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Identifying Global and Culture-Specific Dimensions of Humor in Advertising: A Multinational Analysis

Humor is a commonly used communication tool in advertising in the United States, but U.S. marketers know little about its use and effectiveness in foreign markets. Such limited knowledge hinders international managers' ability to determine which aspects of humorous communications are likely to be amenable to global standardization and which should be adapted to local expectations. The authors examine the content of humorous television advertising from four national cultures: Korea, Germany, Thailand, and the United States. Findings indicate that humorous communications from such diverse national cultures share certain universal cognitive structures underlying the message. However, the specific content of humorous advertising is likely to be variable across national cultures along major normative dimensions such as collectivism-individualism.

HUMOR is one of the most widely employed message techniques in modern American advertising. Indeed, several of the most memorable American television advertising campaigns (e.g., "Bud Light" and "Joe Isuzu") have incorporated humor as a central component of their communication approach. Given the widespread use of humor by the advertising industry, academic researchers in the United States have sought to identify potential benefits (e.g., reduced

counterargumentation and enhanced affect toward the ad and brand; Scott, Klein, and Bryant 1990) as well as potential problems (e.g., impaired recall; Gelb and Zinkhan 1986) associated with the use of humor in advertising.

Though preliminary evidence suggests that humorous advertising can be effective in foreign markets (cf. Weinberger and Spotts 1989), few studies have focused on ways in which humorous content varies across national cultures. Because information is limited, it is unclear which aspects of humorous television advertising, if any, can be globally standardized and which should be adapted to match local expectations. Seeking commonalities as well as differences, we attempt to identify dimensions in humorous television advertising that could be global as well as those that are likely to vary across nations by examining advertising from (former West) Germany, Thailand, South Korea (hereafter referred to as Korea), and the United States. We begin by reviewing relevant research from the domestic and international advertising streams.

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The Advertising Research Stream on Humor

Domestic Research

Communication managers in the United States have generally assumed that humor enhances advertising's effectiveness (Madden and Weinberger 1984). To determine whether this assumption is true and, if so, why, advertising research in the U.S. has centered on three topics: (1) analysis of humor effects on recall, evaluation, and purchase intention (cf. Zhang and Zinkhan 1991), (2) study of mediating factors such as repetition of the ad (Gelb and Zinkhan 1985), social setting in which the ad is viewed or heard (Zinkhan and Gelb 1990), and prior attitude toward the brand (Chattopadhyay and Basu 1989), and (3) examination of whether humor influences consumers more through cognitive processes such as enhanced recall (Zhang and Zinkhan 1991) and reduced counterargumentation (Gelb and Zinkhan 1986) or through affective mechanisms such as transfer of liking for the ad to the brand (Aaker, Stayman, and Hagerty 1986; Zinkhan and Gelb 1990).

One overall conclusion drawn from these streams is that humor is more likely to enhance recall, evaluation, and purchase intention when the humorous message coincides with ad objectives, is well-integrated with those objectives, and is viewed as appropriate for the product category. Under such circumstances, humorous advertising is more likely to "secure audience attention, increase memorability, overcome sales resistance, and enhance message persuasiveness" (Scott, Klein, and Bryant 1990, p. 498; see also Krishnan and Chakravarti 1990).

Cross-National Research

Several cross-national studies of international advertising in general have been undertaken. For example, researchers have examined print and television advertising from various national markets for similarities and differences in (1) levels and types of information (Dowling 1980; Hong, Muderrisoglu, and Zinkhan 1987; Madden, Caballero, and Matsukubo 1986), (2) reflection of cultural attitudes toward consumption (Mueller 1987; Tse, Belk, and Zhou 1989), and (3) portrayal of sex roles (Gilly 1988). With the exception of Tse, Belk and Zhou (1989), whose sample did not include U.S. ads, these researchers found significant differences between U.S. and foreign advertising on key variables of interest.

Other researchers have documented ways in which multinational firms attempt to globally standardize advertising. For instance, Peebles, Ryans, and Vernon (1978) distinguish between firms' use of "prototype" standardization (same ad with only translation and

necessary idiomatic changes) and "pattern" standardization in which the overall campaign is designed (e.g., theme) for application in several national markets with some adaptation of content and execution (Walters 1986). Killough (1978) differentiates between "buying proposals" that state the basic offer and "creative presentations" that package the buying proposal. On the basis of reports from senior executives involved in more than 120 multinational campaigns, Killough concludes that buying proposals can be used successfully across cultures without modification more often than creative presentations, which tend to interact with local cultural factors (see also Onkvisit and Shaw 1987).

Though such issues have been examined in a cross-national context, only one study appears to have looked at the use of humor in advertising within other national markets. Comparing television advertising in the U.S. and the U.K., Weinberger and Spotts (1989, p. 39) report that a significantly greater percentage of ads in the U.K. (35.5% vs. 24.4%) were characterized by humorous intent. In both countries, humor was employed most often with "low involvement/feeling products" and least often with "high involvement/feeling" products. Knowledge of such differences is clearly important. However, another dimension yet to be examined may serve as a construct common to humorous advertising in multiple national markets. That dimension is the potential similarity in the cognitive structures underlying humorous television advertising from around the world.

Meyers-Levy and Tybout (1989) demonstrate the usefulness of the cognitive structure approach in a domestic consumer behavior context. They examined the evaluative effects of moderate differences or "incongruities" between new product information and information for the overall product category cued from memory. They report that moderate incongruity from expectations produced more favorable evaluations of new product information than did congruity or extreme incongruity. As they note, "the very process of resolving the incongruity is thought to be rewarding and thus may contribute to the resulting positive affect" (p. 40; see also Mandler 1982).

Cognitive principles similar to those described by Meyers-Levy and Tybout seem likely to be involved in the structures and processing of humorous advertisements. More specifically, Meyers-Levy and Tybout's results appear to parallel those that would be predicted by theories from psychology and linguistics. These theories specify incongruity and incongruity resolution as central to generating the positive affect that often accompanies humor (cf. Herzog and Larwin 1988). For example, Raskin's (1985, p. 111) theory of humor argues that jokes often produce a mirthful response by including cognitive, structural contrasts between expected and unexpected situations (e.g., in

the Bud Light beer commercial, the character arriving with a flashlight versus the other character exclaiming, "I said Bud Light!").

Structural analysis of humorous advertising from several national cultures could help determine whether cognitive principles such as those hypothesized by Raskin are global or culture-specific. To explore potential applications of these theories to cross-national analysis of humorous advertising, we now turn to the psychological and linguistic literature on humor.

Psychological and Linguistic Perspectives on Humor

A major school of humor has focused on the cognitive structures and processing pathways that are central to a humorous response (Herzog and Larwin 1988). Key to such theories is the notion of incongruity or deviation from expectations. One group of theorists argues that incongruity is a necessary and sufficient condition to produce humor (Suls 1983). In line with this position, Nerhardt (1970) found that the greater the unexpected deviation from normally expected occurrences, the greater the humor response. A second group hypothesizes that incongruity alone is not always sufficient to produce a humor response. Rather, "according to this account, humor results when incongruity is resolved: that is, the punch line is seen to make sense at some level with the earlier information in the joke" (Suls 1983, p. 42). A key tenet of this school is that humor is a form of problem solving, as incongruity without resolution leaves listeners confused or frustrated because they do not "get the joke."

Not all problem solving, however, is humorous. Incongruity-resolution theorists suggest that a humorous response depends on (1) rapid resolution of the incongruity, (2) a "playful" context, that is, with cues signifying that the information is not to be taken seriously, and (3) an appropriate mood for the listener (Suls 1983). Support for this position has been provided by several studies of different humorous stimuli (cf. Herzog and Larwin 1988; Oppliger and Sherblom 1988; Wicker et al. 1981). Suls (1983) concludes that both incongruity and incongruity-resolution styles of humor exist, but that the latter predominates, particularly for verbal humor. In addition, even researchers who advocate greater integration of motivational and cognitive models of humor acknowledge a central role for incongruity theory within their proposed framework (cf. Kuhlman 1985).

From a linguistics perspective, Raskin (1985) suggests a script-based semantic theory, "a linguistic theory which interposes a cognitive step in the perception of what's funny" (MacHovec 1988, p. 92). This theory states that a verbal or written communication is considered a joke when the "text . . . is compatible

fully with two distinct scripts and the two scripts are opposite in certain definite ways such as good-bad, sex-no sex, or real-unreal." The third element, the punchline, "switches the listener from one script to another creating the joke" (Raskin 1985, p. 34-35). More often than not, according to Raskin, the humorous scripts will be opposite in terms of a "real" and an "unreal" situation. For example, consider the following joke (Raskin 1985, p. 106).

An English bishop received the following note from the vicar of a village in his diocese: "My lord, I regret to inform you of my wife's death. Can you possibly send me a substitute for the weekend?"

Here, the joke initially evokes the real situation of a vicar wanting a substitute vicar because his wife has just died. The unreal script involves a vicar wanting a substitute wife. In addition, there is a playful oppositeness in the two scripts on which the humor turns. That opposition involves the contrast between the expected "piousness" of a religious figure and the unexpected implied sexual interaction between the vicar and his "substitute" wife. Following the incongruity-resolution model, one can hypothesize that the incongruity of a vicar seeking a substitute "wife" is resolved with the realization that the vicar undoubtedly means one thing but has inadvertently implied another.

According to Raskin, contrasts such as these can be more finely categorized as (1) actual/existing and nonactual/nonexisting, (2) normal/expected and abnormal/unexpected, and (3) possible/plausible and fully/partially impossible or much less plausible. For the first subtype, consider the preceding joke. Here, it is actually the case that the vicar wants a substitute for himself, but it is not actually the case that the vicar wants a substitute for his wife. Thus the humorous contrast involves actual versus nonactual. An example of an expected/unexpected contrast is seen in the following joke.

A doctor tells a man, "Your wife must have absolute rest. Here is a sleeping tablet." "When do I give it to her?", the man asks. "You don't," explains the doctor. "you take it yourself."

In this case, the contrast involves the normal or expected action of a doctor prescribing medication for an ill person versus the abnormal or unexpected prescription for the healthy but talkative spouse. Playfulness in the joke is captured in the contrast between the expected care-giver role and the unexpected irritation-inducing role of the spouse.

The third contrast specified by Raskin involves a possible or plausible versus an impossible or much less plausible situation. For example (p. 47):

Samson was so strong, he could lift himself by his hair three feet off the ground.

Though it seems likely that Samson was strong enough to lift another person off the ground, it would be impossible for him to lift himself off the ground.

Raskin's theory can be interpreted within the incongruity-resolution school of humor. First, as with incongruity-resolution theory, Raskin's theory posits a switch from "bona-fide" communication to a playful, nonthreatening mode (p. 140). Incongruity is then established by the presence of two partially or fully contrasting scripts that are compatible with the text, as discussed previously (i.e., possible/impossible, etc.). Finally, a "trigger, obvious or implied" (e.g., a punchline), helps the listener or reader resolve the incongruity by fully realizing the oppositeness of the situation. Thus, from the incongruity-resolution school, Raskin's theory can be supplemented with the hypothesis that the sudden realization of oppositeness quickly reduces the listener's felt tension and decreases "arousal back to base-line," creating pleasure in the process (Suls 1983, p. 44).

Raskin's script-based humor theory along with incongruity and incongruity-resolution theories could prove helpful to understanding cognitive structures that may characterize humorous advertising around the world. Though developed for verbal humor, Raskin's script-based semantic theory may well predict the types of incongruent contrasts one is likely to find in humorous advertising, whether verbal or visual.

Application of Humor Theory in a Cross-National Context

Cognitive factors underlying humorous communication in the U.S. may also be found in humorous advertising from other national markets. For example, cross-cultural researchers report evidence suggesting universal use of cognitive categories and summary representations for storage and application of the continuous stream of information to which human beings are exposed (e.g., Pick 1980; Rosch 1977). Global use of such structures supports a central assumption of the incongruity school of humor—that people develop expectations based on category norms that are capable of being violated, sometimes in a humorous fashion.

Within the humor stream itself, several scholars conclude that humor is indeed universal and that incongruity is one of its central cognitive-structural principles. Fry (1987, p. 68) notes that humor was a part of life in dynastic Egypt and that "contemporary records in the Old Testament speak of laughter, joy, and amusement." As Berger (1987, p. 6) states:

Humor is . . . all pervasive; we don't know of any culture where people don't have a sense of humor, and in contemporary societies, it is found everywhere—in film, on television, in books and newspapers, in our conversations, and in graffiti.

Similarly, anthropologists have found that "joking relationships" involving "joking, teasing, banter, ridicule, insult, horseplay, usually, but not always, involving an audience" are present in both traditional and more industrialized societies (Apte 1983, p. 185). From the Amba people of southern Africa (Apte 1983) to machine operators in the United States (Fine 1983), such joking relationships appear to be commonplace. Joking behavior has even been observed in primates (Fry 1987).

