

Advertising Ideas in the Digital Age: Changing origins, methods, and roles.

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under the supervision of Distinguished Professor Jim Macnamara and Associate Professor Susie Khamis

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Student certificate of Original Authorship

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, **Andrew McCowan** declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of *Doctor of Philosophy (humanities & Social Sciences)*, in the School of Communication of the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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Abstract

Advertising development is a creative endeavour. Historically the ‘individual genius’ has been celebrated and lionised by the industry as being key to achieving ‘creative excellence’. This association is a normative reverence for the *intuitive* creative practice of individuals, often working in pairs or small groups. In this practice, the advertising material is conceived through subjective means, dependent upon the experience and perspective of the practitioners involved.

However, an evolving application of social sciences generally, and psychology particularly have been used over the past 150 years of advertising practice to *inform* this use of creativity. This brought a systematic, empirical and allegedly objective approach to the techniques used to capture people’s attention and influence their attitudes and behaviour. Additionally, it had implications for the organisation of creativity within the structure of the advertising agency. This reflects the multiple influences and origins for the field of communication studies, within both the arts/humanities and scientific/ social science paradigms, as well as the commercial dynamics related to its role in delivering marketing programs. There are ongoing implications for industry practices, professional techniques and critical evaluations of advertising from this dynamic evolution in how creativity is applied to advertising development within the context of advertising agencies.

Central to these practices and techniques is the phenomenon of the advertising idea. This concept has evolved, albeit inconsistently, as part of industry practice into playing a spectrum of roles, including being a formative, summative and evaluative tool within creative development. However, a new emerging paradigm of *precision* in the targeting and creativity of advertising practice has evolved over the past forty years. This has been driven by two inter-related drivers of practice:

- i. the growing use of media data analytics over the past forty years, which has resulted from increasing adoption of digital and addressable media technologies which enable precise targeting of people,
- ii. the emerging use of behavioural data, provided by the so called ‘big data’ sources generated using marketing technology systems, and used to determine the most effective messages or prompts. Use of this data is informed by theories of behavioural economics, building on the psychological theories that have informed advertising practice since the early twentieth century.

This evolution in practice raises questions over whether the concept of an advertising idea continues to be relevant, particularly when related to behaviour change, or whether the new methods have made it an unnecessary element. This study explores and evaluates the essential attributes of an advertising idea within the context of normative practices, impacted by continuing technological, social, commercial, and cultural change. It examines the evolution of advertising to identify its central characteristics and principles today and explore future directions. This examination has implications for practice and the role and ethics of advertising in creating desired behaviour change.

Social and organisational creativity frameworks ground analysis of these implications for the creative ecosystem within the advertising industry, providing the theoretical context for the blend of intuitive and informed creative practices, and for the social, economic, cultural, and organisational context in which they occur. These creative dynamics are at the heart of the changing place of advertising within the broader marketing, corporate and strategic communication environment.

In summary, this paper explores the thesis that:

1. Advertising practice has traditionally taken a humanistic approach that was heavily based in the *intuitive creativity* of key individual practitioners who applied subjective judgement to develop and craft an advertising execution.
2. During the twentieth century advertising evolved beyond being a tactical form of communication driven by executional considerations by drawing on the social sciences, particularly psychology, to understand how people process information and the influence of emotions on decision-making and behaviour and so *inform creativity*, and enable advertising to address longer term, strategic objectives.
3. Advertising practice evolved to blend intuitive and informed creativity
4. In the twenty-first century, through digitalisation and datafication, advertising practice has come to be influenced by deductive and analytical techniques involving behavioural, attitudinal and involvement data that became central to managing the delivery of advertising that can be shown to meet the objectives set for it. These new methods are claimed, by their advocates in the industry, to afford *precision* advertising and so enable the development of an advertising idea that is more effective at achieving its objectives as well as being more cost efficient to implement.

This thesis explores changes in advertising practice over the past forty years, examining whether data-driven approaches are changing how creativity is applied to the development of advertisements and what that means for the concept of the advertising idea and determine whether and how it continues to be part of the practice of advertising development.

1. Introduction.

Advertising is an influential and ubiquitous part of popular culture in Australia which often evokes strong opinions from people. It can seem to be so all pervasive that it's fair to say that just about everyone has found it annoying, at least for some of the time. As such, it also can be the subject of fascination for those who have no role related to the industry – as demonstrated by the popularity of the ABC TV series of 'Gruen' programmes that discuss and dissect the world of advertising, and the continuing iterations of 'World's Funniest Commercials' TV specials, as well as the huge global success of the drama series *Mad Men*.

The term advertising has proven to be a broad and flexible one that has been applied to a wide range of activities, particularly over recent decades as the advertising industry and the overall context of business, brands, marketing, and communications are impacted by massive social and technological change. The next section will explore the definitions for the concept of advertising used by scholars and practitioners.

1.1. Defining advertising.

The nature of advertising has changed repeatedly as the technologies used to make it, and the media used to deliver it have also changed. This has ensured that the definition of what constitutes advertising contested by scholars and practitioners. In reviewing a wide range analysis of textbook definitions of advertising, Thorson & Rodgers found the common definition for 'advertising messages' was: 'paid communication from an identified sponsor using mass media to persuade an audience' (2012, p. 4). This definition was broadly comparable to the one used by the American Marketing Association in the 1980s, which categorised 'advertising' as being 'any form of nonpersonal presentation of goods, services or ideas for action, openly paid for, by an identified sponsor' (Kaufman, 1987, p. 6).

In another analysis of definitions used in the past, but also looking towards the future of advertising theory, Royne summarised definitions as including 'paid, mass-mediated, and persuasive' characteristics. She also noted that: 'the definition of advertising has not evolved so much over the years in-as-much as definitions have blurred' (Royne, 2012, p. 542).

Deloitte Consulting, in their *Advertising Pays* report about the economic impact of the advertising industry prepared for the then Communications Council, predicated their

analysis on a definition that is arguably an example of blurring the meaning of 'advertising' with that of the broader practices of 'marketing communication' and 'corporate communication'. This definition was driven by an acceptance that 'traditional boundaries between marketing, sales and service are becoming less relevant for business' and therefore advertising now blurs into public relations, content [including editorial, comments and entertainment] along with word-of-mouth advocacy and social media'. Given this context, the concept of 'advertising' is defined in the report as 'any paid-for, owned, or earned communication intended to inform and/or influence one or more people' (2015, p. 10).

Along similar lines, noted UK industry practitioner and commentator, Jeremy Bullmore, has further blurred the concept by defining advertising as 'simply one of many available channels of communication. It is available, at a price, to everyone – and allows people to make contact with one of more other people for an almost infinite number of different ends. *Advertisements* are the messages that advertising carries, in an attempt to achieve those ends' (Bullmore, 2003, p. 8). A more recent textbook summarises that 'advertising is any form of activity to reach audiences in the most cost-efficient way, to achieve the marketer's objectives' (Moriarty et al., 2015, pp. 4-5).

The concept of advertising has blurred with other forms of marketing communications and corporate communications, and this has prompted a debate on whether the definition should be broadened. Thorson & Rodgers in their new Chapter 'Advertising Theory in the Digital Age' in the second edition [2019] of *Advertising Theory* argue that 'the world of technology has changed so drastically [...] that the fundamental definition of advertising itself has changed' (Thorson & Rodgers, 2019).

They argue that the notion of advertising being only in 'paid' and 'mass' media is no longer relevant to contemporary advertising. They also argue that the requirement that the 'identified sponsor' be apparent to recipients of the advertising has also become 'unnecessary' leading to the conclusion that 'what is left of the original definition is just two necessary attributes: a message from the advertiser, and the intention to persuade'(Thorson & Rodgers, 2019).

Following a similar logic and backed by a review of literature and research among practitioners, Dahlen & Rosengren proposed a 'working definition of advertising' to be 'brand-initiated communication intent on impacting people' (2016, p. 343). These researchers further argued that this definition itself will need further amendment as

practice and advertising related research is broadening so rapidly that an even broader definition will be required.

Advertising has been and continues to be an evolving concept, and its definition is somewhat contested both within the literature and amongst practitioners. For the purposes of this thesis, the following definitions will be used.

- i. *Traditional advertising* is that which is conducted within paid media, having an identified sponsor, communicating with persuasive intent and generally at mass scale (Thorson & Rodgers, 2012).
- ii. The general term *advertising* as used in a contemporary sense is 'brand initiated communications intent on impacting people' (Dahlen & Rosengren, 2016).

In the context of these two definitions, advertising can be considered a key sector within the broader grouping of activities that are often referred to as the 'creative industries'. The following section will explore this dynamic to locate the concept of advertising within the broader use of applied creativity in communications.

1.2. Advertising as a creative industry.

The exact definition of what are and are not elements of the creative industries has been a subject of on-going debate in academic and policy making circles. This is partly because of the technological, social, cultural and economic changes that have impacted the constituent parts of the creative industries, but also because of the inherent ambiguity and fluidity in the relationship between the different elements and how they work together in the creation of creative outputs, which makes identifying 'creative clusters' problematic (Gibson & Kong, 2005, pp. 58-59).

The advertising industry, as a key sector within the broader group of creative industries consists of advertising services, marketing services and media services. These are connected to other sectors of the creative industries through a 'value web' of relationships as members of these sectors work together to enable and support the creative process of creation and production. Other relevant creative sectors include music, performing arts, TV film and radio, publishing, software and the visual arts (Higgs et al., 2007, p. 9).

This speaks to a broad significance for advertising as it impacts on the social, cultural, economic, and even technological aspects of society. The cultural and social significance that advertising has come to have over the course of the twentieth century was summed up by advertising scholar Stephen Unwin as being 'the folklore of the twentieth century' (1974, p. 24). In this view, the impact on popular culture is a result of a 'language of advertising' which: 'is firmly anchored to cultural norms and often says more about a society's psyche than the more obvious stereotypes of content' (Unwin, 1974, p. 24).

The breadth and significance of the impact is reinforced by the observation that 'advertising's very nature, and effectiveness is shaped by its interaction with the social cultural, economic, legal, and psychological context in which it is delivered' (Thorson & Rodgers, 2012, p. 15). In doing this, the impact achieved is broad and pervasive. For instance, in looking at advertising as a force in social communication Leiss, Kline and Jhally argued that the 'real importance of advertising' is as 'the privileged discourse for the circulation of messages and social cues about the interplay between persons and objects' (1990, p. 50).

This power of advertising to create an image for a brand and its consumers which 'resonated with the complexities of gender and the ideologies of race' was demonstrated by the creation of the Ivory soap brand identity in the United States in the late nineteenth century, as 'its trademark became embedded nationally, "Ivory" became a sign of American desires, dreams and needs' (Lebduska, 2015, p. 385). This is an example of Judith Williamson's notion, grounded in 'Barthes semiology and Lacanian psychoanalysis' that 'advertising constructs secondary sign systems that establish differences between virtually similar products [like soap] that have little "real" difference' and so the audience 'adopt an exchange of sign and signified that produces product differentiation through association' (Lebduska, 2015, p. 386).

This creation of associations and meaning for brands which helps define popular culture also has a significant economic impact. Value estimates from 2015 of the global expenditure in advertising range from US\$600 billion to US\$1.2 trillion (Essex, 2015, p. 71). Within Australia, in the *Advertising Pays* report, it was estimated that the advertising industry contributes \$40 billion to the Australian economy through a direct expenditure of \$12.6 billion (Deloitte, 2015, p. 17). In a similar piece of economic analysis, the World Federation of Advertisers conducted a 2016 study in western Europe that concludes that 'each euro spent on advertising equates to seven euros of economic value' (Auletta, 2018, p. 24). While the exact financial value of the

contribution may be contested, there is significant evidence of the economic and cultural scale and impact that can be attributed to the advertising industry.

Notable practitioners such as Tom Doctoroff, former J. Walter Thompson Asia-Pacific CEO, have noted that the advertising and communications industries are at 'an exciting cross-road' with 'two concurrent models: the timeless top-down approach, and the morphing, shape-shifting bottom-up model' (2014, p. 31). Business journalist Ken Auletta identified three questions about the business of advertising which are contributing to this sense of upheaval and challenge in the industry.

The first of these questions is whether 'advertising [is] a relationship business, where accounts are won and lost on the golf course ... as had been caricatured for decades?' The second question regards whether advertising is 'a creative business, where the consumers' hearts and minds are captured by big, original ideas articulated with aesthetic brilliance?' Finally, the third question is whether advertising 'is increasingly a science, in which leadership will gravitate to those who can capture and analyse the most data?' (Auletta, 2018, p. 16).

Auletta cites an anonymous industry insider who claimed that at the core of answering these questions is a 'battle of two cultures: Math Men versus Mad Men' (2018, p. 300). These questions and trade-offs reflect the complex value web of relationships formed by the advertising and communication industries and the ways they collaborate with marketing organisations and other brand owners. The first of the questions relates to the management of the business relationships between advertising developers, media channel owners, data analysts, marketers and brand owners and is beyond the scope of the thesis. However, the second and third relate to the way creativity is utilised across the advertising development process. Understanding the nature of creativity and how it is applied to the development of communication and the strategic use of advertising is the subject of the next section.

1.3. Creativity in the context of strategic communication.

The creative industries, when considered at a broad level, can be seen as being focussed on 'linking creativity with commercial markets' (Higgs et al., 2007, p. 4). Terms like creative economy, cultural economy and cultural class have been characterised as describing 'where the cultural and economic collide' (Gibson & Kong, 2005). As such, the practices used to develop these creative products, can be considered as 'strategic'

processes, which 'implies that people will be engaged in deliberate communication practice on behalf of organisations, causes, and social movements. The creative industries link in this way into the concept of 'strategic communication' which is defined in its broadest sense as being the 'purposeful use of communication to fulfil its mission' (Hallahan et al., 2007). In general terms, the term is applied when the communication is developed and used with 'strategic intent', which involves:

1. 'Research about the publics and the lie of the land';
2. 'Constructing a plan that takes into account both the goals of the organization and feelings, needs and attitudes of publics';
3. the likely use of: 'evaluative research to assess how publics think and feel during and after a campaign'.

This strategic intent behind such communication applies to the value web used for creation and co-creation of advertising content. In practical terms then, it 'use[s] information flowing into the organisation [i.e., research] to plan and carry out a communication campaign addressing the relationship between an organisation and its publics' (Botan, 2018, p. 8). This aligns with the definition of strategic communication as 'the purposeful, normative use of communication functions and discourse processes by organizations to accomplish their missions, visions, and core values' (Heath et al., 2018, p. 1).

This involves overlapping economic, and creative considerations which are at the heart of marketing and communication development. The literature affirms that a 'primary signifier 'of strategic communication is 'is organization-centric communicativeness' (Heath et al., 2018).

In both the general contemporary definition of advertising and the traditional definition grounded in paid communication channels, advertising development processes are implicitly associated with forms of organisation like marketing teams (either in a formal or informal form), and sales teams linked with other service, manufacturing, or support functions. These teams contribute towards setting the goals for the advertising, and their organisation becomes the identified sponsor of the communication. This requires goal setting, planning and management of the implementation by the organisation, and broadly, there are three levels to consider:

1. 'Grand strategy' – in which an organization makes 'policy level decisions' regarding 'goals, alignments, ethics and relationships with publics';

2. 'Strategy' – which is the 'campaign level' planning that should 'exist to implement grand strategy';
3. 'Tactics' - which are 'the specific activities and outputs through which strategies are implemented'.

There are 'at least two dimensions' which characterise the relationship of grand strategy, strategy, and tactics, so that 'authority and guidance flows downward, but substance flows upward. This relationship can be understood as a kind of duality much as light and dark are a duality. Each is separate from but dependent upon the other, at least in the sense that one is only really meaningful if the other exists' (Botan, 2018, pp. 13-14). This interdependence is a demonstration of the organizational nature of the creativity being applied to advertising development and to the nature of the value web of collaborators which form as part of the advertising development process.

Heath et al. contend there are four conceptualisations of strategic communication within organisations and how it fits within the field of communication studies. Grounded in different and emerging theoretical approaches towards this concept, they conceive strategic communication as 1) a public relations or corporate communication; 2) a comparative framework; 3) an organising/ integrative concept; and 4) an organisational meta-process (2018, pp. 7-14).

The concept of the advertising idea has a role as a formative tool within that development process. This involves the application of creativity to strategic communication tasks to determine how that directs and informs how creativity is applied to develop advertising materials.

The area of inquiry for this thesis regards the role and utility of the advertising idea concept. This is considered in the context of the rapid change in communications technologies that is causing a convergence of media. The public is empowered by this dynamic to choose when and where they consume their preferred content, and in the process, choose whether to engage.

Advertising practice is to develop selling messages using a combination of psychologically grounded, data informed, and intuitively derived statements that act as the internal focus for the creative process of bringing together disparate elements, and so organize the communication elements to influence the audience. The nature of the advertising idea is impacted by that selling message in the context of the insightful understanding of the target audience. However, since the turn of the century,

advertising practice is facing a trend leading towards the application of new sources of data about people's behaviour. This includes information about the purchase and usage of products and services, consumption of media, location, and travel, and is utilised to create what could be called *precision* advertising. This involves:

1. Precise targeting of people – connecting to a specific group of people [defined in a wide range of ways from specific demographics to specific behaviour and attitudinal characteristics] at a specific time and place when they are pre-disposed to being exposed to specific messages;
2. Precise messaging to these people – using behavioural, shopping and other relevant facts to inform the creation of the specific message that is appropriate to that precise audience;
3. Use of principles of behavioural economics to tailor the messaging to prompt the desired change in behaviour among the precise group of people being targeted.

This thesis will be taking an approach grounded in theories of communication and creativity, applied to the concept of the advertising idea to explore how this new precision advertising development of practice complements, or conflicts with more traditional and intuitive creative practice, both for the individual practitioners and the teams in which they work. In this context, is an advertising idea a useful formative and organisational tool for managing how the message, context, insight, and objective intersect to create impact and meaning?

The Literature Review chapter will go into more detail about the theoretical underpinnings of the debate among practitioners and scholars about the nature and role of advertising, the creativity that goes into conceiving, implementing, and evaluating it, and the function that the advertising idea concept has played within practice in the past and could play in the future.

2. Literature Review.

Critical inquiry into advertising and its effects has taken several different forms. The field has drawn on theories from business generally, and marketing specifically as well as communication and the fields of psychology, consumer behaviour, economics, and social/ cultural development. As discussed in the Introduction, advertising theorists Thorson & Rodgers argue that ‘the world of technology has changed so drastically [...] that the fundamental definition of advertising itself has changed’. So, they argue that the notion of advertising is now defined by: ‘just two necessary attributes: a message from the advertiser, and the intention to persuade’ (Thorson & Rodgers, 2019).

Over the development of advertising practice there have been two broad traditions or ‘milieus’ that compete to inform practice ‘the creative and liberal arts milieu that informs the creative mentality, and the bureaucratic, scientific milieu of management practice’ (Hackley & Kover, 2007). These milieus could also be labelled the *creative* and *scientific* traditions of advertising practice.

The *creative tradition* in advertising is referring to an intuitive creative practice that has evolved to become about developing an advertising idea, conceived through subjective means, dependent upon the experience and perspective of the practitioners involved, which is anticipated to deliver the intended results. Complementing this creative practice, the *scientific tradition* draws on psychology to bring a systematic and ostensibly objective approach to the techniques used to capture people’s attention and influence their attitudes and behaviour. The theoretical underpinnings of psychology, including early cognitive psychology that proposed fundamental laws and needs as the basis of human behaviour, provided users and practitioners of advertising with increased levels of confidence that the communication will work to achieve the objectives set.

These complementary and conflicting traditions of advertising practice have echoes in the overlapping inter-related theoretical debates which are grounded in the ‘interplay between the sciences and the specific, dual nature of communication’ recognised by Aristotle, with ‘reference to rhetoric as art and science’ (Bruhn Jensen, 2018, p. 179). The debate in the literature regarding the nature of advertising and the formative, summative and evaluative practices associated with it is in the context provided by extremes of humanistic, intuitive, creative and expansive approaches, balanced with

scientific, data driven, functional and reductive approaches. This body of scholarship has its foundation in four fundamental areas of theory and enquiry. These are:

1. Communication theory;
2. Influencing behaviour;
3. Organizational creativity frameworks;
4. Normative creative development processes.

Each of these areas of theory will be the focus of a section of this chapter. The debate between the creative and scientific paradigms as is relevant to each of the areas of theory will be explored.

2.1. Communication Theory.

Communication theory is a highly contested area of enquiry which has been characterized as 'a division between broadly arts and social science approaches to media and communication'. These approaches have 'shadowed sociology (and social psychology)' in key aspects, although 'a good deal of theoretical achievement has shown the impact of humanities thinking about media form, social meaning, subjectivity, and identity in ways that have differed markedly from the sociological tradition in core concepts and approaches' (Corner, 2015). This makes the contrast between the creative and scientific paradigms central to this theoretical area.

This conflict began with the development in the decade after the Second World War of a scientific paradigm which initially reduced understanding of communication to being a 'mathematical', sequential, technical model of a transmission system. This was to be analysed and mapped like an engineering diagram, with the work originating at the Bell Telephone Labs of the AT&T company (Shannon & Weaver, 1949).

At much the same time, Harold Lasswell put forward his *formula* which postulated that the 'act of communication' can be conveniently described by answering the questions: Who, says what, in which channel, to whom, and with what effect? (1948, p. 84). In effect this linear model acted like a 'verbal version of Shannon & Weaver's original model', *A Mathematical Theory of Communication*, applied specifically to mass media (Fiske, 1982, p. 32). This early theory was later labelled by William Schram as 'the bullet theory of communication', as it provided a basis for understanding the nature of a communication act, but it ignored the audience as a participant in that act. Schram himself subsequently critiqued that this approach that treated the audience as

'relatively passive and defenceless' as though 'communication could *shoot something into them*, just as an electric circuit could deliver electrons to a light bulb' (Schramm, 1970, p. 9).

In the same positivist, 'systems-theory' tradition, other early theorists proposed general theories of communication, with an ever-greater complexity for the system being conceived. For instance, Gerbner's model attempted to frame the 'nature and interplay between perceptions and production', by introducing a 'perceptual' dimension and a 'means and control' dimension to the linear system (McQuail & Windahl, 1981, pp. 18-19). Other theorists have proposed different communication process models, notably DeFleur, Westley & MacLean, and Schramm & Osgood, who all variously wrestled with the challenge of modelling mass communication systems in linear, circular or multi-dimensional forms and explaining its role in the broader society and in the difference between the meaning produced and received message (McQuail & Windahl, 1981, pp. 12-35).

Grounded in these theories of transmission of meaning, are the theories of how persuasion or attitude change is achieved via communication, which originated with the Yale Reinforcement Approach. This was developed by Hovland, Janis and Kelly on the guiding assumption that 'exposure to a persuasive communication which successfully induces the individual to accept a new opinion constitutes a learning experience in which a new verbal habit is acquired' (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010, p. 154).

This new focus became the theoretical underpinning for the development of McGuire's information processing model, which 'elaborated two ideas that were suggested but were never systematically worked out by Hovland'. These were: 1) 'that there are different stages involved in the processing of persuasive communications; and 2) that determinants of persuasion could have different impacts at different stages' (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010, p. 156).

McGuire used the Laswell's 'interrogative formulation' that establishes communication as a 'matter of who says what, via what medium, to whom, directed at what kind of target' to create input categories of 'source, message, channel, receiver and destination' (McGuire, 1989, pp. 45 - 46). The variables which represent potential answers for each of the 'input categories' in McGuire's model, have been identified through research to have impact on the persuasiveness of the communication. The theory: 'assumes that persuasive messages need to be systematically processed in order to have impact' (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010, p. 157). McGuire's information

processing model also contains output factors to help explain the successive 'sub-steps required if the communication is to be effective' and the answer the second of the questions inspired by Hovland regarding the determinants of persuasion. This involves a twelve-step analysis of the outputs to understand, like, comprehend, and then engage, internalize and act on the message (McGuire, 1989, p. 48).

The challenge with these and many other process models is they assume a relatively passive receiver of the communication and therefore, cannot provide a general explanation for the mass communications systems of generation, transmission, and processing of meaning which were becoming increasingly important for communication models to explain. Addressing this challenge led to the emergence of the intuitive paradigm of communication theory. It is grounded in the creativity of the humanities, with a post-modern mindset to understand discourse, deconstruct how and why meaning is created by actively engaged receivers, as well as taking a critical view of the power relationships and structures that enable dissemination of that meaning.

The tension between the two paradigms stimulated an extended debate between communication theoreticians. This debate led to the special symposium on the state of communication theory called *Ferment in The Field*. In his essay contribution to this debate, Robert White argued that 'media have come to be viewed not as having an unlimited capacity to directly affect behaviour in themselves, but as having influence through a complex set of cultural, economic, and socio-political factors' (White, 1983, p. 281).

White was writing at a key moment in the history of the study of communication theory, and directly contradicting the approach taken in the scientific traditions when the scope and dimensions of the field of communication theory was being debated by scholars around the world. In this debate was what Wilbur Schramm, in his own contribution to the *Ferment in the Field*, described as a recognition that "Communication is now seen as a transaction in which both parties are active" (Schramm, 1983, p. 14).

In what was then an emerging area of academic enquiry, this more intuitive and less scientific approach to the field derived from the humanities and social sciences. Within this paradigm of academic thought, Fiske characterises the focus as being 'not so much on communications as a process, but on communication as the generation of meaning'(Fiske, 1982, p. 42). This led to the *semiotic* approach to communication theory with the emphasis away from the process of transmission and more on the 'generation of meaning'. Key theoreticians have been Peirce, Ogden and Richards,

Saussure and his followers Guiraud and Barthes, all seeking to explain the relationship between cultural/ linguistic 'signs', 'the negotiated meaning ascribed to [these] members of a culture, and the signified object[s]' (Fiske, 1982, pp. 42-56).

This breadth of influences reflected the international nature of the scholarship in the field and introduced different areas of focus on understanding how meaning is generated for the receiver by communication. French scholar Armand Mattelart, in his contribution to *Ferment in the Field*, argued from a Marxist position that in communications research 'relations between cultural creation and the production of information should be conceptualised to take into account artists, journalists and mediators of the new technologies', and then warned that: 'we risk underestimating the influence of capital on artistic activity' (Mattelart, 1983, p. 66).

Reflecting on the state of the field of communication theory in 1983, Schramm surmised that 'communication is always *part* of something. It represents a relationship not only between individuals but also between relationships. He further noted the breadth of opportunities for future enquiry in the field, observing that: 'the doors from communication open on almost every corner of human life' (1983, p. 16). Within this evolving context, there was concern at the 'frequent failure to find a correlation between argument recall and attitude change; despite evidence that recipients had systematically processed the message arguments' (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010, p. 158)

The cognitive response model was developed by Greenwald, Petty, Ostrom and Brock, and it replaces the 'passive listener' in the McGuire model with an 'active thinker, who engages in a silent discussion with the communicator and argues for or against the arguments contained in a communication'(Fennis & Stroebe, 2010, pp. 158-159). It therefore stresses the importance of the 'cognitive responses' of the individual – the thoughts they generate, rehearse, and learn in response to persuasive communication. As such, it is the nature of the response generated by the recipient of the message that determines whether they will be persuaded by the communication. So, since 'recipients process messages more or less intensively, persuasion should depend on both: 1) the extent to which recipients engage in message relevant thoughts and 2) the favourability of those thoughts' (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010, pp. 158-159).

More recent work by Petty et al., and by Chaiken et al., has developed the cognitive response model into dual process theories of persuasion. Within this model there is a recognition that 'recipients may sometimes take short cuts and accept or reject the position recommended by the communicator without thinking about the message

arguments'. They also 'specify the factors which determine the intensity of message processing and thus the conditions under which attitude change will be mediated by message-relevant thinking' (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010, p. 161).

The two extremes of the scientific and the artistic/ intuitive paradigms bookends for the development of communication theory over the subsequent thirty years. Robert Craig, in his pivotal 1999 paper *Communication Theory as a Field*, contends that seven traditions in communication theory developed and 'divide the field according to underlying conceptions of communicative practice' (Craig, 1999, p. 135). These traditions defined by Craig's *constitutive metamodel* are rhetorical, semiotic, phenomenological, cybernetic, sociopsychological, sociocultural, and the critical, and their application is summarized as 'applying communication theory involves engaging the traditions of theoretical meta-discourse with practical meta-discourse on real communication problems' (Craig, 1999, p. 152).

Craig further argued that: 'the field of communication theory is logically open to new traditions, subject only to the limitation that each new tradition must be based on a unique model of communicative practice that, when integrated into the field [which may involve redefining other traditions], is not logically redundant with any other model' (1999, p. 150). Building on this point and reflecting on his metamodel in 2015, Craig contended that: 'traditions as conceived in the constitutive metamodel are not discrete, inert containers; they do not compose a fixed system of classification such that each theory can be placed in one and only one tradition' (2015, p. 359). This metamodel 'provides [an] important but not exclusive theoretical base for conceptualizing [the concept of strategic communication]' as was discussed in the Introduction (Heath et al., 2018, p. 14).

One of the characteristics of communication research is that it: 'rearticulates the hope and fears of both senders and receivers [of the communication being researched], feeding back its findings and insights to different stakeholders and society at large.' As such this field of scholarship provides what Giddens called 'double hermeneutics' as 'cultural realities that have already been interpreted by the people inhabiting them' are studied and thus reinterpreted (Bruhn Jensen, 2018, p. 177).

Hermeneutics more generally is a useful framework for the interpretation of texts, grounded in the rhetorical tradition of communication theory to gain understanding of all the meanings contained within that text. In the tradition formalized by Gadamer, 'the hermeneutic circle' means that not only can 'the parts [of a text] only be understood

from an understanding of the whole [text]' but it is also the case that 'the whole can only be understood from an understanding of the parts' (Schmidt, 2014, pp. 4-9).

Understanding a text 'in the hermeneutic experience' involves applying 'text signals' to bring 'the text to speak again in the expanded horizon of the interpreter' (Schmidt, 2014, p. 111). This allows scholars to address three practical issues:

1. 'The availability of information' (what is there to be understood by anyone);
2. 'The accessibility of information' (to someone in particular, and what they do and don't do about that information);
3. 'The performativity of information and communication' ('who is able to do what with which words', 'and by extension which media') which enables communication research to describe, interpret, and explain. This informs and potentially transforms analysis using the Aristotelian concept that the use of scientific and analytical frameworks is decided by the ends of the given science, in response to 'changing technologies and institutions' (Bruhn Jensen, 2018, pp. 179-180).

