PART A
1. Influencing people: myths and mechanics
Small effects of advertising can influence which brand we choose, especially when all other factors are equal and when alternative brands are much the same.

Weighing the alternatives: evaluation
In many low-involvement product categories, the alternative brands are extremely similar and in some cases almost identical. Most consumers don’t really care which one they buy and could substitute easily if their brand ceased to exist. It is in these low-involvement categories that the effects of advertising can be greatest and yet hardest to introspect upon. With high-involvement decisions, we are more concerned about the outcome of the weighing-up process, so we think more about how much weight to give to each feature (quality, size or power).

When the choice weights equal in our mind, whether it be low-involvement products or high-involvement products, it can take just a feather to swing that balance.

When advertising emphasizes points that favor a brand, it doesn’t have to persuade us – merely raise our awareness of the positive perspectives. Chances are we will notice confirmatory evidence more easily as a result.

Repetition
Even though imperceptibly small changes in time add up to significant effects, individual increments are too small for us to notice. They are below the just noticeable difference (JND).

In summary, the reasons we are unable to introspect on advertising’s effects, especially in low-involvement situations, are:
1. the effect of each single ad exposure is small
2. with repetition, even imperceptibly small effects can build into larger perceived differences between brands
3. if something gets repeated constantly without challenge, our minds seem to regard this as a prima facie evidence that maybe, just maybe, it is true (the truth effect)
4. often it is no big deal to us which of the alternatives brands we choose, anyway

Image advertising
Advertising can marginally change our image of a brand by leading us to associate it with a particular attribute, and to associate the brands in our minds with that attribute more than we associate it with any other competitive brand.

User image
The advertising aims to change not how we see the brand itself—the brand image—but how we see:
1. the stereotypical user of the brand (user image)
2. the stereotypical situation in which the brand is uses (situational image)

Persuasion is the exception
The effect of advertising is not to make us ‘run out and buy.’ This is especially true with low-involvement products and especially true with image advertising.

High involvement
In the case of high-involvement products, much of advertising’s effect is not so much on the final decision as on whether a brand gets considered—whether we include it in the set of alternatives that we are prepared to spend time weighing up. We seriously consider only those that make it into our short list.

Two mental processes in decision making
Weighing up the alternative is one thing. Which alternatives get weight up is another!

Which alternatives get weighed up?
First, what the mind does is to produce alternatives, one at a time. Second, the order in which the alternatives are arranged is the order in which they are elicited by the mind. Even if we like or prefer something, if it is not reasonably high on our mental agenda it is likely to miss out (if you never got there mentally, you didn’t get there physically).

To affect the outcome of buying decisions, advertisers can try to influence:
1. the order in which the alternatives are evoked
2. the evaluation of a particular alternative
3. both

Much on advertising’s influence is not on our evaluations of a brand, but on the order in which alternative brands are evoked.

Agenda-setting effect
Influencing the order of alternatives has its basis in what is known as the agenda-setting theory of mass communication. The items on top of the mental agenda are the most salient and the ones we are most likely to remember first.
The brand’s physical prominence, the amount of shelf space it occupies and its position in the display are very important. But advertising can influence choice when other factors (like shelf space or position) are otherwise equal.

Salience
The psychological term for prominence in our thoughts is salience. Our definition of salience is the probability that something will be in the conscious mind at any given moment.

One way advertising can increase this probability is through repetition. Another way that advertising influences what we think about and notice is through 'cueing.' Advertising can use cues by tying a brand to something that frequently recurs in the ordinary environment. There are many common words, expressions, symbols or tunes that can be developed by means of repetition into mnemonic devices that trigger recollection of the brand. If the cue recurs in the circumstances under which the product is likely to be consumed, all the better. The ideal mnemonic cue is not just frequently recurring, but occurs at strategic times. Celebrities, expressions and music extracts can come to be so ‘owned’ by a brand that they automatically prompt our thoughts in that direction. Our minds are in a sense a ‘stream of consciousness’ – an inexorable flow that is frequently diverted, sometimes paused, but never stopped. Environmental cues can influence what enters the flow and what direction it takes.

Product category as a cue
Category-cued salience is the probability that the brand will come to mind whenever its product category does. Advertising a brand generally improves its salience.

Point-of-sale advertising: how to upset the agenda
Advertisers try to influence a brand’s salience at the point of sale by not leaving it to our mental agendas alone. They erect signs in an attempt to visually cue us into their brand. So Coca-Cola tries to dominate the clutter of mental alternatives as well as the clutter of point-of-sale advertising. This makes it difficult for other brands to cut through into people’s minds at the point of sale. It protects Coke’s category salience.

Supermarket shopping: mental agendas versus brand displays
Simple locating behavior: most people are simply locating the brand they bought last time, or the one that they came in to buy. They put it into their shopping cart with little or no attention to evaluating the alternatives. The product category as a cue is likely to be triggered in our minds at a particular point and to trigger in turn expectations of the brands we are likely to see in that category. Advertising exposure of the brand and the pack helps to make the brand more familiar and increase its salience. Repeated exposure of the pack in advertising makes it more familiar and hence gives it a better chance of being noticed earlier or faster than its competitor. Shelf displays, shelf ‘talkers’ and off-location displays are all ways to help a brand ‘pop out’ and get our attention.

Measuring visual salience
Advertisers give each brand in a supermarket equal shelf space and then take a photograph of the display. They show the picture to a random sample of consumers and ask them to name the brands they see. The order and speed with which the brands are noticed provide a measure of their visual salience.

Summary
Look at page 24.

2. Image and reality: seeing things in different ways
A brand, company or service can be perceived in different ways depending on the frame of reference that people bring to it. Frame of reference is a psychological term that refers to a mindset or previous experience.

Evaluating a brand
When we evaluate brands we try to do so by evaluating their attributes or features. This is not always a straightforward task, for two reasons:
1. there is the problem of what attributes the brand has
2. there is the problem of how to interpret these attributes

Positively or negatively charged features
Under normal circumstances the focal beam of our attention is only wide enough to encompass a few of the attributes of a brand or product. By shifting the spotlight and playing the focal beam of attention on other attributes, it is possible to marginally change our perceptions.

Advertising influence on our brand attribute agenda
The chain of associations (visual or verbal) that a brand automatically triggers in our mind can be ranked in the order in which they are triggered, with the most salient ones at the top. Advertising influences the attribute agenda for a brand by rearranging the order in which we think of its attributes.
**Using positively charged features: positioning**
Words and images can be used to make the positive attributes of an advertiser’s brand or product more salient; to increase the probability that when we think of that brand we will think of those positive attributes; to place them higher on the brand’s attribute agenda.

**Using negatively charged features: repositioning the opposition**
Highlighting the negatives in the opposition brand is referred to as ‘repositioning the opposition’ – repositioning the opposition brand in people’s minds. Thus, words and images can be used to make particular negative attributes of an opposition brand or product more salient: to increase the probability that when we think of the brand we will think of that negative attribute.

**Point-of-sale advertising: attribute cueing**
The words an pictures used to label and describe a brand can direct our attention to quite different aspects of the same thing; they can help us to see it in different ways. Point-of-sale advertising does the same thing. It influences us by playing the beam of our attention on the brand and the featured attribute at the same time.

**Influenced by the brand name**
Advertisers frequently choose the name of a brand so the itself can help direct attention, dictate people’s expectations and determine the brand’s most salient features. These names not only name the product but also make an implicit statement about its salient attributes.

**Summary**
Look at page 32.

3. **Subliminal advertising: the biggest myth of all**
There are those who believe that advertising is all powerful, with a mechanism that is unconscious and subliminal, and that is why its effects are not open to introspection.

**The never-ending story**
The natural fear is that somehow these subliminal images are seducing us in some way without our knowledge. No study has demonstrated motivational and behavioral effects similar to those claimed by the advocates of subliminal seduction.

**Self-help tapes**
In the same way that a sugar pill will relieve pain in about one-third of sufferers if they think it is aspirin, so too will self-help tapes work on a proportion of the people who use them – because they expect them to.

**The practical jokes: embedded words and images**
It often is an art director playing a joke on his client or his boss, or just seeing if he can get away with it without anyone noticing it. This kind of thing, however, gives ammunition to the conspiracy theorists who interpret words and images as proof that subliminal advertising is practiced and must therefore be seducing us without our knowledge.

**Why did the subliminal myth take hold?**
If subliminal advertising is just a myth, how could the myth have been perpetuated for so long?

1. Legislators in some countries moved quickly to ban it. In doing so they lent a kind of legitimacy to unfounded beliefs about the power of subliminal advertising.
2. The myth fits in the image of advertising that us perpetuated by the advertising industry.
3. The media have also done their bit to foster this belief. Mystique makes good copy and greater reader interest.
4. We are able to learn without full conscious awareness – but only up to a point. There is no doubt that we can be influenced without awareness, but there is nothing necessarily unique or evil or manipulative about this (people can jump six feet, but this doesn’t mean that humans can fly).

There is no need for subliminal exposures on TV and cinema screens. The process happens naturally. It is what low-involvement communication is all about.

**Thirty years of research later**
The notion of subliminal advertising was based on the belief that awareness was an all-or-nothing thing. Research in cognitive psychology over the past 35 years has shown that conscious awareness is a dimension and not a dichotomy. It is a matter of degree. A more useful way of thinking about this issue is in terms of depth of mental processing. Instead of ‘subliminal’ we could use the term ‘shallow processing.’

**The logic and illogic of subliminal advertising**
Subliminal advertising was supposed to be pitched just barely below the threshold of awareness. Thresholds turn out to vary in the same person form day to day and even from hour to hour. And they vary from person to person. For an advertiser always to pitch his message precisely at or just under the threshold would therefore seem impossible.
Awareness and attention: limits to our capacity
Psychological studies show that the more things we allocate our attention to, the shallower the mental processing of any one of them. Psychological experiments on shared attention show that there are real limits to our attention capacity when other things in the environment are competing for our attention. Interestingly, the more attention that is paid to something, the easier it is for us to recall it later.

Divided attention
The competition between simultaneous stimuli reduces the degree of recall.

Choosing what we attend to: selective processing
The more interesting the stimulus the more we are likely to pay attention to it and the more of it we recall – in other words, the impact it has. An ad, even though it may not be recalled after the event, may nevertheless be processed, albeit at some very low level of attention.

Choosing what not to attend to: shallow processing
There is some evidence that shallowly processed or so-called ‘subliminal advertising’ can cue a primary drive (e.g. hunger).

