Chapter Objectives

- Develop awareness of three types of message strategies (cognitive, affective, and conative) and match them with the media chosen for an advertising campaign.
- Study the roles message strategies play in designing effective leverage points and executional frameworks.
- Apply every executional framework described in this chapter in the right situation.
- Learn the value of an effective source or spokesperson, plus the criteria to use in selecting the individual.
- Utilize the principles of effective advertising to be certain the message has the best chance of reaching and affecting the audience.

THE AFLAC DUCK MAKES A BIG SPLASH

Just a few years ago, AFLAC advertised the company’s insurance in a manner similar to practically every other insurer. Images of happy families looking lovingly at each other and having warm, fuzzy interactions with an insurance agent were common. After all, supplemental health insurance is supposed to provide peace of mind; matching the message to the theme with soothing music seemed the most logical choice.

In 1999, the marketing team working with AFLAC took a bold step. They noticed that AFLAC ads were competing for viewers’ attention in a barrage of television advertisements, some of which were stacked 10 to 15 deep during a commercial break. Many of these competing images were funny and smart.

Enter the duck.

Linda Kaplan Thaler, CEO of the Kaplan Thaler Group Ltd., a New York–based agency, has a track record of developing innovative and attention-grabbing advertising approaches. Kaplan Thaler said that the biggest challenge was trying to find some way to build the AFLAC brand, which is an acronym, not a word. Finally, when a creative employee said the name sounds like the squawking of a duck, the team was off and running.

In addition to buying time on national television, the media buyer suggested buying spots on CNN Airport news and on in-flight television shown on American Airlines, Delta, United, and Continental. The target market for the company’s product is employees who work in businesses with fewer than 500 employees. A number of these individuals are underinsured or not insured with health coverage. AFLAC’s supplemental policies cover loss of income, deductibles, and non-medical expenses that are sometimes not covered by standard health, life, and disability policies. Many of these employees and leaders of those companies spend time in airports and on airplanes.

The white Pekin duck, which appears in key spots of commercials, shouts out the company’s name in response to a problem. For example, an early spot features a passenger...
in an airport tripping over a piece of luggage. The flight attendants standing nearby discuss a friend who was hurt on the job and did not have supplemental insurance. At the end of the spot, the duck is flying alongside the plane, still trying to get the attention of the people involved. In another, the duck rides a roller coaster trying to get the message to a couple taking a thrill ride.

“He’s the underduck,” Linda Kaplan Thaler reports. “We can rant and rave against policies and institutions, but as one person, we never feel as if we’re heard. That’s the role of the duck. He’ll even go on a roller coaster to tell the world about supplemental insurance.”

To make sure every ingredient of the plan was in place, the company featured the duck in its annual report, including footprints and feathers on every page. The theme presented to the company was, “If it ain’t broke . . . fix it anyway!” The duck image was shown throughout the organization before the campaign even began.

The advertisements have been a major success. Sales have risen by 27 percent since the ads began running. The company’s name shows up on late-night talk shows as well as a list of ads (prepared by the Wall Street Journal) that have made an impact on popular culture. Lewis Lazre, a writer for the Chicago Sun-Times, notes, “The duck does stick in the mind, and you can remember it and the name of the company.”

Currently, AFLAC sells a stuffed toy duck and other duck-related merchandise on its Web site. This process, known as merchandising the advertising, features another twist: The profits from the sales of the merchandise support the AFLAC Cancer and Blood Disorder Center at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta hospital.

The advertising team continues to look for new ways to feature the duck, including ads with Olympic-like skaters during the 2002 Olympics and another starring Yogi Berra during the baseball season. AFLAC’s media budget was more than $40 million in 2002.
With creativity, careful media selection, and a strong “spokesperson,” AFLAC has built a stronger brand in a market where differentiation is difficult to achieve. “He has very long legs,” reports one AFLAC employee. It would be hard to argue with that.¹

The essence of an integrated marketing communications program is designing messages that effectively reaches the target audience. Many of these messages are, in a very real sense, quite personal. They are designed to change or shape attitudes. They must be remembered. They should lead to some kind of short- or long-term action.

Marketing messages travel in two ways. First, a personal message can be delivered through a personal medium. A sales rep closing the deal, shaking the hand of the buyer, giving a reassuring tap on the shoulder, and smiling while talking is delivering a message in an intimate, warm, human fashion. Clearly, personal media (sales reps, repair department personnel, customer services representatives, etc.) must be included in the overall IMC program and approach.

The second way marketing messages travel is through the various forms of advertising media. Many of these media are completely impersonal. Television sets are indifferent as to what appears on the screen. Radios deliver any sound that can be transmitted. Computer screens are nothing more than special-purpose television screens. The challenge to the marketing account executive, the company, and especially the creative is to design a personal message, even while it is being delivered through an impersonal medium.

Account executives are acutely aware of the importance of effectively reaching a target audience. It is not simply a matter of reach, frequency, and continuity. The message must engage the targeted buyer and influence the individual to the point that he or she will recall and purchase the product.

Beyond the goal of making a message personal, many marketers are interested in tangible, measurable results that can be reported to clients and to prospective new customers. Therefore, the relationship between the executive and the creative reaches a critical point at the stage in which an advertisement is developed.

This chapter focuses on several major topics. First, three types of message strategies are described. Each may be used to help convince the consumer to make a purchase, either through reason, emotion, or an action-inducing advertisement. Second, the major types of executional frameworks are noted. These forms of advertising presentations help the creative prepare original, convincing, and memorable ads. Third, the four types of sources or spokespersons that appear in various advertisements are described, and the criteria used to select them are reviewed. Fourth and finally, the principles of effective advertising campaigns are presented. When advertisements are combined with other elements of the promotions mix in an integrated fashion, the net result is a stronger company image and a clear IMC theme.

MESSAGE STRATEGIES

As noted in Chapter 5, the message theme, or the outline of the key ideas in the ad, is a central part of the creative brief. The message theme can be created using a number of message strategies. A message strategy is the primary tactic or approach used to deliver the message theme. There are three broad categories of message strategies:²

1. Cognitive strategies
2. Affective strategies
3. Conative strategies
The categories represent the components of attitudes as described earlier. All three of the message strategies are described in this section. Figure 7.1 lists the three message strategies along with various forms or approaches from each category.

### Cognitive Strategies

A **cognitive message strategy** is the presentation of rational arguments or pieces of information to consumers. These ideas require cognitive processing. When a cognitive message strategy is used, the advertisement’s key message is about the product’s attributes or the benefits. Customers can obtain these benefits by using the product.

The goal of the cognitive message strategy approach is to design an ad that will have an impact on a person’s beliefs and/or knowledge structure. This can be accomplished by suggesting any one of a wide variety of potential product benefits. Foods may be described as healthful, pleasant tasting, or low calorie. A tool can be shown as durable, convenient, or handy to use. A drill press machine used in a manufacturing operation may be portrayed as being more reliable or faster than comparable machines on the market. Cognitive message strategies make these benefits clear to potential customers. There are five major forms of cognitive strategies:

1. **Generic messages**
2. **Preemptive messages**
3. **Unique selling proposition**
4. **Hyperbole**
5. **Comparative advertisements**

**Generic messages** are direct promotions of product attributes or benefits without any claim of superiority. This type of strategy works best for a firm that is clearly the brand leader and is the dominant company in the industry. The goal of the generic message is to make the brand synonymous with the product category. Thus, Campbell’s Soups can declare “Soup is good food” without making any claim to superiority. This is because the company so strongly dominates the industry. When most consumers think of soup, they think of Campbell’s. Out of the top 10 ready-to-serve soups, three are Campbell’s products, accounting for 43.1 percent of the total market share.\(^3\) Nintendo uses a similar strategy because the company dominates the handheld game category with more than 98 percent of the market share.\(^4\)

Generic message strategies are seldom found in business-to-business advertisements, because few firms dominate an industry to the extent of Campbell’s or Nintendo. One major exception is Intel, which controls 13.7 percent of the global microconductor market, which is double its closest competitor, Samsung (6.7% market share). The generic message “Intel inside” has been used for years to convey to both businesses and end users that the processor inside is made by Intel. The Intel name is synonymous with quality. One of Intel’s major customers is IBM. For several years IBM’s marketing team wanted to discontinue displaying the Intel logo, because they thought it distracted from the IBM’s brand. IBM, however, was compelled to continue to display the Intel inside logo to assure buyers that IBM computers contain Intel microprocessors. Forcing IBM to display the Intel inside logo on IBM’s products illustrates the power a generic message has when the firm dominates the market.\(^5\)
Generic message strategies can also be used to create brand awareness. The goal of the advertiser may be to develop a cognitive linkage between a specific brand name and a product category, such as Skechers and sporty footwear. The ad may contain very little information about the product’s attributes. The intent of the ad is simply to put the brand name in a person’s cognitive memory and cognitive map.