This field is grounded in the recognition that 'communication is, at once, a productive or technical skill and a social practice that enables both individual reflection and collective deliberation.' This is enabled by 'institutions of reflection and deliberation' – the scholarly institutions which Aristotle labelled 'institutions-to-think-with' (Bruhn Jensen, 2018, p. 179). This locates communication studies within a collective, organised framework to facilitate reflection as to the meanings being generated, and for whom they are relevant and meaningful. The next section of this chapter picks up the question of who the message is relevant to and looks at frameworks for how that audience responds and acts because of the message. This is to understand the ability of communication generally and advertising specifically, to influence people's behaviour.

2.2. Influencing behaviour.

The focus of this section is the body of theories and practice regarding the effect advertising has on knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour of its target audience while understanding peoples' needs, motivations, and desires. Regardless of how specific the definition of 'advertising' is used by scholars or practitioners, determining the impact that is intended is a key consideration for them to factor into the creative development process.

This intent is expressed as the *objective* of the advertising activity and literature in this area of theory tends towards the scientific paradigm. These frameworks help practitioners understand and characterise the relationship between those people, businesses, and other organisations. This informs and inspires creative development of advertising that is more impactful and memorable than other 'less creative' advertisements (Jin et al., 2019).

The question of whether advertising was meeting its objectives (that is, determining whether it works) is captured by the advertising industry aphorism, attributed to both Lord Leverhulme (soap manufacturing and marketing pioneer in the U.K.) and John Wannamaker (department store pioneer in the U.S.A.) that, 'I know half my advertising spend is wasted, I just don't know which half' (Jones, 1990). Whomever said this first, it underlines that advertising is inherently purposeful. It is created to achieve results, not as an end in itself. Another early example, articulating this perception that advertising must be purposeful to be of value, was expressed in 1911 by the pioneering Chicago advertising agency Lord & Thomas, when it advocated that 'advertising was literature which compels Action ... [and] changes the mind of millions at will' (Pope, 1983, p. 13). In the century since Lord & Thomas expressed the potency of advertising to 'compel action' the nature of the relationship between an advertisement's selling message and the response by the recipient of the message is a subject that has been widely debated within the industry and in academic circles.

The major area of theoretical development has been a series of hierarchy of effects models, which: 'assume that consumer responses to advertising proceed through a fixed set of three learning stages:' the cognitive stage of 'conscious attention to the ad' summarized as 'Learn'; the affective stage of 'emotional responses to the ad', summarized as 'Feel' ; and the conative stage when 'the behavioural impact might arise', which is summarized as 'Do' (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010, p. 29).

These frameworks that seek to 'analyse the stages of psychological processing' have been seen as being impractical for empirical study among 'large samples of consumers' and Jones has argued that this makes these frameworks difficult to validate (Jones, 1999). Although, since this view was developed in the 1990s, many advertisers have access to 'big data' from marketing technologies and social media engagement and involvement data. This enables new opportunities to test models and hypotheses regarding attitudes, involvement, and behaviour, however this information and insight is grounded in specific circumstances, and the information gleaned from

such analysis is largely kept confidential apart from the selective release of information through advertising effectiveness cases.

Therefore, there is value in using the generalizable frameworks to help provide a broad characterization of how people respond to advertising stimuli despite their empirical shortcomings. On that basis and given that 'advertising can only work if it is received, comprehended, and responded to in some way', the range of potential and hypothetical impacts can be bookended by two 'extreme ways in which advertising effects are believed to make themselves felt' (Jones, 1999, pp. 219-220). At one extreme, the response can be characterized as 'the *learning hierarchy*' which is 'a logical sequential process'; while at the other extreme can be seen as 'the *low-involvement hierarchy*' which is a 'process that encompasses fluidity and feedback' (Jones, 1999, p. 219).

Learning hierarchy is predicated on the 'simple chain of causality', often described as 'learn-feel-do'. This rational type of response is: 'often associated with certain types of print advertising, notably direct response' and prompts 'non-users' to 'embrace a change in knowledge and attitudes' and become classified as 'users'. Versions of this hierarchy have been presented in 'at least 16 forms (Jones, 1999, p. 220). Some of the early effect hierarchies used in analysing advertising have been:

1. AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action);
2. AIDCA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Conviction, Action)
3. AIETA (Awareness, Interest, Evaluation, Trial, Adoption);
4. The Lavidge and Steiner model: Awareness -> Knowledge -> Liking -> Preference -> Conviction -> Purchase.

However, although none of these models provided a valid 'description of how advertising "works"' as they assume a high level of consumer involvement in all communication, despite experience showing that high involvement has been found to be the 'exception rather than the rule'(Fennis & Stroebe, 2010, pp. 29 - 30).

Low-Involvement hierarchies, as the other extreme, can be described as 'learn-do-feel' and as such is about: 'people's relationships to products, brands, and media – relationships that might be described as lacking emotional commitment because of the relative unimportance of purchase decisions to the consumer.' As such this model 'works with uninvolved consumers and few obvious differences between the brand alternatives' (Jones, 1999, pp. 220-223).

To frame the full range of such theoretical responses into a useful model with practical implications for practitioners, Richard Vaughn at Foote, Cone & Belding (FCB), proposed a matrix to 'classify products and services' in terms of an integration of traditional hierarchy models with consumer involvement levels. This 'FCB Grid' modeled the nature of the involvement on one axis (whether it prompts a 'thinking' response or a 'feeling' response) with the intensity of the involvement on the other (from high to low involvement) (1980).

The resulting grid creates four quadrants – each of which 'delineates four primary advertising planning strategies – 'informative', 'affective', 'habitual' and 'satisfaction' with their most appropriate ... hierarchy of effects [sequence]' (1986). This grid and variations thereof are a step forward in understanding the effect of advertising because they recognize that 'consumers are sometimes less than highly involved' and so are 'unmotivated to exert the cognitive effort' assumed by traditional hierarchies (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010, p. 31).

One alternative hierarchy of effects model is DAGMAR [Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results] which was originally published in 1961 by Richard Colley. This model identifies 'nine different effects' which advertising can 'yield'. These are placed into a hierarchical order which starts with the 'category need' effect which can evolve into 'brand awareness, brand knowledge/comprehension, brand attitude, brand purchase intention, purchase facilitation, purchase, satisfaction and brand loyalty' (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010, pp. 32-33).

However, the issue with all these 'grand theories' of how people respond to advertising stimuli is that the models can't account the individual drivers of response or the broader economic, social, political and cultural influences that also will be difficult to explain at a "macro" level. Another way to characterise this debate, which is relevant to this thesis, is to understand the strength of advertising as a 'force' in society in terms of its ability to have a direct impact on the behaviour of individuals – or in more specifically measurable terms: 'drive sales'. Jones' paper identifies that the studies about the 'effectiveness of advertising' tend towards the 'strong force' theory (regardless of whether it is a strong force for good or ill) and therefore assume that 'advertising is effective, and that we need only to develop more sophisticated measurement tools and we shall then be able to quantify the payoff' (Jones, 1990).

Under the strong theory, advertising is seen as a 'powerful driver of the economy' and culture with the ability to:

1. persuade people to buy a brand they had not bought previously;
2. increase sales of the category of products and the brand within it (and the profits for brands);
3. act as a 'driving force for demand' for the economy as a whole;
4. 'manipulate the consumer'.

These abilities are made possible by what Jones characterizes as an implicit assumption that 'consumers are apathetic and rather stupid' (1990). Contrary to this view is what Jones has labelled the 'weak theory' which has been informed by the work of the British mathematician Andrew Ehrenberg, who has published widely on consumer purchasing patterns. The weak theory contends that advertising: 'is capable of increasing people's knowledge and stimulating trial of a brand'; is not strong enough to 'persuade people whose beliefs are different from what is claimed in the advertising' or of 'overcoming resistant attitudes'; and is commonly used to 'retain existing users' as it will struggle to persuade people to do anything different. This view holds that the 'consumers are apathetic [about marketing and advertising] and rather intelligent' (Jones, 1990).

The purchasing dynamics explored by Ehrenberg are not directly related to the approach taken for creative development explored by this thesis. However, reflecting further on the weak theory in 1997, Jones does note Ehrenberg's view that the short, medium, and long-term effectiveness of advertising (in terms of sales impact) are heavily influenced by the existing scale of the brand, in terms of the number of households who have it or use it, and the frequency with which they buy it. This raises the central question Ehrenberg has about the 'power' of advertising: 'If existing buying behavior has a greater influence on buying than external stimuli do, what do these stimuli accomplish?' (Jones, 1997).

In 1995 Jones undertook, what he termed, 'pure single source' research into the influence of advertising on consumer purchasing. The details of this research are not relevant to this thesis, so it will suffice it to note that he 'drew a clear and robust conclusion that advertising is capable of a sharp immediate effect on sales: in direct contradiction to Ehrenberg's doctrine that advertising's short-term effect is solely to increase brand awareness'. He also cites studies by Walter Reichel in 1994 and Colin McDonald in 1996 which support his own work and show that 'short-term sales effect of advertising on sales is evanescent' – with a marked decline in impact from day one after exposure to the advertisement to two days post exposure (Jones, 1997).

In his analysis, Jones did not question Ehrenberg's conclusions about the importance of purchasing dynamics on the medium- and longer-term impact of advertising on sales, but was identifying an impact that was an extension of what Ehrenberg called the 'reinforcement' role of advertising, but falls short of a 'persuasive power' to directly impact behavior (1997). Continuing his work researching the impact of advertising on consumer product purchase, Jones provides 'strong evidence' from an analysis of the sales of 78 brands using data from the A.C. Nielsen panel of 40,000 households in the United States, 'that advertising is capable of providing a pronounced effect on consumer purchases of a brand within a short period [generally measured as seven days] after its exposure' (Jones, 2007, p. 13).

Jones' analysis has also shown that this short term, immediate sales effect has the potential to provide the basis for a medium-term effect, because 'a repetition of short-term effects over a period [normally twelve months]—effects felt exclusively during the periods when the brand is advertised—adds up to a medium-term effect' (Jones, 2007, p. 37). He makes conclusions about the sales impact of advertising under specific circumstances, and his conclusions are not in direct conflict with Ehrenberg's marketing principles but do show that the broader marketing context is a key factor that either inhibits or enhances the ability of advertising to directly impact sales. This leads to the conclusion that advertising has the potential to drive sales, under the right conditions.

A parallel debate about the business impact of advertising has been circulating in the advertising industry over the past twenty years and informed by a seminal analysis, summarized in the *International Journal of Advertising*, of 880 award winning case studies at the UK Institute for Practitioners in Advertising [IPA] Advertising Effectiveness Awards by leading practitioners Les Binet and Peter Field. This study identified key strategic factors within the case study submissions which were central to proving that the advertising was effective. Like Jones and Ehrenberg, such analysis involves operational, financial and marketing factors as influences on whether a campaign had the desired sales and, or profit impact on the business of the relevant "brand". Some of the generalized principles drawn, were:

1. setting sales or profit objectives [as opposed to 'soft' communication metrics like awareness and saliency measures] was an important part of effective cases;
2. the strategy of 'acquiring new customers', or increasing the number of households who buy the brand (penetration metric) was more effective than cases where the marketing objective was to increase the 'loyalty' of existing

- consumers (i.e., get current consumers to buy more frequently or greater amounts);
3. Aiming to 'reduce price sensitivity' (i.e., increase the likelihood that consumers will pay a premium for the brand) are more effective than campaigns that aim to increase sales or market share;
 4. Campaigns that had 'talk value (i.e., successfully stimulated consumers to discuss the campaign) were noted to be particularly effective, which suggests that emotional strategies that stimulate the "water cooler effect" to provides social currency and 'fame' for a campaign were a potent force well before the advent of social media.

Overall, this study demonstrated 'longer-term' effects of advertising on the overall health of a business or brand that have different dynamics from the short-term sales effects often reported for direct response and retail advertising (Binet & Field, 2009).

This view suggests that Jones' spectrum of the force of advertising from weak to strong can only be a partial explanation for the potential for advertising to affect sales, consumer perceptions and consumer behaviour. It also questions the utility of Jones' spectrum of characterizing the consumer in terms of being 'stupid' or 'intelligent' – there is clearly much more going on to drive the level of cognitive involvement in the advertising than that.

The hierarchy of effects group of theories have been predicated on an assumption that stimulating direct action by people required that they first become aware of the message and were persuaded by it (by cognitively processing it) and so to drive consideration of whether to act or not. Whether advertising has such a direct power to drive changes in behaviour is a question that has been extensively debated and is discussed in the Introduction.

However, over the past forty years the focus within advertising on how to stimulate behaviour change has shifted, prompted by the emergence of behavioural insights from the theoretical psychological framework of behavioural economics. These behavioural insights, which are popularly called *nudge theory*, have provided ways to stimulate changes in everyday and often unconscious, behaviours by providing behavioural encouragement, or nudges, within the context of everyday life.

Kahneman, in *Thinking Fast and Slow*, compared two different ways the brain process information: *System 1* intuitive and fast, unconscious thinking, and *System 2*

deliberative and slow, conscious thought. People like to assume they are rational and thoughtful beings and so imagine they are being deliberative about their decision-making. However, this work, and continuing research, has established that ‘the intuitive System 1 is more influential than your experience tells you, and it is the secret author of many of the choices and judgements that you make’ (Kahneman, 2011, p. 13).

So, influencing System 1 thinking can have an impact on decision making, although that will be at a sub-conscious level and so people will be unaware of the effect on their thinking. Behaviour can be nudged towards the more efficient, more effective, better outcome that is desired by the organisation that wants to impact behaviour. The philosophy of behavioural theorists is that social organisations and governments can and should exercise a benignly coercive influence over the everyday behaviour of people – steering them towards making choices that are deemed better for them by using behavioural nudges. Thaler and Sunstein sum up this coercive influence, which they call ‘*libertarian paternalism*’, as: ‘self-conscious efforts, by institutions in the private sector and also, by government, to steer people’s choices in directions that will improve their lives’. (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008, p. 5).

The relevance of this to advertising communication started with experimentation in using policy nudges to drive better outcomes by the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in the Obama Administration in the United States in, led by Cass Sustein (Kahneman, 2011, p. 372). Working with Richard Thaler, Sustein wrote *Nudge* on the practical application of ‘psychological nudges’ to drive behavioural outcomes and applied the theories to help people understand their own decision-making and suggest how decisions can be influenced and guided. The popular impact of this book among key decision makers led to Thaler working with David Halpern in the establishment of the behavioural insights team in the UK Government [the so-called Nudge Unit in the Cabinet Office, established in 2010 during the Cameron Government] to ‘identify low-cost and unobtrusive ways of *nudging* behaviour’ (Halpern, 2015, p. 2).

Halpern writes of when the unit was first set up in July 2010 saying its remit was ‘applying behavioural science in a systematic way to a range of policies at the very heart of Government’ (Halpern, 2015, p. 57). This remit extends well beyond communication – it influences the policy formulation itself and the approach to regulation and enforcement that is needed to manage compliance. However, inevitably the use of behavioural economics flowed through to impact the communication requirements for the policies and the information campaigns that they required.

The use of psychological theories, like behavioural insights provide a basis for predicting the tangible impact of communications campaigns (often in the context of broader behavioural impacts associated with broader initiatives in policy or product and service delivery). This approach brings what is arguably a more objective focus to the planning of the communications strategies and determining the intended impact.

To summarise this section, the literature shows there has been continuing debate among practitioners and scholars about the nature and scale of the impact of advertising can on what people think, feel, and do. Empirical proof of the direct impact is difficult to find at a general level – instead various frameworks for how the impact occurs have been hypothesised through a combination of practical observation by practitioners and extrapolation of models based on the partial evidence available from a combination of reported behaviour and indirect impact on indicators such as sales. Modern *precision* marketing technologies provide the opportunity for data which does directly link exposure to advertising to changes in knowledge attitude and behaviour, but such data is highly dependent on the specific marketing ecosystem in which it is developed, and the evidence tends to be kept confidential by the advertiser organisation.

The next section examines literature regarding another organizational aspect of advertising development – models for how creativity is facilitated within organisations generally and how these creativity systems combine the social science tradition with the creative tradition to create advertising concepts, and then go on to refine, implement and evaluate them. This involves theories regarding the nature of creativity itself and how it is stimulated to solve problems.

2.3. Organizational frameworks for creativity

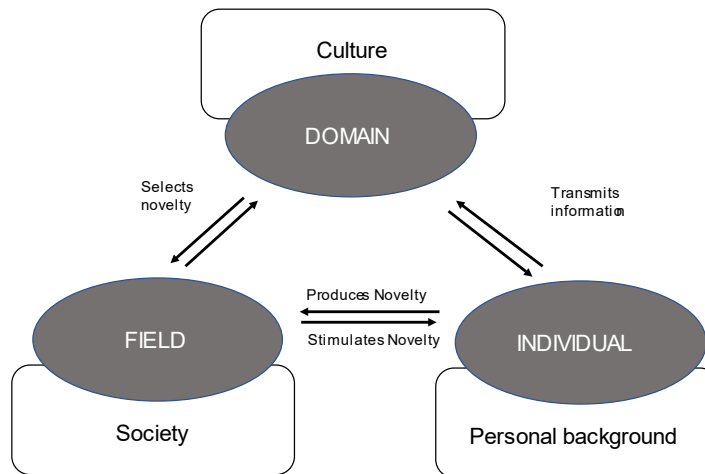
There has long been reverence for the creativity of the ‘individual genius’ – someone of unusual talent who creates breakthroughs as an act of ‘intuitive’ creativity. This perspective is why the ‘great’ advertising creative practitioners, from Claude Hopkins to Helen Lansdowne to Bill Bernbach and Jay Chiat, have been lionised and celebrated within the advertising industry. It is an example of ‘the “lone genius” lay [understanding] of creativity’ in which ‘solo, “lone” individuals [rather than groups] are the source of creative ideas’. This view has been attributed, through a combination of observation and research, to ‘lay observers’ of creativity who ‘tend to hold an implicit theory of creativity’ which ‘emphasizes “thinking outside the box”’ and so associates creativity with divergent thinking and developing ‘solutions that are different from what has come

before' (Proudfoot & Fath, 2021). Perceptions of these practitioners working in advertising developing the creative ideas are 'characterised by outsiders as [being] quirky and insecure, brash and brilliant, and even mendacious' (Hackley & Kover, 2007).

This concept is largely true to 'pre-twentieth century ideas [that] creativity is divinely inspired, as the product of an extraordinary individual or genius or as a product of mental illness' (Fulton & Paton, 2016, p. 27). It is an attitude that is prevalent among 'lay observers' of both creative processes generally and of advertising specifically. This helps form the 'mental models' which practitioners have regarding the nature of creativity, as 'multifaceted and dynamically linked' by being defined, 'on the one hand [as] conceptual innovativeness, deeply influencing not only communication strategies but potentially clients' business strategy as well', while also they assert 'artistic craft as [being an] equally important attribute of creativity'. These mental models further extend to being 'about the creation process both in its individual and social generative contexts' and 'the unique effects they believe creativity has on consumers', which they perceive as different from the mental models they assume their clients have adopted (Nyilasy et al., 2013). However, regardless of the types of 'creative people', in considering the broader context in which creativity occurs, Csikszentmihalyi argues that 'we cannot study creativity by isolating individuals and their works from the social and historical milieu in which their actions are carried out, [on the basis that] what we call creative is never the result of individual action alone' (2015).

In the *Systems Model of Creativity*, Csikszentmihalyi proposes that 'creativity' is: 'the product of three main shaping forces: a set of social institutions, or field, that selects from the variations produced by individuals those that are worth preserving; a stable cultural domain that will preserve and transmit the selected new ideas or forms to the following generations; and finally the individual, who brings about some change in the domain, a change that the field, will consider to be creative' (Csikszentmihalyi, 2015, p. 47). The inter-relationship between these three forces is illustrated in figure 2.3.1. In this framework: "each of the three main systems—person, field, and domain—affects the others and is affected by them in turn, one might say that the three systems represent three "moments" of the same creative process" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2015, p. 51).

Figure 2.3.1 Csikszentmihalyi's Systems Model of Creativity (Fulton & Paton, 2016, p. 29).



Within an agency organisation the mix of experiences of the individuals applying creativity towards addressing challenges, or meeting objectives on behalf of the organisation, evolve into an 'organisational creative code', or practical culture of creative expectations (Stuhlfaut, 2011). The literature presents creativity practice as a 'trade-off' between 'divergent or original' and 'convergent or appropriate' thinking, on the basis that for a creative idea to be both 'on strategy', and to be 'considered creative' it needs to be 'appropriate', as well as 'original'. In applied creativity research, Kilgour & Koslow showed that the 'creativity' used to build novelty or to ensure appropriateness of a concept should be grounded in the experience of the individuals involved. They argued that 'some knowledge of the initial domain must also be available to make the connection [of elements brought together through divergent thinking] relevant (Kilgour & Koslow, 2009, pp. 298-299).

This process of ideation is seen to apply creativity towards 'problem solving' and 'problem finding' in a way that isn't entirely intuitive but rather 'reflects originality and appropriateness, intuition and logic' (Runco, 2004, p. 664). The creative techniques identified in the literature 'vary depending on the extent that they encourage divergent or convergent processes, although most are focussed on divergent thinking' (Kilgour & Koslow, 2009, pp. 298-299). However, as Csikszentmihalyi argues, the creativity of the individuals is assessed through an organisational process because 'the only way to establish whether or not something is creative is through comparison, evaluation, and interpretation' (2015, p. 54).

The cognitive process of developing 'atypical' connections that provides a 'revolutionary perspective' that 'reorients' an individual's representational and cognitive network to provide a new path to solve a problem is characterised by Schilling as the basis for developing 'insight' (2005). Schilling's research demonstrated that this dynamic underpins normative techniques to stimulate insight and thereby come up with more creative solutions, or ideas. These atypical connections between elements are the basis of how originality, and 'new-ness' is ensured in the creative ideas developed, whilst remaining appropriate and on strategy.

The formative techniques used in agencies evolved in the context of both creative and scientific traditions as practitioners moved between agencies, and blended experiences and best practice. Both traditions are brought together in the broad techniques used to develop advertising concepts and executions within the agency organisation. This 'creative code' is 'socially constructed, highly interpretive and negotiated over time' (Stuhlfaut, 2011).

'Creativity' within this codified and organisational context: 'appears to arise from the confluence of three components: the traits of the individual generating the creative output, the problem-solving methods they use, and the organisational environment in which they operate' (Collier et al., 2021). As such, 'it may be formally expressed, such as in corporate documents, but most importantly and more influentially, the code is thought to be informally constituted by an agency's creative employees, based on their experiences, values and beliefs, and from their observations of the work that has recently been deemed to be creative by their peers, supervisors, managers and clients' (Stuhlfaut, 2011).

One element of the creative code within agencies has been the notion of the 'advertising idea'. Scholars and practitioners have attempted to codify the process for developing an idea in the context of advertising. This involved a 'functional' and 'highly disciplined creativity' that results in a 'pattern of creative process' which has been consistently expressed in practical terms, leading to White's observation that 'there have been many examinations of the creative process by many different scholars. But the pattern remains basically constant' (White, 1972). One example is the normative creative technique identified by pioneering copywriter, James Webb-Young, which is driven by two key principles:

1. That an idea is a new combination of existing elements; and,

2. That the ability to make new combinations is heightened by an ability to see relationships between elements (1975, p. 30).

Webb-Young proposed that the idea develops in the practitioner's mind to solidify these connections and relationships between elements (1975, p. 15). This helps them to remember those links and feel their significance so that 'the ability of the mind to produce ideas is increased' (1975, p. 31). The stages in this *operative technique* involved the following steps.

The first step is to gather the raw materials which will inform and inspire the creative development. This includes materials: 'relating to the product and the people to whom [the practitioner] propose[s] to sell it'; and general, relevant creative elements which are found by being 'an extensive browser in all sorts of fields of information' (Webb Young, 1975, pp. 32-36).

Secondly the practitioner needs to find the connections between the materials through 'the mental digestion process', which is when they seek to identify the relationship between different elements to create a 'synthesis where everything will come together in a neat combination like a jigsaw puzzle' (Webb Young, 1975, pp. 42-23). Then the practitioner is advised to stop thinking about the creative task and 'turn the problem over to [their] unconscious mind and let it work while [they] sleep', and because of this pause, the idea comes to them 'out of nowhere the Idea will appear. It will come to you when you are least expecting it' (Webb Young, 1975, pp. 46-48). The *operative technique* concludes with the 'final shaping and development of the idea to practical usefulness' which is when the raw creative concept is refined to a stage where it is ready to be implemented in a media channel (Webb Young, 1975, p. 54).

This approach conforms to the stages identified by psychologist Graham Wallas in *The Art of Thought*, published in 1926, which were: 'Preparation, Incubation, Illumination and Verification' (White, 1972). Wallas' approach is an example of the systematic use of the techniques informed by the newly emerging field of psychology and was informed by the scientific tradition. This helped drive a sense of certainty about how to plant suggestions in the minds of people that will influence them to take the intended actions, and can be characterised as a continuation 'between national advertisers [in the early twentieth century] and nineteenth-century-peddlers, mesmerists and other practitioners of "influence"' (Lears, 1994, p. 208).

Alex Osborn, whose name is the “O” in the international advertising network BBDO, founded the Advertising Education Foundation and popularised the creative ‘brainstorming’ techniques which became a key creative ideation technique used in American marketing departments and their agencies. In *Applied Imagination* he identified that ‘creative problem solving’ would ‘ideally’ comprise three procedures: 1) *Fact*-finding; 2) *Idea*-finding; and 3) *Solution*-finding, and commented that ‘regardless of sequence, every one of those steps calls for deliberate effort and creative imagination’ (1993, p. 86).

The *Fact*-finding procedures relate to the orientation, preparation and analysis phases and are analogous to Webb-Young’s gathering of raw materials through browsing and Wallas’ Preparation stage. These procedures are central to the absorptive capacity of the agency organisation as it transforms ‘raw external information into creative outcomes’ (Parker et al., 2018). These techniques are largely the provenance of the ‘community of practice’ of account planning as part of how the creative brief is developed. This key internal agency document will be discussed as an element of normative industry practice to inspire and inform creativity, in the next section. However, Kover expressed one view about its role in the eyes of creative people, seeing it as the way the ‘strategy’ is provided to them in the form of ‘a research- and experience-based delineation of the target audience, that usually includes a description of a target person’. From this understanding of the target, the creative writer comes to understand ‘limits [on creativity] imposed by this hypothetical target person’ (1995).

An essential technique that contributes towards developing this hypothetical delineation of the target audience is the development of *creative insight*. Although relatively under-researched academically, the insight is a key technique for practice and is recognised by practitioners as integral to the fact-finding and direction setting step in creativity because of: ‘the need for an insight that will help develop a differentiating brand message’ (Parker et al., 2018). In this practical use of insight in the creative process, it speaks to Schilling’s more general notion of an insight being a framework for problem solving (2005). Parker et al. note that the term ‘insight’ was initially popularised among practitioners by American research practitioner Lisa Fortini-Campbell. In her practical guide to creating insight: *Hitting the Sweet Spot*, she identified that ‘in this ever-more complex world, every individual is finding his own individual way to live and cope’. This observation of the transformation in society, markets and among consumer groups [complementing and paralleling the changes in the communications and media environment] makes: ‘getting in touch with today’s consumer even more difficult, yet all

the more important' (Fortini-Campbell, 2001, p. 18). Notable account planning pioneers such as Stephen King, Stanley Pollitt and Jon Steel have all formalised processes which have been adopted by the wider 'community of practice' related to the account planning function and the absorptive role of the development of insights as part of the creative development process (Parker et al., 2018).

Parker et al. conducted research that indicated that for the community of practice explored, insight is developed by the account planner, who will search 'for insight in consumer research; in personal domain knowledge; by challenging conventions around the consumer, the brand, the category, or the competition; through borrowed sources; or around truths that may reside in proximity to the brand's central narrative or positioning' (2021). The variety and scope of the inter-personal techniques and formative processes that are used in gathering and consolidating useful information for generating an insight are beyond the scope of this project, while recognising that account planners 'do more than just identify and understand key pieces of information; they also take on transformative aspects to make the information meaningful to creatives (Parker et al., 2018). The broader role of the creative brief in informing and inspiring creativity in developing advertising is discussed in section 2.4 on formative techniques.

The development of insight is an exercise in creativity. Parker et al. found that: 'they engage in their own struggle that is a creative process of its own, involving searching for human truth and then linking it to a brand attribute or benefit. This iterative searching and linking process is needed because the solution is not immediately obvious' (2018). Baskin supports this contention from a practitioner's perspective, writing that: 'distilling the communications strategy into the brief is an art ... [and it] demands intellectual skill, creative flair and discipline' (2010). This argues that the development of the brief, and the articulation of the insight within it are exercises in creativity and not just procedural steps within agency process. In that sense the fact-finding stage that Osborn identified is part of the creativity in the process, even if it is undertaken by different members of the team. In turn that reinforces that creativity is an organisational activity, beyond the actions of any one individual or team.

Lynch & West put the process of knowledge and information sharing into context of 'multi-disciplinary teams', to observe that: 'when individuals share knowledge, information, and expertise, there may be a better outcome to the challenge at hand' (2017). This relates to the process of creativity moving from the 'baton-passing' between stages identified in Duckworth's process of creative inspiration and direction

setting (see figure 2.4.1 in the next section of this Chapter, (Duckworth, 1999)) and recognizing that regardless of the functional process, the creativity developed is related to the clarity of the problem definition and the quality of the information sharing with the team (Lynch & West, 2017).

In agencies there is a practical need to inspire and direct the development of a creative solution, which, in Osborn's terms is where the fact-finding is applied to Idea-finding, or what Wallas called Preparation, to help set up Incubation stages. Considering the procedures at this critical juncture, Osborn (1993) identified that there are two aspects, as follows:

- i. 'Idea-production calls for thinking up tentative ideas as possible leads';
- ii. 'Idea- development calls for selecting the most likely of the resultant ideas, adding others, and reprocessing all of these by such means as modification and combination' (p. 86).

These aspects relate to what Webb-Young labelled 'mental digestion' and the related concepts, which E.D. Hutchinson, called 'the stage of frustration, wherein the problem is given up for other substitute activities' and the 'the period or moment of insight [about the idea]' (White, 1972). Kover showed that, at least among the group interviewed, the copywriters engaged 'in discourse with the internalized other or ideal viewer', which is based on the characterisation of the target in the brief, 'free from the normal constraints of business time.' This internal dialogue which the writer engages in implies that the 'viewer' or receiver of the advertising is highly involved in processing the advertising, which disconnects with the involvement frameworks [and particularly the low involvement processing] discussed in the previous section of this chapter.