Shallow processing: effects on behavior and brand image
The influence of low-involvement messages on the image and salience of particular brands seems to be much the same as, but less efficient than, advertising that is attended to more closely and processed more deeply. Over time, advertising appears to be able to produce small but cumulative image shifts and salience increments. Often, the advertising needs to be continued to maintain these effects. When it stops, the gains are eroded.

When everything else is equal is when advertising is most effective
Whether it is processed at a shallow or a deep level, however, advertising of a particular product or brand is likely to have greatest impact when the alternatives weigh in equally and we don’t care too much about the outcome.

Summary
Look at page 42.

4. Conformity: the popular thing to do
Seeing things as others see them
In making choices people are influenced by two things:
1. what they think
2. what they think other people think
When we see things differently from others, do we always back our own perception and go public? Or do we play safe and go along with the popular opinion? Very often we play safe.
   - When people make choice decisions, they do so on the basis of two types of information:
     1. objective evidence
     2. what they think other people think
Popular opinion can influence not only compliance and conformity, but how we perceive reality.

When everything else is equal
When there is less evidence to go on, or the evidence is ambiguous, people are less sure of their perceptions. The less sure they are, the more readily they will go along with other people’s ‘perceptions.’ As the real differences between brands diminish, people rely more and more on outside cues to help them make judgments and decisions. This is when advertising seems to be most effective.

The bandwagon effect: indicators of the norm
When there is no real difference between the brands or when the choice is not really important to a person, it takes much less than full consensus to influence their judgment. People will go with what they think the majority of other people perceive –the popular view. This is known as the bandwagon effect.
   - The beam-balance effect is another reason why product positioning works. When everything else is equal, conformity may be the feather that tips the balance.

Insecurity: a motivator for conformity
We try to anticipate what others would do and then do the same. This can spare us embarrassment and it can sometimes save us from thinking too hard.
   - People conform most when they are insecure. Adolescence is a time of great insecurity and uncertainty. It is no surprise, then, that teenagers are highly conformist. While rebelling against the outmoded values of their parents, they are at the same time the ultimate slaves to conformity within their own peer group.
Perceived popularity

Popularity is a magnet. It attracts. And advertising can enhance its power to attract. Advertising makes the brand appear popular. It influences its perceived popularity. The more a brand is advertised, the more popular and familiar it is perceived to be. The interesting about communicating popularity, however, is that the advertiser doesn’t necessarily have to do so in so many words. We as consumers somehow infer that a product is popular simply because it is advertised. The psychological mechanism behind this is known as the ‘false fame’ effect.

A supportive study

Presence, and especially a sustained advertising presence, translates into an image of popularity. It leaves a perception of popularity in our minds.

Advertising side effect

Unlike other image dimensions (such as reliability, taste or price) this perception of popularity is largely independent of the specific advertising message. In other words, it is a side effect. So, whether advertising is designed to communicate the image of taste, style, reliability or whatever, it is also likely to increase the perceived popularity and the salience of the brand. This is a side effect of the advertisement that influences which brands come to mind, which brands we think of are popular and which brands we include in our consideration set.

Agenda setting

The mechanism behind this side effect is one we have already met. It is ‘agenda setting’. Our agenda-setting mechanism is not necessarily logical or rational.

Is perceived popularity a plus?

Advertising and media weight affect the perceived popularity image of a brand. They affect people’s feelings of familiarity with the brand as well as their perceptions of the popularity of the brand. And that, in turn, can affect their buying of the brand.

So popularity is a positive reinforcer. It helps to reinforce our continued, unquestioning buying of the brand. Promotion of a brand as popular does not rely on persuasion; rather it represents a pre-emptive effort to fend off the inevitable competitors who will try to take over the brand’s established mental territory.

Popularity and the bandwagon effect

People are tempted to try ‘the latest’–the one that everybody is talking about.

Overpopularity

If pushed too quickly, or to extremes, perceived popularity can go ‘over the top.’ This is more often a danger when perceived popularity is used in an offensive role, to get us to try a brand initially, than when it is used defensively, as simply reinforcer reminding us to buy the brand again. High visibility can help persuade us to try a brand but the success of such a strategy risks being very short-lived.

Why popularity can become a turn-off

Perceived popularity is not always positive. When too many people use a brand, it risks becoming perceived as common unless its image is carefully managed.

Gifts and special occasions

Positioning a brand or product as suitable for gift-giving or special occasions can be a successful strategy, but if the product proves too successful it has within it the seeds of its own destruction.

Price, exclusivity and popularity

The high price and relative unattainability confers a degree of exclusivity which in effect makes the well known brand more an aspirational symbol.

Advertising examples

Look at page 53.

Summary

Look at page 53-54.

5. The advertising message: oblique and indirect

Indirect forms of communication sometimes register a point with more impact. A lot of advertisers think that advertising is meant to be informational and ask questions like: “Are we getting our message across?” However, the more that the advertising moves away from direct message communication towards oblique message communication the less this makes sense. There is a very real difference between advertising that has a clear, spoken, unambiguous message and advertising that is oblique, especially when it is more akin to drama or entertainment. We mentally process different types of ads in very different ways. Many image ads could be said to have a ‘Claytons message’–that is, the message you’re having when you’re not having a message.
What is a message?
While advertisers frequently use ‘message take-away’ (or message ‘take-out’) as a measure of an ad’s success, it is not necessary for consumers to be able to parrot the message for an ad to be working. Communication of impressions can be just as effective as communication of facts.

Window on the mind
As consumers we often construct our attitudes to brands out of stored information in this way. The attributes or images that have become associates with the brand may have lodged in memory without ever having been part of a verbal message. They may have originated in visual images from advertising, or experiential learning, or input from other people. It is therefore a mistake to think about advertising communication solely in terms of conscious message take-away. Image ads convey associations and are totally different from informational ads that communicate ‘news.’

Learning without awareness
What is missing from some communication is the sense of someone trying to tell us something or trying to communicate a message. Learning does not happen by way of sending someone a clearly elaborated message. Some psychologists have labeled this type of indirect learning ‘learning without involvement.’ Others have called it ‘implicit memory’ and still others have called it ‘incidental learning’ or ‘learning without awareness.’ Strictly speaking, this last term is inaccurate.
We can learn skills, information, image associations or almost anything by this incidental learning, provided it is not inconsistent with what we already know or believe.
Incidental learning does not differ qualitatively from intentional learning. The difference is quantitative –that is, in the amount that is retained under different conditions.

Memory and association
In the consumer world, what gets stored in memory slots is not just information. It may be an attitude, a judgment, a position or a conclusion. Bur once formed and stored, these things are more readily accessible and hence more available to influence future buying decisions –especially those types of decisions that tend to be made ‘on the fly.’
It is worth repeating that, strictly speaking, this is not learning without awareness. It is not that people are unaware but rather that the ‘focus of processing’ is on something else in the communication rather than the ‘message.’

Learning by association
There are two differences when you learn something by experience in stead of when someone tells you:
1. You have learned the information experientially instead of verbally. And this means that you probably have a much richer or deeper sense of it.
2. You have learned the information ‘without awareness’ –that is, without awareness of being taught something. There is no sense of any intended message.
We can not observe invisible advertising effects directly, but we can infer their existence by observing other things, such as:
1. changes in brand image dimensions
2. changes in brand attitudes
3. changes in behavior
With image commercials, the invisible can be made visible by measuring the degree of association with image attributes, the degree to which the image features in the brand’s attribute agenda and how high up it is on that agenda.

Communication by association
An example is given at page 62-63.

Do you think in words or pictures?
Different people tend to favor different modes of thinking. In other words, we differ in the way we mentally process information. We assume, without any real basis, that other people think the same way we do. Even advertisers tend to base their strategies on this assumption.

Individual influences
It becomes readily apparent that people are not in agreement about the way in which their basic mental processes work. There are very definitely those who believe they are primarily visualizers (picture thinkers) and those who believe they are primarily verbalizers (word thinkers).
The cues that advertisers use at point of sale, such as pack design, shelf talkers, slogans and so on, are designed to remind us of the verbal messages or to retrigger the visual associations that have been communicated by the ad.

Summary
Look at page 64-65.
6. Silent symbols and badges of identity
By consuming and displaying brand symbols that are associates with entities we:
1. reinforce in our minds our identification and closeness with the person or group they stand for
2. make an expression of our own identity, a subtle statement or symbol to the outside world about ourselves

Expression and self-presentation
Very often we want to signal our feeling of identification—who we are and what we stand for— to the outside world. We do this non-verbally in our self-presentation and self-expression. We use symbols, mannerisms, gestures, idioms, and flags to communicate non-verbal messages to the outside world. The broader, underlying motivation is one of personal identity and participation in (or association with) a larger, symbolic group.

Identification and conformity
Identification is to be distinguished from conformity. Conformity is the need to avoid standing out from the crowd. It is based partly on the fear of being different; on the need to go along with the ideas or choices of others for fear of the consequences. Identification is the flip-side to this. It is a positive desire to be like something, to be part of it, to find identification with it. Pratkanis and Aronson adopted the term ‘granfalloons,’ originally coined by American novelist Kurt Vonnegut, to refer to the entities we identify with.

Granfalloons
Some granfalloons we are born into. The most important of these is our family. Other granfalloons we choose to identify with. Our choice here, however, is frequently influenced, if not determined, by the groups we already identify with. Even when our assignment to a group is random, identification takes place.

The stronger the feeling of identification, the more we defend the group and display its symbols. The more the granfalloon is attacked by outsiders, the stronger the feeling of comradeship within it. The more similar we feel the other person is to us the more likely modeling or copying influence will take place.

The for and against position
People can find identity not only in being for something but also in being against something else.

Reaction to symbols
Whether our reaction to a symbol is external (stop, go) or internal (revulsion) it is a learned reaction. It is learned by association of the symbol with other things. In this way a symbol gradually develops an ability to influence us in its own right and to evoke common reactions.

Meaning is an attachment
Through a process that psychologists call ‘discrimination learning’ a symbol or a brand acquires meaning. Meaning is an attachment. It just appears as though the meaning is the symbol.

A lesson in the origin of a kiss
Once a symbol is learned, it is no longer necessary for us to know its origin or how our reactions to it came about. Even though we are no longer conscious of how it was learned, we all use it and we all react to it just the same.

Discrimination learning
Look at page 72-73 for an example.

