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Bridging the Gap: Client Based Projects and Academic Applications in the Advertising Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

Calls for improvements in the teaching of business administration are ubiquitous. The history of advertising education is reviewed. An interdisciplinary approach combining marketing, advertising, and art, the National Student Advertising Competition is described and recommended to business educators as an improved teaching approach.

INTRODUCTION

Calls for improvements in the teaching of business administration are ubiquitous. For example, Ghoshal (2005) blamed bad theory for bad practice, urging that leaders of business schools must provide the support for change. Mintzberg and Gosling (2002) urged going beyond traditional borders in educating managers by making the manager's educational experience a place of thoughtful reflection. Perhaps nothing we do is ever perfect, and improvements are always possible, but business education seems to be in particular need of improvement, and faculty continue to seek better ways.

In addition, both scholars and practitioners continue to be concerned about the abilities of students and employees to work across disciplines. As early as 1975, Johnson and Werner identified the crucial issue of problem solving in business, recognizing that traditional disciplinary approaches to education tend to lead to solutions limited to the discipline being taught. They developed an interdisciplinary program intended to educate problem solvers in business to find interdisciplinary solutions to the problems that vex business. Hutt and Speh (2007), writing about the discipline of marketing, insisted that the perspective of the customer most be integrated across hierarchical levels and disciplines. And as recently as 2009, Boni, Weingart, and Evenson described an interdisciplinary approach to teaching entrepreneurship and innovation by combining the perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership, design thinking, and team building. Issues of interdisciplinary education have not been resolved, and faculty continue to innovate in seeking better ways.

Likewise, both scholars and practitioners recognize that there is much employees need to know and to be able to do that cannot be explicitly taught (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008). This relates to the concept of tacit knowledge, defined by Sternberg & Horvath (1999) (and cited in Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008, p. 190) as "knowledge that is grounded in personal experience, and is procedural rather than declarative in structure." Traditional classroom approaches cannot provide students this kind of knowledge, and faculty continue to seek approaches that will. Kritz, Lozada and Long (2007) asked the question, "as an advertising instructor, how do you prepare

students for careers in advertising when the students typically only take one Advertising course, if at all, as required in their marketing major?" Their study concerned the use of multiple progress reports to enhance advertising student performance on term projects. "The task for an advertising instructor", according to Kritz, "is to find a real world advertising project that can be successfully developed within reasonable parameters of the available time and abilities of the student."

Barr and McNeilly (2002) studied recruiters' attitudes about the value of experience both in and out of the classroom and found most indicate that internships, part-time jobs, and leadership positions in university organizations are better predictors of employability than classroom experiences. Their research found recent changes in marketing pedagogy have led to more classes using active learning approaches with client-based projects, field experiences and skill-building activities. When asked about desirable skills for employment in marketing more than half the recruiters listed the development of leadership skills as the most critical skill that is unattainable in the classroom, followed by team-building and teamwork skills. When asked what skills they expect or want to see on a resume they named evidence of leadership ability, communication ability, and the ability to take on a task and see it through to completion.

Furthermore, matters of student engagement in the educational process continue to be of concern. Foster and Rahinel (2008) discussed limitations on what can be done at the institutional level to increase engagement that will improve industry and academic performance. However, their research indicated (pp. 4-5) that:

> Including opportunities to participate and collaborate with peers, being accessible to discuss concepts and answer questions, and creating challenging rather than just simply longer assignments that require students to analyze information and make judgments, will enhance their academic performance and develop competencies that are valued in industry.

Egan (2008, p. 3) in his survey of a century of marketing recognized that "change is notoriously slow in marketing education." Slayden, Broyles and Kendrick (1998) state that "Being out of touch with developments in the industry has been a recurring charge in the assessment of university," and go on to cite numerous studies to support their contention. Walker (1992, p. 244) charges academe with a failure to adequately prepare students for creative positions in advertising and critiques the entire system of collegiate curriculum while recognizing that, "there are no universally accepted standards for professional practice," when it comes to academic advertising instruction. Ross (2006, p. 53) places some of the blame on the faculty when he asks, "Are we ready to retool our syllabi, rethink advertising's role in mass communication and reposition mass communication's role in society within the context of new media and convergence? It all starts with our commitment to teach best practices and what minimum skills our graduates will be expected to exhibit."

