

Chapter 3

The Advertising Spiral and Brand Planning

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter you will understand:

1. The birth and basics of branding
2. Brands and integrated marketing
3. Brand equity
4. IMC strategic planning
5. The importance of the product life cycle
6. The relationship of the advertising spiral

Chapter Overview

This introduces the concept of the advertising spiral and the strategies needed to keep brands vigorous in a changing marketplace. A brand, in its modern sense, is created. It is made up of rational and emotional elements. Advertising's role is to explain and communicate these elements to the consumer. In order to do so effectively, integrated marketing communications recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles to a variety of communication disciplines and combines these disciplines synergistic effect to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact.

Lecture Outline

1. Building Strong Brands and Equity.

- A. Marketers and advertisers are in accord that corporate brands are a company's most valuable asset.
 - 1) Where a product is manufactured, a **brand** is created through communication.
 - a. It is a name, term, sign, design, or a unifying combination of them intended to identify and distinguish the product or service from competing products or services.

*****NOTES: Use Exhibit 3.1 about here.*****

- 2) A brand is a promise to make or save the user money, look better, or feel great.
- B. The Origin of Branding.
 - 1) In the mid-1880s, no brands existed, and wholesalers held power over both manufacturers and retailers.
 - 2) To escape the squeeze on profits, manufacturers began to differentiate their products from their competitors.
 - a. They gave their products names.
 - b. They obtained patents to protect their exclusivity.
 - c. They used advertising to take the news about them to customers over the heads of the wholesalers and retailers.
- C. Brand Connections.
 - 1) Thanks to all the digital changes and the Internet, advertising is going through its first true paradigm shift.
 - 2) Given all the new media technologies now available, there exists now entirely new ways to connect customers to brands.
- D. Branding Channels and Engagement.
 - 1) To effectively connect, marketers need to understand the value of each communication channel and how—or if—it will engage people.
 - 2) The idea should be the organizing principle, and it should inform everything you do to help consumers grasp your brand promise in whatever channel you're using to reach them.
- E. Branding as a Financial Decision.
 - 1) Decisions about brands mean dealing correctly with strategic issues and financial commitments, then taking the risks necessary to deliver category dominating creative.
- F. Digital Influence.
 - 1) Digital communication in its own can influence how people think about brands in a way no other branding means can.
 - 2) If your brand is delivering on its promise in wonderful ways, the world might know about it instantly.
 - 3) If your brand is screwing up badly, the world will know that too.

2. Brands and Integrated Marketing Communications.

- A. The basic belief holds that integration of all communications emanates from a single strategic platform and will generate a significantly greater return on the communications investment than would be the case with traditional independent media executions.
 - 1) For the client, there is the potential for significant synergies and stronger connections with its customers.
 - 2) Practice has fallen short of theory.
 - 3) A brand's equity is best strengthened through the integrated use of all marketing communication tools working from a single strategy.

- B. *Integrated marketing communications* refers to all the messages directed to a consumer on behalf of the brand.

*****NOTES: Use Exhibit 3.2 about here.*****

- 1) Each message from a company must be integrated or dovetailed in order to support all the other messages or impressions about the brand.
- C. The most important factor in determining the actual value of a brand is its equity in the market.
- 1) **Brand equity** is the value of how people such as consumers, distributors, and salespeople think and feel about a brand relative to its competition.
- D. Young & Rubicam's Brand Asset Valuator.
- 1) It is a diagnostic tool for determining how a brand is performing relative to all other brands.
 - 2) The BAV demonstrates that brands are built in a very specific progression of four primary consumer perceptions.
 - a. *Differentiation* is the basis for choice: the essence of the brand, source of margin.
 - b. *Relevance* relates to usage and subsumes the five P's of marketing related to sales.
 - c. *Esteem* deals with consumer respect, regard, and reputation and relates to the fulfillment of perceived consumer promise.
 - d. *Knowledge* is the culmination of brand-building efforts and relates to consumer experiences.
 - 3) A brand's vitality lies in a combination of differentiation and relevance.
 - 4) The two components of brand stature are esteem and familiarity.
- E. Brand Equity and Developing Integrated Marketing Communications Strategic Plans
- 1) Before you can develop a strategy, you need an understanding of the marketing situation and a clear understanding of the brand's equity.
 - 2) There are four logical steps in this process:
 - a. Brand equity audit analysis
 - b. Strategic options and recommendations
 - c. Brand equity research
 - d. Creative brief
 - 3) Of course, these generally would be followed by evaluation or assessment of some nature.
- F. Brand Equity Audit Analysis.
- 1) Market Context.
 - a. This section examines the existing situation of both the market and the consumer, plus clues and factors that positively or negatively affect brand equity.

