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# Harmonized Yet in Tune with the Local Conditions: An Investigation of Global Advertising and the Inherent Challenges of Reaching Broad Audiences without Compromise

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*the school for international training*

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HARMONISED YET IN TUNE WITH THE LOCAL CONDITIONS:  
AN INVESTIGATION OF GLOBAL ADVERTISING  
AND THE INHERENT CHALLENGES OF REACHING BROAD AUDIENCES  
WITHOUT COMPROMISE

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING DEGREE  
AT THE SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING  
BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT

BY  
ALISON DYE

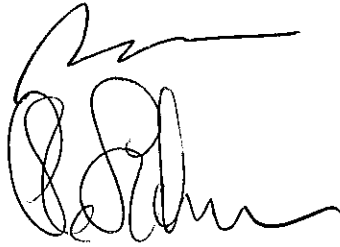
AUGUST 2001

This project by Alison Dye is accepted in its present form.

Date 31 Oct 2001

Project Advisor

Project Reader

The image shows two handwritten signatures. The top signature is for the Project Advisor and the bottom signature is for the Project Reader. Both are written in dark ink.

#### Acknowledgments

I'd hereby like to thank my students at Aalborg University within cross-cultural communications, as field research for the course led me to discover the appeal value of marketing and advertising as seen through the lens of cross-cultural theory. And subsequently to gather materials and take individual courses related to global advertising and marketing.

Certainly without the support of my absolutely shining advisors, Tino Bech Larsen and Ole Andersen, I would stand in a puddle of ambiguity – uncertain as to the merits of my thoughts and conclusions. Finally, Pat Moran provided the expert guidance to ensure that the finishing touches shine.

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## ABSTRACT

The field of advertising communications on a global scale seems to be largely driven and pulled by current trends of thought. And oftentimes pushed through the pipelines of transnational, networked agencies in search of speedy, cost-efficient and unified solutions. Certainly, reaching a broad audience with the most economical route is a real concern of companies today and will continue to be the case. I beckon brand bearers, concept developers and advertisers to merely dare to consider a more nuanced set of factors prior to spinning out global campaigns. Those elements include: an inquiry into the true existence of a global consumer with identical tastes, preferences and motivations, a survey of models of segmentation or groupings of consumers which are, indeed, homogeneous, an overview of advertising's purpose of striking an ideological consensus with the target audience, a synopsis of the formation of a set of intangible associations – a brand – via advertising communications, a delineation of the detrimental aspects of advertising and finally, a look into working samples of advertisements to emphasize the real need of considering cultural variations in creating advertisements more appropriately catered to the target audience and hence, more effective communications tools to support the sale and lifetime loyalty to a brand.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The idea for this IPP topic was conceived while conducting research for the orchestration of a cross-cultural communication class at Aalborg University in the northern realms of Denmark's fastland, Jylland. I was immediately grabbed by cross-cultural marketing's interesting scope: revealing a welcome opportunity to see both the strategic and the creative work side-by-side. The one informing, shaping and balancing the other. The creative lends a more visibly tangible and inviting embodiment of the theoretical aspects of strategy formulation. Whereas the strategic gives a framework of operational plausibility and necessary well-considered analysis to the creative elements.

Over time, a survey of international marketing literature through formal coursework as well as independent study revealed my more specific interest in international advertising.

Initially, my focus was upon the cultural *faux pas* found in many examples of cross-border print advertisements. Further, I was convinced of the need for adaptation-that is, that all advertisements crossing borders should definitely be adapted so as to take into account the cultural differences found around the globe. My stance was strengthened by personal experiences of subtle, yet profound differences of communication style, both non-verbal and verbal between Danes and myself. Although the two cultures appear rather similar on the surface, especially as economics, technology and lifestyle are concerned, in reality the

barriers to communication made integration a longer process than expected. Granted many of these differences were intriguing and piqued my interest in learning more about Danes through both cultural readings and observation, they were real. And they prompted me to emphasize the need for profound insight into a culture and definitely adaptation to ideals, codes and norms – both written and unwritten.

As a result, adaptation of international advertising is a prime focal point of my research. Thus, collecting, observing and noting the individual factors which highlight the need for adaptation is a focal point of my research and analysis in order to inform the world of advertising – both scholars and practitioners alike. When adaptations are taken into consideration, practitioners are able to yield more careful executions which appropriately direct communications to the market as well as support the brand, products and sales. Similarly, when scholars stress adaption to local cultures, they are also better equipped to conduct research and build on existing theories with more refined, potentially groundbreaking, ideas.

An exhaustive review of the literatures reveals the list of considerations for the extent of adapting advertisements to include a host of other significant factors affecting advertising communication; namely:

- affordability of products due to state of economy
- nature of products (i.e. durables, non-durables)
- media availability
- desired features of products
- legislative barriers to advertising such as regulations surrounding comparable nature thereof
- interpretation tendencies due to culture
- target audience tastes, preferences and buying habits
- color usage in advertisement
- de-coding tendencies of target audience
- cultural factors of target audience including Hofstede's 5 dimensions: individualism, masculinity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and time
- intended use of product.

Without question, practitioners and scholars have much to take into consideration in making advertising effectively, successfully communicated to the target audience.

This said, however, after surveying hundreds of articles and arguments supporting a neither/nor view, my initial stance of across the board adaptation has changed. It is less characterised by polarised views and instead, embodies recognition of a broader spectrum of nuanced factors to consider. In other words, the decision of advertisement transferability should not be limited to the two extremes of standardization or adaptation. Rather, a rational choice should be made along the continuum of standardization and adaptation after considering the many factors of its transferability. Sound decisions are reflective of careful consideration of all relevant factors and allow for a good combination of both ends of the spectrum.



As an example, I would site the revised principles and policies of Coca-Cola in adjusting individual facets of their product mix – such as the formula tasting more indigenous, i.e. more spices in India – as well as allowing for local subsidiaries to have a voice in the execution of advertising campaigns in their respective regions. Previously, Coca-Cola was renowned for pure standardized solutions. Today many more features are indeed, adapted to support both the local culture and local sales volume.

As my research progressed, I felt the need to explore grander and broader issues related to advertising in my exhaustive collection and exploration of the materials available within the field. As a result, my IPP extends beyond



globalisation, segmentation and the pure study of cross-cultural advertising into other realms including a basic overview of the advertising industry, the interconnectivity with branding, the unintended negative consequences of advertising and positive reinforcement of the need to adapt advertisements to the target audience via a look into working samples.

Hence, the scope and nature of my IPP provides an overview of advertising – both in general and with particular emphasis on the factors which bear influence in international campaigns. The reader should be expected to glean insights into the grander world of advertising and many of the considerations included in the planning, execution and evaluation of advertising, particularly on an international scale.

Whether an observer, practitioner or scholar in the field, the intention of the IPP is to provide the reader with an orientation to the field of advertising communications with a specific emphasis on intercultural aspects. It is also my hope that readers involved in the field may be inspired to perceive their work in a different, engaging way as seen from the frameworks and models provided here. To improve effectiveness. And hopefully to inform you to take a closer look the next time you should glance through the pages of a glossy magazine.

The journey of inspiration commences with a foundational, thorough look into the considerations for the audience within advertising. Namely, the nature of consumers regionally or globally as regards to the extent of their homogeneity. The central question is this: Can advertising be standardized so as to capture the benefits of unified campaign roll-outs or are standardized advertisements premature due to the complexity of markets and consumers lending heterogeneity tangible applications? Certainly certain product categories – high tech, high tech and the service industry show signs of convergence. Yet

preferences/tastes, desires, needs, evaluations of appeals and purchasing motivations are more often than not a reflection of historical, cultural and economic realities differing from region to region or even country to country. Consequently, adapted advertising campaigns a wise step to take. And ensure that the product sales are supported as opposed to potentially offending consumers and weakening sales. Hence, although many signs of the emerging Euro-consumer and global consumer are visible realities, careful consideration of the individual market differences ensures a more nuanced, appropriately targeted campaign with respect for the local market and individual consumer.

Given the recognition of market and consumer differentiation, how do agencies take into account the need to cater communications accordingly? The second chapter, Grouping the Target Audience Across Countries: Segmentation, deals with this question. Models which highlight the specific factors which unite groups of consumers within and across cultural boundaries provide guidance so as to sharpen advertising campaigns and ensure successful reception of the campaigns, products and brand. Over time, these models reveal more nuanced considerations reflecting the market complexity. An analysis of many useful models, all of which reveal applicatory value, is thoroughly investigated in the second chapter dealing with segmentation.

The next chapter, Promotional Paradise, highlights the necessary link between segmentation and ultimately, gaining nuanced understanding of the target audience in order to create communications messages of appeal value. Even if the connection to audiences is symbolic, the ability to lend advertising communications captivating and ideological appeal is of key concern. These messages should initially forge a connection to the world of the consumer and encourage the product purchase and ultimately, lifetime loyalty.

These advertising communications ultimately serve to create value associations or a brand identity. Chapter 4, Bridge to a Brand, succinctly investigates the notion of a brand and the impact advertising communications have on shaping the concepts, values and associations of a brand. Ultimately, advertising should reflect the organisational values and visions so as to be a harmonious entity.

Leadership of an organisation bears immense responsibility in ensuring that the corporate and brand values relayed to advertising agencies, and in turn, reflected through the executional elements of advertisements - from the message, visuals and symbolisation – are ethically responsible. Chapter 6, Advertising : Some of the Unintended Negative Consequences, explores a wide range of those key issues which do, in fact, bear impact on societal norms and individuals' working conceptions, attitudes, self-esteem, reference groups and one's sense of belonging to those groups. And hence, highlights the immense power borne by advertising communications.

To round off all subsequent explorations, the final chapter, Culturally-Bound Factors of Advertising, links pivotal notions concerning standardisation and adaptation via case samples to the introductory chapters. In living colour examples serve to underline the existence of cultural frameworks which impact the encoding and decoding of advertising communications. Advertisements reveal culturally-bound systems at work in the representations of messages and the response patterns. The analysis of real ads supported by research and experts in the field undergirds the necessity of local variations so as to provide the most extensive reach, ideological identification and hence, successful support of sales, the brand and the organisation.

The conclusion takes a nuanced look into the factors which play a role within global advertising communications and asserts that the consideration of local

varieties to optimally reach audiences through relevant and accessible appeals is a reality. Despite the pulls toward economies of scale and the standardized solutions seemingly advocated by the mass media, academians and the advertising industry itself. On a closer look we can see highlights that the existence of a Euro-consumer, the sweeping notion of the homogenized global teenager segment and the reality of one global communications platform is oversimplified. Regional differences within a single country surprisingly impact the interpretation, response patterns and thus, successful reach or devastating flop of advertising campaigns.

So, with careful consideration of the notions explored in this IPP, communications which more effectively target local audiences can simultaneously be economically sound solutions and harmonised messages. And thereby provide the most reaching support of product, brand and organisation – leading to identification with the brand values and loyalty over a lifetime.

## CHAPTER 2

### EXISTENCE OF THE HOMOGENEOUS GLOBAL CONSUMER

One of the fundamental preliminary considerations in establishing advertising strategy is determining the stance taken towards the nature of consumers.

Ultimately, consumers are the target audience of advertising; thus necessitating a thorough understanding of the consumer segment to ensure the most effective and appropriately directed communication. Two schools of thought exist surrounding the nature of consumers:

1. consumers are converging on a global basis, becoming increasingly homogeneous
2. consumers are heterogeneous and prefer local appeals and products

Clearly, the international advertising strategy of a company adhering to the theory of consumer divergence across cultures will differ from that of the advocate of the global consumer. The former will presumably adapt the advertising message appropriately, whereas the latter will standardize it, allowing only for translations as necessary.

One of the forerunners of the school of standardization, Eric Elinder, is credited for sparking the debate between the merits of standardization and adaptation (Walters 1986, 57). Elinder argued for uniform advertising as consumer differences from nation to nation are diminishing. Coupled with increasing international mobility and the greater availability of international media, he considered standardized advertising both "feasible and desirable" (Walters 1986, 57).

Although he gained support by some of his contemporaries, others were hesitant to readily accept the new-founded notions of globalization. Instead they insisted on the persistence of cultural barriers which limit the transferability of advertising across borders.

However, on the other side it can be argued that a communicator should rightly take cognizance of the differences between consumers in his own country and those in other countries. They not only speak another tongue, but they adhere to other religions, philosophies, and traditions; they differ with regard to family patterns, childhood training, and the role of members in the family. The occupational hierarchy varies among nations; climate and geography and other aspects of consumers' physical environment are diverse; consumers engage in a wide variety of sports, hobbies and other forms of amusement and entertainment. These environmental differences play an important part in shaping the demand for specific types of goods and services and in determining what promotional appeals are best. Thus while human nature and the motives of men are more or less universal, the ways in which men satisfy their needs are not. The nature of need satisfaction is determined by cultural and socio-economic conditions. Since such conditions are not the same in all countries, it may be argued that products, or the appeals, illustrations, and other advertising features used to sell them, often must differ from market to market.... The obstacles to effective communication...are magnified because of the relative heterogeneity of buyers in diverse markets. (Miracle 1968, 30)

Another argument emphasizes the cultural values underlying promotional campaigns as well as the product itself.

While it can always be said that consumers are individuals with different needs, motivations, or desires, it is also axiomatic that individuals within a culture generally rely on basic hard-core values for all types of decisions - those dealing with consumption as well as others. This common core of values is reflected in [a country's] way of life. Part of this way of life results in a characteristic approach to the evaluation of goods and services as well as the product information that supports them. For the marketing manager, knowledge of this approach and its role in the consumer's evaluation of products and product claims is essential.... Further, the ability to compare the characteristics of a number of national markets results in guidelines for adapting domestic marketing strategies to other countries. It is such adaptations that facilitate successful overseas market expansion. (Sommers and Kernan 1967, 89-90)

The majority of subsequent literature in the 1970s continues to support the tenet that worldwide consumers are, indeed, divergent with distinct needs, motivations, evaluations and use of products, preferences, tastes and economic

status, amongst other factors. Formal studies were paramount in citing the evidence against standardized advertising targeted to global consumers. Then, Theodore Levitt arrived on the scene in the early 80s, propagating globalization's call for total standardization of consumers around the globe. He claimed that "worldwide transportation and communication are making consumer demands universal and cultural differences inconsequential. The worldwide marketplace has become homogenized and basic needs, wants and expectations transcend geographical boundaries" (Moriarty and Duncan 1992, 318). Levitt is even bold enough to state the uncompromising, extreme view that different cultural preferences and national tastes "are vestiges of the past" (Levitt 1983, 96).

