

Evolution of advertising and media strategy marketing essay



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Discuss the evolution of advertising and media strategy from published sources, attempting to identify differences (hence why they are now separate disciplines) and determine what is the most powerful definition of an insight in the context of the advertising strategy process from the available literature.

Executive Summary

The following paper seeks to state the evolution of advertising and media strategy, in attempt to identify the differences, facilitating one to determine the most powerful definition of an insight in the advertising strategy process. The paper goes on to talk about consumer insights being 'owned' by account planners and media planners.

The paper takes the reader through opinions on consumer insight, advertising strategies and account and media planning, it also considers the available scope in the area of consumer insight, as well as finding a strong consensus relationship between consumer insight and media planning and account planning.

Accordingly the paper identifies the need for the two disciplines in the advertising world.

Literature Review

Consumer Insights

Consumer insight can be defined as, '(marketing) Knowledge (usually derived from consumer understanding) that a company applies in order to

make a product or brand perform better and be more appealing to customers' (what is an insight?).

Consumer insight can also be defined as the information gained from a particular market situation, that can be applied to a brand or product, which can better the performance of the brand by appealing to its consumers. An insight can also be defined as a 'clear/ deep perception of a situation', as stated on the (WordNet Search) website.

Consumer insight is the key element in any given advertising strategy. Without an insight, one has nothing to base the strategy on (i. e.) there will be no background information about the market, the consumer or even the media mediums the consumers have access to. Not having a consumer insight is like not having bricks to build a building; one can say that consumer insights are the building blocks in the advertising strategy department, and play an essential role in the everyday advertising world.

To gain an insight, it is imperative that the brand as a whole is completely understood. It is not only the aspects that relate directly to the brand that fall into the category of an insight but also those aspects that go beyond the obvious (What is an insight?). It relates to the consumer to form an important link with the brand that defines its core necessity. It is even said that an insight needs to be a revelation. It must be something that seems to answer questions that remained unanswered till that point. A key that unlocks all the doors which acts as an invaluable association with the consumer's thought process.

Insights are important to the strategy of any campaign as it is the foundation to any advertising plan. Both media and advertising planners need this knowledge to gain a competitive edge over competitors and over other rivals amongst themselves.

Both media planners and account planners are always delivering insights. Planners (both media and accounts) are always interpreting data and analysing reports so that they can find an insight to their problem or task at hand. Applying the above statement to the current situation, both media planners and account planners fight strong and hard to own consumer insight. The two disciplines think that consumer insight is most relevant only to them.

Evolution of Advertising and Media Strategy

Advertising is a large and growing industry. Advertising has been known to mankind for centuries, it is an age-old activity that has been known to humans since the late 1400's (internet source unknown), and it has been growing ever since. At present advertising is a force to reckon with; currently advertising alone creates \$ 250 billion in revenue worldwide (Cooper, 1997). There are various elements that actually make advertising what it is; communication, persuasion, marketing which are just some of the core necessities of today's cut-throat world. Some say advertising is an art while some call it a science, no one will ever be able to prove this statement, as there is no right answer. One can say that advertising is constantly changing and improving and therefore no one has seen its full potential as yet.

Media strategy is an integral part of advertising and it can be said that in simple words media strategy, is the method in which an advertising message is delivered to its consumers. An in-depth study is made of who will be receiving the message and what media medium will best convey this message. Whereas advertising strategy is the campaign created to communicate the ideas behind the product, brand or service. When creating an advertising strategy one will have to look into the following topics; target consumer- details of demographics, needs and attitudes that need to be studied/ observed and analysed. The agency should be able to clearly define the product concept, which would then allow for the selection of the perfect communication medium. The communication medium would then carry the advertising message, which would include the copy and creative layout. The above mentioned steps would be carried out keeping the advertising budget in mind. These are the essential steps in creating an advertising strategy (Advertising Strategy).

The following section talks about account planners and media planners, owning consumer insight.

Account Planning

Stephen King coined the term account planner in 1968 (Collin, 2003), and J. Walter Thompson (JWT) was the first advertising agency to incorporate this discipline. JWT's intention was to show the importance of research to its clients and for it to be part of the advertising development processes. JWT's account planning team worked on two aspects, marketing and media planning. The marketers analysed data that was collected through research, which was then used to create an advertising strategy, whereas

the media planners worked on providing the best media usage. This is when Stephen King started to strongly believe that the marketing sector and the media planning sector shared a lot of common ground, especially on the level of thought process, which brought about consideration that it should be considered as one (Collin, 2003).

42 years later a lot has happened to the marketing sector and media-planning sector, this is where account planning stands in this day and age.

Today large and small advertising agencies around the world have a separate department with specialised functions known as the accounts planning department. The job of an account planner is to study consumer behaviour and create a deep understanding, which can then be called as 'insight'. Consumer insights are based on consumer behaviour, consumer attitudes, and consumer reactions, which are collected through every step of the advertising development process. Many say that account planner's act like bridges between the brand and the consumers. Thus working closely with the account manager, creative director etc. and playing an important role in the agency. Account planners are the backbones of every campaign, as they provide knowledge about the brand/ product, target audience and market. The planner aims at creating the perfect advertising strategy to support the creative aspect of the campaign (Habberstad, date unknown).

Dr. Felipe Korzenny of Florida State University, states that account planners give the voice of the consumer within an advertising agency. He believes that the account planner holds the link between the client objectives; account management, the creative team and the media planning team. Dr.