Making brands into symbols
A brand can become a badge of identity in several different ways:
1. by being a symbol of the group
2. by being seen to be valued by members of the group
3. by being seen as supportive of the group
4. by being seen as characteristically used or displayed by members of the group

Summary
Look at page 74-75.

7. Vicarious experience and virtual reality
There are ways that advertising can be designed creatively and structurally to increase the immersion of the viewer in a commercial, and thereby enhance its effect.

Ads as mini-dramas
Ads that are mini-dramas are those that depict a story or vignette. Mini-drama ads usually invite viewers to mentally migrate from their lounge-room reality and step into the fantasy world of the ad.
Role-play
When we watch TV, we have the opportunity to 'try on' other people's identities. Ads that use this process to get a message across are sometimes called 'slice-of-life' ads. We learn how the brand or product is (purported to be) instrumental in attaining the desired goal.

Identifying with a character
Our feeling of immersion in a TV program or an ad seems to be greatly enhanced if we find ourselves identifying with one or more of the on-screen characters. This increases not only the feeling of involvement but also the likelihood that we will adopt the trappings of that character. These trappings may be the character's:
1. brand solution
2. behavior style
3. badges of identity.
Identification with a character in an ad takes place quickly and evaporates. But it is fleetingly resurrected at the next exposure of the ad and, in this way, permanent associations or links can develop between the feeling of identification and the brand itself.

Immersion and empathy
If you can't have identification, empathy is probably the next best thing. Empathy means that we understand at a deep level what the character is experiencing and feeling. Identification goes one final step further in the process. It is a more complete projection.

Immersion and image
In product categories like beverages it is often very difficult for advertisers to claim specific differences between brands and hence much advertising is vague on claims. The focal beam of attention is not on a claim as such but on the character's experiencing the brand and its attributes.

Emotions
Ads utilize qualitatively different channels of communicating, which may be visual, musical or associational. They tap into our existing associations with such things as:
1. personal desires
2. belonging
3. caring, human values
In other words, emotions and desires that we already experience. Instead of being connected with a piece of information, a brand may thus be connected in our minds with emotion. The emotion may be:
1. generalized positive emotion
2. a specific emotion (caring, fun, achievement, power, self-reward)

The viewer’s vantage point
The role or 'vantage point' we as viewers are invited to take in a commercial will influence how we mentally process the commercial and what specific details of it we are likely to recall.

Immersion and attentional inertia
Observational studies of children watching TV indicate that for much of the time they do not actually watch the screen. However, if a look lasts longer than about 15 seconds, a child is very likely to become progressively 'locked in' to the program. This phenomenon is called attentional inertia.

TV, hypnosis and reality
The more an ad can immerse viewers (i.e. making the mediated experience momentarily more interesting, more involving, more immersing than what is going on around them), the more successful it will be. The best advertising does not remind viewers that they are viewers.

Tactics for increasing immersion
Anything that lessens the salience of our own current ‘reality’ and helps to immerse us, the viewers, in the world of the ad makes the ad that much more powerful.

Summary
Look at page 83-84.
8. Messages, reminders and rewards: how ads speak to us

The way an ad speaks to us can influence not only how the ad works, but also whether it works at all.

‘News’ advertising
We can process an ad as ‘news’ or as ‘entertainment.’ News advertising provides news or information about the brand. It may be:

1. a new formulation
2. a new benefit about the brand
3. a new variant
4. a price comparison

It is not necessary for us to like the experience of it provided the ad is imparting valuable information to us. When a news commercial reveals a solution to a current problem, then experience and enjoyability can take a back seat.

Today we see a lot of advertising messages delivered as though they are new when they are not. Unrequited expectations of being told something new tend to annoy us. A problem for advertisers is that pure news advertising can wear out more quickly than other types of advertising. Brand managers and ad agencies can run out of new things to say about humdrum, old products. They may then look for ways to ‘create’ news rather than report it. Instead of messages that give us new information about the brand, advertisers can wrap up an old message in fresh, entertaining ways.

The essential difference is not in what ads say, but how they say it. The way in which we mentally process an ad is influenced by our individual interests, but it is also heavily influenced by how an ad speaks to us.

Liking an ad
Liking an ad doesn’t necessarily make it work but, other things being equal, advertisers would prefer us to like their ads. There are two reasons for this:

1. Ads that are dressed up to be cute and enjoyable are more acceptable than ads that speak to us in a way that grates and annoys.
2. We are less inclined to counter-argue when we find ourselves enjoying the ad.

Entertainment
Entertainment commercials are different. We are not being addressed but simply experiencing. With entertainment commercials we react like an audience rather than a sales project. Entertainment ads may be drama, musical variety or animation. Or they may be artistic, clever pieces of print or radio communication. One of the crucial ways in which entertainment commercials vary is how integral the brand is to the execution, and what role it plays. Here are some examples of the brand playing quite different parts:

1. the brand as a prop
2. the brand as a setting
3. the brand as the hero

The more integral the brand is to the ad the more likely the ad is to be effective.

Wrapping an old messages in a fresh, entertaining way
At times ads are likened to aesthetic phenomena – just as though they were works of art. Our conscious reactions to such ads are quite different from our reactions to straight ads. We recall these ads better, we have greater liking for them and we are less inclined to engage in counter-arguing against them. Most importantly, when the brand is well integrated and communicated, it can nudge our attitude towards the brand in the positive direction.

   Techniques such as play-on-words, ambiguity or incongruity are used as creative material to force an ‘interrupt’ in the flow of our normal mental processing. Ads that puzzle us momentarily are accompanied by a mild positive sensation – a sense of fleeting reward.

Repeating yesterday’s news
Look at page 91 for an example.

How we understand ads
Our minds set about trying to understand an ad goes something like this:

1. first, we recognize that it is an ad
2. second, we immediately try to identify what it is an ad for (we look for something familiar that already exists in our memory)
3. once we have located this familiar memory address our minds can store any new information gained from the ad

Brand reminders
An ad reinforces the salience of the brand in our mind and this effect is independent of any new information. So brand reinforcement is one effect. The news itself may have an effect over and above the brand reinforcement effect.
Heralding
The more heralding the ad, the more it focuses our attention on the information as new. The more it is repeated the less affinity we are likely to feel, either for the ad or the brand, and the more tired and boring it makes them start to look. If an ad is pitched in a more low-key manner, especially if it is done in a clever way that we can appreciate, we tend to receive it more courteously and are more tolerant of its repetition.

Non-heralding
An alternative for the advertiser is to use a lower-key form of communication in the first place. It does not get the message across as directly, or perhaps even as quickly sometimes, but it does minimize annoyance and gives the ad a much longer life.

Assertions and non-assertions
The more oblique forms of expressions, by toning down the communication, can soften the degree of assertion while communicating the same information.

The part of the ad we focus on
The content of any communication seems to be classified by our minds into two sorts:
1. things that are already ‘known’, called the ‘given’ information – we are being reminded
2. things that are ‘new’
What we regard as ‘given’ simply registers in passing while we focus on our attention on what we regard as ‘new’ in the communication.

Reminders
When something is signaled as a reminder instead of new information, we expect what is being said to be already stored in our memory. We expect it to be already known and therefore true.

Malleability of memory
The general point is that expectations can be set up by the syntax or by the other means that can significantly influence the focus of our processing.

Silent signals
When we listen to a radio ad, the amount of vocal stress in each part of the sentence helps signal to us what is new and what is given. In written material and print advertising, it is the syntax and the graphics that provide us the cues.

Summary
Look at page 97-98.

9. What's this I'm watching? The elements that make up an ad
The way executional elements of an ad are blended can help determine which of the consumer’s mental process becomes engaged and which do not.

Interaction of words and visuals
A visual element is used effectively to manipulate what is ‘on stage’ in our minds and help us locate the appropriate mental address for a word. Ordinarily this interactive process is extremely fast and automatic rather than conscious. Up to a point there is a certain reward that goes with puzzling out the right meaning, but this works only if the ad first gets our attention.

Attention-getting devices
The first principle of advertising is that it needs to stand out. To this end, advertising uses a variety of attention-getting devices, the best known of which are sex and humor. But, contrary to popular consumer belief, this device stands little chance of being effective if it is not directly relevant to an advertisement’s primary selling point. An ad that compels our attention but fails to register the brand and its message is next to useless for an advertiser.

Controversial communicable ads
Some brands use attention-getting devices in a way that seems calculatingly designed to generate outrage. The effect is they become ‘talked about’ ads and are passed on by word of mouth.

Humor
There are three main mechanisms by which humorous ads are supposed to work more effectively than straight ads:
1. humorous ads are noticed more –that is, they gain greater attention
2. there is less counter-arguing with humorous ads because viewers process them as entertainment rather than engage in true/false evaluation
3. they are liked more and there is evidence that ads that are liked have a higher probability of being effective
Where a brand is not inherently integrated into the execution, ads using humorous executions have to make doubly sure that the correct brand is successfully registered in people’s mind.
Irrelevant throwaway lined (called klinkers) at the end of commercials do little to attract attention. Furthermore, they are likely to erase short-term memory and interfere with the main message of the ad. They can be contrasted with sign-off lines that reinforce the message (klitchniks).

**Testimonials**
Testimonials can be used to increase attention, particularly with radio and print. The intention behind real-person endorsements is to depict a simulation of word-to-mouth advertising. They may show an ‘expert’ but often they present ‘typical people’ who appear to be just like us. This is the satisfied-customer technique.

**Music**
Association of the brand with a popular piece of music increases the salience of the brand in our minds and makes it more likely that we will think of that brand whenever we hear the music.

**Words to music: the jingle**
Many ads set their own words to established or specially written tunes. Music is a cutting edge that helps to etch a commercial into long-term memory.

**Who is talking to whom?**
Analyzing the executonal elements in an ad requires some rather subtle analysis. An invaluable starting-point to the process is to ask two questions:

1. Who is the ad talking to?
2. Who is doing the talking?

**Lecture-style ads**
The advertiser hopes we will listen to what is said, find it of interest and see its relevance to us, then remember the information and act on it.

**Look who’s talking: face vs voice-over**
Advertisements with an on-screen human presenter and lip-sync emerge as the ones that almost invariably outperform those in which a disembodied voice-over is used.

**Presenters**
Some advertisers choose to use a human face but not their own. He or she may be a model or actor with the right kind of face. Or the presenter may be a famous person. Celebrities and actors are surrogates for the advertiser. They can put a human face on the image of an organization. The use of a presenter also acts a mnemonic device to increase the salience of the brand.