- (1) A *market* is a group of people who can be identified by some common characteristic, interest, or problem; use a certain product to advantage; afford to buy it; and be reached through some medium.
- 2) Brand Equity Weaknesses and Strengths.
 - a. This section examines how strong or weak consumer bias is toward a brand relative to other brands.
 - b. Once the key weakness and strength indicators have been identified, they are used for future tracking purposes.
- 3) Brand Equity Descriptions.
 - a. This identifies and describes consumers' thoughts and feelings that result in their bias toward one brand relative to other brands.
 - (1) This personal relationship between the consumer and the brand provides the most meaningful description of brand equity.
 - b. To accomplish this, we need an analysis from two points of view.
 - (1) Review all the available research to get as close a feeling as possible on how consumers view the brand and how they feel about it.
 - (2) Analyze in depth our brand's and its competitors' communications over a period of time.
 - c. Equal attention needs to be given to rational and to emotional elements.

*******NOTES: Use Exhibit 3.3 about here.*******

- 4) Competitive Strategies and Tactics.
 - a. This area provides a clear summary of the current communication strategies and tactics of our brand and of key competitors.
 - b. It should include an analysis of all integrated communications in relation to brand equity.
 - c. An assessment of problems and opportunities is also in order here.
- G. Strategic Options and Recommendations.
 - 1) This section draws on the conclusions from the analysis to develop a viable recommendation plan.
 - 2) The strategic options include the following:
 - a. Communication objectives.
 - (1) What is the primary goal the message aims to achieve?
 - b. Audience.
 - (1) To whom are we speaking?
 - c. Source of business.
 - (1) Where are the customers going to come from—brand(s) or product categories?
 - d. Brand positioning and benefits.
 - (1) How are we to position the brand, and what are the benefits that will build brand equity?

- e. Marketing mix.
 - (1) What is the recommended mix of advertising, public relations, promotion, direct response, and so on?
- f. Rationale.
 - (1) How does the recommended strategy relate to, and what effect is it expected to have on, brand equity?
- H. Brand Equity Research.
 - 1) This is proprietary, qualitative research.
 - 2) It determines which elements or elements of brand equity must be created, altered, or reinforced to achieve our recommended strategy and how far we can stretch each of these components without risking the brand's credibility.
 - 3) This may give us a revised list of rational and emotional elements that describe how we want consumers to think and feel about our brand in the future.
- I. Creative Brief.
 - 1) The final step is a written creative brief (or work plan) for all communications.
 - 2) All information and understanding is synthesized into an action plan for the development of all communications for the brand.
 - 3) A typical creative brief includes the following:
 - a. Key observations.
 - (1) The most important market/consumer factor that dictates the strategy.
 - b. Communication objective.
 - (1) The primary goal the advertising or communication aims to achieve.
 - c. Consumer insight.
 - (1) The consumer "hot button" our communication will trigger.
 - d. Promise.
 - (1) What the brand should represent in the consumer's mind; what the brand is promising the consumer.
 - e. Support.
 - (1) The reason(s) why the promise is true.
 - f. Audience.
 - (1) To whom we are speaking and how they feel about the brand.
 - g. Mandatories (an optional part).
 - (1) Items used as compulsory constraints, for example, a specific legal requirement or corporate policy that impacts the direction of the strategy.
- J. Other Examples of Strategic Planning.
 - 1) Avrett, Free & Ginsberg's Planning Cycle (AFG).

*****NOTES: Use Exhibit 3.4 about here.*****

- a. This seven-part process includes the following steps:

- (1) *Brand/market status*: Evaluates where the brand is in its marketplace and determines strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- (2) *Brand mission*. Proposes and agrees on brand goals, that is, where it can take the brand.
- (3) *Strategic development*. Various options are explored to determine which of several strategies will empower the brand to achieve the mission. A process called *needs mapping* identifies key psychological or rational needs related to the brand.