In these models generally the intensity of processing is largely defined by the level of involvement in the product category, as opposed to involvement in a breakthrough creative concept (1995). The procedure in the process identified by Osborn as Solution-finding 'calls for evaluation and adoption'. Evaluation involves 'verifying the tentative solutions, by tests and otherwise' while Adoption is about 'deciding on and implementing' the solution which has been under development (1993, p. 86).

These models and frameworks were developed by advertising practitioners and scholars but aren't focused on how the creative development process fits into the operational context of an advertising agency. Agencies required an organised process

of applied creativity 'because agencies and their advertising work represent the creative core in marketing' (Nyilasy et al., 2013).

2.4 Normative Creative Development Process

The operational and management 'inner workings' of a successful advertising agency involve what Eric Mower, a highly experienced American agency executive, identified as depending on five key components: 'strategy, operations, culture, work and rewards' (1999, p. 19). These overlapping management and operational considerations are heavily impacted by the technological, economic, political, and social conditions in which the agency was operating, although those dynamics are not relevant to this thesis.

To understand how the advertising business has evolved since the 1880s, a useful narrative framework was put forward by business historian Stefan Schwarzkopf which contends that the concept which is being defined in this thesis as 'traditional advertising' has evolved. This framework contends that the advertising business has been through six overlapping phases, with implications for the way agencies were organised internally, the nature of the ideas they developed and the paid media context in which they expressed their ideas. These conceptual eras [not sequential stages] were defined as: Polite Announcement, Salesmanship, Service, Propaganda & Social Engineering, Brand Management, Symbol Manipulation and Saliency/ Creativity (2009).

For the purposes of this thesis, the exact labels, and dates and the historical descriptions of these eras aren't the focus of investigation. Instead, they can help to provide a narrative context for the development of advertising practitioners' thinking and the impact that has had on the business and the operations of agencies, most crucially, including their creative development operations. This includes advertising as salesmanship, the use of psychology to ground advertising development, developing professional standards as an advertising industry, and the level of creative ambition, which are key foundational concepts for advertising practice, and they have evolved as follows.

2.4.1 Advertising as salesmanship.

This concept is predicated on the principles of direct personal selling, and the notion that they should be applied to advertising in mass media to ensure it "sells" to the

customer. This rational approach was pioneered by Mahin, Kennedy and Hopkins in the 1910s and 1920s, but evolved into 'reason to believe' advertising during the 1930s and which became the unique selling proposition (USP) concept, codified in 1950s. The USP was predicated on Reeve's notion that 'originality' is: 'the most dangerous word in all of advertising'. (1961, p. 139). This reflected the ambition that advertising could be managed to achieve predictable results. (Hopkins, 1923 and 1927; Mahin, 1914; Mayer, 1961; Reeves, 1961).

2.4.2 Psychological grounding

Evolving from the use of 'suggestion psychology' informed by early applied psychology scholars such as Dill Scott in 1903, and the initial employment of an in-house psychologist (John B Watson at J. Walter Thompson New York) in the 1920s, advertising practice has come to use a broad range of psychological concepts regarding needs, wants, motivations and desires. This is to ensure the advertising materials are impactful, relevant, and engaging for the target audience. Ensuring it provides information, shapes attitudes and impacts beliefs and by using psychological 'nudges', prompts behaviour (Cruikshank & Schultz, 2010; Fox, 1984; Lears, 1994; Scott, 1903).

2.4.3 Professional standards of practice.

The drive to professionalism in terms of financial transparency and accountability for the timely and efficient delivery of advertising programs, and ultimately results, was pioneered at leading American agencies Lord & Young, N. W. Ayer and J. Walter Thompson, and was adopted across the industry around the world. This included the use of research to inform and inspire advertising development, regular reporting of audience sizes by publishers and other media owners, and formalised strategic planning processes with advertising agencies such as the T-Plan and the Planning Cycle, and the continuing evaluation and reporting of the 'effectiveness' achieved by campaigns (Fox, 1984; Mayer, 1961).

2.4.4 Creative ambition.

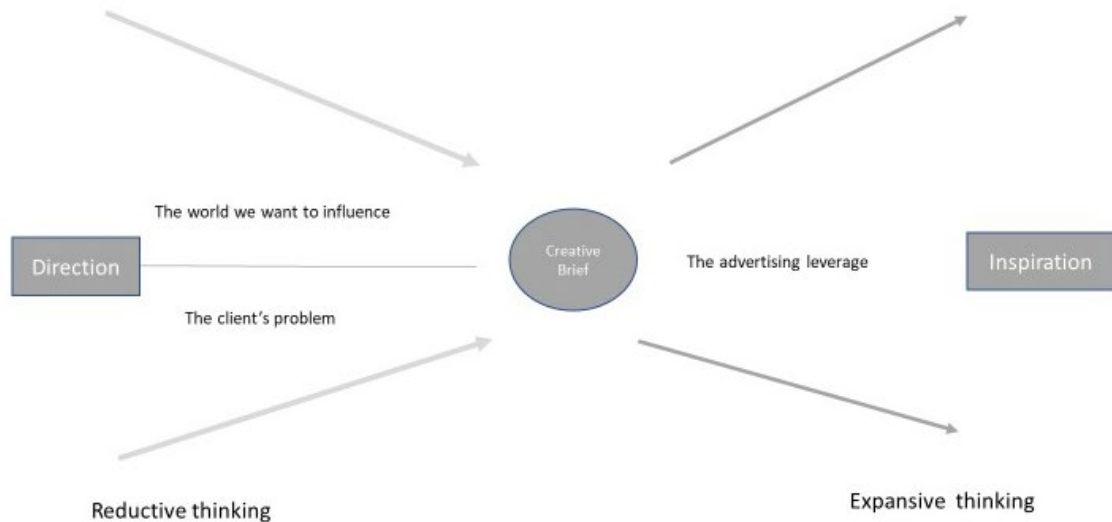
This ambition was prompted by new opportunities created by modern technologies, from photography in print media, the use of lighting for outdoor advertising and the invention of broadcast media, first radio and then television. These opportunities led a series of pioneering practitioners and their agencies to lift their ambition for creative quality of the advertising they developed. David Ogilvy was an early champion of this

commitment to creativity, and it was developed further by practitioners such as Bill Bernbach, Leo Burnett, and Jay Chiat in the US industry (Fox, 1984; Haygood, 2016; Lears, 1994; Ogilvy, 1983).

The foundational concept of creative ambition brought together the other strands of advertising practice – combining the rigour and process that had emerged from the salesmanship focus and psychological underpinnings of advertising strategy, and the commitment from the industry to professional standards to unlock creative opportunities in the emerging new paid media environment of the 1950s and 1960s. Bullmore notes that there is an ‘almost unchallenged’ perception that: ‘some 50 or 60 years ago, [there was] a Golden Age of Advertising [which] began with Doyle Dane Bernbach in New York, [and] was echoed and emulated by Collett Dickenson Pearce in London, and set a new high standard for other agencies everywhere’ (Bullmore, 2017). This so-called Golden Age of advertising has been portrayed as ushering in a passion for creative “excellence” in many agencies. The start of this era was called the ‘creative revolution’ and coincided with the introduction of television as a mass advertising medium.

The new opportunities for creativity offered by television helped spur the continuing evolution in advertising creativity as discussed above. One of the consequences of this evolution was that development of Schwarzkopf’s salience/ creativity era of advertising. In the 1990s, processes for achieving creative excellence were formalised. This included the introduction of the account planning function, and its focus on business and creative strategy development expertise, and the formalisation of ‘best practice’ techniques for practitioners by organisations such as the UK’s Institute for Practitioners in Advertising (IPA). The process, shown in Figure 2.4.1 below, from the IPA’s *Excellence in Advertising* guide to best practice, highlights how the creative direction is set by the gathering and consolidation of information on ‘the world we want to influence’ and ‘the client’s [business] problem [or marketing task] ‘using reductive thinking to identify a point of ‘creative leverage’ which is codified in a key internal document within the agency: the creative brief. Development of this document was identified as the responsibility of the ‘account team’ and ‘planners’ – the key client relationship management and brand and creative development departments within the agency structure (Duckworth, 1999, p. 136).

Figure 2.4.1. The role of the creative brief in the creative development process within advertising agencies.



In this practitioner's framework the 'creative brief' became 'the place the account team gives the creative team to stand in their quest to move the world, i.e., to shape the decisions and perceptions of the target group out there in the real world'. It was also a key point of hand-over between the strategy and client relationship teams and the 'creatives', who would use the brief as 'advertising leverage' and so provide inspiration for 'expansive thinking' (Duckworth, 1999, p. 136).

Duckworth is at pains to dismiss what he calls 'the myth of the "great brief"', seeing the brief as being a formative and procedural enabler for creative ideation that provides both 'direction' and 'inspiration' for the team of people developing the work, and so it is 'not an end in itself' (1999, pp. 136-139). Reflecting on the advertising creative process, Bullmore concurs that 'the function of the brief is not just to ensure relevance; it is also to encourage original thinking.' It does this by 'consciously and artificially rejecting the obvious, at least initially, the mind is forced to explore original possibilities' (Bullmore, 1999). The development of the creative insight, as a way of gathering information that is relevant to the task at hand, and organising it into a form that points towards the possible solution as discussed earlier in this Chapter in Section 2.3 on Organisational Frameworks for Creativity (Baskin, 2010; Parker et al., 2018).

Noted planner Jon Steel agrees that the creative brief is a means to an end with the observation that 'there is only one reason for anyone to write a brief or engage in briefing a creative team, and that is to help make their advertising better (and easier to

create) than it would be if they were left to their own devices' (Steel, 1998, p. 142). In reflecting on best practice creative brief writing, Baskin contends that the brief can be: 'the foundation for the disruptive, breakthrough thinking that can really make a difference to a client's business. This could be via a refocused interpretation of the brand benefit or communications problem, or an original insight into the consumer or a fresh lateral perspective on the category the brand is operating in' (Baskin, 2010).

The 1990s saw another revolution in the communication and advertising industries. This was spurred by the introduction of digital media, initially via the internet, then the World Wide Web and most recently through social media networks and the ongoing digitisation of traditional media. This has transformed the way such media is bought and the capacity for the media to be used for increasingly precise audience targeting and has provided another new wave of opportunities for creativity in advertising, enabled through new technologies. This included new formats of advertisements, new production flexibility and options along with new richness in targeting and scheduling.

One of the consequences of this transformation in the broader communication and media context was a new focus on formalising ways to integrate executions in multiple media to work as a coherent campaign, which required that the marketing communication function take a 'generalist' approach in which 'there is little differentiation between advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, public relations and the like' (Schultz, 1992). This need for a process of integration led to Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) becoming 'a standard component in advertising agencies' offerings' (Ots & Nyilasy, 2017). The various pressures created by the changes in the media environment and advertising practice made integration 'inevitable' on the basis that: 'even if the marketing or advertising organization has decided to direct totally uncoordinated messages to the same consumer, that consumer will aggregate and integrate those communication messages in some fashion' (Schultz, 1996).

Over the more than 20 years since it emerged as a part of advertising practice: 'IMC has evolved to incorporate the benefits of new technologies to connect with more empowered consumers and to integrate the organisation using digital platforms' (Kerr & Kelly, 2017). Delivering IMC necessitated the creation of different organisational structures for decision making and management of campaign development. Kitchen et al. argued that such architecture: 'comes in two forms: (a) internal [to the client/marketing organisation] operations primarily focused on each of the various marketing communication disciplines and (b) external agencies that provide expertise, guidance,

and implementation' (2008). This meant that the structure of responsibility needed to be reimagined to allow marketing communication to be deployed through a wider range of tactics or activities than would traditionally be developed by the advertising agency team, under the advertising budget. This prompted debate within the industry to develop new practices to help guide the intersection between media channel selection and the creative idea.

For instance, to continue to foster campaign effectiveness, the IPA conducted the 'Datamine' project in 2011 to analyse the information provided in years of IPA Effectiveness Awards entry papers. This analysis saw that 'there is clear evidence of a shift in the way that campaigns are organised around executional and conceptual ideas', and so proposed four models for how campaigns can be organised. These models, extrapolated from the cases in the databank, are:

1. 'No integration';
2. 'Advertising-led integration around a common creative platform';
3. 'Brand idea-led orchestration where there is unification around a shared brand concept or need-state platform';
4. 'Participation-led orchestration where the experience is orchestrated around an active consumer experience or conversation' (Cox et al., 2011, p. 3).

These models are indicative of the emerging complexity of the advertising development process as the creative process needed to evolve to accommodate wider objectives and a wide range of tactical levers to implement. Another example of a formalisation of evolving practice is the adoption within advertising practice of 'the four quadrants' of media – 'paid, earned, shared and owned, referred to as the PESO model' although research among communications professionals in Asia Pacific markets observed that: 'radically changed content production and distribution strategies in PR and corporate communications as well as advertising, with the priorities of the PESO (paid, earned, shared, owned) model now replaced by SOEP strategy (shared, owned, earned paid)' (Macnamara et al., 2016).

This finding has implications for the approach used to integrate or orchestrate campaigns that involve advertising and has an impact of the way ideas are conceived to work across a range of media, target audiences and objectives. The academic and industry literature affirms that the normative, industry techniques of applied creativity and the methods used to conceptualise, implement, and evaluate advertising ideas have evolved and refined as technological, social, cultural, and economic factors have

changed advertising practice. This has impacted the concept of an advertising idea and its usefulness within practice and the broader context of strategic communication practice, particularly marketing communication. This raises questions of the role and function of the advertising idea concept in the emerging era of data driven, precision advertising, which points to the knowledge gap being explored in this research.

2.5. Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions.

In the 1920s, the Crawford agency in London ‘realized they had to use the product’s “personality” in order to create an “advertising idea,” [that would] put a “face” on their products’ (Schwarzkopf, 2009, p. 15). This was an early example of the term advertising idea being formalised as part of the practice of advertising development. Regardless of whether the Crawford Agency was the first to formalise the role of an advertising idea in their creative approach, it is indicative of an evolving view among some practitioners that ‘creativity’ is an end in-and-of-itself and was ‘at the heart of their economic survival’ and an essential part of differentiating their services from those of other agencies (Schwarzkopf, 2008, p. 192).

This is when creativity was identified as an important goal because it was seen as the key to the successful differentiation of concepts, so they achieve impact. This use of creativity ‘places its audience in the role of buyer/ consumer and seeks to dispose that audience favourably towards what is for sale’. As such the advertising can be considered ideological in a concrete sense ‘by virtue of the selling pitch it employs’ in ‘charging’ the ‘object of desire’ with ‘social significance’. It does this by engaging the audience so they ‘adopt the socio-cultural identity attributed to those who already use the product’ (Wernick, 1991, p. 31).

Wernick’s framework for the transfer of meaning between the advertising and its audience doesn’t describe how the creative elements, which enable advertising materials to generate meaning, are assembled to achieve the intended outcomes. In short it doesn’t explain how the advertising idea phenomenon contributed to that creation of these meanings. However, because of the evolution of the advertising business, and its need to have ‘creative excellence’ as a differentiator between agencies as discussed above and detailed in Schwarzkopf’s framework, the advertising idea had evolved from just being the creative notion that brought together the different elements in an unexpected way into being a central element in how ‘excellence’ in advertising was achieved by practitioners. The different schools of creative development that emerged during the second half of the twentieth century explored

differing views about the nature of the selling message to be communicated (such as: fact based and rational, through to highly emotive benefits, and statements of identity or values), and so defined that sense of excellence in different terms.

As the social, economic, commercial, technological, and cultural context evolved around the advertising industry, the practical concept of the advertising idea expanded from just being an executional framework for assembling old elements in a new way into being something that also can be used to, in the words of King at JWT 'epitomize our brand'. This means that for some practitioners, such as King, that the Advertising Idea has come to be a strategic device that is 'the link between these two purposes that has to be both powerful and unexpected – an original way of retelling the values of the brand'. In doing this, a 'good' advertising idea: 'has to be original enough to stimulate people and draw an intense response from them' (1986 (reprinted in 2007), pp. 145-146).

In more recent years, new sources of data, provided by new retail management and communication technologies, have introduced apparent *precision* in the metrics used to measure human behaviour – especially when it is associated with their interaction with mobile and digital social media networks. This has given advertising practitioners access to information that demonstrates behaviour, rather than relying on people to declare their own behaviour. Such data give a greater sense of accountability for practitioners and clients that a piece of communication could be judged as to whether it really delivered against its objectives or not. In other words, there was greater confidence that the 'half of advertising spend that is wasted' could be determined and redeployed to avoid such waste. This promises a new era of efficiency as well as effectiveness for the advertising industry.

In seeking to codify and create a 'continuous improvement tool for agencies and clients [to use] in assessing their own work, over time', *The Effectiveness Code* report written by Field & Hurman for World Advertising Research Centre (WARC) in partnership with the Cannes Lions Advertising Festival, provides a benchmark to help practitioners to 'discover how to achieve various types of critical marketing outcomes', and so provide a framework to define excellence in ideas in terms of their ability to achieve their desired outcome (WarcNews, 2020). This report 'identifies the six main types of effects' which are produced through the creative use of marketing communication. These effects are set in 'a hierarchy of levels from least to most commercially impactful' (Field & Hurman, 2020, p. 13). These levels are listed by Field & Hurman as:

1. Level one – influential idea;
2. Level two – behaviour breakthrough;
3. Level three – sales spike;
4. Level four – brand builder;
5. Level five – commercial triumph;
6. Level six – enduring icon.

This framework is defined by the impact of the advertising idea ‘types’ as demonstrated by key metrics of the ‘effectiveness’ achieved, often demonstrated by entrants for effectiveness awards. It is intended to provide confidence about making the financial investment in the right kind of idea which is required to achieve the desired level of impact. This framework for characterizing types of advertising ideas has been developed in a social, economic, and technological context, in which, new forms of data can play a role in bringing together various creative and strategic elements to create meaning and connect with key audiences at the right time and in the right place. The element that has not been explored is the degree to which the ‘advertising idea’ contributes to the meaning being generated over and above the strategic intent and the related audience response metrics.

So, the overarching research question being explored in this thesis asks: **Is the role and function of the advertising idea being changed by the application of data to inform creativity, and if it is, to what extent is it being changed?**

This involves addressing the following specific research questions:

1. How have the creative elements been assembled to generate meaning, and achieve defined objectives in past behaviour change campaigns?
2. To what extent are practitioners observing that there has been a change in the role of the ‘advertising idea’ in the practice of developing, implementing, and evaluating advertising?
3. Does the use of an advertising idea to develop, implement and evaluate advertising necessarily conflict with the use of data to inform creativity, or do the different approaches complement one another?

The following chapter explains the methodology that has been used to address these questions.

3. Methodology.

This chapter details the approach, methods and methodologies used to gather findings which will help answer the overall Research Question and the three sub questions detailed at the end of the last chapter. This includes detailing: the approach to be used; research methods; sample and body of work being researched; and the data collection and data analysis process used to establish the findings. These findings are then the subject of the subsequent chapters.

3.1. Approach.

This research uses an interpretivist approach, and so 'looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world' (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). This is within the tradition of Gadamer's hermeneutic rule, paraphrased as 'we are to extend the unity of understanding in ever-widening circles by moving from the whole to part to whole' (Crotty, 1998, p. 104). However, this also needs to recognise the criticism of this rule, by Brenkman, and summarised by Crotty, that it 'ignores the social site of the work's genesis and the social site of its reception', which led to Habermas' insistence that: 'no hermeneutics can prescind from the setting in which understanding occurs' (Crotty, 1998, pp. 104-105).

In so doing, it examines the construction of advertising, and the use of the concept of the advertising idea as an element of that construction, within the context of the practices of which it is a part. This includes the influence of social, cultural, and technological factors, as well as data such as marketing statistics and demographic, psychographic, and increasingly personal data collected from online transactions and interaction. It is a 'multi-method research design' and so 'based on complementary methods that explore different aspects' related to the phenomenon being examined (Priola, 2010). This is inspired by Ricoeur's development of Gadamer's Hermeneutic circle method which proposes that 'only a dialectic of explanation and understanding can satisfy the requirements for valid understanding' (Kennedy, 2014, p. 8). This examination of the nature of advertising ideas and their impact on the advertising development process comes from two key perspectives.

First are the observable impacts achieved by advertising ideas as shown in published case histories of advertising campaigns. These impacts are demonstrated by the way the creative elements are assembled to create meaning in the advertising material, and how that relates to the declared objectives set and the tangible results shown as evidence. This relates to longer term social, and cultural impacts which are not the direct result of the campaign but on which the campaign has an impact.

The second perspective comes from the knowledge and opinion of a cross section of experienced and relevant practitioners; discussing their view of what an advertising idea is, and if it contributes to creating meaning and generating advertising material, how it does so. The various observations of the phenomenon identified from these sources are triangulated to provide a rich, multi-dimensional description of what an advertising idea is, and the contribution it has made in the conceptualisation, planning and implementation of advertising material. In developing this conceptualisation, a perspective that contributes to the debate about the future of advertising practice will emerge.

An interpretivist approach requires the use of qualitative methodologies to understand the reasoning and emotional influences which help make the decisions about how creativity is applied to the task of creating advertising. This research is not seeking to characterise the number of types of idea, or the frequency of the use of data to inform creativity, or other measures which would require quantitative methodologies and a representative sample. Instead, the research will examine why advertising ideas have and have not been a useful factor in the creative development process. The following section details the methods used in this qualitative exploration of the utility of the advertising idea in contemporary practice.

3.2. Methods.

This study employs two qualitative research methods, undertaken in stages but used together to triangulate data to gain richer understanding of the advertising idea phenomenon discussed in the section above.

The first stage is a qualitative content analysis which examines the construction of advertising – focussing on advertising with driving behaviour change as its objective. Rosengren in 1981, cited by Prasad, described content analysis ‘as belonging to a family of analytic approaches ranging from impressionistic, intuitive, interpretive analyses to systematic strict textual analyses’ (2019). This is a content analysis of

purposively selected case studies of historical advertising campaigns with a publicly expressed objective requiring specific behaviour change. An analysis of the creative content of the advertising material from the campaign will be undertaken to discern whether an advertising idea has been created and leveraged and to characterise its nature and role in the creation of meaning to communicate the intended strategy. It involves selecting six campaigns for analysis on the basis outlined in section 3.3.1 on the Body of Work for this phase of the research. This analysis will form the Findings discussed in Chapter 4.

The second stage involves a series of semi-structured qualitative interviews with purposively selected practitioners to discuss their perceptions of the role of advertising in the delivery of behaviour change communication. The sample is a selection of experienced practitioners in leading, influential roles related to development of advertising strategy and ideas. This will involve interviewing nine experienced executives from a cross section of roles which provide strategic direction to the application of creativity. Further details of the purposive sample, which is being evaluated in this phase of the research, can be found in Section 3.3.2 of this Chapter.

These two stages of fieldwork provide a valid basis for understanding the advertising idea phenomenon from several perspectives as they provide 'evidence of accounts', which are established as an 'inference drawn from data', providing validity as the assessment of the account 'doesn't depend entirely on features of the account itself, but in some way relate to those things that the account claims to be about' (Maxwell, 2002, p. 5 of 24). This is true to the task of the interpretivist tradition of social science to 'surmise what lies unobserved beneath', and uses triangulation to collate and compare 'data from multiple sources and multiple levels' (Babones, 2016, p. 461).

As Babones reflects, in the context of quantitative research techniques in this tradition, it is characteristic of both interpretive methodology and qualitative research in social science that there is a 'blurring of the boundary between measurement and modelling' (2016, p. 416). Taking a reflexive perspective on the phenomenon is an important part of the interpretivist approach as it is 'humanistic enquiry within the field of consumer behaviour', which acknowledges the 'social, complex, often irrational and sometimes unpredictable nature of consumer behaviour' (Goulding, 1999).

This multi-method research design is 'based on complementary methods that explore different aspects' and so is following what Priola, writing in the *Encyclopaedia of Case*

Study Research called a 'strategy for maximizing the amount of information [being gathered]' about the advertising idea phenomenon (Priola, 2010).

3.3. Body of Work and Sample.

This section details the subjects selected for each of the two phases of research. It details the basis for selecting the body of work providing the case histories for the content analysis, and the characteristics used to determine who is selected to be in the sample of practitioners interviewed.

3.3.1. Body of Work for Content Analysis.

The selection of the sample campaigns is based on each being executed for the era since television advertising was introduced, which ensures that the evolution in creative practice enabled by the advent of television is a consistent factor in all campaigns analysed. The following criteria will also be used to select the body of work to be analysed:

1. The advertising was executed in English, and meets the 'traditional advertising' definition as discussed in the Introduction chapter;
2. The activity is characterised as a paid communication - determined by being executed in a paid media formats while also through mass awareness owned or earned channels;
3. The advertising has an 'identified sponsor' – that is, it clearly communicates on behalf of someone or some organisation, and not as editorial or other forms of non-persuasive content;
4. The advertising has a persuasive intent focussed on behaviour change by preventing or at least discouraging risky, unsafe, and anti-social behaviour among younger adults. This represents the most extreme persuasive intent on the basis that it is harder to stop someone from doing something that they want to do, that influencing them with a more nuanced behavioural message;
5. There is a body of public analysis of the campaign and its results are available by accessing government reports as well as advertising industry award submissions and critical analysis of the campaign by journalists and academics.

Three groups of behaviour change objectives were selected as context for identifying campaigns that unambiguously meet the selection criteria mentioned above. These are:

1. Reducing behaviour that increases the risk of someone getting skin cancer (anti-skin cancer);
2. Reducing the incidence of unsafe and risky behaviour around the railways – particularly on station platforms and at level road crossings of the tracks (anti-risky behaviour around railways);
3. Discouraging driving while under the influence of alcohol (anti-drink driving).

The two campaigns identified for each behaviour change objective are not intended to be a representative sample of advertising material with behaviour change objectives from the past forty years, rather it is a useful cross section of work that meets the specific sampling criteria and illuminates the creative and strategic outcomes of the ongoing transformation of the industry. Each pair includes one campaign that involves digital, non-traditional executional elements, with the other campaign being one that was conceived to run predominantly in traditional mass awareness paid media. These campaign selections are listed in Table 3.3.1. below.

Table 3.3.1. Sample of behaviour change advertising campaigns analysed.

Behaviour Change Group	Campaigns	Strategic Practice Context	Publicly available analysis
Group 1 Reducing risk of getting skin cancer	1. SunSmart/ Slip, Slop, Slap	Traditional mass media public information awareness campaigns over 40 years, which have evolved into being a mixed mass awareness and social media campaign	Extensive reporting on the evolution of <i>SunSmart</i> and the original <i>Slip Slop Slap</i> campaign from Cancer Council and academic sources.
	2. Melanoma Likes me	Mass social media activation utilizing data through earned and shared media	Cannes Lions Effectiveness Awards case study paper & WPP Government and Public Service Practice campaign analysis paper are both available.
Group 2: Reducing the incidence of unsafe and risky behaviour around the railways	3. Dumb Ways to Die	Mass awareness campaign using Owned, Shared, Earned and Paid media - driven by activation in Shared and Owned media contexts	Winner of advertising industry Awards – case study papers available as well as academic papers.
	4. Stop! Trains Can't	Mass communication campaign by US Government in key areas with rail safety issues	Public reporting of research results available via US Gov websites
Group 3:	5. Drink, Drive, Bloody Idiot!	Thirty years of mass advertising in Paid and Earned.	Effie award case studies and Victoria Government Traffic Accident Commission [TAC]

Discouraging driving while under the influence of alcohol				reviews and reports available.
	6.	Think! UK Road Safety	Forty years of mass advertising – Paid and Earned, including social media activation	Public reports on the key campaigns, including a Cannes case study.

This mix of campaigns samples different ways in which, what we have defined as traditional advertising has evolved into the contemporary practice which is emerging and was discussed in the Introduction Chapter.

3.3.2. *Sample for Practitioner Interviews.*

The second stage of the research consisted of ‘leading practitioner’ interviews, with individuals who are: ‘selected for interviews on the basis of their expertise in areas relevant to the research’ (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, pp. 113-114). Each participant is a highly experienced practitioner with direct personal experience of the concepts and practices to be explored. An extensive list of eligible candidates for this research was drawn up initially, on the following basis:

1. The executive is a leading practitioner who is actively involved in the development of advertising campaigns from the perspective of either creative strategy development or connections strategy development;
2. The executive works for an agency or consultancy that works along the process of developing advertising – from the development of the strategy through to implementation of the plan in market;
3. The executive’s experience involves working within the context of developing ‘contemporary advertising’ – although that inevitably means some have significant experience with more traditional conceptualisations of advertising;
4. Cross section of gender and age of respondents;
5. Mix of executives based in Sydney and Melbourne in Australia to help ensure there isn’t a geographic bias between those key centres of advertising development, although this does mean all the executives work within the international advertising context in Australia, with executives from regionally based, locally oriented advertising development not included.

Executives were approached via email or the professional social media network LinkedIn, and those who indicated they were available and willing to be interviewed were contacted again and an interview was scheduled. Given the busy schedules of

these executives, scheduled interviews were not always able to go ahead, nor rescheduled. The interviews that did proceed occurred during 2020 and 2021, while Sydney was living under Covid restrictions and as a result most of the interviews were conducted by Zoom. The make-up of the sample is summarised in Table 3.3.2 below.

Table 3.3.2. Practitioners for Interviews.

Identifier	Personal Profile	Agency Role Profile	Name
Executive 01	Female 35 – 49 yrs Sydney	Chief Strategy Officer, subsequently promoted to be President, of the Australian and New Zealand division of integrated marketing communication holding company WPP.	Rose Herceg
Executive 02	Male 35 – 50 yrs Melbourne	Founder & Chief Thinker, of independent creative advertising agency Thinkerbell	Adam Ferrier
Executive 03	Male Over 50 Sydney	CEO of the behavioural sciences consultancy The Behavioural Architects Australia and former head of Planning at Clemenger BBDO and before that a senior planner at DDB Sydney	Mike Daniels
Executive 04	Female under 35 Sydney	Was Strategy Director of digital creative arm of agency major DDB Sydney Tribal DDB when the interview was conducted and then moved to the Sydney office of global socially led creative agency We are Social as Head of Strategy	Caitlin Hislop
Executive 05	Male Over 50 Sydney	Chief Growth and Product Officer of Wavemaker Australia & New Zealand – a media strategy, planning and investment firm owned by WPP.	James Hier
Executive 06	Male 35 – 49 Melbourne	Founder and CEO of Penso – an independent digital strategy consultancy, with a background in digital agencies and the music industry.	Constantine Frantzesos
Executive 07	Female Under 35 Sydney	Account director at international media agency OMD based in Sydney	Catriona Barthram

Executive 08	Male 35 – 50 Sydney	Chief Strategy Officer and Partner at creative agency The Monkeys, and Managing Director at Accenture Interactive, who own The Monkeys .	Fabio Buresti
Executive 09	Female 35 – 50 Sydney	CEO of INNOCEAN digital network agency office in Sydney	Jasmin Bedir

This group of executives represents a useful cross section of industry practice where the strategic role of the advertising idea as a formative and implementational tool is a regular part of everyday practice. It is a group who are highly experienced and engaged in the question of what an advertising idea is and how it fits into the development of advertising communication activities. It is not a representative sample of practitioners and so it must be acknowledged that there will be differing opinions from executives who are less intensively involved in thinking about the advertising idea concept and how to articulate it and use it as a tool in conceptualising and planning advertising activity. As such it is a useful purposive sample which has 'participants who possess certain traits or qualities' directly related to the applied use of the advertising idea phenomenon (Koerber & McMichael, 2008).

