

Inca Sunrise

New Age TV Advertising

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Hey, hey what do you say let's go back the other way! When dealing with necessity, only a fool ignores the call. So how can TV advertising be on its deathbed as heralded by the pundits, when it remains critical to advertisers, networks, service providers and legions of advertising agencies and media buyers — as well as to millions of viewers? Yet who can ignore the similar late 19th century doom and gloom forecasts of earlier pundits as the Luddites ran around America destroying machinery while claiming that automation would eliminate great swaths of employment in all factories and mines? In fact the opposite turned out to be true, as automation has created a massive need for more and more workers. In fact, we are now in the process of indirectly employing the teeming millions of idlers and dreamers in India and China just because of the automation. Advertising as a way of communicating and branding is a necessity in a free market economy; of that there can be no doubt. Ergo it follows that TV, as the media that captures the attention of most Americans for four to five hours per day, while locking-in

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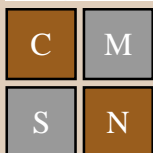
"TV advertising may indeed be forced to change its form, its appearance, even its nature, but it will abide and it will continue to prosper."

their eyeballs in a most captivating way is a necessary place to present advertising.

Thus the advertising sky is not falling Maggie, neither will it fall! TV advertising may indeed be forced to change its form, its appearance, even its nature, but it will abide and it will continue to prosper. You can bet on it. No, the new advertising paradigm will not be more and more imbedding, infomercials or infotainment, how could it be? Sticking with first principles, including the nature of human behavior, we can agree that winning advertising must be presented where it can be seen or heard and given attention. Say near compelling attractions and points of focus, like the TV, the PC, the PDA, the

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game box and the cell phone. For where the interest is attention is also, and that is the point of focus where the ad message can make its greatest impression. But how is this to be accomplished in a 'trick-play' featured world of VOD, DVD and DVR where Pause and Fast-Forward can and do obliterate the message? In this article we shall explore some of the bits and pieces of an Inca Sunrise as a part of the answer. Stay tuned and consider along with us the realistic case where the TV media does indeed remain a big part of what brings the content, the message and the advertising. After all, advertisers have a great ongoing need to build their brands, and TV remains and will remain the most compelling eyeball catching venue there is. The answer to this puzzle is in part to be found in an 'Inca Sunrise', that is in the blossoming of Inca which stands for In Context Advertising. Think about it!

The lead article in the September 2003 issue of CMS NewsLine entitled *Making a Good Impression — The Search for New Advertising Metrics* took off from the observation that if we can no longer effectively measure what is being viewed, how can the TV advertising business continue to prosper? By the same logic we employed above, it follows that we must and we will develop better metrics! This recent article also offers a number of approaches to the problem — including what to do and how to do it. And there is indeed a great deal that can be done — and that will surely be done — in this arena to once again provide advertisers with knowledge as to who and how many

are being reached with their message. Of course many new media technologies have created a great dilemma for the commercial interests by freeing the public from an advertising tyranny over its eyeballs. That is, over an oppressive condition sustained by the very nature and limitations of early TV technology — a time and condition now passing. All of that is in transition now and this is causing a great deal of concern to advertisers, ad agencies, service providers and others — one can just imagine the 'wringing of hands and the gnashing of teeth' regarding what is to be done now that 'they' are free? The answer is: forget about it, get over it and move on. The solution including new metrics will be found and suitable new means will be deployed — mostly by you.

"...TV remains and will remain the most compelling eyeball catching venue there is."

After all, is it too bold a comparison to note that most parents must at some point face a similar loss of control as their children come of age? There surely comes a time when all control may seem lost, so then what is one to do? Similar is the paranoid anxiety totalitarian states and corporate dominions of every persuasion face — the fear of change, loss of control, even revolution. So too for the landed farmers in 1863 when Abraham Lincoln proclaimed his Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the plantations and its slaves. Freedom from oppression generally spells convulsive change for a while, the greater the oppression the greater the convulsion. However, that is not to say that freedom hurts the commercial interests in the long run, as those loyal to the British crown discovered after the American Revolution —

America prospered greatly, first without King George and then without slavery. Surprise, surprise! Yet, while change was in the air many turned their back on George Washington and his ragged band. All the while the reactionary forces, fearing the loss of their ill gotten gain, may suffer — but perhaps not quite as much as the misery they caused others during their time of hegemony.