*****NOTES: Use Exhibit 3.5 about here.*****

- (4) *Strategy*. Formulate a tight strategy to be used in developing a fully integrated marketing communication program.
 - (5) *Creative exploration*. Develop, explore, and evaluate a range of executions to ensure that it maximizes the relevancy, distinctiveness, and persuasiveness of the strategy and final execution.
 - (6) *Brand valuation*. Track marketplace performance and progress.
 - (7) *Brand vision*. Plot long-range expansion plans for the base brand.
- 2) Another View of the Planning Process.
- a. Typical steps include:
 - (1) *Current brand status*. An attempt to evaluate the brand's overall appeal. The brand is examined in the context of its marketplace, in its consumers' view, and in relation to its competitors.
 - (2) *Brand insights*. Use of a series of tools designed to help develop insights to better understand the consumer's view.
 - (3) *Brand vision*. Look for the consumer's hot button to identify the most powerful connection between the brand and the consumer.
 - (4) *Big idea*. The creative expression of the brand vision.
 - (5) *Evaluation*. Means of determining how well the objectives have been met and how to improve the communication the next time.
 - 3) Today's consumers are proactive and speak loudly, and marketers have learned they need to listen.
 - 4) You can't plan integrated communications effectively without understanding the target more wisely than ever before.
- K. What Great Brands Do.
- 1) A great brand is in it for the long haul.
 - a. It can travel worldwide, speak to multiple consumer segments simultaneously, and create economies of scale by which you can earn solid margins over the long term.
 - 2) A great brand can be anything.
 - a. Almost any product offers an opportunity to create a frame of mind that is unique.

- 3) A great brand knows itself.
 - a. Begin by learning what consumers already feel about the brand.
 - b. To keep the brand vital, do something new and unexpected with the brand that still relates to the brand's core position.
- 4) A great brand invents or reinvents an entire product category.
- 5) A great brand taps into emotions.
 - a. An emotional connection transcends the product. And transcending the product is the brand.
- 6) A great brand is a story that's never completely told.
 - a. Stories create connections for people.
 - b. Stories create the emotional context people need to locate themselves in a larger experience.
- 7) A great brand is relevant.
 - a. It satisfies people's wants and performs the way people want it to.

3. The Advertising Stages of a Product.

- A. Products have a life cycle, or stages of development.
 - 1) The developmental stage of a product determines the advertising message.
 - 2) The advertising stage of the product is determined by the degree of acceptance the product has earned with consumers.
 - 3) The life cycle model has three primary stages: pioneering, competitive, and retentive stages.

*****NOTES: Use Exhibit 3.6 about here.*****

4. Pioneering Stage

- A. Successful companies create new markets or reinvent existing ones.
 - 1) One way of doing this is to create new products or new product categories.

*****NOTES: Use Exhibit 3.7 about here.*****

- B. Until people appreciate the fact that they need the product, a product is in the **pioneering stage**.
- C. Advertising in this stage must educate the consumer to the new product or service. It:
 - 1) Introduces an idea that makes previous conceptions appear antiquated.
 - 2) Must implant a new custom.
 - 3) Changes habits.
 - 4) Develops new usage.
 - 5) Cultivates new standards of living.

*****NOTES: Use Exhibit 3.8 about here.*****

- D. The purposes of the pioneering stage of a product's life cycle are:
 - 1) To educate consumers about the new product or service
 - 2) To show that people have a need they did not appreciate before and that the advertised product fulfills that need.
 - 3) To show that a product now exists that is actually capable of meeting a need that already had been recognized but could not have been fulfilled before.
- E. What determines the stage of the advertising is consumer perception of the product.
- F. Often copy focuses on the generic aspect of the product category in an attempt to educate or inform the consumer.

*****NOTES: Use Exhibit 3.9 about here.*****

- G. The Product Acceptance Battle.
 - 1) Producers often convince consumers they can accomplish something they could not accomplish before (by using a new product).
- H. Pioneering Expense.
 - 1) Because heavy promotional expenditures occur in this stage to create product benefit awareness (among other reasons), the product in this stage is usually not profitable.
- I. Developing New Product Categories.
 - 1) If success occurs, competitors are often quick to jump into the market.
 - 2) One of the reasons for being a pioneer is that the company often gets a substantial head start over competitors.

5. Competitive Stage

- A. When a pioneering product becomes accepted by consumers, there is going to be competition.
- B. When this happens, the product has entered the **competitive stage** of its life cycle and *competitive advertising* follows.
- C. In the short term, the pioneer usually has an advantage of leadership that can give dominance in the market.
 - 1) If the pioneer can maintain market share in this category during the initial period of competitors' growth, it can make up for the earlier expense associated with its pioneering efforts.
- D. The purpose of advertising in this stage is to:
 - 1) Communicate the product's position.
 - 2) Differentiate it to the consumer.
 - 3) Feature differences in the product.