Levitt's extreme, uncompromising claims triggered a steady stream of research as to the extent of globalizations' reach. Results of most consumer behavior research found that significant differences in consumers still exist across cultures (Agrawal 1995, 41). Scholars have argued that data concerning consumer convergence is inconclusive due to the complex nature of determining how national culture influences consumer decision-making (Harris 1996, 552). Walters concluded that "despite the optimistic forecasts, there is little evidence to support the notion that the age of the international or even the European consumer has finally arrived" (Walters 1986, 61). Moderate views are the norm. This is illustrated by the following:

There is some evidence from proprietary industry research that consumer tastes are converging across national boundaries for some high-touch categories (especially those targeting 'transnational tribes' of affluent or style-conscious consumers) and for some high-tech categories and for some service categories (e.g. airlines, credit cards, airfreight delivery, etc.). However, this convergence of consumer needs and tastes cannot necessarily be assumed to be occurring at the same pace and to the same degree for all multinational packaged goods (e.g. soaps, shampoos, toothpaste, packaged foods, etc.) or for all types of services or business-to-business or industrial product categories. (Banerjee 1994, 98)

Thus, assertions do not have to be so polarized and oversimplified. Rather, consumer convergence and divergence mutually co-exist. For example, within Europe we see both trends simultaneously. On one hand, the emergence of tighter cooperation of European-wide trade legislation has lowered barriers and tariffs; thus allowing for easier flow of goods between countries. In turn this has enabled companies to create 'Euro-products' which appeal to similar segments across country borders. Many of these products are also internationally known and accepted. On the other hand, resurgence of national pride and preference for the local product is evident. Germans in the former east long for products now obsolete due to the capitalist invasion of unification. Yearnings for their previous laundry detergent and mustard replace the initial euphoria for products from the west. Even in Denmark there is resistance to buying other than 'Made in Denmark' food products.

Moreover, the recent uproar by the EU surrounding the rejection of US beef injected with growth enhancers and hormones is a further example. Europeans remain significantly more skeptical surrounding the use of growth hormones and genetic manipulation of foodstuff than do Americans. Americans tend to be more eager to accept such agricultural advances as well as to believe the claims of the USDA that such manipulated food poses no threats. However, international scientists have not reached a consensus on the long-term safety issues involved. The technology is simply too recent, lacking sufficient research and data about its impact on both humans and the environment. Therefore, consumers' preferences across the Atlantic are quite divergent.

In e-mail correspondence with the renowned advertising scholar John Philip Jones, even he emphasized that increasing homogenization is an outdated concept.



The pursuit of globalization was a chimera that preoccupied the advertising business during the 1960s and 1970s. It was associated with Marshall McLuhan's 'global village' and the fanciful theories of Theodore Levitt.

Many advertisers burnt their fingers and realized that globalization was not nearly as easy as it was thought to be.

During the last decade or two, a much more sensible attitude has been developed. International advertising ideas are rolled out and adapted as necessary to local conditions. There has also been a resurgence of interest in regional campaigns.

I believe that this is the way that the business will proceed; very carefully and pragmatically. An important thing to remember is that for every example of international harmony, there is more than one example of international disharmony. In almost every country one can think of, individual racial elements are causing a splintering. In Spain, people now use two languages and not one; Britain is now becoming three nations. Hispanic speakers are now an extremely important element in the United States. Canada is in real danger of becoming two countries; also Belgium. You can read what is happening in Yugoslavia; also Russia. (Jones 1999)

In conclusion, the notion of consumer similarity across the globe points out the complexity of the issue and the inability to reach a firm conclusion with substantiated evidence. Neither extreme, either total homogeneity or total heterogeneity, seems sensible in formulating advertising strategy. Instead, judiciously analyzing both forces at work simultaneously, despite their seemingly contradictory character, offers a viable solution. Only in doing such, can advertisers capture the true reflection of consumers in our complex postmodern world.

## CHAPTER 3

### GROUPING THE TARGET AUDIENCE ACROSS COUNTRIES: SEGMENTATION

Given the inability of scholars and practitioners alike to find firm empirical evidence for consumer homogeneity across the globe, the need thus arises to identify similar consumer groups that transcend national boundaries. Global companies recognize that it is impossible to effectively serve the entire consumer base in the global market. Instead of creating diffuse, generalized advertising based on the lowest common denominator, a company should distinguish the major market segments for focused communication efforts (Kotler 1997, 249). Advertising thereby addresses a specific, similar audience that cuts across national borders.

Segmenting the heterogeneous global market into groups of relatively homogeneous consumers according to relevant characteristics allows a company to reap the advantages of standardization as well as customization (Baalbaki and Malhotra 1993, 20). Messages will reach as broad an audience as possible while simultaneously appealing to a specific group within the larger global market.

Segmentation is, indeed, quite desirable for global competitiveness. Once a company has accepted the premise of implementing segmentation, then the next step is to determine the variables that are most relevant and applicable to its advertising activities. Moreover, it is important to choose variables that effectively identify segments of consumers who exhibit similar responses to advertising stimuli (Baalbaki and Malhotra 1993, 21). The primary segmentation variables for

*domestic* marketing are geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioral (Kotler 1997, 256). However, the literature within *international* advertising/marketing displays variations of those basic, overriding categories of variables. Further, the most appropriate and useful market segments are measurable, substantial, accessible, differentiable and actionable (Kotler 1997, 269). Identifying segmentation variables that allow for the delineation of global market segments that meet these five criteria is a difficult process. The following pages reveal the variations in identifying segments that best meet those criteria.

Grouping countries by their common geographic region offers an obvious solution for segmentation. For example, all Asian countries are grouped together and treated as a segment with similar response patterns to advertising stimuli. Yet, as early as 1971, the value of segmenting countries according to geographical proximity was questioned (Sethi 1971, 348 and Walters 1996, 367).

This simple approach is of doubtful value because it assumes that adjoining countries have similar cultural, religious, socioeconomic and political characteristics as well as similar marketing and distribution networks, or that the significance of homogeneity, or lack thereof, among adjoining countries is of little importance to an international company. This approach does not consider different determinants of buying decisions and buying processes. Furthermore, it ignores varying capacities of different firms to take advantage of these factors in different countries. (Sethi 1971, 348)

The essential problem lies in the limited scope of country clusters. The goal is to delineate segments cutting across national boundaries, not isolated segments in limited areas. Moreover, within country ethno-linguistic diversity and other differences oftentimes exist; thereby completely annulling the notion of homogeneity within one country (Walters 1996, 371). A 1993 study evaluated country segmentation approaches and found limited evidence of their usefulness in isolation (Walters 1996, 368). An alternative is to utilize country clustering as only a first step in a multi-stage segmentation process.

In a similar vein, focusing only on cultural factors in order to predict the most prevalent advertising appeals for international markets is also an oversimplified approach to segmentation. Nevertheless, a recent article (1995) clearly provides a foundation for the application of Hofstede's cultural dimensions to advertising practice. Focusing only on Europe, the premise of the article is that despite economic integration, cultural integration has not followed. Europe is still considered "clusters of various cultures rather than one monolithic entity" (Kale 1995, 46). Insights into advertising practice are offered based on grouping countries according to Hofstede's 4 dimensions<sup>1</sup>. The link between culture and advertising is that both mediate meaning. Thus, similar cultures share similar modes of managing meaning and thus, similar advertising campaigns will appeal to similar cultures (Kale 1995, 41). Kale offers concrete advice that high masculinity cultures such as Great Britain and Austria prefer portrayals of progress, success, performance and achievement. And weak uncertainty avoidance cultures such as Denmark and the Netherlands are receptive to novel advertising appeals (Kale 1995, 42-44). However, even the author concedes that cultural grouping is too broad and should serve as a first step toward designating more homogeneous cross-national market segments. Another researcher succinctly concurs:

However, cultural similarity does not necessarily imply convergence of consumer behavior and an emphasis on culturally based segmentation variables, in isolation from other important factors, may lead to erroneous conclusions regarding standardization opportunities. On the other hand, even when the cultural context is diverse, underlying patterns of uniformity in consumption behavior may allow for standardization of important dimensions of overseas business and marketing operations. (Walters 1996, 366)

- 
- <sup>1</sup> *power distance*: deals with the way society handles human inequality. Large power distance societies are characterized by inequalities in power, status and wealth.
  - *uncertainty avoidance*: reflects how society deals with uncertainty and ambiguity. Strong uncertainty avoidance cultures need to control uncertainty by being risk-averse, planning-oriented and dogmatic in their beliefs and opinions.
  - *individualism vs. collectivism*: measures a culture's emphasis on the pursuit of individual goals as opposed to those of the group.
  - *masculinity vs femininity*: refers to the extent to which cultures endorse status, accomplishment and achievement as opposed to general welfare and quality of life.

The above argument is well illustrated in a 1987 article by Kale and Sudharshan. It recognizes the limitations of utilizing countries as the basis of marketing strategy and, instead, emphasizes the inherent similarities of groups of consumers across country boundaries. Furthermore, the authors assert that within-country heterogeneity and across-country similarity allow for cross-national market segments (Kale and Sudharshan 1987, 60-61). Their solution-Strategically Equivalent Segmentation (SES)-presents transnational segments of consumers who are likely to respond similarly to an advertising campaign. The following steps illustrate SES in action (Kale and Sudharshan 1987, 62-67).

### **Strategically Equivalent Segmentation**

1. **CRITERIA DEVELOPMENT**
  - A. *QUALIFYING DIMENSIONS*: Does country X have the infrastructure to support market expansion? (i.e. economic/legal conditions)
  - B. *DETERMINING DIMENSIONS*: Factors relevant to individual companies' marketing efforts. (i.e. demographic variables)
2. **SCREENING**: Apply qualifying dimensions to determine viable countries.
3. **MICROSEGMENTATION**: Find submarkets within each country.
4. **CLUSTERING of MICROSEGMENTS ACROSS COUNTRIES**: Find similarities amongst microsegments which cross borders using factor analysis.

The Strategically Equivalent Segmentation model offers an integrated, interactive method for individual companies to find inter-market segments most relevant to their specific needs; a significant leap of thought. The only flaw is that SES fails to include a comprehensive list of variables. It presupposes that the firm considering targeting its advertising towards specific segments within different countries can easily extrapolate the determining and qualifying dimensions. However, SES serves as a beneficial framework for later, more comprehensive work.

A 1991 study conducted by Sriram and Gopalakrishna successfully delineated, defined and justified the use of specific segmentation variables, namely:

- ☐ economic variables
- ☐ cultural variables

- media use and availability.

Following the tradition of decades of earlier scholars, economic similarity was deemed an essential prerequisite for successful standardized advertising in that it enabled an initial grouping of countries based on common economic indicators. Economic similarity is, however, a necessary, but not sufficient factor for global strategy.

For example, Boddewyn noted little usage of standardization among economically similar countries within the EU (Sriram and Gopalakrishna 1991, 141). Thus, cultural factors based on Hofstede's four dimensions were also deemed necessary to more accurately determine which countries belonged together. These cultural dimensions influence the behavior, views and attitudes of individuals within national cultures. Response to advertising stimuli is in turn directly affected by the dominant cultural norms. Further, standardization is also dependent on the ability to access a target audience; thereby necessitating the availability of media as well as similarity in media usage across borders as criteria in grouping the cluster countries (Sriram and Gopalakrishna 1991, 140-142). Table 1 outlines those specific variables.

TABLE 1. SRIRAM and GOPALAKRISHNA'S VARIABLES

<b><i>Economic availability/use</i></b>	<b><i>Culture</i></b>	<b><i>Media</i></b>
Male life expectancy	Power distance	Paper circulation
Female life expectancy	Uncertainty avoidance	Television
Average work week	Individualism	Radio
Telephones in use	Masculinity	TV advertising spending
Urban population		Radio advertising spending
Annual inflation rate		Outdoor advertising
spending		
Per capita GNP		Cinema advertising
spending		
Literacy		
Population growth rate		

Source: Sriram, Ven and Pradeep Gopalakrishna. 1991. Can Advertising be Standardized Among Similar Countries? A Cluster-Based Analysis. *International Journal of Advertising*, 10, no. 2: 142.

Analysis of these variables reveal 40 countries clustered into six groups. The results were validated by both factor analysis and discriminant analysis. The authors contend that their study is useful in identifying the countries that are more likely to be successfully reached with standardized advertising campaigns. Further, they offer this study as a model for flexible applications. For example, the advertising department of a company seeking expanded exposure can select only those variables relevant to their campaign and conduct a similar analysis of the relevant countries where standardized advertising is desirable (Sriram and Gopalakrishna 1991, 147). Table 2 identifies the six clusters of countries.

