

Media professionals are on the frontier of a new creative horizon

| Text / Patricia J. Fiske |

A revolution has occurred within owner-operated advertising agencies across the world. Entrepreneurial agencies were once known for their strong client management or their strong creative. Now they are equally proud to be known for their strong media planning. Media is taking a front row seat along with account management and creative as advocates of the brand.

Three changes in media contributed to the success of the revolution. First, media became a commodity. This led to the growth of media buying services who buy bulk media at greater discounts than any individual agency can earn. Second, media proliferated. How can an advertiser be sure it has reached its target audience with so many media choices - commercial TV, cable and satellite TV, specialty magazines,

newspapers, radio, outdoor, the internet, and more - coupled with consumer media habits of surfing TV channels and recording programs to watch at their convenience? Third, media became defined as any opportunity to reach the consumer. Media is not only the traditional avenues to reach the consumer, it is also public relations, direct marketing, sales promotion, trade shows, in-store displays, napkins, give-aways, and even the creation of word-of-mouth - consumers talking to other consumers.

With the media proliferation, the role of the media planner has never had more strategic importance. The media planner's knowledge of the target market's media habits is invaluable to the creative process. How do we reach the consumer now is the first question asked. Then

comes what is the message and how do we express it creatively?

Let's look at two campaigns from entrepreneurial agencies in Europe. Each campaign demonstrates ingenuity and creative collaboration in blending the media and message to reach the consumer.

Client : ScotRail

Entrepreneurial agency: Union Advertising (Shareholder of Worldwide Partners in Scotland)

For many years, passenger rail service in the United Kingdom had a poor image. Trains were old, and schedules were not dependable. Most people who traveled between Scotland's two largest cities, Glasgow and Edinburgh, had come to depend on their automobiles.

Scotland had become a nation of car-drivers, all competing with each other for limited space on crowded highways, and for city parking that were frustrating to find.

In 1998, ScotRail acquired 24 high-speed, state-of-the-art trains. The new trains ran more frequently than those of the old system did did, and ScotRail offered discounted prices at the beginning and end of the day. The objectives were to build awareness of the service and increase usage of the trains.

Union's account, creative and media teams went to work. They began with research into public perceptions of ScotRail's image, along with studies of what commuters wanted in terms of transportation. The practical objective boiled down to, let 's get commuters off of the roads and onto the trains.

Media saw the perfect opportunity to get the message out, in a way that would drive the demand for train tickets.

Television, the visual medium, aired commercials that showed rapidly moving scenes of Glasgow and Edinburgh that sent travelers the message that ScotRail is a unifying influence in Scotland, bringing these cities closer together.

Radio advertising, timed to coincide with major traffic slow-downs, played a crucial role in reaching drivers. The commercials reminded drivers that instead of struggling through traffic jams and looking desperately for parking spaces, they could be riding the fast, comfortable new trains and avoiding all the inconveniences of driving cars.

To augment the radio spots, outdoor billboards were positioned at the sites of major traffic slow-downs with messages that empathized with the commuter.

Knowing the Scottish public as only other Scots can, the Union team used a guerilla media tactic as well. They placed small flyers on automobile windshields in both cities. The flyers resembled notice of a parking violation and were very effective in reminding drivers of the miseries they could avoid by taking the train. They also bought media space on parking tickets!

In the first year of the campaign, awareness of ScotRail's new services increased by 125%, and the number of passengers increased by 24%, exceeding the client's projections. ScotRail had more growth than any other passenger rail service in the UK thanks to Union's campaign that

emphasized the comfort and ease of train travel compared to the difficulty and stress of driving.

Recently, ScotRail added a new train service to London. The media savvy and creative collaboration of the Union team was once again evident. In addition to advertising in traditional media, messages on sandwich wrappers reminded busy urban workers of ScotRail's benefits. Another brilliant media choice to encourage the public to think about the inconvenience of passenger cars for an overnight trip to London, were the street level windows of retail shops that sell beds and mattresses. The posters were placed in the AND SO TO BED chain of shops with a headline which read "Wake up in London."

It is no surprise that Union's ScotRail campaign took top honors in the Scottish Advertising Effectiveness Awards in 2001.

To see more of Union Advertising's work visit their website at <http://www.union.co.uk>

Client : Haake-Beck

Agency: Wachter & Wachter
Worldwide Partners, Germany

The Haake-Beck brand of beer was well established with the older

working class of northern Germany. Carpenters, electricians, and truck drivers prefer to drink a Haake-Beck or two after a hard day of work.

The company realized it needed to attract a younger market and assigned the job of reinventing Haake-Beck's image to entrepreneurial agency Wachter & Wachter Worldwide Partners.

Germany's worldwide fame for its excellence in brewing fine beers has created a nation of expert beer drinkers. Every town, village, province, and region of Germany has associated with it a specific brand that is loved and admired by the people who live there. So, when Haake-Beck asked Wachter & Wachter to develop a new and younger market for their brand, the challenge was enormous.

One evening at Munich's famous beer garden, one of Wachter & Wachter's owners, Manfred, was about to enjoy his first beer of the day. "Aahh", he exclaimed, at his first sip, "That was as good as my first kiss." "With those words, a great campaign was born." "Haake-Beck, the kiss of the north." And to make it even more fun and relevant to a young audience, the telltale foam on Manfred's lips after his first kiss of beer that evening became a symbol

of the campaign. The mark of foam is proof positive that the kiss is real and appeals to youth as a funny, satirical comment on the "milk mustache" campaign for the American Dairy Association.

Known for its creative integrated marketing communications, Wachter & Wachter developed a strategic plan to involve young beer drinkers with the brand. The agency's team of research, media planning, advertising, public relations and events, sales promotions and interactive professionals created an integrated marketing communications campaign.

Television and print built awareness for Kiss of the North. The agency created public events sponsored by Haake-Beck that featured celebrities, held outdoor roller skating parties, and ran contests to draw people together. Always, the kiss of the north was served. The younger generation of beer drinkers, who enjoy attending unique events with their friends, came to recognize and appreciate this beer as their own.

At one of the events, young Haake-Beck drinkers were videotaped kissing or being kissed by a friend. This event inspired the agency's media planner to work with a local TV station to create a contest.

The winner would be the star of the next Haake-Beck commercial. All the entrants needed to do was to make a video of how they felt when they experienced their first kiss. With great gusto, the public responded. An amazing 6,500 first kiss videos were sent to the station.

The "kiss of the north" positioning, was more successful than the client could have imagined. As the campaign developed, when younger drinkers in pubs and bars were asked what kind of beer they wanted, they answered "Just give me a kiss!" Haake-Beck's image had been transformed from that of "older working man's beer" to one that young people appreciate.

To see more of Wachter & Wachter Worldwide Partners' work, visit their website at <http://www.waechter-waechter.de>

Union's and Wachter & Wachter's recognition of the importance of media in the creative mix of client services made a huge difference in the success of the campaigns. ☺

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