So too with what will soon be the out-of-fashion forced-feed form of TV advertising. In its heyday it was a necessary evil that was tolerated; yet the public did truly suffer the abuse and the intrusion on its leisure time. As to the advertisers, the ad agencies, the media buyers, the TV networks, the cable and satellite providers and the rest, they have little choice but to move on — the times as Bob Dylan would say they are indeed ‘a changing’. TV advertising must survive, so in the face of the high-powered new technologies it has little choice, but to change. As to the reactionary forces who always seem to counsel drawing the drawbridge up and making a brave last valiant stand, perhaps they should re-read *The Origin of the Species* by Charles Darwin and, instead, choose to change and adapt, or else risk dying on the vine. In the classic movie *Beau Geste* with Gary Cooper, they too made a last stand, and all the brothers were indeed valiant, but also soon among the dearly departed. Forced feed TV advertising was in part an aberration, a warp in space and time, which will only now survive under far more restrictive conditions. If Bill Gates has only taught us one thing, it is to heed and at times

fear the massive transformational power of the computer revolution — based on the miracle of the microprocessor — as an irrepressible force of change that underpins all the new media technologies.

All those fancy black boxes at the networks, at the cable head ends, at satellite provider operations, at the RBOCs, at the ISPs, out at the MANs and the LANs and all the other places, they are just more computers with more microprocessors sailing the night sky on the fibre and through the wireless ether. No holding any of that back, forget about it. Even the movie studios are now seriously exploring distributing their movies to the cinemas via computer driven fibre based communication systems. And far more change is in the wind with a high tide of new ideas and new means to drive the sail. So TV advertising must change in many ways to continue to succeed. Herein we offer up one such way.

“TV advertising must survive, so in the face of the high-powered new technologies it has little choice, but to change.”

Among the many things that can be done to once again make TV advertising effective, is the implementation of new means to hold the viewer’s attention. By this we do not mean the greater use of gratuitous sex, violence, high noise levels or profanity, not at all. What we do mean is finding ways to lower the chance of a disconnect between the viewer, the show and the message. Clearly there are many ways this might be done, among which we offer the potential of Inca, which stands for in-context advertising. That is advertising that does not — by misdirection — cause a viewer to become inadvertently disconnected

from the basic experience he or she is having. Instead, in-context advertising provides a degree of confluence between program content and the advertising message. In the desired case, advertising which provides a pause that informs, entertains and even refreshes. Is this possible and can it be done with today's technology including ad insertion methodologies located at networks operations, at service provider network nodes, or local system head ends? Stay tuned!

Some might warn against this complex sounding approach and suggest that Inca, while not without merit, is perhaps too costly and difficult to implement. That is surely a reasonable sounding point of view. But is it more costly to implement Inca than the price of losing a massive TV audience and failing to get the much needed advertising message across at all? To get back to musing about Bill Gates, color him Darth Vader if you must, you can play the technology both ways, as a force for good or as an oppressive tool in the hands of the dark side — star wars anyone? To digress, how about those heroic figures at Viacom, the folks who once muscled CBS and *60 Minutes* into dropping the airing of its investigative report on the misdeeds of Philip Morris and the other tobacco giants, doing it again? God bless them, now these intrepid Viacom folks have buckled in again, this time to knights of the far right defending Star Wars and their aging champion Ronald Reagan.

Do you remember that old high school football fight song line: "Hey, hey what do you say, let go back the other way?"

Technology does cut both ways, use it wisely and it empowers, use it foolishly and lose your rights and your freedom. Freedom of the electronic press is it in danger now that politically tethered G.E., Disney, News Corp. and Viacom own all the major TV networks, you bet it is, or else that disgraceful distortion of the life of a distinguished former president, in a poorly written TV show called *The Reagans*, would, to the gnashing of historian teeth, have aired the other day. Only the printed press is still free to error when it must, or so it seems. And privacy, now a poor vagrant pleading for alms from the Courts and the Congress, probably in vain. Technology after all must be cut some slack so it may grow, or so they say. Isn't that right 'let them eat cake' Michael

Powell? And who else is there lurking in the shadows, like fearful cartoon characters ever changing colors in the light, to not be seen plying their dark trade? The idea of an Inca Sunrise is to turn away from the dark and to go the other way by spending the talent, the

energy and the money to reform TV advertising in a positive way, a way that will bring it renewed success by attracting not abusing its public this time around. Existing technology can be harnessed to enable Inca and launch a renaissance for everyone associated with television and related businesses such as consumer electronics, computers, communications, the Internet and the like.

To begin with, Inca has no iconoclastic intentions, no need to break any mirrors in order to rearrange the TV furniture. The fact of the matter is that VOD has indeed taken off in America, at the same time the number of DVRs in the US is

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now well over two million and climbing fast as the cable MSOs join the fray with DVR capabilities built into set top boxes from Motorola, Scientific–Atlanta, Pace and Pioneer. Further there are now some 40 plus million DVD players out there as Panasonic and others now introduce the next revolutionary product: the DVD player/recorder. None of this is a dream, a fantasy or a nightmare — instead it is just the reality of an evolving, convulsing technological transformation. From these observations one may easily conclude that TV advertising as formerly constituted will no longer work. All the while, advertisers with no place else to go will stay the course for years to come with the old TV advertising paradigm; but then as with a landslide, suddenly no more. Meanwhile the advertising agencies and research houses can be expected to continue with their studies as they must — for, as is so often the case, when one is uncertain as to what to do next, it is only natural to try to hold back the inevitable decisions by first ordering up more information.