TABLE 2. SRIRAM and GOPALAKRISHNA'S SIX CLUSTERS

1	2	3	4	5	6
Argentina	Australia	Austria	Denmark	India	Japan
Brazil	Canada	Belgium	Finland	Iran	
Mexico	Hong Kong	Chile	Holland	Pakistan	
Yugoslavia	Ireland	Colombia	Norway	Philippines	
	New Zealand	France	Sweden	Thailand	
	Peru	Germany			
	South Africa	Greece			
	Singapore	Israel			
	UK	Italy			
	USA	Portugal			
	Venezuela	Spain			
		Switzerland			
		Taiwan			
		Turkey			

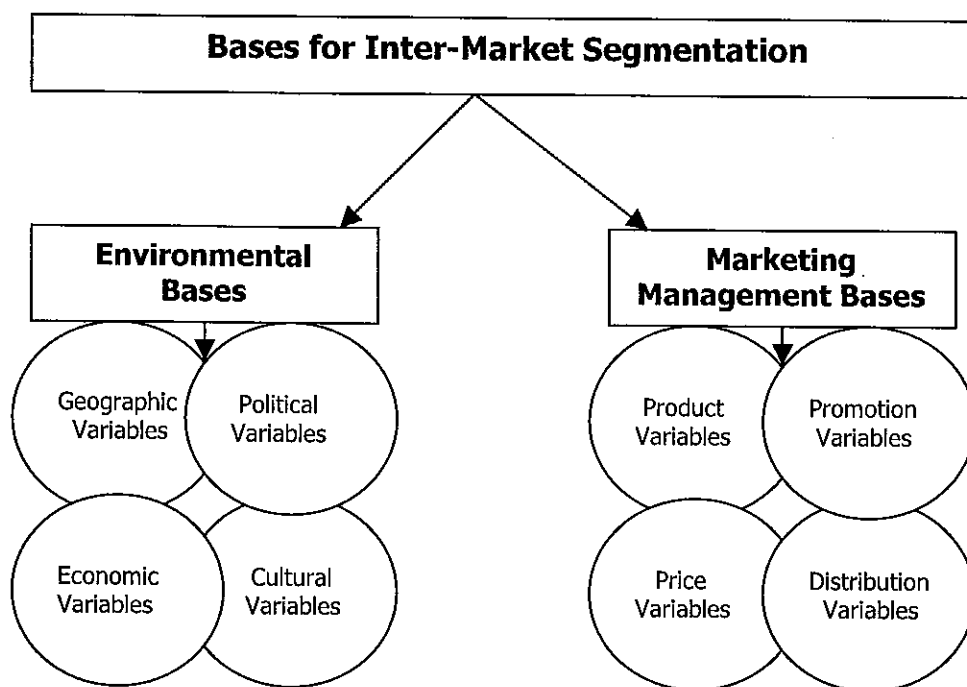
Source: Sriram, Ven and Pradeep Gopalakrishna. 1991. Can Advertising be Standardized Among Similar Countries? A Cluster-Based Analysis. *International Journal of Advertising*, 10, no. 2: 144.

A later study (1993) also recognizes the benefits of targeting marketing efforts to well-defined segments of consumers on a worldwide basis. The study emphasizes the notion of inter-market segments; an improvement of earlier theories - Levitt's "single world segment" as well as "country clusters"- but based on Kale and Sudharshan's revelations (Baalbaki and Malhotra 1993, 38). Inter-market segments are defined as groups of consumers that transcend national

borders but possess common characteristics relevant to a particular marketing activity (Baalbaki and Malhotra 1993, 38).

Moreover, the proposed solution offers a novel method to determine suitable global segments; namely, to utilize both environmental and marketing management bases. Environmental bases include geographic, political, economic and cultural variables. These variables are familiar, as they have been the basis for all previous research. The new angle is to analyze the use of marketing management bases as well; that is, the elements of the marketing mix-i.e. product, promotion, price and distribution variables. Figure 1 highlights those variables.

Figure 1. Baalbaki and Malhotra's Variables for Segmentation



The authors contend that previous use of only environmental variables does not provide sufficient information to accurately determine segments (Baalbaki and Malhotra 1993, 21-22). Inclusion of marketing management bases is only logical



given the integral nature of the marketing mix in strategy formulation. Product-, promotion-, price- and distribution-related variables "impinge on the decision regarding the appropriate degree of standardization of the marketing strategy" (Baalbaki and Malhotra 1993, 23).

Relying heavily on earlier research, Baalbaki and Malhotra compile a comprehensive list of variables within the marketing mix which impact the segmentation process. An example illustrating the variables which influence promotion strategy is shown in table 3. The analyses' findings are plugged into each set of variables (both marketing management and environmental bases) in order to determine a market profile for each country. Next, those markets that have relatively equivocal variables are grouped into a segment. Finally, segmentation of homogeneous markets around the globe offers a solution for determining the degree of advertising standardization.

Table 3. Baalbaki and Malhotra's Promotion-related Variables that Influence the Degree of Standardization of Advertising Campaigns

- Interpretation and understanding of an advertisement's theme, slogan, idiomatic expression, words, symbols and colors.
- Cultural norms.
- Level of consumer literacy and education.
- Attitudes towards foreign campaigns.
- The availability and coverage of promotional infrastructure (i.e. commercial media, TV, radio, newspapers, etc.).
- Preferred modes of communication.
- Mode, speed and level of consumer learning about a product.
- Government regulations and restrictions.
- Competitive offerings and expenditures.

Source: Baalbaki, Imad and Naresh Malhotra. 1993. Marketing Management Bases for International Market Segmentation: An Alternate Look at the Standardization/Customization Debate. *International Marketing Review* 10, no. 1: 30-33.

The proposed solution by Baalbaki and Malhotra is the most sophisticated and dynamic global segmentation model thusfar. The carefully considered and thorough list of variables allows for a more nuanced and accurate delineation of inter-market segments. It reflects the reality of today's increasingly complex world-the co-existence of two seemingly opposing forces-intra-country heterogeneity and inter-country homogeneity. Just as earlier models allowed for flexible application, it is based on the individuality of the company. Companies apply those variables most relevant to their advertising needs. However, this emphasis on individual needs as well as the changing nature of the input-variables also presents a drawback in that no ready-made model with segments of target groups is depicted. Thus, empirical testing of the reliability and validity of those variables is also neglected. The authors themselves recognize this deficiency and welcome that empirical investigation. Yet, the major accomplishments of this model-pulling together the work of others in a savvy, thorough manner-must not be overlooked.

A recent model conquers both problems by including examples of relevant segments as well as exhibiting valid results proven by correspondence and cluster analysis. Offering a divergent methodology, the study identifies cross-national market segments based on the means-end chain theory. The means-end chain theory focuses on the consumer instead of countries, an advantageous angle for identifying international segments more effectively (Jain 1989, 75).

The MEC theory posits that links exist between product attributes, the benefits of product use and consumers' values: "Attributes lead to benefits, which contribute to value satisfaction" (Hofstede, Steenkamp and Wedel 1999, 3). Thus, communication strategies should associate the product attributes with both desired benefits and personal values of the target consumer segments. Persuasive claims

of the product asserted in advertising campaigns are associated with those benefits, which, in turn, are reflective of consumer values. In linking attributes with benefits and values, advertising communications meet the challenges of competitive global consumer markets; that is, they respond adequately to the core values and needs of those target consumers (Hassan and Kaynak 1994, 20).

The study specifically focuses on European consumers in the yogurt market.

The segmentation variables utilized are:

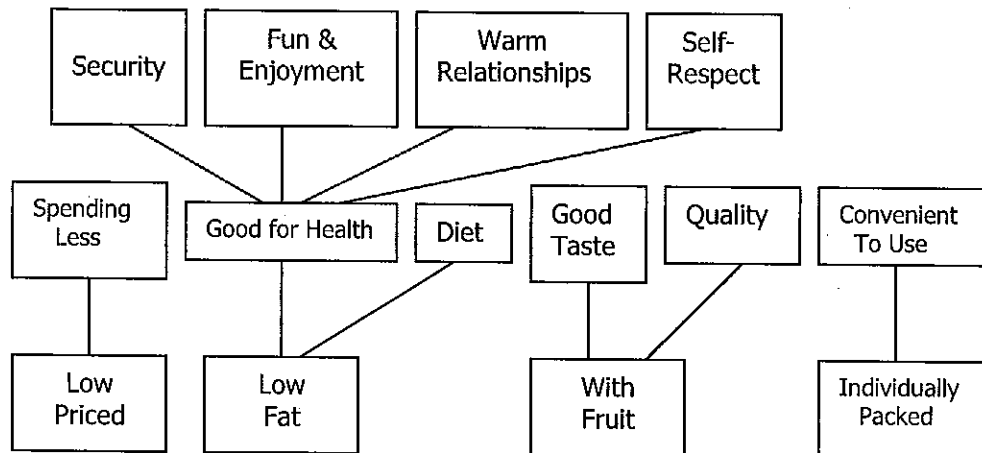
- Sociodemographics
- Consumption Patterns
- Media Consumption
- Personality and Attitudes.

Profiles of consumers based on those variables form useful segments. Those segments' representations of attributes, benefits and values reveal advertising strategy. Namely, the product should be positioned differently in segments according to the segment-specific benefits and values to which the product's main attributes are perceived to lead (Hofstede, Steenkamp and Wedel 1999, 11).

For example, the means-end chain in figure 2 reveals a segment that tends to be older and less educated, to have lower incomes and to live in less urbanized areas. They spend less on yogurt and are less innovative, less deal prone and less involved with yogurt. The segment is a cross-national mix including Denmark, Great Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Greece and Spain. The central benefit is *good for health*, which is linked with the four values and the attribute of *low fat*. Since the links between attributes and values give rise to strategic implications for advertising communication, advertising campaigns should, thus, associate yogurt with security, hedonic, social or self-respect values (Hofstede, Steenkamp and Wedel 1999, 7).

Figure 2: Example Means-End Chain for Segmentation

(Note that the upper row represents values, the middle row benefits and the lower row attributes)



Source: Hofstede, Frenkel ter, Jan-Benedict EM Steenkamp and Michel Wedel. 1999. International Market Segmentation Based on Consumer-Product Relations. *Journal of Marketing Research* 36, no.1: 8.

Therefore, the means-end chain method provides guidelines for advertising strategies by revealing meaningful linkages between the product attributes as well as the desired benefits and the consumers' values within each target segment.

A final method, popular in the 1990s, capitalizes on consumer characteristics by forming segments on the basis of lifestyle criteria. Lifestyle implies consumer interests, perceptions and way of life in all spheres, both work- and leisure-related. The dimensions of lifestyle utilized to define segments include activities, interests, opinions and demographic information (Walters 1996, 368). In such, a lifestyle-based advertisement targeted towards a trade broker in New York City would appeal to his counterparts in Paris and Tokyo more so than to another American, albeit a working class American living in rural New York State. Global lifestyle segments include information seekers, teenagers, elite, modern, urban and pro-energy-conservative (Wang 1996, 93).

Another model used to help marketers and advertising agents most appropriately target their markets and undergird brand connectivity is based on the notion of socio-styles (Piper 1990). The authors concede that 2 identifiable

forces are at work in the minds of consumers. Even if diametrically opposed to one another and rather oversimplified, the initial classification of consumers into either functionalists or idea/value-driven socio-styles can provide helpful guidance in determining the motivations of consumers across cultural boundaries. Examples of such in advertising would include factual explication of a product's ability to add value to a consumer's life. Statistics, results from surveys or market research, uncontested product properties and the like highlight the functionality of a product. An idea/value-driven add could include a visually-dominant image accompanied by succinct text. Product attributes need not be mentioned. The image of the product and a little philosophical text ooze with quality and a perception of the brand. And leave an imprint in the minds as well as consciousness of the consumer.

Most consumers lie somewhere along the continuum of either. Yet, given some product categories, advertisers reap benefit from knowing which appeals have the capacity to sell. That is, to connect to a consumer. To tap into a consumer's sense of identity. Be it a consumer's real or perceived/ideal identity. And thereby create an edge when the consumer is in the marketplace of purchasing options.

The following list highlights further ways of flushing out the array of possible consumers:

- Dreamers – domesticated, stability significant, home-centred appeals work
- Ambitious – dynamic, urban, well-educated who want variety and choice
- Pioneer – well-educated, high incomes, dynamic humanists – scientific & social progress significant to them so choices should reflect these values
- Notables – traditional values, well-educated, high incomes, family in focus so premium quality appeals work

- Contestors – eco-minded, personal development, ideology-driven, social justice appeals with heart and the organic label
- Business – ambitious, competitive, dynamic, trends within health/fitness, high earners characterised by no fear of exhibitionism. Hedonistic appeals work
- Strict – ultra-repressive moralists who want law & order. Slow to accept change. Invest rather than consume. Good value for money works.

These are merely some of the ways in which advertisers can consider the ideal target market for a product and its attributes as well as the ideal lines of communication which would be penultimate in piquing interest, building positive associations, creating a memorable brand identity and eventually leading to lifetime loyalty. Several appeals at work simultaneously to appeal to a broader cross-section of society can be an art form.

To further illustrate other modes of segmenting consumers according to lifestyle characteristics, an *elite* lifestyle segment can be found in every corner of the globe. Due to overall increased wealth and widespread travel, the elite lifestyle segment shares the desire to own products internationally acknowledged as prestigious and of quality lasting a lifetime (Hassan and Katsanis 1991, 20-21). These consumers aspire to premium products, such as Mercedes Benz, American Express Gold Card, Hugo Boss and Bang & Olufsen, associated with images of leadership, exclusivity, high quality and status.

Similarly, teenagers across the globe (particularly in western and newly industrialized countries) share similar tastes and preferences as consumers of fashion, music and other trend items. Certainly, exposure to the media's increasingly wider global penetration furthers the homogenization of teenagers while their values and cultural norms are still somewhat pliable (Hassan and Katsanis 1991, 22).

Some scholars opt to combine lifestyle considerations with the lifestage of a person. Female dominance and career-orientation can be emphasised for women spanning from 20-mid 30s. Green awareness for university students. Home appeals for the newly wed couple. Working typologies which provide primarily emotional magnetism via metaphor or visuals can bear such interesting classifications as:

- The Divine
- The Princess/Prince
- The Olympian
- The Partner
- The Seductress/The Macho
- The Pygmalion

For example, an advertisement for Wilkinson's shaving tools appeals to the vision of a squire. Associations of knights of the round table, tradition and belonging to a certain social caste give emotional aura to the product. And establishes itself in the subconsciousness of the onlooker as magnetising, a product one can identify with.

However, although lifestyle is an appealing basis for segmentation, local cultural and other situational variables play a predominant role in consumer response. For example, legal and governmental differences vary across countries, thereby also modifying consumer access from country to country (Walters 1996, 371). The product category is quite a determining factor in the extent of persuasive and effectiveness of globally standardised advertising appeals. Given the complexity of other socio-psycho factors at work, lifestyle segmentation is a helpful guidepost, yet does reveal limited nuances on a broader base and hence, should be only one of several models considered. Distinct product categories such as high-tech and high-touch do reveal homogeneity across the globe and would as such tend to provide helpful guideposts for understanding the purchaser's motivational framework.

