<sup>126</sup> with pre-recorded footage (only 'live' in being transmitted and received simultaneously).

This is similar to the sense of controlled 'live' action in earlier Tango ads, yet the sense of destination and by extension the sense of security in knowing the action is contained within an ad format, is lost by 1996 in St

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<sup>123</sup>Notably Charlie Higson, co-writer of the BC2 comedy sketch show *The Fast Show* (Absolutely productions, 1995-1999): see comedy timeline in Appendix 1.

<sup>124</sup>Woal, M Aesthetic and Rhetorical modes of experiencing television, lecture delivered at Pennsylvania State University, 1982, and published in Quarterly Review Of Film Studies Vol. 8 No. 3 pp.45-55. Woal claims the notion of 'de-familiarisation' was first made by critic Victor Shklovsky in the essay Art As Technique, published by Lemon, L and Reis, M (ed.) in Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays, Lincoln; University of Nebraska Press, 1965.

<sup>125</sup>Marriott, S Time and time again: 'live' television commentary and the construction of replay talk, published in Media Culture & Society, Vol. 18 No. 1 January 1996 pp.69-70, paraphrasing Ellis, J Visible Fictions, Routledge London 1992 p.131-2.

<sup>126</sup>O'Connor, B and Boyle, R Dallas With Balls: Televised Sport, Soap Opera and Male and Female Pleasures, published in Leisure Studies No. 12, 1993 p.110; quoted in Marriott, p.75, *Ibid*.

George. There are clues however in the dialogue. In Slap, as for broadcast sports events, the commentary objectively and subjectively evaluates the state of play to contextually predict what is to come. According to Marriott, for the sports commentary this ‘...may involve a significant degree of displacement from the here-and-now of the game in progress’<sup>127</sup>. This is also true of the first Tango ad. The only constant is the reverence with which the ‘Tango moment’ is treated. It is as if the commentators were narrating the key goal in an important match, and they are commenting on the goal in real-time, the replay, and the reaction to the goal. As with sports commentary, in Slap there is a shift in vocabulary between past and present tense and in the patter during replays the on-screen action is accompanied by a random mix of past and present: Marriott’s example from a football commentary, ‘Nice little knock back from Klinsmann. It’s well struck by Sammer and the keeper does enough’<sup>128</sup> follows a similar pattern to Tango’s ‘...the big orange fella run in from the left, and gives him a good old slappin’ ...It just illustrates the bite and buzz... Ohhhh! – of real oranges in Tango’.

The need to keep the hooks of engagement alive is also used in St George. The narrator, Gardner, blurred past and present tense and constantly mixed methods of address in his response to Sebastian Lois. This constant shift makes it harder to grasp the overall narrative because it is further hampered by its speed and cramped references, allowing one to filter off and read different narratives into it. Consciously or intuitively, by the latter ads HHCL had woven a complex matrix of dialogues to make the ads catchy yet illusive in pinning down their sources, such is the mixture of eclectic and esoteric references.

#### Conclusions: Summing up Tango

The Tango ads served to use a mass-exposure medium in a manner that would re-engage and re-ignite an enthusiasm for the epic advert. That it achieved this initially by aggressive means (disrupting the accepted conventions) then sophisticated means (hooks, meta-structures) is a measure of how the audience and advertising developed through the campaign (simulacrum). The audience’s perceptions of reading ads moved as the genres of advertising moved, at a time when the effectiveness of commercials as an effective medium was an issue.

At a time when the media advertising industry’s advertising press was anticipating the impact of more commercial TV networks diluting the audiences attention, Tango had already moved forward in that a sizeable chunk of the project’s budget went into direct advertising. The broadcast ad served to filter active consumers into the more inter-active means of ‘taste sensation’ through closer brand involvement.

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<sup>127</sup>ibid. p.71–2.

<sup>128</sup>ibid. p.73.



The campaign strategy latched into a broad understanding of what motivated British youth, and in demonstrating this made ads that were a snapshot of the mood. The campaigns picked up on the most appropriate signifiers of in terms of iconography, tone and constructed props to locate references. They also made the reference points generation-specific, so that the references would be lost to viewers outside the target market. This was one way of giving the brand a sense of exclusivity.

Tango also managed to typify enough of a mass audience at a time when the notion of collectivity was most under threat. Youth could now more readily access the information they were interested in and discriminate against what they perceived to be too mainstream. Like youth magazines, it identified an interest in formulas and technologies of representation. In this context the Tango relaunch pushed mass advertising further.

In its time Tango's campaign was more shocking than most ads, but in the wake of Benetton and before the genre of yobbish ads, Tango was 'of its moment'. The furore it created however did nudge the discourse of advertising further into the mainstream.

More significant to the movement of advertising was the offshoots created to supply the demand for brand information, such as the follow-up phone dialogue and sub-products that were created to give flesh to the sub-brands. The legacy of this was realised through the emergence of below-the-line ad strategies.

While Tango's was perhaps the most referenced campaign of the 1990s for media advertising, a more fundamental advertising legacy for the 1990s was being shaped through less obvious, more interactive means, as the campaigns for Daewoo and Tesco in the next two sections demonstrate.

Chapter 3b

**De-constructing Daewoo as direct advertising**  
Integrated advertising/products as service

Context

Compared to Tango the Daewoo ad campaign (launched between April–July 1995) was modest, yet its significance was more far reaching. Where Tango developed the existing genre in constructing a brand persona by weaving brand hooks through media campaigns), Daewoo's was original in designing and selling the support service around the product rather than the product itself. In a sense the ad agency's approach returned to more direct USP selling. However, the significance of this campaign was that advertising process went much further than selling a product. It stretched the brand.

When manufacturers Daewoo set up their first advertising pitch in Britain they picked an agency with a view to launching the product throughout Europe. When selected, their agency adjusted the client's brief to relocate the selling proposition. After initial research and development they realised the products were indistinct from others in their market. They created a 'new' product, a support service, which they which they promoted instead. This became a landmark in fusing product *and* service through advertising. In this respect the legacy of Daewoo's British strategy shifted the perception of the product by selling it as part of a broader package.

Yet this shift was only possible after an initial qualitative taster campaign that re-examined perceptions of automotive retailers and identified a series of common perceptions that amounted to a fresh market niche. While FMCGs were being sold on convenience, more durable white, brown and automotive products were being advertised on lifestyle or brand marque standing. The latter had, over four decades, become a selling tactic synonymous with longevity, familiarity and reliability. Shaun McIlrath outlined the dilemma this posed in the nineties for a period of saturated promotional communications. 'There is a problem with selling white, black and automotive goods as being the ultimate in safety. A well known brand too can land on either side of being so popular it's dull or so popular its reliable and can work.'<sup>1</sup> Overexposure of Levi's 501 ads in the eighties for instance made it so fashionable that it became linked with the period. This made the brand appear passe in the mid-1990s. Re-directing the point McIlrath made to the automotive industry, popularity needed to be tailored to prevent mainstream renown becoming a staid marque, known for its blandness. Automotive purchases are among the most expensive consumer goods decisions people have to make, so brand status is a significant factor in whether one is getting value for money.

Yet in the British market it had distinct characteristics from other mass manufactured goods. Dullness was a trait seen by automotive manufacturers (and their advertisers) as preferable to lack of trust, a trait which had dogged the car industry. This was a time for product marketing when brands from different fields were beginning to compete in new markets, and Asian brands (like Daewoo) were looking to expand their global operations.

The competition between white goods manufacturers and electrical goods retailers was developing rapidly in this period. Showrooms started providing their own extended warranty and after-sales contracts, competing with those offered by the manufacturers. These were offered at the point of purchase, often as an added incentive to buy from a retailer (or as an added value 'after-sales care' option with multiple purchases). As such it was sold by electrical retailers as 'buying piece of mind', when in fact it was little more than buying product insurance as cover beyond service guarantees. It became a customer bartering point and a means by which retailers – such as the Dixons Group – could expand their operation and make greater use of their own workshops and support service teams, cutting out independent electrical repairers and mechanics. Yet the means by which it serviced the customers hadn't been fully resolved. Rather than *after-care* the warranty assumed it was the customer and not the brand or distributor that should bear the post-purchase responsibility for breakage. It was clear therefore that it was the companies rather than consumers' best interests that were being served as brand manufacturers and retailers battled for the rights of potential post-sales profits.

The system that was devised for Daewoo used the idea of extended long-term warranties, but built the costs into the initial outlay, so after-care was standard rather than an optional extra. The real achievement of Daewoo's promotional strategy however was in developing a 'relationship' with their consumers. Daewoo concentrated much of their European start-up budget on developing a new company culture. Daewoo was a Korean manufacturing firm without an existing base (or even outlet) in the UK, so there was no existing structure that needed to be negotiated. While this made it easier to assemble a unique distribution and service infrastructure, the lack of a track record in Europe made their scheme risky. In the event Daewoo's offices in Korea took a gamble in running with their advertisers' advice and focusing all of their promotional budget on a series of 'suck and see' multi-mass media promotions, that aimed to highlight the promise of total customer care<sup>2</sup>. Throughout the latter 1990s Daewoo was seen as a test case by rival companies as to whether a product could be sold *not* principally on the product itself but as part of a brand ethos, couched as a service.

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<sup>1</sup>Shaun McIlrath addressing advertising students in IPA inter-agency critique, 1 April 1998.

<sup>2</sup>According to Campaign magazine, Daewoo upped their marketing budget from £10 million to £15 million (according to Waters at DFGW on their and Farrell's request) to cater for the extra information enquirers and purchasers wanted to hand so that they understood the new deal.

### The Daewoo campaign background

This alternative take on the British car market was, as one would suspect, driven by a non-British company unfamiliar with the nation's retail and advertising paradigms, and driven by the opportunity to profit. Daewoo – one of the largest manufacturing companies outside Europe<sup>3</sup> – wanted to work their way into the European market in the wake of other Korean manufacturers – Proton, Hyundai and Kia's European successes. Initially they acquired European design facility in Worthing<sup>4</sup> as a base to involve their company into European thinking. From this they instigated an ad pitch early in 1994, with the brief to turn the brand into a 'mainstream volume player as soon as possible', setting a lofty target of one per cent market share within three years. The brief also highlighted the corporation's keenness to invest in Britain and suggested presenting the brand as The European Cars from Korea<sup>5</sup>.

Significantly, Daewoo saw the pitch as an opportunity to find an ad company capable of shaping their existing brand to meet regional/national requirements. This meant that they did not have a fixed idea of advertising's conventional role in Britain – or its thresholds. Nor did they have set expectations of how the advertising should operate. The only definite measure of success was the end result – Daewoo wanted one per cent of the market share in three years<sup>6</sup>. The proposal they selected, by a four year-old ad agency Duckworth Finn Grubb Waters (DFGW), addressed what they labelled 'the unmet need' in the car market, which required a more fundamental overview and which would potentially pave the way for a bigger brand opportunity. DFGW's pitch specifically addressed Daewoo's business concerns, presenting their proposals as strategic planning rather than as a communications project. It was this, along with an advertising track record to draw on<sup>7</sup> that won the pitch for the ad agency and opened out the project development options<sup>8</sup>.

A wider scope of project in effect presented DFGW with wider remit over the total product, which involved not just the communicated interface between brand and consumer but in actually shaping the entire operation surrounding the central product. Where Tango's re-launch was a three-way dialogue between

Dave Waters, correspondence 19 September 2000, Campaign 5 January 1996 p.23.

<sup>3</sup>Although they were little known in the UK before 1994, Daewoo were already one of the biggest corporations in the world - larger than Coca-Cola and Procter & Gamble according to a DFGW promotional paraphernalia IPA Advertising Effectiveness award Winner? That'll Be The Daewoo (1998).

<sup>4</sup>in late 1993, taking over the formerly independent design unit buildings responsible for producing the Lotus. The unit tailors the Daewoo's generic global design to meet inter-continental nuances.

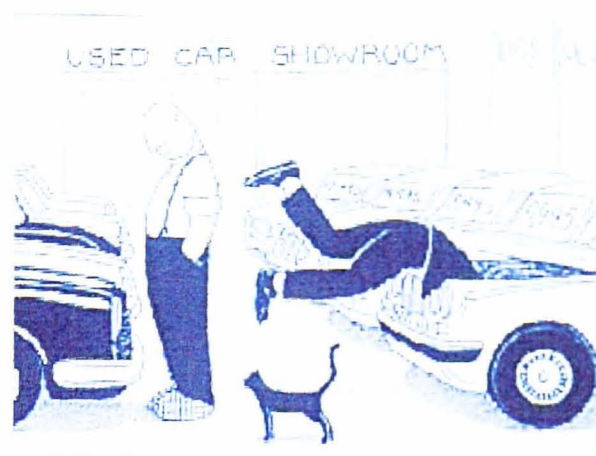
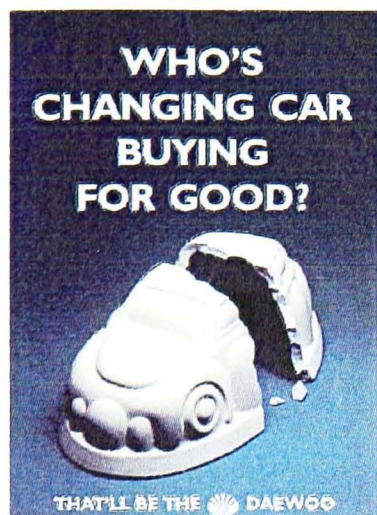
<sup>5</sup>IPA Advertising Effectiveness award Winner? That'll Be The Daewoo 1998, *ibid*.

<sup>6</sup>According to Campaign - who made Daewoo their 1995 'Advertiser of the Year' – Daewoo in fact took one per cent of the UK car market in the first 12 months. Campaign magazine, 5 January 1996 p.23.

<sup>7</sup>Previous work included FMCGs Appletise, Lyons coffee and Pizza Hut ('Hit The Hut') and for Grolsch beer; their work for the Fire Brigade and the Independent Television Commission ('We're here to ITC over ads') were also familiar in Britain. They had advertised Granada TV Rental which sold the idea of a rental service but their campaigns for Toshiba and Duckhams oil suggested an intelligence to the products which appealed to the Daewoo delegate, according to Rachael Hushan, the Board account director for Daewoo at DFGW. Until Daewoo DFGW had not worked on automotive accounts, so in preparing for the pitch they came to the territory of automotive promotion without a wealth of older automotive expertise to draw on.

<sup>8</sup>According to Rachael Hushan, presently (2000) the Board account director for Daewoo at DFGW, who was initially employed as the account director for DFGW's pitch.

Daewoo: selling the idea of brand servicing

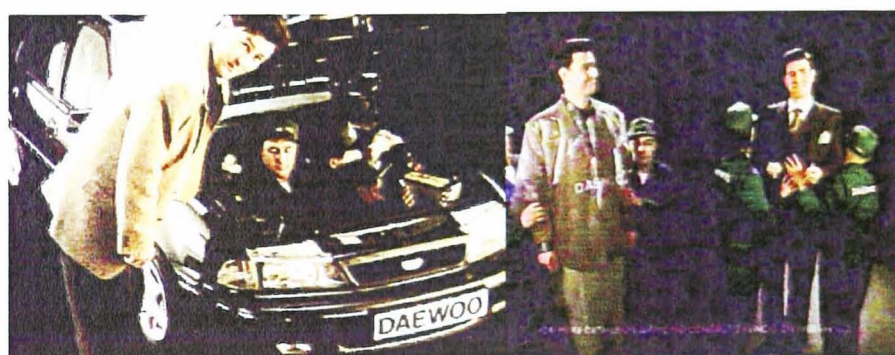
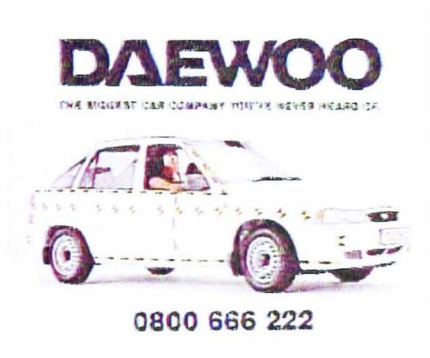


FRED DIDN'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME FOR PUSHY SALESPeOPLE

Pre-launch poster (left), and a cartoon featured in the 1<sup>st</sup> Daewoo brochure (right, DFGW, 1994)

Daewoo sold on a Unique Selling Proposition of its service, not than any functional or stylistic qualities of the car. On the cover of Daewoo's first brochure the usual product shot is replaced with a broken mould of a car 'Fred', a popular greetings card cartoon in the mid 1990s (right), represents the consumer's dislike of 'pushy salespeople'. Fred is the sort of savvy customer Daewoo/DFGW wanted to target.

Endframe of Daewoo commercial 'Dummy' (below left ) & two frames from 'Replacement' (bottom, both DFGW, 1995). The final frame reveals the priorities of the art direction in terms of the proportion given to the elements. 1<sup>st</sup> is the branding name, marque, and clear styling. 2<sup>nd</sup> is that it's a car firm (the car is made indistinct to blend into the background). 3<sup>rd</sup> is the contact number, then the strapline emphasising brand standing. The post-launch ads emphasised Daewoo's sales service (right). The Daewoo came with free AA cover, free specialist servicing and an old-for-new scheme if the car breaks down.



marketing, planning and other creative departments, Daewoo did not have a marketing team already in Britain or a dealer network in place<sup>9</sup>. DFGW negotiated the development of the project with Daewoo's Korean representatives at their British base from start to finish.

Although Daewoo had no pre-determined strategy and - from their acceptance of DFGW's brief - were willing to think beyond the boundaries of traditional car marketing<sup>10</sup>, their delegation had initially considered using established dealerships and launching the car as bottom-end of the market cheap alternative to saloons. The assumption was that inconspicuous growth would make the brand name gradually familiar and not appear as a recent start up. The ad team suggested a more lateral line of strategic planning. In a manner similar to Bill Bernbach's fabled re-thinking of the US car market for VW in the 1960s, the DFGW team suggested they were in an ideal position to instigate their own dealership based on fresh foundations. It was to have contemporary relevance, and should be shaped by their preliminary research work.

Preliminary research suggested that being a new market entrant meant not having a track record of disgruntled customers and Eastern manufacturers had established a good reputation for reliability in Britain. At the time Daewoo were thinking of developing a European outlet, the stigma attached to eastern products had been replaced by a respect for advanced and innovative technology<sup>11</sup>. However, car manufacturers in Britain had a reputation for unreliable products and poor customer service. Being the fourth Korean firm to operate in Britain<sup>12</sup> meant that, from an existing undistinguished identity the badge-value was unlikely to attain anything more than a low identity value. Daewoo were therefore ideally positioned to break the mould.

DFGW had a clear starting point - they were familiar with the commonly perceived processes, rituals and dialogue surrounding the purchase of cars. These were characterised by pushy, hard selling car dealers keen on shifting goods in volume quickly. It was also apparent that the car industry's sole measure was profit margins. This in the 1990s came to be regarded as an undesirable hangover of the 1980s.

Daewoo had (similarly) set sales targets but were open to how the retail experience and customer dialogue could alternatively be formed. The Daewoo directors welcomed the initial concept of dispensing with dealers altogether. This would make them distinct and provide a platform for distinct customer focus. While the idea was not original, it was fresh and avoided the long-winded and deregulated distribution process usually

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<sup>9</sup>It wasn't until June 1994 - a month before DFGW won the pitch for Daewoo - that Daewoo Cars UK (as it was called) appointed a managing director, a deputy MD and marketing director in the UK.

<sup>10</sup>IPA Advertising Effectiveness award Winner? That'll Be The Daewoo Duckworth Finn Grubb Waters, 1998, ibid.

<sup>11</sup>The Toyota project is described by Batchelor, R Henry Ford, Mass Production and Modernism Manchester University Press, Manchester 1994 p.127, of synthesising Western notions of quality into what became the Lexus was already well-known (cf. Chapter 5)

<sup>12</sup>Hyundai were the first in 1982 (0.64% market share after 12 years) then Proton (1989, 0.64% after 5 years) followed by Kia (1991, 0.21% after three years). Source: SMMT statistics, December 1994 obtained from Daewoo in Worthing. Such statistics make Daewoo's target of 1% in three years appear ambitious - even taking into account their larger start-up costs. It seems from this that either the advertising or the means of selling had to be significantly marked to break into an already saturated market.



involved in car transactions. This would allow greater control over the way brand values were communicated. It meant sale rapport could be made consistent through brand and advertising.

Such an approach also served to define the depth of responsibility and remit for DFGW. They could act as mediators between the product and its development in the UK market, shaping all aspects of its brand development: This was different in that most British-based manufacturers or distributors were inclined to spread different aspects of their communication work across any number of ad agencies.

The free-ranging vantagepoint enabled DFGW to re-assess the automotive market and the client. Project director Dave Waters firstly divided the car market into two basic categories;

Eighty per cent of people who... love cars,...want to see their car driving fast in 0-60 figures. 'Does it look flash, do my neighbours get jealous, is it going to be the best in the street, is it going to look a bit sporty'...that overrides the functionality of it. ...twenty per cent of the car market, new buyers, don't care about that. They want a car that goes from A to B<sup>13</sup>, is reliable and is a good deal... (they) don't care what the car looks like or says about them, so long as its reliable, good, functional and a solid deal, and they will do a deal with a good company.<sup>14</sup>

With this in mind the agency marked out a set of qualities around which they looked to convey differentiation. The distinct characteristics involved being hassle-free (to oppose the usual confrontational purchase experience) without hidden costs and emphasis on customer care (rather than one-off transactions). These were all qualities that emerged early on.

They also identified a need to develop a trusting relationship with customers. They discovered few customers wanted to be bogged down with frequent manufacturers correspondence, which suggested they were searching for further sales. Yet by the same measure customers did not want to be left without support after buying the car. Many had found the retailers unsympathetic when their vehicle broke down – especially when additional warranties were not taken out at the point of purchase. Their research for the pitch had highlighted that, '...while drivers of company cars are relatively sheltered, almost all the buyers of private cars we spoke to in qualitative research (not quantitative, note) had a horror story...'. So early on the underpinning strategy was guided by the proposition of selling car ownership as a *service* rather than cars as *products*<sup>15</sup>.

The retail strategy had to be as fundamental. On one hand the brand needed positioning, on the other it was not an established identity in a mature market. Preliminary research also showed '...the extent of cynicism that would greet any car manufacturers assertion of customer focus... they have a 'won't be fooled again' attitude'. Such claims needed to be proofed in the actual retail experience. This was particularly so in the initial years where there would be no existing customer testimonies to draw on.

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<sup>13</sup>in fact market researchers Millward Brown found in their product research for DFGW that 37%% of buyers in the market for cars regard their vehicle primarily as a means of getting from A to B, and were more concerned with the practicalities of owning a car than its comparative performance or engineering

<sup>14</sup>Dave Waters, founding director of Duckworth Finn Grubb Waters, interviewed 7 April 2000; for transcription see appendices.

The nature of the initial research is also significant. This was qualitative rather than quantitative<sup>16</sup>. In the automotive industry as in other high-cost product purchases most engaged more extensively in quantitative research in the 1980s to justify existing marketing rationale. This was in turn was shaped and utilised to reinforce brand positioning to boost market confidence. As such consumer market research tended to justify what was already being done, and segmented its audience in broad social, rather than habitual, categories. As macro marketing was evolving in the mid-Nineties qualitative research became more popular because it found out *why* people made consumption decisions. DFGW and Daewoo used qualitative means which they eventually used to shape a 'dialogue campaign': This was to deduce the issues underpinning car sales and particularly to address the customer experience. As such it was non-predetermined and unearthed enough case-study examples to vindicate the intuited hunches they had about buying cars.

While it tied into their initial brand-awareness campaign (see 'Barrier 1' later in chapter) it also exposed many nuances particular to the car market. Most car buyers for instance, would be tempted to bide their time before deciding which model to pursue - and in most cases it involved a family decision<sup>17</sup>. Turning potential customers to brands required a gradual long-term development.

Daewoo's situation was particularly affected by this. Their claim of authentic customer- friendliness would clearly need to demonstrate the break with traditional ways of operating in its advertising as no previous operational experience could be evidenced. This difficulty was compounded by the fact that potential clients would need be moved to respond further than usual to find one of Daewoo's few selling centres which were only opening in April 1995 on the day of launch. The Daewoo campaign had to spur its audience on to break from their own familiar practices of purchasing, and put faith in the new brand's claims.

Subsequently DFGW drew on past car buying experience as a measure of how their strategy differed, and sought to make a virtue of their sales package.

This was supported by the research which suggested that, with large purchases the deal and *value* for money are more often the overriding factors. These counted more than simple cost price and marque status - as Waters explained, 'They don't want to pay a premium, but they will pay top parity. So if Vauxhall are offering something and another company was offering just as good a deal, they wouldn't worry that Vauxhall was a better known brand, they just want the deal.'<sup>18</sup>. This tallies with Shaun McIlrath's

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<sup>15</sup>ibid., also noted in 'Advertising that builds strong customer relationships?' (1997) and 'IPA advertising effectiveness awards winner?' (1998).

<sup>16</sup>in August 2000 broadcast researchers BARB announced they were introducing lifestyle pattern classifications to compliment their demographic and social statistical groupings (website (July 2000): <http://www.barb.co.uk>); Henly Forecast Center had practiced such classifications since 1997, but Tesco and Dunn Humby were earlier.

<sup>17</sup>A survey of 960 British families conducted across different parts of Britain for Abbey National (used as PR by the bank from 31 July 2000) pointed to 60% of decisions based around large expenditure - including family holidays and buying cars - being made by the family unit, of which children's perspective were the most significant. Their sensitivity to ad messages and intuited grasp of emotive brand values are often reflected in purchase decisions and in the art direction of commercials.

<sup>18</sup>ibid.

understanding of consumer behaviour. Consumers had grown into wiser selectors, playing off brands to find the best deal. This also perhaps also explains the rapid growth in number of monthly consumer magazine titles.

DFGW went for the 'consumption-savvy' twenty per cent, which, like DDB's VW campaign, they pitched as a discerning choice of the more considered consumer. Their strategy therefore needed to be seen as being in opposition to traditional car selling systems, singling out car salesman as an appropriate icon of everything they objected to. Waters had noted the widespread distrust of the way cars were sold - 'one hundred per cent of the car market has a genuine grievance and that grievance is middle men car salesmen. Car salesmen are just below estate agents and advertising agents in despicableness.'<sup>19</sup>

This was some four years before the Labour government launched its Rip Off Britain initiative to reduce (amongst other inflated import costs) car prices. Yet DFGW understood the sense of apathy evident in the early nineties consumers was changing. There was a greater sense of consumers becoming more discerning and demanding. There was also a sense that socio-political ethics were becoming more significant in consumption decisions (for instance the boycott of Shell petrol stations in 1997 over the Brent Spa oil platform<sup>20</sup>).

#### The campaign strategy

DFGW made the brand vision its defining marque characteristic. It effectively became the USP of its sales drive because its in-store service was a value that could be proven (it could be accessed, tested and evidenced by potential customers prior to purchase). In some respects the showrooms themselves were the equivalent of media ads because they were an execution of the campaign ideology. They singled out and illustrated as unique properties of the brand:

- the offer of total service,
- no further charges beyond car purchase for service collection and delivery,
- a fixed standard price which ruled out bartering. This helped reinforce the notion of 'getting a fair deal',
- free in-store café facilities to reinforce the service value and a customer help line (this was one of the first aspects in place for the burst campaign in October 1995).

This became key to connecting the claims of the ads with customers first direct experience of the brand. Together with a three years full warranty, DFGW had positioned key facilities that collectively focused on the buying ritual and customer satisfaction. Such customer focus attempted to counter an anxiety that brands had

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<sup>19</sup>ibid

a propensity to be exploitative, and put profit margins before customer care. In a sense the customer-centred features were all integral extensions that would shape the character of the car marque in its advertising. Significantly, they would be intrinsic in shaping an identity for Daewoo in Britain.

Daewoo attracted wider attention from retailers and manufacturers because they presented an alternative mind-set by selling the product on the basis of their own service guarantee. When customers bought into the car they purchased a service contract and support service that Daewoo had constructed around their models. Daewoo's policy of being consistent with their pricing was significant, given that this was only three years after the court cases that resulted from the supermarket battle over brand name and home-brand products, where Coke successfully took J Sainsbury to court for aping their packaging and under-cutting on price. Part of the problem then was that prices between retail outlets varied, and price promotion became the frame of reference for competition. The price Daewoo set for its cars were flat and inclusive of all additional Daewoo facilities beyond the car.

In by-passing the existing car retail infrastructure and setting up their own exclusive showrooms as the sole distribution outlet, Daewoo could control their own retail culture. DFGW had developed the ad campaign closely in-tune with the shaping of showroom etiquette. In short, the advertising and purchasing experience overlapped to ensure consistency. This made a virtue of being new on the market by laying the entire infrastructure on fresh foundations based around contemporary attitudes. This helped create a platform for the advertising to communicate from a legitimate customer perspective; the advertising was based on the understanding its claims could be met in all other aspects of personal customer dialogue.

#### De-coding the trailer commercial

By October 1994, four months after receiving the project and six months before the Daewoo's first car went on sale, DFGW made their strategy manifest in their initial Daewoo mass-promotion. They termed this the 'Barrier 1; *Daewho?*' campaign – aimed at building brand awareness and establishing the Daewoo image. This was no mean feat for a car initially based loosely on up-market Vauxhall models. They focused on the service qualities, an existing track record of production (even though it was not in the West, they had a reliable production history) and the fact that they were new to Britain, drawing on their anonymity to promote the brand as New and Original.

The trailer commercial – 'Daewho?' – used familiar automotive advert devices. Shot entirely against a plain white studio background to decontextualise the car, the Daewoo is only unveiled in the final five seconds of the 40 second commercial, shown in the manner of a static end shot as the strapline is delivered. Before this the simple art direction is geared to reinforcing the brand's historical strength as '...a manufacturing

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<sup>20</sup>Discussed in Klein, N No Logo pp.380-383.

company that is the thirty-third largest in the world'. The opening shot is of what appears to be a white lorry cabin. As the driver slams the cabin door shut the camera cuts back to reveal it as an industrial transporter. It is dwarfed by a large red oil tanker rudder looming above the cabin. The lorry then moves slowly off (from right to left), so the transporter's contents pass in front of the fixed camera. The formal narrative voice is male, mature and delivered with accent-less broadcasting clarity to run through manufacturing qualities with which Daewoo have a proven track record. As he does so, rolling across the screen on the transporter is the manufactured article, serving to give a clear image to reinforce the narrative. After the oil tanker, which illustrates expertise in producing anti-corrosion goods, they drive past a coach to illustrate passenger comfort. A crane and aircraft components demonstrate Daewoo's reliability and engagement with 'State-of the art technology', which is also illustrated with four 'scientists' wearing white lab coats operating the sort of seventies wall switch technology familiar to a Sci-fi series. It renders stereotypical the compressed image of what technologists might look like to a mainstream audience. Last on the transporter, which after 30 seconds appears to have become a production line, is the (blue) veiled car. The dialogue pauses, a second narrative voice pipes up to ask 'Who?', which was cast to assume the role of the viewer. His accent is more pronounced, perhaps East London, and the diction is less distinct from the main narrator. As the covered car rolls back off the trailer the camera cuts to the end shot, the cover is sucked up in the manner of a magic trick and the strapline is 'Daewoo. The biggest car company you've never heard of.' is delivered.

After the build up of narrative, the simple construction of set and art direction, the sense of magical illusion is in keeping with the tone – one of clarity, formality and (after the narrative) one of establishment. The ad's shape echoes DDB's ads for the VW Beetle. The juxtaposition of product and setting sets up the cryptic tone, while the familiarity of format alludes the product type being advertised. The familiarity of the advertising style (the product in the final frame is ultimately the star of the ad) establishes the brand as also being familiar. The commentary tells the viewer of the company's global standing, thus providing further reassurance. Ultimately the ad in itself is indistinct, but unlike Tango the objective was not to produce famous advertising. The objective is to establish and reassure audiences that the brand is (and was) reliable. Even the representation of the consumer's voice, who breaks the narrator's flow by asking 'Dae-Who?', is simply cast, with DFGW opting for a plummy accent to contrast with the more old fashioned authoritative tone of the narrator. The ad therefore follows a pre-eighties conventional advertising model of having a USP, iterating the product qualities that make it distinct and keeping all the attention on the content rather than the mode of delivery, which is highly polished in its production.

What is significant is that the commercial was just one aspect of the burst campaign, so not all aspects of its promotion hinged on the publicity generated by the TV executions. The publicity engaged other

conventional forms of media advertising: local press, radio, national and the motoring trade press, in the form of a coordinated burst campaign (see p.145), to develop a brand renown and to stoke curiosity. A phone number even appeared in the final frame of the commercial to aid those interested in finding out more. The TV version could therefore afford to be less original in its delivery.

**Table 8: Trailer ad for DAEWHO? advert: structure and camera work abstract**

Time	Action	Narrative
0'	Scene set: Lorry cabin with driver in a plain white studio	
0-4'	driver shuts door. Voice-over starts	<i>Narrator:</i> There's a manufacturing company that is the thirty-third biggest in the world
4-9'	frame cuts back to show cabin from 10 metres. Oil tanker rudder hangs over cabin from top of screen	... and they're about to launch a car combining the anti-corrosion expertise they've learnt from building oil tankers
9-13'	transporter moves off (R to L) with its goods trailing before the camera, starting with a coach	... with the passenger comfort they've learnt from building coaches
13-17'	... then a yellow industrial digger	... with the strength they've learnt from building heavy machinery
17-24'	... then a small fighter plane	... with the aerodynamics an reliability they've learnt from building aircraft and aircraft components
24-30'	... then 4 lab-coated 'technicians' in a mocked up 2-walled technical lab.	... with the state of the art technology they've learnt from building spacecraft.
30-33'	... then a rocket thruster	(commentary pauses)
33-34'	... then onto covered car	And this company is called Daewoo.
34-35'	car reverses off trailer then stops (side view)	<i>Plummy regional London accent:</i> Dae-Who?
35-40'	cut to Three-quarter side view. The cover sweeps off as if by magic to reveal dragon green shiny Daewoo car, which is the final freeze-frame	DAEWOO. THE BIGGEST CAR COMPANY YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF.
40'	END	

In their own case histories DFGW noted that (conventionally) it makes little sense to invest in advertising six months before a product goes on sale. Yet for a purchase the scale of car they assumed their discerning target audience would need a gestation period to reflect upon and explore the values Daewoo were purporting for their 'peoples champion' approach. Such a pre-launch campaign also acknowledged that, unlike most products, potential customers would need to be more motivated to find one of the Four Daewoo outlets.

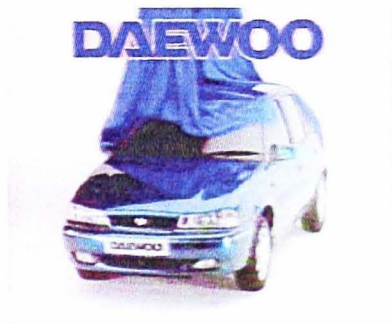
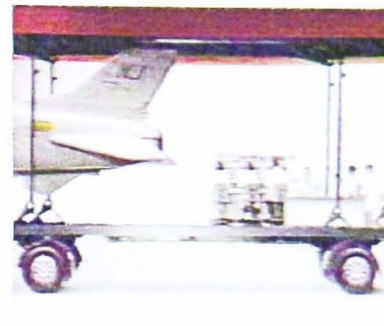
**Table 9: Three agendas for Daewoo's media campaign**

Barrier 1: Ignorance	Build awareness and brand image
Barrier 2: Skepticism	Overcome distrust of Daewoo as a car company
Barrier 3: Apathy	Motivate to either visit or contact via advertising

Duckworth Finn Grubb Waters, 1996



Daewoo: 'burst' commercials 'Dummy' & 'Guinea Pigs'



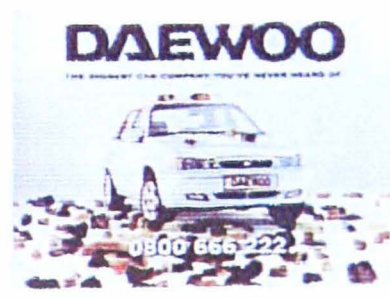
Commercial 1: Dae-who?

The commercial only showed the car in the final frame. Before revealing the car the ad demonstrated what went into its research, and production - scientists, rocket engine and jet technology.



Commercial 2: Dummy

The presenter (Robert Harley) 'interviews' a crash test dummy. The interviewer's eye contact with the camera (and the viewer) suggests that viewers are more discerning than the situation implies.



Commercial 3: Guinea Pigs

The presenter & car are surrounded by 200 guinea pigs, a pun to emphasise 'guinea pigs required'. The simple art direction and message style were symptomatic of Daewoo's direct approach.

Between January and February 1995 (two months before its launch) 'Barrier 2', aimed to combat initial skepticism, was instigated to convince an ad literate, cynical audience that this brand was going to be different – that like HHCL's Ronseal ad, 'It did what it said on the tin'. The advertising had to negotiate an age-old assumption that all ads always claim products to be different and better. DFGW consulted a direct marketing company CIA Media Network, who suggested using the advertising to serve as customer research, demonstrating Daewoo's willingness to listen. Rather than telling viewers they were customer-focused, a claim that would have seemed hollow, the ads invited readers to tell Daewoo what they wanted from a car company. Responders were sent a questionnaire, the results of which formed the material for a detailed database, with material from those who would sense they had a part in shaping the new brand. This some way towards establishing dialogue that may have resulted in a sale.

'Barrier 3' was also instigated before April 1995 and introduced to prevent customer apathy in the wake of interest that followed the launch ads initial enthusiasm (what advertisers called 'keeping the customer warm'). DFGW aimed to keep their potential customers interest before the launch by encouraging involvement with the 'Daewoo Dialogue' campaign. Incentives were added by way of offering the chance to be '1 of 200 guinea pig Daewoo drivers who would be given a free car (for a year's extended test drive'<sup>21</sup>). While this generated additional data it also provided a critical 200-strong customer feedback team by 1996, so the basis of an offer was different to winning a car. It was the type of standard promotion Daewoo sought to avoid.

The market research group Arnold & Bolingbroke<sup>22</sup> were taken on to translate the evidence. They unearthed several distinguishing characteristics that further helped Daewoo and DFGW tune their sales pitch. The data showed ninety five per cent of responders felt car dealers should be more like other retailers than car salesmen. Eighty four per cent noted that the treatment they got from their dealer was as important as how they felt about the car. More significantly for Daewoo, sixty three per cent found showrooms intimidating, where they were always subjected to hard-sell tactics<sup>23</sup>.

Daewoo were by no means the first to realise this. Ford in 1989 employed Retail Solutions, then a division of Fitch, to investigate ways in which the car showroom could be more approachable. As a researcher and visualiser on the project I found that the ambience resided between the clinicality of a dentist's waiting room and the brashness of the stock exchange. One was rarely at ease in what felt like the sellers domain, which forced customers on the defensive. As a result the adverts tempted but personal recommendation carried more weight. Few found the experience comfortable enough to demand space in getting a feel for the

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<sup>21</sup>Re-counted by Dave Waters from his initial Daewoo brief, during preliminary interview conversations: cf. transcription in Appendix 2.

<sup>22</sup>A relatively small-scale market research firm (16 staff), approximately half the size of DFGW, based in Barnsbury Street, London N1. Website (August 2000): <http://arnoldbolingbroke.com>.

<sup>23</sup>Data analysts Arnold & Bolingbroke, February 1995; data obtained from Daewoo in Worthing, March 2000.

cars. Consequently changing the ambience and attitude within the showroom space would distinguish Daewoo. Yet making this feature more significant than the actual product carried a risk: it assumed that experience could substitute for the status of marque ownership (Daewoo's range cost as much as BMWs).

Yet the Clubbiness of buying into Daewoo made it appear as if customers were buying membership of an ethos. This was in parallel with brands from other retail sectors, which were similarly aiming to draw on brand experience to crystallise and develop their marque's worth.

The two commercials – 'Dummy', which encouraged viewers to engage with 'Daewoo dialogue', and Test Drive ('Guinea Pigs'), which provided the test-drive incentive, launched Daewoo through a distinctively direct tone of voice. The face of Daewoo in both ads was Robert Harley, an unfamiliar actor to television, who was cast because he could convey the Daewoo message with 'bloke next door' sincerity. Unlike Eric Cantona or Rutger Hauer (for Nike and Guinness respectively) he did not bring familiar associations from his other activities to the role.

Picking up the treatment of 'Dae-who?', the ad is produced in TV documentary style, which gave weight to the presenter's dialogue to-camera. In Dummy we see him 'interviewing' a crash test dummy. As he asks the dummy a series of questions about servicing the car and test-drive comfort without response, he looks increasingly uncomfortable, until eventually – some 26 seconds into the 30 second commercial – he gives up and walks off set. The voice-over then comes in to tidy up the sense of narrative breakdown, by explaining that crash-test dummies can 'tell us about safety, but not about service and test drives...'. The clarification gives greater emphasis to the headline, '... the biggest car company you've never heard of', which leads a follow-on hook; '... would like to hear from you', cueing in a Daewoo contact number.

The offer was made yet more explicit in the accompanying 30 second spot which was a call for free test drive Guinea Pigs. Again the story line led to a pun revealed in the voice-over during the last five seconds. Likewise, the ad's narrative appears to breakdown when the presenter starts to look off camera (at the assumed production team), as the familiar advertising format is sent up in keeping with other ads of its genre. This time the presenter Harley walks into shot and up to the camera to announce the latest development from 'those people at Daewoo', as if he were an objective commentator. Yet where in Dummy his approach is that of a documentary reporter in Guinea Pigs he is the presenter on Daewoo's behalf.

The organisation of the art direction was plain compared to other ads at the time, which tended to be set in sunny European landscapes to demonstrate the product as a lifestyle accessory. The Daewoo was presented as a solution to familiar concerns about cars – adopting a style which, at the time, would have been synonymous with automotive trade magazines. At the time it was unfashionable to make advertising appear

as staged as it had been in the sixties<sup>24</sup>, yet the plain white background served to suggest the sort of showroom setting that was essential to Daewoo's USP tactics.

**Table 10: DUMMY: advert structure and camera work abstract**

Time	Action	Narrative
0'	Scene: white studio with Daewoo car to right of frame	
0-3'	interviewer Harley walks across frame up to car with a microphone to interview 'driver'. Harley is wearing smart casuals - black trousers, light blue shirt and dark green single-breasted jacket.	
3-6'	cuts into car from passenger side; driver revealed as crash test dummy	Harley(leaning into window, mic. to dummy): So, did you have any trouble with the salesmen?
6-10'	cuts to front view of dummy; interviewer now in back seat	... give you a proper test drive?
10-11'	taps dummy's head with mic.	(pause)
11-14'	cuts to initial full-length shot of interviewer leaning into car window	... and what was the after-sales service like?
14-15'	interviewer looks out of camera frame in disgruntled manner to production crew	(pause)
15-19'	interviewer stays with mic. in window	voice-over (Harley, in more formal tone): Dummies can tell us a lot about safety, but they can't tell us about service or test drives
19-23'	cut to front 3/4 view of car interviewer drops mic. and walks off set (left) apparently fed up	Harley (sarcastically): ... well thank you. Thank you very little!
23-26'	branding, strapline and contact number added to screen	voice-over: We want to get our network right
26-30'	cut to side view of car with branding, strapline & contact number - final freeze-frame end shot	... so call and tell us how you want to be treated. DAEWOO. THE BIGGEST CAR COMPANY YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF ... WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU.
30'	END	

**Table 11: GUINEA PIGS (Test Drive) advert structure and camera work abstract**

Time	Action	Narrative
0'	Scene: plain white studio; no props	
0-3'	presenter Harley walks in from right towards centre shot wearing same outfit from Dummy	
3-8'	speaking as he walks to take position head-shoulder shot (typical 'talking heads' technique)	Harley(to camera): After 15 years of making cars all over the world Daewoo are coming to Britain
8-13'	hand gestures to emphasise the word 'process' and stops walking the words 'petrol free' appear in bottom right of screen	... and as part of the process they are looking for guinea pigs to test drive over 200 Daewoo cars for a year absolutely free...
13-14'	presenter is distracted and stops apparently in mid sentence. turns head to bottom left	(pause)
14-17'	cuts to look own onto 200 guinea pigs moving towards camera	
17-20'	cut to full-length view of presenter, guinea pigs moving towards him from right	
20-23'	cut to view looking down on presenter (unconventional camera angle). talks to other out of frame	No, this isn't what I meant. I think that... (fades voice)
23-27'	cut to presenters feet surrounded by guinea pigs. a contact number (white type against guinea pigs) fades in range centre	Voice-over: If you would like to be one of the 200 test drivers call and tell us why we should pick you.
27-30'	cut to end frame - a 3/4 view of a white Daewoo surrounded by (and covered with) guinea pigs.	DAEWOO. THE BIGGEST CAR COMPANY YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF ... WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU.
30'	END	

However the ad was not completely formulaic. Robert Harley's persona seemed in-keeping with the ad agency's desire for atypical advertising. Automotive advertising - claimed Waters - 'typically focuses on car

<sup>24</sup>The genre for plain decontextualised settings was revived in the late-nineties, perhaps most strongly by fashion brand Gap (ad campaigns produced by in-house New York Gap marketing team from 1998).

performance and features fantasy portrayals of the driving experience'. Harley on the other hand seemed more down to earth, and like the car appeared comparatively ordinary for a car advert.

As a metaphoric association for the car he was significantly different. French brands such as Citroen, Peugeot and Renault used emotive selling styles. The car was a luxury good, with the adverts conveying an idealised everydayness. For instance the Xsara showed model Claudia Schiffer stripping off in a Mediterranean villa before driving off in the car<sup>25</sup> in Spain, while the actress Kim Basinger appeared as a dream-like aspiration alongside the Peugeot 405. Within the frame of the ad, the supposed humorous play-off in assuming male desire for the car over the actress makes human and automotive lust appear mutual – as if the car (like Kim Basinger) was a marque of desirability. Both Schiffer and Basinger had the international cache of exoticism, which was presented in common with the marque's assumed cultural standing. Yet this association is absent in the actual everyday consumption of the vehicles. Such car ads only had a lingering impact during the purchasing and early part of consumption. It was assumed that actual experience *then* takes over to develop a continued form of brand loyalty exclusive from the adverts. With the Daewoo, the safety USP gave the owner continual 'peace of mind'.

At the luxury end of the market BMW, Mercedes and top of the range VW's advertised on performance value. All three brands emphasised their marque status in press adverts, placed in glossy Sunday supplements over double-page spreads to make the car appear bigger in dimension. The VW perhaps had the most in common with Daewoo's approach, reverting back to their (VW-originated) approach that placed the ads message over its style value. In the mid-nineties VW sold on safety, then reverted to emphasising affordability. Yet all campaigns created a context for the product rather than the customer. The majority of campaigns were pan-European<sup>26</sup> and sold the car as part of an object of a lifestyle of desirable.

Around the time of Daewoo's launch, both the Peugeot 305 and the Renault Laguna drew on the freedom evoked through the driving experience, and symbolically re-packaging it with the illusion of illicit sex. Laguna's male driver seemed involved with his wife and 'a friend', as the strapline invites us to 'Drive your imagination' (pp.363–4). Peugeot 305 similarly implied an affair before the couple are revealed as family parents.

Daewoo's choice of TV commercials, press and billboard adverts followed a 1950s advertising format. It had a presenter, single USP message, product quality demonstration and it even had the camera cut to a still end frame, complete with a soundbite in the strapline. Using such conventions of method and medium

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<sup>25</sup>Pan-European car adverts tended to be aspirational: art direction operated as a separate entity from the (dubbed) dialogue. In an ad for the Citroen Xsara (1997) the final frame of the car driving away was even reversed in the UK to make it appear as a right hand drive

<sup>26</sup>In fact the campaign broke in 15 different countries simultaneously from an anonymous starting position. The company's senior management allowed the located marketing teams in the different countries to work independently of a Daewoo-centralised edit, so the commercial dialogue could work on national levels.

– TV commercial format – still represented the most appropriate means to achieve mass-exposure. Yet they Daewoo the format as a frame of reference for car ads, in the manner that Benson & Hedges used the health warning as a recognisable reference-point for cigarette advertising. The medium in this case served to make the car seem familiar, because cars since the sixties have been launched with TV campaigns, and because the format was very familiar to TV viewers. Using commercials was therefore the best way to communicate that the (then unknown) company was as safe and reliable as other established car manufacturers, by virtue of using the same medium.

The simplicity equally underlined its difference. Both Dummy and Guinea Pigs were shot against plain white backgrounds: Harvey addresses the viewer ('to camera'). The brand mark is significantly large in the final frame, while the somewhat limp jokes (an obvious play on the dual meanings of dummy and guinea pig) serve simply to emphasise a single message. Both ads encouraged the untaxing participation of viewers.

In terms of provoking brand awareness, over 200,000 people responded to the campaign's call via the number or by mail. This became the audience for later direct mailers.

While the ads strategy centred on Daewoo's customer research as a means of demonstrating the 'listening brand'<sup>27</sup>, the art direction had been key in getting the spirit of Daewoo across. The advertising content needed to be simple to make the brand primarily seem approachable. Similarly, the commercials needed to emote self-confidence enough to show that Daewoo were established enough to be in business for a long time<sup>28</sup>. Waters was keen to pull viewers into the showrooms as soon as possible to get a flavour of the brand – '...if you want to test drive a Daewoo, what you really need to do is test drive the whole package... come and test drive our people'<sup>29</sup>.

The operational launch campaign involved a tighter integration of in-store promotion and mass advertising. The first year was seen by Daewoo as the key, they needed customer testimonials to substantiate their brand stability. So when the first four Daewoo showrooms opened on 1 April 1995 the first 1,000 purchasers<sup>30</sup> of the Daewoo were promised a new N-reg Daewoo in August 1995 'as a thank you for taking the plunge'. (localised advertising emphasised the offer shortly before the launch).

Meanwhile the press and poster campaign flagged Daewoo's fixed price scheme, by illustrating to potential customers they would not be manipulated by salesmen in showrooms. In the composition DFGW

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<sup>27</sup>In the mid-1980s Midland Bank tagged themselves as 'The Listening Bank', running a series of vox-pop ads to support the idea. This however ran separately to Midland's customer service planning, and customers tended to use the line as an ironic mode of criticism to distinguish their myth from the reality experienced by customers. This was a criticism levelled at many of the lavish ad campaigns – notably Saatchi & Saatchi's 1987 ad 'Relax' for British Rail, which many felt bore little relation to the experience of travelling by train.

<sup>28</sup>DFGW's research on the existing car market in Britain showed that six marques launched since 1975 – the Sao, Lonsdale, ERA, Alpine, Lincoln and the Yugo had all been withdrawn by 1995. (published in DFGW promotional document Advertising that builds customer relationships?..., DFGW 1997).

<sup>29</sup>From interview with David Waters: cf. Appendix 2.

<sup>30</sup>This represented 5.6% of their first year sales - some 18,750 of first year registrations



have used the shark as a metaphor for a salesman. This is the similar tactic to that used by Abram Games in Ministry of Information World War Two posters to represent the enemy. Representing the idea of the 'enemy' rather than showing a true representation of their appearance made it easier to demonise their actions. In effect this was a means of knocking the systems of all other manufacturers, who had salesmen on commission in their retail outlets.

In common with their TV commercials, the press and poster formats used established frameworks to get their message across. In the first poster put out (considered later in this chapter) the car is placed in a studio setting, and appears to be set in the background (as with DDB's VW ad in the sixties, 'Think Small'). However, where the body text in automotive press ads usually occupies the bottom fifth of the page, in Daewoo's poster it occupies as much as fifty per cent of the composition space. It is unusual for car posters to follow the format of press ads. Usually posters are treated as mini billboards and follow similar guidelines (for instance, eight word headlines and the immediacy of the proposition). Daewoo's posters are more like large magazine ads, with the proposition's detail fleshed out in quite lengthy body copy.

The organisation of elements in the poster is quite complex. On first seeing the poster, DFGW have tried to establish the familiarity of the format. The composition has been arranged so that it reinforces the idea of salesmen as sharks (the shark's fin is nearly the same height, and is of the same dark tone as the customer in the image). In front of the Daewoo a shark's fin appears to have cut through the floor, and is working its way towards a customer. The customer in the poster represents us (the viewer). He is examining the car as we are examining the poster. In the image the customer is not defined in detail. He has his back to us, his head is down looking into the car, and although we can see he is wearing a dark jacket and brown trousers, the lighting does not pick him out. He has been left 'open' so that we, the viewer, can project ourselves in his situation. The body text (unjustified) is shaped around the crack in the floor, as if the shark has broken the regular (more neutral) flow of information. The order of reading the poster's information has therefore been carefully regulated. The narrative in the image is 'read' first, then the context (a car ad), and then the branding before one reads the body copy (I discuss later in the chapter).

Following this, the role of TV commercials for the launch shifted to emphasise what DFGW described as '...a complex brand composed of many hooks'. Marketer John Dalla Costa in Admap<sup>31</sup> described this as 'velcro marketing', where a consistent brand perspective is manifested through small hooks. DFGW had listed four main hooks and several sub-hooks, which made their intention to communicate simply in ads somewhat problematic. Yet it enabled more promotional aspects than the mass-media advertising to operate as an extension of the core brand values. The clarity of the TV frame could be echoed in the showroom while the

explicit but 'non-pushy' tone of Harvey's delivery could double as a model for the customer-Daewoo representative relationship. It was, in other words, a fusion of advertising methods, connected through a series of advertising hooks, where the service rather than the product was at the core.

**Table 12: Daewoo's core brand value hooks**

<i>Direct</i>	<i>Hassle free</i>	<i>Peace of mind</i>	<i>Courtesy</i>
...so dealer costs cut from equation	Interactive in-store terminals free creches free café facilities fixed, no haggle prices extended test drives location on retail parks No delivery charges No commissioned salesmen	3 yrs full warranty 3 yrs full AA cover 3 yrs servicing 6 yr anti-corrosion warranty all safety features as standard - airbags, ABS and other features	Fee collection & delivery service free courtesy cars

DFGW strategic diagram, 1995 (source: DFGW, 2000)

Each of the 'core brand values' was the subject of a separate television commercial<sup>32</sup>. As a consequence this made the purpose of Daewoo commercials message-centred. Most automotive advertising sold on speed (images of winding roads and quick edit vignettes) or the illusion of personal freedom. In fact the direct address, the information loaded ads and the highlighting of added customer value through imagery that expressed each point effectively became Daewoo's emotive styling. It nurtured a distinctive identity of being a smart and discerning marque sufficient to prevent its 'people's champion' approach seeming clichéd. Furthermore the strategy was consistent through different media types.

#### Textual analysis of Daewoo billboard ads

The press adverts had the difficult task of condensing the service information (which was relatively verbose) into a clean cut and tangible poster, in a manner that made the text readable and non-stereotypical. The genre of car press ads had a recognisable format, which tended to feature a car shot, a key detail, cryptic headline and small body text. This tended to read as a set of separate set of detailed specs. The DFGW team had similarly noticed patterns in automotive advertising:

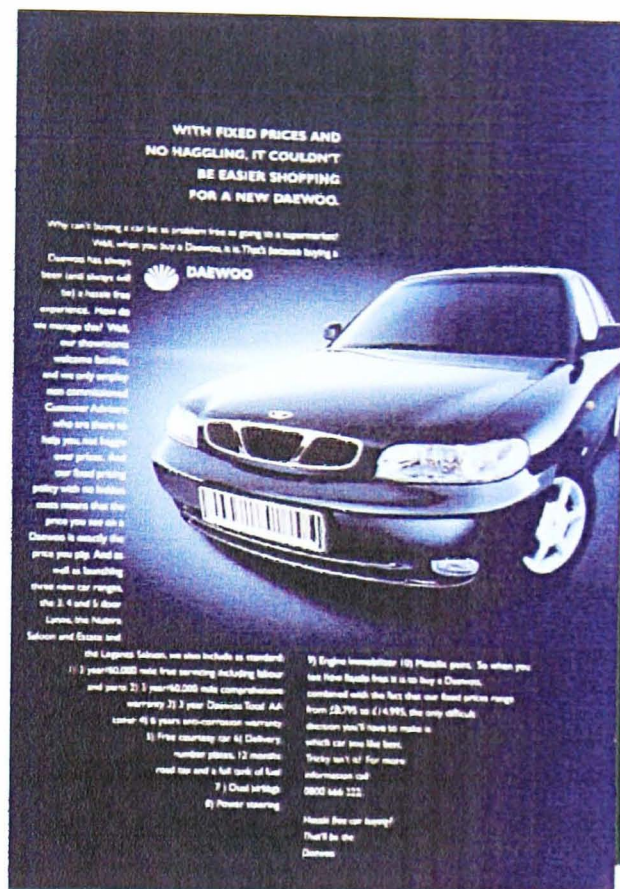
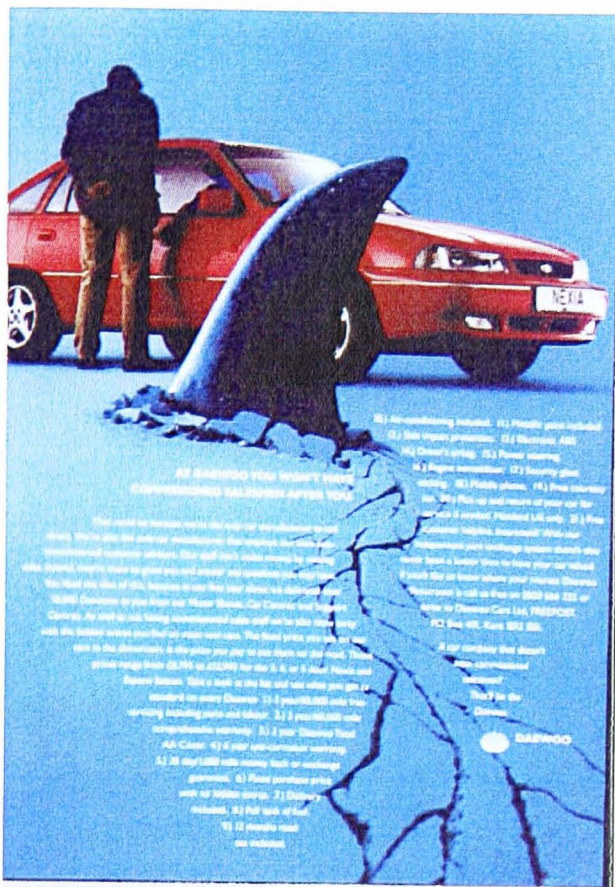
We got every car ad we could find from the last two months and we laid them out on the floor. What you get... is a big picture at the top that comes almost down to the bottom of the page with a headline in it somewhere, and there's a car either driving through the Brenna Pass (double-page spreads with cars driving at three-quarter angled through a puddle) or looking sexy to a girl, or with a family smiling in it. And there's a headline that's witty or clever about how this is built for the city, made for the country or it's faster - or so fast you could do something unusual in it<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup>Della Costa, J Velcro marketing in Admap, January 1996; from a paper at the IPA Marketing conference, June 1995 – cited initially by David Waters in 'IPA effectiveness award winner?...' (1998).

<sup>32</sup>Two further in the series announced the customer hotline while another specifically addressed the 'early adopter' free Six-month replacement promotion.

<sup>33</sup>From interview with David Waters: cf. Appendix 2.

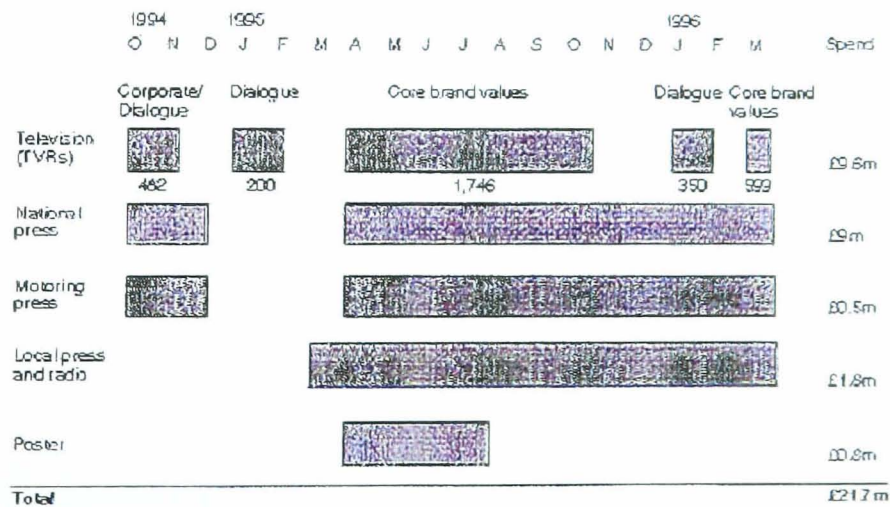
Daewoo: press & poster 'burst' ads



Two executions from Daewoo's launch poster campaign: 'Salesman' (left) and 'That'll Be The Daewoo' (right)

Diagram 1: Media plan for Daewoo Launch

■ Daewoo ad    □ Other ad



DFGW were attempting to resolve a series of contradictions – to escape the format yet make the ad distinctively in the automotive sector, to make it seem new and original but also to suggest company stability and longevity. With the additional difficulty of hooking visual style of the TV commercials, the Daewoo press ads had become more than an exercise in complex graphic problem-solving. Yet posters achieved this without appearing overcrowded. All shots were done in a studio, with greater control over the context immediately around the subject matter, so the significance of the background was reduced. This made the copy more easily readable without resorting to text in black boxes.

If one considers two of the early treatments from the campaign, 'Who's changing car buying for good?' and 'At Daewoo we don't have commissioned salesmen after you', one can see that the images are in fact metaphoric representations of the headline. They play on pre-notions of breaking the mould and (as I noted earlier,) dealers as sharks. These are the key determinants in the foreground, and other compositional elements reinforce them. The shaping of the type around the central image and plain blue tones, which was tinted to emphasise the key details in the text. The images are de-contextualised so that the statement exists not in an imagined every day context but only within the frame of the advert, given key significance by the headline. Yet the image does not only operate with the headline; the crisp focus and dramatic lighting in the shot, together with the curvular forms played up in the subject's positioning re-iterate the modest styling of the Daewoo car – even when the car is not represented in the frame. Waters noted that they sought to establish a distinctive, easily recognisable styl<sup>34</sup>: the separate repeated elements over the campaign held together in portrait format<sup>35</sup> supported this distinctive Daewoo 'look'.

Text is also figures large in the ad's art direction. In British ads the sides of the body text are usually 'justified' (or, occasionally ranged left). Car press ads stick rigidly to this familiar format, where DFGW have shaped either one or both sides of body text to tidy the compositional form around the central iconic image. Waters notes that in the planning of the first poster ad, they realised virtually all adverts squared off pictures. Waters plumbed for one which '...had a page of type and just cut a square out the type in the middle...it was terribly formal and boxy, but they (the advertisers) were talking about art and it was (constructed as) a frame with a little visual in the middle'. Copywriter Richard Grubb modified the idea using type in the manner of a flexible photographic picture crop.

In terms of context the dialogue was terse and direct. Addressing the reader in the second person, it outlines the features as if an informative, non-pushy sales person was guiding one through the dialogue. In

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<sup>34</sup>ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Dave Waters: '... we've flirted twice with (48 sheet) posters and double-page spreads but my feeling is that when you look at them, you think that's what everybody else does. Everybody else does posters and they look exactly the same, but nobody does outside back covers for cars: Its always second page, double page spread.': ibid (see appendix 2 for teanscription).

terms of tone the dialogue could have been that of the commercials<sup>36</sup>. In keeping with its desire to appear up-front the customary small print at the bottom of the page – outlining ‘price correct at time of going to press’, non-stand features and disclaimers – is absent. The dancing type makes some sentences much shorter than others, so reading the text remains a visually active process. In the Salesman poster the cracked path of the shark is constantly in view when reading the text. This reinforces the dramatic impact of the art direction. Yet the headline message in both conveys the essence of the short text – one need only scan over the visual to grasp the gist of the headline, sales message and signature style, which through the repetitive, accentuated type styling and art direction became the regular Daewoo graphic treatment.

The hookline ‘That’ll be the Daewoo’ is from the same mould as the agencies earlier punchlines ‘Hit the Hut’ and ‘We’re here to ITC other ads’; couched as a catchy turn of phrase<sup>37</sup>. It was intended to offer the brand name as a hook in the same vein as ‘You’ve been Tango’d’ (with similar marketing in Britain from 1919 Hoover became a by-word for vacuums<sup>38</sup>). The strapline’s author Dave Waters remarked that he recognised its success when journalists were picking up on it; ‘... every time they do that its an ad for us’. The Daewoo strapline attempts to place the name by way of explanation for a run-in line, for instance, ‘Who’s changing car buying for good?’. According to Waters – who art directed many of the Daewoo ads – the idea of a catchy phrase developed from attempts to come up with an alternative conclusion to the press and poster ads;

They (other car ads) all do exactly the same thing... down at the bottom you’ve got Four little columns of copy and then you’ve got an end line - ‘the ultimate driving machine’, ‘the car in front’ or whatever; we said for an end line we’ll do the cheesy thing... ‘you can’t say the end line without mentioning the brand name. Every time you say the end line of the ad its got the brand name in it... ‘Three years peace of mind? That’ll be the Daewoo’: Always a question, always an answer – it’s always the answer to what the ads are talking about.<sup>39</sup>

The endline also assumes the addresser is neutral, no longer speaking in the voice of the producer<sup>40</sup>. Yet the Tone of voice is still familiar. The line is delivered as if describing a reliable old friend - appropriate perhaps in reinforcing the stability of a new and untried manufacturer.

The phrase also has a slightly cynical undertone - relying as it does on intertextuality<sup>41</sup> with ‘that’ll be the day’, satirical in holding itself to mock ridicule. John Hegarty, director of BBH, remarked of his company second generation Boddingtons and Levi’s 501 executions that if one can comfortably knock one’s own

<sup>36</sup>Dave Waters: ‘We said, if its important enough to say, put it in the copy or leave it out.’. *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>During the mid-1990s the term ‘soundbite’ was banded in politics to mean the summing up of policies into media-friendly terms; PM John Major was intending to be ‘Tough on crime - touch on the causes of crime’ while the term New was being banded by the Labour party to divorce it from its characterisation shaped by earlier Labour governments; many claim this made the party more electable.

<sup>38</sup>In Baren, M *How it All Began* Smith Settle, W Yorks.1992 p.49, the author notes that ‘The Hoover name is jealously protected as a trademark by Hoover plc.’.

<sup>39</sup>From interview with Dave Waters: cf. appendix 2.

<sup>40</sup>After Goddard, A *The Language of Advertising*, Routledge London 1998 pp.27-30; Goddard maps out the difference between the writer - masquerading as the producer - and the reader, who is assumed to be the consumer. The body copy of Daewoo tends to deliver (second person) what ‘we’ the company are offering ‘you’ the customer, but the strapline allows the TV lead in suggesting a cut-off point before the strapline. it brings the content to a tidy resolution by offering the final line in a removed (if still familiar) tone.



product in adverts it serves as a means of reinforcing the idea of the brand's robustness. The irreverent passing off of another (supposed) Daewoo achievement suggests the brand as overtly smart while the cynical twist in the line echoes that of the knowledgeable customer.

#### Significance of the Daewoo campaign

In terms of the way the ads were received, beyond the ad industry awards it received (uniquely) from both above-<sup>42</sup> and below-the-line advertising bodies, Daewoo's own advertising recall in 1997 showed seventy one per cent of Daewoo buyers felt the adverts encouraged them to visit the showroom in the first instance. In terms of the pre-launch campaign work generating a response, over 200,000 people responded to the initial Dialogue campaign in 1995. This encouraged DFGW to run a second version in 1996 (attracting 135,000 callers – whose details were added to the database of potential customers)<sup>43</sup>.

The broadsheet press also singled the ads out for praise. While The Guardian (14 April 1996) noted the campaign 'was markedly different from traditional car ads', The Independent Weekend supplement (27 January 1996) more cautiously noted that 'the car may be ordinary but the campaign is extraordinary'. In 1996, both Autocar magazine (January 1996) and BBC2's Top Gear (March 1996) rated the Daewoo models Espero and Nexia (both based on 1980s Vauxhall cars) the worst in their sector. This prompts the question of whether the ad agency were papering over the cracks of a poor product by simply focusing off the car. Having shaped the brand appearance, DFGW were effectively selling their own service concept rather than the Daewoo car as its unique qualities.

Yet the service content (the campaign's USP) went some way to countering this. The brand was still seen to be responsible for their sold product, and each subsequent interaction with the brand representatives can potentially be treated as a means of turning dissatisfaction with the product into a chance of proving the brand's customer-orientation. In effect, while there are inevitable costs connected with responding to customer calls it still provides the opportunity to prove their service capability. Similarly the services provide an opportunity to maintain the contact, getting the customer familiar with the level of service.

#### Contextualising Daewoo

In that it's polished aesthetic still echoes that of the traditional car ad genre the appearance of the campaign is banal. However the familiarity of format serves as the frame of reference to foreground the service quality - certainly unique to car advertising. In this sense it echoes Waters sentiment that 'We wanted to do for Daewoo

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<sup>41</sup>ibid., pp.69-70; beyond Goddard, the play on intertextuality is not simply reliant on the line, but relies on its passé tone being read as irony.

<sup>42</sup>The campaign won the agency Campaign Magazine's 1995 Advertiser of the Year, while it was also voted the Marketing Society Durables brand of the year. In 1996 its 'Direct dialogue' won the Direct Marketing Association's campaign of the year (amongst others).



what VW did in the sixties'. Like the Beetle ads it put content cover style. The similarity in studio shots, which emphasised neither car length or styling, but an unrendered quality, certainly echoes its predecessor.

Nor was the 'Direct dialogue' strategy unique. The model was adapted from an offshoot of General Motors US Saturn project, which GM ran as a separate entity<sup>44</sup>. Saturn cars were sold through the Saturn brand rather than being model-specific<sup>45</sup>, and by developing a renowned relationship with customers around the marque, word of the 'exclusive group' spread and they established a loyal consumer-base. When the preliminary study was being conducted for Daewoo, their newly appointed marketing director Pat Farrell<sup>46</sup> (who worked with DFGW) discovered Saturn: 'They really look after their customers. They organised barbecues each year, they phone up when it's due for a service' – and they have the entire compliment of GM services to back them up. This goes some way to addressing the customer shift from consumer to 'selector'. If they are included in an exclusive club there is the sense of brand ownership, that they are part of the brand. There have subsequently been other direct marketing strategies geared to a similar end. In 1999 direct ad agency CMB instigated a programme for 3,000 mailed Hyundai customers called Design Track, which invited consumers to participate in the styling and design of the next car. One of the DMA award jurors remarked that 'Once you show you not only asked for my opinion but you've used it, I almost feel obliged to buy the car.'<sup>47</sup>.

What renders the Daewoo campaign a landmark is its broader appropriation of different types of media – the fluid connection between research and advertising, marketing strategy and advertising, data assimilation and advertising as well as the retail process. The term 'advertising' also covers a multitude of communications from mass media to direct mail. The broad-based, lateral and integrated construction of the project allowed all aspects to convey the ad message. In other words it spread the core brand identity throughout the company.

It was however in an ideal position to do this given that there was no existing infrastructure to develop around. It was therefore based primarily on a mid-nineties paradigm (delivered with the use of puns, irony and a sense of familiarity amongst other devices) and is shaped by the preliminary forms of research. Daewoo was one of the first product launches in the 1990s to tap into to the sea-change in cultural outlook. There was a sense in retail sectors and in services that consumers had become more adept at weighing up consumption paths, and wanting better value from products (rather than goods with short obsolescence).

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<sup>43</sup>Statistics from DFGW via Daewoo; also published in the DFGW promotional catalogue 'IPA advertising effectiveness awards...'.

<sup>44</sup>From interview with David Waters: cf. appendix 2.

<sup>45</sup>In a similar vein to Nike, who differentiated between brand and their individual products; see Technology chapter (6).

<sup>46</sup>Farrell had developed a reputation as a top automotive marketer at Rover and was head-hunted for the new post on behalf of Daewoo in 1994; he was only installed in his job Three months before DFGW were appointed. (Farrell worked with the also newly-appointed managing director for Europe, Les Woodcock).

<sup>47</sup>Dale, K & Fletcher, D DMA Royal Mail Awards 1999, in Marketing Direct, Haymarket Business Pub., London 2000 p.6.

Introducing market researchers and data analysts meant that the brand profile could be closely shaped by closely observing consumer values. This was made possible by adapting qualitative research and having a method of advertising that could assimilate change. In other words the infrastructure was at least as significant as the advertising once the launch a campaign was under way. It facilitated the ability to evolve the brand alongside shifting consumer values. The data had been close enough to consumer's decision-making processes to determine the reasons for choice, while being broad-based enough to avoid being effected by the flakiness of chameleonic consumers<sup>48</sup>. The form of soft-selling avoided hassling potential purchasers, but corresponded with them at set points and managed to maintain a dialogue without over-stepping the mark – unlike BT mailers (p.78).

Beyond advertising and communication, the strategic thinking also introduced a different mind-set for the consumption of products and the significance of the product from which the brand emanates. In effect, for the first three customers bought a service *promise* that the car would be reliable years (many that buy first-edition cars tend to keep the same model). As Daewoo subscribers they were entitled to any number of the product in terms of replacements. This created the sense that customers were buying into the company - not just a fixed product. Because the service was inclusive in the initial cost the notion of newness did not start depreciating straight after the point of purchase. This suggested an alternative to the notoriously apposite interests of seller and buyer famously parodied in Monty Python's 'Dead Parrot' sketch, where the post-sale dialogue centred on a defensive seller trying to justify his pre-sale claims. With the Daewoo method the producers responsibility continued.

In terms of its significance to the direct advertising in the 1990s, this represented one of the first media agencies to construct a balanced campaign evenly communicated through different media outlets. It is also a significant benchmark in the shift of advertising during the decade, as the increasing ad revenue for direct advertising and marketing grew proportionately to the dwindling growth of budgets afforded to media advertising. While Heinz switched their entire £14 million account briefly to direct advertisers, sparking concerns that big brand media advertising would become extinct (cf. Chapter 2) Daewoo's more measured media mix demonstrated that the choice of medium need not be an 'either/or' decision. The ad agency had put appropriation first. As Craik Jones' creative director Simon Kershaw remarked, 'If you want fish you don't go to a butcher'<sup>49</sup>. Furthermore the data base had allowed for continual technological development, facilitating the campaigns on-going evolution in a decade where the media capability out-paced the industry's ability to adapt to its full capabilities. In several respects therefore the Daewoo advertising became a benchmark of its period.

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<sup>48</sup>Car purchasing required a big decision on a less regular basis, so there was scope for customers to change their thinking.

<sup>49</sup>Interview with Simon Kershaw, creative director at Craik Jones 31 March 2000. For summary of interview points see Appendix 2.

Similar to the way that DFGW had delegated some of the direct advertising tasks, many media agencies had started their own off-shoot direct advertising units to broaden the scope for mixed media advertising - CDP, BBH, Publicis, AMV and Saatchi & Saatchi among them (cf. Chapter 2). Many already in integrated advertising felt this was a crude way to diversify advertising. Among them was Shaun McIlrath, who criticised such apparent integration for operating in name only. He perceived that across the main media advertising industry;

...integration has been adopted reluctantly... as a widget that allows them to sell advertising. The way (ad) people view integration is just as a mail pack that look like the TV commercial... (the move into) below-the-line was just to protect their income when they saw a lot of money going into below-the-line and accountability because of the recession; what they did was to pull in the below-the-line (and) kept them separate. You have a lot of specialists, but no hierarchy in the discipline, the type of 'media' or whatever you run with should be done on merits of the idea. So, its problem first, and the solution may not be advertising.<sup>50</sup>

In Daewoo's case the strategic plan dictated the use and type of advertising. The re-appraisal of consumption had in any case been the means by which the alternative strategy had been reached.

Perhaps the nearest comparison to the Daewoo project was direct advertising group Craik Jones<sup>51</sup> work for Landrover. The Landrover campaign work is certainly one of the most frequently cited campaigns by direct advertisers. When Landrover's sales slumped in the summer of 1991 the agency were briefed to develop a marketing programme encouraging luxury car buyers to test-drive (and potentially buy) Range Rover. Initially the target was 300 sales<sup>52</sup>.

In their early project research of past owners they quickly deduced that the marque was miss-conceived as a truck rather than a luxury car. The agency's first response was to compile a list from existing data of luxury car owners whose profile matched that of Landrover owners as well as investigating the profiles and buying habits of existing Landrover owners. They then sent out response-mail to the target audience and set about researching consumers that *didn't* respond. It was their reasoning that would provide the clues as to how the promotional strategy needed to be re-directed<sup>53</sup>. Their next phase was what Kershaw described as 'passive information'. They sent out short brochures on the vehicle to raise the level of knowledge and initiate a form of dialogue with their target market. For those that responded they offered a half-day test drive - presented in the mailer as a 'private view' - with a free hamper picnic. This aimed to shape the frame of reference for Landrover drivers; that of countrified gentry. Already this was a direct advertising equivalent of

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<sup>50</sup>Shaun McIlrath, interviewed 14 March 2000: cf. Appendix 2.

<sup>51</sup>Originally a creative team at Ogilvy Direct, Craik Jones set up the direct marketing agency in 1990 using Landrover as their start-up account. Initially the then-Landrover marketing manager sought two like-minded agencies above- and below-the-line to make dialogue between media campaign and direct marketing relevant and easy, choosing media agency Bates Dorland and Craik Jones at pitch.

<sup>52</sup>Simon Kershaw. For summary of interview see Appendix 2.

<sup>53</sup>Initially they sought ways of accumulating data to identify the recorded individual dialogue that took place before purchase, but such records had not previously been logged. The core brand values they refocused on were: its authenticity, assumed supremacy, individualism it facilitated and freedom, according to its creative director Simon Kershaw (cf. Appendix 2).

selling jointly on aspiration and constructing a pseudo-culture for Landrover owners. The test-drive became more than an introduction to the car.

The reason that Craik Jones were prepared to invest so much in each mailer was that their research had singled out the most likely clients. They only needed a small number of those taking up the offer to buy the Landrover for the promotion to still be in profit. The database evidence in effect limited the risk and enabled Craik Jones to be more extravagant. As Kershaw remarked, 'most agencies won't touch the dull bit - the use of data-bases and number-crunching. That's where integrated and direct agencies that already use data-base marketing have the big advantage'.<sup>54</sup>

Of the six per cent that took up the offer 700 sales were generated – more than double the anticipated number. On the basis of this, and the feedback it generated, the schemes developed further over the following years. The Landrover Adventure journal kept Landrover in touch with brand developments and also helped reinforce the myths around the marque through carefully managed art direction and lifestyle imagery. The Landrover strategy carefully balanced the loyalty of existing customers to the mark with the need to attract new customers, so most of the generic promotions sought to integrate the two, realising the testimonies of existing owners would be persuasive. In 1995 Craik Jones even organised a 'Country Affair Day' for Landrover owners whose purchases were prompted by the mailings, taking over Castle Brompton for the day to instigate an association and 'to help customers realise their aspirations'.<sup>55</sup>

Landrover is one of few British brands that throughout the decade remained led principally by direct marketing. In fact the direct marketing became the brands means of keeping customers keenly attached to the Landrover marque. Between 1990-99 Craik Jones worked with two Landrover-appointed partner agencies – first Bates Dorland, then WCRS – who handled TV and Press advertising. During the 1990s the Landrover company also had two changes of owner<sup>56</sup>. On top of this the marketing directors at Landrover tended to change nearly every two years. In effect Craik became brand 'guardians' because of their comparatively long and familiar association with the marque. As the job of brand marketing director is often short; many appear to make their mark then move up the career ladder by changing jobs. Landrover's long-term association with Craik Jones had put the marketing agency at the spine of the brands identity, in a similar vein to HHCL's role in shaping the persona of Tango. The consistency of approach and generic development were key to giving the brand an evolutionary logic that amounts to brand depth.

Daewoo and DFGW have developed an equally mutual relationship, especially in the latter's adherence to their core brand hooks. Where Craik Jones brand hooks wire in the pre-supposed 'customer

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<sup>54</sup>Simon Kershaw, cf. Appendix 2.

<sup>55</sup>ibid. The event managed to attract a 64% turnout from those mailed. The average response to an ordinary mailshot is approximately 1%.

aspirations' Daewoo's were more inward looking, about the brand value rather than customer desire. Conversely Landrover had a marque to evoke a sense of status reinforcement with, where Daewoo's was about servicing the customer. Notably both were selling assumptions *beyond* the product. Both campaign strategies had acknowledged that winning customers over in such an expensive market relied on the individual relations consumers established with the brand – not a unique or even emotive selling proposition but more specifically and individual one.

It is also worth comparing the impact and 'afterglow'<sup>57</sup> of the key commercial broadcast and mailing points; Daewoo's publicity strategy involved a three-stage burst with two-month intervals in between. This allowed for a distinction between introducing the brand, making the strategy explicit and then entering in a full media campaign at the time of launch (see p.145). Craik Jones campaign was comparatively more reliant on direct advertising. This could maintain a more on-going impact rather than the peaks and troughs of media advertising burst campaigns (cf. Frequency of Pitch diagram, p.256). It does not however allow for a broader passing into common parlance to stem from the campaign in the way that Daewoo's strapline intended. Yet both approaches were well measured to the issues and means of communication their vehicle personality required.

#### Daewoo in a wider context of direct marketing

Placing Daewoo in a wider context of direct marketing's evolution in Britain is less straight-forward. Little secondary material on the subject has been published nor is its history authorised. At marketing conventions<sup>58</sup> it is evident that agencies have eulogised their own case histories<sup>59</sup> which can double as self-publicity. Given that the profession operates in a continuous extended present (the constant now) case histories are not necessarily as relevant in shaping the discipline as much as present paradigms. Therefore marketing in Britain has developed with little documentation next to advertising (see Chapter 1). Because advertising has a propensity for celebrating what it deems the best of its kind – using its own award yardsticks such as D&AD, IPA, Campaign magazine and (internationally) the Rose D'Or at Canne – one can glean a sense of evolution by tracking award winners. If one were to similarly track the direct marketing industry's own award schemes (the consensus among agencies is that the Direct Mail Awards are the most significant) it is apparent that direct marketing has become more disparate in medium and more technologically geared.

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<sup>56</sup>It started with Rover then went to BMW in the mid-1990s, and to Ford in 2000.

<sup>57</sup>A term appropriated by Korean product designer Keyna Tagawa (Royal College of Art, 2000) to describe the difference in the length of sensation after receiving an e-mail, phone call and a letter.

<sup>58</sup>The largest in Britain is the Direct Marketing Show which has taken place annually in May at London's Wembley Area (since 1995).

<sup>59</sup>The time of writing Terry Hunt of Evans Hunt Scott is constructing a case history of the Tesco Clubcard for publication in 2001 (this case-study forms part of the material).

Up to 1990 the awarded campaigns were direct mail shots. The (unawarded) First Direct campaign<sup>60</sup> introduced the format that was later adopted as the model for telephone banking in the late 1990s. This involved bold, fixed cryptic imagery in its burst campaign with a back-up phone service for follow-ups.

**Table 13: Direct Marketing 'Gold' award winners between 1985-2000 (see p.367)**

1985	<b>BT mobile phones</b>	business to business; included cell-phone, cassette recorder & audio letter: 'An unusual entry ... business to business market is influenced by gimmickry; this demonstrates product' (DMA 1990)
1986	<b>The Peking Coll'ion</b>	china figurine of 'girl from coalport'; readers asked to imagine she is visiting a sick relative at Gt Ormond St hospital; part of every payment went to the charity: 214% over target
1987	<b>The Army</b>	officer recruitment campaign mail shot affecting mud and dynamism of the job's excitement: Response was well over target
1988	<b>The Next Directory</b>	stylised home delivery catalogue; 'Next changed the image of the catalogue business; a cross between Gratton's mail order & Next's retailing principles' (DMA 1989)
1989	<b>No overall winner</b>	
1990	<b>Rover Catalyst First Direct (Mid. Bk)</b>	tailored mailers selected by individuals from a menu of subjects stylishly connected graphic design PR and TV executions (became a model for late-1990s banking services)
1991	<b>Range Rover</b>	direct mailers around core theme 'Not so much a test drive, more a private view' linked to a scheme allowing present & likely Landrover drivers to borrow the vehicle for a day.
1992	<b>NSPCC</b>	successful TV & M fund-raising drive; a mail pack set to live action, setting up a human problem using intriguing visuals; exceeded investment expectation by 78%
1993	<b>The National Canine Defence League</b>	cheap mail shot pack with appeal letter printed on inside of envelope with case-study stories of animal cruelty; it cost £8,500 and raised £160,000
1994	<b>American Express</b>	mail shot targeting hotels pubs and shops known for not accepting Amex; it warned they '... were not the only cold prospects they were freezing.'
1995	<b>Range (Land)Rover Gotan</b>	teaser postcards with real leaves, shells and chrysanthemums; the car launched solely through direct mail; LR claim one dealer sold his quota of the £40,000 car on the spot. cult (collectible) Tango doll launched as a self-liquidating promotion, Extrapolation of Tango's brand identity, to fuel curiosity of brand 'fans'.
1996	<b>Daewoo ad,</b>	DM and in-showroom service all reflected Daewoo claim of being the most customer-responsive supplier in the market: Daewoo also asked people to recount bad car company experiences then, using this alongside a list of issues and a data-base of examples created 'Daewoo Price' as a value mark.
1997	<b>Goldfish</b>	launched credit card with 'Goldfish product guides' to launch integrated Goldfish identity. Praised for 'copy that had wit and excellent art direction' (DMA 1998)
1998	<b>Cable &amp; Wireless Welsh Tourist Board</b>	multi-media campaign to spread distinctive yellow branding. Focused on product benefits with customer-centred DM; campaign responsible for C&W's in-road on BT share broadened threshold of 'new media' - chalk paving stone renderings & ad lines written in dust on the back of vans were Two of several eye-catching, imaginative executions
1999	<b>Hyundai Car</b>	retention mailers targeting established market with fun questionnaires & bi-monthly consumer magazines. Had customers participating in design & styling of their next car. 'It does everything that we say you should do in relationship marketing.' (DMA Aw. 2000)
2000	<b>Levi Sta Prest</b>	Flat Eric doll: a popular by-product spread the campaign mood by developing the mode of communication through more pleasurable consumption.

*assembled by the author, June 2000 with guidance from David Harris of LIDA - M&C Saatchi; & the DMA.*

In 1991 and 1992 (awards were given the following year) the NSPCC and the National Canine Defence League utilised direct communication to outline the significance of each donation. Its impact would not have been as persuasive through broadwave (media) advertising. Where Ogilvy Direct's stunt-oriented work for AMEX was awarded in 1994<sup>61</sup>, it was the following year that the broader scope of direct marketing became successful enough in the mainstream to challenge media advertising. Both the Range Rover campaign (an off-shoot of Craik Jones' Landrover work) and the Gotan doll (a 'self-liquidating'<sup>62</sup> brand extension of the Tango campaigns) appeared to operate *outside* recognised conventions of advertising, and had the ability to appear

<sup>60</sup>By Howell Henry Chaldecott Lury in 1990.

<sup>61</sup>Which paved the way for more high-profile campaigns such as Impact FCA's series of environmental ads on street pavements and written into dust on lorries for The Welsh Tourist Board. See illustrations in Appendix 3.

<sup>62</sup>The term 'self-liquidating promotion' is used by direct marketers to describe special offers that have a date of expiry included as part of their strategy. Discount vouchers are the most common form of self-liquidating promotion.



not as advertising at all. The Gotan doll is a benchmark in its ability to tailor itself into youth culture as an iconic marque in its own right.

In some respects this was post-advertising – operating as an equivalent of Indie music. The doll became a product that existed outside the brand (its shelf life was longer than the drink) yet assumed the brand persona within its goonish appearance. The journey consumers went through to obtain the doll also shaped the personal meanings the doll seemed to convey – the action of noting the phone number in the TV commercials or on the side of the can. Phoning the bizarre ‘help line’ to order the doll, and the way it was packaged both became light-hearted Tango branding opportunities. The participatory nature of the dialogue made the correspondent receptive to the game play. What’s more the sense of irony built into the crude doll (the cut lines moulded into the texture around the arms and legs, the Tango marque printed across the doll’s left buttock) serve as ‘hooks’ that offer the product as an artefact of youth culture<sup>63</sup>. Participating in Tango’s game play bought the consumers nearer the spirit Tango were associating with. As planner Dave O’Hanlon had suggested, ‘By phoning and joining in you’re one dissenting voice in a million’<sup>64</sup>. The Gotan doll (NB. an anagram of Tango) was planned as a badge of dissent, and to an extent it achieved this as a symbol among non-dissenters (cf. Chapter 4 and Appendix 4, advertising and individuality) placed on car dashboards and in children’s bedrooms. Yet the term *dissent* has its meaning shaped by Western consumer culture (less of Socrates and more of Hebdige, *Hiding in the Light*: 1989), of controlled contrariness, where one wants to dissent but not be out on a limb. Like 1990s floating brands, the doll ultimately operated outside the identity of orange Tango to serve the brand identity at large.

Similarly the puppet produced in 1998 for the Levi’s Sta Prest jeans commercial (Flat Eric), appeared to operate outside the obvious branded remit of conventional advertising, and developed an independent identity that still connected to the brand rather than the product it was introduced to promote. It more overtly sent up the nature of advertising by serving as a parody of a puppet. In the advert one can see the sticks moving its arm, while the ad team that assembled the original Flat Eric model at Bartle Bogle Hegarty were keen to keep its appearance coarse yet friendly – on the cusp of being acceptable as a puppet<sup>65</sup>. It was effectively a parody of itself, which is perhaps why it struck enough of a chord to be sold in toyshops. Flat Eric was a clear self-referential piece of irony that operated in a knowingly disposable manner.

In a sense direct advertising had helped transcend the mainstream cynicism of mass advertising by being more closely tailored to the nuances of contemporary culture. Daewoo’s mark is in questioning the

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<sup>63</sup>David Harris, co-owner of direct marketing agency LIDA (interviewed 23 March 2000) sites seeing one in a sale priced at Six pounds. The run of 10,000 dolls in 1996 were initially sold for £2.99 each.

<sup>64</sup>From second Dave O’Hanlon interview. For transcription see Appendix 2.

<sup>65</sup>Noted in interview with Will Awdry, creative director at BBH Unlimited, interviewed 23 March 2000.

existing habitual values that separate sales as a separate entity, where tighter control through technology (databases) could cement a different brand-brand selector relationship.

In terms of the decade's progression, where Tango led advertising towards direct marketing the Daewoo campaign strategy connected the advertising and marketing at source. As the next case study demonstrates, direct marketing was equally adept at shaping all forms of brand communication by the latter 1990s. As Kershaw predicted, 'Perhaps the story is not the last 10 years but the next 10. The next move in advertising is the *real* ramifications of the internet - greater freedom to choose the product, more product information'. By 2001 approximately forty per cent were set up for site visitors to look at the home pages as a sort of inter-active digital mail order catalogue.

By the mid-1990s the gap between customers experiences of using a product and the ad messages that agencies put out was under scrutiny by consumer watchdogs. This was an observation that DFGW had undoubtedly picked up on. Discrepancies that could be found between presumed and actual brand (product and service) experiences showed companies out of touch with a more savvy '*pro*-sumer' now equipped with internet information and a plethora of new consumer magazine titles. Consumers were becoming more discerning and pro-active in exercising choice (cf. Chapter 5).

Daewoo's 'service guarantee' aimed to avoid such pitfalls. With Landrover, their closeness to regular customers in effect led them to become a car manufacturers prototype in controlling their brand's second-hand market, and to become more involved with the typical activities of their product owners.

Daewoo also demonstrated the advantage of tapping into digital marketing technology, which enabled them to more accurately plan for future growth and advertising drives. In comparison media advertising relied on the existing norms remaining in tact, despite the growing number of broadcast channels and the dilution of homogeneous audience.

Yet Daewoo's success in Britain was not extended to operations in Asia, which limited the depth and longevity of its success. This was less of an issue however to perhaps the most significant campaign of the 1990s in Britain, which was also the most covert: The Tesco Clubcard.

Chapter 3c

**Tesco Clubcard, direct advertising and the mass-consumer**

Context

In 1991 the supermarket chain Tesco appointed direct marketing firm Evans Hunt Scott (EHS, f.1986) to do their direct mail promotions. This was Tesco's first attempt at establishing direct communication with their customers. At the time alternative terms and methods had entered the lexicon of branding: relationship marketing, media neutral and one-to-one marketing. These approaches would radically alter the way the profession worked. Tesco was no exception in realising that database information at point of purchase could be made better use of.

At the time EHS were renowned as one of the first and largest direct marketing firms. Their client base included BMW and The Economist. Their work tended to involve building brands via direct and individual advertising correspondence – through subscription packages, price promotions and special offer schemes. Shortly after the agency was taken on by Tesco, EHS had been saved from receivership by communications corporation Havas, who had bought and re-pitched EHS as the marketing wing of their portfolio of advertising agencies. During the take-over new MD Jon Ingall was brought in and re-appraised the company's project accounts by instigating an audit of work.

At the same time Tesco's MD Tim Mason and his Tesco liaison officer Grant Harrison were assessing opportunities to exploit their new Epos system. The system could identify customers at checkouts using a swipe card, so potentially they could track their customers' buying habits. Yet Tesco was not convinced why they would want to track consumers, and saw that the gleaning of such information might deter potential shoppers. Ingall and Terry Hunt were commissioned to investigate and present possible advantages to Tesco in being able to identify customers by name and address.

This was one of several measures Tesco investigated in 1991. At the time their position in the retail market was being challenged by Asda, whose turnover was growing through competitive pricing. J Sainsbury were the market leader with a reputation for affordable quality. They neatly connected the cost and aspirations of a wide band of the mass-market (B, C1, C2 and D). Ingall's audit had shown Tesco had developed an identity away from its late-seventies 'pile it high, sell it cheap' reputation by revamping stores and spending more energy on improving in-store service. Yet – according to Hunt – Tesco was still seen as being poor in quality, service and cost, which resulted in a poor standing even amongst their regular customers. The threat of large discount food retailers from Germany – Cost Co and Aldi – prompted Tesco to search for ways to strengthen their standing.

Both Ingall and Hunt recognised that Tesco's competitors could easily mount a challenge for its customers. For Sainsbury's this amounted to leveraging its quality heritage — a strategy they used throughout the 1980s. Asda were already making a virtue through their low price associations in all their publicity material. Tesco's own market research showed that their best option was to draw more heavily on existing customers. The check out statistics showed they already had more customers than their rivals but they spent less — presumably doing the bulk of their shopping at other supermarkets. By increasing what Ingall called 'their value of existing customers' through delivering '... the best shopping trip', Tesco could make a virtue of continuing to re-shape and improve their service quality. This approach also had other benefits. Chasing existing customers was less expensive than attracting new customers, who may well only test the store rather than stay loyal. It also enabled Tesco to be in greater control of the advertised message, which, by not leading with mass advertising means meant that messages were less generalised, This improved Tesco's ability to deliver on the perceived promises generated by promotional material.

Hunt used the analogy of his mother who shopped at Tesco regularly during a week and would spend around £3,000 a year, and she has another discretionary £3,000 budget that she spent elsewhere. If she took her shopping budget from Tesco they would have had no way of knowing, while Hunt shopped *properly* once a week but drifted in throughout the week for smaller items (snacks, newspapers and cigarettes for example) and paid with cash. He spent about £7,000 annually in their supermarket but Tesco would only have known about his bigger weekly spend. The conclusions Hunt drew were logical.

Through knowledge you can defend, attack and ring-fence your best customers, while you can also identify your 'opportunity customer', put a value against households and bid for business. In other words, Loyalty is an active (not passive) business; not giving stuff away but exchanging it for knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

The concept was not new: mail order companies and Readers Digest used mail to individually target potential customers. David Ogilvy through his company Ogilvy & Mather had also set up an early equivalent of a direct marketing service for American Express in the late nineteen-sixties to develop and launch AMEX, the first personable extension to the regular banking services. Data-driven research companies had used shopping profiles to establish retail services share of the market and have paralleled the information with other data profile — notably types of account, investments and nature of employment. These were used to assess individual consumer's anticipated lifetime value to production and service industries. In the retail sector fashion retailers embraced both aspects of Tesco's strategy in separate ways. While Debenhams introduced customer account

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<sup>1</sup> Terry Hunt, MD Evans Hunt Scott, first interviewed 4 July 2000: cf. Appendix 2.

cards and offered discounts to members Next introduced a more uniquely branded mail service that was in effect an adaptation of the model shaped by Grains and Kayes (amongst others) in the sixties.

Data-driven marketing was therefore established in different fields by 1990. In a sense EHS were just adapting a contemporary view of marketing, rather than introducing an original way of thinking about consumers. So what made this significant was that it took what was perceived by marketers to be best practice from the emerging information industry and applied it to retail, where the brand was in a better position to feed reward incentives for participation. As the project developed it got larger in scale, eventually becoming a substantial part of Tesco's overall strategic forward-thinking. Tesco even re-directed the majority of their promotional spend (some £70 million) from media advertising and telemarketing and into Clubcards launch budget, spinning their 'Every Little Helps' ad line to reinforce the appearance of a scheme pitched as being customer-centred.

#### How the project was constructed

From the first presentation in 1992 the concept was developed in close-knit collaboration between the marketers at Tesco and creatives and managers at EHS, who before the final launch. They introduced a third party (statistical data analysts Dunn Humby) to shape the structure of data-gathering (from May 1994). Tesco decided that they wanted to keep the identity of the scheme generic and developed the graphics and service language (Clubcard) through in-house design and marketing teams.

The term 'Club' was felt to imbue a sense of elite care for customers, and would imply a sense of exclusivity which would serve to counter-act both Tesco's poor service perception and its perceived social positioning. It also assumed that the brand was about to invest more in their regular customers, which made EHS wary. They were concerned that unless Tesco could guarantee delivering on the *perceived* promise they were in danger of over-estimating what they could deliver and finish up under-achieving. However Mason, Harrison and Bradley at Tesco were keen on the sense of clubbiness, that its members had elected to join and enjoy club-like privileges. Ultimately they kept the identity and opted, with their board's backing, to invest more in the initial price-promotion that the Clubcard scheme needed to guarantee the matching of expectation.

A trial run for the Clubcard was initially test launched in three southern stores (Banbury, High Wycombe and Maidstone) from October 1993. Each store was fitted with specialist transaction recording equipment while site-specific databases were developed to handle the quantity of information, which was shorter in variety but larger in volume than most marketing research firms would have been equipped to handle.

Initial feedback from the stores in terms of take-up and turnover revealed a 'high level of appeal and significant potential for impacting on sales'<sup>2</sup> so the trial was extended to 14 stores by December where it

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<sup>2</sup>Tesco marketing report sent to EHS, 6 November 1993; held in EHS archive.

exceeded Tesco's expectations<sup>3</sup> over the Christmas period. Further developments in the data organisation, together with detailed plans for the reward initiatives, format and presentation design were shaped throughout 1994 with its teams in EHS, Dunn Humby and Tesco all signed up to a code of secrecy. The Tesco board decided in December 1994 to bring the full launch throughout all British Tesco stores forward to 14 February 1995, just long enough to have cards printed and point of sale material ready for launch without rivals having the time to organise a same say response<sup>4</sup>.

The early launch date had been manufactured by EHS and Tesco to give them what Terry Hunt described as 'First-Mover Advantage'; by introducing the scheme they were the first to identify their secondary shoppers. They shaped mailers with offers to entice those peripherally shopping at Tesco to become regulars. By launching the card before rivals Tesco they set the agenda of competition: others would be measured against their scheme, so the early launch guaranteed Tesco as the first retailer to launch a customer card<sup>5</sup>.

