

How to stop your campaign dying

By  Chris Brewer

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What is this process we call "creative"?



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An interesting factor that emerged over the years from various conferences, both international and local, suggested that clients tend to view the process as “structured”, whereas agency personnel viewed it as “spontaneous”.

I'm not too sure what conclusions to draw from this. I think it suggests that, for example, many clients believe that a copywriter can, given the correct brief, write the correct words in a short space of time because it's more a technical process than an art form. Agencies, on the other hand, believe the opposite to be the case – it's an art form that cannot be rushed and requires time, patience and inspiration.

My conclusions from everything I've heard, read and experienced is that neither is right. But paradoxically, neither are they wrong either. The creative process is a combination of everything.

Before work begins on the creative platform (or before you brief your agency), there are a few things that should be done, and all are part of the pre-planning process.

1. Always keep a file of competitive activity, including clips of radio and TV commercials. You do this so that you can

monitor the competition actively – checking any changes in strategy or timing and trying to find if they've missed something.

2. Unless your strategy is a “me too”, avoid any similarity to copy concepts.

3. Just because you are becoming bored with your campaign don't automatically assume that the consumer is also growing tired of it too. The chances are that just when you decide to drop the campaign it will have just begun to resonate with your target market.

Make all you decisions based on results – not on your own feeling or, even worse, the feelings of your wife or husband.

Bruce Barton once presented a campaign to a client who was so thrilled that he had all 13 ads framed and hanging on his office wall. After a few months, the client said to Barton: “You'd better get busy thinking of a new campaign because the public is getting tired of this one.”

Barton told his client that this was highly unlikely because **not one** of the advertisements had appeared yet!

4. And never, **never**, **never** let the opinion of your chairman, nor his wife (nor yours), nor your mother-in-law, friends, relatives or colleagues influence your decision to change the campaign in any way.

They may have very well intended motives but they tend to be subjective (sometimes extremely so). Neither allow your own subjectivity to influence your decisions, either.

Results are what count. Positive response is the sole reason for your advertising's very existence. If your results are beating your forecasts then there is no reason to change or modify anything – unless it's something so unexpectedly dire that it needs your urgent but very careful attention.

So beware of Greeks bearing gifts (is it still PC to say that? I lose track these days). If David Ogilvy himself, or one of the Saatchi brothers walked into your office with a “better” idea, tell them to get out.

And for those at the back of the room who haven't fully grasped the concept yet, write out the following line 100 times:

IF MY RESULTS ARE AHEAD OF MY FORECAST, I WILL RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO CHANGE **ANY** PART OF MY CAMPAIGN.

Note: Chris Brewer is temporarily out of the building and his column will return on Monday 18 April 2016.

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ABOUT CHRIS BREWER

Having joined the ad industry in London, Chris Brewer spent most of his career in media analysis and planning - but has performed just about every advertising task from Creative to Research. He's an honorary lifetime member of the Advertising Media Association and regularly advises agencies and clients regarding their media plan costs and strategies. He is also often asked to talk at industry functions. Email: chris@brewers.co.za. Twitter: [@brewersapps](https://twitter.com/brewersapps). Read his blog: www.brewersdroop.co.za

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