In conclusion, all of the theories and models presented are insightful and of definite usefulness for practitioners and academicians alike. On careful analysis and consideration of the models' application value and ability to capture the complexity of market forces and consumer preferences, Baalbaki and Malhotra provide a model most reflective of the multi-faceted variables which play a significant role in today's global communications. The model builds on previous discoveries so as to take into account the most thorough examination of geographic, political, economic and political variables which can ingeniously be individually applied to market realities. In such, I firmly stand behind and recommend Baalbaki and Malhotra as a model of excellence most helpful in ensuring successful rollouts of communications across country and cultural boundaries.



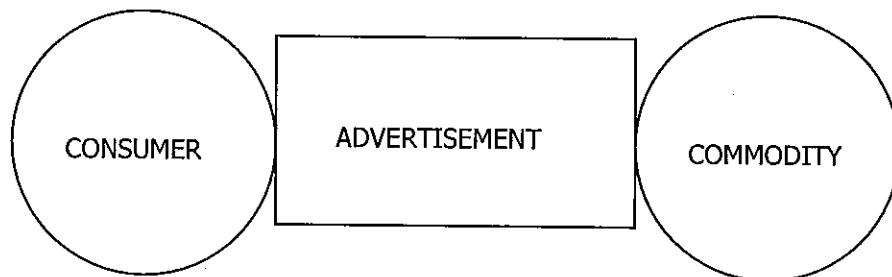
## CHAPTER 4

### PROMOTIONAL PARADISE

Given that advertisers have classified consumers on thorough consideration of the models of segmentation, the next step is to consider the alchemy of consumer, product and message in combination. The end goal of segmentation is to ease advertiser's role of communicating product appeals. Appeals which are unforgettable in the mind of the audience. And which lend themselves to an ideological consensus between their image and a person with a purchase in mind.

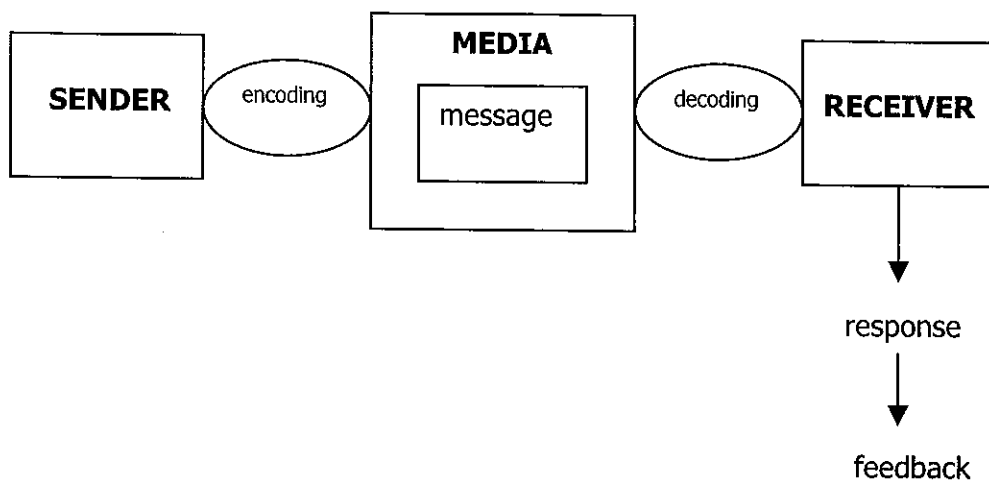
Appeals can be persuasive, informative or oneiric (dream-orientated) in nature (Usunier 1997, 377). Appeals that work to captivate consumer's attention, to encourage to buy a product or stand behind a cause, to make repeat purchases. To go so far as to encourage others to buy the product. The value of the product is thereby heightened. A personality of the brand is rendered through the associative attributes given to the product. We'll return to this discussion later.

Motivational appeals that work. Audience insight gleaned through marketing segmentation, thorough understanding of the target audience tastes, preferences and buttons of receptivity lend themselves to creating the most tight fit between message bearer and receiver. Models for understanding the communication interpretation process are many. As a point of departure, the advertisement serves as a link between consumer and commodity.



Pictorial or verbal devices portray the brand/product in the ad. With the end goal of linking the brand image and purchaser via co-creating an ideological consensus.

Another model delineates the subtleties involved in this communication process.



The decoding process being in focus for the multi-faceted ways of interpreting communications. Oftentimes, advertisers send a message, yet the unintended effects are clearly out of their hands. And the interpretation of cues is

not a one-to-one process controllable by the sender of the message. Factors which play a significant role include:

- Culturally-bound layers
- Societally influenced image of the product/brand
- Preformed opinions
- Reference groups
- Values
- Perceptual frameworks
- Ideologies
- Individual perceptions
- Active versus passive involvement
- Distractions
- Timing of delivery

The decoding process involves the mediation role of advertisements. Ads serve as mediators of meaning in which the reader identifies with the ad. Ads serve as stimuli to evoke associations, find shared experiences, perceptions and attitudes of the target audience.

The response and feedback is largely determined by the combination of listed factors. Induced action – mindset support of the brand/product, concrete consumption and/or lifelong loyalty - is the penultimate goal of the message. And clearly dependent on the medium used to relay the message and the passive or active involvement of the receiver. Not to mention the previously listed number of elements which bear a significant role in the interpretation process.

Controlling the response implies thorough comprehension and control of the variables in the layers of decoding – society at large, cultural norms of the region, reference groups and the individual. Even the timing of message inception and unintended distractions – such as your little child tugging on your pant leg – create unintended interference on the reception and interpretation of advertisement's messages. To prevent unintended interference (Miracle 1968, 30):

- understand the target customer thoroughly
- tap into reference group research
- conduct informal research into the appeals for customer
- play with the symbolic value had in visual and verbal message relayers

- investigate economic and demographic factors
- choose the most appropriate medium for bearing the message

Walking in the shoes of the customer undergirds effective communication. Thought patterns, language transferability issues (nuances and connotations), prevailing belief and value systems, individual prejudices, preferences and personality are otherwise outside the realm of concrete systems of qualitative and quantitative research. Especially given the prevalence of *master of my own universe* individualism sweeping the lifestyle landscape in the western hemisphere and increasingly in the grander world (Bode 1996, 173).

The aforementioned factors lead to unintentional reception and perception of advertisements. And the loss of control on the part of corporate communications departments to relay the most appropriate, effective message to the target audience. And thereby also induce the desired action. Both on a physical and mental plane. A state of mind in support of the product as well as the actual purchase and repeat purchase. Leading to lifetime loyalty and positive reinforcement of that support in the grander world around the loyal purchaser.

Messages can be embodied in advertisements via informative and figurative representations. Figurative ads based on visual symbols are more complex in nature. Communication masquerades as experience itself (Fine and Leopold 1993, 240). And has the power to involuntarily 'sneak' into one's subconscious modes of perceiving the world and one's role in it. So, in addition to the object itself, the purchaser buys the symbolic signifiers represented by the communication in the advertisement. Be it membership in a desired group, an ideal state of health and beauty, a sense of identification with the design principles and affirmation of product quality representing the quality one likens to one's own taste.

"Advertising teaches us to consume the sign, not the product itself. What it stands for is more important than what it is" (Fine and Leopold 1993, 233).

Clearly symbolic and intangible value has an unseen, uncanny capability to shape the mindset of the consumer. The intangible features oftentimes being values, norms, ideals and dreams. All have a powerful impact on one's perception of and affinity to a product/brand. Others coin the symbolic value as an "ideological reconstruction of use value" (Fine and Leopold 1993, 198). This symbolic or ideological value oftentimes evokes a pure emotional response to the advertisement. An intuitive connection and state of mind which reinforces the positive associations and thereby, drive to buy a product and its' umbrella brand.

In the same vein, ads then serve to sanction that aura of bliss or ideal state of being. And in the process serve primarily as communicators of meaning, roles, lifestyle as opposed to being pure commodities or satisfiers of particular needs and wants. Psychological benefits are hence conveyed via an image (Leiss, Klein and Jhally 1990, 288). This ideal state of being is a value in itself, immeasurable by the usual rules of economics.

"Advertising effects a *transfer of value* through communicative connections between what a culture conceives as desirable states of being and products" (Leiss, Klein and Jhally 1990, 270).

An example of this includes the emotional connectivity between the reader and the social setting depicting pleasure, happiness and love. See the ad in which the idealised state of chivalrous romance oozes from a scene whereby the strong, masculine protector reaches out to support his swooning, weaker female counterpart. Simply poignant. At first glance, one would consider the ad to be rather simplistic in concept and execution. Yet, the underlying plays on psychology and sociology are subtly provocative. Firstly, one would not normally associate

selling clothing via a scenario with little or no focus on the objects for sale. Instead one's attention is drawn to the captivating chivalry in action. The scenario and play of idealised romance – both from the male and female perspective – is at the forefront of our visual tableaux. Women - despite current ideology in support of independent, career-minded, self-sufficient, GI Jane states of being - truly want a man to catch her when she faints, falls, is weak or in general to support her throughout daily life. Even if teasing with the notions of power, labour division in the household, care of children, decision-making and the like are real assertions and issues for a contemporary young woman, she still yearns for a protector. Similarly, the image of a male strong enough to bear the load of his partner's vulnerability, weaker physical state and potential wounds is of utmost concern for the contemporary man. Especially given the potential to be overshadowed by a woman who oversteps him along the career ladder or exercises a more dominant voice than previously considered acceptable. Asserting his masculinity is thereby quite significant. So, for both the man and the woman, the image portrays an idealised internal state of affairs. The dreamlike notion of romance. With a man reaching out to catch the fall of his faint love. And support her from harm's path.

Thereby the image, despite its absence of attention to the product for sale, evokes a strong emotional response in the viewer. And an intangible response of support for the brand. Associations which are positive, immeasurable, unseen and part of a psychological landscape reinforcing instinctual ideals states of being.

Images or icons are thereby carriers of impactful communications. Some claim that images are more effective than text in shaping, molding and bearing fruit in favour of the product/brand at hand. The *affective-opinion* components of attitude are impacted by a product's representation in the form of icons or images. And

oftentimes the viewer is unable to express this relationship of an unconscious state explicitly in words (Leiss, Klein and Jhally 1990, 293).

Above and beyond the concern with attitudinal barriers, the advertiser's objective is to clearly differentiate its product's image from others by soldering the associational links between brand and image as fully as possible. The ad's impact, of course, will depend on the degree of retention of these particular associations by the audience. When a visual image is used as a *memory peg* for the message, a person's retention of the ideas associated with the visual is significantly higher than it is if the verbal information is presented alone. A catchy tune or jingle has been employed as a *memory peg* for many years, but it appears that a visual image works even better. (Leiss, Klein and Jhally 1990, 293)

In such, advertising's use of icons, symbols and images is an elaborate, subtle and powerful tool for shaping the psychological affinity and emotional connectivity of the product and brand in the mind of the target consumer.

To sum up, use of segmentation models serves as a segway to understanding consumers and hence, finding the connective appeals within advertising communications which forge an ideological consensus which captures attention, encourages the purchase and lifetime loyalty to a company, brand and product. And simply remain unforgettable.

## CHAPTER 5

### BRIDGE TO A BRAND

In the broader context, the advertisement serves as a tool of communication representing the brand. Advertisements “turn products into brands and shift the emphasis away from what the manufacturer makes – a product – to the meanings and values delivered by what the consumer buys – a brand” (Lannon 1991, 7).

The brand lies at the heart of all communications efforts – including advertisements. Two characteristics of an advertisement stand out – being an asset and providing for future growth. In order to ensure consistency and hence enduring value for the sold customers, many scholars and practitioners alike assert the necessity of brand concept, strategy and message being an in-house product. The authors of the brand should be deeply interwoven, interconnected and even at one with the driving organisational values, organisational culture and corporate vision. Indoctrinated dealers in unison with the brand are the only ones capable of spinning out pure lines of communication. Consistent, clear, in-depth messages.

Key is also stability over time, so despite the often changing tactical communication objectives of new staff arrivals or evolved exterior circumstances, the core message and identity remain solidly in place. A foundation one can rely on, you might say. And passed forward via a torch of brand leaders.



The risk of a brand identity being formulated by an outside source is the loss of unified synergy with the wellspring of the brand. Half-hearted, speedy stabs at representing the communication products of the brand are thereby diluted. The advertising agents can be haphazardly or insufficiently indoctrinated in the brand so as to be able to sense the fine-tuning necessary to truly serve as a representative or brand ambassador. Thereby, the potential to weaken or even damage the brand is at hand. And outsourcing should be carefully considered to those uninvested in a brand's driving values.

Each word or visual representation conveys a message surrounding the personality of the brand. Hence brands should be consistent across multiple medias. Brands should mirror the core identity of the corporation.

Long-term, strong and healthy brand relationships include the following 7 attributes (Joachimsthaler and Aaker 1997, 49):

- deep connectivity
- self-concept
- woven into daily routine
- unfaltering loyalty
- intimacy/familiarity
- partner quality
- nostalgic attachment

Once a brand has achieved solid home market status, a global roll-out program is due. Or that is one possible way of ensuring success across the board. "Cross-fertilisation" of brand concepts across national boundaries swivelling around these benefits leads to a consistent image and reputation and furthermore, capitalises on consistent positioning and associations (Quelch 1999, 4). The goal being enduring values associated with a brand travelling across distribution lines already established.

## CHAPTER 6

### ADVERTISING: SOME OF THE UNINTENDED NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

The hidden persuasion factor to "goad the unconscious mind and the body under its control into the act of acquisition" is always at work within the advertising industry. Some would go so far as to say that advertisements "channel our unthinking habits, our purchasing decisions and our thought processes ... the result is that many of us are being influenced and manipulated, far more than we realise, in the patterns of our everyday lives."

