

Cassies 2005 Cases

Brand: "Stupid.ca" Anti-Smoking Campaign

Winner: Off To A Good Start—Gold

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Crossover Notes: All winning cases contain lessons that cross over from one case to another. The notes for this case are as follows, and are attached. The full set can be downloaded from the Case Library section at www.cassies.ca

Crossover Note 10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged?

Crossover Note 11. The Eureka Insight.

Crossover Note 12. Changing the Goalposts.

Crossover Note 18. Keeping it Simple.

Crossover Note 20. Emotional versus Rational.

Crossover Note 21. Likeability.

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Crossover Note 23. Problem versus Solution.

Crossover Note 24. Tough Topics.

To see creative, go to the Case Library Index and click on the additional links beside the case.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business Results Period (Consecutive Months): December 2004 – May 2005.

Start of Advertising/Communication Effort: November 26, 2004.

Base Period for Comparison: Historical results, where appropriate.

Here's a newsflash: a lot of kids smoke. They know that they shouldn't but they do it anyway. So, needless to say, the objective of the Stupid campaign – to reduce smoking uptake among 12 to 15-year-olds – was pretty ambitious. [Crossover Note 24](#).

Smoking costs Ontario's health care system billions of dollars a year. It also costs tens of thousands of families their loved ones. Ontario was banning smoking in workplaces and public spaces, and had increased cigarette taxes. Next on the agenda? Ontario's kids.

Of course, getting through to kids is never easy, and this case details the first six months of an integrated campaign that did it. How are we doing? So far, so good.

- 91% of 12 to 15- year-olds say that the Stupid ads will be effective at preventing smoking among young people.
- Stupid.ca had more than 500,000 visits (November 26, 2004 and May 24, 2005)
- The TV ads were the 3rd most noticed in Canada in February and March 2005. They were the second most liked in February, and the most liked in March 2005, according to Leger Marketing's monthly survey with *Marketing Magazine*.

Stupid is definitely off to a good start.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Anti-tobacco advertising is well-trodden ground. By the time kids are thinking about starting, they've already been bombarded by images of blackened lungs, rotting teeth and clogged arteries. They've heard stories from victims and people who've lost loved ones. They get it. Smoking is bad for you.

But the fact is they're still doing it. Even with decades of ad campaigns to stop people from smoking, 25% of Canadian kids in grades 5 to 9 are still experimenting with tobacco. Almost half of kids have experimented with tobacco by grade 9.¹

It's pretty easy to figure out why, too. They want to fit in. They think it's cool. They think it relieves stress. They think it will make them skinny.² Those are some pretty serious beliefs to confront.

Our challenge was to come up with a new way to keep kids from caving in to the appeal of smoking, and stop them from starting. [Crossover Notes 10, 12](#). We set out to firm up ambivalent non-smokers – to have them speak up, and support that smoking isn't cool. [Crossover Note 20](#).

¹ 2002 Youth Smoking Survey, Statistics Canada, June 2004.

² *ibid*

STRATEGY AND INSIGHT

Past anti-tobacco advertising efforts taught us that you can't be all things to all people. Kids just don't react to the same messages as adults. And to make matters even more complicated, a single message wasn't going to resonate with both a kid who smokes and a kid who was just thinking about it.

We decided that we had to narrow our focus. We didn't have to worry about the 5- to 10-year-olds – they're some of the biggest anti-smokers around. We couldn't concern ourselves with older kids who were already hooked – that was a “kick the addiction” message. We had to strike some middle ground.

We chose to fight for those kids who are leaving the lower grades to enter the social minefield of middle or high school. They're the ones who are most vulnerable to tobacco's appeal. They're going from the top of the social ladder to the bottom. They're looking for ways to exert their independence. And, at 12 to 15 years old, smoking can be very appealing.

Great. So we want to talk to adolescents. The problem is, they don't want to listen. Parents are lame; teachers are pathetic. Government officials? Forget it. Authority figures are a force to react against. Peers are the ones to please.