With all these concerns in mind, thoughtful educators might ask themselves what can be done to improve business education with interdisciplinary approaches that develop tacit knowledge while engaging students in ways that have been demonstrated to improve academic

and industry performance. The good news, for students of marketing, communication, and art, is that such an approach exists. It is the National Student Advertising Competition. This paper examines the origins of advertising education, the sources of mistrust between educators and practitioners and offers a possible scenario, which could work to the advantage of both.

ADVERTISING EDUCATION

Concerns about what students will take with them into the professional workplace are not limited to topics covered in the traditional business school disciplines. The Association of American Colleges and Universities outlined their concerns about the quality of student learning in the nations higher education system in January of 2010 called "The Quality Imperative". The association also released a survey done in the Fall of 2009 conducted by Peter Hart Research Associates, which suggests most employers would agree with their assessment that undergrad students need a more broad-based education. Just one in four of the 302 employers surveyed agreed that two and four-year schools were doing a good job of preparing students for the challenges ahead. The AACU also raised concerns about programs which offer narrow training or short-term credentials, which could limit opportunity for better jobs. This concern was the source of numerous debates, reports, and initiatives during the twentieth century and now shows signs of abating.

The evolution of advertising education serves as a case study about the difficulties inherent in matching the academic work of the classroom with the demands of the workplace. The art and science of advertising has always coexisted as both an industry and an educational endeavor with an uneasy relationship. Owing to the gap between what happens in the classroom and the realities of the marketplace, the friction between practitioners and educators has been a source of irritation for both. Stewart (1986) in his commentary on the necessity for upgrades for advertising education cites the oft-quoted 19th century department store magnate John Wanamaker who said, "I know half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; but I can never find out which half." Depending on who is asked, the problem lies either with advertising educators or advertising practitioners, neither of whom are willing to assume full responsibility and rightfully so. Rotzoll (1985) argues that advertising education evolved into an educational dichotomy following the Second World War with one side favoring the inductive/practitioner approach and the other side preferring the deductive/principles-first approach. Rotzoll contends that:

> "Interestingly, many practitioners dismiss advertising education because of its assumed emphasis on practice. *We* can, the argument goes, handle sheer training better than remote educators. Let the student receive a general education, *we'll* supply the particulars."

Lancaster et al (1990) in in their study of the theory vs. practice debate cites a statement from one survey respondent, an advertising faculty who said;

> "Academics do not know enough about the actual practice of advertising. Advertising practitioners do not care enough about the academic side of the

business. You build the necessary bridges on the backs of those who are the exceptions."

Moore and Leckenby (1973) found a lack of agreement on the proper content, value, and aims of advertising education and suggested this failure to find a consensus among themselves had led to a failure to achieve both respect and leadership in the field. They argue that the corrective could be meaningful interaction with practitioners to resolve the misunderstandings. In a later study on the role of advertising educators as problem solvers Moore and Leckenby (1973) found that of the two most frequently mentioned problem-solving aids one required action by educators and the other required action by practitioners, thus illustrating the need for cooperation between the two. Walker (1992) writing from the perspective of the practitioner states in a conciliatory fashion that:

> We (working professionals) live with the changes in the field every day. And who could envy the role of the professional educator in an age of severe budget cuts and declining visual/verbal skills.

Advertising education has its origins in three distinct disciplines; psychology, journalism, and business, all of which contributed to advertisings development and all of which are integral parts of a holistic approach to the teaching and practice of advertising. Psychology, which contributes an understanding of human behavior and the art of persuasion, was also the field from which the first advertising research was conducted. In 1895 Harlow Gale, a professor of psychology at the University of Minnesota conducted a survey in search of the purposes behind advertisements (Coolsen 1942, p. 40), which was followed by other research using students in his advanced psychology classes. That same year a trade magazine of the time, Printers Ink, made the prediction that:

> Probably, when we are a little more enlightened, the advertising writer, like the teacher, will study psychology. For however diverse their occupations may at first sight appear, the advertising writer and the teacher have one great object in common --- to influence the human mind (Richards & Ross, 2008).