One would prefer to see the advertising industry in a positive or at least less than cynical light. Beyond a shadow of doubt, the potential for detrimental effects on individuals due to the subtle power of the images and words to shape and dictate working conceptions – such as ideal beauty, trendy lifestyles and brands of choice. The way one should act. Look. Be. What kinds of clothing, shoes, cars and watches are the pathway to belonging. Belonging to the 'in' or desired lifestyle. How does the ideal contemporary woman dress? Behave? Look? Style her hair? How do her possessions reflect that she holds the keys to identifying with, understanding and joining in the membership of the circle of women who are also contemporary, popular and abreast with trends? What does the ideal family picnic look like? How does a woman express her attractiveness and magnetise a man? How does a man fit the bill of being a charmer via the etiquette – donning the right clothing, setting the mood with the choice bottle of liqueur and oozing with romance appeal? What watch is the key to expressing

identity with and belongingness to the symbolic values embodied by an outdoors-oriented, rugged, athletic man who is also a dynamic success in other arenas of his life? Enabling him to have the capital base to afford buying the watch signifying those values.

These lifestyle indicators are not in themselves of negative value. In fact, they can exude with other values such as emphasis on lifelong quality, healthy outdoor activities for happiness and longevity, maximising limited free time with wholesome family social events and the like. Yet, they can serve as shapers of the norms and codes one should follow to belong. To join the ranks of the successful. And if allowed to bear an overly large role in determining one's sense of self-esteem, well-being and belonging to society, then their license to control is far too extensive.

Measuring the extent of influence of advertisements on attitudes, values, self-conception, mindset, reference group norms and the like is truly next to impossible. The workings on unconscious levels is unseen; thereby making it difficult to grasp factual evidence of its role in shaping one's psychological make-up. Hence, its power and might is worthy of stepping back, re-considering and trying to prevent the influence from bearing overly significant influence in one's own life as well as the lives of those close to one. Clearly, realisation of advertising's potent potential is not exclusively for the realms of rocket scientists. Yet, even if aware of the shaper capacity and potentially detrimental side effects, one is not immune to the effects thereof. And would be surprised how many of one's ways of viewing the world, classifying people, awareness of societal norms and expectations and generally shared information is borne solely by the influence of advertising. Particularly the images of ads.

Some comments surrounding this include:

Advertising is a "full-time business to get inside the collective public mind ... to get inside in order to manipulate, exploit and control. (Pollay 1986, 18)

Advertising's unintended consequences are seen by many as a pollution of our psychological and social ecology, which raises moral alarm and tempts a defensive reaction from those of us whose expertise and sense of personal worth is drawn from our knowledge of, and at least implicit assistance in, the processes of persuasion. Thus, the concerns of nonbusiness academicians and the general public are too often dismissed with a wave of the ideological wand. Commonly we appeal to some alternative value, as in the claim that unregulated advertising is a freedom of speech or essential to the efficient functioning of the economy, hardly perceiving that this is distractive argumentation. Not all ... assume that mass advertising of the character and scale we now experience is either inevitable or benign. (Pollay 1986, 19)

Regarded as a form of communication, it (advertising) has been criticized for playing on emotions, simplifying real human situations into stereotypes, exploiting anxieties and employing techniques of intensive persuasion that amount to manipulation. (Pollay 1986, 19)

To the constant anxieties of life, advertising gives a simple answer. In consuming certain products, one buys not only a "thing" but also an image, an image which invokes the belief and the hope of having the good rather than the bad, happiness rather than the misery, success rather than failure, life rather than death. (Pollay 1986, 24)

Advertisers in general bear a large part of the responsibility for the deep feelings of inadequacy that drive women to psychiatrists, pills or the bottle. You keep telling us over and over that if we could use that or have this or look like that, we would be forever desirable, forever happy. So we spend our time worrying over the grey streak or the extra pound or the dry skin instead of our minds, our hearts and our fellow men. (Pollay 1986, 27)

Advertising using *ideal types* can lead the receiver to be dissatisfied with the realities of his everyday world – his wife, his friends, his job, even life itself. Fantasies are a loaded gun. They may sweeten life and advance culture; they may also destroy life in a reckless pursuit of impossible accomplishments. (Pollay 1986, 27)

The advertising industry thus encourages the pseudo-emancipation of women, flattering them with its insinuating reminder, *you've come a long way, baby*, and disguising the freedom to consume as genuine autonomy. Similarly it flatters and glorifies youth in the hope of elevating young people to the status of full-fledged consumers in their own right. (Pollay 1986, 27)

...the inaccessibility of the products ... may create in some feelings of frustration sufficient to make them engage in antisocial acts.... (Pollay 1986, 28)

Clearly, the criticism cited above is justifiably valid. And should be ideally be considered by those shapers of advertisements while planning and creating messages as well as a second round prior to the final campaign launch.

To expound on those specific issues in list form ads have the power to:

- dehumanise relations by idolising goods above people
- emphasise instant indulgence versus deferred gratification
- form and shape one's identity strictly in relation to the objects consumed
- aggravate social gaps – ageism/racism/sexism
- accerbate social problems – inadequacy, marginality, powerlessness, displacement, insecurity, envy, conformity

In particular the power to lend rise to social problems, gaps and resulting psychological issues which can lead to concrete acts of crime, violence, discrimination and personal inadequacy. In particular for marginalised, disempowered and young elements in society, their vulnerability and hence, reception to being molded by advertising is markedly greater. Which in turn can lead to some of the issues mentioned.

Envy, inadequacy and insecurity is an issue plaguing the lives of multitudinous women, particularly teenagers and early 20s, as a result of the oftentimes flawless depictions of the idealised woman in ads. Needless to say, bulimia, anorexia and basic body image complexes arise with such. More complex is the pressure women of other ethnicities feel in conforming to the 'western' model of ideal beauty. Granted the past decade characterised by an upsurge in multiethnicity and the political correctness movement's emphasis on differences as an asset has altered the landscape of acceptable beauty to include exotic facial features as the coveted image. However, evidence for the 'western' dominance as the ideal is seen throughout society. Chocolate-pigmented women straightening their hair, dying it

to non-natural shades and generally ignoring their entire ethnic heritage in strides to conform to the ideal image of a beautiful woman within WASP definitions is not unheard of. Clothing choice, too, is significant in fitting into a new reference group and finding acceptance.

When such advertisements are exported to developing countries, images can slowly begin to erode former notions of exalted beauty. In many African countries, the ideal of beauty is a far cry from the twiggy, flawless image cast throughout a majority of westernised ads. A healthy, corpulent woman donning sweeping gowns is oftentimes the accepted standard for beauty. Women desire to buy products not truly necessary to enhance their beauty and join the ranks of association with the coveted 'western' model. Feelings of inadequacy, changing culturally-imbedded values and mindsets and consumer manipulation are the results of such advertisements which impose another standard without heeding the local heritage and norms.

When one does highlight multi-ethnicity in 'western' cultures, the intentions are good, yet oftentimes the portrayal of the multicultural members of society are open to criticism for oversimplification. And stereotypical renderings which might perpetuate negative associations or narrow perceptions of the ethnic heritage.

For example, many chocolate-pigmented citizens in the US are labeled with the following:

- the superior athlete with super agile capabilities such as the ability to leap to unfathomed heights
- the unhappy nonwhite whose identity seeks to be other than a member of their own ethnicity
- the mentally inferior with little promise and capable of speaking only their own dialect with grammatically incorrect slang
- the charismatic, emotionally-driven churchgoer
- the delinquent or lurking criminal

Certainly, some stereotypes can be positive in nature. Aunt Jemima or Uncle Ben embody some of the wholesome images which perpetuate through American society. Kids eat their pancakes and waffles drizzling with Aunt Jemima syrup and most definitely have respect for and a positive conception of this motherly, nurturing figure who kindly smiles at them from the label. Uncle Ben, too, is a kind man symbolising the quality you can count on and wholesome nutrition. In fact, the actual history thereof is rather refreshing. Uncle Ben was selected by a panel of rice manufacturers who wanted to share their newly found treasures from wartime endeavours abroad with the American populace. They sought a representative symbol for that high quality rice – an icon – and that person become a farmer in the area renowned for his unrivalled crops, Uncle Ben (Kern-Foxworth 1994, 80). Most definitely a more positive icon with good associations wherever it is exported.

To return to the precise definition of a stereotype so as to enhance the brief discussion thereof, I'll turn to some academic sources for guidance. Initially, the term was coined by Didot in 1798 due to the physical printing device to create a permanent, indelible reproduction. The metaphorical use thereof was first noted a few years later in 1824 with associations of consistency and monotony. A century later, Lippmann readapted the usage thereof to refer to "an ordered more or less consistent picture of the world to which our habits, our capacities, our comforts and our hopes have adjusted themselves... it is a form of perception which implies a certain character on the data of our senses before the data can reach intelligence" (Kern-Foxworth 1994, 80). Lippmann certainly implies the lack of true careful consideration in the attitude of superior blissful intolerance with an impervious lack of being aware of ethnographic, biological, family of birth and

other factors outside the control of the individual. And thus, shouldn't bear so much weight in their categorical exclusion at first glance.

Allport captures the essence more succinctly in his definition of a stereotype as "an oversimplified experience resulting in attitude" synonymous with prejudice (Kern-Foxworth 1994, 77). Clearly a mind barrier to being tolerant and accepting of all. Usually implied within these working definitions is also the notion of being commonly shared by a larger body of the populace. Hence, group discrimination against the members of reference groups. The notion of categorising is not in itself wrong – merely the notion of limiting oneself to the confines of such narrow definitions without allowing for the person stereotyped to also step outside the confines of those stereotypical conceptions.

Trapping a person into a fixed box. Or treating members of an ethnic group as one and the same.

As such is a common feature – and even necessary at times – how does one avoid the pitfalls of such? In particular given the way one views and treats those who are walking images of those stereotypes?

Are stereotypes necessarily negative? Sometimes the necessity of grasping a working definition of a people or nation can lend itself to categorisations which are simplified, yet ring true to an extent. One scholar suggested "the sets of traits that are used to explain and predict the behavior of members of socially defined groups" (Kern-Foxworth 1994, 77).

Labels then serve to colour one's attitudes towards an individual or group with shared characteristics. Advertising can perpetuate these stereotypes with both positive and negative impact. Surely the medium lends itself to instant images, words or captured essences of the portrayed. And in such, can surely not be expected to give a more nuanced picture of the portrayed.



The power then, to shape or reinforce existing stereotypes and lead to mass ideological sweeps is in the hands of advertisers. A powerful tool impacting the landscape of values, mores and attitudes of society. In particular the more impressionable elements such as children, teenagers, newcomers to a culture, less formally educated and marginalised groups.

Within the field of advertising in the United States, the magnitude of the industry coupled with the vast number of reference groups possible to portray gives plenty of room for ripe discussion and controversy. Some have even stated "Advertising that effectively addresses the realities of America's multicultural population must be created by qualified professionals who understand the nuances of the disparate cultures. Otherwise, agencies and marketers risk losing or worse, alienating, millions of consumers eager to buy their products or services. Building a business that "looks like" the nation's increasingly multicultural population is no longer simply a moral choice; it is a business imperative. (Kern-Foxworth 1994, 118-9)

Some concrete efforts established by the industry in direct response to the need for heightened sensitivity include the Ad Watch Committee of Black Media Association in North Carolina. Its purpose is to both monitor the ad industry as well as to endeavour to eliminate the multi-ethnic stereotypes present in ads. A specific list of positive portrayals of African Americans include:

- The sole spokesperson for a product or service. He or she is discussing the product's attributes intelligently without singing, dancing or clowning.
- A serious person, a decision-maker and a responsible citizen.
- Youth as honest, intelligent and studious.
- A slice of black life (weddings, births) which depicts joys & triumphs.
- Dual-parent families
- Parents engaged in caring relationships with their children. Concern for children's health, education and safety.

Those on the not list include the previously mentioned as well as simply being a stage device. This implies having no lines – merely serving as the necessary image for representing that ethnic group and thereby giving the corporation an

image of belonging to the virtuous, multi-ethnic conscious organisations (Kern-Foxworth 1994, 119-20).

Certainly such models of committees can serve as inspiration on a global scale in combatting the potentially destructive powers at hand. Or merely avoiding the mishaps of misfavourable representation of the subgroups who can fall victim to representations by stereotypes of a prejorative character. And which shape the mindset of society – now and in future generations.

On the whole, advertising agencies should bear in mind the significant power in their hands to shape unconscious thoughts, conceptions, attitudes and norms. Indeed, to serve as a primary source of moral and ethical codes for society. Marginalisation of groups not adhering to the dictated guidelines, anorexia or bulimia in women who strive to live up to the standards of ideal beauty and creation of stereotypes which define and limit working definitions of a group are merely some of the side-effects of advertising which highlights its power. And power which is otherwise immeasurable by qualitative tools of analysis. Hence, leadership which takes into consideration the serious influence communications has in being an ethical torch and societal mirror is recommendable and reflective of responsible corporate values.

## CHAPTER 7

### CULTURALLY-BOUND FACETS OF ADVERTISING

Culture as a parameter within advertising is also plays a significant role within the planning, creating and execution stages of international advertising. As touched on earlier in the section entitled "The Converging Global Consumer", culture impacts the collective mindset, actions and thus reception to communications.

According to specialists in the field, at least 160 working definitions of culture exist. The forerunner thereof being Margaret Mead whose anthropologically-based definition of culture is a fundament of inspiration for all succeeding definitions. She asserts that culture is "a body of learned behaviour, a collection of beliefs, habits and traditions, shared by a group of people and successively learned by people who enter the society" (Joynt 1996, 33). Society refers to all levels thereof, from the individual level of culture to a profession to an organisation to a region to a nation.

Other definitions of culture include the following:

- Rice: "the values, attitudes, beliefs, artefacts and other meaningful symbols represented in the pattern of life adopted by people that help them interpret, evaluate and communicate as members of a society."
- Geerts: "a set of control mechanisms – plans, recipes, rules, instructions – for the governing of behavior" as opposed to "complexes of concrete behaviour patterns – customs, usages, traditions, habit clusters."
- Hofstede: "the collective mental programming of the people in an environment. Culture is not a characteristic of individuals; it

encompasses a number of people who were conditioned by the same education and life experience."