6. Retentive Stage

- A. The product in the **retentive stage** has reached maturity and has wide-scale acceptance.
 - 1) Its general usefulness is widely known.

- 2) Its individual qualities are thoroughly appreciated.
- 3) It is satisfied to retain its patronage merely on the strength of its past reputation.
- B. *Reminder advertising* attempts to retain customers by keeping the brand name in front of them, so as not to be forgotten.
 - 1) Advertising is typically highly visual.
 - 2) It gives little if any reason to buy the product.
- C. Few products are entirely in the reminder stage.
 - 1) There usually are other products in the pioneering and competitive stages challenging their leadership position.
- D. The advertiser's goal in this stage is to maintain market share and ward off consumer trial of other products.
 - 1) Advertisers do not necessarily cut back on advertising at this stage; however, they may adopt different marketing and promotional strategies.
- E. Generally, products in the retentive stage are at their most profitable.
 - 1) Developmental costs have been amortized, distribution channels established, and sales contacts made.
 - 2) Companies would like to maintain their products in the retentive stage as long as possible.

7. The Advertising Spiral

- A. The advertising spiral is an expanded version of the advertising stages of products.
 - 1) It provides a point of reference for determining which stage or stages a product has reached at a given time in a given market and what the thrust of the advertising message should be.

*****NOTES: Use Exhibit 3.11 about here.*****

- 2) It parallels the life cycle of the product.
- B. Comparison of Stages.
 - 1) Most advertising is for products in the competitive stage.
 - 2) In using the advertising spiral, we deal with one group of consumers at a time.
 - a. The advertising depends upon an attitude of that group toward the product.
 - 3) A product can be in more than one stage at a time depending on the attitude of the consumer.
 - 4) Products in the retentive stage usually get the least amount of advertising.
 - a. Effective advertising at this stage is important, because this is a critical moment in the life cycle of a product.
- C. Product in Competitive Stage, Improvement in Pioneering Stage.
 - 1) When new products enter an established market category, they immediately enter the competitive stage and must hit the road running to differentiate themselves from the competition.
 - 2) Change is a continuum.

- a. As long as competitive products do not change, the product continues to be in the competitive stage.
 - b. Product changes or modifications, however, move a product into the pioneering stage.
- D. The Retentive Stage Isn't the End.
- 1) Products here are at height of popularity and enjoying profitability.
 - 2) But all good things come to an end and two strategies can result:
 - a. Let the product die. Quit advertising it and withdraw other types of support.
 - b. Expand the market into a new pioneering stage (e.g., expand into the international market).
 - 3) When approaching the retentive stage, management must make some important decisions:
 - a. Can it make some significant improvements in the present product so that it virtually represents a new type of product or category?
 - b. Is there a possibility for line extensions?
 - c. If the product is to continue to be marketed, its own advertising stage should be identified before its advertising goals are set.
 - 4) While the three basic stages of the spiral (pioneering, competitive, and retentive) are straightforward and easy to understand, the stages in the bottom half (newer pioneering, newer competitive, and newer retentive) are trickier and require creative marketing.
 - a. The newer pioneering stage attempts to get more people to use the product. There are two ways to enter this new stage:
 - (1) Make a product change.
 - (2) Completely overhaul a product.
 - b. Smart advertisers will look for ways to initiate a change of advertising direction when their product is enjoying great success, showing new ways of using the product or giving reasons to use it more often.
- E. New Pioneering Stage and Beyond.
- 1) A product entering the new pioneering stage is actually in different stages in different markets.
 - a. Longtime consumers will perceive the product to be in the competitive or retentive stage.
 - b. New consumers will perceive it as being a pioneer.
 - 2) The advertising spiral will have entered still another cycle called the newest pioneering stage.

*******NOTES: Use Exhibit 3.14 about here.*******

- a. The focus here is on getting more people to use this type of product.