3.4. Data Collection.

This section details the methods used to collect the data to inform this research in each of the two phases of fieldwork. This includes the diverse mix of sources and collection techniques to inform a multi-dimensional view of the advertising idea phenomenon and evidence of how it has historically fitted into advertising development practice, and the potential for it to play a role in the ongoing evolution of contemporary practice.

3.4.1. Content Analysis Data Collection.

The data used for content analysis was derived from publicly available sources with relevance to the campaign. These include academic literature, entrants for advertising effectiveness awards, industry commentary, blogs and articles, and information published by the advertiser (whether it was a company, a government department or agency, or a non-government organisation), that developed the campaign. Apart from peer reviewed literature, all these sources are inherently subjective and are often produced to argue a point of view that puts the nature and impact of the campaign in

the best possible light. This reinforces the need to triangulate the data with multiple sources providing perspective on the same point of investigation.

The interpretative approach is to first develop descriptive summaries of the discourse related to each of the campaigns, by clustering the published information from four sources of evidence. These are:

1. The declared, and published behavioural and other objectives of the campaigns, which may be part of an evaluation document (such as effectiveness awards entry papers, or public reporting of campaign reviews or pre-campaign announcements and press-releases);
2. Reflections on how meaning is generated by the campaigns using industry and academic commentary where available, and descriptions of the creative elements of the campaign, with interpretation of key generative creative elements, identified from these reflections;
3. Evidence of impact on specific behaviour by the campaigns, with the focus being on the published information to demonstrate the 'effectiveness' of the campaign to make a case to win an award or justify the expenditure of public money. In some cases, academic and industry sources have analysed the effectiveness evidence and those reviews provide useful commentary for this analysis;
4. The impact of the campaigns on broader society and popular culture, which will be a reflection on evidence from academic and industry literature and other commentary.

A description of each of the six campaigns, and the meanings attached to them is captured in these four analytical frames, which will help standardise the disparate and subjective sources into a comparable form. The content analysis findings, presented in Chapter 4, compares the two campaigns and their descriptions within each behavioural objective group.

This provides perspective on the evidence of advertising ideas in use at delivering campaigns. This evidence is from observing the creative elements which form the executions that make up the campaigns as well as the objectives and evidence of impacts published in the papers. To provide contrasting perspective on the advertising idea phenomenon, the next section details how the evidence from practitioner interviews has been collected.

3.4.2. Practitioner Interviews Data Collection.

The reflections of practitioners regarding their experiences and perspective will add to the overall exploration of the role and function of the advertising idea within practice.

The key discussion prompts for the semi-structured interview guide are:

1. What does the term advertising Idea mean to you? How is one developed? What is its role? Is it important? Has the role of advertising idea changed in the context of modern advertising practice generally? Has it changed specifically for you in your own work? If so, how? Does this change in relation to behaviour change communication development?
2. Do you see advertising as an intuitive creative process? How does creativity fit into the development of advertising in your experience?
3. What do you say are key challenges and opportunities in developing advertising that has a behaviour change objective? Any examples you can share of this? (Names of example campaigns/ brands will be excluded).
4. Have you noticed a rising impact of data on advertising – from data driven insights to programmatic buying to addressable media? Do you see it impacting others and their work? And/ or you and your work? Do you believe this has a positive or negative impact on the effectiveness and/or efficiency of the advertising delivering on its objective?
5. Does the role of data and analytics change the role of creative intuition in the development of advertising? Does that change the place of the idea in the development of the advertising? Is this desirable?
6. What is your point of view about the challenges for the future of the advertising industry (specifically raised by the dynamics between data driven creativity and the traditional advertising idea practice), and the way advertising will develop alongside the technologies that allow precision targeting and alternative creative practices?

Each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed. This transcription, along with the interview notes is the basis for reflexive memos on the interview. These: 'memos are always conceptual in intent. They do not just report data, but they tie different pieces of data together in a cluster, or they show that a particular piece of data is an instance of a general concept' (M.B. Miles & A.M Huberman, 1984, p. 69). They were shared with each respondent, so they had the opportunity to confirm that their comments were

being interpreted as intended. The next section of this chapter details how the data collected will be analysed to generate the findings which will be the focus of subsequent chapters.

3.5. Data Analysis.

Analysis of the data generated by these two research methods occurred in two phases and utilised Miles and Huberman's Flow Model analysis process for content analysis. This selected, focussed, simplified, abstracted, and transformed the summarised observation data collected using the two different methods detailed in the previous section. In this process the data was reduced, transformed through summary, paraphrased, and subsumed into larger patterns or metaphors to identify concepts and themes (1984, pp. 21-23). This involved two phases of analysis:

1. Undertaking an axial coding and thematic grouping of the raw findings from each method to explore, consolidate and describe the direct findings generated by that method.
2. Combining, contrasting, and filtering those consolidated findings through 'interim data reduction' techniques as 'data collection and analysis are inter-woven from the outset', on the basis that within Miles & Huberman's flow model of analysis 'data reduction can profitably occur before and during as well as after data collection' (1984).

The following sub-sections explain the analytical techniques used for each phase of analysis for each of the research method employed.

3.5.1a. Phase1: Content Analysis - Analytical Techniques.

Content analysis was undertaken based on the summarised observation data from the four observational groupings identified in Section 3.3.1 of this chapter. The themes, categories and concepts will be analysed for the campaigns within each of the three behaviour change groups. This is to treat them as diatonic case studies with an 'in-case variation over time' that allows an observation of 'a change in the independent variable [that] triggers a causal mechanism which eventually triggers a change in the dependent variable' (Panke, 2018, pp. 248-250). Consideration of these variations will be the start of addressing RQ1.

In this analysis the creative device used to generate meaning in the campaign will be the independent variable, and the delivery of behaviour change outcomes (defined as a

formative aspect of campaign development and as a matter of interpretation within the analysis) is the dependant variable. The relationship between these variables will be explored in terms of how they relate to the nature and the function of the advertising idea phenomenon as can be observed from the six case histories being analysed. This provides the data to address RQ1, as is discussed in Chapter 4.

3.5.1b. Phase 1: Practitioner Interviews – Analytical Techniques.

Inductive analysis of the interview transcripts involved coding the practitioners' discussions into key thematic nodes, exploring the patterns regarding the key concepts that emerge consistently from participants, as well as key divergent points that raise questions for consideration.

The number and nature of the convergent and divergent comments within each of the thematic nodes is analysed in the context of the known perspective of the practitioner making the comments. This sense of their broad perspective is based on their position in the industry, in terms of the type of agency that they are from and a broad categorisation of their relevant experience from a combination of age range and digital experience. These coded comments are analysed within two contexts:

1. Via the reflexive memos that capture the salient comments from each practitioner in a form that they can review and make further comments.
2. By grouping comments through inductive analysis of the codes and themes that emerge from the data to characterise the overall nature of the practitioner discourse regarding the advertising idea phenomenon.

The coded characterisation of the practitioner discourse, and the themes which help organise the key meanings and associations, which emerges from this analysis provides the data which enables an answer to RQ2 in Chapter 5.

3.5.2. Phase 2: Consolidating Findings from both Methods - Analytical Techniques.

The thematic groups of codes emerging from the two methods are inductively juxtaposed and their meanings compared to triangulate the major themes and points made about advertising from the different data sources. With a variety of sources of evidence, and different perspectives this combines the themes and categories that emerged from the content analysis, particularly about the nature of the advertising idea and how it relates to the delivery of behaviour change messages with the themes that emerged from the practitioner interviews regarding the role played by the advertising

idea within the practice of the interviewees. This analysis is discussed as part of addressing RQ3 in Chapter 6 - Analysis and Conclusions.

The next chapter commences discussion of the findings from the research, focussing on the findings from the content analysis, undertaken as detailed in sections 3.1, 3.2., 3.3.1, and 3.4.1. of this chapter. Chapter 5 reports findings from the practitioner interviews as is described in sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3.2 and 3.4.2 of this chapter. The conclusions of this research are detailed in Chapter 6, which includes the thematic consolidation and analysis as detailed in section 3.4.2 of this chapter. Specific and direct answers to each of the three sub-questions, plus an overall conclusion that answers the overarching research question are included in Chapter 6.

4. Findings from Content Analysis.

This chapter will review the findings from the content analysis of advertising, which provides responses to RQ1: *how have the creative elements been assembled to generate meaning, and achieve defined objectives in past behaviour change campaigns?* This is the first level of observation of the advertising idea phenomenon, which contributes to addressing the overall question for this research: *Is the role and function of the advertising idea being changed by the application of data to inform creativity, and if it is, to what extent is it being changed?*

The body of work being examined involves three groups of behaviour change communication campaigns in which each campaign has a declared behavioural objective to encourage young adults to stop undertaking risky behaviours. Within each group two different campaigns have been analysed, as explained in the Methodology chapter in section 3.3.1. Table 4 summarises the cases, the objectives and the labels used for each throughout this thesis.

Table 4. Campaigns summary.

Group	Behavioural intent	Campaign Label
Group 1	Reduce behaviour that makes getting skin cancer more likely	Sun Smart campaign
		Melanoma Likes Me
Group 2	Discourage dangerous behaviour around trains and train stations	Dumb Ways to Die
		Stop. Trains Can't.
Group 3	Discourage driving when intoxicated	If you drink, then drive, you are a Bloody Idiot!
		THINK!

The content of six case studies have been reviewed in terms of four groups of nodes identified through axial coding as discussed in the Methodology Chapter in section 3.5.1. These coding groups are: 1) behaviour objectives of the campaigns; 2) how meaning is generated by the campaigns; 3) evidence of impact on specific behaviour by the campaigns; and 4) the impact of the campaigns on broader society and popular culture.

This section concludes with a summation of the key themes to emerge from these findings, which provides context for the findings from the practitioner interviews in Chapter 5.

4.1. Behavioural Objectives of the Campaigns.

The behavioural challenge in all these campaigns relates to reducing foolish or dangerous behaviour, with a focus on young adults as most likely to behave in this manner. Overall, the objectives were coded into the groups as detailed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. The Nature of the objectives identified for the campaigns reviewed.

Nature of objective		Description	Number
1.	Attitude change	Objective to change particular attitudes or beliefs of the target audience.	2
2	Awareness	Objective to build awareness among the audience of the campaign concept, brand, or key information.	3
3.	'Buzz'	Objective to create a sense of building excitement among the target, key opinion leaders, influencers and commentators regarding the campaign, and concept.	2
4	Non-specific behaviour	Objective to influence people's behaviour without being specific about the exact behaviour and how any change will be measured.	1
5	Making a pledge	Objective to get people to make a commitment that they will undertake a specific action.	2
6	Specific behaviour objective	Objective to prompt specific behaviour change with a clear goal, provided in measurable terms, so success can be evaluated.	4

These objectives provide some context for the expected impact to be achieved by each of the campaigns. As discussed in the following analysis, the objectives need to be understood in the context of when and why they were expressed, particularly when they are part of an argument to justify the campaign, or an entry paper into an advertising effectiveness awards competition. The next sections will go through the objectives, group by group so the differences between the objectives set for the 'digital' case can be compared, and contrasted with those of the more traditional, paid media advertising led case.

4.1.1. Group 1: Anti-skin cancer.

Both anti-skin cancer cases are Australian campaigns, and so were implemented in the context of an outdoor-oriented culture and an often-harsh climate that provides an elevated risk of exposure to UV radiation, resulting in the highest incidence of skin

cancers in the world. Significant public communication campaigns have been conducted in Australia, notably since the 1980s, to change the behaviour of everyday citizens regarding how they think about being exposed to the sun (Montague, Borland & Sinclair 2001).

There has been an imperative in Australia to persuade and inform people regarding inter-related behaviours that, together, are believed to help reduce the risk of an individual getting skin cancer. Whether these actions are effective at reducing the incidence of skin cancer is beyond the historical scope of this study, but the following general behaviours have been at the heart of public awareness campaigns in Australia over the past 40 years, regarding the risks from getting skin cancer. These are:

1. Being mindful about protecting skin, particularly in the harsh sun in the middle of the day, which specifically means messages about wearing a shirt, putting on sunscreen and a hat. Adding to this message more recently have been the importance of wearing sunglasses and seeking shade (Marks, 2004);
2. Having a greater awareness of the condition of your skin, getting it checked by a doctor, and knowing the signs to look out for in between checks;
3. Reducing the appeal of having a 'tan' and so contest the 'bronzed Aussie' stereotype combined with the over familiarity of the beaches makes fair skinned Australians; especially teenagers and young adults, assume that being tanned is desirable;
4. Increasing awareness that typical and complacent activity [and therefore not acting to protect skin from the sun] which is mostly associated with going to the beach combined with the desire to be tanned leads to behaviour that increases the risk of getting skin cancer (Caughley, 2010).

The first campaign example in this group is the *SunSmart* series of activities which commenced with the 'Slip! Slop! Slap!' public information campaign in the state of Victoria in 1981. This campaign has been used sporadically in other states who followed broadly the same campaign direction, albeit with local variations depending on specific local needs and funding options. With this organic development, the original 'Slip! Slop! Slap!' campaign evolved into the 'broad-based and multi-faceted' *SunSmart* campaign from 1988 (Montague et al., 2001).

The 'aims' set for the *Sun Smart* campaigns by the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria (ACCV), as reported in a review of *SunSmart's* first few years (which included the original Slip! Slop! Slap! campaign) were to:

1. 'Reduce the incidence, morbidity and mortality from skin cancer in Victoria by changing people's attitudes and beliefs towards positive sun protection behaviour'.
2. 'Encourage the development of environments that reduced the risk of ultra-violet radiation; and
3. Bring about an increase in the proportion of people reporting for treatment with early skin cancer' (Sinclair et al., 1996).

Overall, these objectives were about leading significant social change by changing individual and collective behaviour relating to a major public health issue. The consistent development of the campaign, which built the strength of the brand associations will be discussed in section 4.2.1.

The second campaign in this first group, *Melanoma likes me* was created by Melanoma Patients Australia which is a charity organisation founded in 2006 'to support, connect and advocate for Australians affected by melanoma and works towards its prevention' (Melanoma Patients Australia, 2020). The task for the *Melanoma likes me* campaign was: 'to stop cancer from killing Australia's youth' (GP Y&R advertising, 2016). This is a very broad intent that drives the activities of the charity itself. The more specific campaign objectives were summarised in an effectiveness awards paper for the Cannes Advertising Festival as:

1. 'Find a new way to encourage young Australians to protect their skin when out in the sun;
2. Encourage Australians aged 25 – 39 to check out their own skin' (GP Y&R advertising, 2016).

These behavioural objectives for *Melanoma likes me* are much more immediate and short term than the ones set for *SunSmart*. They are not an element of the broader policy context and structural, nor the collective behaviour change intent which underpinned the evolution of the SunSmart strategy and implementation. In both cases the metrics used are from incidence measures collected by health authorities or general behavioural directions without a specific expectation for the quantum of change expected.

The creative elements that were developed to create meaning in this campaign and achieve these objectives are reviewed in section 4.2.1 of this Chapter. The next part of

this section reviews the behavioural objectives of the two railway safety campaigns which form the second Group.

4.1.2. Group 2: Railway Safety.

In relation to railway services, there are physical risks that come from the widespread use of these services and facilities by the public. Railway systems operators have attempted communications to warn users of specific risks and to caution them against behaviours that increase the risks that they face. The shared areas of risk which have tended to be the focus for communication include:

1. Rushing towards or around operating trains while on a platform and putting yourself at risk of tripping or falling and being injured;
2. Not paying attention, particularly because of being distracted by mobile phones or other devices, while on trains and stations and so failing to see warnings or observe risks that could have been avoided;
3. Being complacent about the risks of spending time on active rail lines and facing the risks of being hit by a train, and/or electrocuted by overhead wires;
4. Taking risks with level railways crossings - either pedestrian or automotive, for instance, attempting to cross lines against warning lights or other signals (Track-Safe-Foundation, nd), (USDOT-FRA, 2017).

In the reviews of these risky behaviours, it is suggested that teenagers and young adults, and particularly males, are a key group at risk of undertaking dangerous behaviour around trains – either on station platforms, on the trains themselves, or around tracks and crossing areas. Use of public transport and spending time around railway infrastructure are behaviours which it is likely young people will undertake with a friend or in a group and so there is a social dimension to their behaviour. The importance of this is reinforced by research on the tendency of teenagers generally towards risk-taking, which indicated that there is an important social dimension to this behaviour with ‘peer influence as a primary contextual factor contributing to adolescents’ heightened tendency to make risky decisions’(Albert et al., 2013).

This is supported by research into risk taking by adolescent males specifically, which also showed that their risk-taking behaviour was more likely when the outcomes were both ‘ambiguous’ and when the decision was taken in a group (Lloyd & Döring, 2019). This suggests that to have a behavioural impact, campaigns to address safety around

railways need to have a social impact among male teenagers and young adults, while clearly communicating the consequences of the risk-taking behaviour.

The first campaign in this group is *Dumb Ways to Die* – developed for Melbourne Metro, a commuter train operator in Melbourne Australia. In their submission to the Australian Effie Awards, the team behind the campaign described that their challenge was to ‘turn a message that people needed to hear, but ignored, into a message people wanted to hear and share’ (Chan & Mills, 2013). Thereby it was seeking to socially resonate among those people likely to be thoughtless and unsafe around trains.

The awards submission identified that Metro Trains had four prime (interim) objectives for the campaign:

1. Increase public awareness and engagement with rail safety;
2. Generate PR, buzz and sharing around our message about rail safety;
3. 10,000 local pledges to be safe around trains on our website;
4. 10% reduction of near misses and accidents at level crossing and station platforms (Chan & Mills, 2013).

In a later submission to the Cannes effectiveness awards, the advertising agency behind the campaign, McCann Melbourne revealed that while the campaign was initially designed to run for a six-to-twelve-month period, the public engagement levels encouraged Melbourne Trains to develop the idea further. This next phase needed to find a way to cost-effectively reach even more people, at home and across the world, fuelling the franchise and driving engagement. The intent was to: ‘achieve the strongest possible cut-through and ultimate reach goal – every Melbournian aged 14 to 18’ (McCann-Melbourne, 2017).

In this second phase of *Dumb Ways to Die*, the objectives were identified as:

1. Increase prompted awareness from 55% (phase 1 result) to 75% amongst all 14 to 18 years olds in Melbourne;
2. 1 million additional global pledges to be safe around trains;
3. Make the campaign self-funding (McCann-Melbourne, 2017).

This *Dumb Ways to Die* case was conceived with a very ‘non-traditional’ set of objectives about being actively interesting and entertaining to an audience who tune out of safety messages. The metrics and the changes expected were very specific and

largely grounded in the levels of engagement generated by the campaign. Arguably these metrics were post-rationalised in the context of writing the award program entry case studies to which they were submitted, and the questions that raises over the significance of the results reported is discussed in Section 4.3.2 of this Chapter. The methods for generating meaning used by this campaign will be explored in Section 4.2.2 of this Chapter. Next in this part of this Chapter is the review of the objectives of the second campaign in this group: *Stop. Trains Can't.*

This campaign was developed by the Department of Transport in the United States as a collaboration between the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in much more traditional terms. It was developed to address 'the problem of railroad grade crossing crashes' (King & Batrory, 2017). Railroad grade crossings as defined as: intersections where a highway crosses a railroad at-grade. They are also called level crossings in other countries such as Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom' (USDOT-FRA, 2019).

The leaders of the NHTSA and FRA reported to the US Congress that: '94% of all rail-related fatalities and injuries [in the United States] occur at railroad crossings or due to trespassing. Approximately every three hours, a person or vehicle is hit by a train in the United States' (King & Batrory, 2017). According to the official campaign press release announcement, the campaign was: 'aimed at young male motorists to [encourage them to] make the right choice at railroad crossings. The campaign is the latest in a two-year effort by DOT to reduce accidents, and ultimately fatalities, at railroad crossings around the country' (NHTSA, 2017). The strategy for this campaign, declared in the letter to Congress sent just as the campaign commenced, was 'to reach drivers who are in a hurry and those who see the crossing device but not necessarily the train, believing it is okay to proceed' (King & Batrory, 2017).

The 2021 Campaign Social Media Playbook elaborated on this strategy, indicating that: 'drivers should always obey signs, slow down, look both ways down the track and listen before crossing'. It further elaborated specific objectives:

1. Motivate drivers to exercise caution around rail grade crossings;
2. Promote awareness of the risks of not being alert near crossings;
3. Encourage drivers to be conscientious and informed about the proper way to cross at rail grade crossings (NHTSA, 2021b).

Stop. Trains Can't. was conceived as a more traditional 'public service announcement' information campaign to contribute towards policies that would improve public safety but without any expectation that the campaign would actively engage its target audience beyond prompting awareness of safety messages. The way this campaign creatively generated meaning, is reviewed in section 4.2.2., and the evidence of behavioural impact is in section 4.4.2. The next part of this section reviews the behavioural objectives for anti- drink driving road safety campaigns.

4.1.3. Group 3: Anti-Drink Driving.

Driving while under the influence of alcohol is one of the major risk factors contributing to road fatalities. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 'between 5% and 35% of all road deaths are alcohol related', and that: reducing Blood Alcohol Concentrations (BAC]) from 0.1 g/dl to 0.05 g/dl may contribute to a reduction of 6 – 18% in alcohol related traffic fatalities' (World Health, 2018).

More broadly, 'excessive and sustained binge-drinking is often stated as the catalyst for health problems, physical injuries and psychological difficulties' (Kenyon & Wood, 2011). As a result of the risks which are exacerbated by excessive or dangerous alcohol consumption Governments around the world have 'an integrated approach to intervention [that] involves combined publicity and high visibility police enforcement' of restrictive policy measures including the permitted BAC levels for drivers (World Health, 2018).

Australian enforcement jurisdictions have taken an 'evidence based, impairment paradigm' to the regulation of alcohol consumption as related to safe driving, using prescribed BCA levels as a 'proxy' for the known impairment that comes from excessive consumption of alcohol to be at those concentration levels (Quilter & McNamara, 2017). The application of this enforcement practice is in line with the WHO 'best practice' criteria for anti-drink driving laws:

1. Presence of a national drink driving law;
2. BAC limit for the general population not exceeding 0.05 g/dl, and;
3. BAC limit for young and novice drivers not exceeding 0.02 g/dl' (World Health, 2018).

Such laws have been shown by global experience to be more effective when enforcement procedures: 'incorporate random breath testing strategies [as opposed to those that are targeted to certain times and certain places]' and so 'deter drink driving'.

In the Australian state of Victoria, a road safety agency, the Traffic Accident Commission [TAC] was founded in 1987 with a mission, as cited in a retrospective overview of the campaign by the Australian advertising industry website Mumbrella to 'upset, outrage and appal' Victorians [in order] to reduce the number of road deaths in the state'. Of the 850 people employed by the TAC in 2012 only 15 worked in marketing – this statutory body was set up to: 'act as a third-party insurance provider, funded by a portion of a car registration fee, to give automatic cover to all Victorians' with a powerful interest in keeping insurance costs down by encouraging safe behaviour on the roads. The TAC brand was built through all its various activities, into a recognised and powerful brand identity for Victorians (Hicks, 2012) .

In contrast, in the UK the policy settings for enforcement do not meet the best practice guideline as the BAC requirements for both the general driver population and the novice drivers is less strict (World Health, 2018). That is an important context for the second case in this group, the *THINK!* campaign.

THINK! was conceived as part of a '10-year road strategy' that would take a 'holistic approach to communications and the numerous issues that cause crashes, building on the previous four issues of focus [speed, seat belts, drink driving and child safety]'. The *THINK!* campaign would contribute to this strategy by:

1. 'Raising public awareness that accidents do not just happen, they are caused';
2. 'Encouraging and reinforcing attitudes that lead to safer and more considerate behaviour by all road users';
3. 'Promoting behaviour change that encourages safe road use by all road users';
4. 'Involving a broad spectrum of society in promoting safer roads for everyone;
5. 'Creating public acceptance for safety engineering and police enforcement';
6. 'Giving national focus and context for local initiatives (NSMC, 2010).

The way this campaign generates meaning is reviewed in section 4.2.3 of this Chapter which focusses on these group 3 cases. In both groups' cases, the specific behaviour change campaign being reviewed is part of bigger policy and communication initiatives, in both cases by Government agencies. In this way this group is different from the other two groups, which feature more specifically conceived behaviour change campaigns, developed by specialist organisations.

In both cases, the campaign objectives must be seen within the broader policy and enforcement structure created around the Government agencies delivering the

communication campaigns being reviewed. At a general level, the campaigns objectives were to gain attention and drive awareness of the specific policy prescriptions or enforcement actions that would reduce the incidence of drink driving. Specific behavioural or engagement metrics for individual communication activities or advertising initiatives were not published, and the presentation of behavioural results relied on the road safety statistics and drawing a causal link between the execution of the integrated policy and communication campaign and observed changes in those statistics. Campaign effectiveness cases were based on this connection. This presentation of results in the context of the objectives is discussed in section 4.3.3 of this Chapter.

That was the final set of behavioural objectives for the three groups of case studies being analysed. These contextual settings have a significant impact on the nature of the elements which go into the campaign and the impact which it has on its target audience specifically and society more generally. The next section of this Chapter reviews how meaning is generated by the creative devices and techniques used in each of the campaigns in each of the groups.

4.2. How meaning is generated in these campaigns.

The approach taken to generate meaning in each campaign is related to the nature of the behavioural objectives which were reviewed in the preceding section. The objectives, in context, and then linked to the techniques used to assemble creative elements meaningfully, provide distinct points of comparison for the campaigns, and the usage of the advertising idea phenomenon within them. This section compares the creative devices and techniques used in each of the two campaigns, discussed in the context of the relevant one of the three case study groups.

4.2.1. Group 1: Anti Skin cancer campaigns.

The first campaigns to be compared are the cases which aim to reduce 'unsafe' behaviour in the sun, and so reduce the risk that people will get skin cancer. Analysis of the creative material which has been developed as the *SunSmart* campaign evolved over the years, has shown the following consistent creative elements have been important to giving this campaign meaning:

1. Animated character ‘Sid the Seagull’, who has a distinctive and Australian accented voice, and other related characters such as his son Sam, and who are animated in a hand-drawn style;
2. Child-like tone which expresses a direct imperative message in an accessible and non-threatening manner;
3. Jingle that is memorable and with which it is easy to sing along;
4. Behavioural mnemonic “Slip! Slop! Slap!” – three simple steps to reduce the risk of skin cancer (Montague et al., 2001) (Cancer Council Victoria, 2015).

The ‘Sid the Seagull’ character, combined with the jingle, was a ‘jolly character’ who delivered ‘happy good-news messages’ for the campaign (Montague et al., 2001, p. 301). This cheerful and likeable tone helped to disarm the imperative instruction of the message and make it easy to process, accept and remember. Animated ‘spokes-characters’ have proven to help make advertising more likeable and that in turn has helped to make it more effective. In a small-scale study with adult consumers about character likeability, Phillips and Callcott found four key dimensions of likeability in animated advertising characters: personality, physical characteristics, humour and consumer experience factors (Phillips & Callcott, 1996). In Table 4.2.1. below, these criteria are applied to the Sid the Seagull character. Further research among pre-school age children has shown the potency of characters at getting attention from children, showing that they ‘generate high levels of attention, character recognition and liking and product recognition and liking.’ However, the research did not show this translated down the hierarchy of effects model to deliver stronger preference for the product or brand (Neeley & Schumann, 2004). The value of the Sid character to this campaign was his ability to add to the likeability of the message while making it memorable and to grab attention, particularly of children.

TABLE 4.2.1. Likeability dimensions of Sid the Seagull character.

Character Dimension	Sid the Seagull
Personality	‘Cheerful’, friendly and upbeat
Physical characteristics	Comically exaggerated representation of a seagull wearing a t-shirt, boardshorts and hat
Humour	Comic, silly voice with a friendly light-hearted manner reflecting on the fun things people do in the sun
Consumer Experience factors	Outdoors, beach experiences tend to involve seagulls for many Australians

As the campaign evolved, both in Victoria and nationally, alternative appeals were introduced– notably the use of fear as a motivator, but also appealing to people’s self-

image and vanity by reframing wearing a hat and sunscreen into being appealing and attractive. This also led to a change in creative style so that the child-like tone, the animated characters, the jingle itself and the simple behavioural nudges were dropped from these executions and replaced with new devices – specifically: graphic depictions of the removal of a skin cancer, heartfelt testimonials from people who have experienced the consequences of skin cancer, and the phrases ‘there is nothing healthy about a tan’, and ‘leave your hat on’ as well as ‘You know what to do. Do it’ and the branding device *SunSmart* (Cancer Council Victoria, 2015).

Since 2015, SunSmart activity by ACCV, acting as the national co-ordinating body, has continued with a new round of executions which has included:

1. An updated version of the Sid the Seagull campaign – although now the behavioural nudge was extended to Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek & Slide (adding the behaviours of sliding on sunglasses and seeking shade in the middle of the day) with a revised jingle and a new 3D computer animated version of the character Sid;
2. A new series of commercials about the dangers of everyday and incidental sun exposure with the line ‘UV. It all adds up’, complemented with Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide graphic icons and the warning ‘you’ll never know when your number is up’;
3. Belinda’s story – another testimonial about the impact skin cancer has on people’s lives, continuing the series started with Clare Oliver and continued with Wes Bonny. Now with the endline: ‘Be SunSmart. For Them. For You. For Life’ (Cancer Council Victoria, 2019).

The term Slip! Slop! Slap!, and the creative elements associated with that message have provided the ‘solid foundation’ for the integrated *SunSmart* campaigns with ‘almost universal awareness’ of that message (Sinclair et al., 1996).

The key to the second campaign in this group, *Melanoma likes me*, was the creation of an algorithm which identified ‘posts about being outdoors and in the sun’ by looking at ‘hashtags and geolocation functions on both Instagram and Twitter’. This was also ‘able to refine tags and identify those most used by our specific target audience’ (WPP Government & Public Service Practice, 2016). It was designed to aggregate ‘these posts and notified our social media team in real time, so they could respond with an appropriately creepy message from Melanoma’ (GP Y&R advertising, 2016).