This brings us to the fear of losing the eyeballs of the GenX and GenY generations. It appears that these younger folks are not paying attention in the same old way to TV, thereby causing a disconnect between viewer and service providers — so what is one to do? As illustrated quite clearly in the MediaWest Engagement Study released last week, those under 25 are no longer playing the TV game by known rules. First they are watching 20-percent less TV. Now there's a shocker for the advertisers who want to burn their brand into these impressionable minds. It

“..traditional TV advertising now works best with children, the elderly, and the consciousness impaired..”

sounds to us like playing hooky from catechism school all over again. Further, this study estimates that when these young folks do choose to watch a TV show they are more likely by a factor of two to engage and pay attention to its ads. All of which says that if you can get them to engage, then you may indeed be able to make a high level advertising impression upon their minds. So how does one get them to watch more TV? It seems reasonable to suppose that these younger multi-taskers with game box, PDA, cell phone and laptop in hand mostly attend only what truly interests them — less lean-back behavior here and more switching among activities. Yet it is this very lean-back TV behavior that traditionally has helped the media pin down a TV audience to an advertiser's message — as

in this state they are far less likely to surf the channels or do much of anything else but stare ahead. Great, that means that traditional TV advertising now works best with children, the elderly, and the consciousness impaired — an ideal demographic for new products and services.

Sadly, this is a glimpse of how TV advertising still seeks to penetrate an audience. That is the case as adults only pay attention to about 10-percent of all the advertising on television, while the youth may when motivated attend to twice as much, but only for far fewer shows. Turned inside out this shockingly suggests that over the years advertisers may have annoyed and frustrated some 90-percent of their audience in order to impact the remaining 10-percent. Outrageous! That is to say, that ad-by-ad they punished 90-percent of the

viewers as innocent bystanders in an attempt to snare the 10-percent who may have had an interest. As a method of commercial fishing in the open sea, that ratio would result in an ecological disaster and be outlawed. As a way of behaving at a social gathering, say by making outrageous remarks in the presence of the many in order to gain the attention of a few, one would surely get thrown out. As a police enforcement screening method in a free society such a 9:1 ratio of damage to benefit might cause a political upheaval. On the other hand, in a totalitarian state it can be the most efficient way to proceed. For example, do you remember reading about the pervasive never-ending queues in the old Soviet Union? So what is the right balance between pain and gain? Quite simply, via the best methodologies, seek to hold on to the target group and try to spare the others. That may sound like an exaggerated dream to some, but it is a desired view that even a child might understand. If so, Inca here we come.

Those who have studied the somewhat mysterious and often misapplied art of statistics, say in a marketing, science or engineering class, may recall the two types of errors one can make in estimating the validity of a statistical proposition, and how these two conflict. The first error, also known as the Type I error, is to say that a proposition is true when it is in fact false. The second error, also known as the Type II error, is to say that a proposition is false when it is in reality true. By the very nature of these distinctions, it is a fact that attempts to reduce the likelihood of the Type I error

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tend to raise the likelihood of a Type II error being made, and visa versa. In a similar manner, the more an advertiser tries to focus its message onto a very specific part of a TV audience, the more likely it is to disturb or annoy many in the rest of the audience. That is unless they have a way to escape with a pause, fast-forward or other click of the remote control.

That said, it does not take an Einstein to appreciate the fact that a long-term positive relation with the great mass of the public is what advertisers prize most of all. Also, that the combination of Inca and new ‘trick-play’ capabilities fosters such an outcome. It then follows that all the new DVD, DVR and VOD ‘trick-play’ time shifting capabilities are not likely to hurt the thoughtful advertiser who employs the Inca way to hold an audience by maximizing the appeal of the ad message via in-context advertising. From which we may conclude that TV advertising can be greatly improved in ways that help to capture the right audience and release the rest to other pursuits.