Journalism, which until the turn of the 19th century was taught almost exclusively in English Departments, was eventually reworked as a mostly technical form of study with encouragement from the growing newspaper industry. It was not until the University of Missouri School of Journalism in 1913 introduced the first advertising major program, that advertising became a formal course of study (Ross, 1965) While this early curriculum tended to be mostly vocational in nature for teaching the mechanics of advertising for the newspaper industry, it was the beginning of the creative side of advertising.

Interestingly, the impetus for schools of business to develop advertising curriculum was coming from industry ranks in the form of the Associated Advertising Clubs of America, created to advance the advertising profession. The AACA, believing that standardized advertising education was necessary to advance the profession, was hopeful that more formalized instruction would find some scientific principles for advertising while also promote the profession to a more

respectable social status and enhanced profitability. By the time Harvard installed a chair of advertising in the first decade of the twentieth century and Paul T. Cherington, a Harvard professor first offered a course, which included lectures on advertising, many other institutions had decided to follow the trend. By 1910 a professor at the University of Wisconsin, Daniel Starch, offered a course called "The Psychological Problems of Advertising" and it seemed that advertising had established a foothold in academia (Richards & Ross, 2008).

Throughout the history of advertising as an academic discipline there has been an uneasy relationship with industry practitioners resulting both from the indefinite origins of advertising study as well as from mistrust on the part of both educators and practitioners. This mistrust can be attributed to differences of opinion regarding the position of advertising in the curriculum, the content and outcome of advertising education, and the changing nature of advertising in the marketplace, and the desired outcomes of advertising education.

Advertising in the Curriculum

Advertising has long wrestled with both industry practitioners and educators about what constitutes an effective advertising education curriculum. This debate stretches back to the very beginnings of advertising as an academic discipline. While the first school to offer a course in marketing is believed to be the University of Michigan in the fall of 1902 (Maynard, 1941), New York University was the first school to offer a course listed in its catalog as "Advertising" (Richards & Ross, 2008). That is on the academic side since on December 20, 1901, Walter Dill Scott delivered his talk entitled "The Psychology of Involuntary Attention as Applied to Advertising," to the Agate Club, which was the original club for advertising industry practitioners, in Chicago at its annual banquet. Scott, who went on to teach what is considered the first university course on advertising at Northwestern University, is held to be the "Father of Advertising Education." With this beginning, advertising education started the new century with ambiguous purposes dating to the so-called "Yale Report" in 1828, which argued for adherence to the traditional liberal arts undergraduate curriculum of which professional studies should not be a part. (Lucas 1994, p. 133). With the growth of higher education, the popularity of scientific education, and the emergence of graduate programs in the 19th century there came increased demand for more practical training as opposed to the old school classical learning approach. Andrew Carnegie condemned what he perceived as the useless continuation of an approach, which did not work, saying:

> While the college student has been learning a little about the barbarous and petty squabble of a far distant past, or trying to master languages which are dead, such knowledge as seems adapted for life on another planet than this as far as business affairs are concerned, the future captain of industry is hotly engaged in the school of experience, obtaining the very knowledge required for his future triumphs (Lucas, 1994, pp. 144-45).

Content of Advertising Education

During the first half of the twentieth century, when educational institutions and the advertising industry alike were experiencing growth and development, two separate reports on the state of business schools were released with dramatic results. Both the Ford Foundation study by Gordon and Howell (1959) and the Carnegie Foundation study by Pierson (1959) condemned business schools for taking too much of a hands-on application approach and renewed the liberal arts versus professional debate. At this point most of the advertising instruction had been located in schools of business but with these reports, many of the leading business schools went with a more theoretical approach, leaving schools of journalism to expand their offerings by adding advertising courses. Under the influence of journalism, advertising education took a more vocational "how to" approach which was in direct contrast to the business school "why" focus. With the journalism schools advertising favored an inductive, practical, and specialized technique designed to train students for their "first" job, while advertising as taught in business schools preferred a more theoretical, deductive, general strategy to prepare students for their career or "last" job (Lancaster, 1990).

