



GONE *in* 7 SECONDS

Marketers have two blinks of the eye to catch the attention of their potential audience. Multiple media delivery options, data-driven approaches, consensus-driven team processes, and the fear of regulatory backlash are just a few of the inkblots that can clutter the creative drawing board.

The estimated time people give their attention to a print ad is 3.5 seconds and 7 seconds for a Web page. That's the time that marketers have to capture their audiences' attention. But it's not enough to deliver something in an interesting way; marketers also have to create something the audience will remember.

In healthcare marketing, the delivery is more complex and requires a deep understanding of multiple stakeholders and what resonates within a narrowly defined regulatory framework.

The Art of Creative Direction

Dan Hassan, creative director, McCann Regan Campbell Ward, says creativity is all about solving a problem in an original way.

"Today, creativity is still about the pictures and the words that capture the audience's attention, but increasingly also about finding ways to get people to participate. There are more ways to be creative than ever before. Beyond just words and pictures, there are so many ways to deliver a message now that the choice of media becomes a crucial opportunity

for creativity. A journal ad isn't sufficient anymore.

In the past, ads worked to persuade their audiences to act by suggesting or calling attention to an unmet need, says Anthony Rotolo, chief creative officer, True Health + Wellness.

"People were moved because of a brand's ability to affect awareness and the problems that it solved," he says. "It was the push era."

Most creative directors agree that since the social media revolution, relevancy has become the new goal of advertising communication.

"Not only are there more channels than before, but brands must become part of interactive user experiences that work differently for individual audience members," Mr. Rotolo says. "Creativity keeps the campaign from fragmenting. The brand must become singularly relevant, ultimately integrated, in an emotionally welcoming and coherent way."

Jack Hyndman, creative team member, FingerPaint Marketing, concurs that the art of creative direction has had to evolve to accommodate new media formats such as Web, mobile, and search, all of which require a much more dimensional understanding of good messaging and user experience design.

"In other words, today the online brand experience is every bit as important as the online creative," he says.

Dorene Weisenstein Ribotsky, executive VP, chief creative officer, Brandkarma, believes that the art of creative direction hasn't changed as much as evolved to keep pace with technology advances.

"While the technology with which we create and implement a concept has become more robust, the idea still needs to originate from the same place it always has — from our ability to transform an idea into a relatable message," she says. "So while our methods continue to evolve, and it remains important to keep abreast of trade innovations, the core of what we do hasn't differed any more than it had when our industry saw the advent of the camera or the television. Creative direction, at its best, is about insight to the human condition. This is what makes it an art."

Creativity: An Essential Part of Marketing

Creativity has always been an important part of the marketing toolbox, but more than ever creativity has to be able to deliver pointed



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BECKY BODENNER / Dudnyk



“Creativity is all about solving a problem in an original way.”

DAN HASSAM

McCann Regan Campbell Ward

relevancy to penetrate the market and reach its audience.

“Creativity must capture attention,” Ms. Ribotsky says. “It must be clear. And it must be relatable. Imagine being a music lover — particularly, jazz — and you’re on the green at an open-air concert, enjoying your favorite jazz trio. Suddenly, from across the park, you hear the boom of a classical orchestra. Then, from another direction, the electric shrill of a metal band, then blues, then country, rap, reggae, and pop, etc. The sounds begin to mix and you have trouble picking out the nuances of the jazz piano, bass, and drums you had originally come to hear. This is the environment in which creativity currently performs. The competition for market share against which it competes is ever increasing. So, more than ever, creativity is important. It has to be divergent, distinct, and innovative. At the end of the day, if your audience responds to jazz, you’d better be playing really, really creative jazz.”

Mr. Rotolo agrees that creativity is not window dressing.

“Creativity is not a coat of paint that colors the campaign,” he says. “It is not a flavor to be added as an afterthought. Creative is the binding force that keeps today’s many tactics from

becoming disconnected. It is the organizing principle that makes a campaign singular and focused.”

Keeping the campaign on target in a marketing environment that is increasingly being driven by analytics and ROI can be a challenge, and according to Becky Bodenner, senior VP, creative director, Dudnyk, this “drive to know” can never be at the expense of creativity.

“Spot-on strategy may drive the way into targets’ minds, but only memorable creative can reach their hearts,” she says. “When marketers can catch physicians or consumers off guard, grab, surprise, and move them with strong creative, there is a magical moment in which to telegraph a message. They hear, understand, and are poised to act on what you want them to know about a product or service. This requires much more than a pretty picture or a clever headline. It’s actually a complex act of subversion. Fine creative isn’t easy, but it isn’t common either.”

