

BRAVE NEW! WORLD



**ADVERTISING RETURNS
TO ITS [GRASS] ROOTS
AS NEW MEDIA
BOMBARDS CONSUMERS**





WORDS BY:

Lissa Poirot

DESIGN BY:

Susan Rae Stegall,
D/SR Design, LLC



Once upon a time, cable was a luxury and the majority of the country was tuned in to three big network television channels. Radio wasn't transmitted over satellites and computers.

Newspapers were trusted and timely ways of getting news. For advertising agencies, this led to success. With only so many ways to grab a person's attention, the bigger or longer the ad and the more money put into a commercial, the more likely you could snare an audience. As media grew, so did advertising budgets. It was the big boys that got noticed, and agencies pushed the envelope of creative to create sleek, stylized ads and commercials that generated buzz, mainly because the ads themselves were like art (think Absolut Vodka's artistic campaign, which went on to become a best-selling coffee table book).

But today, with hundreds of channels on the TV and radio, and hundreds of glossy monthly and weekly magazines on newsstands, a 60-second spot during "Grey's Anatomy" may get lost entirely, even if it is one of the most popular shows on TV. Harried and hurried consumers with no time to spare are using the Internet and digital recording devices like TIVO to help them shift through blogs and Web sites for daily news and watch their favorite programs without commercials at their own convenience. The ever-changing consumer is now bombarded with information, and it's this technology-driven consumer that is changing the face of advertising today.

"People are becoming more stimulated and there are so many ways to stimulate their involvement that you just can't be passive anymore," said Peter Krivkov, chief executive officer at Cramer-Krasselt, headquartered in Chicago with offices in the Southeast. "I think the media is fostering a consumer engagement. It's no longer 'sit back,' it's 'lean forward.' Things are much more mobile, more evolving, more visual, and they get a jerk reaction."

Over-stimulated is certainly a buzzword used to describe today's consumer. While watching TV, people are more apt to also be reading a magazine or surfing the Web. While reading a newspaper, the radio is often playing in the background. The next generation, deemed the Plugged-In Generation, spends the majority of its time text messaging friends while logged onto the Internet and listening to an iPod, doing a multitude of tasks at once while expecting immediate satisfaction and instantaneous information. But it's the successful agencies that relish the change.

"It is an opportunity," said Tony O'Haire, partner at Ames Scullin O'Haire Inc. in Atlanta. "There is an opportunity to reach young people that has never been there before. There is an opportunity to disseminate information almost instantaneously, which was never there before. It's given smart advertisers a great arsenal of ways to communicate in ways that did not exist before."



New Media

One of the newest ways to communicate is, of course, the Internet. Today's consumer spends an average 100 hours a month online, according to Nielsen/NetRatings. Without time to read a newspaper or catch the local news, Internet users have their news e-mailed directly to them. When planning for a night out, a couple of key strokes and up pops a list of the best new restaurants in their area, as reviewed and rated by their trusted peers. When a new mom's baby has a temperature, a quick online search can help her determine a course of medical action, even without consulting her doctor or pharmacist, because she has encountered online other moms who have been there.

"I think there is no question that the Internet is influencing society," said Anthony Baradat, president of Anthony Baradat & Associates, Miami, adding that the Internet has also become a very useful tool to agencies. "Some of the TV stations that we work with locally are offering short-form commercials, 10 to 15 seconds, that send viewers to the Web, where those actually interested in the product or service can view not so much a commercial but a long form of information that we have put together. You may not get as many impressions, but the impressions you are getting are much more qualified."

For some, the Internet has become a prime tool for reaching a consumer, such as the building and real estate industry. Future homeowners no longer have to spend hours cruising neighborhoods in search of the perfect home. These days, Web searches find homes based on a variety of features, including price, number of bedrooms and whether the lot is located on a cul-de-sac.

"A lot of the consumers' initial legwork or research is done through builder Web sites and community sites," said Amrah Boquist, vice president, accounts of Vergason, Sojourner & McWaters Inc. (VS&M), Winter Park, FL. "More and more builders are putting in Internet specialists that follow up on the leads, and more and more of their commercial leads are coming through the Web. So we are developing more and more programs that include that as one of the marketing elements." However, Boquist is quick to point out that real estate is still retail, and even if a consumer begins a search on the Internet, he will turn to bricks and mortar for the purchase. "The Internet is never going to be the sole means of communication, and we wouldn't recommend it to be. Instead, it is a tool to help you hit prior and new prospects and follow up your communication."