Furthermore, "incongruent, outrageous or deviant manifestations of personalities, behavior and so forth, are also important in such joking activities" (Apte 1983, p. 186). For example, evidence for the universal importance of incongruity in humor is found in "contrary behavior" (e.g., "sitting on animals backwards while riding"), which has been reported to be a major component of ritual humor among American Indians, tribespeople in Africa, and villagers in India (Apte 1983, p. 190). Suls (1983) takes the argument a step further when he states that most humor around the world has an incongruity-resolution structure. As evidence, he cites Shultz (1972), who examined verbal humor in the folklore literature of non-Western societies, and reports (p. 47):

The presence of incongruity and resolution features was found in the vast majority of materials (for example, of 242 Chinese jokes examined, 210 possessed incongruity and resolution).

Hypotheses 1 and 2: Global Principles

The foregoing review suggests that humor is universal. Furthermore, the cognitive-structural characteristic, incongruity, appears likely to be present in much of the humor around the world. Hence, incongruity may well be a major global component of humorous advertising. Though Raskin's (1985) theory does not specify whether the frequencies of his three hypothesized contrasts vary by national culture (i.e., whether culture A's humor will emphasize expected/unexpected contrasts whereas culture B's will emphasize real/unreal), it appears to predict that the contrasts will be discernible in a given national culture's humor in some proportion. On the basis of this theory, we propose our first hypothesis.

H₁: Most television advertising from diverse national markets in which humor is intended exhibits incongruent contrasts.

In addition to establishing the presence of incongruity in humorous advertising, a goal of our study is to identify specific types of contrasts. If these contrasts can be identified, researchers and practitioners will better understand which aspects of the ad can be standardized and how such standardization can occur.

For example, finding that none of the humorous ads from several national markets employ Raskin's possible/impossible contrast would suggest that this form of incongruity may not work well in global advertising campaigns that intend to be humorous. In contrast, if Raskin's theory is to be relevant to international advertisers, one or more of the contrasts it predicts (i.e., actual/nonactual, expected/unexpected, and possible/impossible) should be identifiable in substantial numbers in television advertising from several diverse national markets. Our second hypothesis proposes that the three specific contrasts predicted by Raskin are identifiable in television advertising from different markets.

H₂: Across diverse national markets, three specific types of contrasts (actual/not actual, expected/unexpected, and possible/impossible) are identifiable in television advertising that is intended to be humorous.

Though we expect national markets to differ in the proportion of humor ads that stress one or more of the three types of contrasts, there is little prior theory on which to base any related predictions. Therefore, our investigation of differences in the relative use of the specific contrasts is exploratory.

Hypotheses 3 and 4: Culture-Specific Differences

As McCracken (1986, p. 75) notes, "advertising is a conduit through which meaning constantly pours from the culturally constituted world to consumer goods." As a result, an important goal of advertising is to bring the cultural world and the good together in a "special harmony" that enables the viewer to see "this similarity and effect the transfer of meaningful properties" (McCracken 1986, p. 75). Because the "content of ads mirrors a society" (Tse, Belk, and Zhou 1989), one would expect actual message content (versus the underlying structure) to reflect the culture in which it appears. Hence, despite possible similarities in humorous structures and principles across national cultures, significant differences seem likely to be found in the situations, settings, and themes used to convey humor. Furthermore, such differences seem likely to reflect major national culture distinctions such as those documented both in previous advertising research (e.g., Gilly 1988; Mueller 1987; Tse, Belk, and Zhou 1989) and nonadvertising research (e.g., Hofstede 1983).

Hofstede (1983), for example, found that national cultures could be differentiated on several dimensions. Two of the dimensions he identified were "individualism-collectivism" and "power distance." Looking at the first dimension, Triandis et al. (1988) note that subordination of individual goals to the goals of a few large in-groups is central to collectivist cul-

tures. Individualist cultures, in contrast, tend to be characterized by multiple in-groups that are smaller and less demanding of their members. Reflecting these differences, intended humor ads from cultures high in collectivism (e.g., Thailand and Korea) should involve larger groups of relatively close associates whereas those from cultures low in collectivism (e.g., Germany and the U.S.) should involve smaller groups or no group at all. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H₃: The number of individuals or characters playing major roles in ads in which humor is intended is greater in high collectivism (low individualism) cultures than in low collectivism (high individualism) cultures.

Hofstede's second dimension, power distance, involves the extent to which power within a national culture is unequally distributed (Ronen 1986). National cultures high on power distance tend to be hierarchic in their interpersonal relationships and decision making whereas those low on power distance tend to be more egalitarian. Advertising should differ on this dimension, with high power distance cultures exhibiting more relationships between characters that are unequal and low power distance cultures exhibiting more relationships that are equal. Our fourth hypothesis follows.

H₄: Relationships between central characters in ads in which humor is intended are more often unequal in high power distance cultures than in low power distance cultures, in which these relationships are more often equal.

Method

Sampling National Cultures

To improve reliability while enhancing generalizability, we chose two sets of countries that had similar characteristics within each set but differed between sets on several important dimensions. The United States and Germany made up the first set. These nations are similar inasmuch as both are Western, developed nations having high scores on Hofstede's (1983) individualism-collectivism dimension (i.e., low on collectivism) and low scores on the power distance dimension (see Table 1). The second set, Korea and Thailand, are similar to each other yet different from the first set inasmuch as both are Asian, rapidly developing nations having high scores on collectivism and high scores on power distance. Though hypothesized cognitive-structure principles (H₁ and H₂) were predicted to hold across all four nations, the content of humorous advertising was expected to differ between the matched pairs of nations on Hofstede's individualism and power distance dimensions (H₃ and H₄).

TABLE 1
Scores and Ranks of Countries on Collectivism and Power Distance Dimensions^a

	Power Distance		Individualism/Collectivism	
	Score	Rank ^b	Score	Rank
United States	40	16	91	50
Germany	35	10	67	36
Thailand	64	31	20	13
Korea	60	27	18	11

^aBased on Hofstede (1983).

^bRank is based on 50 countries in sample; for example, U.S. is 16th from the lowest on power distance and Thailand is 31st from the lowest. Germany is 6th highest on individualism but only 14th on collectivism whereas Korea is the 11th highest on individualism but 39th from the lowest on collectivism.

Sampling Ads Within Country

Randomized cluster samples of national brand TV ads shown on major networks in each country were collected. Local advertising and duplications of national brand ads were eliminated along with ads that contained more than 50% sales promotion information (e.g., a tie-in promotional ad for Pepsi with a local supermarket). Ads for the same brand that differed in 50% or more of the content remained in the sample. As other sampling plan details varied slightly among countries, we describe each plan.

Sampling in the U.S. was conducted over three days in early November 1990. On each day (randomly chosen), one of the three major privately owned national networks (randomly assigned to each day) was recorded (6 a.m. to midnight). All ads were then logged. We obtained a total of 497 unduplicated ads for national brands from the three major American networks. In Thailand and Korea, a similar procedure was followed. However, in those countries, the tapes and master lists of cluster-sampled ads (three days from three stations with days randomly selected) were obtained from market research firms that monitored TV and radio advertising. Also in both countries, one or more government-owned stations that carried ads for national brands were included. In Thailand, ads were recorded during April 1990, resulting in 351 unduplicated ads. In Korea, recording was done during February 1990, resulting in 520 unduplicated ads.

Finally, in Germany, the two major national television channels are strongly regulated by the government (Clemens 1987). As a result, advertising on these channels is very limited in terms of frequency and content. With the advent of cable television, however, German viewers are now exposed to a wider variety of programming options and advertising (Clemens 1987). Therefore, to provide a representative sample of German advertising, three privately owned and operated channels that carry ads for national brands were

sampled over a three-day period during October 1990. As in the United States, a log of all advertising was created. Duplicates, promotional ads, and local brand ads were eliminated, leaving a total of 244 ads for analysis.

Humorous Ad Identification

Three native, bilingual coders in Germany and four in each of the other countries were instructed in their own language and in English on how to rate ads in terms of humor. Following Weinberger and Spotts (1989, p. 40), we did not ask judges to determine whether they personally felt the ad was humorous; instead, the humorous intent of the ad was coded in an effort to reduce subjectivity. In other words, because certain ads seem likely to appeal more to specific segments of the culture than to others, coders did not judge how funny each ad was, but only whether humor was intended.

An ad was assumed to contain intended humor when at least three coders agreed. In all countries, interjudge agreement (calculated as the percentage of three or more agreements that humor either was or was not intended) exceeded 80% (cf. Sujan 1985). In the U.S., 80 ads were judged by three of four coders to contain intended humor. In Germany 48 ads and in both Thailand and Korea 51 ads were judged by three or more coders to contain intended humor. To reduce the subsequent in-depth coding task for the U.S. sample, only ads on which all four coders agreed were used, resulting in 52 ads for analysis.

In-Depth Coding Procedures

Three new native coders used a standard coding form to evaluate intended humor ads in each country. All coders received extensive training prior to the actual coding task. Much of this training was conducted in the coders' native languages, though foreign researchers were usually present. Originally written in English, coding forms were subsequently double back-translated to assure maximal equivalency, except in Germany where the coders' high English proficiency allowed use of the original forms. Each intended humor ad was viewed two to three times and coders then independently evaluated the ad. Subsequent viewing was allowed when coders had questions about the ad's content, style, or some other aspect. The coding forms took 10 to 15 minutes to complete for each ad. For all items in all country samples, interjudge agreement exceeded 85%. Disagreements were resolved among the coders without the involvement of the investigators beyond simple clarification of coding guidelines.

Measures

First, coders were asked to indicate (yes/no) whether the ad contained any of the contrasts such as those

specified by Raskin (1985)—actual/nonactual, expected/unexpected, or possible/fully or partially impossible. Second, coders were asked to determine which specific contrasts were present in the ad. In addition, when more than one contrast was identified in the ad, coders were asked to determine which contrast was most emphasized (i.e., the main type). These measures were used to evaluate the study's two global hypotheses (H₁ and H₂).

Next, coders were asked to determine how many people or characters were featured in the ad. To be included, characters had to be actively involved in the ad's plot. For example, if the story was set in a supermarket checkout stand and involved interaction between the shopper and the checker, with other individuals walking by in the background but not interacting with the main characters, the coders would indicate that two characters were featured in the ad. On the basis of Triandis et al.'s (1988, p. 325) statement that "the emphasis is usually on people more than on task in collectivist cultures; and the reverse happens in individualist cultures," we operationalized H₃ by assuming that a larger proportion of ads in collectivist cultures (Korea and Thailand) would feature three or more characters whereas a larger proportion in individualist cultures (U.S. and Germany) would feature two or fewer characters.

Finally, coders indicated whether the people or characters featured in the ad were portrayed as having generally equal or unequal status. This variable was defined to include explicit and/or implicit differences between two or more individuals or characters in terms of age, wealth, education, power, and general knowledge. In ads featuring one individual or character, status differences between individuals or characters were assumed to be absent. Following Hofstede (1983), we operationalized H₄ by predicting that cultures with high power distance scores (Korea and Thailand) would have a larger proportion of humorous ads containing individuals of unequal status than cultures with low power distance scores (U.S. and Germany), which would have a larger proportion of humorous ads containing individuals of equal status.

Results

Our study strongly supports both H₁ and H₂ on the global presence of incongruent contrasts in humorous television advertising. In all four countries, a majority of the humorous television ads contained one or more incongruent contrasts such as those described in Raskin's (1985) theory. As shown in Table 2, higher proportions of ads with contrasts were found in Germany (92%) and Thailand (82%) than in the United States (69%) and Korea (57%). Chi square tests for differences in the proportions of ads with any one of the

TABLE 2
Number of Ads With Any of Three Contrasts by Country

	U.S.	Germany	Thailand	Korea
Any of Three Contrasts Present^a				
Number	36	44	42	29
Percent ^b	69	92	82	57
No Contrast Present				
Number	16	4	9	22
Percent	31	8	18	43
Total	52	48	51	51

^aAds may have more than one contrast.

^bPercentages rounded.

TABLE 3
Types of Humor Contrasts by Country

	U.S.	Germany	Thailand	Korea
Actual/Nonactual^a				
Number	4	8	4	4
Percent ^b	7	14	8	12
Expected/Unexpected				
Number	26	40	28	16
Percent	48	71	56	48
Possible/Impossible				
Number	24	8	18	13
Percent	44	14	36	39
Total Number of Contrasts	54	56	50	33

^aAds may have more than one type of contrast.

^bPercentages rounded.

three contrasts are significant ($p < .05$) for three of six paired nation comparisons: United States versus Korea, Germany versus Thailand, and Korea versus Thailand. Despite such differences, the fact that almost 60% of the humorous ads in all four nations contain contrasts such as those specified by Raskin suggests that incongruent cognitive structures may be present globally in a majority of television ads that are intended to be humorous.