She adds that creativity is more important than ever because the clutter actually is taking over.

“No one watches TV commercials anymore — thanks to the DVR, Netflix, and Hulu — and consumers are hit daily with so many ads competing for their attention online and in the air that only two things will make them stop:



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KERRY BAKER / Flashpoint Medica



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DORENE WEISENSTEIN RIBOTSKY
Brandkarma



something for free and hot creative,” Ms. Bodenner says. “So caving into client pressure to feature bland, familiar images may pay the bills, but it probably won’t get the ROI they’re hoping for and it certainly won’t break through the clutter.”

Mr. Hyndman agrees that creative not only has to break through the clutter but engage the audience, empathize, deliver an experience, and entice them to action.

“Additionally, sometimes an over-emphasis on analytics on the part of the marketer can dull the mind to what is really important — a great idea that emotionally involves the user,” he says.

Analytics, Analytics, and More Analytics

From the agency perspective, there is a belief that creative, no matter the increasing focus on analytics on the message delivery or the growing slate of media vehicles, should be able to withstand the pressure.

“Truly great creative should always communicate the key message, be adaptable to multiple types of media, and deliver results,” says Kerry Baker, senior VP, ACD, copy, Flashpoint Medica. “Otherwise it’s merely attractive or clever creative. So delivering the message, customizing the form, and measuring effects are not really new demands on the creative. However, in an age where we all consume so much media, there is an increased pressure to make sure our communications are direct, fast, and hard-hitting. On occasion, it seems like the requested solution to satisfy those needs is nothing more or less than a giant word “efficacy” and a logo. When this

mindset prevails, creativity certainly can get lost in the shuffle. The challenge that we face is to convince all stakeholders that a creative solution not only communicates the message, but does so in a stronger and more lasting way. If we make this argument persuasively and provide work that’s up to the task, then a truly creative approach still stands a chance.”

Mr. Hyndman agrees that if story can’t be told in an engaging, persuasive way, it doesn’t matter what channels are used, how it’s measured, or how it’s delivered.

“In today’s marketplace, the digital world has transformed the relationship between a brand and its customer,” Mr. Rorolo says. “Within the new reality, the question is what role does creativity play in bringing value to a client’s brand, and their customers? Agencies have become exceedingly good at avoiding creativity. And maybe this is because it’s easier to stick with what is quantifiable, like hits to a website or email open rates. In this time of big data, who has the fortitude to make use of the most powerful of human expressions, for what resonates emotionally? It’s a daunting challenge.”

Mr. Rorolo adds that the rational practice of analytics, channel strategy, and segmentation are imperative to a brand’s success.

“But these best practices only culminate in unemotional cold data,” he says. “People have a need to feel and creativity is feeling.”

It might appear counterintuitive that the left brain and right brain can work in tandem to develop great concepts, but in fact it’s the combination of great creative and good data that drive execution.

“Data are not the enemy of creativity,” Mr. Rorolo says. “Data are a critical component of

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JACK HYNDMAN / FingerPaint Marketing



any relevant brand. To a creative team, data can be the source of great insights — insights about the task of creating ideas that in turn become a campaign. And that data also drive the strategy and a subsequent communication plan that informs creative execution.”

Mr. Hyndman says in his experience creative teams can draw important insights from analytics.

“Knowing which keywords consumers use in their searches, for example, can inform harder-working headlines,” he says. “Knowing which pages on a website are most popular can inform a creative approach — allowing the creative team to focus their efforts on the consumers’ clear information priorities. Refine. Rinse. Repeat.”

Mr. Hassan believes the best thing that analytics can do is refine an execution.

“Analytics may tell us to play up a certain product benefit or attribute, but I would rather layer the data on after the work has been done; I don’t want to lose a great idea because it didn’t make it through the net of analytics,” he says. “Creative people need to think big and to think differently in terms of communicating a message. If we have analytics that say we must talk about the mechanism, identify a certain data point, or speak to a certain type of doctor, by the time we are finished, there’s no idea left.”

THE GALLERY

Creative experts identify their favorite marketing/advertising campaigns and why the creative resonates with them.



REMICADE DOG

Identified by: **BECKY BODENNER**
Senior VP, Creative Director
Dudnyk

I'm a fan of the big, bad, black, and red snarling dog created for Remicade by Sudler & Hennessey. Though we've seen things made up of words before, I like this treatment because it's quick, powerful, and clear.