Indeed busy agencies are finding ways to incorporate the Internet into strategic campaigns by tying advertising into more traditional media, often gaining an audience that seeks out the product after being reached via the TV, radio or print ad. Cramer-Krasselt's television spots for CareerBuilder.com feature comical ads where a man is working, literally, with a bunch of monkeys. Using video footage

from outtakes, the company combined the live monkeys with Avatar technology to give them voices and put them online. By visiting CareerBuilder.com, consumers could then record a message in their own voice that appeared to be voiced by the monkey, dress the monkey to resemble a certain character — such as a sassy female chimp in a tiara or a chimp in a suit with a cigar — then e-mail the "Monkey Mail" to friends, family and co-workers.

"Over 112 million people used Monkey Mail last year. And the only way you could do that was by visiting CareerBuilder.com," Krivkov said. "We haven't limited ourselves to Internet advertising, we use it in a combination. TV is still a powerful tool. The issue is not 'old media versus new media.' The issue is how to combine all media."

Thinking Outside the Box

With the growth of digital avenues and consumer overload, it's no surprise that what's old is new again, and simple is better. Once deemed advertising for low-budget clients, outdoor advertising is experiencing a resurgence. Take a simple cartoon character from "Aqua Teen Hunger Force" and Boston felt it was under attack. The Cartoon Network billboards angered a city but garnered nationwide publicity, appearing in newspapers, discussed on morning radio programs and featured hourly on cable news networks.

"We see a lot more receptivity that outdoor advertising can be an effective medium for different clients, whereas just a few years ago it was used in the introduction of a new product or just to create some kind of broad-based awareness. It is seen as something that can be pretty effective in peaking the curiosity of people, and the objective of a lot of advertising these days is to get somebody talking about it or get someone interested enough to want to go find something out about it," O'Haire said.

Always a fan of outdoor advertising, O'Haire's work garnered awards from *AdWeek*. When Lake Lanier Islands, a lakeside resort 45 minutes north of Atlanta, wanted to sell more rooms, O'Haire ignored the traditional package special advertised in print media's travel section. Instead, he decided to appeal to commuters stuck in end-of-week traffic, enticing them to get away. Billboards featuring 3-D, moving pieces included a woman relaxing on a beach chair enjoying a cold drink, and a man swinging a golf club. The ads worked.

But traditional billboards on the side of the road aren't the only form of outdoor advertising. Public transportation is now space-for-let, and agencies like VS&M are placing full bus wraps to use all avenues of out-of-home advertising. "Mass transit, poster show-ins and last-of-availability permanent boards ... all of that is nothing new but it allows us to help our clients blitz the market with new campaigns. Human directionals have gotten really big. Most of our clients find it's very effective," Boquist said.

Still others have found a return to grassroots and avoid mass media altogether. "People aren't paying attention to it; there's no time," said Bernie Fitzgerald, president, Walz Tetrick Advertising & Public Relations, Lake Mary, FL. Instead Fitzgerald focuses his efforts on guerilla marketing campaigns that incorporate direct mail, in-store events with prizes, and community involvement. "I include what I call a community responsibility program. It's for that particular client to be responsible in the community but on a very local basis. Take some money, go find a very local, needy organization and help them. And in the process of doing that, promote yourself, and get something out of it," he said.

For Trustco Bank, Fitzgerald decided a \$20,000 budget would best be used to build a Habitat for Humanity home. Teaming with Miranda Homes



WALZ TETRICK

Left images courtesy of
Walz Tetrick Advertising &
Public Relations



AMES SCULLIN O'HAIRE INC.

Above and right images courtesy
of Ames Scullin O'Haire Inc.

**VERGASON SOJOURNER
& MCWATERS INC.**

Image courtesy of
Vergason, Sojourner
& McWaters Inc.