The result was that 'Melanoma' would either 'like' the post, follow the person or make a comment about their activity on Instagram and Twitter – enthusiastically pointing it out the activity makes it more likely they'll meet 'melanoma' soon. The intent by the creators of the campaign was that: 'getting a personal message from a sun-related skin cancer truly focused the mind and made people think about covering up' (GP Y&R advertising, 2016). This was complemented by posting some of the material on Facebook [which didn't enable real-time and direct responses to posts] and was supported by a skin check website with practical information which could be accessed from the '@_melanoma' social profile.

Overall, this campaign 'personified @_melanoma as a creepy friend who "likes" photos of young people in the sun and is happy when they're careless about UV protection' (WPP Government & Public Service Practice, 2016). In such a model the only assets created were the online persona: @_melanoma and the darkly humorous tone of voice adopted with the choice of posts which were liked, followed, or commented upon and the supporting information website. The intent as presented by the agency was to shock people with the darkly ironic humour in the normally light-hearted environment of their social media feeds (WPP Government & Public Service Practice, 2016).

Melanoma likes me is a tactical idea that expresses a literal but personalised message about the risks of poor sun protection, in the moment when the target is exposed to the sun. It is a way to get them in a key moment when they need to be thinking about better sun protection. However, it does so without the focus and coherence that can come from an overarching idea that provides a unifying layer of meaning and identity to the activity.

The differences in the behavioural impact, and the consequences of the different creative approaches observed in this section will be reviewed in section 4.3.1. The next part of this section reviews how meaning is generated by campaigns which are trying to reduce unsafe behaviour in and around railways.

4.2.2. Group 2: Rail Safety Campaigns.

The first example in second group of cases is the Melbourne Trains campaign *Dumb Ways to Die*. This campaign used a non-traditional communications strategy, acting like an entertainment product so the agency, McCann Melbourne, collaborated with music industry figures to write and then launch the 'Dumb Ways to Die' song 'as any

band would, via iTunes, radio, YouTube, Soundcloud and more. It charted on iTunes in 28 countries and sold more than 100,000 copies' (Diaz, 2013).

They produced an animated music video of the song as well which was seeded initially on YouTube. The music video introduced whimsical cartoon characters, each dying in a comically exaggerated manner, because of reckless and obviously stupid behaviours. The final group of behaviours featured in the music video and illustrated in this manner were the specific rail safety messages which Metro Trains needed to communicate. (Chan & Mills, 2013). The creative director who led the creation of the campaign commented on the: 'universal appeal' of the creative work with grizzly bears, piranha, rattlesnakes and the like', adding that the breadth of appeal was reinforced because: 'the blob people don't have race or sex attached to them' (Diaz, 2013).

The creative concept was to humorously juxtapose 'blob' characters shown in situations executed in a distinctively whimsical and naive style of animation, together with similarly fun, and light-hearted lyrics and music with gruesome messages about the serious and confronting consequences of these stupid behaviours, which included showing extreme injuries or death. The characters and consequences of those "dumb" rail behaviours featured in posters around train stations, while the same characters and 'world' were extended into other creative expressions over time. This included a children's story book, iTunes content, along with public relations activities. Then, as a second phase, the "Dumb Ways to Die – The Games" smartphone game. This social media game was complemented with a second series of posters around train stations in Melbourne, with a refreshed series of characters and situations relating to rail safety behaviours. There was also a "Dumb Ways to Die 2" You Tube video about "training" for the games (McCann-Melbourne, 2017).

Dumb Ways to Die was created and implemented using techniques that were not associated with advertising ideas, and indeed the discourse around this campaign reinforced its ground-breaking nature and celebrated the massive impact achieved, in terms of engagement in the campaign and its idea. In that sense it certainly was an assembling of creative elements in a new way that was both memorable and impactful as a cultural phenomenon. This contrasts strongly with the second campaign in this group of cases *Stop! Trains Can't*, which was developed by the United States' Department of Transport. Assets developed for this campaign included an imperative call to action logo design: Stop! Trains can't, featuring stop lights design and TV commercial/ video assets – dramatising how long it takes a train to stop. This highlights

what could happen when people dangerously drive across train tracks or race the train to get clear.

This campaign reminds drivers that trains cannot stop quickly enough to avoid a crash, as a reminder for many people to stop taking unnecessary risks with their lives (King & Batrory, 2017). All the executions dramatize how long a train takes to stop to illustrate the consequences. These were executed through two different 30 second videos, each in both English and Spanish, as well as 15 second versions of these executions. This same message was also executed through a series of audio commercials, in both English and Spanish, featuring male and female observers to a car being impacted by a train and reporting it to the 911 emergency call centre (USDOT-TSM, 2021).

These video and audio assets were complemented with a series of images and infographics of the relevant statistics related to train safety and the use of crossings. These were in formats for use as banner advertising, social media posts and printed material (USDOT-TSM, 2021). Plans for the media buy for the 2021 implementation of this campaign indicate that the goal was 'to remind drivers that even in an emergency, trains can take over a mile to stop' with the target audience being 'men 18 to 49 years old who, according to Federal Railroad Administration data, are the largest demographic involved in fatal vehicular crashes at rail grade crossings' (NHTSA, 2021a).

The campaign was planned to use the audio assets in radio (to connect with drivers while driving) along with podcasts and audio streaming as well as using the video and digital display and social media assets to be utilised in 'digital tactics, including video, display and social media' (NHTSA, 2021a).

These two rail safety campaigns generated meaning in quite different ways – one through developing an entertainment ecosystem of content that engaged and amused people with content that had subtle railway safety messages buried within it, while the other overtly announced the rail safety message very directly, using a traditional approach to build awareness of a direct and very clear call to action. The key question is what difference these creative approaches make to the effectiveness of the campaigns at meeting the objectives set for them.

As discussed earlier, in section 4.1.2, neither campaign had meaningful objectives beyond engagement metrics. The evidence regarding the behavioural impact of these ideas will be considered in section 4.3.2 of this Chapter, while the longer-term impact

on popular culture and society more generally will be considered in section 4.4.2 of this Chapter. The next part of this section considers how meaning is generated for the campaigns in group 3, which are about anti- drink driving messages.

4.2.3. Group 3: Anti- Drink Driving campaigns.

Both campaigns in this group sit within a broader body of road safety public information campaigns, but the frameworks in which they have been developed are different. As was discussed in section 4.2.3, the Australian case in Victoria uses a specific campaign idea for drink driving messaging: ‘Drink, then drive, you’re a bloody idiot’, expressed by the consistent TAC road safety brand; while the UK case uses a general umbrella campaign brand: THINK! to carry all the road safety messaging.

Turning first to the TAC campaign in Victoria; in a review of 25 years of the campaign, it was identified that four ‘creative principles’ underpinned all of the ‘about 160 TV spots’ and ‘hundreds more’ radio, billboard, and press advertisements. These were identified as:

1. Do ensure that every ad leaves us thinking ‘That could so easily be me’
2. Do be as shocking as you like
3. Do be as emotional as possible
4. Do emphasise the link between drink/drive, speed, etc – and real crashes’(Hicks, 2012).

Within this broad creative framework, TAC communications have been linked together by the slogan “If you drink and drive, you’re a bloody idiot”, although as the campaign developed this evolved to “Drink, Drive, Bloody Idiot” and was adopted to other lines introducing “a bloody idiot’s mum” and “a bloody idiot’s mate” (Dean, 2013). This line was first introduced in the TAC’s first television commercial in 1989 which: ‘showed the real and raw impact of road trauma on families and the community’ (TAC-Victoria, 2021). The ‘most powerful’ TAC drink driving television and cinema commercials as proposed by Hick’s retrospective review of 25 years of this campaign are detailed in Table 4.2.3a. below (2012).

Table 4.2.3a. The ‘most powerful’ ‘Bloody idiot’ campaign commercials.

Commercial:	Description:	Campaign line:
‘Girlfriend’	Emergency trauma unit nurse explains, over harrowing images from the emergency department, the consequences that can come from drinking and driving	If you drink, then drive, you’re a bloody idiot.

'Joey'	Graphically dramatized the story of a: 'drink driver who kills his brother'	If you drink then, drive, you're a bloody idiot.
'Bush Telegraph'	Showed: 'the perils of drink driving to country-living Victorians'	If you drink then, drive, you're a bloody idiot.
'Lennon's Christmas'	Girl sings John Lennon's 'Happy Christmas' as an: ironic backdrop' to harrowing and emotionally charged images of an emergency trauma unit during the festive season'	If you drink then, drive, you're a bloody idiot.
'The Pub'	'Shows how drink driving can end you up behind bars'	If you drink then, drive, you're a bloody idiot.
'Never'	'Starts out like a clichéd car ad [but] ends with a weeping father' who is distraught from his daughter dying in a car accident	If you drink then, drive, you're a bloody idiot.
'Levels'	An education message about alcohol limits, expressed in the manner of 'a beer ad' to reinforce that 'if you think you are over the limit, you probably are'	Only a little bit over? You bloody idiot.

(Hicks, 2012).

As mentioned earlier the regulatory and communications framework used by the UK Government is different and this sets the context for the second campaign in this group: *THINK!*. The UK Government has been running road safety campaigns for 75 years. From 1946 – 2000 these campaigns were implemented by the Central Office of Information [COI], which was formerly a specialised agency of Government set up to provide: 'marketing and advertising services to other organisations in the public sector', although it is now closed (UK-Government, nd). *THINK!* was established as the UK's official road safety campaign in 2000 by the UK Department of Transport, and has included campaigns about: 'encouraging the use of seat belts to tackling excessive speed, drink and drugs, and the use of mobiles at the wheel'(UK-Department-of-Transport, 2021).

The *THINK!* umbrella brand was conceived to provide: 'strategic and creative flexibility for effectively communicating to an increasingly diverse audience', and therefore facilitate: 'the use of a broad range of channels to deliver individual messages meaningfully'. As such, the creative framework this provided was developed to work in three important ways:

1. Create efficiencies by linking together road safety issues;
2. Create a common language for disparate stakeholders contributing towards: 'the single-minded pursuit of better road safety';

3. Prompt road users to: 'reassess risky road behaviour and consider the consequences of their actions' in a consistent manner (NSMC, 2010).

The key video executions regarding drink driving, under the *THINK!* Campaign, are detailed in Table 4.2.3b below.

Table 4.2.3b. the Key *THINK!* Drink Driving commercials in the UK since 2000.

Commercial	Description	Campaign line
THINK! Don't Drink and Drive	As a man ponders whether to get a drink, the barman dramatizes the consequences of drinking and driving to prompt him to think again.	THINK! Don't Drink and Drive.
50 years of campaigning against Drink Driving	Using drink driving commercials from the 1960s and 1980s which discouraged drink driving – one about the risk of a 'quick drink' and the other about the risk of driving after an office party, plus a web-film showing more historic social marketing executions.	50 years of campaigning against drink driving. THINK!
THINK! Morning After	'A sober-looking man ... talks about how his body is still over the limit the day after an evening of drinking'	1 in 5 drink drive accidents occur in the morning. To your body, the morning after is still the night before. THINK!
Live with it	Inspired by the TAC commercial 'Haunted' (Hicks, 2012), this commercial 'highlights [the] lasting psychological effects of killing a child', by showing a man haunted throughout his life by the memory of the child he killed in an accident.	Kill you speed or live with it. It is 30 for a reason. THINK!
#butalive	2 commercials showing scenarios where a) drinker feels social pressure to have a second drink, juxtapose the consequences of accepting [injury/death] and those of declining ['sent to Siberia'] 'in the doghouse'	Photocopying/ In the Doghouse, but alive. A second drink could double your chances of being in a fatal collision. THINK! #butalive
#PubLooShocker	A film made of an 'award winning PR stunt' in which 'reactions are captured on camera as drinkers are suddenly confronted with a bloody face in the mirror as they wash their hands	What impact could a drink have on your night out ? THINK! Don't drink and drive
Time to Tackle/ Make a noise/ Pint Blockers	TV commercials and series of web-films showing groups of male friends out drinking and using exaggerated, comedic methods to: 'step in and stop a mate from drink driving'.	A mate doesn't let a mate drink drive. #MatesMatter. THINK!

(UK-Department-of-Transport, 2021), (UK-Department-of-Transport, nd).

The *THINK!* campaign was developed with 'a particular focus on young male drivers aged 17-29 years' and 'aims to instil the belief that even one or two drinks before

driving are too many, to reinforce and build the social stigma around drunk driving.’ The findings of research conducted into drink driving attitudes among this audience in the UK ‘showed that the personal consequences of a drunk driving conviction are highly motivating for young men’. So, while the ‘personal consequences of a drunk driving conviction may seem lower key and lack impact compared to an alcohol-related crash’, the portrayal of the legal and social consequences to be ‘more thought provoking and more personally relevant’ to this audience (Cismaru et al., 2009).

Both campaigns in this group must be considered in a much broader context, and although there are differences in the campaign approach, they have been able to adapt executions from one to the other. The UK campaign has adopted a lighter, more humorous tone, while the Victorian campaign is more constrained by the need to show the drink driver is being a ‘bloody idiot’ every time. Both have assembled consistent elements to generate meaning, such as the campaign logo mnemonic, and the campaign slogan which provide a ‘matching luggage’ framework for a ‘common visual identity’ which is led by advertising to generate ‘strong central creative work’ which can be ‘sequenced across different media’ (Cox et al., 2011). The breadth of the objectives for these campaigns requires flexibility within this creative framework. The Victorian ‘Drink, Drive, Bloody Idiot’ construct was the more pointed and focussed, because the behavioural messages being imparted under that banner were limited to various anti drink driving messages, while the “Think!” construct in the UK was carrying the full range of road safety messages and so was necessarily less directional.

The next section will review the evidence for how these differences effected the behavioural impact of each campaign within the context of its behaviour change objectives. This will commence with a review of evidence at a general level and then examine the evidence associated with Group 1 campaigns.

4.3. Evidence of impact on specific behaviour.

The three groups of campaign cases are each about discouraging risky behaviour and encouraging people to adopt smarter, healthier, and safer behaviours in their day to day lives. The focus of all three groups is younger adults. Generally, it is young men who are most prone to risk taking and so are the overt focus of the railway safety/ anti-dangerous behaviour (Group 2) and road safety/ anti-drink driving (Group 3) campaigns. Sun safety/ anti-skin cancer (Group 1) have a more general focus, although several executions also were targeting young adult men or teenage boys.

Each campaign has a different level of detail in published evidence of results which can be used to evaluate the impact it has had on behaviour. This review of the evidence available for the campaigns starts with Group 1, and the first *SunSmart* case study.

4.3.1. Group 1: Anti-Skin Cancer campaigns.

The literature has been clear that the combined efforts of the policies and communications related to the *SunSmart* campaign have contributed to 'major population shifts in attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and behaviours related to melanoma in Australia' (Marks, 2004). The immediate impact of the original Slip! Slop! Slap campaign was measured by the 'Sun Surveys' conducted on behalf of ACCV, in which respondents self-reported their beliefs, behaviours and related experiences of sunburn. The results of these surveys, in 1993 after the first two years of *SunSmart* campaigns (which followed the decade of Slip! Slop! Slap! campaigns) showed 'significant increases in sun protective behaviours, in particular hat wearing and sunscreen use, and a significant decline in sunburn rates' (Sinclair et al., 1996).

Marks found that, because of the melanoma related public information campaigns run in Australia 'there has been a change in attitudes and knowledge related to suntans. They are now substantially going out of fashion' with the result that there had been positive behaviour changes related to: 'all aspects of sun protection' (2004). Further research into *SunSmart* campaigns and summarised in 2014 found that: 'sun-protective behaviours rapidly improved from 1987 to 1995 and then again 1997 – 2007, but had some decline in more recent years' (Perea, 2014).

Research also was used to evaluate specific executions; specifically: The 'Leave your hat on' executions which ran between 1991 and 1993 and ACCV evaluation research showed that '63% of the Victorian population remembered the advertisement (Cancer Council Victoria, 2015), and the 'There is nothing healthy about a tan' series of executions, which were developed by the Cancer Institute of NSW and incorporated into the broader *SunSmart* suite of national activities. Caughley reported in a winning entry to The Australian Effies Awards that 'pro-tanning attitudes' among the teenaged target audience were reduced by 6% over the course of one summer by these advertisements (2010).

So, for the *SunSmart* campaigns there is evidence that there has been long term shift in attitudes and behaviours which correlate with the campaigns and some evidence of

changes in specific attitudes and of involvement with the campaign elements. It is less clear that there is evidence that people were directly prompted to change their behaviour by the campaign. However, it does seem that the accumulated impact of campaign activities did change attitudes and behaviours in relation to 'wearing a shirt', as well as 'putting on sunscreen and a hat' as the foundation of protection against the dangers of the sun. By comparison, the results reported for *Melanoma likes me* are entirely about engagement online with no evidence of a direct impact on people's behaviour. The key engagement measure was the 'over 2 million' people who were exposed to the message during the summer of conducting the campaign in the state of Queensland (with a population of 3.8 million). Within this, 36.35% of Queenslanders in the Millennials age groups were reached (GP Y&R advertising, 2016).

The objective about encouraging skin-checks was evaluated by the number of visits to the skin-check website created as part of the campaign. The case study makes the claims that:

1. 'In the first week of the campaign unique visits to the skin-check mobile site increased by 144% and over an eight-week period by 1371%';
2. 'There were 2052 unique page views during the campaign period with an average time on the page of nearly three minutes';
3. In the period to March 6th, 2016, 'total visitors to the site number 4513 with 4933 page views, and the average time on the page has increased to 3.40 minutes';
4. The click through rate from Melanoma's posts to the skin-check mobile site was the highest level of daily web traffic Melanoma Patients Australia had ever experienced (GP Y&R advertising, 2016).

This evidence makes a case that involvement in the campaign itself is the key measurable goal and that exposure to the '@_Melanoma' persona's comments and likes along with accessing the skin check mobile websites content are both spurs to motivate behaviour change in relation to awareness of the risks associated with poor skin protective behaviour, and individuals taking steps to check their own skin health, looking out for the signs of melanoma. The case depends on the level of involvement in the campaign message being accepted as the key enabler for the real-world behavioural outcomes, but the engagement metrics can demonstrate that the creative idea successfully drove involvement in the campaign.

This group of campaigns was about reducing dangerous behaviours by promoting positive 'sun safe' behaviours. The timeframe and ambition for the campaigns was

quite different and *Sun-Smart* had the advantage of being one element of a larger suite of policy moves to encourage sun safe behaviour, and these policies have been applied over a 40-year period. Individual activities within *SunSmart*, like the ‘it all adds up’ executions, were shown to deliver results against specific campaign involvement metrics, just as *Melanoma likes me* did.

A key question regarding the evidence of results achieved by these cases is in whether there were any signs of longer-term value created by the ideas over time. Section 4.4.1 will put them both in a broader context of popular culture and consider how the different campaign frameworks impacted their ability to have an impact of longer-term attitudes, beliefs, and expectations. The next part of this section reviews the evidence for immediate behavioural impact for the cases in the second group – the rail safety campaigns.

4.3.2. Group 2: Rail safety campaigns.

This second group of cases is about campaigns that require integrated, coordinated action on policy, infrastructure development, education, regulation, and enforcement. The behavioural focus is on what not to do to when navigating railways infrastructure. A key difference in the cases is how explicit they are with regards unsafe behaviour, and how much they try to engage interest from an otherwise disinterested target audience by making the message entertaining. This raises challenges with comparing and evaluating the behavioural impact of the two cases.

The first case in this group, the *Dumb Ways to Die* campaign has been widely lauded with creative and effectiveness advertising industry awards and was hailed as a breakthrough example of the creativity needed for the social media age. As such it was described as ‘a non-threatening, non-authoritarian, unique, and fun persuasive approach to changing how the target audience views rail safety [that] attempts to shift a social norm for young people from being foolish around trains as funny and cool to being socially unacceptable’(Algie & Mead, 2019).

The high level of engagement [downloads of the songs and games and views of the video content] which has been reported for this campaign suggests it succeeded at become sought out entertainment and was commended by the industry magazine *AdAge* as ‘one of the catchiest campaigns launched this century’ and number 12 in their list of the ‘best’ campaigns of the twenty-first century (2015). This followed the campaign’s 2013 feat of being the ‘most awarded campaign’ in the history of the

Cannes Advertising Festival. However, this significant award recognition for campaign creativity has not been replicated by similar levels of industry recognition for effectiveness (Ward, 2015). The key challenge with this campaign is to unravel the difference between the remarkable level of online engagement with the concept, which was achieved around the world, with most of those engagements coming from people who do not and are very unlikely to ever use Melbourne's Metro Trains, with the actual behaviour impact for users of that specific railway system.

Reflecting on the campaign's effectiveness in *Mumbrella*, Metro Trains' General Manager of Corporate relations and Business Development Leah Waymark noted that the reduction in near-misses (specifically a reported 20 % reduction in 'dumb behaviour around train platforms and railway crossings' in the 2 months after the campaign's initial video was launched) cannot be attributed solely to the campaign, although it: 'may well have been a contributing factor' (Ward, 2015).

According to Waymark: 'When it comes to near misses, the reporting has increased quite significantly. You can't use that data really because we've implemented new reporting hotlines and incentives to encourage drivers and station staff to report near misses, so we're collecting a lot more data than we have ever before' (Ward, 2015). This recognises that Metro Trains was using a suite of activities to help increase safe behaviour in and around its railway network, and this communication campaign was one part of that suite, albeit the most conspicuous. Metro Trains has some evidence that the campaign contributed to rail safety: 'over 44,000 Melbournians pledged "not to do dumb things around trains" in the four months after the campaign launched', demonstrating that 'some viewers of the clip did understand the intent and message of the campaign' (Algie & Mead, 2019).

In the series of awards entry papers to the Australian Effies and the Cannes Advertising Effectiveness awards programs, a case was made by the agency team responsible for the campaign regarding the scale of its direct impact (Chan & Mills, 2013; McCann-Melbourne, 2014, 2017). However, Algie & Mead, in their comprehensive evaluation of the broad social marketing dimensions of the campaign concluded that: 'the stated objectives [in the award entry papers] were somewhat weak', while noting that they had been: 'potentially skewed for the purpose of the awards submission' (2019).

An unnamed member of the jury for the Australian Effie awards opined to *Mumbrella* that the campaign's case study 'never set out to own the conversation around safety

and trains and rather it was just a “contagious idea” which took off in unexpected ways, including capturing the imagination of younger children’ (Ward, 2015). These concerns are underscored by Algie & Mead’s observation that ‘the post implementation review is weakened by not having independent and consistent measures in place’ (2019).

Despite these questions over the effectiveness achieved, there is an argument that ‘while short-term the results are unproven, perhaps the real, and unintended consequences of the campaign will be an increased level of awareness of train safety with those youngsters who have grown up playing the games and singing the songs’ (Ward, 2015).

Even though it has much more direct messaging and less ambition in terms of engagement in the campaign, there is even less evidence regarding the direct impact of the second case in this group: *Stop. Trains Can't*. Reflecting in Forbes magazine on the scale of the rail safety problem in the US, just as the campaign was launched, Mohn noted that: ‘about every three hours, a person or vehicle is hit by a train in the United States. Last year alone, 232 people died in railroad crossing crashes. And while overall rail incidents have declined over the last 10 years, railroad crossing deaths spiked in 2014’ (2017). The Federal Railways Administration enacted a ‘Grade Crossing Action Plan’ in the early 2000s, which included physical infrastructure works, standards setting, signage and continuous research efforts, and over that time ‘the number of fatalities and injuries at grade crossings has decreased by almost 40 percent within the decade (2001 – 2011) and has a slight increase in 2014’ (USDOT-FRA, 2019).

Neither of these campaigns has substantive evidence that they directly impacted the behaviour of their target audience in any significant way. There is evidence that ‘Dumb Ways to Die’ was very successful at driving immediate involvement in the creative idea, and the sharing of content. This demonstrates the value of a more disruptive and engaging idea to draw attention to the campaign and its message, but that does not translate into unmistakable evidence of immediate behaviour change. There is an argument that *Dumb Ways to Die* had a longer-term impact on those children who grew up singing the jingle and playing the games and have internalised the message by doing so, and that will be discussed in section 4.4.2. The focus of the next part of this section is on the third Group of cases – anti-drink driving, and the evidence of those multi-dimensional integrated campaigns having behavioural impact.

4.3.3. Group 3: Anti Drink Driving Campaigns.

Evaluation of the behavioural impact of campaigns in this group needs to be seen in context of the broader road safety policy area and the application in the relevant jurisdictions of the 'triangle of legislation-enforcement-publicity for the effective social marketing campaigns against alcohol-impaired-driving [AID]' (Yadav & Kobayashi, 2015). As a result, the direct behavioural outcomes associated with any campaign needs to be evaluated with the 'triangle' of inter-related and complementary activities.

In the case of these two case studies this is particularly true, as the communication of anti-drink driving messages is part of the broader road safety communication efforts. To consider the TAC 'bloody idiot' campaign first, a summary of 25 years of the campaign in *The Australian Financial Review* concluded that 'the campaign has been hugely effective, driving down an annual Victorian road toll of 776 [from when the campaign began in late 1989] to a little over 200 this year'(Dean, 2013). This conclusion can only be made for the combined effect of the 'triangle' of activities, and so while it is a reasonable appraisal of the impact of the TAC's comprehensive campaigning, it overstates the impact of the communication activities and certainly overstates the impact of any one strand of the communication activity.

The responsible advertising agency Grey Melbourne submitted an entry into the Australian Effie awards regarding their TAC campaigns – and it included the 'Only a little bit over? You bloody idiot' Drink Driving activities associated with the TV commercial 'Levels', (as discussed in Table 4.3.3a in this chapter). The submission claimed that the campaign encouraged: 'motorists who are unsure about their BAC level to not drive after they have been drinking' and that the effectiveness of this would be shown by the 'incidence of self-reported drink driving in Victoria in the ongoing tracking study'. This incidence measure was shown to have dropped by 'a significant' 20% post campaign (which means falling to 8% from 10%) (Grey Advertising, 2009). Allowing for award entry hyperbole, and even though the evidence is statistically significant, and it is encouraging evidence that the campaign had a behaviour impact, it is a very marginal change.

In a similar vein, the *THINK!* campaign claims significant success at changing behaviour. They claim that in the first 10 years since the campaign began, that 'road deaths in the UK reduced by 46%' (UK-Department-of-Transport, 2021). In a press release in 2017 it was claimed that '*THINK!* campaigns have helped reduce the number

of deaths [from road accidents] from 22 a day in 1960 to current levels of 5' (Norman & UK-Department-of-Transport, 2017).

These impacts are a result of the 'triangle' of inter-related activities discussed earlier - the UK Government refers to this concept as 'the three Es – Enforcement, Education and Engineering' (NSMC, 2010). As such it would overstate the impact of the communication elements on their own to claim these behavioural shifts. So, it is possible to make a credible case that the integrated policy, enforcement, and education communication responses of the Governments behind these cases have, over time, improved road safety for drivers. The case can also be made that these campaigns within the triangle of factors have contributed to changing attitudes regarding drink driving, making it more likely that behaviour will shift too. It is much harder to find evidence that the communication activities themselves have had a tangible impact on behaviours.

In both cases the creative elements have been assembled into frameworks that allow the flexibility to communicate a variety of messages. In the case of '*Drink. Drive. Bloody Idiot*' the spectrum of messages which the campaign needed to communicate was narrower than it was for *THINK!*. As a result, the campaign framework for *Drink. Drive. Bloody Idiot* was more creatively directional, and so helped make the individual executions in the campaign consistent in message, tone and meaning. In this, it goes beyond the superficial consistency that comes from using the campaign line and logo. However, that is mostly focussed on relatively short-term impacts. The next section takes a step back to put the three groups of cases in their broader and longer-term context and review evidence of the impact they had on popular culture and the broader society. This review will start with the anti-skin cancer campaigns of Group 1.

4.4. Evidence of impact on broader society and popular culture.

This section examines the broader impact of these advertising campaigns and whether any of the campaign messages or creative devices enter vernacular usage beyond the campaign implementation period, suggesting those creative elements have become embedded in popular culture. Such impacts can be demonstrated by the longevity of use of a saying or concept introduced by the campaign, in Earned and Shared communication channels. Evidence for this longer term, cultural impact is examined for the anti-skin cancer campaigns in the next part of this section.

4.4.1. Group 1: Anti-Skin cancer campaigns.

The phrase 'Slip Slop Slap' has become part of Australian popular culture and symbolises the *SunSmart* campaign which has wide relevance and appeal among Australians (Marks, 2004). This is a result of changes in the popular sentiment as 'Australians [now] know that the sun is dangerous as well as wonderful', which was noted by Professor Adele Green of the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute in Brisbane, who has researched incidence of melanoma among Queenslanders for over 30 years (Melanoma Research Victoria, 2014). This evolution in sentiment has occurred as the SunSmart campaign activities have been implemented. In *From Slip! Slop! Slap! to SunSmart: A profile of a health education campaign* it was reported that after seven years of the campaign featuring Sid the seagull, 'the phrase Slip! Slop! Slap! had become part of everyday Australian language.' Then, by the mid-1990s it was 'still identified by all, generations as being one of the key messages about protecting yourself against skin cancer' (Sinclair et al., 1996).

Expressing this behavioural instruction as a jingle helped establish the phrase in the popular imagination, as advertising practice found that: 'the musical jingle turned out to be an extraordinarily effective and long-lasting sales device'(Taylor, 2012, p. 68). This was because jingles link the name of the product or company or other brand attributes 'with a melody that clings to the mind like a burr' (Buchanan, 2005). By 'setting words to music' the use of jingles helps people to 'take the edge off' intellectualising or questioning what 'might otherwise be a strident message' and so 'reducing our tendency to counter-argue with what is being said' (Sutherland, 2008, p. 123).

The use of the jingle made the message easier to remember and easier to accept, with the use of the character and executional style making it highly distinctive. Although the jingle was only used consistently in the original Sid the Seagull campaign executions, it helped to turn the behavioural instruction into a gentle and highly memorable nudge. The construction of the creative elements that added up to the *Sun Smart* campaign, particularly the creative elements developed for paid advertising were deployed consistently and evolved gradually to build long term associations, which helped embed the idea into Australian popular culture.