#### How it operated

The system that was shaped by 1995 created a cycle between Tesco, Dunn Humby who translate the data (some 200 million product purchases daily) and EHS who are fed translated information and with Tesco's marketing department. It is with Tesco's marketing department that defined the appropriate measures to adapt and develop the remit of activity around Clubcard's core activity. Data is transferred overnight to a central database, re-mapped and categorised. This is then available the following day on-line for each store's customer service centre, containing amongst other details each customer's current points tally.

The data is simultaneously transmitted to Dunn Humby, who converted data into usable market information. This subsequently drives EHS's communications programme. Such information spans the proportion of revenue from higher spending customers to seasonal consumption patterns.

**Table 14: Tesco's 7 initial data segmentation groups**

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| • Visiting patterns            | • In-house departmental sales groupings |
| • Spend levels                 | • Types of purchases                    |
| • Life stage                   | • Coupon redeemers/non-redeemers        |
| • Postal/geographical location |   |

source: Jon Ingall, March 2000/Terry Hunt, July 2000

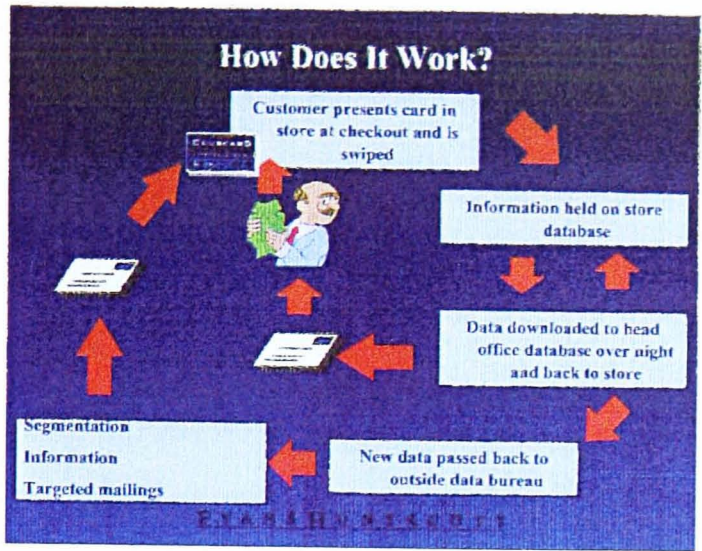
<sup>3</sup>30% redemption on first batch of coupons, while turnover increased beyond Tesco's own anticipated Christmas figures. While this may have been effected by other factors, the sales figures were enough to justify an expansion of the trial figures. Dunn Humby were bought in when the trial was increased to 17 Stores in May 1994 to 'see in primary data could be could prove in clear financial terms whether or not the card was worthwhile'; from (the restyled) 'dunnhumby' website [www.dunnhumby.co.uk/dha\\_tesco\\_info.html](http://www.dunnhumby.co.uk/dha_tesco_info.html)

<sup>4</sup>According to Jon Ingall, the stores were each only given four days notice to prevent the news leaking out (from Ingall's presentation notes, unpublished, January 1998).

<sup>5</sup>The launch date was also a response to the hunch that rival retailer Safeway had been developing a similar scheme. The cards were produced in secrecy at The Print Corporation near Oxford (at the time it was part of the former Maxwell Corporation). Other cards being printed there – which EHS was a rival chain using a similar strategy – turned out to be a credit firm; it certainly concentrated their intention of being the first to run with the scheme. Source: Jon Ingall, former director, EHS, MD Archibald Ingall Stretton, from 1999, first interviewed 27 March 2000: cf. Appendix 2



Tesco Clubcard: database segmentations



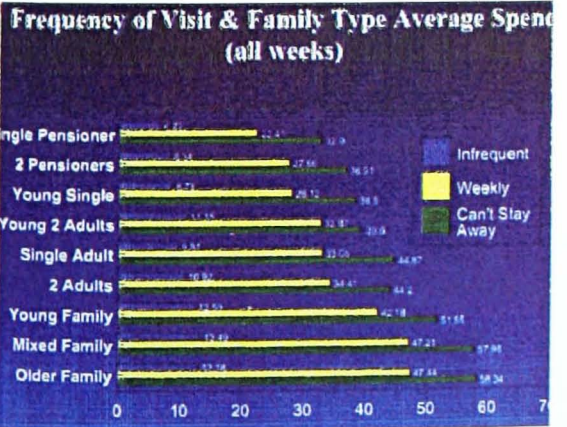
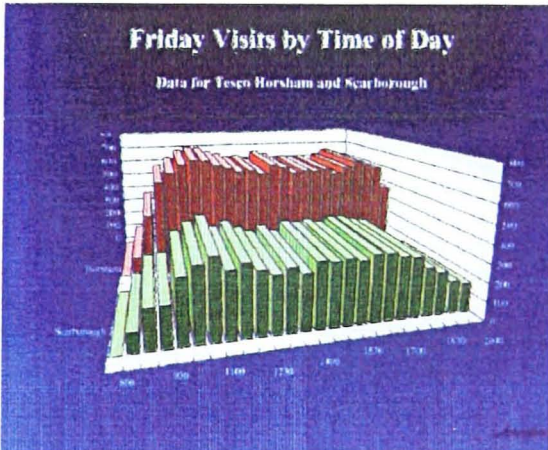
The Tesco Clubcard information/reward cycle

The cycle organised by below-the-line ad agency Evans Hunt Scott ensured that customers use of vouchers was acknowledged with further vouchers. This diagram was put together by co-creators Jon Ingall and Terry Evans.

Data produced by Dunn Humby/EHS for Tesco(1996) & 'lifestage'-targeted Clubcard magazines

Dunn Humby re-shaped data from Tesco checkouts so that stores could make clearer localised decisions on their product lines. The 'Top 5 Products' tables (top left) re-segmented data to map out the top selling foods. The 'Friday Visits' diagram (top right) outlines peak shopping hours, which can be used to determine when staff are required. The 'Frequency of Visit' chart (above left) translated data to outline individual store customer profiles. Such data helped Tesco marketing department to target consumers with appropriate offer vouchers and store magazines.

Segment	Top 5 Products
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tesco 40 Value Fish Fingers</li> <li>tesco Pasta Sauceded Wine &amp; Herbs 440g Jar</li> <li>tesco Value Oven Chips 2.72kg</li> <li>tesco Cream Of Tomato Soup 290g Can</li> <li>tesco McCain Southern Fried Grills 198g 9</li> </ul>
Young Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green Chillies 50g Pack Class 1</li> <li>Tesco Fresh Garlic + Herb Tortellini 300g</li> <li>Felix Chunks In Jelly Turkey &amp; Tuna 400g</li> <li>Felix Chunks In Gravy Tuna &amp; Salmon 400g</li> <li>Tesco 2 Skinless Chicken Breast Fillet 270g</li> </ul>
Families with Older Kids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tesco 2 Litre</li> <li>tesco Ownbrass Drifter Snackpack 8pk</li> <li>tesco mirtha Frazzles 6pk</li> <li>tesco mirtha Square Crisps R/Slted 6 Pack X 25g</li> <li>tesco Ways Towels Ultra Plus Super 12'S</li> </ul>
Pensioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tesco Prunes In Syrup 420g Can</li> <li>My Weekly</li> <li>Tesco White Medium Sliced Danish Loaf 400g</li> <li>Tesco Thick Sliced Danish Loaf 400g</li> <li>Hovis Wheatgerm Bread Tin 400g</li> </ul>



As the profile could be developed with more effective segmentation database technology during the latter half of the nineties, so the data became more specific to increasingly complex operational communications strategies which, in effect, amounted to a more detailed identification. This was used to inform the type of communication each customer should receive.

The data also showed where the store needed to develop its other promotions. For instance early statistics broken down by product type showed that most customers used less than half of the store's departments. Tesco interpreted this as an opportunity to instigate an EHS direct marketing campaign – vouchers, adding third-party brand partners<sup>6</sup> and magazine advertorials – encouraging consumers the 'shop the shop'<sup>7</sup>.

The same techniques were then engineered to target Clubcard holders who were non-consumers of the petrol filling stations, the wine department and baby products. All were targeted to customers who they knew were in the market for such products.

Of all the schemes to evolve Clubcard Plus represented a supermarket's first effort to brand-stretch their activity into financial services. Such was the perceived rapport between the brand and its customers that in early 1997 Tesco sought to capitalise its standing as a customer-friendly operation. The size of rewards was upped to 'secure a higher level of loyalty amongst customers by giving them a unique way of budgeting for their shopping (while) cementing their relationship with Tesco'<sup>8</sup>. Customers paid their anticipated shopping budget monthly into a Clubcard Plus account and drew on the fund when shopping at Tesco<sup>9</sup>. While it stimulated higher levels of spend the in-store account became the mid-phase platform in the transition to launching a full banking scheme.

In effect, the quarterly Clubcard Statement (as it was named) became the prime mode of Tesco communication, making Tesco a much heavier investor in below-the-line rather than media advertising. The Statement comprises a personalised letter with points-based vouchers and money-off coupons based on the individual buying profiles and (what Dunn Humby called) 'life stage'. Customer's age profile dictated the type of Clubcard magazine sent out<sup>10</sup>, which is perhaps the most stereotypical aspect of the tailored operation. Beyond the age typing the form of advertising developed for Tesco is able to perform several inter-personal roles. Its

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<sup>6</sup>Which included 'do it yourself' material suppliers B&Q and Energi, a brand of Norweb energy suppliers; the grounds for third party partners is usually that it has to be mutually relevant to both parties and of equal standing while the type of products are usually complimentary but not similar.

<sup>7</sup>Jon Ingall, unpublished presentation, script prepared for marketing conference, case-studying the success of Clubcard as a data marketing project.

<sup>8</sup>Jon Ingall, *ibid*.

<sup>9</sup>The scheme had a 100,000 take up in its first year (to 1998) which marginally dropped by 2000.

<sup>10</sup>The Clubcard magazine, designed by EHS (published by Forward Publishing, Oxon.) produced 5 versions tailored to the different life stages: young adults, young couples, families, older couples with children and senior citizens. The response to vouchers helped Dunn Humby segment the data into Tesco-specific - groupings such as Green Cuisine, Square Deal Meals and Branded is Best, and consumer streams - loyal customers, opportunity customers, new customers, gone; lapsed and gone; long-lost, according to MD Clive Humby (sited on [www.dunhumby.co.uk/dha\\_tesco\\_info.html](http://www.dunhumby.co.uk/dha_tesco_info.html)), which case-studies Clubcard). The 'personal' statements had some 10,000 variations by 1997. The vouchers - which total more than £250 million in redemption value - also have 10,000 variants.

primary advertising purpose is to thank customers for shopping with Tesco, firstly in presenting the firm, represented by the personable face of the incumbent 'Clubcard chairman', in a personal light. The second aspect of the sales message is to offer the main ad incentive for continuing to shop at Tesco – personalised vouchers geared to the type of product the customer bought on previous visits to Tesco. The personal acknowledgement is devised to stress the sense of membership to the Clubcard Club, imbuing a sense of two-way investment. The magazine also presents an opportunity for drawing attention to schemes Tesco want to plug and the developments in their schemes that make continual 'membership' (which amounts to continuing to shop at Tesco) worthwhile in terms of cost benefits. Significantly it has also enabled Tesco to be on-message (the 'every little helps' slogan) throughout the different levels of customer dialogue, from commercial to shopping experience.

#### Clubcard in context of supermarket promotions

Safeway launched their ABC customer reward card approximately the same time – Clubcard was marginally the first to go national – yet the ABC card and Sainsbury's Reward card offered points redemption at the checkout. Neither saw it as being more significant than a promotion device. David Sainsbury, Chairman of J Sainsbury even suggested loyalty cards were 'just a form of Green Shield Stamps'<sup>11</sup>. The method of operation organised by EHS involved the further process of mailing out vouchers to customers, which made the reward scheme more personal – the vouchers acknowledged types of purchase and appeared personalised. In limiting mailing points to 4 mailings a year it also enabled Tescos to plan for and control for peak selling periods, beyond just Christmas and Easter. Initial sales statistics showed customers redeeming vouchers shortly after they were mailed.

In terms of developing a supporting infrastructure around the scheme, the wider advantage of Clubcard was in concentrating both consumers and Tesco's own marketing minds on what the programme facilitated<sup>12</sup> – an opportunity to engage every three months on a more defined basis<sup>13</sup>. Other product-specific promotions could be tied in with these peak periods, while other schemes Tesco wished to develop (such as financial services) could be plugged. In comparison rival schemes didn't effect sales peaks through their schemes, nor was there the external data-analysis in place to isolate the business enough to effect their in-store decisions had on individual groups of consumers. Hence Tesco's rivals never made virtue of the card's ability to initiate a sense of brand-customer collectiveness.

More significant was the layered use the data was put to. The first layer appropriates the type of value-added offer the customer receives, making it relevant to their usage of the store. The next layer (as Hunt remarks) provides a unique memory for the business, driving all further decisions – pricing policy, stock policy by

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<sup>11</sup>In 1995, quoted by Precision Marketing January 1995 and cited by Jon Ingall in his presentation on Tesco Clubcard, (Unpublished) June 1995.

<sup>12</sup>bid.

store and even determines individual stores opening hours. 'It gives a unique moving picture of their business which no other research could achieve'. It also set about outlining phase two of the development which amounted to breaking up the data to 60 separate segments for statistical analysis. This gave Tesco a precise outline by individual addresses those who of shopped with them and who shopped with their rival retailers.

In short, it facilitates more specific localised information on which to base decisions shaping each store's appropriation to its customers. The net effect is that it has enabled Tesco to be 'glocal' nationally recognised name tailored to localised requirements (by 2001 they were still national and local – 'natcol').

When, for instance, Tesco re-worked their store in Henley on Thames they were able to take data from other Tesco stores in the region and marry the profile to perceived equivalents elsewhere in Britain. Henley was deemed a particularly affluent area and its rival local supermarkets in town (Sainsbury's and Waitrose) were ideally branded to Henley's up-market image. Clubcard was used to emphasise quality-related aspects of the store in mailers as well as in-store – more service counters were provided and incentives to visit the store included a free quarter-bottle of champagne: The store turnover increased by eleven per cent<sup>14</sup>. Clubcard is, in effect, a form of statistical surveillance that operates on many levels. As Ingall remarked, in monitoring their own staff the data can be used to monitor a variety of changes, from '...problems with under performing stores (to problems encountered) during re-fitting to minimise inconvenience to customers'. The data can also be used to reveal details that may otherwise go undetected, for instance, '...a store may appear quiet, it is actually being used by some of the store's best customers'. According to Ingall, some store managers even re-routed courtesy bus services once they realised where their key customers come from. On this level it is where servicing individuals becomes secondary to market-led demand for higher turn-over. While Tesco's exhibited customer care in tracking and rewarding individual consumption, its responses are (virtually) always directed to encouraging people to stick with Tesco, to improve their market share and profits. Operating in a capitalist framework this is inevitable in that, as a commercial operation, their income must exceed outlay. Yet this is perhaps where the card starts to exude its air of exclusivity in the manner of a credit card; ranked by value to the store and responsive to level of consumption in kind.

Given where Tesco positioned its promotions agency within its retail transaction system, the assumption now was that EHS's role was more integral to the brand's core activity. As the system became embedded in Tesco's infrastructure so the relationship between them, EHS and Dunn Humby tightened. EHS had, in effect, produced what was described at the time as a modern 'business solutions' approach. The significant factor in making direct marketing eat into clients advertising budgets was that it was able to drive behaviour by firstly

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<sup>13</sup>On the national launch, the take-up was 7 million in the first year, which has remained steady. By 2000 the quarterly mailings still totalled approximately seven million.

<sup>14</sup>Jon Ingall – see Appendix 2.



monitoring it closely through data gleaned, then by localising responses. That EHS contained employees with advertising and marketing backgrounds meant that they were able to negotiate consumer behaviour as well as attitude through such technology, where advertising on its own can only stimulate the latter. With integrated ad companies such as EHS, the quality of communication (the advertising aspect) had formerly been the final measurement of their input. The communication delivery with Clubcard rested with Tesco, who themselves styled the appearance of the credit card design and created the terminology for the system. The 'advertising' aspect had been in creating the infrastructure.

In terms of measuring the impact of Clubcard, around the period it was launched in February 1995 Tesco's first year target of five million members was met within six weeks; Clubcard had a 12 Million take-up before its first complete years end. The checkout ritual also changed. Card holders accounted for sixty five per cent of transactions by 1996<sup>15</sup>. Tesco had a one and a half per cent increase in sales, which – according to AGB share track figures – took them above Sainsbury as Britain's biggest food-oriented retail chain. While this has as much to do with other promotions and shifts in policy, undoubtedly it also helped shift perceptions of the Tesco brand enough to strike a more personable affinity with its customers, enough at least to make them consider staying 'loyal' to brand worth while<sup>16</sup>. In terms of voucher redemption levels, the combined usage of all types sent out by Tesco in 1997 was approximately thirty per cent, compared to a industry average between one/two per cent<sup>17</sup>.

The usual pattern following the success of original marketing strategies tends to follow the pattern laid out in Bakir and Donnelly's Competitive Market Positioning<sup>18</sup> (p.167). After the initial launch, during which the emphasis is on product awareness, a service tends to have a period of growth where its reputation spreads. During this phase the emphasis switches to brand development while competitors break down the distinguishing characteristics of the product. Usually the brand is then forced to make their service more elastic as the initial impact fades, competitors respond and the brand develops. Bakir and Donnelly next assume it passes through a period of maturity where growth slows down and the emphasis shifts to maintaining existing customers – brand loyalty. Then this is followed by a period of where the volume of sales and profits decline as rivals produce a more contemporary and appropriate alternative.

In fact the year on year sales increase continued for two years at over six per cent which was better than expected; this was because Tesco were prepared for such a scenario of decline. Their own data had pre-

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<sup>15</sup>Dunn Humby, Cheltenham 1999.

<sup>16</sup>In terms of the advertising and marketing industries recognition of Clubcard, the project's lack of visual panache meant that it never featured in advertising awards but its enduring effectiveness made it high profile enough to dominate marketing awards by the latter half of the 1990s, where one of the main award distributors - Precision Marketing - in their 1997 Response Awards catalogue (Centaur Publishing, London 1997) even acknowledged the scheme as *the* 1990's benchmark, describing it as: '...the one initiative that will stand out as the major seminal influence in database marketing'.

<sup>17</sup>Statistic from Jon Ingall, supplied by Tesco in 1997.

warned them of the danger, showing that their perceived success after the first three years (the maturity phase) was in danger of countering the desired reputation of being a brand with friendly, down to earth values. The tone of voice of the mailers and in-store promotions were honed to emphasise these very qualities. In comparison the scheme continued to rise through its first two years - the growth phase – then remained stable at four per cent above its earlier profit margins by 1999. Its initial take-up (12 million by February 1996) dropped off to ten million within a year, but retained that level beyond 2000. Profit margins were helped in that, after the initial year, the scheme started to exceed the outlay costs, which accounted for quarterly peaks in turnover generated by the mailings.

By 1998, Tesco's primary shoppers spent on average 80% of their grocery shopping budget at the store. Yet in keeping with the belief that consumers were more knowing shoppers, Asda dropped their scheme in August 1999 because – as Asda marketing and communications manager Emma Topley claimed, 'We have trailed a loyalty scheme and found it to be costly and unproductive... not having a loyalty scheme allows us to drive costs back down... customers don't choose a supermarket because of a loyalty card ....customer data, that which derives from such cards can more often than not be outdated and corrupt'<sup>19</sup>. The latter point Topley made depends on the context the information is put in. While Asda's cost-led approach still reflects that customers do not like being trapped or 'owned' by brands, but want to exercise choice. Four years on from Tesco's initiative Topley also seems to assume consumers have wisened up to the marketing strategy enough to be wary of its appeal. EHS and Tesco have made a virtue of claiming the scheme pays for itself - this is where rival brands claim the prices of goods are pushed up.

When Safeway also announced they would withdraw their ABC card in May 2000, Tesco responded in the form of a promotion that suggested not only were they not following suit but would make a virtue their scheme, in the manner of an aggressive USP. Tesco offered its holders 600 points for surrendering their ABC cards at their customer service counters.

What made Tesco adamant their scheme would out-last its rivals attempts to ape their systems was that the scheme emanated and evolved as a core Tesco project, shaped and nurtured in close collaboration with its external teams in a manner that made it unlike any shorter constructed ad strategy. Its rivals didn't have a two-year response time, nor would they have had the publicity that greets the first of its kind. Therefore their schemes were built on shallower foundations without the infrastructure to fall back on.

Consequently, Tesco's had a product that succeeded on many levels: it differentiated them from rivals, changed the perception of the brand, changed the actual ritual and habit of shopping and firmed up the customer

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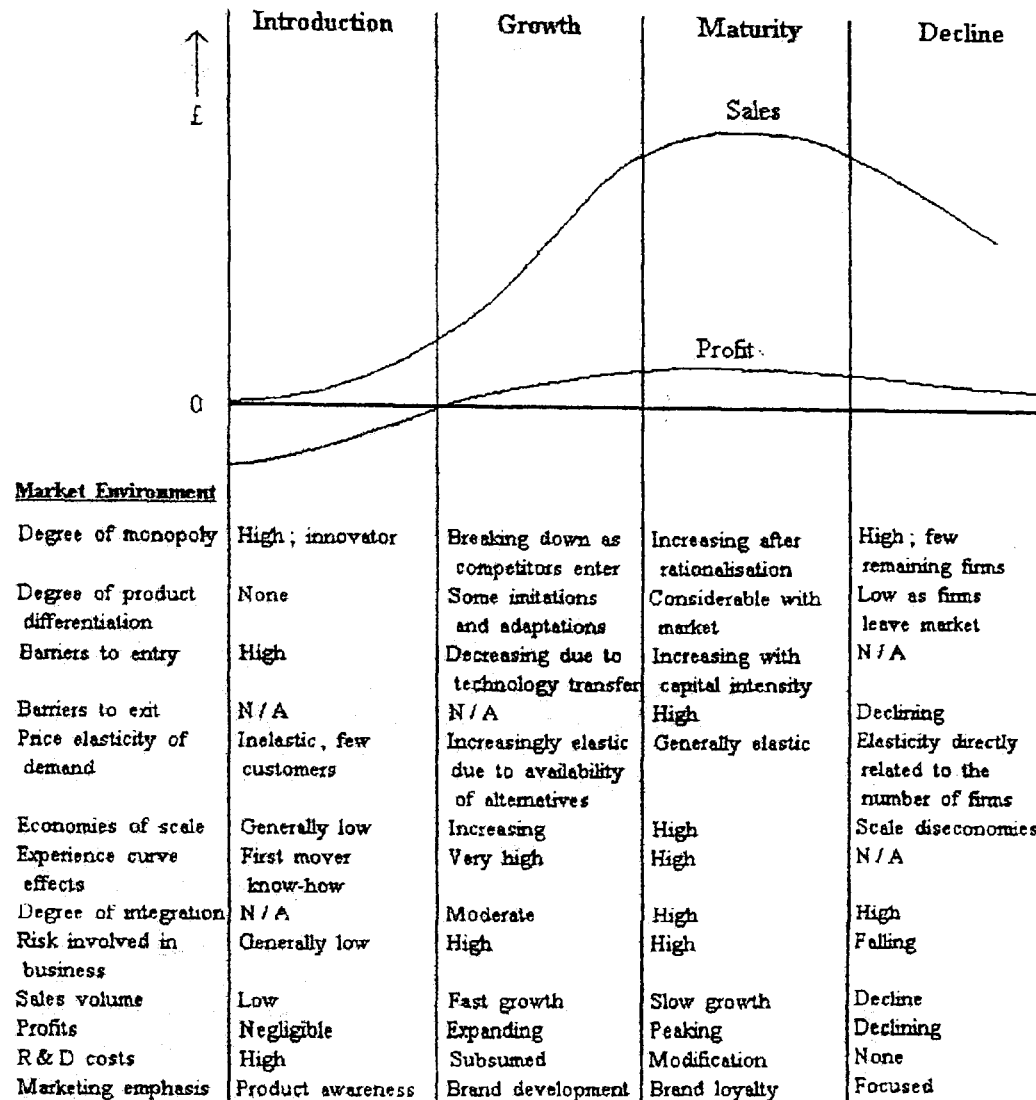
<sup>18</sup>Bakir, A & Donnelly, D Competitive Market Positioning Bakir & Donnelly Marketing Consultants, Colchester 1995 p. 2.16.

<sup>19</sup>Topley, E commenting in Customer Loyalty Today magazine article 'Asda Ads Take Shot at Clubcard Cost', published by office.com/RDS, USA, 1 October 1999, published on internet; [www.office.com/global/0,274,65-13001,FF.html](http://www.office.com/global/0,274,65-13001,FF.html) (as of 8 July 2000).



base. More broadly, it took the company into the information age, where the in-fill between buying, perceiving customers, promotion and advertising could be described as intelligent.

Diagram 2: Bakir & Donnelly's 'Product Lifecycle' pattern after initial success



Analysis of evidence

In effect EHS's project amounted to more of an infrastructure than (the equivalent of) an advert. It was a business solution, rather than just an ad campaign, which exploited a broader remit of communication types that advertisers were able to draw on. Little wonder that the agency, EHS, later shifted its own billing to become a 'new marketing company'. In creating an infrastructure to utilise the systems Tesco already had in operation. The supermarket chain has been able to evolve and develop the systems in a manner that could not have been envisaged at the outset.

Tescos became a benchmark at a time when other large brands were deserting their ad agencies to go below the line. Heinz dropped Young and Rubicam, which was partly put down to the companies need to consolidate its communications (Heinz employed four agencies to spread its product lines promotional delivery).

Their had problems had also been generated by the incessant management turnover at Y&R. Heinz desire therefore, for greater accountability during the recession of 1991–92 led them re-address how they could get value for money promotions<sup>20</sup>. Tesco's project was therefore very much of the moment, in that they too were looking for better returns from their promotions.

The potential for more closely monitoring a brand's consumer base made the rhetoric of Customer First promotions more realistic from 1992, which is why most of the large manufacturing producers and service suppliers in Britain tentatively shifted a portion of their ad spend to direct marketing firms. This also signified a change in significance of the individual consumer to the brand. As Hunt remarked, there was a seismic shift;

... in respect from retailer to consumer - they were no longer fodder, (or 'the masses' as they had been depicted in the 1980's, where) everyone was saying they were consumer-focused and consumers were at the heart of what they were doing - and it wasn't really true. Retail was about big averages and numbers, market shares, not customer share. Now it's realistic to find out who customers are and identify cohorts and groups who share different tastes, values and preferences.<sup>21</sup>

The sense of 'class system' perhaps makes it a system that is British-specific. The 'loyalty ladder' within the scheme follows a similar agenda to adverts of the seventies. This implied that through consumption one could consume ones way up the social strata. With members the more one spends the more the exclusive the mailers appear, the higher the voucher redemption value and the more reverential the letter. Aspiration is introduced into this promotional equation. The prospect is raised within Tesco's card scheme of being grouped alongside those one might aspire to. It is possible within the frame of Tesco's bracketing to raise one's level of consumption and receive reward vouchers for the type of consumables usually associated with a lifestyle.

What positions the scheme in the frame of advertising is its core objective – to change consumer behaviour. What pushes the campaign strategy further is that it also attempted to fundamentally change customers' attitudes to buying goods in stores. After the rise in popularity of direct advertising, which started in the wake of Marlboro's global price promotion in April 1993 (Marlboro slashed their retail prices, and other cigarette brands immediately followed suit. This was referred to in marketing as 'Marlboro Tuesday'), Tesco pushed its potential further. No one had attempted to pretend that loyalty programmes (a service) were a more powerful selling strategy than price promotion or quality. Yet this is at the root of Tesco's achievement over Asda and J Sainsbury. The scheme was more relevant to the values of the decade, and was partly responsible for other forms of brand promotion, such as card-oriented loyalty schemes and service brand diversification. Even household goods producers Unilever (using several agencies) and Proctor and Gamble (using Grey Advertising) switched from selling on the idea of convenience to selling the ideas of complete service. P&G for example

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<sup>20</sup>Editorial, Atkinson, L 'Heinz lays off staff as well as Y and R' in *Campaign* 8 November 1991. Haymarket Press pub., London, p.3.

<sup>21</sup>Terry Hunt, MD Evans Hunt Scott, interviewed 4 July 2000 – see Appendix 2.

running trials to develop 'total cleaning services' (at the end of 2000) as a new way of creating a relevant millennial product<sup>22</sup>.

Tesco did in fact change checkout-buying habits, in that the card became central to the majority of transactions. According to Dunn Humby statistics, the card is used during sixty per cent of Tesco transactions. In effect this means that Tesco can trace most of their customers. The data can account for eighty five per cent of the revenue from Tesco tills. Tesco can use Dunn Humby to generate any number of statistics to present Tesco's to shareholders in a glowing light. In 2000 their ability to data recall and re-cast their market still figured prominently in presenting Tesco as a Brand of the Future<sup>23</sup>.

In the sense that they were the first to closely track their mass market, Tesco were ahead of their time. They even started a trend for publicising data findings. In early 2000 young adult-oriented magazines such as FHM and Loaded latched on to pollsters material and produced attention-provoking surveys. These were then offered up as leader articles, and material for popular debate in the realisation that being seen to authorise statistical evidence is a potentially lucrative way of advertising. As tabloid-style news stories these generated debate. For youth magazine titles the statistical polls often centred on The World's Most Attractive Stars. Britvic produced a survey to show adult consumption levels of carbonated drink, Durex produced one outlining the sex lives of youth, while The World-Wide Banana Trade Board produced a detailed pattern of banana consumption by leading practitioners in different sports. Each are presented as exposes of modern consumer habit and each survey is carefully couched to associate the brand with the study findings, which serves both to convey the brand's grasp of the market and brings their area of practice into focus.

This was not an original strategy. Lord Mortecliffe used a similar tactic over 100 years ago. Yet where many exaggerated claims are the norm statistical validation has again become a means of legitimising a brand's significance, and shows their market involvement beyond the product they produce.

Such a means of statistically led advertising (the consumers are lead by the statistics to deduce the conclusions for themselves) seems less constricting for consumers than the notion of brands trying to 'own' consumers. 'Owning customers' was the scheme that OgilvyOne planner Anthony Tasgal and creative director Steve Harrison were authorised to produce in 1996. Both concluded that the concept of customers belonging to a brand seemed at odds with customers' unease at being manipulated. As Martin Raymond noted in Dutch trend forecast journal Viewpoint, where brands have become more all-encompassing while people look to distinguish themselves through the infidelity of diverse consumption, '... the notion that one-brand-suits-all no longer fits. We

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<sup>22</sup>Tim Mellors, former Creative Director, Saatchi & Saatchi, MD, Mellors Reay, MD of Greys (amongst others), interviewed 27 April 2000 – see Appendix 2.

<sup>23</sup>Tim Mason, Marketing Manager, Tesco Plc., 10 July 2000.

are all individuals and proud to be our own brand.'<sup>24</sup> The last point is poignant: rather than individuals seeing themselves as brands, brands are now more often represented through the individual personalities, company founders, figureheads or CEO's who are central to distinguishing a brand's 'culture'. When companies 'brand-stretch' to become licensing labels, becoming a 'person' makes the identity tangible and appealing beyond rationality culture (for instance, Richard Branson/Virgin: p.368). Such methods were useful in concentrating more diffuse identities, as sought to appeal emotively, 'person to person'. This is another reason direct marketing became increasingly popular: it personalises mass communication to a level where personal experiences are into referenced.

One of the virtues of this approach is that it gestures the opposite of 'owning' consumers, even though it is in effect seeking to do this using its data. The information of personal buying habits connotes the cardholder as an autonomous consumer. While the five magazines – aimed at pensioners, families, young families, young couples and young singles – stereotyped age ranges, the voucher type (determined by the nature of each card holder's previous quarterly consumption) ensured that the supermarket gave the impression to be taking notice of individuals. This was despite consumers obvious awareness their mailer was the result of mechanical rather than personal activity.

Yet Tesco do not celebrate the mechanical in their publicity. It is as if to acknowledge such a hands-off process in some way devalues the sense of constructed personalisation, rendered through the mailings. While in marketing presentations Tesco, Dunn Humby and EHS celebrate the manner that data systems work, the recognition of this is absent in the stores and publicity surrounding.

Perhaps this has to do with the way in which technology is socially framed. The Big Brother phobia of (what Edward de Bono called) the Information Age is that of huge data banks collating all information on 'us', which are used by power brokers ('them') as a sort of surveillance control. Such scenarios crop up in most discussions on liberty, whether concerning the introduction of national identity cards, credit card systems or the need to have money paid into bank accounts.

Such views were well founded in that the technology could easily be utilised in this way, so long as brands are shaped by economic considerations before consumer concerns it remains a topical issue. Yet it also became a convenient and somewhat lazy handle to pin any development that utilised technology in a commercial context. In 1996 a terrestrial documentary on Channel 4 about Tesco's set about framing the Clubcard as a means of Big Brand manipulation, with an eerie over-dubbed soundtrack accompanying remarks from its creators. The narrator, in soft hushed intimidating tones, mapped out how the card could be used with information from listing agencies to construct a complete and intrusive picture of one's identity through

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<sup>24</sup>Editorial, Raymond, M (ed.) Identity Crisis -some days labels just aren't enough in Viewpoint Issue 7, Viewpoint, Amsterdam 2000 p.66

consumption. The flip side is that, if consumers acknowledged and exercised their personal powers of discriminatory consumption by playing brands off one another<sup>25</sup> they could assemble products and services that amounted to an individually better deal, which took into account their unique circumstances.

What made companies such as Tesco customer-responsive and so keen to make consumer reward central to the operation is that the *perception* of using such technology in a manipulative way could easily adversely affect sales. By presenting the technology in a way that makes the volume of information Tesco receive comparable with the scale of the reward incentive they give to customers, the perception created is that the data-base is in place to ensure shopping fidelity is rewarded. In effect, this is selling on a positive the implementation of equipment that ordinarily would be the subject of their rival's knocking campaigns. Impersonal technology is presented as a monitor to ensure a sense of fair play, in the manner of traffic lights or a sporting electronic line judge, to ensure Tesco deliver on their promises.

Leon H Mayhew, The New Public – Professional communication and the means of social influence (1997), argues the case (in a US context) against banks using data in a one-sided manner. Yet such an observation also serves to denote how carefully couched Tesco's presentation needed to be in the closing of its advertising and delivery;

When persuasion becomes entirely instrumental, its techniques governed by the criterion of effectiveness, the warrants of sincerity that allow audiences to extend credit to their persuaders are undermined. There is no longer a presumption that persuaders' tokens will be redeemed on demand. On the contrary, the strategies employed by the new breed of expert communicators are designed to avoid confrontations that would require serious elaborations to their claims.<sup>26</sup>

In November 1999 American Express ran an ad campaign for its AMEX service, boldly asking, 'Is this the best all round personal loan on the phone? From 8.8% Apr'. When Sunday Times journalist Naomi Caine called AMEX to check, the salesperson's response was out of sync with the advert. 'The rate you are offered depends on your credit rating. I can't tell you how high the rate might be'<sup>27</sup>. Caine noted that no mention was made of AMEX's credit rating system, or why AMEX had chosen to compare this figure with a loan with a rate of 10.3%. Competitors could also muster 8.8% loans. The ad was flawed because the claim was superficial. AMEX could guarantee the delivery of the promise which, in turn, made the company appear removed from the more down to earth experience of potential customers.

In contrast, for Tesco's attention-grabbing claim of 'Every Little Helps' (EHS, 1995) was evidently far less important than its ability to accurately describe what the service delivered. The tone is modest and customer-

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<sup>25</sup>The world wide web effectively broadened means of acquiring information from 1996.

<sup>26</sup>Mayhew, LH The New Public, Cambridge University Press, Cambs. 1997 p. 190.

<sup>27</sup>Caine, N Mind the gaps in Amex offer and 'Tell us the true figures to compare loan rates' in The Sunday Times Money section ('Adwatch' and 'Comment' sections respectively), 5 December 1999; accessed through The Times library web page (11 July 2000): [www.the-times.co.uk/cgi-bin/backissue?](http://www.the-times.co.uk/cgi-bin/backissue?)

centred – more like VW Beetle's ads (DDB 1965) than Barclays 'The World Needs A Big Bank' (Leagas Delaney, 2000). This would lead one to suspect that the scale of thinking behind the promotion of the card is narrow, focusing in on customer perceptions rather than the bigger picture of where Tesco's stand as a brand.

In fact the scale of the strategic outlook is the opposite. In terms of strategic advertising the scheme is macro rather than micro thinking, in that the project went way beyond the communication of an idea related to the brand, to actually *be the brand's* core idea. The advertising was assumed into the marketing infrastructure.

Such a move to absorb advertising into other aspects of the overall promotion proposition was very much a strategic objective of its time. During the mid-nineties there seems to have been a common objective in marketing policy to make creative work more financially accountable, to make the pound 'work harder'<sup>28</sup>. As advertising was expensive it was an obvious area ripe for marketing budget-holders to re-negotiate. Grey Advertising's media director Tim Mellors and M&C Saatchi's direct advertising head Dave Harris<sup>29</sup> both mark this out as the period when established brand marketers and advertising creatives joined to set up their own direct advertising groups, taking clients with them as start-up accounts. This is also the period in which the media advertising industry shrunk by a third. Technology became more significant at this point, and in crossing over with such budgetary concerns its implementation was framed by its ability to speed up the creative process and cost-cut. Inevitably this meant work was turned over more rapidly, and appeared more disposable as a consequence. Yet in terms of being integral to advertising evolution Tesco could be described as a benchmark in that it intertwines a sophisticated state of the art technology with a progressive form of more personalised advertising. It demonstrated in the mid-nineties what *could* be done if strategic thinking about post-industrial mass consumerism, technological capability and communication could all be synchronised in a projected manner.

The legacy is not defined by a clear image as in the past, but by a change in ritual and relationship to the company; a sense of being closer to its core. The language involved has changed to that of a personal relationship: use of phrases such as fidelity and dis/loyalty and the simplification of the interface – 'reward', 'ABC' 'club' – all have metaphoric qualities that try and instil a sense of inclusiveness, simplicity and ultimately trust.

A further legacy has allowed the Tesco project to be flexible enough to withstand many re-structurings and shifts in approach, as well as gearing the company up with the right information to anticipate when changes need to be made. As a model therefore, the 'ad' is not a face but a set of interactions, while the personality is arrived at not by consuming an image but by personal experience shaped by the shopping trip and the personalised mailers.

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<sup>28</sup>Phrase used by David Harris, Co-Director of LIDA (a branch of M&C Saatchi), interviewed 23 March 2000.

<sup>29</sup>The direct advertising wing of M&C Saatchi; Source: *ibid*.



While this still runs contrary to contemporary marketing notions of flaky consumers, who want to brand surf and demonstrate infidelity to services and product labels as a code of autonomy, the enjoyment gained from consumption and shopping rituals has become a powerful tool of persuasion. It bypasses the need to represent, which through the previous 15 years of advertising had come to be seen as synthetic. Personal experience and testimony have become the most effective means of communicating the values of 'brand', which that given most brands are competing on their identities as they stretch into other typologies of product and services, has given Tesco's a strong platform to base their forays into other markets.

While the Clubcard's main objective at launch was to change customer behaviour its wider purpose had been to construct an emotional – rather than rational – reason for loyalty. While the store events programme partially did this, taking customers on through their finances made the bond closer and gave them the sense that they were significant in the brands success.

This approach is similar to the move by fashion houses in the early nineties of creating affordable mainstream perfumes. This gave the mass-market a way of 'buying in' to exclusive couture brands, and in turn gave couture brands the opportunity to capitalise on the stature of their brand marques.

In terms of brand diversification it was brands that were originally service-oriented companies that, up till 2000, more easily adapted to cross-discipline expansion. The supermarket typology is already familiar with one-to-one customer relationships. Disney, Virgin and Tesco's have all had at least three decades of shaping their retail interface. Thus the brand-customer relationship has been harnessed through enough generations to ensure at least those in their thirties will find the brand identity familiar, if not reassuring.

In comparison, where brands have moved too quickly their sense of integrity has been compromised. The consequence is that it appears the name has been franchised for the sake of short-term profits (a selling out to market) which tends to lose the sense of fidelity many customers may have felt with the brand. Virgin experienced this when they over-franchised their name by taking on rail services. It has become the brand's defining weakness<sup>30</sup> and the constant butt of jokes to such an extent that they needed to invest in a national media campaign (2000) to redress perceptions of their brand. Klein in No Logo<sup>31</sup> quoted the Graphic designer Tibor Kalman in saying 'The original notion of the brand was quality, but now brand is a stylistic badge of courage'. Klein qualified this by citing Richard Branson's 'Asian Trick' of networking a series of linked corporations<sup>32</sup>, conceivably facilitating endless expansion if the badge carries well. Klein also points to street fashion label Tommy Hilfiger, who she remarks is '...less in the business of manufacturing clothes than he is in

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<sup>30</sup>It was even sited by the Lottery Commission in 2000 during their announcement of the decision to keep Chamalot running the National Lottery rather than Virgin.

<sup>31</sup>Klein, N No Logo p.24.

<sup>32</sup>ibid.: Klein used the Japanese term for this – *keiretus*.

the business of signing his name'. The company she claims is run entirely through licensing agreements on both sides of the Atlantic. 'What does Tommy Hilfiger manufacture? Nothing at all'<sup>33</sup>.

Tesco have prevented over-stretching claims by keeping close proximity to brand extensions by maintaining the connection of its banking services (savings and loans) through them. In effect it means they can closely monitor the progression of the services and, as a financial service, regulate their own activity by using data base segments extended from the system organised in 1995. While the figures do not have the sort of range or pollster profile of brand personality such as MORI or BARB, they are in a position to use net figures to determine the financial significance of company decisions, and how it effects their core operation.

Coke in comparison operated in a different manner. After establishing themselves globally, their next objective was to rationalise – their only means to continue profit margins. As a consequence however, as issues beyond their central control emerged they were unable to respond appropriately. When Belgian students fell ill after drinking Coke in June 2000 Coke failed to respond promptly. They only recalled seventeen million cases of their product after Belgium and France had banned sales, which was interpreted in both countries as tardy and unsympathetic. Its reputation for familiar reliability brand was shaken and the fall out from this (amongst other perceived PR errors) amounted to Coke losing a third of its market value<sup>34</sup>. While world markets are always unstable (according to Leadbeater<sup>35</sup>), building in a measure of performance has enabled Tesco to counter-act consumer weariness before it effects broader perceptions. It made what is an advertising tool serve to reinforce company identity on many fronts simultaneously.

Such was the foresight of Tesco's linkage between database marketing and the organisation of their publicity that it can negotiate a way through the sort of Permission Marketing described in Viewpoint<sup>36</sup>. Brands will mail an e-advert to consumers in for return them watching it, (claims author Martin Raymond, citing trends analyst Pillot de Chenecey). 'Rewarding' consumers in telecommunication time credits, air miles, or in Clubcard's context in card points amounts to money back vouchers of purchases in their store. Campaign magazine – representing media advertising's interests – noted that such a shift of power could be miss-skewed towards what they called 'the younger power-user end of the market'<sup>37</sup> who would play the system to earn credits. Yet it did acknowledge that, like the internet, 'permission marketing' was more than a passing fad. Tesco are well positioned to exploit such a situation.

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<sup>33</sup>ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Alexander, G (New York Business editor) 'Coke takes an axe to its big bad wolf' in The Sunday Times Business News 12 December 1999. website (10 July 2000): [www.sunday-times.co.uk/cgi-bin/Backissue?](http://www.sunday-times.co.uk/cgi-bin/Backissue?)

<sup>35</sup>Leadbeater, C Living On Thin Air p.5.

<sup>36</sup>Raymond, M The Time Machine, in Viewpoint, Issue 7 p.82.

Analysis of 'ad' format (the credit card-like Clubcard)

The credit card format would also allow Tesco to locate foreign markets at a swipe. Potentially they could grow into an international conglomerate if they chose to take a global perspective. As a credit card Clubcard is in some respects a metaphor for such an international outlook. For instance, it bares the identity of brands rather than nations as guarantors, expressing the true power brokers in the to a digital Information Age<sup>38</sup>.

The form taken by the Clubcard is also symptomatic of a broader trend towards more flexible corporation-funded movement of money, rather than national currencies. The shift from cash to credit cards could be interpreted to reflect the shifts in financial clout during the 1990s. Here coins and bank notes were just vectors and their values were measured on exchange rate listings. In the nineties the remit of national currencies was developed by international financiers towards greater portability, which international corporations were in a better position to organise (such was the potential of Clubcard)<sup>39</sup>.

With brands competing in different fields, quality of service has become the USP brands compete on. Between 1999-2001 Tesco used media campaigns to promote their internet ordering system for instance. Within banking (where the card format originates) rewards for 'brand fidelity' such as membership extensions ('subscribe to an American Express and get free travel insurance') and third party service collaborations ('pay with visa and get railway discounts') personalised the movement of money in a similar way to Tesco's acknowledgement of customer spending in their stores. Club-like exclusive membership groups emerged, with status identified through card types - for instance gold, silver and platinum cards<sup>40</sup>. Tesco 'tried' something similar in their Banbury flagship store in 1996, by rewarding their best local customers with food and wine tasting evenings.

As with the shifting trend towards longer retail hours, technology's effect on plastic money has been to make cash accessible '24/7' and the transaction process quicker. It's also been catalytic in the culture of acquisition because of the internet and mobile communication. With access to credit card information on the world-wide web, the three core components – credit card, internet and mobile phone systems – are central to the brand identity via the design and styling, security measures, tone of dialogue and the terminology constructed around the operation.

Against the lead taken by corporate banking, an alternative, the euro and the pound (in 2000) have come to re-iterate the importance of more localised banking currency. It defends a combined 'frontier-less' Europe, overlooking nationality without dragging up the users personal details at every transaction. This points to the fact

<sup>37</sup> Reid, A, citing internet ad. company i-Level's director Alan McCulloch, in Does paying the public to look at internet ads have a future? in Campaign 9 June 2000 p.15. The article sites website Getpounds.com, launched in April 2000, which paid people to download and watch ads.

<sup>38</sup> Described in Leadbeater, C Living on Thin Air, pp.1–27: cf. Chapter 5.

<sup>39</sup> The author: this text was re-appropriated for Kozak, P, Biagi, B & Springer, P Beneath the card's surface in Ottogono No. 136, Editrice Compositori, Bologna, Italy, February 2000 pp.41–47.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

that technology-led money systems that closely track expenditure offer little guaranteed protection against information misuse. With smart cards, listing agencies and corporations have access to detailed personal data; hence monetary development has wide social repercussions.

The backlashes that have expanded from counter-cultural (and other) protest groups against Capitalism, such as that in Seattle outside a World Trade Organisation meeting (3 December 1999) or the May Day riots (May 1, 2000–01), reiterates the image of 'Big Brother' described in George Orwell's 1984. In this context corporations have replaced national regimes<sup>41</sup>. The Sunday Times (12 December 1999) noted credit card holders pay £2.5bn in excess charges, while £1bn was over-charged in uncovered mortgage interests<sup>42</sup>. Given this, it is pertinent to question whether the brand driven movement of banking is implicitly leading consumer transactions towards a system of financial exclusion and marginalisation. Tesco have managed to negotiate the company-centred connotations implied by credit cards, maintaining a system that, in its projected appearance and the way it has shaped perceptions thorough its accompanying publicity, emphasises rewards and benefits.

#### Significance of the card's identity

In fact the graphic design of the cards has become significant in distinguishing the value of the brand. Where coins introduced a coded measurement system using metal, that was non-perishable to re-iterate such qualities of preciousness, cards have to create their own visual significance. A national currency conveys a clear sense of territorial identity – hence notes and coins now reflect a nation's defining glories, monuments, historical icons and figureheads<sup>43</sup>. In comparison credit cards have become synonymous with late-twentieth century capitalism because they are hi-tech, impersonal (the front of the card recognises the customer most prominently as a number first) and they reinforce the brand's identity above that of the user. The surface becomes the signifier, conveying identity and affiliations with its other meanings that establish its worth. If one examines the Clubcard this is also apparent. The corporate identity takes up more than forty per cent of the card's surface image, where the user is represented as a number (and by the machines as a swipe code).

In terms of representing 1990s advertising, the credit card as a sort of personal advertising hook is significant in that it draws on a variety of creative disciplines that connect corporate identity work with graphic design, with data-led marketing, and with strategists and advertisers. Significantly it prevents the advertising component operating as a separate discipline. The blurred margins of creative disciplines that appeared to stand out in the late-eighties converged to compete in the same fields as they chased the big budgets for

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<sup>41</sup>Website (10 July 2000): [www.sunday-times.co.uk/c/s.dll/Backissue?](http://www.sunday-times.co.uk/c/s.dll/Backissue?); cited by Springer in Kozak, P, Springer, P Biagi, B. Beneath the card's surface in Ottogono, ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Gardner, N 'Credit-card holders pay £2.5 bn in excess charges' in the Sunday Times: Money Section, p1: Gardner cited a survey conducted by The Sunday times and an unnamed 'independent audit service'.

communication in the 1990s. Given that brands wanted more financial accountability than the existing media advertising culture was used to providing, marketing managers were apt to give any new alternatives a go.

Tesco fused marketing, advertising, database analysis and graphic art to produce the Clubcard. This in turn paved the way for a promotional diversification, later drawing on shop designers, planners and corporate identity strategists. By 2000 a much broader variety of activity operated within Tesco's advertising domain.

In some respects this compares with Coca-Cola's re-structuring in 1993. As I mentioned earlier (cf. Chapter 3a), Coke brought the decision-making processes back in-house, so that the brand made the core decisions. Different executions final communication were commissioned from specialist creative units<sup>44</sup>, Tesco also had a system where they maintained creative control of their own brand, using Dunn Humby and EHS as specialist 'brand guardians'. Like Coke, they deploy tasks to outside specialists, but they also relied on continual database maintenance from Dunn Humby.

The cross-disciplinary approach has contemporary appeal. At a pitch in May 2000 for fashion brand Van Heusen, Jon Ingall of AIS (then MD of AIS, which spanned media advertising and direct marketing) found himself pitching against a graphics group, fashion forecasters, a top five ad agency<sup>45</sup>, a design constancy, a start-up 'new wave' (multi-tasking) group and marketing consultants. The pitch list represented a span of creative cultures that each produce visual commercial work in the broadest sense, but each would have used different terminologies and different frames of reference<sup>46</sup>. Yet they were all competing for the same work. From this pitch list it seems Van Heusen were intent on getting a variety of inputs to shape the context and direction that their work would evolve in (cf. Diagram 5; 'the gathering of creative tribes').

This reflects the significant shift for the management of information and the meanings applied to products. Where in the eighties advertising and marketing activity stopped at the point of campaign execution, after a USP or ESP had been formed, by the late-nineties it continued much further into a brand's strategic development. The identity, meanings and operational context could now be shaped by the careful and covert manipulation of appropriated communication channels. Also, by massaging their customers into social groupings through target activities, such as those organised by Landrover and Tesco in the 1990s (and Tupperware in the 1950), 'consumer bonding' devices were not seen as 'owning' customers, but rather shaping their perceptions through a form of interactive dialogue.

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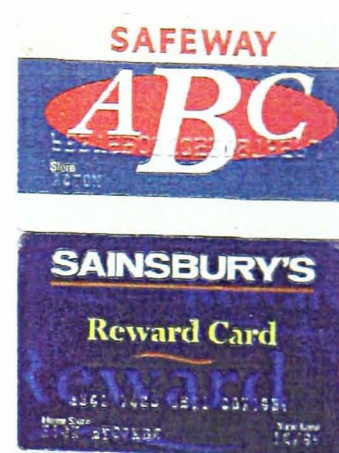
<sup>43</sup>Springer, P Beneath the card's surface p.43.

<sup>44</sup>In 2000 Coke's European brand advertising was created in Europe rather than imported from the US, in a strategy more geared to glocal operation. The decision in itself was headline news for Campaign magazine, 30 June 2000 p.1.

<sup>45</sup>Agencies are popularly ranked according to size and billings in the trade press; the term 'top ten' has become advertising parlance for larger scale, as the terms 'heavy- middle-' and 'light- weight' have come to signify. In 2001, specialist 'brand management teams' started pitching for work in different creative disciplines. They consisted of multidisciplinary agency teams representing a number of the communications agency's creative departments. Campaign magazine leader article, 30 October, 2001 p.1.



Tesco Clubcard: characterising credit cards

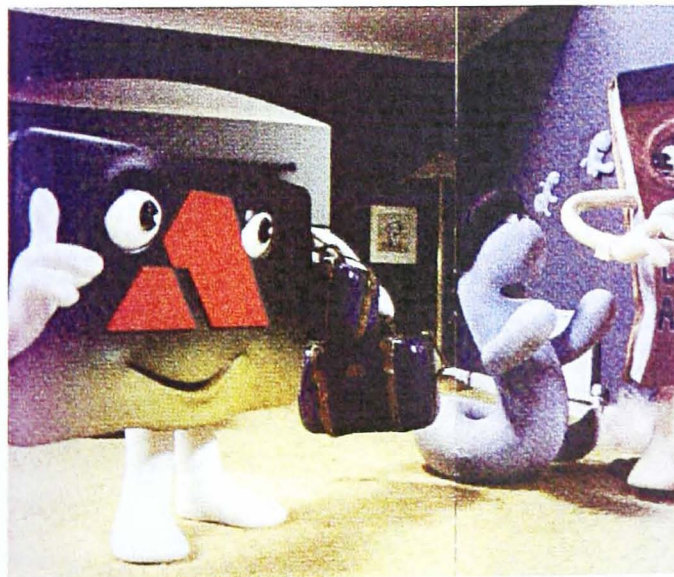


Tesco Clubcard (Evans Hunt Scott, 1995) & Safeway's and Sainsbury's alternatives (1996)

A portable advert – 'owned' by the customer, who is rewarded for using it operated unlike any other credit cards at the time. Barclays were rewarding their customers with use 'points' from the early 1990s, but Tesco's used it as a means of tracking their customer's shopping habits. The card above is second generation: the first generation had customers names for added personalisation. This became unfeasible with the larger take-up. Other supermarkets offered points redemption (Safeway's ABC) and instant money-off rewards (Sainsbury's Reward Card), but Tesco's scheme had always been more about developing customer relationships to understand customer actions better. In the mid-1990s 'relationship marketing' became increasingly popular. Marketers used it to describe data-enhanced information getting. It had the advantage of giving Tesco's planners informed consumption evidence to shape their promotional decision-making.

Access credit card Commercial (left, 1985) Adbusters, spoofing convenience cards. September 1998

Access used to bill itself as 'Your Flexible Friend'. 'He' was caricatured as an animated go-getter alongside a travel sick British £ and shifty cheque book. The representation of Access, friendly, well travelled and amenable, seemed hollow as banks increased interest rates. The ad was dropped in 1989. Adbusters satirised the attitude of many about credit cards, that their 'convenience' serves credit card companies better than customers. After banks, Retail and service brands started to compete with their own financial services in the 1990s. Owning a store card now is recognition of favouring that brand, of being a their 'kind of person'.





### Conclusions

Between the beginning and end of the nineties, as reflected through the Tango and Tesco Clubcard campaigns, targeting audiences became more personally focused (micro) and less generalised (macro). Improvements in data collation and recall technology facilitated this. All three case-studies made use of getting feedback to inform their follow-up campaigns. They were all more responsive than the forms of advertising would have been in the eighties. As advertising was able to produce quicker responses to project briefs, so up-to-date information produced by data technology started to dictate the direction of campaigns.

Getting closer to customers became increasingly possible, but tones of address became more significant. Given that Tango had a higher brand presence than Daewoo (which, in turn, was more famous than the Clubcard) it is fair to assume that making famous advertising was not necessarily the most effective objective. Tesco's increase in sales was significantly greater than Britvic, Tango or Daewoo cars. Similarly the leading edge of advertising became less apparent<sup>47</sup>, more directed and had a much higher percentage of market response. While media advertising maintained its significance in launching new products, its edge as the primary means of accelerating sales had been blunted and superseded for the first time in fifty years.

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<sup>47</sup> It was evident during my interviews that, unlike where Charles Saatchi in the 1970s and John Hegarty in the 1980s who stood out as prominent practising advertisers, the key contributors to 1990s advertising were not practitioners but owners of agencies and media groups. This is symptomatic of the period. The 'story' of the nineties was about the movement of the industry rather than creative development. See questions and answers in interview transcriptions, Appendix 2.

Chapter 3d**The case-studies in context**Where Tango, Daewoo and Tesco strategies fit within changes in communication

If one considers the shifts of approach within the case-study period (1992–1997) it is apparent that the scope for advertising broadened. A wider span of creative, commercial and research practices became constitutive of advertising practice. For instance, Tango's promotion was built around commercials, where Tesco only used commercials to promote special offers and new Tesco services. Tesco's strategy was built around the infrastructure supporting Clubcard, enabling them to develop a 'dialogue' with consumers (Tesco sent vouchers, customers responded with purchases). With honed understandings of consumer habits, general 'moods' were less significant in keeping customers 'warm' to their brand. Daewoo's campaign was symptomatic of mid-nineties marketing, in the drive to get closely (and continually) involved with customers and develop new niches. Daewoo's campaign was unique in that, from concept to execution, the entire promotions process was managed by an advertising agency which extended advertising methods through Daewoo's services and retail practice. More significantly, DFGW shaped the entire operation around their perception of what consumers wanted: it was customer centred.

In terms of developing the relationship between promotion and product, Tango's layered and interactive ad campaign proved to be more of a forerunner to one of the period's key shifts in mass communication: the fusing of products with promotion (I explore this further in Chapter 5). HHCL's re-booting of Britvic Tango was the first of its kind to effect all aspects of the promotional process, from re-presenting the work culture of Britvic's commercial operation to the restyling of Tango's packaging. Through the ad campaign Britvic were able to unify their brand. Seven years after Tango's re-launch, the re-branding of Apple Macintosh through their iMac range went further in unifying product and promotion techniques. The methods employed by Apple are extensions of the brand structure of the Tango campaign and the product/service infrastructure of Daewoo and Tesco Clubcard.

Given that my three case studies could be read as benchmarks and symptomatic of their period's marketing/advertising concerns, the aim of this section is twofold. In the first section I consider how Apple's shaping of the iMac (launched in 1999) synthesised many promotional aspects from the Tango, Daewoo and Tesco campaigns. The aim is to establish the extent to which understandings of consumers (by communications industries) had been incorporated into the processes of visual and promotional communication. In the second section I contextualise the three case study campaigns against the century's other benchmarks in commercial communication. I draw on historian John Heskett's framework of 'benchmark'

products as a model with which to construct an equivalent for communication. I demonstrate how the agenda driving products changed from being production-centred ('form follows sales') to consumer-centred, where priority was given to consumer experience.

### Part 1

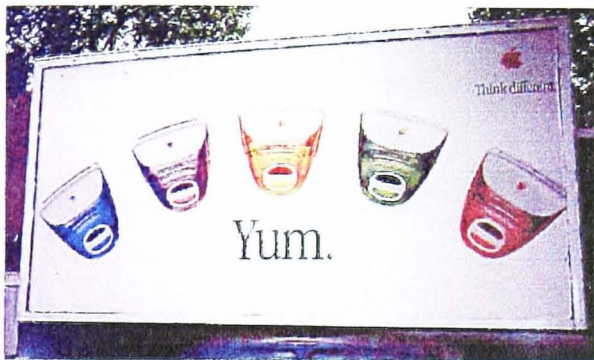
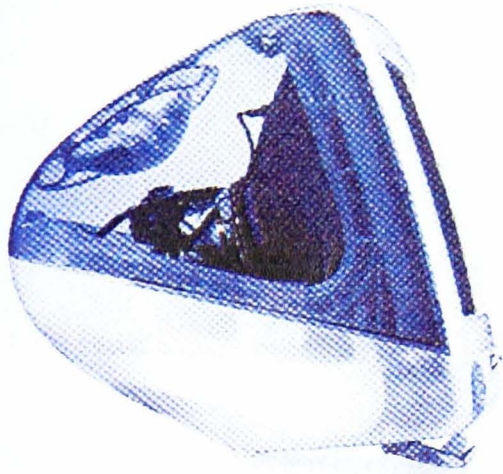
#### The fusion of products and advertising: the case studies in context with iMac

My three case studies took shape within a period where the relationship between product and communication was repositioned. In the 1990s, as relationship marketing and digital data accumulation/analysis techniques developed in tandem, advertising roles such as planning and market positioning were increasingly being dissolved into their client's own creative outlets, marketing and design. Therefore the promotional strategy no longer an after-thought. It was being considered at a much earlier product concept stage, and the separate roles of product design, branding, marketing promotion and advertising were becoming indistinct. It is apparent from the three case studies that during the 1990s marketing planners increasingly advertised goods/ services as brands. In this section I aim to prove that, as brands, communication 'hooks' could be incorporated within commercial artifacts, so that products effectively became their own adverts and trailers to their brand's other products. As I illustrate in this section, Apple's iMac and Nike Town were models of this.

As I noted in Chapter 2, advertising's clients were keen to wrestle total brand control from their agencies to keep costs down. This meant they had the authority to dictate promotions agendas and blend creative aspects rather than relying on advertisers to use their own facilities. It is somewhat inevitable therefore that practices of design, marketing and promotion were pushed closer together. Because production companies were making more in-house decisions for their brands, they could respond to perceived market developments and consumer moods more quickly than if they needed to operate through a third party (advertisers). It also made it easier to co-ordinate all aspects of production and promotion. Lines of responsibility between promotions and design appear to have blurred, as the shape, form and materials of objects like the iMac appear to represent the sort of unique aesthetic properties wished for by marketers. The 'advert' was imbued in the product.

It could be argued that aspects of 'advertising' have always been apparent in design: Raymond Loewy for instance was renowned for putting a sexy 'packaged' interface on new technology to make it commercially desirable. Yet in the 1990's there was a reinforced sense of promotion connecting products to commercial fashionability.

iMac: an inherent advert



Our newest Internet cruise line.

(Top row left to right) press shots from the iMac's burst campaign (TBWA, between 1999–2000) the image top right was the specified product shot to represent the iMac in trade magazines, while the plan view arrangement featured in press ads. The Bag Radio (Daniel Weil, 1987) was a forerunner to the iMac's sense of 'exposure'. Billboards for the iMac (above left, TBWA, 1999) typically showed 5 'flavours' to make it appeal on the same emotive level as sweets. A press ad placed in a 1999 Sunday supplement (right) makes a virtue of its iconic styling, likening it to the bow of a cruise liner.

Second generation iMac press ad (below left, TBWA, 1999) and a standard computer trade shot (right) Picasso stands in for the iMac, but the line 'Think Different' stays, with a simplified Apple icon. The standard trade shot before the iMac tended to show the computer as a flat, in front elevation.



Just send us your content, host it or

Through our streaming tech multimedia c

While Keat & Abercrombie, Enterprise Culture (1990) may well have considered this a symptom of the 'enterprise discourse' extending through commercial practice from the 1980s, one could also claim that from the fifties a shift to a service and information economy was becoming evident in the western world. This was particularly true of the two decades before the nineties. In 1973 for instance Daniel Bell imagined The Coming of A Post-Industrial Society<sup>1</sup> while Manuel Castells had been describing 'information societies' in the decade before The Informational City was published in 1989<sup>2</sup>. But only in the nineties did the full impact register on the 'superstructure' (commerce and culture). This manifested itself in the integration of information processing, product management and the storing, manipulation and dissemination of images (cf. du Gay, in Chapter 1). The iMac was emblematic of this.

#### iMac as a model

In the nineties, 2000 came to signify a period of future gazing and re-evaluation not just within the creative industries but broadly throughout popular culture. So it was then, that artifacts held by the popular press to define our age, like the iMac, tended to be highly stylised in a manner that presented technological advancement shrouded in a safe chic 'skin'. The iMac had charm because it evoked earlier fantasies of future technology. In some respects it picked up on a similar popularisation in film for gleaning from past aesthetics<sup>3</sup>.

Design professions used advertising methods to interpret the popular moods for their research and to win pitches. Throughout the twentieth century designers, manufacturers and marketers have fetishised looks of the future in seeking to make people buy into new technology through new products. To inspire trust, fresh products were promoted as new or improved; essentially similar to previous versions, just better. The alternative tactic, which claimed a product to be completely original, emerged as a high-risk approach (Clive Sinclair's C5 and the De Lorean were high-profile failures in this respect). The iMac was not therefore unique in borrowing from advertising. Its means of self-promotion was more advanced than earlier attempts.

The iMac operated as an experiential advert on several fronts. Its semi-transparency made aesthetic virtue of revealing some of its inner components thereby making an aesthetic feature of its inner components. Here we find a sculptural celebration of technology in an intentional iconisation of personal computing. The iMac's transparency is also a communicated symbol of sincerity in promotional communication – it had nothing

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<sup>1</sup>Bell, D The Coming of a Post-Industrial Society: A Venture of Social Forecasting Basic Books, NY 1973.

<sup>2</sup> Castells, M The Informational City: Information Technology, Economic Restructuring and the Urban-Regional Process Blackwell, Oxford 1989.

<sup>3</sup>For instance, in films set 'somewhere in the twenty-first century' such as Brazil (Terry Gilliam, 1984) and Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, 1982), the film makers projected eclectic clips from twentieth century period styles as the look of product and landscapes of the future. Both films were best selling videos in the early to mid-nineties: the iMac's style fits within this genre.

to hide. It refused to follow the traditional design route of creating an impassive (non-consumer-serviceable) 'envelope'.

The Apple iMac used new materials such as corrugated polyurethane, holographic film and brushed aluminium, which were evocative of materials used to make a variety of adult and children's toys. In some respects it treats the notion of serious computer 'work' as 'play'. This sense of play is particularly loaded: it was an important element in the genesis of Apple, of games and hacking, and the appearance was particularly significant in the development of its Graphic User Interface (GUI).

The iMac was used to harness Apple's renown as the main manufacturer of computer technology for the creative industries. iMac's skin went some way to distancing the company from the hard, angular corporate grey tones of computers in the eighties. It also distanced Apple from associations with IBM<sup>4</sup>, of military and industrial applications, and of Microsoft, which by 2000 was still actively trying to rid itself of its geekish reputation.


Apple's break with the past alluded to a more colourful and unlimited outlook for computer users via the Apple brand. Its advertising reinforced this. In common with VW Beetle, Daewoo and Gap, the 'Product as King' advertising tactic was effective for iMac. In ads it was decontextualised against a plain white background to put emphasis on its form and colour range. The strapline 'Think different' emphasised brevity to reflect the speed of its operation and to introduce the idea that (like the product itself) its users exercise free thought. Believing in its identity added to the consumption experience. These qualities, flagged up in the pre-launch hype, became an 'experience' consumers looked to have confirmed when they first used the iMac.

One cannot claim this as a totally new approach. Olivetti's bright red Valentine typewriter of the sixties (designed by Ettore Sotsass) pushed the notion of work as fun. It rekindled a market for fashionable office accessories (such as pens, pen and credit card holders, which aped the Valentine's aesthetics), and made a lively contribution to developing the idea of the portability of work (ads showed the Valentine in domestic and commercial situations). The Valentine like the iMac had toy-like qualities and a sense of organisational poetry within the product. Like the iMac, it shifted typology. It did not appear to be a bureaucratic device, just as the iMac did not appear to 'belong' to a conventional office.

Apple's sense of 'play' echoed the first iMac billboard ads which referred to children's sweets. The plastic colour range became fruit pastel flavours – lime, strawberry, blueberry, lemon, grape. The idea of childhood consumption is immediately invoked while the product engages the reader/viewer in the outrageousness of choosing a computer by personal taste in colour. Hence this is a kind of oral pleasure in a primary form of communication. The juxtaposed range of Macs in the promotional images (in curved arches or



in circles) positions them as a stylish accessory, encouraging the consumer to define themselves against their preferred choice of iMac. It acknowledged the significance of primal responses in making major purchasing decisions: goods that instinctively 'feel right' give consumers a sense of added value and personal attachment. The iMac's emotional pull was further enhanced by its distinction from other brands. Where other computers were shown head on, iMacs were shown in side elevation, pan view or three-quarter front view (like automotive ad shots).

After selling the iMac's distinctiveness, second generation billboard ads sought to cement celebrity by replacing the iMac product shot with images of the twentieth century's most famous creative free thinkers, including Picasso and Chaplin. The personalities were connected by the 'Think different' line and  icon<sup>5</sup>, which emphasised the 'idea' of what the product represented.

While iMac's form made the product a celebrity in its market, the marketing campaign was well measured in its reading of the mood of Western consumption. As McIntyre noted in her essay on the iBook<sup>6</sup>, the i-range showed Apple moved to a more modest, measured 'i' from the 'Power' Macs of the early nineties. This was evident in the less brash tones of its advertising, which ceased competing on speed and power.

From this it can be seen that iMac's stylists (the most credited is Jonathan Ives) made the iMac form distinct enough to dictate the direction of its advertising. Making the USP inherent within the product enabled Apple to re-claim promotional territory from its advertisers. Apple could decide the strategy before designing the product, rather than going to a communications agency for promotional advice.

iMac moved the personal computer into the domain of fashion goods, as Benetton did with paint ranges, Swatch with watches and Alessi with kitchenware. These other design fields had, since the 1980s, moved into the same short shelf-life realms as clothes, where aesthetics were as much a determinant of obsolescence as practicality. With the iMac range, the appearance would probably be as fashionable for as long as the relative capabilities of its technology (about two to four years).

The advertising industries have most often been characterised as being in the vanguard of the Information culture. In fact it is only one aspect of advertising – direct – that is geared to embracing the potential of new media, because it fuses with other forms of media and technologies that are intrinsically tools of avant-garde communication.

In terms of developing consumer perceptions of brands, the iMac appeared to be verging towards the FMCG market, given that Apple computers could (by 2000) be bought in supermarkets. The design direction

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<sup>4</sup>According to Bond, J & Kirshenbaum, R. *Under The Radar* p.162, the concept was that Apple had finally made computing power accessible to the masses, freeing them from the repressive monopoly of IBM.

<sup>5</sup>For the iMac campaign Apple's icon had lost its colour bar and became a more monolithic single colour brand in the manner of Nike's 'swoosh', McDonalds 'golden arches' or Disney's three-sphered Mickey Mouse profile.

emerging from other product design fields seems to resemble that of Apple. In the late-1990s there was a tendency in other product types (from desk accessories, lamps and even furniture) to appear as relatives of the iMac family, with semi-transparent plastic materials finding their way into a number of other creative disciplines. Product design fused with (and was re-energised by) fashion, graphics, jewellery and ceramics. In fact products appeared fresher when the sensibilities that have traditionally framed the different creative cultures were blurred. Hence the advertising and graphic rendering of the 'flavoured' iMacs were vibrant through their shift of typology. Where the iMac seems ready-made for marketers with plenty of marketable hooks in its styled form, so in product fashion similar looking gizmos with translucent plastic and exposed wires were appearing within children's toys, domestic and telecommunication appliances and giftware<sup>7</sup>. These are all following a similar bent. It is as if they are switching typologies to broaden their commercial appeal.

The remit for product design (which like many design disciplines was initially shaped by architecture) seems to be expanding into new territories through the domains of portable work, prosthetics, low-identity products, extreme sports and cityscapes. Here the Zippo cigarette lighter became a format for stretching fashion house branding (Yves St Laurent, Harley Earl, Tommy Hilfiger<sup>8</sup>). Meanwhile visual culture was exploited and re-interpreted in adverts - repetition, 'replay', fast edit, sampling, retro-irony - are disseminating to other areas of creative production where the time lapse between concept and production are more drawn out (see Chapter 5).

The iMac removed the opportunity for misinterpretations between a product and its marketing. Conventionally, adverts made claims; consumers bought into products via the adverts promise: if it failed the brand's reputation was flawed. No amount of marketing hype can counter actual experience. ImMac's promotion consistently pointed to the product and what could be achieved with it. Word-of-mouth testimonies from real peoples' product experiences are more profound than any number of seductive advertising messages, as the Daewoo campaign sought to demonstrate.

Journalist John Vidal touched on this in his article Power to the people<sup>9</sup>. He observed that the '...consumer is angry. After years of accepting the paternalistic line of governments, corporations and shops claiming to offer consumers' 'choice' and protection, there is accumulating evidence that they are wising up to how they are being abused...'. He cited the costly public relations problems of Shell with its plans to sink

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<sup>6</sup>McIntyre, K 'Me and my iBook', in Things 11 Winter 1999-2000, Things, London p.100.

<sup>7</sup>The twice-yearly 'Top Drawer' exhibition at Earls Court, London and the annual Gift Show at Birmingham's NEC are both useful venues to cross-reference different varieties of product available on the market for distribution; as such they represent an opportunity to glean a flavour of the issues in contemporary production.

<sup>8</sup>The significance of branding rippled through a series of different creative disciplines, from modern art (Damian Hirst's Dot paintings, Sensation catalogue, p.7) to galleries (Cassina Design Classics range for the Guggenheim, contemporary British Designers for The Design Museum) products (Starck for XO) and Jewellery (Gecko range merchandised under Benetton, G McKenzie range merchandised under the Mikey label).

<sup>9</sup> Vidal, J Power to the people, in The Guardian G2: Media Guardian section, Monday 7 June 1999 pp.8-9

Brent Spar oilrig, and the British government's difficulty in promoting Genetically Modified foods. 'If government says GM foods are safe, people immediately assume they aren't; if it says something is not safe, they presume it is'.

Vidal's implication is similar to that outlined in Chapter 2, that promotions groups and their clients needed to be aware that consumers were more aware and discriminating, fuelled by an increase in information, critical journalism and a general consciousness of consumer issues. If companies are not seen to address the values of their customer, consumers knew how to express dissatisfaction by altering their spending habits. They came to realise the power consumption exerts. In response to this the emphasis in new products shifted from expressing virtues of the brand to expressing values of the consumer.

## Part 2

### After Heskett

The shift towards addressing more consumer-centred sensibilities has been evident for some time. Design Historian John Heskett noted it in 1994<sup>10</sup>. He produced a table charting the most significant twentieth century designs that had gradually, radically or fundamentally effected the evolution of design, from Breuer's cantilever chair to virtual reality.

*Table 15: Heskett's model of change in 20th Century Design*

	incremental	radical	fundamental
<b>Design-Centred</b>	Starcks toothbrush 1980s	Breuer cantilever chair 1920's	Mickey Mouse 1930's
<b>Producer-Centred</b>	Braun Clock 1950's	Sony Walkmen 1979	Apple Mac. 1984
<b>Consumer-Centred</b>	Toyota Lexus 1993	Battletech 1994	Virtual Reality 1990 ongoing

re-worked version of the Heskett model,  
originally presented at the [into/through/for design](#) conference, London, March 1994.

In mapping shifts Heskett observed a change in emphasis of what products best served. At the beginning of the century manufactured goods were design-centred, with the significance of mass-manufactured goods still being realised. This evolved towards more producer-centred objectives as the Western world became more industrially reliant. Gradually the industrial focus has been re-appraised and re-oriented to consumer-centred values as more sophisticated forms of consumerism have emerged. Given that the examples Heskett gave for

<sup>10</sup>Professor John Heskett, Illinois Institute of Technology, 'Gradual, radical and fundamental changes in twentieth century design, paper delivered at the [Research Into, Through and For Design](#) conference, the Royal College of Art, February 1994.

consumer-centred design at the time (the Toyota Lexus and Battletech) involved contemporary technology, it is fair to assume that designers have been better equipped to mould around physical and emotional needs. Part of the decade's design 'story' was how such emotive needs could be deduced.

Consumers have to an extent been empowered by technology. On-line they no longer need to know typed computer commands but can operate on a GUI point and click basis. Apple Macintosh borrowed terms from offices and restaurants – desk-tops, menus, wastebasket, files and windows. There is certainly better access to product information, obtainable from a wider choice of media.

Heskett's structured perspective is a useful model to 'read' changes in design direction across the century. If one applied Heskett's framework to twentieth century developments in communication, the emphasis would equally have shifted to an accent on consumer-centred approaches:

*Table 16: After Heskett: mapping Changes in British Advertising*

	incremental	radical	fundamental
<b>Message-Centred</b>	'Beanz Meanz Heinz' Heinz (Y&R) 1967	'Labour Isn't Working' Conservatives (S & S) 1978	Kitchener wants you/ 'Careless Talk...' Govt. Home Office 1914/46
<b>Product-Centred</b>	B&H Gallaher, (CDP) 1978	Levi's 501 Levi (BBH)1985	'Think Small' VW Beetle (DDB) 1965
<b>Brand-Centred</b>	Tango Britvic (HHCL&P)	√ Nike (several agencies) 1991	iMac Apple (Chiat Day/TBWA) 1999
<b>Service (customer) -Centred</b>	'Adventures' Landrover (Craik Jones) 1995	Daewoo Daewoo (DFGW) 1994	Clubcard Tesco stores (EHS) 1995

the author, May 2000 (after John Heskett, March 1994).

The pattern is similar; for 'design' read 'message-centred', for 'producer' read 'product-centred' and for 'customer' read 'service-centred'. An extra phase between product and service, 'brand-centred', recognises the significant development of company cultures in the nineties.

### Message-centred

The most successful commercial message-based campaign was 'Beanz Meanz Heinz', which effectively made Heinz and the product synonymous from 1967. The line is still used and Heinz are still the beans market leader. Striking word play (for instance 'Think Electric', 'Tel Sid' and 'one-2-one') helped shape emotive identities for services which rubbed off on identities in politics (Forza Italia in the late-1980s, and New Labour from 1994). More *radical* was Saatchi & Saatchi's 'Labour Isn't Working' of 1978. It led to a spate of ads where

After Heskett: Mapping Changes in British Advertising

GRADUAL

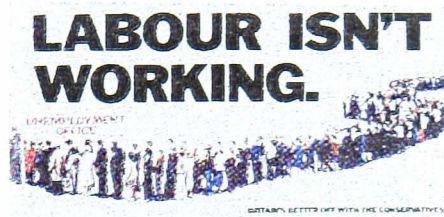
INCREMENTAL

FUNDAMENTAL



Row 1: Message centred (1914–1978)

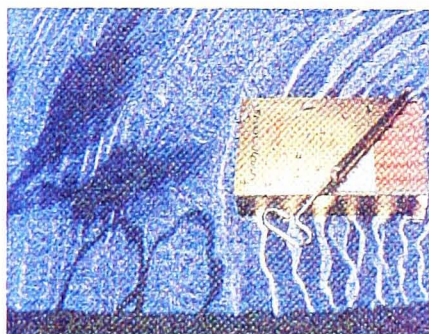
Heinz Beans (1967)



The Conservatives (1978)



Ministry of Information (1914)



Row 2: Product centred (1886–1979)

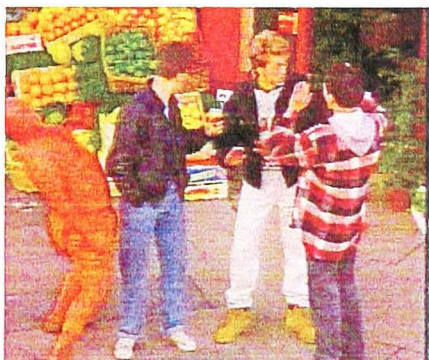
Benson & Hedges (1979)



Levi's 501 (1985)



Volkswagen Beetle (1965)

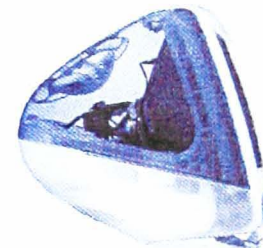


Row 3: Brand centred (1990–present)

Tango (1992)



Nike (1996)



Apple iMac (1999)



Row 4: Service centred (1993–present)

Landrover 'adventures' (1995)



Daewoo (1996)



Tesco Clubcard (1993)



image and copy were inter-dependent. By not imaging Labour, the 'idea' of Labour was easily demonised because they were outside the frame of the ad, in the way that Daewoo demonised salesmen.

In terms of *fundamentally* effecting mass communication, the directness of war posters became post-war models for rationalising commercial messages. Ideas were compressed with visual metaphors, connecting the messenger – heroic figures such as Kitchener – directly with the viewer. War posters were presented as personal dictats. Kitchener's poster was the most direct and personal. It also cast the sense of 'collective spirit'<sup>11</sup> evident in World War Two posters.

As a genre, message-centred advertising relied on cementing a single meaning to a recognisable brand. Whether Beans *meant* Heinz, Kitchener *wanted* you, or even whether you've *been* Tango'd, the method relied on a fixed pre-knowledge of the brand in the frame of reference. By the end of the century only superbrands such as Coca-Cola tended to employ message-centred strategies<sup>12</sup>. The use of message-led proposition dwindled from the 1980s in favour of strong art direction and emotive selling styles. In this respect 'You've been Tango'ed' and 'That'll be the Daewoo' were not representative of their period's advertising, as hooklines did not sit well alongside the tendency for irony.

### Product-centred

Promoting goods using product images was the most common pre-war ad tactic. Of the early benchmarks Pear's soap (from 1890) is often credited for introducing emotive advertising and 'artistic' advertising in Britain<sup>13</sup> while Thomas Lipton's 1850 promotion featuring painted pigs apparently created a bigger stir<sup>14</sup>.

However, Benson & Hedges campaign methods (from 1978) pitched the image of their product through press and billboard ads using strikingly surreal and often cryptic photography. B&H negotiated restrictive legislation through juxtaposition. The health warning in the bottom quarter of the ads operated as a

<sup>11</sup>Barnett, C *The Audit of War*, Macmillan, London 1986. Barnett claims that Britain real strength was in its war time ability to maintain a sense of collective responsibility and community which, post-War, became diluted in a celebration of Britain's re-organised equipment, brains and skill along with their manufacturing and technological ability. 'Yet' as Barnett observed, '...it was generally accepted that Britain's war production had not just been a matter of new factories and machines and methods. The prime mover in the whole industrial machine lay in a new-found sense of national community and team effort, obliterating the old peace-time antagonisms of social class and sectional interest. Everyone had 'gone to it' in the common cause'. p.7.

<sup>12</sup>Coca Cola's advertising is significant in that it has continually drawn on dominant models of the day. Where British war posters assumed their public should be dutiful for the common good. A similar sentiment was evident in Coke's 'I'd Like to Teach The World To Sing' (1974). As a renowned global corporation they assumed a moral (self-ordained) high ground in their 'One World: One Coke' global village. The ad inferred that with Coke went the sense of western freedom and collective togetherness – a United Nations of Coke, representing the world's youth. The moral high ground it assumed, and the sense of being swept up in the rhetoric of unanimity were both methods extrapolated from British war posters, whose underlying agenda was to maintain a collective home-front spirit. Coke tailored this message to assume global collectivity under Coke's branding.

<sup>13</sup>Bingham, J *Commercial Advertising* in Timmer, M (ed.) *The Power of the Poster*, V&A Publications, London 1998 pp.178–9. Bingham cites Thomas J Barratt, the husband of the eldest Pear's heir, for realising the marketing potential of visual association when he famously bought John Everett Millais painting 'Bubbles' (1886) in 1896 and added the Pears insignia. The resulting collage was used in advertisements.

<sup>14</sup>Thomas Lipton in 1850 was said to have launched his Lipton stock by obtaining a load of skinny pigs and painted on them 'we're off to Lipton Stores'; he let them loose in a town where they ran into houses, shops, and through streets; creating havoc and curiosity – 'who was Thomas Lipton?'. After the police recovered the animals, in the evening Lipton let out fatter pigs bearing the words 'we're returning from Lipton's store'. The myth is often recounted at Direct Marketing conferences with the punchline that, including his fine



form of brand recognition. The ads narrative was deliberately ambiguous open-ended. Its advertisers CDP acknowledged the level at which tacit recognition could operate. By shifting to a more allusive set of visual codes, images drew on the packets familiarity and used exotic landscapes to imply sophistication. B&H's stylistic promotion methods became the most copied of the eighties, and prompted rivals Silk Cut followed suit while automotive and fashion advertising – as well as rival cigarette brands – to emulate the strategy.

The campaign for Levi's 501 jeans was more *radical* in promoting an entire period style and placing the product at the heart. The ads re-constructed 1950's America, during the post-war conspicuous consumption boom, and rooted Levi's 501's at its centre through a series of film styled commercials. Levi's 501 were effectively positioned as the 'original' label to wear, by drawing on consumer's 'archival memory' (see Chapter 4). The landscape constructed for Levi's was of a pre-modern, pre-complex world associated with the fifties and sixties, and Levi's associated the brand with youth ephemera, fashion and music from period. It was 'original' in that it treated the past as a strange place, which tailored its authenticity in the eighties. ). For viewers under 40 the period reference would have been read from viewing films and TV.

Levi's were by no means the first to involve 'authenticity' as its sales vehicle. Coca-Cola claimed to be 'the real thing' from the sixties (see p.387). But 'real' is self-possessed; it does not claim as much cultural currency as 'original'. Levi's original' positioning is complex. In terms of the images used, Levi's existed in America in the fifties. It effectively came to signify the original part of the period's retrospective outlook – the product that summed up a longing for simplicity and apparent innocence of a previous era. In some respects this recalls the image Walter Benjamin described of the storm confronting the Angel of Progress – 'This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress'<sup>15</sup>. Levi's were part of the same eclectic future as Apple were in giving the iMac a rounded fifties shape. Levi's tapped into a romantic past pitched at the roots of youth culture, a period which for post-war adulthood was the first (the birthing of a generation) where youths appeared to have expendable income in a pre-aids, pre-feminist, pre-irony era. The Levi's campaign was British in casting and tone, if fifties and American in its placement. As such BBH projected the Levi's 501 to the centre of cultural significance, the ripples from which continued for Levi's and its competitors throughout the 1990s.

Doyle Dane Bernbach's 1960's VW Beetle ads had a *fundamental* impact for product-centred communication. They are often heralded in accounts of advertising<sup>16</sup> for introducing a more down-to-earth

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and the cost of buying the pigs, Lipton's promotion was still cheaper than running a press ad. Source: David Harris, director, LIDA/M&C Saatchi, paper to Marketing Direct, 'Developing direct Marketing Strategies' delivered at Marketing Direct, May 1999.

<sup>15</sup>Benjamin, W *Illuminations, Theses on the Philosophy of History* Fontana, London, 1973 p.249.

<sup>16</sup>Both Lupton, E & Abbott Miller, J *A Time Line of American Graphic Design, 1829–1989* in Friedman, Mildred (*et al.*) *Graphic Design In America – A Visual Language History* Walker Arts Center/Abrams Inc. NY1989 pp.54–56, and Meggs, PB *A History of Graphic Design*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, NY 1983 pp.368–9, treat DDB's ads as landmarks in re-thinking how they addressed audiences.

approach, taking “the exclamation mark out of advertising’ as they talked intelligently to consumers<sup>17</sup>. DDB recognised in their tones of voice that viewers read through the hard sell logic of ad messages rather than merely consuming them. For instance, DDB never claimed the VW Beetle was the market leader, but aimed to please more discerning viewers needs. This gave the product commercial distinction. Where other car advertisements competed on speed, styling and luxury, DDB promoted to their own agenda foregrounding qualities as economy and reliability. One ad line ran, ‘Have you ever wondered how the man who drives the snow plough, drives to the snow plough?’. To understand its smart logic and admire its sentiments was to become a VW Beetle type of person. The campaign is a model that demonstrates the need to differentiate and acknowledge the intelligence of consumers. Product-centred USP advertising was the mainstay of advertising from the very first TV commercial (for Gibbs SR toothpaste) in 1955 until the late 1980s.

#### Brand-centred

Brand-centred communication developed as companies aimed to set a distance between themselves and their product ranges. By having a core identity semi-affiliated to their products, companies were able to extend their activity into new sectors (cf. Chapter 2). Many attempts were made in the 1990s by marketers and ad agencies to make consumers feel they ‘belonged’ to brands<sup>18</sup>. In 1987 Sony sought to establish a ‘cradle to grave’ relationship with their ‘My First Sony’ range of electronic toys. The range was aimed at 1-4 year olds as a means of familiarising them with Sony’s style of iconography, features and formal language. In making this youngster’s first hands-on technological experience during their formative years (when their powers of assimilating information is at its most sensitive) Sony hoped the consumption experience would establish an emotional bond with the brand. Even TV remote handsets had extra buttons applicable only to Sony videos. It is in this context that Tango represents an incremental development in brand-centred communication, in that they extended their identity to prove their edgy and eccentric identity ran throughout the company. Extensions to their campaign such as the call lines, ‘Gotan’ doll and their ‘national Tango Lemon day’ were all geared to create an umbrella identity for the Britvic product range.

The objective for most multinational brands was to develop satellite products that demonstrated command of the markets niche requirements. In terms of brand communication, Nike went *radically* further than any other fashion brand by simultaneously tailoring their identity to local and global markets. They developed their strategy from 1987 in the US (1991 in Britain) by endorsing athletes in high-profile sports that had the appropriate degree of ‘Just Do It’ win or bust attitude. As Klein remarked, ‘Branding, in its truest and

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<sup>17</sup> Meggs, PB, *ibid.* p.369.

most advanced incarnations, is about corporate transcendence...(in America) Nike has drawn on inner cities, merging... with the styles of poor black and Latino youth to load up on imagery and attitude'<sup>19</sup>. Nike appropriated their selection policy to each country to make their brand 'glocally' pertinent to the different cultures. For instance, in England early Nike promotions had a hint of rebelliousness. The British spirit of taking pride in stoic amateurism<sup>20</sup> was re-cast by Nike for England's rugby team: Nike's line ran 'It's the taking apart that counts'. It was the activity generated around the 'attitude' of the ads that made it a benchmark of brand-centred communication. Klein described Nike's swoosh in 2000 as among the 'most familiar and best-tended logos on the brandscape'<sup>21</sup>, despite being a focus for anti-Capitalist demonstrations in the 1990s<sup>22</sup>. Their signature swoosh became a 'semi-constructed' medium – partially (not fully) loaded with enough attitude to be equally re-modified by youths from Milton Keynes to the Bronx.

Nike's brand-centred values were imbued in their products in several ways. In the formal qualities of their products, in the way they were presented in-store and in the organised sales rituals that accompanied Nike purchases in their flagship stores. Nike authorised their own place in sporting history through Nike Town. In Nike Town, a museum-cum-retail outlet for the brand, they celebrated the achievements of their endorsed stars. Some of Nike's most popular ranges – over-sized peak caps, wrap around sun shades – were only sold in their flagship stores, to make consuming Nike goods an unique brand-specific event. This encouraged consumers to make a special journey to 'experience' Nike through Nike Town. As Klein noted, Nike were one of few brands that had successfully integrated the idea of branding into the very fabric of their companies.

Their corporate culture was so tight and cloistered that to outsiders it appeared to be a cross between fraternity house, religious cult and sanatorium. Everything was an ad for the brand: bizarre lexicons for describing employees (partners, baristas, team players) ...fanatical attention to design consistency, a propensity for monument building and New Age mission statements. Unlike classic household brand names such as Tide and Marlboro, these logos weren't losing their currency, they were...becoming cultural accessories and lifestyle philosophers.<sup>23</sup>

In one sense, the stores serve as walk-through adverts. Most city centre Nike Towns have a central arena to get visitors participating. Objects became souvenirs of the Nike experience, and embellished the personal meanings of Nike goods after purchase. Such of blending consumption with entertainment follow the model of

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<sup>18</sup> in 1995 for instance Ogilvy Direct worked on a project called 'Our Consumers', which examined methods of relationship marketing to establish ways for companies to make their customers 'brand loyal'. From interview with Steve Harrison, MD of HPT Direct (formerly Creative Director of Ogilvy Direct), interviewed 15 March 2000.

<sup>19</sup>Klein, *No Logo* p.21 and p.369.

<sup>20</sup>The point is made in Paxman, J *The English*, where Paxman notes 'stoic defeat and the amateur' in chapter 1 pp.1–24 and pp.176–207, as quintessential British qualities.

<sup>21</sup>ibid., p.137.

<sup>22</sup>Mainly because they showed a lack of contrition when it was disclosed that they used Chinese sweatshops to produce goods, and because they re-invested little of their inner-city profits back into poor communities. 'Instead of jobs for their parents' complains Klein, 'what the inner-city kids get from Nike is the occasional visit from its marketers and designers on 'Bro-ing' pilgrimages' ibid., p.370.

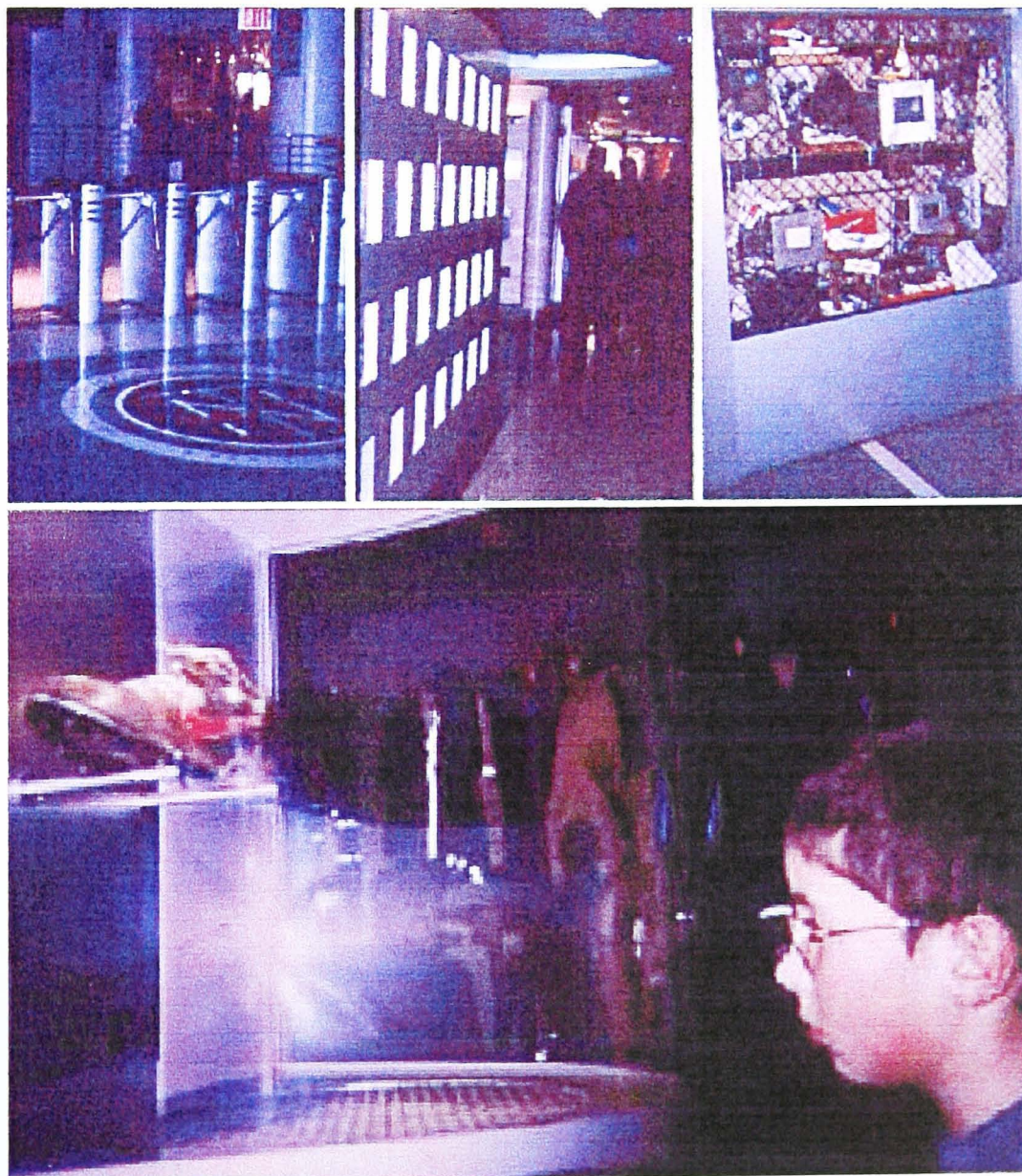
<sup>23</sup>ibid., pp.12-16; quote from p.16.



Nike: a model of advertising imbued product /retail activity



The Winning attitude of Nike in America turned British sporting 'characters' into gladiators, where Nike harnessed myths around its sponsored stars, and shaped interpretations for their actions (Brian Moore famed for fighting in rugby matches, billboard, SPDC, 1994). Sub-brands such as Nike's Jordan label (right) act as satellites for 'Team Nike' (Michael Jordan & his 'Nike Jordans', 1999).



Nike Town NY – entering 'The Nike experience' is emphasised by passing through sporting turnstiles, then the experience becomes a mixture of theatre (there's arena in the middle), history museum and retail – a bit like a theme park shop. A boy is wowed by 'The shoe' worn by Nike runner Michael Johnson in winning the 1996 Olympic 400 metres (The validating measure of gladiatorial sporting achievement).

Disneyland. Here the theme park activity ties in with the corporation's sales strategy. With Disney's marketing, special events are backed up by retail availability (see Chapter 5).

In terms of what the Nikes stores signify, the *space* they occupy in the guise of entertainment, information and retail equates to perceived power. The presence of Superbrands in their own distribution outlets de-notes the shift in from local and national distributors of many brands (for instance the Dixons group) to brand-owned outlets (Sony Centres, Orange, One-2-one, Vodaphone and BT stores were in most high streets in 2000). Brands increasingly formed their own retail outlets, as brands expanded into global operations. They even used the language of geography – *Disneyland*, *Nike Town*, *Euro Disney*, *United Colors* of Benetton.

As I discussed earlier in this chapter, the iMac proved fundamental in re-thinking how products can keep customers 'warm' to the brand. Its sales strategy and brand values ran through the product, which made it unique from earlier attempts at creating promotion imbued products. For instance, through publications such as Philips: Vision Of The Future (from 1994<sup>24</sup>) the manufacturers Philips used their Research Center to boost stock market confidence in their brand (see p.389). iMac went further in the sense that it did not require a third party vehicle such as a publication to express Apple's brand values. The iMac's functions and commercial hooks were self-evident in the product.

Brands that have ensured they are perceived as being customer-centred are those that have best harnessed the potential of digital technology to determine the shape and type of advertising campaign. In the case of the iMac, the medium was the message.

### Service-centred

In the broader context of advertising's evolution in Britain, there was another phase during the 1990s which claimed to be consumer-centred because it defined its central identity as a service. The key characteristic was that the 'product' was in effect part of a wider service package, as the case studies for Daewoo and Tesco Clubcard illustrated.

Craik Jones constructed a 'user culture' around their database of Landrover users (cf. Chapter 3b), which became a much aped strategy in the automotive industry for keeping customers affiliated to the brand. As such, the Landrover 'adventures' promotions had an incremental impact in the development of service-centred promotion during the 1990s.

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<sup>24</sup>The edition I refer to in this text is Marzano, S *et al* (ed.) Vision Of The Future, Philips Corporate Design, Eindhoven/V+K pub., Brussum, 1996.

Daewoo's methods were comparatively more radical. When one bought into Daewoo one had acquired a guarantee of faith, that if the car broke down one would be serviced with a replacement. This (at the time) was customer care had been taken a stage further, and suggested to other manufacturers and retailers that (as Daewoo claimed) they had changed the nature of buying cars for good. First Direct 24 hour telebanking service (introduced by Midland Bank in response to research that showed the discrepancy between their services and what their customers really wanted). Likewise Daewoo in Britain first addressed what customers required, then addressed perceptions in their market before shaping their product, the branding and (finally) the advertising types they required. Both Daewoo and First Direct had a built-in capacity to be what their customers wanted them to be.

Clubcard went a stage further in reorganising consumer data acquired at checkouts to monitor and reward consumers for staying brand-loyal. In Clubcard they affected a sense of customer care, and (in the wake of Marlboro Friday) were able to tailor their price competitiveness specifically on the types of items that, according to their data, would appeal to specific customer's tastes.