**Preemptive messages** claim superiority based on a product’s specific attribute or benefit. The idea is to prevent the competition from making the same or a similar statement. For example, Crest toothpaste is so well-known as “the cavity fighter” that the brand preempts other companies from making similar-sounding claims, even though all toothpastes fight cavities. The key to effectively using a preemptive strategy is to be the first company to state the advantage. This keeps competitors from saying the same thing. Those that do are viewed as “me-too” brands or copycats.

A **unique selling proposition (USP)** is an explicit, testable claim of uniqueness or superiority that can be supported or substantiated in some manner. Brand parity makes a unique selling proposition more difficult to establish. Reebok claims it is the only shoe that uses DMX technology, which provides for a better fit. Reebok can use this unique selling proposition because the company holds patents on DMX technology. In the Bonne Bell advertisement shown on this page, the company proposes a unique selling proposition aimed at teenagers. The message that Bonne Bell Lipshade is “your 1 and only, 1 handed, sleek sweep flipstick” stresses a unique product feature.

The **hyperbole** approach makes an untestable claim based upon some attribute or benefit. When NBC claims that its Thursday night lineup is “America’s favorite night of television,” the claim is a hyperbole. These claims do not have to be substantiated, which makes this cognitive strategy quite popular.

The final cognitive message strategy is a **comparative advertisement**. When an advertiser directly or indirectly compares a good or service to the competition, it is the comparative method. The advertisement may or may not mention the competitor by name. Sometimes, an advertiser simply presents a “make-believe” competitor, giving it a name like product X. This approach, however, is not as effective as comparative advertising that states the actual competitor’s name. To provide protection from lawsuits, company leaders must be sure any claim concerning the competition can be clearly substantiated.

AT&T and MCI compare rates. VISA brags that many merchants using the card will not accept American Express. Burger King explains the advantages of flame broiling as opposed to frying, which McDonald’s and Wendy’s use. In the business-to-business sector, shipping companies compare delivery times and accuracy rates.

The major advantage of comparative ads is that they often capture the consumer’s attention. When comparisons are made, both brand awareness and message awareness increase. Consumers tend to remember more of what the ad says about a brand than when the same information is presented in a non-comparative ad format.
The negative side of using comparative ads is in the areas of believability and consumer attitudes. Many consumers think comparative ads are less believable. They view the information about the sponsor brand as exaggerated and conclude that the information about the comparison brand probably is misstated to make the sponsor brand appear superior.

Another danger of comparative ads is the negative attitudes consumers may develop toward the ad. If viewers acquire negative attitudes toward the advertisement, these negative attitudes can transfer to the sponsor’s product. This is especially true when the sponsor runs a negative comparative ad. This form of advertisement portrays the competition’s product in a negative light. Research has shown that negative comparative ads typically result in lower believability of the ad claims and create less favorable attitudes toward the brand.6

In psychology, the concept of spontaneous trait transference suggests that when someone calls another person dishonest, other people tend to remember the speaker as also being less than honest. When a comparative ad criticizes the competition’s brand based upon some particular attribute, viewers of the ad may attribute that deficiency to the sponsor brand as well. This is most likely to occur when the consumer uses the comparative brand, not the sponsored brand.7 Companies must be careful in choosing an appropriate comparison firm and must be even more careful about using a negative comparative ad format.

Comparison ads are less common in other countries. This is due to both social and cultural differences as well as legal restrictions. It is critical to be aware of these issues. For example, many governments in Europe classify comparative advertising as illegal. In Japan, it is not illegal, but it runs against the society’s cultural preferences. In Brazil, the advertising industry is so powerful that any attempt to create a comparative advertisement has been challenged and stopped. Often, international consumers not only dislike the advertisements but often transfer that dislike to the company sponsoring the ad.8

The comparative message strategy can be beneficial if used with caution. The comparison brand must be picked carefully to ensure consumers see it is a viable competing brand. Actual product attributes and customer benefits must be used, without stretching the information or providing misleading information. If there are actual differences to compare, then comparative advertising works well. If the comparisons are all hype and opinion, with no substantial differences, comparative advertising does not work as well. If the comparison is misleading, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) may step in and investigate. The largest number of complaints that the FTC hears are about potentially misleading comparison advertisements.

In general, comparing a low-market share brand to the market leader works well, because viewers concentrate more carefully on the content and message of the ad. On the other hand, comparing a high-market share brand with another high-market share brand is often not effective. In these cases, a better strategy may be to simply make the comparison without naming the competitor.

Several years ago, comparative advertising worked well for Avis. When Avis was tenth in market share in the rental car industry, a series of ads was developed for Avis, comparing its service to the market leader, Hertz, mentioning the Hertz name specifically. Consumers began to believe that Avis provided the same level of quality as Hertz. After gaining market share and becoming one of the top three brands, Avis changed its approach and now usually does not mention Hertz in advertisements. Still, when comparisons are made, consumers still know which competitor is involved.9

All five of these cognitive message strategies are based on some type of rational logic. The message is designed to make sure consumers pay attention to the ad and take the time to cognitively process the information. In terms of attitudes, the sequence of cognitive → affective → conative is the plan of attack when developing a rational approach. The intention of a cognitive message strategy is first to present consumers with rational information about a good, service, or company, and then to help them develop positive feelings about the same product or company.
Affective Strategies

Affective message strategies invoke feelings or emotions and match those feelings with the good, service, or company. Such ads are prepared to enhance the likeability of the product, recall of the appeal, or comprehension of the advertisement. Affective strategies elicit emotions that, in turn, lead the consumer to act, preferably to buy the product, and subsequently affect the consumer’s reasoning process.

An emotion such as love can be used to convince consumers that a product such as Cheerios is a superior breakfast cereal for loved ones. The consumer group is then led to believe Cheerios is a rational choice because the company’s advertisements mention the cereal’s positive effects on cholesterol levels. This approach is demonstrated by the advertisement for Cheerios in this section. Three generations of a family in the picture combined with the words “Your heart has better things to do than deal with heart disease.” Family memories and emotions combine with the product feature of being a heart-smart cereal. Affective strategies fall into two categories: (1) resonance and (2) emotional.

Resonance advertising attempts to connect a product with a consumer’s experiences to develop stronger ties between the product and the consumer. The use of music from the 1960s takes baby boomers back to that time and the experiences they had growing up. Any strongly held memory or emotional attachment is a candidate for resonance advertising.
Emotional advertising attempts to elicit powerful emotions that eventually lead to product recall and choice. Many emotions can be connected to products, including trust, reliability, friendship, happiness, security, glamour, luxury, serenity, pleasure, romance, and passion.

As noted in Chapter 6, emotional appeals can be used in both consumer-oriented and business-to-business ads. Members of the buying center in a business are also human beings. They do not always make decisions based solely on rational thought processes. Emotions and feelings also affect decisions. If the product’s benefits can be presented within an emotional framework, the advertisement is normally more effective, even in business-to-business ads.10

Affective strategies are a common approach to developing a strong brand name. When an advertisement gets you to like a brand and have positive feelings for a brand, then the hope is that you will also purchase that brand. Cognitive beliefs about the brand then follow. This approach relies on the attitude development sequence of affective → conative → cognitive. For some products, affective ads are an effective approach because there are no real tangible differences among the brands. Coke and Pepsi primarily use affective message strategies. The ads are made to evoke liking, positive emotions, and favorable feelings toward the products and the companies who sell them. Few ads focus on physical attributes of the soft drink. Skechers Sport Footwear is using a similar strategy in the advertisement on this page. The ad depicts social acceptance and the idea that Skechers shoes will make you a part of the in-crowd. The ad is supposed to create positive feelings for the Skechers Sport brand.

Corporate Advertising and Image-Building

Corporate advertising promotes the corporate name and image rather than the individual brand. Corporate advertising often contains an affective message strategy. As companies continue to face public pressure to be more socially responsible, corporate advertising is an increasingly important tactic. Recently Microsoft launched a global corporate advertising campaign created by the McCann-Erickson advertising agency. The ads appeared in China, Japan, Australia, Korea, India, and the United States. Each message highlights the company’s efforts to build programs and partnerships with communities around the world. The tagline used is “Your Potential. Our Passion.” Each advertisement features video showing people involved in various activities. The video is then overlaid with drawings. In one ad children are participating in various school events. White lines are drawn around each student to illustrate what that student could become (doctor, lawyer, chemist) through education and technology.11 The goal is to tie emotions about success and taking care of children with using Microsoft products, all the while believing Microsoft is concerned about young people.

GlaxoSmithKline launched a corporate advertising campaign highlighting the company’s investments in pharmaceutical research. The idea was to make sure consumers realize that people depend on pharmaceutical companies to develop medicines that improve the quality of life and fight disease. The message of the ads is that although developing medicines is an expensive process, the results are immeasurable. The tagline in the advertisements was “Today’s medicines finance tomorrow’s miracles.”12
Conative Strategies

Conative message strategies are designed to lead more directly to some type of consumer response. They can be used to support other promotional efforts, such as coupon redemption programs, Internet “hits” and orders, and in-store offers such as buy-one-get-one-free. The goal of a conative advertisement is to elicit behavior. A conative strategy is present in any television advertisement for music CDs that seeks to persuade viewers to call a toll-free number to purchase the music. These ads typically encourage quick action by stating that the CD cannot be purchased at stores and is available for only a limited time.