*******NOTES: Use Exhibit 3.15 about here.*******

- b. The product in this stage is faced with new problems and opportunities. You have to understand why consumers were not interested in the product earlier.
 - c. New pioneering can be the result of reworking the original product or a line extension – with a new formula and name – that is related to the original version of the product.
 - d. Creating product innovation does not always translate into brand share. Advertising must be managed effectively and communication with customers must be effective.
 - e. Once an established product in the competitive stage begins to innovate successfully in a newer pioneering stage, competition will not be far behind.
 - f. The advertising focus in newer pioneering must be on getting consumers to understand what the product is about.
 - g. Advertising in the newer competitive stage aims at getting more people to buy the brand.
- 3) New Pioneering.
- a. A need for pioneering advertising is clear when a new wrinkle is introduced in the product category.
 - (1) Marketers must simply educate consumers about what the product will do for them.
 - (2) Sometimes many consumers are eagerly waiting for advances in a product category.
- F. The Advertising Spiral as a Management Decision Tool.
- 1) Moving through these three stages (newer pioneering, newer competitive and newer retentive) is not easy.
 - a. Products do not move through the stages at the same speed.
 - b. The advertising spiral indicates direction; it does not dictate management decisions.
 - 2) Before attempting to create new ideas for advertising a product, the advertiser should use the spiral to answer the following questions:
 - a. In which stage is the product?
 - b. Should we use pioneering advertising to attract new users to this type of product?
 - c. Should we work harder at competitive advertising to obtain a larger share of the existing market?
 - d. What portion of our advertising should be pioneering? What portion competitive?
 - e. Are we simply coasting in the retentive stage? If so, should we be more aggressive?

Review Questions

1. What is brand equity?

Brand equity is the relative standing of a brand relative to its competition in the minds of the consumers over a period of time. Strong brand equity means that a brand, such as Coca Cola or Tide detergent, is one of the most recognized names in its product category. When consumers go shopping for a particular product, they usually have three or four brands on the top of their mind as preferences. If your product and brand name is among those initially identified as a purchase possibility, then you have strong brand equity. And, as in any business, the term *equity* is thought of as an investment. A brand possessing strong brand equity has dollar value equal to that of the product factory and equipment.

2. What are the elements of the creative brief?

The elements of a creative brief, or communications work plan, are a short statement of the direction the promotional plan should take. It includes: 1) a definition of the intended target market (segment); 2) that market's feelings and attitudes regarding the product/brand in question; 3) the desired communications goals and position; and 4) a promise of benefit to the consumer that will build brand loyalty.

3. What are the key elements in the AFG Planning Cycle?

The Avrett, Free, and Ginsberg's Planning Cycle is a disciplined, need-mapping process used to develop an advertising strategy to ensure long-time growth and brand equity. It involves a seven-step planning cycle: 1) the brand's status or pre-eminence in the marketplace is assessed; 2) the brand's future (mission) goals are set; 3) alternative brand development strategies are considered and based upon Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs; 4) a tight strategy is selected to be used in developing a fully integrated marketing communications program; 5) a range of executions is explored to maximize the relevancy, distinctiveness, and persuasiveness of the strategy and final execution; 6) the advertising campaign is closely monitored to assess performance and progress as a means of accountability; and 7) based upon the results of the plan, a long-range expansion plan for the base brand is projected to determine if brand equity can be extended to other product line categories.

4. Briefly, identify each stage in the first half of the advertising spiral.

The first half of the advertising spiral relates to the fundamental life cycle experienced by a product/service: as it becomes introduced for the first time in the marketplace (pioneering stage); matures and attracts competition (competitive stage); and as the uniqueness and need for the product/service erodes, and may even face obsolescence due to market innovations (retentive stage).

5. What determines the stage of a product?

The stage at which a product may be identified in its life cycle is dependent upon the level of consumer demand, the level of competition of like products, and the emergence of innovative new products with superior benefits that can threaten the continued existence of older, mature products. A product can actually be in more than one stage at the same time because it may be targeted for different uses by entirely different niche market. Since Bayer introduced and sold the first aspirin product in the late 1800s, it has become both a medical and a marketing marvel. It has been sold for headaches, toothaches, muscle aches, back pain, and more recently to stave off first and repeat heart attacks. Each time a new use for the product is found, a new advertising campaign promotes the product to an appropriate group of consumers.

6. What is the essence of the advertising message in each stage of the spiral?

In the pioneering stage, advertising must educate the consumer to the new product or service, show them that they have a need they did not appreciate before and that the advertised product fulfills that need, or show that a product now exists that is capable of meeting a need already recognized but that could not have been fulfilled before. In the competitive stage, the consumer knows what the product is and how it can be used, but the product's superiority over similar brands has to be established in order to gain preference. The purpose of competitive stage advertising is to communicate the product's position or differentiate it to the consumer; the advertising features the differences of the product. In the retentive stage, companies seek to build consumer loyalty and hold on to their customer base. Called reminder advertising, it simply reminds consumers that the brand exists. Most reminder advertisements look like posters with few words because there is no need to give consumers information.