Execution was crucial. We needed to talk to kids in the way they talk to each other, when adults aren't around: No preachy talk. We built an advisory panel of kids involved in anti-tobacco work, and some who were just non-smokers. We walked them through our strategy and asked them to help us refine it. When we had five creative concepts worth pursuing, they helped narrow it to three. They even attended our creative presentation to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. And as you might have guessed, the MoH went with the concept the kids recommended: Stupid. [Crossover Notes 11, 23](#).

We then made sure the campaign hooked the audience by using these three elements:

1. **Entertainment** – we had to capture attention and get kids talking. Every element of the campaign featured humour and a youth-for-youth feel. [Crossover Note 22](#).
2. **Situations Kids Could Understand** – we translated tired anti-tobacco messages into terms kids would get. They don't care that they might have lung cancer when they're old enough to be grandparents. But they do care about looking stupid. Truly stupid acts like holding a metal pole in a lightning storm or making toast while in the bath show smoking – the far more likely way to kill yourself – for what it really is. [Crossover Note 18](#).
3. **A Web Site** – stupid.ca was engaging, informative and funny, like the TV ads. It was a forum where kids could share stories, ask questions and get answers. They could even learn how to get more involved by becoming an anti-tobacco advocate at school or in their communities.

EXECUTION

The game plan was to have a big launch, start a youth buzz, then hold their attention with a multimedia campaign—all of it leading to the stupid.ca web site.

Launch – November 26, 2004

We started with a five city concert launch in Toronto, London, Thunder Bay, Kingston and Ottawa, promoting the concerts two weeks in advance with wild posting teasers. The concerts featured bands like Goldfinger, De la Soul, Brass Munk, Dead Celebrity Status and Closet Monster and were hosted by MuchMusic VJs.

How did it go? The web site got more than 32,000 hits in the first four days.



TV – November 26, 2004 – March 2005

Our youth panel made sure the ads had it right. We developed seven English TV spots and one French. Each showed the stupidity of smoking a different way. We rotated two ads at 138 GRP a week, refreshing the creative every month.



Antlers



Hardware Store



Cereal



Stupid Stunt



Dog Park



Bath Time

Cinema – December 2004 and January 2005

We took advantage of the Big Sound and Big Screen to really get our message through.



Lightning Rod

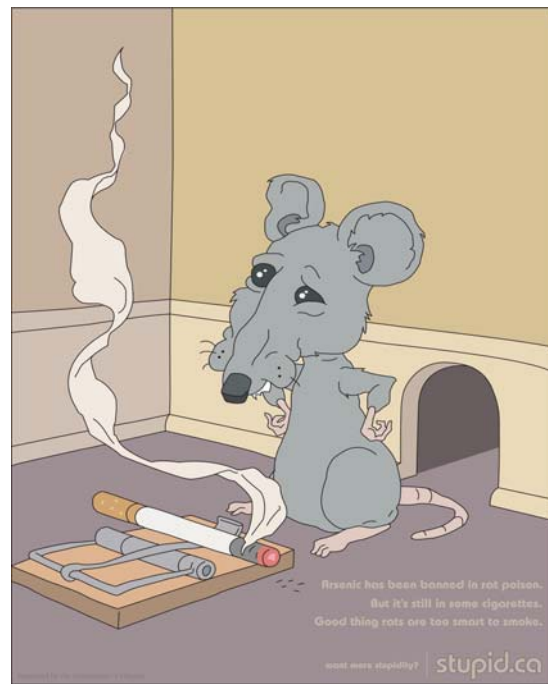
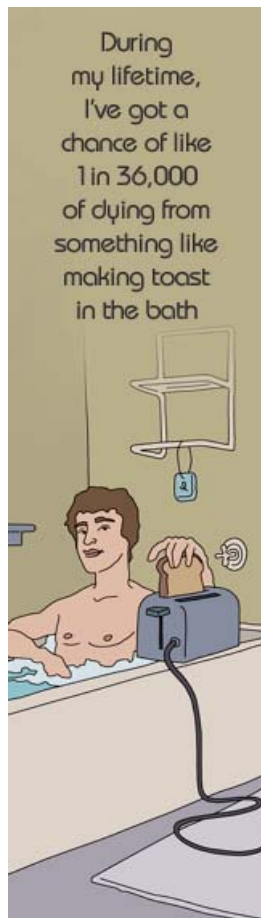
Stupid.ca

This was an immersive experience that balanced education with entertainment. It was real, honest and funny, and it continues to reach an ever-expanding audience.