Action-inducing conative advertisements create situations in which cognitive knowledge of the product or affective liking of the product may come later (after the actual purchase) or during product usage. For instance, a point-of-purchase display is designed (sometimes through advertising tie-ins) to cause people to make impulse buys. The goal is to make the sale, with cognitive knowledge and affective feelings forming as the product is used. In terms of an attitude sequence, conative message strategies typically utilize the conative → cognitive → affective approach.

Promotional support conative advertisements are used to support other promotional efforts. Besides coupons and phone-in promotions, a company may advertise a sweepstakes that a consumer enters by filling out the form on the advertisement or by going to a particular retail store.

Cognitive, affective, and conative strategies can be matched with the hierarchy of effects approach described in the previous chapter. The hierarchy of effects model suggests that consumers pass through a series of stages, from awareness to knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and finally to the purchase. As shown in Figure 7.2, each message strategy can highlight a different stage of the hierarchy of effects model.

Choosing the right message strategy is a key ingredient in creating a successful advertising program. To be effective, the message strategy must be carefully matched with the leverage point and executional framework that have been selected as well as with the media that will be utilized. The creative and the account executive must remain in constant contact.
throughout the process to be certain all of these advertising ingredients are consistent. In the following section, the next element, the executional framework, is described.

EXECUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

An executional framework is the manner in which an ad appeal is presented. The executional framework is chosen after an advertising appeal has been selected. In Chapter 6, the types of appeals that are most commonly used were described, including fear, humor, sex, music, rationality, emotions, and scarcity. Each appeal can be matched with the appropriate executional framework. Figure 7.3 displays the various frameworks that are described in this section.

Animation

Animation is a popular type of executional framework. In recent years, the use of animation in advertising has dramatically increased. This is due in part to the growing sophistication of computer graphics programs. The animation technologies available to advertising creatives are far superior to the cartoon-type that was previously used.

One new animation technique is called roto-scoping. Rotoscoping is the process of digitally painting or sketching figures into live sequences. This makes it possible to present both live actors and animated characters in the same frame. The creative can also merge or modify various live scenes within the same frame.

Rotoscoping was used in Budweiser’s “Born a Donkey” commercial, which was voted the viewer’s favorite in the 2004 Super Bowl. The ad features a donkey that wants to be a Clydesdale and lead the Clydesdales pulling the Budweiser beer wagon. Almost all of the scenes involving the donkey and the Clydesdale horses were filmed separately. They were then merged. Rotoscoping helped enhance various actions, such as when all of the Clydesdales turn their heads simultaneously to listen to the donkey speak. In reality, it would be almost impossible to get that many horses to turn their heads in concert with each other.
Animation characters can be human, animal, or product personifications. Animation was originally a last-resort technique for advertisers who did not have money to prepare a live commercial. Most agencies did not hold it in high regard. Currently animation is one of the most popular advertising techniques. Successful films such as *The Incredibles* and *Finding Nemo* generated a great deal of interest in animation advertising.

Besides cartoons, another method of animation, made popular by the California Raisins commercials, is clay animation. Although expensive to create, clay animation has been successful. One well-known product personification is the Pillsbury Doughboy. Computer graphics technology now allows production companies to superimpose these personifications in live scenes.

Animation is used mostly in television spots. It can be utilized in movie trailers and Internet ads. Single shots of animated characters, such as Tony the Tiger, are also placed into print ads. For years animation was rarely used in business-to-business advertising. Many advertising agencies had negative views of it. Agency leaders tended to believe animation appealed to children but not to businesspeople. These views have changed. Business ads shown on television can now take advantage of high-quality graphics technologies to illustrate a product's uses with animated figures and graphics.

**Slice-of-Life**

In slice-of-life commercials, advertisers attempt to provide solutions to the everyday problems consumers or businesses face. This format was made famous by Procter & Gamble during the early days of television advertising in the 1950s. The advertisements normally show the common experiences and especially the problems people encounter. Then, the good or service is made available to solve the problem. The most common slice-of-life format has four components:

1. Encounter
2. Problem
3. Interaction
4. Solution

In some of the ads, the actors portray the dilemma or problem and solve the problems themselves. In others, a voice-over explains the benefits or solution to the problem that the good, service, or company provides.

A typical slice-of-life commercial could start with a child playing soccer and her parents cheering (the encounter). Her dirty uniform is then shown with comments by the child that it will never come clean for the championship game, or a voice-over can be used to state the same message (the problem). Another parent or the announcer then introduces the benefits of the new laundry detergent (the interaction). The commercial ends with the proud parents taking their daughter to a championship game in a clean uniform (the solution). Note that this commercial could be shot in various ways. The actors can talk to each other in the scenario, making the audience the third party who essentially is "eavesdropping" on the conversation. Or, the commercial can be shot using a voice-over to highlight the problem and solution portions of the commercial, with the announcer speaking directly to the audience.

In print advertisements, slice-of-life frameworks are difficult, but not impossible to prepare. In the business-to-business advertisement for Messagemedia shown on the next page, the encounter is the potential female customer. The problem is that the "average
single female breaks up with 4.3 men, avoids 237 phone calls, and ignores approximately 79 red lights per year.” The interaction occurs through the copy “What are the chances she’ll read your e-mail message?” The solution to this problem is Messagmedia’s “E-messaging campaign.”

The slice-of-life executional framework has become popular in Japan in recent years. The slice-of-life style is suited to Japan’s soft-sell approach to marketing. A more hard-sell attitude is often found in the United States. Japanese advertising tends to be more indirect, and the slice-of-life approach allows advertisers to present a product in a typical everyday situation. Benefits can be presented in a positive light without making brazen or harsh claims and without directly disparaging the competition.15

Business-to-business advertisements also heavily use the slice-of-life method. The executional framework is popular because it allows the advertiser to highlight the ways a product can meet business needs. For example, a typical business-to-business ad begins with a routine business experience, such as a sales manager making a presentation to the board of directors. Then, the projector being used by the salesperson does not have a clear picture. The ad offers the solution: a projector from Sony. The presentation is made with great clarity, and the board of directors accepts the customer’s bid for the account. As with all slice-of-life commercials, disaster is avoided and, by using the advertised brand, a happy ending results.

Slice-of-life executional frameworks are possible in most media, including magazines or billboards, because a single picture can depict a normal, everyday situation or problem. The challenge is creating one image that can tell the entire story, with the product being the solution.

**Dramatization**

A dramatization is similar to the slice-of-life executional framework. It uses the same format in which a problem is first presented and then a solution is offered. The difference lies in the intensity and story format. Dramatization uses a higher level of excitement and suspense to tell the story. A dramatization story normally builds to a crisis point.

An example of a dramatization is a recent Maytag commercial, which did not use the “lonely repairman” theme the company had featured for decades. The ad was designed to launch a new product—the Gemini range. Thirty- and sixty-second spots featured children carrying pizzas, yelling and rushing toward a throng of adults carrying casserole dishes. The groups run toward each other on a battlefield. The two groups are ready to break into battle when the Maytag representative intervenes with the dual-oven range that accommodates the needs of both groups.16 The commercial contains all of the critical components of a drama execution. It tells a story in a dramatic way, leading up to a suspenseful climax. Suddenly, the Maytag product provides a solution to the crisis.

An effective and dramatic advertisement is difficult to create, because the drama must be completed in either 30 or 60 seconds. Building a story to a climatic moment is challenging, given such a short time period. The first “What’s in Your Wallet” advertisements for Capital One credit cards did manage to create the level of excitement needed. Not all dramatic execution styles can, however, accomplish the high level of suspense required to make them successful. It is often easier to simply produce the ad using the slice-of-life framework.
**Testimonials**

The testimonial type of executional framework has been successful for many years, especially in the business-to-business and service sectors. When a customer is presented in an advertisement telling about a positive experience with a product, it is a testimonial. In the business-to-business sector, testimonials from current customers add credibility to the claims being made. In many business buying situations, prospective vendors are asked for references. Testimonials provide references in advance. Further, most buyers believe what others say about a company more than they believe what a company says about itself. Thus, testimonials by someone else offer greater credibility than self-proclamations.

Testimonials also are an effective method for promoting services. Services are intangible; they cannot be seen or touched. Consumers cannot examine services before making decisions. A testimony from a current customer is an effective method of describing the benefits or attributes of the service. This matches the method most consumers use in selecting a service. When choosing a dentist, an attorney, or an automobile repair shop, consumers often ask friends, relatives, or coworkers. A testimonial ad for a service simulates this type of word-of-mouth recommendation.

One major reason companies choose testimonials is that they enhance company credibility. Endorsers and famous individuals do not always have high levels of credibility, because consumers know they are being paid for their endorsements. In testimonials, everyday people, often actual customers, are the main characters. At other times, they are paid actors who look like everyday consumers.

