

## **DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY WITH PERCEPTION MEASUREMENT**

*Whether you represent the marketer or the agency in the context of advertising, PR or any other communication-based discipline, you will no doubt have spent many hours developing briefs or strategies and agonising over whether they will succeed in realising your objectives and, indeed, how that success might be measured.*

*Clive Webster of Objectivity - South Africa's leading perception measurement and management firm - shares the wisdom of his many years of marketing experience with this advice on how to develop and manage a strategy that works.*

Communication strategy starts by identifying, quantifying and prioritising the needs/wants and perceived degrees of satisfaction of specific target markets or Key Communications Groups (KCGs). These are the fundamentals, the building blocks of a sound strategy.

The purpose of any meaningful communication strategy, in turn, is three-fold: to create or increase awareness of a brand; to create or shift target market perceptions to the point where they are satisfied; and to achieve a physical response/s.

Having said that, you can neither put the fundamentals in place nor realise the very purpose of your communication without the benefit of knowing exactly what perceptions are held by these KCGs. Perception measurement is thus the key ingredient required for a successful strategy.

When it is correctly approached and conducted, perception measurement will yield the following, valuable business intelligence:

- 1) It will quantify and prioritise the needs/wants and/or decision criteria and the desired standards of performance of a KCG;
- 2) It will quantify their levels of awareness and the perceptions they hold regarding potential satisfiers of their needs/wants, in comparison with their desired standard of performance;
- 3) It will identify and prioritise the messages to be delivered to the target market/KCG; and
- 4) It will quantify the awareness and perceptions shifts achieved by the advertising/communication. In other words it will track or monitor the effect of the communication in the course of the strategy's implementation.

In this manner, proper perception measurement actually develops the strategy for you. Not only does it identify the messages to be sent, but also prioritises them and indicates the weights that should be assigned to them or in other words the frequency and emphasis that should be placed upon them.

## strategy two last

Thereafter, when the implementation phase of the strategy is underway, perception monitoring will monitor the receipt of the messages and thus direct any amendments necessary to the communication.

Of particular importance is the fact that perception measurement yields a very specific brief for the advertising, PR or other communication agency right from the outset. Subsequent to that, regular perception monitoring throughout the lifetime of the campaign, will yield interim briefs that will reinforce or redirect the messages until they achieve the desired standard of performance, i.e. the point of physical response.

Approaching strategy and message formulation and maintenance in this manner will change marketing spend into an **investment in brand building**, and empower the marketer to incentivise and reward their advertising and communication agencies for quantified awareness and perception shifts achieved. This is the ultimate win-win situation for the marketer and his company as well as the agency.

In short, sound strategies start and end with accurate perception measurement.

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