Changing Nature of Advertising

With the explosive growth of advertising as an industry from a $28 billion business in 1975 to a $75 billion enterprise in 1988, (Advertising Age, 1988) the emphasis shifted to sales promotion, direct marketing, and other less traditional methodology at the same time its audience was being fragmented by cable television, magazines, and telemarketing. (Marketing and Media Decisions, 1987) Consequently the skill set for a successful advertising career became more complex and the educational experience to effect those skills became exponentially more complicated. Applegate (1994), referencing the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business accreditation standards, mentions the expansion of the common body of knowledge requisite for advertising education includes the areas of; (a) background of the concepts, processes, and institutions involved in marketing, (b) background of the economic and legal environments pertaining to ethical, social and political influences (c) basic understanding of concepts and applications of accounting, management, information systems, and computer applications, (d) study of organization theory, behavior and interpersonal communications, and (e) study of administrative processes related to uncertainty theory, integrating analysis, and policy determination at management level. While these required skills are on the management side of advertising, the changes on the marketing side of the business have exploded, encompassing every facet of the online and digital environment. Harden and Heyman (2009) explore and explain the concept of digital engagement as "internet marketing that captures customers and builds intense brand loyalty" and as "managing the participatory power of millions of Internet users to profit your business." Chapters in their book include new information on online branding, search engine optimization, viral buzz, web video, affiliate marketing, PR and social media, metrics and measurement, and new marketing channels including virtual worlds, advergaming, and wireless mobile search. Cappo (2003), writing about the changing role of ad agencies, maintains agencies need to reposition themselves to assume more strategic roles for their clients as the "strategic architect" which directs and integrates media services into a comprehensive marketing strategy for the client. In the chapter on

reinventing media, Cappo discusses the development of interactive television, multimedia publications, and an endless stream of new media fueled by new technology and ever-expanding venues for old media placement. Few if any of these concepts are currently major topics in contemporary advertising classrooms, if for no other reason than their recency, yet it is becoming clear that advertising education will be deficient if they are not included.

Outcomes of Advertising Education

Outcomes for effective advertising education must take into account the diverse needs of those preparing for a career in advertising; learning holistically about the creative, business, and psychological aspects of advertising as they function together. Moore and Leckenby (1973) proposed that advertising education objectives should be:

1. To prepare the student for a long-range career
2. To prepare the student for his first job in advertising
3. To teach the student the latest advertising approaches
4. To provide the student with training and judgment in problem solving
5. To give the student an appreciation of the field of advertising in general

The man widely regarded as the dean of advertising educators, Dr. Charles Sandage, stated in the Spring 1955 issue of *Journalism Quarterly* that:

My own philosophy of education in the field of advertising is to minimize strictly skills courses and to place more emphasis on the 'why' of advertising in its business and social environment. Advertising is a broad field. It is concerned with products and how to get them distributed…with the dissemination of ideas..with broad economic matters…with communications…If we place emphasis on teaching the student, we will attempt to sharpen his ability to think and to solve problems. We will look upon thinking as an instrument of action and a basic tool for solving problems.

Perhaps the standoff between educators and practitioners of advertising can be illustrated by the proposal of legendary adman David Ogilvy in 1955 to create a National College of Advertising since the advertising taught in ordinary universities was "sadly useless" (Hileman & Ross, 1969). Dunbaugh (1957) countered that the chief reason Ogilvy's suggested "University of Advertising" was rejected is that advertising students need a broad base of knowledge since "An advertising man's future depends on his ability to communicate, whether he be a copywriter, space buyer, or account executive." Dunbaugh also cites an advertisement in university publications by Proctor and Gamble seeking personnel for copy supervision, media, merchandising, and brand management which contained the sentence, "a knowledge of advertising is not necessary". Whether implicitly or explicitly, the practitioner was expressing a widespread sentiment in the advertising industry that advertising education was not preparing the next generation of ad men for the demands of the marketplace.