**Voice-over**
The reason that so many ads continue to use voice-over in spite of the fact that they are almost always less effective is cost. They are cheaper to make and more flexible, especially if they need to be modified.

**Variations on voice-over**
Advertisers sometimes have more success with voice-overs if they can vary them in some way. One way is the newer trend of using some of Hollywood’s biggest stars as voice-over talent in major campaigns. Another variation is to set the voice-over to music. Advertisers can let supers-words appear on the screen to correct overclaim for the product by some on-screen character. These words seem to come from an invisible person that we presume to be the advertiser.

**Who are the characters talking to?**
The voice-over can address to some other character on the screen. At the same time we, on our side of the screen, are also experiencing the commercial and getting the message, but in the role of bystanders or passive observers.

**Voice-over talking to on-screen character**
The difference between being a bystander and a target is the difference between overhearing a conversation and being told something directly. What is different in overhearing information in a conversation between to two other people is that our attention and cognitive processing are focused differently.

**The on-screen character as receiver**
This style engages us as passive observers and invites us to enjoy the ad while interpreting the ‘you’ as a reference to the on-screen character. However, if we identify with the on-screen character, we can simultaneously interpret the ‘you’ as referring to us.
Tuning in to the on-screen character’s thoughts

The on-screen characters in all these commercials are depicting other actions while simultaneously we are hearing what seems to be their thoughts, desires and remembrances coming through the audio track. To the extent that we find ourselves sharing the feelings of these characters and identifying with them, the pronoun ‘I’ or ‘we’ can be taken as referring to us as well.

Drama

We record inadvertently the incidental information or message that happens to get conveyed while the focus of our attention is on being entertained. Sometimes by pulling both music and drama together we get musical drama.

Characters

The age, sec and lifestyle of the characters are chosen to maximize the probability that the target audience for the brand will identify with the character.

Multiple target audiences

It is possible, however, for one commercial to address multiple target audiences and still achieve identification. Successful identification should lead to suggestions for similar feelings in similar households. Two questions are therefore pertinent when we examine an ad and its characters:

1. Are we members of the target audience group for the ad?
2. Which character or characters seem to be most like us?

The person playing the character

People who are already admired generally have a head start in getting the audience to identify with, and project themselves into the character. Where the character has to be introduced and developed from scratch, the advertiser has to spend much more money for on-air time to elicit the same degree of identification effect.

Animated characters

Animated characters have been used to both positive and negative role models. Animation can be used to change the whole feeling and tone of a commercial. In particular, it can be used to lighten up what might otherwise be a serious, unpleasant message. One appeal that animated characters have for advertisers is that the makers of the ads are in total control of the characters’ behavior. Advertisers using real people always have to hold their breath and hope. The character may get into trouble, developing a bad reputation that can cross over to the brand.

Length of commercial

Time is both enemy and a challenge for drama commercials. There is extremely limited time in which to develop the characters, depict the situation and get a message across. It takes time to build involvement and identification with the characters. This is why sequels can work so well –because the characters have already been developed in an earlier ad.

Negative roles of characters

Some ads deliberately use a character designed to be a negative role model. Some ads, in attempt at humor, make the mistake of doing this inadvertently and depict the target identification character as something of a goat. Yet the advertiser still hopes that we will react positively on the character and what he or she is saying. These ads often fail and can sometimes be seen to have marked negative effects. Some advertisers, while not attempting to be humorous, can still fall into this trap and be amazingly incautious or unthinking in their choice of characters. They are obviously not thinking clearly about target identification.

Comparative ads

Particularly in mature markets, comparative ads are increasingly being used by small brands to attack the market leader head-on. It’s not all about building a brand personality, it is merely about setting a competitive framework and talking about one key attribute which is often price.

Summary

Look at page 119-120.

10. The limits of advertising

Advertising’s power is constrained as much by practical limitations as by absolute limitations.

Competitors’ advertising

For every advertiser there is at least one and usually several other advertisers in the same product category. These create a lot of advertising ‘noise’ and clutter. The ‘noise’ of competing claims often neutralizes or at least greatly dilutes the effect of any individual campaign. It also makes it much more expensive for any individual company to advertise at a level and frequency that can be heard above the competitive ‘noise.’ This imposes a limitation of its own.
Money: limitations of budget

In the competitive environment it takes huge sums of money, sometimes over long periods, for such mechanisms to be really effective. Even the largest companies cannot afford the advertising that would be necessary to ‘manipulate’ us in the wholesale way that many opponents of advertising fear. This is especially true when the brand has no unique benefit or difference over other brands and the difference has to be created by advertising.

‘Creating’ needs

People who are ‘anti advertising’ often feel that advertisers create needs and manipulate us into buying things we don’t really need or want. Advertising does not create these products. What it does do is help to accelerate their diffusion into the mass market. Yesterday’s inventions and luxuries become tomorrow’s necessities. Advertising’s primary role is creating awareness of these inventions in the mass market.

How advertising accelerates mass markets

Advertising, in communicating first the product and then the affordable price, accelerates the diffusion of the innovation into the mass market. The critics often seem to be nostalgic for the simplicities of the past. Nostalgia is an attempt to create an idealized past in the present. However, there is no argument for staying where we are.

Ads for brands or ads for products?

Only a tiny proportion of advertising is aimed directly at affecting our decision about whether to purchase a product or not, as distinct from which of the various brands to buy. Research into the ability of brand advertising to create demand for the category as a whole is sparse and remains frustratingly inclusive. The suspicion is that research will eventually show the spin-off effect to be substantial and that its mechanism is based primarily on agenda setting by creating an image of popularity and social acceptance for the product category—but only if enough advertising for enough brands is aired for long enough.

Resistance to change

For the product to gain widespread acceptance, it has to be made consistent with consumers’ existing beliefs and expectations. This reflects a psychological principle known as cognitive consistency.

Cognitive consistency

Our minds seem to have a need for consistency, in our attitudes and beliefs, and between these attitudes and our behavior. When we receive information that is in conflict with, or is inconsistent with what we believe, we are likely to experience cognitive inconsistency. Our minds automatically try to resolve this.

Advertising is the weaker influence

Our need to cognitive consistency means that advertisers who try to persuade us against our will, to get us to accept something that goes against our existing information or attitudes, are almost certain to fail (unless they have unlimited time and money to hang in for the long term).

Positioning for cognitive consistency

Much of the advertising, then, lies in finding ways to play the focal beam of attention on the attributes of the product that are consistent with what already exists in our minds. The existing set of our mind is a limitation or inhibitor on what advertising can do.

When everything else is not equal

Advertising may get us to try a product, but our experience with the product then overrides anything that advertising may tell us. If the product does not live up to the promise, we don’t purchase it again.

Conversion/persuasion vs reinforcement

Advertising has frequently proved quite ineffective by itself at getting people to buy a brand for the first time. To achieve widespread trial of a new brand, advertising usually has to be heavily supplemented by promotions, in-store displays and free sampling.

Advertising’s main role is to reinforce feelings of satisfaction for brands already being used. Users of a brand almost always react more positively to its advertising than non-users. This type of advertising provides a verbal ‘pat on the back’ for its own costumers. At the same time, it casts people not using the brand as bystanders who ‘overhear’ a communication between the advertiser and the buyers of the brand.

As a result of repetition of the advertising, when we consume the brand we may think to confirm that the brand does indeed have the advertised attribute. The advertising sensitizes us to experiencing those advertised attributes and confirming them. It therefore had the potential to transform the consumption experience. Without first experiencing the advertising we might simply consume the brand without noticing the differences between it and its competitors.

Confirming that a brand has the advertised attribute has two effects:

1. It reinforces the consumption experience and makes us more likely to buy the same brand again.
2. It makes us feel more positively towards the advertisers and the truthfulness of their advertising.
Ads that work or ads that win awards?
Most advertising industry awards are not based on any measure of effectiveness but on subjective evaluation and artistic creativity. This is now beginning to change.

Summary
Look at page 134-135.

PART B
11. Continuous tracking: are you being followed?
Information about consumers should, ideally, cover the state of play for that week in regard to people’s behavior, attitudes, brand awareness and brand image as well as direct communication effects such as advertising recall, advertising recognition and message take-out. This is then related to other information such as media data (indicating what advertisers were on air during that week, at what times and what advertising weight) along with sales and market share data. Continuous monitoring of purchase information can recall whether something worked or didn’t. However, knowing whether it worked is one thing while finding out why or why not, is another. This diagnostic information also needs to be continuous and is obtained from continuous surveying known as continuous tracking.

Conducting ad hoc surveys, or pre-post design surveys, was the old way of trying to understand what is happening in a market.

In the absence of weekly information, there is sometimes an overwhelming temptation to react when there may be no need to. It is comforting to know at the earliest possible time whether you need to react to a competitor’s move. Increasingly, continuous tracking is used before making important moves and to study competitors’ activities as well as your own. Product managers and advertising managers are also interested in promotions, changes in media flighting, different media weights, a switch to shorter-length ads, a free sampling campaign, a change in pricing, new positioning, a new presenter, or new creative advertising ideas.

With the time dimension included, the research becomes richer and its value much more easily demonstrable in terms of:
1. its role as an early-warning system
2. its ability to reveal changing patterns in a market
3. its ability to tease out inferences about causation and relate these to assessment of the effectiveness of advertising, promotions, etc
4. its ability to capture unexpected events
5. its asset value as a cumulative database resource

12. New product launches: don’t pull the plug too early
Not enough companies closely and continuously monitor what is happening at the product launch and in the immediate post-launch period. The result is that many of the all-important fine-tuning adjustments necessary to marketing success fail to be made. And the product crashes.

Durable products
Many new durable products fail because early sales do not come up to expectation. Pessimism then spreads within the company and often results in management ‘pulling the plug’ too early and abandoning the product.

Each time advertising goes on air, it develops and strengthens attitudes towards a brand – it strengthens the brands’ consumer franchise. Between on-air times, the mental territory that the advertising previously captured, will begin to erode because of the lack of advertising reinforcement but, overall, in the long haul, the product will be gaining more than it will lose.

Repeat-purchase supermarket products
In new product launches, particularly, it is crucial to monitor other things – among them awareness (the proportion of people who are aware of the new product) and trial (the proportion who have tried it) – and do this continuously.