I immediately know what the condition does to sufferers and I can see how Remicade reins in the symptoms — or at least keeps the symptom-dog from biting the mailman. Also the dog collar in Remicade brand colors featuring the circle logo makes me smile. Seriously, isn't it nice not to see a patient?



GROW SOLE PRODUCT

Identified by: **BECKY BODENNER**
Senior VP, Creative Director
Dudnyk

With the Grow Sole Project, The CementBloc has created a winner. The website is fun, edgy, and contemporary. It optimizes social media, was tied into an event (how did I miss the SOLE-cial experiment?), and delivers visual interest without being complicated.

Shoes framing the site provide color and rich

personality, complemented by a nice logo and simple message. Check it out: growsoleproject.org/.



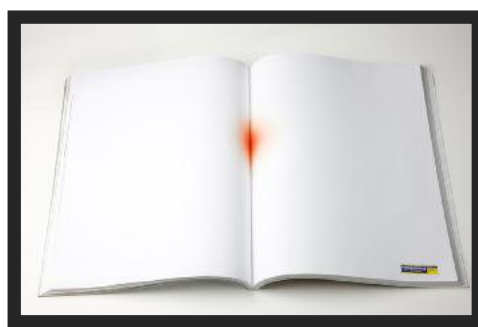
INVISIBLE WAR

Identified by: **JACK HYNDMAN**
Creative Team Member
FingerPaint Marketing

This groundbreaking award-winning documentary exposes the prevalence of rape against women in the U.S. military and gives them a voice to communicate their experiences. It also provides victims and supporters with helpful resources, a way to demand policy change, and increases public awareness. The campaign combines: the documentary, a petition for change, Twitter and Facebook links, blog, screening calendar with an extensive PR push.

Rape is socially top of mind right now around the globe. It was a key topic in the latest U.S. presidential election. The recent New Delhi incident has ignited national rage and a global demand for justice.

For more information, visit notinvisible.org.



PREPARATION H

Identified by: **DORENE WEISENSTEIN RIBOTSKY**
Executive VP, Chief Creative Officer
Brandkarma

It's not often that a single print ad can say so much with so little. This advertisement has always stuck in my mind not only for its consumer insight but also for the sheer guts that both the agency and the client exhibited in producing it.

The advertiser forgoes any fear of using too little information by trusting in the ad's ability to deliver a solid message coupled with its divergence — its sheer uniqueness.

The power and impact of this approach is something that we never lose sight of at Brandkarma. A best practice is to deliver a unique message and creative execution without providing every detail and reason to use the product.

In essence, leave your audience wanting more. When you can achieve the perfect balance between necessary messaging and breakthrough delivery, as I commend this ad for doing, you've really, if you'll pardon the expression, hit the sweet spot.



FIAT SEDUCTION

Identified by: **ANTHONY ROTOLO**
Chief Creative Officer
True Health + Wellness

The Fiat 500 Abarth "Seduction" advertisement is a great example of a brand that literally comes to life. It is 90% attitude and 120% feeling. The portrayal of the brand as a woman is initially unexplained. She engages with the stand-in for the intended audience and finally ambushes the viewer by transforming into the brand at the end of the spot. This surprises the viewer and makes the brand promise both very clear and easy to understand. The element of surprise is timed to leave the viewer in an emotionally receptive state just as the promise is delivered.

"Seduction" began as a digital spot that spread throughout the Web and gained global attention demonstrating the value of the strong creative idea The Richards Group uncovered.

BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS ►

**KERRY BAKER**

Senior VP, ACD, Copy
Flashpoint Medica

When multiple stakeholders are concerned, getting them all involved up front is key. Whether it's senior management or team members from different global regions, anyone who is late to the game is sure to have a new idea or a different opinion that can derail a favored concept.

By holding an early input session, you can capture every party's hot buttons and understand what must be conveyed in a concept to make it acceptable to every individual. Often, this can spur a creative idea that works for everyone else. Even if it doesn't actually change the creative concept being developed, understanding each party's mindset, needs, and language of success up front can help the team gain consensus around the work by allowing the team lead to clearly relate how it addresses the issues everyone brought to the table.

**BECKY BODENNER**

Senior VP, Creative Director
Dudnyk

It takes insight and imagination to create a great concept. But it takes skill, faith, and determination to take that creative concept through the gauntlet of checkpoints that it must travel from the time it leaves creative, to the moment it makes its debut in print or online. Each review meeting along the way poses dangers, challenges, and opportunities to strengthen the work.