**Authoritative**

When using the authoritative executional framework, the advertiser is seeking to convince viewers that a given product is superior to other brands. One form is expert authority. These ads employ a physician, dentist, engineer, or chemist to state the particular brand’s advantages compared to other brands. Firms also can feature less recognized experts such as automobile mechanics, professional house painters, nurses, or even aerobics instructors. Advertising presents each of these as an expert or authority in a particular field. These experts normally talk about the brand attributes that make the product superior.

Many authoritative advertisements include some type of scientific or survey evidence. Independent organizations such as the American Medical Association undertake a variety of product studies. Quoting the results gives an ad greater credibility. Survey results are less credible. Stating that four out of five dentists recommend a particular toothbrush or toothpaste is less effective, because consumers do not have details about how the survey was conducted or even how many dentists were surveyed (5 or 50). On the other hand, when the American Medical Association states that an aspirin a day reduces the risk of a second heart attack, it is highly credible. A company such as Bayer can take advantage of the finding by including the information in the company’s ads. The same is true when a magazine such as Consumer Reports ranks a particular brand as the best.

Any scientific, independent, unpaid source makes an advertising claim more powerful. For example, Wachovia Bank recently created advertisements featuring the Bank’s rating as the number one community development lender in the United States. The rating was given by the Federal Financial Institutions Examining Council. The ad was more credible because the rating was made by a federal agency, which was an independent source.

Authoritative advertisements have been widely incorporated into business-to-business sector ads,
especially when scientific findings are available to support a company’s product claims. Independent test results are likely to have a more profound influence on members of the buying center, especially if they are actively looking for rational information to help them make decisions.

The authoritative approach assumes consumers and business decision makers rely on cognitive processes when making purchase decisions. This means that they will pay attention to an ad and carefully think about the information conveyed in the advertisement. The authoritative approach works most effectively in print ads, because the buyers are willing to take the time to read the claim or findings provided in the advertisement.

Authoritative ads work especially well in specialty magazines. For example, in a hunting magazine, having an expert hunter discuss the superiority of a particular gun is effective, because readers have an interest in hunting. Brides observe the endorsements of wedding experts in special bridal magazines. Readers notice these specialized advertisements, and the claims made have greater credibility. The same is true in business-to-business magazines. Trade journals in the business world are similar to specialty magazines in the consumer world.

**Demonstration**

A demonstration execution shows how a product works. A demonstration is an effective way to communicate the attributes of a product to viewers. Other product benefits can be described as the product is exhibited. For example, one recent advertisement featured a new form of dust cloth that could be attached to a handle or used separately. The demonstration highlighted the product’s multiple uses by cleaning a television screen, a wooden floor, a saxophone, and light fixtures on the ceiling. Thus, consumers were being shown how to use the product while at the same time hearing about its advantages.

Business-to-business ads often present demonstrations. They allow a business to illustrate how a product can meet the specific needs of another business. For example, GoldTouch, Inc., can demonstrate the InstaGold Flash System, which deposits a bright and uniform gold surface finish on products such as jewelry, through a nonelectrical current process of immersion plating. Such demonstrations can be offered via television ads or Flash media ads on the Internet.

Demonstration ads are especially well suited to television and Internet Flash ads. To a limited extent, the print media can feature demonstrations, especially when a series of photos outline the sequence of product usage.

**Fantasy**

Some products lend themselves to a fantasy-type of executional framework. Fantasy executions are designed to lift the audience beyond the real world to a make-believe experience. Some fantasies are meant to be realistic. Others are completely irrational. Often, the more irrational and illogical ads are, the more clearly consumers recall them. Fantasies can deal with anything from a dream vacation spot or cruise ships to a juicy hamburger or an enticing DiGiorno pizza. The Jantzen ad to the right encourages consumers to fantasize about what the world would be like if they ruled. People are even encouraged to share their fantasies by contacting Jantzen at [www.jantzen.com](http://www.jantzen.com).

The most common fantasy themes, however, still involve sex, love, and romance. According to some marketing experts, raw sex and nudity in advertisements are losing their impact. Instead, advertisers can feature a softer, more subtle
presentation of sex. Fantasy fits nicely with preferences for a tamer sexuality, which primarily are found in older members of the population. For some senior citizens, raw sex and nudity simply are offensive. Fantasy is an excellent way to approach older individuals by taking them into a world of romantic make-believe rather than hard-driving sexuality.18

One product category that frequently uses fantasy executions is the perfume and cologne industry. In the past, the most common theme was that splashing on a certain cologne causes women to flock to a man. For women, the reverse was suggested. Although used extensively, these ads were not particularly effective because people didn’t believe them. Currently, perfume advertisers tend to portray the product as enhancing the love life of a couple or even making a man or woman feel more sensuous, rather than turning a man into a “babe magnet” or a woman into a “diva.”

Television fantasy ads for cruise lines show couples enjoying romantic, sensuous vacations together, swimming, jet skiing, and necking. The goal is to make the cruise into more than just a vacation—it should become a romantic fantasy trip. Fantasy ads also can show people experiencing the thrill of winning a major sports event or sharing a common product (beer, pizza) with a beautiful model. Effective fantasies can inspire both recall and action.

The business-to-business advertising field has not used fantasy a great deal primarily because of fear that members of a buying center would not take it seriously. At the same time, creatives are sometimes able to feature a fantasy in a business-to-business ad by showing a product helping the buyer achieve some type of unrealistic result or outcome. For example, being promoted from janitor to president because of the correct choice of a cleaning product would be a fantasy aimed at people using or purchasing janitorial supplies.

Informative

A common advertising executional framework is an informative advertisement. Informative ads present information to the audience in a straightforward manner. Agencies prepare informative messages extensively for radio advertisements, where only verbal communication is possible. Informative ads are less common in television and print because consumers tend to ignore them. With so many ads bombarding the consumer, it takes more than just the presentation of information to capture someone’s attention.

Consumers highly involved in a particular product category pay more attention to an informational ad. Such is often the case when business buyers are in the process of gathering information for either a new buy or modified rebuy. On the other hand, if the business is not in the market for a particular product, buying center members do not pay much attention to informative ads. Thus, informative ads tend to work well only in high-involvement situations. Many advertisers believe that business buyers need detailed information to make intelligent buying decisions. As a result, the informative framework continues to be a popular approach for business-to-business advertisers.
One of the keys to informative advertising is the placement of the ad. An informative advertisement about a restaurant placed on a radio station just before noon is listened to more carefully than if it runs at 3:00 P.M. An informative ad about a diet product in an issue of *Glamour* that has a special article on weight control or exercising will be noticed more than if it is placed in the fashion section of the magazine. An informative business ad featuring a new piece of industrial equipment works well next to an article about the capital costs of equipment. Consequently, informative ads have limited uses but can be effective when placed properly.

Beyond these types of executional frameworks, the creative decides about all of the other ingredients, including music, copy, color, motion, light, and the size of a print ad. Remember that almost any of these executional frameworks can be used within the format of one of the various appeals. A slice-of-life can depict fear, as can a dramatization. Informative ads can be humorous, but so can animations. Testimonials or demonstrations are rational or emotional, and so forth. As the advertisement comes together, one element remains: the choice of a source or spokesperson.

**SOURCES AND SPOKESPERSONS**

One final major issue remains for the creative, the company, and the account executive. Selecting the right source and spokesperson to use in an advertisement is a critical decision. Four types of sources are available to advertisers:

1. Celebrities
2. CEOs
3. Experts
4. Typical persons

Approximately 20 percent of all advertisements use some type of *celebrity spokesperson*. Payments to celebrities account for around 10 percent of all advertising dollars spent. A celebrity endorser is used because his or her stamp of approval on a product can enhance the product’s brand equity. Celebrities also help create emotional bonds with the products. The idea is to transfer the bond that exists between the celebrity and the audience to the product being endorsed. This bond transfer often is more profound for younger consumers. Older consumers are not as likely to be influenced by celebrity endorsements. Still, many advertisers believe they are effective. Figure 7.4 lists some major brands and their endorsers.

Agencies also utilize celebrities to help establish a “personality” for a brand. The trick is to tie the brand’s characteristics to those of the spokesperson, such as Elizabeth Taylor’s love of the finer things in life being attached to her line of scents and

![Figure 7.4 Celebrity Endorsers](image-url)
The Changing World of the Creative

The advertising landscape is changing. New pressures have affected the role of the creative. For some, the most dramatic shift is in the center of power of the entire industry. For many decades Madison Avenue agencies were viewed as being on the cutting edge of innovation in advertising. Currently, if you believe renowned creatives Bob Kuperman and Roy Grace, the shift has most of the “action” to the west.

Kuperman says, “The Madison Avenue label may play to middle America. But any client or marketing head knows he doesn’t have to go to New York to get what he wants in terms of creativity.” Grace is more blunt. He states that too many creative decisions fall within a safety zone of familiar styles, concepts, and sales techniques, especially in the Big Apple.

One of the reasons for the change is the shift to market research–driven advertising development. Focus groups and other forms of testing have made it so that, according to Grace, “There’s too much testing and too much research. Advertising is too much of a science and not as much of an art.” This frustration appears to be growing throughout the industry. Winston Fletcher notes that every major creative decision is subjected to research. When things get modified, creatives can scream themselves hoarse, but they don’t necessarily convince the focus group.

