

CREATIVE CRITIQUE

A Tell-All Report on DTC, And Device Ads from 2008

Our panel of DTC experts cites creative work for AmbienCR, Humira and NuvaRing among the best prescription drug advertising of the past year. A number of device ads also get heaped with a share of praise from the panelists.

The details follow.

By Jennifer Haug

There is no question that pharma marketers need to engage with their consumers. For this year's Creative Critique, we asked our contributors to select the DTC campaigns that stood out and engaged patients in what was a cluttered ad market in 2008. It quickly became clear that the central theme of DTC advertising this past year was to focus more on educational tones. Among the campaigns that did stand out, according to our panel of creative experts, are AmbienCR, Chantix and NuvaRing. Following are the reviews from Pilar Belhumeur of Greater Than One, Stu Klein of Lowe Worldwide, Mark Kosak of CommonHealth's EvoLogue, and Maryann Kuzel of STAR Healthcare.

"The celebrity partnership used for the Bayer Contour Diabetes Glucose Monitor is an example of great use of the online medium. Nick Jonas of the Jonas Brothers helps endorse the product and remove the stigma of diabetes for kids and teenagers." – Pilar Belhumeur



Pilar Belhumeur
Partner, Executive Creative Director
Greater Than One

Few pharmaceutical brands this year pushed the envelope when it comes to an integrated approach to marketing. AmbienCR, Contour, Caduet and Symbicort succeeded in creating integrated, engaging brand experiences; but sadly, in 2008 an integrated cross-channel pharma brand experience was the exception, not the rule.

As more and more marketers realize that consumers are now in control of brand relationships, they are looking at multiple

channels in order to deliver their messages. Marketers are struggling to break through the clutter in a world saturated by DTC ad campaigns and grappling with Web 2.0 trends that are now being expected by the savvy online consumer.

As a result, we continue to see the use of video across multiple channels. Whether directly leveraging a 30-second TV spot as a Web site's central theme, like Pfizer's [www.Caduet.com](#), or using a video host to walk users through a product or a site's features, the use of video marches on, but seems uninspired.

For example, Procter & Gamble has done a good job at communicating its Actonel brand's promise – treating osteoporosis – in their television campaign with the tagline, "Time is a thief, help protect what's yours." It is compelling because it's built on a product-based consumer insight that active older women can be in control of their health; the campaign feels both elegant and modern.

The Actonel Web site, however, fell a bit short. A generic video host introduces the product and its features, but adds no real value other than an educational tour that teaches about osteoporosis. The swirling scarf visuals, a metaphor for the brand's implied benefits of agility and strength, are used in the interface, but have a more interesting treatment in the header areas of lower-level pages. There are some areas where interactivity is used (for example, questions to ask your doctor), but overall it does not leverage the medium as much as it could.

On the other hand, the celebrity partnership used for the Bayer Contour Diabetes Glucose Monitor is an example of great use of the online medium. Nick Jonas of the Jonas Brothers helps endorse the product and remove the stigma of diabetes for kids and teenagers. Nick is featured on the homepage, which leads to a special section of the

site featuring Nick's song, "A Little Bit Longer", about his personal experiences with diabetes, along with a link to purchase the song on iTunes. There are other engaging promotions as well, such as a sweepstakes, Nick's story of his diabetes care, and Nick's blog. Users can click to other social networking platforms, such as Nick's Facebook page and the Jonas Brothers' MySpace page, as well as click through to the Jonas Brothers' "Change for the Children" foundation,



where kids and teens are encouraged to help other kids. Videos on YouTube feature Nick describing his experiences, that he would not let diabetes get him down and prevent him from leading a successful

life. Print ads were also run to create awareness about the partnership. Although no television was done for the campaign, it could be argued that there wasn't really a need since the target audience Bayer is trying to reach is more than likely formulating their opinions and interacting online.