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Felipe goes on to state that account planners need to understand their consumers completely, which would then result in knowing the consumers emotions and thoughts, which allows for more effective campaigns, and ultimately a successful brand. (Account Planning: the art of making Advertising Relevant to Consumers, spring 2009)

Planners across the globe are expected to produce outstanding creative solutions for brands that will ensure the brand to have a positive effect in the market place. The account planner's job is to guide this process by application of knowledge. The major roles played by an account planner are; Market researcher, data analyst, focus group moderator, information centre, target audience representative, futurologist, communications planner, strategy developer, knowledge applicator etc. etc. (Baskin/ Shark, 2007).

O'Malley (1999) once said, ' are great generalists able to take a complex mass of disparate information and make it coherent, in other words able to see the woods, not just the trees. Much of the information comes from market research, but an account planner is not simply a type of researcher' (Habberstad, date unknown). Account planners have an eye for great detail; they catch the slightest change, difference, and detail, and use the results efficiently as the base of a campaign. Account planners see much more than the obvious and at times read between the lines to understand the market etc.

As understanding the target audience in this complex world gets tougher and tougher, it is important for an account planner to constantly try and receive new/ in-depth insights. It is completely impossible to expect a client to

believe the outcome of a campaign without some kind of facts or figures as a base, this is where the account planner's job comes into action. Account planners always plan their advertisements and analyse the outcome of the campaign so that it can be used as a reference point for the next campaign (Habberstad, date unknown).

Form Wolf (1944) once said ' a planner is essentially the account team's primary contact with the outside world; the person who, through personal background, knowledge of all the pertinent information, and overall experience, is able to bring a strong consumer focus to all advertising decisions' (Habberstad, date unknown). This statement holds true as the account planner is the ' eye' of an agency when it comes to looking at the outside world. In other words, an advertising agency sees the world through the eyes of the account planner. Each and every detail observed by the account planner helps in creating that deeper insight which every advertising agency is looking for.

According to Jon Steel (1988), ' the first skill of the planner's job is to make ideas happen, not necessarily to have those ideas themselves. The second skill is to spend more time listening than talking, whether in conversation with consumers, clients or other agency members. A good listener will recognize those good ideas and use them, thus allowing others to do the work for him/ her. The third attribute is a chameleon- like quality that allows the planner to develop relations with an extraordinarily diverse group of people' (Habberstad, date unknown). An account planner is the most

versatile person on this planet; handling all the numerous jobs by himself/

herself is something that has to be applauded. An account planner is a
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compact bundle of all the good qualities one can ever wish for. The command to multi- task is the ultimate super power in any account planner can possess. In simple words account planners are undisputed rock stars!

Media Planning

Media planning is one of the many disciplines in an advertising agency. At first media planning and account planning were clustered together, but slowly grew apart over the years. Mid 1960's there was a boom in media forms, but then again in a few years media choices become limited. In the 1980's consumers saw an increase in choice, ever since then there has been an increase in new media forms like mobile messaging, guerrilla marketing etc. (Collin, 1997).

Hairong Li, of Michigan State University goes on to say, ' Media planners make three crucial decisions: where to advertise (geography), when to advertise (timing), and what media categories to use (media mix)' (Advertising Media Planning: A Primer). These three aspects, by far are the key elements to any media planners job.

With so many media types and forms available, consumers are hard to target (i. e.) the wide options of media means that consumers are diversified over the different types, which makes it harder to reach. Since the increase of complexity and diversification of media and its consumers, the difficulty in the media planner's tasks has increased as well. This meant that the media planners had to be more specialized in their daily duties. Stephen King states that ' media planning needed a single- minded focus and that a hybrid

account planner could not provide'. And thus emerged the split between the departments of account planning. (Collin, 1997).

In the 1970's the role of a media planner was solely in purchasing media time, while the media planning was carried out by the advertising agencies. At present specialist media agencies do their own media buying and strategy planning. Media planners are responsible to buy the best media spots for their clients. Media planners are expected to help their clients achieve their business objectives by selecting the best possible media channels for them and assisting them with a media strategy.

The roles performed by a media planner are the following, analysing target audiences, keeping abreast of media developments, reading market trends and understanding motivations of consumers etc. The role of the media planner is quite often mistaken with that of a media buyer, the obvious difference the two would be, the planner creates a plan for advertising whereas the buyer bargains with the media proprietor on things such as rates, copy deadlines, placement, merchandising, etc. (Media planner).

In my opinion media planners have a keen eye for competitors strategies and their media plans, whom their target audience are, specific mediums and time spots to use, when to run it etc. while catering to a client all the above questions are answered by a media planner. It is important for media planners to know how to use research effectively, so that they can use it to create a media plan. For one to evaluate the outcome of a media plan, one has to evaluate how close the media plan is to the marketing objectives (Sissors & Baron, 2002).

Concluding Opinion

Although both, media planners and account planners own equal right over consumer insight, people might favour one discipline more than the other. Account planning and media planning have a major role to play in the twenty- first century, this is what Morris had to say in Admad, Jan. 2000, ' the world is changing as new technology completely transforms the way people are connected. " Communications" is no longer a part of the economy; it is the economy. Its impact will change the way we live and act at a fundamental level and it will change the way marketing service industry behaves' (Habberstad, date unknown).

I would say that the future development for both media planning and account planning is positive. Keeping up- to- date in both the fields can increase business productivity and taking advertising to a whole new level.

I would like to end with a statement from Tim Broadbent (1995), ' clients expect and deserve more planning for their money than J Walter Thompson or Boase Massimi Pollitt dreamed about 33 years ago when account planning was born. Planners must be masters of total brand communication, and all good planners nowadays think communications, not just advertising' (Habberstad, date unknown).