Once the concept leaves the creative department, it enters the internal account review process. In most agencies, this review includes members of the account team, possibly a scientific advisor, and maybe agency leadership.

Next comes the client presentation, which brings its own set of challenges, not the least of which may be medical/regulatory approvals.

Finally, there's market research, in which the concept gets shared with the intended audience as we listen, shell-shocked or proud, behind the one-way mirror.

Going through each of these creative review meetings is like taking a trip across the boundaries of different countries, each with its own interests, politics, and points of view. Ideally this journey strengthens the concept, making it better each time.

Here are some best practices we've found to help ensure the concept keeps its soul even after multiple stakeholders weigh in:

1. Start with a strong creative brief. We make sure that each concept is anchored in a single-minded unique selling proposition (USP). While judging creative can be subjective, delivering on the product's USP is not. A strong brief helps us ensure that the concept is not only awesome, it's also completely on strategy.

2. Know the landscape cold. We don't start working until we know what every competitor to our product is doing creatively. We also get familiar with the ads and

images our targets are seeing outside of the product category. There's nothing worse than discovering a great idea has already been done. Knowing the creative context helps us bulletproof the concepts.

3. Practice the presentation. We prepare carefully, even for the very first internal review. We ask ourselves which points are likely to be raised? Which concepts do we feel most strongly about? Where would we like to end up? When it's time for the client review, we set up the presentation meticulously, we practice the reveal, and we prepare for any questions. Great creative concepts deserve great presentations, so we practice.

4. Foster cooperation. It's hard presenting creative concepts for the first time. It is like showing off your newborn baby to relatives who may or may not appreciate its beauty. We foster an atmosphere of mutual respect, so that when the science guy or the account lead has a concern, we listen, consider, discuss, and think about how to make it better versus kill the concept or each other. When the client gives feedback, we listen and respond. We remember that everyone on the team has the same goals. And we don't take it personally.

**DAN HASSAN**

Creative Director
McCann Regan
Campbell Ward

This may sound controversial, but I believe that it comes down to people doing their own jobs. Multiple stakeholders create an illusion of democracy. The more people who are involved in the process, the more important it is to make sure everybody's role is defined. When you try please everyone, you create the antithesis of creativity: consensus. Just because there are 16 people involved in the process, doesn't mean there should be 16 votes. There's a difference between collaboration and compromise.

Clients pay advertising agencies for their point of view, not for their ability to consistently revise their point of view as the creative moves up the levels of command.

I also believe agencies should show clients things they don't think they'll like. This is a good way to do a base check and shake the client up a little bit. If we show them what they expect to see, there's no reason to have an agency.

**JACK HYNDMAN**

Creative Team Member
FingerPaint Marketing

The key is integration of thinking and execution.

1. All stakeholders must agree to one clear brand

vision and articulate it with a consistent tone of voice.

2. All stakeholders must share assets and content.

3. Share all good ideas regardless of whether you get to execute the project or not.

**DORENE WEISENSTEIN RIBOTSKY**

Executive VP, Chief Creative Officer
Brandkarma

On any given project there are stakeholders on both the client side and agency side: creative, account executives, brand managers, compliance regulators; and everybody, understandably, has skin in the game. The old saying goes, "A camel is a horse designed by committee," but this only happens if there's no one to direct the horse-designing process and if you're trying to design a horse in the first place. In other words, it is important that, from the beginning, a project is managed so that all stakeholders understand and agree upon the desired end result — the target.

This means open, but managed communication. Once you have the agreed upon target in place and clearly visible, the challenge of directing the message through an appropriate and robust creative concept becomes much easier, regardless of how many stakeholders there are.

**ANNE STROUP**

Managing Director
True Health + Wellness

Managing a group's interpretation of a creative concept is challenging, as relevancy for each individual is evoked by the target audience or marketing discipline that they represent. Alignment to the creative brief, the single salient tipping point that will capture audience attention excite imagination, and inspire behavior change, is a critical first step.

Using the creative brief foundation, marketers can be helped to recognize and support great creative. This is often a matter of helping them to become sensitive to the relevancy of their own emotional responses.

Regardless of whether one is a brand manager, a medical director, or a market research expert, a well-conceived concept that is aligned to creative brief will provoke a desired emotional response. The stronger their emotion is, the more effective the communication is. Making sure that creative products hit that sweet spot, the brand's promise, across audiences is essential. Sometimes, people need a gentle push to recognize that they are feeling what the audience will feel. **PV**