For me, one of the most engaging integrated campaigns of 2008 was for AmbienCR. It is unique, innovative, and a great departure from the brand's past campaigns. Utilizing humor and an element of surprise, the first "Silence Your Rooster" commercial brought a smile to my face. It begins with people soundly sleeping in their beds, until suddenly an unexpected noise occurs, such as a blow dryer. One person awakes and goes to explore the disturbance, only to find a rooster. There's no dialogue and the final screen points online to the URL, [www.SilenceYourRooster.com](#), which features an online "Ruffle Some Feathers" game. The site plus the commercial are fun, entertaining and memorable. I played the game more than once and watched all of the commercials that are featured on the site.

The year 2008 saw DTC just scratching the surface of integrated marketing. The digital trends that are being exploited in the non-pharma marketing world are simply not being utilized enough. Television and print messaging are the status quo, with just a few standing out from the rest. In order to create more engaging brand experiences, pharma marketers need to take some risks in order to stand out in this new age of high digital engagement and consumer control.

"[In] the Humira psoriasis campaign... the advertising successfully navigates a particularly difficult regulatory environment." – Stu Klein



Stu Klein
Managing Director
Lowe Worldwide

In 2008, we witnessed a continuation of the past years' trend of DTC advertising that was more sober and educational in tone. While many of these new campaigns ably communicated their intended message, there was a decided lack of engagement, as witnessed by the almost total absence of any DTC spots from the Nielsen IAG rankings of most-remembered ads.

That said, there was one campaign that proved to be both highly engaging and deeply insightful, the DTC campaign for Chantix. In categories with multiple OTC and Rx options, it is especially difficult to create breakthrough advertising given the testing methodologies utilized to vet ads, which seem to require formulaic category cues to exceed norms required to air. The Chantix campaign succeeds because it is grounded in an insight previously overlooked in this category, namely that the road to smoking cessation is certain to be long. The metaphor of the hare and the tortoise instantly communicates this insight in a non-threatening manner, managing expectations of patients and physicians away from the quick-fixes typically promised. Importantly, a simple demonstration of the brand's MOA helps to reinforce how Chantix works, providing credibility to the brand's efficacy messaging. The tortoise/hare imagery is ubiquitous in brand communications across all touchpoints, ensuring that the brand speaks in one voice.

Other campaigns of note include the DePuy Orthopedics campaign featuring Duke University basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski. While Duke has become one of those "love 'em or hate 'em teams," "Coach K" rises above as the embodiment of a winner, a reputation cemented by this year's Olympic success of the men's basketball team. In the ads and arguably even better on the brand's Web site, Coach K's relentless encouragement helps to overcome one of the category's key barriers to growth, the overly long decision-making period most patients endure before finally opting for surgery. With Coach K's urging, backed by his personal experience, many patients still on the fence will have a difficult time continuing to put off the inevitable.

Another campaign worthy of recognition is the Humira psoriasis campaign. Here, the advertising successfully

navigates a particularly difficult regulatory environment, as previous campaigns in the category have received warning letters for their “overstatement of efficacy.” These ads utilize a metaphor of removing garments to reveal clear skin, which taps into one of the most profound insights in the psoriasis category, namely the embarrassment sufferers feel when their skin is visible. The Humira campaign utilizes a visual technique that allows a wide range of sufferers to be depicted (critical given the broad demographic range of the target), and empathetically demonstrates that treatment with Humira can end the cover-up that sufferers have endured for so long.

“[Ambien CR’s Silence YourRooster.com] is standout example of the direction in which DTC marketing should be going – toward intriguing advertising integrated with Web-based interactivity that can tell a brand story in an unconventional way.”
– Mark Kosak



Mark Kosak
Executive Vice President, Chief Creative Office
EvoLogue (a division of CommonHealth)

Let’s put aside, for the moment, how we as marketers typically assess campaign success based on research, results, or ROI. As consumers, we’re just not wont to do that. Instead, we’re focused on what really matters in advertising: what gets us to react enthusiastically – or not.