To regain control, some creatives have moved into the role of director, splitting their time between commercial development and commercial production. In this new role, creatives limit themselves to one company per industry. For example, one creative noted that he had just prepared a $50 million campaign for Jack in the Box and therefore would not film for clients such as McDonald’s or Burger King. The Chicago-based Fusion Idea Lab, which creates a number of Bud Light spots, will not film ads for other breweries.

Assuming the new role of director also puts the creative more directly in the line of fire, in terms of reporting tangible results. Unfortunately, “Creatives are probably the worst judges of their own work,” states Don Williams, creative director at the PI Design agency. The new accountability may force some creatives away from directing and back into simple development.

Creative Stuart Burnett concludes that the best route to take is to find a marketing communications firm rather than a simple ad agency. He states that “marketing communications agencies are best at responding to the [new] challenges. Their media-neutral, integrated approach is winning more and more fans and is getting them sexier work, bigger budgets, and meatier problems to solve.”

No matter who employs the creative, the goal is to keep things original. According to Jeff Goodby, a major creative in San Francisco, “Advertising very quickly turns into formulas, and the real enemy of the creative organization is the formulaic feeling.” Consequently, the firm Goodby, Silverstein & Partners is working to make sure the agency’s creatives take risks and work to sell themselves to clients.

If you are looking for a dynamic, interesting, and evolving career, the job of creative offers many challenges and opportunities. As the next generation of creatives moves forward, the nature of the advertising game will continue to shift with the times, making things exciting for everyone involved.

perfumes as well as other products. In developing a brand personality, the brand must already be established. The celebrity merely helps to define the brand more clearly. Using celebrities for new products does not always work as well as for already established brands.

There are three variations of celebrity endorsements: (1) unpaid spokespersons, (2) celebrity voice-overs, and (3) what may be called dead-person endorsements. Unpaid spokespersons are those celebrities who support a charity or cause by appearing in an ad. These types of endorsements are highly credible and can entice significant contributions to a cause. Politicians, actors, and musicians all appear in these ads. VH1’s “Save the Music” ads are a recent campaign of this type.

Many celebrities also provide voice-overs for television and radio ads without being shown or identified. Listeners often respond to the ads and try to figure out who is reading the copy. This adds interest to the ad but may also serve as a distraction, when the individual does not hear the message while trying to identify the speaker.

A dead-person endorsement occurs when a sponsor uses an image, or past video or film, featuring an actor or personality who has died. Dead-person endorsements are somewhat controversial but are becoming more common. Bob Marley, Marilyn Monroe, John Wayne, John Lennon, Elvis Presley, and many others have appeared in ads and even become spokespersons for products after dying. Colonel Sanders has become a spokesperson in animation for KFC. Figure 7.5 identifies the top-earning dead celebrities and the amount each of their estates earned in endorsements in just one year.

Instead of celebrities, advertisers can use a CEO as the spokesperson or source. Dave Thomas of Wendy’s was possibly the most famous CEO in commercials in the 1990s. For many years, Lee Iacocca was the spokesperson for Chrysler, and Michael Eisner served as the main voice for Disney. A highly visible and personable CEO can become a major

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**FIGURE 7.5**

Top 10 Earnings of Dead Celebrities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Celebrity</th>
<th>Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Elvis Presley</td>
<td>$40 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Charles Schulz</td>
<td>$35 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>J. R. Richard</td>
<td>$23 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>John Lennon</td>
<td>$21 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Theodore Seuss Geisel</td>
<td>$18 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Marilyn Monroe</td>
<td>$8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>George Harrison</td>
<td>$7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Bob Marley</td>
<td>$7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Irving Berlin</td>
<td>$7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Richard Rodgers</td>
<td>$6.5 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

asset for the firm and its products. Many local companies succeed, in part, because their owners are out front in small market television commercials. They then begin to take on the status of local celebrities.

*Expert sources* include physicians, lawyers, accountants, and financial planners. These experts tend not to be famous celebrities or CEOs. Experts provide backing for testimonials, serve as authoritative figures, demonstrate products, and enhance the credibility of informative advertisements.

The final category of spokesperson is *typical-person sources*. Typical persons are one of two types. The first category consists of paid actors or models that portray or resemble everyday people. The second is actual, typical, everyday people used in advertisements. Wal-Mart, as already mentioned, features its own store employees in freestanding insert advertisements. Agencies also create many “man-on-the-street” types of advertisements. For example, PERT shampoo recently prepared ads showing an individual asking people if they would like their hair washed. Dr. Scholl’s interviews people about foot problems that might be resolved with cushioned shoe inserts.

Real people sources are becoming more common. One reason for this is the overuse of celebrities. Many experts believe that consumers have become saturated with celebrity endorsers and that the positive impact today is not as strong as it was in the past. One study conducted in Great Britain indicated that 55 percent of the consumers surveyed reported that a famous face was not enough to hold their attention. Celebrities held a greater appeal for the 15- to 24-year-old age bracket. Sixty-two percent of that group stated that a famous person in an ad would get their attention.20

**Source Characteristics**

In evaluating sources, most account executives and companies consider several characteristics. The effectiveness of an advertisement that utilizes a spokesperson depends on the degree to which the person has one or more of the characteristics. As illustrated in Figure 7.6, the source selection characteristic of a spokesperson’s *credibility* is derived from the composite of attractiveness, likability, trustworthiness, and expertise. Credibility affects a receiver’s acceptance of the spokesperson and message. A credible source is believable. Most sources do not score highly on all four attributes, yet they need to score highly on multiple characteristics to be viewed as credible. One reason for using celebrities is that they are more likely to possess at least an element of all characteristics.
A CEO, expert, or typical person probably lacks one or more of them.

**Attractiveness** has two forms: (1) physical characteristics and (2) personality characteristics. Physical attractiveness is usually an important asset for an endorser. Bijan used Michael Jordan’s and Bo Derek’s physical attractiveness to promote its line of menswear, perfume, and jewelry. Advertisements with physically attractive spokespersons fare better than advertisements with less attractive people. This is true for both male and female audiences. At the same time, the attractiveness of the spokesperson’s personality is also important to many consumers. This personality component helps viewers form emotional bonds with the spokesperson. If the spokesperson is seen as having a sour personality, even if physically beautiful, consumers are less likely to develop an emotional bond with the individual and the product.

Closely related to attractiveness is the concept of **similarity**. Consumers are more inclined to be influenced by a message delivered by a person who is somehow similar. For example, a “stay at home” mom is more likely to be influenced by an advertisement that starts out with a woman saying, “Since I made the decision to stop working and care for my family full-time. . . .” Both similarity and attractiveness can create **identification**, in which the receiver is able, in some manner, to identify with the source. At times this may involve the fantasy of identifying with a rich person buying a BMW. At others, identification is based on believing the source has similar beliefs, attitudes, preferences, or behaviors, or is in the same or a similar situation as the customer.

Closely related to the personality component of attractiveness is **likeability**. Consumers respond more positively to spokespersons they like. This liking arises from various sources, including situations in which viewers like either the actor or the character played by the actor in a movie. An athlete gains likeability if he or she plays on the consumer’s favorite team. Other individuals are likable because they support the favorite charities of consumers. If consumers do not like a particular spokesperson, they are likely to transfer that dislike to the product the celebrity endorses. This is not an automatic transfer, because consumers recognize that endorsers are paid spokespersons. Still, there is almost always a negative impact on attitudes toward the brand.

A celebrity may be likable or attractive, but he or she may not be viewed as **trustworthy**. Trustworthiness is the degree of confidence or the level of acceptance consumers place in the spokesperson’s message. A trustworthy spokesperson helps consumers believe the message. In the early 2000s, two of the most trusted celebrities were Michael Jordan and Bill Cosby. Likeability and trustworthiness are highly related. People who are liked tend to be trusted and people who are disliked tend not to be trusted.

The fourth characteristic advertisers look for when examining sources is **expertise**. Spokespersons with higher levels of expertise are more believable than sources with low expertise. Richard Petty and Jeff Gordon are seen as experts when automobile products and lubricants are advertised. Often when expertise is desired in an ad, the ad agency opts for the CEO or a trained or educated expert in the field. American Express features María Barraza, a small-business owner and designer, to promote its Small Business Services.

A potential negative side to using a CEO as the spokesperson may be present. Although he or she has a high degree of expertise, the individual may lack some of the other key characteristics (attractiveness, likeability, or trustworthiness). Expertise can be invaluable in persuasive advertisements designed to change opinions or attitudes.
Spokespersons with high levels of expertise are more capable of persuading an audience than someone with zero or low expertise.21

Matching Source Types and Characteristics

The account executive, ad agency, and corporate sponsor, individually or jointly, may choose the type of spokesperson. They can choose a celebrity, CEO, expert, or typical person, and the specific individual must have the key characteristics. This section matches source types with various characteristics.