#### Conclusions – reviewing the evidence

It is worth noting that, between message and consumer-centred approaches at each end of the twentieth century clarity of communication is uppermost. Where commercials appeared more sophisticated in the 1980s, in the 1990s the different levels of customer interaction had complexity, while actual advertising communication appeared simple. For instance, Levi's 1985 advertising agenda was to claim '501s from Levi's are the right look'<sup>25</sup>, which was presented as a stylised period reconstruction. In comparison agenda for Tango's Slap commercial was product centred, in that it was about the moment client meets product ('the taste sensation').

It is also worth noting that between Heskett's phases for product develop and mine for communication, the rate of change is different. The degree to which the values and methods embodied within the products and campaigns are in-tune with broader socio-economic and political world views varies in that the advertising operates approximately half a decade faster than product design.

This is easier to explain. Product design requires more decision-making stages and a longer gestation period between concept and the final produced artefact. It is true that ads operate in a more transient and flexible medium than products, which also (by and large) have greater longevity.

In terms of tapping into current market values however, products have been closing the gap since the mid-nineties. Rapid prototyping and production technology can now be positioned to mass-produce tailored

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<sup>25</sup>From an abstract of Levi's brief. Nixon, S Circulating Culture, in du Gay, P Production of Cultures/Cultures of Production p.200.



goods to specification. Levi's plants in the US were doing this from 1993. But in terms of more marketable attributes - visual identity, location in the market place (qualities which are less flexible) - products remain less in-tune with most versions of contemporary 'everydayness', and product designers still have to pitch their vision some five to ten years hence.

There are other signs that product design is operating on a different time frame. While advertising (for the most part) exhausted archival tactics during the mid-nineties, products are still evoking period styles and the sort of aesthetic gestures about function and the fetishisation of banal domesticity that were prominent during the eighties. Notably elsewhere in Europe. Alessi (Italy) and Koziol (Finland) both manufacture goods that teeter on the threshold between being functional and being industrial high art. Furthermore new shops in fashionable city areas and craft shops in tourist areas are selling table, kitchen and living room wares that are craft but allude to production, in the manner of designs between the Bauhausian early 1920s and streamlined goods of the 1950s. While they also have pretensions of mass-production, the 80-year gap and evocations of production 'classics' suggests that they are inherently still developing a theme exhausted in advertising half a decade ago. Classics in product design engage with a number of social stigmas. There is the sense that they reclaim the past and promise eternal relevance. They are modern heirlooms of a lower order than antiques, but testify to a quality of understanding in the consumer. Because they are in a medium that suggests permanence they appear to be of a higher order.

There are showcase trade shows<sup>26</sup> that forge connections between creative expression and production, craft and industry and batch production with pretensions to mass-market. Aiming at distributors and retailers, such shows promote small companies marketing their styles as brands, and attach their company name as if they were selling signature styles.

From this one can assume that there is a growing collectors market for inconspicuous consumption, where lesser-known batch-produced works are collected. This assumes that 'authentic' late-industrial mass-produced goods, with a shared common stigma attached (like Tetley Tea ephemera), are eroding the thrill of uniqueness to the extent that it is becoming just another sub-classic. There seems little opportunity to repeat the international classic of earlier decades. It is at a similar stage to advertising in 1994, where (if one takes Clubcard as the first of its kind) the market for product design in 2000 is starting to become more esoteric and 'hi-style', while also becoming more defuse and polarised.

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<sup>26</sup>In Britain, at Birmingham's NEC – Spring and Autumn Fairs – and Earls Court – Top Drawer, and in Europe the Salone Satellite at the Salone Internazionale del Mobile annually in Milan, which operates as a showcase for future products and future approaches to design.

As I demonstrate later (in Chapter 5) new ways of watching were also encompassed in the styling of adverts. Tango was an early forerunner in structuring visual information for generations brought up on reading multimedia.

In this Chapter it is evident that two more major determinants caused advertising to shift the way it understood and reached consumers. Better understandings of audiences through digitally assisted market segmentation met with new methods of 'reading' change. The other determinant was companies broader understandings of how to diversify yet maintain consistency through all aspects of their operations. If one reads the change between chapters 3a–c a major effect of brand diversification was the blurring between advertising and marketing. By 1997 many 'advertising' schemes were using a number of integrated media like Tesco's Clubcard. Campaigns had become closer, with more depth to them.

Interactive methods of selling like Tesco had ramifications for the design of products. Sales showed that marketing goods as 'new' may work for FMCG's, but for expensive products consumers preferred a sense of guarantee, as Daewoo illustrated. Customers have even come to expect consumption rewards, from freebies to service care. This has developed as a component of what is sold: it is no longer just the product but its service infrastructure that has become significant. In Britain Daewoo epitomised this by offering full, extended service with the cars, and later by regulating their own second-hand market. In effect consumers bought the service guarantee, the peace-of-mind, that their product would work. If the marketing and product were not actually fused together, then marketing certainly worked in tandem with the product ethos, because the product + service could be delivered exactly as promised.

This approach had currency. Some of the biggest producers and service companies diversified their interests, so brands with apparently little in common by 2000 were competing in the same field. In Britain brands as disparate as Virgin, HSBC, Manchester United FC and Tesco compete over investment services. To do this successfully their core identity is required to be distinct and real: it must genuinely deliver all the values its advertising espouses, otherwise its manifest of integrity is diluted.

Now that consumers have a wider (if more confusing) variety of information at their disposal to inform choice, the actual branded product plays an intrinsic role in marketing. As the iMac demonstrated, products have become, in effect, their own adverts. Their skin not only dictates how they work and their social status, but also communicates a broader spirit of trust – of a guarantee (in some respects this is a realisation of the product semantics movement of the eighties). In short, a product's purposes and function need to be more clearly evident within the object. Its language of form needs to be measured and precise if its broader values are to have resonance.

As the shift in product positioning between the case studies demonstrates, the orientation of product design has shifted. Consumers demand more emotive value from goods. The spirit of an artifact, the very sensations we experience through their functionality and references has to be in-tune in late-consumerism if designers through manufacturers, marketers and advertisers are to circumvent a reaction against mass-manufactured goods – a post-product era. Interior magazine Wallpaper is typical of many style journals in reflecting the contradiction for advertising, between establishing markets for new goods and servicing consumers needs: opposite advertorials promoting new designer gizmos are editorials showing minimalist architectural interiors (de-materialist) without a product in sight. Pure, uncomplicated lifestyles require the elimination of product clutter, cutting back on the ‘need’ of over-consumption (see Chapter 5).

While this may still be a far cry from the sentiments of Adolf Loos<sup>27</sup> this still illustrates that existing products do not fulfil the wider demands of contemporary overloaded lifestyles. Emphasis on emotional content, in creating a sense of sensorial experience (Tango), security (Daewoo) or belonging (Tesco), seems to be the strength of product/communication promotional hybrids, fashion and art industries already reflect the highly tactile and spiritual demand for sensory stimulation, found (for instance) in the adrenaline-rush of extreme sports, or the sensational experience of walking between two halves of a cow in Damien Hirst's ‘Mother & Child Divided’(1996). This is significant for electronic products and the way they are advertised. It is in the moods products and their environments create that ‘experiential marketers’ sought to invest in their brands. For instance, the buzz of buying a ‘swoosh’ branded Nike baseball cap in Nike Town’s vibrant environment, or meeting the Daewoo salesroom staff for the first time. The iMac’s ‘selling hook’ was also in experiencing the brand for the first time. In all three campaigns, strategies placed emphasis at one point in the transaction: the sensation – or ‘perfect moment’ – of consumption.

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<sup>27</sup>Loos argued that the more humankind evolved the less it required ornament or clutter. Extracted from Ornament & Crime, 1909, taken from Greenhalgh, P (ed.) Quotations and Sources Manchester Univ. press, Manchester 1993 pp.14-15.

Chapter 4

**The cultural turn in Britain: how advertising conceptualised social change**

Outline

The purpose of this short chapter is to consider how ad agencies addressed cultural change through advertising strategies. I outline the key strategies agencies adopted in response changing moods and attitudes to advertising. I outline the main approaches in this section, and in Appendix 4 the points are considered in a broader context. In Appendix 4 I explore contexts for advertising's re-conceptualisation of youth and masculinity, ethnicity, and national culture. I also speculate on why such market segments were re-appraised in the 1990s. In previous versions of this chapter Britishness was a major preoccupation. I have re-rendered this as a visual essay in Appendix 3. The significance of a more knowing audience (discussed in Chapter 2), new cultural reference points and changes in mood are outlined in this abbreviated section.

Characterising the 1990s: a period of 'ends'

In the 1990s British culture underwent a number of significant transformations. Devolution created both a problematising and new awareness of 'Englishness', and there were new ways of thinking masculinity. A diverse/hybrid culture resulting from long term effects of immigration became more visible, as did the coming to consciousness of 'Black British' – usually second or third generation, which led to new understandings of 'Britishness'. While not the focus of this study, such issues effected consumers' sense of place, in a way that was not as evident in earlier decades.

It is difficult to claim the nineties as a period characterised by newness, particularly in terms of representation. Digital image manipulation from the middle of the decade introduced distinctive looks in pop promos, such as the freeze-frame camera spin (where a camera appears to move around separate layers of a frozen 3D image). Yet in terms of subject matter and treatment, particular characteristics are harder to isolate. In some cases it was more a case of emphasis than new subject matter or new approaches. More often it was definable in terms of marketing strategies and the ways that adverts fitted into a wider campaign.

### Provocation

The instigator of aggressive ad imagery appears to be Benetton, whose use of imagery by documentary photographer Olivera Toscani from 1987 on billboards and in press ads across Europe stoked widespread rebuffs in Britain, especially in the ad industries own publications and their regulatory bodies (see p.384).

Benetton's was the most widely debated strategy of a number of campaigns employing shock and sensation. It was, at the time, the only fashion label using such methods. Ad agency Howell Henry provoked attention (and later controversy) in a fast-tempo relaunch of Britvic Orange Tango in 1992 (cf. Chapter 3a). By 1993 provocation had become commonplace in ads for FMCGs. While Pepperami re-pitched to become 'A Bit Of An Animal', Saatchi & Saatchi anticipated the withdrawal of their braggish ads for Club 18–30 even before release. Saatchis thought the campaign's double entendres would create such a stir that they would be recommended for withdrawal much sooner than their eventual five-month run<sup>1</sup>. The intention of the Club 18-30 ads was to lock into the language of 'lad' magazines in associating the package holidays with non-stop hedonism - sex, booze and sun. By reiterating this reputation Club 18–30 expected to be a leading youth brand, but the campaign resulted in ten per cent more men and twenty five per cent fewer women booking<sup>2</sup>. This was one of only few examples where pandering to notions of masculinity had a detrimental effect on the female viewer<sup>3</sup>. Skol lager and Sega Megadrive's 'Pirate TV' campaign in 1993 equally evoked the spirit of the lout and gained wider press notoriety without implicating women. The campaign for luxury ice cream Häagen Daz (BBH, 1991) managed to make men and women buy into the idea of erotic sensuality. They made the product appear sexy and sophisticated without dropping the suggestion of a nudge-nudge joke.

### Irony

By the nineties if one was moved by an ad one also tended to be suspicious of its motives. The ingrained perception was that advertising was capitalism's message-bearer. Planners negotiated this by adopting the consumer position and commenting on earlier dubious advertising claims. This had two advantages: it struck an affinity with consumers by using familiar reference points, and it drew on the period of advertising before layered dialogue and irony became part of contemporary communication. Significantly, the dwindling amount of 'given' common ground advertisers could assume was bridged by irony, which clipped in to shared collective memories of old advertising. The old ads being spoofed tended to be more direct in their address, which to a contemporary audience had naïve charm. For instance Mercury's One-2-One launch, featuring a

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<sup>1</sup>In the event the Advertising Standards Authority received 490 complaints – the second highest in 1995 (the year with the most complaints upheld in the 1990's). Complaints against Club 18–30 were upheld. Source: website (August 2000): <http://www.asa.org.uk>

<sup>2</sup>Dave Morris, Advertising course leader, BCUC, May 2000.

<sup>3</sup>One reaction to 'laddism' was 'laddettes' (BBHs Boddingtons ads used feisty models in a lad pastiche from 1991). The suggestion through sitcoms as Men Behaving Badly was that women adopted a matriarchal position to counter the infantilism of laddishness; in advertising the depiction was more disparate – sexy and self-assured (perfume and drink ads) yet business and work-oriented

Harry Enfield character set in the 1950s was more intent on identifying the viewer's perceived ironic mood than making a definitive claim for the (then new) telecommunications service.

Importantly for clients, such approaches appeased the sense of irony and knowingness apparent in pop-culture, and made products appear relevant to contemporary youth. Where previous ad strategies tended to point to an aspirational tomorrow irony operated in a realistic rendering of the present – sourcing everyday common oddities like the feted 'Reg' Regal cigarette campaign (see p.383). The approach exposed space between the advertising craft and viewers awareness of ad methods. In ironic ads there was no apparent cleverness, just an avoidance of sophisticated illusions. The jokes were conspicuously up-front. Broadly, the ads reverted to somewhere between British seaside postcards and under-dressed directness, where took precedence over style<sup>4</sup>. Irony in nineties commercials therefore reflected of ad agencies concern that they must be relevant to contemporary consumers.

Irony as a method was appropriate in the 1990s. It drew on the mood for self-reference (picked up in Tangos campaign, cf. Chapter 3a) and the increased knowingness (of ad methods and archival reference points) of consumers. It served as a cloak of sophistication and esoteric recognition of the viewer's extended archival memory. Therefore, in making connections with viewers irony became a commercial short-cut. FMCGs (notably alcoholic drinks) tended to draw on referential irony, using viewers knowledge of old familiar film and television. As a prevalent tone of voice irony ran in conjunction with shock as the most common means of locating a collective spirit in youth. Cheaper-looking ads<sup>5</sup> removed the glossiness synonymous with 1980s ads, and conveyed a sense of openness, suggesting and exposure of product values beyond the frame of the ad, such as VW Passat's spoof documentary exposés<sup>6</sup> (BMP DDB 1998, p.393).

Ironic campaigns such as Boddingtons (p.47) followed a model in *not* addressing viewers directly – as if 'double-meaning communication' had become a pre-requisite. The exclusive esotericism of the B&H ads (cf. Chapter 3d) appeared obvious alongside ironic ads, which were in a better position to layering codes of dialogue within ironic structures. Advertising texts that refer to ironic ads<sup>7</sup> claim that postmodern times required postmodern means. However, indirect dialogue negotiated the viewers cynicism of hard sell. Humour proved an effective means of numbing viewers critical resistance to commercials, and turned the fashion for parody into an eclectic trawling of reference points.

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(Coffee and car ads): cf. timelines, Appendix 1.

<sup>4</sup>After the Bill Bernbach adage that to communicate most effectively the message was more significant than the style. Taken from unpublished notes by Dawson Yeoman, a former associate of Bill Bernbach at Doyle Dane Bernbach in the 1960s. Received via Derek Haas, former art director with DDB, in February 1996

<sup>5</sup>HHCL's Tango commercial was the first – cf. Chapter 3a.

<sup>6</sup>It featured documentary journalist-cum-film maker Nick Broomfield (his exposés included *Kurt and Courtney* (1998) on Seattle Grunge singers Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love). In the Audi ads Broomfield follows and interrogates an aircraft mechanic and a surgeon, armed with sound boom and microphone, to discover why Audi designers wanted to contact them. The rough and ready appearance of Broomfield's work looked like authentic documentary broadcast between more stylised ads.

<sup>7</sup>For instance Aitchison, J *Cutting Edge Advertising*, Prentice Hall, London 1999 and Butterfield, L (ed.) *Excellence in Advertising: The IPA Guide* Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford 1997. See also the Advertising Planners Group: website (March2000):

<http://www.apg.org.uk>



'Boutiques of history'

With sophisticated means of manipulating film at advertiser disposal and with a greater repertoire of archives to draw on collective memories, film, programme and ad makers were able to reconstruct controlled 'vistas' of the past. This was the first complete decade that video recorders were common in homes, where viewers were able to record and keep visual references. Revivals of films, series and images achieved the saleability of memory, as historical re-constructions allowed viewers project their own intersection with 'history'<sup>8</sup>.

The tendency for archive pillaging in commercials between 1988–93 showed advertisers were aware of the commercial pull of key constructed historical moments (in terms of recreating the effect of archive footage). Advertisers for instance could get nostalgic about the world wars, because they conveyed a sense of togetherness and post-war periods, where disposable incomes and allowed advertisers on both sides of the Atlantic to isolate youth consumption. Advertisers reconstructed the spirit of *la dolce vita* to rekindle the thrill of novel consumption experiences (cf. Chapter 3d).

In making sense of why archive pillaging was so prominent in the 1990s, using past and familiar shared reference points was a way of 'rounding up' the last decade of collectivism in anticipation of a more diffuse period to come. Simple image transference with the onset of the world-wide web made history pillaging easier. In fact television and cinema, the most significant mass mediums to adopt a collective voice in the twentieth century, were not only the instigators of this self-reflection but acted to extend the collective memory by re-rendering the past through period reconstruction and archived footage<sup>9</sup>. In some respects this was akin to flicking through a nation's family archive before facing a different 'ahistorical' future.

In the late 1980s pop music proved particularly skilled at sampling and re-working period styles within new arrangements. So often was sampling used that it became a distinct accent in mass communication in the 1990s. It became especially commonplace within the developing hybrid dance subcultures, notably in drum n' base, banga and jazz/soul funk (cf. Appendix 4). Brands and services were legitimised by the past in a similar vein to celebrity endorsement. Historical ties gave longevity and authority in a period of technological change, employment instability and diminishing 'given' authorities. The past, through ads, was a safer place.

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<sup>8</sup>Film director Robert Zemeckis's Cinema blockbusters caught the mood, with the Back To The Future Trilogy (1985, 89 and 90) and Forrest Gump (1994) both looping in the significance an individual with the course of history.

<sup>9</sup>For instance the popularity of mainstream period films as Dangerous Liaisons (Stephen Frears, 1988) and Amadeus (Milos Forman, 1984). British films such as A Room With A View (James Ivory, 1985) and A Passage to India (David Lean, 1984) eulogised upper-class Victorian society at home and in the colonies in Merchant Ivory films. Turn of the century New York and Chicago were recreated to great acclaim in Once Upon A Time In America (Sergio Leone, 1984) and The Untouchables (Brian de Palma, 1987). The Back To The Future Trilogy (Robert Zemeckis, 1985–90) recreated the landscape of the 1950s as Platoon (Oliver Stone, 1986) did of the 1960s. In fact the storylines of Back to the Future and Field of Dreams (Phil A Robinson, 1989) both centred of re-visiting the past

Issues of masculinity/problems of patriotism

Britain's uneasy cultural relations with the rest of Europe ran throughout the nineties fuelled by pro and anti-Eurocentric allegiances (cf. Tango's placement, Chapter 3a). In the mid-1990s Britain held the presidency of the Economic Union, hosted international sporting events and experienced an upturn in national confidence the inward-looking island mentality was also driven by mistrust of Europe and European bureaucracy<sup>10</sup>. Yet much changed in Britain during the earlier part of the twentieth century to bring it in line with other European countries. For instance, the class divide was not as pronounced as it had been in the previous centuries<sup>11</sup>.

Moments of collective masculine expression, such as that evoked through watching sport, became significant for advertisers during the 1990s. Divergent tastes in music and leisure diluted other efforts to appeal broadly to a British sense of masculinity. Therefore international sporting tournaments became a focal point for advertisers to appeal to a unified masculine audience.

The summer of 1996 in particular gave rise to a collective moment of national pride found simultaneously in sport, art and politics<sup>12</sup>. For the English, the terms British and English were interchangeable as BritPop, BritArt and England's hosting of Euro 96 were expressed as a loop of fashionable archivism that adopted the sixties as a historical model – reviving laddish masculinity as a sort of 'geezer chic'.

Football and comedy (ironic humour) in particular were used as vehicles to interpellate cynical young males during the 1990s. Football remained one of the few domains where un-reconstructed versions of Englishness were still permissible. Football had become a metaphor for replaying old wars in the absence of real conflict. Germans and Argentineans were particularly demonised as 'our' enemies. Hoggart remarked that Them and Us meant less to post war generations<sup>13</sup>. Both nations became metaphoric measures to compare how 'we' stood next to 'them'. Therefore every two years Football (European and World cups) became key moments for advertising to whip up a sense of belonging (see 'Michael Owen's moment' in Chapter 5).

In terms of tapping collective sense of British masculinity, advertising managed to synthesise being crude and sophisticated, which made for a potential spread of consuming practices from low to high culture. Advertisers used sport and associated macho primitive behaviour to sell emotively. This negotiated the limitations of rationally selling product values and a more critically aware male consumer.

<sup>10</sup>During the May 1996 (after the election) pollsters MORI conducted a survey to determine Attitudes to the EU which concluded that seventy four per cent of Britons did not want full integration, compared to 22% that did. Website (June 2000): <http://www.mori.co.uk/polls/1996/>.

<sup>11</sup>Central Statistical Office Social Trends No. 30 2000, London p.18; also a point made by Hoggart, R *The Way We Live Now* p.198

<sup>12</sup>Following the May general election, with the sense of an upward economic turn and that 'Things Can Only Get Better' (Labour's adopted anthem by D:Ream, 1996). The underlying negative undertone of the song's title assumed the state of the nation was at rock bottom. The same cynical line ran through mainstream pop at the time ('Oasis's What's The Story - Morning Glory?', 1997) as it had in the sixties (The Beatles 'It's Getting Better (Can't Get No Worse)', 1967).

<sup>13</sup>Hoggart, R *The Way We Live Now* p.4.

Conclusion: changes of organisation & modes of address

The significant difference in address from the 1980s was that new 'common ground' had been located. Getting consumers to aspire to brand imagery was exhausted as a useful method in all but a few isolated cases (most notably Nike, cf. Chapter 3d). In terms of consumers being more knowing, customers wanted the claims of advertising evidenced in consumption experiences, so product claims were replaced by advertisers attempts to recreate the 'experience' of historic moments, and address mass audiences through emotive agendas such as football. The gap between consumption experience and advertisements closed, and the sense of 'total packaging' became necessary.

Like advertising, the music industry also moved towards representing groups as packages, where identities were managed through existing pop products. Thomas Hine in The Total Package<sup>14</sup> claims such commercial packages became a repository for consumers feelings and values, and the blurring of disciplines connected different types of products with similar aspirations<sup>15</sup>. Different commercial products competed on personality and attitude because a visually literate youth 'listened' with their eyes, reading/connecting visual and sound codes. Like advertising, during the 1990s most commercial pop products understood emotional pull to be more powerful than rational argument.

While the advertising industry continued to award its members for creativity, it suited advertising to be less concerned with the 'craft' of communication. Shock tactics could be striking without being costly. The 1990s saw the creative professions effectively feeling their way through new ways of working and discovering the potential of digital communication and changing youth moods. Therefore the sense of intuited communication evident in cigarette ads of the early eighties was still in evidence during the 1990s. In the nineties however intuited creativity was embedded in a more rapid turnover of work and in the fleshing out of GUI's capabilities, as much as it was toying with new ideas about consumers (see Chapter 5).

In terms of how this impacted on the look of the decade's advertising, it is fair to conclude that the construction of communication became increasingly complex. On the one hand there were archival references to past styles (post-fifties and pre-twentieth century). On the other hand there were styles emerging that seemed synonymous with digitisation – for instance the use of blurred type morphed photographic imagery (using Photoshop). The certainty with which agencies understood viewers would pick up on references within communication said much about the ability of planners and art directors to chime with their target audiences. The harder reading communication became, the more advertisers clipped into the myriad of reference points consumers were thought to have. Like music advertising could also rely on sampling from the 'boutiques of history' to stay relevant.

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<sup>14</sup>Hine, T. The Total Package Little, Brown & Co., Toronto 1995 pp.104–105.

The overriding disdain for hard sell encouraged advertisers to engage with more direct and digital means. As I discussed in Chapter 2, this did not stop ad industries from cultivating media advertising. In this period advertising learned how to harness associations with edgy or counter cultural figures, and by so doing appeared to be operating outside the respectable bounds of commercial enterprise. They made brand differences echo the arbitrary yet crucial distinctions made within subcultures. This touched on the dialectic between belonging and difference, which many theorists of subcultures/consumption have seen as central.

Before ad agendas changed in the 1990s advertising relied on the constant 'now' and 'what next?' to ignite fresh interest. Effecting experience, discovering new common ground and developing relationships displaced product promises. Advertising rewarded its sponsored stars for developing their own *caricature* in their respective mediums – in sporting arenas and in the courts. Bad behaviour outside the respectable boundaries was re-cast in the popular press as 'attitude'. For advertisers there was added value in unconventional behaviour because it was newsworthy. Being topical meant being relevant. Also, identifying with loners offered a sense of being autonomous, at a time when the commercials industries were identified as manufacturers of identities. In a sense advertising was offering the chance to appear original. This is a departure from earlier understandings within advertising of what consumer autonomy represented. Choosing 'loners' as celebrity endorsers could add value beyond the framework of an ad<sup>16</sup>. In the 1990s therefore, using expressions of individuality was a main strategy by which 'mood marketing' could break down individualism into a set of choices relating to facets and moods.

Such methods worked for brands but less so for ideas of collective national belonging. As the Labour government concluded after 'Cool Britannia' waned in 1999, the only way to re-image Britain abroad was through its rich diversity, avoiding representations altogether. This worked like any other 'thin air brand' of the 1990s – emotive, mysterious, stylised, iconic but decentralised<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup>This was termed '3<sup>rd</sup> Party Advertising'.

<sup>16</sup>A similar point is made in Williamson, J *Decoding Advertisements* p.25 where a celebrity endorsement of perfume brand Chanel No. 5 by actress Catherine Deneuve was seen to draw on additional information viewers may have had of the actress and the characters she played. In an extension of this, I claim that the continued actions of celebrity endorsers have significance on the way associations are continually read into brands. The fluctuating popularity of the celebrity is linked to the reputation of a brand. Endorsers therefore continue to serve as on-going ambassadors for brands outside the frame of an advert.

<sup>17</sup>Pountain, D & Robins, D *Cool Rules: Anatomy of an attitude* Reaktion, London 2000. 'Cool Britannia' (reinforced by government endorsement for film, fashion and design (The 1997 Powerhouse exhibition) was such a motif. Pountain & Robins analysed this phrase, which they considered to be usurping the industrial work ethic in assuming the mind-set of advanced consumer Capitalism. If one takes this idea to a logical conclusion New Labour's 'third Way' strategy acted as a conduit between the late-industrial and early-information ages (cf. Chapter 5).

## Chapter 5

### The impact of digital technology on advertising

#### Overview of issues and chapter outline

Writer Edward De Bono considered the 1990s as the period when a production-led age became one led by the movement of Information<sup>1</sup>. Similarly Charles Leadbeater in Living on Thin Air The New Economy described this period where creativity and ideas became valued above hard industrial goods<sup>2</sup>. Both interpretations assume technological change impacted on the social and economic infrastructure of the Western world, effecting what until the 1990s had been rooted modes of behaviour socially, domestically and in the workplace. As du Gay observed, 'Through the introduction of seemingly banal mechanisms and practices such as call centres... (employees) sought to create new meanings for the work people do and thus to construct new forms of work-based identity amongst employees'<sup>3</sup>. Removing familiar ways of operating to make things faster, more economic, more convenient met with considerable resistance. Engaging with new media involved issues of access and training. With more means of communication at the end of the 1990's (personal phones, computers, e-mail addresses, faxes) at home and work, more time was involved in checking messages. Advertising was significant in engaging consumers with new technology. For instance personal editing of broadcast information could be exercised through the use of video recorders, personal computers and remote control facilities, which encouraged channel surfing. At the end of the decade more product information could be accessed by surfing the internet. The significance of this is considered in light of their repercussions for advertising, and the knock-on effect selective viewing had on the nature of advertising work.

This chapter considers three issues relating to the way advertising and digital technology developed in relation to perceptions of consumers in the 1990s. It considers advertising's role in making digital technology accepted, then the impact digital technology had on the advertising industry. In appraising the changing content of adverts, I consider how technology has impacted on the nature of communication. Where Chapters 2 and 3 tracked new ways of reaching consumers, the aim of this chapter is to consider how the take-up of digitisation connected technology and new industrial products through communication. In the first part of this chapter I address advertising's relationship with digital technology, and in particular how advertising sold the idea of digitisation at home, in leisure and in the work place. I also consider how personal communication/viewing

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<sup>1</sup> Sited by David Harris, founding director of LIDA/M&C Saatchi, interviewed 23 March 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Leadbeater, C Living On Thin Air, Penguin, London 1999 pp.14–15. Leadbeater describes the movement of IT and creative work as the 'thin air economy'.

technology effected the way people consume. In Part 2 I consider how digital imagery caused changes in the appearance of commercial imagery. I address the compression of the sales moment and its significance for the nature of consumption, and how 'experiencing' brands spread beyond advertising's usual frame of reference led to branded spaces, the reconstruction of company histories and to the forging of new (third party) connections.

#### Part 1 – the impact of digital technology on advertising

As the Chapter 3 case studies illustrated, the speed of communication moved up a notch in the 1990s. Improvements in production technology (notably billboard printing techniques) accelerated the production of campaigns to the extent that ads could react to news events at the speed of the press. Press ads in particular latched on to topical issues where previously they engaged with social moods. Tesco's press ads for instance referred to the days sports successes in drinks promotions. In terms of the trends outlined in Chapter 4, speedier production localise moods on a weekly (rather than monthly) basis by 2000. In comparison the pace of product design production broadly remained the same. Companies like Fitch and IDEO tended to negotiate six weeks for creative processes (three weeks each for concepting and detailing) and about a month for production design and sourcing. There were even some cases in the 1990s of billboard advertising moving from three-week campaigns to three days or less, once research had been carried out.

The increased pace of advertising production did not necessarily make the industry more effective. In terms of cost, advertising production fees continued to rise<sup>4</sup>. In terms of quality, many in advertising before the mid-1980s<sup>5</sup> consider that an over-reliance on digital (Apple Mac) production has damaged the quality of work put out by the ad industries. Clients expect a faster turnover, and roughs appear polished when they have been 'Mac'ed up'<sup>6</sup>. Part of the problem has been that new digital visualising programmes such as Photoshop (cf. Chapter 3a) developed at a faster rate than advertisers ability to fully utilise them. The problem was not unique to the ad industries, as the speed of computer evolution outstripped the rate of market acceptance. The cost of maintaining digital equipment ate into agencies profits. Up-grading (note: 'up' suggests improving) implied a need to stay abreast of current digital production programmes or risk one's knowledge of computing becoming obsolete. As most programmes only make it impossible to upgrade, a technologically dependent market was forced to move at the pace of the computing industries. Furthermore, consumers and industries alike are forced to commit to 'buying into' brands of technology (for instance, Macintosh or PC). In personal and professional contexts this aroused a degree of techno-scepticism. Unease at being led by technology, together with the

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<sup>3</sup>du Gay, P Production of Culture/Cultures of Production p.4.

<sup>4</sup>McIlrath, S, citing Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, in A new creative manifesto p.3.

<sup>5</sup>Such as Paul Delaney, see below.

<sup>6</sup>Interview with Paul Delaney, former Managing Creative Director of Foote Coning Bell, 1979–83, interviewed 25 February 2000.



suspicion that it reinforces multinational control over all aspects of work, driven by market economies, lead many to question the manner in which technology has driven its way to becoming an accepted aspect of the everyday. The suspicion was that the funders of technological development (notably Microsoft) were solely driven by commercial agendas. Public scepticism is well founded: along with computers, no other products come close to being obsolete so quickly as telecommunication products. Yet this hasn't been a significant problem until now. Familiarisation with digital equipment and services has resulted in re-evaluations of the purpose of technology in our lives. Consumers started to look to technology as a component that should slot into everyday life.

Wariness of consistent obsolescence and the resistance to non-permanent (rental) culture led to an off-shoot of the product/graphics design industry in its own right – strategic telecommunications design. The purpose here is to maintain and up-grade an understandable product interface. EHS effectively did this as 'advertising' for Tesco. This became necessary because the rate of development had rendered many transactions (like reward card systems) incomprehensible to the non-technically oriented. A 1999 iMac commercial<sup>7</sup> illustrated advertisers awareness of this dilemma. In it actor Jeff Goldblum remarked – to camera – that the iMac may help you but *won't* change the way you live. As Chapter 3d illustrated, Apple/Chiat Day avoided over-pitching iMac's capabilities, and emphasised how it would fit into consumers own pattern of use. Therefore the iMac was sold as a convenience. One iMac billboard in 2000 even likened the product's convenience to fast food, running with the headline 'ready to go'. Daewoo and Tesco also shaped promotions around being convenient. Daewoo produced a hassle-free car maintenance service while Tesco Clubcard directed customers to information and offers their previous spending patterns suggested would interest them.

However, in selling the idea of new goods through convenience, better services, more support from a co-ordinated system rather than many, advertisers presupposed that consumers wanted guarantees and bonds with brands. In fact my case studies suggest customers were keen to remain selective. Rather than sticking with one system/brand, the presumption of advertisers was that customers retained the potential to re-define who they wished to associate with. Shopping around for personal 'make-overs' became a leisure activity during the 1990s, as arenas like Nike Town demonstrated. Particularly in late youth/early adulthood there was a tendency to constantly re-evaluate ones place and purpose through consumption. Old USP tactics were therefore useful in selling technology as new and life-enhancing to younger audiences. They were the market most likely to buy into, and incorporate digital goods into their lifestyles. One technique of getting the masses to embrace new technology was therefore to target youth in a 'trickle up' strategy, where they would introduce new media to family members of different ages.

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<sup>7</sup>In the US by ad agency Chiat Day. British versions were produced by the London ad agency TBWA.

In terms of address, the tones in messages seemed more personable: 'listen to the people' became both a political and marketing mantra. The grounds for competition in public relations seemed to centre on who took the most notice of individual consumers. As I noted in Chapter 3c, supermarket Tesco introduced loyalty schemes, which pre-empted money-back coupons and store-specific credit cards in developing individual bonds with customers. The advertising agenda had shifted, from expecting people to change habits (for instance, swapping from Coke to Tango) to offering customer-centred convenience in the way products serviced consumers (like Daewoo and Tesco: cf. Chapter 3d). As a commercial for Boots contact lenses claimed in 1999, 'We see things as you do'.

#### Shaping 1990s technology for mass-consumption

Marketers in particular made concerted efforts to engage with consumers on an emotive level. Where advertisers understood consumers had the ability to 'see through' rational styles of address, they knew that appealing to customer's irrational sensibilities would penetrate their logic of resistance. Many of the laddish ads described in Chapter 4 appealed emotively. As I noted in Chapter 3's conclusions, the drive of relationship marketing techniques caused marketers to imbue communication techniques within goods and retail environments/ transactions. In the (French) Industries Françaises de l'Ameublement's publication What If We Put The Clocks back To Zero<sup>8</sup> (1998) sociologist Bernard Cathelat similarly claims that goods were developing deeper significance:

Hopefully, we are moving towards a new renaissance... more than economic effectiveness, we need objects that have a spiritual dimension, that propagate a world view, that are mirrors of the persona and, in a certain sense, give access to it. After showiness and derision, after artistic gesturing, disdain, function, and fascination with what has comparatively little meaning, the age is waiting to create its own roots. In this sense we are definitely witnessing the birth of a new philosophy whose necessity derives from technology. Whether design is ethical, whether it tells a story or represents a new lifestyle, whether it remains in contact with use... it gives a form to a mosaic of issues – a form that has to enable a person to find the object's place in his or her life.<sup>9</sup>

In some respects this is rather similar to Walter Crane's call some 110 years earlier, to 'lean upon the staff of line. Line (should be) determinative, line emphatic, line delicate, line expressive, line controlling and uniting'<sup>10</sup>. Crane was as sceptical of contemporary stylists (Art Nouveau) as Cathelat was of pop-product creators. Yet both expressed the relevance of drawing on the aesthetics of their day. Contemporary designers in the Nouveau period used modern techniques of moulding, casting and steam bending to shape the 'look' of new technology, such as Hector Guimard's highly stylised Paris Metro. The styling of Metro stations was important in tempering

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<sup>8</sup>Cathelat, B in Laisé, G (ed.) What If We Put The Clocks Back To Zero? Hypotheses for Probable futures Industries Françaises de l'Ameublement/ Les Éditions de L'Imprimeur, Paris 1998 pp.26 and 182.

<sup>9</sup>ibid., p.182.

the fear Parisians may have had about stepping onto underground rail systems which was then new technology. Guimard's aesthetic became a 'social lubricant', encouraging consumers to embrace new technology.

Art Nouveau's dilemmas in embracing new production methods sit parallel to contemporary dilemmas for communication of engaging with digitisation. Art Nouveau analogised a 'natural' style derived from elements of Gothic revivals with immaterial phenomena like the currents of electricity or the contemporary fascination with neurology, symbolism and the spiritual. It is by latching onto past and present visual reference points outside technology that made products like the iMac more approachable.

The 'spiritual dimension' Cathelat spoke of is similar in principle to the 'product truth' that HHCL's planner O'Hanlon both spoke of, as evidenced in their strapline for Ronseal wood stain, ('It does what it says on the tin': cf. Chapter 3a). Such directness appears to have also been resonant during iMac's development and Tango's campaign, and such messages may well ultimately work around the embedded resistance consumers have to the mediums of advertising.

It took a while for the language of the 'information age' to catch up with digitisation. Clumsy expressions like 'interface' did little to ease the changing digitised landscape into popular parlance. Yet in the space of five years there was a sense of change, where a more descriptive use of language (derived from hyperbolic pop culture) replaced descriptive accuracy. Abbreviations and the use of lower case – a cross between Bauhausian Modernism and Orwellian 'doubleplustalk' called 'alt.culture' entered the vocabulary. Matthew De Abaitua, [alt.culture](#), expanded a view similar to Cathelat's in relation to 1990s American youth culture, which demonstrated the depth of resistance in youth markets to mainstream commercial culture;

...the lifestyle offered by nineties alternative cultures is not one of ascetic, bohemian integrity either. What distinguishes the new counterculture from its predecessors is its ability to pay its own way. To breed new products, products that don't look like products for the people who don't like to be consuming... (However, in this book) ...you won't find an alternative to capitalism. Suspicion of corporate structure, yes, but those on the fringes of society have given up on the long capitalism/communism dichotomy that has underwritten most of this (twentieth) century's cultural conflict in the West. Instead, alternative culture has redefined the mainstream ethos that you buy what you are sold. Rather than the wholesale imbibing of mass-produced objects, there is a movement towards customisation with customers downloading their own particular tastes and desires to receive a product tailored to themselves.<sup>11</sup>

That some eighty per cent of internet web pages worldwide are in English is testament to a US-centred culture rather than British. Yet 'Sunrise' industries during the nineties were one of Britain's best exports<sup>12</sup>. By 2000 up

<sup>10</sup>Walter Crane in 1889, cited in Sparke, P *et al.* [Design Source Book](#), McDonald Orbis London 1986 p.40.

<sup>11</sup>De Abaitua, M [Where would we be?](#), in Daly, S & Wice, N (ed.) [alt.culture](#), Fourth Estate/The Guardian, London 1995 pp.11–12.

<sup>12</sup>Peter York as far back as 1986 remarked that British creativity was best regarded internationally for its software (interfaces for computer, graphics and pop videos) rather than its produced hardware. York, P [The Englishness of English Design](#) broadcast on [The South Bank Show Special](#), London Weekend Television, produced by Melvyn Bragg: broadcast 15 April 1986.

to forty per cent of peak-time commercials were for internet brands<sup>13</sup> and stories of young internet entrepreneurs made news headlines<sup>14</sup>. It was therefore easier to engage younger consumers with the notion that digital technology was a lifestyle accessory than older audiences. Before advertisers could develop the sort of personalised communications infrastructures developed for the Daewoo and Tesco Clubcard campaigns, technology had to become more accessible.

By 2000 up to forty per cent of British residents had access to the internet<sup>15</sup> and the potential for accessing choice was wider. Yet as I demonstrated in Chapter 2, the sizeable proportion of youth that identified with being outside the norm were sceptical of corporations capitalising on alternative tastes. The difference between early and late 1990s youths' resistance to commercialisation was that late 1990s youth developed understandings of how markets operated. Alt.culture markets were, De Abaitua claimed, catered through inconspicuous consumption, which was previously confined to mid-markets. Inconspicuous consumption operated through specialist trade shows for niche markets, and in the sort of themed subculture shops found around London's Camden Lock and in comparable zones of major cities. The styling of alt.cultural artifacts exhibited the sort of showiness and artistic gesturing disdained by Cathelat. Yet their charm was in looking crafted, not mass-produced. They were in the same semi-precious goods range that Radio 1's Gog and Tango's Gotan doll assumed to be part of (cf. Chapter 2 and 3c). For non-youth specific brands like Tesco, it remained wise not to produce goods that seemed to target sub-cultures. Their strategy played not to senses of belonging, but through personal relationships. Such approaches avoided representing youth as broadly being 'Tesco's type of people'.

Yet being seen to be outside the mainstream was still important. An antipathy to established politics and political systems is perhaps the most embedded issue of resistance to subscribing with the British mainstream consensus. The ambivalence towards existing established mainstream commercial operations stems from this sense that new products and services are first and foremost profit-making operations, where end consumers are not top priority. The Labour party evidently understood this after they re-pitched themselves as New Labour, offering a Third Way. Yet as the government re-developed the infrastructure of its communication, so the news events focused on the mechanisms of delivery rather than the content of messages. Paul du Gay noted how the very production processes of information became culturalised in the late 1980s (cf. Chapter 1). A legacy of 'culturalised information' in the 1990s was that communication processes

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<sup>13</sup>Circumstantial study by the author on commercials/idents appearing on Sky, ITV, and Channel 4, 9–11:00pm Monday–Friday, between January–March 2000.

<sup>14</sup>Notably lastminute.com's share floatation, boo.com's demise and the various other 'dot.bombs'

<sup>15</sup>...and a growing number of 'Silver Surfers' (what The Guardian described as internet users aged 55 and over). According to The Guardian: Computing supplement cover story, Papworth, J. Silver Surfers Ride, 9 September 2000 pp.1–3, an increasing number of websites are being aimed at Silver Surfers. Barclays Bank commissioned a survey (sited by Snoddy, J. Silver Surfers surge ahead in The Guardian, 30 March

became a focal point<sup>16</sup>. This effected commercial communication: Klein noted problems caused by Nike's inconsistent promotion and practice (cf. Chapter 3d). De Abaitua and Klien noted that 'alt.culture children' were resistant to advertising: 'Study after study' claimed Klein, 'showed that baby boomers, blind to the alluring messages of images of advertising and deaf to the empty promises of celebrity spokespeople, were breaking loyalties...'<sup>17</sup>. Brands trod a finer line by being lifestyle oriented and engaging within youth cultures, and not being product-centred.

The apathy towards both political and commercial communications seems driven by the dogmatic roots of both systems. These have not re-addressed a more adaptable and critically aware mass-culture. The very fact that dissecting communication has become a form of newspaper entertainment signals the degree to which consumer knowledge has outstripped the medium's ability to convince. For instance The Sunday Mail magazine in 1998 had a weekly feature that de-constructed an ad to demonstrate how it manipulated<sup>18</sup>.

Evidently (for advertising at least) the TV image weakened, which is perhaps why commercial advertisers latched on to Tango's shaky camera technique to render a non-synthetic sense of the everyday, as it would have happened without cameras.

Yet Capitalism has means of replenishing itself, having established and structured the system of maintaining a fluid movement of taste in the early twentieth century. The Western world is so used to seeing commercials and being sold to through mass-media means that it has become deep-rooted in the Western cultural fabric. It is because of this that newer forms of sophisticated advertising were passed off by media advertisers as fads and niches earlier in the early nineties. Yet new forms of advertising were not solely driven by technological capabilities. They also stemmed from a closer appreciation of consumers' attitudes. Hoggart, The Way We Live Now argued that;

...those technologically advanced societies, 'open democracies', capitalist, operating ever more elaborate communications systems (are) consumer-driven and so run by means of persuasions of all kinds, at all levels and depths. Such societies need relativism; it is the perfect soil for their endless and always changing urges. A society different beliefs, divides, splits people into majorities and, worse, awkward minorities. Some well-heeled minorities can now be addressed with profit. But that specialised provision is inextricably related to the fact that others, the great body of people, are more and more led towards having undifferentiated, shared, but always changing tastes.<sup>19</sup>

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2000, website (12 April 1999): [www.guardian.co.uk/Archive](http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive) which claimed older people 'have grown more confident about being online than Britain's young'.

<sup>16</sup> Esko Kurenniemi in the essay Supermegatechnologies remarked that 'in the communications society, communication has become an end in itself, and information secondary... all information ages too quickly'. Kurenniemi, E Supermegatechnologies Some thoughts on the future in things 11 Winter 1999–2000. things, London p.57.

<sup>17</sup> Klein, N No logo p.13: this was similar to what Faith Popcorn called 'the vigilante consumer' a decade earlier in Popcorn, F The Popcorn Report HarperCollins (Harper Business), NY 1991 pp.69–77.

<sup>18</sup> There were many other examples, notably the Sunday Times (from 1997) where Peter York ran a brief weekly analysis of a topical advert's strategy. The Guardian's Weekend Magazine (between 1994–98) ran a section called 'they snipped that bit out', which showed how ideas for commercials had been moderated for mass accessibility. The Friday Guardian ran a weekly article by its media correspondent Belinda Archer (from early 1999: called 'What the ad says about you', which showed how adverts are constructed around projected consumer types.

<sup>19</sup> Hoggart, R The Way We Live Now, Chatto & Windas London 1995 p.6.

In some respects the ingrained movement of capital was compatible with psychoanalytic understandings of perception, which appeared to be the way that advertising has manipulated one's sense of reason through coded imagery. Terry Hunt, MD of Tesco Clubcard's direct marketers EHS, considered consumption as a pleasurable means by which one is able to exercise personal values through decision-making, using one's own discretion and prejudices<sup>20</sup>. In fact the decision-making process is based on a presumed set of values drawn from reading the surface of a commodity, which is then tested or qualified through the individual associations one makes. This is significant for the way advertising imagery is interpreted. Kurenniemi described the process of how messages are received;

An image is worth only as much as a hundred words, effectively coded (I do not mean bit-level compression of raw data, but semantic coding). According to the classic 7+/-2 rule, the conscious mind can process between 5 and 9 things at one time. Inside the human head, thoughts proceed at slightly less than the pace of conversation.<sup>21</sup>

If one were to take Kurenniemi's words literally, with several simultaneous thoughts operating at one time, the reading is only partial before it is connected with other thoughts. Where moral values are socially conditioned and continually honed, new values operate as stimulants and have a shorter and more transient life. The implication of this is that (like Clubcard and Daewoo, where the actual selling proposition is encompassed in the service infrastructure) there is scope for design in creating operational infrastructures between products and communication, shaping consumers' interaction with the brand. In terms of understanding what new technology can offer commercial communication, there is the sense that marketers have got closer to the root of what prompts consumers to warm to goods. Where in the 1950s Packard spoke of advertisers' attempts to motivate consumers, in the 1990s a much closer and continued bonding could be sought by tying together all means of communication (the product skin and advertising), retail environment and ritual, product performance and support structure. Therefore digital technology offered the promotions industries scope to achieve the 'total brand experience'. In Britain Daewoo and Tesco campaigns anticipated the mass acceptance of the internet in developing complex systems of operation around distinguishing their brand and establishing closer links with their customers. As such they were benchmarks, where the American promotion in the form of iMac has become the model of connecting all communicative aspects within a tangible artifact.

#### Advertising new technology: negotiating resistance to technological innovation

While digital technology enabled marketing, advertising and design to fuse promotions, it was consumption savvy customers who were quick to take up the support structures on offer. Those not prone to change were not

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<sup>20</sup>Terry Hunt, interviewed 4 July 2000: cf. Appendix 2.

<sup>21</sup>Kurenniemi, E Supermegatechnologies Some thoughts on the future in things 11 Winter 1999–2000 pub. things, London p.57.



addressed through the intrusive new communication methods. This section considers how advertisers sold the idea of new technology to technophobics and those resistant to change.

Between the New York World Trade fair in 1939 up to the 1970s, the future through technological advancement tended to be viewed with optimism<sup>22</sup>. By the 1980s, when microchips had conspicuously worked their way into consumer electronics, future-phobic scenarios of the human/technology relationship emerged, particularly in Hollywood<sup>23</sup>. The shifting social significance of new technology leading up to the twenty-first century may have been a cause for the increase in resisting digitisation. Carroll Pursell, White Heat (1994) noted that, for the military, as technological capabilities superseded the abilities of humans, digital might was greater worth than human life, and descriptive terminology had inconspicuously adjusted to assume this:

The exchange of human and technological attributes works both ways. Techno-strategic language provides people with the words and ways of thinking that override 'normal' human reactions like horror, fear, and compassion. It is a kind of software to reprogram our humanity... the army from earliest times has been seen as a machine... The uniforms, the drilling, the discipline and camaraderie are all designed to fuse individuals into a working whole which reacts without thinking and follows orders without hesitation. 'Smart' bombs on the other hand, have been given powers of sight and reason, to 'see' their targets and decide how best to approach them... The best of the first (intelligence, discrimination, rationality, the ability to communicate) is married to the best of the second (power, speed, reliability, absolute obedience, lack of emotion of conscience).<sup>24</sup>

The image of technology as clinical, accurate and more able than humans has underpinned the reluctance of many who (like the scenarios conjured in film) had reservations about the way technology has been allowed to develop. Such reticence makes it difficult to embrace the Western commercial world's apparent unquestioning reliance on new technology. The concept of Clubcard was shrewd enough to adopt the format of credit cards (cf. Chapter 3c), which were in wide circulation by the mid-1990s.

One phobia was that technology involved a different, more logical (less emotional) mode of thinking from that of existing cultural paradigms, and that everyday practices would be forced change to accommodate new technology – nothing would be the same again. Yet not understanding the new technological (on-line) landscape was to be culturally disadvantaged. Many industries involved in computing exploited this paranoia. Wired Magazine in 1992 went as far as claiming 'Everything you know is wrong' in one billboard ad (p.390). In 1995 Sunday Times journalist Emily Bell noted that 'Technology is changing every type of communication. British newspapers had already experienced the "Wapping revolution". Radio is a crowded marketplace of new

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<sup>22</sup>At the 1939 World Trade Fair, the potential of technology in the home was then exemplified by the Westing 'Elektro' robot, which performed simple domestic chores to re-assure its audience that the purpose of technology was (directly) to improve the quality of life, liberating people from daily chores. It suggested technology would lead to easier ways of working and would make leisure-based lifestyles accessible.

<sup>23</sup>The films *Blade Runner* and *The Terminator* (James Cameron: 1984) played on the period's paranoias of social decay and anti-social technologies respectively. The outlook in *Brazil* (Terry Gilliam 1985) was of a retrogressive society that operated in the sort of Orwellian Big Brother state. Set in the twenty first century, *Brazil* fetishised a retrospective 1940's-looking, 'future' technology. The style of the film spawned a much parodied aesthetic in product design, from stereos to Meccano-looking fruit bowls with magnifying glasses. It also provided the storyline for Apple Macintosh's first US commercial in 1984 (by Chiat Day, first aired on Superbowl Sunday, February 1984).

<sup>24</sup>Pursell, C White Heat: People and Technology BBC books, London 1994 p. 165.

stations. Television provides a bewildering array of multi-channel opportunities, and the internet allows everyone to become a world-wide publisher.... Monolithic media are being swept aside by a new generation of multi-skilled operators'<sup>25</sup>. It is of little wonder that large corporations switched from selling products to brand identities, as they were keen not to miss out on navigating the new medium's evolution to suit their own ends. By the mid-1990s market-led development and deregulated networks made understanding the new systems available because of the lack of consistent standards.

In April 1997 a MORI 'Socio consult study'<sup>26</sup> claimed that 'The British public is becoming increasingly concerned about the role of technology in society... the proportion of people who agree on balance that "technological progress is destroying our lives" has increased substantially over the last 3 years'. This (claimed the poll) was in spite of recognising its ability to improve the quality of life<sup>27</sup>. The survey did however acknowledge this would change in subsequent decades<sup>28</sup>.

Of MORI's 1997 findings, perhaps it was the increase in time pressures that was the source of most concern (particularly for women: more women were in employment than before). Women in particular were expected to work longer hours, often clashing with family obligations, and experienced greater pressure from career competitors. The report concluded that attitudes to work and leisure had changed as a result of offices becoming more technologically dependent. More workers/consumers adopted a 'work hard, play hard' mentality, reprioritising their work time, while 'savouring leisure time' was (according to the report) an emerging trend. Time was more highly prized than before, and while faxes answering phones and mobiles were convenient time-savers, the expectancy of quicker communicative activity had in effect simply accelerated the nature of work and increased demand expectancy. This is perhaps why the Daewoo sold on the idea of convenience, cutting down on time spent chasing garages for car repairs. Daewoo's approach to winning consumers was to demonstrate how their service would make life easier by not having to worry about faulty goods. Daewoo's strategy made their database technology systems inconspicuous in customer dialogue. Emphasis was on servicing the user rather than making its digital means of operation a selling point.

<sup>25</sup>Bell, E Sofas in cyberspace? in Sunday Times: Art Section, 19 March 1995 p.7.

<sup>26</sup>Goschalk, B. and Robinson, J./MORI British Public Divided on the Role of Technology, April 1997, website (July 2000): <http://www.mori.co.uk/polls/1997/technol.htm>.

<sup>27</sup>Another poll, Hutton, P/MORI Public Embrace the Digital Age commissioned by Price Waterhouse Coopers, November 1998, claimed a sizeable portion of the population – one in ten (mostly men) – intended to buy into the first generation of digital television within the year. While they were still expanding their use of the internet interactive television was expected to dominate the market long term even in home banking and other financial services. Consumers it claims, '... are looking for tangible benefits... at a time of rising consumer expectations and increasing competition'. The survey cites the example of supermarket queuing as a factor that initially helped internet shopping establish, which has since been addressed by faster checkouts and other in-store services. Another survey by MORI for Motorola in July, 1999 titled British Attitudes To Technology – Now And In The Future found that most Britons looked forward to 'maintenance free cars, self-cleaning kitchens and... electronic access to community information', and hoped that, by 2009, they would have household intelligent electronic assistants. Websites (July 2000): <http://www.mori.co.uk/polls/1998/digital.htm> and <http://www.mori.co.uk/1999/mot-may.htm>.

<sup>28</sup>A MORI survey for Motorola – Kids Become Britain's Technology Gurus, November 1998 – showed that two-thirds of British kids believed they knew more about technology than their parents, twenty per cent spending three to five hours a week on internet compared to nine per cent of parents. Yet between 1997–1998 according to another MORI/Motorola survey Britain Becomes a Nation of Technophiles, those

The notion continued amidst the take-up of digitisation that new digital goods were being forced into the market. Neil Postman in an Article for Lapis<sup>29</sup> challenged whether such products were needed an already technologically over-loaded culture:

The first question need to be addressed when anyone tells us about a new technology such as interactive television, virtual reality, high-definition TV, the information superhighway, or whatever. [1] What is the problem to which this technology is a solution?... (then) one must ask: [2] Whose problem is it?... We need to be very careful in determining who will benefit from a technology and who will pay for it... [3] What new problems might be created because we have solved an old problem?... [4] which people and what institutions might be most seriously harmed by a technological solution?... [5] What changes in language are being enforced by new technologies and what is being gained and lost by such changes?... consider for example how the words 'community' and 'conversation' are now employed by internet users... [6] What sort of people and institutions require special economical and political power because of technological change?

Such views are now so popular that they have given consumer watchdogs greater lobbying power. They are in a position to publicly expose unethical corporate practices, which feed active anti-capitalist sentiments in youth. Moving such issues into the frame of popular debate can potentially threaten the renown (and market value) of brands, such is the power of organised consumer opinion.

Yet if one were to redirect Postman's questions to the (apparently) consumer-oriented, information centred internet, one could see a corporate loop forming around the technological opportunities they present. Here the best interests served are those of the investors – conglomerate brands, retailers, marketers, communications and design firms. In other words it is the sort of production-centred machine Heskett pointed to at the beginning of the twentieth century (cf. Chapter 3d).

The idealised scenarios for technology in the last century were themselves a means of promotion. Similarly, in the present, digital technology has been carefully re-worded to continue the illusion of choice: the iMac's 'think different' strategy for example. The difference at the end of the twentieth century was that, after five decades of consumerism, customers were in a position to exercise a degree of autonomy through informed consumption choices beyond that shaped by mass-markets. The popularity of consumer guide titles and articles ('Goldfish' guides and youth magazine 'Stuff' for instance), gave a wider scope to comparative product information, based on criteria of desirability rather than the pure functionality of 'Which?' and the 1950s notion of an intelligent consumer as a rational consumer. With the popularity of such guides consumer organisations became more effective in Britain as government lobbyists and information distributors. Consumer guides opened up another avenue of product information with which to test the claims of manufacturers in adverts. Advertising could no longer speak with authority in making claims for their products or services any more. As

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wanting access to electronically obtainable information had doubled to seventy per cent of the population. Websites: [http://www.mori.co.uk/polls/1998/mot\\_kids.htm](http://www.mori.co.uk/polls/1998/mot_kids.htm) and <http://www.mori.co.uk/polls/1998/mot-tech.htm>.

consumers were able to assess product information from on-line and off-line sources, information moved away from the sole control of corporations and into the public domain. Daewoo's advertisers DFGW made a point of advertising through trade and consumer guide titles, encouraging consumers who had gone as far as researching the car market to test their original set up. Tesco also made sure there was a sense of added value in their systems.

As Chapters 3b–d demonstrated, given that marketing became more significant in the total creative process from initial strategic thinking to the market positioning, it was inevitable that advertising's method of demonstrating market differentiation, Unique Selling Proposition, would be revived as an integral agenda shaping the form of digital goods. In this way surveys of 'user experience' would be able to locate the USP within the product. The iMac had a form which 'looped in' its marketing strategy, within distinctive stylised sculptural form, while Daewoo and Tesco had promotions that could be evidenced.

The task of defining the promotional direction was increasingly resting with brands marketers rather than the ad agency's planners, as marketers became involved in product development (internalising promotional hooks). The advantage for producers was that control of their identity is retained within the brand rather than with an external ad agency. As Chapter 2 and 3 demonstrated, brands could be less committed to a particular means of promotion, and in appointing their own 'brand guardians'<sup>30</sup>, were more able to exercise the sort of corporate autonomy that, say, Coca-Cola exercised. The alternative, which third wave agencies achieved, was to integrate within the day-to-day office culture of their corporate clients, and develop integrated means of working. Some agencies even worked in their clients workplace (cf. Creative Process diagrams, Appendix 1)

Changes in working methods were symptomatic of a change in the way products were represented from the beginning to the end of the 1990s. In advertising the movement was from external representation, where a product/service was put in a lifestyle environment, to a more internalised representation, where the experience of consumption was conveyed. Tango's re-played 'taste sensation' moment was an early version of this. In the way the promotional infrastructure has also shifted it seems that the distinguishing marketable qualities have also become internalised, while the key decision-making processes have also come closer to the in-house marketers. This presents the opportunity to smooth over connections between the different forms of promotion and sales transactions.

However, the limitation of relying on marketers is short time they tend to stay in their job. The trend in marketing is to make a mark then move on to progress one's career, (as with Landrover, cf. Chapter 3b) so advertisers can end up as unofficial brand guardians, ensuring a degree of continuum. The shortcoming is that

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<sup>29</sup>Postman, N Stop! New technology keeps whizzing into our lives. But pause a while. Is it really making us any happier? in Lapis, published by New York Open Center, NY December 1999, re-printed in The Guardian: Editor, 5 December 1999 pp.12–13.

<sup>30</sup>A trend that became more frequent in the late-nineties. Britvic had a Brand Guardian for Tango.

in wishing to make their mark, marketing directors veer towards novel, punchy campaigns rather than more modest approaches that produce longer-term benefits. Tesco (more than Daewoo or Britvic) managed to keep the same marketing and ad teams in place. Therefore the Clubcard consistently maintained commercial distinction. Apple negotiated personnel changes by shaping all infrastructural aspects of their operation before launch. In selling reassurances about digital equipment to techosceptic consumers, iMac's strategy appeared to be a long-term building of trust, using younger generations to wean older consumers. Reward schemes, like Clubcard offering discounts through customer loyalty programmes and internet home delivery schemes, helped older consumers see the benefits of engaging with digital systems. In terms of communication-charged product design, the building of trust was also an agenda in evidence. With the iMac/iBook ranges, the form was likely to age in tandem with the usefulness of its technology.

The battleground for product-centred marketing centred on convincing would-be customers that their future lifestyles would be better served brand-specific ranges of options, hence the support products and services available for most digital goods. Ericsson attempted this in 1998 in an ad to launch their buttonless phone (p.390). Ericsson's ad showed an office scene in soft focus: a man (presumably an office employee) holds up a hand which is 'squared' to draw the viewers attention. It suggests that the mobile phone is a missing aspect and belongs in this context. The incentive here is to conform to the (presumed) idea that modern life requires such a product *presumes* a mobile must be part of your life. As I noted earlier in this chapter, the sub-text suggests that one's life should be as hectic as that rendered in this image, If not, one is not a part of the relevant band of consumerism. The message is that one has to stay in touch to maintain relevance. As Bob Tyrrell in the article Time in our lives, '...To be busy is to be needed, and staying at work all hours indicates how important we are – even if it means no time to give family and friends.'<sup>31</sup> The as applied pressure to socially conform, implicating a measure of self-worth.

Products like iMac are also culpable. Its ads celebrated its USP (fashionability and convenience) rather than addressing first time users. In comparison, the telephone was first introduced it took the form of a candle stand to introduce the concept of a hand-held electric device incrementally<sup>32</sup>. The internet's 'birth' was soon marred by viruses, crashes and a reliance on brands own deregulated technology-speak. This did little to convert those resistant to technological innovation. In Britain, where the warm rustic Provence style and Laura

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<sup>31</sup>Tyrrell, B Time in our lives: facts and analysis on the 90s in Mulgan, G *et al* (ed.) Demos Issue 5, The time squeeze pub. by Demos, London 1995 pp.23–25. Bob Tyrrell was Chief Executive of Henley Forecast Center.

<sup>32</sup> The introduction of recent technology has also been inconspicuous at times. For instance, In Batchelor, Henry Ford, Mass Production and Modernism Batchelor describes the development of the Toyota Lexus, where designers devised methods to synthetically replicate the features of quality in top marque cars. The scent of leather, the irregularity of hand-stitching, wood and chrome features, the deep clunking sound of the door and the purr of the engine. Late-mass production has become adept at effecting handcrafted quality. Yet in the Lexus this has to be 'dumbed down' to effect the appearance of hand production. Notions of technological and production perfection are still secondary in the 'value system' to pre-industrial endeavour, and is not in the same bracket of quality perceived by the masses. This is particularly significant in Britain, where the Lexus gained its anticipated volume of sales more effectively than in other countries. Batchelor, R Henry Ford, Mass Production and Modernism p.127.

Ashley's chintz is still symptomatic of popular taste, domesticating digital technology cannot be easily made inconspicuous. Advertising's longer-term strategies appear to have met with more success than their bullying efforts to make not using technology socially stigmatic.

Part 2 – reshaping ads for the digital age: negotiating resistance through commodified moments

The fusion by marketers of advertising methods within products was one of the key changes caused by better understandings of consumers and consumption. The other was development of advertising through modern visual editing techniques. Advertisers realised that consumers made selections by reading 'surfaces': judging appearance, contexts and other associations (in other words, design semantics). This is why brand endorsements (and placements) became a popular tactic during the nineties. If one couples to popularity of brand placement (in films and sponsorships) with the emphasis placed on making consumption experiences, it is apparent that personalising product meanings became the main promotional objective. Previously with advertising the aim had been to make 'famous advertising' (as Britvic had asked of HHCL for Tango in 1992).

An artifact's skin has become far more intrinsic to its sales not just in communicating what the product is but in actually selling it as a commodity. Walter Benjamin's description of an 'urban phantasmagoria' of Modernity, the dream-like state of consumers as they interact with products in the market place<sup>33</sup>. These markets have, like Nike and Disney goods, become centrally controlled and co-ordinated by brands. The difference now is that European culture operates in a climate where commercialism underscores the basic premise of negotiating objects. Qualities such as texture, tactility, form and the use of material become loaded signifiers and commercial hooks. Alessi, Philips and (Spanish furniture) producers Domodinamica all promote the metaphoric values of their goods so that a Domodinamica door mat for example becomes a symbolic threshold and gateway between two territories and a point of entrance (p.394). The moment of passing between references the rural outdoors: for instance, a (plastic) toy bird fixed to the mat warbles as one brushes past. The mat itself suggests a small domestic urban dwelling, while the material suggests past production and play. The 'gateway' draws attention to the symbolic passing from one space to another, while the warbling heightens the experience – the 'sensation' in this context. The communication is in signs and symbols.

While the popularity of such esoterically loaded products has grown, within most other communication mediums the reference points have needed to be immediately explicit. In pop videos this has been apparent from the late-eighties (pop promo 'shorts'), as with film (trailers) and internet animations such as the twelve second Dancing Baby in the mid-1990s. They all operate in short visual bites. In many respects the samples operate in a similar vein to contemporary music styles (garage, rap and drum n' bass and sampling) to locate a

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<sup>33</sup> Buck-Morss, S The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project MIT, Cambridge Mass. 1989 pp.182-191.



reference point with short, striking sequences which carry the visual bite signature of the message. They contrive to make the perfect visual moment stick with brands.

Video recorders were in over thirty eight per cent of homes in the UK by 1990 (by 1996 there were over twenty six per cent in US homes, and forty five per cent in Australia)<sup>34</sup>. Viewers were therefore in a better position to zip through commercials<sup>35</sup>. Between the mid-1980s and early 1990s audience research conducted for agencies was called into question because the statistics did not account for channel surfing and the dilution of viewing. New measurements, digitally tracking viewing habits, showed fewer viewers watched ads enough to recall them but many sampled them<sup>36</sup>. By 2000 video recorders were being produced that sensed and eliminated commercial ad breaks altogether. As Sinclair noted, videos potentially;

...present the advertising industry with the untouchable attraction of self-selected, specialised targets... the time-shifting facility allows audiences to 'zap' commercials when replaying, that is to fast-forward over them, a practice which is causing advertisers unease about the presumed effectiveness of broadcast television as an advertising medium.<sup>37</sup>

In response ads drew on the same visual bite that pop videos had. Many pop video directors had already cottoned on to the value in shooting a short, eye-catching moment that could be sampled by programme makers for inclusion in a short burst. The larger the ad spend on commercials (by the mid-1990s this meant in excess of £400,000 for a 30 second commercial) the more agencies veered towards pop video makers to communicate in a stylised vein the flavour of the brand (and its product). Perfume advertising for Gaultier and Calvin Klein ('CKOne' and 'BE') did this, as did sporting brands Nike and Reebok in their usage of sports icons.

Pop promos are most often sampled in three to seven second bursts. Singer Robert Palmer even claims his videos are consistent in treatment throughout because he felt videos were clicked into and remembered as an image rather than narrative (p.394). In a similar vein sports programmes have tended to construct sample montages of highlights, shaped with a soundtrack to summarise tournaments such as Wimbledon, the Olympics and the World Cup.

When footballer Michael Owen scored for England against Argentina in the 1998 World Cup, the moment embraced many of the issues of mass commercial communication. First the context (a world tournament with an estimated 100 million world wide audience) with the score poised 1-1 in a match that featured a past 'enemy' (some 17 years after the two nations were at war, and memories of Diego Maradona's notorious 1986 'hand of God' goal). Then the frame, a run that started before the half way line that took Owen past two Argentine defenders, a run tracked sequentially and smoothly edited live through three different TV

<sup>34</sup>The Government Statistical Service *Social Trends* Vol. 20, London 1990 p.84.

<sup>35</sup>Sinclair, J *Images Incorporated* p. 190-1.

<sup>36</sup>Brierley, S *The Advertising Handbook* p. 132-4.

cameras. The 'live' commentary crescendoed at the moment the ball hit the back of the Argentine net. Then the length of time: five seconds was sufficient to convey the total moment. The clip is often shown in its 'five second entirety' within montages and most times features are done on the footballer. It has undoubtedly become the definitive moment of his career, because it was contained within a tidy visual bite that had a build-up and punchline. Journalist Joe Lovejoy described it as the moment the international perception of Owen changed. His basic earnings doubled and, with endorsements, he became the youngest football millionaire within days of the goal<sup>38</sup>. In the popular imagination Owen became an embodiment of dynamic heroism, metaphorically becoming an optimistic symbol of national spirit (his goal was scored wearing an England shirt). There is also the notion that the goal was – for television viewers – a moment of watching factual TV<sup>39</sup>, 'real' in the sense that it hadn't been transposed by camera trickery or mediated by carefully contrived broadcast techniques – even though it appeared seamless. The element of surprise in the commentaries made it appear as though the moment were live and direct, cutting out the middle ground of cameramen, editors and the preliminary broadcast organisation that went into preparing for such a moment. Television may well have 'borrowed' the technique from cinema. Film makers throughout the twentieth century compressed information into short and punchy moments of visual dynamism<sup>40</sup>. Given the tighter grip on digital image control, the 1990's saw better use of editing and juxtapositioning as communicative devices, and audiences were primed to read such forms of communication.

The movement within advertising towards shorter visual 'bites' tied in with the broad perception mooted earlier in the nineties within the ad industry<sup>41</sup> and in studies of youth<sup>42</sup>, that attention spans became much shorter. Messages had become clipped. This in effect marks a difference in perceiving information across different age groupings, and in effect means that advertising has had to become more localised in terms of age if not in terms of region. Hence when advertisers operating before the 1990's remark that ads aren't as clear as they used to be they do not take into account the social shifts in the way information is read. Ads for older age stratas (for instance, those shown during early afternoon on terrestrial commercial channels) still tend to have a USP and clearly define the product context. For products aimed at Under-30s advertisers first have to negotiate the social languages and attitudes before they can engage in placing their product. The first method uses transparent overt advertising, the second is covert and more engaged in association than direct hard sell.

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<sup>37</sup>Sinclair, J Images Incorporated p.191.

<sup>38</sup>Lovejoy, J Five seconds that made a fortune, in The Sunday Times Euro 2000 magazine, published by The Sunday Times/bluesq.com 4 June 2000 p. 7.

<sup>39</sup>Fetveit, A Reality TV in the digital era: a paradox in visual culture? in Media Culture & Society Vol. 21 No. 6 November 1999 p.787.

<sup>40</sup>Sergei Eisenstein once described 'editing in' spectacular moments in his film to keep the viewer's senses astute. 'Every element... that brings to light in the spectator these senses or that psychology that influences his experience – every element that can be verified and mathematically calculate to produce certain emotional shocks in a proper order within the totality'. Eisenstein cited in Monaco, J How To Read Film Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford 1979 p.402.

<sup>41</sup>For instance, JWT account director Giles Lury, 'The incredible shrinking ad' in Campaign, 10 May 1991 p.24.

<sup>42</sup>For instance, in Willis, P Moving Culture Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, London 1990 pp.32–3.

At this juncture it is worth considering how understandings of attention span have arrived at a state where the most effective way to get attention is by constructing a dynamic 'perfect moment'. Jonathan Crary, Suspensions of Perception, Attention, Spectacle & Modern Culture considered how early twentieth century perceptions of attention have shaped subsequent interpretations of creating the memorable moment. Crary argued that as far back as 1910, once perceptual and sensory experience was understood to come from within the body, it was thought external techniques of manipulation and stimulation could control mood<sup>43</sup>. In the 1960's it was considered that attention spans limited the volume of information being 'an incoherent flood of sensations, yet research showed it to be an undependable defence against such disorder'<sup>44</sup>. Crary cites the 'dimming of awareness'<sup>45</sup> produced by perceiving repetitiveness, which he says initiates automatic responses in a 'closed feedback loop' without having to produce a fresh response to the sensation. Between these three understandings at the beginning, middle and latter half of the twentieth century, the emphasis appears to shift. The emphasis has moved from addressing the potential of manipulating attention to one of breaking through the further defence mechanisms (the 'closed feedback loops') that have developed as a resistance to persistent attempts at getting attention. From this it appears therefore that viewers have developed extra means of resisting information, for which shorter attention spans may be a symptom.

There is also difficulty in placing youth oriented communication in an historical frame. Chronicling the change is problematic because strategies are less linear and the approaches blur existing models of practice. Rather this tended to be a momentarily active process of producing communication, rather than leaving a residue of static artifacts that could fit into existing archives and models of interpretation<sup>46</sup>. As I noted in Chapter 1, where texts such as Williamson (1979) and Polhemus (1994) could categorise ads and subcultures respectively, contextualising contemporary communication required more of an holistic and intertextual view.

Lupton in Mixing Messages (1996) noted that, since the rise of mass media in the nineteenth century, graphic arts technologies have shown a tendency to manipulate existing material rather than to create new technology-specific aesthetics. Re-appropriation tends to have the advantage of being imbued with existing significance. The meanings and styles change within the context they were sent and received, remarked Lupton. This fits into the popular postmodern notion that (sub-)cultural identities are a multi-layered synthesis of ready-mades, whose meanings are provisionally fixed through appropriation.

More recently, since the mid-1990s, the shaping up of internet search engine systems and international distribution networks has broadened access to information on products and consumption, so

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<sup>43</sup>Crary, J Suspensions of Perception, Attention, Spectacle & Modern Culture MIT press, Cambridge, Mass.1999 p.12.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p.64.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p.78; Crary cites Koestler, A The Ghost in the Machine Macmillan, NY 1967 p.207.

consumers can get alternative perspectives to the advertising ephemera put out by brands. On the net one can order products such as jeans and have delivery services tailored to one's specific needs. In another sense however mass consumption is getting to a point where product options and information access is so broad that it is becoming difficult to discriminate. The way brands represent themselves on their own internet websites assume that consumers have time to track through their on-line menus, where the tendency is to graze and move on. Information is being sampled, rather than read. It has become harder to simultaneously buy into different brands, particularly technology-based brands (communications and white and black goods) because 'mix n' matching' entailed having to learn how different companies structure their service systems. In the case of mobile phones for instance, consumers had to negotiate making different types of technology compatible. At least by sticking with one brand's product/services range one could learn how to get the best deal.

Brands that franchised their marque to endorse other product ranges discovered that, by 2000, the management of their satellite 'products' was significant in maintaining their brand's reputation. As Virgin buying into the rail industry demonstrated, if the franchising of the name is miss-judged it has repercussions on the other services the brand has to offer (cf. Chapter 3c and p.394).

Fusing the identity of brands with commodified moments proved a useful strategy for marketers because moment of perfection – from Tango's slap to Michael Jordan's Nike slam-dunk – punched through the landscape of customer resistance by appealing on an emotive (non rational) basis. Outside the frame of an advert, like Michael Owen's goal, adrenaline rush moments became the handle by which events were remembered. Given that the volume of advertising saturated most consumers, an identity fixed to one moment gave brands an aspirational point of reference. Richard's Branson's numerous hot air balloon expeditions may well have been in a quest for Virgin's perfect moment.

By 2000 services were in a position to be more responsive to consumer pressure and facilitate ever 'flakier' customers more prone to brand swapping. Like Tesco, companies were using quantitative data analysis of customer's consumption habits in a drive towards propositions to meet more individual circumstances. The battle to make people stay brand-loyal has therefore become reliant on more targeted customer research. What makes this shift significant is that it was not driven by corporations and marketers but by a number of factors amounting to a more powerful consumer. While consumers have become more empowered, the ad industries have had their 'power' reduced. Firstly the flattening of value systems has made the established advertising methods<sup>47</sup> harder to demonstrate convincingly. Media advertising methods came to be seen as *passé* in that their means of selling seemed both bland and exposed. Anti-mass-consumerist groups such as (the Canadian)

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<sup>46</sup>Lupton, E, introduction to Mixing Messages: Graphic Design in Contemporary Culture Cooper-Hewitt/Princeton Architectural Press, New York 1996. p.11.

<sup>47</sup>Such as 'product is the star', product demonstration, lifestyle selling and 'new, improved' strategies.

Adbusters, whose cutting spoofs draw attention to the practices of multinational corporations and their advertising, presently (in 2000) occupy the 'ascetic' moral high ground Catherat described, in asking whether mass-consumption is needed on the present scale.

It is this that brands have had to address, and as their outlook has shifted they have had to monitor their consumers more closely, responding to perceptions of their operations and relying on individual testimonies of product experiences. The significance of individual views have become more central to the wider brand standing, and in this respect as 'Selectors' (as complainers, lobbyists, floating and discerning customers) the more savvy consumer has been capable of realising the power they have. As Terry Hunt of new media company EHS Realtime remarked, in the 1990s the rapid advancements in technology (particularly that in customer-tracking data-bases) '...made it possible to live up to the smartness of customers'<sup>48</sup>.

If one considers this against the broader perspective of industrial product development, the agenda driving products followed the same path shaped by the wider cultural sphere that runs through Heskett's model of twentieth century change, from design to production to consumer-centred (cf. Chapter 3d).

In effect, the scenarios I describe amount to the product being a brand's advert, its message bearer and confidence installer. The impact of technology has been to help companies track the nuances of consumerism and locate the values that motivate the buying. As this has coincided with a more sophisticated set of values that shape purchasing decisions, technological advancement in the nineties (principally data-base tracking and inter-active price promotions) were significant in empowering brands through direct marketing to maintain a stranglehold on consumer choice. This is achieved through making concessions such as consumption reward schemes and money back and discount schemes. These offer instant gratification, and are representative of promotional techniques to span decades with continual success.

The difference now is that promotions and communications have moved to more adaptable, open-ended infrastructure of operation, which can accommodate moving brands and consumers while by-passing the existing cumbersome operations of the British advertising industry establishments. They only now need to be engaged with if the project is appropriate (and much further down the line of the decision-making process).

Many of the larger manufacturing corporations such as Coke, Gap and Disney established their own integrated communications departments, while American brands such as Nike and Disney differentiated between brand and product to create sub-brands and sub-communication means to publicise them<sup>49</sup>.

Fashion brands were quick to re-structure with advertising at the spine. From the late 1980s a number of couture fashion labels also used marketing's sub-brand strategy, distilling the their couture identity into more

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<sup>48</sup>Terry Hunt, interviewed 4 July 2000 .

<sup>49</sup>Klein, N No Logo p.365.

accessible mid-market perfume ranges. This gave fashion brands better returns from their advertising<sup>50</sup>. In 1997 marketing/advertising techniques were famously employed to co-ordinate the re-launch of clothing chain French Connection (p.395)<sup>51</sup>. By replacing the brand's mainstream identity with a more confrontational identity the brand was able to broaden appeal through its 'edginess'. FCUK goods were read less as mid-market feminine than unisex youth chic.

The Independent's media editor Paul McCann wrote at the time 'Sex, bad language and drugs imagery is causing a backlash among the general public... (The Advertising Standards Authority)... found that eighty one per cent objected to any bad language being used in adverts – an increase of ten per cent on the last such survey two years ago...' <sup>52</sup>. McCann remarked that sixty per cent objected to French Connection's FCUK and F\*\*K posters, quoting the ASA's Chris Reed who noted that the concerns were almost exclusively to do with ads addressing younger consumers. Ads trying to get in with youth risked getting out with other 'sections of society'. This mattered little to French Connection whose tightly defined market segment would have been the only consumers they wanted to attract in any case. What it offered French Connection was the same non-conformist tones evident in (mainstream) pop music and sports advertising. It appealed to men who wanted its attitude and women who desired its sense of independence.

FCUK's sense of challenge in a newly developing 'social order' in the wake of the fragmentation of existing authorities ran through different stratas of popular culture. This perhaps explains the growth of laddish, edgy advertising in the 1990s (cf. Chapter 4). Re-defining ones own allegiances and sensibilities led to many manifestations of temptation and pleasure. Popular images associated with the devil have been remodelled as codes of youthful aggression, passion and sexiness. In terms of corporate culture the devilish sense of hedonism became a popular metaphor in the promotion of goods, while Manchester United's Fred The Red devil adorned children's greetings cards, tomato ketchup bottles and other MUFC ephemera up and down the country. In nightclubs plastic suction horns and tridents became a softened code for light eroticism. Such representations are a far cry from the sort of stance the Church, a former national 'authority', would have deemed as an acceptable mainstream British entertainment.

In terms of establishing new codes of conduct within new affiliation, the sales of US rap music (notably artists on the Death Row label) in large measure was indebted to the press attracted by the East and West coast gang rivalry of 'Blacksploitation' rap artists. The popular music press narrated the stories of drive-by shootings and ritual beatings while the musicians themselves made explicit reference to the rivalries and

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<sup>50</sup>Chanel originally did this in the early twentieth century and Dior followed in the 1950s.

<sup>51</sup>Trevor Beattie, creative advertising director of TBWA GGT, was credited with coordinating the FCUK branding through shop fronts and window displays, clothing, on boxer Lennox Lewis ('FCUK fear') and on billboards.

<sup>52</sup>McCann, P UK is now Promotionally Correct, in The Independent 29 July 1998 p.5.



underworld street life in their work. These effectively echoed the glamour of Chicago 1920s mobsters. Police reports were used by record companies as publicity, as the of arms offences and murders of Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G. were later spun as marketing tools. Such events demonstrated a level of commitment to gang (represented by the record label, a brand) rarely seen in a commodity. In terms of using attitude as a selling means, a realm of possibilities was opened up: It enabled popular news stories to be publicity spins – assuming that the connections between brand and personality endorser were inextricably linked. It also enabled the brand to draw on track record to embellish brand positioning. Also, given the rather brutish change of allegiances and personnel, only the most recent ‘upgrade’ material was rendered relevant at any given moment. To this extent, the brand had managed to be a sub-cultural marque to Western youth. In a period of cynical youth consumerism, where the discrepancy between the brand message and the evidence available to back it up was keenly observed by information-hungry youth, the rappers presented an image of living and dying by their brand, and so gave a sense of authentic conviction, an alternative moral sensibility. The attitude being used to sell therefore had resonance and any publicity (for or against the gang warfare) served to propel its relevance in the popular youth press both sides of the Atlantic.

#### Placing the impact of digitisation

One can claim for the 1990s that the acceptance of fast edit techniques caused a change in appearance of adverts, and particularly commercials. Data analysis also caused advertising to change its agenda. Marketers and advertisers now reached for customers using experiential sensations more than rational means. While advertising packaged product ‘sensations’ as USPs advertising remained in the business of conjuring perfect moments to fix sensations to product experiences. Therefore the legacy of Tango’s strategy (cf. Chapter 3a) broadly remained intact at the end of the decade. The 1990s produced several significant landmarks for commercial communication that caused ripples amongst rivals and effected incremental changes in the advertising operated. In the wake of Tango, a mood for laddish advertising started that acknowledged the (male-oriented) audiences mature sensibilities and ability to read complex communication, while appealing to them on an amoral, emotive and primitive basis. In terms of reading digital images, the fast data intense tempo of Tango created the sort of visual hook that became popular in the 1990s, as Michael Owen’s five second moment demonstrated 6 years later. Tesco Clubcard was effective in the re-defining of consumers as ‘selectors’. Tesco’s communications agency realised with other integrated communications agencies that, beyond grazing over the style of message presentation, consumers were still more convinced by the best value for money. New industries – notably the dot com internet industries – drew on customers shopping around.

The second significant impact caused by digitisation was the change in the depth required of brands and their promotions campaigns. Behind the ad's interface a brand's infrastructure has needed to demonstrate that the core values disseminated through adverts are in fact 'real' in that they can be evidenced throughout the company. This was significant for ads targeting the youngest consumers, whose discerning critical faculties are at their most sensitive. The Disney/Dreamworks film Toy Story 2 for instance suggested there was substance behind the façade. Several films chronicling 'the making of...' were an integral part of the pre-launch publicity while the mock out-takes during the end credits helped blur the understanding of where the image stops and the construct begins. If products are about fitting into a perceived idealised (fictional) life, then Disney remains one of the strongest producers of product meaning. In this sense, Disney lead the way on meta-meaning, allowing their product to be coded in a way that it can be read in different ways by different market sectors. The ability for products/services to mass-tailor their wares would suggest that this is a model to be emulated.

#### Characterising the twenty-first century consumer

In 1995 the Henley Forecasting Center set the tone of re-evaluating consumerism in realising that the tight mass social classifications A, B, C1, C2, D and E were too rigid to explain changes in consumption patterns. They set about formulating a more accurate pattern of distinction grouped flexible aspects such mood and consumption. This recognised that consumers bought outside their perceived social taste and more frequently operated outside their own perceived patterns of consumption. As technology allowed brands to monitor their consumers more closely, so the very mechanisms of measurement were being considered outmoded. Where Gallop in the 1930's had noted that only a broad cross-section of the public would give an indication of consensus, the 1996 British general election polls showed that the opinions given were how people thought they should respond, rather than what they really thought. Likewise, part of the banality of modern politics has been driven by responses to pollsters, which is why many have become apathetic to the blandness of moderated majority views. What people claim in polls and what they actually think and want became understood to be different. The nature of consumption had become more complex, and the conviction of views less decisive.

This meant that the whole process from product concept to final advertised commodity needed to be consistent, while customer information became more significant beyond the advertising, offering accurate information to inform the selection process. If there was a discrepancy between the ad message and product experience the 'belief' in the brand would break down. The essence of commerciality therefore became rooted further back in the research and development in the case of internationally competing producer brands. Consistency in all aspects from suppliers to service centres, became significant in pursuing a line of authenticity.

This in turn had repercussions on the nature of consumption. Many brands re-shaped themselves to offer up a company culture, such as Tesco Clubcard and Daewoo's 'total service guarantee' which, in effect, made the act of consumption more of a pleasurable experience. The sense of experience itself was greatly worked on, as it became apparent that it gave customers a reason to trust the brand.

An overview of the last decade compared to the previous four suggests that the nineties contained greater involvement in the shaping of consumption by consumers themselves. Protest groups were more coordinated, shoppers were more aware of ways to get consumer information and inform choice, and connections were being made more often between changes in brand presentation and consumer's own developing relationship with brands. Unlike Heskett's notion of producer-centred goods, there was a sense that a sea change had taken place, which had seen customers and not producers become the centrally served party. The consequence was that the established agency structure (as represented by Campaign and D&AD), faced upheaval. By 2001 its utilities appeared to be polarising as a means of launching new products through burst campaigns while its mainstay advertising work, maintaining a product or brand in the public consciousness, has moved to more located means of maintaining personal contact. In many respects TV, press and billboard ads have had to become less arty and more direct in their manner of communication as media advertising became the most readily identifiable aspect of a much deeper and integrated marketing process. Media adverts on their own rarely provided total promotion solutions by the beginning of the twenty-first century.

**Table 17: Re-defining terms for modern British advertising**

'selector':	autonomous, wants choice — not a commodity
brands :	'you can be <i>OUR</i> individual — we'll look after you' 'we'll help shape your life & reward your loyalty'
products:	'if you like the way we work, try other products and services in my brand family'
marketeers:	'tell us what you want — we'll tailor to it'
media advertisers:	can't sell individuality — but its spirit
integrated advertisers:	use the most appropriate means to communicate
direct marketers:	put the best price package together

(source: author)

Yet at a time that commodities from pop music to white goods are read in terms of their surface identities, the identity or 'attitude' brings advertising to the centre of imparting product information. Where 1980s advertising was perceived as an instrument of capitalism it has now become assumed to be part of a dialogue — an element in the workings of an information culture. Terms such as 'spin', 'on-message' and 'soundbite' have all entered common parlance through a political system that has re-shaped itself around advertising means. Perhaps this is why mechanism of information distribution *is* in the spotlight more than the substance, through numerous headline stories of spin-doctors and ministerial press leaks.

As for the consumer (selector or prosumer) in the nineties, the tacit understanding that customers recognised ad methods became much more of a given norm by those doing the communicating, which meant they were able to progress with further levels of layers information construction. The notion of 'Indie', the street shorthand for 'independent', also became a mainstream grouping in its own right during the nineties. Former 'underground' labels became populist because of their 'outsider' image. Pop music's version of Indie had been so since the late-eighties (Happy Mondays), and was in any case a pastiche of the sixties American underground (the Velvet Underground, beat poets). By assuming so much 'indie' and 'alternative' in the mainstream it was difficult to operate outside the main value system and not be dismissed.

In terms of consuming new technology, there seems an awakening to the potential of mass tailoring later in the decade. One manifestation of this is how it was reflected in advertising. Where Fiat Strada in 1978 was celebrated for being 'hand-built by robots', twenty years later Citroen's Xara 'Picasso' celebrated a spirit of mechanical rebellion from the automated process as a robot with its own mind paints an original detail on the side of Xsara cars (p.392). The implication was that the car was a free spirit, creative, not automatic, and unique (hence the name of the range, 'Picasso', to emphasize the association with free expression). In the thinking of the advertisers, these apparently non-industrial qualities were, for the late twentieth century viewer, 'added value'.

Advertising industries appear to be the expanding the degree of interdisciplinary creative work, beyond that presently in operation between communication industries (cf. 'Gathering of the Tribes' diagram, p.257). As design group buy-outs bought design and communication facilities together as 'creative services', so the potential for cross-fertilisation of approaches grew. Where design, advertising and graphic services compete at pitch stage for a branding commission, it is clear that both media and design approaches have broadened the remit of what they consider to be their creative territories. There is a sense therefore that interdisciplinary approaches may be the means to revitalise both the industrial design and communication industries.

Evidence emerged of blurred boundaries blurring in the mid-1980s. Annuals such as the (Thames & Hudson) International Design Yearbook showed the extent to which product and furniture design in particular maintained their vitality by operating in the margins between their discipline and other creative practices<sup>53</sup>.

Outside the British advertising industry, other creative industries have already taken a lead. The New York graphics firm The Burnett Group employ people with a variety of skills – musicians, sociologists and film producers to add to their portfolio of creative service on offer. In the UK the agency Tomato span graphic

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<sup>53</sup>For instance, Ron Arad, Andre Duvail and Phillippe Starck's work have operated between design and sculpture while Danny Lane and Tom Dixon have operated on the threshold of craft. Similarly in the US, graphic designer Tibor Kalman bought in contemporary artists Jenny Holzer and Barbara Krugar to work on graphics and advertising products, while in Britain Neville Brody's Fuse and Fontworks created work to be evaluated by its formal qualities as art. Typographer Jonathan Barnbrook's work equally resided in design museums and galleries In the introduction to Poyner, R (ed) Blurred Boundaries: Visual Communication in Transition, Booth-Clibbon, London 1998 p.9. Poyner sites interior,

design, architecture and have their own music recording studio; Product design consultants Paul Stead Design have taken on graphic work while international graphic firm Pentagram take on product design. All appear to have realised the virtue in addressing the bigger picture as communicators and facilitators; offering design services where designing is only part of their remit.

The interdisciplinary nature of creative work seems appropriate to an age where the product, its supporting services and the way its saleable attributes are communicated have become fused in a complex amorphous process. The significance for advertising (as Clubcard also illustrated) is that it became a microcosm of macro promotion processes. Previously the product advertisement was an end in its own right. The role of media advertising as it appeared in 1990 is now less significant. The more fundamental role it used to occupy of 'total promotion' now works on a far bigger and more disparate scale, as decisions on where promotion is introduced into the creation of a product is made much earlier in the creative process.

It is evident therefore, that the 'inter-determined story' of advertising's passage through the nineties was more problematic than in previous decade. In terms of technology, the potential of greater viewing autonomy that was facilitated with satellite TV and sophisticated video equipment indicated that more complex forms of promotion were necessary. Yet all forms of media advertising were instrumental in introducing new technologies to domestic and working landscapes. It seems that most of the future thresholds for future advertising also involve applied advertising methods, as the search for new mediums (and the development of permission marketing, cf. Chapter 2) defines its most suitable forms of operation. While media advertising within its own industrial sector maintains its identity as the flagship mass-promotional medium, its period of communications monopoly is over after a long time, while some of its old promotional gambits, such as unique selling propositions, were reinstated. The significance was that advertising's methods were imbedded in other creative practices.

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furniture and graphic designer Gaetano Pesce: in the section Art=Design = Art...? who remarked that 'the boundaries are not so clear now. I would like to make them less clear'.

## Conclusions

### Revisiting 1990's determinants: re-imagining customers

In reading how the ad industries re-shaped their understanding of consumers and their own media at the end of the decade, I have arrived at a series of conclusions I never expected to reach.

Media advertising strategies changed substantially during the period of review. During the 1990s it was apparent that media advertising was registering a perceived fragility of traditional hype by engaging in irony and self-reflection. Commercials aimed at male youth for instance, became layered and encrypted with esoteric references so that ads could simultaneously appeal to audiences sense of knowing while appealing to its audiences more primitive instincts for belonging, remembering and sharing<sup>1</sup>. Addressing youthful consumers involved making youth-geared ads seem on the margins of the mainstream, with coded age-acknowledged references ostracising viewers outside the target market. Also in the mid-1990s media advertising addressed its own notoriety through third party tactics and the use of irony<sup>2</sup>. By the decade's end to some of its purveyors irony appeared exhausted. As one planner remarked, 'Now we've all been slurred with irony can we ever be virgins again?'<sup>3</sup>.

These changes of strategy had ramifications for the way advertising sold products. Media advertising encountered problems in representing consumers collectively as British. It seems that the label 'British' was so heavily politicised<sup>4</sup> that, as a brand in its own right, it came with too many contentious and polarising associations to be useful for advertising. For instance ethnic minorities developed an organised voice and established a stronger profile in cosmopolitan (but not rural) Britain. Being representational became problematic. One solution was to effect a shift in visual style, where everyday situations were replaced with closed action scenes and visual trickery. In being representational the problem was only negotiated by selectively editing or 're-framing' the problem. Representing the British mass in images only worked in conveying ideals. Therefore new strategies removed the need to represent customers by focusing on the 'values' of products and brands. Unlike earlier rational methods of product demonstrations and celebrity testimonies, 1990s ads drew on a wider frame of references. Shared value systems were less nationalistic but could be connected through references to shared experiences and 'boutiques of history' to draw on relocated collective sensibilities. Therefore, advertising made claims less specific and sold on

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<sup>1</sup>For instance, the belonging in Tango's Englishness, remembering Ice Cold In Alex in Hostern Pil's re-working of the film with their advertising, and the sense of sharing, as in Mercury's 'Who would you like to have a one-2-one with?' campaign.

<sup>2</sup>For instance the irony in Boddingtons spoofs of familiar advertising genres. The third party tactics of the 'That'll be the Daewoo' campaign, which addressed resistance consumers had to advertising by inviting consumers to test and experience the brand, by ringing a Daewoo call centre, visiting showrooms and test-driving their product and support service.

<sup>3</sup>Clarke, P, Planner at Saatchi & Saatchi, on The Message, BBC Radio 4, 21 July 2000.

<sup>4</sup>It connected to notions of nationalism, Empire Establishments and the sense of 'Them and Us' surrounding European integration.



relative 'moods'. This led to an apparent paradox: as media agencies extended into new global markets, the content of adverts became increasingly culturally specific, as Boddingtons sense of region and Nike's 'glocal' methods illustrated. Ads therefore trod a fine line in not attempting to represent consumers through inclusive generalisations, but making them feel the tone should represent them: it was the 'feeling' of being in control of choice, which also involved consumer's individual desire to belong (and being seen belonging).

The state of the ad industry also changed in the 1990s. At the start of the decade media advertising looked outdated, lacked market penetration and was comparatively expensive – it didn't 'work the pound'. In effect media advertising re-audited itself during the 1990s and played to its strengths as a 'quick fix' message bearer. As a medium it was sustained by being shorter and becoming more accessible (for instance, shooting on video rather than film). Despite viewers knowing how ad formulas worked, media ads still produced attention-grabbing instances that effected the way viewers thought about the product, judging by ad recall figures after ads were aired. By perfecting the art of making/associating with memorable moments, media advertising was re-invented as a vehicle for launching ('bursting') products within bigger mixed media promotional campaigns. Where media advertising drew attention, direct advertising could develop more personalised 'experiential' customer relations.

*Table 19: Marking typical shifts in a decade – broad conclusions drawn*

	1990>	2000>
<b>industry structure</b>	media advertising agencies set strategy agenda fear: recession & buy outs	integrated advertising brand guardians, re+pro-active fear: speed of change
<b>adverts</b>	Emotive Selling Proposition usually 30-40seconds long linear narrative, textual	Individual & Unique Selling Propositions usually 2-30 seconds long layered, hypertextual
<b>campaigns</b>	Single market strategy selling product/service (Sony Walkman) 'top down'; 'Product Is King' promos	third party associations/joint promotions selling brand (Nike) 'bottom up'; products serve customer
<b>brands</b>	brand stretching (Guinness) brand names (Nike) valued on product	one-stop brand shop (Tesco) brand symbols (√) valued on ID's standing and connection
<b>cultural</b>	consumer ideological/political agenda (PowerBook) Capitalism vs. Socialism industrial age (producers)	selector personal agenda (iBook) plural hybrids – 'The Third Way' information age (media, IT & service)

Source: author (cf. Appendix 1 for expanded list and reference points)

In addressing technological change, the marketing/advertising mix helped to utilise database technology better than digital communications networks as they came on-line. For example Tesco Clubcard's database led to more useful ways of segmenting its customers, and informed all aspects of its promotions. In

comparison, by 2001 p-marketing was still less effective than disruption advertising. However, the accelerated speed of digital communication led to changing viewing habits. Where the nineties spanned a period that saw the impact of channel flicking, the realisation of knowledge archives and personally edited viewing took effect. For instance on TV sports highlights packages reduced events to brief moments, film highlights were distilled into trailers and later bookmarked on DVD's and commercials also became shorter and punchier. In 2000 many commercials were 10 seconds long, while programme sponsored 'idents' were shorter. Commercial 'hooks' such as Tango's 'slap' and the iMac's style became increasingly significant in making goods distinct.

In Chapter 2, I grappled with the notion that attention spans shortened as a plethora of new channels emerged, and much was made in advertising journals of commercial saturation and viewer fatigue. Yet this is contradicted by the popularity of the internet, which takes patience to browse. Children's films are still around 90 minutes in length. With greater viewing choice ads made their 'bite' quicker and emotively seduced customers to 'enter the brand' using the hooks (web site and call centre) provided. Post-irony advertising therefore replayed to some of advertising's earlier USP techniques. Like the iMac and Ronseal campaign, 'it does what it says on the tin'.

Given this, it is surprising how little reference there was to the US in nineties British advertising. When I first envisaged this thesis I considered the relationship between British/US ad forms and expected the US's high-cost/low risk model would take hold in Britain. It didn't happen. When US-produced ads are placed alongside British ads they 'punch out' of sync. They do not appear as crafted or as intricate. If one were to characterise the relationship of recent British advertising to its American roots therefore its is more 'phaedigmatic'; British advertising took the original form and localised it. In Britain advertising 'craft' was ingrained in the media ad industry – even cheap-looking ads<sup>5</sup> were expensively 'crafted' to look that bad.

British advertising did not move to US models or relocate to European styles. After a wave of pan-Atlantic treatments like Levi's (1985–98) and pan-European ads like Renault Clio (1989–93), Tango heralded a genre that mixed localised esoteric reference points in a manner that made it feel like it 'belonged' in Britain. American-styled ads in Britain played on the sort of US sitcom and chat show formats familiar to European viewers<sup>6</sup>. Virtually all British products and services seemed to locate their brands within specifically British frames of reference. This was not achieved with the glamour of eighties ads or US TV shows, but with an idea that they are depicting a fragment of everyday concerns, humour and experiences. Perhaps it is because the programming on commercial television relies heavily on imports, that the

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<sup>5</sup>For instance, HHCL's ads shaky camerawork in their 1996 Pot Noodle commercial.

<sup>6</sup>Budweiser's 'Waatsap' (DDB Chicago, 2000) and Diet Coke (McCann Erickson, 1998) both used the formula of US comedy dramas (Seinfeld and Ally McBeal respectively), while Miller Lite's 'Miller Time' (TBWA, 1998) borrowed from the David Letterman Show format.

programmes themselves provide the sort of fantasy and escapism previously afforded by adverts. Commercial breaks offer localised reassurance and show brands that are closer to home.