Magazine, Web Banner and Ticket Back

We also developed a web banner, magazine ads, and Ticketmaster ticket backs.



RESULTS

There are several clear pieces of evidence that demonstrate the Stupid campaign is getting its message across:

1. The advertising was remembered far more often than other anti-tobacco ads in Ontario. They were also the third most recalled ads in Canada for February and March 05, and the ads drove more than 500,000 people to our website.
2. There was extremely high (91%) acknowledgement among kids that the Stupid ads would help prevent their peers from smoking.

Advertising Breakthrough.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care measured anti-tobacco advertising awareness a month before the launch of the stupid campaign, halfway through the TV buy, and just after the end of TV in April 05.

While anti-tobacco advertising in general had good recall prior to the launch of Stupid, unaided recall jumped with the launch of Stupid by approximately 15% in February and stayed at 73% through April. By February, more than half (57%) of kids asked, on an unprompted basis, were able to recall the name of our web site.

Awareness of anti-smoking advertising (general) – seen, read or heard in the past two months.

Oct 04	Feb 05	Apr 05
62%	77%	73%

Despite most of the media being in Ontario, *Marketing Magazine's* Leger Marketing poll ranked Stupid as the third most noticed ads in Canada for February and March 05. They were the second most liked in February, and the most liked in March. **Crossover Note 21.**

Traffic to the web site was impressive. In the first four days, more than 32,000 people visited the site. December and January saw more than 130,000 unique visitors each, with 569,432 unique visitors by the end of May 2005. More than 10,000 visitors sent e-mail greetings to friends from the site, and more than 4,000 downloaded the anti-tobacco kit.

Youth Say the Ads are Working

Ninety-one percent of those 12 - 24 think that the Stupid ads are effective at preventing young people from starting to smoke, versus the 65% who thought the anti-smoking ads before stupid accomplished the same goal.

I would like to know how effective you felt these (Stupid) ads were at preventing young people in Ontario from starting smoking.

Oct	65% rate ads (pre-Stupid) as effective
Feb	91% rate ads (Stupid) as effective
April	88% rate ads (Stupid) as effective

Similarly, kids felt the ads did a good job of providing them with relevant information about the dangers of smoking.

I would like to know how effective you felt these ads (stupid) were at providing factual information about the dangers of smoking.

Feb	86% rate Stupid ads as effective
Apr	84% rate Stupid ads as effective

Other Recognition

The campaign won a Silver Marketing Award in Public Service, a Certificate from the British Television and Advertising Awards, and was a finalist in both the Cannes Lions and One Show. The web site won the Flash in the Can “People’s Choice” for educational web sites, “Site of the Day” by Favourite Web Site (FWS), and was a finalist at One Show Interactive.

CAUSE & EFFECT BETWEEN ADVERTISING AND RESULTS

Measurements of recall, response to the website, and self-assessment of the effectiveness of the ads by kids suggest that Stupid accomplished the vast majority of the anti-tobacco attitude shifts. Though substantive behavioural change happens over years, there’s no doubt that Stupid is off to a good start.³

End of Case. Crossover Notes follow.

³ Editor’s Note. Ordinarily, the Cassies judges look for *behavioural* changes, over and above attitudinal shifts. However, for the first 6 months of an anti-smoking campaign, it would have been unrealistic to expect behavioural shifts. We look forward to a future case showing a successful long-term effect.

INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2005

[For “Stupid” Anti-Smoking]

Crossover Notes have been going for several years, and now run to 28 pages.

We used to attach a full set to all cases, but to save a few trees, we now include only the Notes particular to any case.

The idea of Crossover Notes occurred to me while I was editing Cassies 1997.

I was a consultant by then. Before that I had reached the category manager level at P&G (what they quaintly called the Associate Advertising Manager). I had then clambered up the ladder at O&M, eventually becoming President and later Vice Chairman—both in Toronto. P&G and O&M were both passionate about “lessons learned,” and so was I. In those days (it seems hard to believe now) we felt rushed off our feet. But we did have time to study if campaigns were working or not, and come to conclusions about why.