On the other side of the coin, advertising educators were busily trying to research the problem as well as keep up with the increasing changes and complexities of modern advertising technique and technology. Bedbury (2002) spent seven years as the chief marketing officer for Nike and another three years doing the same job for Starbucks, before branching out on his own to develop web-based businesses. His work on the web led him to write *A New Brand World* in which he develops a new vision for brand advertising. In the final chapter on brand futures Bedbury outlines his work on the two startup companies he founded and hints at the implications for advertising from the melding of new technologies. The first, mySimon.com, provided instant price comparisons of brand merchandise across more than a thousand vendors and was developed to allow merchants to present themselves creatively online as part of the process. The second, Tellme Network, provided callers to an 800 number with access to web-based information as well as the capability to place calls to restaurants, hotels, and airlines on the same free call. Callers could also access news, financial, entertainment, sports, and weather information as well as play games by phone. It made the web accessible with your voice from anywhere in the United States at any time for free. Advertising revenue was generated for Tellme by placing 5-7 second ads within the service, by speech-enabling corporate web sites, and by helping companies improve their phone-based customer service programs. The advertising in play was not just selling time or space for some creative work and measuring a response rate.

Ross (2006), in researching trends in advertising education, found three dominant changes, reflected in the naming of the studies programs, but also indicative of the shifts in the industry. The changes in focus for advertising studies include changes to one of three designations including Integrated Marketing Communications, Strategic Communication, and Media Convergence. In regard to convergence, Gould (2004) asked the question, "Shall we converge?" and went on to elaborate on what that term means for advertising:

> The question that hangs out above all of this activity is more difficult to answer: where are advertising and the Internet going (and is it all together)? That is, if all mass communication migrates to web sites, what happen to advertising? To some extent, the way in which we answer this question should give us some idea about how we approach advertising pedagogy. We may not have been trained to build web sites as a form of advertising, but there is a strong argument that advertising educators and their students had better learn this skill quickly if our students and we are to be players in future advertising activities. Whether we are comfortable or not with advertising online matters little in this discussion. The convergence of media online, together with the fusion of branding and direct marketing, compels us to face a harsh reality. Whatever form advertising takes in the next decade, it is a good bet it will be online.

Jim Marra, writing in *Advertising Age* in 1984 framed the debate from the educator's perspective: "There's a schism, a gap that exists between advertising education and the profession of advertising. You folks in the 'real world' sometimes think we folks in education live in an ivory tower detached from what goes on in the 'real' business of advertising. And we folks in education sometimes think you folks in the 'real world' live in a bustling grinder detached from the more contemplative insights regarding how advertising works."

Doerner (1983) was more specific with industry complaints;

Okay, so you want to hire a beginner. But you find he or she can't spell, doesn't know what a grp is, thinks customer benefits have something to do with insurance and direct marketing means going straight to the supermarket right after work…No wonder advertising's wondering what's wrong with advertising education.

THE NATIONAL STUDENT ADVERTISING COMPETITION

The business community has increasingly been calling upon advertising students to submit their work for real life projects with corporate entities seeking a fresh perspective and insight into that student demographic. The Yellow Pages Association, a trade group for the telephone industry, has sponsored the YPA Yellow Pages Advertising Challenge for the past five years in an effort to spur creative development for their market. Similarly, major product brands have launched initiatives to connect with the college student through consumer generated advertising competitions such as the Doritos Crash the Super Bowl contest which featured 4 non-agency ads in Super Bowl 44. School-related organizations like the NCAA are also forming partnerships with college students to help them find more growth with the 18-24 year old market for the annual NCAA college basketball tournament. For the 2010 March Madness, the NCAA enlisted the Farmer School of Business at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio to give the students a chance to present campaign ideas to actual marketers, who can then choose to use their advertising concepts for advertising to real consumers. This is by no means a new approach to teaching the art and science of advertising as it has been tried and tested for at least the past fifty years on a national level. Marra (1988) mentions four of the most prominent competitions as those sponsored by Phillip Morris, Nissan, the AAA/INMA, Direct Marketing Collegiate, and the AAF. Benefits of these types of competitions according to Marra include:

