

You Can't Walk Away From What You Already Own in Your Mind

The ground rules for a successful advertising program start with acceptance. Accept what your brand already owns in the mind and move on from there. Furthermore, you will usually find that a brand's current market share is only a fraction of its potential market share.

Advertising is particularly appropriate when you want to reinforce a leadership position. And when you own the leadership position, you generally want to reinforce it. Leadership alone is one of the primary objectives of a marketing program. It is why you want to create a new category (so you can start the brand from day one as the leader). It is why you want to be the first brand in the new category (so you have a head start on your competition). It's why you want to promote your leadership (so prospects assume your brand must be the best because everybody knows the better product will win the marketplace.)

The advantage of leadership in an advertising theme is its credibility. Let's say your brand has a number of attributes you could advertise: performance, durability, and easy-to-use are matter of opinion. Your competitor might challenge you on these very issues. Leadership is not debatable. There can only be one sales leader in beer, tires, internet service, ketchup. Budweiser, Goodyear, AOL and Heinz. Each of these brands, to one extent or another, has run advertising extolling its leadership.

Leadership has credibility. Leadership also has the implied benefit of 'betterness.' Even better is to connect your leadership to a specific benefit that has already been implanted in prospects minds via publicity.

Changing a mind.

To build a new brand, you often have to change the prospects' mind about an old brand. To change your mind means top admit to yourself that one of your 'truths' turned out to be a falsehood. That's hard for most people to do.

When evidence to the contrary piles up over a number of months or years, a person can slowly accept a new truth and forget that he or she ever held a contrary point of view. This is the most important point. It is the 'forgetting' of the old truth that allows a person to accept a new truth. You need to allow enough time for the forgetting to take place.

Editors are people, too. They see revolutionary PR concepts exactly the same way as your prospects do. It's new, it's different, and it's instantly under suspicion. You need to allow enough time to pass to let these objectives fade away. You need to allow enough time to let editors be influenced by what they see, read or hear in other media.

The big bang approach might be a good idea for an advertising campaign but it's a poor strategy for getting into a human mind. You don't hammer an idea into a mind—you let it seep in.,

Successful brands get into the mind slowly. A blurb in a magazine. A mention in the newspaper. A comment from a friend. A display in a retail store. After a slow publicity buildup, people become convinced that they have known about the brand forever.

Source: The Fall of Advertising & the Rise of PR by Al Ries & Laura Ries,