

Advertising: the basics

SMOCISM is the key to great advertising because great advertising is:

- Sustainable
- Memorable
- ‘Ownable’ (distinctive and differentiating)
- Credible (supportable)
- Impactful
- Successful
- Measurable

Advertising resembles an iceberg because what you see is a ‘creative’ idea, clearly portrayed. What you don’t see is great deal of preparation work to ensure that the advertising has:

- Clear, achievable objectives
- A robust, explicit strategy
- Campaign longevity
- Constructive client engagement

To determine these, you have to ask:

- What do we want the advertising to do?
 - Improve people’s predisposition to buy and/or believe?
 - Reinforce real positives?
 - Correct unwarranted negatives?

- **NB** You can use advertising to compensate to some degree for deficiencies in a product or service but, by doing so, you create an expectation gap – which will cause more problems than it solves.
 - What do we want the audience to do as a result of the advertising?
- This leads to the ‘purchase decision process’, also known as the ‘purchase funnel’ and denoted by the acronym ‘AIDA’:
- **A**wareness – leading to
 - **I**nterest – leading to
 - **D**esire – leading to
 - **A**ction

Of course, people travel this road at different times and different speeds – which is why there is more than one type of advertising.

Types of advertising

There are four main types of advertising:

- **Brand** – which relates to Awareness in the purchase decision process and which leads to...
- **Promotional** - which relates to Interest and which leads to...
- **Retail** - which relates to Desire and which leads to...
- **Activation** - which relates to Awareness in the purchase decision process

Another way of looking at these four types of advertising is that they address the following statements:

- Buy an X
- Buy an X now
- Buy an X from me
- Buy an X from me now

These four types of advertising fit onto a continuum that places brand advertising at the ‘marketing’ end of the continuum and activation advertising at the ‘sales’ end of the continuum.

Since each stage in the purchase decision process is dependent on the immediately preceding stage, the less awareness (brand) advertising you do, the fewer people are drawn through the purchase funnel and so the fewer people will buy your product/ service.

Of course, PR should complement every stage of this process.