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## Driving Advertising Success in the 21st Century

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When the target audience is new to a product category it may be enough for an advertisement to generate brand recall. But as product categories grow, and as audiences become more experienced with the products and the way they are advertised, it becomes important for ads to be persuasive as well as memorable. As audiences grow even more familiar with products, recall and persuasion are no longer enough. In 2005, PhaseOne launched an ambitious effort to learn what set effective advertisements apart from the rest of the pack at this level of audience sophistication.

Cooperating with seven leading advertisers, PhaseOne analysts examined 89 recent advertisements across 42 brands and 14 product categories, all rated by at least one of three consumer testing services. All advertisements were coded across PhaseOne's 300+ communication variables. PhaseOne's variables cover communications elements such as attention capture, involvement, brand integration, and audio/visual techniques. Advertisements were also classified as either superior, average, or inferior, based on their consumer testing scores.

The results showed that successful advertising in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is driven by *owning a piece of the heart*. Advertisements must carve out an ownable niche for the brand, a relevant space that no other brand occupies. Although this space can be created through either rational or created ideas, our analyses found that created ideas were generally stronger and are an easier space to own.

### How to Own a Piece of the Heart

The traditional drivers, persuasion and memorability, are still important, but now they must be used to create that unique space in the consumer's heart, and to own the space once it is established.

#### **Persuasion:**

Two persuasive techniques stood out as effective in *creating* the space in the consumer's heart:

- Half the superior ads used *brand-related emotional components*. Attaching emotion to your brand is an effective way of claiming that unique place in your consumer's heart. However, the emotion must be appropriate to the brand; only one inferior brand tied emotion to brand, and in that case the emotion was not appropriate to the category.
- 45% of the superior ads used *imagery associated with the brand*. No ads in the inferior group did this successfully.

Additionally, one persuasive technique stood out as owning the space, once it's occupied.

- 100% of the superior ads provided *proof that the brand was able to deliver on the image it set or the promise it made*.

The analysis also identified *negative drivers* — drivers that block a brand's entry into the consumer's heart:

- Comparing a "new and improved" product to the older version of the same product
- Failing to provide adequate support
- Claiming uniqueness, which was negatively correlated with ad success

### **Memorability:**

Our analysis found that to make a brand memorable, it must be the star of the ad and an integral part of the ad's dominant idea.

- Making the brand the star of the ad is achieved through brand messaging and creativity.
- The style of the ad should focus on and be consistent with the brand. For example, if your brand is quirky, the style of your ads should be quirky, too.
- Avoid clutter and extraneous elements that overwhelm the brand's role in the dominant idea.