

LITTLE BIG ASSIGNMENT #1:
Strategy-intensive campaign for a personal care product

This emphasis in this assignment is on learning to think strategically.

CLIENT:

Walk into your bathroom and open your medicine chest, closet and sink drawers. Pull out 3 or 4 products that you use and that you think are effective.

WHY DO THIS?

“Package goods” is a huge consumer category.
Analyzing your own buying habits is insightful.
Personal care products generally have strong USP’s.
Package good brands use print campaigns

Step 1: Gathering Raw Material (2-3 days)

1. Sources of information (page 4)
 - the product packaging, including the parts usually thrown away (outer box or shelf hanging system)
 - brand website, facebook page, twitter
 - consumer reviews of the product
 - websites for other products in the category (esp. category leader and challenger brands)
2. Audience research (page 4)
 - list all the reasons you have for using this product.
 - interview at least 3 people about the category (find out whether they use “your” brand or a competitor.)
 - search online for both positive and negative opinions about the product
 - fill out demographic section of your book.
3. Locate an Adobe Illustrator version of the brand logo (you may have to scan and trace it). Find or take a high-resolution (8” wide, 300 dpi) photo of the product - all sides. You may need this for your final ad, and getting intimate with it now is a good idea. In fact, draw the package or the logo on the cover of your book. Good procrastination task!
5. Research the history / invention of the product.
6. Answer the product benefit questions (page 5).

Step 2: Digesting the Material (2-3 days)

1. Press release (page 6)

This is an exercise which may or may not reveal a big truth to you.
What kind of event around this would attract a big crowd?
Where would it take place?
What kind of people would be invited? Why would they want to come?
How would you get national writers, bloggers, news media there?

 - party, performance, show
 - competition or game
 - conference, lecture, educational event
 - related “good cause”

One approach to your campaign could be to design your ads just around this event.

LEVEL:
College - beginning

OBJECTIVES:
Learn about strategy.
Practice complete, structured ideation process.
Create a single print ad or campaign of 3.

TOOLS:
Little Big Idea Book
sharp pencil
computer with design software
other art supplies, as per idea

TIME:
Three weeks.

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2. Truth triangle (page 7)

Now that you are somewhat familiar with the place and its customers, come up with one or more central / core:

PRODUCT TRUTHS are the important product benefits you have uncovered
What is the **UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION** of this product? What does it do best?

CUSTOMER TRUTHS are issues that are top-of-mind to your best customers
What is the person most likely to use this product looking for?
What higher-order needs does it help them fulfill? (See Maslow's chart)

CULTURAL TRUTHS are usually the hardest.
What "big trend" or current news ties in with this product?
What is going on in the larger world of ideas that relates to it?
Research trendspotting information or TED talks.
What's hot in men's / women's / children's magazines lifestyle magazines?
What is happening in the news that the target would be watching?
Use your knowledge of people, issues and society to look around you and find some big idea or current mood that connects to this product.

2. Possible strategies (page 8)

Come up with three different "reasons" someone would want to use this product. Don't be clever or cute here. These are not "taglines" or headlines. These are **ARGUMENTS**. Each strategy should be a word (an adjective) or (adjective) phrase you want to "hot-glue" to the brand.

For example:

Tom's of Maine is a _____ toothpaste. (natural, organic, nontoxic, sugar-free...?)

Clearasil is a _____ complexion cream. (effective, no-nonsense, gentle, feminine...?)

Remember: Try to come up with a strategy that....

- Is specific to your brand (how is it different than the one next to it on the shelf?) (REALLY hard for "parity" products - like Crest and Colgate - with minimal differences)
- Fits the brand image of the product (and is true)
- Is a compelling reason to choose this product
- Seems like it could lead to interesting ads

STOP

Show this page to some people you trust (instructor - friend - client?)

Get their honest opinion before you start writing ads.

Do these strategies have some promise? Are they unique, specific, interesting?