Celebrities normally score well in terms of trustworthiness, believability, persuasiveness, and likeability. These virtues increase if the match between the product and celebrity is a logical and proper fit. For example, Phil Mickelson endorsing golf merchandise is a good fit. An athlete endorsing any type of athletic product fits well. Companies can be creative but also use common sense in making quality matches. For instance, the match of boxer George Foreman to his Lean Mean Grilling Machine is a great success. Figure 7.7 lists the top 10 celebrities people would most likely buy a product from and the 10 celebrities people would least likely buy a product from. Both lists were compiled from a random survey conducted by Advertising Age magazine.

Several dangers exist in using celebrities. The first is negative publicity about the celebrity caused by inappropriate conduct. For example, prior to the 2004–05 basketball season, numerous NBA basketball stars served as spokespersons and endorsers. The Kobe Bryant trial and the brawl between several members of the Indiana Pacers and spectators in the stands at the start of the season quickly changed the landscape. Shortly afterwards, a survey of marketing executives revealed that 31 percent of those contacted said they would consider reducing associations with the NBA and specific players. Twenty-one percent of those surveyed said the incident caused them to rethink using any professional athlete.22

The potential for negative publicity has led some advertisers to use deceased celebrities, because what was
essentially negative likeability became attached to the company and its products. Many companies concluded that there was no need to risk bringing embarrassment or injury to themselves or the brand. It is also a reason that more ads use cartoon characters. Practically everyone likes cartoons.

The second danger of using celebrities is that their endorsement of too many products tarnishes their credibility.23 Only a few exceptional celebrities, such as Michael Jordan and Bill Cosby, have been able to successfully endorse a variety of products.

Another problem associated with celebrity endorsements is credibility. Consumers know celebrities are paid, which detracts from their believability. If the celebrity endorses a number of products, consumer evaluations of that person’s credibility decline further. Some advertising research indicates that when a celebrity endorses multiple products, it tends to reduce his or her credibility and likeability as well as consumers’ attitudes toward the ad.24

As a result, careful consideration must be given to the choice of a celebrity. The individual cannot simply be famous. The person should possess as many of the characteristics as possible, match the good or service being advertised, not be “spread too thin” or overexposed, and promote a positive image that can be transferred to the good, service, or company.

A CEO or other prominent corporate official may or may not possess the characteristics of attractiveness and likeability. CEOs should, however, appear to be trustworthy, have expertise, and maintain a degree of credibility. A CEO is not a professional actor or model. Coming across well in a commercial may be difficult.

Companies must be aware of the trustworthiness issue. For example, many times the owner of a local auto dealership represents it as the spokesperson. The primary problem is that many consumers view used-car salespeople as those who cannot be trusted. Other local business owners may be highly trustworthy, such as restaurant owners, physicians, eye care professionals, and so forth.

Advertising creatives and account executives should be careful about asking a CEO or business owner to serve as a source. They first must be convinced that the individual has enough key characteristics to promote the product and gain the consumer’s interest and trust.

Experts, first and foremost, should be credible. The ad agency should seek out an expert who is also attractive, likable, and trustworthy. Experts are helpful in promoting health-care products and complicated products that require explanations. In other situations, consumers will place a degree of trust in the company when purchasing the product or service recommended by an expert. An expert who is unattractive and dislikeable cannot convince consumers that he or she can be trusted, and credibility drops as a result. Business-to-business ads often feature experts. The agency should be certain that an expert spokesperson has valid credentials and will be able to clearly explain a product’s benefits. Then the source’s trustworthiness and credibility rise.

Typical-person ads are sometimes difficult to prepare, especially when they use real persons. First, typical-person sources do not have the name recognition of celebrities. Consequently, advertisers often use multiple sources within one advertisement to build credibility. Increasing the number of sources in the ad makes the ad more effective. Hearing three people talk about a good dentist is more believable than hearing it from only one person. By using multiple sources, viewers are motivated to pay attention to the ad and to process its arguments.25

Real person ads are a kind of two-edged sword. On the one hand, trustworthiness and credibility rise when the source is bald, overweight, or has some other physical
imperfections. This can be especially valuable when the bald person promotes a hair replacement program or the overweight source talks about a diet program. On the other hand, attractiveness and likeability may be lower.

Using customers in ads can be difficult, because they will flub lines and look less natural on the screen. These difficulties with actual customers and employees lead many ad agencies to turn to professional models and actors to portray ordinary people. Professional actors make filming and photographing much easier. Also, the agency is in the position to choose a likable but plain person. The desired effects (trustworthiness and credibility) are often easier to create using professional actors and models.

In general, the ad agency should seek to be certain that the source or spokesperson has the major characteristics the ad needs. When the appeal is humor, likeability is very important. In a rational or informational ad, expertise and credibility are crucial, especially in business-to-business ads. In each case, the goal is to try to include as many of the characteristics as possible when retaining a spokesperson.

**CREATING AN ADVERTISEMENT**

Figure 7.8 illustrates the process a creative uses in preparing an advertisement. The work begins with the creative brief, which outlines the message theme of the advertisement as well as other pertinent information. Using the creative brief blueprint, the creative develops a means–end chain, starting with an attribute of the product that generates a specific customer benefit and eventually produces a desirable end state. This means–end chain is the foundation on which all other decisions will be made.

Following the development of the means–end chain, the creative selects a message strategy, the appeal, and the executional framework. He or she also chooses a source or spokesperson at this point, because the choice usually affects other creative decisions. Development of the leverage point is usually undertaken after the creative begins work on the advertisement. The leverage point moves the consumer from the product attribute or customer benefit to the desired end state. The type of leverage point used depends on the message strategy, appeal, and executional framework.

Although certain combinations tend to work well together, the creative has an almost infinite number of options when preparing an advertisement or campaign. For example, if the creative wants to use a cognitive message strategy, the most logical appeal is rationality. The creative, however, could use fear, humor, sex, music, or even scarcity. The one appeal that would not work as well is emotions. The emotional part of the advertisement tends to overpower the cognitive message the creative is trying to send to the viewer. If the creative decides to use a humor approach with a cognitive strategy, other logical and illogical combinations emerge. In terms of the executional framework, dramatization and authoritative

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**Figure 7.8**

Creating an Advertisement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message Strategy</th>
<th>Creative Brief</th>
<th>Executinal Framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>(message theme)</td>
<td>Animation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td></td>
<td>Slice of life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conative</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dramatization</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Testimonial</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Authoritative</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appeals</td>
<td>Means–End Chain</td>
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<td>Fear</td>
<td></td>
<td>Informative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>Leverage Point</td>
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<td>Sex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Spokesperson</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scarcity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
tend not to work as well with humor. Any of the other executional frameworks are suitable. This flexibility allows a variety of advertisements to emerge from a single means–end chain. The combination to use depends on the creatives’ expertise and experience as well as the creatives’ opinion about the best way to accomplish the client’s advertising objectives.

ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS

Producing effective ads requires the joint efforts of the account executive, creative, media planner, and media buyer. Working independently can produce some award-winning ads, but often they will not be effective ads that meet a client’s objectives. One major problem ad agencies face is producing a commercial that will stand out among the thousands of existing ads. If an advertisement can break through the clutter, half the battle is won. All that remains is finding a way to lead consumers or businesses to react to the ad in the desired manner.

An effective advertisement accomplishes the objectives desired by the client. The task of making sure the ad accomplishes the IMC objectives is a major challenge. Seven basic principles of advertising effectiveness, as shown in Figure 7.9, should be followed. Each of these principles is described in greater detail next.

The first principle is to maintain visual consistency. Repeatedly seeing a specific image or visual display helps embed it in long-term memory. Visual consistency is important because consumers, whether individual consumers or members of a business buying center, spend very little time viewing or listening to an advertisement. In most cases, it is just a casual glance at a print advertisement or a cursory glimpse at a television ad. Visual consistency causes the viewer to move the advertising message from short-term memory to long-term memory. Consistently used logos and other long-standing images help fix the brand or company in the consumer’s mind. For example, people remember Frosted Flakes because of the visually consistent use of Tony the Tiger. They know Green Giant products by their cartoon spokesperson. Logos such as the Nike swoosh and the Prudential Rock emblems are well established in the minds of many consumers.

The second principle of effective advertising is concerned with campaign duration. Consumers often do not pay attention to advertisements. This makes the length or duration of a campaign important. Using the same advertisement for an appropriate period of time helps embed the message in the consumer’s long-term memory. Account executives give careful thought to how long to run an advertisement. The ad should be changed before it becomes stale and viewers become bored with it; however, changing ads too frequently impedes the retention process. Reach and frequency affect the duration of a campaign. Higher frequency usually leads to a shorter duration. Low reach may be associated with a longer duration. In any case, typical campaigns last 1 to 2 months, but there are exceptions. Marlboro and Camel still use the same visual imagery and have never changed their basic advertisements, but these are rare examples.
The third method used to build effective advertising campaigns is repeated taglines. Visual consistency combined with consistent taglines can be a powerful approach. The advertisement may change, but either the visual imagery or the tagline remains the same. The U.S. Army has promoted the tagline “Be all that you can be” for many years, and the Marines are known as “The few. The proud. The Marines.” Taglines help consumers tie the advertisement into current knowledge structure nodes that already exist in their minds. Figure 7.10 contains some of the more common taglines. See how many you can identify.