The problem in most cases was not that the new variety was rejected by the market. It was to do with the inadequate level of marketing support behind the launch and the over-reliance on advertising alone without promotional activity to generate that first key trial.

Fine-tuning the marketing support
Trial needs to be gained early, while the product has a newness and freshness about it. If it does not achieve good penetration in the first six months, it is unlikely to succeed. This is particularly important for seasonal products such as new varieties of canned soup or chocolate cookies in winter or ice confections in summer.

13. Planning campaign strategy around consumers’ mental filing cabinets
Ads are like alcohol: the more you have, the less you remember (at least for competing brands in the same product category).

When time passes but little or no further (competing) learning takes place there is very little forgetting. On the other hand, where a lot of activity and new learning – especially competitive learning – fills the time interval, these ‘interference effects’ become very great indeed.
Models of memory and forgetting

Forgetting has more to do with ‘inability to retrieve’ than with failure to store the memory (the information becomes functionally lost). There is interference from previously stored ads, exacerbated by the fact that the consumer is often fairly unmotivated to or uninvolved when storing them. With these types of memory inputs the interference effect is all the greater when the viewer has low involvement.

Advertising application

Anyone who is serious about maximizing the effectiveness of their ads strategy needs to have access to weekly data (monthly or quarterly is not good enough) as to which advertisers were on air that week and at what weight.

Try looking not at the total amount of advertising but at the brand’s share of advertising in the product category, week by week. A strong relationship may then emerge. The brands’ TV ad share-of mind is the brand’s share of total ad awareness in the product category, in other words, memory for that ad relative to all other ads in the product category.

Components of clutter

In the broadest sense an ad competes with all other ads – even those not in the same product category. This is known as the general level of on-air clutter and any ad has to break through it. Category clutter occurs when an ad competes with other ads in the same product category, this does vary from week to week.

Can a company compete with itself?

The key point is the level of involvement of the target audience. Advertising for high-involvement products (such as cars) doesn’t impact only on a high-involved audience. It also impacts on relatively uninvolved consumers. And this uninvolved audience will at some time in the future become an involved one harboring memories of past advertising.

The on-air effectiveness of an ad is influenced by several things:
1. the execution
2. the dollar spend
3. the reach
4. the flighting
5. the number of competitors who are on air in the same week and how much money they spend
6. the number of different ad executions for the same brand that you have on air in any one week
7. the number of commercials for the same umbrella brand that you have on air in any one week
8. the level of involvement of the target audience and the complexity of the message that needs to be communicated
9. the ad objective

14. What happens when you stop advertising?

What happens when advertising stops?

Most companies don’t know what happens when advertising stops because they only look at the immediate sales figures. If sales don’t go down, they breathe a sigh of relief. But it is critical to look at what is going on underneath, at the brand image and ‘brand value’ level. To regain a favorable position that is lost during belt tightening can cost more in the long run than to try to retain it, by continuing to advertise at a maintenance level.

For how long can a company afford to stop advertising?

Continuous tracking of campaigns and advertising flights can reveal how much ‘residual capital’ has been built up and how quickly it is eroded once the advertising is stopped.

Some experiences

Look at page 163 for examples.

Erosion of brand franchise

Habitual, repeat-buyers of a brand are not the same thing as brand loyals. Habitual buyers repeat-buy the brand for reasons of inertia rather than loyalty. With the cessation of advertising, the brand loyals diminish in the market and habitual buyers increase. While sales may not change immediately, the major brand(s) in the market become more vulnerable, more open to attack. They lose their brand franchise.

Opportunity

Rather than wait for the business to return to normal, top executives should cash in on the opportunity that the rival companies (who are stopping their advertising) are creating for them. At such times, there is less advertising clutter and the smaller advertiser, even with a small ad budget, is more likely to be heard when the large advertisers are silent and mental commitment to their brand is beginning to erode.

Reinforcement effect of advertising

One of the most important effects of advertising is to consolidating and protecting what has already been built. It reinforces behavior. People are more convinced of the ‘rightness’ of their brand choice if they see the brand advertised.
Belt-tightening strategies for tough times
Rather than stop the advertising, consider these ways of trimming the waistline and tightening the belt:

1. A drip media strategy – that is, rather than stop advertising altogether, use reduced exposures (reduced weekly TRP weights) to try to hold the ground you have already captured.
2. Look for ways to trade off frequency while maximizing reach on the target market.
3. If necessary, examine the feasibility of having longer gaps in your advertising flighting pattern.
4. If you are using several ad executions on air at the same time, cut back to just one ad and put all your media weight behind it. In other words, avoid ‘executional anorexia.’
5. If you want to cut back, consider 15-second commercials – but use them not as attack forces but as occupation forces to hold the mental territory that has already been captured. Don’t just use 15s as substitutes for 30s.

15. The effectiveness of funny ads: what a laugh!
Little is written and known about humor in advertising and its effects. Part of the problem is that it is so easy to treat all humor as the same and generalize about it — when it isn’t the same. And what is funny to one individual can be uninteresting or even irritating to another.

The history of humor
Laughter and humor were viewed negatively, not positively. Indeed, they reflected the ‘satanic spirit of man.’

Anatomy of humorous ads
The key of humor is in the incongruity. Writers create humor by surprising us — but in a particular way. They force us momentarily to fuse together two things that already exist in our minds but are otherwise unrelated and incompatible. The conceptual elements that go into humorous ads and induce a mental switch from information to humor and hence enjoyment of the ad, are these:

1. two concepts
2. incongruity/incompatibility between them
3. confidence that the stimulus elements occurring as depicted is impossible or highly unlikely
4. a way of fusing the two and making them momentarily ‘compatible’
The greater the degree of incongruity the funnier the humor is seen to be. The more impossible or incompatible the two things are fused together, the more enjoyment people seem to derive from it.

Humorists and scientists
Humor is only a temporary fusion. Ideas struggle against each other to fight their way up to our conscious mind from the unconscious. Under normal circumstances, certain ideas are incapable of combining with one another. Usually, their incongruity blocks these ideas from making it successfully into the conscious mind.

Humorous ads
Ads are entertaining and a lot of fun but, when they come to mind, they so often without the brand.

There are three main mechanisms by which humor is supposed to work in advertising:

1. less counter-arguing
2. humorous ads are noticed more
3. humorous ads are generally liked more

Counter-arguing
A reduction in counter-arguing can often be at the expense of correct branding of the ad. The risk with humor is always that we may be so focused on processing it as entertainment that little if any processing registers for the brand and the message.

Attention and recall
Whether extra attention has a positive or negative effect depends greatly upon where the attention gets focused. We have to make sure that the brand-message communication in commercials is so much stronger in order to compensate for the overshadowing effect of the humor.

Integration of brand and execution
Ideally, the brand should be made an integral part of the execution of the ad, especially in the case of humorous ads because the ‘attentions-overshadowing’ effect of the humor. While it is much harder to do, if integration can be achieved it works far better than simply tacking the brand on the end.

Many ads have good integration of the product category with the execution but not with the brand. If the competitor’s brand fits in the execution as well as yours, you are at risk. Poor branding is especially likely to happen in commercials where the humor is peripheral to the brand message rather than integrated with it.
Liking
In low-involvement categories where all brands in the category are virtually identical and there is often nothing new to say about the brand, liking of the brand’s advertising can be the feather that tips the balance. It is of somewhat less importance in high-involvement categories. When people are already highly involved, humor can be somewhat superfluous in attracting their attention.

Wear-out
Some studies find that humorous ads wear out more quickly while other studies find no difference between humorous and normal ads. Why do such contradictory results exist? One clue is in the social dimension. People laugh more if they are with other people, and the more people the more they laugh.

Summary
Look at page 177-178.

16. Learning to use 15-second TV commercials
When they work, 15-second commercials seem to work very differently from 30-second commercials.

Getting into people’s heads versus staying there
A general principle in the psychology of learning is that it is harder to get into people’s minds than it is to stay there. In other words, there are two processes: the process of learning and the process of priming and reinforcement. The more we prime (or activate) something, the more familiar it becomes.

Familiarity and speed of processing
When we see shorter-length commercials or we fast-forward (zap) through ads on a prerecorded program, we are more likely to be able to pick up the communication if the ad is already familiar. 15-Second commercials can be quite effective in holding mental ground after longer-length commercials have been used to capture it. However, when used on their own, as solos, 15-second commercials often prove disappointing and ineffective.

Lost in the clutter
15-Second commercials, when used as a solo with low-involved audiences, have great difficulty breaking through the clutter. 15-Second ads are usually screened at greater repetition levels than 30-second commercials. Advertisers can get more repeat exposure for the same ad budget than they can with a 30-second ad. You need exceptionally creative ads or highly involved audience or an extremely simple message, if you are going to use 15-second commercials as solos.

Message communication
Capturing mental ground means not only breaking through but also correctly delivering a message or an impression. 15-Second commercials won’t communicate unless the message is extremely simple, or the 15-second ad is a reminder ad following from a longer one (i.e. where the message is one the audience has been exposed to and internalized previously).

Blame the creatives?
15 Seconds is a very short time in which to communicate anything successfully. In those few instants the ad has to:
1. tune viewers out of the previous commercial or program that they are watching
2. lock their attention onto the ad
3. communicate the brand name
4. get across an effective message
5. consolidate the memory trace before the next ad comes along (with the potential to interfere with the mental processing of what has just been said)

Tuning in takes time
For up to a quarter of the time of the 15-second ad, the viewer’s mental processing may be subject to interference effects of one kind or another (at the start and finish).

Fifteens as cost-efficient reminders
If we need to convey a message then the preferred strategy is to use longer-length commercials to get it across first, to firmly entrench it, before switching to 15-second (reminder) commercials.
Ways 15s commercials have been used

1. as a reminder: 30-second ad is followed by a 15-second reminder ad
2. as a fast-follower: a 30-second ad is followed by a 15-second cut-down version of the 30-second ad that appears in the same commercial break
3. as a sequel: a 30-second ad is being finished by a 15-second ad in the same commercial break
4. as a mixture-ingredient: 30-second ads and 15-second ads are randomly scheduled in one week
5. back-to-back: two 15-second ads in a 30-second pod
6. as a solo: 15-second ad used entirely on its own

Audience motivation
When aimed at highly-involved groups, a 15-second ad can work in its own right—if the message is simple. The key here is involvement, which affects not only attention but also the amount of work the recipient is prepared to do to take out the message.

Summary
Look at page 189-190.