There are lessons, like gold dust, in all the Cassies cases. So in 1997 I decided to extract them. This started with bite-sized footnotes about lessons that “cross over” from one case to another. And the idea kept growing. It is still anchored to winning cases, but I also draw on other thinking for more complex issues.

You can use Crossover Notes in two ways. Although they didn’t start out as a crash course in advertising, they are worth reading as a whole. You can also dip into them selectively. The headings on the next page will help you choose.

I’ve tried to be even-handed on controversial issues, but here and there you will sense my point of view. For this I thank the Cassies for not editing their Editor.

We now have over 150 published cases. They’re a growing body of experience. I hope I’ve helped pass some of the learning on.

David Rutherford

Toronto: December 2005.

For advice on brand-building see *Excellence in Brand Communication*—authored by leading Canadians from across the marketing and advertising spectrum.

It is published by the ICA. See www.ica.adbeast.com.

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The Notes for this case are marked ✓ and come next.

“STUPID” ANTI-TOBACCO. CROSSOVER NOTES. CASSIES 2005.

10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged? Conventional wisdom will sometimes be right. But it can also be a roadblock. When US Pepsi executives first saw the Pepsi Challenge, they apparently said, "that's not Pepsi," and rejected it. The Dove Litmus campaign (*Crossover Note 7*) ran into a fusillade of disapproval at client/agency global head offices—and only survived because the Canadian team stuck to their guns. Here are others that went against the tried and true:

From Cassies I, III, 99, 2001:

- Crispy Crunch, making a virtue of greed—a taboo in confectionery.
- Richmond Savings, poking fun at the Humungous banks.
- Sunlight, saying it's OK to get dirty.
- Fido and Clearnet, using dogs and frogs.
- Various financial accounts—so many that humour has almost become the new conventional wisdom: AGF, Clarica, BMO Quebec (and Scotiabank in 2002).

From Cassies 2002:

- Bud Light, not going after the young, legal-age, male heavy drinker.
- CFL, against younger viewers, accepting they might alienate the core franchise.
- ED, going high-profile with a taboo topic.
- Five Alive, switching from Moms to young males.
- Irving Home Furnaces, using age as a plus for attracting attention.
- Labatt Bleue, breaking the Christmas “Happy Holidays” tradition.
- Pine-Sol, breaking the conventions of household cleaner advertising.
- Sleeman in Quebec, embracing the English heritage with “honest frenglish.”
- Sloche, rejoicing in being politically and nutritionally incorrect.

From Cassies 2003:

- Bait Cars, talking directly to criminals.
- Crown Diamond Paint, advertising that men hate painting.
- Familiprix, using humour to sell health products.
- Irving Mainway Coffee, making a virtue of the caffeine hit.
- Toyota Matrix, breaking all the Toyota “rules.”
- Sola Nero, could not be further away from wine snobbery.
- Super 7, reveling in the excesses of the super-rich.
- Université de Montréal, with no smiling students and ivy covered buildings.

From Cassies 2004:

- Cirque du Soleil, breaking convention as a corporate philosophy.
- Elections Ontario, resisting the temptation to use social responsibility.
- The Miller campaign, throwing out the conventions of political advertising.
- Réno Dépôt, investing in the brand, rather than “price and item.”
- Toyota Sienna, with their “cool minivan” thinking.

From Cassies 2005:

- Cruisin' to Win, thinking small.
- Crescendo, moving away from "delivery/takeout" as the high ground.
- Energizer Lithium, ignoring the conventions of battery advertising.
- Baileys, breaking out of the liqueur cabinet.
- Hubba Bubba, using brand thinking in a merchandizing category.
- Moores, redefining the way to look at men shoppers.
- Familiprix, selling health products hilariously.
- The Anti-smoking campaign, also being hilarious in how it talked to teenagers.