Just when you thought it was safe to go back to bed

Recently, the AmbienCR folks have stepped up to the plate with their own unbranded, oddball take on the sleep category. In a stroke of brilliant media placement, the



campaign debuted on network morning shows. The spots featured dazed and ruffled would-be sleepers who’d been rudely awakened by a

mischievous rooster that plays the drums, makes calls from a pay phone, and sets off car alarms. These snapshots pay off with a call to action to visit SilenceYourRooster.com.

By the time I got to the office on the first morning the spots aired, just about everyone was on the site, silencing the rooster in a pillow-hurling shooting gallery game.

This is a standout example of the direction in which DTC marketing should be going – toward intriguing advertising integrated with Web-based interactivity that can tell a brand story in an unconventional way. Since the unbranded intros, AmbienCR has spooled out the concept with a branded 60-second spot that features the goofy old bird, roaming the city streets in search of his next victims. It’s still funny – despite the standard heads-on-pillows and morning after footage.

When everything old is new again

Another campaign that got us buzzing was the NuvaRing “Break away from the pack” creative. This one premiered with what looked like a hastily rendered animatic of computer-generated bathing beauties performing a synchronized swimming routine. To tell the truth, it left us scratching our heads and asking the question “Cool idea, but what were they thinking with that execution?” Hard on the heels of it came what we now call “the real spot.” In this iteration, the action is live, and the production values are a dead-on homage to mid-twentieth century high-style aesthetics. This spot is a Busby Berkeley-meets-Esther Williams cocktail that succeeds swimmingly in entertaining viewers with brand attributes that happen to be benefits, too. The irony here is that the target audience probably has never seen an Esther Williams movie, so what they are viewing looks like a fresh visual take on a novel modality within a familiar category.

The scenery steals the story

At first glance, the latest Lyrica TV spot appears to be cut from familiar pharma cloth. The ad features a couple vacationing in New Orleans. The woman opens the spot by remarking on how fibromyalgia pain used to keep her from leaving home. Granted, it’s a typical “walk in the park” scenario with a not-so-memorable voice-over. But what is so intelligent about this spot is that it uses locale as a sympathetic metaphor for a devastating disease state. I’d venture to say that the city itself is the main player here in telling the brand benefit story. The Big Easy appears serene and revitalized, having overcome the loss, pain and ravages of natural disaster. Watching our couple stroll the pristine streetscapes subtly sets up for fibromyalgia sufferers the possibility of getting their lives back...to an idealized state.

When a brand becomes more than its advertising parts

Finally, let’s focus on a campaign that is not new or particularly high concept. It is, however, a campaign that bears testament to the power of a game-changing product with a compelling call to action...that can make a world of difference in a woman’s life. I’ll shamelessly admit at the get-go that the work came out of our shop. I am speaking of the Myriad Genetic Laboratories BRACAnalysis campaign. The ads feature a series of women who talk to the advantage

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of a genetic test that can determine predisposition for inherited breast or ovarian cancers. The mantra throughout is “Be Ready Against Cancer” (BRAC). While some critics have disparaged the proposition of a costly test for a cancer risk one may not have, I’m guessing that women who’ve taken the test and learned about their inherited risk feel quite differently. And it so happens that it is just such a test that helped save the life of entertainer Christina Applegate. The point here is, sometimes a brand, by virtue of its attributes, is able to transcend its advertising to become an advocate for public health.



Maryann Kuzel
President
STAR Healthcare

In 2008 one campaign truly broke new ground in DTC advertising – Chantix. It truly tells a full story with authenticity. Brilliantly conceived and produced, the spot uses the classic fable of the tortoise and the hare



to dramatize the journey toward smoking cessation with Chantix.