The *Melanoma likes me* campaign indirectly leveraged this social awareness of the importance of SunSmart behaviours, but there has been no reported evidence so far of *Melanoma likes me* having a long-term impact on public opinion, or awareness of the

specific campaign activity. The construction of the creative elements in this campaign were focussed on engagement and sharing using the functionality of social media networks, as there were fewer building blocks with the potential to be used consistently. Of course, this campaign only ran for one summer and wasn't repeated so it is unknown whether the creative elements could have been refreshed to give the campaign greater longevity and a greater prospect of becoming embedded in popular culture. Without the mass awareness paid advertising provides as the backbone to the campaign, it is very likely that new and innovative techniques would be required to give the campaign longevity.

The next part of this section looks at evidence of long-term impacts from the campaigns in the Rail Safety group, to consider how those campaign constructions have built long-term meaning to embed the message in popular culture.

4.4.2. Group 2: Rail Safety Campaigns.

The *Dumb Ways to Die* idea has been lauded as an international creative phenomenon, which has 'transcended advertising', by becoming a games platform. So, it evolved into an 'entertainment ecosystem', which is 'loved by millions as an enduring piece of entertainment' and which 'people are paying money to engage with' (McCann-Melbourne, 2017). Further, the earned media attention on this campaign has prompted widespread adoption and parodying of the concept – applying the creative elements (characters, animation, creative style and music jingle) to other situations. An example is the *Dumb Ways to Die* parody of the 'Among Us' online game (SylverStar, 2020).

It is unknown whether the level of engagement in the entertaining *Dumb Ways to Die* content and games by children will have caused them to internalise the message and therefore change behaviour in the longer term as argued by Ward. *SunSmart* managed to 'charm' its way to embed itself as a simple 'Slip, Slop, Slap' mnemonic for positive behaviours to adopt, which has an implicit association with happy childhood memories. It is conceivable that *Dumb Ways to Die* could similarly build long term associations that impact on behaviour. The entertainment platform evolved and ran for several years although that required the creation of new content, which proved to be unsustainable for a rail safety campaign to maintain the relatively high level of content creation required to keep people interested and entertained. The campaign sits on the blurred line between advertising and branded content, but that raises questions about how the cost of creating an ongoing content stream is funded and managed when the organisation has a different operational focus.

The second campaign in this group, *Stop. Trains Can't.* has very little published evidence of any long-term impact which can be linked to the campaign in any way. The US FRA has claimed that between 2007- 2017 fatalities at US railway crossings declined by 23%, although in the year to 2016, the number of fatalities had increased by 20 people to 260 (Federal-Railroad-Administration, 2017). The objectives set for the campaign, as discussed in section 4.1.2 are broadly based on building awareness of safety messages and are reflective of the broader policy setting rather than providing metrics against which the communication campaign specifically can be evaluated. The communication campaign is part of a broader effort and isn't analysed as an independent influence on behaviour.

These campaigns don't have strong evidence of a longer-term impact on behaviour although there is potential in the nature of *Dumb Ways to Die* to build longer term impacts on attitudes and behaviours. The next part of this section will examine the evidence of any longer-term impact of the anti-drink driving campaigns in Group 3, and how the construction of those campaigns impacted any longevity.

4.4.3. Group 3: Anti Drink Driving Campaigns.

This group of campaigns has considerable potential to have an immense impact on popular culture with some of the most memorable and impactful advertising concepts developed as part of both campaigns. They address very high-profile issues which form part of the daily discourse of life for millions of people. As such the campaigns are addressing a subject that people are already engaged in. In the case of the TAC campaign the line 'If you drink, then drive, you are a bloody idiot' has entered the popular vernacular in Australia. Some of the specific advertising executions developed under this banner have been: 'either remade or revoiced by government departments in the European Union, the UK, Ireland, South Africa, Vietnam and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The strategy has been used wholesale in New Zealand', and elements have also been adapted for use in China (Hicks, 2012).

The second campaign in this group *THINK!* has very high awareness in the UK. Among men aged under 30 years old, the key target audience reported 95% awareness of the campaign. The case study of this campaign developed by the National Social Marketing Centre argues that 'today's road users are more aware of road safety than ever before'(NSMC, 2010). This is on the basis that the consistent campaign structure

is reinforcing road safety more consistently than ever, building long term awareness and understanding of the message that will continue to influence behaviour.

The high profile, popular relevance, and longevity of both campaigns in this group makes them likely to have long-term impact, although to what degree that directly impacts behaviour is unknown. It certainly plays a role in the broader mix of social marketing and government policy initiatives. The construction of both campaigns has developed enduring phrases, symbols, and messages which have been used consistently over time and have potential to become more deeply embedded into popular culture. The next section of this chapter summarises findings from the Content Analysis into themes which will be connected to the themes from the Practitioner Interviews (discussed in Chapter 5), in the Chapter 6 Analysis and Conclusions.

4.5. Summation of Themes.

This section summarises the themes that have emerged from this content analysis. These themes help to characterise the use of the advertising idea within the cases that have been examined and address the first of the specific Research Questions. This answer is derived from the themes from each of the 4 groups coded from the analysis of the 6 cases analysed to provide a multi-dimensional observation of the advertising idea in practical use. These observations shed light on the relationships between the various factors which are emerging as being part of the advertising idea phenomenon. The comments about these factors made by practitioners are reviewed in Chapter 5 to triangulate the data and provide a richer and more grounded view of how the advertising idea fits into advertising development practice.

The first of the coding groups is the Campaign Objectives declared for each campaign. These objectives range from building general awareness, to generating buzz, to changes in attitude, driving people to make a pledge, to general behaviour to specific behaviour changes. These objectives are set in the context of how they will be used to determine the success or failure of the campaign. As such they have a role as a tool for management of the process as well as the evaluation of the impacts achieved, and both of those roles depend on the business and communications strategies which are used to direct the development of the campaign. Observations of the impact of the strategies being followed and how these relate to the creative development process are examined in Section 5.4 of the next chapter.

The second coding group is about meaning generation – these are the different techniques for assembling creative elements to create meaning for the campaign. These techniques included: creating characters, mnemonic devices, personalised connections, video assets, music jingles, integration through media channels and creating a distinctive tonality for the campaign. These techniques allowed the campaign to communicate the strategic message set by the objectives with impact and relevance for the target audience. The way such techniques are deployed is related to the objectives set, the marketing technology and data system which the organisation uses to develop and evaluate the creative direction being developed. This is also related to the individual and organisational choices made about application of creativity to meet objectives and find solutions to marketing and corporate communication problems. The observations of practitioners regarding this value web of relationships (inside and beyond their immediate team) and the formative techniques used by those teams. This impacts the way their practice of creativity is used in developing advertising direction, and their observations of these dynamics is discussed in sections 5.2 and 5.3 of the next chapter.

The third group coded was the evidence of behavioural impacts and these came in two broad forms, bespoke metrics that were tracked for the campaign, and standard metrics, both of which can be used in the ongoing management of the creative development process. The extent of the systems required to manage the information and use it in the formative and evaluative processes has a relationship with the nature of the objectives that can be set for the campaign, and the metrics used to evaluate such results. Without any data to inform and evaluate the campaign, the blend of convergent and divergent creativity used to assemble the elements into an idea will be necessarily subjective and grounded in the personal creative judgement of the leaders of the team. If there is data, it will depend on how granular it is, and how well embedded it is in the client decision making processes and therefore how that impacts the metrics used to evaluate the campaign and so influence the strategy. This relationship is explored with the experienced practitioners interviewed, and the findings from that stage in the research are discussed in the next chapter in section 5.5.

The fourth and final group coded are the broader social and cultural impacts of the campaigns, where there is evidence that the elements being used to communicate meaning develop significance over time and become recognised and appreciated even once the campaign itself is no longer running. These impacts are explored among practitioners in considering their definition of the advertising idea concept and

discussions of their perceptions of the role it plays in creative development in section 5.1 of the next chapter.

So, to use these findings to address RQ1: *How have the creative elements been assembled to generate meaning, and achieve defined objectives in past behaviour change campaigns?* Creative techniques have been used in this body of work in ways that are related to the nature of the organisation within which the advertising has been developed – specifically:

1. the decision-making and evaluation system used to set objectives, monitor progress, and evaluate results,
2. the business, marketing and communication strategies developed by that organisation,
3. the web of relationships that exists between those people and organisations contributing creativity to the process

As such the creativity techniques of the individuals, teams and organisations who assemble these elements to create meaning operate within a broader formative context which is impacted by the web of inter-relationships between the strategic, operational and creative elements that make up the three factors identified above.

These dynamics are explored from the perspective of experienced practitioners to contribute towards further understanding their impact on the nature and function of the advertising idea phenomenon within the advertising development process in the current digital age.

5. Findings from Practitioner Interviews.

This chapter reports on the findings from the interviews conducted with a purposive sample of leading, experienced practitioners in the development of advertising, who were recruited on the basis discussed in the Methodology Chapter. These interviews provide perspective on the organisational, strategic, and creative dynamics discussed in the previous chapter and which illuminate aspects of the nature and function of the advertising idea within the process of creating and implementing advertising in the context of the digital age. Their responses and comments address RQ2: *To what extent are practitioners observing that there has been a change in the role of the 'advertising idea' in the practice of developing, implementing, and evaluating advertising?* This answer is a step towards answering the overall Research Question: *Is the role and function of the advertising idea being changed by the application of data to inform creativity, and if it is, to what extent is it being changed?* This overall question is discussed in the Conclusions & Analysis chapter.

The term 'advertising idea' is familiar to all respondents, yet their perceptions of its meaning, utility, and significance as an element of practice differs. The respondents saw that the phenomenon of the advertising idea is closely intertwined with marketing and business considerations, including the notion of the 'brand' being incorporated within the advertising along with the communication channel and technologies which enable and constrain the creative elements which can be used as aspects of the advertising idea. These comments and observation are coded into nodes through software and are discussed in Sections 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5, in this Chapter. First, in the next section are the findings about how these practitioners define 'advertising idea', and how they express their view as to the role it plays and the challenges it faces.

5.1. Advertising Ideas and the Challenges they face.

The respondents saw that the phenomenon of the advertising idea was closely intertwined with marketing and business considerations. This includes the notion of the 'brand' being incorporated within the advertising, along with the communication channel and technologies which enable and constrain the creative elements which can be used as aspects of the advertising idea. To provide an initial overview of the concept, Figure 5.1 below shows a word cloud of the definitions expressed.

they 'can shop around internally as well and inspire their internal staff with it' (F. Buresti, personal communication, October 10, 2021). This is a view of the advertising idea as a foundational concept at the heart of advertising communication. In contrast Daniels sees the advertising idea in more functional, organisational terms in which the Advertising Idea is 'at its most simple' a 'way of expressing, in an engaging way, in an effective way, whatever needs to be communicated' (M. Daniels, personal communication, August 24, 2020).

By defining the advertising idea as being 'anything that builds a brand, and by a brand, I really mean anything that builds a business in a coherent way', Ferrier puts the role of the idea as the heart of advertising in a broader, more business-oriented context. This view sees the advertising idea as being integral to the strength of the brand being advertised, and the distinctiveness of the product or service being offered (A. Ferrier, personal communication, July 17, 2020). Digital media strategist Frantzeskos placed the advertising idea as 'taking the inherent value of a particular product service, [and, the] brand assets that have been developed over the years' and creating an 'expression of those [elements] to change behaviour' (C. Frantzeskos, personal communication June 3, 2021).

The dynamics of how advertising messages and activities are executed and delivered through various media channels is another key factor that is seen to affect the advertising idea phenomenon. Hier defines the concept of an advertising ideas as being 'a continuum' in which different types of agencies (like media, PR and digital agencies) each 'want their own type of ideas' and so will challenge one another to be the lead agency at setting the creative direction for the advertising campaign (J. Hier, personal communication March 26, 2021). Also approaching the advertising idea from a media strategy development background, Hislop saw it as being a factor in how advertising is implemented with the 'big difference between an advertising idea and an execution' being its longevity. This use is on the basis that an advertising idea is 'something that can live for at least five years' (C. Hislop, personal communication March 16, 2021).

These leading practitioners believed their industry to be in the process of transformation and change, and that process raises questions for the industry about the future role and utility of the advertising idea concept. Insofar as advertising practices are rapidly evolving, Bedir defines the advertising idea as 'a creative concept wrapped about an organizing idea' which enables the practitioner to 'evaluate it and its performance later', in terms of 'sales, brand [health metrics]' (J. Bedir, personal

communication, October 20, 2021). However, not all agreed that the advertising idea will or should continue to play a central formative role in the development of advertising in all circumstances. This questioning of advertising ideas' present and future worth came from the following two perspectives.

The first perspective arises from a critical view of the formative approach to developing advertising, which has been traditionally adopted by agencies, as discussed in the Literature Review section 2.4. This traditional approach, as summarised by Daniels, is that advertising material which 'has an idea [in it], is of inherently greater worth than [material] that doesn't'. He contends that this traditional 'notion' about advertising campaigns and the role of ideas within them is 'quite a dangerous and obstructive way of thinking about... [...] what advertising can be' (M. Daniels, personal communication, August 24, 2020). The impact of this perception on evolving formative advertising practices will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

The second perception arises from Bathram's experience with developing innovative creative directions in non-traditional channels where the content cannot be recognisable as 'advertising', if it is to engage the audience. The creative context of such channels means that an advertising idea construct 'doesn't translate in the same way across all categories.' She recognised that 'the idea is probably still really important for big TV advertisers [...] but [...] questioned whether 'one creative [campaign concept or idea] can work across all the different platforms' (C. Barthram, personal communication, August 11, 2021).

Although there are challenges to the way the advertising idea concept is applied in contemporary practice, Buresti saw that its central formative role endures as 'the intent behind the idea, the integrity of it is still the same ... there are still varying levels of experience and ability, and [capability] to deploy it' (F. Buresti, personal communication, October 6, 2021). The transformation of practice does still raise questions about the nature of advertising creative development practice in the future. The next section explores the formative process of advertising development and the views of these practitioners regarding the role of advertising ideas within it.

5.2. Formative process.

Creativity in advertising agencies is an 'organisational concern' in which there are 'quasi-formal interactions' that help manage the 'order in the day-to-day [or hour to hour] narrative' of developing the 'commercial creativity'. This helps to drive and

determine the 'aims and ends' within advertising agencies. (MacRury, 2018, pp. 186-187). The organizational dynamics, which are discussed in section 2.3 of the Literature Review, relates to the second group of nodes coded from these interviews, formative process, and table 5.2 below breaks down the nodes which make up this group. The practitioners reflect on the established concept of advertising practice, which is as considered in section 2.4 of the Literature Review.

Table 5.2. Formative process coding nodes.

Group	Description	Specific Codes	Number of References
2. Formative creative approach	The creative orientation and mindset for the team developing the creative direction	Creative agency skills	13
		Creative insight	5
		Creative steps	11
		Creative research	4
		Ideation process	27
		Implementational capability	3
		Proactive creativity	6

These executives discussed the importance of having structure in the creative process, organising the collaboration between agency team members and also with other partners in the process from the media, other commercial partners, other agencies and the client organisation. In reflecting on the organizational system within which this occurs, Daniels reflected on whether 'intuition is sort of a bad word', as it implies 'a flash of brilliance', which is linked to the people with 'creative' in their job title. He suggests that this association 'implies that someone that doesn't have that label is not creative', and thereby diminishing the creativity of roles such as strategists and 'account people' (M. Daniels, personal communication, August 24, 2020).

Considering the structures in which creativity is managed, Hislop declared that 'the structure in [advertising] agencies is broken'. This was a recognition of the specialisation and 'unique skillset[s]' required for developing an advertising campaign when being developed by a cross-functional team (possibly sourced from multiple agencies, with a diverse set of skills). In this team 'everyone [needs to be empowered to] bring their own lens to it, their own emotions to it' (C. Hislop, personal communication, March 16, 2021).

These skills are deployed within the structures and skills of the agency organised to enable creative idea development. Noting opportunities for establishing new organisational structures in agencies, Ferrier remarks that he 'hates the vibe between [the roles of creative and strategist] because so many of our ideas and our good ideas

are coming from the thinkers'. This reinforces Daniels' point that people without the term 'creative' in their job title can still be contributors of creativity to the organisation. He advocates 'getting rid of the nomenclature of strategists, suit, creative' and rethinking roles and responsibilities within the operational structure (A. Ferrier, personal communication, July 17, 2020).

To undertake the creative development process requires traditional advertising skills, which have developed to be part of advertising agency practice. Reflecting the accumulated experience of practitioners, over the past 50 years as discussed in the Literature review, the role of the creative brief in the formative process for developing advertising is central to agency practice. Herceg notes that 'a good advertising idea is developed with an incredibly clear brief, a clarion brief, written with one voice' (R. Herceg, personal communication, July 7, 2020). Underlining this need for structure for the creative process, and the essential role of the creative brief, Frantzeskos observed that 'the reality is that the creativity needs the framework and it needs boundaries and it needs a brief' (C. Frantzeskos, personal communication, June 3, 2021).

A key skill for achieving clarity in the creative brief is being able to 'simplify' and 'focus' the message. This is traditionally, as Ferrier noted, something that 'people who are in advertising are good at'. It is a part of traditional practice because 'when you've only got 30 seconds, ... you have to tell it in a really simple, interesting way for people to notice it' (A. Ferrier, personal communication, July 17, 2020). Herceg commented that 'the best briefs have a clear sense of what the benefit of their product or service is' but also added that the brief needs clarity about defining its target audience, on the basis that 'to advertise to everyone is to advertise to no one' (R. Herceg, personal communication, July 7, 2020).

However, the required clarity of thought can be compromised by the growing complexity of the advertising development task and related process. Hislop noted that there are a number of factors to consider as the advertising is implemented in market. In her view, the result is that 'an idea now is harder'. This is because practitioners have 'the same desire to create something that really makes people feel something' and recognize the importance of building 'memory structures' associated with the brand, but now are required to plan the activity 'in lots and lots of different channels, and that makes it harder for an idea to work' (C. Hislop, personal communication, March 16, 2021). Another factor that makes achieving clarity in the brief harder today is, in Herceg's view, is 'the unfortunate problem' that briefs are 'authored by 50 people',

which reflects her broader concerns, raised earlier in this section about a culture of consensus coming to dominate the way large teams collaborate on creative development tasks (R. Herceg, personal communication, July 7, 2020).

A critical factor in determining the way creativity is applied in the development of advertising campaigns, is the distinction between the two creative 'procedures', which were identified by Osborn and discussed in section 2.3 of the Literature Review. These procedures involve creating new *ideas* through *idea-production* (which sometimes can be referred to as 'ideation') and *idea-development* which involves refining and implementing existing ideas so they can be practically executed and delivered to consumers (1993, p. 86). Much of the preceding discussion in this section has related to *idea-production* but practitioners recognise the creativity that is required as part of the *idea-development* procedures.

Once in *idea-development*, identifying and defining the *idea* becomes a critical factor, because, as noted by Buresti, it is 'the central thought that holds it all together'. The traditional refinement and implementation stages of the creative development process involve developing executions of that idea for each specific media channel involved. The creative production task is to 'find the best way to express it, finding that executional sweet spot with time, with casting, with all that stuff that you do down the back end of the communication' (F. Buresti, personal communication October 6, 2021).

This *idea-development* process needs to be supported and managed carefully, as observed by Hislop, by executives 'who are really, really good at coaching other people to come up with ideas' who are 'not always the same person' who is good at actually coming up with the ideas themselves (C. Hislop, personal communication, March 16, 2021). Doing this involves having the skills to identify an idea and nurture its development by allowing the iterative creative process to unfold because sometimes, as Buresti comments, 'you don't know what the idea is until you've seen the execution and [consider] what you think it can be and the potential of it' (F. Buresti, personal communication October 6, 2021).

This suggests that the distinctions which Osborn draws between *idea-production* and *idea-development* are not definitive or linear in nature. Instead, the creative process can involve iteratively going back and forth between the identification of the *idea*, and the development of specific executions. Buresti remarks that such processes help to

'unmask' the creative concept, 'unravel it and then build it back up' into a creative direction (F. Buresti, personal communication October 6, 2021).

The complexity of the communication environment which these executives discussed, raises challenges for advertising development practice. The more frequent use of data as part of advertising development prompts questions about the skills which will be required in creative agency teams in the future and how they compare with the traditional skills Ferrier mentioned. As a result, as Herceg remarks, agencies need to 'look for people who love data, [and who] love the humanity behind the data.' She argues that 'the new frontier of advertising' is to use data analysis skills to 'find the greatest opportunity to acquire a customer' and those will be 'in the shadows' (R. Herceg, personal communication, July 7, 2020).

With these new opportunities to leverage data and analysis in the advertising development task, the value of structures and information to constrain and inform advertising development has increased. In this context, and despite the organisational creativity systems discussed in section 2.3 of the Literature Review, Daniels expressed a concern that advertising practice has 'bought into [a] dominant ideology of the idea and intuition, which is somehow God granted and bestowed on selected individuals'. He also perceives this ideology is an 'excuse for laziness as well' (M. Daniels, personal communication, August 24, 2020). This challenge is that opportunities for using creativity to find new and inventive solutions to the problems brands face in this new data-driven era, risk being missed because of hidebound industry practices which still preference the creativity of key 'genius' individuals.

There are further challenges to this traditional approach to creative development, like Ferrier identifying that there is 'a proactive and a reactive way of developing an idea'. He notes that always taking a reactive 'problem first' approach in which the agency team will seek to understand a problem and learning all they can about it before developing creative concepts is 'a real issue' and that his view is that 'advertising's taken that way too seriously about waiting for the problem' (A. Ferrier, personal communication, July 17, 2020).

The alternative, Ferrier suggests, is that 'good advertising' should set out to create 'value when there was no prior problem to solve.' To do this, agencies need to look at their structures and the skills required to enable creative idea development, which challenges the traditional 'baton-passing' formative process which Duckworth

formalised, and which was discussed in the Literature Review and also in this section of this chapter. Ferrier's view was informed by experience at establishing a new structure at his agency Thinkerbell, where 'we try to combine the creators and the producers into one'. This ensures, as discussed in, that 'everyone feels like they can do a little bit of everything', (A. Ferrier, personal communication, July 17, 2020).

Organisational considerations are important within the internal agency ideation process but are also important to the way one creative team works with other creative partners in other agencies, production houses, client companies and other partners. This is the third group of nodes and the focus of the next section.

5.3. The nature of the relationship between partners in the creative process.

These executives reflected the complexity and variability of the collaboration that is a necessary part of developing advertising concepts between different partner organisations. The nodes into which there were grouped are detailed in Table 5.3 below. The dynamics within the ideation process relate to the relationship between the client and the agency, which has been coded in the nodes of client role and client bravery. Putting this relationship in simple terms, Bedir observed that advertising ideas are 'only as good as our clients' (J. Bedir, personal communication October 20, 2021).

Table 5.3. Groups of nodes related to partners in the process.

Group	Description	Specific Cluster	Number of references
3. Relationship between partners	The nature of the relationship between the collaborating partners, including the various agencies, media and technology partners and the client team	Client Bravery	10
		Client Role	10
		Commercial orientation	2
		Creative Collaboration	5
		Creative experimentation	2
		Data analytics	4
		Media agency role	15
		Creative intuition	6

The key role played by the client within the creative development team is to be a leader and decision maker, who advocates for the creative direction within the client organisation and helps facilitate the progression of the idea from being an initial concept, into the final execution which is ready to be placed in the appropriate channels. This is related to the discussion in the section 2.3 of the Literature Review on organisational creativity and advertising development. Leadership is of critical importance within the creative process. Herceg commented that 'businesses need

leadership' and so 'you always know where they stand. You always know what [the business] wants to achieve' (R. Herceg, personal communication July 7, 2020).

The nature of the web of partners with decision making power has become more complicated. Frantzeskos observed that the marketing executives, who have been the clients for advertising agencies, are being somewhat marginalized 'away from the C-Suite', and away from the decision-making power related to budgets. He noted the pertinent question about this dynamic as 'how many listed companies have a CMO in their management team? In the old days, I believe that was higher. I see it in front of my eyes where you go, "Oh, well now the marketing role is under the XYZ role"' (C. Frantzeskos, personal communication, June 3, 2021).

Whomever is in charge, making the decisions as part of the creative process can be challenging for those involved, requiring leadership and a determination to follow through on the financial and reputational consequences. Herceg observes that 'it takes a great deal of courage to reflect honest moments of truth where you can cut through, because most brands want to erase the truth and make it a much more palatable version in life' (R. Herceg, personal communication July 7, 2020). Bedir reflects on the importance of courage in decision makers by commenting that 'if you've got someone that is a bit weak on the client side, it gets incredibly hard to determine ideas.' The consequence of such weak and indecisive leadership is, in her view, that the decisions are made on the basis of what they feel they can 'sell' on to influential stakeholders, and what they perceive they are able to implement in practical terms (J. Bedir, personal communication October 20, 2021). As such, weak leaders do not utilise the creativity of their team which can refine and implement the creative direction.

Implicitly, these points coded as client role and client bravery require leadership to address and ensure the coherence and integrity of the advertising direction that emerges, and to champion that direction. They also relate to role played by the media agency in the process, so it is not surprising that the media agency executives saw the advertising development process and the nature of ideas in the context of where and when the messages are communicated.

Hier identified that media agencies have always brought a different perspective to both questions of creativity and the analysis of data. This is because, in his view, media agencies 'have always been data-born', informed by the data about how, when and where contact with people is achieved through the media channels, and applying creativity 'from contact through context to content'. Creative agencies, by contrast

apply creativity that 'move[s] from content to context to contact' (J. Hier, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

In making a similar point about the communication environment and the data which helps executives understand it and deploy advertising campaigns, Frantzeskos pointed to the 'the five variables' regarding the objectives of an advertising activity, which are 'channels, communicator, content, context, and then company' (C. Frantzeskos, personal communication, June 3, 2021). Considering these variables is part of the role of the media agency and Bathram also spoke to the importance of channel specific objective using the context provided by 'a traditional [sales] funnel'. This is used to 'think about what you're trying to achieve from a media marketing objective' so the campaign drives members of the target audience to transact and make a purchase (C. Bathram, personal communication, August 11, 2021).

This data which is generated through the contact channels used in a campaign help provide a rich understanding of attitudes and behaviour of the target audience. Herceg suggests that such data can help uncover 'moments of truth [which] are very close to the bone'. Such understanding might not reflect the idealised representation usually shown in advertising of the moment of consumption, and the customers' behaviour related to those moments. Such representations in advertising are to amplify the benefit or point of differentiation which is being communicated, and so don't reflect actual behaviour. She gives the example that when passengers get off a long-haul international flight they look 'like they've been sleeping in their pyjamas for 24 hours' but in airline advertising "everybody looks lovely' (R. Herceg, personal communication July 7, 2020).

However, the cross-agency, cross-skills collaboration which is a feature of developing the advertising material for integrated multi-media campaign and activations can raise its own challenges especially in the quest for 'great' creative ideas. Herceg lamented that 'collaboration is the enemy of great', on the basis that it 'means that everybody needs to agree, everybody needs to feel comfortable, everybody needs to feel included'. This can lead to 'a very watered down, very vanilla approach', although it could be argued that she is referring to consensus, more than collaboration.

Regardless of the label, taking a bland consensus driven approach to developing the creative work risks developing less original, less impactful, less clear ideas 'because I think the things that work tend to make you feel a little bit uncomfortable [is what is] going to connect with the community' (R. Herceg, personal communication, July 3, 2020).

The nature of the relationships between the partners who are working together to create the advertising material can be challenging and managing the skills of the people involved and the collaborative process to still achieve high impact and effective ideas is something that was a key area of concern for these practitioners. The next section discusses the group of nodes coded from the perspective expressed by the practitioners which were related to the strategic considerations which impact their personal and organisational creativity.

5.4. Business and Communication strategies that direct creative development.

This section discusses an inter-related series of strategic business and communication considerations for practitioners, which the executives interviewed discussed as having an impact on their practice as it related to the phenomenon of advertising ideas. Table 5.4 summarises the nodes that have been clustered into the group.

Table 5.4. Nodes coded into the Business and Communication group.

Group	Description	Specific Nodes	Number of references
4. Business and Communication Strategies	The business and communication strategies which informs and directs the creation of the advertising and determines the basis on which it is evaluated	Brand differentiation	7
		Changing behaviour	6
		Creative strategy	11
		Customer relationship marketing	8
		Expectations of advertising	4
		Longer term impacts of advertising	5
		Moment of truth	10
		Stand for something	3
		Value of creativity	13

Expectations of advertising, and the impacts it can achieve, particularly the longer-term impacts relates to concepts discussed in Section 1.3 of the Introduction, particularly Botan's distinctions between 'grand strategy', 'strategy', and 'tactics' (2018, pp. 13-14). Longer-term expectations fall into the realm of 'grand strategy', setting the goals for the organisation and the policies to be followed in all activities. In this broader business context, it can be argued that expectations of marketing decision-makers regarding advertising and the results it can stimulate, have become more particular and specific that was the case previously. Herceg contends that 'a lot of brands and businesses expect a lot of advertising, and I think it's probably unfair'. She put these expectations for advertising into the broader decision-making context, as it is "one part of the

marketing mix, it's not everything' (R. Herceg, personal communication, July 7, 2020). This view aligns with Jones' argument, as was discussed in section 2.3, that advertising is a 'weak force' and is unable to do more than reinforce existing behaviours and beliefs without further incentives, (Jones, 1990; 1997).

The way practitioners look at advertising ideas in the context over the timeframe and the longevity of the idea is connected to Botan's 'strategy' level of considerations. The implementation of advertising execution is a matter of 'tactics', but the enduring advertising idea which is used to integrate or orchestrate a campaign (as was discussed in section 2.4 of the Literature Review) can be considered as rising to the 'strategy' level. Hier contends that an idea can 'take time to wear in because [...] there's almost a necessary time lag, especially if it's a new idea, for people to catch up with it, accept it, and then propagate it themselves' (J. Hier, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

Echoing Benit & Field's call, as discussed in section 2.2. of the Literature Review, for a greater recognition of the accumulated value that comes from the consistent implementation of a campaign, Hier argues that the current focus on immediate impact (participated related to social and digital media) doesn't recognise that advertising can 'wear-in' over time and build value or equity. The strengthening of short-term sales impacts can come from a longer-term equity on the basis that 'if [advertising impact is] good long-term, it's good short-term' (J. Hier, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

The value of the strategy to the organisation is that it sets the direction for the brand and the business and setting important parameters which includes the advertising ideas as a useful element of practice. However, Buresti has observed a 'lack of enduring brand strategy in market' which means that the approach taken to advertising development 'just get very, very executionally led.' As a result of this mindset, he notes that 'as soon as they think they're running out of steam with a campaign, they change it, and they say they're changing their brand strategy.' In doing this, he argues that practitioners are 'just .. chasing our tails' because they 'conflate both' the tactical and the strategic 'and can't really separate them' (F. Buresti, personal communication, October 6, 2021).