11. The Eureka Insight. These feature in many cases. Some examples:

- Oh Henry! None of the gut-fillers had tried to own hunger, even though it was the high ground for the category. Cassies II. See also *Crossover Note 7*.
- Buckley's. Rather than side-step their bad taste, Buckley's relished it. Cassies III.
- Chrysler. Minivans were "my most expensive household appliance." Even so, *emotion* was the key to an immensely successful launch. Cassies III.
- Philadelphia Cream Cheese. In research, people often do not own up to what they really want, which in this case was "permission to indulge." Cassies III.
- Richmond Savings. Almost everyone hated banks, but it still took insight to turn this into the "Humungous Bank." Cassies III.
- Eggs are natural, but in word-association tests, consumers did not say so. (See *12. Changing the Goalposts*.) The farmer campaign brought "natural" to life.
- Sunlight. Getting dirty is fun. This is diametrically opposed to the conventional wisdom, dominated by Tide, that clean is good and dirt is bad. Cassies 99.
- Fido in Cassies 99. In an echo of Apple vs. IBM, Fido saw that consumers needed the human touch. See also Clearnet and "the future is friendly" in Cassies 2001.
- Diet Pepsi in Cassies 2002. They found a way to be youthful without being too young in the "forever young" campaign.
- Listerine in Cassies 2002: healthy gums, after a century talking about bad breath.
- Pro•Line in Cassies 2002: Appealed to non-experts with "Anyone can win."
- Aero. Saw the power of "melting" in Cassies 2003.
- Crown Diamond. Used the fact that men hate to paint in Cassies 2003.
- Super 7. Ignored the political correctness of being tasteful. Cassies 2003.
- Cottonelle. Talked to women as women, not as "family." Cassies 2004.
- Quebec Milk. Saw the blindingly obvious. That just asking people to drink more milk might cause it. Cassies 2004.
- Toyota Sienna. Realized that the answer lay not in what minivan buyers do, but in what SUV buyers do. Cassies 2004.
- Irving's Cruisin' to Win. Saw the power of *small* prizes. Cassies 2005.
- Crescendo. Like Oh Henry! saw unoccupied high ground. Cassies 2005.
- Butter. Saw a way to use "natural" to connote taste and health. Cassies 2005.
- Anti-Smoking. Saw the power of "Stupid." Cassies 2005.
- Jergens Ultra Care. Saw a way to reposition skin. Cassies 2005.
- Whiskas saw things from the *cat's* point of view. Cassies 2005.
- Moores used the fact that their target audience hates shopping. Cassies 2005.

- Harvey's realized the significance of The Grill.
- Quebec Lotto 6/49. If 6/49 winners are so generous, be nice to them.
- United Way saw power in the Hand icon.
- Leucan realized that there is still hope, despite childhood cancer.
- CIBC Run for the Cure saw the power in the Pinnie idea.
- Juicy Fruit saw how to build a new image by (almost literally) destroying the old one.
- Quebec Milk saw power in the obvious—if one glass is good, two are better.
- Plus virtually all the cases in *Crossover Note 10*.

12. Changing the Goalposts. Some insights come from seeing what was always there to be seen. (Sunlight's Cassies 99 joy of getting dirty is an example.) Others re-frame the problem, such as:

- Cow Brand Baking Soda's extended usage.
- Johnson's Baby Shampoo's re-positioning against adults.
- Cereals trying to get eaten as a late night snack.
- Baileys (2005) going against wines and beer occasions.

Insights can also spring from what is not being said. Eggs in Cassies 99 is an example. Word-association tests played back benefits, but did not identify that eggs are natural. Somehow, this caught the agency's eye. They made "natural" into a powerful campaign using real farmers, and turned around a 17-year decline.

Purina is another example. At one time, everyone sold dog food on taste and nutrition. Not surprisingly, consumers played these back as the important benefits, reinforcing conventional wisdom. The team at Scali/Purina saw the significance of the unspoken (and deeper) truth—that a dog is part of the family. This led to the immensely effective "helping dogs lead longer lives" campaign.

This also points up another way to get insights—to look beyond Canada. PAL dogfood in the UK had earlier arrived at similar thinking, and produced the famous "prolongs active life" campaign.