Tango's St George ad in 1996 was therefore symptomatic rather than unique in being culturally specific. Tango followed in a lineage of FMCG ads in its address to male youth, but they were progressive in assuming viewers to have their own archival reference base of essentially British film and television that stemmed back some fifty years. This located many outside marketing's normal age bracketing (in this case 9–16 and 17–24) within the product's 'radar'. The art director even layered the level of detail in the ad to allow the references to be tracked and cross-referenced. This assumed that there was an element of late-twentieth century viewer that was not as passive, and enough of them were prepared to respond to the addition of contact numbers and internet web sites to make brand extensions worth while. This showed that, even with small numbers (tens of thousands) relationships with brands could develop beyond the consumption of the goods advertised.

For media advertising therefore, the decade was initially one of introspection, re-evaluation and eventually a condensed, localised form emerged that showed a potential to feed more sophisticated forms of relationship marketing and direct advertising.

#### The impact of technological change

One can claim a watershed for advertising with the introduction of database technology. After honing the processes of advertising and marketing, retail developed a potential means of closing the loop of consumption. This did not make customers (in marketing parlance) necessarily 'brand-loyal', but at least they had produced enough material evidence to deduce why patterns of consumption change. The next logical step in targeting individuals may well be that the need to mass-categorise customers can be bypassed.

In terms of 'imaging' consumers' consumption habits, many direct ad agencies concluded that they were, typically, more inclined to promiscuously swap brands for the want of change, to feel they were not being bracketed. McIlrath insisted on the term 'Selector' because 'consumer' suggested passive reception, and didn't describe the sense of actively shopping around. Direct advertising negotiated this by ushering in closer relationships between customers, marketing and their clients. It made greater use of research – in the case of Tesco's Clubcard it responded to individual patterns of consumption. Like Clubcard, direct methods led to infrastructures that more layered and interconnected. While the design industry claimed to be more interdisciplinary by the end of the decade (after the many mergers and buy-outs), the communications

industries can claim to have been more integrative. In the period of review the nature of ad work developed faster than it had done in 50 years.

However, technology (via the manufacturing brands that produce it) does not dictate the rate of market change, but consumption rates did. Encouraging consumers to buy into new technology has historically been problematic, and manufacturers of digital technology have been particularly slow to realise the potential of their products. For instance, it took from the 1950s to late-1970s for a computer to become a word processor (IBM): from the mid-1980s it was a drawing tool (Apple's GUI) and by the late-1990s a video editing suite<sup>7</sup> and fashion accessory (iMac). It is only as a visual telex system (e-mail) and on-line brochure (internet sites) that advertising has channelled its honed segmentation skills into practice with new media.

By the turn of the Millennium manufacturers were capable of devolving decisions back to customers through direct mail and digital correspondence<sup>8</sup>, but there was little purpose in pushing technology that was not actually required. Open forms of product (or for that matter its promotion) presupposed customers wanted greater control over goods, where iMac's sense of brand allowed a closer affiliation with Apple (literally) through the product.

#### Re-placing advertising

Given the layered approach to promotions by 2000, is advertising still an appropriate term to use? If one considers the way agencies billed themselves between 1990-2000, a tendency developed whereby the term 'ad agency' was dropped in favour of 'communications consultants', implying a bigger strategic role, of 'multimedia groups', which made agencies sound like the engineers of hi-tech wizardry.

This is revealing in as much as advertising used to frame its creative activity as a sort of creative 'science'. The larger 'top ten' agencies<sup>9</sup> still use creative 'gurus' to pull in clients<sup>10</sup>. More critically aware consumption has made adverts less of an enigma. Production methods were foregrounded and sales techniques exposed as creative services became less of a mystique. So in moving the stigma from the 'creative' product to the means of production, advertisers such as Chiat Day and HHCL (cf. Appendix 1) in effect sold their own organisational means in the way that Tom Peters or Charles Handy sold flexible working. For digital advertising this enabled agencies to stress the immediacy and pliability of their work, as

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<sup>7</sup>Adapted from an observation made by Douglas Adams in A Hitchhiker's guide to the Future, broadcast on BBC Radio 4 throughout September 2000.

<sup>8</sup>There was the sense that through digital technology and mass-tailoring customers could have a bigger input in their goods. For instance Levi's in New York mass-tailored jeans from 1991, and car manufacturers Hyundai offered customers the chance to accessorise their own cars via direct mail correspondence in 2000: cf. Chapter 5c.

<sup>9</sup>The industry tends to refer to 'Top Ten agencies' in terms of account revenue billing, which is seen to indicate the magnitude of a company.

<sup>10</sup>Such as Trevor Beattie, Creative Head of TBWA. Brierley, S The Advertising Handbook, p.55 notes that usually the only difference between agencies is the creative personnel, who project their difference as creative uniqueness at account pitches.

company names such as EHS Realtime, HPT Direct suggest. 'Advertising' has therefore become descriptive of a promotional form that is just one commercial weapon in a modern communications groups armoury.

Unlike the 1980s, where clients relied on ad agencies for market placement, Ad agencies learnt how to reshape their operations from their clients. Leadbeater illustrated how companies market value rested on their perceived worth (built through associations) rather than stock value. For instance the 'infinite amorphism' Tommy Hilfiger<sup>11</sup>, which was a label of endorsement but not a producer, demonstrated the need for adaptable identities and working methods. Start-up agencies similarly were light on permanent staff and facilities, as the nature of work in advertising became project/portfolio based. The ad industry in effect polarised. While below-the-line agencies fluctuated in scale media agencies expanded by buying in facilities and becoming integrated communications groups.

I have made much of the fact that the content of advertising tended to be condensed into a moment (be it through humour, a visual bite or staged event). Even narratives in ads were little more than fragments of a situation. If one cross-references this with viewers grasp of digital media<sup>12</sup> the knack of reading accelerated fragments became commonplace. Using the recognition of ad tactics, advertisers developed methods that allowed image grazing. The sense of gratification in perceiving things in a compressed timescale played to the abilities of the digitally literate. The stepping up of 'air time', where tiny fragments of time are made more valuable, is one of the clearest signs of mass engagement with digital media.

Advertising's captivation of the moment worked on another level. Where ads in the 1980s tended to extol distinctive product qualities with a particular kind of allure, most 1990s ads I've described (cf. Appendix 4) were different: they constructed perfect relationships between the product and the person using it. Tango did this with a hit, as drink and drinker bonded. Similarly Daewoo and iMac linked product and user by conveying consumption experiences. The emphasis was on the consumption experience. Rather than saying 'come and buy it', effectively they were saying, 'supposing you owned it, this are the changes it would make to your life'. Digital services such as 'beme.com' advertised themselves this way, stressing experience rather than objectifying the service.

With the reshaping of multinationals such as Coke and Apple as brands, promotional strategies are most often planned decided in-house. In previous decades they would have gone to an advertising agency for advice on brand and promotional strategies. Even British brand Britvic Tango divided tasks to different agencies for specific types of promotion.

So, where a decade ago there might have been a tangible account of advertising's development there are now several interlocking but different perspectives. In rationalising what I've established through

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<sup>11</sup>Klein, N. No Logo p.24.

the text (compared with existing accounts of British advertising), British advertising has changed distinctly in a decade and in a digital age has re-characterised its position as a global model of advertising. Next to the US's cultural Imperial model of advertising, whose paradigmatic model is revered in advertising histories and reinforced by the NY roots and dominance of the Hollywood narrative model, Britain's ad form has moved and is now much more localised. Where American-originated multinationals such as Apple imbue their products with American-originated USPs, British national brands such as Daewoo and Tesco work strategies around relationship marketing, a hybrid of British-originated emotive selling propositions. In so doing British advertising has reacted to its Madison Avenue roots. It is all the more significant in that British agencies have global operations as much as Americans – the two dominant global ad cultures. Given the evidence, it seems that where America is set up as the dominant model, Britain is the alternative.

In conclusion, dominant changes from advertising's perspective during the 1990s were driven by four main factors: the realisation of how to apply technology and individualise customers *caused* advertising to change selling methods. More discriminating consumers *caused* advertising to re-evaluate the role of existing models, while closer understandings of consumer mood and market segmentation effected the content of ads. Therefore advertisers were able to avoid customer representations, which became increasingly difficult because customers would only respond to generalisations of mood and occasionally belonging. Media advertising more often represented the 'perfect moment' when consumers experience products. This is why advertisers 'got into' the perspective of their target audience, and started to see things through the eyes and experiences of customers.

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<sup>12</sup>DVDs and VCRs let viewers habitually de-select and flick through commercial material, using remote facilities.



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Daewoo UK (1999 heritage compilation)	M&Co. (1988)
Duckworth Finn Grubb Waters (2000)	Ogilvy & Mather (1999)
Grey Advertising (1999)	St Lukes (1999)
Guinness (1994, & heritage reel)	Saatchi & Saatchi (1997)
HHCL & Partners (1998)	TBWA (1996 & 2000)
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South, Alan	snr. design dir., IDEO industrial design, Pleasant Row, London NW1
Teer, Phil	planner, St Lukes (1996– present), Dukes Rd., London W2
Thompson, Paul	director, The Design Museum (1991–2000), Shad Thames, London SE1
Whiteley, Steve	copywriter, DMB&B (1997–2000), Baker St., London W2
Wright, Julie	art director, Nick D'Costa, Dukes Rd., London W4

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Advertising Standards Association	Independent Television Commission
beeb.com	Institute of Practitioners in Advertising
BBC Broadcasting Research Department	London College of Printing
Central St. Martins	Market and Opinion Research International (MORI)
	SRU
Design & Art Direction	University of East London
Direct Marketing Association	Ilex/ Ivy Press (& Ivy)
Hamleys	University of Wales
Haymarket Press (& Campaign)	

# Perfect Moments.

**British Advertising during the 1990s -  
An assessment of determinants**

## **Appendices**

A thesis submitted to Middlesex University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Paul Springer

School of Art, Design & Performing Arts

Middlesex University

2002

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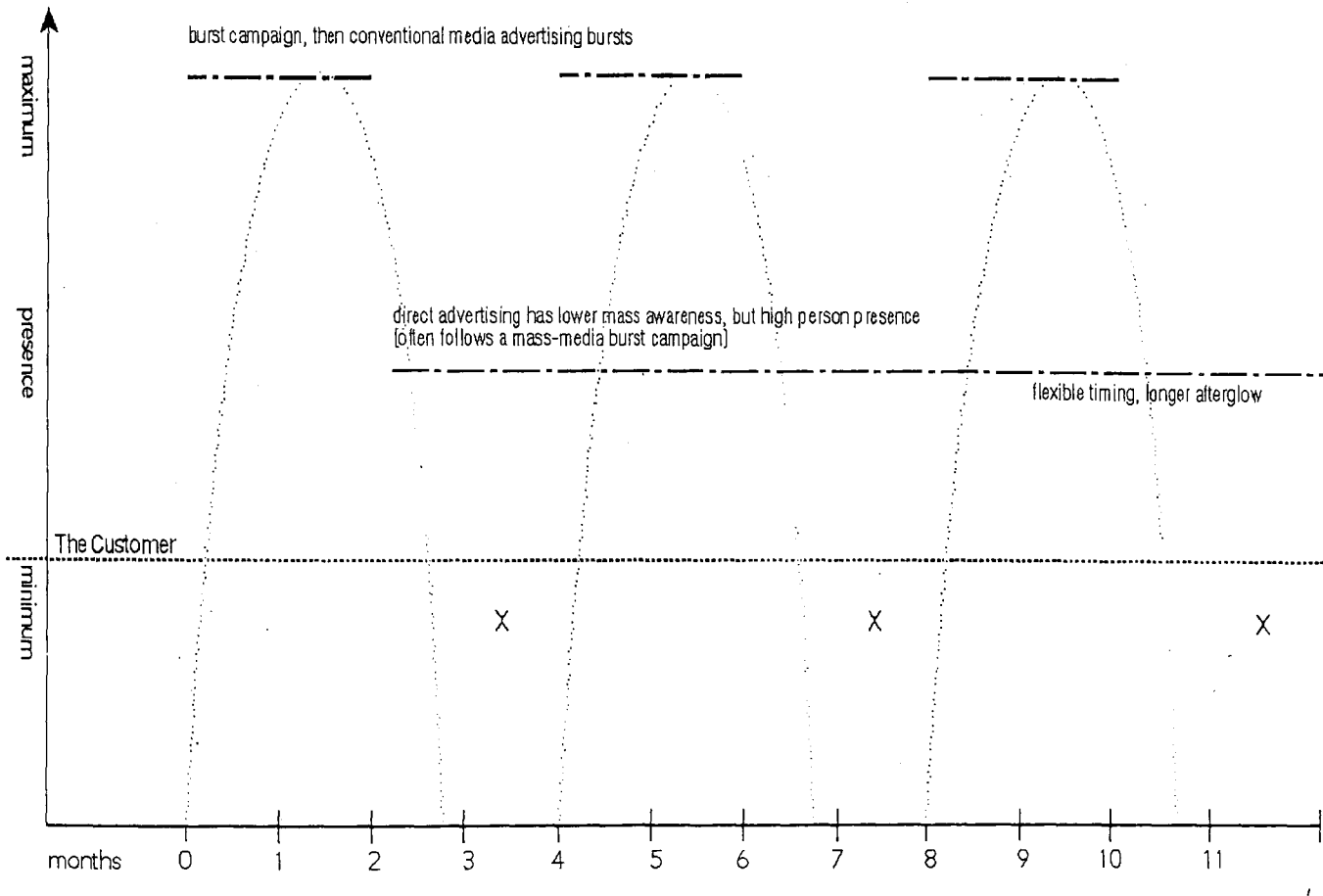
Appendix 1

**The British ad Industry:  
diagrams, timelines, terms and contexts**

Diagram 3

# FREQUENCY OF PITCH

*the pitch of attention aroused by media ad campaigns*



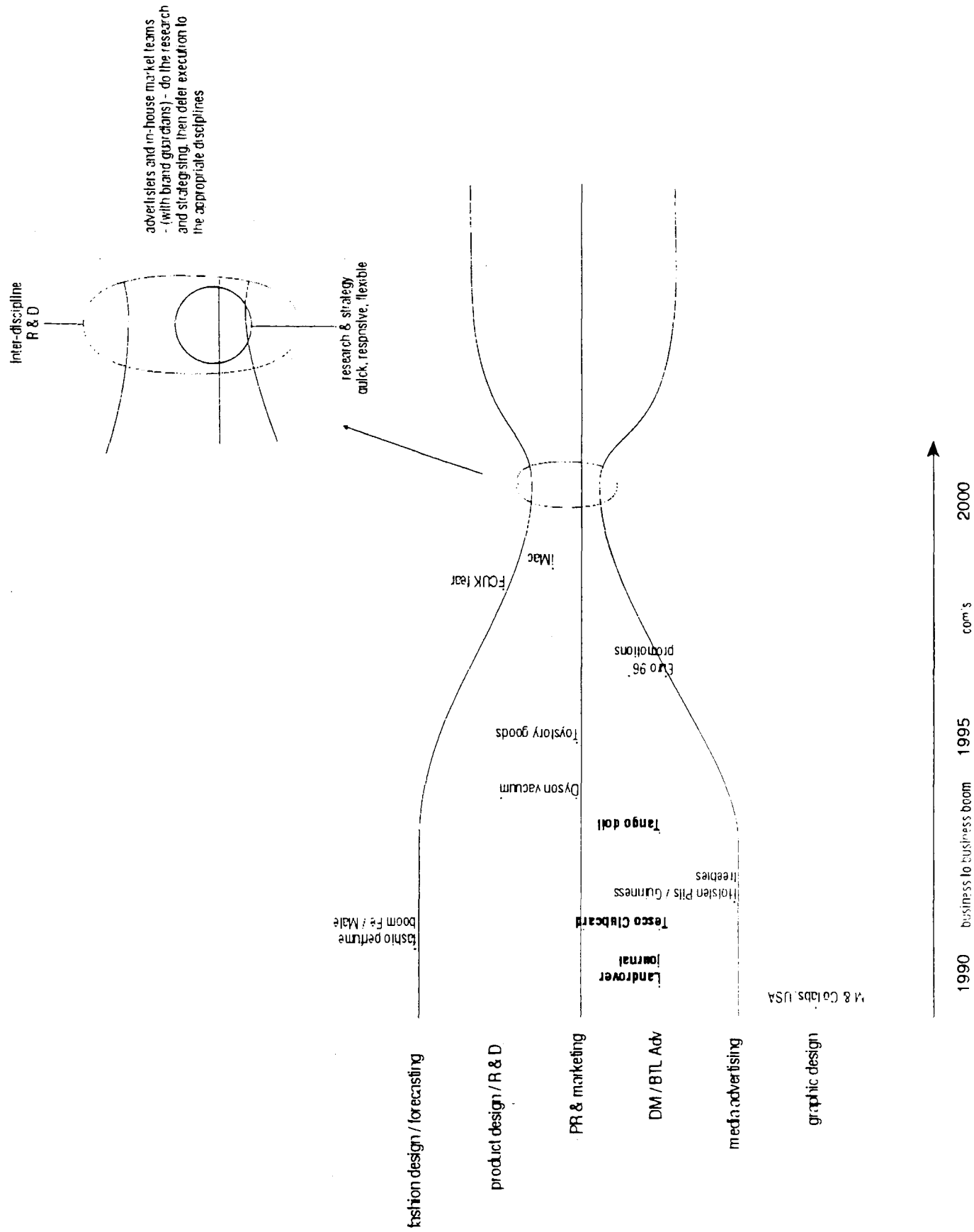
X = points at which little information is obtainable, outside ad periods

Paul Springer, April 2000 - after sketch by Simon Kershaw of Craik Jones, March 2000

Diagram 4

# GATHERING OF THE TRIBES

how the creative practices merged





## Timelines 1985 - 2000

Shifts In Advertising

Soundbites & Copy Hooks

Design & Architecture

Comedy

Film

Pop

# SHIFTS IN ADVERTISING 1985 - 1992

	1985	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Ir-Britain ... ...globally							
DM issues	Live Aid Coke & Pepsi sponsored		black wednesday Design Museum opens fall of Berlin wall	London poll tax riots Gulf war			
Adv issues / legislation	< "below-the-line" < 1963: Ogilvy starts O&M direct for American Express	Saatchi's start Saatchi Direct Evans Hunt Scott expand ... lose Comodore	Mandela released, opening up of new markets in Africa collapse of communism opening up of Eastern Markets	*Integrated* Heinz Move £14m A/C to WWAV Rapp (BTL) market press claim the brand is dead	EHS Tesco clubcard some Benetton & Tingo ads pulled by ASA	*Marlboro Tuesday* price promo Coca Cola re-think their marketing & advertising infrastructure	Brand-stretching->diversification Access "flexible friend" axed Tango Orange "slap" commercial J Sainsbury's "recipe" tv ads & in-store cards
Cultural Commerce		Craik Jones founded	British advertising industries in recession				
landmark projects / landmarks		Run DMC release the single "my adidas" in the US					
market movement		Toscani's Benetton posters					
digital (I.T.)	IBM > Apple Mac > Microsoft > Nintendo			Mac Classic launched			
FMCG				Pepperami - STP			
thin air economy leisure, financial service				*chatback* tv ads '0891 50 50 50*			
awards D&AD, DMA, Campaign							
publications industry, academic	Judith Williamson "Decoding Advertisements" (79), "Consuming Positions" (80) P. Meggs "A History Of Graphic Design" (83) N Postman "Amusing Ourselves To Death" (84)	T. Peters "Thriving on chaos" D. Hebdige "Hiding The Light"		C. Handy "The Empty Raincoat" C. Moog "Are They selling Her Lips?" (US)	R. van Ochs A Whack on the ... Head* A. Warnick "Promotional Culture" F. Popcorn "The Popcorn Report" C. Rode "Design After Dark" L. Buck "Relative Values"		M. Davidson "The Consumerist Manifesto"

1993 - 2000

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
In Britain ... globally	Channel tunnel	more Euro-centric Britain		Labour win Gen Election Diana dies HK handover, 1st cloned sheep RA's "Sensation" exhibition: V&A's "Power of the Poster" ex. trainers	Domestic started Good Friday agreement op. Desert Fox		
DM issues	start of internet boom	Calvin Klein ads pulled	Allianta Olympics - Lindford Christie's Puma Lenses & USA's 4x100m. relay teams one off Nike shades by IDEO	Pepsi blue - worldwide (UK:AMV) Nike > ✓ Chapman Bros Fila and NIKE shoes dot.coms	Sony > ODX	David Ogilvy dies "globalisation"	*.com dot.bombs (boo.com) Plastic Saturday*
Ad issues / legislation	ITV programme sponsorship	"Brand-neutral"	adv. censorship debated	re-emergence of brand market press moot if power	tighter legislation on cigarette adv	restrictive DM legislation introd pester power debated lastminute.com floated	
Cultural Commerce	5+ adv. BA (Hons) est BMP's "Heinz buildz britz" itin. to media adv.	O&M's Guinness "ritual" (global) "sub - cultural Capital"	integrated adv. introduced at Bucks. College	Nike cathedral store in London	dot.coms		MUFC worth more than £1bn
landmark projects / landmarks	WCRS Orange. Adrian Holmes against job advertising	marketing of Toy Story = Disney+McDonalds	Limbo's Audi DM Mauro and Charles Saatchi leave Saatchi & Saatchi brands on internet	Tequila's Marlboro "cows" stunt GAP TV ads	precision marketing	Saatchi & Saatchi's Johnny Foreigner's ad for BA	Leagas Delaneys Barclays
market movement	Impact FCA's Caxton stunt billboard HHCL's Tango "gotan" Doll WCRS's Nissan Micra	Triangle. Caburys/Coronation SI Sponsorship 360" advertising stealth ads	> Tequila take on Rothmans	FCA's Siemens/cab stunts	AIS ltd est. dancing baby	iMac & "think different"	permission marketing on-line
digital (I.T.)	HHCL's Tango - clubbers - 0800 numbers introduced	S+S club 18-30	Yahool dancing baby - 10" cult	FCAI remove "Impact" LHS Reebok landscape projections FCAI's Welsh TB stunts	1st Ministry of Sound adv. projection FHM's parliament projection		
FMCG	Guinness dancing man screen-saver	the term "brand neutral" appears in Haymarket Press		amazon.com	Yahool floated egg banking	Smile.com	Lastminute.com floated
thin air economy culture, finance, services	Marketing Week est. J A Walker "Art In The Age Of Mass Media" M E Taylor & E. Saarinen "Imagologies" T. Polhemus "Street Style" M. Bierut et al (ed) "Looking Closer"	Hallberg "Not All Consumers ..." Crowley & Jobling "Repro. & Represent." S. Brierley "The Advertising Handbook" S. Brown "Postmodern Marketing" Handbook"				FCAI "best agency"	
awards D&AD, DMA Campaign	Booth-Clibbon leaves D&AD						
publications industry, academic	D. Pepper "One to One Marketing" (US) J. J. Beadle "Will Pop Eat Itself?" Adbusters est.			S. McIlraith "A New creative Manifesto" L. Butterfield "IPA guide ..." G. Laise "What if we turned ... to zero?" (France) L. Mayhew "The New Public" Heller & Pomeroy "Design Literacy" D. Bernstein "Advertising Outdoors" M. Bracewell "England Is Mine"	DM Business est. J. Baudrillard "The Consumer Society" (reprint France 1970) J. Bond & R. Kirschtbaum "Under The Radar" (US) View Point est.	J. Aitchison "Cutting Edge Adv" N. Klein "no logo" L. Sullivan "I Lay, Whipple, Squeeze This" (US) S. Goddin "Precision Marketing" K. Lasn "Culture Jam" (US)	C. Leadbeater "Living On Thin Air" G. Ritzer "The Mc Donaldization Of Society" (US) Clifton & Maughan "Interbrand: The Future Of Brand"

# SOUNDBITES & COPY HOOKS

## 1985 - 1992

	1985	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
in Britain...			black wednesday freeworld				
pan-USA/Europe	Cons. win Gen Election supplies Essex Man PLATFORM	U can't touch this		scuds vs cruises (Gull War)		Cons. win Gen Election	
digital terms	Apple Mac, IBM PC CAD, Hewlett Packard Laserjet Sinclair	scanners Next Computer	G-Max MYST hypercard	Mac Classic risc chip	chatback Mac System 7 (Apple) Inex	power-pc IBM Thinkpad STEREO LITH Young British Artists	1st person games Playstation
art							
TV, film & music	U can't touch this Panic Greed is Good "economic w/ truth" the 3 R's Essex Man	gadanga loads-a-money	*have a cunning plan...*	dub	Party on, dudes Schwing!	cool/sucks	
politics	deregulation & privatisation enterprise	Don't die of ignorance.	good. Not! single currency classless society		ERM/EMU New Labour: New Britain	New Labour Sierra Man	
health/cosmetics	AIDS, condom	the fantasy of chanel				CKone	
press							
FMCG	Fruit & nut case ...Eau Follow the bear	*You can't top a Grolsch*	*Tel Sid* Pure Genius		excellenté Ambassadoré!	Regal Reg: I like em cos my names on em ...its a bit of an animal	
drink	Reassuringly expensive "I bet he drink Carling Black Label" Goicha we're with the Woolwich let your fingers do the walking	*The world's favourite airline*	*Easy like Sunday morning*		spot ill hens/tells on hips You know when you've been Tango'd	Gold Card	
service							
leisure	Walkman, Commodore 64, Asteroids, Pac-Man, Space Invaders	Sega Mega Drive Tetris for PC (USSR)	*The car in front is a Toyota* *Elio Tosh - got a Toshiba*	Gameboy (Nintendo) Diskman	Just Do It (Nike)	Surround Sound	
b&W+auto goods	You can't get better than a Kwik-Fit litter *Elio Tosh - got a Toshiba	Jewson good.	United Colors	Nicole. Papa?	Vorsprung durch Technik		
fashion	501 the original cut	It takes 80 dumb animals		Just do it			

# SOUNDBITES & COPY HOOKS

## 1993 - 2000

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
in Britain...		Dianaranna	American means I CAN	Labour win Gen Election devolution Dolly	op Desert Fox	"so smooth it can sell itself" John Smiths "sells itself"	
pan-USA/Europe		into infinity - and beyond!					
digital terms	one2one Pentium (Intel) Newton pad (Apple) quadra (Apple)	.com floppy > disk drive Windows 95 Internet - World Wide Web Brilliant!	e-commerce Intel/Compaq psion Fat Les, wannabe, Suits you, Sir	Mac OS 8 "helheads & silver surfers" e-commerce DIGI cameras Sensation	its your call i-book Gameboy Colour .com (boo.com) Neurotic Realism Pharmacy	Think different thin air economy giga bytes	1st person games. System X, Bomb. i cube, PS2 Art Noises
art							
TV, film & music	Barlman show me the money moral crusade sleeze	BritPop, tops/pants, Nice! feel good factor Sorted Prozac In Your 10p Sun (circulation war)	Eat My Shorts, D'oh, Show Me The Money BSE (mad cow disease) "new" third way	"They are killed, Kenny!" "education education education" Vagra, spin, Mondeo Man, "New Labour, New Danger"	Groovy, baby! Spin, Spin, More Spin Free Thinkers Welcome.	pukka privileged few	wicked! Hello! Yeah, I'm on my mobile "Dome today, gone tomorrow" we see the same as you
health/ cosmetics							
press			The Independent: It is. Are you?				
FMCG							
drink	The cream of Manchester	You know when you've had sprouts	Eat (cod)tail, sleep (football) Drink Coke		good things come to those who...	You need it because you're weak	Wazap! because we're big
service	It's good to talk	it could be you	chuck out the chinz	perfected day one-2-one	buzz away from mouse to house		1st person games PS 2 System X
leisure	Surround Sound	Playstation		fits in the game Kark! a go go	FUCK it never underestimate the power of Playstation Gameboy blow	Dreamcast DVD gimme the dvd I'll take it	
auto goods. Hardware	4th emergency service	That'll be the Daxwico Does exactly what it says on that tin					
fashion		CKone		✓ Out of sodies			
		Mini CD hello boys power is nothing without control					
		Hello boys I hate them because they look so sorry					

# DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE 1985 - 1992

	1985	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Design Museum, V&A and others	Rogers Foster Stirling @ RA	The Independent Group @ ICA	Design Museum opens Stark @ Design M.	Malcolm Garrett, Spanish Design, Green Design @ Design M.	American Graphics Alia Romeo Designing Yourself @ Design M.	Organic Design, Dutch PIT, Japan Festival @ Design M. *Design For Our Future Selves* @ RCA *Art meets Ads* exhibition in Duesseldorf & NY	
Architecture / Interior Designers	Richard Rogers - Lloyds Bdg Eva Jirichna-Josephs store, Brompton Road Nigel Coates - Cale Bongo	Piers Gough - Docklands Pawson & Silverstein - Wakaba Sushi Restaurant	Oscar Tusquets Armstrong Chipperfield - Issey Miyake Store, Stone St.	Terry Farrell Embankment Pl., Charing Cross Vignelli's (USA) @ RCA Cesar Pelli (USA) Eric Parry	Norman Foster - Stanstead Airport Norman Foster - Sainsbury Wing (National Gallery) Will Alsop	N. Grimshaw's British Pavilion @ EXPO '92, Seville Tadao Ando (Japan)	
Furniture Designers	Flux Peter Leonard / Soho - Gothic chair Ron Arad - One Off, Concrete, Stereo Caelano Pesche - Il Feltri Cassina Oscar Tusquets - Gawfino chair	The London Group, Ron Zoeffig Jasper Morrison - Phy Chair (Cappellini) Andrea Banzi - *Domestic Animals* Matthew Hilton - Antelope Table	SCP P. Wheeler J. Dillian F. Van Den Broecke Foster Associates - Nomos Table	Janelle Carpenter - Donnelly Janice Kirkpatrick - Gay Gordon chair Ron Carter - V&A bench Enzo Mari - beds	Antonio Citterio (Spain) John Makepeace - Steamer chairs	OMK - Aluminium seating at Saville EXPO Ron Arad - Big Easy Tom Dixon - S Chair	
Product Designers	James Dyson - bagless Vacuum Daniel Weil - Bag Radio Michael Peters - Conservative logo	*My First Sony* range Paul Smiths - English Classics range Flo Jo & sports fashion	Tibor Kalman / M & Co. Labs Alessi: including architects Richard Sappa, Aldo Rossi, Vico Magistretti	Daniel Weil / Pentagram - Pelshop Boys *Very* CD box Fitch - Lib. Democrats logo Cassina - Masters Collection	Stark - Flos toothbrush (France) Ingo Maurer - *Ya Ya ho* lighting	Masamori Umeda (Japan) - soap trays	
Blueprint Profile	Zeel Atam London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC)	IKEA in Britain Smart Design (USA)	John Pawson	Olympics in Barcelona Javier Mariscal Glasgow - European City Of Culture	Conran sells Habitat to IKEA Berlin	Pem Koolhaas Nick Grimshaw	
Retrospective	Picasso sketches @ RA	Bloomsbery Group	Italian Post War Architects	Spanish Architecture	Le Corbusier FHK Henrich @ Design M Forrasetti @ V&A	Eileen Grey @ Design M	

Source: Blueprint magazine, Design Yearbook 1985-2000, Hudson, Jennifer

# DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE 1993 - 2000

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	
<b>Design Museum, V&amp;A and others</b>	Streetstyle @ V&A Donald Judd furniture Swedish design+ FIAT @ Design M. 20th Century Art @ RA	Tokyo Design Network @ Design M. Iron Work @ V&A Fashion Architecture Taste (FAT) Pop Art @ RA	Paul Smith: 100% Made in Europe stamp design @ Design M.	100 years of RCA @ RCA Sensation @ RA Erotic design, Cola bottle, Bicycle design @ Design M.	Coke bottle+ Erotic D. @ Design M. Swedish Style @ V&A Finish Design @ Barbican Powerhouse @ Horseshoe Parade Objects Of Our Time @ Crafts C.	Innovation @ Design M F. Poische @ Design M Postcard Art @ RCA Fashion & Surrealism @ V&A JAM @ Barbican	Bernard Muller @ Design M Stealing Beauty @ ICA Designing A Digital Age @ V&A Decadence? @ Craft Council	
<b>Architecture / Interior Designers</b>	Philippe Starck - Roylton Hotel, NY RIBA - N Grimshaw N Grimshaw - Waterloo International Terminal Berlin re-generation z. Hadid - Fire Station (Holland) Boris Sipek (Czechoslovakia)	Rem Koolhaas Gaelano Pesche - Chial Day offices, NY	Rem Koolhaas house (Holland) also: Dillerf Scalfidio, Teruo Kuroszki, Zvi Hecker	Frank Gehry - Bilbao Guggenheim Museum Walsall art gallery	Ben Kelly - Design Council offices Nigel House - The Oyster House (Nigel Coates - Body Zone)	Nike Town, London Richard Rogers - Dome (Nigel Coates - Body Zone)	London Eye Tate Modern @ Battersea Power- station British Library Reading Room	
<b>Furniture Designers</b>	Alberto Lievare - Rothko chair also work by: Terence Woodgate, Mark Bond	Mary Little - Lily IKEA boom Marleen Van Severen - aluminium + acrylic shelves Konstantin Grcic - "stair"	MDF (Germany) Marc Newson - Embryo chair Michael Marriott - 4x4 tables Ingo Maurer - Mozzkito Lamp	IKEA (Morten Kjeldst Allen Ursjoord, Sweden) Matthew Hilton - Miller Daybed IKEA - child's chair Jasper Morrison - Lima Chair	Mo-billy El Ultimo Gripo (Spain) - "Mind The Gap" table	Michael Young Matthew Hilton - Wait Chair	British Library Reading Room	
<b>Product Designers</b>	Marc Newson - Aluminium Lounger Takeshi Ishiguro - lighting MUJI in London	Michael Marriott Droog / Marcel Wanders & Remy Romsters	Philippe Starck - Bubu Infiale Philips Research Centre	JAM - washing drum storage Tom Dixon - Nike trainers K Graic for Authentics - 2 hands basket	Johnathan Ives iMac	Matthew Hilton Ron Arad - Laser Vessels	Ross Lovegrove - Lava Lamp	
<b>Blueprint Profile</b>	FAT work on Chunnel "Design" magazine closes	Rem Koolhaas	Glasgow - City Of Architecture mutant materials Ford KA London Fashion Week starts Bilbao	Wallpaper launched Sexy Objects 40s Fashion @ Imperial War M. 50s Design + Architecture publications 60s Architecture	Tom Dixon @ Habitat	Mark Bond @ Conran Matthew Hilton @ Habitat Subversion in Architecture + Design Glasgow - City Of Architecture FAT buildings in Carnaby St	"Welcome to the Pleasure Dome" Protosynthesis	
<b>Retrospective</b>	Damien Hirst - Mother + Child Divided plans for Sydney 2000 Olympics 1973 1993 "Why the future looks so familiar" Renault Twingo Russian Art @ V&A Frank Lloyd Wright @ V&A	Pacific Rim Architecture Frank Lloyd Wright - early years @ Design M	Charlotte Perriard @ Design M Charles R Macintosh	Vanity Fair magazine - "London Swings Again" V Panton A Castiglioni	Claude Monet @ RA	Modern Britain 1929 - 39 @ Design M		

Source: Blueprint magazine Design Yearbook 1985-2000, Hudson, Jenifer



# FILM 1985 - 1992

	1985	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Academy Award Winners	Out Of Africa, Platoon, The Last Emperor, Rainman	Dances With Wolves	Silence Of The Lambs	Unforgiven	Schindlers List	
Pop Cult	Full Metal Jacket She's Gotta Have It Brazil	Good Fellas Delicatessen Cyrano de Bergerac	Reservoir Dogs Prospero My Own Private Idaho	Malcolm X Waynes World	The Piano Three Colours Philadelphia Blues M. Butterfly	409
entertainment / light entertainment	Top Gun, Wall Street Hannah & Her Sisters Predator, Die Hard, Cocoon Who Framed Roger Rabbit?	Misery The Grifters Ghost Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles Look Who's Talking	Thelma & Louise JFK Frankie & Johnny LA Story Beauty & The Beast	Strictly Ballroom The Player Scent Of A Woman My Cousin Vinny	Groundhog Day Cliffhanger The Nightmare Before Christmas Jurassic Park Mis Doubfire Blues	
British	A Room With A View A Fish Called Wanda	Batman The Fly	Roxanne Father Of The Bride	Howards End Cape Fear Hamlet	Carry On Columbus Bram Stoker's Dracula	
Remakes	Dangerous Liaisons Inner Space Color Of Money					

# FILM 1993 - 2000

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Academy Award Winners	Forrest Gump	The English Patient	Boogie Nights Life Is Beautiful	History Of America X		American Beauty	
Pop Cult	Seven Leaving Las Vegas Casino	Scream Fargo Shine	The People Vs Larry Flint Jerry Maguire Scream	Kurt n' Courtney Boogie Nights	The Blair Witch Project Ma Vie En Rose	Being John Malkovich The Matrix	American Psycho Fight Club
entertainment / light entertainment	Toy Story Twelve Monkeys Dead Man Walking Babe	Mars Attacks As Good As It Gets	LA Confidential, Mrs Brown, Good Will Hunting Austin Powers Spiceworld	The Titanic, The Big Lebowski, The Truman Show Saving Private Ryan Antz	Eyes Wide Shut, Boys Don't Cry, The Talented Mr Ripley, A Bugs Life, Star Wars, Austin Powers, The Spy Who Shagged Me South Park	Mortal Combat James Bond: World Is Not Enough The Sixth Sense, American Pie Toystory II	Memento
British	Naked	Trainspotting	Secrets & Lies	Smoking Barrels	Lock, Stock Shakespeare In Love, Notting Hill	Snatch! East 15 East	Billy Elliot Fantasia 2000
Remakes	Miracle On 34th St.	William Shakespeare's Romeo & Julia The Brady Bunch Les Misérables	101 Dalmations Mission Impossible Sgt. Bilko	The Titanic Godzilla	Psycho The Mummy Star Wars	Blues Bothers 2000 Thomas Crown Affair Hollow Man (after Invisible Man)	Spiderman Charlie's Angels Get Carter

# POP 1985 - 1992

	1985	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
compilations							
albums	Adam & The Ants Lenny Kravitz Let Love Rule	Now! collections The Cure Roxy Music	The Smiths	Cream & Ministry Club Mixes The Cure Greatest The Best Of The Pogues George Michael: Listen Without Prejudice	REM: Out Of Time	The Stones Greatest REM: Automatic For The People	
Teenie-bop		Bros, Kylie Minogue "Summer of Love" raves Depeche Mode	Wet Wet Wet Weather Prophets	Inspiral Carpets Happy Mondays The Levellers Queen FYC	The Farm	Take That Stone Roses Primal Scream	411
Indie	A-Ha Stock Aitkin Waterman The Smiths Red Wedge concerts	Fairground Attraction			The Cure Soul 2 Soul	Simply Red	
British Bands	U2 Boy George	NWA Public Enemy Susanne Vega Grace Jones Goths rave festival Ibiza dance get real	Phil Collins MC Hammer	INXS Nirvana Elton John	REM Seal Lenny Kravitz	Crowded House Mick Hucknall	
British Best Foreign	Run DMC Sade Tracey Chapman		Acid House (idiot dancing) The Soul System (urban Reggae) Indie labels wouldn't give a xxxx	"Skinz" Travellers act up	Madchester Hascienda, Cream, Ministry Of Sound	Madonna's "Sex" book E's R good Tango ad	
sub-cults	Free The World						
Pop soundbites	Free the world live aid						
Turner Prize	Howard Hodgkin	Gilbert & George	Richard Long	no competition	Arish Kapoor	Grenville Davey	

# POP 1993 - 2000

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
compilations	Ibiza Mix	That's Entertainment!	Michael Jackson History	Latin Jazz FM			
albums	Sting Greatest The Best Of The Beautiful South	Beatles Anthology Alanis Morissette: Jagged Little Pill Oasis: (What's The Story) Morning Glory?	Spice Girls: Spice	U2 / George Michael Greatest U2: Pop Radiohead: OK Computer	All Saints The Best Of George Michael		
Teenie-bop	Spice Girls		Britney	Steps	S Club 7		
Indie	Massive Attack	Roni Size	Kular Shaker	Prodigy Fat Boy Slim	Stereophonics		
British Bands	M People	Blur	Oasis	Manics	The Verve Catalonia	Manics	Travis
British Best Foreign	Tupac Shakur Paul Weller Alanis Morissette	George Michael	The Fugees	Puff Daddy Finlay Quaye Beck	Notorious B.I.G. Robbie Williams	Eminem	Tom Jones
sub-cults	UK Soul Acid Jazz	Garage biggest Glastonbury	Drum n' Base	Big Deal Tribal Gathering	Country (live dancing)		
Pop soundbites	Brit Pop	parklife: oil Tops Alright!	wannabe vivaldo zig a zag ah		pants	pukka	
Turner Prize	Antony Gormley	Damien Hirst	Douglas Gordon	Gillian Wearing	Chris O'Leary	Steve McQueen	Wolfgang Tillmans
Unplugged	Paul Weller: Wild Wood Queen: Greatest Hits						
Boyzone							
Supergrass Pearl Jam							
KLF Sting							
Sting Bjork Kd Lang							
Jungle Brit pop							
Sorted							
Rachel Whiteread							

# COMEDY

1988 - 2000

Year	film & US TV	youth-oriented comedy shows	sketch based
1999			
1998	The Chicken Run (Pathé, Dreamworks)	Skinner & Baddiel Unplanned (Avalon) Ali G (talkback)	Trigger Happy TV (Absolutely) jaaam (talkback) The 11 O'Clock Show (talkback)
1997	American Pie (Universal)	The League Of Gentlemen (BBC production)	Big Train (H'Trick)
1996	Austin Powers (Fox) Ally McBeal	The Royle Family (Granada)	Harry Hill (Avalon) -----> First Direct (1999) TV Ofal Goodness Gracious Me Armando Iannucci (talkback) Denis Penis
1995	South Park (Warner Bros) Dumb & Dumber	Game On (>98, H'Trick) Father Ted (>98, H'Trick)	
1994	Friends (Warner Bros)	Don't Forget Your Toothbrush (Ginger) KMKY with I'm Alan Partridge (>97, t'back)	The Smell of Reeves & Mortimer -----> First Direct (1996), Churchill Insurance (1996) The Fast Show (>97, T'back) -----> Holsten Pils (1999) National Dairy Council (Squiggle 'Brilliant' char.) 1997
1993		They Think Its All Over (T'back)	The Day Today (T'back)
1992	Mrs Doubtfire The Wrong Trousers (Aardman)	Fantasy Football League (Av) Men Behaving Badly (ITV, BBC 1995>97) Absolutely Fabulous (>96)	Newman & Baddiel Eurotrash(>, Rapido) Harry Enfield's TV Programme (H'Trick) -----> Creature Comforts (1990) Lurpack (1990) Cadburys (1997)
1991	Wayne's World	Have I Got News For You (Hat Trick) Bottom (>95)	Cinzano (1995) product placement (Coke, KFC et al.) British Rail (2000)
1990	Bevis & Butthead The Larry Sanders Show	Mr Bean (>95)	KYTV (>93)
	The Simpsons (Fox)	Drop The Dead Donkey (>98, Hat Trick)	Doritos (1996)
1989		Blackadder Goes Fourth (BBC)	The Mary Whitehouse Experience Absolutely! (>93) Vic Reeves Big Night Out
	Wallace and Gromit "A Grand Day Out" (Aardman)	Rab C Nesbitt (>99)	Friday Night Live (Ch 4)
1988	Naked Gun Bill & Ted 'Ex' Adv.	Whose Line Is It Anyway? The New Statesman (>94) Comic Strip (83>93)	Red Foo (1995)
		Red Dwarf	Who Dares Wins (Hat Trick) Danepak (1995)
			Spitting Image (>90)

OTT-sticker (78)  
Thomas (78)  
Central

## Sign of the times

<b>1990 &gt;</b>	<b>&lt; 2000</b>
1. <i>then</i> consumer	<i>now</i> selector
2. media adv or below the line	integrated or direct response
3. product is king	customer is king
4. advertisers hold key	client-employed 'brand guardians'
5. measurement = ad spend	measurement = sales
6. ads artwork-driven	ads marketing driven
7. Emotive Selling Proposition	Individual Selling Proposition
8. TV... billboard, press	mixed media... direct response, ambient, internet
9. abstract flyers	glossy postcards
10. consumer finds brands	brands 'own' consumer
11. brand stretching <i>Guinness product range</i>	one-stop shop for all brands <i>Tesco Clubcard,</i>
12. industry recession = contraction	industry mergers = shake-down
13. ad scepticism	ad literate/conditioned
14. 5 week ads - mass impact	3 day ads - speed and production
16. brand names Lacoste, Adidas, French Connectic	brand symbols √, □, □OΔX, FCUK
15. Lifestyle Halifax Bdg Soc: <i>"Easy like Sunday Morning"</i> =	devolved responsibility BT Cellnet: <i>"Its Your Call"</i> =
16. <i>security</i>	<i>autonomy</i>
17. brand is dead [Marlboro Friday in 1993]	'brand, brand, brand' [brand.new in 2000]
18. advertisers research customers	database marketing
19. commercial break ads	programme sponsorship
20. WASP ad assumptions	Hybrid and cosmopolitan assumptions
21. selling product Sony Walkman, Toyota Lexus, Dyson Vacuum	selling brand Nike, Disney, McD onalds, Virgn, Tesco
22. overt eulogical ad, saturation campaigns	covert exclusive,, targeted, one-to-one
23. TV ads = epic, series	TV ads = short, moments of impact
24. agencies > employers	clients > deployers
25. single-media executions	multiple outcomes, multi-media
26. direct marketing = offer-led	integrated = creative interplay
27. ad objective = 1 big idea [media]	ad objective = relevance [b-t-l]
28. KPB*= agency > client > consumer	KPB = consumer > client> agency
29. strategy = convenience	strategy = advertising service
30. fear = recession & buy-outs	fear = speed of change
31. 'top down'- ads interface brand	'bottom-up'- agencies service customer
32. single market strategy	3rd party affiliation;shared interest assoc

• *Knowledge-Power Base*

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(from interviews unless otherwise stated: author = Paul Springer)

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13. author
14. Will Awdry, Creative Director, BBH Unlimited, 23 March 2000
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17. author, after David Brown Copywriter, Craik Jones, 20 March 2000. Also Klein, Niomi No Logo Flamingo, London 2000 pp.12 & 26 - quoting Peters, Tom The Circle of Innovation Knopf, NY 1997 p.337
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21. Naomi Klein No Logo HarperCollins London 2000
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25. author
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**Advertising and the impact of new technology**

**1990 >**

*then*

1. planners
2. ad agency do planning
3. set product agendas
4. regional titles,  
media proprietors localised
5. brand as marketing tool
6. sound-bite staples
7. one hit advertise > buy
8. interruption commercials
9. copy: word play  
*'we're here to ITC...'*
10. Power(book)
11. 'edgy', linear
12. form follows (corporate) business
13. eclectic mix
14. ads; tech demo, separate  
'real life' strap
15. beginnings of 'hot white mail'
16. companies valued on product

**< 2000**

*now*

- marketeers
- brand marketing departments do the 'big idea', & devolve tasks to specialists
- reactive and pro-active [Tango]
- united news medias, & inter/national press mergers; Granada, Carlton, Sky
- product as branding tool for marketing
- viral - big ideas catch; social currency
- fluid media ad > internet> direct response > buy > database > consolidate with targeted dialogue
- Permission [P-] marketing
- copy: non-word particles  
*Pwhor! Tango'ed, 'Saaap! oh-oh!*
- i(book)
- 'curvy', amorphic
- form follows (corporate) fas hion brand
- sample
- integrated technology
- virtual/real blurred
- beginnings of 'media-rich e-mail'
- companies valued on a) strength of ID  
or b) data-base, size of connections



## British popular culture

<b>1990 &gt;</b>	<b>&lt; 2000</b>
17. political agendas	personal agenda
18. ethical agenda	multiple agendas; plural transient values;
19. thinking in terms of groups	individual perspectives; a matrix of tastes
20. monolithic - Capitalism or Socialism	plural, hybrid of choices - The Third Way"
21. bricks [producers]	clicks ['thin air' workers]
22. retail: bricks [in-store shopping]	retail: bricks & clicks [ in-store or on net]
23. National currency	Banking corporation credit cards
24. Slone Rangers/Yuppies	Trustafarians
25. grunge, gen. X clubbers,	e-culture, cypher, mutilation, introspection
26. fashion, pop, clubbing	fine art & metropolitan fashionability
27. art	product
writing, pop music, painters...	& personality, all competing for market share
28. communication value = speed	communication value = after-glow
29. self fulfillment	personal fulfillment
30. linear textual	hyer textual
31. 'me' or 'I'	'us' or autonomous
32. aiming for ideal form	well-being, personal fulfillment

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#### SIGN OF THE TIMES - TECHNOLOGICAL

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  11. author, after under-grad. seminars on cars and computers at BCUC, May 1999.
  12. author, in introduction to exhibition of Central St. Martins Design work for Microsoft, February 1998
  13. author
  14. author
  15. Tom Wass, MD Tequila UK ,26 May 2000
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- #### SIGN OF THE TIMES - BRITISH POPULAR CULTURE
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  19. Andrea Branzi - Domestic Animals, Idea Books Edizioni, Milan [ Thames & Hudson ], 1987; Towards an abnormal normality [pages un-numbered] and US geneticist T Murray, on the Today Programme, Radio 4 12 May 2000 [8:30am]
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  25. author, December 1997
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  28. author, after Kinya Tagawa, MA Industrial design Engineering student at the Royal College of Art, 24 May 2000.
  29. author, 5 June 2000
  30. author, 23 September 2000
  31. a fter The Guardian Weekend leader on Us, 8 January 2000 pp.8-16, and after Richard Thomas - The I Society in The Observer, 4 April 1999 p.5
  32. author, 18 May 2001

## Texts used by advertising practitioners: an annotated bibliography

Table 1: An outline of selected texts on, about or influential to British advertising (up to 2000)

Title/type of book	Author	Year	Title/type of book	Author	Year
<b>How To</b>			<b>Image-led and thematic</b>		
The Young Man's Guide to Advertising	Fisk	1963	Graphic Agitation	McQuiston	1996
Advertising Today	Jefkins	1976	A Smile in the Mind	McAlhone & Stewart	1996
The Art of Advertising	Lois	1977	Advertising Outdoors: watch this space!	Bernstein	1997
The Practice of Advertising	Hart	1978	<b>Critical method</b>		
Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind	Ries & Troutman	1981	Decoding Advertisements	Williamson	1978
Ogilvy on Advertising	Ogilvy	1983	Understains	Myers	1986
All Consumers Are Not Created Equal	Hallbery	1995			
Excellence in Advertising: The IPA Guide	Butterfield (ed.)	1997	<b>Cultural Studies/cultural contexts</b>		
Cutting Edge Advertising	Aitchison	1999	FR Leavis: Culture and Environments	Denys-Thompson	1933
Permission Marketing	Godin	1999	The Active Voice	Douglas	1982
Experiential Marketing	Schmitt	1999	Advertising The American Dream	Marchand	1985
Internet Marketing	Chaffrey	2000	Advertising as Communication	Dyer	1991
The Complete Guide to Digital Graphics	Gordon (ed.)	2001	Promotional Culture	Wernick	1991
			The Consumerist Manifesto	Davidson	1992
<b>Copy</b>			Images Incorporated	Sinclair	1992
The Craft of Copywriting	Crompton	1984	The Discourse of Advertising	Cook	1992
The Art and Craft of Novel Writing	Hall	1989	Advertising Languages (UK & Japan)	Tanaka	1994
Write Great Ads	Klein	1990	The Advertising Handbook	Brierley	1995
Words in Ads	Dyer	1992	Representation and Communication	Jobling	1995
The Language of Advertising	Goddard	1998	Reading Ads Socially	Goldman	1995
			Club Cultures	Thornton	1995
<b>Best Of annuals/texts</b>			Postmodern Marketing	Brown	1995
D&AD annuals Vol. 1 (ongoing)	pub. D&AD	c. 1962	Disruption	Dru	1996
Remember Those Great Volkswagon Ads?	Levenson	1979	Buy This Book	Nava et al (ed.)	1997
Bill Bernbach's Book	Levenson	1987	Production of Cultures/Cultures of Prod.	du Gay (ed.)	1997
Humour/Shock/Sex/Fantasy/Photo. In Ads	Saunders	c. 1995	The Power Of The Poster	Timmer (ed)	1998
Twentieth Century Advertising	Saunders	2001	Brand.new	Pavitt (ed.)	2000
			<b>Ethics of practice under review</b>		
<b>Practitioners testimonies</b>			Packard		1957
Madison Avenue, USA	Mayers	1958	The Hidden Persuaders	Birch	1962
Reality in Advertising	Reeves	1960	The Advertising We Deserve?	Schudson	1989
Confessions of an Advertising Man	Ogilvy	1963	Advertising: The Uneasy Persuasion	Mayhew	1997
How To Become an Advertising Man	Young	1963	The New Public	Lasn	1999
Under The Radar	Kirchenbaum/Bond	1995	Culture Jam: The Uncooling of America	Klein	2000
Hay, Whipple, Squeeze This!	Sullivan	1996	No Logo		
Advertising Advertising	Fletcher	1999			

Source: compiled by the author

This section considers industry-centred texts, and their recent change in focus. The main categories industry-specific texts fell into were 'How to do' texts, texts on the art of copywriting and art direction, practitioners testimonies, 'Best of annuals and digital technology. Most were image-led texts, and most gave exemplary models of what (at the time) the ad industries understood to be the craft of advertising.

### 'How to do'

The most used models for strategising media ad campaigns were David Ogilvy's *Ogilvy On Advertising* (1983)<sup>1</sup>, Al Ries and Jack Trout, *Positioning: The Battle For Your Mind* (US, 1981) and George Lois's *The Art of Advertising* (US, 1977). The techniques they described were the same methods of borrowed association, celebrity endorsement and aspiration that Judith Williamson picked out in *Decoding Advertisements* (1978).

In terms of earlier models, Martin Mayer's *Madison Avenue, USA* (US, 1958) described the shape of the agency system up to 1990. Rosser Reeves' *Reality in Advertising* (US, 1960) gave the clearest account of New York's benchmark 'Unique Selling Proposition' methods, which still forms the basis of press and billboard advertising. In Britain, 'how to do' texts included (amongst others) James Webb Young's *How To Become An Advertising Man* and Nicholas Fisk's *The Young Man's Guide To Advertising* (both 1963). It is immediately apparent that both these texts, like others in the early sixties assumed advertising to be male domain. While gender is rarely raised in post-eighties texts, there is a sense that

<sup>1</sup> And to an extent his earlier text *Confessions of an Advertising man* (1963)

advertising, of all communications industries, is still predominantly run by men<sup>2</sup>. Texts such as those by Young and Fisk are products of their time. Such texts have rapidly dated, and now operate as period benchmarks, reflecting how rapidly communication has moved in four decades.

Copywriting/art direction: 'best of

It is worth noting that pre-seventies texts seem to concentrate on the nature of the copy written message, while post-seventies texts have a preoccupation with art direction. In terms of more recent texts for advertising copywriters, Alister Crompton's The Craft of Copywriting (1984) and Oakley Hall's The Art & Craft of Novel Writing (1989) have become common teaching aids. Both tend to borrow from the Madison Avenue form of copy craft described by Reeves (1960). Crompton's work is characterised by explanations of how adverts are consumed, from the order information is taken in to tips on crafting copy with imagery. Hall's text maps out styles of writing, and gives reference to national characteristics in the use of long and short body copy.

On the whole, publications used by the ad industries tend to be model reference points for would-be advertisers or visual stimulants. Essentially there appear to be two categories of text. On one hand there are 'The Best Of' picture compendiums such as Lürzer's Archive, thematic hardbacks bringing together selections of good advertising. D&AD annuals are the most popular exemplar of contemporary media advertising. Beryl McAlhone and David Stuart's graphic book A Smile In The Mind (1996) is often cited by advertisers as being of particular use because it demonstrates 'advertising thinking'<sup>3</sup>: a range of exemplar ads use different forms of visual and word play humour to make the ad-customer dialogue light-hearted. Advertisers tended to the book to locate tones and styles of humour. Paradigmatic ads are celebrated in terms of their ability to establish the product as a 'given' or to insert it into useful contexts (natural or supernatural). Characteristics such as wit, memorability, impact and puns are picked out in McAlhone & Stuart's text.

In terms of assessing excellence, Bill Bernbach was most frequently cited as the principle authority of modern advertising. A retrospective of his campaign featured in Bill Bernbach's Book (1987), while his agency Doyle Dane Bernbach's work for Volkswagen in the 1960s is claimed as a benchmark of excellence in Remember Those Great Volkswagen Ads? (US, 1979). Both were written by former DDB employee Bob Levenson. In fact all the texts in this category appear to be authored by practitioners who spoke of their practice through case-studies and experiences. Most of these texts of this ilk tended to be image-led, in that text related to the images shown. Such texts tend to reflect little of the background context of campaigns or on the evolving realpolitik of the advertising industry. Text produced on advertising for practitioners during the 1990s did little to re-address this. Most texts produced on advertising during the 1990s were image-led collections. Dave Saunders Best Of... series on advertising were symptomatic of publications on advertising during the 1990s. Saunders presented ads as exemplary models. His series 'best ads' series spanned a number of themes including humour, shock and sex in advertising<sup>4</sup>. By putting contextual captions to full-page images Saunders highlighted the craft of image-text juxtaposition. In such texts the content in terms of its brand and target market is of secondary concern to its method of communication.

While the changing context in which advertising operated was overlooked, the ad industry was kept up-to-date on the day to day politics and current issues through a range of industry-based journals. Haymarket publications Campaign and Marketing Week have the widest circulation in the industry<sup>5</sup>. With Advertising Works and Admap the journals convey an industry-centred perspective on prominent issues effecting advertising practice, and profile significant new developments. Profiles were mostly geared to potential markets rather than industrial dilemmas (cf. Table 2, Chapter 2).

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<sup>2</sup> This was only slightly redressed in the 1990s with the rise to prominence of agency heads MT Rainey and Jennifer Laing, and award-winning creatives such as Alex Taylor at Saatchi & Saatchi or Tiger Savage at M&C Saatchi (as of 2002)

<sup>3</sup> Of the advertisers interviewed for this study, Jason Cascarino of Banks Hoggins O'Shea, (May 1999), David Harris of M&C Saatchi (March 2000) and Tim Mellors of Grey Advertising (April 2000) all made the same point about A Smile In The Mind.

<sup>4</sup> Saunders, D Best Ads: Sex in Advertising, Best Ads: Shock in Advertising, Best Ads: Humour in Advertising and The World's Best Advertising Photography, all by Batsford, London between 1994-96.

<sup>5</sup> According to Haymarket Management Pub. Sales Department (1 October 2000), weekly sales of Campaign are approximately 12,000, of which there are 8,000 subscribers. An updated list of international advertising journals can be found at the International Marketing Research website (September 2001) [www.dr.ad.com/publist.htm](http://www.dr.ad.com/publist.htm)

### Practitioner's testimonies

From the mid-1990s Adweek, Campaign's American equivalent, co-produced a series of texts (with publishers J Wiley) that addressed key strategies in modern global advertising. John Bond and Richard Kirshenbaum's text Under The Radar (1998), Luke Sullivan's Hey, Whipple, Squeeze This! (1996) and Garth Hallberg's All Consumers Are not Created Equal (1995) were all written by advertising practitioners, and map out tactics employed up to and including the 1990s to override consumer's increased resistance to media advertising. These partially filled the void in terms training material for would-be advertisers. Like Ogilvy, and Reeves before them, the texts put forward their own perspectives drawn from practice. However, all 3 were also rooted in the American ad industry, and do not take the specificities of the UK industry into account.

One text written from an industrial UK perspective was Winston Fletcher's<sup>6</sup> Advertising Advertising (1999). Fletcher considered the significance of global advertising from a commercial perspective, and illustrated how, in the West, consumers had a deeper understanding of established brands and markets. He concluded that in Britain campaigns could form broader relationships through tone (with humour) or environment (with lifestyle advertising)<sup>7</sup>. However, Fletcher's disparate range of partially connected (enterprise-led) examples<sup>8</sup> rendered his account marginal. Jim Aitchison's Cutting Edge Advertising (1999) contained a more updated collection of case-studies from present ad industry figures which, collectively were intended to demonstrate 'how to create the world's best print'. The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising also produced a 'best of' series. The text edited by advertiser Leslie Butterfield, Excellence in Advertising: The IPA guide to best practice (1997), was the best selling advertising text of the nineties in Britain, and there are many agencies where Butterfield's text is a standard work. Butterfield's descriptions of 'good advertising' follow in the mould of David Ogilvy's seminal 'On Advertising', which gave examples of good practice (Ogilvy's was one of the first texts outside the USA to recognise the significance of Doyle Dane Bernbach's VW ads in its change of consumer address).

Creatives in agencies have tended to reach for image-led publications rather than read critical analyses of their discipline or culture. Advertising practitioners tended to be sceptical of academics de-mystifying and post-rationalising their work. Yet advertising industry awards bodies such as Design & Art Direction (D&AD) called on writers such as Jeremy Myerson (former editor of Haymarket title Design Week) to rationalise jury selections, to quantify and legitimise advertising as a commercial craft.

### Digital

Few recent texts have considered the impact of digital technology and Graphic User Interfaces (GUI) on British advertising, although several consider advertising in respect of the internet. John Chaffey's Internet Marketing (2000) is well respected by advertisers. It touches on permission marketing (vouchers and other forms of pay-back for receiving ads) but does not consider the implications of disruptive advertising on internet users. There are comparatively more titles that deal with digital technology and graphics<sup>9</sup>. Journals such as Creative Review have however produced numerous articles that charter GUI as a developing commercial tool while Design Week have profiled shifts and mergers between communications consortiums. Campaign magazine has chronicled the developments in digital advertising spanning the 1990s while their web site 'Campaignlive' and The Guardian newspaper's 'Guardian unlimited media lounge' have become recognised during the decade for their profiles of benchmark digital advertising innovation. Such material is mostly addressed to the ad industries, although it has also tended to be used as the circumstantial evidence of sociologists in making sense of advertising.

Since 2000 there have been a growing number of 'cross-over' texts, as agency planners developed a tendency to academicise their art and drew on sociological studies of consumption. Texts on internet (p-advertising), experiential and relationship marketing were the areas most addressed by studies of consumption.

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<sup>6</sup> Fletcher was the chairman of a communications agency, Bozell UK Group at the time of publication.

<sup>7</sup> Fletcher, W Advertising Advertising, Profile books, London 1999 pp.135-138

<sup>8</sup> Fletcher develops a number of brand-oriented issues, including the means by which advertising can be said to 'add value' (Ibid, pp.179-183) and the significance of royal patronage on brands (p.49). The points are not necessarily inter-connected and, broadly, the study becomes series of perspectives from a senior in the profession by the end.

<sup>9</sup> notably Bob Crooks (ed.) The Complete Guide to Digital Graphics (2002), which contains a model of contemporary advertising practice in the digital era, Springer, P Advertising, Corporate Identity & Branding, pp.84-99

## The Impact of digitisation on the modern Advertising workscape

Digital communication has become more apparent in the appearance of modern work environments. It has been spun as a means by which total branding has been able to be deployed throughout the workscape. As internet and e-mail systems have facilitated home working, the office has shifted to become a 'real' manifestation of company ethos, where meetings and work interfaces are played out against a branded space.

American ad agency Chiat Day's offices in Lower Manhattan<sup>1</sup> made a virtue of having its creative employees on-line by re-defining their office as a theatrical 'office of the future'<sup>2</sup>. The agency specialised in media advertising - their clients included Apple Mac, whom they used to equip their space. The designer Gaetano Pesche dispensed with personal territories while 3 offices (with adaptable studded fabric walls, containing a simple desk and up-to-date technology) were only bookable for client presentations. The plan was that workers would hang out on beanbags in corridors or in a designated desktop zone, plugging into the rail of plug and phone points ringing round the entire floor. In practice much of the dialogue took place at the large bar, while much of the brainstorming and concept development took place in employees homes.

Disrupting and re-energizing conventional office working methods became a recurring theme amongst office planners and fashion forecasters in the mid-nineties, as the 'look' of the hi-tech office changed with the integration of new digital equipment. In contemporary office planning, the potential capabilities and notional liberating factors (representing management) were considered alongside social interaction (of employees) in offices, as the Domus Academia/Future Trends Lab outlined in 1998;

**Table 18: '7 key words to avoid office extinction'**

1. *Amenity* - pleasure in all senses - smell, ambience
2. *erotic purpose* - relations... warm environment, avoid straight lines (like blinds)
3. *play* - set up possibility of play, imagination, energy, rewards & incentives
4. *meeting* - social reflection, natural - less formal
5. *status* - where one's position /role is defined
6. *theatricality* - props, role play, gestural, not hiding
7. *territoriality* - possession - animal behaviour; physical barriers, civilisation

Future Trends Lab/Domus, Milan 1998 The categories were presented in a presentation at the 1998 Milan Furniture Fair

What the predictions addressed were the social implications of technology-led work. The landscape had been re-worked to stimulate workers senses, tapping into 'needs' of play, territory and role distinctions. A sense of belonging and comfort were prioritised. It seems the polar opposite of what in fact occurred. Most ad agency employees kept their work force operating at full capacity for fear of not matching the production rates of their digital equipment's capabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Designed and installed by Gaetano Pesche in 1991, the office covered one floor of a high-rise block overlooking Battery Park. Chiat Day moved out of the offices when the 'experiment' had run its course in October 1998: The firm of solicitors that bought the space gutted and restored the original partitioned scheme.

<sup>2</sup> Facilities director Missy Wilson during a site visit, with former Art Director Owen Lee; (TBWA) on 25 February 1994. The offices were at 180 Maiden Lane NY 10038. They are now in New York's main advertising district, at (488) Madison Avenue.



Making the office Look driven by digital technology



Chiat Day advertising agency offices, 1992-1999, designed by Gaetano Pesche

Each member of Chiat Day's creative department was given a laptop to produce work digitally. Therefore the nature of their work did not require staff to be at an office desk all day. Flexi-time and flexible offices were introduced (they could be booked in advance), so the office became 'about' the nature of work, mostly used for presentations to impress clients. Most of the agency's employees worked from home. The office became a place to check in and show 'face time'. Few employees were able to maintain a nine-to-five work cycle. With a 'virtual office' (as it became known) staff felt obliged to put in far more than their paid time, because there was less of a physical divide between work and home. On entering the office, a new staff member (usually employed on a project basis) would obtain an agency laptop from the 'hot lips' (above right), which was the floor's control centre. The only designated staff space was the lockers (below). Corridors featured video boxes, representing the 'bricks' of their trade (left). A 'think tank' office (centre) was installed for brainstorming and client presentations. The door is shaped like an Absolut Vodka bottle, in honour of one of their longest clients. Soft materials and lively colours made it seem a fun place to hang out (right). In practice most people met in the agency's bar, and did the 'real' work at home.



The problems many of the employees found with Chiat Day's offices from 1992 had to do with re-orienting themselves from conventional working mind-sets. They felt the need to show 'face time', and found it hard to differentiate between working and leisure time when the office stayed open for 24 hours, 7 days a week. The danger in having a working pattern led by computer technology was that they didn't acknowledge the need for a consistent working pattern, which made structuring group meetings difficult. Furthermore, the technology don't recognise the boundaries of time<sup>3</sup>. Thus workers felt obliged to work beyond their contracted hours.

Yet, as HHCL found when they introduced a similar hot-desking scheme 'ROMPing'<sup>4</sup>, alternative officescapes made workers acutely aware of company culture. It also kept employees in a state of flux, continually needing to justify their position in the company. Such schemes were passed off as being less about stimulating creativity and more about self-advertisement - turning the office into a theatrical fashion plate (more *about* the nature of work than actually conducive to producing it). They were appropriate creative solutions to emanate from an industry that had increasingly come to rely on contemporary technology, contemporary modes of working and employment patterns. Where adverts are more speedily produced than in previous decades more workers tend to be taken on either short contract placements or working on a project basis. The sense of temporiness demands a constant level of high performance (evident in a portfolio working culture: cf. Chapters 2 and 3a). It has helped shape an employment culture in advertising where established creative teams who developed understandings of the mechanisms of account business were promoted. In their wake junior, middleweight and senior teams operated as a floating work force, rotating around an agency circuit and moving up the ranks via teams of head-hunters. They become 'serially committed' to projects in the company culture, then move on to another project and working environment. Sean Brierley noted that advertising appeared to be returning to a pre-mass-media nineteenth century role in taking on all promotional activity<sup>5</sup>. In a sense it was akin to nineteenth century cottage industries in its farming out of work to flexible employees who could work at home (or anywhere else) via lap-top computers and mobile phones. Such means of operation best served many of the creative advertisers who made their professional mark during the 1980s and became part of the agency identity in the eyes of clients. The fast turn over also serves as a siphoning process for the vast number of graduate advertisers seeking a way into the profession<sup>6</sup>.

As one of the first industries to become technologically reliant the advertising in Britain and the US have been shaped by many of the scenarios forecast for post-industrial, digital age of work<sup>7</sup>. Advertising work became multitasking in that creative teams spent more time negotiating with clients and facilitating the feasibility of ideas rather than inventing with creative solutions. This made the nature of working non-linear, in that advertisers worked simultaneously on several accounts and were always on call, working to project deadlines rather than their own time. In many respects the contemporary nature of

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<sup>3</sup> A point made about computer-led home working culture by Steve Balmer, the President of Microsoft Corporation interviewed by James Noughtie on the Today Programme, Radio 4 25 May 1999.

<sup>4</sup> 'Radical Office Moving Programme'. The term and acronym coined by HHCL+P planners to keep the workplace unsettled, but to remind employees that their work needs to be fun, hence the word 'romp'.

<sup>5</sup> Brierley, S The Advertising Handbook p. 244

<sup>6</sup> According to Dave Morris, advertising course co-ordinator at BCUC and Tim Mellors, Director at Grey Advertising, some 2000 graduates annually from creative courses seek employment in advertising.

<sup>7</sup> Leadbeater, C Living On Thin Air pp. 14-18



advertising is in tune with that anticipated by Martin Raymond, editor of Viewpoint<sup>8</sup>. He foresaw a return to polychronic modes of working (he called it p-culture), which were non-linear and driven by impulsive, emotional and flexible ways of managing tasks. Given the UK's reputation for spending more hours at work than the rest of Europe<sup>9</sup> and the ad industries 'hard work, hard play' culture, blurring the distinction between work and leisure inevitably gets more work time from employees. This makes employees continually re-evaluate their worth to the company, as the decision of 'on-off work time' is devolved to employees who may well be on short or temporary contracts. The sense of control still resides with the agency.

Given that advertising produces ideas to sell, it appears that the agency hierarchy turned to buzz phrases to reinvent office working environments and the nature of work. Like Chiat Day they effectively re-cast their workspace as a commercial product to sell themselves. The sound bites Raymond used (telecommuting, 'flexexecutive', fulcrum time) were not alien to agencies such as HHHCL or St Lukes. St Lukes is owned entirely by its staff, whose social time often revolves around work colleagues and company organised events. The notion that knowledge has become a form of individual power seems ill-founded within the agency structure, as the obsolescence of creative working lives has not risen in the past decade<sup>10</sup>. Raymond argues that the way technology has evolved to be used contrasts with the notion of simplifying our lives. The tendency has been to compress time. He cites the New York fad of 'double-deal' lunches where a deal is struck during starters then table and client hopping allows one to move on to the next client. While this is extreme, the demand to make bigger and better work from diminishing labour and work time has inevitably had an effect on more down to earth ads where amateurish-looking camera work has been treated as a virtue. The journal Demos in 1995<sup>11</sup> underlined the implications of technologically led work, where flexibility and autonomy were significant factors. Yet Gary Cross, a cultural historian, reasoned that the late-twentieth century saw more goods and work produced but less leisure time. This, he explained, was because post-war economists and governments used increases in production output as a cultural barometer, a '...progressive alternative to the 'stagnation' of reduced work-days and the demoralisation of the idle'<sup>12</sup>. In many respects this validates the pursuit of increased profit margins and output as an end in its own right. The same Capitalist industrial order that made free time possible also constructed a consumerism culture based on 'material accumulation and emulation'. Because production has throughout the last 2 centuries financed economies, the notion of mass-leisure made political right and left equally anxious<sup>13</sup>.

As I outlined in Chapter 2, digital technology also effected the nature of ad agency work in that established media consultancies bought out smaller direct marketing firms and added them to their facilities<sup>14</sup>. Technology was therefore significant in reshaping the landscape of the advertising agency

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<sup>8</sup> Raymond, M 'The Time Machine' in Viewpoint No. 7 pub. by David R Shah, Amsterdam January - June 2000 pp.81-83

<sup>9</sup> According to The (British) Government's Statistical Service publication Social Trends, in 1987 British male employees spent more hours per week at work than men in the rest of the European Community (Vol. 20: 1990 p.67). In 1992 this amounted to 43 hours per week (Vol. 25: 1995 p.63) which rose to 45.7 hours by 1998 (Vol. 30: 2000 p.65).

<sup>10</sup> Jeremy Myerson, writer, interviewed at the Royal College of Art, 30 March 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Mulgan, G et al (ed.) Demos Issue 5, The time squeeze Demos, London 1995

<sup>12</sup> Cross, G The all-consuming work ethic in Demos, Ibid., p. 21

<sup>13</sup> Leadbeater C Living on Thin Air p.129-130, also noted mechanisms of economic measurement are rooted to established systems and are not equipped to gauge the worth of thin air economics. Yet the global advertising industry operates on such an economy, where worth can be gauged by work volume, through put, and renown - market confidence. With flexible measures an agency's worth can quickly fluctuate, hence the need for short term and flexible employment terms.

<sup>14</sup> Among the company mergers and buy-outs in Britain during the nineties, TBWA bought GGT and Simons Palmer Denton in 1998, while Havas acquired media agency RSCG Conran, direct marketers EHS (inventors of the Tesco Clubcard) and backed integrated

set-up. This was advantageous for a number of reasons, as Design Week editor Lynda Ralph-Knight commented,

With 'brand experience' still being something most communications groups still only talk about, regardless of whether their roots are in design or advertising, it makes sense to bring events specialists on board. Consumers have come to expect brands to 'live' and the escalation of sponsorship by brand-owners creates opportunities<sup>15</sup>

In other words the communications industries themselves sought specialists to meet the growing expectations from brands. Therefore in the 1990s, advertising work (commercial production) itself became repositioned as an commercial commodity in its own right. Like the products/services they advertised, ad agency's actions and work culture could were being recast as commercial commodities. The nature of advertising work therefore itself became commercialised. Chiat Day's offices (it could be argued) were a way of advertising their services and unique working methods. Many agencies advertised the way they worked was a form of USP (cf. the creative process's of HHCL and St Lukes, Appendix 1). Shaun McIlrath's articles could also be interpreted as a means of pitching confidence in his agency *Impact FCA!*'s future worth. 'A New Creative Manifesto' was published in a trade journal (Ad Map) where it would be seen by prospective clients. This type of brand-stretching extends to the agencies themselves, who in effect turned in on themselves to become their own clients, re-defining their activities before the next period of de-stabilisation kicks in.

It could easily be argued that Tesco and Daewoo sought to brand the experience of consumption more closely by heightening the experience of consumption while Philips and *Impact FCA!* reinforced perceptions of brand depth through research and development. All 4 were dealing in the business of establishing confidence in their name. This doubled as an advertising tool to reassure consumers and stock markets. In an age where financial value has enabled products and services to compete of an equal footing, all forms of professional communication ultimately operate as a means of social influence.

It is worth noting that in younger communications agencies (those founded from the late-eighties) creative process became more layered (compare Creative Process diagrams in Appendix 1). St Lukes, HHCL and The Media Foundry all have 'tissue meetings' that blend concept development with a stylised in-house manner of workings, where at HHCL they tend to play up to their billing as 'radical professionals'. Such agencies were founded on the values of their day, which anticipated service competition that judged companies on more than their output. Older firms such as FCB, BMP and Grey Advertising have a more structured and linear creative process on paper, which they present as tried and trusted technique.

The net effect is that the type of service advertisers offer has opened out to encompass many of the issues encountered by product designers, who have become as involved in selling the process as much as their end product. There is a sense that what is asked of the creative industries is a 'cross-over', where all aspects of operation are vested in the activity of selling (cf. Chapter 3c).

Further, given the blank canvas of opportunity web-sites provided, the requirements of designers broadened. As job specs for graduates in trade journals like Design Week demonstrated,

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ad firm AIS. Publicis took over Saatchi & Saatchi. Ogilvy & Mather and Bartle Bogle Hegarty expanded to accommodate a wider range of facility. All were measures to remain economically buoyant.

<sup>15</sup> Relph-Knight, L, comment leader Watch this space for the takeovers frenzy, in Design Week 24 March 2000, DesignWeek/Morag Arman-Addey, p. 4. The comments were regarding the global communications Interpublic Group (who own design and advertising agencies), when they bought the (New York-based) commercial events specialists Caribiner International

computer skills were more important to companies than the discipline-specific training graduates received.

I was struck during my visits to London ad agencies by how many ex-students I recognised from non-two-dimensional courses were working either as on-line facilitators, computer support or actual web-site design and development. They were from degrees as broad as fine craft furniture design, restoration, textiles and ceramics. What they had in common was that they all received taught modules on CAD CAM and Apple Mac during their degree. Where the employers (agencies) had at least three generations of profession-specific expertise to draw on, the speed of turn-over that is now expected (a decade-and-a-half after computers became common-place creative equipment) has created a demand for young and quick on-line creatives. As a consequence design skills represented in web-site design tend to reflect the varied training of young designers. The background brought to bear on via web design to advertising has brought with it a wider outlook that is the inevitable consequence of a converging design ethos<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup>However, Mac literate graduates tended to be on the bottom rung of the agency hierarchy, answerable to the often non-computer literate seniors. In terms of accountability therefore they were little more than responsible for on-screen styling, often pitched as computer operators; behind 'the suits' and creatives were the 'mac monkeys'. Yet the present organisation is often usurped when such operators break away to form their own floating on-line services, working for a broader range of creative industries from industrial design to publishing, as more industries look to translate their identities for internet consumption. From separate interviews (notably Ron Fielding at Tequila, May 1999) and conversations (Andy Pilkington at Triangle Communications, April 2000 and Ed Shore at Tequila, March 2000). It tends to be a common derogatory term in integrated ad agencies.

# The Creative Process Diagrams

Samples from a survey of 'campaign processes'  
in contemporary media advertising, direct advertising and communications agencies

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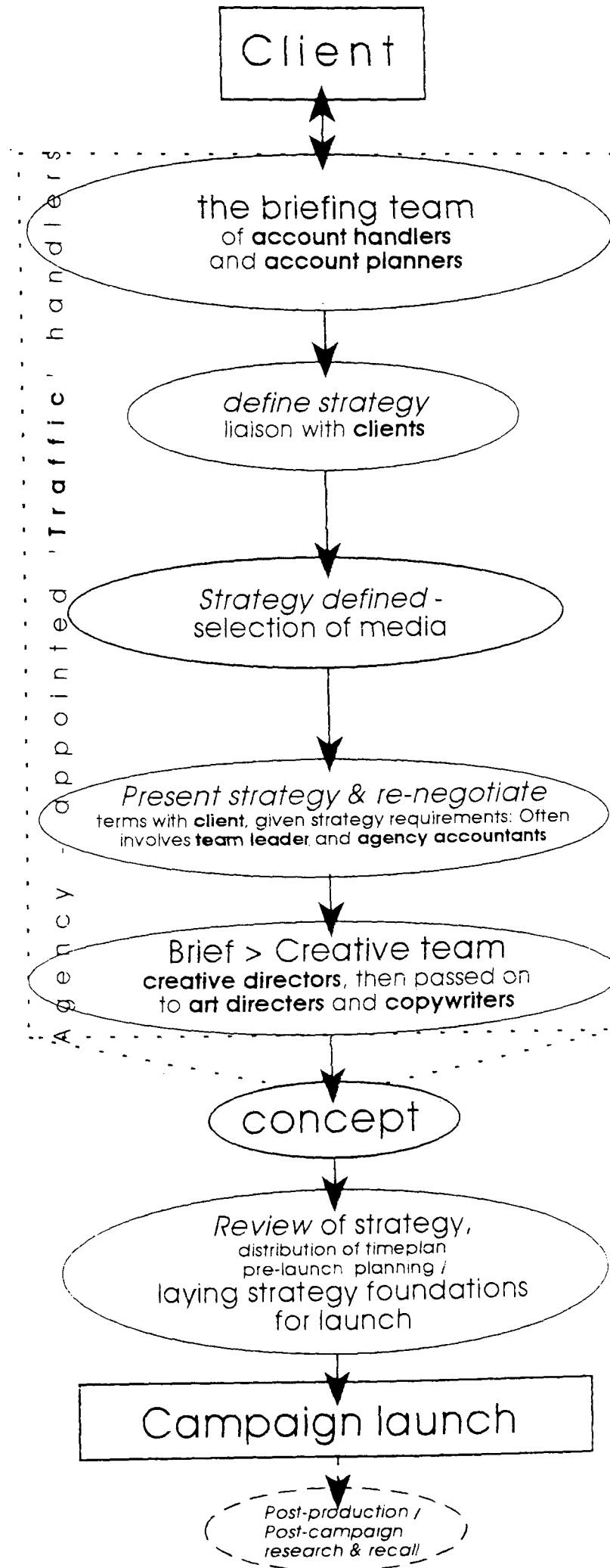
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# CAMPAIGN PROCESS

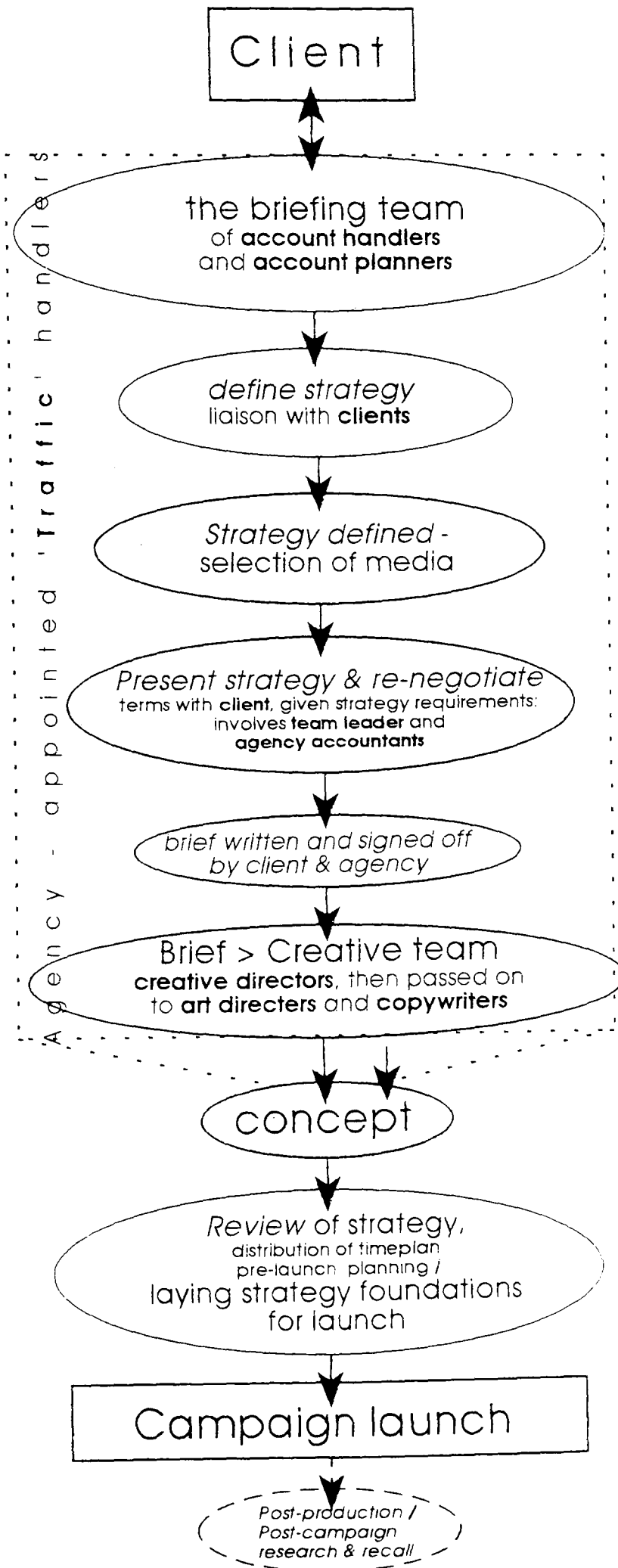
of Hoggins O'Shea FCB Media Ad Agency, 17.5.99  
Paul Springer / Jason Cascarino - creative director



problem defining > identification > unification > brain storming > plan of action

# CAMPAIGN PROCESS

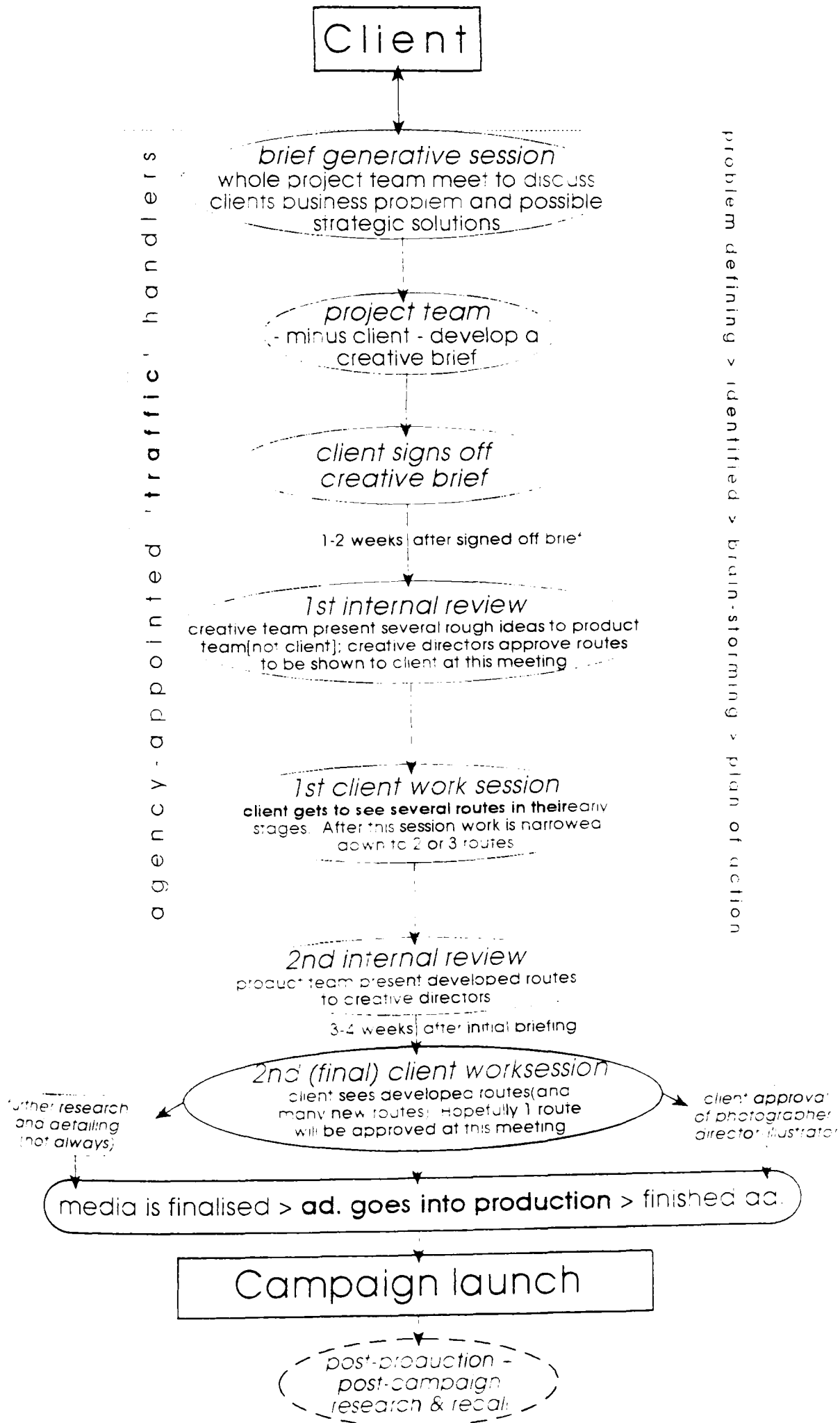
of D'Arcy Masius Benton & Bowles Media Ad Agency, 10.2.00  
Paul Springer / Steve Whiteley - copywriter



# CAMPAIGN PROCESS

at St. Lukes, new Media Ad Agency, 17.2.00  
Paul Springer / Andy Lockley - art director

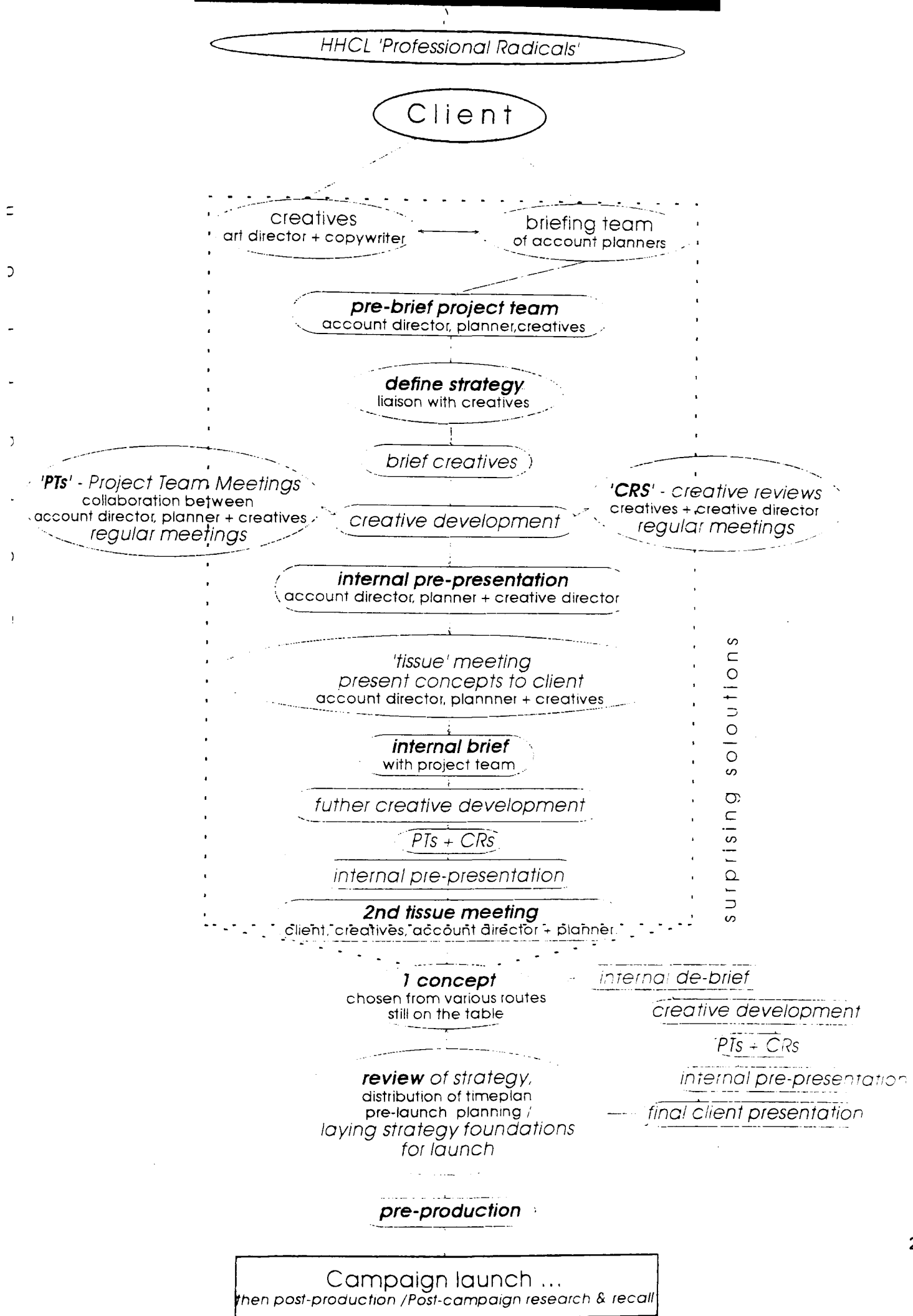
**Project teams' =**  
 an account handler (or account director)  
 an account planner  
 creative team - copywriter/art director (or a design duo)  
 client (usually a marketing director or brand manager)





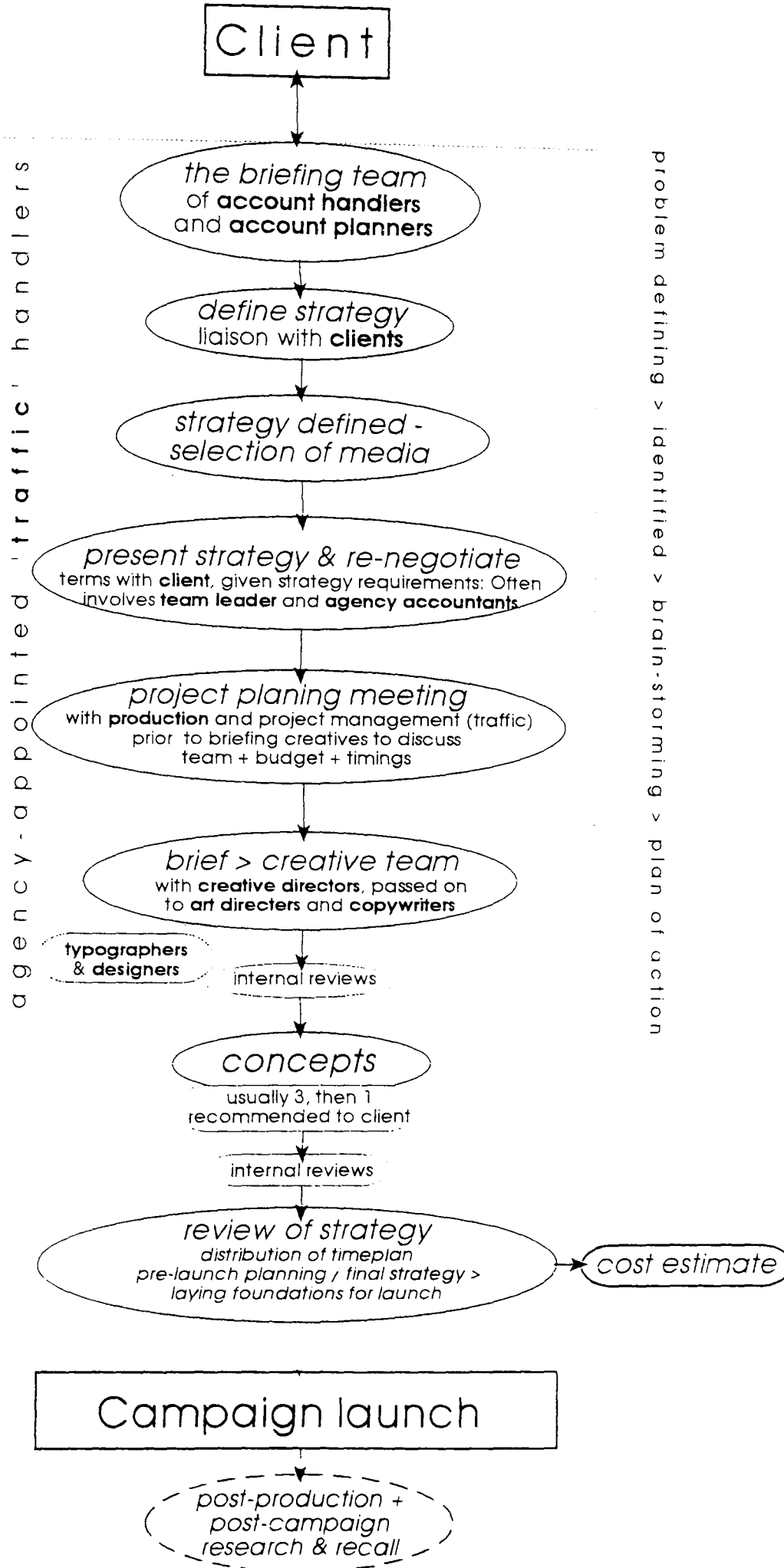
# CREATIVE PROCESS

of **HHCL + Partners** - radical media group, 10.2.00  
 Paul Springer / Catriona Campbell - copywriter



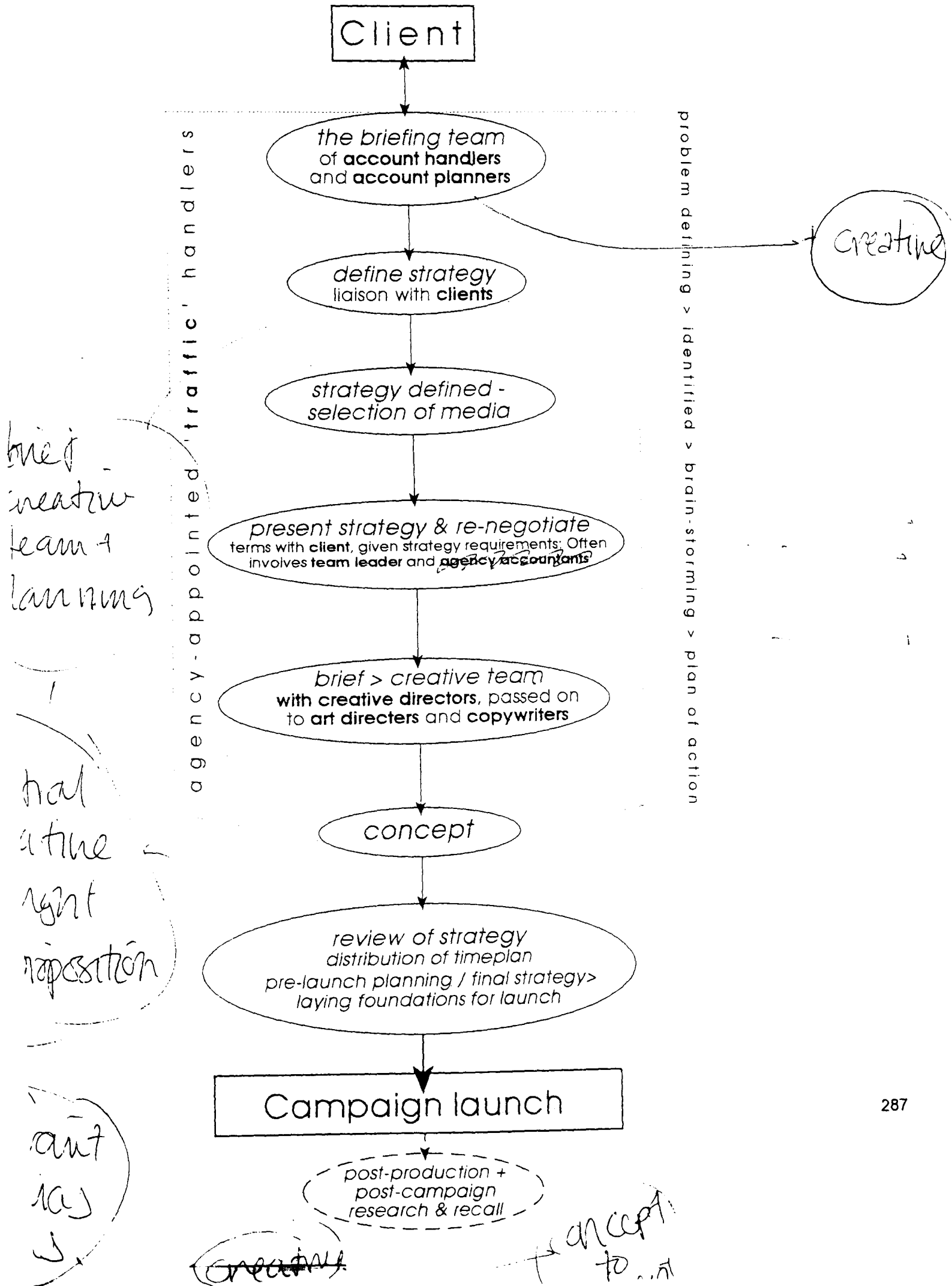
# CAMPAIGN PROCESS

at BBH Unlimited, integrated Ad Agency, 18.2.00  
Paul Springer / Lisa Onion - account handler



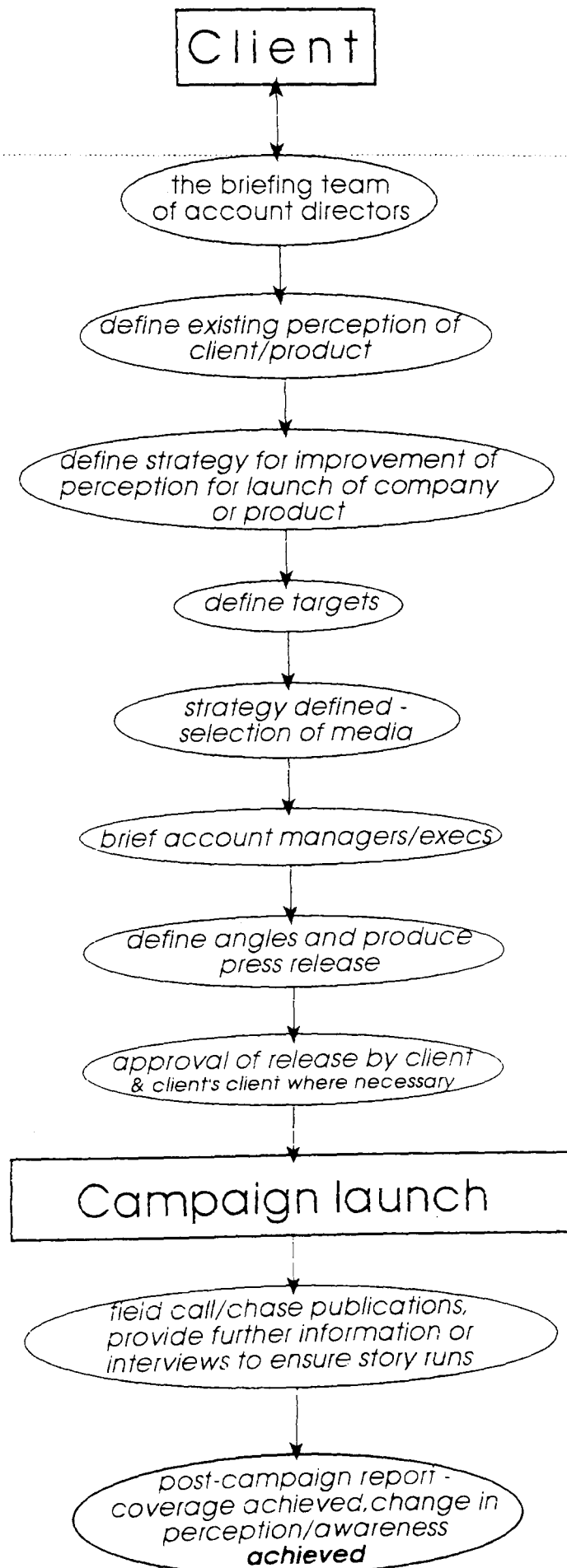
# CAMPAIGN PROCESS

at Banks Hoggins O'Shea FCB A/S (Director)  
PAUL SPRINGER / STEVE STRUTTON, CREATIVE EXEC



# CAMPAIGN PROCESS

of The Media Foundary communication consultants, 11.2.00  
Paul Springer / Veronique Attas+Amanda Harrison - director of media



## Specific terminology

(summary of terms, extracted from Springer, P. Advertising, Branding and Corporate Identity, in Gordon, B (ed.) The Complete Guide To Digital Graphic Design Thames & Hudson, London 2001)

### types of campaign

Unique Selling Propositions (USP) – a distinct characteristic singled out as the main selling point

Emotive Selling Propositions (ESP) – associating the product with a presumed lifestyle or period

Individual Selling Propositions (ISP) – used in direct advertising; personal customer profiles, defined through data analysis.