- De Mooij: "the glue that binds people together. Our ideas, our values, our acts and our emotions are cultural products. We are individuals under the guidance of cultural patterns, historically created systems of meaning."
- Roland: "it is apparent that the kinds of personalities persons actually develop, how they function and communicate in society, what their mode of being and experience is in the world and within themselves, and what their ideals and actualities of individuation are depend overwhelmingly on the given culture and society to which they belong."

As an aside, one should note that the working definition of culture is confounded as it is rooted in Western thought; hence, categories, distinctions and separateness are noted more frequently. Eastern thought would likely present a working definition with an emphasis on continuity and connectedness (Joynt 1996, 33).

As a pathway to the world of advertising, one would definitely note that advertising also reflects these systems of giving meaning – how people think, what emotional cues are most effective, how they relate to one another, how they delegate their time and how they define the activities of both work and leisure time. Perceptual patterns are oftentimes culturally learned. Hence, how an ad is read and received is largely based on the cultural norms which have shaped one throughout life.

To what extent international business and advertising should be reliant on the heightened awareness of the culturally-bound rules for communication in order to establish stronger communication platforms is widely discussed. Scholars such as Adler and Bartholomew advocate the need for "a conceptual shift: from a hierarchical perspective of cultural influence, compromise and adaptation, to one

of collaborative cross-cultural learning” whereby the deeper understanding of cultural characteristics abets communication’s effective reach (Joynt 1996, 34).

An earlier example noting that adveristing is defined as a *transfer of value* through commuicative connections between what a culture conceives as desirable states of being and products whereby culture is defined by the shared norms, attitudes and behavioural patterns of a society is illustrated by a few working samples of advertisements as well (Leiss, Klein and Jhally 1990, 270).

As a starting point, we’ll look at the Danish cultural values as embodied by the FAXE advertisement. Given the current political and mindset landscape of Denmark with an ambivalent posture towards its membership in the EU, some key cultural values of Danes come to the forefront in their ads. The slogan itself *Unspeakingly Danish* utilizes a country-of-origin set of appeals whereby made-in labels impact the reception and interpretation of the product.

The made-in label is coined an *extrinsic product cue* (Johansson 1988, 49). And hence, serves as a tool for evaluating products and brands as possessing some specifical traits; traits that are usually commonly known by a widespread audience. The Swiss label, as a simple example, in watches is a sign of reassurance for the quality and lifetime reliance of the timepiece.

For non-Scandinavians or non-Danes, the country-of-origin associations with Danish products are likely limited. Perhaps agricultural adeptness, the shipbuilding and transportation industry, architectural and furniture design excellence, Havarti cheese and Hans Christian Andersen’s tales and papercuttings come to mind. Beyond these basics, the actual mindsets and culturally embedded values of Danes are more subtle and recognisable by those who’ve lived in Denmark or are otherwise quite familiar with the Danish culture.

FAXE's advertisement stems from the period just prior to the national vote surrounding the Maastricht elections in 1992. The notion of a super European body of government was, and to a large extent, still is, overwhelming to a country of just over 5 million inhabitants. Would they have a voice? Who would determine the economic rules in place? Would their power and status as a country be completely squelched along with membership? As a result of these and many other well-informed sentiments, the rise of pride – a resurgence of nationalism – began to appear on the horizons of newspapers, coffee room conversations, public forums and over dinner tables across the land.

The FAXE ad capitalises on the country-of-origin status. Outside of Denmark, the ad emphasise the purely Danish character and quality of beer; whereas within Denmark, both the Danish identity as well as the sophistication of having an international presence is used to undergird the product image (Niss 1994, 222). "Europeans, beware. Before you know it Danish will be on everybody's lips" captures the bold self-confidence of Danes who want to rush onto the scene like David and win over the larger forces of Goliath. A Danish mindset of overflowing confidence on the surface is genuine. Underneath lies a fear of the larger powers and a slight sense of inferiority. Yet, in the end, Danes claim to rest securely in their hidden secrets and strength – of knowledge, efficiency and high quality across the board. This enabled by an egalitarian spirit at work, high taxes to secure a sound social and educational infrastructure and generally work smart principles throughout the country. Even if other countries are not aware of the fortitude in our grips, we are. And the silent victory rests securely in the minds of Danes.

As a result, the drive to stand-up and resoundingly support its own rights and voice within the European Parliament is vivid. Hence, this ad captures that attitude

at a time when that confidence and national assertion was rife. The small, but mighty voice of Denmark (which is realised by having their own exceptional clauses within the EU legislation).

Also depicting the historical, political stance of a nation bound to a specific time, the advertisements within the eastern realms of Germany in a period rife in disillusionment and nostalgia (within a cyclus of *Euphorie* (initial euphoria for the fall of the wall) - *Ernüchterung* (disillusionment) - *Ostalgie* (nostalgia for all aspects of previously 'eastern' lifestyles and products) and *Osttimismus* (optimism for the future of the eastern realms of Germany)). As a result of this retro pride, ad campaigns require special attention to messages, images and appeals in order to find popular acceptance. "There is a subconscious reluctance to seduce and be seduced" (Shulman 2000, 5). Underlying suspicion that ads are exagerratingly false and even frivolous. Many support the notion that strong products should sell themselves (Heyder, Musiol and Peters 1992, 62). Hence the more typical 'western' emotional sell focusing on a glorified, easy lifestyle are less likely to be received convincingly. Some can even be offensive.

For example, an advertisement depicting "a West German manager stepping out of his Porsche, climbing the stairs to his luxury loft and sprinkling a well known laundry detergent into a washing machine containing his designer shirts might resonate well in Hamburg or Düsseldorf. But in Leipzig, tinderbox of the protests that led to the downfall of the DDR, this type of ad is a swift kick in the pants" (Shulman 2000, 3). Emphasis on career, status and money were appeals not quite as effective in gaining backing as friendship, community, solidarity and good citizenship.

Although one may wonder why, the dream appeal of the western lifestyle was initially coveted and sought-after. Euphoria. With the state of transition from a

system of justice, solidarity and cooperativeness to a capitalist system rife with unemployment, social ills, competition and suppression by their big brother in the west, disillusionment and rejection of the western appeals and products dominated. Many longed for products no longer available. Brands from the previous DDR which flourish today include (Shulman 2000, 4):

- Florena – the “Nivea of the East” which is the moisturiser of choice
- Juwel cigarettes – in response to the western manufacturer’s “Test the West” slogan, the general reply was “I smoke Juwel, because I’ve already tested the West”
- Rondo Kaffee – a blend with ground split peas necessary during the shortage of coffee beans in the 80s

These only to name a few of the shining examples of the nostalgia and need for definite adaptation of advertisements (not to mention products themselves). The characters which grab the support of the eastern segments include “died-in-the-wool *Ossis* who embody real dimensions and life situations as opposed to the glossy, high fashion supermodels pantomiming fantasy lives so characteristic of western ads (Schulman 2000, 5). For instance, a cigarette ad appeals to the younger generation by portraying a handheld camera filming a party in the neighbor’s kitchen (As an aside, this down-to-earth, completely socio-realistic philosophy is rather characteristic of Danish ads, films and mindset as well).

Keeping an eye out for the evolutions of advertisements as time passes and the changing needs of advertisers to alter the message, visual and other product appeals is noteworthy. And necessary. The future of advertisements is likely to unfold as a more cohesive unity with their western brothers. Until then, though, “refurbishing romantic vignettes from the East German past and creating a positive contemporary identity for *Ossis* is by definition a temporary task, a crutch to help



a small but not insignificant segment of the German population overcome the trauma of arbitrarily imposed division" (Shulman 2000, 6).

Adaptation of advertisements clearly represents some realistic needs of some markets. Even if globalised trends simultaneously tug towards the Euroconsumer, the global citizen and the homogenisation of consumer needs, tastes and preferences worldwide. The examples above tie in both regional representations of the need for thinking through strategy, conceptual undergirding, copy & images and the overall execution.

Another example from Heineken highlights the overeagerness of the marketing and advertising industries in adopting the sweeping Euroconsumer executionary strategies. Prior to the 90s Heineken's communication strategies embraced the *think global, go local* line of thought. All messages were altered to the local consumer as communications traveled the globe – behavioural norms at work, cultural identity and brand conception being the cornerstones of those differences seen across the globe. Yet, Heineken reconsidered these strategies given the mounting evidence towards the Euroconsumer and adopted a stance towards the universal tastes and expectations of a global product. A European Brand Team was formed and a new theme - *Heineken Moment* – was adopted. The focus being on Heineken's role in facilitating relaxation after a stressful day. The following is a description of the advertisement:

...shows a young woman getting ready to go out with her friend. She stands in front of her wardrobe and is desperately looking for a dress to put on for a formal evening out. Her male friend, already dressed in a dinner jacket, is looking at her. He is obviously amused by her distress. He leaves the room and comes back dressed in casual clothing – jeans and a leather jacket. He hands her a pair of her own jeans. The pressure is off, and so is the plan for the formal evening. They go to a relaxing place with a pub-like atmosphere, where they can be 'as they really are'... of course drinking Heineken. (Hoecklin 1995, 102)

When actually pre-tested in markets throughout Europe, the realisation that cultural differences still persist was readily apparent. In Italy the ad was received as intended. The young couple enjoyed a casual evening out with a warm, pure and simple touch to the evening. Modest, yet cosmopolitan. However, in Greece, the ad evoked completely variegated interpretations than the intended. Many understood the change of attire not as something positive, but rather, as settling for something less. Hence, Heineken was perceived as being an ordinary beer for ordinary occasions. The same was the case in Spain (Hoecklin 1995, 103). So, instead of adding value to the brand and brand perception, the ad would have done damage to the existing brand identity and likely led to fewer sales.

Repositioning the brand as universal was hence, premature and even detrimental.

Typically American ads characterised by hyperbole and grand claims, an emphasis on convenience, achievement, lapping in luxury in one's precious leisure time after slaving in the office for 90 hours and similar appeals are not also likely to be transferrable to other cultures. A typical example would be the following Reynolds Home Economists ad presenting a stereotypical feature of the American lifestyle; namely, the outdoor grill. Coupled with ads' emphasis on the added-value benefit of convenience and saving time, it is catered to the hectic Mom whose involvement with her family, in the community as a volunteer chairing several committees, having her own business from home and as a wife truly lends itself to time saving meal planning and preparation. Although relevant for a majority of lifestyles in Germany, the UK, Scandinavia and the like, such appeals could be less than effective elsewhere. For example, the Japanese housewife is quite meticulous and would much prefer to emphasise to her family the tedious task of preparing a meal. All from fresh ingredients. Convenience food, such as ready-made frozen meals, are unheard of amongst the generation of Moms throughout the majority of

the country. Even such modern conveniences such as food processors would not likely be a hit on the Japanese market due to the cultural emphasis on painstaking food preparation. The wife wants to do each step of the chopping and blending by hand. "Anything less would be considered an insult to the family" (Mueller 1996, 152).

Other examples of prototype American appeals more likely to offend than to boost the brand image include (Mueller 1996, 153):

- Being on the cutting edge with product purchases (ahead of their neighbours) is deemed poor taste and superior. A clear-cut breach of collectivist norms at work in Japanese culture. As well as against the respect for tradition, stability and harmonious relations.
- Discounts, rebates, sales – Japanese prefer paying the full value and can't accept that something is given for nothing. Reliability is more important.

Another American ad embodying appeals and copywriting bound in American values and cultural norms which might have difficult transferability to other countries includes the following Passat advertisement. The text reads *Don't think small. Live large. As does Given the Opportunity, 220,000 People Can Lift an Entire Planet* by Boeing. If you flip through any magazine while browsing the airport bookshelves, these typical themes of larger than life, expressive optimism, dreams which can become yours and achieving on a grand scale are clearly evident. Theory states that such appeals are only relevant in cultures such as the US.

I would prefer to think that it does depend on the eye of the beholder, the degree of credibility and the text used. Oftentimes, theory does not pan out in reality. And the exotic appeal proves itself more appropriate and effective in cultures which embrace more modest lifestyles.

Such has been the case in several research studies based on American versus Asian advertising campaigns. The American lifestyle emphasising individualism and

the Asian emphasizing the collective. In reality, though, the collective appeals of a group of people flying a kite down the beach were more effective for the American audience. Whereas the Asian audience, in this case Japan, found the individualistic appeals portraying a person walking down the beach in solitude more magnetising. So, even if one does want to bear in mind the cultural theories which can impact the reception of, understanding, approval and brand undergirding value of advertisements, the unexpected can bear more fruit than theorists might like to claim.

Some culturally bound norms such as food consumption patterns are clearly bound to individual cultures. A simplistic example includes the Boca Burger advertisement. Several facets of American-bound cultural values at work are present. First, the representation of the multi-cultural via Kyoto and Ken. Kyoto is the token for being PC (politically correct) and thereby, being more indicative of the true American demographic landscape. Hopefully boosting sales to a broader audience through this portrayal of the multicultural. Individualistic appeals are also present. The individual personality and preferences of both Kyoto and Ken are mentioned along the side – “connoisseur of exotic spices” and “connoisseur of TV dinners” being just one of several contrasting features of their unique food tastes. Furthermore, the copy is clearly rooted in Americanness “Boca Burgers taste, look and cook like real meat, but they’re meatless. So they’re naturally low in fat and calories, yet high in protein”. The overdrive on health appeals and low or non fat varieties is a derivative of the American culture. If sold in Denmark, Italy, Japan or other countries around the globe, the majority of consumers would be turned off by merely the product itself. Convenience might reflect a growing base of needs of an increasingly busy lifestyle, but compromising the quality of ingredients and turning

to processed foods with more additives and preservatives than the real thing is to be scoffed.

