

# ACHIEVING BRAND STANDOUT

The audience may have a shorter attention span and the diversion of multiple messaging channels, but traditional marketing methods still hold true, according to Jane Bainbridge

THERE WAS a time when a short attention span was considered a learning handicap and multi-tasking was only mentioned in a domestic context. But today everyone in the workplace is under increasing time pressures, with numerous channels of communication all vying for attention.

So whether it is direct mail, email, brochures, text messages or tweets, any form of communication has to work particularly hard to grab the reader's interest. For marketers, gaining brand standout is invariably about achieving succinct and salient copy, no matter what the platform.

But while the rapid development of multiple technologies in recent years has added to the mix, many argue traditional marketing rules still hold. Philip Davies, managing director, business brands at branding agency Dragon Rouge, says: "Great communications have always relied on smart, pithy, imaginative expressions or identity. It started all the way back with Julius Caesar's 'I came, I saw, I conquered'. The old tricks still apply; brands need a clear story and promise in their message."

Building a brand story and image that is understood and achieved consistently is all part of creating brand trust and recognition. And this is especially true if

you have only brief amounts of time to connect with customers. A strong and original design identity or logo means continual reinforcement is possible. Think of Apple's image, Nike's swoosh or Coca-Cola's contoured bottle shape.

## CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Graham Hales, managing director of Interbrand, says: "The challenge for brands is a paradox: consistency is important. If people are paying partial attention you must deliver messages that build on the last, but you also have to create a constant impact to get noticed."

Hales believes understanding the medium you're communicating in is vital. "You have to consider the message through the platform and understand how it works. Cadbury has done an interesting thing on Twitter where it has dropped clues on where special bars with prizes inside are, so it's using the medium to deliver the right message."

Allyson Stewart-Allen, director of International Marketing Partners, agrees and warns brands must understand the rules of new media: "The YouTube, Facebook generation is under 30, but for the 30+ age group 'old media' is still okay. What's vital is that it's

sticky content and multimedia; that it's entertaining and engaging and not a hard sell. On Twitter, brands are castigated if they go for a hard sell and then regaining credibility is tough."

She argues that brands will increasingly look at ways of appealing to the senses beyond the visual. This has already been explored successfully by brands such as Nokia, with its ringtone and Intel's jingle.

While it may initially appear that consumer brands have an advantage, Davies argues so much communication from B2B brands is poor that when a company does do it well it can really stand out. "Accenture has gone to enormous lengths to differentiate, while its competitors are all very dry," he says. "Its association with Tiger Woods and the language of performance in its identity cuts through very fast."

The key for delivering messages across platforms is to be consistent with the great brand idea, but adjust the tonality to fit with the environment. Davies advocates that it all comes down to a great idea. "I'd go with the US Patent Office's description of a powerful idea: if it is new, non-obvious and useful. If you can apply that to communication and branding then you get something pretty powerful." ●