

Judge Shell by actions not words

I read with interest your editorial about the ethical dilemmas facing multinationals and the reference in particular to Shell's recent public relations disasters. You say that "Shell has apparently learned its lesson". I beg to differ.

My claim against Shell UK in respect of the Smart loyalty scheme is set down for a three week High Court trial in June.

I invite *Marketing Week* to attend the trial. You will then be able to make an informed assessment of Shell's ethical conduct after sensational evidence is put into the public domain.

Don Marketing, the agency I founded, has successfully sued Shell three times in recent years for allegedly stealing business ideas that we put to the company in the strictest confidence. Shell settled out of court each time.

During the current litigation, Shell has employed undercover investigators who have used outright deception in the course of their activ-

ities. I have a letter from Shell's legal director, Richard Wiseman, admitting Shell's association with the covert activities (copy available on request).

I would respectfully recommend that you wait for the emergence of evidence in the coming trial before making further comments about Shell's reformed ethical conduct. We must judge Shell by its deeds, not by its words.

John Donovan
Founder of Don Marketing UK
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk

Feline viewing motivates life

Judging by the quality of programmes currently broadcast, one can be forgiven for thinking TV producers have inadvertently based their programme selections on feline viewing data. Sat on my viewing couch over the past few months I too have found myself shrieking, hissing and arching my back before fleeing the room, much to the disgust of my square-eyed canine friend. Perhaps I should buy a gerbil, a hamster and

a goldfish to extract real value from my TV licence.

Thank you Iain Murray, your article has finally given me the courage to throw out my velcro-knickers, liberate myself from my couch and TV and to get a life. I am now ready to build my dream house, landscape my garden and spend my weekends redecorating my friends' rooms, after I get back from my solo-around-the-world skateboard tour (terrestrial and satellite networks are currently bidding for the rights)... Who needs TV!

Barbara Urquat
Linlithgow
West Lothian

Marketers must blend expertise

Your Special Report on multidisciplinary agencies "Name dropping" (MW February 11) raised some valuable points but missed others.

As a founder director of an agency that has been fully integrated for over five years, I take exception to Matthew Hooper's comment "other agencies are just catching up", this is not a new phenomenon.

As sales promotion and direct marketing evolved, it was a logical step to house them under the same roof. There is little need for fashionable jargon such as "lateral marketing" when communicating this to clients. There are too many buzzwords polluting the market today.

I agree with Hooper that it also helps the client to pay its agency through fees rather than commission. By billing a fee for a "total service" you avoid becoming a slave to any one discipline. This is just one of the practices supporting our policy of "clear thinking", which allows us to determine the combination of marketing disciplines needed to meet our clients' objectives.

Clearly, the future for agencies lies in objective marketing consultancy. Why is it then that industry regulatory bodies have not yet recognised the way we are developing? I have five keen recruits who I am happy to train, but which diploma comes first?

I wish the Institute of Sales Promotion and the Institute of Direct Marketing would take a leaf out of our book and start combining their expertise to provide the new generation of marketing professionals with the right training.

Andrew Watts
Director
KHWS
London W1

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The fate of our 'flexible friend'

Hardly a week goes by without some announcement in the marketing press that Bank X or Insurance Company Y is to invest more in its brand. While we must applaud their pluck, the truth is that developing financial services brands is very difficult and few have succeeded. This makes the fate of poor "Access" all the more difficult to comprehend.

Access was the response by a consortium of leading high street banks to Barclays Bank's Barclaycard. Access received fairly consistent support over the years (the "flexible friend" theme) and in time acquired that rarest of commodities, a likeable brand personality.

When the banks decided they would do better with their own credit cards, Access was, quite literally, killed off - rounded on, like Caesar, by its former friends.

The tide of public sentiment is running against traditional suppliers of financial services, and how you could do with friendly Access today.

However, even among Caesar's assassins there were honourable men. In the Access case there is little evidence that the conspirators were motivated by anything but self interest; they know that, and the public knows it too.

It is hardly surprising then that attempts to create financial services brands are met with healthy scepticism.

Mack Bottle
West Byfleet
Surrey

Set Eurostar on the right track

I was the public affairs director in charge of public relations for European Passenger Services, the UK company that ran Eurostar with SNCF French railways and SNCB Belgian railways prior to the takeover by London & Continental Railways.

As a matter of record, the first Eurostar in public service ran in November 1994 and the L&CR team, of which Mark Furlong was a part, first arrived in March 1996 and formally took over in June of that year.

I cannot see how Mark can therefore have been "launch marketing director" as described in your recent articles.

Peter Kendall,
London SE11

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