18. Keeping it Simple. We've all been to a presentation that was so complicated that nothing registered. In other words, we know from real life that KISS works. But when it comes time to approve a creative strategy we get overtaken by the urge to cram everything in. This has to be resisted. P&G say that you have to "feel the pain of leaving things out." Trout & Ries give similar advice.

Scott Bedbury (of Nike and Starbucks, and himself a client) blames clients for the habit. He points out that it's hard to see what's wrong with adding another benefit or copy point. But it's also hard for an agency to say "we should leave it out" when the client says, "let's leave it in."

There's a sub-set of this when a brand has an emotional benefit *and* a rational claim. Examples are (1) Philly in Cassies III with "permission to indulge" and "60% less fat." (2) Scotiabank in Cassies 2002, wanting to sell individual services while improving overall image (3) Campbell's Soup in Cassies 2002, wanting to modernize its image, while getting nutrition facts across.

Something has to give—and the more points there are, the lower the impact of each. This is where experienced research companies can help. They have evidence about the trade-offs involved.

The points so far have been at the Creative Strategy level, but the execution should also be simple—or, said better, *simple for the audience to take in*.⁴ The danger is that we know what we are trying to say, and so may not realize that an ad is unclear. I've also seen directors complicate commercials, in an effort to make them "more interesting." Overall, though, virtually all Cassies advertising is simple.

20. Emotional versus Rational. There's a great quote that "a brand is a bundle of meanings." Many of these meanings are rooted in emotion rather than reason, so if we showed a Vulcan a typical Creative Strategy (especially one from the packaged goods companies in their heyday) he would be puzzled. The key consumer benefit is always rational, and the rationale is, well, rational too. Our Vulcan would say that it is not logical to be so logical, because Earthlings are, well, not logical.

It's worth asking why Creative Strategies are this way. First, there's the tendency to assess issues analytically rather than intuitively. This was fertile ground for the ideas of Claude Hopkins, writing *Scientific Advertising* in 1922, and Rosser Reeves, writing *Reality in Advertising* in 1960. The resulting hard-sell advertising appealed to the mentality of many North American advertisers. Hard sell then had enough successes to make the beliefs self-fulfilling. Selective perception expunged the failures.

Others, led by Bill Bernbach, argued for a more intuitive approach, and recently the "emotion" approach has shone more brightly on the radar screen. But even today, there are Creative Strategies that just tuck the emotional benefits in under Brand Character, or don't mention them at all. I used to make that mistake. When I was Brand Manager on Tide we said implacably that Tide stood for cleaning. At an unwritten level, we knew that Tide also stood for *trust*, but this emotional benefit did not appear in the Creative Strategy—and we could easily have overlooked it.

Make sure your mental model of advertising rings true to what people are really like. Often, we are too rational, which could be tragic. John Bartle of Bartle Bogle Hegarty (the UK agency famous for creativity that works) calls for us to think in terms of the

~Unique Emotional Proposition~

Agencies and clients factoring this in more than they used to, but it still doesn't get pride of place. Given what we are learning about Emotional Intelligence, this strikes me as illogical, and lord knows what a Vulcan would say. Here are winners that *could* have focused on the rational, but chose emotion:

⁴ Simplicity is not simple as it used to be—in the sense that Direct Marketing relishes multiple copy points, provided they have selling power. Also, the notion of "the brand" involves layers of meaning. That said, a piece of communication must still be easy to take in.

