

Chapter

4

Strategy

Creative Strategy in the Marketing Mix

Congratulations! Your agency was invited to pitch the Garlowe Gizmo account to introduce their new line of gizmos. Your job is to develop a creative strategy and build a marketing communication campaign that will knock the socks off the Garlowe management. You really need this account, because if you don't win, half of your agency will be laid off, including you. Right now, you know nothing about the company, their products, their customers, their competition, or their market. By the way, you've got 2 weeks until the presentation. Once again, congratulations!

The above scenario happens every day somewhere. The good news is you're invited to the dance. But there are very few "gimmes" when it comes to new business, and if you're lucky enough to win an account, the euphoria quickly dissolves into the daily grind of keeping the business.

***Mad Men* versus reality**

In *Mad Men*, the award-winning TV program about 1960s advertising, Don Draper, the head creative director at the fictional Sterling Cooper agency, usually saves the day by (a) ignoring all research, (b) threatening to resign the account, and (c) delivering brilliant insight just as the client gets up to leave. His coworkers are envious, the client is impressed, his boss gives him another big raise, and everybody meets back in his office for martinis and cigarettes. It's great fun to watch, but it doesn't happen that way in today's advertising game . . . if it ever did. So, at the risk of destroying the myths of the Golden Age of Advertising, the following sections deal with the hard work of looking brilliant.

Strategy and tactics

The difference between strategy and tactics stumps a lot of clients and their agencies. They usually mix them up and throw in a few goals and objectives for good measure. Typically the net result is a rather random laundry list of what they'd like to happen—about as specific and realistic as wishing for world peace.

Words of Wisdom

*"Brilliant creative isn't enough. You must be creative and effective. It's a time for the strategic thinker, not just the creative rebel."*¹

—Helayne Spivak