The Coca-Cola light advertisement depicting a Spanish woman and her light cola is an example of product communications adapted to fit the Spanish market. Diet Coke is deemed unacceptable throughout most of Europe due to the negative connotations of the term diet or non-fat or anything non-natural. Hence, the appeals portrayed are based on identification with a drink designed for the sophisticated, urban consumer. The model's hairstyle, though, does diverge from associations of the prototype Spaniard, with a blonde bob being the chosen fashion. Her earrings, choice of top and general aura also embody this notion of a sophisticated Euroconsumer not bound to necessarily Spanish culture any longer. This exotic appeal for joining the ranks of the more formally educated, well-off and geopolitical European overshadows the other adaptations. So, the extent of adaptation to the local market is limited. But at least an attempt is made to consider the differences between the American market and the European market appeals which work.

Another simplistic representation thereof is the advertisement for OK with the text *Ingen hotdogs Ingen smurte rundstykker Kun billig benzin (No hotdogs, no buttered rolls, just cheap petrol)*. The popularity and widespread presence of hotdogs and pastries, including buttered buns, is inherently rooted in the Danish culture. The transferability of this ad to other cultures is completely impossible. Further, the emphasis on cheap petrol is nice everywhere, but in particular given the economic structure of taxation for petrol in Denmark as a deterrent to individual use. Danish legislation emphasises protection of the environment through higher taxation on consumption patterns both short-sighted and detrimental to the

environment. And beckons its citizens to use public transportation. If not, then at least an affordable option is available at OK filling stations.

The Swedish advertisement depicting a pregnant woman with the text *Varmt naturligt och levande* (warm, natural and living) as well as *med fötterna på jorden* (with both feet on the ground) for a heated linoleum floor made from raw materials such as cork and wood is also rooted in Swedish cultural norms. Firstly, the depiction of a woman bearing her bare stomach is not always readily accepted in some cultures – Spain, the US and Italy being examples of more conservative values in action. Coupled with the text emphasising the natural, one gains an insight into the overriding values in Sweden – respect for nature and use of nature-friendly solutions. Coupled with no the lack of modesty in portraying the human body in stages of nakedness as it, too, represents the natural. Certainly other cultures than the Swedish depict some of the same visuals and values, but they are inherently Swedish. And transferrability to cultures outside of the Nordic regions is limited in extent and the medium used should be carefully considered prior to implementation.

As a result of looking briefly at some of the examples highlighting the need of carefully considered strategies for execution, despite the forces leaning towards globalisation, the theory of multi-local or adapted ads takes on validity. As the chairman and CEO of Coca-Cola states “the very forces that were making the world more connected and homogeneous were simultaneously triggering a powerful desire for local autonomy and preservation of unique cultural identity” (Financial Times 2000, 27). Even though considered by most scholars as a classic example of a global company with standardised solutions across the board, Coke has admittedly changed the course of their ship. Allowing for ideas or strategies to that are “the right thing to do locally” as long as they also fit into the fundamental

values, policies and standards of integrity and quality, such is possible (Financial Times 2000, 27).

A survey conducted by the Management Centre Europe based on 246 senior managers in marketing and advertising undergirds the necessity of giving weight to the local market needs within communication. Only 1% of advertisers accepted a fully standardised campaign as acceptable (WSJE 1997, 4). A majority were in favour of standardised campaigns with the possibility of local variations as seen fit. And as high as 36% of ad agencies totally embraced the notion of having global campaigns created entirely locally (WSJE 1997, 4). Thus, evidence is mounting towards careful consideration of local adaptations despite the concurrent pull towards economies of scale and standardised solutions.

To sum up, Norman Vale, Director-General of IAA (International Advertising Association) states my case quite well.

(Communication specialists – marketers & advertisers) will continue to strive for concepts and strategies that have the potential for extensive application but not by sacrificing a true understanding of local cultures and how to market within those. All will continue to practice under the umbrella of “thinking global ... acting local”.... Invariably, they will rely on allies locally placed who understand the culture and are sensitive to local concerns...to adapt and modify strategies and creative ideas. (IAA online publication 1, 6)

## CONCLUSION

To briefly reiterate my focus as mentioned in the onset of my paper, the field of advertising communications on a global scale seems to be driven and pulled by current trends of thought. And oftentimes pushed through the pipelines of transnational, networked agencies in search of speedy, cost-efficient and unified solutions. Unity of purpose and message is positive. Yet, the compromise is too great if at the cost of indoctrination and loyalty to the values, vision and true character of the represented organisation.

Coupled with the pull towards standardised solutions which can be rolled-out internationally, the risk for lowest common denominator solutions is at hand. Lowest common denominator representations which may be bland and provide mass appeal, yet not bear shining value or a sense of a well-considered corporate policy. Attempts to sell to the broadest based audience, although not negative in itself, can lead to a spineless, rootless organisation whose products and communications float with the winds of change. Societal trends then wield all-important power. Even though consideration of trends and popular appeals is significant, so, too, is an organisation firmly grounded in a consistent line of values, vision and mission. If this wellspring of driving brand values is overlooked or not truly understood by advertisement creators, a bland solution with the bottom line of pushing sales as opposed to genuine communications is the case. In my paper, I have presented frameworks and strategies to avoid such pitfalls and enhance communication.

Certainly, reaching a broad audience with the most economical route is a real concern of companies today and will continue to be the case. I beckon brand bearers,



concept developers and advertisers to merely dare to consider a more nuanced set of factors prior to spinning out global campaigns. And, more accurately reach the target audience through concerted understanding of the target audience. Segmentation models provide a framework of variables plugged into each new campaign launch so as to reach a broad audience sharing similarities across inter-market groupings. These groupings can share segments of consumers across cultural boundaries and show variation within regions, even within a single country. Hence, accurately reflecting the realities of today's world with competing pushes and pulls of localization and globalization at work.

Simultaneously, these segments serve to be economically-efficient and reveal a nuanced understanding of the receiving audience. When culturally-determined modes of interpretation and reaction to advertising messages is also taken into consideration, then communications reflect customer-centered considerations and are likely to be more effective.

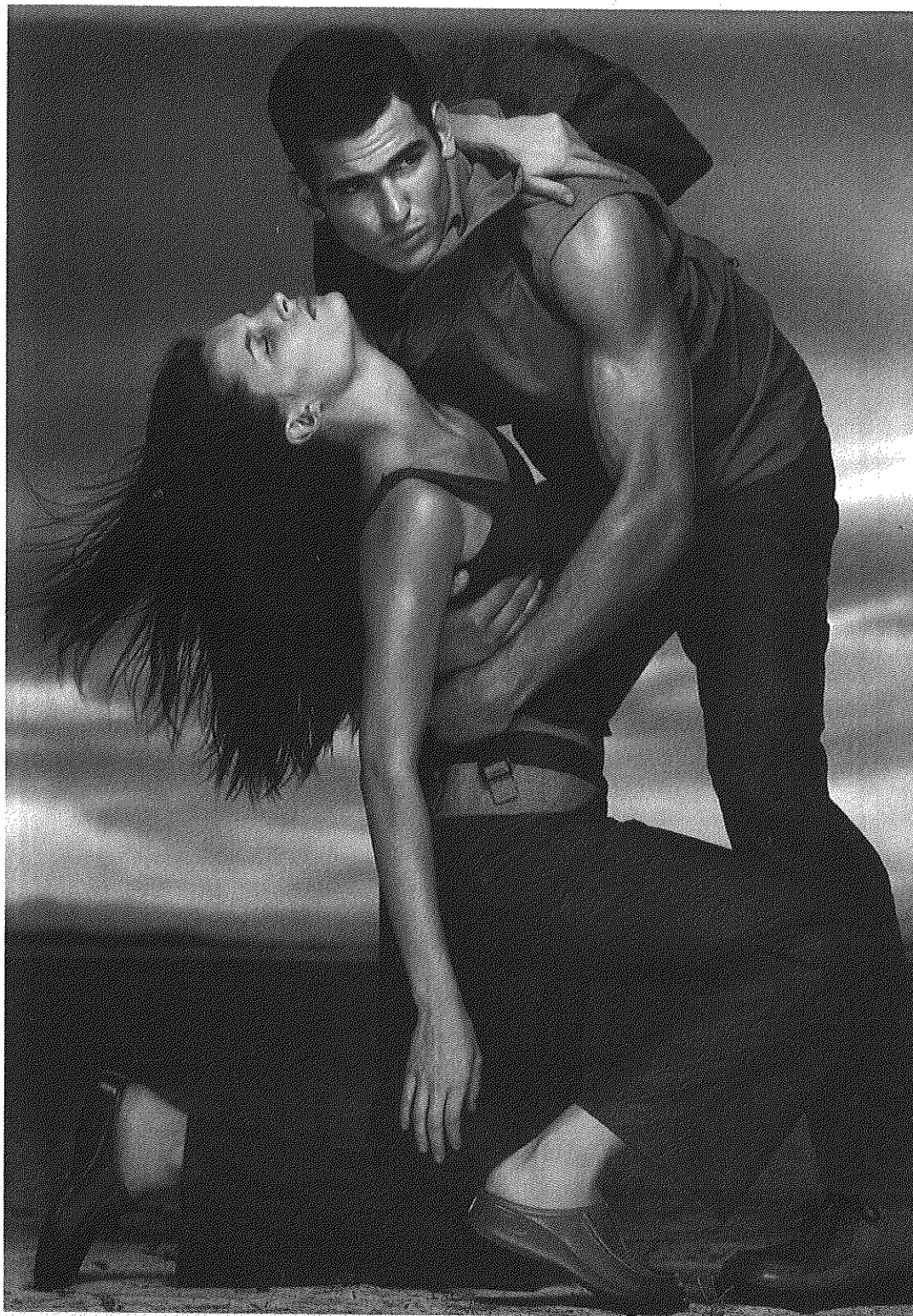
The weighty, even if immeasurable, influential societal impact advertising images and messages carry is another arena I advocate reflection and serious consideration of prior to publication. The power to mould and form conceptions, attitudes, beliefs warrants filtration by the layers of leaders within the advertising agency and particularly, the organisation represented. Even if freedom of speech is propagated, some filtration system would help alleviate some of the societal problems propagated by advertisements – anorexia/bulimia within women striving for the ideal sense of beauty being one of the most inherently obvious. Ethical codes do have a place on the desks of agencies and organisations alike.

Finally, the culturally-relevant considerations of locally adapted advertisements are significant, even given the justifiable pulls towards across-the-board solutions. Advertisements do relay and transfer values – and hence to be most effectively

received, should consider the target audience. Cultural theories from anthropologists and business theorists alike recognise the validity and necessity of considering the local audience. And bridging an ideological consensus to capture attention, secure connectivity, encourage the purchase and firmly undergird lifetime loyalty. That is, after all one of the prime purposes of advertising.

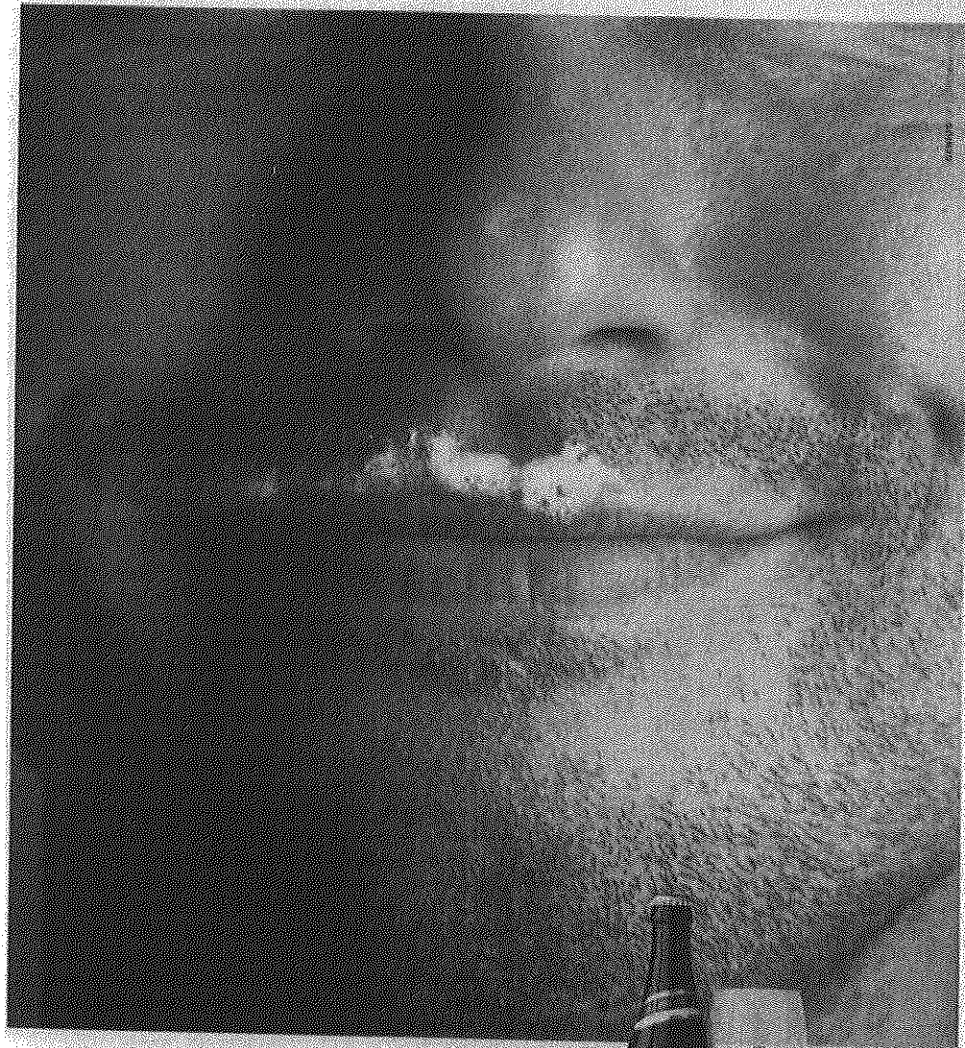
I hope that this exploration is insightful, shares facets of communications not yet considered and provides impetus for stepping back and considering the true torch of influence borne in executing global advertising communications. And importantly, still enable you to enjoy analyses of advertisements as creators and receivers.