In support of H₂, the specific types of contrasts theorized by Raskin were identified in all four countries (see Table 3). Interestingly, there is relatively little variation in the proportions of contrast types across national cultures. For example, in all four country samples, 15% or fewer of the contrasts were found to be actual/nonactual. Though in the German sample 70% of contrasts were expected/unexpected, the percentages of expected/unexpected and possible/impossible were fairly consistent and evenly divided across the three other country samples. Thus, advertising in which humor is intended appears to feature greater proportions of certain types of contrasts. Furthermore, these proportions may be relatively consistent across national cultures, though some variation undoubtedly is present.

Patterns similar to those just discussed emerge when

one looks at the main type of contrast in ads with one or more contrasts (see Table 4). First, very few actual/nonactual contrasts were identified as the main contrast type in each country (i.e., fewer than 10%). Second, distributions of the main types of humor contrast in the U.S., Thai, and Korean ads do not vary significantly ($p > .96$). However, overall, the distribution of the main type of contrast across all four country samples is not independent of country ($\chi^2 [6] = 21.61, p < .001$). This result appears to be due to the fact that substantially more expected/unexpected contrasts (84.1%) constituted the main type of contrast featured in the German ads. There is a fairly even split between expected/unexpected and possible/impossible main contrasts in the three other national culture samples.

In addition to supporting H_1 and H_2 , our findings provide evidence on behalf of H_3 . As seen in Table 5, the two nations high on Hofstede's collectivism dimension (Korea and Thailand) had a substantial number of humorous ads with three or more central characters whereas the two that were low (U.S. and Germany) had substantially fewer ads with three or more characters. Within each matched country sample, there was no significant difference between the proportion of ads with three or more and the propor-

tion with two or fewer characters (for Korea and Thailand, $p > .17$; for Germany and the U.S., $p > .82$). Combining the results for Korea and Thailand, we see that 75% of the sampled ads contained three or more characters and 25% contained two or fewer. In contrast, only 26% of the ads in the combined sample for Germany and the U.S. had three or more characters and 74% had two or fewer. Chi square analysis indicates that the relationship between differences in the numbers of characters and the matched country pairs is significant ($\chi^2 [1] = 47.53, p < .001$).

Finally, H_4 is supported. As shown in Table 6, more humorous ads featured unequal status between main characters in the two nations that are high on Hofstede's power distance dimension (Thailand and Korea) than in the two that are low on that dimension (U.S. and Germany). In both Thailand and Korea, more than 60% of the humorous ads portrayed characters of unequal status and there is no significant difference between the two nations on this variable ($p > .68$).

Differences in the distributions of equal and unequal status ads are significant for Germany and the U.S. ($\chi^2 [1] = 9.32, p < .003$). These differences appear to result from the fact that the percentage of ads judged to contain equal status characters was larger for Germany (85%) than for the U.S. (58%). However, a majority of ads in both countries featured equal status characters. Thus, the two country samples were combined and results at the aggregate level were compared with those for Thailand and Korea.

Combining the results for Korea and Thailand, we found that 63% of the sampled ads featured relationships between characters that were unequal. In sharp contrast, for the combined U.S. and German sample, 71% of the ads featured equal status relationships. Chi square analysis indicates that the relationship between status and the combined country pairs is not independent ($\chi^2 [1] = 23.15, p < .001$).

Last, the content differences found may be due in part to differences in products advertised. To test this possibility, three native coders in each country categorized featured products along three dimensions: (1)

TABLE 4
Main Types of Contrasts in Ads by Country^a

	U.S.	Germany	Thailand	Korea
Actual/Nonactual				
Number	2	4	2	2
Percent ^b	6	9	5	7
Expected/Unexpected				
Number	16	37	22	14
Percent	44	84	52	48
Possible/Impossible				
Number	18	3	18	13
Percent	50	7	43	45
Number of Main Contrasts				
	36	44	42	29

^aInclude ads with one or more contrasts.

^bPercentages rounded.

TABLE 5
Numbers of Individuals Featured in Television Ads

	U.S.	Germany	Thailand	Korea
Ads With Two or Fewer				
Number	38	36	10	16
Percent	73	75	20	31
Ads With Three or More				
Number	14	12	41	35
Percent	27	25	80	69
Total Number of Ads				
	52	48	51	51

^aPercentages rounded.

TABLE 6
Status of Individuals or Characters in Television Ads

	U.S.	Germany	Thailand	Korea
Ads With Equal Status				
Number	30	41	20	18
Percent ^a	58	85	39	35
Ads With Unequal Status				
Number	22	7	31	33
Percent	42	15	61	65
Total Number of Ads				
	52	48	51	51

^aPercentages rounded.

oidance nondurable (goods associated with undesirable events and activities such as aspirin, cf. Stayan, Aaker, and Bruzzone 1989), approach nondurable (goods associated with desirable events and activities), durable, or service; (2) high, medium, or low involvement, and (3) pleasure-oriented, function-oriented, or both. Interrater agreement was again 80% higher in each country and disagreements were resolved through discussion. Though certain significant differences ($p < .05$) on each product dimension are present across countries, the differences are not substantial. For example, in each country, consumer approach nondurable goods comprise the modal category (i.e., 50% or higher). In addition, lower involvement products are predominant (i.e., 50% or higher) in every nation's sample, and in three of four countries the modal category consists of pleasure-oriented products. Thus, though differences in product types featured in the ads may have contributed to observed differences in terms of the collectivism-individualism and status measures, it appears unlikely that product-related differences could account for the extent of systematic variation in advertising content documented in our study.

Discussion

The purpose of our study was to examine the nature and content of humorous appeals across national cultures. The first goal was to identify an underlying global principle that might provide a deeper understanding of the basic structure of humorous appeals. Second, we attempted to identify dimensions along which national cultures might meaningfully differ in terms of specific television advertising content.

In reference to the first goal, coding results for humorous ads in four different cultures (Thailand, Korea, Germany, and the U.S.) lend support to Rasquin's (1985) script-based semantic theory, which focuses on incongruity of scripts as the central element of humor. In all four cultures, a majority of the ads were classified as containing incongruent cognitive structures. In two countries, Thailand and Germany, the presence of such contrasts was even significantly higher (82% and 92%, respectively). These findings extend Suls' (1983) conclusion that humor globally exhibits incongruity to advertising.

The implications of this finding are twofold. First, from a theoretical perspective, it appears that the basic cognitive structure approach underlying humorous appeals may not be "culture-bound." Thus, our study supports and adds to a growing body of research indicating that certain aspects of consumer cognition are "universal" (Pick 1980; Rosch 1977). More important, the seemingly global applicability of the incongruity principle suggests that a cognitive structure ap-

proach has the potential to provide a more basic understanding of how humorous appeals operate across different cultures.

Second, from a global strategy perspective, our study may provide valuable insights to attempts to standardize humorous appeals across national cultures. Specifically, our results suggest that ads constructed in line with the incongruity and/or incongruity-resolution principles may have the ability to generate humor in diverse national cultures. However, our study examined only the presence of incongruent structures in ads classified as humorous in intent. The study did not address the issue of the effectiveness of the ads in generating a humorous response. Hence, an important topic for future research would be to examine the extent to which ads containing "incongruent" versus "incongruent with resolution" cognitive structures are more or less effective in generating desired affective responses.

It is also interesting that very few actual/nonactual contrasts were found in any country. Thus a substantial portion of humorous advertising around the world appears to rely on expected/unexpected or possible/impossible contrasts. Furthermore, for the United States, Thailand, and Korea, distributions of these two contrast types are very similar, with proportions for both types ranging from approximately 40% to 50% of the total number of main contrasts. The German results are distinct in that so many of the ads (more than 80%) featured expected/unexpected contrasts. Unfortunately, present theory and research are inadequate to explain this difference. Similarly, from a theoretic perspective, it is not clear why humorous advertising in Korea exhibited fewer contrasts than that in any other country. Such unanswered questions clearly indicate a need for future research into possible cultural factors that might relate to a preference for certain types of contrasts as well as humor without contrasts.

The second goal of our study was to identify dimensions along which the specific content (as opposed to structure) of the humorous appeals might vary across national markets. Two dimensions from Hofstede's (1983) work were chosen for hypothesis development: collectivism-individualism and power distance. The collectivism-individualism dimension pertains to how much the national culture emphasizes either the subordination of individual goals to the goals of a few large groups or the association of the individual with multiple smaller groups that tend to be less demanding. Results support the hypothesis that ads in countries high on collectivism (Korea and Thailand) contain more group-oriented situations than ads in countries that stress individualism (Germany and the U.S.). The suggestion is that consumers in collectivist societies are more likely to respond to hu-

morous appeals involving large groups than consumers in individualist cultures, where use of smaller groups or individuals may be more appropriate.

Power distance was the second national culture dimension examined. Cultures high on power distance tend to be hierarchic whereas cultures low on power distance tend to be more egalitarian. We examined this dimension by looking at the status relationships between the characters in the ad. The results support our hypothesis that cultures high on power distance (Thailand and Korea) have more ads with characters of unequal status than countries low on this dimension (Germany and the U.S.). This finding is reflective of the fact that in the U.S. and Germany, more emphasis is placed on equality than is the case in the Asian cultures studied.

Though our findings suggest that it may be possible to standardize the basic structure of humorous appeals by employing the incongruity principle, the ad's content (i.e., numbers of characters and their status relationships) may require modification for markets with widely varying values and norms. Hence, our findings are consistent with previous research on the ways in which multinational firms standardize or modify advertising across national cultures (Killough 1978; Peebles, Ryans, and Vernon 1978). In particular, the results are similar to Killough's (1978) findings about the possibilities of standardizing an ad's "buying proposal" (i.e., a structural characteristic akin to the incongruity principle of humor found in our study) but culturally adapting the ad's "creative presentation" (i.e., a thematic content characteristic similar to differences in the numbers of individuals and their status relationships).

Our findings also support Onkvisit and Shaw's (1987, p. 54) conclusion that standardized advertising strategies incorrectly assume that communications designed for the U.S. market can be used abroad without modification. Those authors describe such approaches as "ethnocentric" and argue that they are likely to be unsuccessful for any one of the following reasons: (1) failure to gain attention if the message is irrelevant, (2) failure to be understood, or (3) failure to motivate action. Instead of a globally standardized advertising approach, Onkvisit and Shaw recommend a "geocentric" strategy that requires (p. 54):

... the advertisement to be designed for the worldwide audience from the outset to appeal to a shared intercountry denominator while allowing for some modification to suit each market.

Our study identifies a potentially important "intercountry denominator" in humorous advertising. That is, incongruent cognitive structures were found in a majority of television advertising that was intended to be humorous despite significant differences on major

cultural dimensions. Thus, following Onkvisit and Shaw, we suggest that these structures may provide a dimension on which to standardize because their use is likely to enhance the communication effectiveness of humorous advertising around the world. At the same time, the study demonstrates that advertisers are likely to benefit from "allowing for some modifications to suit each market" (Onkvisit and Shaw 1987, p. 54).

Finally, while remaining alert to differences, managers may be able to group countries strategically on the basis of national culture dimensions. For example, our findings suggest that appeals emphasizing collectivism and unequal status relationships are much more frequent in Thailand and Korea (and perhaps other collectivist national cultures) than in more individualistic cultures such as the U.S. and Germany. Future research should test the extent to which such value dimensions may assist development of standardized humorous appeals for various groupings of national cultures.

Limitations

The many difficulties associated with cross-national research have long been recognized (Albaum and Peterson 1984) and some of these problems are present in our study. For example, one of the key challenges in cross-cultural data collection is the attainment of measurement equivalency (Hui and Triandis 1985). In other words, the data collection is valid only to the extent that the researchers can demonstrate that the constructs and measures are conceptually and operationally equivalent across the various cultures studied.

In our study, we devoted extreme effort to ensuring that the coders clearly understood the constructs and categories and could demonstrate the ability to make judgments as we intended. Nevertheless, cultural biases inherent in the coders could have somewhat influenced the results and accounted for some of the variance between countries. The differences observed, however, were on culturally sensitive measures (e.g., individualism-collectivism) and were typically very large. Therefore it is unlikely that all of the meaningful variance in categories is attributable to coder biases. Second, the coders were all extremely well trained and exhibited high interrater agreement.

We also recognize that the samples studied represent only a portion of the ads that appear on television in the respective countries. Future research employing larger numbers of ads is needed to verify our findings. Finally, we examined only one medium (i.e., television). Future research should examine humorous appeals in other media as well because the cultures studied differ in terms of exposure to ads in the various media. For example, in Germany, print advertising (in particular magazines, newspapers, and bill-

boards) plays a more significant advertising role than it does in the U.S. (Toyne and Walters 1989).

Conclusion

Our study makes an important contribution by discovering that humorous television advertising in four national cultures employs incongruent cognitive structures. Furthermore, the incongruity in humorous advertising was found in every culture to be expressed in identifiable structures such as the expected/unexpected contrast specified in Raskin's (1985) model. Message content in humorous advertising, however, appears to vary along major national culture dimensions such as collectivism/individualism and power distance documented by Hofstede (1983). As a result, though the notion of incongruent contrast structures

may ultimately prove capable of serving as a guide to the development of globally standardized communications, certain aspects of the ad's message may continue to benefit from adaptation to the targeted national culture.