Borrowed interest – drawing on the rub-off association with existing campaigns or personalities

Burst campaign – promotion to launch a new product or service

product truth – the most recognisable function of product/service when in use

tone-of voice – the characterising sound or attitude in which a campaign is pitched

print copy, headline/body text/end- (or strap-) line,

marque – a name commonly given to describe a brand icon

nudge campaign – moving the understanding of a product slightly further

knocking campaign – a strategy that sets out to question the calibre of its market rivals

Third Party associations – where brands of equal standing in different markets come together for a joint campaign or promotion

ambient –unconventional promotion using landscape as its media; the placement of a brand in a location makes the ad connection

direct – point of sale – supermarket checkout or sales counter, recognised to be the main moment of impulse buying

### advertising terms

brand stretching – diversifying from the market within which a brand is normally recognised.

norm transcending – a twist on familiar ad formulas, playing with the viewer's preconceptions

disruptive narrative – where a typical (and anticipated) rhythm is broken to draw attention

brand recognition – a promotion that aims to reinforce the significance and profile of a brand

advertorial – a magazine editorial where the objective of the content is to promote a product or service

### Project Team

#### *'the Creatives'*

The 'creative' department is made up of **Art Directors** who construct the artwork - and **Copywriters** - who determine the use and wording of copy. They tend to work as a team, an approach that emerged from New York's Madison Avenue in the 1960s, and are answerable to **Creative Directors** who control the overall direction of campaigns with financial and planning directors. All three creative jobs require graphic design training, and it is with the creative department - usually called the '*Creatives*' - that graphic designers, typographers and brand design specialists most closely work.

#### *'facilitators'*

The media campaign is usually connected to, and co-ordinated with other areas of brand-building such as price promotions and more targeted direct advertising. This is usually negotiated with client's own **marketing departments** and the project management teams, which consists of a **Creative Director** and **Planners**, who translate the clients needs into the Creatives' brief, and **Account Handlers**, who control the finances of a campaign. These organisers (often called '*suits*') control the management of the project and liase more often with the client team. They employ specialist creatives (for instance typographers, illustrators, animators, computer-graphic layout

specialists and production specialists) on a project basis. Project time-planners, called '*Traffic*'; ensure deadlines are met within the agency and with production. *Media space buyers* negotiate with billboard site owners, press and other media owners to organise the placements of ads. In some cases specific ad sites require designers to tailor their artwork at short notice in liaison with media *space planners*.

### Media advertising

*Billboards* are usually produced for 48 or 96 sheet sites or single-sheet square format. On a smaller scale but in larger runs, 6 and single-sheet poster campaigns are used to promote events rather than products. In both cases graphic designers liaise with advertising directors to make imagery and layout plans fit the format. *Press ads* - double and single page spreads at one end of the market, column-width ads at the cheaper end – most require graphic judgement from an early stage. Factors such as typesetting, coloration, and organisation of space are determined before photo shoots and other production material are commissioned. Unlike brochure design, designers have less choice over paper or format, and the brief stresses corporate qualities that need to be clear in the artwork.

*Broadcast commercials* also require early graphic input. Illustrators are hired to sketch out storyboards from art directors notes, which help the creative team communicate precisely what they require from film directors. Because of the expense in hiring film crews, on-location storyboards are constantly checked to ensure accurate footage is recorded, that the timing of sequences are met and that recorded material fits precisely with the requirements of post-production teams.

### Direct Advertising

The most common form is *Direct Mail*, using postal services to reach selected potential/ existing customers. Most DM specialists are graphic designers, because the work involves graphically presenting special offers, service schemes, brand magazines and service information through the design of mail shots - flyers, brochures and packaging. The formats and appearance of DM work is usually the remit of graphic designers, in negotiation with the client's marketing team. For bigger advertising pitches using DM, one-off 'interactive' *Self-Liquidating Promotions (SLPs)* tend to be commissioned. These are specially designed, limited edition branded goods that connect to publicised special offers, and are usually developed from a media campaign. *Point-of-sale* promotion requires digitally skilled graphic designers to connect all areas of brand advertising and promotion work. Usually in shops and supermarkets, point-of-sale formats include free-standing boards, dump bins, banners, '*wobblies*' (plastic mobiles suspended from shelves) & '*buzz stops*' (vertical advertising hoardings between shelves).

### Corporate Identity

Corporate identity is the commercial face that represents a company, where *Branding* is its commercial application. They often get confused because the term 'Brand' is the name given to a company's identity while *Branding* describes the marque by which a company, product, or service is recognised. Expressed simply, Corporate Identity is the creation of the brand, while branding is how it is then applied through all areas of communication. The Corporate Identity has to represent the values that a company should be known by, but in recent years major brands have turned their products into sub-brands; consequently advertising activity has diversified. In modern communications agencies the roles normally associated with branding and corporate identity increasingly tend to crossover.

The most common outlets for Corporate Identity include *journals & in-store magazines* which are typically quarterly publications containing promotional offers that, through their editorial content, show how their range of products and services connect to presumed lifestyles of consumers. Graphic design considerations include the systematic application of the brand's corporate rules regarding layout as well as the organisation of leader stories, '*advertorials*' and features in a visually stimulating manner. Bigger brands have tended to develop and implement corporate

identities through their own retail environments – most notably **Superbrands** Nike Town and Disney Stores. Such Total Branding involves the bringing together of all visual aspects and the development of corporate signature styles to create a brand experience: Within such schemes the graphic design content fits into a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates architects, product designers and art directors. Corporate Identity therefore require a fundamental background knowledge of the product or firm's chief characteristics, the type of market they want to develop in and the nature of promotions they want to commit to.

### Branding.

Branding, compared with Corporate Identity, is directly connected with raising awareness. It usually involves the development of a brands identity within the everyday surroundings of its target market, using graphic techniques to ensure the brand is associated with a particular space and mood. Branding therefore fits between Direct Advertising and Corporate Identity, because it commercialises the brand by applying the graphically identity to appropriate contexts.

The most renowned aspect of branding is **product placement**, instigated by marketers who directly engage with graphic designers. The role of the designer is to appropriate the corporate graphic style to situations which, in most cases, requires re-thinking how an existing identity can be suitably tailored. In recent years branding has engaged a wider range of specialist graphic practices so that environments and products - from coasters and clocks to night clubs and public spaces - have become vehicles for promotion.

The objective of placement branding, called **Ambient** or **360° advertising**, is to engage at the moment customers are most likely to want the product – for instance a brand of drink in a bar. Graphic designers are typically employed to re-style and appropriate graphic elements, taking into account how the branding will be understood in its given context. The development of typographical rules for on-line branding is essential, and usually involves collaboration between digital graphic designers, copywriters who shape the wording, and web designers, who apply the corporate identity rules and graphic elements to the Graphic User Interface. Branding is also called on to extend direct advertising activity. Examples include branded booklets, collector cards and correspondence, usually produced to promote product ranges and sent to existing clients to maintain customer dialogue.

In recent years brands develop their identity by diversifying into other markets. **Brand Stretching** can simply involve a brand name being applied to another product. More often it involves developing a brand through a new product range – for instance a drinks brand expanding into leisure clothing, where new product ranges are links to the brands main area of operation. Branding therefore requires graphic designers to bridge the gap between the existing deployment of branding and concessions that need to be made for the brand to appear effective in its new context.



Appendix 2

**Interview transcriptions (selection)**

Creative Director, Impact FCA! (integrated advertising agency)

@ FCA offices - Porters Place, 103 Wigmore St. London W1

Tuesday 14 March 2000

*Line of Questioning:* • opinion; fleshing out 'A new creative manifesto'  
• how advertising practice moved in the nineteen nineties • key examples & key texts  
*structure:* 1. after Admap 2. overview of nineties 3. movers & shakers 4. Missing bits

1) Following your article 'A new creative manifesto' in Admap...

- a. If mass-marketing is dead, by extension will mass "above-the-line" media advertising follow?
- b. Do you feel 'Integrated' is a means by the old agencies to retain the traditional, expensive modes of product exposure?
- ci. what projects/campaigns can you site that reflect a more closely involved, client-centred approach to advertising? What qualities give it 'added value'?
- cii. What agencies are benchmarks model of future operations - multi-disciplinarian, antithesis of mass-marketing approach?
- d. Do you know of any brands that have switched completely Below-The-Line?

2) The nineteen nineties...

- a. what precisely soured the client/agency relationship in the late-80?
- b. from your perspective, is advertising now the antithesis of eighties advertising?
- c. catalysts: to what extent did the following issues drive changes to advertising during the past decade:
- d. (i) increased competition (ii) client awareness of 'value for money' (iii) ad. literacy (social ) (iv) digital communication, database marketing, internet (technological)(v) antithesis of eighties hard-sell (political) (vi) inevitable industrial evolution (cultural)?
- c. What adverts for you characterise the differences in outlook over the period?  
for example, late eighties - Midland Banks 'Easy like Sunday Morning'  
late- nineties - Yellow Pages ' burglary...' or Vodaphone's strap line; 'It's your call'
- d. Do any direct advertising campaigns characterise the shifts over a decade ?  
for instance Heinz moving from media advertising to WAVV; Tesco Gluboard ...
- f. What 3 events characterise, or are key to the industry's shifts in the nineties?  
for instance, BBH starting Limbo, HHCL/Tosconi's overtly provocative & laddish ads? M&C Saatchi leaving Saatchis, the change in government?

3) Who else - for you - were the key shakers of British advertising in the nineteen nineties?

- b. which campaigns & agencies are on the pulse in B-T-L, marketing & media advertising?

4) Bits I've missed...

- a. have you published more articles that I've missed?
- b. have you received any response to the your published stance?
- c. have you found writings that support or contest the case you made in Admap?
- b. who else do you recommend I speak to in my quest to get a fuller picture?

5) Diagrams

a. Timelines... *onto timeline*

1. the key events that characterised advertising from late-eighties-1999
2. what ads stick out that are benchmarks/characterise the changes?
3. what were your movements in the industry and your ad achievements in the nineties

b. Creative Process... *cf. Appendix 1*

shifts in advertising late 1980s > 2000

- 1 = key events - 2 = benchmark ads - 3 = Shaun McIlrath in the 1990s

<1985	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> <li>• Saatchi's start Saatchi Direct</li> <li>• Run DMC release the single 'my adidas' in the US</li> <li>• Saatchi's/Tony Kaye BR 'relax'</li> <li>• BBH Levis's 501</li> <li>• 1987 - Yellowhammer Lynx</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• black wednesday</li> <li>• BBH Levis's 'mad about the boy'</li> <li>• JW's BT 'Beatle' &gt; 1994</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> <li>• shock adv debated</li> <li>• Heinz &amp; Tesco switch to B-T-L</li> <li>• WCRS's Regal 'Reg'</li> <li>• CDP's B&amp;H 'Surreal'</li> <li>• WCRS's 'Act Up' - anti Benetton</li> <li>• BBH's Haagen Dazs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> <li>• WCRS's 'Act Up' - anti Benetton</li> <li>• AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> <li>• Tango Orange 'slap' commercial</li> <li>• BBH's Haagen Dazs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> <li>• AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> <li>• Access 'flexible friend' axed</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness 'titlud' [glocal]</li> <li>• BBH Levis's 'creek' TV</li> <li>• WCRS Orange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> <li>• AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> <li>• Access 'flexible friend' axed</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness 'titlud' [glocal]</li> <li>• BBH Levis's 'creek' TV</li> <li>• WCRS Orange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> <li>• AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> <li>• Access 'flexible friend' axed</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness 'titlud' [glocal]</li> <li>• BBH Levis's 'creek' TV</li> <li>• WCRS Orange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> <li>• AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> <li>• Access 'flexible friend' axed</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness 'titlud' [glocal]</li> <li>• BBH Levis's 'creek' TV</li> <li>• WCRS Orange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> <li>• AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> <li>• Access 'flexible friend' axed</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness 'titlud' [glocal]</li> <li>• BBH Levis's 'creek' TV</li> <li>• WCRS Orange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> <li>• AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> <li>• Access 'flexible friend' axed</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness 'titlud' [glocal]</li> <li>• BBH Levis's 'creek' TV</li> <li>• WCRS Orange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> <li>• AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> <li>• Access 'flexible friend' axed</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness 'titlud' [glocal]</li> <li>• BBH Levis's 'creek' TV</li> <li>• WCRS Orange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour win Gen Election</li> <li>• AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> <li>• Access 'flexible friend' axed</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness 'titlud' [glocal]</li> <li>• BBH Levis's 'creek' TV</li> <li>• WCRS Orange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour win Gen Election</li> <li>• AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> <li>• Access 'flexible friend' axed</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness 'titlud' [glocal]</li> <li>• BBH Levis's 'creek' TV</li> <li>• WCRS Orange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour win Gen Election</li> <li>• AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> <li>• Access 'flexible friend' axed</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness 'titlud' [glocal]</li> <li>• BBH Levis's 'creek' TV</li> <li>• WCRS Orange</li> </ul>

Charts initiation w/td here!

**Shaun McIlrath**  
**Creative Director, [integrated adv.] at Impact FCAI [ until 2001],**  
**author of 'Towards A New Creative Manifesto' in AdMap, [cited in Chapter2, 3&5]**  
**interviewed at the FCA offices - Porters Place, 103 Wigmore St. London W1**  
**Tuesday 14 March 2000**

PS: First - I apologise for calling you an integrated advertiser ...

SM: That's alright.

PS: ... because I've been re-reading your article in 'AdMap' again - and you criticise the term as an excuse for advertisers to claim they're broadening their remit when all they want to do is plug their TV, poster & press slots that they can charge their 15% commission on. In terms of your article, it seems that it is the bigger agencies that don't fully integrate but treat direct ad means as a minor facility you take a swipe at.

SM: the notion of integration I don't have a problem with at all. I was concerned with full integration. I'm less concerned with the whole integration than the adoption.

PS: OK. I've been going round to different agencies and I've realised that I'm dealing with a large number of off-shoot agencies, who are owned by bigger media groups. Direct is just one of their facilities - along with internet. BBH Direct amongst others. Do you think that some of the bigger agencies direct sections are a token of being relevant, and not presented to the client as the main means to solve the problem in a less glamorous, more effective means?

SM: Absolutely. I think integration has been adopted reluctantly by advertising agencies as a widget that allows them to sell advertising. The way people view integration is just as a mail pack that look like the TV commercial which is not what my understanding of below-the-line-is.

Originally the move from media agencies to below-the-line was just to protect their income. When they saw a lot of money going into below-the-line and accountability because of the recession; what they did was to pull in the below-the-line. They kept them separate - I think it was CTP I slagged off, because they kept a separate 'integrated' floor - which wasn't in fact integrated. Our understanding is the ability to use any marketing tool available for the discipline. You have a lot of specialists, but no hierarchy in the discipline, the type of 'media' or whatever you run with; all done on merits of the idea. So, its problem first, and the solution may not be advertising. The way people get to alternative forms is through consumer groups, and with new every client we get we take them to a consumer group and we make them listen to what they think about their marketing.

So they'll come in and say we want to launch a new product - say, a direct insurance company - this is a real case study - and we took the chairman, the under writer marketing team to consumer groups and what came out was 'there are hundreds of direct companies, I didn't like insurance, and I'm certainly not going to buy this one'. So what they realised was the extent of the task first hand. They wouldn't buy it unless it gave more, was a new product, a guarantee on the product. I remember a funny ad with an old man - I can't remember what its for - and after the humour which they all laughed at we asked the group what qualities they'd go for, and they said 'if it was cheaper, or 10p off point of sale in a supermarket I'd buy it'. Now - you'd never get that from an advertising agency because its cutting off their income. The line I normally use to a client is 'a classic advertising agency is geared up to selling its product, not yours'. Its geared up to sell advertising...

PS: So, with an agency involved in such preliminary work as this [ FCA?] is it the case that you often send the client away to go and re-think what question, problem and direction they should be pursuing?

SM: Absolutely. The more I look at what our task is, the more it is becoming a fully-fledged 'business hospital'. We now have different specialists: They come in - usually a sick client - they'll come in with an ache., and we'll say 'OK lets have a look, what would make you buy in this category?'. They'll say what they're interested in. The first thing is - top of the list - that the consumer actually wants the product. They want to think about it in a certain way. Every thing is fashioned from what the consumer wants first and foremost: We've had clients who have been obsessed with their product, and agencies obsessed with their project - the consumer's been lucky to get a look-in. You know - product shot and witty line. This has changed a lot, partly as a result of the consumer. Things have changed. I don't know if I mentioned a change from 'consumers' to 'selectors' in the article...

PS: No you didn't.

SM: OK - this is a new one then! My theory is that the term 'consumer' is inappropriate now, because it comes from the era of mass-production, it implies a large, gluttonous passive object that just sits and swallows manufacturers propoganda. It doesn't actually define what's happening.

What we have now is a new breed of 'selector' who are very specific in what they are looking for. And they are savvy - they can see a strategy in seconds and they quite like playing the advertising game, they like being tickled on their tummy, but it doesn't mean that they're going to buy it. And the old sharomes of research are utterly inappropriate because they don't get under the skin. Again - they're geared up to sell advertising - 'oh, its a funny ad; would you like it - yes...' you get the guist. We're on about fundamentally changing this sector - we want to know what it takes for them to fundamentally want the product.

PS: What do you think has been the most fundamental shift in the last decade? You mentioned clients are more savvy, then you mentioned ad literate or conditioned; it works in a more meta, PoMo way now. What about the impact of technology also?

SM: Awesome - but not fully realised yet. Its going to change everything - in fact I'm seeing it change everything as we speak. The agencies have [in the last 6 months] the ramifications are becoming clear. I think that in about 90% of those who seek creative departments, they view us as they do brochures. They'll farm it out to somebody else. I don't think they fully understand the implications of it. If you look at the old ad agencies... Technology is creating a direct channel between clients and their customers. They won't need the clients to tell them what the customer wants.

The old style route was that the company talked to the consumer - the manufacturer propaganda route - where the agency uses creativity to shape the customer. What has happened is that technology has come in-between: the internet has come in-between and created direct channels between companies and the customers. Consumer behaviour will be driven by their *experience* of the company, not by an image.

The new agency task is therefore this; Instead of a company using an agency to change customers' behaviour, customers will use the agency to change the company's behaviour.

PS: Explain.

SM: The agency may well start interpreting what the customer wants from the companies, because companies will need to be more aware of what's happening.

A new company could easily come on line tomorrow and wipe out your USP. Your old forms of building up a big brand ain't gonna happen as effectively any more. A search engine can take you past the brand there's no gradual slow burn build up.

Companies are going to have to be much more aware of what companies are looking for.

The manufacturer that can use customer information to continue to build is going to be king of the hill. The can use it to change the company rather than the consumer.

My job now is increasingly being about how to change the company - a company that consumers want ethically, morally, to make the product more relevant - and this is all the information that is coming from the consumer.

PS: I assume this is a bit like the classic Bill Bernbach lateral thinking, re-orienting the client to question the grounds of operation- what they take for granted about their product and brand- rather than just the advertising as the glossy icing on the cake.

SM: Yes - it is about finding your way in a way that's practical. If, like Bernbach you're saying you're buying this Nazi car...

PS: Isn't it more fun damental than Bernbach - which was ad industry people changing the ad industry, where now its driven by other things?

SM: what you'd be selling is a car that the Jewish nations have re-fashioned from its ashes!

PS: [laughs] right.

SM: And that is what technology is giving us the ability to do. Before, changing the bricks and mortar and all the manufacturing was very slow and fundamental. Now we can change the industry to meet the customer's whim. On-line can change things much more quickly.

PS: Are there any campaigns you can point to that show the much closer relationship between you - the surgery consultant - and the product that emerges from this process?

SM: Not in the mainstream. Yet. We did one I was alluding to earlier - one we called 'help.com' HEF Direct, who were looking to launch...

PS: HEF Direct? Sounds more like a direct agency to me.

SM: [laughs] What happened was the consumer person said - it was a beautiful moment before we even got under way - in the presentation their chairman sat next to the guy who did the consumer surveys. And, not realising who he was, said 'of course, insurance companies are all cheats, thieves and lying bastards aren't they?'. And their chairman aid 'oh, yes, emm', intimidated, [laughs] What we discovered is that generally insurance companies are reaping the ill wind of having for a century treated the consumers as risks. The moment they look cautious they know you're on to them. What they thought of the customers - that they were a liability - became what the customers came to think of the companies. First they had to change the mind-sets of their staff. Teaching them how much it costs if someone crashes their car against how much they make when people bank with them. They [the companies] are going to have to offer more money back and show that they can be trusted more. What should be the generic promise of insurance? A guaranteed product. In other words, the customer comes to the company and basically says 'I'm paying you money so that if my car breaks down you will come and help me. If my car is struggling you will give me a new one. So you are paying for a promise of help. In our suggestion we called the company *help*, and we said this is the launch - the staff are geared to maximizing the help aspect, which then has to be realised. Re-training and we re-wrote the company document; we then said 'let's look at your other activity. Who do you sponsor?' they said 'a football team'. Why? Because the MD goes to football matches and likes his box? We dropped that to do something more cultural. We suggested to make it more useful - sponsor more community police in that area for instance. Then you're doing something useful with the money. And its better for your brand because its not wasted and in effect you've got an active brand advocate walking around the place, doing something related to house insurance...

SM: Yes, to a point. The next step would be to have a total service, so that when something bursts in your house you're covered for it; generic insurance. From a company that just wanted advertising to put them in the market place - what everyone else was doing, mainstream, - it became a unique proposition. Unfortunately it was too unique and got held up and couldn't get past the broker.

PS: [laughs] What did this say about the here and now?

SM: A lot of what I've found in the past is lazy organisations with lazy ideas just going through the motions and doing what the others are doing because that is assumed to be how its going. They rarely think it through. You've got marketing people who are protecting their marketing budget; they're not serious about changing things, just spending the million pounds on advertising, because if they don't spend it this year they will not be allocated it next year. They want to maintain the status quo but need to be seen to be doing something.

They want something that's showy to look good on them for their next career move - you also have the situation now where the lifespan of a marketing director is 14 months, so they don't care about the long term health of the organisation. They're there to make short term gain.

PS: Not good.

SM: These are the good ones! The bad ones just don't want to make mistakes so just want safe, familiar type jobs.

PS: There are big implications in the example you gave, 'help'; these are not incremental or gradual changes but a fundamental shift in the mind-set for client. It's actually customer-centred now. I've been doing projects with the Royal College when we've been getting people to re-orient who their projects are for. [The example we use is] When you get on a train and you see the ticket collector he isn't concerned about your needs - he's there to get money for the company and protect the service...

SM: Absolutely,

PS: ...to make sure people have paid, and not question *why* you can't get a ticket in the first place. In future they will have to *serve* the customer, not just their company that masquerades as a service. The internet is helping open out the ideas of service...

SM: Absolutely, absolutely.

PS: ...but even there there's a battle ground with large corporations have moved in and circled the systems to make sure you go through them and you pay for it.

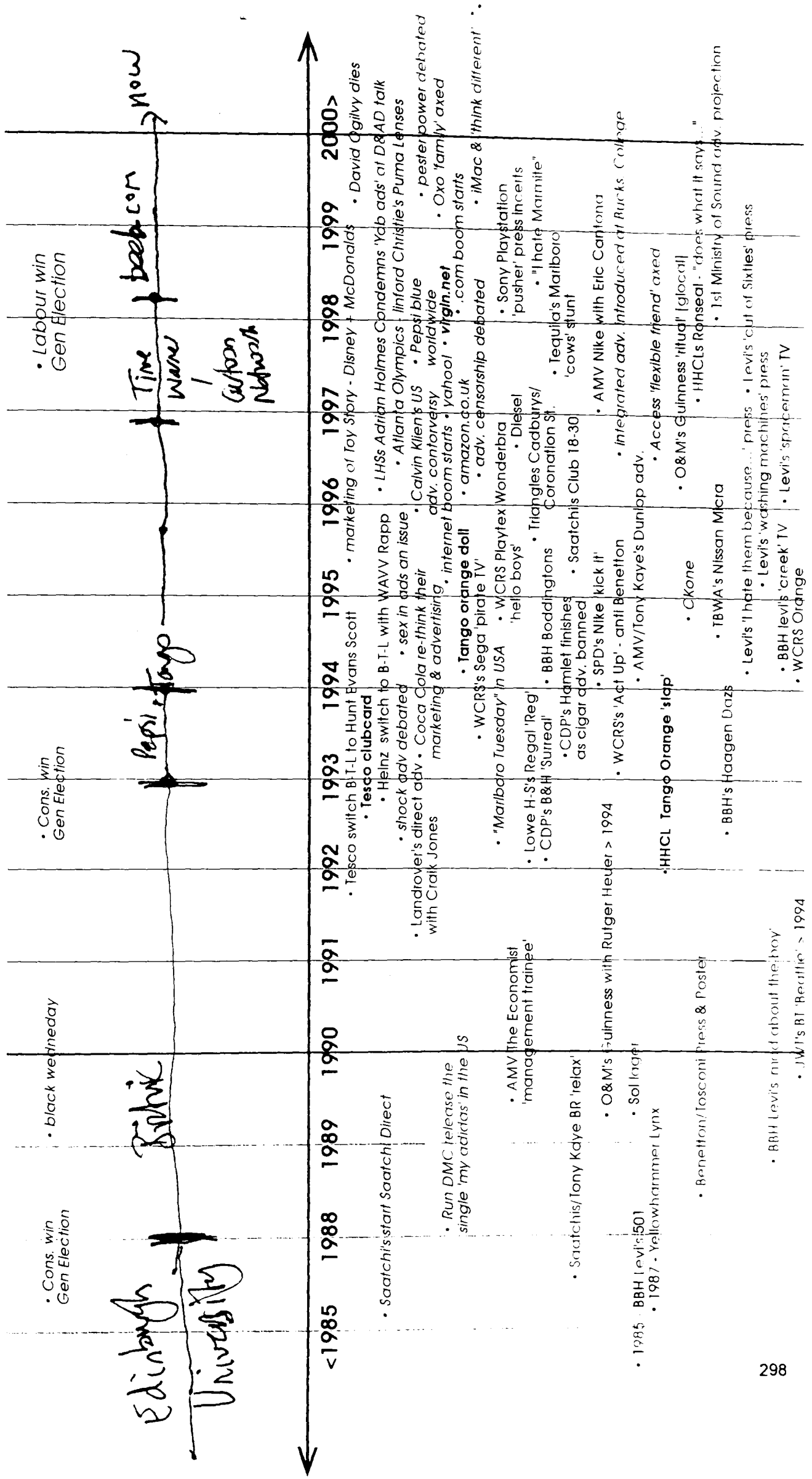
SM: British firms are terrible. Despite all the bluster of the 1990s British service is disastrous. I've just moved house and being reminded of how awful that sector is. And the reason being its all thinly disguised selling. Instead of making a product that consumers want to buy, they just make things people don't want in the first place and plug them relentlessly. Its a much easier job long term creating what people want, it just involves a bit more hard work in the planning and organisation...

[talk tailed off]

END

**iiiiiiiiii**  
 shifts in advertising  
 late 1980s > 2000

- 1 = key events - 2 = David Atter in the 1990s





David Atter, Former Marketing Director Britvic.

Interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2000 at Beeb.com offices, Television Centre, Wood Lane, London.

Interview between Paul Springer (PS) and Dave Atter (DA)

DA: How did you get involved in all this?

PS: I'm doing a doctorate on Advertising in 1990's and several things I want to cover in this dissertation. 1. Is the nature of Britishness, Tango is an obvious candidate for that. One is about database marketing, mass tailoring advertisements, I'm doing it on Tesco clubcard for that. I'm doing a thing about the cultural brands, I'm doing a thing on Land Rover, I'll be talking to the direct advertisers doing that and they had a Land Rover away day and spent a fortune on persuading people to buy back into the brand.

DA: What was the point behind Land Rover?

PS: It was about brand extrapolation if you like, about cultural brands. The real substance of the PhD is technology, changes in consumerism and advertising in the 90's in what way did technology reflect the shaping of advertising throughout the decade; it seems to be the one area we can actually 'measure' the changes.

DA: Were those changes to advertising or were they advertising that changes technology/consumerism?

PS: I think advertising, realising it had to address technology and having to realise that consumers could discriminate. The old methods of advertising weren't really relevant anymore. Probably where I'm at at the moment with it, the consumer becomes selector, advertising follows movements of consumerism, but there has been huge shifts and I've been monitoring the main changes. Otherwise I'm a full time lecturer, I teach advertising at Bucks College to degree and Masters students.

DA: Wow

PS: I realised I had very little source material to draw on in the last few years and managed to wangle a sabbatical to finish the doctorate and see how far I can take it. There's a possibility I might be able to turn it into a broadcast of sorts, I don't quite know how yet. I talked to one or two people at Channel 4, I don't know what form that would take, but first of all I've got to write it! I've got lots of material (sort of) shaping it up now. I still think it's a bit weak on the marketing, but then marketing's quite hard anyway, because there isn't a history of marketing. There's lots of cases, but very rarely...

DA: Planning, implementation and control by Philip Kotler, written in the 80's – a marketing text book. It is theory and not just case studies. I remember the subheading, analysis, planning, implementation and control. I think its just called Marketing actually. I recommend it.

PS: Have you read 'Living on Thin Air' by Leadbeater? It takes lots of subjects that we already know like ideas of a 'new product' and Thin air is written in an entertaining way.

(Talking about 'Dianeomics', after Leadbeater)

PS: Did you get this (the prepared questions) this morning?

DA: Yes, can I have a copy of the thesis? When will it be ready?

PS: Yes, I am aiming for September, I think it probably depends on clearance for the different sections, but yes absolutely.

You started on Tango - when was that – I haven't got the dates?

DA: I started on Tango in February '94 and ended in October '97.

PS: So that would have seen (ref on the back of a video) The Blackcurrent Campaign, the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Orange Tango ads, the Clubber ads for Tango Still. You would know Dave O'Hanlon and the creators (Al) Young and (Trevor) Robinson at HHCL?

DA: Yes. All the ads I worked on are on the video.

PS: I like the title, 'Now That is What I Call Tango 4'.

DA: That was my idea to call it Tango 4...

PS: Did you do Tango 1 and 2

DA: Yes. Anita and Jeremy (marketers) at Britvic marketing department worked with me, I was the marketing manager.

PS: When you started in '94 they had Tango up and running. The initial Tango campaign was established in early 92. In 94 you had the late extrapolation of the initial Tango Slap – you had heads blowing off in football stadiums, you had the legless ginger Scotsmen who was like a more aggressive orange monster. What had been established about Tango's direction at the time? Were there sections of the original criteria that were adhered to...

DA: No, well yes, in some ways of course. I think it was particularly the marketing mix - price, product, place, promotion. Promotion had been well set, the creative look of the brand had been well set. It was the design of the brand which was updated after the ad. What wasn't happening was the sales of the brand hadn't improved much to people's surprise. Sales didn't increase markedly from '91 through to '94. The brand remained £150million turnover. That was £150million turnover before orange man slapped and after it. Sales increased month by month, so in an individual month they may have improved, but on an annualised basis there wasn't a marked increase. The first year there was a marked increase was in the 1995 and the reasons for that were threefold. We launched many variations on Orange. We made Blackcurrant Tango and got a bit worried as to how it filled in, and probably started to push before we'd sorted a strategy. It was a very hot summer and we started to get our pricing accuracy right, because up to that point the trade promotion activity wasn't properly aligned to the advertising.

PS: What do you mean pricing activity?

DA: Promotions and price activity as in special offers, fiddling around in price to drive penetration so that over time you grow sales of the brand. I'm trying to paint a picture here of a brand that was quite static and then took a massive jump in 95, that's what happened. We continued with this great advertising. I brought in Orange man doll, and we sold 400,000 copies of that.

PS: Was that something that originated with Howell Henry?

DA: Yes. Well, they started the idea of having an artifact that was separate from the core product. That's what was quite interesting... the completion of the idea was started by one of our customers. It was originally a kind of daft end line to one of the ads. We kind of half thought about it as something that we should do, but the idea grew when we took it to research and one of the researchers, I can remember it now and he was only a 19 year old lad, we were saying you don't really want one of those dolls do you, there a little bit plastic and childish. 'No, we do really want one of those dolls. They look like fun' – so it was from direct customer feedback. I remember having to sign up two of the board directors to agree to the project and invest up front. Soon they were on dashboards on cars, stuck to the helmets of motorcycle couriers...

PS: But it opened up a youth cultural subsidiary. Is that unique to marketing or do you think there were any role models that you followed?

DA: I was at Britvic for 9 years and that was my first job really, but Tango was always the most interesting brand and for my last three years there, I was in charge of it. Role models, Jesus Christ was a role model, I think Tony Goodyear was a very good marketer, a marketing director for Britvic. He was the one who appointed Howell Henry and also appointed Simon from (the graphics company) Southgates as a 'brand guardian', (who left to be an employee of Britvic). He changed the design on Tango.

PS: Were there a lot changes from the time you got hold of Tango?

DA: Yeah, but the point I was trying to make to you earlier, was that they didn't have a material impact on the business resource until later, that's where I came in. Of course, I've had knowledge of Tango and it kind of clicked with my sense of humour. You want to know why it clicked, it was its sense of humour, that's

what really made the connection with people. We would understand cultural trends of course, but we would never try and reflect them, or try and bend them to the 'culturalness' of Britain.

PS: Was working on the Tango brand different to any other Britvic campaign at the time?

DA: They also had other brands, Robinson's, Tonic were the main other brands.

They (HHCL) had quite a close working relationship on Britvic juice. We were the marketing team which was myself, Anita and Jeremy (co-marketer at Britvic) contribute to the creative process, in a much richer way than you would normally get between an agency and client and they would contribute to a business process more than you would normally get. Between an agency and client. They (HHCL) would contribute to the business process more than you would normally expect. We at Britvic and HHCL both deliberately tended to mix things up to keep the ideas fresh and new. For instance, I think it was me who said we should have more Blackcurrant Tango elements at the back end of the blackcurrant Tango ad and that's where the idea of Harrier Jump Jets come in and having them flare up. We also changed the script because even though it was subtle, it's all to do with the brand and the product needed more specific mentioning at the end. The last sentence of the ad was changed at my suggestion, because the way it was originally scripted didn't end with a kind of accurate reference of blackcurrant Tango and the last line was 'come and get me – I drink blackcurrant Tango, come and get me', before it lost the product. That's the way advertising works, you're creating a bag of imagery, excitement and messages which you're absorbing subconsciously. You then need to make sure they are correctly being attributed to the thing that you want to add value to – the Tango brand, the significance of the logo, signs and symbols, just generally communication, knowledge, the way words work because they are a symbol that spark of a whole set of needs. With Tango the idea of everything we were doing was to enrich the sign, the symbol of Tango.

PS: How did that affect the way that you and Dave O'Hanlon (HHCL Planner) shaped the tone of voice, the words of what Ray Gardiner (the angry Tango boss at the beginning of the blackcurrant ad) said? Were you putting in esoteric phrases specifically in Gardiner's rambling dialogue?

DA: Yes.

PS: Can you think of any examples?

DA: 'I'm Ray Gardiner, I drink Blackcurrant Tango' right at the end, when he gets really pissed off and confrontational. 'I am the spokesperson for Blackcurrant Tango'. He starts quite normal and he starts to play the game the executive of Tango and his tone of voice gets richer and more excited which is a drawing analogy of the process of drinking the drink. There's all sorts of the hidden messages in that it's a thinly veiled reference to I want to buy the world a coke and 'teach the world to sing', only in Britain he ends up getting drunk. Tango only worked because coke existed with a look and tone everyone knows. We riffed off the background image.

PS: Do you think its British in the sense that you can only rely on things that are ironic – if you reference shared British reference points.

DA: It is a distinctly British brand. We always talked about it being part of British culture (as defined against France as well) It wasn't sold in France, I assume that was deliberate. I think it was more British because it just happened to be very popular in Britain. I think the sense of humour would work very well in America or Australia or somewhere. But if you remember the end lines on Tango were always in a deep American kind of filming voice as well. One of the things that was important and that we really wanted was that there would always be lots of elements of communications, and was that you couldn't quite pin it down. That was really important.

PS: How much was serendipity and how much was constructed, contrived?

DA: In what way?

PS: Did you have a very clear knowledge of exactly what was going to go in there or did you say well that kind of feels right? Where you kind of more brand guardian?

DA: Everything was very well crafted, everything was really well thought about, yeah. In the early days it was definitely, the campaign originally started out for Britvic fruit juice and then Tony Hillary suggested, (Britvic fruit juice was pitched with Robinson's Barley Water as being British. Robinsons had even cultivated

a relationship with the British Lawn Tennis Association). Both were pitched as English, so that was why Tango became English.

PS: When it came to Blackcurrant Tango what was .....

DA: Is Blackcurrant Tango what you want to talk about specifically....

PS: Yes, but I want the background that lead to that first.

DA: Oh, because that was my crowning glory!

PS: Keep talking and I'll come to that in a minute. This is interesting because in terms of Britishness that is probably by far the most curious hook. You've got timing - which was somewhere between the Euro '96 Football championships and the final political party conferences before the following year's general election. You've got all the stuff in the press about joining the EU, and we got Vindaloo marches, you get Footballs Coming Home, just after the time the Blackcurrant ad was launched. Vindaloo by Fat Les is sort of a take on Tango, which was sort of a take on political marches and 70's wrestling. I can spot references here, there and everywhere.

DA: Have you spoken to Jim and Charles? The principle players were Jim, Chas and me and Dave O'Hanlon, have you spoken to them? It was conceived, created and implemented ...

PS: I've already interviewed them. Who was responsible for the three different locations?

DA: Possibly it was the Director actually, it would neither have been Jim or Chas. I think the director, Colin Glegg. He was the one who suggested we did it as one big take. The cultural references were, we knew that anti-Europism was a threat that was gradually subsiding. You have to bear in mind that this was six months before, actually no, it may have been longer, nine months before it went on air because I wanted to make sure we had the advertising material well in advance of going on air. This was a change, we actually had the luxury of being able to plan it, so the advertising was finished around April of that year which was several months before it actually went on air in October, with what I call a 'sledge hammer strategy' a million and half saw the ad the first weekend.

PS: By sledge hammer you mean BANG

DA: Yeah, blitz. A little cartoon was in the Broadsheets the next week saying, 'oh no, that bloody blackcurrant Tango again' ... and we made the deliberate decision to keep it as a 90 seconds at all times and never to do it as a cut down.

The cultural references in it came from us, the team predominately, it's a piss take (full of props and closed references) of Britvic people, it even says 'my friend Geoff here' ... do you remember that line? Well Geoff was the technical director of Britvic, we had about 50 Britvic staff in it including...

PS: Was it layered for people who wanted to investigate it, so doing the research, they could actually find out what the reference points were?

DA: Yeah, it was generally, well that's what I mean when I say everything was well crafted. So the blackcurrant Tango had a Britvic lorry? I don't know if you noticed the Tango headquarters sign is based on the Britvic house sign in Chelmsford.

PS: Whose idea was it to foreground the Britvic staff? It kind of assumes, as Nike would say, 'it's the brand not the product', it's the people that make the brand rather than the product itself. Its like saying it's the marketers that make the brand essence and not the product, isn't it?

DA: I think it's based on the fact that people like the idea that there are people behind these things, and its obviously a parody but they could potentially be like that. Ray Gardiner was so completely dis-believable, he was brought on board as a contracted employee for a while so he could say the opening lines legally, so he was employed at the time.

PS: Was he paid to do the job he claims in the ad?

DA: He was paid just be a 'spokesperson', I think he was just a jobbing actor. He's a good guy, he's funny.

PS: So he hasn't got any marketing experience or anything of the kind?

DA: No

PS: Makes it even better then!

DA: Have you seen the Still Tango slipper ad?

PS: Yes

DA: Its very reminiscent of the same kind of thing. The other thing that's amusing about Blackcurrent Tango is that it's one take, and we deliberately built into the script funny business words.

PS: Have you got copies of the briefs at all?

DA: I might have some. They would create an internal brief to get to the creative team... a lot more of first thoughts on creative areas as well are in there.

PS: Did you flag up the British brand in blackcurrant – the rush of blood, the charge of blackcurrant...

DA: That's where the 'charge' came from. We would always come up with propositions and these were developed collectively or between Britvic and HHCL and then we would research them, and this was one of them. I added to the depth and consistency massively. (Showing brief). This was the start point, I developed it and then I used the 'seduction of apples', 'euphoria of lemons' and the 'charge of blackcurrants', and really brought to life this idea of a 4 flavour strategy. We did this enormous sales conference in January 95 and then when we launched all sorts of things. The new Tango strategy, the presenters on that were myself and Jeremy, we launched the strategy, the ads, new design. Simon Coker was the designer from Southgates, who was employed by Britvic as their Brand Guardian. He has now got his own agency business. You should chat to him.

PS: What do you mean by 'brand guardian'?

DA: Someone who over saw continuity if you like, because the marketing life span is quite short, advertising agencies, traditionally and this was an exception at HHCL and even their responsibilities aren't wholemeal are they? Its gone to Triangle. The brand guardian at Tango was probably me and Dave O'Hanlon, between us, if you want to pin point people. I did before I left, because I tried to preserve the good stuff or at least write down a Tango brand positional statement which was four pages.

PS: What was on it?

DA: Well I said that when you read this document, simultaneously you have to be watching Tango 4 and 3 drinks, because the brand was very much multi sensory so its very difficult to put it down to a black and white document. I did try, but its something that you can very easily get wrong as a brand. I used it at conferences and people would come and say wow, you must really have your finger on the youth culture and on the pulse. I'm like, 'no I didn't have any interest in that I'm afraid'.

PS: ...culture it came purely from drink, it came from substances...

DA: Well I don't even mean that though, I just mean that the only thing I had a connection with was the sense of humour like Monty Python, if you like that and Tango type of humour you would get it and you would know what I meant.

PS: Can you elaborate on that a bit?

DA: I think someone did a cultural study which said that the humour of the 60s was shaped by Monty Python. 80s was Not the Nine O'Clock News and The Young Ones, I'm just talking about this type of humour. 70's was Faulty Towers and then in the 90's Tango advertising sort of occupied that space, as defining the cutting edge of British humour. You've also got Benny Hill in the front of this (talking together) .. In the 90's you've also got things like Absolutely, which is short terse comedy sketches which is about a

minute to minute and half long , then you've got Tango which fits in to that format, so we would, I would like to say it anyway, we contributed to the defining comedy or cutting edge comedy of Britain in that decade. You can see Monty Python, Benny Hill and Faulty Towers and stuff, the Young Ones, Not the Nine O'Clock News, kind of follow that trend and a lot of Tango advertising was just about very lateral things happening, which is very Monty Python, lots of slap stick, Benny Hill, and all that lot, running around.

PS: What were your reference points? Were you actually looking through those tapes?

DA: No - it was just subconscious. That's what I'm saying, some of it was very well crafted, well all of it was I guess in the end. What we would do would be to start off really tightly with a very clear brief, this is what we've got to do and then it would expand out really wild, we'd hone it down and create a craft, until we'd got exactly the communication that we wanted to communicate. I think HHCL taught us a simultaneously tight and loose process, but its like this (shows you a brief)...this would take anywhere between 4-10 weeks, I think that was the quickest time for a Tango ad. You can tell that that's what came through (the speed of production) in the ad.

PS: We were told not to buy the drinks, when Tango Still was withdrawn from the markets.

DA: That was before my time, but I knew that it was back on sale and that the problem was fixed and that's an end to it, kinda of thing. That was four weeks I think and then the blackcurrant Tango probably took a year because of the lead-in time we had a bit more time basically and because it was the fourth launch of four, we definitely planned to make it an epic. We wanted to make it an epic, it did a bit of an increase in sales of blackcurrant Tango, but what it did do was a lot of increase in sales for overall Tango and it re-framed the brand in people's minds from being a smallest medium size British soft drink to all of a sudden in people's minds in the same category or scale as Coke. People went grief, that's a big ad, that's a big gesture, and that was also very deliberate - we wanted to start fighting in the same category as Coke, we didn't have any other competition by then. We had destroyed our rivals Coke Cola, were were now rivaling the leading fruit carbonates market.

PS: I'm curious you and Chas ..

DA: Do you want to know what's at the route of that? Well Chas and me are born again Christians

PS: I don't know where Jim stands.

DA: He's not, he's agnostic. We have that conversation experience. If you really follow Christ, one of the things he said was run the race to win the prize, do well and fight. There's no harm in winning. In fact winning is very much a Christian ethic.

PS: It's very C of E, the whole thing. You could almost swop Ray Gardiner for St. George complete with all the knights of the Round Table complete with full armour

DA: You know what the ad was called don't you? St. George!

PS: In my memory, I forget Ray Gardiner sometimes and see knights bouncing around the White Cliffs of Dover. Its got all sourcery, round table of that and football crowds as well, what do you call it 'magical transformation'.

DA: Well magical transformation is an observation of what happens with good advertising for the whole category. All soft drink advertising, not just Tango, drink the Coke and suddenly everyone's happier. The two main pre-conceptions of Tango that are wrong are 1. That the advertising leads the brand - the product leads the brand, well it did. 2. That Tango breaks all the rules.

PS: Describe it to me; 'Tango was the child that broke the rules but never got expelled...'

DA: I've never heard that before. But no, its bent rules. You see we can easily break all the category rules for advertising or communicating with soft drinks, but you would probably end up with advertising that wouldn't work, because it would be unappealing. It would still need to be magical, and it was this magical transformation thing that they want to talk about ...

PS: Did it aim to get more complaints from the ITC?

DA: No no, that's another pre-conception. We did not do things to wind people up deliberately, just the opposite. We did research amongst both teams and 18,19,20, 21 year groups.

PS: What did the research tell you?

DA: We'll do that in a minute. You asked if we deliberately set out to get complaints, the answer is No, the opposite because the perceived target audience is a 19 year old lad, the actual target audience is anyone aged between 12 and 50 or 60. Certainly 40 so 12 – 40 year olds is the target audience. The way that works is, if you are a 12 year old say, you kinda look up to the advert and say 'Oh that's funny, that's like my older brother, or that's like an ad, that probably appeals to my older brother. I will aspire to that'. If you are 30 years old you will look wistfully back at it and say Ah, I remember those days when I was a roguish school boy, and Mum will look at it and say ah yes, my lad's a bit like that, likeable rogue, because Mum doesn't like a prissy little goody two shoes boys, so it kinda works for everyone. We did do some ideas, which had Mums saying 'oh we would boycott the ad like that', and we wouldn't make it, because 50% of our sales are sold in a supermarket and bought by parents. So we can't upset people.

PS: What did you choose from audience tests with 19 year old lads to find out whether it would work or not. Were there any qualities you wanted to pick out?

DA: Well a good reaction would be, I don't understand, or I don't think that's right for the brand, or I don't understand where you're going with that one. If you ever got the reaction, ah yes I understand that.... You know then that you've not actually taken it all in one shot, they will say another one of those was funny was it Tango, one of those soft drink ads.

PS: So one is about re-enforcing the image, so people know what brand you were advertising and secondly it was 'what was that about'

DA: Correct

PS: ... and it deliberately sort of met them...

DA: There was another advertising campaign that was created at exactly the same time, made by another team connected with the group strangely enough for Mountain Dew, which was a Britvic brand. They were trying to copy Tango advertising style, but they got one fundamental thing wrong, which was they made an ad that was incredibly closed. All of the passages that you can walk down were all shut off and it was basically saying is that wacky, fun cool, whatever, all that kind of nonsense and Tango was always deliberately leaving all kinds of little spreads open, so that you play with it. The reaction to the Mountain Dew was, there's one of those crap ads, trying to look like the Tango ad. Take Blackcurrant Tango for instance, was it really xenophobic? I'm not really sure. Does Ray Gardiner really work for the competition? How on earth did they get from that office to the White Cliffs of Dover? What is it really trying to tell me? Does it make you flighty, or hate France or what?

PS: Right, OK. Why the perforation on the arm of the Tango Doll or the voodoo thing?

DA: It wasn't meant to be voodoo, its definitely got a style to it that's quite black magic, it's just that sort of doll. But the blackcurrant Tango ad I remember, there was two politicians there, one Tory and one Labour, I can't remember which one was arguing which. But one was saying that was very funny, very amusing, and the other was saying how awful it was because it was encouraging hatred of the French. There two politicians arguing about it on a radio on programme.

PS: They mentioned it on the Today Programme?

DA: Yes, but luckily the politicians that were supportive of the ad as was the Britvic Chairman, even not selling it in France, so it was great really. It was quite funny to seeing them arguing about it.

PS: There is a phrase if something transcends being a normal 'paid for advert' and becomes common currency and you get free publicity the amount of extra publicity it generates, can be measured and there's a phrase for it... Anyway, Tango was logical. The logic was to keep it open, was it suppose to be reactive as well, one ad was done and it was released and there was a lot of hooah usually around it and it generated a following that seems to be very knowing, it was reactive to circumstance...



DA: Only to our customers, we're the best soft drink, 'we're the fourth emergency service'. To say we were reactionary sounds a bit like we were lucozade and reacting to popular 'culture shoving'.

PS: Being responsive to ads created

DA: We had to be known as being clever

PS: What are the key hooks? There was the French, the march, the drunk man... What else is in there that I should have picked up and I haven't?

DA: Do you know where the join parts are between the three scenes?

PS: Yeah, there's a morphed bit that I haven't spotted yet, I'm trying to do it frame by frame..

DA: I can show you where they are if you want. We've got a fantastic trade version, where we re-voiced it, so that it says now an attack on Coke Cola, and Americans as oppose to an attack on France.

PS: Wow, I would love to see it.

DA: It's very good, very funny. That was an idea of mine, where I was coming back from somewhere else and was going to the final edit suite, and I thought it would be really funny and really motivated for our own sales team to do this, anti Coke version. It was Chas and I who wrote a new script and when Ray Gardiner came back to do some final voice-overs for the TV ad, he also recorded this internal amusement version, which actually I think did end up back in Coke. They weren't very happy about it.

PS: They couldn't really respond to it.

DA: Well it was meant as fun.

PS: Projects like blackcurrant Tango, at what point would you intervene or re-direct the thrust?

DA: Only if they were going off kilt...

END

**shifts in advertising late 1980s > 2000**

- 1 = key events - 2 = benchmark ads - 3 = AI Young in the 1990s

<1985	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• black wednesday</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saatchi's start Saatchi Direct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run DMC release the single 'my Adidas' in the US</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMV The Economist 'management trainee'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tesco switch BTL to Hunt Evans Scott</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WCRS's Segal 'pirate TV'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tango orange doll</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• marketing of Toy Story - Disney</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LHs Adrian Holmes Condemns 'Yab ads' at D&amp;AD talk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour win Gen Election</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McDonalds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Ogilvy dies</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1987 - BBH Levi's 501</li> <li>• 1987 - Yellowhammer Lynx</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saatchi/Tony Kaye BR 'relax'</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness with Rutger Heuer &gt; 1994</li> <li>• Sol Lager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benetton/Toscani Press &amp; Poster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBH Levi's 'mind about the boy'</li> <li>• JWT's BT 'Beatnik' &gt; 1994</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landrover's direct adv with Craig Jones</li> <li>• "Marlboro Tuesday" in USA</li> <li>• Lowe H-S Regal 'Reg'</li> <li>• CDP's B&amp;H 'Surreal'</li> <li>• CDP's Hamlet finishes as cigar adv. banned</li> <li>• WCRS's 'Act Up' - anti Benetton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heinz switch to B-T-L with WAVV Rapp</li> <li>• shock adv debated</li> <li>• Coca Cola re-think their marketing &amp; advertising</li> <li>• BBH Boddingtons</li> <li>• SPD's Nike 'kick it'</li> <li>• WCRS's 'Acht Up' - anti Benetton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WCRS's Segal 'pirate TV'</li> <li>• WCRS Playtex Wonderbra 'hello boys'</li> <li>• BBH Boddingtons</li> <li>• CDP's Hamlet finishes as cigar adv. banned</li> <li>• WCRS's 'Act Up' - anti Benetton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Left Nike X</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LHSs Adrian Holmes Condemns 'Yab ads' at D&amp;AD talk</li> <li>• Atlanta Olympics - Pepsiblu</li> <li>• Calvin Klein's US adv. controversy worldwide</li> <li>• internet boom starts</li> <li>• amazon.co.uk</li> <li>• adv. censorship debated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rejoined X</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sony Playstation 'pusher' press incerts</li> <li>• "I hate Marmite"</li> <li>• Tequila's Marlboro 'cows' stunt</li> <li>• AMV Nike with Eric Cartona</li> <li>• integrated adv. introduced at Bucks. College</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pestel power debated</li> <li>• Oxo 'family' axed</li> <li>• .com boom starts</li> <li>• iMac &amp; 'think different'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HHCL Tango Orange 'slap'</li> <li>• BBH's Haagen Dazs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access 'flexible friend' axed</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness 'it's all in the [glocal]</li> <li>• HHCLs Ronseal - "does what it says..."</li> <li>• 1st Ministry of Sound adv. projection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levi's 'I hate them because...' press</li> <li>• Levi's 'cut of Sixties' press</li> <li>• Levi's 'washing machines' press</li> <li>• BBH Levi's 'creek' TV</li> <li>• Levi's 'spaceman' TV</li> <li>• WCRS Orange</li> </ul>

**Al Young**

**Creative Director, HHCL, Art Director of the Tango Ad 'Slap' in 1992.  
Interviewed at HHCL Offices, Market Place, Oxford Street, London.  
24th March 2000**

**Al Young (AY) Interviewed by Paul Springer (PS)**

PS: I've interviewed a lot of people who have been in integrated advertising, Will Awdry at BBH Unlimited who use to work on Levis Media Ads and since worked on Flat Eric. I'm chasing the story of Tango, the ways in which it shows Britishness, how it was reshaped and how it identified with youth culture really. The other story I'm doing is the Tesco Clubcard because how it works is interesting. I might do Land Rover because it's open through integrated advertising to reflect its potential users lifestyles which were then translated into a different media. I might do that, I'm not too sure. But Tango today is the one I need to establish the main points quickly today.

First of all who was the planner?

AY: The planner was John Leach, he's still here.

PS: Its been one planner all the way through

AY: Well first of all it was John Leach more latterly when Trevor and I did the anti Tango stuff for Dave O'Hanlon. But the original planner was John Leach.

PS: Who else was on the original team?

AY: Trev Knight and Robin Aziz now Executive, but in those days he was a lowly account director. So that was the team.

PS: His name crops up with some of my old students dissertations. I think they interviewed him a lot! What are the planners and creative brief sort of ball point?

AY: Well the brief was about real people drinking Tango, which I never quite got my head round.

PS: That would be August '91.

AY: Yea, the pitch was actually in three parts, a Tango brief, an R Whites Lemonade brief, and Britvics fruit juice brief. It was a sort of real people drink Tango kind of.. show them what's its really like. But there's this kind of, quite important part of being made with real oranges, which we kind of thought about and then forgot and there was a batch of ideas. The actually idea with had was to take the piss out of drink ads. At that time in the early 90's there was a lot of coffee ads, which they had obviously learnt that you can't just say 'God this coffee is great, yum, yum' and expect you to buy it - lets do a little bit more than see people take a drink of coffee and then there would be a slight flicker of an eyebrow of something like that, and that was actually the whole idea, to take the piss out of other ads at that time, which emphasised the taste reaction, if you like.

PS: If I remember rightly a lot of ads had a narrative story, almost like mini soap operas running through, the Gold Blend..

AY: Yes, yes, we were kind of having a laugh at them really, but then it grew into a bit more.

PS: Were there any projects you worked on before that, that fed into it?

AY: Well everything feeds into everything else in a way, its all crossed referenced, but no, every brief, certainly that I've ever been to work on, has always been.. and I've worked in lots of different kinds of stuff and lots of stuff that would be say just one of the influences on the rebranding of Tango.

PS: At the time then, was it affected by the other soft drinks, because you had Quatro, Lilt,

AY: No we didn't think about them

PS: You didn't see them as rather ineffective at all, not even as a frame of reference?

AY: Well, only in as much as we didn't want to do ads that had been done before.

PS: When you were shaping the ad, were you trying to make the product the centre of attention, to accurately give an idea of what the product is like? A lot of the time, the ad seemed to be slightly over-pitched, or over determined. It seemed to be aspirational in a way. Even the Gold Blend had this idyllic couple....

AY: It was not deliberately about lifestyle, it was about getting the tone and attitude right. The big thing then was irony, but it was never really about the product. The ideas were never based on, or derived directly from any existing aspect of the product, but one of the things about Tango and why it seems such a radical idea in many respects at that time was it was about (a re-evaluated understanding of) the product. (in this sense) it was all about the product, the idea came from the product at that time. I suppose in advertising there is a kind of snobbishness about selling and our reluctance to show the client's logo or to talk about the product or show the product, when really the ad should be all about the product and the logo. Its like when we did the Golden Wonder, again that was all about the product truth, and that value was indeed featured throughout.

PS: Its strange, because when somebody comes up with something as monumental as Tango was you get a whole range of spoofs straight afterwards. Saachi's did the Club 18-30 ads the following year. The Sega ad did a pirate TV tape which was trying to be Tango again, but none of them actually managed to get the point and Tango seemed to be more far reaching than that. The more I seem to watch it, even now, the more I spot the different reference points. Its like setting loops in a way for people to latch on to, as though it's supposed to be plagiarised.

AY: The piece of Tango that was plagiarised most was when we did Tango radio, and we did spoof radio phone ins with the general public - real people.

PS: The sort of Victor Lewis Smith type of stunt comedy.

AY: Yes, and that was copied if you like. I did one of the big D&AD, I was on the jury for one of the radio advertising themes for the year after and every other ad was a version of that. When it was sussed people were phoning up having a laugh at it.

PS: Like the guy who phoned Blair has been bought into advertising now. Were the aims with the Tango campaign to make the tone realistic and attainable? Was it suppose to be in any way eclectic and, was it supposed to be borrowing references from things you saw around you?

AY: The way I've always worked has been to come up with ads that make me laugh, and Trev and I we used to do stuff primarily for ourselves. Not that we were particularly party animals all the time, we were a bit too old by that stage.

PS: How old were you then when you did Tango?

AY: About 28 something like that.... I'm 36 now so it was 8 years ago. Trev and I always did stuff in part for ourselves and if it didn't entertain us or provoke our thoughts or make us laugh or make us nervous, or scared in some way - its never going to work on anyone else, so we were our only filters in that respect. I've never particularly known what I'm going to do just before I do it. I don't sit down and say 'right we've got to make this work'... obviously you have an instinct for stuff which will be picked up on, but first and foremost it was to have a laugh.

The very first version of the script we did there for the first Tango ad was to kick the guy up the arse and everyone liked to do that both at HHCL and Britvic. In the first version we had American football commentators, who reeled off a stream of statistics. These guys talk quickly about big Bill Scott from Wichitarr State in the commentary, and they narrated over the ad in the pitch for Britvic. Then we won the business and the idea was put into research and that's when we came up with the idea of making it British and using (Darts commentator) Sid Wardell.

PS: When you concentrate on what he's saying, his pitch goes up and down quite a bit.

AY: The problem with Sid was that he's got to be passionate about what he's doing, like with his darts or stuff like that. But I don't think he really cared about doing voice overs for commercials, so we had to employ the impersonator, Hugh Dennis to do an impersonation of him. The idea evolved as we were working on it. The American commentary became British sports in its style.

PS: When did your Gil Scott Heron voice over for the Strapline 'you know when you've been Tango'd' come into the ad? He's Southern American drawl contrasts in a way with the rest of it. You've got Ray Wilkins doing his bit down there...

AY: Trev and I had gone to the jazz cafe in Camden one night and it had Heron playing and I just said to Trev it would be great if he were to do a voice over, because at that time we had finished editing films and were looking for a voice over to put on the end. So we got our producer to track him down the next day and he had

actually flown off to do a gig in Frankfurt. He flew back to London, got off the plane and came into the studio and said you've been Tangoed 80 times

PS: He's got the best voice ..... something like Leon Redbone, when he did that kind of relax thing for British Rail in the Eighties [by Saatchi & Saatchi]. His voice has got a wonderful gravelly overtone and plodding tempo to it. That contrast of voices seems so sort of Anglo-American. With Sky Sports TV from the early Nineties you've got that contrast of voices in their commentary, Andy Grey and seasoned English commentators overlapping, but there's always that contrast was that deliberate.

AY: The contrast we wanted was one bloke who was completely over excited all the time, as it is on telly when some guy scores with an amazing overhead bicycle kick and Ray Wilkins says blandly 'good goal: You see this amazing goal and there was no trace of emotion in this voice. The normal commentator is going hyper. Its just that chalk and cheese contrast that just seemed funny.

PS: The myth is that you and Trev were playing a game of golf on his computer and you just happened to do the voices, the commentary that went with it.

AY: Yeah, there may have been a bit of that. I really don't remember.

PS: Its a nice story that seems to be part of the legend here [at HHCL]

AY: I love it. Hugh Dennis did the voice for Sid Wardell. Who did Ray Wilkins?

AY: He did himself..

PS: The voices changed in the next one, the one that followed Slap. Its not Ray, but sounds like him.

AY: There was one ad, when he wasn't available and we got in a mimic, but we always used Ray for [I think we did] 8 orange ads in all, but we always use Ray apart from one occasion when he was doing Football Italia, or we couldn't get him because he was on holiday or something.

PS: I'm trying to get the pecking order right. I think Tango ads were done before Football Italia on Channel 4, which he always does....

AY: But it started certainly while the campaign was going on.

PS: You had the concept, you had the American Football suggestion originally and when you actually won the pitch and they said 'yeah, but its a British thing, Britain's number 1 fizzy drink, nobody else has positioned themselves there', where did it go from there?

AY: The client loved the idea when it was presented and basically that's what won us the business. I think the Carling ad the clients comments was, this is great, its like beer advertising for a soft drink, its just what we want.

PS: Was it at that point that Tango was supposed to be like an errant child? Someone described it the other day as being like the school boy who gets into trouble, but stops short of being suspended...

AY: Yeah, yeah, its kind of a bad lad or whatever, but with enough charm and charisma to get away with it. With classic advertising post rationalising on that, it became the safe dangerous soft drink. t was about danger, but not that dangerous really. Its not an angry brand.

PS: Moving on a bit, at the start of the ad in the actual TV frame, you've got a group of three lads at the front. Who styled the screen like that, was it Limelight production?

AY: It was Black Forest - we shot it all on long lenses so it had more feel of eyes dropping on an innocuous everyday situation. We wanted it to look more like fact than fiction because in fiction you should feel caught up, whereas in reality events don't happen next to each other right in frony of you. They overlap and they happen over there, which is why our photographer had a very long lens. Matt was very smart about creating an environment to make the idea seem at its funniest..

PS: Where was it shot?

AY: That one was shot in Chiswick..

PS: Where about?

AY: I can't remember exactly where.

PS: So it was a restyled environment, with a grocery store on the corner...

AY: It was an off licence, but it didn't seem quite right so we painted it and changed it into a grocers.

PS: I suppose it was late summer

AY: No, it was a freezing November and we had to make it look warmer. Which was really bad for the guy in the orange nappy. It was really very cold.

PS: The show reel, I can watch for entertainment because, especially later on, you can rewatch it and see a whole load of other things going on.

AY: Tango wasn't just one ad, it was a whole bunch of things and still is.

The interesting story is how the campaign developed. At one point you can almost say the ASA might have been living in the same building, because it seems as soon as something was done the next development was then pulling it, which was the best thing that could possibly happen as far as its publicity was concerned.

The questions I've been asked about Tango most of all is, you did it on purpose didn't you getting it band. If I was smart enough and intelligent enough and brave enough to have done that, I wouldn't be working in advertising, I would be in politics, you know what I mean. It was never ever the intention to get anything band, it was always the intention to stand out, which is what we're aiming for. If your ad doesn't get talked about then you're not maximising the client's budget in a way. We have a saying here that you should create two boxes, the one marked surprising, the one marked solution. There's got to be a surprising solution. It's actually very easy to do ads which are just weird or controversial and it's very easy to ads that just work, but to do both at the same time, surprising solutions...

PS: Its like that Bill Bernbach line about keeping the attention on the product and also to 'give the client what they want, but never what they expect'.

AY: It's about doing, it's about being unpredictable, that's what good advertising is, I think.

PS: Were there any sort of props or things in that frame, that you specifically wanted in there. You've got the bike against the billboards, you got the screen sort of orangey red to start with, the red frame of the shot, the old ladies marching around.

AY: I remember thinking about how the orange man was introduced. I remember thinking it would be quite funny if it came out from behind a post box, not a real post box. It felt the right way to do it. If you look at it, its quite cold and grey and a lot of people thought it was shot on bigger tape, which it wasn't, it was shot on film..... but it's got a sense of that kind of slick grey tracking (the first run of the orange man).

PS: Its got a sense of sports footage. Its at a time, if I think about it chronologically, where videos had really become popular, most households at that point, so the image which became an icon of replay and fast forward, came shortly after that. What gave you the idea of going 'whoops - stop, rewind'.

AY: We had an idea that there were these two guys, who you hear, but you never see, who live in a strange world, who look through visual tape footage of life and 'oh I think we might have something here and play it back'. It was very much a kind of mental picture, which was put in our minds quite early.

PS: Who characterised the actors in it? You've got the Tango man, the bloke who gets slapped round the face and his two mates almost forget his there for a few seconds.

AY: The thing about the bloke who gets Tango'd is that he has such a funny face. He was well cast, because he looks like a regular guy.

Making a commercial is a funny process, because first of all you have an idea which is a piece of paper and then you talk to a production company about what it might look like and it becomes a story board, and then you go out and shoot the thing and then you've got to take all the bits you've shot and assemble them and then you have to find sounds or whatever to go with them.... and there's all these different hurdles and you can get it wrong at any point, you have the wrong idea in the first place, you can hire the wrong director to shoot this thing, you can shoot it in the wrong way. There's all manner of things that can go wrong on the actual shoot. You might shoot it great, but edit it badly, or you might edit it great, but do the sound badly or you get the casting wrong, and the Tango stuff was one of those weird jobs where we got everything right. It doesn't happen that often, its not happen to me that often. I still think about it and would change it if I could, and still think we didn't do as well as we could have done.

PS: For instance?

AY: Actually, now you ask me, I can't think about anything. I don't particularly like watching it, or any of my ads, because you can always see little kinda flaws or whatever.

PS: What have been your most successful ads?

AY: In terms of awards, Tango.

PS: Do you think it was because it was best ad, or do you think that people finally realised there are good adverts. Everything something comes, it doesn't have to be in advertising, it could be punk it could be music.

AY: In the first orange ad it created a lot of noise in the national press but got very little recognition in the ad press. It wasn't like it went unrecognised. The idea only got a silver, when we were told we would get a gold. Most successful - I suppose its orange Tango in terms of most awards and recognition, particularly the second and third generation, although they are not necessarily my favourite. The 10 second ad we did for Apple Tango with a dog, is my most favourite ad. The martini stuff, that was quite 90's - it looks on top, rather than what's underneath it, I was pleased with them as well.

PS: Did you shoot the ads in the order that they appeared, where the Slap came out first, the woman in the train station, then it was the pub, then it was Napoleon and then Napoleon with a policeman saying there as a raid going on?

AY: That was Still Tango, a pirate...

PS: Were they all shot at the same time, or were you waiting for the reaction to see.....

AY: No the first two were shot together, Shout and Slap, then we made two a year, certainly for the first three years. The first year we made Shout and Slap, the second year we made Napoleon and the old exploding lady and then Trev and I didn't want to do any more, so we only said we would do it for a third year, if we could do something a bit more scary. That's when we did the football match one and the guy with no legs. So those are the six orange Tango ads, Trev and I did, and then other teams took it over and we did Apple Tango...

PS: I actually have some of the Apple Tango props in a little glass cabinet in an exhibition in West London and there were school parties mulling over this strapped down can of Tango.

AY: That was a calendar we did.

PS: They look great in a little black cabinet in this exhibition. You could see them all mulling over it, and then their teachers would come over and push them on. It looked great, I think we've got a video of it somewhere. It had all the gym stuff, lemon heads and the rest of it.

When you were working on the second batch, what qualities did you pick out from the first one, because you had a bit of hind sight.. The Britishness....

AY: The structure had very little change, by the nature of the idea really. All we learnt from it was yeah, this worked really well lets do some more of it.....

PS: The tempo is something else in all of them. There's a word in academia called meta which means its layered, you can watch it again and again. Its got that great replay value.

AY: Matt who did the second batch as well.

PS: Matt Forest - where is he?

AY: I don't know, I kinda run into him at parties every now and again. He does work for Screen Play and he directs a lot and he's just directed a TV show for Channel 4 or something.

PS: What about Trevor..

AY: Well Trev's got his own production company called Quiet Storm. Trev and I got back together in 95 after we did the Martini stuff, and set up our own production company, because we started shooting our own commercial stuff, we shot the Apple Tango stuff and the Martini for that matter.



PS: Were you a sort of freelance subsidiary to Howell Henry for a while?

AY: No we sort of shot our own stuff .....

PS: What did you operate under your own names or did you have different names?

AY: When we left we started a production company imaginatively called Trev and Al. We lasted six months, but Trev still does that and is one of my best mates.

PS: Is there any ads looking about over the last 10 years, not necessarily ones that you've done and say they are also landmarks for that period.

AY: The Dunlop ad was very much a sort of watershed and I'm sure there's lots of others. Even if someone asks you what sort of ads you like at the moment, even when you do you can't think of them.

PS: If the others don't come to mind, they obviously haven't stuck out. The one I've noticed at the moment seem to be BT Cellnet, its your call, just the strap line alone is evocative with the Labour Government being in, people now have got their own pensions to do, and people stop working and have a life.

Have there been any other sort of major events that have affected the shape of advertising in the last 10 years, database marketing Internet, being the obvious ones.

AY: I think, as you put it, media savvy as people have become more media savvy. You can take more liberties and I think good ads are as important to people as good programmes, they are part of the entertainment kind of thing. People will watch their ads out courtesy, because that just leads to complacent ideas are wallpaper, for me 9 out 10 ads on telly are a waste of money because they don't intrude into anyone's life. It doesn't change the way they think. Having said all that, we don't really have to try quite so hard sometimes because people are quite positively responsive, especially younger people and I think as an audience and as a market they have become more important that has shaped advertising.

Trev and I were working on and doing ads as youth audiences were coming in into the money net. Martini, Pot Noodles.....

PS: A lot of people think Pot Noodles was very significant.....

AY: Again Trev and I were very well awarded for that.

PS: Any idea where some of the luck from the tempo came from. Its the tempo in all the Tango ads that gets me, its fast and furious, and after you've watched it you can't come to terms with what you've seen, so naturally you're going to want to see it again. Is that from watching sport?

AY: No, I think it was because we had so much to pack in it and so it became quite fast. I think the Tango ads were kind of a emotive and sensory reward for people, they got the action, they got the excitement.

PS: One other thing could you do the time line.

Where you creative director throughout it all. Your name crops up so often in all I've been reading, you Trevor Beatty.

AY: I noticed you worked above and below the line.

PS: That's to get a true story of what happened in the 90's. Did you work on the Tango dot.com stuff? It would be worth writing this up in book form sometime.

AY: Trev and I have just done a day long thing with Yorkshire TV. I think its the story they're after. Its on over Easter [2000], a two hour special, and they got in a whole bunch of people who have done the most memorable ads. You should keep your eye on it.

END

shifts in advertising  
late 1980s > 2000  
DAVE WATERS, DFGW

- 1 = key events - 2 = benchmark ads - 3 = Dave Waters in the 1990s

<1985	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• black wednesday</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saatchi's start Saatchi Direct</li> <li>• Run DMC release the single 'my adidas' in the US</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMV (The Economist 'management trainee')</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saatchi's/Tony Kaye BR 'relax'</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness with Rutger Heuer &gt; 1994</li> <li>• Sol Lager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tesco switch B-T-L to Hunt Evans Scott</li> <li>• Tesco clubcard</li> <li>• Heinz switch to B-T-L with WAVV Rapp</li> <li>• shock adv debated</li> <li>• Landrover's direct adv with Craig Jones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cons. win Gen Election</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WCR's Segal 'pirate TV'</li> <li>• "Marlboro Tuesday" in USA</li> <li>• Lowe H-S's Regal 'Reg'</li> <li>• CDP's B&amp;H 'Surreal'</li> <li>• CDP's Hamlet finishes as cigar adv. banned</li> <li>• WCR's 'Act Up' - anti Benetton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tango orange doll</li> <li>• WCR's Segal 'pirate TV'</li> <li>• WCR's Playtex Wonderbra 'hello boys'</li> <li>• BBH Boddingtons</li> <li>• Saatchi's Club 18-30</li> <li>• SPK's Nike 'kick it'</li> <li>• AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• marketing of Toy Story - Disney + McDonalds</li> <li>• LHs Adrian Holmes Condemns 'Yab ads' at D&amp;AD talk</li> <li>• Atlanta Olympics - Inford Christie's Puma Lenses</li> <li>• Calvin Klein's US</li> <li>• Pepsi blue adv. controversy worldwide</li> <li>• internet boom starts - yahoo!</li> <li>• amazon.co.uk</li> <li>• adv. censorship debated</li> <li>• Sony Playstation 'pusher' pres incerts</li> <li>• "I hate Marmite"</li> <li>• Tequila's Marlboro 'cows' stunt</li> <li>• AMV Nike with Eric Cantona</li> <li>• integrated adv. introduced at Bucks. College</li> <li>• Access 'flexible friend' axed</li> <li>• O&amp;M's Guinness 'ritual' [glocal]</li> <li>• HHCL's Ransel - "does what it says..."</li> <li>• 1st Ministry of Sound adv projection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour win Gen Election</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Ogilvy dies</li> <li>• pester power debated</li> <li>• Oxo 'family' axed</li> <li>• .com boom starts</li> <li>• iMac &amp; 'think different'</li> </ul>		

DFGW

DAVE WATERS  
LAUNCH

**Dave Waters**  
Co-founder and Creative Director of Duckworth Finn Grubb Waters  
interviewed at the DFGW offices, 41 Gt. Pultney Street. London W1R  
7th April 2000

Dave Waters (DW) interviewed by Paul Springer (PS)

PS: The thing about the Daewoo, and I find myself referring to it frequently in lectures, is that it assumes the user is more central than the producer. It's no longer just about a product that has a short life, which, if it breaks then you have to buy a new one. What you're getting is the service that goes with it, your buying the guarantee, the familiarity. Daewoo, as far as I can tell, as far as my research is concerned, what you did with the first strategy really did tap into that changing sort of climate probably more in tune than most of the direct mailers. How did that come about?

DW: Shall I do what was happening in the car market at the time? I had the car market in two chunks: you've got the whole pie, 80% of that pie is people who love cars, what you put petrol into. 80% of people want to see their car driving fast in 0-60 figures. Does it look flash, do my neighbours get jealous, is it going to be the best in the street, is it at least going to look a bit sporty, and they're really in to that and that almost overrides the functionality of it, and 20% of the car market, new car buyers, don't care about that. They just want a car that goes from A to B, is reliable and is a good deal. 100% of the car market has a genuine grievance and that grievance is middlemen: car salesmen. Car salesmen are just below estate agents and advertising agents in despicableness - universally known. Everybody knows that a car salesman is going to cut a deal for him and not for you and just around the corner you could get the same thing cheaper. So there is a universal truth that 100% of the market hates car salesmen. There is also 20% of the market that doesn't really care what the car looks like or says about them, so long as it's reliable, good, functional and a really good solid deal, and they will do a deal with a good company. They don't want to pay a premium, but they will pay top parity. So if Vauxhall are offering something and another car company was offering just as good a deal, they wouldn't worry that Vauxhall was a better known brand, they just want the deal. What we said was that the entire car market of advertisers go for the 80% of people, every single car that you have ever seen has been aimed at or every substantial car advert has been aimed at - we'll make you look good, we'll make you look flash, it's got ABS, or whatever it is, high speed, make you look good, make it attractive to girls, double page spreads, all in 60 seconds. And they're advertising models the whole time, that's all they ever do. We're not going to have as much money as Vauxhall, we're going to have a fraction of what they have, we've got a car that's on a par with what Vauxhall had two years ago, perfectly reliable, perfectly OK, but it's not sexy, what do we do to make people buy it. Do we aim at 20% of the market that nobody else is aiming at and what they want is a great deal and the way to get great deals is to cut out the middle men, so if we could do it that that wherever you went to buy Daewoo, you always got the same deal, and there was no haggling, you were never going to lose out, you knew that you would get three years of everything, and it was absolutely solid. You would pay a parity, you wouldn't pay a premium, but you would at least pay a parity with all the other dealers. So our cars weren't cheap but there was the Proton, a very very cheap car, and we weren't going to undercut them, we wanted to charge the same as Vauxhall, but we were giving them a deal of three years servicing, three years peace of mind, really and three years of when the cars away we would give them another one to replace it, absolutely peace of mind, three years trouble free motoring guaranteed. The Koreans came to us with a mediocre product and said 1% of the car market in a year and there was no way they could have done that without doing some radical in the market.

PS: In effect you didn't do a campaign for them, you refurbished them? It seems much more fundamental.

DW: It was much more fundamental, we had also a blank sheet. We were launching from scratch and they didn't have a dealer network in place, they had talked about using the existing dealer networks and selling them through bottom of the range means. We said set up your own dealers, don't have middle men, just have Daewoo men. That way they won't be pushy or hard sell, and they were in the position to do it. The Koreans also said, whatever it takes get 1% of the car market, you just get 1% of the car market, we don't mind how it's done and we were taking on other Asian manufacturers that had been in this market for about five or six years and Suzuki have been here at least that or a bit longer and they still don't have 1% of the car market, we got it in the first year, and we now have 2% which is just unheard of, we have a bigger share than Honda and they've been in for 15 years, selling high quality cars, really good cars and we've outstripped them, but if you go to Honda dealership, you get one price here and one price there, getting service is not always easy. They are not particularly attentive after they've sold it to you. At Daewoo they really do look after you, they honestly do come round and service it and look after you. I think as an advertising agency we wanted to position Daewoo as doing similar things to the existing market to demonstrate establishment, but with a twist. 60 second ads and double page spreads, we wanted to do for Daewoo what VW in the 60's do. They had a back drop of glossy car ads and big promises and big cars, and they did single page, black and white selling, done with wit and charm, but selling on 'you should buy it because of this and

this and this' very reasonable, reasoned, honest reasons rather than just look to your neighbours and we had the same thing when we launched this, everybody was doing double page spreads with cars driving at ¾ angle through a puddle, or going through the Brenna Pass, mountain ranges, and we've never done that, we've always been in the studio and we've always done it on good solid reasonable, reasoned, different looking campaigns. I think it does look different in the same way as VW was in its day, I think they have done for the car market the same, although its not recognised as such yet, but it will be. When people look back it will be recognised like that.

PS: When you do something as radical as this, you must have had a lot of back up evidence to prove this was going to work, we've got to run with this - a huge risk I would imagine.

DW: I think we had a gut feel, I don't think we had any hard evidence. £8million worth in the first year and if you look at Vauxhall they spent £30million in the same year, we had a higher recall figure. But we only ever advertised Daewoo, but we don't do the Daewoo Elvera, the Daewoo, whatever the brand would be called.

PS: But still with £8million, its still quite a risk to be intuitive.

DW: I think the big risk is doing what everybody else does, following whatever everybody else does is a much big risk because the rules of the market says you won't beat them, you won't do better than them. Whatever car was advertised it was always pitched as being slightly better than the last one. Like a load of squares on a piece of paper where this one looks slightly bigger, slightly better, but its not quite so big but its shinier. We said lets do a circle, lets break all the rules, because that's the only way Daewoo will make £8million work as hard as £30million.

PS: Do you have any framing guidelines, that kept reminding you while you were shaping it?

DW: Yes we had the top guy Pat Farrell and a chap called David who absolutely held hands with us through the whole thing. He's really the guy who made it all happen. He said we could be the most customer focused car company the whole world has ever seen, and there was a model in America of General Motors in America doing the Saturn project, which is very similar, they said that GM do however much business, we're not really going to grow that, lets do something else, lets do a little cleeky customer focus thing, called.....have you heard of the Saturn thing. The Saturn cars are sold through the Saturn brand rather than models specific, and they've got people who are incredibly loyal. They have BBQ's each year and they go back and they just look after them. They phone up afterwards, they phone up when its due for a service, they do a look of the things that Daewoo were doing, but its GM run, so they've got a back-up company. Its spreading really well. So its a long slow build thing, and compared to the GM mass product, but its a really good strong growing market. With 2% of the car market over here, we're sort of echoing that. So you could look at that model and say, that's where we're going with customer focus and the watchword has always been customer focus. Every ad we've ever done we look at it and say, is it customer focused, are we putting them first. Is it an honest to goodness offer.

PS: How does that translate to the treatments, because what you get is, am I right, is it always a black backdrop.

DW: No, by and large.

PS: The choice of illustrations (see ~~p. 129, top left~~), I thought was inspired because it was completely on the side of the people, it was a very popular sort of Daily Mail style of illustration.

DW: I had forgotten about that.

PS: There are two side by side, talking about a product ...

DW That was one we did very early on (shows illustrations). I bought these along because I thought it was a good idea to show you. There was about 50 or 60 of these, but when we started we said that we wanted a look that you could spot, we wanted it to be different from other cars. We wanted the copy to be prominent and we wanted to do a 13 point list of things that you got extra with the car. This was a big part of the copy, which is in all these ads somewhere. It was a fantastic offer, we didn't want to have any small print on the bottom of the page, there has never been an ad with small print on it. If you look at any other car company they've got about 3 little lines on the bottom, disclaimers, price correct at time of going to press, that sort of stuff, air conditioning on certain models and certain standards. We said if we're going to advertise air conditioning, we're going to add up every single day we've got, that's what we did. We've got air conditioning, do us an ad for air conditioning and we're put it on every model. We're not going to commission salesmen, that's a kind of a strange one, because that was test drive the car company campaign, but it still looks like part of the main story. Even now we're not doing models specific ads, we're doing we'll service your car free for three years, free. I don't think, if you look at any of those, maybe you would say that was all one year, but its been quite hard to

keep the small print off, because we've had certain things they've wanted to say, where you need small print in. We said, if its important enough to say, put it in the copy or leave it out. The minute you start breaking that rule and say OK we'll have some copy down the bottom then the ad looks different. Its still only single page, we've flirted twice with posters and double page spreads but my feeling is that when you look at them, you think that's what everybody else does. Everybody else does posters and they look exactly the same, but nobody else does outside back covers for cars. Its always second page, double page spread.

PS: What has been the most important factor then. Has it been to make it look different from all the others, or is it to really sell up the service - don't service your life rather than ...

DW: Its both. First off it was to do, three things for three years, in every ad as much as possible. Its always in every ad, even if its not the main headline issue and the other one was for me as an Art Director, we made these ads look different from every other car ad. We got every car ad we could find from the last two months, and we laid them all out on the floor and what you get, I could draw one from you and you would say that's a car ad, a big picture at the top that comes almost down to the bottom of the page with a headline in it somewhere, and there's a car either driving through the Brenna Pass or looking sexy to a girl, or with a family all smiling in it, and there's a headline that witty and clever about how this is built for the city, made for the country, or its faster, or its so fast you could do something unusual in it. They all do exactly the same thing and then down at the bottom you've got four little columns of copy and then you've got an end line - the ultimate driving machine, the car in front whatever.. and we said for an end line we'll do the cheesy thing and say you can't say the end line without saying the brand name, every time you say the end line in the ad, its got the brand name in it and that's air conditioning standard, that will be the Daewoo, always a question, always an answer. Its always the answer to whatever the ads talking about, car company doesn't have commission sales, that will be the Daewoo, who wants you to test more than just their cars, that'll be the Daewoo, three years peace of mind as standard, that will be the Daewoo. I can you every ad, we've ever done has had that on the end. You find journalists pick up on it and they start doing, whose changed the car market for good, that'll be the Daewoo. There's a book from a press cutting saying that every time they do that, it's an ad for us. So we said we'd do a cheesy line on the end where you have to use the product name, which nobody else is doing, that I can think of ....

PS: Make sure there's a loop there for people to latch on to.

DW: Yes, so you don't forget who the ad is, then do quite a small logo and shift the logo about to unusual places. Daewoo always has a list in the copy of all the things that you're getting that nobody else does. We also make the copy an integral part of each advert rather than stick it down the bottom in nice little neat things. If you want people to read it and its got to be on there to read, make sure its interesting and part of the picture. So it was actually Richard Flinton who came up with this, but on the basis that it must be different from all those other car ads, lets do photography that doesn't look shinny and bright and hard edged, lets do it all soft and break all those rules of copy. We've had a Japanese look at photography in the open air instead of using flash guns and it doesn't look right. So we went for studio shots to begin with. That was exactly what we set as our style to begin with..

PS: Its certainly not cars for fly boys, the way it was shot. You had a car in place of the fridge, emphasised great servicing with the actual car virtually in the background. But its almost like a pun on the car, you've got it shiny and reflective, and a highly polished and balanced scene in the TV frame..

DW: The score of the type was always, everybody else does squared off pictures,....does actually have the ads to prove it, they get squared off pictures and the type runs around them. We said, we'd make the type into ke, a saw this thing in Playboy when they had a page of type and they just cut a square out of the type in the middle, and it was all terribly formal and boxy, but they were talking about art and it was made like a frame, where the little visual in the middle and it worked really well as a frame, and I said to Richard lets use that and put a small picture in the middle. He said 'no, lets just use it like a photographic crops, when you can crop in that corner, or that corner, in the middle if you want or at the top, just use the type as crops for the picture'. That's what we've always done, despite the fact that its sometimes difficult and uncomfortable and yet put more copy in than you want to sometimes, but...

S: Its brave though, in every case, you've got the object, the car, playing second fiddle to something else. In this case its the service that's key .

W: If you've got something you want to say, this is talking about servicing incidentally, the mechanic, we want you to not just test drive the cars, because if you did you wouldn't get the whole experience we did the campaign in three hours. We said if you want to test drive a Daewoo, what you really need to do is test drive the whole package, because its so amazing, so come and test drive our people, don't just test drive the car, so the original ad had that not in it.

PS: Do you think there are any other ads that have latched on to the same idea, the only one I know of, certainly to do with automotive, would be someone like Craig Jones and Land Rover, who did a much more directed campaign, didn't use television and didn't use press in the same way. They data based basically and targeted.

DW: We've done quite a bit of that as well, but we use other companies for that and direct marketing.

PS: Who do you use?

DW: I should know that, shouldn't I. All we do is sit in a room together, I know the guy... and we thrash out what we're going to do for the next quarter and then we would agree that the concept should be, then we give them the transparencies and all that stuff comes from the same photographer and they take it and do what they will with it, using the same devices.

They've actually got quite a good database because when we started, we did 200 test drives for free, that was pretty good initiative. Pat came to us and said how can we get a lot more registrations and how can we get a big database. That was the brief. It was actually me who said, why don't you do 200 test drives, thinking they would do 20, and he said '200 test drives, I can't afford to give away 200 cars', and I said 'well, test drives don't go on forever do they, they can just go on for a couple of years'. That happened for a year, and I thought blimp, 200 test drives for a year, that is just an incredible offer. Amazingly, if you phone up Daewoo now and leave your details, you've got a chance of getting a free car for a year. If you've got 200 going, you've got a pretty good chance of getting one. Somebody assumed that people would not phone up though, because it's only a competition, and not like you're going to get one. I thought, 200 cars, test drive for a year, I'm pretty certain that's going to work and we made an ad for it that went out on television once and it only ran one time and the phone just melted down. What happened was, somebody on the radio saw the ad and repeated the number for a week afterwards and we pulled all the air time for that ad, and that radio..keep the calls coming in for a whole week and we got a database from that 30,000 people who were genuine prospects who might buy a car, rather than, they were all people who wanted a test drive for a year. We've built that using the information we got in response to the campaign. We've done test drives ever since then. There are other people who have latched on to that. If you look at the papers there was a thing called Daewoo value, which said look what you get with a Daewoo, and I'll get you a copy out if you want, and it says you get this as standard, that as standard, three years of this, three years of that and then you compare with what you get with an Escort or Vauxhall and is very upfront and ballsy and when you come to the bottom and if you add all those things on the Vauxhall, the way, way more expensive to get the whole package. Subsequently they've changed what they were doing and they do that, look at the value you get with us now. They don't do in the same way, but it's a similar kind of format a chart, Vauxhall do it, Ford do it, I've seen Land Rover have done it as well actually and I don't blame them. I'd do the same thing if I could make the story work.

PS: What were the projects you worked on before Daewoo where the thinking fed in to it?

DW: This was completely fresh for us. It's not a difference in style for the agency. We always approach each problem as a fresh issue. We did Pizza Hut before this which was, the client came to us and said we want to do a themed advertising, branded advertising for Pizza Hut and we want to do an offer every month, so that we can do trial and build the brand. They saw three or four agencies. At the pitch they said you can't do that, you do your brand advertising and then you do your campaign separately. The client had actually said, what I want to do is combined the two, I know it's not actually been done, but can we try it. We said just because it's not been done, doesn't mean you shouldn't try, and we did a campaign called Hit the Hut, where every month we did a new 30 second advert which was disposable in effect, in the middle of it was what shall we do when we want a sausage, we'll hit the hut,

PS: That was 1982..

DW: Yes, that was a long time ago

PS: I should have brought the image along, I went through all the campaigns about 10-15 years ago. Its got images of you on the panels in 1988/89.

DW: Thank you very much!

That was a the same kind of thing in a way, because its contrasts with something quite radical in the market place they wanted to do where we didn't say the accepted wisdom is this, we said look lets have a go and I thought, 'Hit the Hut', if you had a product called Pizza Hut you're not going to say Hit the Pizza, you're not going to say something about pizza, because pizza's a generic word, we're the only people with hut on the end, so we've got to do something about hut, its got to be catchy. Its based on miller time in America, do you know about miller time?

PS: Yeah,

DW: And we said, if you're feeling hungry and you fancy a sausage, Hit the Hut. There were different promotions like Thunderbirds, you had Thunderbirds in the ad themselves, saying what do you do if you want a Thunderbirds cup, you Hit the Hut, or what do you do if want a pizza, you Hit the Hut and you get a Thunderbirds cup and the puppets would do it, it was quite comical and it took about three years before anyone said that's a really good campaign, and when they did they said that was a fantastic case history. Because then its like everybody else knows how to do it. I felt we were breaking new ground there as well.

PS: What do you think has been the strong theme from the last decade. You've got a lot of adverts deliberately setting up, they give you enough props in there to give you a handle or sound bite. They put in hooks so that it becomes free advertising when it becomes common parlance.

DW: I've seen people do that, and I think a big part of that is chance because you get some very strange things picked up on terraces, I think its bizarre what people do pick up on, its very often the bit you didn't suspect and its difficult to spoon feed the public when you want them to take away and I think Howell Henry Chaldecott Lury are probably the best at this, but most of it requires post rationalising some of this stuff. Tango has always had a history of good advertising. I think in the last 10 years they have been the agency that have broken the mould most often and for me, its not so much 'by Tango' as getting it talked about.

In the last 10 years, HHCL did the AA, 'The Fourth Emergency Service', which was just brilliant thinking and I think strategy has been their great strength always. The AA positioning it as an emergency service has just completely pushed RAC to one side. I think RAC will never come back from that, they'll never surpass the AA. They've done it with using the colour, the branding and right from the heart its like they have positioned themselves as the ER of the road, which is amazing considering that RAC was probably doing slightly better than the AA and when you looked at the AA, that really funny campaign that everyone would say that's a really fantastic campaign, 'I know a man who can', but it was just catchy, it was just catchy and thin, the fourth emergency service is just so solid and brilliant, that's the campaign I'm most jealous of, but I think they've done a number of those. I think Fuji was a brave attempt which failed. I think Go has been another stroke of genius, that was a planning thing, how Henry set up. They basically invented Go, for British Airways. British Airways went to them and said, how do we win back all the customers, and they said, well you can't. These people are going to low cost operators, that's the way the market's going, what you need to do is get a chunk of the market. You should do something entirely different, that is not British Airways, but is under the badge of very subtly, and that for me is a stroke of genius, the way they handled it as well on TV, I think is just brilliant, it feels like fresh, exciting and now. Damien Hirst, its got all those things going for it and its just priceless advertising. Its exactly what we're trying to do with Pizza Hut all that time ago, I think its a work of genius. I think they've done it day in and day out. I thought Egg was another really good example, breaking the mould of financial advertising.

PS: They've all got resonance in some of the daily press.

DW: For me I'd like to think so..

PS: The visual treatment they have, traces back, this is the first example I've found of that ilk. I'm including a chunk on Land Rover in my thesis, because I think its very interesting, that they got very close to their customers and yet the campaign is so understated, but accurate. Its interesting because I'm looking at the shift in advertising in the 1990's and one of the real stories is the rise of what became integrated advertising, its very hard to find a bench mark because they've been so direct, where media advertising is clear, obviously Tango the story and that linked quite nicely to the re-appropriation of what Britishness is all about, that's been used. But this fits in very well too.

DW One of our prime examples of that integrated thing is the drugs education work that we did for four years. I'll very briefly give you a potted history. Drugs education in this country was always, Heroin its bad, I can handle it, no you can't you'll going to die, you'll going to get spotty and lose all your money. When we got the drugs business we said, kids aren't really responding to that, kids know an awful lot about drugs, they know they can have a great time on ecstasy or cocaine, they know that smoking pot won't kill you, that probably their parents are doing it and have done it all through college and its a different world. Don't keep telling people that if you take drugs you'll be a heroin addict and you'll die, because they don't believe you and they think you're preaching at them. We said admit you might have a good time, but also there is a very dangerous side to it, and be very honest and give them the facts and what we did with drugs was to say give them facts not fear. That was always our benchmark on that, facts not fear all the way through. Every ad you do, just tell them, here's the real facts, not try and scare them but give them the honest truth and let them decide for themselves if they're scared of it and at least at the end of it they will be more educated and we always put in things like, if you drink too much, you will damage your liver, if you don't drink enough you will dehydrate really badly and that cause liver failure in itself or it could lead to just making you feel absolutely drained for three or four days, we would say something like that in the ads. Then we would ask kids what they thought drugs did for you and then we wouldn't give an answer to it on radio, we would say one of those guys is right and one is wrong or



maybe its somewhere in the middle, but unless you phone the drugs help line, you won't find out for real, get the facts and then make your mind up - know the score, that was the campaign.

That was a really integrated campaign, we did almost no advertising for it. We had a lot of ads in the 'kiddie' press and then we did CD for schools, we did interactive stuff, we did flyers, we did in club advertising, and we did lots of sponsorship, all the festivals you'd find our stuff everywhere. We did no commercials we did some radio, we did some press ads, all the rest was in other media.

PS: Is it a conventional ad agency?

DW: Well what we do is charge for exactly as HHCL, but without all the extra billings. They bought a huge company to encompass the whole span of advertising. We never made that investment, but thought what we should do was offer the ideas, so we sell them the ideas, we're expensive, when they come here, we deal with all the other companies below the line for this and they buy our ideas and our thinking, and we are like business partners with them.

PS: You decide the most appropriate media of execution...

DW: Yes, and I think that's a much more mature way, than saying right we're an ad agency and we're going to make you some commercials or you won't make any money. So we charge them a big fee, we don't charge them any commission if we make an advert, so that way we can say, do some posters, maybe write for this, or don't run any adverts, do a lot of stuff in schools, and they know its honest advice because we're not making any more money out of it.