17. Seasonal advertising

Seasonal product categories
Products that are seasonal to a greater or lesser extent include:

1. summer: ice creams, suntan lotions, soft drinks, swimwear, beer and charcoal
2. winter: canned soup, chocolate bars, chocolate cookies, cough and cold preparations
3. seasonal events: electric razors, children’s shoes and school supplies, champagne and greeting cards
4. in addition: some public-authority and utility advertising campaigns may be distinctly seasonal, such as save water (summer), prevent forest fires (summer), drink driving, speed kills (holiday seasons)

Perceived popularity
Brand popularity can be self-fulfilling. Sometimes, products gather momentum through their advertising. The brand is seen as increasingly popular. And just when it is about to really catch on, the visibility and impetus suddenly stop. Why? Because ‘the season’ is over.

The need for accelerated trial
With product categories that are seasonal, advertisers have limited time to build momentum. They have to make the product ‘catch on’ in much less time than they would have for a non-seasonal product. You need to aim for maximum trial for a new brand in the first three to six months. Otherwise, it loses that sense of newness. If the ad can’t create a sense of the brand having taken off in the first season, chances are that by its return in the second season the brand will risk being perceived as ‘old hat.’

The off-season pause
It is worth considering occupation strategies during the off-season to attempt to hold onto the mental territory you captured.

Extending the season
The idea is to find ways during the off-season to maintain what has been built up in the season. This may be in people’s minds or behavior or both.

An example
Look at page 193-195 for an example.

Get in early
It is easiest to get into people’s heads when there is little or no competing advertising clutter. Getting in early can be an effective strategy. But make sure you also send in the occupation forces in the form of a maintenance campaign when the competitors come on air.

Who determines seasonality?
Products are rarely as inherently seasonal as we are inclined to believe.

The changeover-to-daylight-saving trap
Seasonal products have limited peak season time on TV. In the summer holiday season, for example, there is significant doubt about how many people are going to be away on vacation and therefore not be sitting in front of their TV sets being exposed to that advertising.
18. Underweight advertising: execution anorexia
Is there a minimum threshold of media weight needed to make an ad campaign work? The answer seems to be ‘yes.’

A case example
Before labeling any campaign a failure, or concluding that ‘these ads don’t work,’ it is crucial to look at the actual TRP figures, the actual delivered, as distinct from the planned, media weight. Sometimes ads do not go to air because of a mix-up. Sometimes (as in the changeover to daylight saving, holiday periods, etc) there are not as many people watching TV as there were the previous week.

Execution anorexia
When planning a media schedule, the threshold TRP weights cannot be decided without taking account of the number of ad executions that will be used.

One execution or many?
Multiple executions have to be considered carefully in terms of tightness of integration, media weight, flighting of each execution and particularly the degree of involvement of the target audience. Especially with low-involvement products, the use of multiple executions can be counterproductive.

Low vs high involvement
Highly involved target audiences are more motivated and actively looking for information. As a result the ad may require less repetition, and print media may often work very effectively. Advertising to highly involved audiences has been shown to be less subject to interference in memory when they see subsequent ads for competitive brands. Some evidence suggests that advertising to highly involved audiences is not as subject to minimum TRP thresholds as is advertising to low-involved audiences. Advertising to high-involvement audiences is therefore thought to be less sensitive to the number of ad executions on air –but only relatively.

Guidelines for the low-involvement audience
For low-involved audiences the overriding task is to break through the clutter of other ads and force people to notice the ads and its message. The ad and the message need to be very single-minded. The message has to be simple. Even when you get your message across with low-involved audiences, the way it has been processed makes it particularly subject to interference and memory degradation through subsequent exposure to competitive commercials for other brands.

With highly involved audiences the desired effect may often be achieved and maintained with much less repetition because the audience works harder on the message in the first place and this greater ‘elaboration’ consolidates the information in memory, thereby rendering it less subject to subsequent interference and memory degradation from exposure to other competitive commercials.

Another case example
Look at page 201 for an example.

Mixed-involvement audiences
To make things even more complicated, some product categories have mixed audiences – a problem that some ad agencies do not seem to recognize explicitly in the ad planning process. Right now people may be low-involved but very soon they may well be much more highly-involved.

Summary
Look at page 202.

19. Why radio ads aren’t recalled
Attention and pictures
The two main problems with radio seem to be listener attention levels and the fact that radio advertising doesn’t have pictures. Nowadays, peak-time listeners are a low-involved lot. They are schizophrenically pressures from minute to minute by the many stimuli that compete for their attention. Advertisers also need to look for behavior, attitude, image and salience effects before concluding simply from the lack of recall that he advertising is not working.

Lessons for using radio
1. don’t rely solely on recall as a measure of effectiveness
2. use more selective time periods
3. create better radio ads
4. use radio for involved, dedicated listeners
5. use TV first to provide faces and visuals (generate reminders and reinforcement through radio)
6. take advantage of the immediacy of radio
7. take advantage of the flexibility and immediacy of radio to stimulate consumption
8. mention the brand name in the first eight seconds and a minimum of three times during the ad
Summary
Look at page 206.

20. Maximizing ad effectiveness: develop a unique and consistent style

Category conformity
Too many product categories gravitate towards a single style of ‘look-alike’ advertising. The style becomes ‘generic’ to the category and we end up with entrenched category conformity. Beware of generic elements in commercials, whether visual or verbal. ‘Look-alike’ advertising is advertising of which people already have a mental model of.

Mistaken identity
Mistaken identity also occurs with commercials. If your brand is identified with a particular style, then anyone else who tries to use that style risks advertising for you.

'Owning' a style
When a brand comes to ‘own’ a unique and consistent style in its category, it prevents any attempt by its competitors to copy what it is doing without giving its brand free advertising.

Style influences memory retrieval
Far too many advertisers have only one constant in their advertising from one campaign to the next and that is the brand or logo.

Slogans
A word, a phrase or a sentence can function as a constant.

Symbols
Symbols are one form of constant that act as a powerful branding device in the total style mix.

Visual devices
Used very rarely, but sometimes very effectively is the action or gesture as a constant.

Actions and gestures
A simple action or gesture used as a constant can be very effective especially if it can be easily mimicked by the audience.

Presenters
Sometimes a presenter –often a celebrity- is used as the constant. The alternative is the ‘do it yourself’ (DIY) celebrity.

Characters
The constant may be a character that always appears in the ad but who is not necessarily a presenter.

Layout/format
Some brands make effective use of a unique layout.

Music
Music can function wonderfully well as a retrieval cue.

Sounds
Sounds can become integral parts of the brands’ advertising. Even a simple sound like a little ‘ping’ can have far-reaching mnemonic effects.

Color
There seems to be surprisingly little use of constant color specifically related to commercials themselves. Although color is often carried across from the brand colors.

Other constants
Various other things could serve as constant but have rarely, if ever, been used. Examples are: a place, feeling or emotion.

Voice-over… and over and over and over
While it has the advantage of being cheaper and, in an increasingly global world, more flexible, using voice-over is almost less effective than using on-camera presenters, whether direct or indirect.

Musical voice-over with visual illustration
This is typified by someone singing for the commercial but not appearing on screen.
The on-stage, all-musical singing commercial
In recent years the big anthem-type ads have become much rarer, particularly as 60-second commercials have become less frequent.

The integral constant
It is better if you can find a constant that is, or can be made into, an integral part of your brand identity.

Ad style – the brand’s attire
If the brand capriciously changes its style of attire every few months it would not only be disorienting, it would be difficult to get to know the brand. So we expect brands to remain true to themselves if we are going to get to know them and be attracted to them. It is legitimate to build in to the strategy brief a constraint in regard to ad style within which the creative process must work.

Summary
Look at page 220-221.

21. Sequels
Sequels are a particular form of advertising style where the character(s) are held constant and become associated with the brand. Sequels are something of a natural answer to the often overexaggerated problem of ‘wear-out.’

‘Wear-in’
Most ads are more pedestrian and reliant on many media bursts over a period of time to build the assault and then hold the mental territory.

Residual recall barriers to mental entry
When a totally new ad for a brand is launched, it will be some time before the old one disappears from people’s minds. In fact, the more successful and better performing the old ad, the longer it will dominate and the longer it will take for the new ad to ‘wear in.’ While this ‘in-fighting’ between ads is going on in people’s mind, the sum total of ad recall for the brand (i.e. the old plus the new) is very low.

Greater use of sequels
Why not make more use of sequels, as has proved to be successful for movies?

A few great sequel ads
A sequel is one form of continuity of style where the character(s) are held constant. Look at page 225-226 for examples.

Resisting ‘natural’ forces
Constancy in style in sequels takes a lot of discipline on the part of the advertiser and the agency in order to keep them going. This is because the people involved tend to get bored with the characters and see them as ‘creative handcuffs.’ Also, new brand managers naturally like to put their own creative stamp on the brand by introducing a totally new campaign.

With a sequel the ad doesn’t have to wear in. Nor does it have to displace what is already there. It just hooks in immediately to existing memories.

Continuity is the key
The important thing is that the new ad has a meaningful relationship with the one before. In this way people can file the two ads together in memory and retain both.

Owning an ad style
The advantage in owning a style is that, when viewers see that kind of ad, the style instantly triggers an association with the brand. The brand comes to stand for the style and the style comes to stand for the brand.

Summary
Look at page 228.

22. Corporate tracking of image and issues
A well known and well respected company will always enjoy the advantages in at least two non-consumer markets. First, it will attract and retain better quality employees. Second, corporate image can and does affect the company’s stock price.

Defense as well as offense
Corporate communication plans and corporate image development can be used strategically for both offense and defense. It is important for the company not only to be well managed but also to be seen to be well managed. Tracking
provides an early warning system of any weakness or vulnerability and forms the basis for managing the corporate image and the corporate communication plan.

The basis of image
The first step in image research is to find out:
1. which attributes are important in people’s mind regarding the (product or industry) category
2. which attributes differentiate your company from companies generally
A key aspect to this is to establish what things people know about, or associate with, your particular brand or company.

The next step is to determine how you want your organization to be seen. In choosing an attribute to position on, organizations need to develop a unique and consistent positioning around that attribute dimension and resist the temptation to chase every other positive dimension to its burrow. Trying to position on more than one or two at a time is fraught with the danger of image diffusion – trying to do everything and accomplish nothing.