Finally, we emphasize again that our study did not address the issue of ad effectiveness. In the future, relationships between use of alternative cognitive structures (e.g., expected/unexpected vs. possible/impossible) and effectiveness in generating desired humorous responses should be examined. For example, an important question is whether and when incongruity or incongruity with resolution is more effective as a humorous communication strategy. Regardless, the search for global and culture-specific principles in international marketing communications appears to be a promising area for future research.

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Company Advertising With a Social Dimension: The Role of Noneconomic Criteria

The author examines company advertising campaigns with social dimensions and compares them to matched standard, or nonsocial, campaigns. The author investigates the managers' objectives for the campaigns with social dimensions, examines the processes creating them, and develops a model for explaining success factors. Most campaigns have mixed objectives, both economic and social, which have many implications. Although these campaigns are not particularly effective in achieving traditional economic objectives, such as increasing sales, they are highly effective in achieving company-oriented objectives, such as motivating the work force or communicating the essence of the company's mission. Drawing on research and theory related to organizational identification, the author discusses causal mechanisms underlying social campaigns' effectiveness with company-oriented objectives and presents directions for further research. Ethical considerations and managerial implications are discussed, as well.

In the pages of an elegant fashion magazine, a fashion manufacturer's advertisement uses people with physical disabilities as models.

During a prime-time network television commercial, an athletic equipment manufacturer associates its product with an attempt to build awareness of a serious social problem.

Broadcast during drive-time radio, a local retailer advertises a promise to contribute to a local charity each time a certain product is purchased.

Company advertising with social dimensions is on the rise as companies affiliate with causes such as AIDS, breast cancer, domestic violence, drug prevention, gay rights, literacy, mental and physical disabilities, racial harmony, rape prevention, and wetlands and wildlife preservation (e.g., Arnott 1994; Benjamin 1994; Carringer 1994; Garfield 1993, 1994; Miller 1992, 1993; Zbar 1993). Advertisements associated with these topics are variously referred to as *cause marketing*, *cause-related marketing*, *corporate issue promotion*, *corporate social marketing*, *social issues marketing*, *mission marketing*, or *passion branding* (Andreasen 1996; Arnott 1994; Bloom, Hussein, and Szykman 1995; Duncan 1995; Varadarajan and Menon 1988).

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From 1989 to 1992, cause marketing grew from \$100 million in corporate expenditures to \$254 million (Andreasen 1996). More recent figures estimate it to be as high as \$2 billion (Smith 1994). A nationwide survey by Cone/Roper found that cause marketing is well received among consumers (Carringer 1994). For example, 64% of American adults surveyed said they believe that cause marketing should be a standard part of a company's activities; 78% said they would be more likely to buy a product associated with a cause that they care about; and 84% said cause marketing creates a positive company image.

Despite their reception by marketing professionals and consumers, company advertisements with social dimensions have been among the most controversial of marketing approaches. They have been heralded as marketing's greatest contribution to society (e.g., Smith 1994; Smith and Alcorn 1991) and lambasted as marketing's most unabashed exploitation (e.g., Garfield 1993, 1994). Many have conjectured about managers' objectives and motivations for these marketing programs and made inferences about how they come about, but no one has investigated them directly. Do these approaches represent marketing as it has always been practiced, in service of economic goals, or do noneconomic criteria enter in?

I examine advertising that has a social dimension. The first objective is to understand the objectives that managers in companies and their marketing partners have for these advertisements in order to see if, in fact, noneconomic criteria enter into the advertising decisions. If they do, in what ways do they enter and to what extent? A second objective is to understand how managers approach, create, execute, and evaluate advertisements that have a social dimension—whatever the objective. A third and longer-term objective of this inquiry is to contribute to a research stream that involves

broadening the understanding of the use of noneconomic criteria in marketing decisions.

Background

Consumer Research

Consumer research on company advertising with a social dimension takes two directions—one assesses the effectiveness of the advertising and its various aspects on the basis of consumer response and the other explores consumer processing of social ideas in advertising. Company advertising with a social dimension appears to be well received among consumers. A majority of consumers view it favorably, and it results in positive purchase intentions among a segment of consumers (Ross, Patterson, and Stutts 1992; Ross, Stutts, and Patterson 1991; Smith and Alcorn 1991). Various aspects and tactics have been investigated. For example, there is some evidence that consumers prefer local causes to national ones (Ross, Stutts, and Patterson 1991; Smith and Alcorn 1991) and disaster relief or curing diseases to other causes (Ellen, Mohr, and Webb 1996; Ross, Stutts, and Patterson 1991). This type of advertising appears to be more effective with luxury products than practical ones, perhaps because the donation offsets feelings of guilt associated with the purchase and consumption of luxury products (Strahilevitz and Myers 1995). Consumers perceive less exploitation and more benefit to the cause when donations are larger (Dahl and Lavack 1995). Moreover, they respond the most positively when the tactics used prompt attributions of genuine altruism on the part of the firm; for example, donations of products are more likely to prompt attributions of altruism than cash donations (Ellen, Mohr, and Webb 1996).

Research suggests that social dimensions may have unique effects on consumer processing. Social ideas have been differentiated from product messages on several dimensions, and it has been proposed that the dimensions characterizing social ideas may negatively affect attention and cognition (Manrai and Gardner 1992). In contrast, when combined with a message about a service, social ideas have been found to increase people's motivation to process the message. They also increased perceptions of the strength of the argument for the service, especially under conditions of moderate perceived involvement and ambiguous service arguments (Berger, Cunningham, and Kozinets 1996).

Managerial Research

Consumer research is scant, but there is even far less managerial research. With a few exceptions, what exists are largely attempts to describe variations of advertising with a social dimension—cause marketing versus mission marketing, cause-related marketing versus corporate issue promotion, and so on (e.g., Andreasen 1996; Bloom, Hussein, and Szykman 1995; Duncan 1995). In a seminal conceptual study, Varadarajan and Menon (1988) identify important managerial dimensions of cause-related marketing and illustrate their effective use. In a survey of 25 company marketing managers and 23 fund-raising managers at nonprofit organizations, it is shown that both groups view cause-related marketing positively, which offers benefits to both

businesses and nonprofit organizations (Barnes 1991). Guidance has been offered to nonprofit managers regarding protecting their interests in cause marketing ventures (Andreasen 1996; Cunningham 1996; Wagner and Thompson 1994). In summary, the managerial research has been based largely on accounts of practice from secondary sources external to the firms themselves and has generally not investigated why managers did what they did, what their perceptions or rationales were, or what the processes that led to the advertising with social dimensions were.

Methods

Selection of Method

When the goal is understanding what the meanings are to actors rather than predicting what their behavior will be—or in philosophy of social science terms, the *action versus behavior* distinction (Braybrooke 1965)—qualitative methods are often the most appropriate tactic. More specific, field-based approaches and elite interviews are particularly useful when the research objective is to understand complex interactions, diffuse processes, and often tacit perceptions, beliefs, and values, especially when the researcher cannot be sure what interpretation, code, norm, affect, or rule is guiding the actors (Dexter 1970; Fielding and Fielding 1986; Marshall and Rossman 1989; Miles and Huberman 1994; Strauss 1990). In the social sciences literature, the term *elite interviews* is commonly used to refer to interviews of decision makers as opposed to consumers, an electorate, or a mass population (Dexter 1970). Elite interviewing is different from highly structured survey research interviews. The latter are useful for predicting behavior and generalizing to populations about behavior; the former is designed to ascertain the decision makers' understanding. For all their inherent benefits, behavioral reports, as produced by survey research, often disregard the meaning to the actors. A researcher may infer meaning from behavior, but when he or she wants to know what the actor thinks is happening, elite interviewing often provides a more direct and useful tool. Elite interviewing stresses the informant's definition of the situation, encourages the informant to structure the account of the situation, and allows the informant to reveal his or her notions of what is relevant (Dexter 1970; King 1994; McCracken 1988; Schwartzman 1993). In short, the objectives of the research drive the methodology.

Selection of Campaigns

The criterion for selecting campaigns with social dimensions was that multiple external sources had perceived and commented on what appeared to be a social dimension.

¹Widely used in the social sciences, qualitative methods also have been used to great profit in marketing and consumer behavior studies (e.g., Arnould and Price 1993; Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989; Bloom 1987; Dougherty 1990; Drumwright 1994; Hill and Stamey 1990; Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985; Workman 1993). When previous research is scant, qualitative methods are often essential to generate hypotheses and ultimately theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967; King, Keohane, and Verta 1994; Kritzer 1994; Strauss 1990).

TABLE 1
Annual Revenues and Billings

0,000)	Company Revenues	Advertising Agency Billings	Public Relations/Talent Firm Revenues
More than \$1,000	4	0	0
-\$1,000	2	1	0
-\$500	2	2	0
-\$100	2	2	0
More than \$50	1	3	3
Total	11	8	3

TABLE 2
Configuration of Partnerships

	Social Campaigns	Standard Campaigns
Configuration of Partnerships		
Company/advertising agency	6	4
Company/advertising agency/ Public relations agency	2	2
Company/talent agency	1	1
Company in-house	2	4

campaigns with a social dimension and three of the standard campaigns were transnational, appearing in the United States and in multiple countries on at least one other continent. The remainder of the campaigns appeared in the United States. The range of media expenditures was \$50,000 to \$7 million for the social campaigns and \$100,000 to \$6 million for the standard campaigns. Of the 11 social campaigns, 10 were initiated between July, 1991 and May, 1994. One campaign ran from 1985 to 1991. The interviews were conducted between January, 1993 and September, 1995.

Development of Interview Protocol

The interview protocol was developed in consultation with 15 professors and practitioners, who have substantive or methodological expertise: 2 company marketing executives, 3 advertising agency executives, 4 marketing professors, 4 advertising professors, 1 prominent media advertising critic, and 1 social scientist specializing in qualitative research methods. The interview protocol was pretested in personal interviews with a company marketing executive and an advertising agency executive, both of whom had been a part of social advertising campaigns that were not included in the sample. The interview protocol is shown in Appendix A. In keeping with accepted practice for elite interviewing, most questions were broad and open-ended to enable informants to define the situation. The interview protocol was designed to prompt informants to engage in what Wallendorf and Brucks (1993, p. 341) call "guided introspection" and was constructed to elicit particularistic data from informants, which are reports of experiences associated with a unique context in time and place.

Data Collection and Analysis

All but one of the interviews were conducted in person. The typical interview lasted about an hour; however, some lasted more than two hours. The interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed. Of the 63 people interviewed, 38 were from companies sponsoring advertising with a social dimension (hereafter referred to as *company informants*) and 25 represented marketing partners (hereafter referred to as *agency informants*). Fifty of the informants were involved in both the social and the standard campaigns; 12 informants were involved only in social campaigns, and 1 was involved only with a standard campaign.² The job assignments of informants are shown in Table 3.

Anonymity for the companies and informants was insisted on as a condition of the interviews. Anonymity brings obvious disadvantages, but it helps mitigate biases and demand effects related to social desirability and posturing. Widely used in the social sciences, anonymity has been used often in qualitative, company-based marketing research (e.g., Arnould and Price 1993; Dougherty 1990, 1992; Drunwright 1994; Workman 1993).

²Of the 12 informants that were involved only in social campaigns, 6 were agency informants: 5 were retained by companies that prepared their standard campaigns in-house, and 1 joined the agency after the standard campaign but before the social campaign. The person involved only in a nonsocial campaign was not employed by the company at the time of the social campaign.

a campaign had received multiple write-ups and had been lauded for its social dimension, criticized for exploiting a social cause, or both. Companies sponsoring the campaigns were contacted, and one to three telephone interviews were conducted with persons who had been involved in the processes resulting in the campaigns. This led to an initial set of personal interviews within the company. During these interviews, a technique known as *snowballing* (Moriarty 1993) was used to identify other informants. That is, informants were asked to identify other people within the company or within any organization that had served as consultants or "marketing partners" who had been involved in the advertising processes. Company informants also were asked to identify a campaign without a social dimension (referred to as a *standard campaign*) for the same products or brands that had been used within the same general time period and generally comparable in expenditure, geographic scope, and persons involved. The interviewing continued until, if not all, of the people identified as playing key roles had been interviewed.

Eleven companies agreed to serve as interview sites. Ten of the companies have headquarters in the United States in seven states, and two are in Western Europe in two different countries, though their products are sold widely in the United States. Eleven firms were marketing partners working with the companies: eight advertising agencies, two public relations agencies, and one talent agency. Revenue data are shown in Table 1, and the configuration of the partnerships is shown in Table 2.