Class Projects and Exercises

1. (*) As discussed in the text, branding first started in the 1880s and many brands begun then still exist today. Using the Internet, find examples of ads from different time periods—early 1900s, mid 1900s, and today—for a brand that has enjoyed a long history. How has this brand's

advertising changed over time? What part of the product life-cycle does each ad represent? Explain why.

2. (**) Find examples of ads for products that would represent all three stages of the product life cycle. Be prepared to explain why you think the products fit in these stages.
3. (**) In spring 2009, General Motors received a huge infusion of cash from the federal government to keep it afloat. At this time, the company was seen as too bloated, old-fashioned, and rigid to adapt successfully to the changing global marketplace. Find commentary in newspapers, trade press, and magazines after the bailout regarding how GM should change its marketing direction in order to survive. Express the range of suggestions in terms of product life-cycle stages, remembering the complexities of "new" and "newer" stages. Did any consensus emerge regarding either which stage GM had been in or which stage it needs to move itself into? Explain and provide evidence for your claim.
4. (***) Evaluate the advertising for the introduction of Apple iPod and iTunes in 2001 (in addition to trade-press and magazine accounts, a good place to start is http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/iPod_advertising). Although in the pioneering stage, its highly visual nature and lack of persuasive copy seems to be more typical for retentive-stage, reminder advertising. Using newspaper, trade publication, and magazine sources, research its introduction. What justifications did the creative team use for executing the pioneering campaign this way? How did commentators of the day judge the campaign? In your estimation, what specific characteristics of the service and/or the market made this atypical campaign suitable and successful nevertheless?
5. (***) Select a brand and find examples of at least three of its different communications – advertisements, promotions, public relations, direct response, events, packaging, Web, etc. What is the message that each example communicates to consumers? What is the brand image each creates? Do you think that these examples illustrate an integrated marketing communications strategy? Why or why not?
6. (***) Identify a top brand in any category. Analyze why this brand is so successful by comparing it against Scott Bedbury's brand-building principles. You should use library research to help you understand the brand. Identify any principles where the brand is weak and give suggestions as to how this brand could strengthen itself against that principle.

Internet Exercises

1. (**) Select a consumer product brand and explore its Web site. How does this brand use the Web to reach consumers in new ways that are not available through traditional media? Find examples within the Web site that illustrate different stages of the product life cycle. In terms of messages, goals, and target audiences, how do these parts of the Web site differ? How are they alike? Be ready to demonstrate the Web site to your class and explain your findings.

2. (***) As marketers develop integrated marketing communications programs to build brand equity, they are using more promotions in conjunction with advertising. Contests and sweepstakes have become more popular as they present a way to get consumers more involved with the brand. Contests and sweepstakes are especially effective in engaging customers and differentiating brands. Find examples of three different brands' contests or sweepstakes on the Web. How do these examples engage the customer? How do they differentiate the brands? How are they integrated with that brand's other marketing communications? Now select a brand. Explore its Web site, and develop a Web delivered contest or sweepstakes that will engage customers, differentiate the brand, and be integrated with the brand's other marketing communications. You should develop a mock up of the contest or sweepstakes.

3. (***) Go to <http://epinions.com/>. Choose a specific product category and product, and read the most recent 30 entries regarding it. Summarize and categorize the observations of those who left feedback. What kinds of positive evaluations were made? What kinds of negative ones? Find and evaluate at least three current advertisements for the product. Evaluate the degree to which the advertising takes into account the brand image as represented by the user feedback you read.

Term Projects for the Semester or Quarter

1. (***) By the early 2000's, computer and printer maker Hewlett-Packard was deemed to be a dull, boring also-ran compared with other computer makers. Yet, by late in the decade, it had become one of the two top-selling brands of computers. Write a paper that explores in detail the state HP was in, how it remade itself, and how this remaking directed changes in its marketing and advertising. You should use library resources as well as company information for your research.

2. (***) Take the seven steps found in Avrett, Free, and Ginsberg's Planning Cycle and apply them to a product from one of the following industries: computers, fashion clothing, automobiles, or PDAs (personal data assistants). Create a strategic planning cycle (similar to Exhibit 3.4). Follow the brand's development in contemporary advertising media for three weeks. Use these observations to make any corrections to your use of the aforementioned planning cycle. Comment on the effectiveness and applicability of using the planning cycle method for managing a brand and its products. Lastly, clearly state what your brand vision is. Present this vision to the class and have them critique your thoughts.