## APPENDIX



One: Wannabe – Soldier Exercising Chivalry

*E*uropeans, beware.



*Before you'll know it  
Danish will be  
on everybody's lips.*



**FAXE BEER**  
*Unspeakingly Danish*

Txo: FAXE – Unspeakingly Danish



The Reynolds Kitchens Home Economist

"You can chill while you grill,"

"when it's all in the bag."

**Ginger Shrimp & Broccoli Dinner**

1 Reynolds® Hot Bags™	1 medium red bell pepper, cut in strips
Foil Bag, large size	2 cloves garlic, minced
2 pounds medium raw shrimp, peeled and deveined	1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
4 cups broccoli florets	2 tablespoons dark sesame oil
	Soy sauce

**PREHEAT** grill to medium-high or oven to 450°F. **OPEN** foil bag. Arrange shrimp, broccoli and red pepper in foil bag in an even layer; sprinkle with garlic and ginger. Drizzle oil over ingredients in foil bag. **TO SEAL**, double fold open end of foil bag. Place foil bag in a 1-inch-deep pan. **TO COOK**, slide foil bag onto grill or leave foil bag in supporting pan and place in oven. **GRILL** 15 to 20 minutes in covered grill OR **BAKE** 25 to 30 minutes in supporting pan in oven. **USE OVEN MITTS** to cut open foil bag with a sharp knife. Carefully fold back top of foil bag, allowing steam to escape. Sprinkle with soy sauce before serving. **Easy Clean-Up.** Makes 5 to 6 servings.

**Nutrition:** Per serving: 270 calories, 39 grams protein, 8 grams carbohydrate, 9 grams fat (30% total calories), 276 milligrams cholesterol, 328 milligrams sodium.

For more recipes and tips, call 1-800-745-4000, or visit [www.reynoldskitchens.com](http://www.reynoldskitchens.com)

**Reynolds**

*Making good food better.*

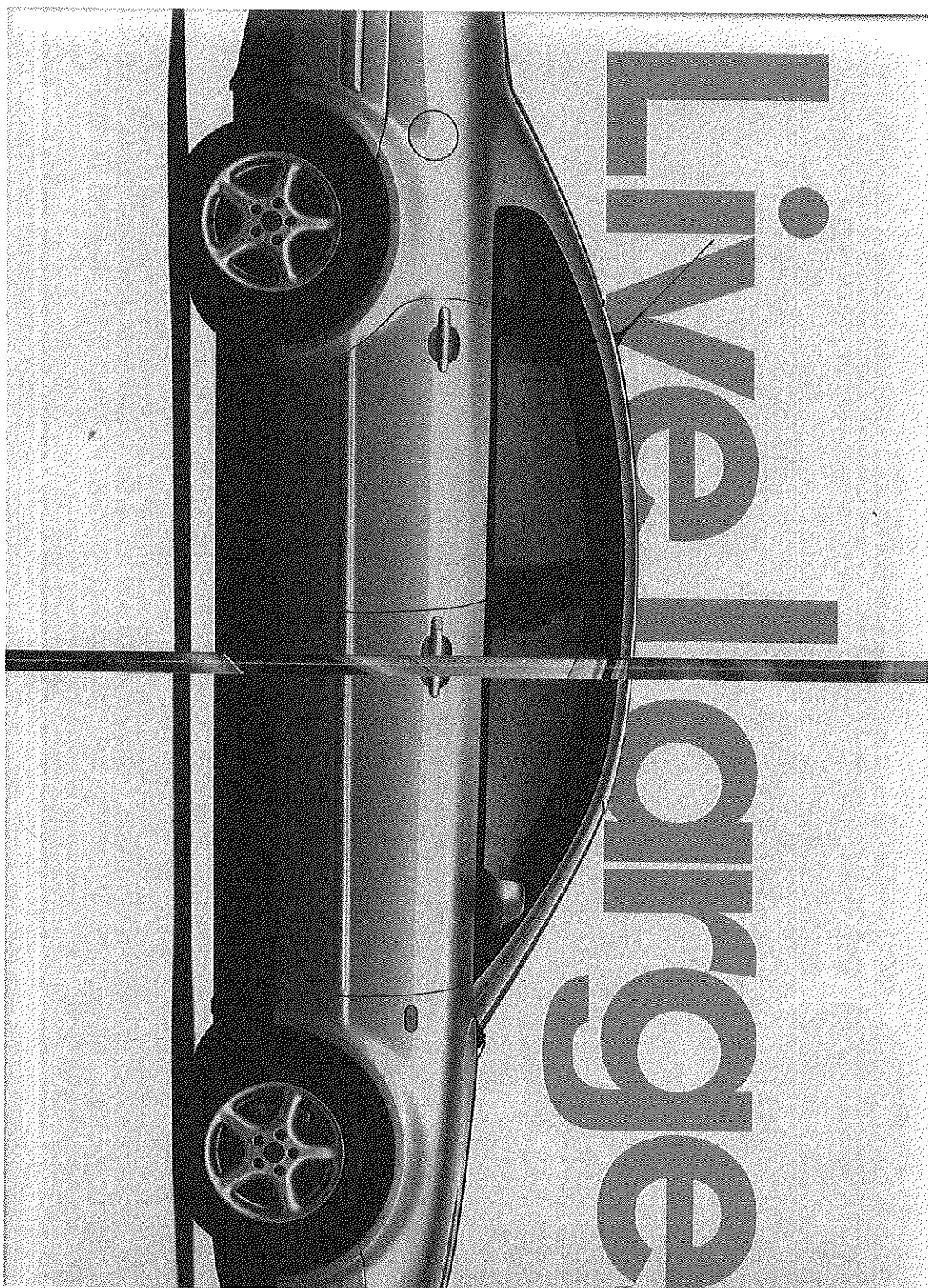
Now Available  
In Regular  
And Large.

©1999 Reynolds Metals Company

Three: Reynolds- Home Economists

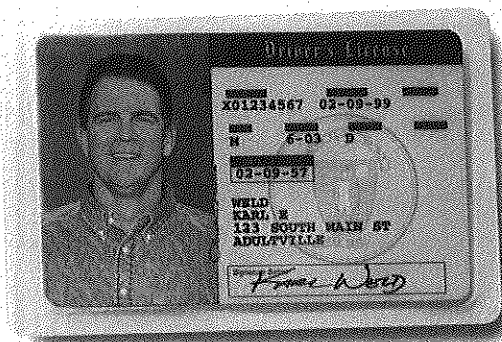
**Don't  
think small.**

**Four: Passat – Live Large**





**"My driver's license says I'm 40. There must be some mistake." A couple things happen to us humans as we get on a little in years. A: Shock. B: We put our life in a bizarre holding pattern and leave the**



**business of really living to the young. This is an outrage. Sure, you've got the job, spouse and bambino thing happening, but**

**what if you're not up to driving around in some cookie-cutter family sedan designed to appeal to the least common denominator? Conveniently enough, we think we have at least part of the answer: Get a new Passat and live large.**

**Introducing the New Passat. Living large (i.e., squeezing every drop out of life), as it applies to cars anyhow, requires driving a vehicle with a certain presence. A certain heft, if you will. Enter the new Passat. It's beautiful without being precious. It's got**



room for five adults  
and a trunk  
the size of a  
New York City  
apartment. Plus, it's  
got a rock-solid road stance that strikes fear  
into cars twice its price.

"My, what a big soul you have." Sure, the new Passat is safe and reliable and practical. It is, after all, a German car. But like all Volkswagens, the Passat is really about driving. It asks you to take an active role in the driving experience. It asks you to be involved. Downshifting hard into a tight corner is wholeheartedly encouraged. In short, the Passat asks you to stay in the game of life and enjoy the hell out of it. Granted, this may not be everyone's cup of tea, but then again, not everyone was meant to live large.



Live large. The New Passat.

Drivers wanted. 

GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY, 220,000 PEOPLE  
CAN LIFT AN ENTIRE

Boeing and McDonnell Douglas  
are now one company. Apart, we  
helped shape the first century of  
flight. Together, we will redefine  
the frontiers of aviation and  
space. What possibilities will be  
created by the 220,000 people  
of the new Boeing, we can only  
imagine. We do know that by  
working together we can make  
life better for an entire planet.



Five: Boeing – Girl in Scenic Countryside





Kyoko and Ken

Connoisseur of exotic spices.

Likes eating many small meals.

Bottled water is a must.

Keeps her body and mind healthy.

Loves Boca Burgers.

Connoisseur of TV dinners.

Likes eating many large meals.

Bottled water is a joke.

Keeps his mind off his body.

Loves Boca Burgers.

*The Original*  
**Boca**  
Burger

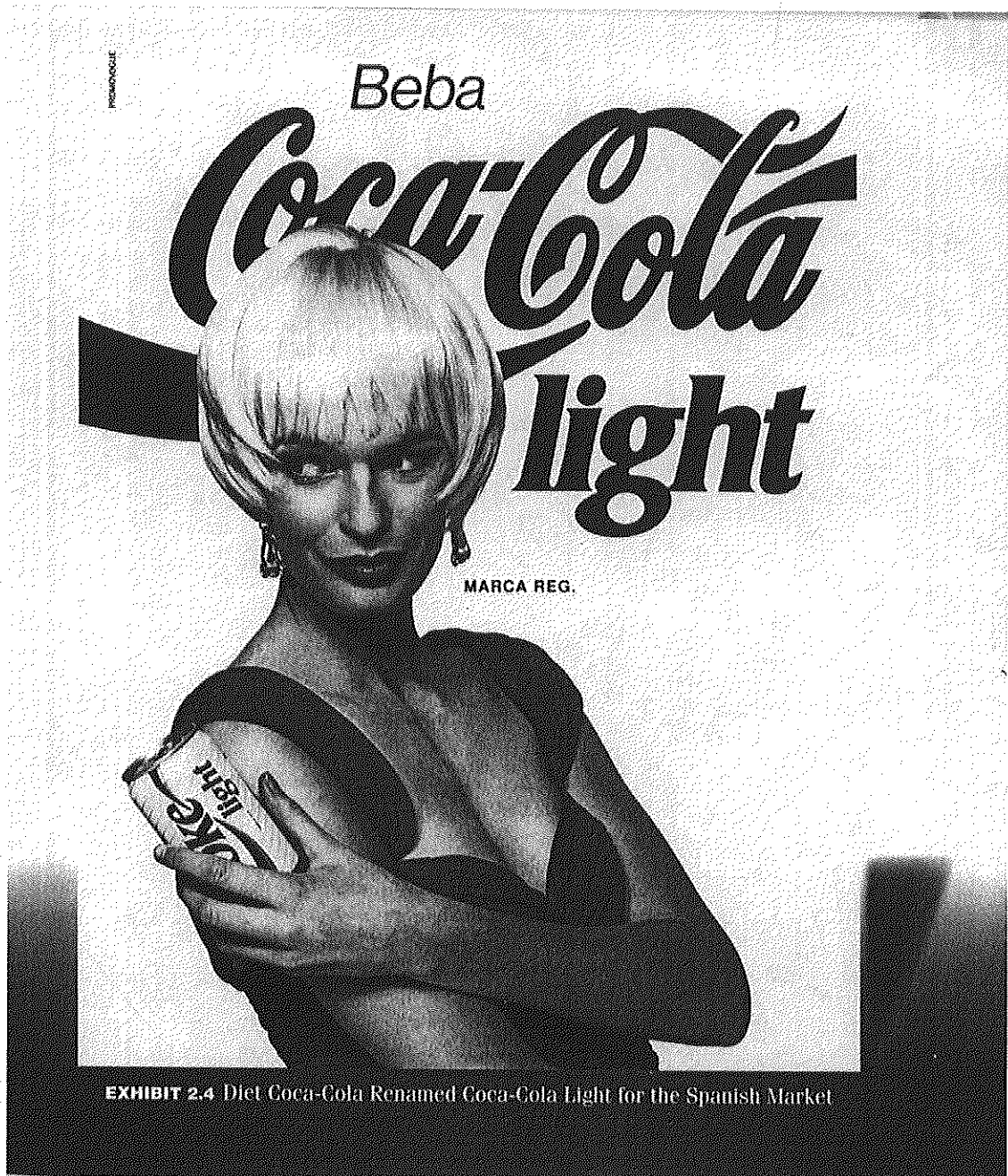
Real taste attracts all kinds.

Boca Burgers taste, look and cook like real meat, but they're meatless. So they're naturally low in fat and calories, yet high in protein.

Look for Boca Burgers in the frozen food section.  
[www.bocaburger.com](http://www.bocaburger.com)

©1999 Boca Burger, Inc.

Six: Boca Burger – Kyota and Ken



SOURCE: The Coca-Cola Company is the owner of the copyright for this ad. Coca-Cola Light and the Dynamic Ribbon Device are Registered Trademarks of the Coca-Cola Company.

Seven: Coca-Cola Light – Spanish Edition



# Ingen hotdogs Ingen smurte rundstykker Kun billig benzin

Hos OK behøver du ikke stille dig op i hotdog-køen, når du skal betale for benzinen. Hos os betaler du direkte ved standen. Nemt, hurtigt og frem for alt billigt.

Tag en bestillingsfolder til et OK Benzinkort ved anlægget eller kontakt os på enten 80 200 300 eller [www.ok.dk](http://www.ok.dk). Så får du kort til billig benzin – mere end 480 steder i Danmark.

OK, Lundtoftegade

**OK**  
ALTID BILLIG BENZIN

Eight: OK – Danish Filling Station

**SOMMER** 

Varmt  
naturligt och  
levande.

Linsom – vårt  
hämtat sin  
naturen. Det är  
förnyelsebara råvaror  
Bli naturlig golvmaterial med värme, styrka och liv.



linoleum – har  
stycka från  
anbygger – av  
samt kork, trä och lin.

**LINGSOM**

UNIKALINOLEUM OCH KORKFÄRÄTTAD

**SOMMER** 

Med fötterna på jorden

Sommer AB, Box 5, 271 21 Västervik, 0430 20000, [www.sommer.se](http://www.sommer.se)

Nine: Linsom – Swedish Flooring Ad with Pregnant Woman



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