Twenty-two campaigns were examined: 11 with social dimensions and 11 standard campaigns. Three of the cam-

TABLE 3
Job Assignments of Informants

Job Assignment	Company Informants		
	Total	Standard Campaigns	Social Campaigns
CEO/COO	6 ^a	6	6
Advertising	10	10	10
Marketing/Brand Management	9	9	8
Public Relations	7	3	7
Research	4	4	4
Philanthropy	1	0	1
Assistant to President	1	0	1
Total	38	32	37
Agency Informants			
Account Management	15	11	15
Creative/Production	10	8	10
Total	25	19	25

^aTo be read: Of the six CEOs or COOs in the sample, all six were involved in both standard and social campaigns.

Data also were collected from seven other sources to enable triangulation:

1. internal documents (e.g., reports, memos, briefing papers),
2. communications between the company and its marketing partners (e.g., requests for proposals, proposals, bids),
3. internal publications (e.g., employee magazines, newsletters),
4. documents for external distribution (e.g., press releases, brochures),
5. articles from newspapers and magazines,
6. videos of broadcast news stories, and
7. videos of presentations by executives (e.g., press conferences, speeches, presentations at sales meetings).

The data were systematically and intensively analyzed through standard procedures for qualitative data analysis (Spiggle 1994; Strauss 1990).³

³The analysis involved several steps. Initially, the transcripts of interviews and all documents related to a given campaign were carefully reviewed, and a summary memo was written about each. Next, in a phase known as *open coding*, the interview transcripts and related documents were scrutinized line by line and paragraph by paragraph to suggest initial categories or themes. These themes were recorded in a series of analytical memos. Then axial coding was done. The transcripts and other materials were scrutinized repeatedly to consider each of the themes across several cases to assess the fit of each theme to the data. At least one analytical memo was written about each of the cross-case themes. When about three-fourths of the data had been collected, a major analytical memo was written in an attempt to bring together the themes and suggest other areas for investigation. Then, through a stage Strauss (1990) calls *selective coding*, the data were scrutinized once again to refine the themes and identify the findings for each.

Reliability

After the analysis was completed, two experts (faculty colleagues) were asked to serve as external auditors to ensure that the assessments and interpretations of the data were accurate and reliable. Because there were hundreds of pages of interview transcripts, documents, and field notes, the auditors reviewed the data from five campaigns. One campaign was selected at random from each of the four types of social campaigns identified subsequently and a fifth campaign was selected at random. The auditors were asked to review the materials and code the data for the dimensions reported in Table 4, as well as for the effectiveness of the campaigns as perceived by informants. The coding agreement was 98.4%. The auditors then were asked to read this manuscript and note disagreements or questions concerning any conclusions I drew or any quotations that did not fairly represent attitudes of other informants. In the few instances that this occurred, the statement or quotation was removed from the manuscript.

Limitations

The research method used has well-known limitations, but an attempt was made to mitigate their effects. For example, findings based on the retrospective accounts of informants can be distorted or biased. To combat this, multiple informants were interviewed in person regarding each campaign, and findings were based on reports substantiated by multiple informants. Informants' reports were compared with information from other data sources, such as internal documents, to check for accuracy and consistency. Some judgment is inevitably required by the analyst (Dexter 1970), but as was described previously, auditors reviewed the data and my conclusions. Another way to check subjectivity is for the author to try to be as transparent as possible; that is, I demonstrate as clearly as possible how I came to certain conclusions (Golden-Biddle and Locke 1993). Extensive use of quotations adds transparency in addition to depth of understanding. When used, quotations are representative of what was expressed by many informants, unless otherwise noted. Finally, the organizations chosen may not be representative of the total population, but they represent firms that are varied on many dimensions, including industry, size, and geographic location. This is in keeping with one of the goals of qualitative research, which is to portray the range and depth of the phenomena, which, in turn, is important to developing theory (Bonoma 1985; Eisenhardt 1989).

Findings

There is not a company in the U.S. or the world that would spend money on advertising in a way that is not economic. The only reason, *absolutely the only reason*, that money is spent on advertising is to move people toward economic payoffs for the product and the company (PI 5).⁴

⁴"PI 5" indicates that this quote was from a "Preliminary Informant." This person was the fifth of the 15 marketing and advertising specialists conferred with as a part of the pretest phase. He is a marketing manager who had been actively involved in creating advertising with a social dimension for his company.

Comparison of Campaigns

Standard Campaigns		Campaigns With a Social Dimension			
		Economic	Mixed		Noneconomic
			(Mixed-economic)	(Mixed-noneconomic)	
Number of campaigns	11	2	3	5	1
Economic Objective	Sales and/or image	Sales and image	Sales and image	Image and company-oriented	Not applicable
Initiation	Varies: Company (if driven by price promotions, new product features, or product line extensions) Agency (if image-oriented)	Agency	Agency ^a	Company ^b	Company
CEO Involvement	Usual amount	Usual amount	More than usual	More than usual	More than usual
Creative and Production Processes	Standard	More complex, often longer	More complex, often longer	More complex, often longer	More complex, often longer
Resistance	Varies (typically greater for image-oriented advertising)	Likely	Likely	Less likely	Unlikely
Evaluation	Usual advertising and sales measures	Usual advertising and sales measures	Usual advertising and sales measures, some public relations measures	Qualitative measures; public relations measures; some cause-related measures	Cause-related measures
Time Commitment	Short to medium	Short	Short	Long to indefinite	Indefinite
Employee Involvement	Not applicable	None	Low (e.g., informal and at the initiative of individuals)	Moderate (e.g. cause-related speaker, workshops) to high (e.g., paid time off for volunteering) ^c	High
Evangelism for cause	Not applicable	None	Low (e.g., informal and at the initiative of individuals)	Moderate (e.g., venue for consumer involvement) to high (e.g., personal petitions to vendors on behalf of cause)	High

^aOne campaign was initiated by a company in-house agency.

^bOne campaign was the result of a collaborative brainstorming session involving both the company and the agency.

^cOne campaign was an exception, because it had a low level of employee involvement.

And instead of making a product statement in our advertising, we felt that we could make a social statement.... If we could change the way Americans dressed, why couldn't we change the way they think about a social issue? (CI 11).⁵

Advertising Objectives

Most of the 15 marketing and advertising specialists with whom I conferred in the pretest phase predicted that the findings would confirm the position of the first manager quoted (PI 5)—the objectives of advertisements would be solely economic. A response such as the second manager's would be rare and come only from an errant "do-gooder." The findings of this research are to the contrary; noneconomic objectives do enter into advertising campaigns. Perhaps the more interesting finding is that advertising campaigns in which a social concern plays a role are not fundamentally all alike; they vary in important and systematic ways on the basis of their objectives. Because of this, campaigns that contain a social dimension can be meaningfully categorized and labeled by their objectives: Some are solely economic (hereafter termed *Economic*); some are purely social (hereafter termed *Noneconomic*); and some have mixed economic and social objectives (hereafter termed *Mixed*). Surprisingly, only two campaigns fell into the Economic category. Only one was Noneconomic. The remaining eight were in the Mixed category.

Economic campaigns. Similar to standard campaigns, Economic campaigns had objectives that involved increasing sales, building brand equity, or enhancing image. There was no social agenda, despite the social component.

I'll tell you truthfully that the reason we did the [cause] campaign is because it was good business. We have absolutely no charter to feature any [cause] ever. We don't think like that. We have limited media dollars. We have a very competitive category that is very traditional. We leave that [social responsibility] for McDonald's (AI 24).⁶

Informants talked about how the socially conscious aspect of the campaign was simply a search for "breakthrough advertising," for "category breakers," for "out-of-category" campaigns.

I was bringing in agency after agency to come up with that one campaign that would separate us from the pack.... You have to look for what we call the "category breaker" We're still looking for that magical thing.... We think that this social cause and concern is a category breaker. (CI 55)

Economic campaigns often sought to reach a "higher level" of meaning for the product or the brand. Said one company informant, "We were trying to find some way of differentiating our brand at a higher level; we never did figure out what that higher level was" (CI 18). An objective of enhancing image and building brand equity might usually be considered a long-term goal, but in these campaigns, it had

a short-term orientation with an expectation that the advertisements would produce immediate, bottom-line results.

It should not be inferred that there are not substantial positive benefits to society from social campaigns with solely economic objectives.⁷ Both Economic campaigns were heralded as highly positive by supporters of the causes, but the creators of these campaigns insisted that these positive effects were unintended and largely unanticipated by-products, accidents, or serendipitous effects.

[B]eing a creative run agency, we also just try to do things that are cool.... Did we decide to do [it] because it was the right thing to do socially? No, we decided to do it because it was a cool way to show [the theme] and be authentic.... So again, it was more of a by-product. And it happened to work out (AI 40).

Noneconomic campaigns. At the other extreme from Economic campaigns were campaigns with objectives related solely to a social agenda—to provide individual benefits, societal benefits, or both. At first blush, a campaign without significant economic objectives seems implausible. The Noneconomic campaign, however, was a part of a portfolio of campaigns, some of which had economic objectives. Although there were benefits to the company resulting from the Noneconomic campaign, they were not part of the objectives. The most senior marketing executive of this company said that one of her primary challenges was "to know when to pull rank on social issues" and blend in more economic objectives (CI 50). This is understandable given the company's philosophy.

We aspire to be a values-led company.... We do believe that business is arguably in partnership with the not-for-profit sector, and that community action is the way to transform the world.... [Business] should be, as far as we're concerned, the real engine for progressive social change on the face of the planet ... we are a business which will campaign for social change; we are a business which will raise issues; we are a business which will fund initiatives on [cause 1], [cause 2], [cause 3] (CI 47).

Mixed campaigns. It is interesting that most of the campaigns had both economic and social objectives. Sometimes there was a happy coexistence. As one company informant expounded,

The premise is [that] to be a great company, you've got to be excellent, both in the products you create and also in the role you play in society (CI 53).

Sometimes, however, coexistence was not so peaceful.

[Some people said], "How dare you blend retail with social causes." Most of the major, really avid criticism was from people who thought that we were trying to take advantage [of the social cause] (CI 56).

Even when positively received by the public, objectives sometimes competed to the detriment of the economic goals.

[People called and said], "This is the best thing in a long, long time—for a company to meld itself with social causes in this campaign" ... But the net result was: yes, it is a good

⁵CI 11" indicates that this quote is from a "Company Informant," who was the eleventh of the 63 informants interviewed.

⁶AI 24" indicates that this quote was from an "Agency Informant," who was the twenty-fourth of the 63 informants interviewed.

⁷The term *social campaign* is used throughout to refer to campaigns with a social dimension irrespective of the objective.

campaign, but no, the register did not continue to ring as much. It is expensive, and you need a big return (CI 55).

II, six of the eight Mixed campaigns were perceived to be successful, which indicates that a synthesis can be achieved.

The Mixed category is more complex than the other two and requires elaboration. Three Mixed campaigns weighted their economic objectives heavily, whereas five heavily weighted their noneconomic objectives. This suggests that objectives across all campaigns could be thought of as a continuum. Categorization, however, is more appropriate because the differences are of kind rather than of degree. For these Mixed campaigns that had heavily weighted economic objectives, the social objectives were real, not simply a means to achieve economic ends as in Economic campaigns. Objectives were truly mixed. Similarly, despite the heightened importance of the social goals in other campaigns, the economic goals remained important, unlike in Noneconomic campaigns. The varying importance of economic versus social goals within the Mixed category does necessitate a refinement. When differentiation is important, the three Mixed campaigns in which economic objectives received particularly heavy weight are designated as *Mixed-economic*; the five in which the noneconomic objectives had significant weight are referred to as *Mixed-noneconomic*. The most important word here is *mixed*, not the hyphenated modifier. The weighting of the noneconomic versus economic goals matters, sometimes a lot, but the most important thing about these campaigns is that they must contend with both economic and noneconomic objectives.

Although Mixed-economic campaigns were fairly straightforward with regard to objectives, Mixed-noneconomic campaigns were more complicated. Not only did noneconomic objectives increase in importance, but also the economic objectives were more complex than in Economic and Mixed-economic campaigns. In addition to, or at times instead of, the economic objectives that were related to sales, brand equity, or image, Mixed-noneconomic campaigns had objectives that can be considered company-oriented, such as achieving human resource management goals or communicating the essence of the company mission to various constituents. To be sure, company-oriented objectives are ultimately economic—to have a more motivated work force improves the bottom line (Heskett et al. 1994; Chesinger and Heskett 1991). But the economic objective is more indirect and in many ways conceptually different from objectives such as increasing sales or enhancing brand equity. Labeling these *company-oriented* helps differentiate between somewhat different types of economic objectives.⁸

One additional phenomenon regarding objectives should be noted. Informants reported a tendency for their companies to gravitate toward greater emphasis on noneconomic objectives in six Mixed campaigns. These companies had never made indefinite time commitments to the cause or planned to initiate another social campaign in the future. As one company informant said, "I would say that it [the social agenda] was a part of a dramatic, evolutionary theme for us, our advertising, and also for our company" (CI 54). Else-

where, this phenomenon is referred to as a *tendency to convert* (Drumwright 1994). That is, the socially responsible behavior "takes" and commitment to the social cause evolves.