Key factors, as discussed by these practitioners, which help to drive creative strategy are coded into the nodes of brand differentiation and standing for something. Ferrier

prioritised distinctiveness in the brand, commenting that 'if creativity is in the service of distinctiveness and sustainable ability to trade, well then great. If it's not [...] in the service of that, well then it's an affectation' (A.Ferrier, Personal Communication, July 17, 2020).

Determining when, and where advertising should appear and in what contexts is an opportunity to make the advertising activity more distinctive. It is when media agencies apply creativity as part of the *idea-development* procedures. Hier contends that such 'channel thinking' should 'take the idea and advance it, so not compete with it. Don't conflict with it. Advance it'. Doing this can help the brand to stand for something and build a strong association which people come to know and identify with the brand (J.Hier, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

Standing for something adds value and helps ensure distinctiveness for the activity. Herceg argues for such associations irrespective of whether it is polarising or not, because despite 'the backlash' which Nike suffered when they executed the advertising campaign which featured Colin Kaepernick, then 'Nike's sales were never better than when they did that' (R.Herceg, personal communication, July 7, 2020). She is referring to the 'believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything' campaign which a review in *Fast Company* magazine commented 'lit up the cultural discourse like no ad had done in recent memory' (Beer, 2019).

These strategic considerations come down to the nature of the impact the advertising is to have. There is a range of impacts from building front-of-mind awareness and immediacy for a brand through to changing behaviour in specific ways. The data available and the key moments of truth identified provide vital context to help focus advertising messages in this way. However, as Hislop notes 'the metrics that we can measure are not the metrics that matter most of the time' (C. Hislop, personal communication, March 16, 2021). The media engagement informed by this data is a factor that helps determine the nature of the advertising idea and the brand strategy. Hier observes that social media makes it 'easy to propagate stuff' while noting the challenge with using a specific execution in social media because 'maybe the idea is not built for that platform' (J. Hier, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

So, the use of tactics which determine how an idea is implemented can add strategic value and help to build enduring equity. Hier observed that 'the benefit of distinctive assets ... [is] ... that are able to be transported and pushed into all of the different

touchpoints' along the customer's purchasing 'journey' (J. Hier, personal communication, March 26, 2021). In a similar way, the data collected through tactical activities can be used strategically to drive relevance of messaging when it utilises understanding about the relationship between the brand and its customer. Bedir noted the power of this data is why 'the tech platforms of the world are becoming so successful, [because they can manage the data to] also do [a brand's] customer relationship management" (J. Bedir, personal communication, October 20, 2021).

The data provided by customer relationship management can help identify key moments when the brand advertising connects with, and influences the customer, as discussed in the Literature Review. Herceg reinforces her earlier point about the power of honest and 'real' moments of truth because 'people like to see a bit of truth reflected [in terms of how people really act], [as] it makes their behaviour permissible. But a lot of brands are still, ...nervous about where the truth will take them' in terms of how their customers are represented (R. Herceg, personal communication, July 7, 2020).

Within these strategic dimensions of advertising development there is a question over the inherent value of 'creativity' as a concept within advertising practice. While some regarded creativity as implicit within the phenomenon of the advertising idea, questions were raised about its relative importance. Taking the view that 'creativity' isn't the point of advertising and that it is only useful if it serves the real purpose of the advertising, Ferrier opined that 'creativity is not the be all and end all. I don't mind if creativity gets ruined, as long as brand building sits above it. And when I say that I want brands to be interesting and colourful and crazy and weird and draw people in' (A. Ferrier, personal communication, July 17, 2020).

Making a similar point regarding creativity in the broader context of marketing communication and marketing technologies, Frantzeskos notes that 'creative agencies arrogantly dismiss the idea that there has to be a commercial outcome'. In contrast, the marketing technology team will criticise 'expensive ads that didn't actually drive any sales [and] barely even mentioned the brand' before observing that 'when we looked at our metrics, they didn't budge, so you guys are useless' (C. Frantzeskos, personal communication, June 3, 2021).

There are many overlapping considerations within the business and communication strategies group of codes. The practitioners interviewed saw that these factors help to direct the creation of advertising, inform how it will be evaluated and therefore

influences the practice of developing advertising ideas. The next section looks at comments coded into the nodes related to the level of access to data which can be a key input into the strategic considerations just reviewed.

5. 5. The level of access to data which impacts the development of advertising ideas.

The comments related to the link between the process for creating advertising ideas and the behavioural, attitudinal, engagement and involvement data available from marketing technology, 'big data' sources, customer relationship management systems as well as digital and social media. The make-up of this cluster has been detailed in Table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5. Nodes coded into the access to data group

Group	Description	Specific Nodes	Number of references
5. Access to data to inform development	The level of access to data which can inform and direct the creation and implementation of marketing communication	Data and creativity	20
		Data quality	6
		E-commerce	5
		Engagement	3
		Purchase process data	6

Herceg is concerned that the current proliferation of data can negatively impact the creativity applied to advertising development, arguing that 'my great worry is that data will stifle the creativity'. This puts a requirement on practitioners to avoid ending up with 'a whole lot of blah', which is a risk that the use of data analysis could make 'everything binary ... which is not good for marketing at all'. Instead, practitioners need to learn 'how to take what's human, wrapping that up in data, and making it work together' (R. Herceg, personal communication, July 7, 2020). Ferrier makes a similar point with the view that 'the big challenge is [that we are] drowning in consumer-driven data' (A. Ferrier, personal communication, July 17, 2020).

The analysis of data is a media agency strength, while being a struggle for creative agencies. In the view of Hier media agencies approach 'analytics as a way of measuring and confirming, and you can have analytics that help you optimize' the idea by taking behavioural signals from the data and using them to inform creative choices (J. Hier, personal communication, March 26, 2021). As was discussed in the previous section of this chapter, data captured in the process of interacting and transacting with

a brand is key information used by practitioners to inform the creation and implementation of advertising ideas.

However, the growing use of marketing technologies to deliver first person data directly to the client organisation poses challenges to the role of media agencies in managing behavioural and engagement data for their clients. Bedir observes that this has the potential to impact the role of media agency trading desks managing programmatic buying for their clients as ‘the big performance buying [clients are] moving [their programmatic buying] in-house’. On the basis of these changes in the control of managing data, she predicts that ‘a technology battle [between types of agencies, clients and media businesses]’ will evolve within the advertising industry (J. Bedir, personal communication, October 20, 2021).

Whether it is collected, analysed, and interpreted by specialists employed by the media agency, another kind of agency or consultancy, or within the client’s organisations the customer understanding that can be gleaned from key behavioural data points is a powerful tool to help inform decision making in creative idea development. Herceg nominated the importance of ‘knowing what to focus on versus [all the other pieces of information] about the customer is key’. For instance, data analysis can help practitioners understand late night clothes shopping behaviour, when ‘the woman who's earning 80,000 bucks a year is just as likely to buy big as the woman earning \$300,000 a year. Because in that moment, they're women who deserve a treat because they've just managed to put down their screaming children’ (R. Herceg, personal communication, July 7, 2020).

Reinforcing the potential power of the data becoming increasingly available to advertisers, Ferrier identifies a new generation of “tech based” brands, like AirBnB which have been built on access to this class of data and “are ahead of the curve of everyone in terms of understanding that a brand is everything the customer feels, and every single touchpoint is the brand’ (A. Ferrier, personal communication July 17, 2020). Such electronic and online commerce technologies provide new opportunities to gather data to further understanding of purchasing behaviour. To this point, Hislop noted new data was showing ‘how much people are buying online between 12 at night and 06:00 a.m. ... [when] people aren't sleeping, [and so] keep shopping, [and so] are going to return items’. She adds that ‘clients don't want to necessarily hear because they will say that feels like it's a really negative cycle’ and so they ‘don't want to be

there in that moment when people are doing something that's bad for them' (C. Hislop, personal communication March 16, 2021).

New business systems are emerging to support online, and data driven marketing, and this is creating new challenges and opportunities for marketers to engage with their customers with what Bedir called 'direct to consumer [marketing] models, [which enable the marketers to] know exactly what their [customers'] shopping basket is'. These all the marketers to focus on driving sales because 'they can model what [their customers are] about to do next, and then target [them] and make sure that they have the CRM [customer relationship management] machinery in place' to manage the transaction and customer support 'so that [the customers] come back' (J. Bedir, personal communication, October 20, 2021).

This will allow new opportunities for creativity in the branded, commercial marketplace where deep brand engagement and messaging can become part of the transaction experience within the virtual market. Hier identifies how the online retailers Alibaba and Amazon have a 'whole brand-building universe' in their online and mobile retail environments so marketers can 'have influencers sitting inside' that environment endorsing and supporting their brand where the customer can choose to immediately engage and transact with the brand. As a result marketers will be able to 'build [their] brand inside Amazon', because they will 'get a message through' to customers in that environment, 'and [the customer will] go to that beautiful standalone shop' to make a purchase (J. Hier, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

So finally, how do these practitioners feel that data works with creativity? Ferrier takes the view that these dynamics are driving fundamental change, at the expense of creativity 'I do reckon the math men are smothering the Mad Men with a pillow [and] that is for the detriment of our industry, without a doubt'. He also adds that he feels that creativity is not the point of advertising development and so if data doesn't aid creativity that isn't necessarily matter whether the result is 'better creativity' as 'I don't know if better creativity is the big game here'. Instead, he argues that consumer-centric behavioural data has distracted practitioners from making brands more distinctive and 'doing what is right for the brand'. In this he is reinforcing his early point about the importance of proactive development of creative ways to enhance and differentiate the product because advertising is 'that tax you [the brand owner] pay for not creating a remarkable product' (A. Ferrier, personal communication, July 17, 2020).

Hier argues that data has a positive role in helping make more effective communication of brand strategy using data and delivering 'multiple messages', the key question for practitioners is 'are we advancing the idea, or are you competing with the idea, or are you conflicting with the idea?' The opportunities that have resulted from 'addressable media and the idea of smart media [is] where you can change the copy in the background, and the pictures, and the characters, and the cars, and the date' (J. Hier, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

Supporting this belief that data is good for creativity, albeit resisted by creative people (echoing some of Daniel's observations about the false reverence applied to creative intuition), Hislop comments that data 'makes ideas better' and while 'creatives often don't want to be led by data. They want to have something that feels very natural and intuitive and powerful'. However, you can make ideas better whether you are using [data] to validate an idea that has already existed or whether you are using it as an input to create an idea, I think it works both ways' (C. Hislop, personal communication, March 16, 2021).

However, as a note of caution about these new opportunities, Herceg warns of the challenges for brand owners and creative decision-making from being driven by data because 'then they need to be okay with where data [from being transparent about data to deliver personalization of marketing at scale] takes them'. That's because the behaviours illuminated by the data might not be the positive customer image which advertisers prefer to show, so, for instance if 'the data leads a point in time, like [when] most people eat fast food as secret, single behaviour, [going through] drive-through [and then eating it] in about four seconds on our own'. This can be uncomfortable for a fast food advertiser to highlight 'because it's not a shared moment with a happy family' and so doesn't conform to the sort of image the brands want to portray (R. Herceg, personal communication, July 7, 2020).

So, while having new levels of access to data which can inform and direct the creation and deployment of advertising, the practitioners interviewed do note that it also raises new practical and creative challenges for them. Buresti also worried about the risk of over stating the importance of data and its ability to change practice 'I think almost like an existential crisis in the industry. It felt like at one point it was going to go all digital. I think we just pulled back a bit and realized it's not the silver bullet we all thought it was' (F. Buresti, personal communication, October 6, 2021).

Access to the right data gives practitioners options in terms of the objectives they set, the way creative material can be personalised to the target, the deployment of the creative while being tailored to the time, place and key messages, and the effectiveness and efficiency of the activity can be evaluated with the appropriate metrics. Buresti notes that it also enables creativity to be applied across the customer experience of interacting with the brand by taking ‘a step back from the big creative idea [to be driven by] the strategy and the purpose and the core values of the organisation and weaving that through the entire experience’. This provides opportunities to utilise creativity from marketing technology firms to ‘come up with a big idea that can be translated [and ‘built’ into a technology solution]’ (F. Buresti, personal communication, October 6, 2021).

Without access to the right data then the ‘digital age’ precision marketing and technology driven techniques are irrelevant for the contemporary practitioner, and they need to rely on more traditional methods to apply creativity and develop creative directions. The interviews have indicated that for these practitioners there is a wide scope of new opportunities for advertising campaign development, but that these depend upon access to marketing technologies, data systems and research that is often only available in limited form or is entirely unavailable within the context of the creative development value web in which they are operating.

The final section of this chapter will summarise the themes that have emerged from this phase of the research and address RQ2 as another step towards answering the overall research question in Chapter 5.

5.6. Summation of Themes

This section summarises themes that have emerged from inductive coding and analysis of the practitioner interviews. These points help characterise the use of the advertising idea within the cases that have been examined and address the second of the specific Research Questions.

Overall, the idea is clearly a familiar and somewhat useful tool for these practitioners, but its ultimate utility depends on factors related to the formative process, the web of partners and contributors and access to relevant data and other information which can inform and inspire the development of creative directions. The idea is traditionally seen by practitioners as central to the process for developing advertising – the inspiring “north star” that is the starting point for everything else.

Advertising ideas can be a framework to help focus and direct creativity to develop advertising, but the methods and techniques will be impacted by the resources available as well as the mindset of the team and the broader web of partners. Ideally a creative process needs a point of focus, which provides clarity and inspiration for ideation and implementation. Creative roles within agencies are traditional but are being increasingly questioned by some practitioners.

The quality of the relationship between the partners in the process and decision-making stakeholders can have an impact on the decisiveness and coherence of the executive and creative spirit. The clarity and coherence of the strategies developed for the brand helps inform and direct the creative process. Having a lack of clarity about the strategic context and direction of the brand risks making decision making less decisive and the creative direction less clear, which is likely to sap its sense of decisiveness and clarity of purpose.

Access to data is dependent on the strategies being followed, and the quality of the relationship between the partners in the process. Being able to utilise that data comes down to the skills and processes deployed by the team developing the work, raising questions about the skills required of its members. Data can unlock opportunities for brands and products, but only with access that allows those opportunities to be realised.

This phase of research has indicated that the creative process as observed by these practitioners is about the quality of the co-operative partnership and process management techniques used within the group of people and organisations working together. Practitioners apply creativity to create, plan, implement and evaluate the advertising material used to meet the strategic plans the organisation has set. Without such a framework, and the access to information and tools which it enables, the practitioners rely on the same creative techniques, utilising a version of the advertising idea concept, to develop advertising material as has been used for the last 50 years of practice. However, when access to the systems and data is available, practitioners now have formative options that don't necessarily rely on an advertising idea to organise the various elements into advertising.

So, to focus the findings from this phase to address RQ2: *To what extent are practitioners observing that there has been a change in the role of the 'advertising idea' in the practice of developing, implementing, and evaluating advertising?*

The role of the advertising idea is seen to have changed in recent decades along with the broader suite of changes to the communications, media, and marketing environments as is often associated with the development of digital technologies. The prospect of a new era of personalised marketing communication being delivered through addressable digital and social media is a thrilling prospect for the future of advertising. In this future, orchestrated campaigns are executed using a blend of Owned, Shared, Earned and, where necessary, Paid media and the coherence of the activity is driven by being true to the brand purpose or brand values, or a much broader business imperative.

However, the practitioners indicated that there are several practical barriers to this vision faced in the day-to-day practice of advertising. These are:

1. Lack of client commitment to evaluating the creative direction using the right metrics that will evaluate whether the strategy is being met, which leads to them not effectively advocating for the direction within the organisation;
2. Lack of clarity among all partners in the creative process about the strategy and the role advertising is capable of playing in delivering that strategy;
3. Lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities among the partners in the creative process, diverting energy and attention away from the creative development and onto organisational battles for influence;
4. Challenges with practical data collecting amid growing regulatory restriction on the use of the data required to personalise communication, making personalised activity impractical for the campaign, or only practical in limited parts of the campaign.

These barriers all reflect on the qualities of the organisation within which the advertising material is being developed. Advertising ideas remain useful as a way for practitioners to help manage creativity at the individual and organisational level when these factors come up and the ideal of precision marketing can't be delivered. Quality data used in the context of clear objectives informed by a well-articulated strategy provides options for practitioners to apply creativity in more ways than ever, and in some cases that means they don't need to use the advertising idea as a part of their approach. However, those opportunities are rare and so the advertising idea remains a useful concept to use in the organisational creativity used to create, plan, implement and evaluate advertising concepts.

The next chapter will bring the themes discussed in the last two chapters together to address RQ3, and the overall research question and reflect on what is understood about the advertising idea phenomenon and what still is to be explored.

6. Analysis and Conclusions.

This chapter brings together the findings from both stages of the research to consider the future role and function of the advertising idea as part of the development process for contemporary advertising. It addresses RQ3 first to consider whether the use of an advertising idea is necessarily in conflict with the use of data in application of creativity for advertising development. It then goes on to address the overall research question and draw conclusions about the nature of the role that the advertising idea does, does not and could play. In so doing it proposes guidelines for the potential use of the advertising idea in future development of advertising campaigns. These conclusions help focus and identify further areas of enquiry to build further understanding of this aspect of advertising practice.

6.1 Comparing and contrasting themes in the context of contemporary practice

This section addresses RQ3: *Does the use of an advertising idea to develop, implement and evaluate advertising necessarily conflict with the use of data to inform creativity, or do the different approaches complement one another?*

This research indicates that the advertising idea concept does not necessarily conflict with the use of data to inform creativity. However, it does suggest that the use of data will influence the way creative elements are combined to generate meaning and that does not conform to the more traditional expectation of advertising creativity. There is a multi-faceted interaction between, the strategic direction set, the formative process followed, the creative techniques used the messages to be communicated, and the plan developed to connect with the audience which can be, but does not need to be, informed, and inspired by data.

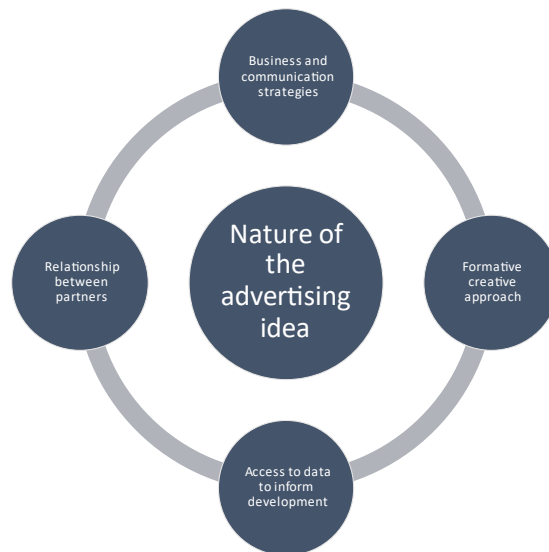
This interaction of elements means that there is a circular relationship between the way meaning is generated by advertising and the nature of the idea and the processes used to create it. The factors that interact to determine the nature of the idea are:

1. the business, brand, and communication strategies of the brand owner or client organisation,
2. the decision-making and approval processes:

- i. within the value web of creative services used to deliver the advertising material,
- ii. for the client organisation,
3. the data available to then team members which can be used to inform and evaluate the advertising,
4. the creative development process and techniques applied by the team to develop the advertising.

The circular dynamic connecting these factors is illustrated in Figure 6.1 below. As they are brought together and linked, these factors create the organisational, and individual context for the application of creativity to form advertising material. In practice, this assembly is the advertising idea – although whether it is formalised as a creative tool or goal or is a more fluid expression of a point of connection is related to these influencing factors.

Figure 6.1. Factors influencing the nature of an advertising idea.



The techniques used to assemble the creative elements to generate meaning in advertising practice as observed in this research need to be considered in relation to the context set by the organisation in which it is developed and evaluated. This relates to the formative approach employed within the agency and its value web of creative collaborators, which in turn is impacted by the quality of the relationship between the parties within that value web. Philosophically, practitioners may have a working definition for how they see what an advertising idea is conceptually, but the practical role that the advertising idea has as a tool for creativity will depend on these

organisational factors combined with the availability of data to inspire and inform the development of advertising material and determine how it is evaluated.

This research indicates that 'data' or science driven vs 'intuition' or artistically driven views of applied creativity have always represented a false dichotomy in practical terms, and that in the 'digital age' the distinctions between these two paradigms are becoming even less meaningful.

6.2. Answering the Overall Research Question.

This section addresses the overall Question: *Is the role and function of the advertising idea being changed by the application of data to inform creativity, and if it is, to what extent is it being changed?* This involved answering three specific questions, which have been addressed in turn over in the last three chapters, specifically:

1. RQ1: *How have the creative elements been assembled to generate meaning, and achieve defined objectives in past behaviour change campaigns?* was addressed in section 4.5 of Chapter 4,
2. RQ2: *To what extent are practitioners observing that there has been a change in the role of the 'advertising idea' in the practice of developing, implementing and evaluating advertising?* was addressed in section 5.5 of Chapter 5.
3. RQ3: *Does the use of an advertising idea to develop, implement and evaluate advertising necessarily conflict with the use of data to inform creativity, or do the different approaches complement one another?* was addressed in section 6.1 of this Chapter.

This section brings those themes and conclusions together to address the overall research question.

The transformation in the communication and advertising industries has the potential to fundamentally change the way creativity is applied to advertising in its broadest and most contemporary sense. However, this sense of far-reaching potential change in practice and definition needs to be tempered by the following five considerations.

The first of these considerations is that paid, traditional advertising continues to have the capability to drive awareness of messages among non-users and non-fans of a brand when the data which facilitates precision marketing techniques is unavailable to a brand or organisation. As a result, mass media still have a place within the range of

media connection strategies open to organisations. This means that there continues to be a significant aspect of practice that does not involve addressable, digital media, and such traditional use of these media requires a more traditional application of creativity to craft a single-minded advertising idea that cuts through the media environment and is memorable. In research commissioned by the 'ThinkTV' industry group in Australia, econometric modelling of three years of 'raw sales and campaign data', showed Television as being the 'most efficient medium' in terms of Return on Investment (ThinkTV, 2017). Although this research was undertaken to help the industry body make its case for the use of television, the finding does reinforce that there is ongoing value in using traditional broadcast media to meet some advertising campaign objectives.

The second of the considerations is that limits are increasingly being set on the data that can be applied to precision marketing. This is because of regulatory restrictions on the ability of the business to collect and leverage the data, budget restrictions on the scale of marketing technologies and data generating infrastructure, as well as organisational restrictions on the ability to manage the collection and utilisation of data within the limits set by regulators. The WARC Awards for Media in 2021 highlight (in the Best Use of Data category) a growing number of examples of marketing organisations, ranging from the fast-food chain Burger King to Warner Brothers Home Entertainment, that are establishing systems that allow precision marketing based on first party data (which effectively means data collected and owned by the advertiser). This is a critical point about the future of the digital marketing age as there are ongoing questions about whether third party data sources such as cookies will continue to be supported by search engines such as Google's Chrome (WARC-Category-Intelligence, 2022).

The scale of limits put on marketing data collection and utilisation is unknown at this stage as governments debate regulatory measures, but there is significant risk that many organisations will be unable to take up the anticipated opportunities provided by digital networks. Europe based practitioner Femi Taiwo writes for WARC that 'an inescapable, privacy-first future beckons [and] ... it's clear that this is not [and should not be] a platform-only conversation [especially in regard to Google's plans for the Chrome browser] (Taiwo, 2022). In such circumstances the formative techniques and disciplines associated with the advertising idea will still be useful ways of bringing together creative elements into strategic communication.

The third consideration is that traditional advertising practices favour creativity that is impactful and will grab attention when interrupting other activities, and which communicates a simple and highly memorable message. Repeat use of such techniques over time in high reach media has shown the capacity to embed a key phrase or symbol in audiences' minds, with the potential for these creative elements to become widely known and considered as part of popular culture. This high-level umbrella campaign identity has traditionally been a key aspect of the advertising idea. One example of this is the role of the phrase and jingle 'Slip! Slop! Slap!' used in the *SunSmart* anti-skin cancer campaigns reviewed in Chapter 4. This campaign line was used consistently for decades and became embedded in popular culture. The creative techniques of paid advertising evolved to create memorable and high impact slogans and other such devices, and such creative elements could still have value in the most personalised campaign in social media. This goes beyond just being consistent and repeating a memorable and distinctive phrase, image, or musical snippet, as the creativity that goes into such elements helps lift the connection beyond being purely transactional and into being an exchange of meaning.

The fourth consideration is the 'bravery' of the 'client' to advocate for the idea in face of opposition and proactively manage practical barriers in order to 'push' for the idea to proceed. Of course, the term 'client' tends to be a catch-all term for a whole group of individuals with some decision-making power within the organisation commissioning the advertising development. A factor in the 'bravery' of the collective of 'client(s)' will be the clarity of strategic decision-making processes and the roles and responsibilities of key executives within it. The management challenges of creating a decisive, effective, and efficient advertising development and approvals process within the client organisation and its influence on the creativity applied has implications well beyond the role and function of the advertising idea phenomenon. Suffice it for the purposes of this analysis to cite the observations of UK advertising practitioners Craig Mawdsley and Bridget Angear who observe in their book *The insiders' guide to advertising*, that clients spend 'a surprisingly large amount of their time turned inward, presenting to colleagues and asking for more money [or asking to hold onto the money they have]' rather than 'thinking about ideas and audiences' (2021, p. 35). Because clients in this circumstance have less time to focus on the idea and nurturing its development their level of commitment to it can be lower and so there is a risk their passion for advocating for that idea will also be lower.

The fifth consideration which tempers the potential for the digital age to usher in fundamental changes to advertising practice is the strategic context in which campaigns are developed. The various approaches taken by businesses and other organisations towards meeting their purpose and achieving goals set for them is beyond the scope of this study. However, for many organisations there continue to be the same commercial imperatives to use advertising to help sell products or services and drive revenue which first prompted the use of advertising at the advent of mass markets in the second half of the 1800s. As such the selling and persuasion techniques, which were developed by twentieth century practitioners for campaigns that were conducted in paid media, continue to be useful for developing contemporary advertising when it has similar objectives. This is completely consistent with the philosophy, articulated by the agency founder David Ogilvy, but espoused over the past century by many notable practitioners, that ‘when I write an advertisement, I don’t want you to tell me you find it “creative”. I want you to find it so interesting that you *buy the product*’ (Ogilvy, 1983, p. 7).

However, within the limits defined by those five considerations, practitioners noted that the revolution in communication has provided new opportunities and pressures for practice. There are new and unprecedented opportunities to use applied creativity for strategic purposes through the matrix of connection channels available to organisation and individuals. Advertising, in the contemporary definition, is necessarily seen as still requiring a campaign structure that organises the creative elements being assembled to generate meaning and make that message impactful, engaging and memorable. Within this requirement for structure, are dynamics about how an advertising idea helps contribute towards delivering the strategy set for it, and the explicit and implicit outcomes of the creative choices which delivered that idea.

The first of these dynamics is the way the deployment of executions across multiple media is organised. In contemporary practice this involves ‘orchestrating’ the mix of creative assets developed for the campaign in all Shared, Owned, Earned and Paid channels at the same time, and then across the full mix of channels over time and geographies as well. WARC’s report on best practice in integration notes that ‘a multi-channel strategy is not only the most effective, but it also increases [Return on Investment]’ and ‘the most successful brands now spend more than 80% of their budgets on a combination of TV and digital channels’ (WARC-Category-Intelligence, 2021, p. 3). This requires development of creative devices and specific elements which can be practically used in this variety of conditions. These will range from slogans to

visual and sonic symbols, to characters, colours, music, and other creative devices and be measured by brand health metrics 'such as awareness, consideration, preference, purchase intent and image attribute ownership' (Field & Hurman, 2020, p. 18).

This conceptualisation of the utility of ideas relates to two levels of the Creative Effectiveness Ladder. These are Level Seven 'Enduring Icon' and Level Five 'Brand Builder'. Both of these levels of the code 'use creativity to improve the fundamental measures of brand health', with the difference being that an 'Enduring Icon' idea sustains the growth in brand health and commercial metrics by consistently using the same creative idea for over three years' (Field & Hurman, 2020, p. 18). Beyond the transactional focus on commercial outcomes used in the definition of effectiveness used by Field & Hurman, practical experience with enduring ideas has shown that they 'work by making brands famous, so people continue to buy them without thinking very much about it, for emotional, not rational reasons' (Mawdsley & Angear, 2021, p. 73).

The second of the dynamics in the creative development process for contemporary advertising practice is the way the audience participates in, and engages with, the communication content and activities developed for the campaign. The extent to which practitioners facilitate and encourage this interaction and involvement by the audience, helps to enable the communication to deliver on its commercial and strategic objectives. This is particularly the case for ideas which are developed for use in the social media and digital media environments. Therefore this dynamic is a critical success factor for ideas at the 'Influential Idea', and 'Behaviour Breakthrough' levels of the *Creative Effectiveness Ladder* (Field & Hurman, 2020, p. 18). The intersection of the creativity of individuals and the web of individuals with the technologies available play a key role in delivering this dynamic. This dynamic intersection ranges from the use of new production techniques to deliver paid advertising faster and more efficiently to the invention of new digital and mobile applications to provide functionality to people that was not previously possible.

In this study practitioners reflected on the need to adapt and localise ideas developed overseas for other markets to optimise the creative assets to drive participation and involvement in this market. This can range from optimising paid media assets (like re-voicing a television commercial), to refining assets so the local packaging, addresses, website URLs and other signifiers of the place of the brand in this market are captured with the asset. This can be an exercise in optimisation and crafting as opposed to creative ideation if the practitioner follows Sullivan's advice to people wanting to get into a job in an agency creative department. He said they should 'sweat the details' and

so 'go to any length to get it [the execution of your idea] right. Don't let the smallest thing slide. If it bothers you even a little bit, work on it until it doesn't' (Sullivan, 2003, p. 106).

The third dynamic to consider is the potential commercial impact of the idea – delivering against key metrics involving increases in the volume of items or services sold, or the value of what is sold, or other metrics defined by the organisation as a measure of success. This dynamic is particularly related to ideas at Level 3 'Sales Spike' and Level 5 'Commercial Triumph' of the Creative Effectiveness Ladder (Field & Hurman, 2020, p. 18). As discussed in the interviews discussed in Chapter 5, by Franzeskos, many creative people in agencies are not commercially minded, which is a challenge when developing ideas at these levels of the Ladder.