We've got a team of planners, we've got five creative teams and press department and TV department, we've got probably about 20 account men, co-ordinating. They have to have a planning brain as well, but we've got a team of about 10 planners as well, and we work in project teams, so a creative, planner and account man will handle every bit of business. You get to know the client inside out and work on it properly as a team, rather than planner comes up with the brief, we do the work and the account man sells it, we just don't do that. Sometimes I'll sell the ad, sometimes the account man will think of the idea, sometimes we'll think of the brief and the planners will come up with the idea, its a very mixed up kind of no rule situation. Nobody minds where a good idea comes from here, I spend my time looking at good ideas from every department to tell you the truth.

PS: What was the Independent Television Commission project you did, when you had the man's head looking at the ads of either side.....

DW: I know the ad you mean, it wasn't us, we did ITC the TV campaign. ITC came to us and said we want two cartoons that explain to people what we do, very complex set up, where they are the only governing body that polices all terrestrial and celestial channels, so if its cable dish or regular television, they are the only people you can turn to, to make a complaint. On all commercial channels, obviously the BBC is different and we say no no no, we don't think you should do that, we think this is a serious business, you should tell everyone what you do properly. You should tell them about taste and decency that's a big issue that people care about. We'll first make a commercial about that and demonstrate what you do on that. A kid being shot but it turns out he wasn't, but just watching a TV programme, but his reaction was the same as if he had been shot, it was really horrific. We did another which was both sides of the story, you had guy talking to you and his head would pop up and it was one of those drawings, where you can turn it the other way up and somebody else was on the other side and it would spin back and deliver the other side of the argument. We have to be very open minded and hear both sides of the argument that was another story you should do, and language was another one. We made about 10 commercials for them, each one highlighting one point. That's funnily enough got another slogan which is We're here to ITC you get both sides of the story. We're here to ITC that kids don't see things they shouldn't. We're here to ITC that language is used only appropriately.

PS: .....all on the name isn't it?

DW: Well if you can brand it that way, yes, its quite healthy.

PS: With advertising in the 90's the market wasn't like a decade before

DW: No you're right there

PS: What do you think has been the biggest sea change in the last decade, certainly in terms of the consumer?

DW: Intelligent consumers I think, and advertising to match. The development of fashion advertising has been notable, and I think people have gone from a hard sell mentality to one where you insinuate your products to people. I think Mother are a really good example of that, they don't hard sell anything, they do a very grown up mature, come along for the ride, kind of advertising.

PS: I've been playing spot the difference in the last few weeks, I've been backwards and forwards to agencies to help knock my 'then and now' characterisations in to shape. They've been scribbling on it and passing it back and that is one of the big changes in advertising, its quite subtle in one sense that about 10 years ago everything was being advertised for convenience, now it seems to be more to do with service, partly because of the Internet and partly because of the new channels of communication and ways of doing things.

DW: I couldn't agree more, I think that is one of the really telling changes, that consumers select is fantastic, because that is what the Internet has done for us, because we can now no longer decide what people should look at that, they can now decide what they look at...

PS: Its taken me three years to twig, I've had problems because I've been talking about the customer, the consumer, talking to advertising agencies about the customer, if I try to put it in a cultural context, its 'the consumer' and I think 'consumer' is a 16th or 17th century word and actually people are more savvy than that, they are selecting and they know what's going on and saying what's in it for me. Started to look at quality and advertisers are now pitching on that now. Dot com.

DW: I couldn't agree more, and I think you've got your finger on the pulse there.

PS: The other thing that seems to be emerging and that is what you've done with Daewoo and that the significance of advertising is becoming greater now, its all stepping on....my background before I became a lecturer was product design and research and I worked for Fish and I'm now realising that advertising is fulfilling that role, its crossing the fashion forecasters, the product designers, its now defining what the product should be, far more than it used to. If you go to a Home Page now you just want to see the information they're prepared to give you, you want to find out what goes on behind it.

DW: There's nowhere to hide is there?

PS: I found a direct advertising guy Steve Harrison who worked for Ogilvy. I think in 1993 they sent him to the States to set up a £5 million project of what they called Our Consumer. They wanted to find ways in which the consumer would actually want and be grateful for being part of your brand and staying brand loyal and that was almost a benchmark, and he didn't actually come out with a great deal because no one was really prepared to run with it in Ogilvy, but that seems to be the aim now, how do you make people brand loyal and this is possibly the first to do it certainly through media advertising.

DW: Thank you. I do think what the difficulty here is you have to have a client who is brave enough to not just advertise something but to follow it up, because if you promise something like 3 years servicing and don't deliver it you shoot yourself in the foot every time, and we had an example of the Co-operative Supermarket and we did some ads for them, and we had a really good client there called David Rovey, who at Tesco's changed the way they did everything, with Maclaren, he was the guy who made Tesco's quite a cool place to go in. He came to the Co-operative and he had the same high ideal, and they hired him to turn the Co-operative into a 90's brand instead of a 1930's brand. If you went round the Co-operative before he went there, you would say, yeah I used to go round these with my Mum and nobody would shop there. A big part of his design and the bit that fits with the corporate identity, but also a big part is instilling in your staff that we are not going to treat our people like that anymore, we have got to grow up and service consumers, or whatever you want to call them, or they won't select us. I think that's the really difficult part for management, because you can go round to any agency and get any kind of glossy advertising but if you can't make it like a stick of rock through the company it fails every time, it just fails quicker because people go its not your shit and under the Co-operative, we had a really brave campaign for them, which was like that thing, where they torched the Butlins and said 'right, Butlins are dead, here's the new Butlins'. The truth was they didn't follow it through. They torched one Butlins but when you went there it was the same thing, it wasn't Center Parcs and I think we said to them, we'll do something like that, we are going to set the standard really high and you are going to have to keep up with it. He said 'we can't do that and won't do it, its 20 years ahead of its time. We cannot get the Co-operative to do that'. We said 'come on you're a top manager, you did it at Tesco's', and he said 'but at Tesco's they were given carte blanche and fired all the staff in the bad stores and they hired new people on twice the money, they got new managers everywhere', he said 'I can't do that at the Co-operative. Its not run the same way, you don't have management that will do that'.

PS: What do you think has been the benchmark in terms of telecommunications, do you think Orange has been the one?

DW: Absolutely, I can remember when Orange came in. I was very slightly dubious when it first started, but they started with a highly stylish and criptic method. I can't believe WCRS are going to lose that business, it just seems outrageous. As far as I remember from headlines about a month ago it was in Review, but you have Vodafone and Cellnet both very expensive options and One to One on the outskirts and Orange on the outskirts and 3 or 4 other operators on the outskirts. Vodafone had the whole thing sewn up, there's no way they could have been stepped over in that market and Orange came along with this clean modern typeface and

classic example of design, with phones all you've got is the thing you hold in your hand and what you see on poster sites, other than that there is nothing, its all in the airwaves and I think Orange just made themselves like everywhere brand, that every man who was cool, modern sophisticated, they didn't do price advertising, they didn't do condescending advertising, they did really cool.

S: I've an image I took of a bloke walking down the street. In front of him is a billboard with just the figure on it and another with 'think' on it. It actually had two or three people stopping and thinking...

N: Absolutely brilliant, how cool was that.

S: Yeah, it was beautifully done.

N: When I first saw it I thought oohh, look at the size of the logo, I remember thinking that's logo's too tall, but then I thought its a orange box, what else could it be.

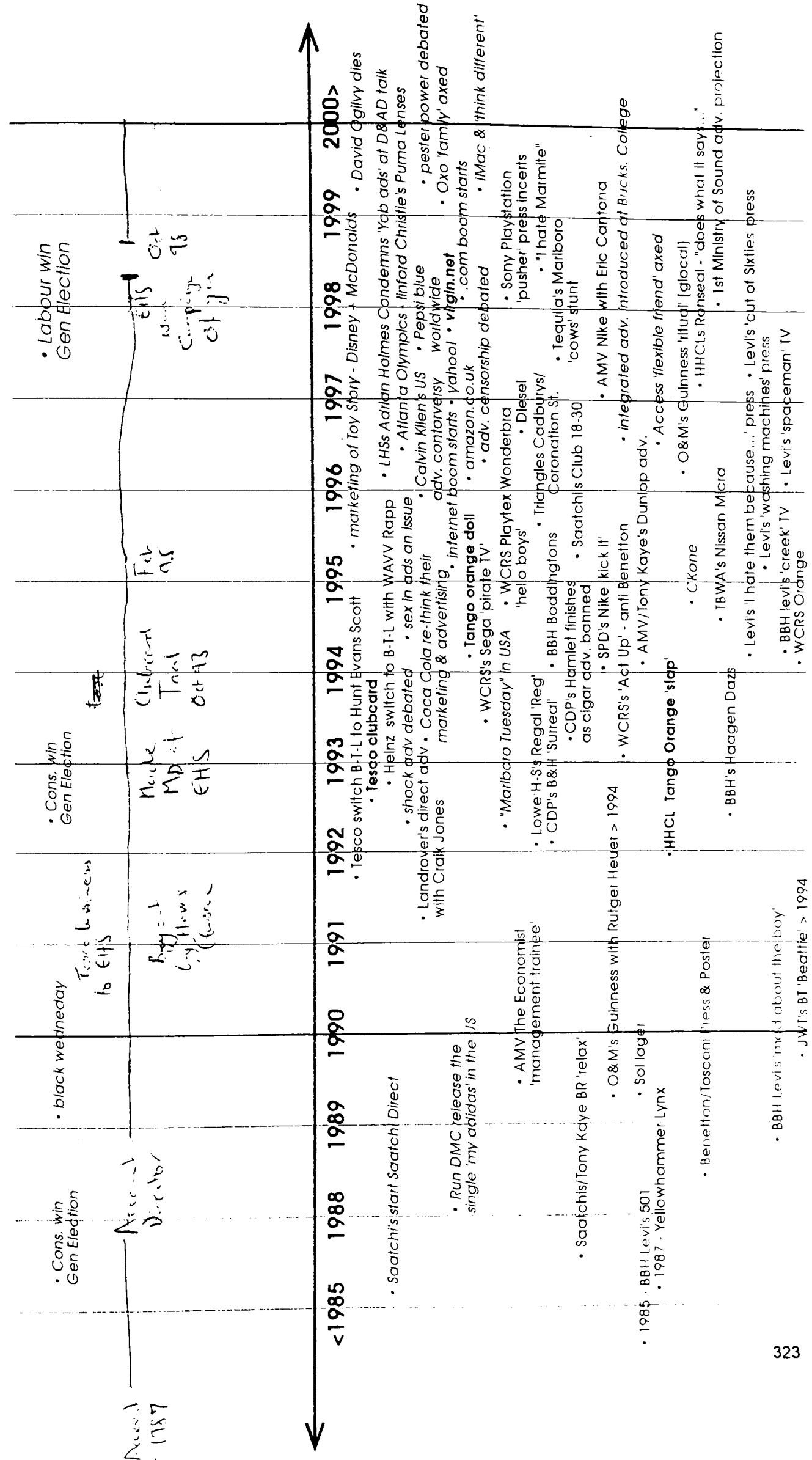
S: Its the timing that got me, the teasers were for me probably the strongest of the decade.

N: Absolutely brilliant. I wasn't sure about it at first,

JD

shifts in advertising late 1980s > 2000  
**JOHN INGALL, A&S**

. 1 = key events - 2 = benchmark ads - 3 = John Ingall in the 1990s



Jon Ingall

Managing Director of AIS (Integrated Advertising), formerly Chairman of Evans Hunt Scott on the Tesco Account. Interview held at AIS Offices: Berners House, 47 - 48 Berners Street, London W1P  
Wednesday 29th March 2000

Interview by Paul Springer (PS) with Jon Ingall (JI)

PS: I've been working on diagrams and trying to get my head round some of the things that are going on - it's getting there, - I'm beginning to realise the correlation between cultural shifts, advertising shifts and shifting between the different terminology and different types of advertising has been quite interesting, I'm starting to get there.

Jl: It will be a fascinating document, once you've completed it.

PS: On different levels, its quite interesting, I can pitch it to be an academic text, its quite interesting that the more I've tried to find texts that have been about the background, and the benchmarks of marketing the more I realise there's a complete void in the market as well. And it's strange the people who miss the equation, the past plus present equals a version of what is going to happen.

Jl: The other thing is I suspect there is so little effective learning material or process. There is little learning from the past its just following the constant change. You build up a relationship with the client, you work with them, they bugger off and you go off, the marketing director goes somewhere else, and you all go right back to square one and despite telling the client, 'no, we did this a year ago and it didn't work'. The amount of time that it takes up is enormous. An entire book could be written about corporate memory or lack of corporate memory from the fact that companies completely forgot what they did a year ago and make all the same mistakes all over again, just because they don't listen to the people who were actually there at the time and remember doing it.

PS: It's a constant now, its like the computer market which is doing something similar. It's constantly doing the same sort of 'constant next' that one, two or three generations were doing without being found out.

Jl: It's the same in advertising. About three or four years ago, Hugh (at Evans Hunt Scott) and I both went to do a pitch to BMW in Japan; why the hell we were doing it I have no idea... Robin White (at EHS) came along and it was jointly between the two of us and Robin White did the presentation. I remember having a conversation with him over breakfast. There aren't many ad agencies today that actually understand how to build brands - they're good at doing ads, but its really the WCRS or the Saatchis that understand that it's long term. You've got an objective, your starting here and you've got to take people from here to here, and in most cases we're going to do three months TV advertising, that's that job done and then we'll go on to something else. Talking to him, and you expect him to know everything and he said, I wish there was a scientific way to go to clients and say this is the science of how to build a brand, you just can't because the creative, they (WCRS) had started to do the Orange work at the time and proved creativity plays such a big part in whether something works or doesn't work..... There is no rule that says if you spend 10 million pounds on TV and 3 million pounds in the press, it's going to have this effect. There is no sort of science as to how you can develop campaigns and say its going to work.

Anyway, shall I tell you about Tesco then?

S: Please do

Jl: It's a combination of two presentations, so I'll try and whizz through them because there's quite a lot here. This was actually for a conference that I did, down in New Zealand of all places.

S: How to journey in market leadership!

Jl: Which was around the time soon after Club Card was launched. It had probably been going for about a year and sort of tells the story of how we got to where we got to. Basically we're saying that there was a big shift at the time - still is - that the shift and the focus being on the product to the customer, from no choice to customers having much more choice meant that everything you've got in the way of promotion is more targeted and is designed to be more interactive than simple 'one way'.

S: The one I got was customer becomes selector...

Jl: Also having more, because they've got a big insurance, they got more control over their buying habits and purchases

PS: ...the framework was from the Henly Forecast Center - I love it because they keep it so terse.

Jl: This was trend that we saw - I'll print you out a copy at the end and from sort of image building advertising to more transaction based, a direct response advertising.

PS: With the shape, were the clients very open to a new way of thinking, rather than here's the brief, taking a few steps backwards

Jl: Absolutely, the original, it was actually Stuart who brought the Tesco business to EHS, which was absolutely tiny, for two years was actually the smallest account at AIS  
All it was was the gift vouchers business, business to business stuff. Worth absolutely nothing. I'd work on Comet and seen that if you did direct marketing around a store, how phenomenally successful it could be at driving traffic into stores. That was, Comet was selling high value products, but it was very infrequent purchases and it didn't take a massive leap. to work out the average customer at a supermarket probably spends around £2 - 3,000 a year there and they are in there virtually every week, if you knew who the hell they were you had a hell of an opportunity to try and increase their involvement, to try and get them to buy more from the store. So Stuart kept badgering and badgering the client, saying, look we've got a presentation we want to talk to you about. We presented in about mid '93 - summer of '93 - to Grant Harrison Jane somebody...as it turned out we were sort of coming at from there, they were already half way down the track and had been thinking about it and they liked the idea, but what they hadn't done is talk through, if they've got all this data, what could they actually do with it. We added that into the mix and how they could use the data to drive more sales and it really just took off from there. It went from there to trial in originally three stores and then 14 stores.

PS: Can you remember where these stores were?

Jl: Stuart will, its Banbury, Loudwater and one south of London.

Jl: Can you remember the original three stores for the trial of club card.  
There was one up North, one out West... the intention was to split the locations geographically and demographically.

This was simply to look at patterns of advertising spend, who is spending what, basically saying that everyone was spending shit loads of money and Tesco was spending less and this was just the way I built up the story. It was all about, I think the fascinating thing for us was

At Tesco our main point of contact was with Grant Harrison, who was the person we originally presented to. He was young, quite dynamic, sat in the corner of the marketing department, and was given this project to look after. He became Club Card Manager, it was great, because we had a real champion in Tesco, who believed that this was where they were going and what they should be doing, but he was very very junior at the time. Our concern was that the further he got up the ladder the less they would understand the real benefits of the data and how they could use that. In actual fact I think that was the thing that fascinated them, the higher it went up the ladder, the more vision they had about the potential and the opportunities to use the data and that was nice and encouraging it went up to Tim Basin who was the Marketing Director, he has a real vision on how this could change the business beyond just the marketing, but actually their core business in terms of what they put on the shelves, their distributions and everything, and then up to Terry Lee, the Managing Director. Again they totally got it, whereas when we presented this to Sainsbury and Safeway about two years before Tesco did this and they both completely ruled it out.

PS: Really, on what basis?

Jl: It wouldn't work, it was too complicated, they just didn't get it, they didn't get the benefits of knowing what their customers want.

PS: They got into database marketing, had they - Sainsburys and Safeway?

Jl: They have now, but not then not in the slightest, and we pitched to both of them, with exactly this idea.

PS: I assume they had database marketing equipment and didn't know what to do with it, is what you were saying, who came up with the strategy who said we can influence this in a way.....

Jl: At the time when we started Sainsburys was absolutely dominate. Its quite hard to think back now to the fact that nobody wanted to shop at Tesco. It was down to their perceptions of Tesco. I think Sainsburys, unlike any retailer in the world had built an incredibly strong brand and quite often if you go to the States, or if you go to Europe, the retailers don't have strong brands, there is very little loyalty, people don't say I'm a ..... shopper, they do say I'm a Sainsburys customer. (just looking at the different no. of stores and turnover)

PS: Were Sainsbury's more upmarket than Tesco?

Jl: That was just the positioning of how people saw the individual competitors, and Tesco at the time was very much seen as second rate. Shabby stores, very promotionally orientated and driven. But they were being hit and there was a whole load of press about how Sainsburys were not delivering the goods and this was as a result of ....this was 93 onwards, really, all of those bad news stories, actually that was 95, was a result of the launch of club card, basically.

PS: That was 92

Jl: No, launched in 95. February 95 they actually launched nationally. The thing that actually really got them excited was the fact that in every store they had masses of technology. They knew every single product that went through the till, where it was on the shelf, whether it was in the warehouse, on the shelf or gone through the till. They tracked their warehouse and distribution system every single one of 25,000 odd products going through the store and we said, you've all this data, if you could just add one extra piece of data which is the name of the customer, which is buying this product you suddenly move into a different league in terms of the information you've got, because you've already got all this product data and suddenly you can associate the customer with all this product data and you'll know that Mr. Ingall is spending x amount a week, and these are the sort of products I buy, these are the departments I'm using and these are the departments I'm not using, so you can start to segment the basis of different clusters of different groups of customers and so identify patterns in terms of shopping behaviour. That's when they started getting excited about it, and that's when they started thinking shit we can really do something with this. So it went into trial in three stores in October 1993, that went for about 6 months, and they then rolled it out to 14 stores and the purpose of the trial was 1 - did it work, what was the take up, I remember having bets with Grant as to what percentage of the stores customers would take out the card, - we all got it wrong, because we estimated about 30% and it was more like 65%. Which....on different values of reward so was there a benefit of giving you 2% back as oppose to 1% back, we trialed different promotions for the base. In fact what turned out to be one of the most successful parts of the programme was the in-store events, which we set up. We actually originally set it up more as a research group to get some customers into the stores to talk to them about the programme and what they liked about it. We sent out invitations to all of our traceable shoppers, aiming to get 90% of people turning up that we invited. The first one was a cheese and wine evening on a Monday night, we would get 300 people coming into the store. It had a massive effect. It went to 14 stores in 1994, at the end of 1994, they had a thing called the Chairman's Conference, which is basically all departments lock themselves away for a week and say what budgets they want for the next year, argue their case and we worked with Grant to say, actually what Club Card should be used for is tactically in any town where Sainsburys and Tesco were directly in competition. It was great tool to give you the advantage over Sainsburys. We never envisaged that they (Sainsburys) would not figure it out. The sheer costs of doing it were phenomenal.

PS: What would the outlay be.

Jl: As I recall, and I could be completely wrong, but in the first year it was something like £75 million was spent on the programme. When it went national, that was in 95. The printing of all the cards, all the database set up, the internal structure, everything that was associated, all the communications that went out and it actually came of the Chairman's Conference, Grant rang me up one afternoon and said I need to come and speak to you this evening and this was the beginning of December 94. He said we've got this problem ... he wanted me to launch it quickly, in just two months we were told. So two months, we estimated to on the basis of take up, 6 million cards were produced in total secrecy. They were stored in a kind of warehouse, 6 million cards. The other problem was getting all the stores IT systems up to scratch to being able to handle it. All of the things like the training of staff, everything, all the point of sale, the advertising, signing contracts to say that we weren't allowed to take shares out in Tesco - it was fantastically exciting to be involved in something like that.

PS: By then you knew it was going to work

Jl: Yes, by the time it was launched, it was 18 months of history that showed, within 6 weeks of going into a store it had effectively paid for the additional sales in that 6 weeks.... the cost of getting it into the store.

PS: What was the initial pull, was it a penny a pound?

Jl: Yes,

PS: What other things were thrown in?

Jl: We tried the 2% during the trial and found that the additional benefit of giving away 2%, particularly in a supermarket where the margins are pretty slim anyway, 1% was the minimum you could go to, and 2% wasn't worth the additional percentage they were giving away. So we stuck at that. We also trialed during the



trial the original application form you actually applied for it, sent it off and then you got the card sent to you, a personalised card. We tested that against having a card stuck on that you could peel off and use immediately and got massively increased take up because people could swipe it that day. So that's why we didn't go down the personalised card route, it was done in store. We trialled all sorts of different promotions, because you can start, we've got a company called Dunn Humby.

PS: Who are they?

Jl: They are a database and analysis company co-owned and run by Clive Humby. They were the first database company I've ever worked with. I worked with them on BMW and they delivered what they promised - they are very bright people, able to actually turn numbers into marketing language that you can actually use to make something. I'll show you some examples of some of the stuff we've done. So we got them involved to handle all the analysis side of the database. The way that it works is that Tesco held the administration database effectively, the points profiles were held in house and sent it to Dunn Humby who were then responsible for all the analysis and the segmentation, the identifiable groups, trends and that sort of thing. So we used a lot of segmentation that we had done in the analysis during the trial to be able to diagnose typical buying habits. We tested out a series of different communications and we knew that male non wine buyers with a wider offer, we would get significant enough numbers to go in and buy wine to make it worth doing.....knew what was happening. So they came back and said they wanted to launch nationally. The original story was Ian McClowie said he wanted to launch it in February and the internal IT people said no way until July that we could have the systems up and running. He said that's not good enough we want it by February. I think he was somewhat driven by rumours that there was somebody else. We knew that there was a card printer somewhere, printing 3 million cards which we suspected was for another grocery retailer, and we wanted to make sure that Tesco was out there first, as the first mover was clearly going to have an advantage. It turned out it was nothing to do with a retailer, but a credit card company, so it didn't matter anyway.

PS: How far after Sainsburys?

Jl: Sainsburys was year to the day, after Tesco launched. Safeway came before Sainsburys if I recall, because Mr. Sainsbury came out with a famous quote straight after the Tesco launch, that this was ....green shield stamps.... that it would never work and they would never do it. I only recently realised, I don't know if you saw that programme about it, it was on not so long ago

PS: The shop in Banbury - is that the one?

Jl: Yes, yes I hadn't realised it was Sir Ian McClourie that killed off green shield stamps, so it was actually an incredibly brave move, having killed off green shield stamps to be the first to introduce a technologically advanced version of it. They could be another type of .....

PS: What did the Tesco presentation of ideas have in it that you didn't have to your presentations to Sainsburys and Safeway?

Jl: Absolutely nothing

PS: Exactly the same?

Jl: Yes

PS: Blimey! They were just further forwards in their thinking.

Jl: The very fact that he said this was just another green shield stamps, they didn't get the fact of knowing who the customer was and I suppose the thing that we bought was a complete change of mind from Tesco's point of view. Historically they measured everything by sales. So they measured the store by sales, was the sales up, was the sales down, they measured their own performance by sales, suddenly it allowed you to measure customer value, as oppose to shoppers store value, so you could say an individual customer be worth £3,000 to us this year, could be worth £3,000 or they could be worth £5,000, we got to divide these other products, so the total sort of, turning the whole thing on its head and looking at it completely a different way. That's what they just didn't get. Sainsbury's just didn't get it at all, and I remember digging back through and the documents were filed away at EHS and reading the presentations, and looking through them and they were pretty much word for word what we presented to Tesco.

PS I'm assuming they must have a database for archives at EHS still, do you know who would be the best person.....

Jl: Terry Evans would be the best person to talk to. He was on the creative side, so he wouldn't have a bloody clue where they had got to, but I'm sure he could find somebody who could. They are in the cupboard behind the accounts dept. or they were!

PS: I won't mention that I've spoken to you

Jl: Oh that's fine.

PS: It's going to be like that

Jl: Yes it is - in the cupboard, 3rd file down behind the Accounts Department!

Jl: This is basically what we presented to Tesco - The Challenge. The potential is there, but even if you can get all of this, how do you use it, what do you do with all the data you've got.

PS: You told them you could identify every shopper by name, how do you capture your shopping habits, the time they shop, how often, what they buy, how much they spend, how do you manage such a large potential volume of data and how do you use information effectively. In other words, it's been a very strange decade in that for the first half technology has lead rather than thinking has lead the technology and technology has evolved at such a rate that people have just about come to terms with one....

Jl: When we were doing this, two years prior to this, it wouldn't have been possible, the technology wouldn't have allowed you to and if you think about you've got something like 12 million customers going through Tesco in total and its something like 10 million a week or something ludicrous. Just tracking 10 million customers every week, so its 52 x 10 million pieces of information that says that customer has shopped in the store and then 25,000 products that that customer has bought in that store every week and you just multiply and multiply to this ludicrous amount of data and if you think you can fine a system that is able to hold it and manage it, there's a danger that you will get complete data blindness, because there's so much of it, that you can't see the important elements of it. That to be honest often happens, you would find Dunn Humby had done entire document, that thick, on the sausage department, which identifies some fascinating things about people's buying behaviour of what sausages they bought. Frankly, what the hell do you do with it, its not... even if you sell twice as manu sausages as a result its not going to make an impact on the business, whereas if you have this massive group of customers who look like the people who'd buy wine in your store, but aren't buying wine, they're clearly buying wine somewhere else and you can get them to buy their wine at Tesco instead of Oddbins, or wherever, you've got some significant benefits.

PS: Did you have to do a lot of preliminary background before you came up to this point, or is this lateral thinking around what they have?

Jl: It was purely lateral thinking around what they have. This was a slide straight out of the presentation to them, you know that products are sold, you know when they are sold, you know where they're sold, you know how much they're sold for, but you don't know who bought them. If you can add this one additional piece of information, you'd gain a much better understanding of customers needs, you'd be able to serve their needs better and you'd be able to react to change faster, you'd know the trends, you'd actually see them happening, see people moving. Ultimately you can get them to buy more products.

S: The opportunity... Was that the first generation?

Jl: The first generation you can see in the trial which was the personalised card before yours (see illustration LXXX). Your card is the second generation, the personalised version was a trial card, that was very early on.

PS: We first launched in October 93, three stores, we looked through all different forms during the trial. We actually looked at the paper based system and realised that trying to manage 6 million pieces of paper flying around as ...

S: How did you devise how far to go, because I know the company Tequila did work for BT where they have a 150 paragraph database, judging on your buyers habits, your user trends, they put them together. They put a sentence in one of them which said we notice you haven't been using your friends and family that frequently and people were like, 'hang on, how much do you know Big Brother?!

Jl: That was a concern, surprisingly, and that was a concern at the trial and again another reason for limiting the trial was how far you could push it. Surprisingly it had very very little, virtually zero backlash on that all. It was actually frightening, I remember during the trial going in and seeing the then very small customer service phone handling people set up at Cheshunt. Went round that and you can't picture it until you get there and you've got somebody on the phone and whilst she's on the phone the operator will key in and actually see

what that person bought, see the list of products that person bought last time she was in Tesco. That to me was quite frightening, because there was to me somebody who has access to the knowledge of every single product that I buy and you.....

PS: Click away at the ATM data at the cash point...

Jl: It is, this is almost more frightening, because this tells more about you as a person, the sort of products you buy, so there was a concern about that. I think everybody was always very wary of going to specific in terms of saying things to people. The key to it was always trying to use the information to offer relevant products and services to customers, without saying aren't we clever, we know what you buy and we're offering you this. We wanted the customer to get things and think, 'oh great, I can use that, I can use that - I'm getting a really good service from Tesco, it's worth being part of this'.

I think customers are smart enough to say I get the 1%, I get the vouchers, I get the benefit for doing it, that's the sort of pay back for me giving them the data and information. I think its careful use of the data, not talking to people too specifically. We did get a few things, where because it was literally down to the individual you would get people ringing up and saying, oh I got a mailing today and I got a voucher for Stella and my next-door neighbour got a voucher for Heineken and I prefer Heineken, why did my next-door neighbour get that. House to house to have to be slightly careful. The other key which Sainsbury's never got was the whole idea of this, the whole thinking process behind Tesco doing this was communication with customers, so they saw this quarterly mailing as an absolutely key part of the programme and that's one of the fundamental difference between the club card and the Sainsbury's programme where you get the reward on the card. The reason that's so critical is, if you think about it from the stores point of view and you know that you're mailing 6 million customers with effectively millions of pounds worth of vouchers, you can create a focus around the store at the point of sale, all the staff are briefed, all the stores are briefed, everybody knows what's going on. They always describe it as having another 4 Christmas's every year, because you suddenly have this mass of people coming in with additional cash in their pockets to spend which you don't get at Sainsbury's because you've constantly got people taking a bit here a bit there, you don't get that same focus. So that communication, they always saw as a natural key part of the programme.

Jl: How does it work? Well that was the application form at the time. I'm sure its been updated since then. So basically the card was stuck on to it, you filled that if you took the card off and used it immediately, the number on the card which was also on the mag stripe linked back to the number which would be on here somewhere. It would then go into the database and the two were matched together, this is all data captured and then every time you use the cards, it links directly back to that customer.

PS: I wouldn't mind a colour slide of that...

Jl: Yes sure, the biggest problem with this is its got so many pictures, its a massive file, trying to e-mail it anywhere ... I'll get it on CD if you want.

PS: Thanks

Jl: This is how it worked - swipe card in store, every store has their own in store database and it was more of a technical issue than anything else. Overnight all the data from that store was down loaded and then back loaded onto the stores database. It may have changed now, but certainly in the early days, as long as you had a home store and your home store held your information, when you got your till receipt, it would say your amount of points this quarter, you can only get that in your home store, because that information is held on the in store database. So that all went overnight down to head office, that would then drive the communication, the quarterly mailings that went out which would put cash back into people's hands, which would drive them back into stores. It was a nice virtuous circle. That in itself as a promotion, would have worked absolutely fine, but what we also added on is that all of the data then got passed to Dunn Humby - the outside data bureau. That allowed them to do all the segmentation, provide information, the management information and drive all the direct mailings, which again without another dimension to the programme and the sort of information we could get. I'll move from this to the other programme, because that's got more information about segmentation.

So on the database, 11 million customers, which are updated daily. We know who they are, what they spend, how much they buy, where they live, how often they spend, what they buy, the demographic data, ie the family make up. It provides a massive amount of management information, both at a store level and we would produce, or Dunn Humby would produce what they call floor health checks. So you could look at a profile of a particular store and understand the make up of the customers at that store. I remember just looking at one, it must have been Arundel, for some reason comes to mind, and you look at the store profile of when people are shopping and it was sort of, whilst some would be up and down during the day, this one would hit a limit and be absolutely..... and never move. Why does this sort of hit this and it turned out the car park was too small and the limit of the store was limited by the number of spaces in the car park, couldn't get any more people in the store. They increased the size of the car park and that changed the whole dynamics of the store and that's the

sort thing you can do which is beyond the market and beyond communications and it enable the customer segmentation and it drove all the communications.

PS: It can be shaped by adding new facilities like an extension of supply and demand..

Jl: Absolutely. The ultimate extent which we were already working on at this stage was Tesco Direct, the home shopping side where you can actually use all this data to drive the genuine individual.

PS: Did EHS do that?

Jl: Yes, I'm not sure, I have no idea if they're still doing it, but certainly we did the original trials back in, originally in '96, I think it was. Originally for the Social Services to deliver to old people, those who couldn't get out. This gives you some idea of the volumes of data that are being transferred.

PS: 11 million profiles being mailed electronically to and fro?

Jl: Phenomenal amounts of data going backwards and forwards. The way that they managed this which is very clever is that instead of - they did a poll for every single customer and every single purchase that he bought. What they did was take slices of data, so what you would have is a slice of data which would track, 25 - 60 stores tracked all products for all customers, so it was right round the country, we had a base of every product for every customer. We also had a sample which was all products for some customers. There was another slice which was for particular brands. We could track a particular brand, across all customers, so if they wanted to find out what was happening with Persil, they could track that one brand across every single customer and find out who brought Persil, or who didn't buy Persil. If you think about the potential from the knowledge of that and you're launching a new washing powder, historically you would launch it in the usual way and some people would go and buy it. But for the first time you could actually see, not only who was buying it and what sort of people were buying it you'd also know what they were buying before they moved to the new brand. So were you just cannibalising you're own brand, if it was new Persil variant what? Was it just people who use to be buying Persil or are you actually adding a new market to those people. So from a product point of view there was massive potential benefit to be done and that's where they've were talking to the likes of Neilsen and Brit artists and all that sort of stuff.

PS: It's difficult not to underestimate this but wasn't it the power shift between brands and products certainly a huge catalyst?

Jl: Oh I remember talking to Heinz and at the time they had moved completely below the line and obviously they weren't happy with media advertising because it wasn't working for them. One was with Tesco, where basically they were interested in getting the products data, and at the time Tesco were very much against the product data going out to manufacturers and the stupid blokes sat there and regarded Tesco and said, well what can you offer us? He said frankly I can't offer you anything, because you know a million times more about who our customers are than we do. The darn thing is that all this work could ever only be based on coupons and the only way to track was coupons going into the store and the ironically was that I could have built on the back of Tesco's their database, more accurately, quickly and more effectively than Heinz could ever do. But it was quite frightening when you think they were spending, God knows how many millions of pounds doing their own database programme when Tesco actually owned their information. All the things they actually needed.

PS: All this is removed from other BTL work done before that. Rather than thinking 'right we've got to render if not a campaign then a strategy to get information going' the project addressed the bigger picture, you actually considered the infrastructure, how that should be shaped, which has got all kinds of implications for...

Jl: Well you could imagine, the launch of club card and the database had an effect on every single part of Tesco's business, it was a marketing campaign or a promotional campaign. It fundamentally changed the way they do business.

PS: ...I've been working on an analysis of changes in product design during the 20th Century, I had design like the Phillippe Starck toothbrush, the three circle icon Mickey Mouse, the Apple Mac which were all design and producer centred, but ultimately you have the consumer centred 'product', which is were Tesco's come in.

Jl: These are just some of the basics of information that they never knew before. 50% of their revenue came from 21% of their customers. Top 5% of customers accounted for 16% of their revenue. Bottom 20% of their customers only accounted for 3.2% of revenue. You could argue that with that knowledge you could basically say lets get rid of these people. We're spending a lot of money talking to people who aren't worth anything and lets focus on these people. There were a few marketing articles at the time that suggested that Tesco would start doing that, which was completely never discussed to be honest. The whole point...

PS: .....the potential surely, if they're not spending enough.

Jl: The whole point is that everybody has to buy groceries, so if they're not spending at Tesco, the chances are they're spending elsewhere. What we found was one week, they would shop at Sainsbury's, the next week they would shop at Tesco, the next week Waitrose. They were completely disloyal to anyone. There's the opportunity, if you can turn these people into people who were spending regularly, there's a massive opportunity. That was the whole point, because as long as you can identify the relevant things to the relevant people to try and get them to do what you want.

Shoppers segments - this is exactly it. We segmented it into four key groups, loyal customers, opportunity customers, who are the infrequent shoppers, new customers, who had just joined the programme in the last six weeks and lapsed customers, who had been on the programme and then disappeared. That was the basic shoppers segments. We then had segments by life stage, so you could look at the different age groups and we had these groups which we called 'cast their way' cast their way, shop at Tesco's more than twice a week, so any frequency less than that. You can see the value of tracking the spending.

PS: Is this post club card?

Jl: Yes, this is all after, this is all data we got as a result of club card.

PS: What do the figures along the bottom signify?

Jl: This was average spend per week, so you've got, if you look at a weekly spend, the people who are coming in more frequently are spending more money overall. If people are coming in infrequently, then their average spend in a week is much lower. So frequency is key, that's an important element, as is also value of spend as well. It allows us to do interesting things like looking at the different groups and seeing how to do rankings of products. That's an interesting one, Tesco proved that the highest index product is prunes for pensioners. It tells you exactly what you would expect - for students it was fish fingers and Ragu.

PS: Linda McCartney burgers as well for students, you could almost push this little pen picture...

Jl: This is exactly what we did, we then created little illustrations for the stores identifying people in different groups.

Jl: Let me just quickly whiz through and you can then pick up the key things and then I'll get you a CD of it as I said.

Jl: There in 1996 £120 million pounds was paid out in rewards.

PS: Wow, what was the increased sales to balance that?

Jl: I honestly can't remember, but a lot more than £120 million. You can get that from looking at their sales figures for that period. Tesco should be able to provide that.

PS: Increased sales figures between 95-96.

Jl: There might be some on the back here, I'll have a look.

PS: How long do you think it took before it really took hold of the market when you actually measured fairly the impact of club card.

Jl: If you look at the end, let me see if I've got it on here. You can actually see exactly what happened (looking for slide) .....market share had gone up 15%.

PS: That's huge

Jl: Yes massive. This was the early stuff on the Tesco Direct.

PS: When was the presentation - 97?

Jl: Yes 97. Horsham and Scarborough - it hit a limit and instead of just carrying on going up which was when we found the car park was the problem. This is actually very interesting, they identified that even the very best shoppers who can't stay away, only used 12 out of 15 departments. But the interesting thing was and this is departments, the number of the departments, and this was the one where there was heavy or medium spends in and this map shows that you

look at this compared to the next one, so they can't stay away compared to the infrequent small shoppers, that their not just spending less, but they're shopping in entirely different departments in the store. So their purchasing behaviour is a totally different type of behaviour. Its not just that they are coming in and spending less frequently, they are buying completely different products. I'll have a look and see if I can find some other different data.

PS: It picks up so many shifting trends in the 90's, these for Tesco were benchmarks?

Jl: There was a slide that I've got somewhere that showed basically the market share between all four major brands and literally about 3 weeks after club card launched, then Tesco overtook Sainsbury's for the first time. What I've always said, it wasn't club card that did it, they were, they had had 5 or 6 major initiatives that were pushing them up there. They had done one in front, they had done a big in store push on service.

PS: What do you mean one in front?

Jl: One in front, was when they basically said no customer would have more than one person in front of them in a queue. The idea was for a first class service initiative which was basically empowering the store staffs to treat customers as they would like to be treated themselves and in responsibility. Just things like if a customer had a query about a particular product instead of somebody saying oh I'll go and find Fred, they were told it was your job to sort that customer out as an individual, not pass them on to customer services.

PS: Why is it called club card?

Jl: It's like club culture you could say, like airport lounges. I can't honestly remember.

PS: Because Club and Tesco are not something you would associate together at that point but its part and parcel. The reward card makes it sound more specific, club card makes it sound like you belong and you're one of them, its the most.....

Jl: It's very much about that, getting people to feel they belong to something.

PS: I know Ogilvy One spent millions in comparison trying to conduct campaign research called Our Consumer which investigated ways of making customers brand loyal. Club Card I suppose is a version of that.

Jl: (Pointing to a diagram showing the comparative impact of Tesco sales post Club Card) There you can see, its January 95, the red line is Tesco, the dotted line is Sainsbury's, that's when club card launched, so you can see a pretty immediate affect.

PS: Maintaining market leadership.

Jl: I've got three or four various different presentations, with different information in them, so I'll put them all on to a CD.

Takes number and address e-mail etc.

Jon Ingall's background

Evans Hunt Scott

I joined in 87, I joined as an Account Manager.

Jl: We've always tried to position ourselves at the forefront of communications. We believe totally that an agency should be able to provide a strategic creative service, that is totally integrated, and I hate the word integrated because it is so overused, but I think what we are doing for Virgin net demonstrates exactly that, basically if you start with a proposition, you should be able to create campaigns around that that totally work together whether that's in direct mail, signs in toilets, TV advertising whatever, you should be able to work that. I think above the line agencies are unable to deliver the genuine relationship marketing below the line. Most direct marketing agencies don't have the strategic skills or ambition able to create the brand advertising, and I did a lot of research towards the end of EHS talking to Marketing Directors saying in the ideal world going forward what sort of agency would you be looking for, and they said basically one that could bring the branding of strategic skills above the line, but marry them with the management and detail skills of below line relationship building skills, and data skills, that's the way the world's going, that was very much the model for setting this place up.

Our feeling is that in a way, at a critical time when so much is changing and there is a big challenge to respond to that change from agencies point of view, most of which like to bury their heads in the sand and hope that it will all go away.

HHCL made a big thing about integration, they won the AA business, the whole lot a one point, above and below the line, everything. But their idea of integration is that they can now produce a mail pack that looks like the TV campaigns, that look like the press ads. It was nothing about database or the relationship market and I'm not surprised that about 3 months later they lost all the below the line and it went to Wonderman. It's a very different way of thinking and they don't get it.

General chat about his time at EHS

We won Campaign Direct Agency of the Year, we had grown from 45 to 225 people, we had done club card, we'd done Windows 95, we'd done BMW. When I took over in 93, we were out in Edgware Road, we had gone bust two years before hand, we weren't making a profit we couldn't get on any new business lists and literally winning that award and for going out with the whole agency. I've achieved everything I wanted to do at EHS, what do we do now, we just get bigger and bigger and bigger, slower and slower at a time when clients need agencies to work faster and faster. We were known as a very good direct marketing agency and that was our skills that was and it would have been wrong to try and change that into something else. It was like, if I don't do it now, I never will. I've always wanted to do my own agency and I thought if I wait another five years, I'm going to be too old and knackered to have the energy to do it and I literally 3 days later, walked into Andrew Harrison the Chief Exec, and said I want 4 months off, completely go away, don't know when I'm going to come back, I'm going to do something else. But from there until there 24 hours a day I was EHS and it was work, work, work, work.

END



**Terry Hunt**  
**Managing Director of Evans Hunt Scott and Co-Creator of Tesco Clubcard**  
**Interviewed at the EHS Real Time Offices, Soho Square, London.**  
**4th July 2000**

Terry Hunt (TH) Interviewed by Paul Springer (PS). Hunt worked with Jon Ingall in the mid 90's on the Tesco Direct Advertising Account.

TH: I plan to write a book on clubcard.

PS: Oh right, that's going to be too late for me.... How far at the moment...

TH: Well we've got it delivered by February next year.

PS: How many words do you have to do?

TH: About 12,000 I think.

PS: Right and what perspective are you doing it from?

TH: Its really clubcard as a model for retail, but its using clubcard as its main case history but taking lessons from it.

PS: .... its a definitive thing in its own right. Clubcard's got more infrastructure than anything else had in advertising. First of all who was on the original team for that, for the concept onwards, I imagine you had Tesco's as a client already.

TH: We did but only on a very polite basis. Essentially there was a team of Grant Harrison, Marketing Director of Tesco and the data firm Dunn Humby. I'm trying to think of the other character who worked at Tesco and reported to Jim Hazen. Anyway Grant Harrison was the main mover, though he did have another colleague who was on the project and they were looking at the opportunities to exploit any their new ethos system and all the functionality of that which was you could identify by swipe card customers, and they were actually in charge of saying why would we want it. So they were looking at what possible advantage that would have as function to Tesco. It was at a time when Tesco was pretty weak about 91-92 between the rising Asda and the potential threat of discount stores from Germany and America and the cost cutters, which never really materialised in the end, but was seen as a very big threat. Then the rock of Sainsbury's at the other end, which was still very strong at the time and Tesco not really having a place and not seen as having leadership presence - not strong or good on price at the time and not actually as good on service and quality as Sainsbury, so it was losing its way a bit. That has been acknowledged by people like [chairman of Tesco] McClaran in his book, 'Tiger by the Tail'. It's not very good, but worth looking at. We did a presentation - Jon and I - to Grant Harrison and his colleague (who I can't remember). Essentially the purpose of identifying customers by name and address was that every time they shopped and collected all the data you can on free transaction. The model we gave them at the pitch was my Mum and me - the fact that my Mum shopped in Tesco at least twice a week, spends at that time getting on for £6,000 per year, had probably another £3,000 of discretionary grocery budget that wasn't going to Tesco and we painted the transitional picture, that if she took her account elsewhere, you wouldn't even know it. We looked at a typical store and every version of my Mum walked out and you didn't have any way of tracking them or the effect they would have on your business and then take my budget which was something like £7,000 per year. I used Tesco perhaps once every seven shops and you've got no way of knowing that I drift in and out on a very irregular basis. Basically you are only catching 15% of my grocery spend, what are you going to do about it, and this was basically saying through knowledge you can actually defend an attack, you can then ring fence your best customers and then identify your opportunity customers. Then you can put an opportunity value against households. So its basically saying loyalty is not a passive strategy, its not just skipping stuff away that will make people like you, its actually giving stuff away in exchange for knowledge which you can then use proactively to drive your preference.

PS: This final presentation you did with them, where did the strategy come from in the first place? Was it based on an audit of Tesco and you assessed what they had there, because they had database.

TH: Its just applying the best practice in Amex or the mail order companies, or anybody who is already a data dripping organisation, already had these multiples that they work from. If you looked at what was the lifetime value, what was the share of whatever they were getting, what was the opportunity and then basically if you apply that to a mass retailer, its pure common sense really, it wasn't done particularly scientifically. Its just saying here is best practice in another industry and you have the technology apply it to a different scenario

PS: So what were the role models?

TH: Well, mail order which is the traditional one. Readers Digest, Amex, all kinds of service companies, Banks to an extent because some of their ways of working were quite advanced, at least in the theory of data driven marketing and the fact that you looked at different segments of your base and you looked at what was the potential spend and you matched it against your existing identifiable spend and you try to work out strategies to take as much of it back. That was well established as a way of thinking, it wasn't well established as a way of thinking in retail.

PS: Where did the term Clubcard come from? Because that suggests you are in a group and have a sense of belonging.

TH: It actually was generated by Tesco themselves, they decided if they were going to do this they were going to own the generic, which I think was very sensible of them. We were actually counselling that club, unless you actually deliver on club its over promising and under achieving and club means more than just a bit of plastic. The Card is self explanatory, that's fine, but they decided that they wanted to own all the words. So Clubcard became a Tesco generic that they could develop and control.

PS: Do you think it could have only come about in the middle of the 1990's - would something like that have worked 10 years before do you think?

TH: It was physically possible to do it before. It is all these strategies are completely driven by what is technically and economically possible and you would not have been able to run these programmes in a robust way.

PS: In a sense people were becoming more discerning, you had a slightly more intelligent nouse of consumer that were prepared not to buy in to something completely, but were prepared to..

TH: I don't know, I think there's a bit of a myth now that consumers are more intelligent than they use to be, I think they've always been pretty smart and the technology actually makes it easier to make a virtue of how smart the customers are.

PS: Do you think the perception of the customer has changed over the decade, do you think its more or less a continuum of earlier understandings of the customers (or indeed the perception of the consumer themselves)?

TH: Definitely there's a massive shift in respect from retailers to customers, they are less treated as fodder, one way it enables them to more closely observe their own reasons for buying and associating with products and services. Everybody was saying they were customer focussed, everybody was saying the customers were at the heart of what they were doing, and that wasn't actually true, they were making some lip service to that and retailers were generally about big numbers, big averages, and looking at market share, rather than customer share. What has happened is that Clubcard happened in Tesco, and it is now possible to look at how different customers are and actually identify cohorts, groups of customers who have shared values and tastes and preferences whatever. I think by making people more real to marketers, it does help make them just their imagination more and treat them as human beings, its not that they didn't treat them as human beings at all, but they were much more anonymous and they are now much less. Customers are very 3 dimensional now to Tesco.

PS: What was the time scale of the whole of Tesco Clubcard project - was that in 92?

TH: You are really testing me now, I think it was 92 the first presentations of the winter. 93 was the trial year, I think it started in the spring and it went from 7 stores to something like 14 stores and then over the Christmas period it did particularly well so the Board of Tesco met either before or after Christmas and said we want this rolled out early, because it was going to have another year of testing, so it was rolled out in February 94.

PS: I remember Jon saying that when the cards were being made, somebody else were having cards made at the same time. it was a worry...

TH Well it was Safeway I think, because ABC happened at almost the same time. There is a dispute as to who came to market first. I think Tesco were the first to become national, but Safeway was very advanced.

PS: What is the main difference between the two. Do you think they got it as right as Tesco?

TH I think almost by accident, Clubcard got it completely right. This was not strictly by accident, there was a strategy that we mail, as oppose to have reward at till and I suppose to say we're going to be customer

centre, you should actually say the customer should opt for a reward whenever they want to and we should give freedom to the customer and we should give maximum flexibility. Actually that would mean, and Sainsbury's Reward did that, that it really didn't do much good for the business. What you fail to get is the sales effect and what Tesco did was to say no we're going to save up the reward, send it to people and really concentrate people's attention on the benefits of this programme four times a year and then we're going to mail. It was a way of controlling it basically, as a management talk, and what happened was you got these enormous peaks of the sales around the mailing time, which basically to use the business its awesome, its fantastic, its brilliant, instead of seeing a dribble of redemption, and seeing it all through the year, you actually controlled the sales pattern and Tesco then invented four new Christmas's a year, as you got these enormous peaks. I think that was the real advantage that clubcard got because it concentrated consumers minds and the business minds on what this programme was for.. to everybody else it almost became part of the wall paper, just there and it was very difficult to isolate what was the business effect of it, which is why Tesco is 100% committed to the scheme, but I think at Sainsbury's its pretty fragile.

PS: There's also room to manoeuvre. Tesco can move the Clubcard promotions anyway they like, its an infrastructure rather than a final advertising campaign..

TH: In the end it goes well beyond advertising. I think Jon probably made the point is that the by-products of this enormous source of data that data is used in its first loop to make the offers and the additional value added propositions more relevant to the customer, so there's in my club membership, I get more relevant messaging and more relevant offers. If you then take that data off out of clubcard, and you use it as a unique memory for the business it drives everything else. It drives pricing policy, it drives unique stock policy by store, it drives whether you open 24 hours or not. Its a memory. Its a unique moving picture of their business, which no other research can achieve.

PS: On what basis did you work with them then, because it certainly wasn't as an advertising agency. It seems that that the solution that you came out with and ultimately the impact that the strategy had, is much more to do with business advice than mere advertising communications.

TH: But that's always been the case for direct marketing, DM has always been as much about communication as the output at the end, but it is actually more a business solution approach which is what, if you go back to basics, the scale of the opportunity is - how many people are in this, what is their current value to us, what is their potential value to us, what is the most efficient medium to communicate with these people, what propositions can be make that will encourage them to shop more frequently, or whatever. Its always been much more to do with sales efficiency which is pretty good grounding and that is based by evidence, which is the data they get, as opposed to seperate attitudinal market research. The task direct marketing uses is different to conventional advertising because it is much more to do with driving behaviour as well as driving attitude.

PS: Were you given a tight brief to start with, or was it open ended and you defined....

TH: The actual testing of Clubcard was very much a joint activity between us, the guys from Tesco were very advanced in their thinking

PS: You didn't have to sell the idea to them?

TH: No not really, we had to demonstrate our way of thinking was as advanced as their's really. They had a pretty good picture of what they wanted to do. What we managed to do was demonstrate through our direct marketing background, lots of different applications of data, lots of different ways you can cut the cake and make propositions to different groups and really give extra dimensions to the relationship. In the end it was almost a coincidence of people at the right moment at the right time having shared thinking with.

PS: It was a team of you?

TH: In the beginning it was Jon Ingall and I, Pam Hira here, Grant Harrison, Caroline Bradley of Tesco, Jim Mason, Tesco, but we were starting very small. Dunn Humby came in just prior to the actual roll out, so they would have come in in late 93, I would think. We had the 14 store test going through.

PS: What do you think have been benchmarks over the last decade for direct advertising because it has changed so much. Heinz when they moved to below the line from media advertising, Tango perhaps, Land Rover has been a constant. Do you think there has been things that stand out?

TH: I would say BA Exec club, which predates them, I would say Next Directory was ground breaking, I would have said that all of Amex from day one. A lot of these is not agency driven, a lot of this is strategically driven by the client

PS: Its easier figure out the benchmarks in media advertising, and even to map out the changes..

TH: Yeah, its much more covert, the strategy is quite small that affect it, I mean Ford's commitment with a joint edge with Wunderland was quite a step.

PS: Who do you think were they key movers and shakers in advertising in the last decade, if it was the people who would be synomous with Saatchis in the 70's and then you get the work of John Hegarty in the mid 80's, then Tony Kayes film direction and maybe Trevor Beattie's work in the early 90's... is there anyone else you would single out?

TH: Somebody who is very underestimated mainly because they do so much of it is, there's an agency in it, I would have said Watson Ward,.... John Watson actually, not the most unfairly unreverred actually, because what they introduced was mass scale application of DM data technique and it convinced an awful lot of big businesses. Its not necessarily the prettiest execution always, but that's not always the case, but they have been a very professional outfit, and they have changed the environment, I think.

PS Do you think the clients perception of advertising has shifted, certainly more accountable now than it was a decade ago.

TH I think there is much less lazy thinking now. People have to squeeze, sweat the pound, make it work better. You've got a new generation of senior marketers came through, who had a much broader education, better marketing training and a lot more scepticism of big budget advertising being the solution for everything, it just fell away progressive over the last twelve years, that that was a viable business strategy. It just became less and less tenable.

PS: Back to Clubcard again, when you got the first presentation, what did you have to emphasise, was there anything you ball pointed particularly that Tesco weren't already aware of?

TH: Well I think we described first 'mover advantage' to them, I don't think they had first 'mover advantage'.

PS: By which you mean?

TH: By which I mean that if you do this first you identify who you have, you also identify who you don't have, and by implication that means you know who your competitors have. To what extent they have actually used that information isn't always clear or to its full potential, but it was an exciting prospect that if you come in first to this sort of scheme, store by store you can identify by name and address the key audience and your secondary tertiary and you can look at the catchment area for that store. You can look at the households by who should be yours and who shouldn't, because obviously location is the key for criteria of choice and then you can actually physically pinpoint houses within a street, who are not shopping with you and are therefore shopping with a competitor. So its basically mapping out, having a detailed map of whose in and whose out and we described that quite well, I think. Therefore if you are a first time shopper and you are what we have come to call a magnet scheme shopper we can hopefully track you. Magnet schemes will hopefully turn a lot of those opportunity customers into regular customers immediately, then you immediately know whose going to competitors and if you want to you can ease on it?

PS: What the secondary phase then? Clubcard's been rolled out (up and running) in 1994. What do you call Phase 2?

TH: Phase 2 was holding onto the tiger tail. It was just the sheer scale of it, it was unprecedented to be honest, to go from nothing to 7 million mailings, four times a year, up to 20 then 30 then 60,000 different segments.

PS: Did it increase their share price?

TH: Do you mean share of market, or share price?

PS: Share of market.

TH: Whether or not it was the only influence, there's a debate. They got a 1 ½ %, they leapfrogged Sainsbury, within that period of launch, before the first mailing came out that was early 94. The first half of 94 they had a 1% lead, which they held onto and has grown now to something like 3 or 4%. It is worth tracking, its gone through DTI, but you can track precisely when clubcard happened and that leapfrog and as the mailing programmes you can see this blip of share. It is pretty unconventional. It had a substantial affect on the share.

PS: Had you done a project like this before, or was it fresh thinking completely?

TH: There's nothing new under the sun, but it was definitely of that scale, and different techniques brought together and it was probably unique for us.

PS: What other projects had you worked on before that filtered into Clubcard?

TH: Well in retail there was nothing. We actually didn't do any retail. Retail DM was pretty dull, it was all to do with account cards, like Debenhams card, which were probably an example of a good account type relationship you can build. Really the work we were doing and were best known for were like BMW and The Economist, which was more sort of smaller scale, the advantage there was being able to use all the techniques of direct marketing but in a brand sympathetic way, so the brand was built through direct marketing and I think we were quite famous for that.

PS: What did you do at The Economist?

TH: We did all their subscription marketing, still do and have done for 15 or 16 years.

PS: Promotional

TH: Its basically turning occasional new stand readers into full committed subscribers and that subscription ratio had gone up from when we took it over at 30% to something like 70% readers subscribe.

PS: Do you in direct advertising work in a similar way to media advertisers in your working methods?

TH: Well sometimes it like that and sometimes its completely different. Sometimes you start with an idea and work back, because that concept in our terms is not necessarily a communications concept it could be a promotion, it could be a media .. who knows. That predisposes that that creative product is an ad, often it isn't anything you could identify and put your finger at as a piece of creative work.

PS: So you still produce ads here. Define the problem and then decide what's the most appropriate means.

TH: I think we say creative is not a department, its a commitment. Everybody is there to sell ideas, even if they're data ideas or they are media ideas, they don't necessarily touch the creative department at all. The creative department is there technically to produce print or on line media communications, but it doesn't always end up like that. It could end up with a joint venture with the Times and the newspaper does all the creative work.

PS: .....as such the traditional agency, I'm getting very clear conclusions - traditional advertising agencies have invested the media plus the bill boards and the TV commercial, and that's what they have been pumping where we deal with an industry that is more flexibly based that isn't committed to the media, it means.....

TH: It's curious that amazingly creative people are so besotted by one media, in fact that is the only reason that they are in that business is to make films and therefore the output drives the solution. I don't quite know how long clients will put up with that, because basically they are using their money to promote somebody's career, - they are acting like patrons than clients.

PS: I was wondering why, until about two weeks ago. Trevor Beattie took me on a shoot for FCUK (French Connection) TV and Cinema ad, and I can see why its glamorous now. It was a lovely set, a lovely house and the quality of their working life was quite nice.

TH: A vested interest in keeping it going. There is always going to be a place for big glamorous TV advertising.

PS: What do you think the thresholds are now, because there are frontiers for advertising; for environmental advertising where you have adverts on the risers of steps, and people say 'hang on we can't avoid the advert there', that is sort of one threshold. The other I would say at the moment is where you get direct advertising calling people 'selectors', meeting banks and you call people 'risks' and you've got this collision, talking about the same people if you like.

TH: I don't think there's going to be one model, there's going to be a whole host of different models, and I think the question of permission of marketing is very important. I think it is a very important thought, where people buy the right, negotiate the right to communicate.

PS: I've been playing spot the difference between what was happening in 1990 and what's been happening now? It's a mixture of lots of people's ideas put together so far - just some of the changes that have become standard now is 'customer is king'.

TH: I would say that that is quite arbitrary, probably in the 90's we would say customer is king and in the 80's its the same. Its been a progressive thing just how genuine that it. I think now its more than lip service, but still you will see a massive investment in customer care, but I think that is a bit arbitrary.

PS: I talked about advertising in the 90's, Britishness and I ended up talking about Clubcard at conference full of sociologists (at the University of Central Lancashire's 'Relocating Britishness' conference in July 2000). I thought many academics subscribe to the idea that advertising is simply a Capitalist tool and think little further of it. In the event I sensed that perceptions had moved on and were less pre-judgemental.

TH: If your basic premise is that anything commercial is sinister, then you would look at it and say, OK they're not doing it for the fun of it, they're doing it for a commercial advantage, therefore it is wrong, therefore it is sinister, big brotherish. And fine if that is your view, its very difficult to put a different interpretation on it. But if you come with a view that commercial activity is actually quite positive, it keeps jobs, it drives choice and it gives people happiness to an extent, all we're saying is in order to do that more efficiently and to do that with more relevance you use data. Data helps you change the proposition depending upon who you are talking to and the only way you can get the data is by engaging in people in some way to gather the data, in exchange for reward. As long as you are up front, straight and transparent about it, customers don't mind, customers like it. Sociologists may not, but customers like it.

PS: With my background as a cultural historian, I would say that 10 years ago people were banging on saying 'oh hang on its advertising, isn't it commercial' and argue that of course it is but after enterprise culture of 14/15 years plus, the middle ground has shifted now and people expect. We live in a commercial culture, and people read through the hard sell...

TH: I do think social commentators are surprising naive at times. You read what they say and think oh 'get real'. Basically people enjoy being consumers, its not a con, people actually enjoy being consumers. All right the degree in which that consumerism is taken and you can worry about it certainly as being in the broad area, lives are made happier and lives are often or because people engage in it in a commercial way. Now its a contract through, if brands don't live up to it, if brands overstep the mark, they will lose out. Its an explicit contract and people are careful about it and people are as much as possible transparent about it, then they don't lose face. Its a strange unlegislated area, there's social balance in it. I think somebody who isn't out to do a hatch job, do quite well, investigate the social contract in the commercial world, but they are actually quite complicated.

PS: By social contract you mean?

TH: Ie that it is not an adult to child thing, it is adult to adult, where people are, with the Tesco model giving and getting. We're saying gain permission to talk to you in exchange for getting more accurate vouchers. Customers are giving us that permission so that we can give a more relevant message and more relevant offers.

PS: So what about permission marketing, where advertisers are buying peoples time to show them ads?

TH: Clubcard is permission marketing, we are buying their right, the right to talk to them, we give them money back. People are, again misinterpreting these sort of schemes, we've done permission marketing for 10 years

...I would say that clubcard is pretty up front and honest about it, there's no hidden agenda here, everybody knows they get the information on me in exchange for me getting money back, but they've explained it to me and made it pretty straight forward and they have practically guaranteed that they have information for everything other than ... giving me some offers. As long as Tesco, which it will, lives up to that, I believe there is some pretty honest trading.

PS: Before we wind up, can I make sure I've got the order right? In 92 you did the first presentation, 93 is when you had the trial, late 93 is when you had Dunn Humby involved and you were producing the cards late 93/94.

TH: That was over the Christmas period and February 94.

PS: Was that the trial run?

TH: That was the full national run. It would be worth clarifying with Clive Humby, but I think that was the 339 sequence. Dunn Humby was talking to Grant Harrison as well.

PS I'll get this transcribed and I'll get a copy to you because it would be useful for you, if you're putting a book together.

I think for me the Tesco project is going to be a metaphor for the growing significance of direct advertising in the 1990's and how it was part of a much bigger communication launch.

TH: The total launch budget, the implications of yet are something like £70million a year, not spent through this agency, but the shift in investment towards Clubcard and getting the cards out there, funding the rewards, getting the telly marketing up and running in Dundee. Then doing the mailing, all of the sudden where did the campaign cost of £70million come from? It came from the fact that they spent half of their budget on TV advertising. They had shifted massively how they spent their marketing budget.

PS: Was the mailing from Dundee?

TH: No, it was telly marketing.

PS: Where were the mailings done from?

TH: It was the old Maxwell prints organisation, they handle all the print. Is it Western, basically the suppliers have been pretty constant. There has been us, Dunn Humby, it used to be called The Print Corporation, but its now called something else.

END



shifts in advertising late 1980s > 2000  
**TIM MELLOR, GREY AD**

- 1 = key events - 2 = benchmark ads - 3 = Tim Mellors in the 1990s

<1985	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cons. win Gen Election</li> </ul> <p>SAATCHI e SAATCHI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cons. win Gen Election</li> <li>black wednesday</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Saatchi's start Saatchi Direct</li> <li>Run DMC release the single 'my adidas' in the US</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AMV The Economist 'management trainee'</li> <li>Saatchi's/Tony Kaye BR 'relax'</li> <li>O&amp;M's Guinness with Rutger Heuer &gt; 1994</li> <li>Sol lager</li> <li>1985 - BBH Levis 501</li> <li>1987 - Yellowhammer Lynx</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benetton/Tosconi Press &amp; Poster</li> <li>BBH Levis 'mad about the boy'</li> <li>JWT's BT 'Beatle' &gt; 1994</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landrover's direct adv with Craig Jones</li> <li>WCR's 'Act Up' - anti Benetton</li> <li>AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cons. win Gen Election</li> <li>Tesco switch B-T-L to Hunt Evans Scott</li> <li>Tesco clubcard</li> <li>Heinz switch to B-T-L with WAVV Rapp</li> <li>shock adv debated</li> <li>Coca Cola re-think their marketing &amp; advertising</li> <li>Tango orange doll</li> <li>WCR's Sega 'pirate TV'</li> <li>"Marlboro Tuesday" in USA</li> <li>WCR's Playtex Wonderbra 'hello boys'</li> <li>Lowie H-S's Regal 'Reg'</li> <li>CDP's B&amp;H 'Surreal'</li> <li>CDP's Hamlet finishes as cigar adv. banned</li> <li>SPD's Nike 'kick it'</li> <li>WCR's 'Act Up' - anti Benetton</li> <li>AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> <li>Cikone</li> <li>TBWA's Nissan Micra</li> <li>Levi's 'I hate them because...' press</li> <li>Levi's 'washing machines' press</li> <li>BBH Levis 'creek' TV</li> <li>WCR's Orange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heinz switch to B-T-L with WAVV Rapp</li> <li>sex in ads an issue</li> <li>Coca Cola re-think their marketing &amp; advertising</li> <li>internet boom starts</li> <li>amazon.co.uk</li> <li>adv. censorship debated</li> <li>WCR's Playtex Wonderbra 'hello boys'</li> <li>Triangles Cadburys/Coronation St.</li> <li>Saatchi's Club 18-30</li> <li>SPD's Nike 'kick it'</li> <li>AMV/Tony Kaye's Dunlop adv.</li> <li>Cikone</li> <li>TBWA's Nissan Micra</li> <li>Levi's 'I hate them because...' press</li> <li>Levi's 'washing machines' press</li> <li>BBH Levis 'creek' TV</li> <li>WCR's Orange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>marketing of Toy Story - Disney + McDonald's</li> <li>LHs Adrian Holmes Condemns 'Yab ads' at D&amp;AD talk</li> <li>Atlanta Olympics - Inford Christie's Puma lenses</li> <li>Calvin Klein's US</li> <li>Pepsi blue adv. controversy worldwide</li> <li>yahoo!</li> <li>virgin.net</li> <li>.com boom starts</li> <li>adv. censorship debated</li> <li>Sony Playstation 'pusher' press incerts</li> <li>"I hate Marmite"</li> <li>Tequila's Marlboro 'cows' stunt</li> <li>AMV Nike with Eric Cartona</li> <li>integrated adv. introduced at Bucks. College</li> <li>Access 'flexible friend' axed</li> <li>O&amp;M's Guinness 'ritud' [glocal]</li> <li>HHCLs Ransel - "does what it says..."</li> <li>1st Ministry of Sound adv. projection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour win Gen Election</li> </ul>				

SAATCHI → PUBLICIS → MELLOR → GREY

**Tim Mellor**

**Executive Creative Director of Grey Advertising, formerly Creative Director at Saatchi & Saatchi and Gold Greenlees Trott. Interviewed at Grey Advertising Offices, Great Portland Street, London. W1. Thursday 27th April 2000**

Interview by Paul Springer (PS) with Tim Mellor (TM)

PS: I'm still trying to work out what the benchmarks were in the 90's, because it was something other than the audience.....

TM: Before I worked on the Holston Pils (anagram) campaign there was the idea that you didn't give it all away at once, the assumption is with a poster that people will have the number of times and they may not get it the first time but there's a reward in working out the anagram or what, the concrete medium was, the kind of metaphor, a visual pun.

PS: What about the way in which Silk Cut and B&H, acknowledged that consumers were a more sophisticated audience, you could laugh along with them?

TM: B&H was the start of it (from the late 70's), B&H was considerably earlier than Silk Cut, and no-one had ever done anything like that and there was a commercial and I still think it was one of the best ones ever made, with the iguanas which was even the music which I think was done by Godley and Cream and in that commercial, the motif of the eye, I've seen it many many times and you don't notice it for a long time. You notice the iguana and yet you never see the person who is observing, a real surreality.....

PS: Did Silk Cut similiarly set out to do emotive and sophisticated, surreal looking advertising?

TM: No, it started with literally 'Silk and Cut' and the interesting thing about that was, that it was supposed to be an international campaign, but of course it's a pun and it doesn't work in any other language, and it was very British, very literal British (ironic) humour, I think Charles Saatchi had some pain killers, because he said he had a pain which felt like the image of slicing across silk and he had it in his mind to do that...

PS: The Italian surgeon Alberto Burri and more obviously Lucio Fontana both did work that resembles the Silk Cut slash.

TM: Yes, that's it and I think. Charles (Saatch) had a picture he brought in to show the creative team. Anyway, it was his idea and then we went off and shot loads, about 10 different versions, of Silk being cut and arranged. It was quite hard to shoot really.... the amusing part came thereafter, because you couldn't have 10 years of silk being cut, but interestingly enough, people read sexist overtones into the Silk gash. There were writings about it being a vagina, I suppose what's interesting is that if you leave it open to interpretation you also leave it open to a negative interpretation as well.

PS: One of the things I've noticed, which has happened in the 90's is that by open interpretation is that you get a lot more publicity that would have cost you a fortune. Benetton latched on to it .....there are many campaigns around that period that had entendre's or were left open ended rather than closed in meaning. Tango did very well out of it....

What for you were the real winds of change in the 90's? Around that period, I think you had been at Saatchi's, with GGT and you had your own agency before you came to head up Greys.

TM: I think what happened was that creative people wanted more management action. There was a generation that had grown up in the 70's, that by now were old enough to be considered management, some did, some didn't. So I suppose, and it was a generation that had not actually replaced itself, so there was a big gap, in young creatives stamping their authority. I took on more responsibility when I was at Saatchi's. I worked with the generation before and the team was only a very small group of people, but in my generation, there was a hell of a lot of us and I suppose one of the ways we decided we could survive was to be in management, rather than just party animals.

PS: So that was a key change?

TM: Yes, but I think for example, some didn't make the change very well, Greenlees, was not a particularly good manager, so he didn't make the change very well, (Tony) Cracknell did. He was a good writer, and became a management figure to some degree. But then went too far and became Chairman which is an interesting lesson for us all. I also became Chairman of my own agency, which is not a good role for us, we don't do it very easily. So there seems to be only so far up the management ladder creative people can go.

PS: Is that to do with the specific training for business and knowledge of organisational structures and finances?

TM: Yes, but I think it also depends on character. There are some people who can do it. There's kind of (Dave) Abbott (of Abbott Mead Vickers). Abbott was the Managing Director of Doyle Dane Bernbach when I was a writer there (before working at Saatchi's). He became the Managing Director and then the Chairman, and to a degree I suppose he had made the transition because he was the creative in view on the board. But the idea was that it brought I suppose people on the creative side in to the main stream of advertising business.

PS: You are also of the generation that applied what they learnt at art school (rather than coming from a training in Advertising).

TM: No, there was no training for writers whatsoever. It was luck of who you knew. Basically and I think two agencies had copy tests - (J Walter) Thompsons and Ogilvys (and Mather) - but in general writers came from very different backgrounds, and I think that was a rich source of thinking and probably there isn't now. Art Directors still tended to come from art colleges, but a lot came through the studios as well then and that doesn't happen now, which is very sad really.

PS: What was your background pre-advertising?

TM: I worked on a magazine, but basically I've been in different parts of advertising. I started as an art director, but mostly I've been a writer and I got my job through the labour exchange. I left university with a degree in psychology, which was a complete waste of time. I applied for architecture, and got a job in architecture and found I was no good at engineering drawings and got the sack and then the next day it was advertising and I got into it through being a runner basically.

PS: Art directors and copy writers together even now are accredited in pairs. Has it been like that in your experience, with the copy writer looking after the wording and the art director taking complete care of the visual campaign?

TM: No, obviously not. I would say there is a mutuality in the job, but there isn't a mutuality in my opinion that college is giving now, so that people don't know if they are art director or writer. I think you have to have a vibe or bent one way. I've worked with art directors, who are very very good at writing lines for posters, they tend not to be as good at writing scripts. But they may well have the ideas and equally I regard myself as someone who is very visually inclined. In many ways I am more visually inclined than verbally or written, so when I first started the visualisers were in a different department to me and it was a bloody nonsense.

PS: How has the nature of copy changed in recent years, I know that the ration of type to image has decreased and, more colloquial expressions are used. It is more about the shape of the letter forms and how they relate to the image, and there is a much closer correlation between...

TM: Were you thinking of head line or copy?

PS: I was thinking head line and the overall linkage.

TM: There's a revival at the moment of that 60's typography where form followed function, and people played with the appearance of type, and for many years it was absolutely horrendous to mix type styles and now of course de rigueur, to the point now its become too boring, but that's the 60's trick. The trick was in the wording and the typeface. You know in the 60's it was a big thing, that was when I was working on magazines in the late 60's and early 70's and it was a big thing to do undulating type if you were talking about seeds or any other 'product' that was hippish. A lot of it was based on popular sounds such as jazz, and the type often suggested going outside the picture. That kind of irreverence, with the odd cropping of pictures, gave way to two decades of very formal looking ads. If you take for example the basic template for the VW ad, when I was working for Abbott Mead Vickers we were given the number of words basically we could use on the thing and it was kind of squared off, pitched to a generalised idea of who the reader was, half tone, and you start with a joke and you finish with a joke and it was almost like doing Latin. I think for two decades you could more or less say there was a structural form of headline and image sizes, and really in the 90's that started to fall apart and the more irreverent. The more playful kind of look came in which now has gone too far again, so there will be a backlash and what will come back will be formal layouts again and formal writing. You are talking about copywriting, which was what your question was. Now it is, in my opinion, a nonsense. Nobody reads it. The actual copy on an ad, who the hell reads it? I know I don't. We had all this trouble about whether we should have a big copy award at D&AD, and give prizes for copy. But the fact is only advertising people read advertising copy. Things aren't sold in that way.

PS: Do you think that copy now is still useful at all in press ads? My first year advertising students, before they are primed to analyse ads, tend to sample things like they do music. Their attention span is so short, they

look at the headline, the look at pictures in the magazine, then they will go back, then they will take another couple of lines. Their reading seems to be flitting about the page, pretty much like their reading, sampling information, and they are either darting....

TM: Yes, its that barrier thing of cutting off and just trying to rearrange it and its.....its all those things. There is no feeling for content or about form and I think that is appropriate. This is the most visually literate age that has ever been. Communication to them is driven by so many images. If you watched a whole day of MTV very little would register with you, you'd just be numb. My great fear with imagery is that in another part of my life I trained as a psychotherapist/analyst and I worked with people's dreams and dreams are an immensely rich source of imagery. All surreal paintings come from dreams. What has happened is the images I have thought were peculiar to me when I was a kid, I've seen on MTV, I've seen on VH1 and it seems ridiculous, but I think there is not an inexhaustible supply of images and what would be a tremendously potent image at one time, they don't appear quite as earth shattering. The pictures of cows in a field for example, which I think was a Pink Floyd thing, which was a really powerful image, as was the Dark Side of the Moon which was a prison, which was a fantastically clear and simple image, but now that kind of image is common place, and you see in ordinary magazines - I'm not talking about art or design magazines - incredible imagery produced by Macs and there will come a point where I don't think they will have that impact and I think that is when people will move back to a more formalised, simpler and I suppose more Bauhaus way of doing things.

PS: That sort of answered a question I was meaning to ask, was 'what so far do you think has been the impact of new technology?'

TM: Incredible, absolutely phenomenal.

PS: The expectation your industry has pushed to clients, has lead to the space between the concept and the final thing closer now because you can make things look more finished easily.

TM: There is less room, its a double edged sword. One level there is less room for inventiveness because clients expect quick results. If you take any bad existing picture you can put your image in and it will give you variety of painterly finishes to dress it up and make it look polished and finished. There are lots of odd tricks you can do to make a rough concept look like the finished business which is nice imagery and weak communication. Before that you would have had to send out to a retoucher or to a processor and it would have gone away for two days, now you can do it instantly. So there is a tremendous capacity to allow the machine to invent for you and there is a laziness in that. At the other end of the scale it creates opportunity to produce things that would need a lot of skilled people. Now its someone that's Mac trained with good communication skills. I think for example, the image of a Chinese Bjork on the cover of her album is absolutely astounding. I mean really spiritually deep and I think a lot of what Bjork does shows she is marvellous at manipulating her own image and she is a child of this generation and none of that would really be possible before.

PS: Is that the exception to the rule? Do you think the term 'crafted' is something advertisers use a lot to describe the shaping of an ad? Do you think things are still crafted in the same way.

TM: There will always be a number of people who can artistically put together what others miss and those same people tend to craft what they do with a love and they use it with love and it makes it special and different, yes I think that's true and its true in every area of creative endeavour.

PS: How has the perception of the client changed in advertising over the last decade?

TM: Almost wholly in the sense that, historically for example, a marketing manager would be paid far less than an account manager in an agency. Now that position has been reversed and its been reversed all the way up to the point where, marketing directors can earn huge salaries, so therefore they have been able to get brighter people, they've been able to get the pick off the milk round, where advertising agencies now pitch harder for accounts. Once the banks have taken people out, once the city has taken people out, so the standard of intelligence of clients has increased if that is a function of salary and I take the view that it is, so what you get is people who are confident, pretty well educated about what you can do and its another aspect of technology, and well aware of what you can do. Its now true that a marketing director has a shorter shelf life than a football manager. A football manager averages 3 years and a marketing director averages 2 years, so therefore you can image the incredible pressure they are under. Their area is marginalised because in financial institutions, the financial people in companies are always asking, well can you prove it? So there has been a huge move towards provable, there's been a huge move towards I want it quicker, because I've got the demand thing and a huge move towards cheaper, from a group of people who now know very well what's happening. There is no way advertising agencies, who have historically pulled the wool over clients eyes, if I'm being truthful, they can't get away with it anymore and in a strange way that's real change but its also quite motivating. The magic has been lost. We owned the magic at one time, now Mac and clients, they all own the magic and its a magic that's accessible to anyone with the kind of degree of intelligence you get in marketing 344

companies. In fact its interesting, the term marketeer is a 90's terms and its a much banded word and they are very valued people because there is a good bounty of them and its probably gone too far.

PS: Are they, the marketers, in the 90's what the planners were in the 80's?

TM: Yeah, planners have become laccies to marketers. Planners have been exposed for their vulnerabilities, marketers have always been there, it used to be called research and it was a lesser function, because the demand on the marketeers is so strong. The only evidence they could get seemed to be through planners, so they embraced planners. Planners in general help the strategy, but also they can take a lot of wind out of the sails of creativity. They claim often that they are the ones who generate the creative edge. I don't buy that. I've been in the business long enough to see people 'creating edge', long before the planners were there to do it, but they serve a useful function, in that they oil the wheels between client and agency. I think that their danger is that they are responsible but not accountable.

PS: Benchmarks; what for you have been the most outstanding adverts, the ones that spring to mind, or the ones that you think have made such an impact that they have affected the way in which adverts have been produced in the 90's? In my list of questions, I've suggested Tango because it looked cheaper and more immediate than other ads at the time or before...

TM: I don't think it was because it was cheap. I think it was because in a world where we are bound by regulations it seemed to dance the thin line of being kosher, which of course is clearer now, as they've just gone over the line. Are you talking about the first orange one, 'Slap'? I thought it was a brilliant advert because oddly enough it's the same kind of brilliance Chris Tarrant had in Tiswas but somehow he is not seen as creative or respectable and this was. But to me its very much the same kind of thing. It's not the Fast Show which is intellectually rather snooty and much cleverer, and is not Ali G which is obscure and intellectually superior. It is literally slap dash, its pantomime. I'm not in any way decrying, I think its a fantastic ad, mainly because its works so incredibly.

PS: What other benchmarks were apparent at the time?

TM: I'll tell you where I made a mistake on an ad. I reviewed the First Direct commercials which Stephen (Henry) and Axal (Chaldecott) did and I said they were rubbish, and I was absolutely wrong. Looking back I now see exactly what they were doing, I just couldn't see it at the time and I think it was remarkable and very very brave advertising, and there a strategist had had an input, as the same planner did on 'The Fourth Emergency Service' (for the Automobile Association). I think I wanted to react badly to First Direct. Now in the context of what has come afterwards, it doesn't seem that radical, but it was radical and I really applaud their thinking. When you review these things of course you don't have the hindsight, I did the same on a Dunlop commercial. I thought it was either tripe or brilliant and I couldn't make up my mind, and I still actually can't. But I was wrong about First Direct. I would say that was the most significant, probably the most significant change of direction in advertising. For the reason that it worked to no known rule book and it was relevant to a new way of banking. If, as I first thought it said nothing, I thought it could be read as just being throw away, but what it said beneath it was, was we are tackling the way you are thinking about banking. This is different. And again, people took notice of it and First Direct has been very successful.

PS: The buckets were the very first one they did for First Direct. It has a sense of being brand new, it was jarring, it cut through everything you could see on either side of the ad in a commercial break.

TM: Yes, that was what I was reviewing..

PS: The copy was reflecting something like a new approach to banking.

TM I think that was really, really good. I thought about them afterwards because I realised I had made a mistake....

PS: What else do you think maybe typical of the period? I've picked some out on my list of questions. In the late 80's you had Halifax Building Society's 'Easy Like Sunday Morning', where you had a guy in his penthouse suite, his cat needing milk, a sense of tidy organisation and control, whereas in the late 90's you get the Yellow Pages guy, where he goes back to his flat, it looks like its been trashed, and there is a realisation about who the male consumer is and all that that implies, with little in the way of aspirational lifestyle anymore.

Beyond that you've got the copy for IMac, 'Think different', sounds like it could have been scribbled on a post it pad, it was the jargon which I thought was quite interesting. And also Cellnet's, 'It's Your Call' as well, at a time when the Labour Government was devolving responsibility, saying take charge of your own lives, your own pensions, you determined your own destiny, you got BT saying Its Your Call. Any spots that you've made that you think that it is typical of the now or typical of what's gone on.

TM: I think that (the agency called) Mother's Super Noodle ads are very popular now, the idea of playing with food was an absolute no no for years and then with Bachelors or baby food, as sitcoms have become more and more vulgar, more and more observation of what it really is as opposed to people guiding and being kind of parodies of people, I think advertising has kinda mimicked it. I mean Robert and I on Holsten Pils did that with, before that we had Geoff Goldblum. I chose him because he was incredibly alternative and then he did the box office thing of all time. I chose him because The Fly was the most taken out video and he had a very strange quirky kind of ethos really. Very engaging and also off putting at the same time. I originally wanted and I signed up Stephen Fry, but in the end his agent wouldn't let him do it, but I wanted that kind of in your face, but kind of objectionable, but also intriguing thing and I think some of the stuff we did with those people was not selling literally but was oblique.

The difficulty with advertising is it is so much of its age and its very difficult to spot what is of its age. I have never agreed that advertising is art I also don't believe it is innovative. It follows a beat after. If you see a good video on the telly, you can bet your life somebody will be ripping that off within the next month. But then strangely enough it goes full circle and starts to inform the very video its pirating to start with. Probably because there are people who move across both worlds now.

PS: Like the response to the Sensation Exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1997. The sorts of conversations people were having around the gallery were stimulated by the artifacts...

TM: What is interesting and I have just been asked by Creative Review to go up to the new Saatchi show at their gallery called Ant Noises - which is an anagram of 'sensation' - and I was just thinking about 'Spotty III Hens'(which I did as an anagram of Holsten Pils for an ad) and I'm sure (Damien) Hirst wrote that anagram copy for Ant Noises. He's has got a brilliant eye for what will work. I was in New York when he went to the Brooklyn Gallery he was a sensation, he was beside himself with how it could shit on the Madonna and you're right, he is doing what we have never been allowed to do in advertising one stage further, but they are, I mean this Ron Meuek was a model maker for advertising, but these are phenomenal...

PS: One gets quite a strong reaction to his work.

TM: And you will these as well, I was in there on my own this morning and it was really spooky, because his work is so realistic. There's a little boy this high and he follows you with his eyes, weird stuff.

PS: The sensation you get when you walk between that Damian Hirst's 'Mother and Child Divided' (a pregnant cow cut in half) and you remember the experience like the impact of a very good advert and you want to remember the moment.

When I saw Meuek's sculpture 'Dead Dad' I felt I was looking at a corpse, and when I panned back I realised that this was a realistic model in miniature, on a much smaller scale than a real human.

TM: It's interesting, because I was just thinking that this is only this size, but I had seen it as a full size thing, and this is the clue? You come round and you know the gallery is all those white cones, then you come round the corner and then place this so that its all you can see and all I could hear was the air conditioning this morning, and I saw this thing, it was very freaky.

PS: Do you know if Jake and Dinos Chapman have got sponsors for their sculptures? All of their mutant figures had brand new trainers on, and I remember at the 'Sensation Exhibition' they were wearing Puma, where in the 'photos I've been for Ant Noises the figures are wearing Nike... there must have been some deal there.

TM: They're with J. whatshisname, their new agent and his very hot on anything to do with sponsorship. Yeah, I wouldn't be surprised. What's interesting is their bodies against that of Meueks body. There's something very advertising about it, but I can't put my finger on what it is...

PS: You look at figures and you know that when you look at the Chapman Brothers and you know that you're looking at a thing, a real human here or a real interpretation of looking at the flesh, so you can very well observe the state of the human nature and advertising has to be like that. Also I would argue that advertising has moved centre stage in popular culture. You look at column inches in papers, advertising has moved over a decade and become a main street talking point. Advertising hasn't tried to be high art for a long long time, yet the number of artists who are doing adverts now has increasingly grown.

TM: I think if you take the VW stuff which has won many awards, there's a realism in it. It is exactly like this. The idea that you should sell a car in the old glossy ad glamour way has gone. Advertising is about real observation of real life now.

PS: Yeah the recognition of everydayness. Who did the Heinz ketchup ads? In those the bottle looked very familiar in the way the ketchup settled in the bottle, but the way the ad was presented made it look like a fresh image. The way globules of ketchup inside the bottle were composed was beautiful.

TM: The creatives had obviously had an eye for realism.

PS: Yeah. Now we're talking about adverts in art terms suddenly..

TM: Advertising people always talk in art terms, which is inevitable. We spend our whole lives saying what do you make of so and so and such and such and our references are image lead.

PS: I get really pissed off now when people are talking about advertising simply as unethical, because the cultural debates have far surpassed this premise. Advertising, because it has moved to such an extent, has got to the point where people expect to be sold to now. They look through the adverts, they want the understatement, they want the irony, the attitude, you have to be an advertising platform before they will even look at it.

Anyway, what do you think have been the benchmarks in advertising where you can look back at the last decade and say that it was significant to the British ad industry? For instance the Saatchi's leaving Saatchi and Saatchi or change of government...

TM: One thing about Saatchi's leaving was that they tried and buy it back, that was a significant thing, because advertising again was getting beyond itself. If you were in there of course that was what it was, when John Major left Government that was it...

PS: So the change of government was literally significant?

TM: Tell you what, that poster done by the Saatchi's against Blair, the one that they made him look like the devil, I think that was an incredibly significant piece of propaganda. That is where advertising crosses the road into propaganda and I think that there is something dodgy in there, I think it is an intuitive thing and now you start to see it. By turning his eyes upside down, which is what they did, they made him demonic. As an image it undercuts, because if you had done it to Smith, the bloke who died, it wouldn't have worked. So why did it work? It's because subconsciously there's a feeling at some level, that that's within the personality assumed of the then unknown Blair... it was a clever thing to do.

PS: Who do you think have been the movers and shakers in the last decade or so? It hasn't been say, people who were the key players for the previous 20 or 30 years...

TM: Martin Sorrell buying up and merging creative industries. I think he has changed and made advertising more business like. I think he is one of the few people with a real vision.

PS: He also brought a lot of different creative disciplines under one umbrella hasn't he?

TM: Yeah, that's the way the world is going. I think he has a real vision. Do you mean in terms of personalities..

PS: In terms of personalities first and foremost?

TM: I think oddly enough, I think the 90's have been an almost personality free zone. Nobody jumps to mind do they? As agencies amalgamate, if you take for example there was a powerful agency GGT. For me the best agency in the 90's was Simons Palmer Denton. I think they were different. I think they were the first really different agency for a long time. But they didn't last. They were like a meteorite. They went up and they came down and now they went into GGT who then went into TBWA, which was a merger. And now its taken on the name TBWA GGT Simon Palmer... and something else as well. Everyone of those had their own brands of personality in there, but lost out in a flush of mergers. Sad, but in one sense, we're all bloody anonymous anyway, only through Campaign (magazine) do we know each other.

PS: Do you think Campaign is keen to keep the identity of the industry intact? They treat advertising as a personality driven industry probably more than a business thing, even though the front page outlines who has gone where - a bit like the football transfer market.

TM: They don't anymore. They don't as much as they use to. I think they are trying to be grown up...

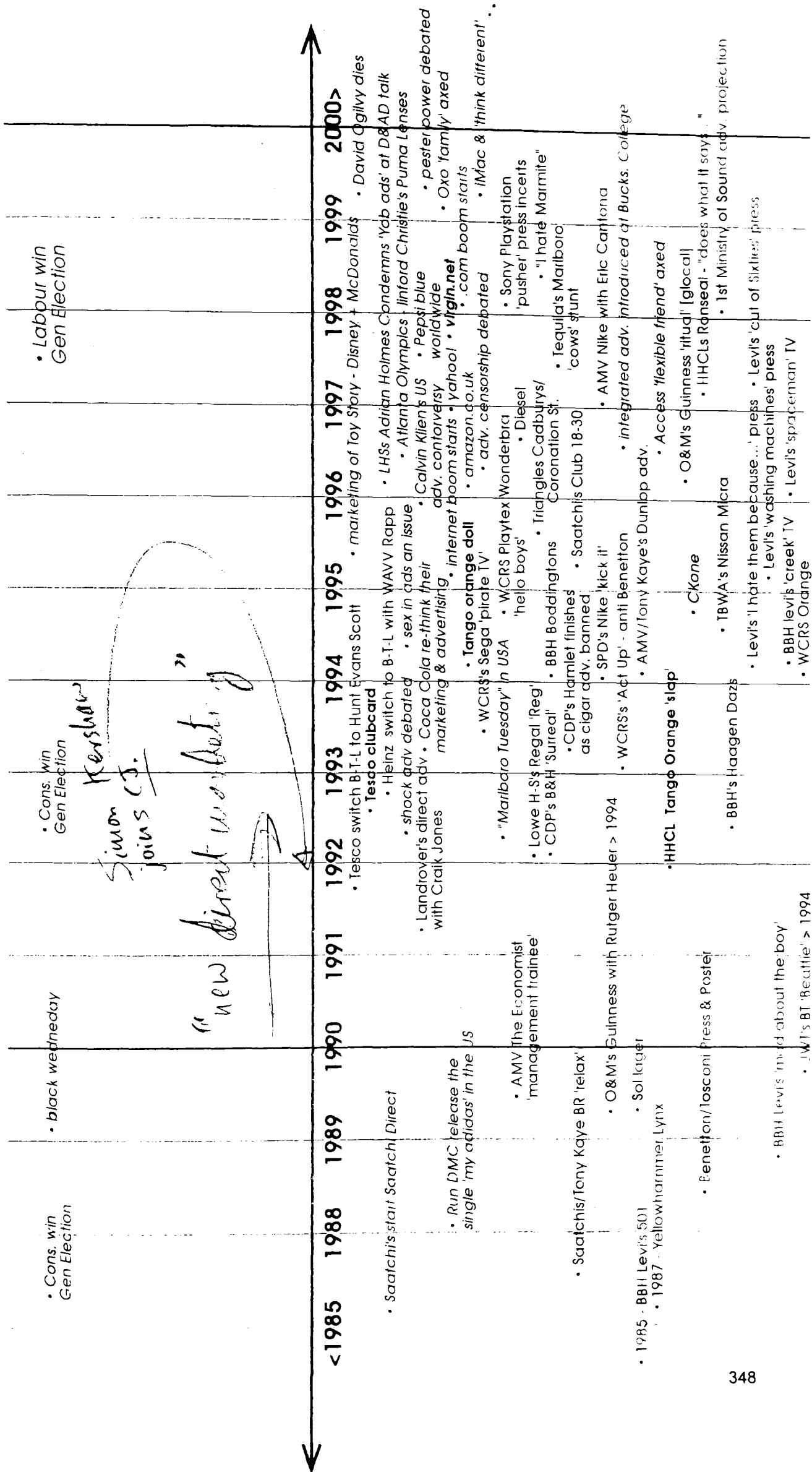
END



# Timeline

shifts in advertising  
late 1980s > 2000

- 1 = key events - 2 = benchmark ads - 3 = Simon Kershaw in the 1990s



## Edited notes from interviews

**Simon Kershaw**

Creative director For 10 years on the *Land Rover* integrated ad campaign, at Craik Jones

### Overview

(On *Land Rover* and consumer ownership) From the beginning the agency set out guiding principles to put the *consumer at the heart* of the project. Craik Jones' team researched the profiles and buying habits of existing *Land Rover* owners, sent out response-mail to profiled target audience then set about researching consumers that didn't respond. Craik have been *Land Rover's* direct marketing agency since 1990. In that time they have worked with two *Land Rover*-appointed partner agencies responsible for 'communications' – *Bates Dorland* then *WCRS* (who handled the television commercials and Press advertising). *Land Rover* have had two changes of owner during their spell with *Craik Jones* – first *Rover*, then *BMW* (since the interview *Ford* have taken over). The marketing directors at *Land Rover* have tended to change every two years so *Craik* have become brand 'guardians' over the decade. *Land Rover's* marketing manager sought to find two like-minded agencies to work with, with similar outlooks, that would make dialogue relevant and easy. From *Craik*, *Land Rover* wanted 'a response that's immediate and tangible - that's the difference between us and *WCRS*'. In terms of advertising outlay from the brand owners, *Land Rover* is one of only projects that has remained throughout the decade core-direct marketing led, to retain and move the core market on. Direct marketing band manager Simon Kershaw: 'While we create the context and set the tone, we have to retain our core purpose - which is about selling cars'. "Loyalty" is different and complex: half the battle is New Customers versus Customers we've got... The story is not the last ten years but the next ten. The next move in advertising is the *real* ramifications of the internet – more freedom to choose the product, more product information. Where at the moment most are set up just for site visitor to look at the home pages and the first generation strings from it.'... 'In terms of the internet, the design of the detailed communication service is going to be. Brands need to have a personality in-depth that's attainable, real and can be accessed by consumers as proof. Building a brand using the internet is about maintaining the depth.'... 'Most agencies won't touch the dull bit – the use of data-bases and number-crunching. That's where integrated and direct agencies that already use data-base marketing have the big advantage.' Newer agencies are founded on a fresher paradigm, informed by the technology and business methods of their period of establishment. These fresher foundations make them more flexible and ready to meet the clients requirements in the most appropriate and direct manner. 'The story of the next few years is re-distribution - in terms of cars, cutting out the unauthorised dealers, to bring the car manufacturers closer to their customers. A bit like *Tesco* gathering data around their most profitable customers.' "...this way *Tesco* can get ownership of the customers rather than the brand they stock. This is how they inform their own-brand goods to sell more than their brand rivals. We're doing the same, but its the brand that wants customer-ownership - wrestling it away from the existing distributors with concerns that aren't *Land Rover*-centred.'

**Dave O'Hanlon (interview 1)**

Planner at HHCL+P on Britvic Tango project, 1992-98

*"we weren't on the side of the state - we were on the side of the people."*  
*"Brands like Fairy Liquid are particularly British in flavour"*

(On Tango and Britishness) Initially *Britvic* introduced a code of silence around the advertising - it was covert - HHCL team couldn't talk about it because *Britvic* treated it as if it were surrounded in mystique - they didn't understand how it worked.

'The tendency in advertising not to analyse work, therefore critical language gets called "semiotics" – I call it the 'invisible stitching' that makes the tone and visuals work'

'I was working through a set of theories I had about brand extension - not just lemon, apple, orange and black current, but more about the cultural shifts using semiotics'

'Little has been mentioned of one of the real phenomena of the nineties - the way brands have managed to make contributions to adolescent males - introducing gender parallax for instance; we played with the free and easy notion of "life's a game".'

'I was reading John Fiske's Reading the Popular and Reading Popular Culture (Unwin Hyman); when the first ads were outlawed by the ASA we were in an ideal position - we weren't on the side of the state - we were on the side of the people.'

'Throughout the campaign we were offering hooks for copying and appropriation by the viewer (sampling-friendly; creating an original reference point): The campaign was about portability of references. The industry didn't know how to receive it; it was different. Normally the industry works

on a tacit lie – the sanctity of creativity. The aesthetic of ads is done instinctively, then you don't tell the client how it works - it breaks the mystique. In other words it's a marketing confidence game. Curiously, the industry still don't know how to receive it. Normally once something's done agencies analyse it to figure out what makes it tick. I've heard about advertisers and marketers discussing it at seminars, and they still miss all of the central points – they haven't figured out how it works, where the ideas come from and the levels of response that it works on.

When O'Hanlon was at *JWT* (in mid-Eighties) he would often show images of surreal B&H ads and ask how they work: The creative department would use terms like 'brave, bold, cut-throat' while accounts people would shirk comment - they didn't understand them, but just thought they were 'appropriate'.

Most advertising critical dialogue formed in hindsight - post-rationalising, which advertising latches onto in its own terms and vocabulary because it doesn't rationalise what it does.

O'Hanlon was the planner on *Blackcurrent Tango*. It was a notion of the product 'blackcurrent' extrapolated - it looked like red wine, it looked the colour of blood, so I took the 'fruitiness' notion as a rush of blood to the head, (which is how the advert with Ray Gardiner winds up).

*Marketing* magazine letters page (w/b 20/3/00) questions: *Britvic* marketing Manager Andrew Marsden's questioning of the ASA to prove their campaign causes bullying. It similar to Benetton's response to their 1989 ads.

### Dave O'Hanlon (interview 2)

On his planning input into Blackcurrent an post-Slap Britvic Tango ad work

O'Hanlon was a chartered accountant after doing a philosophy degree, and started advertising at 30, when at *JWT* in 1989. (first campaign worked on was for *Lever Brothers*). He claims that most logical recollections in ads are post-rationalised 'If you were to analyse it for the clients and work out formulas, there is a perception that it would spoil it for the client'. He claims to use Marxist theory and is enjoyably perverse in advertising. O'Hanlon states that, at *HHCL*, 'we take the malcontents in the industry'

O'Hanlon worked on *Tango* ads from *Orange Tango* commercial 'runaway' (1994) onwards. They tended to book a slot for ads before the ads were even ready: '(when I came in on the project...) we ran fill-in ads which were assembled montages of the previous ads with apologies for not showing new ones. People read the papers they knew the run-ins we were having. We used this theme a lot- foregrounding the marketing facts of the project (to make the process more transparent).