In summary, observers tend to stereotype advertisements with a social dimension. Some see them as simply a tactic to serve economic ends. Others credit the company with having sincere social concerns. This research finds that the story is far more complex. The objectives cannot be determined simply by viewing the advertisement; indeed, two advertisements that appear to be similar may mask very different objectives.

Advertising Processes

Advertisements are advertisements. Thus, the decision processes to create and evaluate campaigns with a social dimension are not wholly different from standard campaigns. There are differences, however, that are often subtle and at times substantial. Even when objectives are completely economic, once the social dimension enters, aspects of the decision processes more resemble campaigns with social objectives than standard campaigns. In short, when there is a social dimension, things become more complex. Some of the common ways in which campaigns with a social dimension differ systematically from standard campaigns and among themselves are subsequently reported and summarized in Table 4.

Initiation. Experts interviewed prior to collecting the data hypothesized that the more liberal, free-spirited people in advertising agencies would be the ones advocating the use of a social dimension rather than the more conservative company managers. Contrary to expectations, social campaigns were more often initiated by companies.⁹ More interesting than which party initiated social campaigns was the relationship observed between the initiating organization and the nature of the campaign objectives. The campaigns that agency informants initiated were either Economic or Mixed-economic campaigns. Creating breakthrough advertising tended to be the dominant objective. The campaigns initiated by companies, with one exception, fell into two categories as well, Noneconomic or Mixed-noneconomic. Informants in these companies were usually quick to point to social objectives.

Our chief operating officer felt that we needed to raise our voice, not be silent. Silence is compliance. And we wanted to [have an impact with respect to the cause] in our own company. We felt that this was relevant to us as people. So we developed the campaign (CI 54).

Top management involvement. Chief executive officers (CEOs) or chief operating officers (COOs) reported that they were more deeply and actively involved in the social campaigns than in the standard campaigns, and their perceptions converged with reports of their subordinates. Top management involvement was reported as higher than usual in six of the nine Mixed and Noneconomic campaigns but

⁸Six social campaigns were initiated by companies, and four were initiated by agencies. The remaining campaign was the result of a collaborative brainstorming session.

I thank Richard Barnes for helping me identify and name company-oriented objectives.

not in any of the standard or Economic campaigns. It was particularly high when the campaign was part of a strategic effort to define and communicate the company's mission, which was the case for four of the companies. One senior marketing executive from such a company explained the context that led to heavy involvement by the CEO:

[T]he company decided we really needed to articulate a vision for what this company was all about.... What we were looking for, and [the CEO] in particular, was ... the overarching equity of the company. And probably that could differentiate us from other companies (CI 31).

Another situation prompting heavy top management involvement was personal commitment to the social agenda by the CEO. Three such CEOs were referred to as "children of the Sixties" who were indelibly marked by the era's social concern. They described themselves or were described by their senior managers as "an old radical ... coming from the Sixties" (CI 27), "an ex-hippie" (CI 56), "bleeding heart liberals ... who believe in trying to make a difference" (CI 55), and "a radical with a Sixties feeling" (CI 46). The common theme among these people is that they believe they can make a difference and indeed have an obligation to do so. In a study of socially responsible organizational buying, people who invested their time, energy, and creativity in launching a socially responsible policy or initiative in their business because they believed it was the right thing to do were labeled "policy entrepreneurs"; there, however, they were most often found to be middle managers (Drumwright 1994). In contrast, in this study, policy entrepreneurs tended to be CEOs or senior managers.

Creativity and execution. The creative and production processes for social campaigns were more complex and often longer than for standard campaigns.¹⁰ Multiple objectives complicated the creative task. One agency was sent back to the drawing board three times before they "got it right" because, "We're asking them [the agency] to do more. We're asking them to communicate the [product], the brand, and a belief ... it was substantially harder" (CI 54). In many cases, selecting the social issue involved at least some extra research and pretesting. Broaching social issues raises sensitivities and is potentially treacherous. The sensitivities of people sympathetic to the social issue are relevant, but those who are unsympathetic, or even antagonistic, must be considered as well. The many ways in which both groups can be offended increase complexity and therefore time and effort. As a result, the process often includes more pretesting of both the creative concept and its execution with various constituents. Finally, the execution process often is more difficult because of the need to be authentic and genuine with respect to the social dimension. For example, this could involve using persons affected by or involved with the cause in the advertisements. In addition to introducing nonprofessionals as models or actors on the set, this could necessitate accommodating people with special concerns and needs.

¹⁰This finding converges with Manrai and Gardner's (1992) assertion that social ideas are both more intangible and more complex than products.

Resistance. Campaigns with a social dimension faced a good deal more resistance than standard campaigns. Resistance usually came from salespeople and retailers who typically had one of two objections. The first was that the advertising was not bringing enough people in the door or making the cash register ring. Standard image-oriented campaigns suffered similar criticism, but it was more intense for social campaigns. The second objection emanated from a lack of affinity for the social agenda and a lack of appreciation of the strategic benefits from association with the cause.

Unfortunately, I think that a lot of the distributors and retailers who carry the brand don't wholly understand the nature of the issue and what it can mean to a company that really stands by that issue. They're afraid of it too. You have to educate them. And that's a long learning curve. And some of those important outlets for the brand may ultimately never embrace that purpose (A1 43).

Attempts to deal with objections in Mixed campaigns typically involved emphasizing the economic objectives.

[We] continued to present a really strong rationale for what this program has done for us, and to play on the business savvy of people in understanding that there is this great benefit in building the image of the company.... It's also very hard in a business as fast-paced as ours to get people to understand that it takes more than a year for this to really take hold and for the benefits to be seen (CI 30).

Although resistance from salespeople and retailers was a potential issue for social campaigns, irrespective of their objectives, resistance within the company management appeared to be an issue primarily for Economic and Mixed-economic campaigns. The resistance was rooted in uncertainty about the effectiveness of the social dimension in service of economic goals.

Only executives at the company with the Noneconomic campaign acknowledged the potential of resistance coming from shareholders. The antidote, in their eyes, was education about the business philosophy, as well as stressing economic objectives and benefits.

We really spend a lot of time here talking to our institutional investors, explaining to them why this philosophy is not some sort of bizarre altruism but is at the core of the way we function. And what's more, maybe we're wrong, but we think this is how consumers will increasingly expect companies to behave (CI 47).

Agency-client interaction. When campaigns had noneconomic objectives, companies tended to realize enhanced relationships with their agencies. Both company and agency informants spoke of a different sort of bonding that occurred between their organizations as a result of the collaboration on the advertising with a social dimension. For four of the campaigns, agency informants reported that they or their coworkers had donated some of their services because of shared commitment to the social agenda. Benefits accrued to the agency as well. Company informants spoke of switching costs that had been raised, because their partners had been able to understand and create advertising with a social dimension. Five of the campaigns had won awards, and they often were shown by agencies in securing new business. One agency presi-

It felt that working on these accounts strengthened his group's ability to focus on "normal" campaigns. They increased the intensity of focus, the skill in execution, and the passion that his group brought to normal campaigns.

Agency informants also often spoke of intrinsic rewards:

I've been producing commercials for 18 years and the two [company name] commercials that we produced for the [cause] campaign were my all-time favorites. It was such a powerful experience to produce them.... We touched a nerve with one and the heart with the other. It was such an emotional experience to select the film footage. We went to the archives and saw footage that shredded our souls (AI 14).

I really enjoyed working on the ad a great deal. I'm one of those baby boomers coming off the materialism of the 1980s. I've come to recognize that people are important, that we need to focus on human beings as human beings. I found it rewarding to learn about [the cause] and create a great piece of work in the process (AI 23).

It is interesting that intrinsic rewards occurred even when the objectives of both the company and the agency were completely economic.

Evaluation. It is not surprising that evaluation methods differed dramatically, because campaign objectives varied greatly. For Economic and Mixed-economic campaigns, conventional methods such as copy testing, tracking studies, or even sales were used. Campaigns with a social dimension tended to score higher on intrusiveness than the normal campaigns but lower on persuasiveness and linkage to the product. Like other creative approaches that rely on intrusiveness and salience (e.g., celebrity endorsements), the social dimension can overpower the product message. As one company informant in market research lamented, "I think we sold [the cause] more than we sold [the product]" (CI 21).

Informants overwhelmingly reported more media coverage and consumer reaction to the social campaigns than to the standard campaigns. When objectives were solely economic, public relations measures did not count for much. As company-oriented and noneconomic objectives became more important, so did public relations—concomitantly, so did public relations measures. In some cases, the dollar value of the media coverage received by campaigns with a social dimension was calculated. Informants at one company calculated that their campaign had generated media coverage valued at six times the expenditure on paid media. Unsolicited positive and negative phone calls and letters often were counted, and positive consumer reactions overwhelmingly outnumbered negative ones for all but one of the social campaigns. In several situations, activists and supporters of the cause appeared to have "ginned up" consumer response through organized letter-writing campaigns to the company and the media. Decidedly, not all media coverage was positive, and professional advertising critics tended to be more negative and cynical than other journalists.

To assess the effectiveness of Mixed-noneconomic campaigns with company-oriented goals, particularly those related to human resource management, there was increased

reliance on qualitative methods. For example, when campaign objectives involved increasing sales force morale, periodic focus groups and in-depth interviews with salespeople were conducted. When company-oriented objectives involved high-level strategic issues, such as communicating the essence of the company vision, the evaluation process tended to be informal and subjective. A marketing research executive from one such company elaborated,

In certain programs, we're asked to collect very specific, definitive data to prove or disprove the efficacy of the program. And nobody has really asked about this [for the campaign with a social dimension]. I mean, what they want to know is, Is it being positively received? Is it having an impact? But not in the same way you would look at [a standard campaign].... We've been asked, "What have the reactions been?" But it's a different kind of request than a normal marketing program would get (CI 51).

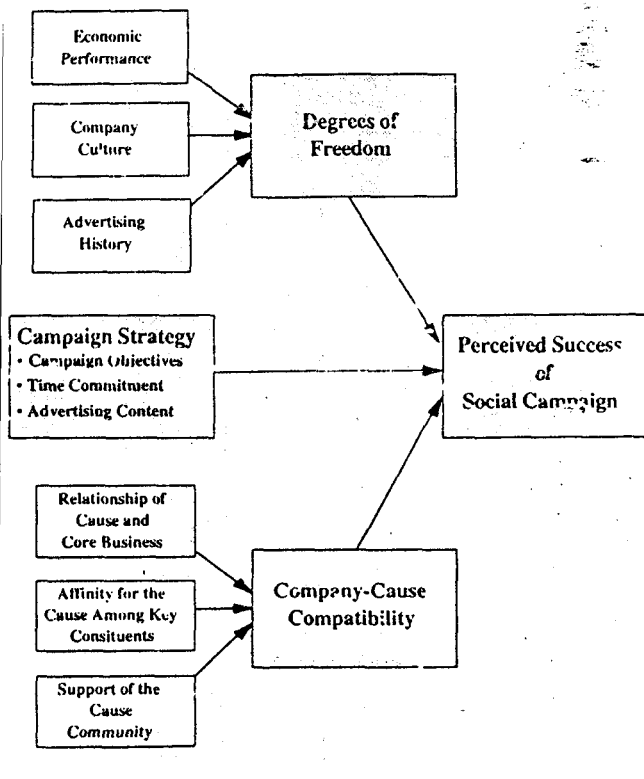
For Mixed-noneconomic and Noneconomic campaigns, companies tended to create and use measures related to the cause, such as number of people requesting cause-related information, volunteering for the cause, or supporting it through writing letters or signing petitions. In some cases, attempts were made to measure the number of people actually engaging in the social behavior; pre- and postcampaign comparisons were made. Companies participating in grassroots, cause-related efforts, or partnerships with nonprofit organizations were especially likely to attempt to get these types of measures.

Success of Social Advertising

Success is in the eye of the beholder and the hands of the evaluator. Seeing success always depends on what a person is looking for and how he or she looks for it. Because most campaigns with a social dimension have multiple objectives, the concept of success is immediately problematic. Add to that the multiple ways in which success can be measured and the complexity grows. Nonetheless, seven of the eleven social campaigns were perceived as successful: five clearly so and two only moderately. Of the seven, two were Mixed-economic, four were Mixed-noneconomic, and one was the Noneconomic campaign. Four social campaigns were not perceived as successful. Two were Economic campaigns, and one was Mixed-economic. The fourth was Mixed-noneconomic. For the standard campaigns, nine were perceived as successful, two overwhelmingly so, and two were viewed as unsuccessful.