- Cassies III
 - Chrysler NS Minivan. It had functional improvements, but the campaign was heavily infused with emotional benefits.
 - Philadelphia Cream Cheese. The Angel campaign captured the emotional benefit of "permission to indulge," along with the rational benefit of 60% less fat than butter or margarine.
- Cassies 99
 - Richmond Savings. The Humungous Bank campaign.
 - AGF Funds. The "what are you doing after work" campaign charmed its way into people's pocketbooks.
 - becel. With hard-hitting print, and a strong doctors/nutritionist plan, it reached #1. They then wanted to get on TV, but regulators forbade hard-hitting claims. This led to the "young at heart" campaign, and spectacular long-term business growth.
 - Clearnet MiKe. It appealed to the self-image of its pragmatic, project-driven target audience.
 - Fido. It includes rational benefits, but the main pull is user-friendliness.
 - St-Hubert tapped into chez-nous.
 - Sunlight captured the joy of getting dirty.
 - Wonder Bread. They could have sold on taste + nutrition, but instead used the joy of childhood.
- Cassies 2001
 - Joe's Rant made us proud.
 - Clarica made it all look simple.
 - Clearnet gave us the future is friendly.
 - Kraft tugged at our heartstrings with KD moments.
- Cassies 2002
 - Manitoba Telecom gave us Morty, the talking bison.
 - The Bank of Montreal and Scotiabank made us smile.
 - Campbell's gave us the less-than-perfect family.
 - CFL fanned the flames of rivalry.
 - Diet Pepsi and Five Alive gave us back our youth.
 - ED made us think.
 - Home Furnaces tickled the fancy of an older audience.
 - Nautilus gave us joie de vivre.
 - Philly showed us that a less-than-perfect angel was still working.
 - Pine-Sol took a quirky look at keeping the house clean.
 - Sidekicks gave the family a helper.
- Cassies 2003
 - Sloche appealed to teen rebelliousness.
 - The SAAQ campaign scared us to death.
 - Manitoba Telecom showed that Morty the bison was still working.
 - Toyota Matrix went for emotion rather than reason.
 - Sola Nero made wine youthful and hip.
- Cassies 2004
 - Viagra was, well, Viagra.
 - The United Way cast off its "administrative" image.
 - Cottonelle talked to women as women.
 - Gaz Metro dealt with the fear of Gas.
- Cassies 2005
 - Prairie Milk appealed to teens' need for growth.
 - Toyota Sienna positioned itself as the cool minivan.
 - Smoking is just "Stupid."
 - Energizer Lithium found that the rational approach was not working.
 - Coricidin II had to find a way to get a blood pressure benefit across.
 - Activia had to do the same with the "digestive" benefit.
 - Run for the Cure, perhaps not surprisingly, found that emotion was appropriate.

21. Likeability. Nowadays, it's generally felt an advertising should be *likeable*. But there was once an opposite school of thought. The poster-child was "Ring around the Collar" for Wisk—highly disliked *and* highly effective. Dissonant views on likeability, in part, reflect the long-running feud between creativity and selling power—do they work together, or does creativity get in the way? Cassies winners demonstrate that *they work together*, and the day may come when this ancient vendetta is put to rest.

Likeability hit the headlines in the mid 80s, with a paper by Alex Biel. Later, in the early 90s, the Advertising Research Foundation caused another stir. The ARF Copy Research Validity Project⁵ examined major copy tests. The results showed modest predictive ability on shipments and share, but no technique did particularly well. This caused a blizzard of rebuttal from the research firms. But it also caused a surprise. Likeability, which until then had been seen as a bit of a non-issue, was (apparently) one of the better predictors of in-market success.

A bandwagon started. For quite a lot of people their mental model is that advertising has to (mostly) entertain to do its job. They seized on the “entertaining” meaning of liking. Others pointed out that “liking” means different things to different people. Alex Biel found that it is closer to “meaningfulness” than “entertainment.” Others say that it is a combination of positives (Entertaining, Relevant, Newsworthy, Empathetic) and/or the absence of negatives (Unfamiliar, Confusing, Alienating). In other words, it's simplistic to assume that liking just means “entertaining.”

In the Cassies, much of the advertising is likeable in the ordinary sense of the word, but some (Big Brothers Vancouver, Dove Litmus, Ethical Funds, Pfizer's ED, SAAQ's anti-speeding, Canadian Blood Services, Motrin, United Way, Leucan, Run for the Cure come to mind) could only be called likeable in the “meaningful” sense.

And then, as with so much in advertising, we must also be alert to exceptions. Tim Broadbent, in his speech at the 2004 Cassies, showed a very unsettling UK winner from the 2003 IPA Awards. Lennox Lewis, talking about wife abuse, smoulders with repressed rage in a very disturbing (but effective) commercial for police recruitment.

For myself, I've found the best approach is to think of liking on the broader lines defined above.