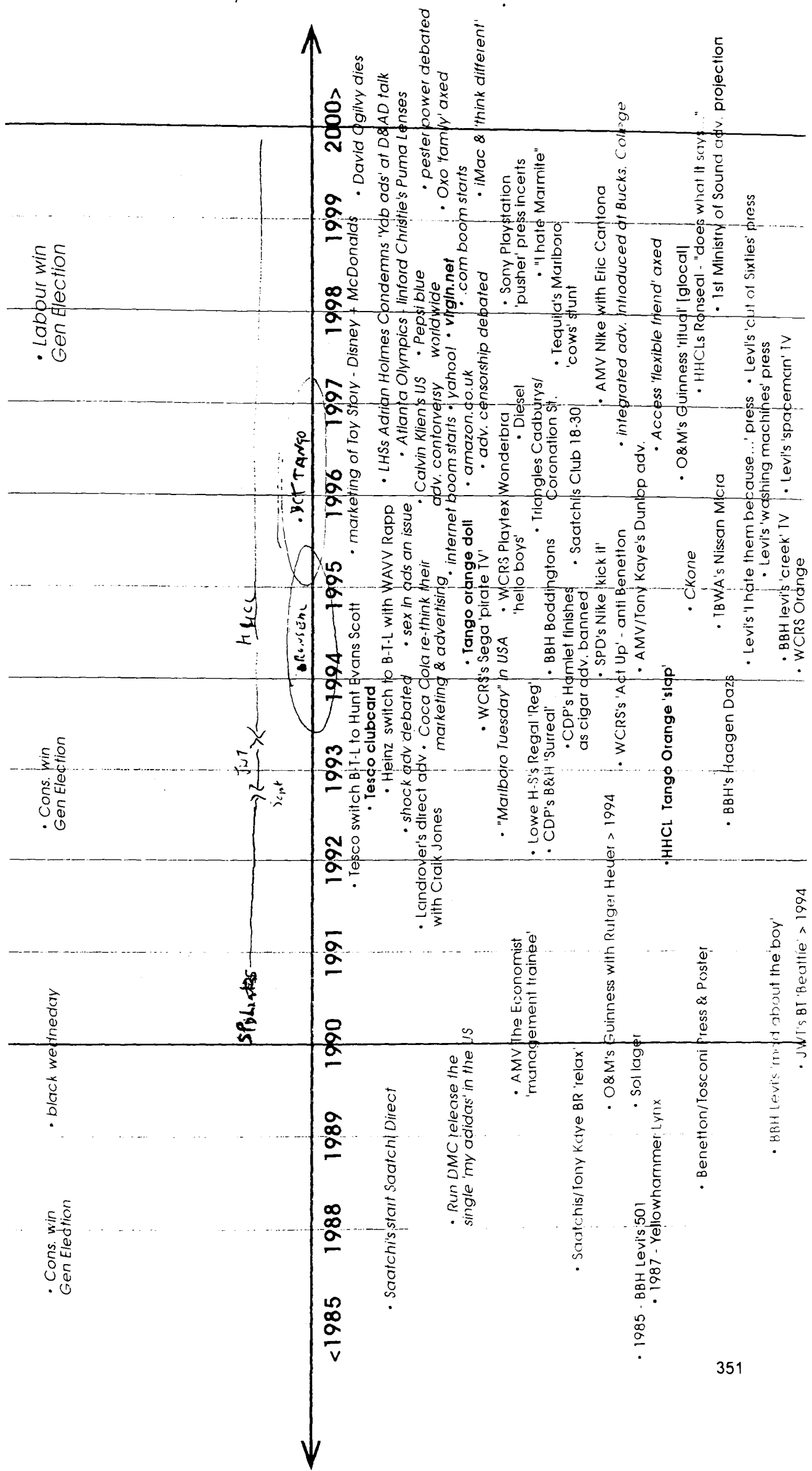
The two John Fiske texts were companion pieces to O'Hanlon's approach, 'to get over the rules of communicating in a confined space... people have to make do with what they have; the idea of using words and signs of the state against themselves. Fiske uses the example of a shopping mall. I struggled with this for a more pertinent clear-cut example that was relevant to our project. Then, a couple of years into *Tango*, I was leaving our building (in Market Place, WC1) and I noticed that they had traffic-cordoned our street, which was obviously a safety measure. About a week after they'd done it I saw a kid on a bike, about twelve years old, who had turned into a ski-jump - he had subverted it, and turned it into an adventure playground which was more dangerous than it was before. That, and *Duisants* - an unmediated experience; occasionally we capture moments like the 'caught out' *Apple Tango* ad when he's in a rain mac...'

'We showed the ad at an agency meeting, and I was watching people watching it; when you first experience (the commercial) *Slap*, it goes very quickly; people are trying to catch up - it sort of cascades... The thing about *Tango* and *Coke* is the sensation.'

'The first one -slap, planner was John Leach – was written for the pitch. They realised what happened in *Coke* was that the *Coke* lorry arrives and there's a "magical transformation", they all party. Everyone goes "bollocks" to it. It's called "magical transformation" – a bowl of cornflakes turns into wheat or something. You have to give names to these things. Our clients like to think there's some method in the madness! So, they thought it would be funny if some big fat orange bloke came in for the transformation. Everyone thought it was a good and funny idea. That was for *Britvic Orange Juice* – not *Tango*, and it seemed it had less to do with the orange juice and more to do with the *Tango*. The other idea was a load of kids dancing around 'Tango- farin'- there was nothing edgy about it beyond that (and it didn't develop beyond this initial thought stage). The other thing running at the time was to have loads and loads of commentary running over it; Over-analysis, masses of stats, partly because people here (at *HHCL*) was into American football and it was of the moment. So the idea was to get John Madden and somebody else to do the commentary. Then John the planner said if you look at the *Tango* real - the skateboarder one - it's all rather British; can't you get a British commentary running through it? They thought about it over the weekend. So they came up with Ray Wilkins and Sid Wardell (Hugh Dennis) Their logic was not to make it gritty-urban, but to keep it in a normal British street. That's how slap came to be. When they did research they found that a kick up the bum was weaker as a metaphor than a slap in the face because it was meant to be the *Tango*.'

**Timeline**  
 shifts in advertising  
 late 1980s > 2000  
**DAVE O'HANLON, HHCL + P**

- 1 = key events - 2 = benchmark ads - 3 = Dave O'Hanlon in the 1990s



*How was this extrapolated for the next campaign?*

'Many people thought I was stuffed; the way I formalised it came from the opposite Coke; it didn't always have something different to say about the Coke - people said it was just lifestyle advertising, it was just young people jumping about. The semiotic bit - if you look at how it's evolved throughout my lifetime - "I'd like to buy the world a Coke", "It's the real thing", a sort of United Nations, 'the real feeling'. There's nothing that advertises the Coke idea, or a real strapline as such. But it's a feel for impulse, the form of the thing, the form of the advert is effectively a metaphor for the drink. So, they use hot colours, (the) music, fast editing, the use vignettes to disrupt the narrative, they show you a very horny girl or hunky bloke for three-quarters of a second, just long enough for you to realise what but not long enough. "Danger intensity" I call it. They bombard you with audio-visual information at such a rate that it puts you into a child state, it forces you out of a state where your resistance level is high. In that child-state, which is a one off feeling, it just feeds you the experience of the ad and the argument of the ad; the ad feels as much the argument of the thing.'

**Nick Presley**

Group Creative Director of Triangle on Britvic Tango Below-the-line project work from 1996

### outline history

The Britvic account for below the line work, pre the (HHCL) Tango "taste sensation" was with *Wickins Tutt Southgate*, who worked on the briefing with Simon Coker who, after the "Hit of orange" campaign became retained as the brand guardian. now works independently for Britvic on Tango brand development. The agency *Triangle* were picked because they thought in the same way and were an independent agency b-t-l; not part of a big group - didn't want to unsettle HHCL, and weren't precious about ideas - 'weren't going to have creative tantrums'.

### Britishness

'The nation's fizzy drink' that we used is taken directly from Britvic mission statement... Tango... was about single-brand strategies - the hit of orange, the seduction of apple, the zest of Lemon... now, with the 'tea ladies' execution (2001) they've taken it back to multi-brand... '...they have made a move to make the brand the hero and not the flavour.'

'At the end of the day it's just a fizzy drink - the brand is bigger. Its an emotional relationship you have with the brand... It had to be anarchic - like the spirit if Punk hasn't been got over yet.'

'Tango is a naughty schoolchild who may get suspended but will never get expelled' ('Britvic) have this rule that they call the "cliff of okay-ness: Tango's on the edge of it but never falls over".

'If they were serious about wanted to effect sales rather than just having a brand that looked cool they needed to be a bit more mainstream'.

Presley claims *Triangle* were not influenced by other ads, but *M&C Saatchi's* R J O'Rourke "Johnny Foreigner" ad for *British Airways* give a (Paxman-esque) perspective of Britain; in the long-running *Oxo* commercials (by *JWT*) there was a sense of idealised family life and *Fairy Liquid* wholesome domestic up-bringing.

'Tango was pitched as "the nation's fizzy drink"; with the attitude that they were fed up with the American approach - Coke and Pepsi's ads - which pushed their brash corporate style in the British market. Britvic wanted to get back at *Coca-Cola's* "eat football; sleep football; drink Coke". They don't even know about football over there (in America) - they call it soccer !... The campaign strategy, for Tango Time (1999) was a play on the ritual of very-English tea-time break not unlike the Coke-break (used by McCann Ericsson for Coke in 1997).' Britvic wanted to see the Britishness incorporated within *Triangle's* pitch. Triangle even came up with an alternative Tango-led 'national Anthem', with overtones of the 1996 song by the ad hoc pop group *Fat Les'* and their laddish song 'Vindaloo. *Triangle*, it was later claimed by Britvic, were picked for their 'tone' - which was right for the identity they wanted to extend and for the advertising agency they already had, HHCL, who Britvic wanted them to work with.

*Triangle* combine the planning - all the thinking - with creative work. 'We have little time scale on the project; media adverts have one to three months, direct agencies usually have one to three weeks. Below-the-line is often seen as an add-on by the media agencies, but Britvic saw it as being more integral'. With Britvic, *Triangle* have been an integral part of the briefing team with HHCL. They were together in the same room for initial brainstorming (for 1999-2000 *Tango Megaphone* briefing). Idea originated from the day Michael Portillo was 'outed'; seemed a British idea to 'out' people for suppressing their real passions, beliefs or attitudes. Associated stunts to coincide with the commercials included mock radio phone-ins to 'out' non-Tango drinkers. *Triangle* themselves coordinated above and below-the line-activity. Both HHCL and *Triangle* were sent away to work on the brief together, while the ideas were fine-tuned ideas presented to the clients together. The big

promotion – which featured non- *Tango* drinkers being 'outed' by people with megaphones, involved *HHCL* executing posters and a commercial incorporating the idea, while *Triangle* executed on-pack and point-of-sale associated advertising.

'There's more science to it than you think... *Britvic* weren't what I thought when we started. They are not brash and 'we know best'. A lot of thought had gone into the whole positioning – how it was devised, briefed. They can switch from the *Tango* way of thinking to different brand-'thinking heads' It all originates from a group of ideas by *Tutt Southgate*. Simon Coker, now the *Britvic* 'brand guardian', and *HHCL* amongst others, have meticulously guarded the development of the identity ever since, still true to the position. *Triangle* a virtue in their work out of *Tango* not being stocked in France. In 2002 *Tango* was positioned as the twenty first century equivalent to a cup of tea. 'If one goes back to Ceylon 300 years to when tea bought over, we've swapped it to tea and developed up proposition from that point. So, it's a *Tango* break, not a Tea break'. *HHCL* devised a series of 'holding' campaigns when the ads got banned to buy time for a new ad.

#### *What Qualities were British?*

'Uniquely, for below-the-line we could take what *Tango* had and develop it. Stiff upper lip, won't cry - but men cried when they failed at something (world cup) ; The biggest joke in the British press at the time was the Dome, some did free give-away inflatable domes – 'a dome for your home' (tabloid style), kids could use it in the garden, use it as a spare room, have it as a relaxation zone...

The market for *Tango* is split. Core *Tango* drinkers ate nineteen year old (mostly male) drinkers, but also, significantly, 'mum buying a six-pack for her kids'... 'We decided therefore we would do a range of supporting stuff - like royal souvenirs – tea towels, commemorative mugs and stuff. You have to remember, you can't pitch it to the mum is thinking 'this doesn't appeal to me, but it will make me look cool with the kids... In a way we were like the soft drink *Sunny Delight*, which was also very successful. It was a drink in the summer, but that was aimed at a parent buying for kids'. 'When *Tango* was launched it was about single-brand strategies – the hit of orange, the seduction of apple, the zest of Lemon... now -with tea-they've taken it back to multi-brand. The blackcurrent was the last single-strategy. We made a move to make the brand the hero and not the flavour. At the end of the day it's just a fizzy drink. The brand is bigger. It's an emotional relationship you have with the brand. It's not our job to develop the brand: we make them (the target market) drink the product... In terms of our version of Britishness, *Daddies* source is trying to be more British - with Frank Bruno leading the Charge. *British Airways* with P J O'Rourke is more British. The big idea is king – it has to be to punch through the vast volume of messages. The consumer has loads of messages every day. The brand and brand personality is what everyone does these days - you have to spend a long time developing brand'.

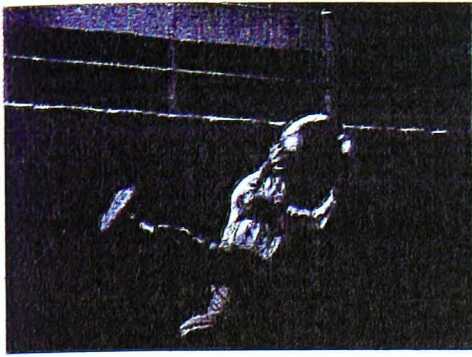
'*Oxo (JWT)* is a big idea that is quintessentially British - it lasted a long time. We've all grown up with it. They were going to develop it with an Asian family, disabled... and they realised people would see through that. It's about defining the target audience, and their audience was definitely C2DE - people who didn't aspire to cook a lot, wanted it to be fast, quick and fancy. They sent in a couple of their creative teams to go and live with the target audience for two weeks, and they told a story about a woman they stayed with on one Saturday, who was making lunch. It only took eight minutes, and they said "Do you always cook that quick?" She said, "On a Saturday? Of course. The football's on, isn't it!". Forget about being politically correct, that's life as it really is'.

'*Tango* time' was a quick idea, because the dome idea was a bit narrow. The lead-time was too short to do an on-pack promotion. So we had a big lateral thinking session, then Lee Jobling (copywriter, a member of the *Triangle* team) latched on to the codes at the bottom of the can; each batch had a different set of time digits at the bottom of the can. However many cans go through in that period (usually a hundred) had that batch no. So we twigged the solution. We will publish times in *The Mirror* and in independent radio. *The Sun* didn't want to do it. We printed times every day in the *Mirror* and broadcast the same on the radio. The prizes were all about quirky British stuff. So, if your number came up you could win a weekend in a caravan Bognor. Win a game of crazy golf with a topless model as your caddy. Win a John Motson sheepskin coat; Win tickets to see an England home game. Each day was themed. Monday was football because it was after the footballing weekend. Tuesday was TV - win a Del-boy suitcase full of gear. We had to assemble the case ourselves. With the *Mirror* executions we did two sixty second radio ads that were done as tea-lady breaks that sounded live; they were topical, very funny and anarchic.'

In terms of characterising *Tango*, it is '... a naughty schoolchild who may get suspended but will never get expelled. There's a line that it won't go over. They (*Britvic*) have this rule that they call the 'cliff of okay-ness'. *Tango*'s on the edge of it but never falls over. If you give them an idea that they think will fall over, they won't go there... We ran a Millennium appeal to support our fizzy drink. *Tango* sales were falling, and we thought that perhaps they were taking their brand too seriously. They were developing into a niche brand. You could have the best personality in the world, but it doesn't necessarily work. So what we thought we'd go in with a brave idea which they were unlikely to run with but would test their resolve. We suggested they said publicly that *Tango* was about to be 'pulled' unless people would drink more of it. Anyone working on it would be out of a job, so it would become a sort of 'save our national drink' (like the makers of Spam and salad cream did at the same time in the late-nineties)...



## Britvic Tango: the burst commercial 'Slap' in context



### Context of adverts

When the Tango 'Slap' commercial was launched in the early nineties, the most familiar commercials on TV were described as "film ads" in *Creative Review* and *Campaign*. They tended to be awarded within the ad industries for their creative craft. Their tone was typically consistent throughout the 20" & 30" ads, and the art/film directors made a play on using perspective and screen depth to make the images more dynamic. Three of the most renowned at the time were (above from left) Carling Black Label (WCRS, 1990), Renault Clio (Publicis, 1991) and Dunlop ('Unexpected' by AMV BBDO/dir. Tony Kaye, 1993)



### Tone of Tango ad

While the colour of the opening frame (above left) is heightened, Tango's imagery seems banal - less exotic in setting, visually less striking, flatter in picture depth and seemingly less constructed in terms of texture next to say, British Gas's campaign. The usual device was to exoticise products by association. Even in selling British Gas shares in 1983, the 'Tel Sid' campaign' (right, Saatchi & Saatchi, 1983) took the viewer away from images of mundane cityscapes and suburbia, without losing its sense of Britishness.

### Maxcell Tapes, Howell Henry (1991) developing the address pre-Tango

The agency always tried to reflect everydayness and multi-culturality in their ads to broaden their accessibility. This campaign for Maxcell has a familiar street setting (similar in texture and colour to Tango) and the humour also comes from the familiarity of the 'problem' - poor tape quality hindering the clarity of the lyrics. Like Tango, the central character also exudes an heir of vulnerability - another of life's British male 'victims'.





Britvic Tango: 'Slap' - the principal characters



First shot of the orange man, (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> replay, 24")

The 2<sup>nd</sup> replay tracks the orange Tango man. He is seen to emerge (looking shifty) from behind the red pillar-box. Note the colour saturation, making the box and the red tango man seem similar. He is made to appear closer to the street furniture & landscape than other humans in the ad. He's pitched somewhere between a genie, a pantomime character and a cartoon figure. He is the 'magical transformation' equivalent to that in Coke ads.

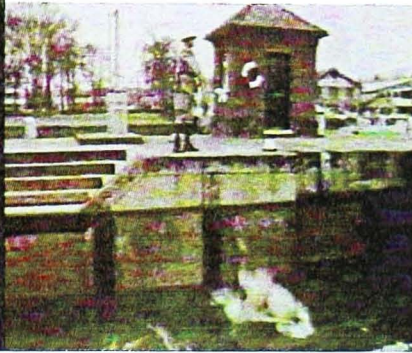
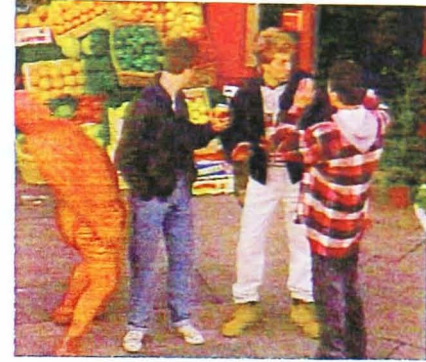


The Tango Victim

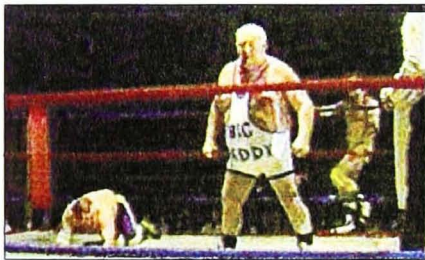
The victim is a regular British bloke. He looks ordinary and is inconspicuous in the opening shot, wearing jeans, casual jacket, shirt and T-shirt. He seems shocked to be singled out, as his gaping expression (to camera) demonstrates. The genre of addressing cameras mid-action started 10 years prior to this ad in the TV comedy Moonlighting (US)



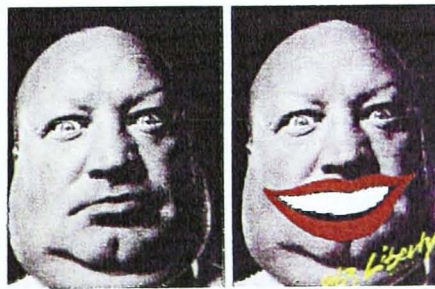
Britvic Tango: dichotomy of 'Slap' - juxtaposition & the fat man



The juxtaposition of a bald orange man with an everyday street scene was not as unique as it appeared. It borrowed from a number of quintessentially English reference points from Monty Python (top) to English all-in wrestling that was popular in the 1970s (below left, broadcast on ITV's World Of Sport on Saturday afternoons until the early 1980s). 'Big Daddy', the most renowned of the wrestlers, used to 'specialise' in the sort of slap delivered by the Tango man. Tango's 'shock' moment was a parody in the style of Monty Python sketches (above, 'the kipper dance').



The orange man (above right) tapped into a mood of cynicism within British youth directed at the idealised masculinity that glossy images sold. The 'anti-pretty' Tango hero is more aggressive and non-conformist than anyone featured in Coke or Pepsi ads. The characterisation of the orange man drew on esoteric models for 1990s youth, such as wrestlers and pop stars as (kitch) 1980s pop singer Buster Bloodvessel of Ska band Bad Manners (centre). The same allure was used in 1993 campaigns for Dunlop tyres (below left) Liberty Radio (centre) and the Independent Television Commission (right).





Britvic Tango: 'St George' pillaging the 'boutiques of history'

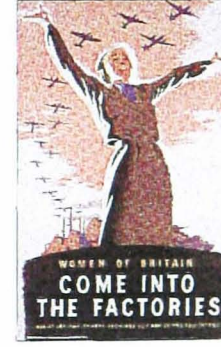


Placing the style of camerawork

The shift from marketing promo to hand-held format in the Blackcurrent Tango ad (above left) borrowed from films as *Natural Born Killers* (Stone, 1994), and *Dogma 95*, re-creating the sense of being there, like Abraham Zapruder's 'real' footage of John F Kennedy's assassination (right).

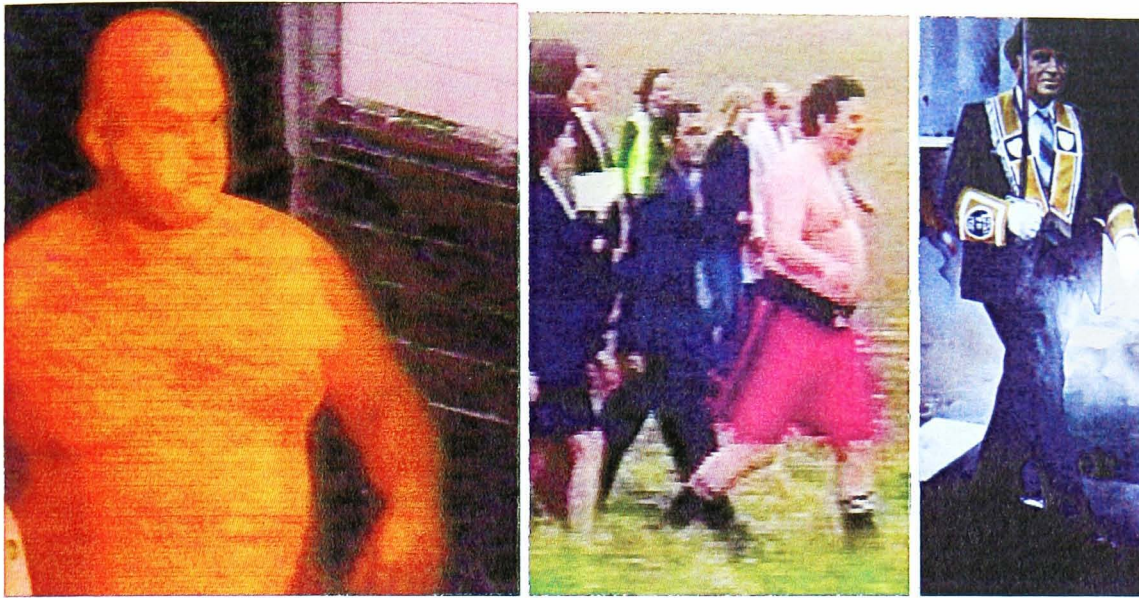


The panned helicopter images of the White Cliffs of Dover (above) drew on a number of distinct reference points, notably the final scene in 'pop cult' film *Quadrophenia* (above centre, F Roddam, 1979) and battle re-scenes from *The Battle of Britain* (right, G Hamilton, 1969). Therefore 'St. George' drew on viewers ability to reference visual archive points. The ad also borrowed from a number of contemporary films in its setting. For instance camera angles recalled 1990s blockbuster films *Cliffhanger* (R Harlin, 1993) and *True Lies* (J Cameron, 1994) while the 3 harriers drew reference to the Falklands war only 14 years earlier. (*The Battle of Britain* featured groups of 3 spitfires flying on missions, below centre). This is the image of war Tango's young audience may have had, constructed through film and famous war imagery, like Abram Games posters (below right, 1944). In Games' posters planes represented the airborne fight for freedom, like the Harriers backing the Tango crowd (above). Reference points were therefore eclectic and esoteric, 'hooked' in for avid footnoters.



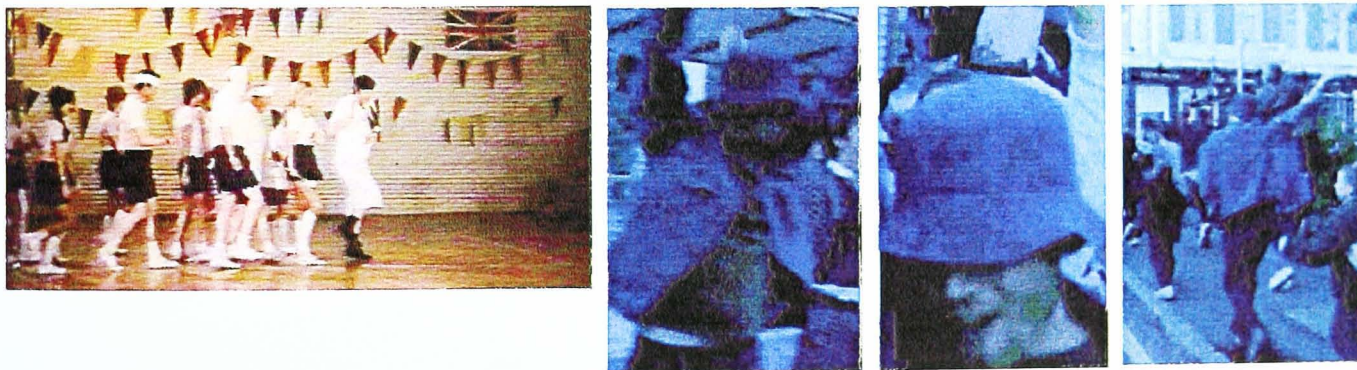


Britvic Tango: dichotomy of 'Slap' & 'St George' - the comic run & march sequences



Britishness and marching

The Blackcurrent Tango 'protest' march follows a rich British working class (and Irish religious) connotation. (above, left to right) The marching Orange Tango man 1992, Blackcurrent Tango's march in 1996, a scene from an Orange order march, part of a painting by Richard Hamilton (1982) and the Benny Hill comedy chase (below left), which Tango's art director cited as a reference he 'borrowed'. The sense of protest, theatre and absurdity in Blackcurrent Tango's march struck a chord elsewhere. The promotional video for Fat Les's song Vindaloo, (below right) featuring actor Keith Allen and Damien Hirst, also sought the appearance of the laddish Englander. Vindaloo was released to coincide with the 1998 World Cup. It featured British Celebrities from light entertainment in the 1970s, such as Rod Hull (& Emu), Max Wall and former wrestler Mick McManus. Fat Les's march parodied Tango's and another prominent 'pop march' of 1996, by singer Richard Ashcroft featured in the pop promo for The Verve's 'Bittersweet Symphony'.





Britvic Tango: early forays customer 'dialogues'



Tango Gotan Doll (HHCL, 1996)

The Gotan doll (an anagram of 'Tango', above left) was a limited edition of 10,000, which could be bought for £2.99 via a phoned mail order (a number featured on the can). As an extrapolation of the original ad's Orange man, Gotan was moulded to be as off-beat as the ads. He was toy size at 5.5", with a rounded partially detailed body. The only suggestion of gender is in the bloated stomach and slouched stance. He had uncoordinated eyes, appearing mad or drunk, with the Tango branding printed on his backside. Gotan had cut lines moulded around the top of his arms and legs, as if he were a voodoo doll. To reinforce the connection for Tango 'devotees', the ad 'St George' launching Blackcurrent Tango a Gotan doll in the opening frame (above right), which works as a link between the dolls 'madness' and Tango's office culture.

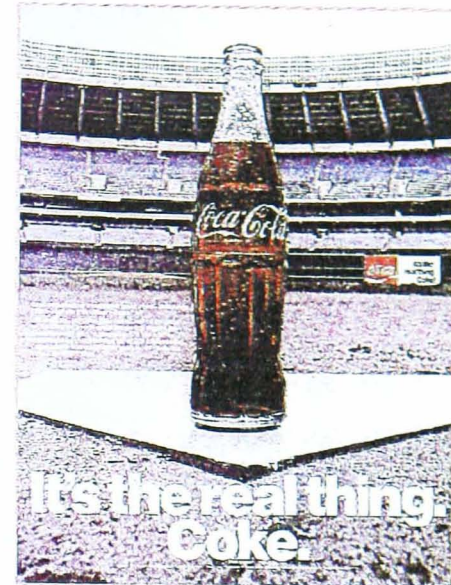
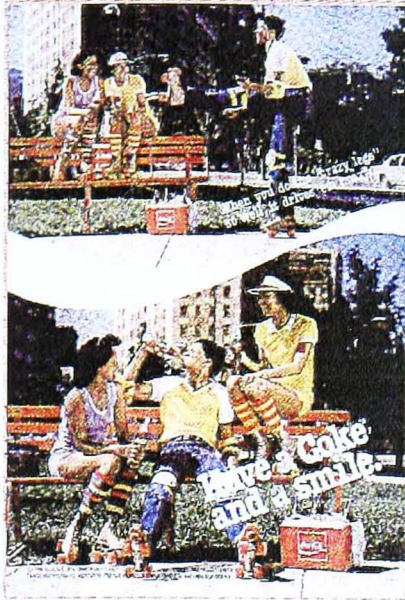
Tango Megaphone (above left, Triangle, 2000), & 'Jim will be with you' stickers (above left, HHCL, 1998)

In the wake of Gotan's success Tango extensions were less icons in themselves and more props for Tango drinkers to become involved in mock rituals. (below left) The Tango Megaphone, intended for outing and shouting at non-Tango drinkers: Launching Lemon Tango in 1998 drinkers could buy the 'Sayings of Jim' (The orange man equivalent) and get Lemon friendship bands. Perhaps the most involved spin-off activity was when Lemon Tango drinkers were invited to their nearest Tesco hypermarket. Among the fruit and veg they would have found lemons with stickers reading 'Jim will be with you' - the payback at the end of the 'journey' (right).





## Britvic Tango: rival strategies - Coke bonding with youth



### Coke during the 1970s and 80s (ads by McCann-Erickson)

Continual adjustments to Coke's representation of American youth culture (occasionally tapping into their past times) helped Coke maintain an integral relationship with American youth up to the nineties. 'Have a Coke and a Smile' (above left, 1979) was the first of Cokes ads to reflect a broadening market beyond white, middle-class American youth. Coke started to include more ethnic cultures in their representation of US youth at leisure. 'It's the real thing' (above right, 1970) reflects Coke's iconic status, positioned this time in a context appropriate to American male youth.

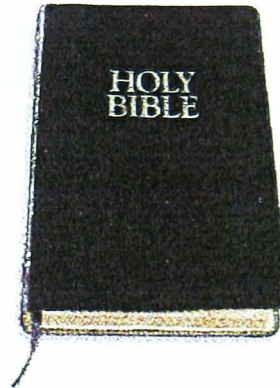
### Sundblom's 1931 Santa Claus for Coca-Cola

In this pan-Atlantic Christmas holiday ad from 1993 (below, by McCann-Erickson) the image of Santa is used to convey the type of wholesomeness associated with Disney. The look of Coke's Santa (created for Coke by Haddon Sundblom in 1931) was based on the appearance of its creator, according to Coke's own authorised histories. Typically in commercials Santa comes to life in animated form for the (now famous) Coke swigging moment. On the right is a typical example of Coke's 'magical transformation', as described by HHCL+ Partner's planner Dave O'Hanlon. This surreal transformation in Coke's ads became a forerunner of Tango's orange genie, who also appears at the very point of the 'swigging moment'.





Britvic Tango: rival strategies - Coke, America & God



Coca-Cola – leading exponents of 'brand is the safe' promotions

Coke positioned itself among the central tenets of the USA's self-identity:

The re-affirmation of Coke's brand identity. (from top to bottom, left to right) Youthful & united (McCann Erickson commercial, 'I'd like to teach the world to sing', 1974), freedom & patriotism (from a NY Independence Day parade in 1983), religious & genuine (a church near Coke's bottling plant in Atlanta, 1982), and *the* definite article (McCann Erickson billboard, from 1960). Note the sense of purity suggested through the 'real thing' woman. She's wearing white and leaning back, he's leading the conversation, it what seems like a, intimate but non-sexy liaison. Coke's symbolic value and its position as a US multinational corporation marked it out for many critiques on consumption. Magazines such as Adbusters (middle, right) have frequently sent up Coke and drawn attention to Coke's styles of propaganda.



Britvic Tango: rival strategies - office culture displacing home culture



'Time for a Diet Coke break' (US, 1996)

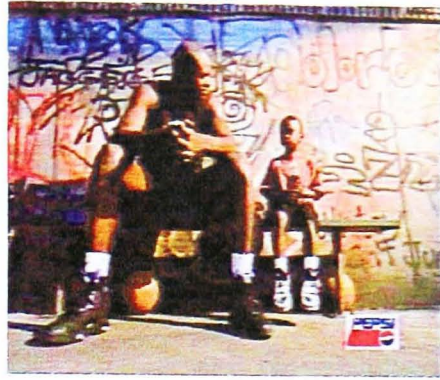
Narrative: a woman brushes against a male worker (clearly her junior) in a tight corridor as she squeezes past to get a can of Diet Coke from a dispenser. She exchanges glances with her co-conspirator, a female colleague. Then an older colleague, reading the situation, 'tuts' and pushes the mobile work unit to back make the corridor bigger: it transpires that she moved the unit to engineer the situation. Both females laugh. The male, the object of desire, looks embarrassed. Message: Live your life.

The ad was pitched at working women, set as it was in a contemporary white-collar job. The aim was to install the idea that work breaks, when one 'gets to know' ones colleagues, are in fact Coke-breaks. The length of drinking a can is the length of the mini-break, like a smoking break. It is an up-dating of the mid-morning and afternoon breaks, represented in commercials since the mid-1960s. Tea breaks featuring the PG Tips Chimps (below, 'Mr Shifter', DPB&S, 1970). Unlike 'Mt Shifter', Coke's break was geared around work culture and colleagues, not family. The sense of ritual moment is similar: it is a pause in the mid-activity of routine work. Unlike PG Tips British-oriented break, Cokes break was Americanised, clipping into the type of globally exported US sit com genre that would be familiar across continents. Also updated was the male/female relationship: it is the women who are ogling the man. It is her gaze, shared with her friend. Bus stop posters gave reason to pause on one's own 'office moments'.



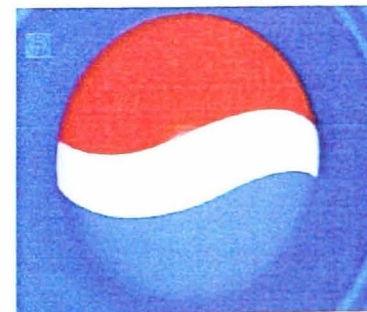
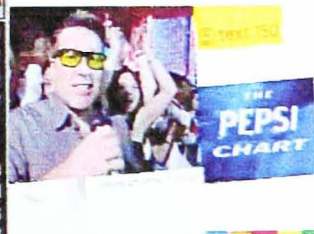
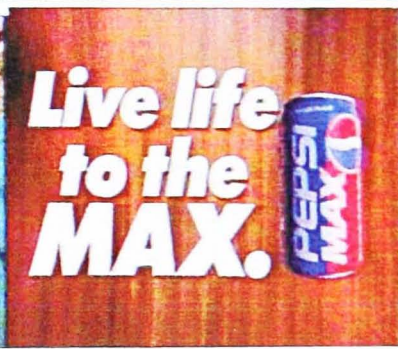
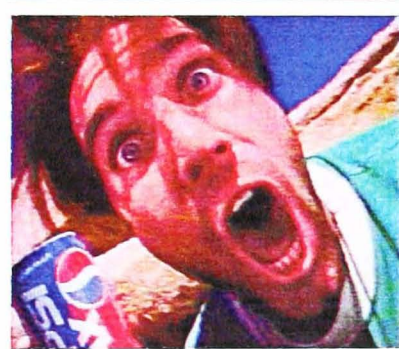


Britvic Tango: rival strategies - Pepsi campaign development



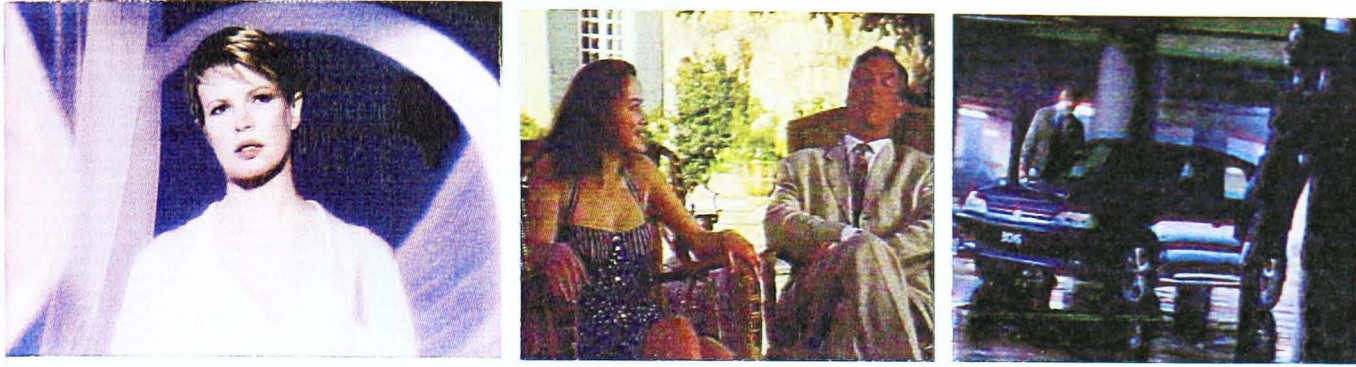
Pepsi's brand development

Pop celebrity endorsements (above left to right) Michael Jackson (1986), Basketball player Shaquille O'Neil (from 1998) and The Spice Girls (from 1998) amongst others. Pepsi have star-surfed to keep their brand relevant, and have conveyed utopian versions of youth (below, late-1980's) to create their own extreme sport-loving 'Generation Next' slacker band, before re-branding globally as Pepsi Blue in 1997. This lent itself effectively to strategic programme endorsements including The Pepsi Chart Show on Channel 5 from 1998. With this Pepsi no longer relied on the fluctuating reputation of specific acts.



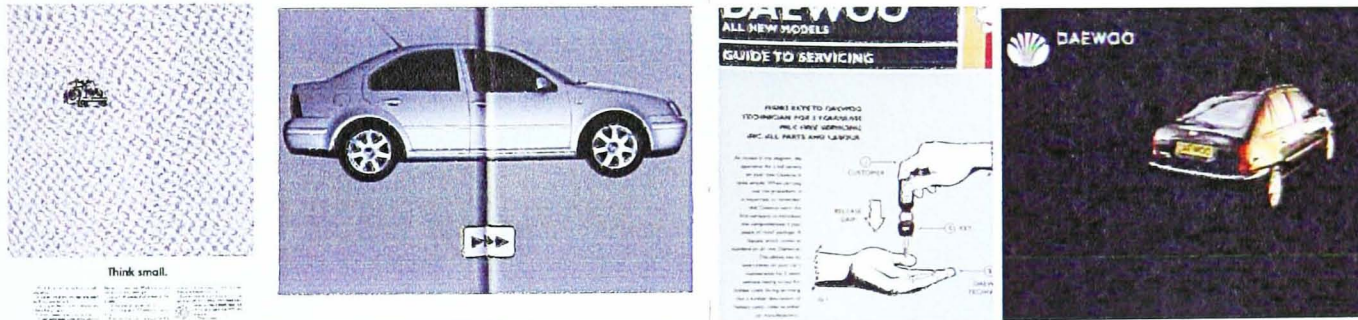


Daewoo: in context with other car ads



Daewoo in context with other ads for (above left to right) Peugeot 206 (1997-8), Renault Clio (1991-94) and Peugeot 406 (1997). Automotive ads tended to be European in treatment and exoticised/eroticised. Actress Kim Basinger advertised Peugeot 206 (above left) while Renault Clio's ads, with a racy father-daughter (Nicole & Papa) gave the impression that the Clio supermini facilitated an active love life. The commercial for Peugeot's 406 even implied a racy car park pick-up (right). The illusion was of access to a more exotic means of living through the car.

VW Beetle press ad (below left, DDB, US 1965), VW Passat press ad (2<sup>nd</sup> left, BMP DDB, 1999), Daewoo press ad and end frame (right, DFGW, 1996). The clipping (and updating) of DDB's art direction is evident in the product placement, rational use of copy and use of single plane. The plain black background makes the car appear more sophisticated and up-market, and the dramatic side lighting in Daewoo's ad makes the product more of a hero, where the VW could rely on its distinct shape and panelling. Typically press ads for estate cars spread over 2 pages to make the car look longer. In this VW ad the audio buttons reinforces the idea that cars are, like stereo gear, hi-tech equipment. The removal of a background illustrates that, by 1999, this style of car ad had become an alternative to rolling countryside and exotic European locations. Daewoo's press ads emphasised their service guarantee, not the car. They drew comparisons with authoritative codes of safety such as Haynes manuals to reinforce their consumer-centred approach.

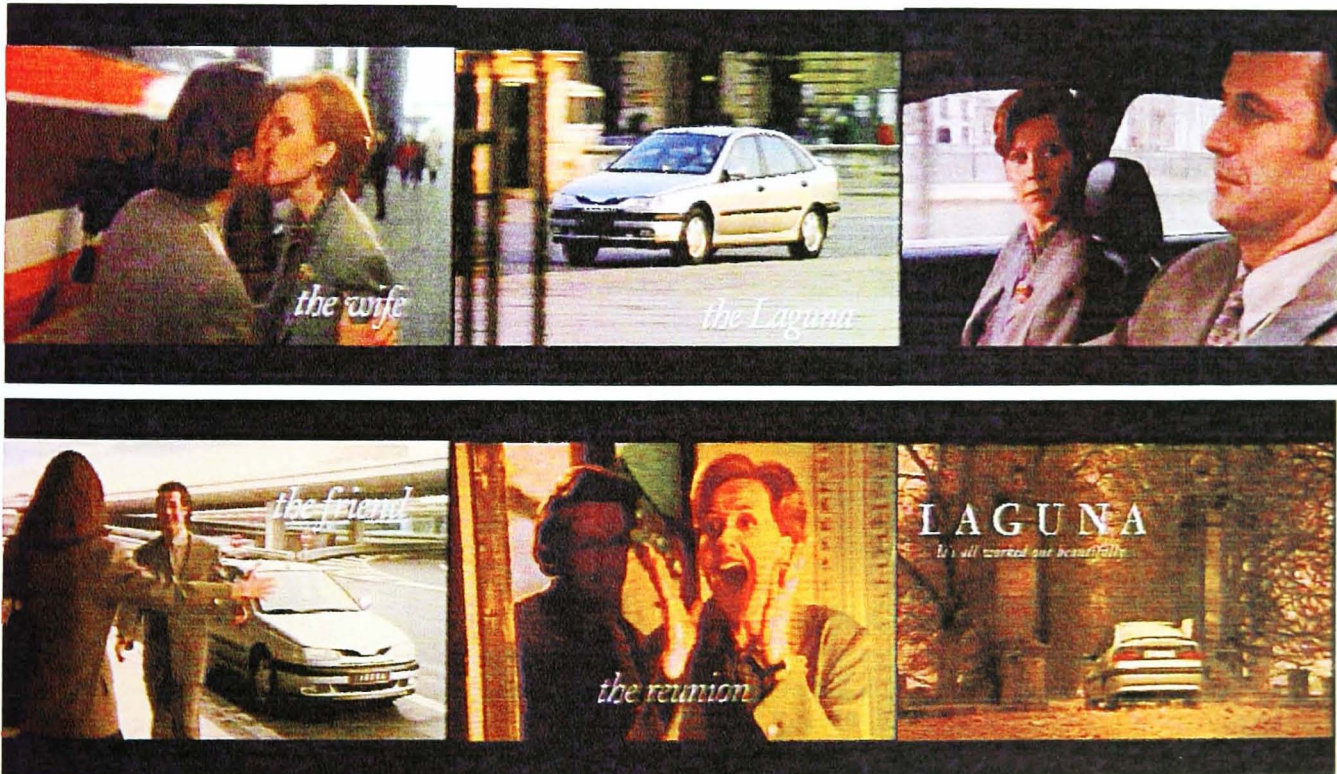




Daewoo: rival strategies -the car as gateway to eroticism



Commercial for the Peugeot 306 (above, 1997) and for Renault Laguna (below, 1998)  
2 ads that use the idea of their supermini as a facilitator to implied illicit liaisons and maintenance of deceit. The car in both cases is positioned as a gateway to a realm of possibilities, forbidden or not. Peugeot's strapline was 'Drives the imagination'.





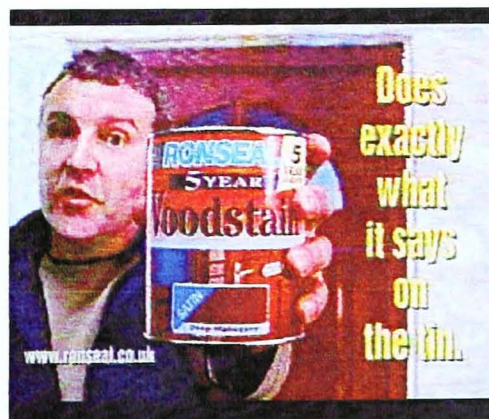
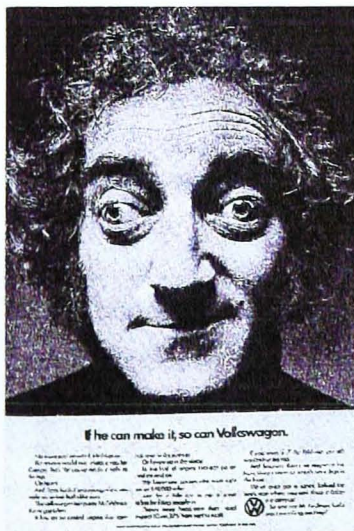
Daewoo: characterising the brand



Daewoo 'front man' Robert Harley

Daewoo's 'frontman' Harley takes on several roles in the commercials - reporter ('Dummy'), rep. ('guinea pigs'), and narrator ('service'). His character is educated, affable and organised - he seems disturbed when the narrative goes array. Harley was not a celebrity endorser - didn't have much of a broadcasting track record. In the ad therefore he took on the role of a middleman, not a hard seller.

Characterising products through 'faces': VW Beetle (below left, DDB, 1969), Ronseal (below centre, HHCL, 1995) & B&Q (below right, 1999) A head shot of UK comedian Marty Feldman featured in a press ad for the VW Beetle. Feldman featured predominantly in off-beat roles in Jewish comedy films. In keeping with the tone of previous VW copy the headline ran 'if he can make it, so can Volkswagen'. Feldman's face reiterated VW's 'ugly bug' characterisation - charming and distinctive. Ronseal (HHCL, 1995, cf. p 51) wanted a character that was, according to the ads planner Dave O'Hanlon, "direct, no-nonsense and utilitarian - what more can you say than what's said already on the packet". They cast an East-end London actor to play the authoritative decorator with nous. Ads for B&Q auditioned and cast store staff (not trained actors) to make their ads seem more direct, authentic and less constructed.





The development of direct advertising methods during the 1990s



Next Directory (1988)



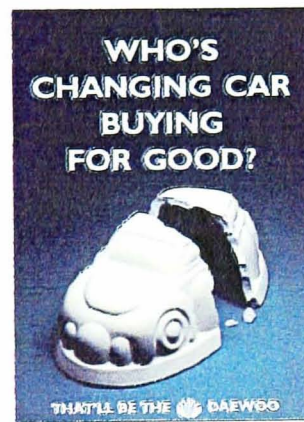
First Direct/Midland Bank (1990)



Landrover 'Adventures' mailers (1995)



Britvic Tango Gotan doll (1995)



Daewoo 'service' (1996)



Welsh Tourist Board (1998)



Levi's Sta Prest 'Flat Eric' puppet (2000)

A selection of MarketingDirect award winners, 1988-2000

Note the changes in form of direct advertising, from design-centred styling in the late eighties to strategic systems in the mid nineties, then a shift to placement and brand extensions by the late 1990s

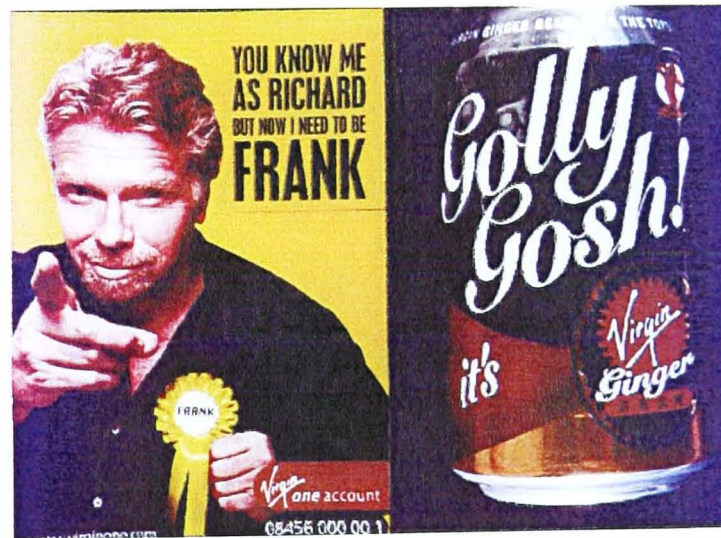
## Tesco Clubcard: brand stretching viewed in abstract

### Jasper Carrott on Virgin:

"I get up in the morning to Virgin Radio,  
put on my Virgin leisure gear  
then go into town by Virgin Rail  
to a Virgin Store to buy a Virgin CD.  
Then I go a Virgin Bar to have a drink,  
so I have a Virgin Vodka with Virgin Coke.  
I use my Virgin phone (on a Virgin line)  
to take out Virgin insurance  
to fly to the Virgin Isles by Virgin Airlines.

All those Virgins,  
and I'm the one still getting screwed!"

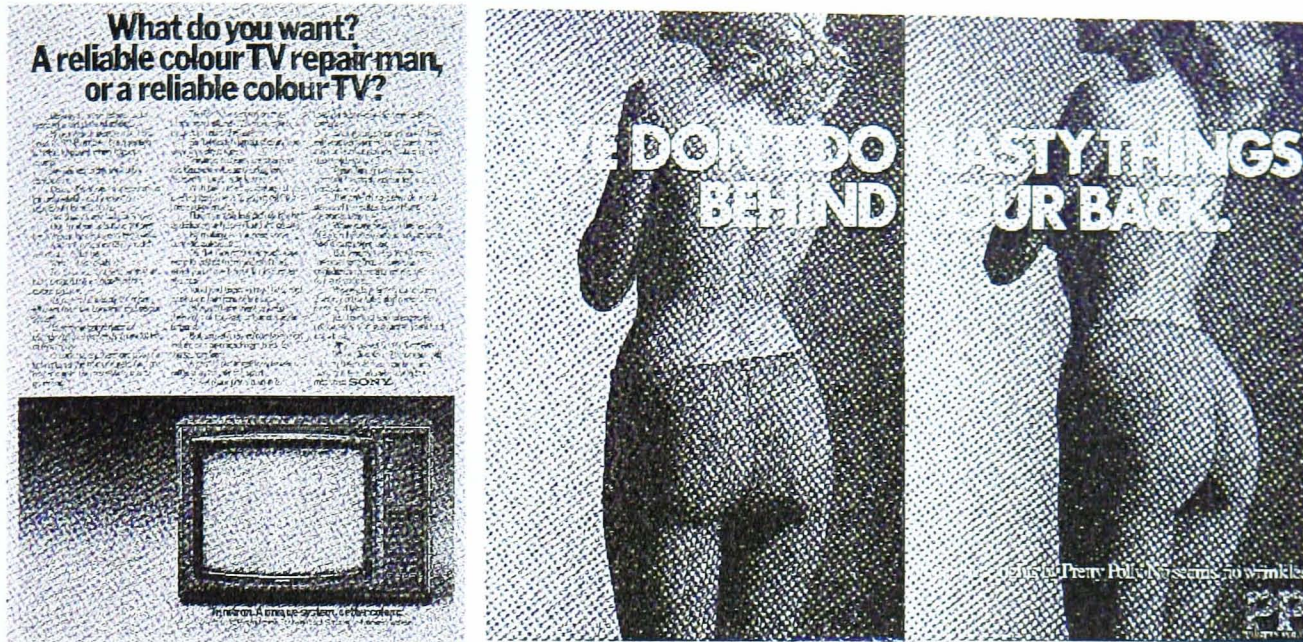
Comedian Jasper Carrott  
on Canned Carrott, (first broadcast on BBC1 June 1999)  
Note the ironic sense in the satire that, as companies expand, the customer (Carrott) is ultimately a 'victim'



Richard Branson's Virgin bank (flyer by AIS, 2000)  
& Virgin ginger beer (1996)  
Brand-stretched too far? The Virgin brand label relied greatly on the charismatic personality of its founder. Branson's popularity 'value' fluctuated in sync with his financial worth - particularly when he expanded into telecommunications, travel & financial services.



Moving conventions of adverts



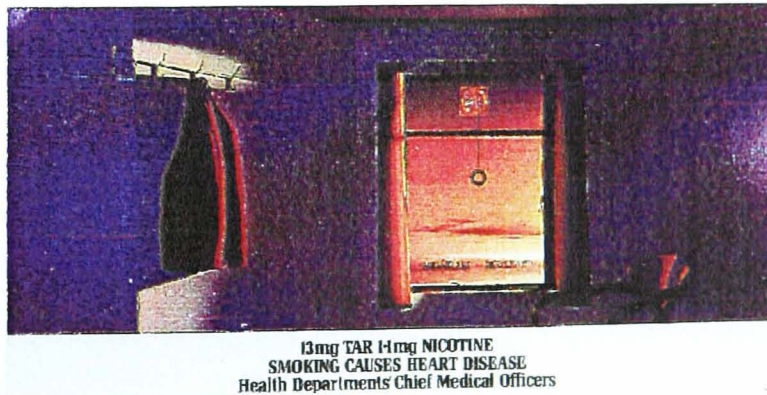
Conventions

2 1970s press ads that followed formulas and were shortlisted for D&AD Awards.

The Sony Trinitron, 'What do you want? A reliable colour TV repair man, or a reliable colour TV?' (above left, BBDO, 1975) used the manufacturer's 'trinitron' screen as its USP. A product shot ensures the branding is not lost. Pretty Polly, 'We Don't Do Nasty Things Behind Your Back' (right, CDP, 1976) followed a 1960s method of keeping headline text to 8 words or less, with a clear comparative 'us vs our rival' knocking strategy.

Moving conventions

The Birds Eye Beef Burgers TV ad, with their Lancashire lad 'Ben' (below left, CDP, 1973) and the Benson & Hedges press ad (right, CDP, from 1978) were among the first commercials to move British advertising's tactics further from Madison Ave-originated structures. Both ads used un-American tones and reference points. Birds Eye made a virtue of regional national accents while B&H used references to European surrealism.





## Selling via representations of Britishness



British Gas 'Tel Sid' share offer, commercial campaign (Saatchi & Saatchi, 1983)  
Note the landscape - removed from images of commercial (sub)urban Britain.

The campaign for British Gas's privatisation used the guise of a Postman's journey, getting a message by letter and word of mouth to an unseen character ("Sid"). The ad follows the Postman (in British Postal uniform, possibly a metaphor for the reach of British institutions) to the backwaters of rural Britain. The rural environments evoked a sense of national landscape like that of William Blake's 19<sup>th</sup> century 'green and pleasant land'. British Gas's 'message', delivered by a slow form of communication (post rather than telecommunication) makes the tempo of the ad slow enough to reflect on national attributes. The pace of urbanity would have looked international, modern and commerce-oriented. The postman met characters on route to finding Sid that were all representative 'types' - builders, farmers, housewives and shop keepers. They had a variety of regional accents and were of white, Asian and Afro-Caribbean ethnic origin, suggesting the diversity of Britishness and making the ad widely relevant to many stratas of (adult) Britain. The dialogue between the Postman and the various characters (they all know who Sid is) is managed in a way that conveys equity between different social types. In other words, it conveyed a form of social levelling and familiarity. Even in Saatchi & Saatchi's 1983 version of Britain in the "Tell Sid" campaign, contradictions were apparent. Even though most people may have seen the type of rural scenes most British people did not live in that environment. The timeless sense of rural life represented (much of it could have been set in any post-war period) only partially reflected the everydayness of the British during the eighties. It avoided the perspectives of youth or shifts in the economic landscape, so it effectively typed a pre-existing version of Britain rather than one specifically located in the eighties. In a sense, it was re-casting (with a few alterations) an old version of Britain to place the nationalised service in the 'archival matrix' of watching viewers. The aim was to make it tally with their personal sense of the past and strike a chord.

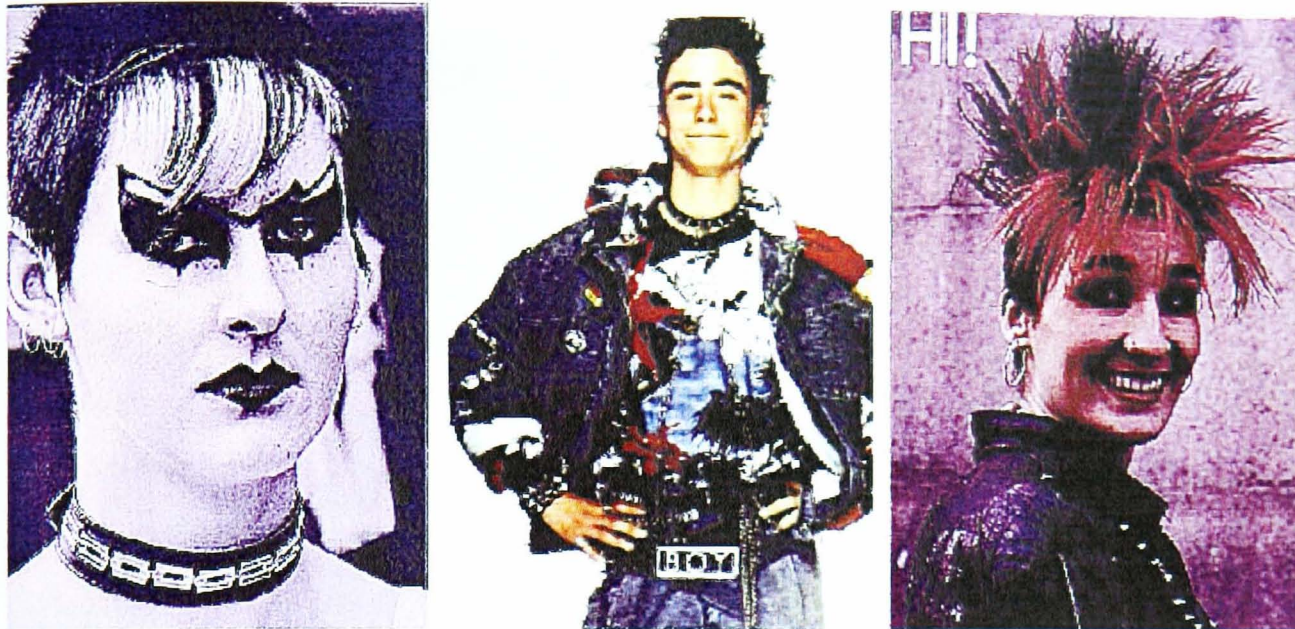
The Electricity Board 'Creature Comforts' TV ad (above, GGT/Aardman, 1990)

The national electricity and telecommunications shares campaigns drew on stereotypes of British homeliness. Both versions of everyday British home life could have been in-keeping with domestic situations rendered in any post-war period. British Telecom Jewish grandmother 'Beattie' TV campaign (below, JWT, 1987)





Commodifying Englishness as 'belonging'

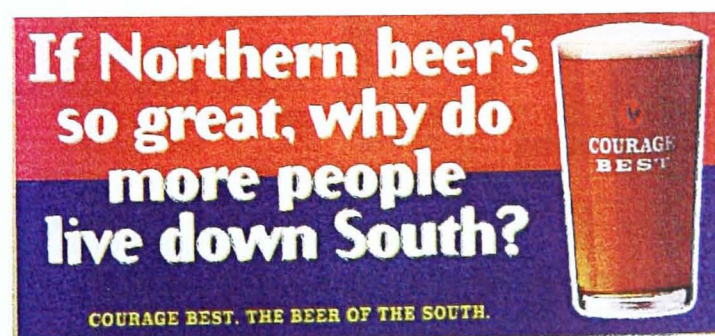


The mediation of Punk by 1990

(above, left to right) Punk at a Sex Pistols gig in 1978, when it was considered counter-cultural. A fashion shot for the Soho fashion store Boy in 1981, when it had been commodified as a subculture, and a London postcard bought in Trafalgar Square in 1990 - by which time Punk was repositioned as a nationally identifiable image of Britain. By 1990 images of punk were adorning British tourist brochures.

The North-South divide as perceived in beer ad stereotypes in the 1980s

John Smiths 'Barflys' (below left, BMP, 1981) and Courage Best's 'Gertcha' (right, BMP, 1979). Both were art directed by John Webster at the agency BMP, as was the Courage Best billboard ad (bottom, 1995) which echoed the North-South difference familiar to beer ads in the tone of laddish banter.





Capitalising on collective moments: constructing masculinity around football



Walkers Crisps commercial (above left, JWT 1998) & Umbro Sports billboard (above right, 1996)  
 Gary Lineker & Paul Gascoigne revised the moment when 'Gazza' cried during England's defeat in a World Cup semi-final - a key moment in football's rapid rise in popularity. After England's famous defeat in 1990, match attendances soured and an outlet for raw, barely mediated machismo passion was rediscovered. Typically in media portrayals, it was hip to put football first and to get emotional when one's team lost. The motif of football sold (below, left to right) Sugar Puffs and the Bravo channel. Coca-Cola (1996), dropped their American-ness & played on football's ability to bond, a nuance of British ads.

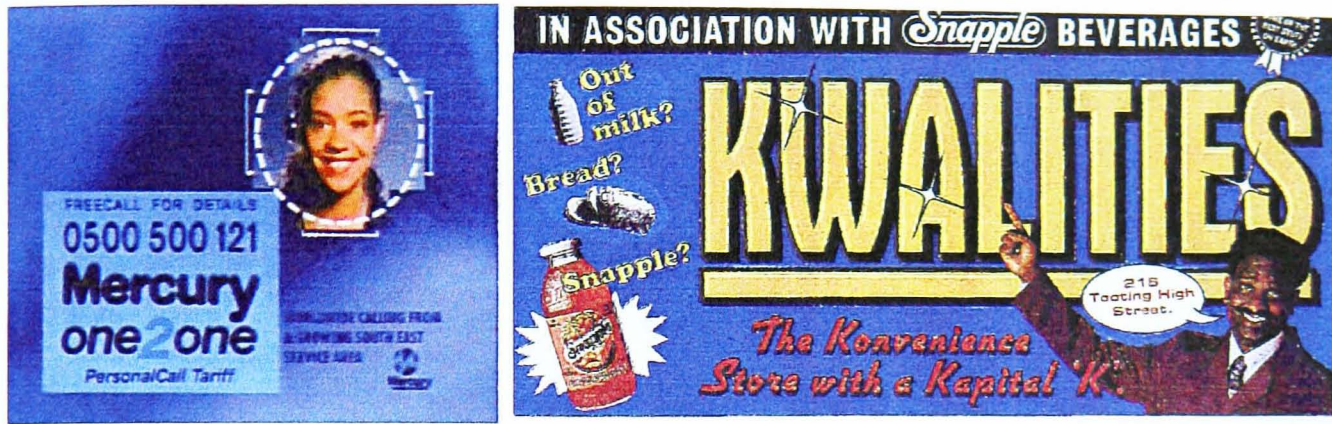


English ladism defining itself: Tabloid Headlines in 1997 (below left/centre), after England drew Germany for Euro 2000. Spitfire Beer poster campaign (right, 1999) recalls previous 20<sup>th</sup> century hostilities with Germany, referring to Britain/England (note the confusion) beating Germany in war and football.



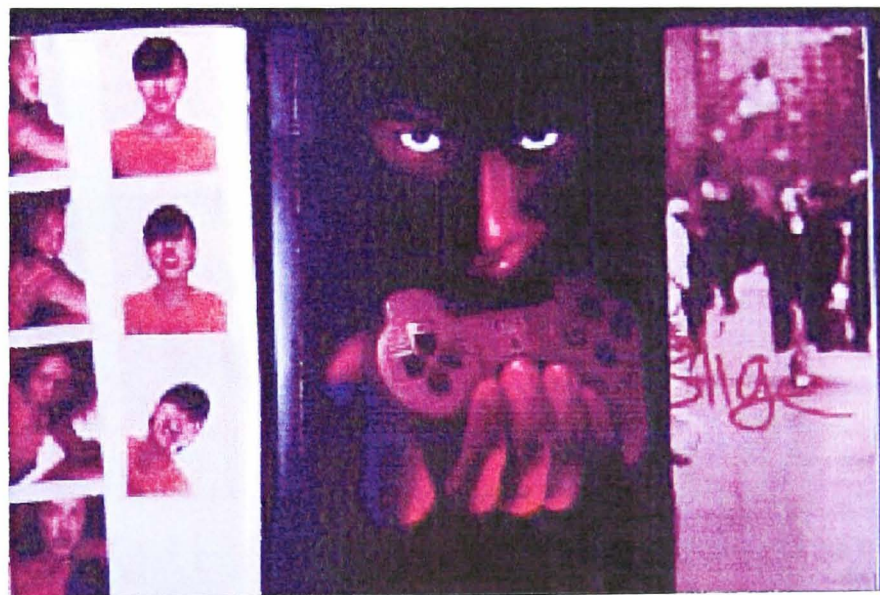
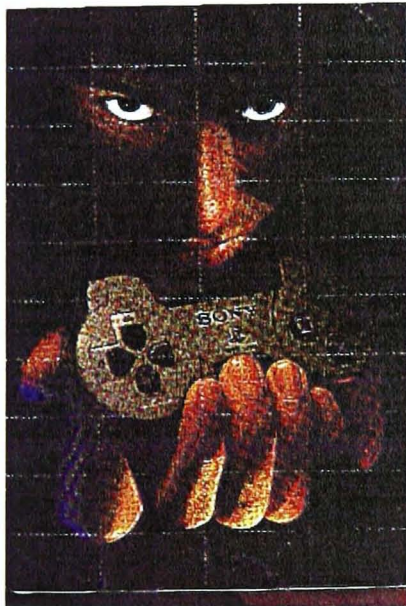


Representations of British Black & Asian youth in media advertising



'Burst' ad for Mercury 'one2one' (left, HHCL, 1992) & Snapple billboard (right, Mustoe Merriman, 1995)  
Actress Jaye Griffith became the first Black actress to front a burst brand campaign. Her selection made Mercury's new service appear cosmopolitan and contemporary. By 1995 advertisers felt confident enough to parody stereotypes of ethnic minorities in adverts, as this billboard ad for Snapples illustrates. Both ads address British youth with the clear assumption that Black and Asian youths are an integral part of the nation's fabric.

Sony direct advertising - 'pusher' offering a Sony Playstation handset, magazine insert (below, 1997)  
In youth magazines Loaded, The Face and Dazed & Confused, Sony promoted their gaming equipment by inserting a perforated card - roach filter size - printed with an image of a dark figure 'pushing' a Playstation hand set. To make sure the reference was not missed, the caricature's facial structure is Asian, conforming to an old stereotype in Britain of Asian and Black youths with drugs.





Referencing youth culture in 1970s



Schweppes Cresta Bear 'It's Frothy Man' (above, BMP 1972)

Cresta's beatnik bear momentarily lost his cool, boogeying across the screen after a sip of Cresta. His manner was similar to Baloo in Walt Disney's *Jungle Book*. However, this bear appears more like a Cresta junkie. He transformed with the 'hit' of Cresta, dropping his otherwise cool demeanour.

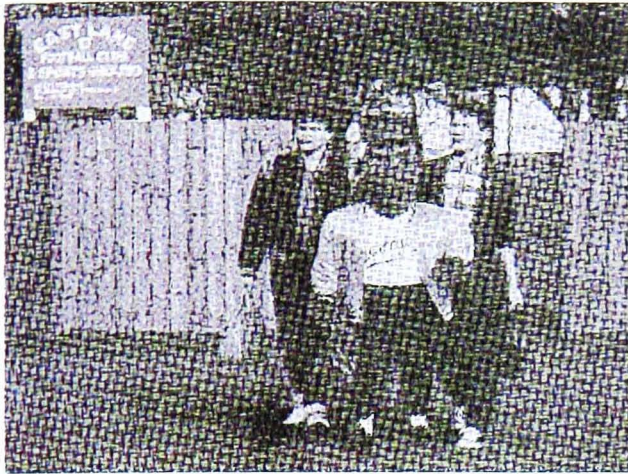
R White Lemonade's 'Secret Lemonade Drinker' (below, ABM, 1973)

R White's lemonade drinker was characterised as a rocker, yet appeared to be in a typical domestic set up with a partner. The narrative centres on his secret late-night craving for lemonade. When caught by his wife (who in the ad serves as a measure of sobriety) the explanation he offers - it's 'R Whites Lemonade' - is presented as a child-like apology, which suggests that the 'secret' addiction is akin to drug or alcohol addiction. Like Cresta, the brand was presented as a product with 'edge'.





## Representations of the British 'lad'

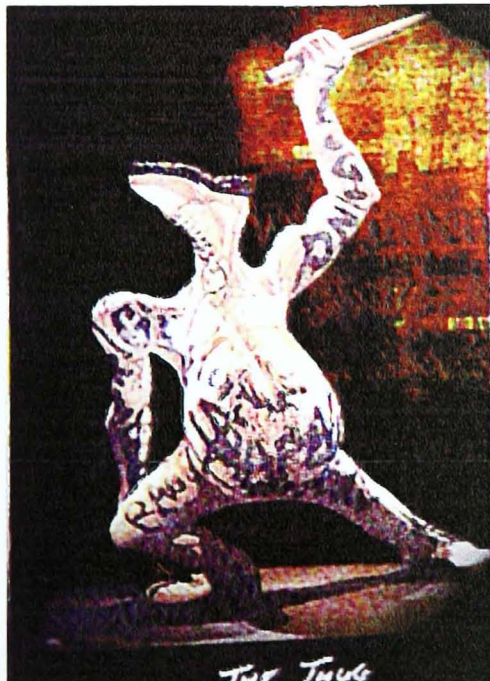


### Hofmeister's bear (BMP, 1982)

George the bear was a 'geezer'. He had a cockney accent, always wore his moddish trilby and was always accompanied by his two mates. He was a self-confident bear with an ability to play football and snooker superbly, and he was popular with 'the ladies'. Because he didn't have a human face, the male viewer could project themselves in George's shoes - popular with everyone good at everything and with a great deal of street cred.

### Gerald Scarfe's portrait of aspects of British youth at the Millennium Dome 'Self-Portrait' Zone (2000)

Scarfe's stereotypical portraits picked out a number of qualities including the TV sloth and the dodgy business man in a strange hierarchical system. Two sculptures showing British yobbishness (below left) and British humour (right), are qualities that were, in many respects, the flip side of George the Hofmeister Bear's character. However, like the characteristics represented below, George's actions were intended to appeal to other men.





Selling through representations of the British lad: Magazine titles in the 1990s

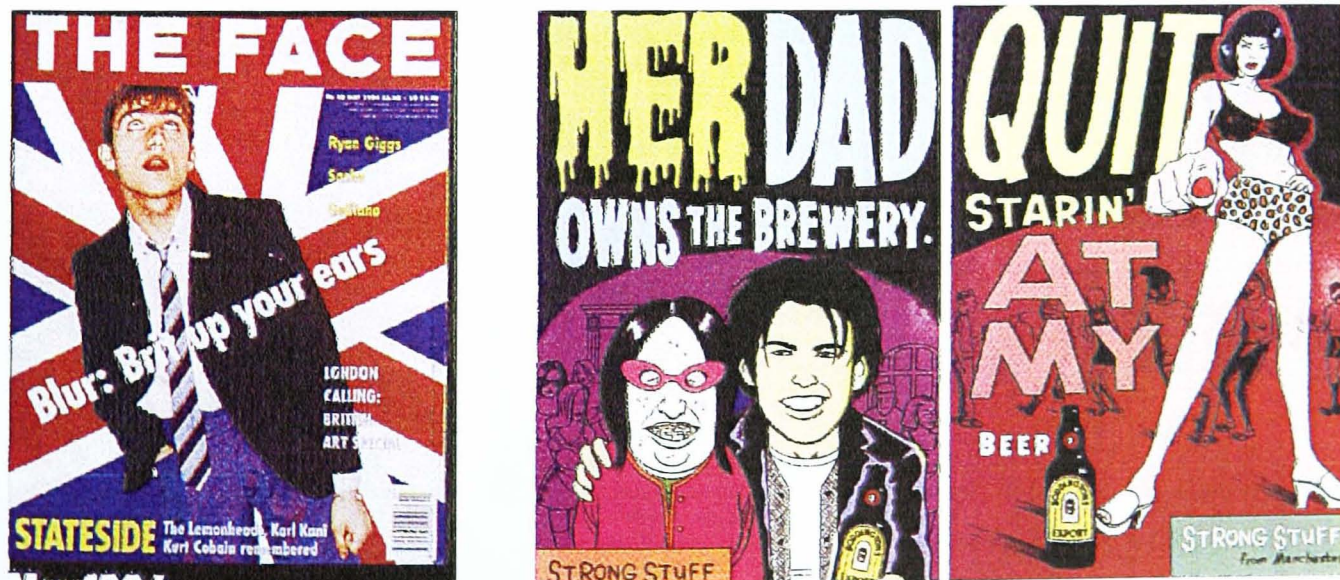


Loaded (left, 1994) and Stuff (centre, 1996), direct ad placed in Loaded, (right, 1998)

Loaded celebrated laddish misbehaviour: themes such as excess drinking, drugs and sex were mostly featured, while Stuff magazine spotted a market for lads keen on pin-up models and gadgetry. In a sense the glossy magazine industry were able to type the mood enough to make a commercial market out of common child-like fascinations. The ad for Brylcreem in Loaded draws on this, but the model's gaze makes it clear she is in control. As the 'lad' became unconstructed, the corresponding image of women was often one of greater control, often confrontational, using sexuality.

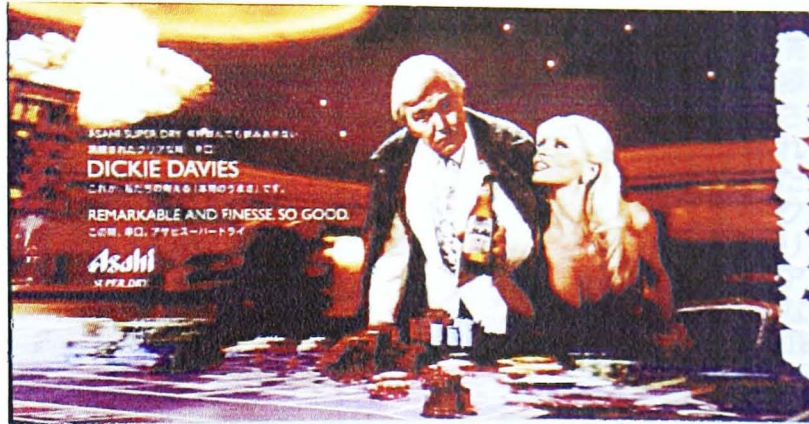
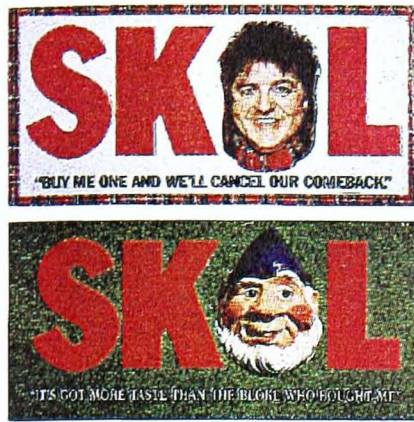
The Face in 1996 (bottom left), Boddingtons press ads, mostly for youth titles (centre & right, BBH 1996)

The 2 ads for Boddingtons almost reflect a stereotype of male & female youth mood in the mid-1990s. He's on the make, she's aggressively autonomous and equally hard living. The confident mood of British youth had commercial currency. Even established titles such as The Face switched into the new mood, from sophisticated pop masculinity to ironic childlike laddishness, by celebrating the British pop-culture renaissance from 1996.





Representations of the British lad: Ironic association and youth masculinity



Kitch 'heroes' - sending up 1970s figures. Skol beer billboards featuring a knome and 'Les' from the Bay City Rollers (above left, SCD, 1995) Asahi Japanese lager, featuring Dickie Davies, presenter of ITV's World of Sport (above, 1998). Advertisers targeting male youth realised that ironic esoteric references created the ironic mood youth associated with. Former TV personalities were used in a pillaging of viewers' own archival memory in using closed, esoteric reference points



Irony as a knowing play on formats. 1 P&G Fairy Liquid (left, Gray Ltd, 1989) Iron Bru (2<sup>nd</sup> left, Leith, 1995) Schweppes Lemonade (2<sup>nd</sup> right, O&M, 1996) Tango Cherry (right, HHCL, 2000). The 4 ads above span a decade, and all 4 play on viewers familiarity with advertising formulas. There is a shift in use of irony throughout the period: at the beginning of the decade irony differentiated the product (left), mid-decade it presented a (cynical) mood. The recent version adopts the consumer's perspective, pre-empting viewers' cynicism.



Molson Dry beer TV ad (right, HHCL, 1991), Cussons Imperial Leather, featuring Paul Merton (bottom, GGT, 1993). Twisting the 'integrity' of direct address, it is assumed that the viewer has put distance between themselves and the believability of the advert. It is clearly understood by advertisers and viewers that the ads were meant to be read 'between the lines'. The ad featuring comedian Paul Merton sent up USP 'product demonstrations' popular in the 1970s; this genre is most often spoofed.



Representations of British masculinity: differences between 1988 & 1998



Yellow Pages TV commercial (AMV, 1998)

Yellow Pages man was an attempt at typifying the characteristics of unreconstructed 1990's masculinity. The narrative centres on a man returning to his flat to be met by an attractive neighbour. She thinks he's been burgled. Rather than looking up/calling the police in his Yellow Pages he secretly dials for a cleaner - it transpires that the flat is how he had left it. As he finishes his call the neighbour emerges from another room, looking shocked and says, "You won't believe what they've left in the bathroom!". The lad shuts his eyes, knowing. In 1980s advertising (below right) men were addressed in idealised terms - ordered, successful, in control of situations. In the nineties the male exhibits greater vulnerability. The sense that he is a child at heart gives the Yellow Pages man a boyish charm. Evidently, he realises that he can't cope on his own.

Halifax Building Society 'Renaissance man' commercial (right, originally in colour, Brunnings, 1988)

The 'Renaissance Man' in Halifax Building Society's ad appears to be a young urban professional. He has an affluent, lifestyle in his London Docklands flat. Renaissance man is clearly in control of his life, where Yellow Pages Man seems in denial of his situation. The ad's narrative centres on the Halifax Man as he casually redresses a dilemma: he is out of milk and his cat is by its drinking bowl. A quick-fix solution is required. Halifax's man is shown getting cash from a Halifax ATM and buying milk. The end shot shows the cat cuddling up to him. The ad stresses how Halifax's service is a convenience for the modern man's pace of life. He is an aspirational figure, organised, suave and autonomous.





Guinness, Circa. 1990



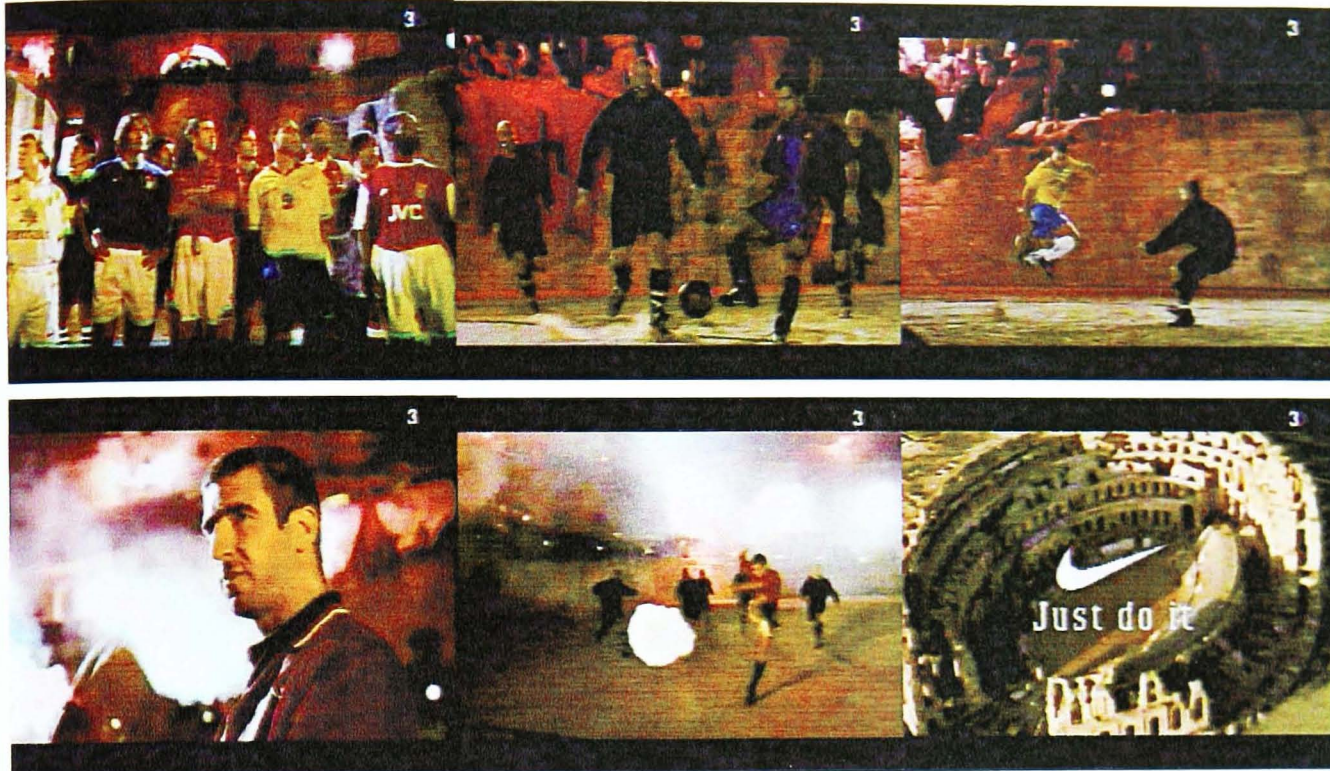
Re-launch of Guinness: the burst commercial with Ruter Hauer, 'the Guinness Man' (O&M, 1990)  
In the initial campaign Hauer becomes a metaphor for the values of Guinness (note the blond hair and black clothes). The ad consolidated the brand's earlier brand values of maturity and wisdom. Hauer appeared to be self-possessed, 'his own man', with enough scope to avoid being a drone, and enough confidence to buck the ritualistic flow of others.

2<sup>nd</sup> generation Guinness ad, featuring Hauer (below left, from late 1990) 3<sup>rd</sup> (& final) generation ad featuring Hauer (from 1993) Ogilvy & Mather developed the theme of sophisticated drinker by demonstrating strength of character, here placing him in what was an unfashionable context. The Guinness man is obviously out of context. Hauer says 'Don't worry. You're having a nightmare'. By the final ad the 'drones' had become followers of Hauer, and he a mystic cult leader transferring messages to the viewer by telepathy from a barbers chair. By this stage obscurity was being passed off as sophistication, and once a follow-on ad revealed his 'mystical' thought - 'have you seen my teddy bear?' - it became apparent that the allure of the sophisticated drinker had worn off.





## The loner & outsiders in selling propositions

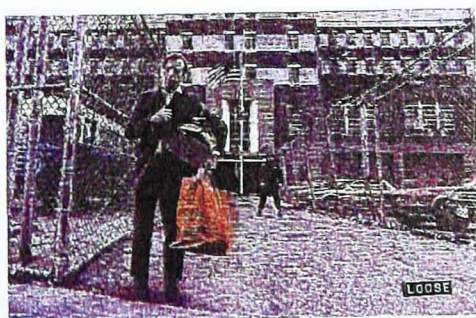


Nike 'The Beautiful Game', featuring Eric Cantona (AMV, 1996)

In this mini-epic 'film' ad, Cantona cuts a gladiatorial figure as his team of Nike all-star footballers perform tricks of skill. The dronion-like 'devil' opposition, who all look the same, use foul tactics. In a passing reference to Arnold Schwarzenegger's Terminator films, Cantona says 'Au Revoir' and, flicking up his collar strikes the winning goal.

Law breakers and anti-heroes selling on attitude: Levi's 501 press ad (below left, BBH, 1994) and stills from the films The Blues Brothers (below centre, 1980) and Hudson Hawk (below right, 1991)

Ever since gangster film *Scarface* (1932), the anti-hero has featured prominently as a popular figure. It suited advertising to use 'outsiders' because they were outside social and moral constraints. Association with crime therefore had commercial appeal. In the late 1990s 'gangsta chic' was popular in East and West coast America, while East-End gangsters were again popularised with the wave of sixties British revivalism. In the early nineties the outlaw was popularised as a rogue free-thinking individual. 2 of the most popular films of the period, *The Blues Brothers*, which reached cult popularity by the late-1980s, and *Hudson Hawk* both cast their main characters law-breaking outsiders, free to follow their own moral lines of 'justice'. The image was lifted by Levi's in their press campaigns (left) at the beginning of the 1990s.





Trawling 'boutiques of history' for legitimacy



Holsten Pils TV campaign (left, GGT, 1983-90). The Mercury burst campaign, featuring Harry Enfield (right, HHCL+P, 1992-95). The 1<sup>st</sup> Hovis commercial (below, CDP 1975)

Using the cutting edge digital technology of the 1980s (Quantel Aston and Harry) the production company, Brooks Fulford Coutts Seresin, seamlessly slotted links featuring comedian Griff Rhys Jones into well-known movie scenes featuring, amongst others, George Raft (left). The initial 1993 launch campaign, featuring the Harry Enfield character Mr Cholmondley-Warner in a spoof war-era information film, sends up the idea that this 'new technology' is difficult to grasp, and a sense of 'authority voice' prevailed through the irony. Unlike the sense of nostalgia in previous decade's period reconstructions (below), in the 1990s the past was rendered as a strange place. Hovis was one of the first campaigns to tap into period authentication, drawing on viewers archival memory.

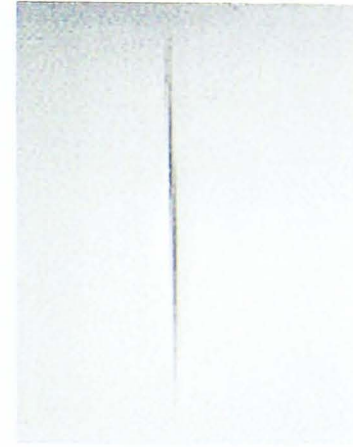




'borrowed interest' from art and collectables

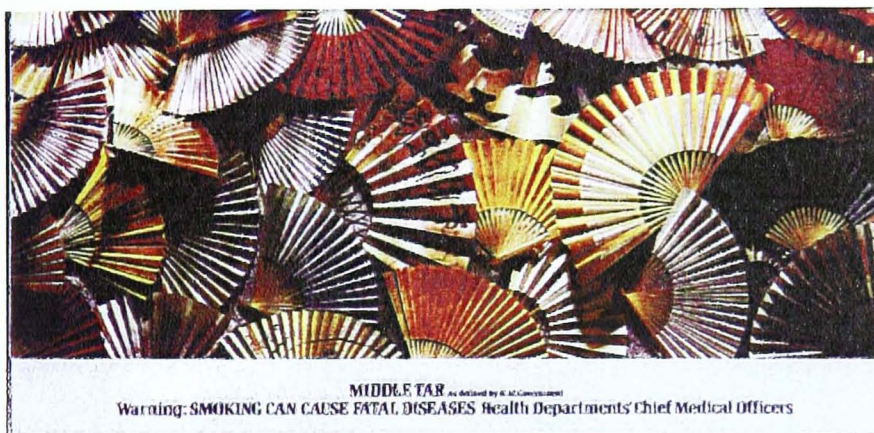


**LOW TAR** As defined by U.S. Federal Standard. **MIDDLE TAR** As defined by U.S. Federal Standard. **UIGARETTES CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH**



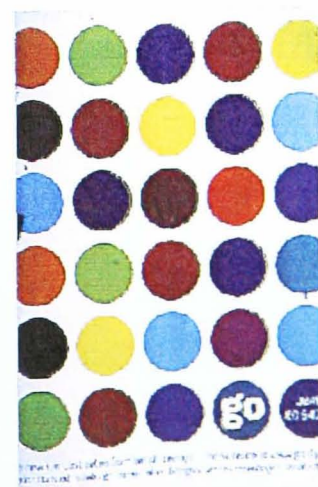
Silk Cut press/billboard ad 'Slash' (above left, Saatchi & Saatchi, from 1983) & Lucio Fontana's 'Concetto Spaziale' (right, 1964). Silk Cut's treatment borrowed from Fontana to forge a connection between contemporary European art, the name Saatchi and a striking media campaign with artistic overtones.

Gallaher's Benson & Hedges (CDP, from 1978; press ad below 1988)  
The B&H campaign 'style' was easily adaptable. This version appeared during the summer of 1988, when Spanish fashion and culture was frequently featured in Sunday supplements in the run up to the Seville 1991 World Expo and 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

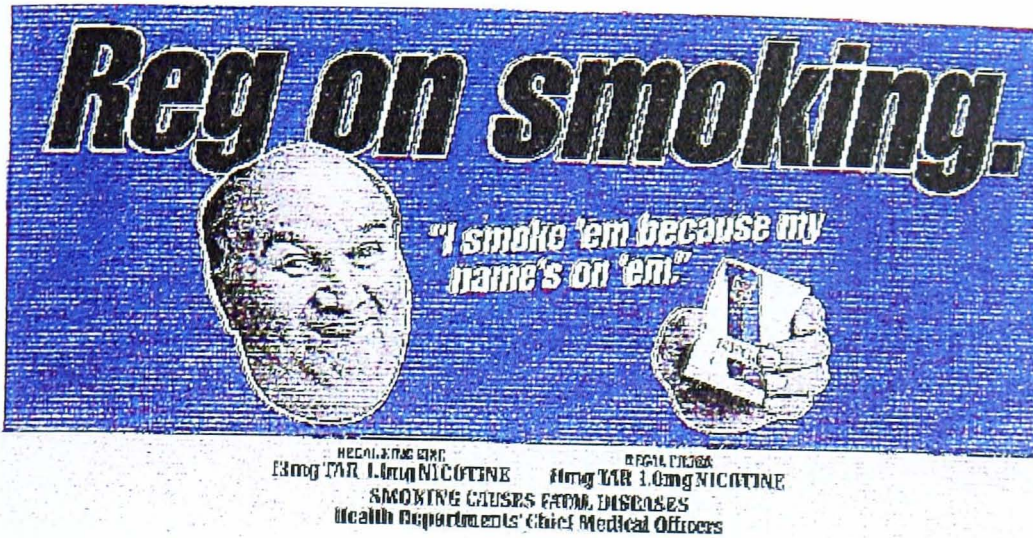


**MIDDLE TAR** As defined by U.S. Federal Standard.  
Warning: **SMOKING CAN CAUSE FATAL DISEASES** Health Departments' Chief Medical Officers

Damian Hirst's Argininosuccinic Acid (below left, 1995), & a press ad for Go! (right, M&C Saatchi, 1997)  
Of the types of work produced by Hirst, he calls his Spot paintings 'the most commercial' because they are easily reproduced and have a strong identity. Again - note the Saatchi connection: like Silk Cut's 'connection' with Fontana's work in the Charles Saatchi collection, M&C Saatchi (founded by Maurice & Charles after their ousting from Saatchi & Saatchi) in 1997 used Hirst's applied paintings to British Airways. The aim was to 'borrow interest' in establishing BA's sub-brand 'Go!'







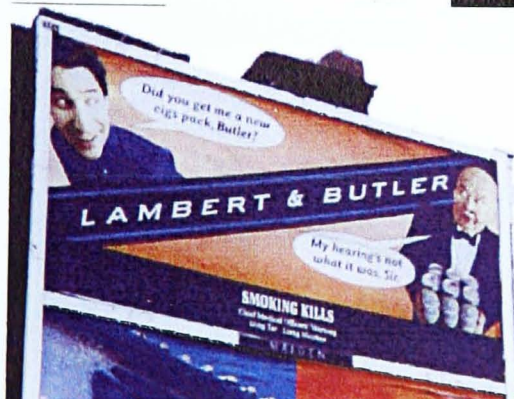
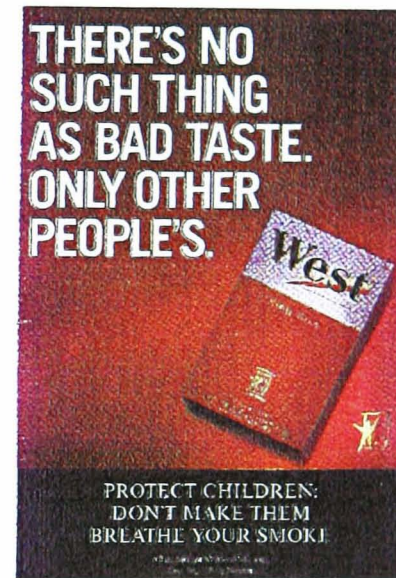
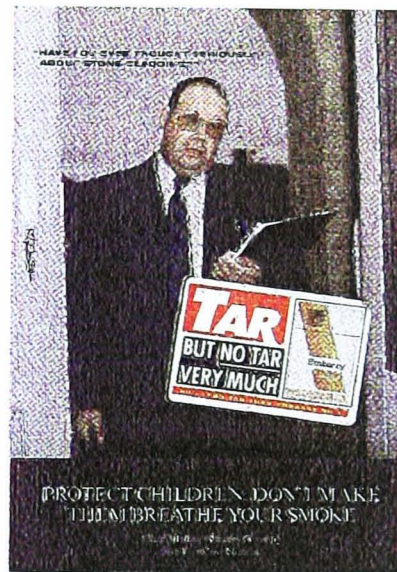
Regal's burst ad, launching the 'Reg' billboard campaign (above, LHS, 1992). Regal was first brand advertised in the 1990s to shift to a laddish tone of voice. It was raw, ironic & immediate. Tango followed suit.

Royals press (below left, 1994) Embassy Regal press (below centre, 1995) West press (below right, 2000) Lambert & Butler billboard (bottom left, 1999) and Guinness billboard (bottom right, O&M, 1997)

The direct address/crude punning of the messages became a standard tactic - the most dominant new genre of tobacco advertising since Collett Dickinson Pearce's B&H campaigns from 1978. Even the last Ogilvy & Mather Guinness campaign borrowed Regal's tones.

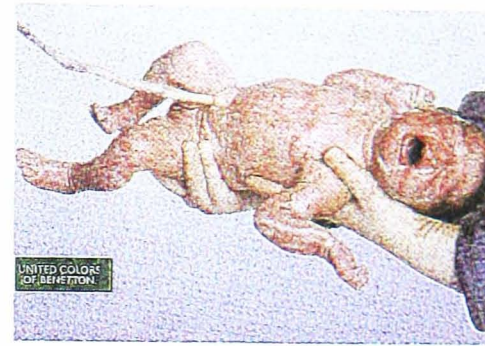


13mg TAR 1.1mg NICOTINE  
 SMOKING WHEN PREGNANT HARMS YOUR BABY  
 Health Departments' Chief Medical Officers



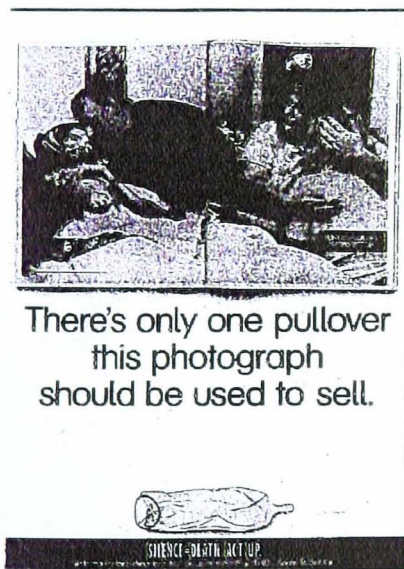


Benetton's media campaign



Luciano Benetton with the ad featuring AIDS victim David Kirby (left image by Therese Frare, mediated by Oliviero Toscani, Spring 1992) & Benetton's 'Baby' billboard (Toscani, Summer 1991)  
Benetton's owner Luciano Benetton and his art director Oliviero Toscani continually argued that their campaign simply used the medium to draw attention to 'real world issues' - no different - they argued - to news network CNN's coverage of world events. The AIDS awareness campaign group Act Up read it differently - arguing the ads were borrowing from the empathy AIDS attracted to promote their brand. The British ad industry was outraged that Benetton's strategy (below), subverted their established medium.

Act-Up's poster (right, WCRS, late 1992) & responses to Benetton from Campaign readers  
Lobby group Act-Up's poster won D&AD awards. One agency took out a double page spread in Campaign to ask of Benetton's ad, 'why wasn't it killed at birth?'. The ad claims any agency could resort to shock tactics, but agencies should restrain from doing do in the 'name of common decency'.



Disney as a brand-centred operation



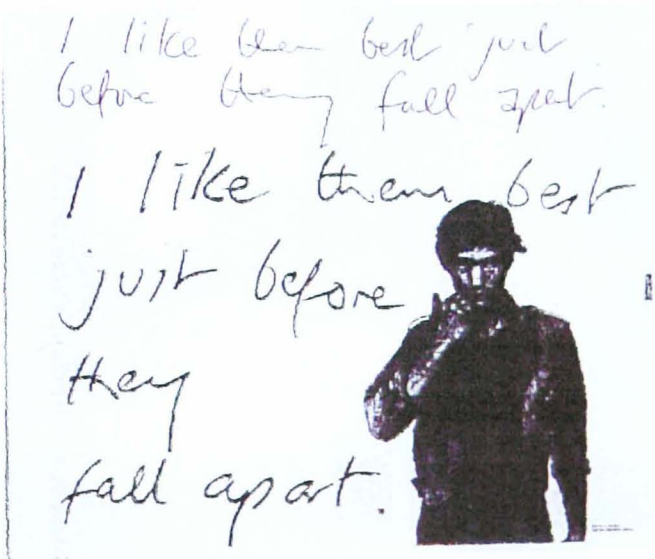
The range of children's Disney merchandise in the signature Disney style (above left 1996)  
 Note the colour co-ordination and the scale of the children's room. For parents there is a presumption of affluence, afforded through a Disney-esque way of living.