Write down comments, reminders, thoughts, opinions - your focus group (page 9)

4. Writing (pages 10 - 14)

Now you're ready to brainstorm. Maybe you've even already started!

For each potential strategy, start listing ideas, headlines, concepts, or .urls.

As Luke Sullivan says, "Don't just write willy-nilly. Start with willy, and move on to nilly."

If you're a methodical type, make lines 1-20 on Strategy A, 11-20 on Strategy B, and so on.

Use these lines to write about product truths, or customer truths, or cultural truths.

Come at it from lots of different angles. Be playful. Just generate. Don't judge. Or just freestyle it.

Once you get going, you'll flow for a while, and then it will get hard. Then you'll have another burst.

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6. Thumbnails (pages 15 - 19)

Visual brainstorming. Let your visual cortex - the "left side" of your brain - have at it. Start making visual associations. Using your writing list, play with symbols. Combine visual clichés. It's ok. Use visual shorthand. Play with the company logo. Draw cartoons of the customer. Interpret the truths visually- what do they look like? Try all the brainstorming techniques you learned in "Visual Thinking" class.

These are tiny little boxes, aren't they?

That's on purpose - so you don't get caught up in drawing STYLE and focus on drawing CONCEPTS. Stick figures are fine. These are visual notes for yourself. They have to remain simple, since they're small.

In advertising, simple = good.

Nobody has time to decipher a really complicated idea in an ad (unless complexity is your strategic benefit.. then... well, have fun with that!)

DO 100!! You can do it.

Congratulations!

Whew! You did it! Now you can stop thinking for a while.

Step 3: Unconscious Processing (24 hours)

7. Swipe /scrap / inspiration (pages 18-19)

Take a break from all this ideating and just start looking around for inspiration. You've been immersed in the assignment for a while, so kind of shove it to one side of your brain and just go on gut feeling for a bit.

Be a visual packrat - collect pretty (or interesting) objects / images - ones that somehow "feel" right.

Get out your Pantone books and your paper samples. Dig through old magazines, or go down to the magazine store and thumb through some new cutting-edge ones.

What kind of photography, illustration, typography seems like it would fit this brand?

Don't worry about "stealing" stuff right now - you have your own ideas.

Just open your eyes to what's going on out there that might give your ideas a new spin, or a different visual approach.

Feel confident that you already have some ideas - now let the designer in you (even if you are a writer) be inspired.

This could be the time to do something on your "bucket list".

Feel like making a watercolor painting, a cartoon character, a piece of street art? Go for it.

Make any notes here about things you need, places you want to visit, stuff you found, people who might help, talent you could use, etc.

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Step 4: The Aha! Moment (2-3 days)

8. Roughs (pages 20-23)

Pretty arrogant of us to just assume that, exactly right here, you're going to have a brilliant idea, isn't it? Well, with experience... I think around this time, you'll start getting a feeling for which ideas out of all the ones you've generated have the possibility to become... something.

Especially if you've had the courage to share your thinking with someone along the way (almost anyone will do). Something about explaining what you're thinking about, OUT LOUD helps you see it more clearly yourself. You can start to see which things are totally ridiculous, or stale, or unclear, and which are unusual, smart, insightful, funny, simple, or interesting.

Focus on those.

Take the best seeds, scraps and beginnings from all the other pages
- and AT LAST try to turn them into actual ads (roughs).

PLEASE don't rely on previous notions of what an "ad" is supposed to be like.

Just look for things in your notes that seem compelling or convincing. Use your bullshit detector!

Would YOU believe the claim you've written?

Would YOU rip out that interesting visual and hang on to it?

Be brutal now. If you can't be brutal, find someone who is

and have them sort out the promising from the tired, overused, ordinary or fake-sounding.

And while you're at it, now is the time to get serious about the overall design of the page.

What element is the most important? Words or pictures?

This campaign is supposed to be COPY driven, so it's ok if the headline is the focus.

There doesn't even have to be a picture at all!