For more, see such papers as *Love the ad. Buy the product?* Alexander Biel. Admap 1990. *Do our commercials have to be liked?* Colin McDonald. Admap 1995. *Like it or Not, Liking is not Enough.* Nigel Hollis. Journal of Advertising Research 1995.

⁵ It tested commercials that were known to be effective (or not) to find out if copy tests could pick winners from losers. This required pairs of commercials for the same brand (to remove the “brand” effect). The commercials also had to have shipment/share results (good or bad) over at least a year in split-cable test markets. It was hard to find these pairs of such commercials, but eventually five pairs were validated. The ARF replicated the major techniques, and “pre-tested” each commercial. The results, while modestly positive, did not show especially strong predictive ability for any technique.

22. Humour in a Serious Category. It doesn't make sense to trivialize what you are trying to sell, but this does not mean that humour cannot sell in serious categories.

Money is serious stuff, but Richmond Savings (Cassies III) blew the doors off with its "Humungous Bank" campaign. Other examples include Buckley's, Claritin, and Goodwill in Cassies III; Fido and AGF in Cassies 99; Clearnet and Manitoba Telephone in Cassies 2001; Familiprix and Université of Montréal in 2003; Miller for Mayor and Elections Ontario in Cassies 2004. The "Stupid" campaign, Leucan, and Familiprix I Cassies 2005.

The two financial cases in Cassies 2002 (Bank of Montreal and Scotiabank) both use humour. As of Cassies 2003, I was saying that the financial category had thrown off its "serious" straightjacket. And in Cassies 2004 the Desjardins case-writer suggests that the pendulum had swung too far, pointing out that virtually all the Quebec banks are using humour.

Sometimes humour must be avoided, even when there must be a strong temptation to use it. Jokes about erectile dysfunction are an easy laugh, but not to men who have the problem. So the ED campaign in Cassies 2002 was conspicuously serious. But by the time we get to Viagra ("Good Morning" in Cassies 2003) the mood has become distinctly jaunty.

23. Problem versus Solution. There's a widespread idea that advertising works better when it is positive—i.e. a mental model that advertising should spend more time on the solution than the problem. But this can be challenged:

- Quebec's "Buckle Up" campaign in Cassies I.
- The campaign against Quebec's Medical Bill 120 in Cassies I.
- The Heart and Stroke campaign in Cassies I.
- Oxfam Canada in Cassies II.
- Buckley's in Cassies III.
- Dove Litmus in Cassies III. (Most of the commercial is showing harshness.)
- Big Brothers Vancouver and Ethical Funds in Cassies 99.
- Sunlight in Cassies 99. (Most of the commercial is spent on getting dirty.)
- Erectile Difficulties in Cassies 2002.
- SAAQ anti-speeding in Cassies 2002.
- Bait Cars in Cassies 2003.
- Familiprix in Cassies 2003.
- Motrin in Cassies 2003.
- Elections Ontario in Cassies 2004.
- The "Stupid" campaign in Cassies 2005. Also the United Way.
- Moores in Cassies 2005.

Note: When I tell people that the Dove and Sunlight commercials spend most of their time on the problem they often disagree, until they re-look at the commercials.

This is why the conventional wisdom needs to be re-examined. The issue shouldn't be the *time* spent on this or that, but on the *net impression* taken away.

24. Tough Topics. The Cassies don't have a lot of cases about complex social issues. However, we do have the following:

- Quebec's "Buckle Up" campaign in Cassies I.
- The Heart and Stroke Foundation in Cassies I.
- Oxfam Canada in Cassies II.
- Goodwill Industries in Cassies II and III.
- ABC Literacy in Cassies III.
- Big Brothers Vancouver in Cassies 99.
- Erectile Difficulties in Cassies 2002, and Viagra in Cassies 2003.
- SAAQ anti-speeding in Cassies 2002.
- Bait Cars and United Way in Cassies 2003.
- Elections Ontario in Cassies 2004.
- The "Stupid" campaign against tobacco in Cassies 2005.
- United Way in 2005

Note: The British and Australian databases have more cases on tough topics.

End of "Stupid" Crossover Notes