Changing an image
Image is a function of:
1. the attributes associated with it
2. the degree of those attributes it is perceived to have
3. how important that attribute dimension is in people’s minds when they make a decision

What advertising or corporate communications are trying to do is:
1. move the organization along an attribute dimension
2. add a new attribute dimension to the image
3. influence the perceived importance of an attribute dimension for the public in evaluating the organization
Image, like grooming, is something that needs continual attention.

Tracking the agenda of concerns
A number of organizations (corporate, government and industry groups) track what might be called the agenda of concerns among the general public in regard to their particular organization of industry. The information allows the organization to detect events that have had a positive or negative impact on people’s perceptions and concerns. It allows the detection of these at the earliest moment. This is crucial if an organization is going to take a proactive approach to managing corporate communication and corporate image.

Image: you can’t leave home without it
Image is not something that companies can choose to opt out of. If an organization doesn’t effectively communicate the way it sees itself and its beliefs and what it is associated with and what it stands for, then the public will do so for it.

23. The Web: advertising in a new age
Having a Web address is an important part of a company’s image these days. Companies that have Web addresses are seen as:
1. more customer oriented and responsive
2. more informative
3. more sophisticated and hi-tech
4. more geared to younger market

Web sites: a ‘home’ on the Web
For a growing number of companies, the Web is the primary point of contact – the place where people know where to find them. Consumers have little idea of the company’s geographic address, nor do they have any need to think about it.

Types of products
What most Web advertising is about is getting people to visit the company’s virtual home – that is, creating visitor traffic. The ad provides signposts and short cuts and directs people to the company. More than that, the ads draw the company to people’s attention in the hope of making them recall the brand at the time they are interested in purchasing from that particular product category.

Advertisers who sell more common household products have been the traditional heavy spenders on advertising in other media over the years and they seem to have the hardest time finding the right formula for a Web site that will continue to attract visitors.

One objective of a company’s Web site is to set up a vehicle to enable a dialogue with the consumer. Another is to showcase the company. This can be achieved by offering a short-cut (link) to it or by using so called ‘virtual billboards.’
Banner ad effects
Web advertising can:
1. help build brand awareness and perceived advertising presence by displaying the brand name
2. convey extremely compact, very simple messages that help in brand building
3. reinforce/remind people with already know brand messages, -if they are simple

It is important to know more than just how many people clicked on the ad. It is also important to have some measure of:
1. reach –what percentage of the target audience had at least one opportunity to see your banner ad
2. frequency –how many opportunities to see it have they had

It is important to know what effect the ad is having on awareness, image and attitudes to the company or brand.

Continuous tracking
Consider these benefits:
1. measuring recognition becomes more accurate and easier
2. people exposed to banner ads are, by definition, on the Web and potentially accessible using that (cheaper) medium
3. the Internet enables rapid, cheap access to large samples via random sampling or via panels of pre-recruited respondents
4. pre-recruited Internet panels enable targeting of even low-incidence groups
5. the low cost and super-fast turnaround of information means that it is capable of providing finer-grained information on daily as well as a weekly basis
6. the use of control groups is all too often cost-prohibitive with telephone interviewing but the Internet makes these much more affordable and feasible
7. continuous tracking of visitors to your site is possible

Click-through
The advertiser can be charged on the basis of ‘impressions’ or, in other words, how many times the page with the ad displayed is exposed. The other way is to charge on the basis of the number of people who actually click on the ad.

Since it is such a minimal effort response, why are click-through rates so low? A key point is that the click-through rate will naturally vary with the makeup of the audience. Statistics on click-through rates are likely to be affected by the types of ‘hot’ sites that are proliferating fastest at that particular time. The click-through rate will also depend quite naturally on the type of ad the person is presented with. It is reasonable to expect that the more the displayed as matches the person and the need state of that person at that time, the higher the likely click-through rate.

Context sensitive display
Context sensitivity enables the page that comes up to display not just any old ad, and not the same ad that everybody else sees, but one that is associated with what you are currently interested in –what is on your mind at that particular moment.

The Web – a very different medium
The Web is an active, task-oriented, high-involvement, interactive medium. It is an environment that demands a continual stream of decisions from you. What is called the ‘clickstream,’ is in reality a ‘decision stream.’ People at the moment use the Web in a way that is heavily loaded with utilitarian rather than entertainment motives.

Functionality and aesthetics
Web pages that are considered attractive tend also to be regarded as useless. Web pages that were considered useful were thought to be most unattractive.

Keeping track of the latest on Internet advertising
Look at page 247 for examples.

24. ‘Mental reach’: they see your ad but does it get through?
This chapter focuses on the difference between media reach (how many have an opportunity to see) and mental reach.

Recognition
Lack of recognition generally indicates the ad is not distinctive enough to ‘cut through’ the clutter and mentally reach its audience. Advertisers can use ad recognition as an operational measure to validate that the ad is achieving at least some ‘mental reach.’

Reach versus mental reach levels
An advertising media schedule quantifies the size of the audience that an ad is supposed to reach. Such measures as these (along with TRPs, GRPs, TVRs and TARPs) can be misleading unless it is clearly understood what they mean. It is most important to realize that such figures do not represent actual exposures or mental reach. They are merely ‘opportunities to see.’ The reach figure measures the number of people who were in the room around the time the ad
was aired. Even if people have their eyes on the screen and have resisted the urge to go to the bathroom or make a cup of coffee, an ad may nevertheless still fail to register mentally. Clearly there are a lot of other things going on in people’s heads when they are exposed to ads – things that can neuter the effect of the ad.

**Problem diagnosis**
If, shortly after being exposed to an ad, an audience can’t even recognize seeing or hearing it, they have either not noticed it or have been unable to take in enough to form a mental model of it. The main reasons for these are as follows:
1. poor creative
2. insufficient processing time
3. distractions
4. lights on but no one home (internal distractions when people do have their eyes on the screen)

**Overcoming the barriers**
Good creative ads compel attention and there is a lot of evidence to suggest that repetition (in the form of more media exposures) will not make up for an ad if it is the commercial itself that fails to engage interest and attention on the first occasion.

25. **Measurement of advertising effects in memory**
Traditional measures of advertising effectiveness such as ad recognition, ad recall, message take away, brand awareness, brand image and purchase intention confuse many advertisers.

**Diagnostic complementary measures**
Mental measures are essentially diagnostic. They help with the problem of sorting out what is going on underneath the observed purchasing behavior. How much is due to the advertising and how much to other things that happened at the same time (such as promotion, pricing, competitor’s actions, etc)? Measuring purchase behavior by itself will not provide the necessary diagnostic ability to understand what is happening unless the behavior measure(s) are combined with mental-response measures. Judgment of advertising effectiveness solely in terms of increases in sales or market share is naïve; among other things, it fails to come to grips with the role of advertising as an ‘occupational force.’

**Towards the modern view of memory**
Penfield’s experiments eventually led cognitive psychologists towards what is called the ‘spreading activation’ theory of memory. Cast in the framework of neural networks and distributed representation, this has become the best-accepted theory of how memory works today.

**Association**
Our memory system can be cued with a fragment of a memory and, to the extent the connections and associative strengths are there, our minds tend to ‘fill out’ the rest through spreading activation that travels through the mental connections. The bits and pieces of a memory are distributed throughout different parts of the brain. What binds them together into a coherent memory is their connections and the associative strength of those connections.

**Mental network**
Recognizing something involves us in linking the fragments we have seen together – linking them by associative strengths into a coherent representation in the mind.

**Spreading activation**
When we are exposed to words and pictures, each one activates a group of neurons that collectively represent that thing in the neural network. It can be triggered by spreading activation from some close associate.

**Meaning and brand image**
The fact that our memories work through this process has far-reaching implications for advertising and marketing. It means much more than simply keeping something on top of mind. In fact, it is the whole basis for the meanings things have for us, including the meanings of brands.

**Connections**
Spreading activation extends through the mental network like an electric current. When there is low resistance between two points, the two items are said to have high associative strength and a high probability of the connection being made – the association being completed. Connections are like muscles. When they are exercised they get stronger.

**Retrieval cues**
Our memories are triggered by retrieval cues. Retrieval cues enable us to remember other things. The relevance from this to advertising is that advertisers want their brand to be cued into people’s minds when they think of making a purchase from that product category. If you are an advertiser, you would no doubt like to tie the brand strongly to a
retrieval cue that is often in people’s minds or in their environment—and ideally is also around at the time they buy the product category. Retrieval cues can be visual, verbal or even a piece of music.

Association measurement
As marketers, the retrieval cues we are interested in are brands, products, messages and image attributes. We have the ability to measure and track the changing strength of associations by exploring relationships between words and asking large samples of people “what is the first thing that comes to mind when I say...” The inserted word is the retrieval cue. The connection strength is measured by the percentage of people giving each response. Direction is important.

An example
Look at page 263-266 for an example.

We should never throw out an effective ad that is working just because we don’t understand exactly how it is working. Poor ad recall or poor message recall should never be allowed to override the stronger evidence of movement in the strength of the brand connections (together with sales, market share and attitudes, of course).

When an ad isn’t working
If an ad is clearly not working (as indicated by the behavior and attitude evidence discussed above) then ad-memory questions may help to identify whether the problem is one with mental reach (getting attention) or branding or message registration.

Summary
Look at page 266-267.

26. The buy-ology of mind
Not all memory is knowledge. Autobiographical events or episodes are retained in our memory, at least for some time. Psychologists label memories for episodes like this, ‘episodic’ memory, to be distinguished from remembering that is in the form of knowledge which they call ‘semantic’ memory. The two are seen increasingly to be related. There are usually four distinguishable components or fragments that can potentially be stored in autobiographical memory:

1. the ad execution
2. the product category
3. the brand
4. the message

The ideal is to have all four of these elements highly integrated in the ad so that they mutually reinforce each other. The most common problem in advertising is registering the (correct) brand in memory. One point that can be strongly connected to the brand is the ad execution. Another is the message.

Ad effect measures
We must first understand that the effect of an ad is a process, and that evaluating the effectiveness of an ad using continuous tracking data is also a process.

The process of evaluating an ad
The first part of any doctor’s diagnosis is to determine whether there is a real problem and, if there is, to locate the source of it.