Offering scope for individual expression via the brand:

Children from Rokesly Junior School, Crouch End, aged between 7-11, self-portraits (below left)

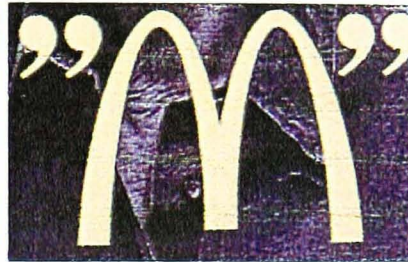
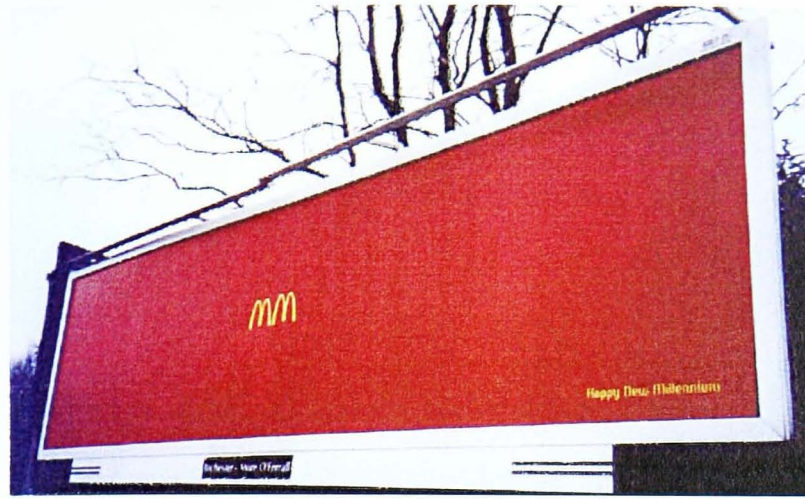
Levi's 501 'I like them best before they fall apart', billboard and press ad (right, BBH, 1994)

In their annual school calendar, children were asked to pen portraits of themselves. Approximately 10% defined themselves with a brand, which featured largely on the drawings of their clothes. Above are just a few of the self-branded images featured. Levi's attempted to make their brand appear to be the choice of discerning 'free thinkers'. To make their product not seem mainstream mass-market, they cast a non-standard model (who they claimed was a NY street worker), and used hand scrawled copy to make it not look manufactured. It's art director Will Awdry re-wrote the line above the original on this image to illustrate how he intended to make the ad appear 'unproduced'.





Branding by icon



McDonalds 'Golden Arches' (above left, billboards by Leo Burnett in Holland 1995 and UK, 2000), Sony Playstation symbols (left top, TBWA, 1999) & the Apple (right, in-house, 2000)

McDonalds 'M' marque has at times been emphasised in ads to reinforce the brand marque and to play on its global renown. The symbol and its colour is prominent in all McDonalds promotions. The arches have been the same since 1980. The simplification of the Playstation logo draws on icons found on the Playstation handset. They have been used in publicity campaigns to replace the 4 Sony letters. Sony have used this to enable their identity to appear global, rather than being rooted in an English speaking culture. The Apple Macintosh symbol has been rationalised since 1984, where the coloured horizontal stripes have made way for a more monolithic single-colour Apple icon. The apple above is from the iMac range.

Branding by colour – consistency



Barclays blue (above, TV & ad by Leagas Delaney, from 1991) Such is consistent emphasis of Barclays corporate colour that a snippet of it is enough to remind one of the brand (left, a left over segment of a Barclays ad, found in Fulham, 1992)



## Branding by colour



Colour branding and marques (above, left to right), Cadburys, Hutchinson Telecom & Silk Cut. Corporate colour brands of Cadburys, Orange & Silk Cut as featured in commercials & press ads. An editorial in *The Face*, September 2000, extrapolated several brand identities to make their own '3<sup>rd</sup> party associations'. Among their 'new product range' featured a crisp, feminine Cadbury's bag opposite a diamond-encrusted pink Whiskas watch.

## Techniques of re-iteration



Levi, Budweiser & Coke branding (above left, image by author, above right, McCann Erickson, 1979). By casting themselves as the definite article Levi's 'original' clothing, Budweiser's 'genuine' beer and the 'real thing' Coke implied a core 'truth' to the branding, that suggested they were each more than merely a brand in their field.

Coke billboard 'If you don't know what this is, Welcome to planet earth.' (below left, McCann-Erickson, 1991) and Levi's 501 press spread right, BBH, 1998).

Coke used the iconic familiarity of its globally recognisable bottle to re-emphasise its significance, as if to claim version of 'We're the biggest, so trust us'. Levi re-positioned their brand in the late-nineties as museum relic, complete with product details and branding in the form of a museum-style caption. This crystallised their reputation as an iconic brand, which they had effectively established by the nineties.





Engaging outside the frame of advertising



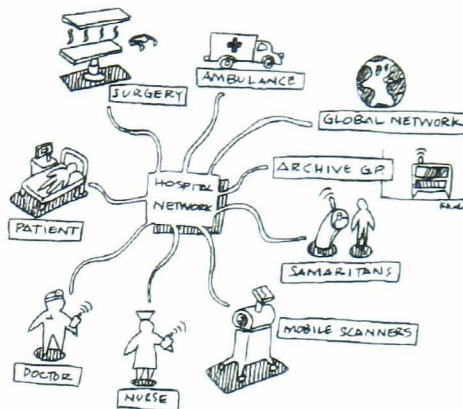
Radio One 'Gonks' (left, St Lukes, 1997). Headline 'news' in The Sun, March 1995, on the banning of a Walkers Crisps ad featuring Gary Lineker (promotional stunt by JWT/Walkers marketing, right). The Radio 1 'gonks' (commissioned from an old peoples home in South London) gave festival goers in 1997 a free souvenir of the experience and memories, which helped reinforce that Radio 1 were part of that experience. The ad agency J Walter Thompson made a virtue of their ad being deemed by the Advertising Standards Authority to be outside the boundary of acceptability, for showing former footballer Lineker stealing a child's crisps, which apparently 'set a bad example to children'. JWT used their Walker's PR division to contact press and make a news story of their new-found 'risqueness'.

Barclay Bank 'Because we're big' commercial (below left, Leagus Delaney, 2000). Nike poster for Eric Cantona, produced when Cantona attracted press controversy (bottom right, AMV 1996). The apparent clash in timing and tone of the Barclays ad - the Bank had just closed many rural post offices, then appeared to be bragging about the size of the company in a TV commercial - back-fired and many customers left the branch amid a wave of counter-publicity. The actor featured in the ad, Sir Anthony Hopkins, claimed he was just the message bearer, so The Guardian, amongst other papers, ran the headline, 'Big fee, Big disclaimer'. The agency lost the Barclays account in 2001. It was no longer acceptable to assume an ad worked independently from a company's other operations. While many agencies tended to generate publicity exclusively from their clients, it was becoming apparent that the USP's needed to be more closely integrated and evident throughout a company. When Abbott Mead Vickers took over the Nike account (from SPDC in 1995) they used Cantona's raw combative persona to front their UK drive, marking it out as a successful and desirable masculine quality in 1996.





Philips Research Centre, Eindhoven - 'Visions of the Future'



Product 'development' as advert

Through their 'Visions Of The Future' publications (1994>) Philips Research Center shape a future driven by digital innovation. Philips scenarios show where they anticipate new technology improving the quality of life. For instance (above, left to right) learning family history through play. An interconnected infrastructure could lead to better organised arrangements of information around hospital services. 'Smart badges' however (below) show technology intruding on normal emotive human interactivity - turning 'getting to know you' into a series of mechanical steps. Rather than improving the support system of everyday human interactivity, this rather pre-empt a break-down of regular communication - or a case of Philips trying to make technology fit.

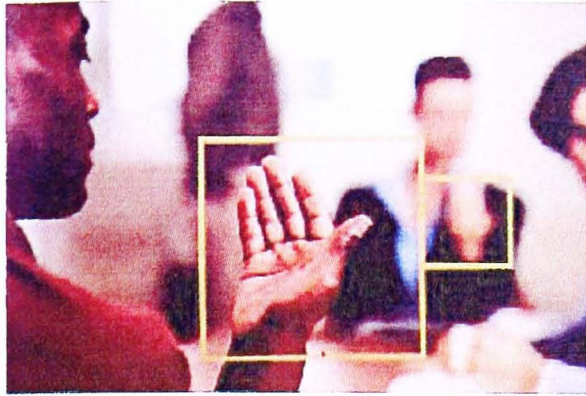


the badges dialogue: " 'he likes...?' > 'she likes the opera?' > 'she likes football?' > contact > contact > they've scored"

The inter-active family tree and digital hospital infrastructure both address informational problems of transferring information. Yet the 'hot badges' assume technology has a part to play in social interaction. The 'hot badges' read data from other badges without any dialogue needing to take place. This intrusion of technology has replaced social skills altogether. Such overstated assumptions of technology's social potential exposes the role technology plays in Philips brand marketing. Technology is being presented as a way of shaping a more idealised future through the brand, where Philips Visions of the Future images are idealised lifestyle plates selling the notion of Philips strength in research and development. The appearance of Philips artifacts bears this out. Most are in a matte plastic, opaque and retrospectively 1950s-60s in their formal qualities. Philips suggested scenarios of the future that are wrapped up a contemporary style, hinting past forms to evoke a sense of re-assurance, modes of operation served to enable brands to invent their own promotional platform beyond that of conventional advertising.



'Buy into new technology - or be left out'.

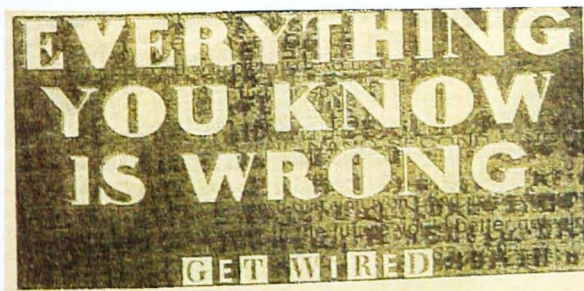


The veiled threat of technology within the promotion of new products

In this 1998 press ad for Ericsson mobile phones (above left) the implication is that there's something missing. There should be a mobile phone in his hand to facilitate the (assumed) busy life he leads. The further implication is that if one doesn't need this new piece of technology, one is behind the pace of the times (behind on contemporary relevance). When manufacturers have not used convenience as a means to sell, they have tended to coax consumers to use new technology by making it seem familiar and accessible. During the 1920s telephones were made to seem familiar by drawing on the form candlesticks, which people were used to carrying. It encouraged users to handle it in a familiar manner. Similarly, the soft biomorphic shape of the Motorola phone (below) 'borrows' from stone-like forms to make it 'feel right'.

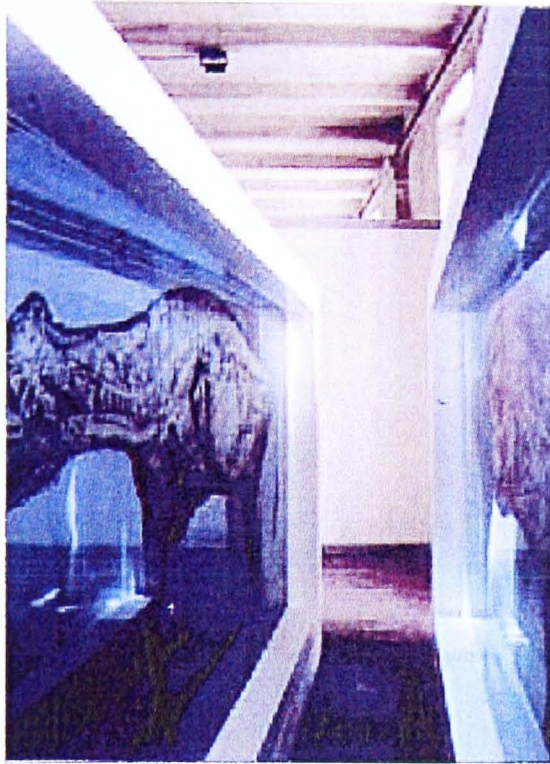
Motorola TV commercial (below, 2000) Technophobia in the workplace

Nudging a luxury good into the bracket of 'social necessity'. When new technology is used in a 'prosthetic' role, in the hi-tech chair for instance (below centre), it fits into offices as an updating of the environment: However, in front of us tend to want materials we feel emotionally comfortable with (wooden surface inlaid into desk, below right). In 1992 Wired magazine's headline ad, 'Everything you know is wrong' (bottom) backfired because it made computing seem an new exercise that bore no relation to previous experience.





The 'experiential corridor' - heightening the sensational retail moment



'Experiential': Damien Hirst's 'Mother & Child Divided' (above left, 1996) and Adbusters calendar image (above right, 1999)

The heightened awareness of one's sensitivity when passing between the 2 halves of Damien Hirst's 'Mother & Child Divided' is comparable to the way in which 'superbrands' have attempted to make buying more 'experience' than chore. The 'experience' of purchasing their products on 'home' territory - 'home' stores in London - and representative of other Western capitals - include Nike Town, Warner Village, The Disney Store and Levi's store amongst others.

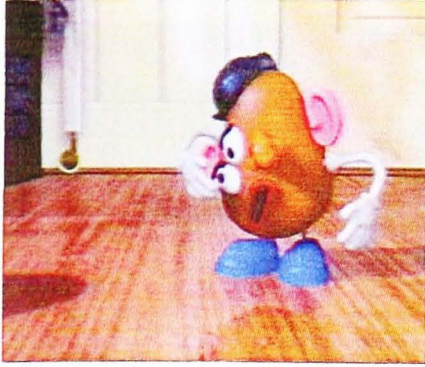
Entrance to Nike Town, NY

The sensation of entering Nike Town is heightened by the turn styles - It is as if one is entering an arena. Nike introduced turnstyles to heighten the intensity of the moment, to separate the shopping experience from the rest of the shopping trip.





## Multiple-coded information



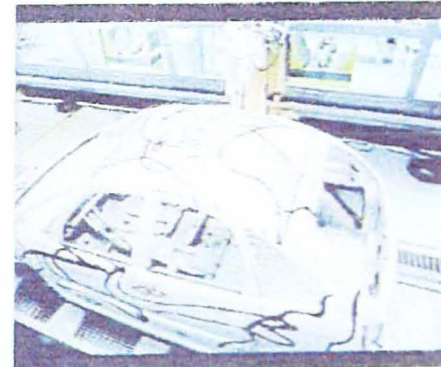
### Layered communication for multiple-coded reading, as practised in Toy Story (1995)

Toy Story had jokes worked into the narrative, to appeal exclusively to an older audience. Above is Mr. Potatohead 'doing Picasso' and 'kissing ass'. The tempo of such references tends to be quicker and dispersed throughout the narrative, compared with the more inclusive wide-band visual humour. By the mid-1990s, multiple-coding communication was relatively commonplace. Like Toy Story, many multiply-coded sequences were devised for repeated viewing, where the separate layers of meaning could be picked at.

### Shifts in the way new technology is presented in advertising, between 1978-1998

#### Fiat Strada commercial (CDP, 1978) and Citroen Xsara Picasso (Leagus Delaney, 1998)

In 1978 automated production was used as a selling proposition for the Fiat Strada. Set to Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, the ad celebrated the accuracy of technology (over man-made production) by showing aspects of the assembly line processes. The strapline 'Built by Robots' presumed that automation was preferable (and safer) than human labour. Twenty years later in an ad for the Citroen Xsara Picasso range a robot on an automated production line is shown to be craving personal expression. A quality controller is monitoring production consistency, but the robot sneaks in 'personalised' individual detail. By 1998 automation had connotations of being repetitively dull, and mass-production had overtones of being cheap. Citroen's ad assumes consumers wanted more than a standard mass-produced model.





'Exposure of methods': under the skin of media constructions

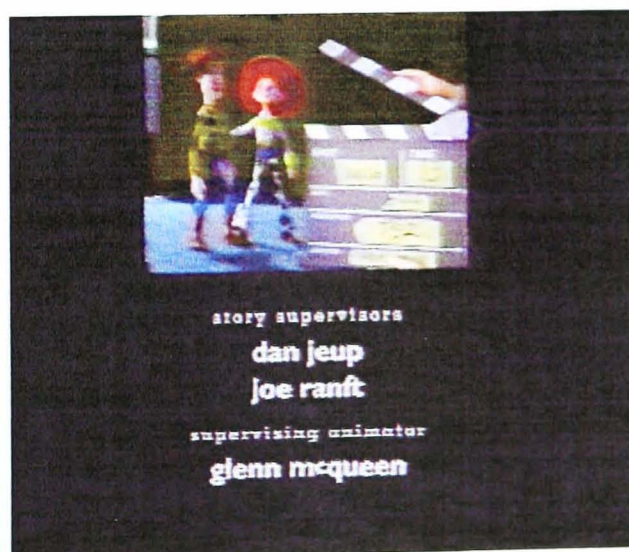
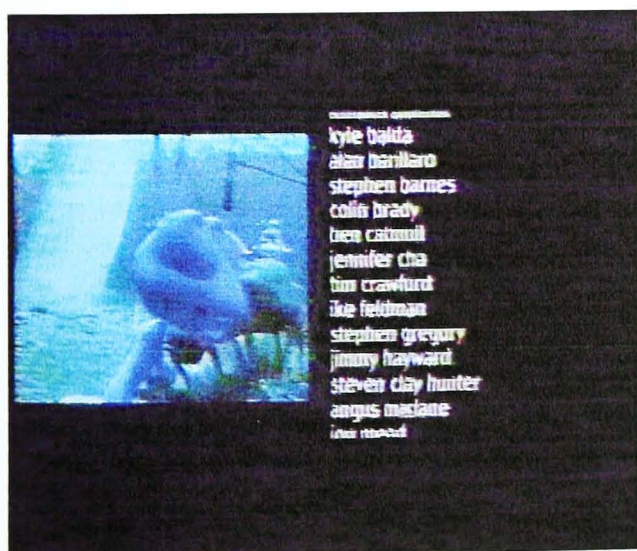


VW Passat TV commercial 'Nick Broomfield' (DDB BMP Needham, 1999)

Film maker Nick Broomfield (Producer & Director of Kurt & Courtney) is synonymous with making exposé films. In his ad for the VW Passat, the art direction's raw and apparently unstyled treatment flagged up the construction in adverts, implying this 'mock expose' went beyond the construction of most ads. Even though the viewer would have been aware that the scene was a construction, it is the association with getting 'behind the scene', revealing the technology to have come from plane and rocket engineers, that became the ads strongest message.

Disney's A Bugs Life and Toystory 2 'out-takes' during end credits.

Disney also acknowledged that its young audience were aware of media construction. In the films A Bugs Life (Disney/Pixar, 1998) & Toy Story 2 (Disney/Pixar, 1999) a series of mock out-takes added another layer to the construction, where the animated characters become actors in end credit 'out-takes'. The Gumball Rally (Chuck Ball, 1976) was the first film to show out-takes during end credits. In the Disney/Pixar films the out-takes make the characters seem more immediate.





## 'Perfect moments'



Domodinamica – 'cicalino' warbling bird door mat, by Denis Santachiara, (above, 1994) & Dancing Baby (below, 1997) The company describe it as "...a little door mat with a little bird that greets with a song everyone who cleans his/her shoes": It is a symbolic entrance to mark the passing between spaces. The 12-second animation Dancing Baby was one of the first internet 'celebrities' spawning dolls, TV appearances (most famously on US comedy drama Ally McBeal) & numerous follow-up animations. It even started a pre-Millennial ad genre for using babies. The baby's brief moment posed more questions than it asked - why a baby doing dancing like an adult? Who did it? Why? With no apparent narrative or purpose the baby's apparent love of the moment struck a chord: it was a snapshot of the moment.

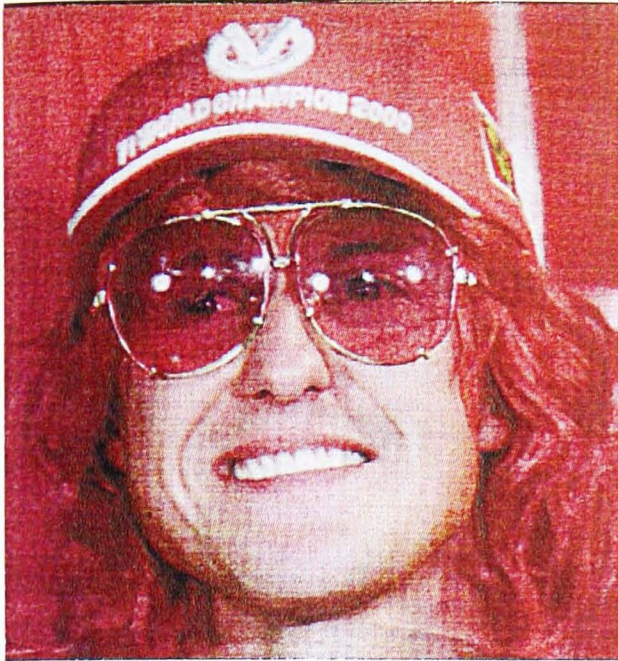


Robert Palmer promotional videos (between 1986-90) & Michael Owen's 'commodified moment' (right). The art direction of Robert Palmer's pop promos 'Addicted To Love' and 'Hyperactive' (both 1986) were both designed to the demands of the format, as were Palmer's following videos. Having realised that most people remember the image of the video rather than a narrative - most pop videos were usually shown as 10-30 second clips, 'brand' familiarity was the primary concern for Palmer's record label EMI. The image of Michael Owen (right, owned by Reuters) is perhaps the most reproduced still from Owen's 5 second run and shot. It shows the only point he actually took on a member of the opposition. The other much-used still of Owen's goal is at the moment where the ball is stretching the back of the net.



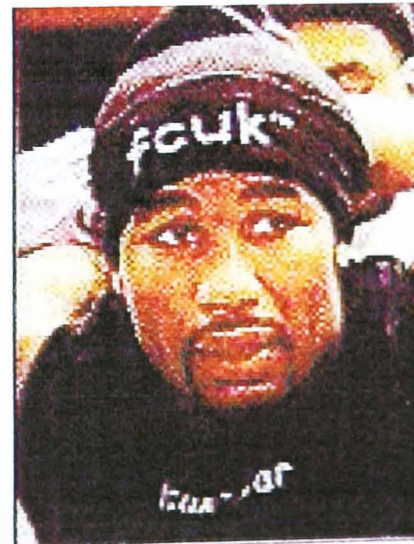


Commodifying 'moments': Marlboro



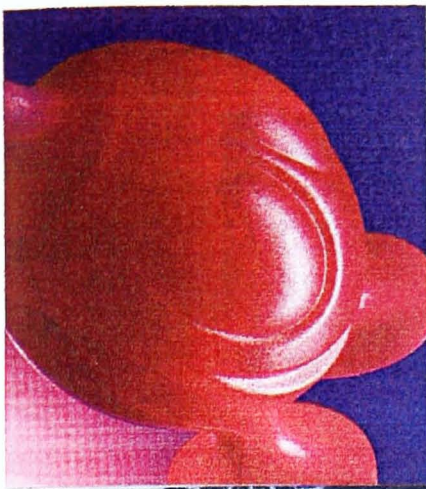
A 'Marlboro moment' (Image from The Sun, April 2000) Michael Schumacher winning the Formula 1 World Championship 2000, and 2-week Marlboro ambient at the Edinburgh Festival (Tequila London, 2000)  
Less than 5 minutes after winning the last 2000 motor racing Grand Prix, and winning the 2000 Driver's Championship, the entire Ferrari team donned Marlboro red wigs. During the 1990s Ferrari changed their tone of red to match their main sponsors. Ever since, their success has been an unmitigated brand association/re-assertion opportunity - a Marlboro Moment (Marlboro global branding by Tequila London). In a similar approach to capturing the moment, a Marlboro ambient saturated Glasgow streets, in front of Marlboro-sponsored events at the Edinburgh Festival.

The launch of FCUK branding in Oxford Street store window (below left, 1997: ads originally by GGT)  
In 1997 French Connection were a mid-range fashion store with a low identity branding that fitted the market. Research for their next campaign suggested their market was in decline. They either competed as a market leader or moved to compete on different terms. They chose the latter, and specified a campaign to make the brand more vibrant, relevant to British youth and distinct. The branding was stretched to make several 3<sup>rd</sup> party associations, locating celebrities or activities of similar attitude. FCUK sponsored boxer Lennox Lewis for his World heavyweight title bouts in 1999. Lewis's T-shirt bore the slogan, 'f c u k f e a r' (right).





Re-branding (or characterising) the kitchen



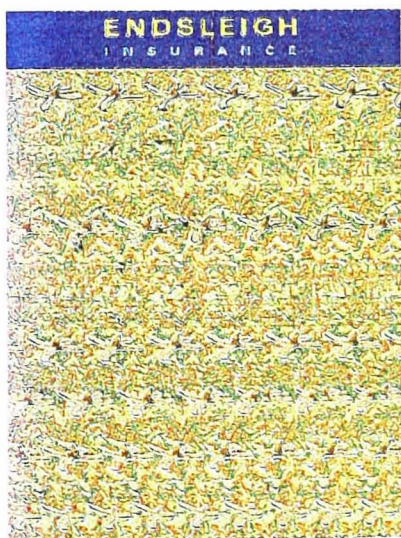
Alessi sugar shaker (Italy, 1997)

Koziol scrubbing brush (Germany, 1997)

Both products were manufacturers attempts at re-positioning and fetishising common domestic objects, where branding and its relationship with the consumer becomes more significant. In Heskett's model (cf. Chapter 3d) these would be design-centred, in that they are geared to promoting their style before their practical function. In my table they would be brand-centred (like the iMac) in that their formal qualities perform a branding communication role.

Selling on 'experiencing' brands

Endsleigh 'magic eye' ad was part of a student induction pack (below left, 1997), tapping into what Thornton in Club Cultures called 'subcultural capital'. The experience of a Sony Walkman (right, 1998) is replicated in a press ad while a billboard for United airlines (bottom, 2000) with the headline 'Life's Is A Journey Travel It Well' sells on the idea of personal fulfilment.



tell us what you see and you could win a weekend for 2 in Paris!



Appendix 3

**Visual essay:  
a narration of issues between Chapters 3-5**



Appendix 4  
**Extended chapter:**  
**How advertising conceptualised social change**

## Appendix 4

### **How advertising conceptualised social change**

This section looks at the mutual determination of advertising and cultural change. In particular I explore contexts for advertising's re-conceptualisation of youth and masculinity, ethnicity, and national culture. I also consider new advertising strategies to cope with change and the restructuring of practices that were, in 1990, described as advertising. The latter distinction is significant, because advertisers were not able to cater for much of the change within the existing pre-1990s structure.

In particular this section also expands in the four different strategies for mapping consumers outlined in Chapter 4, of how changing understandings and constructions of consumer behaviour were played out in the decade's advertising.

In the 1990s British culture underwent a number of significant transformations. Devolution created both a problematising and a new awareness of 'Englishness', and there were new ways of thinking masculinity. A diverse/hybrid culture resulting from long term effects of immigration became more visible, as did the coming to consciousness of 'Black British' - usually second or third generation, which also led to new understandings of 'Britishness'. While not the focus of this particular study, such issues inevitably effected consumers terms of reference and sense of place in a way that was not as evident in earlier decades. The first section of this study does consider the significance of what some cultural commentators called 'a period of ends'. I go on to consider how the dwindling amount of 'given' common ground prompted advertisers to manufacture other forms of collectivity, and how rendering personal experiences came to supplement moments of collective value.

In previous versions of this chapter Britishness was a major preoccupation. I have re-rendered this as a visual essay in Appendix 3. Instead this chapter considers advertising's re-conceptualising of British consumers. In this section I reflect on what was unique to the cultural landscape of the 1990s in Britain. I then suggest some key themes that were predominantly featured in ads - youth and masculinity, ethnicity, national culture - and speculate on why they were particularly relevant in the nineties. Finally I suggest how the thematic concerns were related to the structures and ideology of advertising.

One first needs to consider the context for advertising in the 1990s. I begin by outlining cultural change in Britain, and how this was negotiated within advertising strategies. I then consider the idea of 'boutiques of history'. Where advertisers stepped up the use of evocative past images in the 1990s, I consider how adverts tapped into consumer's personal repertoire of images, and drew on 'archival memory' though sampling and other techniques. After considering what advertisers took to be new opportunities for communicating product experiences, I then consider new constraints. The significance of a much more knowing audience (outlined in Chapter 2) is considered, as are problems of patriotism, which include the often ironic manifestations of national identity in the early nineties (a theme illustrated in the Chapter 3a case study). I briefly address the enduring problem of Britain's relationship with the USA as 'same but different'. I then consider the issue of masculinity in the 1990s. In particular I address the synthesis of being crude and sophisticated, which made for a potential spread of consuming practices from low to high culture. This leads to a contextual discussion of the changes in attitude to modes of address. Issues such as the non-conformism are discussed at the end of the chapter, which concludes by reflecting on what were the main determinants in representations generated by media advertising in the 1990s.

#### Characterising the 1990s: A period of 'ends'

It is difficult to claim the nineties as a period characterised by newness, particularly in terms of representation. Digital image manipulation from the middle of the decade introduced distinctive looks in pop promos, such as the freeze-frame camera spin (where a camera appears to move around separate layers of a frozen image). Yet in terms of subject matter and treatment, particular characteristics are harder to isolate. In some cases it was more a case of emphasis than new subject matter or new approaches. More often it was definable in terms of marketing strategies and the ways that adverts fitted into a wider campaign.

Given the rapidly fragmenting sense of Britain throughout the period, a major obstacle for media advertising was its representation of 'typical'. Until 1990 it was assumed that there were British 'types' that could be evoked to strike a chord in the majority of viewers.

#### Setting the context for the 1990s

Peter York argued in the eighties that the British tended to be a self-reflective island nation, that was happy to see itself as a nation of types in the eyes of other nations - from the North-South divide ('flat caps and bowler hats') to its historical roots as a pre-industrial nation<sup>1</sup>. Books as varied as those by travel writer Bill Bryson<sup>2</sup> and sociologists Storry and Childs<sup>3</sup> echoed the view that Britain saw itself as a separate 'island race' with an introspective view of itself and its place in the world. The privatisation campaigns of the mid-eighties onwards – especially those for British Gas (Saatchi & Saatchi's 'Tel Sid', 1983), British Telecom (J Walter Thompson, 1987) and The Electricity Board (GGK's 'Think Electric' and 'Creature Comforts') – required advertising to construct images that appeared inherently British.

Even in Saatchi & Saatchi's version of Britain in the 1983 'Tell Sid' campaign contradictions were apparent. Even though most people may have seen the type of rural scenes most British people did not live in that environment. The timeless sense of rural life represented (much of it could have been set in any post-war period) only partially reflected the everydayness of the British during the eighties. It avoided the perspectives of youth or shifts in the economic landscape, so it effectively typed a pre-existing version of Britain rather than one specifically located in the eighties. In a sense, it was re-casting (with a few alterations) an old version of Britain to place the nationalised service in the 'archival matrix' of watching viewers.

From the early nineties even this marginal 'common ground' had dissolved. Given assumptions of history, democracy in its existing form and modernism were at an end. Many of the stable assumptions about consumers were un-negotiable. In the first chapter of The Way We Live Now Richard Hoggart pointed to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a 'series of Ends' which became most apparent in the 1990s<sup>4</sup>. In particular the nineties marked the end of unquestioned social authorities and hierarchies, while the popular press (in somewhat moralistic tones) were considering this an 'end' to political correctness and prominent feminism. There was an apparent reaction against political correctness in the tones of youth male-oriented advertising, albeit with an assumption that the messages had been assimilated and then critiqued and overturned. However, Hoggart was correct in assuming the amount of common shared values for Britons had decreased.

In attempting to establish common ground, media advertising attempted to sell on a sense of sentimentality for a lost sense of belonging. There was a trend for reviving past ads and rendering period reconstructions. The value of these was to place the brand in the viewers matrix of memories. For instance the Hovis advert (CDP, 1975-1997) showed the narrator's father cutting a loaf of Hovis that 'is (still) as good as it has always been'. The difference between the Hovis ad of the 1970s and 1990s renderings of the past was that the past was accessed as already mediated. In the early nineties sports fashion brands Adidas and Nike both competed on the basis of their brand's significance in sporting history. The past was re-enacted in the appearance of old stock footage, and the brand's history was woven into stories of how brands had been unsung in existing accounts of human sporting achievement. This was to enable both brands to be seen as being agents of history.

While renderings of idealised present day lifestyles had proved a useful means of selling on aspiration in the eighties, the past offered a richer territory in several ways. First, it enabled advertising creatives to place greater emphasis on imagery. This appeared in an era in which advertising agencies attracted a larger number of employees from art schools than universities for the first time since the 1950s. Secondly, with manufacturing companies following similar marketing paths, distinguishing their brand became increasingly difficult. Thus differentiating products was made easier by displacing unique selling propositions with emotive appeal. Period placement implied longevity and an impression of being created in better times. Furthermore advertising attempted to associate products with little existing identity within the fashion for reviving recent period styles. Third, the past was represented as an ultimately unobtainable aspiration. It is a destination that could not be revisited or altered, it offered an escape from the fears of modern industrialised society, to much simpler and

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<sup>1</sup>Peter York lecture The Englishness of English Design The South Bank Show Special, London Weekend Television, May 1986.

<sup>2</sup>Bryson, B Notes From A Small Island Doubleday, London 1995 p.29.

<sup>3</sup>Storry, M & Childs, P British Cultural Identities Routledge, London pp.14-15.

<sup>4</sup>Hoggart, R The Way We Live Now Chatto & Windus, London 1995 pp. 3-18.

safer times before complex consumption choices. It was pre-Aids, pre-modern work pressures (for men, pre-Feminist) and before the weathered spirit of knowingness that heralded the 1990s.

Broadly, if one traces the movement of media advertising in the nineteen-nineties (see timelines in appendix 1) one can see a trend characterised by highly stylised ads (notably British Rail's Relax, Toshiba's Hello Tosh, Levi 501's Mad About The Boy). One can also spot a trend for serialised comedies (British Telecom's Beattie, Renault Clio's Nicole and Barclaycard James Bond) at the turn of the nineties. From 1992 there seems to be a consistent run of ads that highlighted immediacy (Tango, then Pepperami's Animal, Skol's tongue-in-cheek endorsements and Club 18-30's crude puns). From 1993 and through the mid-nineties established brands appeared to opt for self-referential campaigns (Levi 501, Cometto and Boddingtons) while new products opted for softer tones (Nissan Micra's 'bubble car' press ads, Mercury's information ad spoofs and the Electricity Board's Creature Comforts). From 1995 ads seemed to celebrate the product more (Coke's Always and Guinness's ritual) while old brands re-booted by toying with familiar formulas (Diesel's complex imagery, Pot Noodle's amateurish looking a slots, Pepsi re-branded Blue campaign). Later in the decade advertising reflected personal perspectives (Mercury's One 2 One, Playstation's myriad of cascading images and Nike's Cantona perspectives). By the end of the decade the same methods were being replayed to less effect, as the industry's impetus for innovation had passed over to direct advertising. However, the dominant styles of media advertising were clearly irony, which had a different accent from the eighties, and provocation, where campaigns were more hard hitting and edgy than they had ever been before.

### Provocation

The instigator of aggressive ad imagery appears to be Benetton, whose use of imagery by documentary photographer Olivera Toscani from 1987 on billboards and in press ads across Europe stoked widespread rebuffs in Britain, especially in the ad industries own publications and their regulatory bodies.

While the public attention generated by Benetton's campaigns caused many agencies to stop and rethink, it also attracted many column inches in Campaign magazine<sup>5</sup>. Benetton's photo-journalistic images which featured a death scene<sup>6</sup>, tapped into a moment when representing violence was hip<sup>7</sup>. Although the same campaign was run throughout 90 countries the British public and ad industry seemed particularly agitated. Agency Leagas Shafron David Chick even took out a double page ad spread in Campaign to ask of Benetton's new-born baby image, 'Why Wasn't It Killed At Birth?'<sup>8</sup>. The argument (beyond grounds of taste) was that 'advertising needs to be persuasive as well as impactful... just because an ad gets noticed, doesn't necessarily mean its done its job'<sup>9</sup>. While the headline was provocative in its own right and the 'complaint' was lampooned as self-publicity, it revealed an underlying industry attitude. The LSDC claimed that it was a means of stoking controversy at the expense of other agencies more measured campaigning. The ads small text explained;

Remember the poster for a bank that simply showed a pair of wellingtons? ...Remember the striking imagery of the poster above? Of course you do. And their creators would have you believe it's because they were successful, mould-breaking campaigns. But you'd also remember an ad that had a man with his willy hanging out, wouldn't you? That doesn't mean its good advertising.<sup>10</sup>

Given that this knocking ad was addressing prospective clients, its copy appeared to be protecting the ad industry's own (unclear) understanding of what constituted 'acceptable' advertising. It did not take into account the more abrupt tones of communication evident in popular culture. The agency's ad also neglected to consider that information tended to be read in a quicker, less profane way. It continued;

Like petulant infants, some agencies have embarked on a mission to smash every mould in sight, good or bad... Call us old-fashioned, but there is, in our opinion, the odd mould that is actually still pretty relevant. even to

<sup>5</sup>It was the main topic running throughout Campaign magazines during September 1991.

<sup>6</sup>US AIDS sufferer David Kirby shown on his deathbed in 1990. The ad was launched in a Spring 1992 campaign with another ad, showing the death scene of a Mafia murder in Italy. Both pictures were not captioned so, claimed Tibor Kalman, editor-in-chief of Benetton's Colors magazine, they had an opportunity to represent greater truths and values than were usually shown in adverts.

<sup>7</sup>Point made by NY writer Leslie Savan in an interview with Lürzer's Archive, Vol. 6 1995 p.7. At the same time the violence in Tarrantino movies and hip-hop gang warfare occupied column inches.

<sup>8</sup>Leagas Shafron David Chick (authorised by ad agency), Campaign 20 September 1991 pp.17-18

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., the wellingtons refer to the First Direct ads by Howell Henry Chaldecott Lury in 1991. Benetton's Baby ad appeared in August 1991

today's advertising-literate consumer.

It is worth noting that AIDS charity Act Up's ad attacking a Benetton poster was shortlisted that year for a D&AD award while Benetton posters were never nominated<sup>11</sup>.

Benetton's was the most widely debated strategy of a number of campaigns employing shock and sensation. It was, at the time, the only fashion label using such methods. Ad agency Howell Henry provoked attention (and later controversy) in a fast-tempo relaunch of Britvic Orange Tango in 1992 (cf. Chapter 3a). By 1993 provocation had become commonplace in ads for FMCGs. While Pepperami re-pitched to become 'A Bit Of An Animal', Saatchi & Saatchi anticipated the withdrawal of their braggish ads for Club 18-30 even before release. Saatchi thought the campaign's double entendres would create such a stir that they would be recommended for withdrawal much sooner than their eventual 5-month run<sup>12</sup>. The intention of the Club 18-30 ads was to lock into the language of 'lad' magazines in associating the package holidays with non-stop hedonism - sex, booze and sun. By reiterating this reputation Club 18-30 expected to be a leading youth brand, but the campaign resulted in 10% more men and 25% fewer women booking<sup>13</sup>. This was one of only few examples where pandering to notions of masculinity had a detrimental effect on the female viewer<sup>14</sup>. Skol lager and Sega Megadrive's 'Pirate TV' campaign (WCRS, 1993) equally evoked the spirit of the lout and gained wider press notoriety without implicating women. The campaign for luxury ice cream Häagen Daz (BBH, 1991) managed to make men and women buy into the idea of erotic sensuality. They made the product appear sexy and sophisticated without dropping the suggestion of a nudge-nudge joke.

### Irony

By the nineties if one was moved by an ad one also tended to be suspicious of its motives. The ingrained perception was that advertising was capitalism's message-bearer. The bottom line was that selling and profits were more important than quality and customer satisfaction. While some planners negotiated this by shifting ad type to demonstrate a different agenda most relied on adopting the consumer position by commenting on at earlier dubious advertising claims. This had two advantages; it struck an affinity with consumers by using familiar reference points, showing that their perception was the same as the consumer. Reference to earlier advertising was particularly significant for the media ad industry, when it was easier to communicate in the period before layered dialogue and irony became part of contemporary communication. In the period before emotive selling propositions ads tended to be more direct in their address, which to a contemporary audience has a naïve charm. The launch for Mercury One-2-One, which featured a Harry Enfield character set in the 1950s (discussed later), was one of the first launch campaigns that was more intent in establishing an ironic mood than making a definitive claim for the (then new) telecommunications service.

Past advertising held different significance for advertisers clients and customers. To customers old ads seemed bland and communicated shallow sales messages. To advertisers they represented better times. This is perhaps why agency planners laced the tone of historical-looking advertising with irony. This made the ad industry prominent by referring to its own history. More importantly for clients, it appeased the sense of irony and knowingness apparent in pop-culture, and made products appear relevant to contemporary youth.

The billboard equivalent to ironic campaigns were epitomised by Cigarette brand Regal's Reg campaign (LHS, 1992). It used a self-parodic comic strip humour and working class dialogue, but the real irony came in the casting of an unmodified and ignorant 'tabloid type' character to front the campaign. Reg was hardly aspirational, for instance; 'Reg on smoking. 'I smoke 'em cos my name's on 'em.'; 'Reg on television. 'No I'm not. I'm on a poster.' While lines made nonsense of preceding endorsement formulas, the agency's reading of its market was accurate, with its contemporary comedic

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<sup>11</sup>The 1990 Benetton poster depicted AIDS victim David Kirby surrounded by his family on his death bed in 1990. Act Up's image showed the image juxtaposed with a condom; the line ran 'the only thing this image should be used for'.

<sup>12</sup>In the event the Advertising Standards Authority received 490 complaints - the second highest in 1995 (the year with the most complaints upheld in the 1990's). Complaints against Club 18-30 were upheld. Source: website (August 2000): <http://www.asa.org.uk>.

<sup>13</sup>Dave Morris, Advertising course leader, BCUC, May 2000.

<sup>14</sup>One reaction to 'laddism' was 'laddettes' (BBHs Boddingtons ads used feisty models in a lad pastiche from 1991). The suggestion through the sitcoms as Men Behaving Badly was that women adopted a matriarchal position to counter the infantilism of laddishness; in advertising the depiction was more disparate - sexy and self-assured (perfume and drink ads) yet business and work-oriented (Coffee and car ads see timelines, in Appendix 1.



positioning<sup>15</sup>. In the context of other billboards it looked like a counter-advert - crudely printed in pixilated form (like a low-grade betting coupon) the ad referenced 'working classness'. Rather than pointing to an aspirational tomorrow it operated in a realistic rendering of the present - sourcing everyday common oddities like the feted Reg. The subtext of irony that ran beneath the strap line was the message adopted by school children - within two weeks of release the ASA had requested its withdrawal from billboards near schools because of its growing popularity. The fashionably aware child spotted similar tones-of-voice in other ironic pop figures - the plethora of album covers bearing images of gurning grotesques (from Nirvana to Pulp in the wake of The Smiths) who were the confrontational face of popular music. Here hard-sell was matched by cynicism and what appealed more was understatement, irony and attitude. With these values at the fore beauty was in the eye of the beholder: Reg - through the casting of an overweight middle-aged character - recognised this.

Regal's campaign became a trend that drew its rivals to dispense with their cryptic crossword-like puzzle ads (for passing motorists to toy with) for transparent sloganeering - Embassy Low-Tar (showing a Reg-like sales rep: 'Have you thought seriously about stone cladding?') 'Tar, but No Tar Very Much'; West: There's no such thing as bad taste. Only other people's'. The messages were geared to single-issue plugs as if the messages were straight from a marketing department. The approach exposed the space between the advertising craft and viewers awareness of ad methods. In these ads there was no inherent hidden agenda, just an avoidance of sophisticated illusions. The jokes were conspicuously up-front. Broadly, the ads reverted to somewhere between British seaside postcards and the much-vaunted Bill Bernbach adage that to communicate most effectively content should take precedence over style<sup>16</sup>.

Yet it's too simplistic to conclude that such cigarette ad approaches advocated a return to unique selling methods, because they refer specifically to a products brand name (Regal) or quality (Low tar). Both billboard and commercial ads addressed viewers with hard-selling and visually demanding sales messages to the extent that, according to HHCL & Partners Planner Dave O'Hanlon<sup>17</sup> critical faculties became overloaded and anaesthetized. The tone of treatments and style made a bigger impression than product attributes. Cigarette ads had simply made tone and style more explicit components of reinforcing the brand identity<sup>18</sup>.

Perhaps the context determined that billboard ads became more transient while TV commercials were becoming coded. Where television had to compete with other living room activities (cf. Chapter 5), urban landscape billboards where these were situated meant over-dressed treatments would look out of place. Using street-talk and catchphrases billboard ads could allude to a sense of the everyday, as dance culture had in corrupting and feeding off bland imagery earlier in the decade. In effect bland advertising had been mediated by British counter-culture which had subsequently been distilled back into advertising. The wit and phraseology of late eighties dance culture had therefore found its way into nineties billboard advertising.

Irony in nineties TV commercials reflected the concern of ad agencies that they must be relevant to contemporary consumers. Agencies became more preoccupied with being relevant (in mode of address) than promoting the inherent qualities of their advertised products. Agency's planners, who were charged with understanding target markets, also encouraged creatives to emphasise youth credibility rather than product qualities in campaigns.

The advertising of FMCGs (notably alcoholic drinks) tended to adopt a referential irony based on the viewers knowledge of old familiar film and television. The ads rarely mentioned specific product qualities. In commercials from 1985 to 1992 Carling Black Label (WCRS) parodied the genre of world war 2 films in repackaging the storyline of *Dam Busters* (1989). Other executions sent up Levi's 501(1987) and Old Spice (1991) ad styles. Other campaigns followed suit, parodying films; *Casablanca* (for shoes), *Gone with The Wind* (Danish Coffee), *Jean de Florette* (Stella Artois 1989-present) and even *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* (Holsten Pils 1988-92) - a film that was itself a pastiche of other movies.

An ironic mood ran in conjunction with shock advertising as a notable element in mainstream British advertising. Provocative shock advertising proved useful in grabbing attention and changing perceptions, but the method's inability to maintain attention did more long-term harm to brand and industry. Cheaper-looking ads (in the wake of Tango) sought to remove the gloss in presenting content over form (like HHCL's 1995 Pot Noodle ads and GGT's 1994 Imperial Leather ads)

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<sup>15</sup>In the manner of BBC2's comedies *The Fast Show* and *Absolutely*; q.v Chapter 3 case study on Tango.

<sup>16</sup>Taken from unpublished notes by Dawson Yeoman, a former associate of Bill Bernbach at Doyle Dane Bernbach in the 1960s. Received via Derek Haas, former art director with DDB, in February 1996.

<sup>17</sup>O'Hanlon interviewed April 2000: cf. Appendix 2. See also Chapter 3a for an explanation of visual saturation.

<sup>18</sup>As legislation tightened on tobacco advertising (between 1978-1982), advertisers started to rely on the obligatory health warning as a form of product mark, where the warning became a shared distinguishing characteristic between all British cigarette brands

but they were also spoofs of the industry's earlier genres. In the event the knowingness of media advertising simply developed more sophisticated versions of self-reference, such as Audi's spoof documentary exposés<sup>19</sup> (BBH 1998).

In many respects the parody ad was a cost-effective strategy because it required a simple appropriation of genres. Agency director Barry Day suggested in 1991; 'The brand may have baffled them but they knew where it was coming from because they could see where it had been - to the commercials memory bank'<sup>20</sup>. The industry (Day claimed) had neither the time nor business to '...create (a) totally new language. It (made) trade in what other people already recognise...(It took) the déjà-vu view'. This prompted the 'clothes of pop culture', self-reference and knowingness, to become a commercial shortcut. They also served as a cloak of sophistication an esoteric recognition of the viewer's extended archival memory.

Boddingtons bitter (by BBH) drew on such methods in parodying genres of 1980s advertising in a campaign that ran between 1992-99<sup>21</sup>. As the campaign unfolded through different executions (same type of joke and strapline) the ads set their own formulaic comedy sketch series which appeared as one genre and descended into a style associated with Boddingtons. The Campaign did this by drawing on the audience's own extended memory of television. All the ads parodied were from the period when watching TV was a shared experience (between the late-fifties and the mid-seventies). Films before this period, for instance *The Dam Busters*, were accessible references because of television. Old films had been cheap schedule-fillers since commercial TV started in 1955 (particularly from the mid-seventies). By plundering the collective archive advertisers were appealing to viewers on an emotive level - below the threshold where one's critical faculties operate. Archival reference points therefore had to be collective - film, early TV, previous adverts and children's programmes and pop culture.

John Smiths Bitter (AMV, 1994) used no-nonsense comedian Jack Dee to dismiss the need for frivolous advertising. The truly ironic twist was that Dee was t-total while the frivolous campaign styles he ridicules are post-produced additions. In a back-handed way, this enabled the ad to use impressive visual imagery while deriding other brands that use the same expensive post-production techniques.

Like the others this campaign followed the eighties mould in *not* addressing viewers directly - as if 'double-meaning communication' had become a pre-requisite. The exclusive esotericism of the B&H ads had become obvious by these nineties ads to the extent that advertisers were layering codes of dialogue. The line spun in ad industry texts<sup>22</sup> was that postmodern times required postmodern means. However, indirect dialogue negotiated the viewers cynicism of hard sell. Humour proved an effective means of numbing viewers critical resistance to commercials, and turned the fashion for parody into an eclectic trawling of reference points.

### 'Boutique of history'

With more sophisticated means of manipulating film and with a greater repertoire of archives to draw on collective memories, film, TV programme and advert makers were able to reconstruct controlled 'vistas' of the past, which, for the first time, viewers were able to record and keep. This was the first complete decade that video recorders were common in homes. In this section I re-appraise the significance of this extended and accessible history. Revivals of films, series and images achieved the saleability of memory, as historical re-constructions allowed viewers project their own intersection with 'history'<sup>23</sup>.

If one consider the tendency in commercials between 1988-93, it seems that advertisers were aware equally aware of the commercial currency in period pillaging (in terms of recreating the effect of archive footage). Advertisers could get nostalgic about the two world wars. Here advertising had helped convey a sense of togetherness, successfully spinning

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<sup>19</sup> t featured documentary journalist-cum-film maker Nick Broomfield (his exposés included *Kurt and Courtney* (1998) on Seattle Grunge singers Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love). In the Audi ads Broomfield follows and interrogates an aircraft mechanic and a surgeon, armed with sound boom and microphone, to discover why Audi designers wanted to contact them. The rough and ready appearance of Broomfield's work looked like authentic documentary broadcast between more stylised ads.

<sup>20</sup>Day, B *Why parodies still pull punters* in *Campaign magazine*, Haymarket press, London 2 August 1991p.10.

<sup>21</sup>The commercial executions were 'ice cream' (1992) 'perfume' (1997), 'fashion' (1996) and 'automotive' (1998), while the press campaign aped the stylised Cigarette press ads (between 1992-97).

<sup>22</sup>For instance Aitchison, J *Cutting Edge Advertising*, Prentice Hall, London 1999 and Butterfield, L (ed.) *Excellence in Advertising: The IPA Guide* Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford 1997. See also the Advertising Planners Group: website (March2000): <http://www.apg.org.uk>

<sup>23</sup>Film director Robert Zemeckis's Cinema blockbusters caught the mood, with the *Back To The Future* Trilogy (1985, 89 and 90) and *Forrest Gump* (1994) both looping in the significance an individual with the course of history.

idealistic post-war futures. What then followed was 45 years of broken post-war promises<sup>24</sup>. Post-war changes of circumstance gave rise to disposable incomes and allowed advertisers on both sides of the Atlantic to isolate youth consumption. Representations in adverts of how consumption can change lives were repeatedly found to be fanciful illusions: Advertising promised much, yet consumption rarely matched expectation. However, the late-twentieth century industrial age had come to depend on advertising to accelerate demand and profit margins.

In terms of making sense of why archive pillaging was so prominent in the 1990s, using past and familiar shared reference points was a way of 'rounding up' the last decade of collectivism in anticipation of a more diffuse period to come. Edward Said noted that, in the nineties, collective memory became more significant as a hook into any remaining semblance of a social totality. Shared moments, Said claims, have been popularly sold back for popular consumption through memoirs while academic disciplines have overlapped in the study of human space, where humanities (memory) met social sciences (geography)<sup>25</sup>.

Transferring imagery became even easier with the onset of the world wide web from 1995. In fact television and cinema, the most significant mass mediums to adopt a collective voice in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were not only the instigators of this self-reflection but acted to extend the collective memory, by re-rendering the past through period reconstruction and archived footage<sup>26</sup>. In some respects this was akin to flicking through a nation's family archive before facing a different 'ahistorical' future.

Pop music video established the models that commercials tended to draw on. Pop video producers had a knack for cramming a great deal of visual information into a short amount of time. These techniques were obviously advantageous for advertisers. Pop video was the quickest medium to make extensive use of new digital software<sup>27</sup>. Techniques could modify existing stock material and 'reinvent' familiar footage from existing film and television archives. Established imagery could therefore be recast and reclaimed. Weight of authority from the past could be used to fix associations with new products. Digital technology therefore made referencing styles, moods and moments from the 'boutique of history' easier to accomplish.

In the late 1980s pop music proved particularly skilled at sampling and re-working period styles within new arrangements. So often was sampling used that it became a distinct accent in mass communication in the nineties. It became specially commonplace within the developing hybrid dance subcultures, notably in drum n' base, banga and jazz/soul funk. Within these music forms sampling re-served well known sixties and seventies riffs as reference points to work over modern arrangements. This was eclectic in many respects. First, it embraced the significance of past American music styles within youth culture. Second it manifested itself in the re-issuing of distressed archive footage in pop promos. Third, it found its way into the sound bite hook in samples that held the track together. For instance the dance arrangement for My Definition Of Boombastic Jazz Style<sup>28</sup> sampled Quincy Jones 1962 track Soul Bossa Nova, using the sixties standard's chorus line as its central riff. A rap arrangement and a series of other samples were worked around the key Quincy Jones sample.

For an older generation listening to the 'new' track, this may have recalled a familiar jazz standard but for youth it was their first point of contact with the riff. For them it was original. Bracewell also noted that;

there is a sense in our archival condition, as nostalgic consumers scavenging for bargain rarities of the past, that a car boot sale can double as a faculty of cultural studies...In an age of cultural sampling, when yesterday's

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<sup>24</sup>This remark was frequently made by direct advertisers during my interviews. The claim tended to be used in their pitches against media advertisers since 1990. Shaun McIlrath (FCA!) and George Boytar (Publicis Dialog) both draw attention to this: cf. Shaun McIlrath interview, Appendix 1.

<sup>25</sup>Said, E *Invention, Memory and Place* in *Critical Inquiry* Vol.26 No.2, University of Chicago Winter 2000 p.175

<sup>26</sup>For instance the popularity of mainstream period films as *Dangerous Liaisons* (Stephen Frears, 1988) and *Amadeus* (Milos Forman, 1984). British films such as *A Room With A View* (James Ivory, 1985) and *A Passage to India* (David Lean, 1984) eulogised upper-class Victorian society at home and in the colonies in Merchant Ivory films. Turn of the century New York and Chicago were recreated to great acclaim in *Once Upon A Time* (Sergio Leone, 1984) and *The Untouchables* (Brian de Palma, 1987) for their period detail. *The Back To The Future* Trilogy (Robert Zemeckis, 1985-90) recreated the landscape of the 1950s as *Platoon* (Oliver Stone, 1986) did of the 1960s. In fact the storylines of *Back to the Future* and *Field of Dreams* (Phil A Robinson, 1989) both centred of re-visiting the past.

<sup>27</sup>From the mid-eighties in Britain, software company Quantel produced packages that rendered virtually flawless image manipulation. Both terrestrial networks polished up their identities using Quantel for continuity ident.s and network news intros.

<sup>28</sup>*Dream Warriors* in 1990, pub. by MCA music ltd./Island Records; bossanova sampled by Gilles Patterson

gauche enthusiasm can be recycled as tomorrow's distinguishing label, there is little distance between the hidden source and the public destination of England's unofficial commentary on itself.<sup>29</sup>

It seemed that many contemporary creative forms practices (from architecture, product styling, graphics and pop music to advertising) were simultaneously engaged in using fragments of the past in the manner of palimpsest<sup>30</sup>, as if there were a movement in popular culture re-integrate the present with earlier valued forms.

The original meanings of reference points were less relevant because it was the overall constructed profile that recording brands competed on. Unlike the avid eighties consumer described by Frith who archived footnoted details of artists, music promoters rightly assumed that youth didn't *read* the long text. Even on club flyers hard text is kept to a minimum while most information is presented as ambient images to be 'absorbed'. The image is sampled in similar vein to the music using clipped stylistic references of familiar genres to establish the branding.

Saarininen in *Imagologies - Media Philosophy* comments that 'Surface is no longer superficial; nor is it profound. In 'simcult', the very opposition between depth and surface must be refigured. To insist that the so-called real is nothing other than a play of surfaces is not a claim that the surface is simple or the 'real' is anything less complex... Reality is only skin deep'<sup>31</sup>. Saarininen claims that 'like many others' he seldom reads books because it;

... takes too much time... book culture, under the pressures of the imperatives of speed, seems to yield too low cost/benefit ratios for the conscious user the moment he or she is outside his or her field of expertise. It takes perhaps ten seconds to process the poem but you never seem to have that ten seconds available. (Because knowledge and insight production remain associated with orthodox reading, media philosophy) will run counter to these pretensions. Shock-effect read - that is what I would recommend. Hypertextual reading, in the sense in which you jump around at will in a given text mass, not necessarily intending to grasp the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Instead, you just pump gas into the engine<sup>32</sup>.

Overlooking the assumptions about (not) reading books, Saarininen's description of grazing information is similar in nature to the way Techno, Garage and other (flyer-oriented) music styles are assembled in cut n' paste fashion. In terms of engaging with youth through new modes of communication, it is clear that advertisers quickly absorbed the impact of digitised communication methods and mastered ways of mapping new readings of communication and were able to make communication more direct again, as it had been before the eighties.

Advertising was also assisted in archiving by the music industry through its re-issuing of back catalogues. The change in format, from 33 rpm albums and cassette to compact disc (late eighties) then the up-take on MP3s and autonomous CD burning (from mid nineties) encouraged record companies to capitalise on their existing stock by re-issuing the entire back catalogues. From the early nineties anthologies started to dominate the album charts (cf. timelines, Appendix 1). Pop videos were also hastily assembled to promote tracks from the re-released albums. The appearance of distressed film had an edge over the fashion for slick imagery because it introduced an overtone of period authenticity, against what for many consumers was an era dominated by overtly manufactured pop acts. Record companies increasing reliance on pop promos, allowed record companies greater control over the communicated message. Record labels could more easily re-package an act through pop video when the impact of one 'face' faded. Madonna's multiple incarnations were the most prominent example. Satellite music channel MTV<sup>33</sup> was conceived to generate a public for the increased volume of pop videos, and the knack of editing together recent footage with stock imagery was in large measure responsible for the bringing to life of modern celluloid history. Old footage presented in a neatly packaged pop commercial indirectly made learning about the past visually stimulating. For children growing up in the late-eighties, common reference points of 20<sup>th</sup> century film and TV history were first 'read' in re-edited video bite. Writer Simon Frith made the observation that 'nowadays our expectations are shaped by other media than novels, by films and television fiction, by pop stars and pop songs...'<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup>Bracewell, M *England Is Mine* p.235

<sup>30</sup> Where the old 'stencil' signature was rubbed out and replaced by a newer, more contemporary version.

<sup>31</sup>Taylor, MC & Saarininen, E *Imagologies - Media Philosophy* Routledge, London 1994: pages unnumbered: p. Superficiality 1'

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 'Superficiality 7-8'

<sup>33</sup>MTV first aired in August 1981.

<sup>34</sup>Frith, S *Music For Pleasure* p.168. Frith goes on to describe 1980s youth as children of Barthes and Bowie rather than Marx and Coca-Cola

Frith cited E Ann Kaplan<sup>35</sup> who saw MTV as a selling medium and spotted the tension between '... a potentially disruptive form, critical of bourgeois hegemony (i.e. rock) and the 'commercialising' practices of MTV - as if rock were not itself a commercial form, and if all advertisements did not play on the descriptive qualities of desire.'<sup>36</sup>

Yet commercialism and advertising technique had themselves become fashionable despite such contradictions. Archival plundering became the accessible form of expression as the past began to *appear* an obtainable desire.

In street style, archivally revived role models were also evident in the 1990s. Michael Bracewell remarked that, "Culture clubbing' became fun through archiving... the loop of popular culture in England would be repeating itself, celebrating an ironic nostalgia for every phase of pop since the middle of the 1950s'<sup>37</sup> (or earlier, given the popularity of big-band swing). The exhibition Street Style at the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1993 showed a myriad of derivative cross-referenced styles such as British Goths, Cyberpunks, Casuals and Acid Jazz amongst others<sup>38</sup>. In the eighties both British terrestrial networks (BBC and ITV) made a virtue of the Americana style revival by re-running archived sit-coms such as *I Love Lucy* and *The Phil Silvers Show*<sup>39</sup>, which added to the repertoire of the audiences expanded range of references and the possibility of highly personal, organised (video) archives. To a limited extent this partially over-rode any diffusions of subcultural interest. In the eighties the film *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* (1982)<sup>40</sup> and a series of adverts for *Holsten Pils* (1983) stood out as exponents of the eclectic prank, intercutting and meshing clips from past and present. Adverts like *Holsten Pils* managed to manipulate innovation (the technology) with 'history' (clips from popular old films) in a manner similar to the way Thatcherism was able to combine British innovation and support for a neo-liberal economy with tradition - neo-conservative political ideology. Nineties youth were therefore already primed to read different period styles enough to be 'included' in its advertising usage. This was one method in the nineties that helped advertisers readdress increasingly fragmented youth markets.

In Britain, Bartle Bogle Hegarty marketed Levi's 501's as 'authentic' and 'original'<sup>41</sup> to connect with 'fiftiesness' through US rock n' roll pop music and close period reconstruction. This in post-war American<sup>42</sup> culture when youth conspicuously exercised their disposable incomes for the first time<sup>43</sup>. For Levi's in the eighties the strength of a brand depended on confidence. Retro implied longevity, familiarity as part of the cultural fabric and safety in its generational continuum - 'as wholesome as it was in my parents day'. Sinclair remarked at the beginning of Images Incorporated that, 'At this level, advertising diffuses its meanings into the belief systems of society... (citing Inglis 1972:3) The study of advertising is the study of an economic system in its symbolic forms'<sup>44</sup>.

The impression of confidence (the potential for new money) sold more than substance (existing stock) in terms of market value. Even the stock markets began to rate potential more than established stock. Part of the charm of old authentic fifties goods was that they were from another period - a romantically distant, unattainable 'primal scene'. Objects, memories and footage were the remaining connection to a period of apparent simplicity - early capitalist and socialist dreams were uncorrupted, pre-feminist, pre-Aids and pre-postmodern complexity, and idealised alternative to the present uncertainties<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup>Kaplan, AE Rocking Around The Clock, Methuen, London 1987

<sup>36</sup>Frith, S Music For Pleasure p.206

<sup>37</sup>Bracewell, M England Is Mine: Pop Life in Albion from Wilde to Goldie Harper Collins London 1997 p.206

<sup>38</sup>Polhemus, T Street Style Thames & Hudson, London 1993, flowchart pp.136-137

<sup>39</sup>Source: BBC Broadcasting Research Department Information Desk, Woodlands London W12

<sup>40</sup>*Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* (Carl Reiner, 1982), *Holsten Pils* commercial by Gold Greenlees Trott

<sup>41</sup>du Gay, P (ed.), Production of Culture/Cultures of Production p.200 cited a planner's creative brief written in the late 1980s for Levi Strauss 501s, which stated '...they are the original jean, indelibly associated with the birth of teenage culture in the fifties, and its finest expression since'.

<sup>42</sup>American post-War youth culture rather than Italian *Dolce Vita*. Not only were they war-time allies, they spoke the same language, had similar cultural reference points and American Fifties culture imported well in Britain, so a wider field of reference points were readily available in Britain to connect with the theme.

<sup>43</sup>Jean Baudrillard made the case that originality means less when it is overwhelmed by copies: Rojek, C and Turner, B (ed) Forget Baudrillard? Routledge London 1993 chapter 7.

<sup>44</sup>Sinclair, J Images Incorporated Croom Helm, New York 1997 p.1

<sup>45</sup>in a similar vein, Olins, W Corporate Identity Thames and Hudson, London 1989 p.202, sites Nestlé's take-over of Rowntree as an attempt to make better use of under-utilised product brands: 'In other words brand name and image were given financial value'



This led to archival style revivals on many levels, as collecting became popular<sup>46</sup>. The highest form of 'creative commodity' remained art. While art signified status for centuries, the fashionability of historical provenance added to its worth in the 1980's as much as the Original tag on Levi's or the 'genuine' slogan on Budweiser lager bottles added a mythical historical value to the products. As Buck and Dodd remarked in *Relative Values*, auction rooms became more of an arena for the glamorous and global sport of art collecting<sup>47</sup>. Art had become subject to financial speculators and the prices art attracted at auction bore little relation to earlier exchange value patterns. In fact its ability to reach over-evaluated prices re-positioned art's worth as an investment<sup>48</sup>.

The methods of archiving spread as new collector markets were formed in such mass-produced arenas as literature, wines, and electrical goods as Limited Editions of all types flooded the market. Cadbury's even produced a limited edition Crunchie bar in holographic wrapper. In pop a fetishisation of collector markets was also evident. Frith described the limited edition Springsteen Box Set in 1987 as;

...an event in itself (similar to the Beatles 1968 White Album). It generated its own publicity as 'news' (and became) the ultimate object of Capitalist fantasy, a commodity which sold more and more because it has sold well already, a product which had to be *owned* rather than necessarily *used*. (Where other live or limited editions were sneered as cynical opportunism Springsteen's set was seen to have musical integrity because) Springsteen wears work clothes even when he is not working... For him there is no division between work and play, between the ordinary and the extraordinary... there can never be a suggestion that this is just an act.<sup>49</sup>

As Frith notes, the label 'collectable' had made many weary of exploitation. This gradually became increasingly pronounced in all forms of knowing consumerism. Beyond the commercial cynicism of its limited appeal such activity flattened the value hierarchy that placed art at the top of the creative pecking order. Film moments were easy to collect. Advertising on the other hand is hard to position alongside this for a number of reasons. It's hard to collect, problematic in its disposable format and it carries the connotations of being a cheap, hard sell medium. Yet advertising still tended to archive reference itself as its own greatest moments. Ad agency HHCL+P replayed a famous 1973 ad for R White lemonade<sup>50</sup> in which the 'secret lemonade drinker' was confronted by a range of (irrelevant) personalities including tennis player John McEnroe. For older viewers the new end line esoterically played on their archival memory. For new viewers the ad's seventies feel was fashionable in 1998, when the ad was relaunched. The graininess of the ad made it seem from a different period, unlike the Hovis ad a decade earlier, which maintained its connection with the present through the nostalgic narrator.

#### Problems of patriotism and class distinction

Britain's uneasy cultural relations with the rest of Europe ran throughout the nineties fuelled by pro and anti-Eurocentric brand allegiances. While the mid-nineties saw Britain hold the presidency of the Economic Union, host international sporting events and experience an upturn in national confidence the inward-looking island mentality was also driven by mistrust of Europe and European bureaucracy<sup>51</sup>.

Yet much had changed in Britain during the earlier part of the twentieth century to bring it in line with other European countries. The class divide was not as pronounced in Britain as it had been in the previous century, as working class groups were democratised through land registration and organised employment systems were developed early in the

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<sup>46</sup>Between 1980-90, TV viewing figures for consumer programmes soured. *That's Life!* attracted huge audiences of between 8 million (1980) to 13.5 million (1987), while arts programmes had significantly smaller viewing figures in 1980 - between 0.8 -3 million for shows like *The South Bank Show* and *Arena*. This is mostly because they cut off C2, D and E social groups (37% of *That's Life!* viewers were DE, only 14% were AB). The exceptions to this were BBC1's *The Antiques Roadshow* and *The Great Picture Chase*. Both centred on placing exchange values on art and artefacts. *The Antiques Roadshow* attracted up to 10 million viewers across social and age stratas, two-thirds more than any other BBC Arts and Music output. Given that the elderly form the bulk of early evening viewers, and were keen participants having established their own lifetime archive sources now rendered valuable, it is fair to assume that this type of archive-plundering made the fashion for reviving Popular. Source of statistics: *BBC Broadcasting Research Department*, C313, Woodlands, Wood Lane W12.

<sup>47</sup>Buck, L & Dodd, P *Relative Values* BBC Books, London 1991 pp.53-55 and 63.

<sup>48</sup>While this was not particularly new, the connection with an advertising patron - Charles Saatchi - was: This is discussed in Hatton, R & Walker, John A *Supercollector, a Critique of Charles Saatchi*, Ellipsis, London 2000.

<sup>49</sup>From the essay Frith, S *The Real Thing - Springsteen* in Frith, Simon *Music For Pleasure* pp.95-96.

<sup>50</sup>Originally produced by Allen Brady Marsh (cf. Chapter 3a).

<sup>51</sup>During the May 1996 (after the election) pollsters MORI conducted a survey to determine Attitudes to the EU which concluded that 74% of Britons did not want full integration, compared to 22% that did. Website (June 2000): <http://www.mori.co.uk/polls/1996/>

century<sup>52</sup>. From the late nineteenth century there were more instances of industrialists becoming part of the elite - new money meeting old - which may well have made the existing British establishment develop in a similar way to France or Italy. Yet, as Martin J Weiner described in English Culture and The Decline of the Industrial Spirit, the new business elite in Britain did not associate across national boundaries in the manner that other European nations industrialists did. Instead, British industrialists gained such financial and institutional privileges that they no longer felt part of the industrial landscape and re-located within higher social echelons<sup>53</sup>. This, claims Weiner, is the point at which industrialisation failed to become an end in itself (unlike in America, which embraced technology and production capabilities) and became (in Peter York's eyes) pre- and post-industrial by inclination, and Establishment governed by habit<sup>54</sup>.

It is only during the nineties the British Establishment systems were challenged on several fronts. Firstly by service and IT industries outgrowing manufacturing industries. Secondly, by an increase in variety and volume of media coverage aiming to generate popular news stories. Third, by the plethora of information that became accessible through establishments such as government ministries (MI5 opening its doors to the media, the increased number of press leaks<sup>55</sup>) and hierarchies (the Royal family) who exposed their workings and de-bunked the myths in which they had been shrouded. The fourth challenge to established hierarchies offered alternatives to the orthodoxies of the British past. From the joining of a European parliament at one end to a devolvement of power to UK countries at the other<sup>56</sup>, the sense of a close-set united Britain was rapidly dissolving.

The re-definition of England and Britain has been a persistent issue, particularly since devolution in 1997. Many culturally-centred debates on the subject, such as those presented at the 'Relocating Britishness' conference in 2000<sup>57</sup>, question the distinction of a separate English identity, where there has been little need in the past to distinguish England from Britain. Many of the speakers referred to this as a dilemma of English self-identity. Journalist Yvonne Roberts noticed that such critiques were mostly written by men, and connected the apparent English identity crisis '...to the alleged crisis in masculine identity<sup>58</sup>'. Advertising is still a predominantly male domain – although this imbalance was partially re-addressed in the nineties. However there was a sense that it was masculinity, the British establishment and the advertising industry that was mutually open for re-negotiation during the nineties. Because these changes were mostly institutional and attitudinal changes to the notion of Britishness eventually became marked through transitions in advertising genres rather than in abrupt stylistic shifts.

#### Issues of masculinity

Moments of collective masculine expression, such as that in response to the highs and lows of British sporting teams, became increasingly significant during the 1990s. Divergent tastes in music and leisure activity diluted other efforts to appeal broadly to a British sense of masculinity. Therefore sporting tournaments became more of a focal point for advertisers to appeal to a communal masculine audience.

The summer of 1996 in particular gave rise to a collective moment of national pride found simultaneously in politics<sup>59</sup>, arts and sport. The popular press and youth magazines habitually blurred distinctions between Britishness and Englishness as England 'became' Britain for the summer. BritPop, Young British Art and England's hosting of Euro 96 were expressed as a loop of fashionable archivism that had adopted the sixties as a historical model - reviving laddish masculinity as a sort of 'geezer chic'.

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<sup>52</sup>Central Statistical Office Social Trends No. 30 2000, London p.18; also a point made by Hoggart, R The Way We Live Now p.198.

<sup>53</sup>Weiner, MJ English Culture and The Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980 Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1981, pp.1-35. In contrast, Macedo, D Literacies of Power Westview, Colorado 1994 p.153, Macedo describes a British industrial culture so ingrained with its existing industrial model that it prevented an informational alternative evolving.

<sup>54</sup>Weiner, MJ English Culture... p.3. Weiner claimed that 'It is a historic irony that the nation that gave birth to the Industrial Revolution, and exported it throughout the world, should have become embarrassed by the measure of its success. The English nation became ill at ease enough with its progeny to deny its legitimacy by adopting a conception of Englishness that virtually excluded industrialisation'.

<sup>55</sup>Hewison, R In Anger: Culture in the Cold War 1945-60 pp.204-209, Hewison describes such 'Establishment bureaucracies and collusions'.

<sup>56</sup>Central Statistical Office Social Trends No. 30 2000, London p.18.

<sup>57</sup>Relocating Britishness Conference, hosted by the University of Central Lancashire, Preston, May 2000 (140 delegates, mostly from Britain, the US and central Europe).

<sup>58</sup>Roberts, Y Home Truths in The Guardian media Supplement, 30 March 2000 p.7

<sup>59</sup>Following the May general election, with the sense of an upward economic turn and that 'Things Can Only Get Better' (Labour's adopted anthem by D:Ream, 1996). The underlying negative undertone of the song's title assumed the state of the nation was at rock bottom. The same cynical line ran through mainstream pop at the time ('Oasis's What's The Story - Morning Glory?', 1997) as it had in the sixties (The Beatles 'It's Getting Better (Can't Get No Worse)', 1967).

The 'geezer' was remodelled as a fashionably modish Brit from 1996 within BritPop, BritArt and film. The image celebrated underworld and underclass in a romanticised version of sixties urbanity and 'in yer face' attitudes. For example in the film *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* masculinity was characterised through super-confident operators who relied on wit. A distillation of this lent itself easily to advertising, and most of the film's actors in such films went on to become brand mascots<sup>60</sup>.

Where women's glossy magazines through ads and editorials had typified, legitimised and commodified mainstream interests of women in different age, class and interest brackets, publishers IFG and IPC stretched their remit to similarly group young men. Magazine titles such as *Loaded* (1994) and *FHM* (1993) instigated a new commercial territory prompting a wave of Lad-oriented special interest magazines, including *Dazed And Confused* (dance and pop culture, 1994), and *Stuff* (gadgets and products, 1996). These legitimised laddishness by tapping into topics of overlapping male interest. Childhood fascinations with action films, football<sup>61</sup> and fantasy magazines were blended with adult fascinations for cars, fantasy sex, wealth, beer and gadgets. These became the most commonly recognised props of British masculinity.

In effect therefore, the commodification of the 'New Lad' (the term had a linear logic, following on of the eighties term 'New Man') created a market niche for a magazine culture that set out to appear post-feminist (it tended to objectify women). It also vindicated a new-found primal masculinity that operated outside existing conventions of adulthood.

Television was quick to pick up on this. The sitcom *Men Behaving Badly* (originally ITV in 1992) characterised a couple of flat-sharing lads prone to heavy drinking, non-committal relationships and leeching. BBC2's Friday night (post-pub) show *Fantasy Football* (1994) also embodied this. Its hosts David Baddiel and Frank Skinner (aided by 'Stato' - the nerdish straight man) traced the weekly progress of a hypothetical league in which the team managers were guest celebrities (cf. Nick Hornby, *Fever Pitch*: Chapter 3a). Such programmes and magazines identified shared interests that allowed the different versions of masculinity from various subcultures to be seen as an homogeneous male mass. The Euro championship gave different stands of masculine pop taste a united outlet to bond and vent a cliché-ridden version of masculinity on neutral territory; football. This managed to associate with the other manifestations of geezer masculinity<sup>62</sup> while bring together regional divisions. All clubs maintain their regional location in their name, so when they become a social totality during the championships there were moments when British masculinity became an homogeneous mass. The moments (in 1990, 1992, 1996 and 1998) became brief welding points against the erosion of traditionally masculine domains (in work and leisure) and an older account of macho masculinity. But it was only temporary.

The press fervour leading up to international matches drew on moments of English male success - the World wars, the 1966 World Cup - to evoke nostalgia for collective masculinity. This effectively became the point at which national identity served as a sanctuary for collective male belonging. Such fervour revealed a hitherto hidden laddishness in male youth not seen since the seventies - the polar opposite of the mid-1980s politically correct 'Renaissance Men'. *Fantasy Football* drew on the spirit of archiving the seventies, celebrating crude production values with re-enactments of past ('classic') footballing moments in a semi-ad libbed format that made a virtue of uncomfortable or idiosyncratic moments. Cheap puns and laddish rebellion were blended with self-referential humour that connected Baddiel's self-effacing Jewish humour with Skinner's quick-witted puns and bawdy jokes. The running banter between them seemed unrehearsed and fluid, like pub conversation. The treatment had the sort of amateurish spirit Paxman singled out as a province of the English: '...it recognises a God-ordained right to philistinism and the rectitude of individuals to please themselves in their own homes.'<sup>63</sup>. This could equally be said of the 'yobbish' lad ads between 1992 and 1998<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup>From *Lock Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* alone several actors were utilised for their association with 'Brit Lad', notably Nick Moran for Barclays Bank (1999), Vinnie Jones for Red Devil drinks (2000) and Sting for Renault (1999)

<sup>61</sup>A poll by MORI/The Institute of Personnel and Development *World Fever Grips Britain's Workers*, June 1998. The report showed that 20% of British working adults (28% male, 8% female) planned to "down tools" during the World Cup. 61% were taking paid annual leave while 24% negotiated flexi-time and 16% took unpaid leave: only 3% admitted to taking sick leave. Website (June 2000): <http://www.mori.co.uk/polls/1998/ipd.htm>

<sup>62</sup>For instance the politicised pop protest - somewhat muted by Labours 1996 election win - as borne out on a popular T-shirt at the time which noted the connection between 1966 (England hosting the world cup) and 1996 (hosting the European Championship) and the England national team's performances during a Labour government. The dandification of violence in *Lock Stock...* and England's European-wide notoriety for violence harked back to the mods, rockers and football violence of the sixties. Many art critics reviewing Young British Art exhibitions commented on the similarity of agenda with sixties Pop. Along with the plethora of magazines between 1996-97 coining the resurgence of creative self-confidence as 'Cool Britannia'.

<sup>63</sup>Paxman, J *The English* p. 4.

Laddishness trod a fine line of acceptability, especially in the eyes of the Press Complaints Commission and the Advertising Standards Authority. After the politically correct revisionism of the eighties finding solace in national pride bore similarities to nationalism, which had a political tendency to define itself against other nations. The tabloid press's posturing before the 1990 and 1996 final stage football matches with Germany<sup>65</sup> and the 1998 tie with Argentina evoked the sort of war jingoism that prompted an introspective press and politicians to ponder England's propensity to violence. As a leader in the Daily Telegraph pointed out before such a match in 2000, 'You do not establish your dominion over a quarter of the globe without some potential for violence'<sup>66</sup>.

One could further argue that the increasing number of ads 'pulled' showed that agencies were willing to sacrifice self-regulation and responsibility for a high-profile campaign<sup>67</sup>, as Adrian Holmes, chairman of the ad agency Lowe Howard Spink, famously claimed in 1995<sup>68</sup>.

That the ads for Asahi and Skol beers used aggressive, 'edgy' tactics at either end of the decade reiterates how little the industry's grasp of bland irony and laddish humour changed<sup>69</sup>. While irony had become a common tactic in the late eighties this stood in contrast to the nineties version, where irony dressed-up contradictions between advertisers selling and consumers knowing they're being sold at. By the mid nineties irony was used to make the distinction between advertisers knowingly selling, and ads that simply looked routine. For instance, a press and poster ad for Superkings cigarettes in 1996 depicted a cigarette in the foreground and a large sofa in the distance, type below the sofa read 'big', and below the cigarette 'bigger'. The ad was not about the 'message' but the ironic tone associated with the attitude of New Lad. It was through such tones simultaneously ran through ads for beer, travel, cigarettes and other products that targeted youth.

Most of the campaigns in this section seem to rely on versions of comedy. A close proximity to British humour seems to run consistently throughout the different tactics of advertising during the decade, making many of the as culturally specific. British comedy offered ready-made reference points that could conjure tone and locate the brand with immediacy. On closer inspection (cf. comedy timeline, Appendix 1) if one traces the development of British comedic form during the nineties alongside advertising, one can see that FMCG's frequently 'borrowed' comedy characters for endorsement. The immediacy of the nineties British humour matched the required immediacy of the advertised products. Furthermore youth-oriented comedy sketch shows throughout the decade moved closer to the form of commercial ads. One minute sketches (often used in The Mary Whitehouse Experience, 1990-92, Harry Enfield in 1993 and Newman and Baddiel, 1992-93) gave way later in the decade to sketch 'moments' often under ten seconds (The Fast Show, 1997-2000, Dennis Pennis in 1997 and Smack The Pony, from 1998). Such was the particular suitability of The Fast Show format that characters from it were used to advertise The National Dairy Council (1997), Walkers Crisps (1998) and Holsten Pils (1999-2000).

Such comedy appealed to advertising planners on a number of levels. They were class-appropriate, they appealed on a level of light entertainment where the viewers resistance is likely to be reduced, and they made use of the

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<sup>64</sup>Evident when one considers the shifts in British advertising discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>65</sup>Calder, A *The Myth Of The Blitz*, Cape, London 1991 p.196.

The author lists a series of opposites between England and Germany based on the perception of how the English saw themselves. It included freedom against tyranny, friendliness against brutality, timeless landscape against mechanisation and volunteer spirit against 'drilling'. The same rationale could easily be applied to media re-enactments of this character around occasions in the nineties of England facing its most obvious footballing rivalries.

<sup>66</sup>Home Secretary Jack Straw commented on English youth's 'propensity for violence' in an interview for Radio 4 Programme *The English*, broadcast 11 January 2000. It was reproduced in a *Daily Telegraph* leader article (unattributed) on 12 January 2000, p.1.

<sup>67</sup>The most common tactics were where advertisers distorted familiar frameworks with ironic celebrity endorsements or aggressive disruptions to formats. For instance the brutishness of American comedian Dermott Leary smashing props in an ad for Holsten Pils (GGT) and the likes of a bullish Bob Hoskins for BT (JWT) were used to make the format less obvious. In similar vein a host of unfashionable seventies celebrities - former TV actor Gareth Hunt and former sports commentator Dickie Davies advertised Asahi beer (Fallon McElligott, 1999) while the unfashionably cultish comedian Jim Bowen and a somewhat kitsch Fat Elvis impersonator were used to endorse Skol lager (Leagas Shafron, 1992). Examples such as these gave the product an edginess that seemed prominent and unexpected in a conventional ad format.

<sup>68</sup>The speech, by Adrian Holmes to fellow advertisers and journalists at the July 1995 International Television Advertising Awards Prima D'Or in Monte Carlo, derided what he saw as a worrying trend in British advertising: 'The new unpleasantness. The new brutishness. The new yobbishness. The new desire to shock the audience into taking notice by whatever means.' (Source: Holmes script, from Lowe Howard Spink agency archive, November 1997). Holmes claimed this was to the long-term detriment of the advertising industry. Holmes cited GGT's 1994 ad for Holsten Pils featuring aggressive American comedian Dennis Leary, the then-brand mascot, in which he smashed bottles and ranted about other lagers. The outburst was much remarked upon in Campaign, Ad Map and Ad International from March 1995 and by Bell, E *Shock of the new* in *The Guardian: Media* section, 20 March 1995 p.5.

<sup>69</sup>The Film *Wayne's World* (Penelope Spheeris, 1992) coined the use of 'Not' to flag up the irony of previous sentences, which was widely used by the late-eighties.

realisation that viewers were more open to a punchline where they would be resistant to a strapline. The sketches were based on (and abstracted from) close observation of behavioural patterns, and in the frame of comedy mock-heroism would be ready-coded for the viewer to deduce the frames of reference. The biggest advantage was in appearing to operate outside the framework of an advert. It didn't appear as if the central purpose of the commercial 'moment' was to sell things. This also meant that the association between type of humour and the brand would extend to the sketches original format, within a comedy show. Comedy, it appears, could use types in a way that characters that were ready-constructed for ads could not.

Therefore comedy and sport - especially football - were the most used vehicles to interpellate cynical young males during the 1990s. As this section has illustrated, football remained one of the few domains left where un-reconstructed versions of Englishness were still permissible. Football had become a metaphor for replaying old wars in the absence of real conflict. Germans and Argentineans in particular were demonised as 'Our' enemies. Hoggart remarked that Them and Us meant less to post war generations<sup>70</sup>. *England* saw itself as *Britain*, especially when Germany were concerned. The Germans were a convenient measurement to compare how 'we' stood next to 'them'. Therefore every 2 years Football (European and World cups) became a key moment for advertising to whip up a sense of belonging. The subsequent expectance of defeat developed somewhere between 1970-1990, and seems to underscore the British sense of irony in defeat. Many football fans sung 'Always look on the bright side of life...' and 'We're crap, and we know we are' as their team faced losing. Such moments drew on past versions of masculinity in assuming an undercurrent of repression (cf. the male victim, Chapter 3a), that while they can 'believe' in their team, they are prepared to appreciate that they are not ultimately good enough.

In terms of maintaining a positive collective British male identity between football tournaments, the flame of laddish attitude was maintained by the plethora of magazines and in FMCG fast-food products. The advertisers of Pot Noodle (HHCL, 1994) re-directed some of their early Tango energy (cf. chapter 3a) into an intense and surreal set of short ads. They pitched the set and anchorman of an American news broadcast against the frenzy of an extreme sports experience, put to a soundtrack of Heavy Metal band Motorhead 'The Ace of Spades'. The concentration of energy and jarring impact the ad achieved in its slots (aired early evening) characterised the product with a degree of laddish garishness. Playtex Wondabra's 'Hello Boys' (TBWA, 1994) with their use of a flirtatious model (Eva Herzigova) and Calvin Klein's use of child models in America (1995) both sought to make a commercial virtue from the controversy they generated. Such ads caught the spirit of 'edginess', by testing the ASA's resolve and finding their way into public discourses on provocative advertising. In some respects therefore they matched the spirit of confrontation evident in BritPop, even more established brands like Heinz rephrased their renowned strapline 'Beanz Meanz Heinz' (in operation since 1967 (Young & Rubicam) to announce that 'Heinz Buildz Britz' (BMP, 1994).

In the latter half of the 1990s advertising appeared to move from an externalised representation of products in their cultural context (with a tendency to render desired consumer lifestyles) to a more personal 'inner spirit', in the sense of trying to simulate the experience of consuming the product. An example of this was 'The Pepsi Max' a Blackpool pleasure beach white-knuckle ride that Pepsi sponsorship. Advertisers even coined the phrase 'product truth' to communicate a product's core values. For instance, the 'slap' of the Tango 'taste sensation', the Guinness ritual and the treble-entendre of Pepperami's 3-way line 'it's a bit of an animal' (hot & fiery, in terms of literally being made from meat and its confrontational attitude to vegetarians in terms of its loutish charm (Still Price Lintas, 1991). Beyond products, there was brand attitude - Nikes 'Just Do it' (SPDC, 1991) or French Connection's 'FCUK Fear' (GGT then TBWA, 1997).

At such moments it was difficult to determine a British nation that was Eurocentric. It was only during the 1998 World Cup broadcasts that sports brands developed their own international array of sponsored personalities to front their brand. As the ads for Adidas, Reebok and Nike developed as global campaigns, colloquialisms and localised reference points were less in evidence.

Next to the popularisation of national identity football tournaments provoked, the Olympics games (especially athletics sprint events) re-grouped the sense of identity from nations to multinational brands. The system of sponsorship endorsements and conspicuous logos has evolved (since the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics) where athlete's outfits were designed by brands, and endorsed by national athletics federations. While the 1996 Atlanta 100 metres sprint final was



billed as inter-national rivalry by virtue of athletes country of origin, in terms of technology (training methods, running spikes and clothes performance) it could easily have been billed as Nike versus Adidas versus Puma versus Reebok. This reflected the new century's overriding competition of power brokers, between the corporate global divisions (this theme is explored further in Chapter 3c).

Relocating communications budgets from advertising to sponsorship also positioned multinational brands in local cultures, which was a marketing method derived from advertising<sup>71</sup>. The sense of 'national community' advertising relied on in Britain was being re-aligned to corporations, who could sell more clearly defined attitudes through personalities because, unlike nations, they had tighter control over how their identity was conveyed. The nineties therefore contained a shift in the way mass media advertising represented and used the idea of collectivity as a national type. Collective moments however remained a means for media advertising to use old tactics without converting to the more complex 1990s modes of address.

#### Changes in organisation, change in address

Changes in the organisation and strategies of advertising are partly attributable to new 'authors' and collaborative practices. Writer Robert Elms (in an interview with Peter York) inferred part of the change was in re-positioning creativity, a sort of tacit equity between creative and financial cultures in London; '...we were essentially working class...predominantly, homosexual and heterosexual male. I think we saw ourselves in that mod sense as the working class aristocrat, the Face if you like. They all wanted to go and get jobs in the city and wear red braces... in some ways we had similar expectations, but instead of the city we were aiming at Soho.'

The 'creative commodity' Elms found in Soho broadened in the nineties<sup>72</sup>, as the Conservative government encouraged self-sufficiency and a (self-regulating) market led economy. This led to a broadening in the fields of market competition. Banking and retail services competed with recording artists and sports teams as 'products' in similar commercial markets. Established sporting and record labels developed sub-brands such as sporting clubs and pop acts, which in turn spawned 'products'. Sports stars and individual artists became products (and separate satellite sub-brands) in their own right. In rendering people products they attracted a fluctuating exchange-value like other products and services. In fact it wasn't the people but the values of their face that was of significance. It was this that was being managed, manipulated and sold because associations were significant (as with all commercial products)<sup>73</sup>. This inter-related perception of commodity, provenance and value became commonplace leading up to the 1990's.

The significant difference in mode of communication during the 1990s was that aspiring to brand imagery had been exhausted as a useful method. Consumers wanted the claims of advertising evidenced in consumption experiences. The gap between consumption experience and advertisement closed, and the sense of 'total packaging' became necessary.

The music industry moved closer to this by representing groups as packaged products: Identities were managed through existing pop products. Thomas Hine claims in The Total Package<sup>74</sup> pop and product packages became a repository for consumers feelings and values, and the blurring of disciplines connected different types of products with similar aspirations<sup>75</sup>. Different product types competed on personality and attitude because a visually literate youth 'listened' with their eyes by reading the visual codes and connecting image with sound: this was around the same time advertising understood emotional pull to be more powerful than rational argument.

A commercial at the time for the Halifax Building Society illustrated this: the ad conveyed a sense of a world of leisure and creativity, where work and play fused indistinguishably in which the lead character seamlessly fitted (stills from the Halifax commercial feature in the 'visual essay' in Appendix 3). In one sense the Halifax's young urban professional fitted into a more readily adaptable model of Renaissance Man that served to level advertising with other creative manifestations in the same vein that Benson & Hedges was reshaped as a sophisticated prop. Bracewell made a similar

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<sup>70</sup>Hoggart, R The Way We Live Now p.4

<sup>71</sup>How the method works is described in Williamson, J Decoding Advertisements p.42

<sup>72</sup>Elms illustrated the same idea, that communications had moved into the commercial/cultural mainstream, later made by Keat, R & Abercrombie, N Enterprise Culture (cf. Chapter 1). It is worth noting that, despite the rapid growth of the new communication industries, the proportion of women in positions of power remained unaffected. By 1988 women constituted 43% of the British labour force, up from 37% in 1971. Source: Social Trends 1990 No.20 - Central Statistical Office p.67.

<sup>73</sup>A point expanded early in Judith Williamson, J Decoding Advertisements.

<sup>74</sup>Hine, T The Total Package Little, Brown & Co., Toronto 1995 pp.104-105

<sup>75</sup>This was termed '3<sup>rd</sup> Party Advertising'.

observation, remarking that, 'the visual language of New Romanticism - the glamorous solitude of the modern(e) European - had become the template for advertising's concept of the upwardly mobile consumer.'<sup>76</sup>

The 'cultural turn', or period of 'ends' that Hoggart described, had a greater impact on advertising. Stern's second point, that customers related emotively to perceived realities, was more significant in the 1990s, where a wider sense of future uncertainty about work and the declining beliefs of authorities prompted consumers to look for 'truths' in the products they bought. Advertisers even latched onto the idea of being honest and measured in their style of delivery - they called it selling on a 'product truth'. Ads such as Ronseal - 'It does what it says on the tin' (HHCL) - were symptomatic of the 1990s, where customers were more willing to shop around for products which were better value, with better guarantees (cf. Chapter 3b). Consumers were starting to demand of their goods, and by extension a more accurate reflection of their abilities through the way they were sold. Developments in seductive digital communication had little value if the core message did not reflect the experiences of consumption.

Digital technology did however effect the modes of communication in that the speed of production started to match the speed with which customers could graze and dispose of visual imagery. I discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 5. As Du Gay noted earlier (see Chapters 1 and 2), the culture of production did impact on the changing mode and references of address. Apple Macintosh's 'Graphic User Interface' (from 1984) meant images could be quickly assembled ('Mac'ed up') with imaging software packages such as Aldus Freehand (for generating images) Aldus Page Maker, Quark Express (for collaging images) and Adobe Photoshop (for editing images)<sup>77</sup>. Creative work could, within a short space of time, be made to look like final polished solutions, with high presentation values. This put emphasis on presentation skills, and (according to planner Anthony Tasgal at OgilvyOne) ad agency clients were often sold on slick presentation techniques. Grabbing and re-editing existing visual material became the quickest (and cheapest) way of producing commercial images. By 1994 therefore, computing offered a faster means of two-dimensional production for the creative industries. By extension therefore, technology had realigned the processes and the tempo that advertising that advertising worked to.

It suited advertising to be less concerned with the 'craft' of careful communication, where ads could be more cost-effectively knocked out and visually striking. The trend from the majority of (non-media) ad agencies was therefore to produce art direction-led work, rather than the clarity of message evident in ads, say, of the 1970s. The creative professions were effectively feeling their way through new ways of working and were still realising the potential of digital communication throughout the decade. Therefore the sense of intuited communication evident in cigarette ads of the early eighties was still in evidence during the 1990s. In the nineties however the intuited creativity was embedded in a far more rapid turnover of work and in the fleshing out of GUI's capabilities, as much as it was toying with new ideas about consumers.

In terms of how this impacted on the look of the decade's advertising, it is fair to conclude that the construction of communication became increasingly complex. On the one hand there were archival references to past styles (post-fifties and pre-20<sup>th</sup> century). On the other hand there were developing styles that seemed synonymous with digitisation, most obviously the use of blurred type and seamlessly fused photographic imagery (using Photoshop) in ads for sports brands. Yet the certainty with which agencies understood that viewers would pick up on references within such communication said much about the ability of planners young art directors to chime with their target audiences. As the means of reading communication had become more complex, the more advertisers clipped into the myriad of reference points consumers were thought to have. As with most forms of creative expression, advertising could also rely on sampling (from the 'boutiques of history') to stay in touch with expressions of popular culture.

## Conclusion

The overriding mood of the nineties towards advertising encouraged advertisers to engage with more direct and digital means. As I discussed in Chapter 2 this did not stop the ad industry from cultivating media advertising. In this period advertising learned how to harness associations with edgy or counter cultural figures, and by so doing appeared to be operating outside the respectable bounds of commercial enterprise. They made brand differences echo the arbitrary yet

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<sup>76</sup>Bracewell, M *England is Mine* p.214

<sup>77</sup>In media advertising, the most commonly used packages were Pagemaker and Quark in the early nineties, then Freehand for the creation of images. By 2000 Photoshop and Quark were the most used programmes.

crucial distinctions made within subcultures. This touches on the dialectic between belonging and difference, which many theorists of subcultures and consumption have seen as central.

As advertising relied on the constant 'now' and 'what next?' to ignite fresh interest, it rewarded its sponsored stars for developing their own *caricature* in their respective mediums - in the sporting arena and in the courts. Bad behaviour outside the respectable boundaries was re-cast in the popular press as 'attitude'. For advertisers there was added value in unconventional behaviour because it was newsworthy. It made the endorser and endorsed more topical.

Characters such as footballer Eric Cantona developed near-mythical media constructions. This was shaped through Nike advertising (by Abbott Mead Vickers) which became a mouthpiece for the sportsman's dislocated opinions. The way in which adverts drew on constructed persona of rebels was therefore honed during the 1990s. Increasingly such ads encompassed the knowingness that viewers knew the 'outsider's' words were constructed by others. It operated between levels of what was apparent, pre-knowledge and the viewer's perspective of the 'outsider' and their actions. The tension between maintained the subject's vitality. It was clear that the adverts 'message' alone did not sell illusions wholesale. It is clear therefore that marketers were keen to commodify individuality through advertising because loners offered several beneficial associations to media advertising.

Firstly, identifying with loners offered a sense of being autonomous, at a time when the commercial industries were most clearly identified with manufacturing ready-made models. In a sense advertising was offering the chance to appear original. This is a departure from earlier understandings within advertising of what consumer autonomy represented: for instance in 1960 ad man Rosser Reeves claimed that originality had '...ruined more advertisers than it has made'<sup>78</sup>. In the 1990s the risk of needing to be seen to be original lessened by successive decades of bland 'safe' advertising. With media advertising losing their impact - especially commercial - being different became an advantage. Advertisers were still measured in their methods of achieving this. The responsibility for being original tended to be decanted through star endorsements: the bigger the star, the smaller the risk. In the 1990s it seemed that the more controversial or 'edgy' the celebrity, the more effective the association became.

Second, choosing 'loners' as celebrity endorsers could add value beyond the framework of an ad. In fixing the meaning of a product to a personality the ad could exist off the billboard and in the endorsers other public activities<sup>79</sup>.

Third, selecting established celebrity endorsers famous for being 'their own people' provided a focus for a product or brand's value could more clearly be made. A single and distinct point of focus made the emotive 'mood' of a product/service more tangible, even though brand's identities were generated through the collective acts of companies and the promotions companies they employed. Edgy characters, such as Rutger Hauer for Guinness and Eric Cantona for Nike, were seen as being able to maintain their convictions outside the main frame of commercial activity. Such apparent 'authentic' rebelliousness helped sew the idea that buying edgy mainstream brands (like Guinness and Nike) was akin to buying badges of individual expression - and would be recognised as such by others.

In the 1990s therefore, using expressions of individuality was a main strategy by which 'mood marketing' could break down individualism into a set of choices relating to facets and moods.

Such methods worked for brands but less so for ideas of collective national belonging. As the Labour government concluded after 'Cool Britannia' waned in 1999, the only way to re-image Britain abroad was through its rich diversity, avoiding representations altogether. This worked like any other 'thin air brand' of the 1990s - emotive, mysterious, stylised, iconic but decentralised<sup>80</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup>Reeves, R *Reality in Advertising*, NY 1960 p.114

<sup>79</sup>A similar point is made in Williamson, J *Decoding Advertisements* p.25 where a celebrity endorsement of perfume brand Chanel No. 5 by actress Catherine Deneuve was seen to draw on additional information viewers may have had of the actress and the characters she played. In an extension of this, I claim that the continued actions of celebrity endorsers have significance on the way associations are continually read into brands. The fluctuating popularity of the celebrity is linked to the reputation of a brand. Endorsers therefore continue to serve as on-going ambassadors for brands outside the frame of an advert.

<sup>80</sup>Pountain, D & Robins, D *Cool Rules: Anatomy of an attitude* Reaktion, London 2000. 'Cool Britannia' (reinforced by government endorsement for film, fashion and design (The 1997 Powerhouse exhibition) was such a motif. Pountain & Robins analysed this phrase, which they considered to be usurping the industrial work ethic in assuming the mind-set of advanced consumer Capitalism. If one takes this idea to a logical conclusion New Labour's 'Third Way' strategy acted as a conduit between the late-industrial and early-information ages