A fourth advertising principle is consistent positioning. Maintaining consistent positioning throughout a product’s life makes it easier for consumers to place the product in a cognitive map. When the firm emphasizes quality in every ad, it becomes easier to tie the product into the consumer’s cognitive map than if the firm stresses quality in some ads, price in others, and convenience in a third campaign. This inconsistency in positioning makes the brand and company appear more confused and harder to remember. Consistent positioning avoids ambiguity, and the message stays clear and understandable.

Simplicity is the fifth principle of effective advertising. Simple advertisements are easier to comprehend than are complex ads. A print ad with a simple tagline and limited copy is much easier to read than an overloaded or complex one. Consequently, advertisers must resist the temptation to relate all of a product’s attributes in a single advertisement. This practice is more prevalent in business-to-business print advertisements, but it should be avoided there as well. Further, consumer ads on radio or television spots often are so verbally overloaded that the announcer is forced to talk faster. This is usually ineffective, because the listener has too much information to grasp in such a short time period.

The principle of simplicity should be carefully applied to Internet advertising. The primary reason for simplicity with the Internet is load time. Individuals surfing the Internet will not wait more than a few seconds for something to load; if it doesn’t load quickly, they move on to another site.

The next principle of effective advertising is the concept of an identifiable selling point. The emphasis should be placed on all three of the words: (1) identifiable, (2) selling, and (3) point. The advertisement should have a selling point (price, quality, convenience, luxury, etc.) that is easily identifiable to the viewer of the ad. It is important to remember that an advertisement should sell a product’s benefits as much as the product itself. Also, the concept is a selling point, not selling points. The best advertisements are those that emphasize one major point and do not confuse the viewer by trying to present too many ideas. An advertisement’s primary goal is to fix the product into the cognitive map of the viewer through establishing new linkages or strengthening current linkages. An identifiable selling point helps reach that goal.

The final principle is to create an effective flow. In a print ad, the reader’s eye should move easily to all of the key points in the ad. In a television ad, the points to be made should flow in a manner that leads the consumer to the appropriate action or conclusion. Ads without flow confuse the consumer or are simply tuned out.

Figure 7.10
Which Taglines Can You Identify?

Answers: VISA, Reebok, Nike, Allstate, Colgate, Pontiac, Saturn, Hallmark, BMW, Timex.
Beating Ad Clutter

Overcoming clutter is a major challenge when creating an effective advertising campaign. The presence of a competitor’s ad within the same medium or time slot makes the ad clutter problem worse. A recent survey of television advertising revealed that during prime-time programming, 42 percent of the ads shown had one or more of their competitors also advertising during the same hour. Research suggests that an advertisement’s effectiveness is significantly reduced when a competitor’s advertisement runs during the same time slot.26

One method advertisers use to overcome this brand interference is repetition. Repeating an ad can increase brand and ad recall. In advertising studies, repetition is effective in increasing recall if no competitor ads are present. When competitor ads are present, repetition does not help the competitive ad interference problem and does not stimulate greater recall.

Mere repetition of an ad does not always work. Therefore, advertisers have begun to emphasize the principles present in variability theory.27 The theory suggests that variable encoding occurs when a consumer sees the same advertisement in different environments. These varied environments increase an ad’s recall and effectiveness by encoding it into the brain through various methods. Creatives can generate the effect by varying the situational context of a particular ad. For example, the MasterCard campaign noted previously uses various settings to convey the same basic message, “There are some things money can’t buy. For everything else, there’s MasterCard.” Varying the context of the ad increases recall, which is an effective method for overcoming competitive ad interference.28
Another method designed to decrease the impact of competing ads is to use a second medium. Using two media to convey a message generally is more effective than repeating an advertisement within the same medium. An ad placed in more than one medium also reduces competing ad interference. In other words, an ad that appears on television and in magazines works better than one that appears only on television. Consumers seeing an advertisement in a different medium are more likely to recall the ad than if it is always seen in only one medium.

Clutter remains a difficult problem in advertising. Creatives who are able to capture the attention of the audience and transmit messages successfully are in great demand. Companies constantly experiment with various approaches to reach audiences. When a program works, the advertising firm and its client have a great deal to celebrate.

Advertising is the process of transmitting a personal message through one or more impersonal media. The message should reflect the image that occurs throughout an IMC program. Three types of message strategies are present in advertisements. Cognitive strategies emphasize rational and logical arguments to compel consumers to make purchases. Affective strategies are oriented toward buyer emotions and feelings. Conative strategies are linked to more direct responses, behaviors, and actions. These strategies should be integrated with various types of appeals through the media selected for the campaign.

Executional frameworks tell the story in the ad. Animation has become more sophisticated and provides many new creative approaches in the design of ads. The slice-of-life approach and dramatizations are problem-solving types of ads, leading the consumer to something better by using the product. Testimonials are rendered by individuals who have realized the benefits of a product. An authoritative expert can build consumer confidence in a product or company. Demonstrations show how products can be used. A fantasy takes people away from the real world to a make-believe place. This makes the product more exotic and desirable. Informative ads render basic information about the product. Each execution can be used effectively to persuade consumers and business-to-business buyers to consider a company’s offerings.

Celebrities, CEOs, experts, and typical persons can be chosen to be “out front” in the advertisement. Each has advantages and disadvantages. The marketing team selects sources or spokespersons based on the individual’s attractiveness, likeability, trustworthiness, expertise, or credibility. The more of these characteristics that are present, the better off the advertiser will be.

Effective ad campaigns are based on the seven principles of visual consistency, sufficient campaign duration, repeated taglines, consistent positioning, simplicity, presentation of an identifiable selling point, and creation of an effective flow. Creatives and account executives must incorporate these principles into the advertising campaign to enhance the odds of success. Also, clutter must be overcome by repeating ads and showing them in various media, or in some other way.

Designing ads is often considered the most glamorous part of the advertising industry, and it is in many ways. Remember, however, that the other side of the glamour coin is hard work and the constant pressure to perform. Many people think being a creative is a burnout-type of job. At the same time, those who have proven track records of success are well rewarded for their efforts. Utilizing the principles presented in this chapter can be key to success in the highly competitive and exciting business of advertising design.
11. What kinds of products or services are best suited to fantasy-based executional frameworks? What products or services are poor candidates for fantasies?

12. Name the four main types of sources or spokespersons. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

13. Name the five key criteria used when selecting a spokesperson. Which four build to the fifth?

14. Name the tactics available to overcome clutter. How does variability theory assist in this process?

**KEY TERMS**

- **message theme**: The outline of the key idea(s) that the advertising program is supposed to convey.
- **message strategy**: The primary tactic used to deliver the message theme.
- **cognitive message strategy**: The presentation of rational arguments or pieces of information to consumers.
- **generic messages**: Direct promotions of product attributes or benefits without any claim of superiority.
- **preemptive messages**: Claims of superiority based on a specific attribute or benefit of a product that preempts the competition from making the same claim.
- **unique selling proposition**: An explicit, testable claim of uniqueness or superiority that can be supported or substantiated in some manner.
- **hyperbole**: Making an untestable claim based upon some attribute or benefit.
- **comparative advertisement**: The direct or indirect comparison of a good or service to the competition.
- **affective message strategies**: Ads designed to invoke feelings and emotions and match them with the good, service, or company.
- **resonance advertising**: Attempting to connect a product with a consumer’s experiences to develop stronger ties between the product and the consumer.
- **emotional advertising**: Attempting to elicit powerful emotions that eventually lead to brand recall and choice.

**action-inducing conative advertisements**: Advertisements that create situations in which cognitive knowledge of the product or affective liking of the product follow the actual purchase or arise during usage of the product.

**promotional support conative advertisements**: Ads designed to support other promotional efforts.

**executional framework**: The manner in which an ad appeal is presented.

**expert authority**: When an advertiser seeks to convince viewers that a given product is superior to other brands in some authoritative manner.

**sources and spokespersons**: Persons in the advertisement who make the actual presentation.

**similarity (source)**: Consumers are more inclined to be influenced by a message delivered by a person who is somehow similar.

**identification (source)**: Occurs when the receiver is able, in some manner, to identify with the source, either through a fantasy or by similar beliefs, attitudes, preferences, behaviors, or by being in the same or a similar situation.

**visual consistency**: Occurs when consumers see a specific image or visual display repeatedly.

**variability theory**: A theory stating that when a consumer sees the same advertisement in different environments, the ad will be more effective.

**CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES**

**Discussion Questions**

1. Mark five advertisements in a magazine. Identify the message strategy, appeal, and executional framework each uses. Did the creative select the right combination for the advertisement? What other message strategies or executional frameworks could have been used?

2. Record five television advertisements on videotape. Identify the message strategy, appeal, and executional framework each uses. Did the creative select the right combination for the advertisement? What other message strategies or executional frameworks could have been used?

