Book reviews

How to Produce Successful Advertising

A D Farbey

Kogan Page, London, 2002; ISBN 0-7494-3634-4; 200pp; paperback; £14.99

Over the past five years, there has been an increase in the number of advertising texts emphasising the strategic importance of communication. The tactical or practical aspects of advertising and other communication tools have, as a result, been given less significance and few texts have taken a do-it-yourself approach to advertising.

Farbey's title is, at the very least, ambitious. Producing successful or effective advertising has often been described as akin to finding the holy grail. This book simply 'does what it says on the cover'. That is, it is extremely practical, if a little prescriptive, and would make an ideal addition to a small business bookcase where the communications budget is relatively tight. It would certainly appeal to 'beginners', although individuals with slightly more advertising experience may well be able to use it as reference/guide to new campaigns or new markets. This text includes a very useful update on electronic advertising and advertising production. Certainly for small to medium size enterprises (SMEs), the rise of the new media may be confusing or difficult to follow. The pragmatic style taken by the author ensures the suspicion and, for some, anxiety is taken out of

the rapidly evolving new media communications' vehicle. Similarly, the cost of producing effective promotional material may prove elusive in other texts — although it is important to highlight that the rapidity of change within advertising and the variance in advertising costs may well reflect this changing market.

Perhaps one of the most appealing features of the text is the section on recruitment advertising. Internal communications and the meaningfulness of appropriate corporate advertising has been seen as increasingly important as firms compete not only for market share and return on investment but the best in human resources. No longer are organisations merely outward looking — internal communications, leading to improved motivation and sustained market position, is at the forefront of many organisational priorities. Recruitment advertising can both encourage new members of staff and motivate existing employees. Its inclusion in this text is, therefore, a useful sign to readers of the significance of recruitment advertising.

One aspect of the text which would prevent it being recommended as a text for, say, undergraduate students, is the

lack of campaign examples. Often students, and probably owners of small businesses, will have seen an advertising campaign they particularly liked and/or enjoyed. They will want to replicate a similar creative approach but will be unsure of the potential effectiveness of such a campaign as these are not included in the text. Similarly, while targeting and segmentation are alluded to, the area has attracted considerable academic debate over the last few years and it is no longer enough to discuss segmentation in such simplistic terms.

On the whole, however, this is an interesting book covering the planning and targeting of advertising. Perhaps what it does less well is illustrate how to be 'effective' because the assumption is that

if the planning is appropriate, the rest will follow. Advertising, unfortunately, is not quite so predictable and perhaps some of the text should have been devoted to variables that may affect the running of a campaign. Similarly, examples of successful campaigns (and unsuccessful campaigns if permission for publication could have been granted) would have provided a gauge against which SMEs could have some sense of what was available to them financially and creatively. Yet a good reference guide and a cohesive planning tool.

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Real-Time Marketing: New Rules For The New Media

James Morris-Lee

Digital Printing Council, Alexandria, USA, GATFPRESS, Pittsburgh, USA, 2001; ISBN 0-88362-299-8; paperback; 270 pp; US\$35.

Looking through almost any marketing bookshelf these days, one cannot help but notice the plethora of new publications on the subject and in particular those with a new technology slant. At first glance, a casual reader of this book may be forgiven for thinking 'oh just another one aimed at "the techies" and those with an in-depth mastery of the computer and online communications world'. On closer inspection, James Morris-Lee shows some good understanding of consumer behaviour (focusing on Mitroff's four

organisational styles), company organisation, strategic planning and many concepts familiar to traditional marketers which should provide a solid base for the integration of his 'Real-time marketing model'. He recognises that 'Most of the reasons why database-marketing programs fail are cultural and not technological ... technology does not make customers, people do'. This statement should help provide the necessary 'steroidal' motivation for those not so technically inclined to read on.

'Real-time marketing' consists of first,

an overview, followed by three sections comprising 11 chapters in all, but the overview is worth the reader's attention as it sets the base on which many of the following chapters are constructed. Morris-Lee contends that 'success in marketing now rests on understanding the informational needs of buyers, on cognitive psychology — how people know what they know and what helps them to know it better — as in being able to apply the basic rules of using a specific medium'.

Morris-Lee has generally steered clear of the many academic sources, but has preferred 'practioners' quotes. For example quoting a Canadian-based marketing consultant: 'everything we do in marketing is part of the framework of being noticed, remembered, trusted and referred' and in a real-time context focuses on trust without fully justifying his choice. Other notable sources range from Harry Beckwith to John Stuart Mill. Database marketers and others are reminded more than once that the 'amount of information that prospects and customers are willing to provide about themselves is directly proportional to the perceived value of the informational offer'. The core of the book is understanding the research methodologies necessary to create information marketing programmes that better integrate the media mix and how companies use a continuum of electronic-to-print media to enhance loyalty, win new customers and create competitive advantage.

Although 'Real-time marketing' is primarily targeted at the marketing

practitioner, especially those operating in a US environment and context, it should update and possibly fill in any gaps in the knowledge banks of university lecturers and others seeking a wider dimension to their lectures and other texts. It is arguable if all the software companies and IT terminology listed translate well outside their American context and data protection/privacy issues are covered from a mainly US perspective. At times the reader may become frustrated by a seemingly continuous flow of GoCode, NeoMedia, JUMPtec, Net Objects Fusion and GoLiveCyber Studio but, considering the title and context, the author may have spared his audience from the worst excesses. Possibly one of the unintentional strengths of the book is that it is peppered with snippets of interesting and cleverly applied research. The author cites the Roper Center identifying six categories (segmentation by benefit sought?) of small business users using the World Wide Web ranging from e-Traditionalists, offliners, accelerators, evangelists, administrators and integrators. A more convincing strength of the book is that it strongly argues its case that many of the previous, apparently irreconcilable, functions of business operations, including marketing, will require collaboration if the implementation of the new information technology is to benefit all stakeholders.

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