Campaigns with a social dimension simply faced tougher obstacles and higher hurdles than standard campaigns. Informants expected more of these campaigns, and the campaigns were more vulnerable to becoming scapegoats than were standard campaigns. For example, even when informants acknowledged that sales had not risen because of several factors, the blame typically was placed on the social campaign. Another pervasive problem involved reverting to short-term measures of success even when objectives were undeniably long-term. Thus, social campaigns were in danger of being ended prematurely. Indeed, four of the social campaigns were ended prematurely, whereas none of the standard campaigns were. Typical was this comment from a company informant when her col-

FIGURE 1
Preconditions for Success of Social Campaigns



leagues abandoned a campaign with long-term objectives when sales did not increase: "They panicked on a short-term basis" (CI 70).

There are factors that increase the chance that a social campaign will be perceived as successful. None alone are sufficient conditions, and further research is needed to determine if some are necessary conditions. These factors, which are portrayed graphically in Figure 1, are encompassed by three constructs: degrees of freedom, campaign strategy, and company-cause compatibility. Some of these factors are important to creating any successful campaign—social or not—but they are extremely important to understanding the success of campaigns with a social dimension.

Degrees of freedom. The term *degrees of freedom* is used conceptually, if not technically. Because of their tougher obstacles and higher hurdles, social campaigns need more latitude than standard campaigns; they need more degrees of freedom. This is true from defining objectives to evaluating results. This cannot mean fuzzy-headed assessment. It may mean, however, the latitude to think, act, and evaluate "outside the box" in ways that often challenge the conventional orthodoxy and sometimes involve paradigm shifts. Three factors or their confluence are related to degrees of freedom.

1. **Economic performance:** The economic performance of the company or the brand increased degrees of freedom in both unusually good and unusually disappointing times. As an advertising informant noted,

Clients will accept [doing things differently] when their business is really, really good (AI 40).

Conversely,

[The company] hired us ... and said, "We're facing a problem, looking into the future.... Consequently, [the brand's] share was beginning to diminish, and if the trend continued, it would certainly be devastating to the company ... [the social campaign] was a drastic move, but we were ... concerned as to the life of the brand (AI 12).

2. **Company culture:** Two characteristics of company culture that increased degrees of freedom were a general willingness to take risks and a history of civic-mindedness. Informants often referred to their organizations' appreciation, or lack thereof, for risk taking. When it existed, social advertising was more likely to be tried and more likely to succeed. Informants had definite perceptions, which they articulated in a variety of ways, about whether their companies were civic-minded. Numerous informants for seven of the campaigns, all Mixed and Noneconomic, identified their companies as civic-minded. As evidence, they cited socially oriented activities, including philanthropy, social activism on the part of executives, executives' service on nonprofit boards, and company policies in response to social issues (e.g., proactive hiring of disabled people, environmentally sensitive organizational buying, paid time off for volunteer work). A history of civic-mindedness provided encouragement for managers to be open and receptive to considering advertising with a social agenda. It also tended to affect the manner in which managers evaluated the advertising's effectiveness, which caused them to factor in social benefits. A history of civic-mindedness, however, did not necessarily mean that the civic-mindedness had been evidenced in the company's previous advertising.

3. **Advertising history:** Companies with a history of innovative advertising were likely to experience less resistance to campaigns with a social dimension. Many informants for five of the campaigns viewed their companies or clients as innovative. They often cited a list of advertising firsts in their product categories. In addition, these five companies had used image-oriented advertising with at least some success in the past. Managers both appreciated the contribution that image advertising makes and did not expect immediate, short-term financial gains from it.

Campaign strategy. Three aspects of campaign strategy were likely to influence perceptions of success.

1. **Campaign objectives:** The greater the emphasis on company-oriented objectives and noneconomic objectives, the more enthusiastic the managers were about the success of the campaigns and their ultimate contributions to the company and beyond. Mixed campaigns were most effective in achieving company-oriented objectives. Of the six Mixed campaigns that were perceived as successful, four had explicit company-oriented objectives.

I think we had a couple of goals. The first goal was really to provide something that would be motivating and energizing to the sales organization and to give them a new way to interact with [customers] ... another goal was certainly to create a program over time that would improve the image of [the company] ... the overriding objective, and it really is related to the other two, is that we really believed in this company that we had the unique opportu-

ity and ability to make a difference in [people's] lives (CI 30).

Informants for the remaining two successful Mixed campaigns reported resounding company-oriented benefits. Benefits related to human resource management were prevalent, occurring in anticipated and unanticipated ways at both organizational and individual levels. For example, informants overwhelmingly reported that they experienced intrinsic rewards from the social campaigns: "Company-oriented and noneconomic objectives appeared easier to achieve than the breakthrough advertising and increased sales that typically were sought when economic objectives were emphasized. Note that three of the four campaigns that were not perceived as successful had heavy emphasis on traditional economic objectives. The difficulty of measuring advertising's effects and tying advertising to sales is a well-documented phenomenon, but a social campaign provides a safe scapegoat. Placing importance on company-oriented noneconomic objectives appeared to offset, at least in part, the disappointment when economic objectives were not achieved in the dynamic way for which the company had hoped."

Time commitment: Longer time commitments, those measured in multiple years, increased the likelihood that campaigns succeeded. Given the long-term objectives surpassed by many of the campaigns, longer time periods increased the odds that campaigns would achieve their objectives. This was understood in some campaigns:

"We really believed that this was not a program that could achieve its objectives overnight, but over a continuum of time we have a real opportunity to really change the way people think about [the company] ... because of the depth of commitment that we have to this program, it is not an event. It is not a public relations sort of media thing that we're doing. It really is something that we have made a long-term commitment to (CI 30).

A short time commitment, six months or less, invariably led to doom. Time commitments ranged from four months for a campaign that was prematurely aborted to an indefinite commitment to a specific cause. Economic campaigns had short time commitments of less than one year, as did two of the three Mixed-economic campaigns. Mixed-economic and Noneconomic campaigns had time commitments of three years or more.

Advertising content: The advertising content, its message and execution, was a particularly challenging and critical precondition of success. There is a potential to offend at every turn. It also is important for the message to have an inspiring or positive bent, even though causes may involve fatal diseases or tough, uncomfortable social problems. A message that was perceived to be too graphic or too harsh could offend and alienate key constituents; salespeople and retailers appeared to be especially sensitive to advertising messages that they perceived as depressing.

Company-cause compatibility: When the cause and the company were compatible, informants were more likely to perceive the campaign as successful.

Relationship of cause to core business: The relationship of the cause to the company's core business appeared to influence the way in which the company's association with

the cause affected consumers. Three types of relationships between the social agenda and the core business were observed. In one, there was no relationship—a complete disconnect. In a second, there was an indirect relationship in which the cause and the company shared a target market (e.g., a women's product and a women's health concern). In a third, the relationship between the company and the cause was close, and the company could be perceived to benefit, at least indirectly, as the cause flourished (e.g., an athletic equipment manufacturer and the cause of promoting physical fitness among affluent, middle aged professionals).¹¹

The most advantageous relationship observed for the campaigns in this study was the indirect one. Dissonance resulted when there was no relationship and salespeople and retailers did not develop an affinity for the cause. When there was too close a relationship, managers pointed to cynical reactions from consumers about the company's motive, who perceived it to be opportunistic or exploitative.

2. Cause affinity among key constituents: Affinity for the cause among key constituents increased the probability of perceptions of success. Key constituents are both internal (employees, especially salespeople) and external (channel partners, vendors, customers, and consumers at large). All four of the unsuccessful social campaigns had problems with constituents having little affinity for the cause. One campaign that ultimately was perceived as successful also had difficulty along these lines. Unless employees have or develop an affinity for the cause, the company is unlikely to realize any human resource benefits from the advertising with a social dimension. As was explained previously, channel partners—retailers in particular—lacking an affinity for the cause can be a source of resistance that can sabotage the campaign. Reaching out to customers, vendors, and consumers on behalf of the cause can give the social campaign credibility and meaning that extends beyond the advertising itself, which enhances the prospects of reaching company-oriented goals related to expressing the essence of the company and its mission. Developing affinity for the cause among key constituents took two forms: encouraging internal constituents to become actively involved with the cause, and "evangelizing" for the cause among external constituents.

In the companies studied, employee involvement with the cause varied greatly. At one extreme, it was nonexistent. This was characteristic of the Economic campaigns. Companies with Mixed-economic campaigns had low levels of employee involvement. With one exception, companies with Mixed-noneconomic campaigns fell into either moderate or high categories. The Noneconomic campaign had high employee involvement. In companies with low levels of employee involvement, any involvement with the cause was informal and completely at the initiative of individual employees. As the importance of the social goals increased, so did the companies' efforts to provide opportunities for information and involvement, which in turn increased involvement. Companies with moderate levels typically would bring cause-related speakers in to address employees or provide cause-related workshops or sensitivity training.

¹¹These examples are for explanatory purposes. They do not necessarily represent examples of the campaigns studied.

Employees were informed of volunteer opportunities and encouraged to join in. When employee involvement was high, companies did everything that those with moderate involvement did and then went further to "institutionalize" involvement with the cause. For example, one company scheduled its executives from around the world who were convening at headquarters for a week-long meeting to spend the first day together volunteering for the cause. Others organized volunteer opportunities and/or provided paid time off for volunteering.

The extent of evangelism varied dramatically, and it increased as the emphasis on noneconomic objectives increased. Evangelism was nonexistent for Economic campaigns; the primary outreach was the advertising itself and the awareness of the cause it created. For Mixed-economic campaigns, any evangelism efforts were informal and at the initiative of individual employees. Mixed-noneconomic campaigns had moderate to high evangelism, and for the Noneconomic campaign, it was high. Moderate levels of evangelism typically meant providing some venue for consumer information and/or consumer involvement, usually through an 800 telephone number. Campaigns with high levels of evangelism not only provided a venue for consumer information and involvement, but they also actively sought to solicit both customers and vendors through personal petitions. For example, in some companies, sales force members distributed information about the cause and urged involvement. In other companies, managers solicited the support of vendors, inviting the vendors' employees to join with the company's employees in serving the cause. The appeals were made to the potential vendors during the selling process. "[W]e're trying to build a model of business. We're looking for like-minded companies [as vendors], companies that will connect with our organization. We talked about how [involvement with the cause] provides value to us" (CI 64). Another company initiated collaborative, grassroots-oriented programs with its retailers on behalf of the cause.

Companies with both high levels of involvement with the cause among internal constituents and evangelism for the cause among external constituents institutionalized support for the cause, thereby making a substantial and enduring organizational commitment to it. As a CEO from one such company said, "I don't see how we could back out now, even if we wanted to" (CI 63).

3. *Support of the cause community*: The active support of the cause community—nonprofit organizations and associations affiliated with the cause—can be of tremendous assistance. In contrast, antagonism or skepticism can doom a campaign. Interaction and association with the cause community lends credibility and expertise to the company's efforts. For example, when media critics accused one company of exploiting the cause, influential members of the cause community mobilized a massive counter-campaign led through media interviews and a grassroots letter-writing campaign. A company informant spoke of the benefit of cause community support:

Luckily, I think that we've been able to align ourselves with some really, really good people who are very influential within the [cause] community who have been really very carefully cultivated to understand what we're about.

They've become real fans of [the company] and the power that this company has, and [they] realize that we have a lot to offer them" (CI 30).

The cause community also can lend its expertise to cause-related efforts that the company initiates, particularly those of a grassroots nature. However, developing these relationships can involve substantial expenditures of time and effort by company managers.¹²

Discussion

The identification and importance of objectives, the relationships expressed in Table 4, and the links to success in Figure 1 are replete with hypotheses that warrant further investigation. The following discussion is an attempt to elaborate on the findings and to augment and amplify the opportunities for further research emanating from the study without unduly repeating what has already been said or implied.

Organizational Identification

Campaigns with a social dimension were highly effective in achieving company-oriented goals, such as motivating the work force and communicating the essence of the company mission. A potential theoretical explanation comes from research on organizational identification, which focuses on the degree to which employees define themselves by the same attributes that they believe define the organization. A high degree of organizational identification can result in job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and desirable work-related behaviors, such as intraorganizational cooperation, greater effort exerted on behalf of the organization, and higher retention (Chatman 1991; Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail 1991; O'Reilly and Chatman 1986; O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell 1991).

In an important work, Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994) assert that two images or perceptions of a person's work organization shape the strength of organizational identification: (1) organizational identity, which is what an employee believes is distinctive, central, and enduring about the organization, and (2) construed external image, which is what an employee believes outsiders think about the organization. Organizational identification is stronger when employees perceive that both the organizational identity and construed external image are attractive, distinctive, consistent with the attributes they use to define themselves, and helpful toward enhancing their own self esteem.