Speaking of copy - use those gridded pages (24-26) to focus on the design of the type. Take your words, weigh their importance - which are big, which small? Should they be shouted, whispered, caressed, brutalized? How can the type communicate your tone of voice? Sketch the words.

8. Variations (page 27)

After designing your rough ads, step back a minute - is there another way to organize the page?

Give yourself at least one totally different page design to think about. Just try it for fun.

9. Feedback (pages 28-29)

Use this page for friends, classmates, or instructors to make suggestions and point out the strengths and weaknesses of your idea before you jump out of the book and onto a computer.

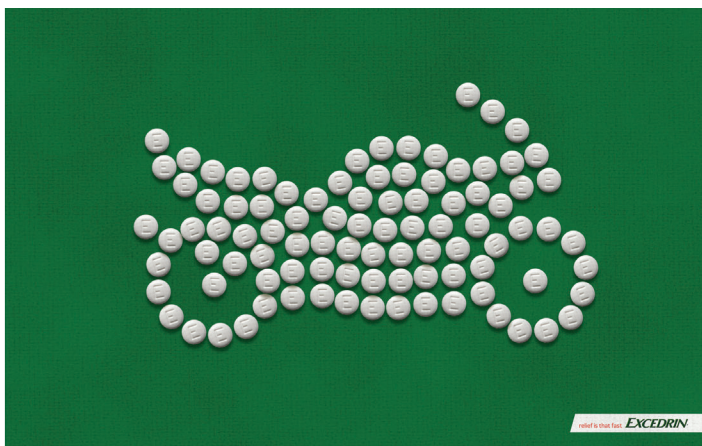
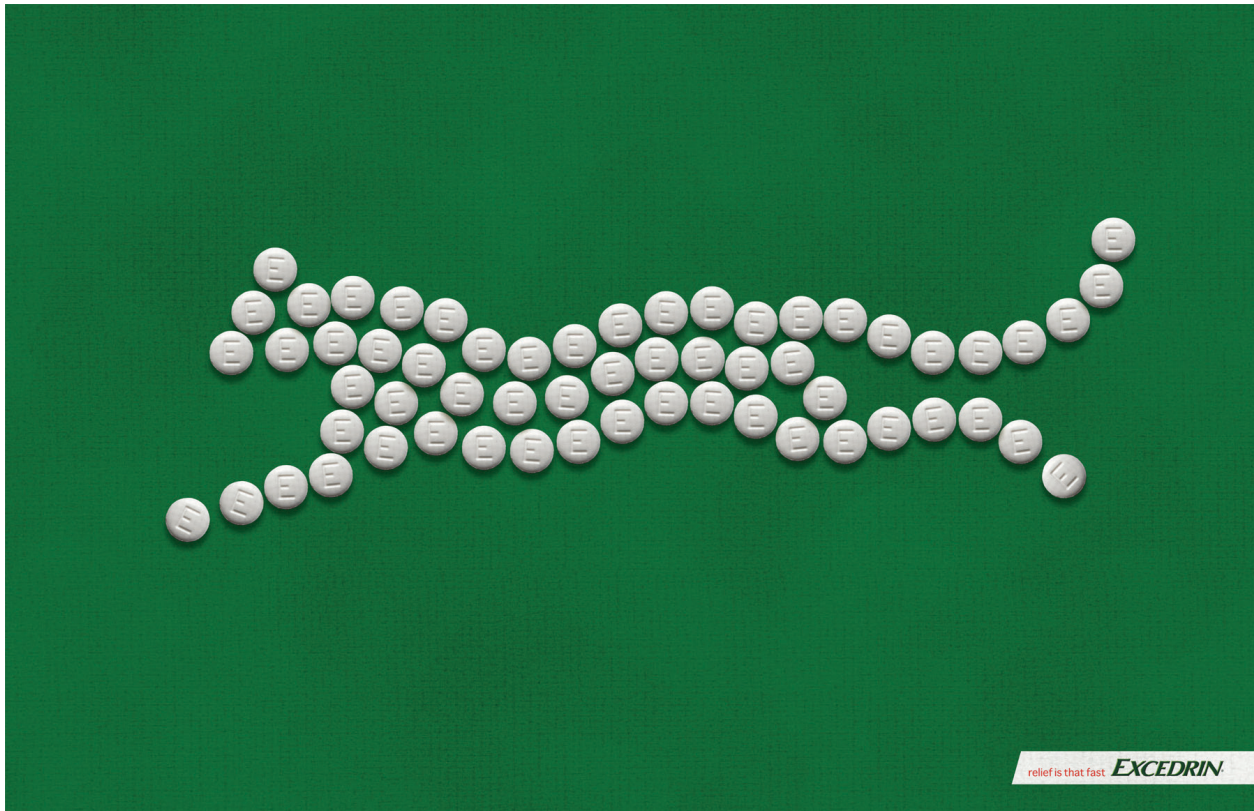
Instructors can use this page for a process grade.