1. An important link to the real world of advertising
2. Judging by professionals
3. Opportunity to raise the image of advertising educators
4. To showcase the future of advertising

A good example of the predicament advertising has faced can be found in the life of Edward Bernays, a graduate of Cornell in 1912 with a degree in agriculture. Choosing to pursue a career in journalism, he became interested in the use of psychology to influence human behavior. It was young Edward Bernays who, working with a meat packer and having Sigmund Freud for an uncle, employed psychoanalytic theory to persuade Americans that a "healthy breakfast" consisted of bacon and eggs. Bernays went on to a career in public relations during which he pioneered work in psychology and the social sciences in the service of advertising, public relations, and marketing. Bernays life was influenced by his experience in each of the three disciplines from advertising education developed and he is widely regarded as the father of modern public relations practice. Clearly, Bernays benefitted from his learning in each of the three fields associated with advertising and it is this synergy, which is missing from much of

contemporary advertising education. Even if Edward Bernays had tried to obtain an education which might have prepared him for his future career, it is doubtful he could have done so any more now than then. While advertising education can trace its genealogy back to beginnings in psychology, journalism, and business and while it has grown into its own, it is still inextricably linked to each of these disciplines by virtue of its practice. Advertising is essentially about the psychology of persuasion, executed artistically with words and pictures, to make money. Donnelly (1992) discovered in a survey of agency professionals that about a third of them had degrees in business, 23 percent had degrees in journalism, and 27 percent had degrees in fine arts or humanities. The question then becomes how to most effectively combine these three disciplines in a way to teach advertising. Collins, Brown and Newman (1989) propose a model of cognitive apprenticeship, which outlines six teaching methods that facilitate learning. When this model is applied to the process of advertising education it provides a counterweight to balance the extremes of a polarizing dichotomy, which stresses either academic preparation or practical experience as the only right approach.

Table 1: Six Methods of Cognitive Apprenticeship

Modeling	Teacher puts his mind on display, walking students through the steps and strategies of problems solving, critical analysis, and creative development
Coaching	Teacher observes students in performance of task or skill, asks questions, and offers feedback
Scaffolding	Students are assisted by teacher, their peers or both in completing a task they are unable to perform alone
Articulating	Students practice the skill of converting tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge by describing the internal reasoning involved in problem solving or critical thinking exercises
Reflecting	Students debrief and critique their own performance by comparing their approaches to problem solving and critical analysis with those of other students or the teacher
Exploring	Students are encouraged to tackle new knowledge domains and problems on their own; the teacher stimulates intellectual curiosity and facilitates the discovery process

Building on this model, we offer this taxonomy of advertising education from least to most effective methodology. Each level is matched with its counterpart in the Cognitive Apprenticeship model.

1. Classroom lecture - Modeling
2. Lab / production experience - Coaching
3. Academic / Industry contests - Scaffolding
4. Internships - Articulating
5. Portfolio schools / Agency training programs - Reflecting
6. Juried Competitions - Exploring

Each level of this taxonomy has its own weakness; with the portfolio schools leaning too much toward the creative side, the agency programs teaching advertising only as it is practiced at their own agency and with the rest simply not being comprehensive enough. Burton (1955) stated, " Since advertising requires so many facets of knowledge, no one can ever tell in advance just which subject will ultimately prove most valuable to him. For this reason, a wide liberal arts background is desirable in addition to the specialized background." If this was true in 1955, how much more so now with the advent of digital, online, and social media coming to dominate the advertising landscape to the degree it has turned traditional ad media upside down. Kotler (2010) describes the evolution of marketing through three phases beginning with phase 1 being product-centric, phase 2 being consumer-oriented, and phase three being values-driven. According to Kotler the objectives of these three phases moved from selling products, to satisfying and retaining customers, to making the world a better place with accompanying technology. What began in the industrial revolution developed into information technology, which became today's new wave technology. New wave technology as defined by Kotler is that which enables connectivity and interactivity of individuals and groups and consists of 3 major forces; cheap computers and mobile devices, low-cost internet, and open source software. These evolutionary developments in media have removed much of the power from the hands of traditional advertisers and into the hands of the consumer. In the new era of Marketing 3.0, Kotler categorizes social media as either expressive, which allows individuals to impact marketing, or as collaborative media which allows users to work together to use, share, and develop software as new advertising media. Kotler remarks: (p. 8) "As social media becomes increasingly expressive, consumers will be able to increasingly influence other consumers with their opinions and experiences. The influence that corporate advertising has on shaping buying behavior will diminish accordingly."