Organizational identification may be the route through which advertising with a social dimension achieves company-oriented goals. Distinctive organizational attributes often remain hidden from internal and external constituents (Albert and Whetten 1985; Fiol 1991). Advertising with a social dimension appears to be an effective way to make dis-

¹²The alliance between the cause community and the company provides opportunity for another dyadic study focusing on the costs, benefits, problems, and opportunities perceived and experienced by both parties.

ive organizational attributes salient. Moreover, when there is a high degree of company-cause compatibility, social campaigns increase the attractiveness of organizational identity. The propensity of the campaigns to generate publicity and consumer reaction enhances the construed external image. Company informants repeatedly spoke of social campaigns' influence on both. One informant described the impact on organizational identity:

The cause] is being woven into the texture of the company and how we do business, how we think about ourselves ... and our salespeople have another reason to feel more aligned with us as a company and to have a stronger affinity with us because we're demonstrating a great deal of commitment to an issue they believe in (CI 30).

also alluded to the influence on construed external image:

... have the best job in the world and I know that because I get all the phone calls and letters from these people saying ... this is the greatest thing that [the company] could ever do ... and that's great. That's the kind of stuff you can't buy (CI 30).

It is important to note that the positive effects related to organizational identification are contingent on having or developing company-cause compatibility. Additional research is needed to determine when and under what circumstances advertising with a social dimension strengthens organizational identification. What factors enhance company-cause compatibility? Generally, what organizational environmental contingencies come into play, and what are their ramifications?

Interorganizational Identification

Another finding of this research is that when advertising has a social dimension, companies tend to realize enhanced relationships with their agencies through a different sort of bonding. This bonding could be the result of a type of interorganizational identification that extends to employees and marketing partners. Increased interorganizational identification could bring about desirable work-related behaviors, such as cooperation and greater effort exerted on job-related tasks. The donations of services reported by agency informants for four campaigns are examples of cooperative behavior.

Interorganizational identification also could extend to corporate customers, suppliers, and other types of "partners" whose cooperation, commitment, and trust become vitally important as outsourcing, strategic alliances, networks, and joint corporations increase (Coyle and Schnarr 1995; Lewis and Darling 1995; Varadarajan and Cunningham 1995; Webster 1992). Shared values, on which interorganizational identification is based, have been found to be a direct precursor of both relationship commitment and trust in relationship marketing (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Thus, advertising with a social dimension could be a mechanism spanning interorganizational boundaries. If so, questions need to be explored for further examination. Under what circumstances is advertising with a social dimension most likely to create interorganizational identification between a company and its partners? What types of behaviors on the company's part

increase the likelihood that interorganizational identification will occur? What effects do organizational and environmental contingencies have? Once interorganizational identification occurs, how should it be nourished and leveraged?

Mixing Objectives

Research questions of when, how, and under what conditions economic and noneconomic objectives can be blended prudently still remain. The contingent effects of organizational, environmental, and other factors must be identified and considered. My study addresses these issues and contains implicit propositions along these lines, but further efforts are needed. Campaigns with mixed objectives often evolve toward greater emphasis on noneconomic objectives.¹⁵ Behavior modification is one theoretical explanation, though there may be others. Evolution, however, may not always be desired. The problems, benefits, and likelihood of such evolution warrant further examination.

Ethical Considerations: Cause-Related or Cause Exploitative?

There has been much discussion regarding the potential adverse effects of company advertising with a social dimension, and many authors have raised the question of whether these programs are cause-related or cause exploitative (Andreasen 1996; Barnes 1991; Cunningham 1996; Gurin 1987; Ross, Stutts, and Patterson 1991; Varadarajan and Menon 1988). However, it is not so clear what *cause exploitative* really means. Informants who were most sensitive to the question of exploitation were involved with Economic or Mixed-economic campaigns. Exploitation was not generally an issue for informants involved with Mixed-noneconomic or Noneconomic campaigns. When probed, many of those for whom exploitation was an issue seemed to be unclear about what exploitation actually entailed. Nonetheless, for most the test was clear: Did observers react negatively? There was a great deal more concern about not being *perceived* as exploitative than about not being exploitative. The issues related to exploitation involved three concerns. By far, the first and most prevalent concern related directly to demeaning the persons representing the cause in the advertisements through the manner in which they were portrayed. The antidote in these situations was sensitivity and taste in execution. As one informant explained, "I think any anxiety about the potential issue of whether or not we were exploiting these people had been put to rest by the fact that we had treated it so tastefully" (AI 37). A second concern involved a fear that observers would perceive the company's support for the cause as tokenism because the company lacked a consistent track record of supporting the cause. A third concern involved the use of the cause to engender emotion through which to sell the product. As one informant said, "We want to sell product. [Person representing the cause] was a way that we could do it, and that could be interpreted as exploiting" (CI 19). None of

¹⁵This finding was based on the reports of informants and not on longitudinal observation.

the informants believed that they had been involved in exploitation. Many used a utilitarian point of view to justify the use of the cause, reasoning that the outcome or consequences of the campaign had benefited the cause. In fact, the cause communities viewed both Economic campaigns as extremely beneficial. The "right" things can come about for the "wrong" reasons.¹⁴ A few informants used deontological reasoning, emphasizing that their intent had been genuine in wanting to help the cause. Informants for one Mixed campaign that had incurred strong criticism from the cause community justified their campaign because they had intended to help the cause. Thus, the "wrong" things can come about for the "right" reasons.

As interesting as why informants involved in campaigns with heavily weighted economic goals were so sensitive to the issue of exploitation is why informants involved in campaigns with heavily weighted noneconomic objectives often were not. It might be assumed that because the cause was more important to this group, they would be more worried about the possibility of exploitation. However, it appears that sincerity about the cause assuages worries about exploitation, again a deontological perspective. Ironically, absent the sensitivity to exploitation, there was not as much concern with having an appropriate and effective execution, and in one campaign in particular, this proved to be a problem. Good intentions may pave the road to troublesome places.

Also implicit in the manner in which some of these informants justified their campaigns were answers to two questions Bloom, Hussein, and Szykman (1995, p. 5) raise: "Is society better off because of this program?" and "Could this program have performed better if corporate involvement had not existed and only a nonprofit and/or government agency ran it?" One informant addressed these questions directly:

I think probably the overriding objective ... is that we really believed in the company that we had the unique opportunity and ability to make a difference in [people's lives].... And it's an interesting equation because [the governmental agency] couldn't do it by themselves. [The nonprofit organization] couldn't do it by themselves. And we couldn't do it by ourselves. But together, there is this—we call it the three-legged stool—and there's this interesting pooling of resources in a way that government, private industry, and not-for-profit organizations have previously not really done.... [This is] the substantive proof that we're doing something that hopefully is going to make a difference (CI 30).

Perhaps more appropriate and prudent than either a utilitarian or deontological approach would be one that could be characterized as dualist, in which intent and consequences both matter. If this is, indeed, more appropriate, then research should examine how a person can ensure that a dualist perspective pervades the attitudes of key players within both companies and their marketing partners. What organizational mechanisms create and reinforce a dualist

perspective throughout the development and implementation of a campaign?

Managerial Implications

Much of the preceding discussion encompasses managerial implications. This section augments the topic and offers an implicit set of additional hypotheses for further research. Varadarajan and Menon (1988) offer several managerial dimensions that represent choices practitioners make in using cause marketing. Many of the managerial dimensions noted subsequently are ones they identified. Although sometimes recast, some of their other dimensions have been addressed, explicitly or implicitly, in preceding sections.

Level of association between firm and cause. Is it better for the association with the cause to be at the brand level, the product line/divisional level, or the organizational level? It appears to be advantageous for the association between the firm and the cause to be at the organizational level. Organizational-level associations enable the benefits of stronger organizational identification to be widespread and pervasive. They also enable social campaigns to benefit franchisees and licensees. These campaigns are more likely to succeed because the support of senior management, which is a prerequisite for organizational level associations, brings more resources to bear on the social campaign and gives it more visibility.

Number of participating entities. Is it better to have a single brand and a single cause, a single brand and multiple causes, multiple brands (intracompany) and a single cause, or multiple brands (intracompany) and multiple causes? The organizational level association recommended previously stipulates that multiple brands be involved with the cause. With respect to the number of causes, fewer is better. For company-oriented benefits to be realized fully, companies must integrate the cause into internal and external programs, which provides opportunities for employees to be involved with the cause and evangelize for it. Because of the resources involved in doing this, social campaigns are more effective when they focus on fewer causes, perhaps one. Moreover, focus also facilitates a stronger organizational identity. When multiple causes are used, they should be a related cluster or family of causes that create a theme.

Geographic scope of the campaign. Can a social campaign be effective on a transnational basis? Yes, it can be, and it can bring company-oriented benefits to bear in far-flung places of company operations. Three of the successful campaigns in this study were transnational. However, when a campaign spans a heterogeneous group of countries, it may be difficult to find one cause that key constituents in all relevant countries view as high priority. In this case, a family of causes may be effective, and it is advantageous to permit country managers to select different but related causes (e.g., various children's health concerns). Implementation in multiple countries is obviously more complex than in a single country. However, managers in one or a few countries can lead in learning about developing and implementing

¹⁴"Right" and "wrong" are used relative to the topic of the article, not in an absolute or normative sense.

campaigns for the cause or family of causes, and thereby serve as role models and resources.

Cause-related or corporate issue promotion. Is it better for the campaign to be cause-related marketing or corporate issue promotion? Whether the campaign involves what Paradarajan and Menon (1988) define as cause-related marketing (i.e., a donation that the firm makes contingent on a consumer making a purchase) or what Andreasen (1996) calls *corporate issue promotion* (i.e., promotion of a cause without the promise of a contribution) or both does not seem to matter. What does matter is the degree of organizational commitment and the degree to which the cause is integrated into other programs targeting both internal and external constituents.

Campaign objectives. Is it advisable to try to achieve economic, company-oriented, and noneconomic objectives in a single campaign? Rather than trying to achieve all three sets of objectives in a single campaign, a portfolio approach can be used. In such an approach, some campaigns are primarily company-oriented and noneconomic objectives, whereas others have primarily economic objectives. Companies can free campaigns with heavily weighted company-oriented and noneconomic objectives from conventional advertising measures, and managers can avoid the predicament arising from a mismatch of campaign objectives and evaluation measures.

Evaluation. How should social campaigns be evaluated? Evaluators of social campaigns must develop new approaches to evaluate long-term, company-oriented, and noneconomic objectives. Traditional short-term measures are inappropriate. On the other hand, the current reliance on subjective evaluation is also troublesome. More systematic and rigorous approaches to qualitative data collection and analysis, as well as to the development of appropriate quantitative measures, are needed.

Integrated communications. Can social campaigns be effective mediums for integrated communications? Because of their potential to increase organizational identification and achieve company-oriented goals, social campaigns can be a particularly effective mechanism through which to integrate external and internal communications efforts. This study finds integrated marketing communications—the strategic integration of the various marketing communications functions (Duncan and Everett 1993)—into the realm of internal communications and human resource management. The effectiveness of advertising with a social dimension in this context is largely dependent on the degree of affinity that external and internal constituents have or develop for the cause.

Limitations. What are the limitations of social campaigns? Social campaigns do not appear to be particularly effective in achieving short-term economic objectives, such as increasing sales or differentiating products. They can be more difficult to execute than other approaches, and even a well-conceived and well-executed campaign may be ineffective if constituents do not have or develop an affinity for the cause. Although the social message is often effective in breaking through clutter and getting attention, it can overwhelm the product message.

A social campaign's message may be misinterpreted or misconstrued, which may lead to negative attributions to the company by consumers. Finally, it may be difficult for a company to end an affiliation with a cause without negative repercussions from the cause community and others, perhaps including key company constituents.

Conclusion

There is much work yet to be done in the area of advertising with a social agenda. From the perspective of those interested in social responsibility, several findings from this study are encouraging. Economic and noneconomic objectives can be blended in a harmonious manner in an individual campaign and/or through a portfolio approach to communications programs. Moreover, when campaigns have mixed objectives, they often evolve toward greater emphasis on noneconomic objectives, and managers are more likely to continue the campaigns and use noneconomic objectives in future campaigns. Finally, social advertising, whatever the motivation, can have positive social benefits.

From the perspective of all students of marketing, company advertising with a social dimension and the study of it can and should no longer be relegated to the status of an interesting but minor marketing phenomenon. Done properly, it has important potential benefits for the company. It is becoming mainstream in commercial advertising, and it must now be studied in that context.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

1. How did this campaign come about?

Probes: How and why did you become involved, and what role did you play? Where did the concept for this campaign come from? Who advocated it and with what rationale? How was that rationale received? Who else was involved, and what roles did they play?

2. What was the strategy behind this campaign?

Probes: What were the objectives for this campaign? Why and how were they selected? What was the target market, and why was it selected? What was the message, and why was it selected? What media were selected for this campaign, and why? How much was spent?

3. (If it was a social campaign) Why was the decision made to affiliate with this cause or causes?

Probes: How did this decision come about? Were members of the cause community involved? If so, what roles did they play?

4. What challenges, if any, did this campaign present?

5. What was the impact of the campaign?

Probes: How was effectiveness assessed, and what measures were used? Who was involved? Was the campaign successful?

6. What, if anything, did you learn from your involvement with this campaign?

7. (After specific questions related to both the social and standard campaigns) What differences, if any, did you

observe between the processes that resulted in the social campaign and those of the standard campaign?

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