WHY BUY NOW? RealOpportunityCFL.com



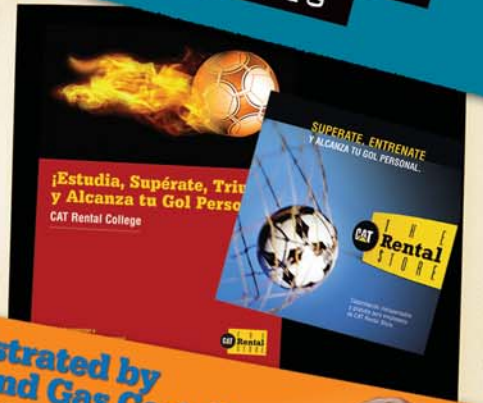
**ANTHONY BARADAT
& ASSOCIATES**

Right images courtesy
of Anthony Baradat
& Associates

CRAMER-KRASSETT




Above images courtesy of Cramer-Krasselt



Frustrated by Traffic and Gas Costs?
Take the Commuter Challenge
Thursday, May 17th
www.yridealone.com
1.800.234.RIDE

Join the COMMUTER SERVICES



and the Seminole County Habitat for Humanity, the home was built in 10 days, but the media blitz included local radio and TV stations and newspapers reporting daily on the progress. Yard signage prominently displayed Trustco's name and logo, interviews were arranged with bank staff working on the build, and information and links were available on Habitat's Web site. "They got more out of that than if they would have taken that \$20,000 and put it into TV. Not only did every station and print media cover the build, it portrayed the bank as a caring, community-oriented bank."

Fitzgerald, himself too busy for media with a young daughter occupying the little free time he gets each day, also discovered inspiration at his daughter's church daycare. The popular church produces a four-color, quarterly magazine on a Web press for 10,000 subscribers. Not a typical church publication, the magazine includes travel and celebrities, most recently PGA Master's winner Zac Johnson.

"We put a full-page ad for Renaissance Sea World Resorts in for \$1,300. We just reached 10,000 people with an average income of \$150,000 and up. And there's almost a little over-the-shoulder endorsement by this very popular church. They are saying, 'This is a good resort, go there,' just because the ad is in their publication. Being a quarterly, the magazine sits in the house and it gets passed along. We spent midget money to reach a tremendous audience," he said.

The Future is Now

As consumers change, one thing remains certain: Clients expect a return on investment (ROI). While creating glamorous and award-winning campaigns is exciting to the agency and staff, if it doesn't bring consumers and earnings to the client, the agency will lose as well. Creative advertising in today's world is no longer artwork, but instead advertising that sells.

"There are a lot of agencies doing good work, doing good creative, buying media in a decent way. But the important thing is to sit down and figure out a strategy that will make that customer money, not just do communications for the sake of doing communications. That's where I think a lot of agencies miss it. They are too interested in what award they are going to win or how cool something is going to be for their own benefit, versus how is this going to improve the life of the customer and solve the problems that keep them awake at night," Fitzgerald said. "Our philosophy is do whatever we have to help them make money, be selfless."

Added Baradat, "I was always amazed by the fact that a client's advertising budget in the traditional advertising agency environment was about 80 percent media and 25 percent production, services, etc. I always felt that the agency's role was to maximize the client's budget and do the best thing for ROI. When I started the agency back in 1994, we created what we called the "Ugly Baby Postcard" that read, "If you want beautiful ads, hire someone else." When you turned it over it said that our philosophy is about marketing not Monet, it's about creating ads that work for our clients, not works of art. At that time, that was a unique philosophy. Nowadays it's funny to see how larger agencies have embraced it. It's what clients wanted to hear all along." ■

WRITER:
LISSA POIROT is an award-winning freelance writer and editor whose work has appeared in national publications like *travelgirl*, *Modern Bride*, *Vegetarian Times*, *Arthritis Today* and *Pregnancy* magazines, as well as Atlanta-area publications such as *Georgia Trend*, *Points North* and *Lifestyles Magazine*. Graduating from the ultra-creative Emerson College in Boston in the mid-90s, Poirot spent 10 years working on staff at major magazines and book publishing houses. Now a full-time freelance writer, Poirot's focus continues to be magazines, but she also works on advertising literature, company brochures, Web sites and books. Visit her Web site at www.lissapoirot.com or e-mail: lissapoirot@yahoo.com.

DESIGNER:
SUSAN RAE STEGALL is the owner and creative director of D/SR Design LLC in Nashville, TN. She is a 17-year veteran of the design industry, and has won numerous local, regional and national ADDY awards. Her creativity and unique style has attracted accounts from across the United States, with clients ranging from local start-ups to large, multinational corporations. She has a B.S. in Graphic Design from Samford University and this is her first layout with *Create Magazine*. See more of her work at www.dsrdesign.com.