Practitioners in this research still valued and respected the importance of ideas as defined but there was recognition that new opportunities for commercial creativity will be unlocked by the next phase of technology convergence as payment systems, e-commerce engines, delivery and distribution systems, engagement contexts online, entertainment content streaming, social media, and gaming converge into new platforms. This could be the so-called 'Metaverse' envisioned by the rebranding of Facebook Inc into Meta, and Microsoft's acquisition of Activision Blizzard (Facebook-Newsroom, 2021; Microsoft-News-Center, 2022). This new context will provide new challenges for creativity to be applied for strategic messaging.

So, to return to the overall research question: *Is the role and function of the advertising idea being changed by the application of data to inform creativity, and if it is, to what extent is it being changed?*

This thesis has indicated that in the experience of the practitioners interviewed, and as observed in the creative materials used in the case study campaigns, the role and function of the 'advertising idea' has historically been flexible within a matrix of influences that drive advertising creative development. It has been a function of the strategies being followed, the organisational and decision-making dynamics within the team, the practical budgets, and technologies available to execute the campaign, and the applied creativity of the individuals, and of the combination of individuals who make up the team itself. This value web of applied creativity still applies in the digital age, although the creative scope as to how a campaign will be implemented has grown massively. That does not change that an advertising idea is a tool in helping to apply

creativity, but it does change the breadth and depth of options as to how it is implemented. It also opens alternative ways to apply creativity to develop advertising in the contemporary sense, in some circumstances, in which the idea becomes less critical to ensuring the assets are relevant, appealing and on strategy as data helps personalise the content and target the delivery.

6.3. Challenges for the processes and outcomes related to advertising creativity.

The notion that an advertising idea is a function of the interaction between strategic, creative, operational dynamics, deployed to apply creativity towards meeting an objective or intent raises five practical challenges for practitioners. This section will detail these challenges and explore the implications for the practice of advertising idea development as characterised in the previous section. The challenges are:

1. Organisational creativity & decision-making;
2. Collaborative process;
3. Understanding of audience motivations and behaviours;
4. Intersection with technologies and popular culture;
5. Short term or longer-term focus on results.

The first of the challenges relates to organisational creativity, and the manner of decision-making within the extended team of people working together to create the idea. This relates to the decision-making and approvals process used to approve progress in the development of the idea. This research doesn't provide perspective on how to make the organisation and approval process as efficient and effective as possible, but it does make it clear that for practitioners it is important to have a clear approval process and a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities within the extended team working within the value web of creativity.

The second of the challenges is the related concept of collaboration. Practitioners interviewed in this project expressed doubts about the value of 'collaboration' in delivering 'creative excellence' in creative idea development. This sentiment is expressed widely in the discourse in industry media. On this topic, one agency CEO wrote in *Mumbrella* that 'the simple truth is agency collaboration can work effectively if the right structures and processes are put in place ... [as] ... agencies [are] highly competitive by nature and will approach a new agency roster populated with their adversaries with a healthy degree of cynicism and mistrust' (Cleaver, 2016).

The third challenge relates to the level of understanding of audience motivations and behaviours. This challenge is four-fold:

- i. Developing insights into the target audience and their specific needs, wants, motivations, and behaviours regarding the product or service or concept. This is the absorptive process of gathering information, while building understanding from secondary and primary sources that is the focus for agency planners as discussed in the Literature review in section 2.3;
- ii. The use of real time data showing consumer behaviour, and the way people engage with the brand, the communication assets and the addressable digital and social media on the basis that 'a strong first-party data strategy can help brands to develop a seamless omnichannel customer experience, making the path to purchase easier, while still respecting customer privacy' (WARC-Category-Intelligence, 2021, p. 2);
- iii. Analysing and interpreting the data available, particularly first-person data, which 'delivers personalised experiences based of the data [which the] audience consents to share', in so doing the analyses need to 'humanise' the data and 'really understand their customer journeys, shared drives and behaviours'(Fox, 2021);
- iv. The crystallisation through reductive thinking about the target audience and how and why the brand is relevant to them, to develop a clear and simple creative brief that helps inform, inspire, and manage the creative process within the creative value web of people working on the creative task. The importance of this process is discussed in section 2.4 of the Literature review, although contemporary practice may not always be as linear as the Duckworth model the need for a clear message that focuses creative development is still an essential element of practice.

The fourth challenge is the intersection with technology and popular culture, which is also an opportunity to exercise creativity and increase the originality, impact, and level of distinction of the creative assets generated. However, there is a constant challenge to balance the relevance and appeal in advertising content, so it is directly relevant to the brand being sold, while still attracting the attention and interest of the target audience so they remain engaged and involved. Renowned practitioner, Rosser Reeves noted that 'the most dangerous word in advertising is originality' and with this point he was underlining the risk that the creatives will become focused on appearing 'clever' and making the advertising 'shocking' or 'entertaining' rather than 'making the

product itself interesting' on the basis that 'if the product is worth paying money *for*, it's worth paying attention *to*' (Reeves, 1961, pp. 140-143). This quest for the new and the different devalues the importance of understanding what has worked in the past.

Having previous experience and known 'proven' models that successfully achieved the results helps to provide greater confidence in the creative direction and its ability to deliver the expected results. This intersection of popular culture and technology upends this certainty by challenging the basis for the success model by providing new contexts, and new associations and related meanings in which to communicate with people. That can render previous success models as redundant and create new uncertainties, which can be addressed using in-market-testing, and other iterative evaluation techniques such as those that are enabled by digital, and addressable media in the manner discussed by practitioners in Chapter 5. Such an approach to testing has organisational and financial implications for the process used to create and implement advertising ideas of any nature and needs to be balanced with the need to understand the value of longer-term consistency with an advertising idea or utilising elements of an idea such as a slogan, logo, character, jingle, or other creative device.

The fifth challenge is the balance being struck between a focus on short-term results or prioritising executional consistency for long term benefit. This is the challenge identified by Binet & Field, and discussed in section 2.2 of the Literature review that the imperative to achieve immediate sales uplift, or indeed other forms of immediate but non-commercial impact blinds practitioners to the value of longer-term forms of impact. These include the accumulation of brand equity and the nurturing of cultural associations and other links between the organisation and broader society consistently through advertising.

These challenges highlight the complexity of the intersection of dynamics at the heart of the role of the advertising idea within the value web of creativity used to develop contemporary advertising. This means that the advertising idea is a phenomenon made up of overlapping, inter-connected dimensions of applied personal, group and organisational creativity and decision-making. The intersection of these dimensions forms the proposed *Dimensions of Applied Creativity in Advertising Development* [DACAD] model which is illustrated in Figure 6.3 below. The following are the elements that make up the model.

6.3.1. Strategic message as a basis for engagement.

The best practice has always been that advertising should be driven by a purpose, whether that is helping to sell products or engaging a specific audience. Having an objective which is grounded in the strategy being implemented, provides the essential basis for all creativity and development. This is grounded in having a strategic message that is relevant and engaging for the intended audience. Development of such a message is an act of strategic creativity as discussed in section 2.3 in Chapter 2, and the is associated with the role of the account planner in advertising agencies. This is particularly related to the absorptive process of collating information and using it to develop a creative insight, which becomes a key element of the creative brief. In traditional practice the creative brief is the result of a reductive development process of convergent thinking as summarised by Duckworth, with the process often led by account planners or strategists as discussed in Section 2.3 of the Literature review.

6.3.2. Media/ behavioural context.

The digital age has changed the context for how organisations connect with people, the media channels they utilise and the way such connections can fit into the patterns of people's day to day lives. With the support of the right technology, enabled by appropriate data, organisations can connect with people at each of the stages that they go through while in decision-making process about whether to make a transaction or engage in a process. Hierarchy of effects models were conceived to model the broad and general shape of such decision-making, but precision-marketing enables connections between the brand or organisations and the individuals making the decision. Where such precision targeting and connection is possible it can have a huge impact on the nature of the advertising idea, or even, determine whether an advertising idea is necessary. Of course, without an advertising idea the connection will be entirely short term and tactical and risks lacking coherence as a campaign, but as to whether that matters or not depends on the objectives set and the strategy being implemented. When data to facilitate precision marketing is not available, the context of the media and where it is consumed by the target still influences the nature of the advertising idea to help keep it relevant and impactful within that context.

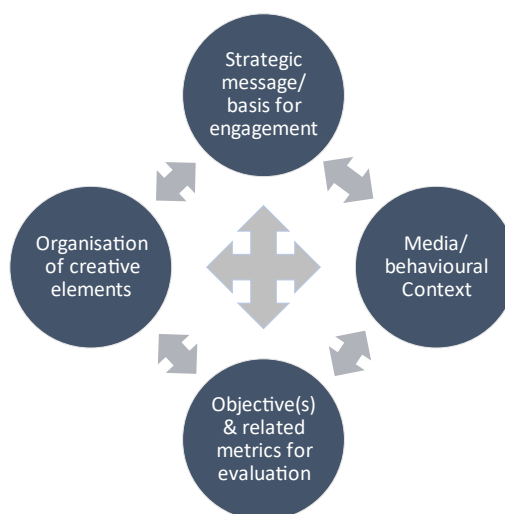
6.3.3. *Objective and related metrics for evaluation.*

There is a relationship between the metrics available for an organisation to use to evaluate its advertising and the way that the objectives are framed and set. That's not to suggest that objectives are always post rationalised or contrived to be based on what is measurable, but observations of the case study campaigns discussed in sections 4.2, 4.4 and 4.5 of the Findings chapter for the content analysis show that there is a connection between the way objectives are conceived and the data, which is available, which may not always link with the strategy being implemented. It will depend on how decisive the key decision-makers within the value web of creativity are and how much discretion they have, to set the benchmarks against which the results will be judged. The development of the advertising idea is influenced by the guardrails established by the objectives and evaluation metrics.

6.3.4. *Organisation of creative elements.*

The traditional notion of a creative idea, expressed by Webb-Young and reviewed in section 2.3 of the Literature review is that various, well selected creative elements are assembled in a new way to create something new, the idea. This remains the executional heart of an advertising idea, but this thesis has shown that these executional elements are only part of what makes the advertising idea phenomenon important to advertising practice. The complex web of factors intersects to help define the role the idea needs to play, the way it is conceived and implemented, and the meanings associated with the way these creative elements are assembled.

Figure 6.3. Dimensions of Applied Creativity in Advertising Development model.



The intersection between these dimensions defines the nature of an Advertising Idea. It is more than just the creative elements brought together to meet a specific purpose – it reflects the overlap and interaction of these dimensions, which in turn reflects the context in which the creativity is applied, and the nature of organisation and the value web of applied creativity being activated to create advertising materials.

The nature of any single advertising idea is a function of these dynamics in that one case, and characterising the idea is only useful in terms of the objectives it is seeking to meet as is the case with the Cannes Creative Effectiveness ladder discussed in section 2.5 of the Literature review. However, the DACAD model takes an overview of the fundamental elements that determine the nature of any form of constructed creative advertising material, including advertising ideas in both traditional and contemporary contexts. As such it can provide the basis for a statement of guidelines about the development of constructed creative materials for use in contemporary advertising campaigns.

The next and final section of this chapter explores the potential guidelines for advertising development in the context of the DACAD model and the questions that raises for further enquiry.

6.4. Potential future roles for the advertising idea concept & questions for further enquiry.

The six idea levels in the *Creative Effectiveness Ladder*, defined by the nature of the results intended for each type of idea, which was introduced in section 2.5 of the Literature review, are a useful starting point for categorising ideas and applying the DACAD model to understand the developmental implications for the idea type. In *The Effectiveness Code* report, Field & Human propose seven principles for helping an idea to climb the Creative Effectiveness Ladder and so be improve its potential to be effective. These principles for practitioners to follow are:

1. 'Set the right objectives for the type of campaign outcome which is wanted';
2. 'Budget realistically' by recognising the 'rule of thumb' that 'your share of voice needs to be higher than your share of market';
3. Don't carve your brand's marketing budget up into tiny increments so you have 'fewer short-term activations and more longer-term brand and sales building campaigns';

4. 'Plan robust, insightful strategy' with 'absolute clarity' of objectives and an 'insightful understanding of what will make consumers respond in a way that will achieve';
5. 'Choose highly creative work' which 'delivers on the strategy in the most original and engaging way';
6. 'Maximise creative output' and 'use the levers of media budget, campaign duration and number of media channels to drive Creative Commitment [which is a composite measure of those three metrics and correlates with effectiveness as demonstrated in results as reported for the IPA effectiveness awards (2020, p. 4)];
7. 'Land and expand' on the basis that 'if you are seeing great results from a campaign .. give [it] more budget, run it for longer and spread it across more channels' (2020, p. 6).

These seven principles are predicated as a way of 'climbing' the ladder on the basis that that higher an idea sits in terms of the ladder, the more commercially effective it is likely to be, although the guideline for practitioners using this framework, is that they 'should be aiming for the Ladder level that matches the objective you've set for the campaign you're embarking on' (Field & Hurman, 2020, p. 14).

The decisions which are implied by the seven principles all sit within the matrix of inter-related influences and consideration that form the DACAD model, and so this model can help characterise the nature of the practice which will lead to that level of idea. This characterisation can act as a guideline for practice to optimise ways of working and help direct the organisational context that ensures creative efforts are focussed on the right way to deliver the type of idea desired (in terms of the results it will achieve).

It should be noted that there is an important limit to the data used to develop The Effectiveness Code report as the cases which are entered into the awards on which it is based have 'a strong strategic basis' and so the database does not include 'campaigns that are poorly planned from a strategy or media perspective'. The assumption made by Hurman and Field is that poorly planned campaigns 'would prove to be ineffective no matter how high their Creative Commitment score' (Field & Hurman, 2020, p. 111). This means that the steps on the Ladder are idealised best practice, rather than representative cases of all advertising campaigns and their implementation plans. There are variations of idea types not captured in the ladder of levels of creative quality because they are without strong strategic foundations and do

not generate validated results and so cannot be declared 'effective' despite being cutting through and achieving a strong influence on the target.

This thesis isn't using the *Creative Effectiveness Ladder* framework to suggest ways to 'climb the ladder' or generate what could be classified as 'better' ideas, rather these are best practice characterisation of creativity being applied which helps to illuminate how the ideas are generated and so make the nature of the advertising ideas phenomenon and its place in contemporary practice clearer.

6.4.1. Level 1: Influential Idea.

Influential ideas are defined by Field & Hurman as using 'creativity to maximise engagement and sharing, resulting in the campaign over-achieving on campaign metrics and media efficiency' (2020, p. 22). As such they are enabled by a use of creativity that is informed by rich, meaningful data about the levels of engagement and involvement of people in the campaign content. Table 6.4.1 below details guidelines for the application of creativity within the dimensions of the DACAD model, for the creation of this level of idea.

Table 6.4.1. Use of creativity to deliver an Influential Idea.

DACAD Dimension	Guideline to deliver
Strategic Message/ basis for engagement	Creating the message is influenced by how people will become involved with it [sharing it, responding to it, commenting on it] more than the information details being delivered. If people will not become involved in the message the details will be largely redundant.
Media/ behavioural context	The context in terms of what media channel people are engaging with, where and when they are doing so, and what else they are doing at the same time needs to be one which encourages and enabled measurable engagement.
Objective(s) & related metrics for evaluation	Objective and related metrics are necessarily short term and related to the level of involvement in the campaign's creative elements. This can come from addressable digital or social media, potentially combined with data showing interaction levels with websites and other digital owned media and participation data in promotions making results appear precise and evaluation criteria as superficially objective.
Organisation of creative elements	The intent of the Influential Idea is that creative elements are optimised to encourage engagement and participation and the development of brand equity on longer term creative elements to be used consistently has a lower priority and risks being overlooked as a result.

Influential Ideas are inherently tactical in nature but are informed and inspired by data and so are easily evaluated in precise terms, which can feel reassuringly exact to decision-makers. Despite this precision, those terms are defined by the data used to inform the creation of the idea itself and as such there is a circular quality to the way 'effectiveness' is defined for this type of idea. Essentially, the application of creativity is to generate interest and participation in the advertising content, so a key question about this level of idea relates to whether that involvement helps to deliver to a bigger purpose such as commercial outcomes, delivery of organisational mission or a more general social good.

In general, and particularly if there is no organising purpose, this level of 'idea' can be delivered without the need for an 'overall creative concept' requiring intuition and judgement to develop but can be inspired directly by the analysis of engagement data from individual elements to maximise the involvement for its own sake. The next part of this section considers ideas at the 2nd level of the Ladder which are Behaviour Breakthrough ideas.

6.4.2. Level 2: Behaviour Breakthrough.

Behaviour Breakthrough campaigns are defined in *The Creative Effectiveness Ladder*, as those that 'use creativity to change the purchase behaviour of customers – or to change other forms of behaviour relevant to the success of the brand'. This definition sees behaviour in commercial terms, because of the nature of the evidence used from the IPA effectiveness databank. Successful entries to those awards with substantive data to prove behaviour change will rely on commercial behavioural marketing metrics like the percentage of households or individuals in the target audience owning the product or using the service [penetration], frequency/ weight of purchase, and measures of brand loyalty and trial of the product or service (Field & Hurman, 2020, p. 33).

Beyond the effectiveness framework, behaviour change campaigns can use paid media advertising to have a more general awareness building objective while specific activities provide the pointed nudges for specific behaviours. So, the role of the advertising in such strategies can be more nuanced than this characterisation of 'Behaviour Breakthrough' ideas. However it is a useful generalisation of how ideas can prompt behaviour change and Table 6.4.2 below goes into how creativity is applied in the terms of the DACAD model.

Table 6.4.2. Use of creativity to deliver a Behaviour Breakthrough Idea.

DACAD Dimension	Guideline to deliver
Strategic Message/ basis for engagement	The message reflects the behaviour which the campaign needs to impact, engaging interest in the nature of that behaviour and prompting people to reconsider what they are doing or not doing. Having metrics that describe the behaviour and demonstrate the changes makes evaluation very clear and simple, but when such data isn't available then greater levels of intuition and judgement are required to tailor the message and achieve engagement from the target audience.
Media/ behavioural context	The connection with the audience is driven by the context created by the behaviour, and where and when it is exhibited and the ways in which messages can be delivered, and value exchanged within that context.
Objective(s) & related metrics for evaluation	The objectives are set by the measurable indicators of that behaviour, in some cases this will be collection of direct evidence as the behaviour occurs through marketing technology or will involve less reliable evidence such as self-reporting of behaviour by the audience or the use of metrics of indirect evidence of the behaviour
Organisation of creative elements	Behaviour Breakthrough ideas assemble relevant content related to the behaviour which is to be encouraged or replaced with engagement in another behaviour. The case studies reviewed in Chapter 4 underlined that campaigns for behaviour change in its broader sense to be effective and delivering tangible change, then they need policy and enforcement support beyond the nudges or other prompts delivered through forms of advertising

To demonstrate tangible results, Behaviour Breakthrough Ideas depend on having evidence of the tangible behaviours and the degree to which they have changed since the campaign has been in market. Even then, the metrics struggle to differentiate between the impact of the advertising campaign and the related marketing or policy changes designed to nudge the behaviour too, unless a comprehensive research framework is established to ensure valid and ongoing evidence of all aspects of the behaviour change are being tracked over time. Behaviour change campaigns related to commercial outcomes for major marketers are more likely to have the evidence to be able to make a behaviour change case and so provide evidence for *The Effectiveness Code* paper.

Without such robust evidence at the heart of campaign development levels of intuition and supposition will necessarily become part of the strategy development and the evidence for any behaviour change will become more indirect, circumstantial and more open to challenge as to whether the change in behaviour has really occurred. Proven, effective execution of this level of idea is highly dependent on having the data and

analytical framework for the strategy and evaluation process. Without the data, it become much more like traditional brand driven advertising campaigns which are discussed as Level 4 below. First though, the next part of this section considers the creativity applied at level 3 of the Ladder.

6.4.3. Level 3: Sales Spike.

Field and Hurman define Sales Spike campaigns as using ‘creativity to create short-term, temporary growth in sales, market share or profitability of a brand’ (2020, p. 44). As such they have an entirely commercial focus by driving a tangible business outcome within a limited time window. In business terms they are tactics, which can be implemented in the confident expectation that short-term results will be achieved. Field has argued that marketers have come to ‘favour short term initiatives that have a lesser impact [in terms of ROI] (WarcNews, 2020).

The applied creativity of these idea is firmly grounded in creating short term impact and landing a selling message that will prompt the audience to buy the product or service. This means tactics to achieve those aims will be key to the creative work rather than creating enduring equity or building a bond through connection and insight. Table 6.4.3 goes through the application of creativity within the DACAD dimensions to achieve a Sales Spike idea.

Table 6.4.3. Use of creativity to deliver a Sales Spike Idea.

DACAD Dimension	Guideline to deliver
Strategic Message/ basis for engagement	The message is persuasive in nature to drive sales by addressing consumer needs with direct appeals and an imperative for the consumer to act immediately. This is more likely to be a ‘hard sell’ message than not.
Media/ behavioural context	Deliver the most Creative Commitment as measured by <i>The Effectiveness Code</i> report by using the media budget, campaign duration and number of media channels for maximum impact on the target.
Objective(s) & related metrics for evaluation	These ideas are defined by objectives set in commercial terms. The organisation needs to be organised to have timely access to data to track to the sales and other commercial metrics in time to be able to use the result to update and optimise the campaign as it is being implemented in market.
Organisation of creative elements	This is a usage of one of the ways a traditional advertising idea is developed – creating a unique selling point for the product or service and communicating it as directly and clearly as possible in advertising in a way that has impact and relevance for the target.

Developing this level of idea uses the commercial sales and operations data which any marketing or sales organisation will have. Ideally the data will be available in 'real time', so the impact of sales spike ideas can be observed as they are implemented. For many brands there will be a practical lag of a week to several months between when commercial activity goes into the market and the relevant sales data is available for analysis. The longer the lag the more intuitive judgement calls will be necessary to manage the campaign implementation.

As the conception of this level of *Creative Effectiveness Ladder* is entirely commercial, it has limited relevance to non-commercial campaigns. Short term and tactical social and other purpose driven activities would be examples of Level 1 ideas, while any broader campaign construct with longer term intent would be at least a Level 4 idea. Such Brand Builder ideas are discussed in the next part of this section.

6.4.4. Level 4: Brand Builder.

Brand Builder ideas 'use creativity to improve the fundamental measures of brand health – including awareness, consideration, preference, purchase intent and brand image ownership' (Field & Hurman, 2020, p. 55). As such they are advertising concepts which play the traditional "brand advertising" role of developing longer term associations and equity which can be seen to strengthen over time. For the purposes of *The Creative Effectiveness Ladder*, the time frame is 6 months or above, but this reflects the time frames for the case study submissions made to the IPA effectiveness awards, and brand campaigns have historically developed and evolved equity over longer periods of time.

A key consideration for how creativity is applied at this level of the Ladder is whether the evaluation metrics have been consistently collected and evaluated over longer time frames and whether those metrics helped inform the strategies which the campaign is implementing. This will determine the degree to which data informs the strategic thinking and the evaluation criteria for the idea and the timeframe for the evaluation. Without such consistent data the intuitive application of creativity and subjective evaluation of the direction becomes a factor at this level of the Ladder. This is how the brand campaigns were developed in traditional advertising development practice. Ideas at this level don't depend on the use of data to inspire the creativity, rather the data is a useful way of managing decision-making and evaluation in a consistent manner over time. The DACAD dimensions are used to explain how creativity is applied to create this type of idea, in Table 6.4.4. below.

Table 6.4.4. Use of creativity to deliver a Brand Builder Idea.

DACAD Dimension	Guideline to deliver
Strategic Message/ basis for engagement	The message is created by finding an overlap between the brand's point of distinction and the needs, wants and motivations of the target audience, so the message is as uniquely about the brand as possible while also being relevant and appealing.
Media/ behavioural context	This form of idea is traditionally led by Paid media channels, although increasingly Owned media is becoming important as a way of connecting to the base of loyal consumers. Understanding of the behaviour of consumers or users can provide a context of understanding of how the brand fits into their lives so advertising can be optimised.
Objective(s) & related metrics for evaluation	Objectives are primarily about the health of the brand, depending on what metrics are available to measure the changes in brand healthy. Business transactions and other commercial metrics may form secondary criteria [and are an important focus for specific activities within the overall campaign] but this kind of campaign is about a commitment to the brand itself beyond day-t- day transactions
Organisation of creative elements	The elements are organised in a manner that can consistently reinforce the brand's point of distinction or another element of the brand strategy which has a consistent role in the brand strategy and which is relevant and appealing to the target audience.

The application of creativity to deliver a Brand Builder idea involves creating an organising creative concept as the campaign advertising idea and then using intuitive creativity, informed by the engagement and behavioural data available to apply that idea to executions as appropriate [as determined by media consumption data related the target audience] for all the paid media channels in the campaign. This is one of the characterisations of an idea which does not depend on behavioural data to inspire the creativity, but where data is available it can play a role to inform the creative direction and make it more relevant and precisely targeted.

This type of idea is one of the traditional uses of creativity to build advertising that endures. The measures used to establish effectiveness are medium-term, but many ideas developed to 'build the brand' without necessarily being validated by the data defined in the Ladder. This has been a normative, somewhat "typical" use of applied creativity in developing advertising, although there is an argument that this type of idea, especially when untethered from significant effectiveness measures is one of the advertising types destined to become less common in the context of the precision-marketing future. The next part of this section moves up the ladder to consider Commercial Triumph ideas.

6.4.5. Level 5: Commercial Triumph.

Ideas defined as Commercial Triumph ideas ‘use creativity to profitably increase sales and market share beyond a single quarter or beyond the duration of the campaign’ (Field & Hurman, 2020, p. 66). This is another level of idea defined by commercial objectives, but in this case the results are proven to be sustained over time. There is an assumption in *The Effectiveness Code* report that the idea will be ‘more creative’ to have the longer- term impact. In part this is because the creativity is applied so that the creative assets have utility over time and so need to have more layers of meaning and so are less tactical in nature.

The data used to evaluate the idea and determine the objectives for the strategy needs to be consistently collected and analysed in a ‘window of six to eighteen months’ (Field & Hurman, 2020, p. 66). To be relevant over this time frame, best practice would have the objectives having strategic implications for the organisation and so will provide a pointed and validated commercial outcome combined with consistency that adds meaning to the brand as well. Table 6.4.5 below details the application of creativity to develop a Commercial triumph idea using the DACAD dimensions.

Table 6.4.5. Use of creativity to deliver a Commercial Triumph Idea.

DACAD Dimension	Guideline to deliver
Strategic Message/ basis for engagement	This message is persuasive, even after repeat exposure, so it can rely less on newness or novelty to grab short term attention than a Sales Spike idea and so the message needs to address highly relevant and enduring consumer wants and needs.
Media/ behavioural context	The context for ideas at this level need to be flexible and adaptable as the idea is executed consistently over time. As such it is less about a specific relevant moment in time and more about a mindset among the target audience
Objective(s) & related metrics for evaluation	These ideas are evaluated by commercial metrics which can be assessed over time and continue to respond to the campaign. That suggests the measures are not only tactical and transactional and have a broader relevance while still being grounded in the commercial dynamics of the business.
Organisation of creative elements	The elements are organised in a manner that can consistently impact the commercial dynamics of the business. In so doing it may also develop and reinforce another point of consistency in brand identity which is relevant and appealing to the target audience.

Development of such a strongly commercial idea needs to balance the focus on selling with providing structure and creative elements that will help the idea to remain relevant and appealing over time. As such the idea will build elements of consistency that could

be regarded as brand equity. The next part of this section considers ideas at the top of the ladder Enduring Icon ideas.

6.4.6. Level 6: Enduring Icon.

Ideas at the highest level of the *Creative Effectiveness Ladder* have been labelled 'Enduring Icon' campaigns and they 'use creativity to drive brand and sales growth consistently over a long period of three years or more. They stick with the same creative strategy or creative work throughout that period, creating sustained commercial outcomes" (Field & Hurman, 2020, p. 77). Ideas at this level are the ones which have evidence from the IPA knowledge bank that enduring meanings were established for the brand by building significant associations which become linked to the brand through consistent use over time. This is the level of idea which has the most potential to become embedded in popular culture by creating symbols and associations that become famous as people adopt advertising devices like slogans, jingles, logos, characters and creative scenarios into the shared everyday discourse of the community.

This is the level of idea that starts with ideation using the intuitive techniques for applying creativity as discussed in Section 2.3 of the Literature review. Application of data to inform and inspire executional ideas is more likely to be in the second stage of ideation – the initial stage is about assembling the creative elements to find a new combination that will have the impact and deliver the meaning desired. As such applied data complements the traditional techniques to help ensure the idea works as hard as it can in the context established through applying data and understanding. Table 6.4.6 details how creativity can be applied in the context of the DACD model.

Table 6.4.6. Use of creativity to deliver an Enduring Icon Idea.

DACAD Dimension	Guideline to deliver
Strategic Message/ basis for engagement	The strategic message is about why the brand matters to its consumers – the rational and emotional benefits they get from the brand, the values and symbols they come to associate with it. The creativity is applied to use all the levers of communication to bring these elements together to make a coherent and distinctive brand identity.
Media/ behavioural context	Ideas need to be able to be implemented via any media channel, with creative devices which can be deployed consistently while remaining meaningful and
Objective(s) & related metrics for evaluation	The objectives and metrics used for evaluation will be a combination of commercial and brand health measures – although managing ongoing tracking of

	the specific, tailored brand health measures isn't always practical and so brand health is only measured by indirect and standard measures.
Organisation of creative elements	This is the form of idea in which the intuitive creativity to find concepts with originality and distinctiveness is the priority for the development of creative directions, and although data can inform the development of the direction and insight can help make it relevant, intuitive creativity at the individual and organisational levels is a powerful tool to direct how the different influences work together.

Ideas at the Enduring Icon level have the widest ranging impact. This is demonstrated with the evidence in the IPA databank of effectiveness submissions that they meet their objectives over an extended period and have potential to have a broader impact by embedding their messages, symbols and associations.

This thesis has illuminated significant aspects of the advertising idea phenomenon as part of the process of applied creativity at the heart of the organisational process of advertising campaign development in contemporary practice. This raises three further questions for potential critical enquiry regarding:

1. the nature of the 'types' of idea that aren't defined by highly strategic delivery of results. While *The Effectiveness Code* has characterised best practice idea in terms of the data used to demonstrate effectiveness, this is less useful for advertisers and agencies who don't work in data rich strategic and creative environments but still need to deliver ideas in the context of the digital era, but without the systematic data access.
2. The evolution of the formative development of the creative brief in the context of the less linear, more iterative and cross functional creative process, to characterise the impact of the dimensions of the DACAD model on that element of the process
3. Evaluation of the role and impact of the DACAD model dimensions by observing application of creativity in a live creative development process to validate the model and provide a more granular illustration of the intersection of influences which drives the advertising idea phenomenon.

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