3. Studies involving comparative advertisements as compared to non-comparative ads produced the following findings. Discuss why you think each statement is true. Try to think of comparative ads you have seen that substantiate these claims.

   a. Message awareness was higher for comparative ads than for non-comparative ads if the brands were already established brands.

   b. Brand recall was higher for comparative ads than for non-comparative ads.

   c. Comparative ads were viewed as less believable than non-comparative ads.

   d. Attitudes toward comparative ads were more negative than toward non-comparative ads.

4. Suppose Charles Schwab wants to develop an advertisement with the message theme that Charles Schwab understands the
needs of individual consumers and can design an investment strategy to meet each person’s particular needs. Which type of message strategy should Schwab choose? Why? Based on the message strategy chosen, which executional framework should the company use? Why? What type of source or spokesperson should Schwab use? Why? Would the type of media being used for the advertisement affect the message strategy choice? Explain your answer.

5. A resort in Florida wants to develop an advertisement highlighting scuba diving classes. Pick one of the following combinations of message strategy, appeal, and executional framework. Then design an advertisement using those components.
   a. Hyperbole cognitive message strategy, humor appeal, and demonstration execution
   b. Emotional message strategy, emotional appeal, and slice-of-life execution
   c. Conative message strategy, scarcity appeal, and informative execution
   d. Emotional or resonance message strategy, sex appeal, and fantasy execution
   e. Comparative message strategy, fear appeal, and a testimonial execution

6. Name three influential commercial spokespersons. For each one, discuss the five characteristics used to evaluate spokespersons. Next, make a list of three individuals who are poor spokespersons. Discuss each of the five evaluation characteristics for each of these individuals. What differences exist between an effective and a poor spokesperson?

7. Find a copy of a business journal such as BusinessWeek or Fortune, or a trade journal. Also locate a copy of a consumer journal such as Glamour, Time, Sports Illustrated, or a specialty magazine. Look through an entire issue. What differences between the advertisements in the business journal and consumer journals are readily noticeable? For each of the concepts that follow, discuss specific differences you noted between the two types of magazines. Explain why the differences exist.
   a. Message strategies
   b. Executional frameworks
   c. Sources and spokespersons

INTEGRATED LEARNING EXERCISES

1. Animation is often used on a Web site to add to its appeal. Two sources of free animation that can be used for your personal Web site or for a commercial Web site are at www.camelotdesign.com and www.animationlibrary.com. Access each site. What types of animation are available? How could animation be used to enhance a commercial Web site?

2. Current as well as past Super Bowl ads are available at www.superbowl-ads.com. Access the site and compare Super Bowl ads for the last several years. What types of message strategies were used? What types of executions were used? Who and what types of endorsers were used? Compare and contrast these three elements of ads.

3. Most advertising agencies provide examples of advertisements on company Web pages. The goal is to display the agency’s creative abilities to potential clients. Using a search engine, locate three different advertising agencies. Locate samples of their work. Compare the ads produced by your three agencies in terms of message appeals, executions, and spokespersons. What similarities do you see? What differences do you see? Which agency, in your opinion, is the most creative? Why?

4. Access the following Web sites. For each one, identify the primary message strategy used. What type of executional framework is present? Does the site use any sources or spokespersons? What type of appeal is used? For each Web site, suggest how the site could be improved by changing either the message strategy, the executional framework, or both. Be specific. Explain how the change would improve the site.
   a. Georgia–Pacific (www.gp.com)
   b. Playland International (www.playland-inc.com)
   c. MGM Grand (www.mgmgrand.com)
   d. The Exotic Body (www.exoticbody.com)
   e. CoverGirl (www.covergirl.com)
   f. American Supercamp (www.americansupercamp.com)
   g. Windmill Hill Tennis & Golf Academy (www.windmillhill.co.uk)

5. Identify a commercial that uses each of the following executional frameworks. Evaluate the advertisement in terms of how well it is executed. Also, did the appeal and message strategy fit well with the executional framework? Was the ad memorable? What made it memorable?
   a. Animation
   b. Slice-of-life
   c. Dramatization
   d. Testimonial
   e. Authoritative
   f. Demonstration
   g. Fantasy
   h. Informative
STUDENT PROJECT

**IMC Plan Pro**

Emotion, reason, or action. One of these driving forces will be the main ingredient in the theme of an advertising campaign. Once you select the main strategy, you can develop an advertising program that will resonate with the right customers, whether they are individual buyers or other companies. The IMC Plan Pro booklet and disk available from Prentice Hall are designed to help you make logical, consistent choices for your advertising program.
John Mulvaney was placed in charge of his company’s newest account, the United Way Charities of Savannah, Georgia. This branch of the United Way had never retained the services of an advertising agency but had gotten caught in the crush of competitive problems in the past decade. Consequently, the organization decided it was necessary to prepare more professional advertisements in order to succeed in the new millennium.

At the first meeting with the organization’s leaders, John discovered a world of competition he had never envisioned. First of all, the number of charities competing for contributions had grown exponentially in the past decade. Relief for terrorism and disaster victims, women’s shelters, homeless shelters, performing arts facilities, veterans groups, colleges and universities, minority organizations, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and dozens of other charities were in the marketplace for charitable dollars. Illnesses alone included heart disease, lung disease, AIDS, MD (Jerry Lewis telethon), blindness, and many others. Organizations representing these causes contact small and large donors alike.

Second, bad publicity had tainted the entire industry. Church scams combined with spending abuses by leaders of other charities had created a negative impact. Many people believe charities simply fund themselves, with very few of the dollars actually reaching people in need. As a result, contributions had declined.

Third, a booming economy had created an odd effect. On the one hand, the number of extremely rich people had grown, especially those associated with Silicon Valley. Many of these individuals were actually trying to be effective altruists. Unfortunately, far too many of these givers wanted to see their names on buildings rather than simply making contributions to operating budgets. Also, prosperity (lower unemployment, fewer people in poverty) had created a kind of complacency in which many regular givers had begun to assume there was simply less need for charity.

The United Way had received major support from the NFL for more than 2 decades. Visibility was high, and the organization had a solid base of donations. The goal was to build on this base and combat the problems that had grown. John contacted his best creative, Tom Prasch, to see what could be done.

Tom argued that the primary problem with United Way ads was that they were boring. They typically showed a football player visiting a sick child or shaking hands with some community leader. Viewers could tune them out easily. Tom said the United Way needed something that would recapture the attention of John Q. Public. Tom told John and the United Way that he believed strongly in the use of seven attention-getting factors:

1. Intensity
2. Size
3. Contrast
4. Repetition
5. Motion
6. Novelty
7. Familiarity

Intensity means that bright, loud, strong stimuli capture the attention of the audience. A large-size billboard or full-page newspaper ad is more likely to be noticed than something normal or small. Contrast is the difference between dark and light or loud and soft. Repetition means something repeated has attention-getting value. Motion captures attention, even in print ads where the illusion of movement can be created. Novelty occurs when someone encounters a novel stimulus in a familiar setting (a new piece of
Hank Freeman was excited. His new store, Hank’s Furniture Mart, was about to open. Hank had been in the furniture business for more than 10 years, first as a delivery and setup man and then as an in-store salesperson. This was his big chance to launch out on his own. Using some money that he inherited, various loans, and the investment of a silent partner, the mid-price range retail furniture store was ready for business.

Hank’s Furniture Mart was located outside the city limits of a large metropolitan subdivision. Being outside the city limits meant customers would not have to pay city sales tax. The store was part of a large corner cluster. Hank’s agreement with the other tenants was to stay out of the mattress and bedding business, because another retailer exclusively sold those items. He also agreed that he would not sell television sets or stereos, for the same reason. A “country-kitchen” chain restaurant was located across the parking lot from the retail stores. The entire shopping complex could easily be reached, because of its convenient location next to the interstate.

Hank knew any furniture store faced a variety of competitors. On the high end, stores such as Ethan Allen attracted the affluent customers. On the lower end were large warehouse-style operations offering low prices and prompt delivery of lower-quality pieces. In the middle, several retail chains sold various furnishings. Specialty stores that focused solely on recliners were also close by.

Two advantages gave Hank hope that his store would be a grand success. The first was his extensive knowledge of the retail furniture business. He knew how various stores competed, whether it was through price, quality, offering “deals,” or any other tactic. His knowledge extended to the various manufacturers. Hank knew which ones gave the best deals, which ones delivered merchandise on time (or late), and the quality levels of the pieces each sold.

The second advantage was Hank’s extensive potential customer base. Hank had been working in the retail furniture marketplace for more than a decade. He believed he had a series of loyal buyers and that word-of-mouth would be a big help.
At the same time, Hank knew he would have to advertise. He had set aside enough money to fund television spots, radio, newspaper, Internet, and specialty ads including direct mail. Hank had chosen a local agency to develop a consistent theme across all the store’s ads. He suggested the tagline “Hank’s Furniture Mart: Our prices are right and our deals are real.”

1. What type of message strategy should Hank’s Furniture Mart feature?
2. What type of executional framework should Hank’s ads utilize? Which type of appeal will the framework feature?
3. Who should be the spokesperson for the store, Hank or a paid professional actor?
4. Design a print ad for Hank’s Furniture Mart.

ENDNOTES