Not only has the media technology reformatted marketing and advertising, but it has also motivated and inspired new creative breakthroughs. Berman (2007) cites the examples of Burger King's Subservient Chicken web site which reached more than 385 million hits and over twelve million unique visitors within one year of its launch. The site featured someone dressed up as a chicken standing in front of a webcam all day responding to online commands sent in from viewers as a promotion for Burger King's chicken sandwich. Another technology Berman references are adaptable TV commercials that can be customized digitally to be more relevant to an audience at a certain time, with the capability of being altered in a variety of ways without reshooting.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century The American Advertising Federation embarked upon a series of groundbreaking initiatives, which had the effect of helping to bridge the gap between the educational establishment and the industry practitioners in advertising. As early as 1906 the AAF had stated advertising education as one of the organization's purposes and they were one of the early proponents of standardized training for the advertising industry. (Richards & Ross, 2008). Among the milestones the AAF advanced were these:

> In 1958 established the Advertising Educational Foundation to elevate the quality of ad education and to better explain the field to the public.
> In 1973 created the National Student Advertising Competition and established an academic division of the national organization as well as a program to establish college chapters of the AAF
> In 1987 created the Distinguished Advertising Educator Award
> In 1997 instituted a Most Promising Minority Students program
> In 2005 extended the Student Addy Awards to the national level

In terms of providing a satisfying answer for the discrepancy between the classroom and the workplace the NASC has had the most profound effect, but taken in conjunction with the other AAF educational opportunities, the overall benefits are truly impressive for students seeking a future in advertising.

In discussing the NSAC it is helpful to consider the organizational principles utilized, the connections provided, the advantages offered, and the principles behind client-based projects. Organizationally, advertising education has always suffered from the diversity of its origins in multiple disciplines.

Organizational Principles

Stewart (1986), in calling for the development of advertising as its own philosophy and department within academe, stated that: "Advertising, when controlled by faculty in cognate disciplines, has not been able to rise above a level of understanding (and explanation) of anybody whose main intellectual interests are in other fields." His argument is that the historic location of advertising as a subset of either business or journalism has weakened the process of advertising education. Stewart was echoing the sentiments of Charles Sandage who, writing in *Advertising Age* in 1980, said: "We must come to recognize that advertising is becoming an intellectual discipline in its own right. And therefore, it should not be bound by the traditions of journalism or communication."

Connecting Education and Practice

Connectedness has long been understood and recognized as the model for modern ad agency operations and it has been a curiosity as to why that same approach has not been more fully implemented in the teaching and learning of advertising.

Smith (1956) recognized earlier that the team-problem approach of learning advertising had numerous benefits with its emphasis upon the role of the student in the educational process where the instructor acts as an advisor or a catalyst. "Under the team approach," says Smith, "the student assumes a different role. He brings to each meeting an awareness that his group will not make progress unless each member contributes his share."

The NSAC, since its inception in 1973, has taken this team-problem approach with national clients ranging from Toyota to Yahoo, where students work together bringing the skills of differing academic disciplines to bear on the problem at hand.

Wright and Steilen (1976), in discussing advertising education, wrote that:

Traditionally advertising education has looked at its own discipline only in terms of its own functional units. It has treated the functional areas – media, creativity, production, and research – as being independent and somewhat mutually exclusive. It has failed, in most cases to provide an effective linkage between these units.

One of the strongest aspects of client-based projects such as the NSAC is the value it provides for students to make connections between the functional areas of advertising. Nottke (1983), speaking for advertising practitioners, noted that "ideas are our business, whether they are related to advertising, product, packaging, promotion, or other areas…What we're looking for …is that the employee sees…the job in its broader perspective and is developing a take charge attitude."