The main measures
Brand focused  Ad-focused
1. brand-purchasing behavior  ad recognition
2. brand attitudes/purchase intentions  ad recall
3. brand awareness  correct branding
4. brand image  message take-out
   ad liking
   ad believability

Use the brand-focused measures
We need to elaborate a little more on these four brand-focused measures:
1. Are more buyers purchasing it? (brand behavior)
2. If not, are they more predisposed to purchase it? (brand attitudes or intentions)
3. What is the likelihood they think of or notice the brand? (spontaneous brand awareness)
4. When they do notice or think of the brand, what is the likelihood that the image information from the ad is activated? (brand-image association)

Pinpointing where an ad is breaking through
It is in order to explore the ‘where and why’ of something breaking down that we need the ad-focused measures. The ad-focused measures are diagnostic supplements.
Episodic memory and knowledge memory
There are:
1. memory networks that represent brand experiences, and
2. memory networks that represent ad experiences, both of which feed into
3. ‘knowledge memory’ networks

Ad recognition
‘Ad recognition’ is the conventional name for this measure but, in line with our modern view of memory, it should really be called ‘execution-cued ad awareness’ because it is recall that is prompted by the ad execution. Whatever we choose to call it, however, it is measured showing people the ad execution (or describing the execution) and asking if they recognize having seen it before. It provides an indication of the proportion of the audience that has been ‘mentally reached’ by the ad. In reality you will find that low recognition figures and ‘wallpaper’ ads are rare – for TV at least. Most often, 70 to 90 per cent of people who have been exposed to an ad a number of times in a TV campaign do recognize they have seen it – unless there is something very wrong with the ad. Recognition measure can tell us that mental connections exist but tell us nothing about their current strength or the likelihood that these connections will be activated by everyday events, especially at the point of purchase.

Spontaneous ad recall (category-cued ad recall)
There is a mental connection between the product category and the ad execution in your mind – one that is strong enough to be triggered by the product category as a retrieval cue. This is conventionally known as ‘spontaneous ad recall’ but, in the modern view of memory, it is more accurate to call it ‘category-cued ad recall’ as it is recall prompted by the product category.

When you are asked to recall and describe ads for product categories like this, which ones do you describe? Those which are activated in your memory by the ‘spreading activation’ moving outwards from the two points in the network that have been activated and from a point representing the general notion of advertising (those that have the strongest memory connections to the product category at that point in time). These will be ads with already high activation (those exposed very recently) and ads that have established high strength (those that have been exposed more frequently).

If, in response to the product-category cue, a respondent can recall and describe the ad execution and also correctly recall the brand, an advertiser can deduce two things:
1. the ad has undoubtedly been seen
2. it is strengthening the interconnections in memory between the product category, the brand and the execution

Ad-brand association
Failure to connect up the (correct) brand in the memory network is an all too frequent problem. A check on ad-brand association is therefore a crucially important procedure in the total armory of diagnostic checks.

Message take-out
The problem may lie with the quality, or clarity, of the message and this is where ‘message take-out’ assumes center stage to determine whether this is the problem. Message take-out is usually measured by asking, ‘What was the main message that the ad was trying to communicate to you?’

Believability
Failure to strengthen the brand’s image on the attribute can happen if people have cause to disbelieve the message. If the ad or its message is inconsistent with what is already in our minds, if there is motivation for our minds to not accept what is being said, then simply remembering the message will not necessarily influence our underlying ‘knowledge’ network.

Message recall is only one component of the process. Cognitive consistency is another. If an ad is not working, message recall can help answer these questions:
1. Is it because the ad failed entirely to communicate the message that was intended?
2. Or did it communicate the message but was just not accepted?
3. Is the attribute not relevant?

Attribute importance
Ads try to connect the brand with an attribute that the manufacturer thinks will be important or at least relevant to the consumer’s decision-making process. If the message is not right, if the attribute is not relevant to the consumer, then effectiveness may be limited or non-existent. To have any effect at all in that situation, the ad will be totally reliant on increasing the salience of the brand in people’s minds?

Attribute relevance, or attribute importance, is or at least should be researched up front as part of the ‘message engineering’ at the time an ad campaign is being developed. The relative importance of attributes may also be tracked by asking people to rank, or rate, how important each attribute is to them in their purchasing of that particular product category.
Ad liking
Liking the ad is critical to making people feel good about the brand—especially where there is not much else to differentiate it from other brands. This last of the ad-focused measures and simply asks people if they liked or disliked the ad.

Supplements to the category retrieval cues
Be aware that a brand can tie itself to some connection, some retrieval cue, that helps it break through the mental or visual point-of-sale clutter and pop into mind, especially at the point-of-sale or point of consumption. The brand wants to ‘own’ the occasion, or the moment or the feeling. The main retrieval cue is the product category (name) because, almost by definition, this is on our minds when we are about to make a purchase. Signs that tie in with the advertising, or a distinctive logo, pack shape or designer label that are included in (or tie in with) the advertising can all function in this way. Advertisers who have built strong supplementary retrieval cues into their advertising rely correspondingly less on the connection between the product category and the brand to do all the work. ‘Spreading activation’ can bring the brand to mind by spreading out from the product category or the supplementary cue or both. This has implications for measuring the strength of not just one but all of these connections to the brand.

Summary
Look at page 285-286.

27. Conclusion
Advertising works on people just like you and me.

The typical world of advertising that we may have envisaged where advertisers always knew exactly what their advertising was doing turned out to be very far from the truth.

The reality is that there are more ads that fail than ads that are outstandingly successful.

The fourth realization was that much of the myth and mystique of advertising has come from the ‘tribal’ agencies—many of which know less than they would like us to think about how or why advertising works.

The fifth realization is that persuasion per se is a mechanism that is rarely involved in advertising.

Finally the real mechanisms underlying advertising effects turn out to be more subtle than they are mystical.

The fact that advertising doesn't seem to be working doesn't necessarily mean that it isn't working. It takes sensitive measurement to gauge the often small and subtle but cumulative effects.

Appendix: how to prompt ad awareness
What is the cue?
Sometimes, people mistakenly use the term unprompted ad awareness. There is no such thing! There always has to be some kind of prompt in a question to tell people what it is you want them to try to remember. This prompt can be:

1. the ad execution
2. the brand
3. the category

Practically
For the purpose of measuring awareness of your own ad(s) as an indicator of their mental reach, execution-cued awareness is highly valuable measure and is most appropriate for this purpose.

Brand vs category cueing
When the two are compared, you will find that the brand-cued advertising awareness figure is usually higher than when the question is category-cued.

The nature of the output
Note that there is a difference in expected output from the two types of questions (category-cued vs brand-cued).

Ad awareness
Claimed advertising recalls are made up of not one thing but at least four things. These include:

1. current ad
2. past ads
3. false recalls: brand slippage or category slippage
4. don’t knows

When using the brand-cueing type of question you must also apply the follow-up request and ask people to describe the ad. Only in this way you can quantify the level of ad awareness of the current ad.

Ad awareness vs advertising awareness
Too often people use the terms ‘ad awareness’ and ‘advertising awareness’ interchangeably. Advertising awareness is an image in the person’s mind. It is not ad awareness. It is not a measure of awareness of any specific ad or campaign. One is an image dimension of the brand. The other is the level of ad recall for a specific ad or campaign. One quantifies the brand’s perceived advertising presence. The other helps you diagnose how people are processing the current ad.
**The bottom line**
Debating which way you ask category-cued and brand-cued questions is something of a red herring. It is not as material as making sure that you do ask it and therefore making sure you get a measure of ad awareness, not just an image measure of advertising awareness.

**Evaluating ads**
It is a perfectly valid objective to want to quantify the brand’s perceived advertising presence. For this specific purpose, brand-cued advertising awareness does the job well, although it would be more helpful if it were called ‘perceived advertising presence’ instead.

**Three measures move together?**
All three measures of ad awareness (category-cued, brand-cued and execution-cued) tend to move in a similar way, more often than not. But note that there is a major difference in their absolute values.

**Recognition**
Showing photo-stills from the ad execution, or describing the ad verbally, is the next thing to playing the ad. This is called execution-cued ad awareness.

**Execution-cued as recall**
For face-to-face interviewing, execution-cued ad awareness is most often measured by showing photo-stills from the ad which should always have some of the words from the audio track underneath.

**Execution-cued is usually highest**
Execution-ad awareness establishes whether there is any evidence that the person has been mentally exposed to the ad.

**Problem with the media or the ad?**
Large gaps between the level of execution-cued ad awareness and the cumulative reach indicate:
1. a media schedule problem
2. an ad problem
When an ad doesn’t track well on this measure, it is most often identified as a media schedule problem.

**Include the execution-cued measure before the ad goes to air**
The execution-cued ad awareness measure must go into field before the ad goes to air, to make sure that the degree of false claiming can be quantified. This can be caused by:
1. generic content
2. a sequel which contents elements similar to the brand’s previous advertising

**Brand cueing**
With ad awareness it is mostly not possible to get complete coverage of all ads for all brands in the market. There are just too many for it to be practical. The same applies to brand cueing, although to a slightly lesser extent. If you use brand cueing you will have no choice but to use a subset of brands, which means yet again that the tracking compromises on getting coverage of the full competitive ad spectrum. Category cueing, which does not suffer from this problem, therefore usually represents a more attractive alternative.

**Ads for new brands and new variants**
There is another important point to note with brand cueing –if a new competitor enters the market, you will miss out on its advertising because any new brand or variant will not be specifically included in the list of brands that the interviewer has to ask about. But deciding whether the new brand is going to have substantial impact (and to put it onto the list) is exactly why you want to capture the ad awareness in the first place. With category cueing, on the other hand, if the new brand’s advertising is salient enough, it will be recalled and automatically picked up by the category-cued question —without any need to intervene manually and change the questionnaire.

**Category cueing**
Using category cueing is about the only practical way to get coverage of the full competitive spectrum in the ad awareness question. One difficulty with category cueing is definition of the category. The positives of category cueing can be summarized as follows:
- it allows complete coverage of the ads for all brands —not just a subset of brands
- it doesn’t miss out for new brands or variants that inevitably come on the market
- it is clearly the easiest to manage from a questionnaire point of view and avoids the problem of the questionnaire getting out of date by new product/variant entries
Recommendations
Where the category is relatively well defined there is strong argument to use category cueing. With categories that are
less well defined then brand cueing may be preferable. But be sure to include the follow-up question asking people to
describe the ads they claim to have seen do that you can come up with a measure of ad awareness and not just an
image measure of advertising awareness. It is important to include a measure of execution-cued ad awareness for
your own ad(s) in order to be able to quantify the absolute level of ‘mental reach.’