First, the brand takes the time needed to tell the story of Chantix as a pill and a program – a full 90 seconds – and holds the viewer’s attention throughout, even during the 30 seconds of fair balance, which is delivered as part of the brand story. Second – almost heresy in brand marketing –

the brand’s strong efficacy claim regarding quit rates after 12 weeks is reserved until the end when the tortoise has the finish line in sight. Next is an exceptionally strong synergy of words and pictures, with key messages visually reinforced on signposts along the pathway. Finally, the spot goes well beyond conveying the necessary message that Chantix is not a “magic pill,” achieving a degree of authenticity that will resonate with today’s consumers.

This spot proves that education doesn’t have to be boring, but can be delivered with charm, realism and motivation to capture the viewer’s attention, mind and heart.

Tapping into a woman’s desire for freedom

With its highly memorable Busby Berkeley choreography and upbeat tune, the NuvaRing broadcast ad not only encourages women to “break free from the pack” of standard birth control pills, it also breaks free from some of the staid conventions of DTC advertising.

Competing against the category of birth control pills, which focus as much on secondary benefits of premenstrual symptoms and clear skin as on contraception, NuvaRing offers a simple but important point of difference: easy once-a-month use with uncompromising contraceptive efficacy. This spot works on a rational level by using synchronized swimming as a visually arresting metaphor for the daily pill-taking routine. But it goes beyond the rational, tapping into a woman’s strong desire for freedom from the monotonous routine of daily pill-taking. In a category and age group in which word-of-mouth and peer influence are high and daily birth control pills are still the norm, it gives women permission to act on their desire and break free from convention.

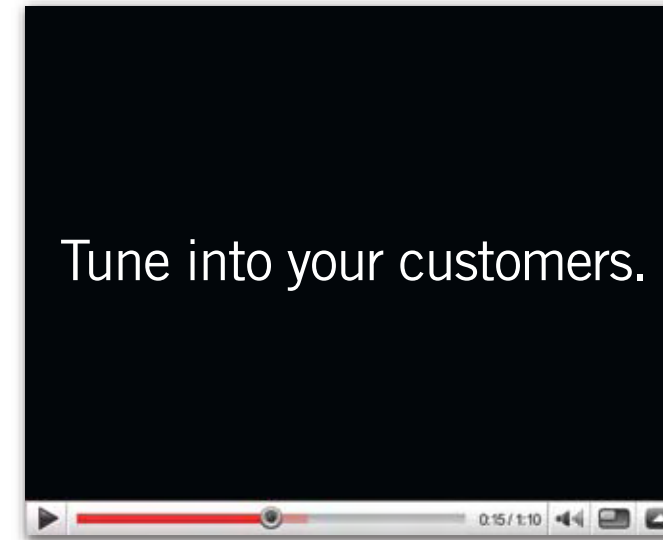
For a product that does not present a life-or-death choice, this spot uses edutainment well to address both rational and emotional drivers.

Spot-On brand positioning and targeting

The Smith & Nephew hip and knee replacement broadcast ad, “Innovation in Motion,” stands out in its category and DTC as a whole through its strong, differentiated branding.

A brand should take a strong stand on who it is and who it is not, and be clear and proud of its unique qualities. Smith & Nephew’s ad clearly positions its products as “next-generation joint replacements engineered to meet the needs of your high-performance life.” It singles out a very specific relevant target audience defined not only by demographics, but by lifestyle and mindset: physically active boomers with drive, determination and an enduring adventurous spirit. The spot features computer-generated athletes performing in sports such as running, climbing, surfing and swimming. It uses a high-tech silver-gray color palette with occasional splashes of bright orange, Smith & Nephew’s branding color. With synthesized music keeping a rhythmic beat, the message, look, tonality and style work together to clearly communicate a differentiating brand position.

This brand won’t appeal to everyone who needs a knee or hip replacement, but will engender very strong affinity and response among its chosen target. And that’s exactly what a strong brand should do. ■



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*Google OTX Online Health Video Study, March 2008



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