Advantages of the NSAC Approach

The advantages offered by this more integrated approach to advertising has been found and validated by some of the research into advertising education. In 1989 the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Liberal Arts and Sciences Task Force administered a study to examine both the educators and the practitioners' perceptions of what makes a strong advertising program. On the seven issues examined relating to advertising curricula, accreditation, faculty diversity, need for specific education, students needs, and industry expectations the study revealed strong agreement on five of the six points studied. Both practitioners and faculty agreed that a student wanting to work in advertising should get a broad education, that a student from an accredited program would be preferred over one from an unaccredited program, that students from accredited programs are academically better prepared, that the masters degree in advertising is not increasingly important for entry-level positions, and they were in agreement that the statement, "Most entry-level jobs in advertising do not require specific training," was false. The only point of disagreement concerned whether the educational establishment was alert to the implications of changes in the structure and function of the advertising industry. Educators agreed that they were indeed aware, while the practitioners expressed skepticism about whether that was actually the state of affairs.

Obviously both the practitioner and the educator can see the advantages of taking this approach and the research bears out that assumption when both sides have been surveyed about the issue. Moore & Leckenby (1973), found disagreement among educators, practitioners, and students regarding the proper content, the value, and the aims of advertising in advertising education. Their study cited Zellner (1973) who stated that: "Advertising agencies and advertisers are finding that many of the college graduates entering our business are, in many cases not adequately prepared for a career in advertising." Interestingly, one of the few points of agreement in the Moore & Leckenby study about possibilities for improvement was the interchange between educators and practitioners. This was the same year the AAF began the National Student Advertising Competition which has since grown to become "arguably the premier student advertising competition in the United States, and the centerpiece of the AAF educational mission." (Richards & Ross, 2008)

Client Based Projects

Finally, it is useful to specify some of the guiding principles behind client-based projects and implementation of the same. Lopez & Lee (2005) developed five principles for the practice of client-based projects:

1. Select clients with care
2. Design projects of varying scope
3. Invest in advance planning
4. Manage and set high expectations
5. Provide periodic and productive feedback

Smith and Van Doren (2004) developed a reality-based learning method with criteria to help faculty determine the usefulness of learning activities as well as how to plan, implement, and evaluate those activities. The standards they employ are that:

1. The purpose of each activity is student learning
2. The student is co-responsible for learning in each activity
3. The activity draws on knowledge and skills beyond the classroom and discipline
4. The activity ensures transferability of learning from the activity to outside the classroom

Each of these principles and standards are inherent in the NSAC, which makes it a good fit to give students and educators a real-world experience, judged by business professionals, and providing a robust educational opportunity benefitting both communities.

Schibrowsky, Peltier and Boyd (2002) argue that professional student organizations, such as the AAF student chapters which compete in the NSAC, are a key mechanism for bridging the divide between the academic learning paradigm and the practical orientation of the business experience. They note that the combination of reflection and practice offered by the

programming and project-based initiatives of student organizations, is essential for developing problem-solving skills and for adapting to strategic and tactical initiatives.

A strong advantage of the NSAC is the fact of its rootedness in both academe and industry with shared oversight and governance by both parties. It is the best testing and proving ground to date where students may learn to practice the art and science of advertising with real clients on a national level and it is accessible for colleges and universities of any size who are able to facilitate a relationship with a local AAF chapter. Given the national scope of the AAF and their track record of 37 years of administering this and other advertising education initiatives, it is entirely within reach of a majority of US institutions of higher learning to participate.

In reviewing the history of advertising education it becomes clear that both educators and practitioners have misgivings about best practices for preparing the next generation of employees for the industry. While the process of educating students for a career in advertising has shifted and changed over the past century, the fact that advertising is a multi-faceted art and science has not changed. With the increasingly fragmented audiences of the post-mass media age has come the need for advertising practitioners to be well versed in the theory as well as the practice of new advertising forms. Client based projects such as the NSAC have proven to be an effective means of bridging the gap between the academy and the marketplace in connecting students with real-world experience prior to entering the job force.

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