Step 5: Idea Meets Reality (2-3 days)

(Pages 30-33) Using the roughs, layouts, type and references you have found, construct a finished ad on paper, or using Adobe Creative Suite tools. Typical print ad, full page, size is 8.5" x 11". Print out your finished ads and glue mini-sized into your book for future reference. Then evaluate them.

For this assignment, one GREAT ad (a "one-off") is fine - but if you have stumbled across an idea that seems have three or more separate, equally good executions, try that. In order for ads to be a campaign, they usually share a STRATEGY, a tagline or campaign tone of voice, a color palette, a type treatment, and some similarities in visual organization. See the attached samples of past student assignments for inspiration!

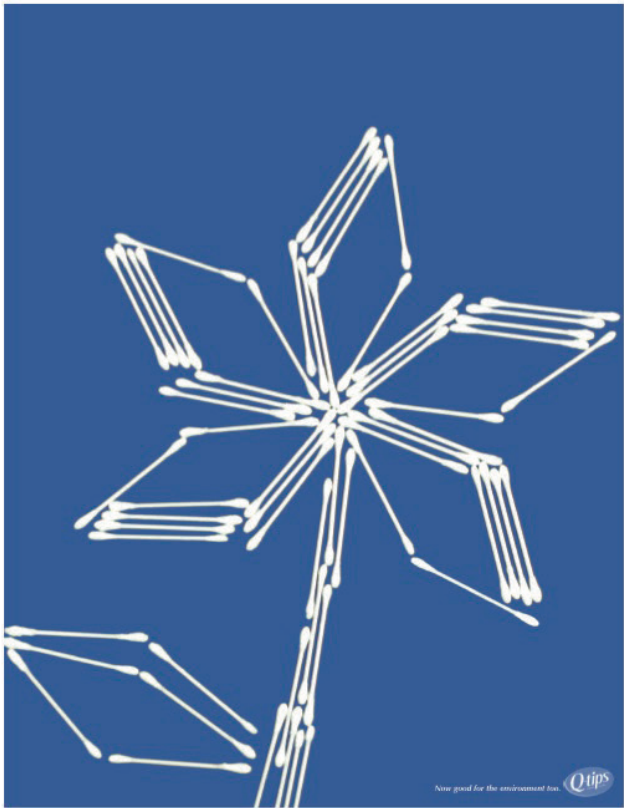
LITTLE BIG ASSIGNMENT #1: Strategy-intensive campaign for a personal care product
Student: Rachael Baratta, Kutztown University. Strategy: Excedrin relieves headaches FAST.



LITTLE BIG ASSIGNMENT #1: Strategy-intensive campaign for a personal care product
Student: Sam Resta, University of Delaware. Strategy: Advil, targeted for specific pain.



LITTLE BIG ASSIGNMENT #1: Strategy-intensive campaign for a personal care product
Student: Cara Ray, Kutztown University. Strategy: Q-tips are now good for the environment, too.



LITTLE BIG ASSIGNMENT #1: Strategy-intensive campaign for a personal care product
Student: Rachel Foster, Kutztown University. Strategy: Time to replace your toothbrush.