Inca At Work

The idea behind Inca or in-context advertising is to try to maximize the opportunity to make advertising impressions on a TV viewer by presenting advertising in an in-context way, so as to preserve the continuity of the experience it provides. This methodology can be broken up into a number of distinct cases as one combines approaches in various combinations. An ad may be inserted (or imbedded) into a program in many ways with various

degrees of loss of context, including, in order of increasing refinement, inserting an ad:

- 1) Wherever among available channels and programs one may hope to capture a few eyeballs.
- 2) On a specific channel or network, either local or national.
- 3) In with a preferred program based on its genre and time slot.
- 4) In a way that fits in with the content of a specific program.
- 5) That generally matches the specific nature, content and context of a show.
- 6) At ideal chosen points in a program where it fits in best and where the context is appropriate.
- 7) That fits in well with the program, the context and a target viewing demographic.
- 8) That fits with the program, the context of the show, the demographic targeting and the best insertion points considering the flow of the show.
- 9) That fits with the program, the targeted viewer class, the current context and the known behavior of an individual viewer.
- 10) That fits with the program, the viewer class, the current context, the viewer's behavior and recent interactivity.
- 11) That is personalized to a history of prior targeting of a specific viewer.

This is the moment in the classic courtroom drama when the masterful attorney asks the dumbstruck witness with probing indignation: "What did you know and when did you know it?" Advertising insertion and imbedding can vary greatly, yet the line of demarcation

that separates the context sensitive forms of advertising and the more mundane 'catch them if you can' forms lies in between varieties 4) and 5) on this list. Above the line we have various degrees of general targeting of TV advertising from a broad shotgun blast, say for a toothpaste ad, to a somewhat targeted beer commercial on ESPN at a time when the right demographic group should be watching in high numbers. Nonetheless, for any such variety in cases 1) through 4) it is not unusual for a feel good

"...[with traditional TV advertising] it is not unusual for a feel good advertisement to be inserted on top of a gruesome murder scene."

advertisement to be inserted on top of a gruesome murder scene. At such moments the viewer is likely to disconnect, turn to the remote control and simply move on, or just doze off.

Prior to the availability of the remote control, the electronic program guide and the cell phone our now confused, disconnected or dazed viewer might simply grab his or her beer and await the end of the commercial. Not so today. In fact if a viewer is in a somewhat alert and receptive mode when distracted in this way by an out-of-context ad insertion, there is a better than 3 out of 4 chance that he or she will opt out of the commercial, mute the sound, go to the kitchen, turn to a PC or PDA or in some other way avoid the ad pod that has, with clang and clatter, descended upon his or her scene. Try if you will to make a successful advertising impression under those conditions? Forget it; see you later, as penetrating this viewer's consciousness is not likely to be a happening thing. Further, with a program that was previously recorded, or is concurrently being recorded while the viewer, in a ten

or twenty minute time delay, watches as the recording goes on, a pause or fast-forward will quickly eliminate the ad from being seen at all. Coitus interruptus means that contact has been lost. Indeed this is the reality many an advertiser faces today in the electronically enabled living room, unless it changes tactics and improves the context connection between the show and the ad. Within a few years, as the many new viewer-enabling technologies become ever more pervasive, that will be the condition in most TV parlors. At such a time, the old time religion will hardly play to anyone at all.

It is with regard to these concerns that a few doom and gloom forecasters within the popular media press have in recent months launched into a TV advertising sky is falling scenario. To these folks we suggest a quick trip to the local business library for a review of the vibrant history of advertising. Such an examination will quickly reveal that adaptation has always been the order of the day in the advertising business. TV advertising will surely succeed and prosper in the future as it has in the past; there is little doubt about it. However, in order to move forward it must now seek out new ways such as implementing a real Inca Sunrise to reconnect with its audience. In-context advertising, sustained and enabled by available but underutilized new technologies, can do the trick for the advertisers. You can lay your money on the 'come line' and place a bet that when TV advertising keeps in better tune with its viewers, the viewers will in turn be motivated to keep in touch with the advertising. That is where Inca as an

“...when TV advertising keeps in better tune with its viewers, the viewers will in turn be motivated to keep in touch with the advertising.”

approach comes in, give them ads that fit the context of the programming they are watching and young and old, they are far more likely to stay tuned!

To illustrate the nature of a few of the varieties of Inca listed above, consider the following oversimplified examples:

Case 5 — Here an ad that fits in with the content and the context of a show is inserted or imbedded. For example, amid a scuba diving episode of an adventure show ads for Coppertone, or beach wear would fit in well, while an ad for Ford or Lexus could result in a disconnect.

Case 6 — Following a close-up of Britney Spears with a Revlon lipstick commercial might have a powerful impact on young females, while inserting the same ad after a Rolling Stones number on the same program would not.

Case 7 — When an advertiser concentrates on a particular demographic group it must accept the fact that others may be turned off and surf away. Say, on a program about love and marriage on the Lifetime Channel, an ad for a menopause medication may cause disinterested young women to turn away.

Case 8 — By way of contrast with the previous case, if the show were about a mother struggling with her relationship with her husband and her children as she deals with menopause, and a menopause medication ad were to be inserted at an appropriate point in the story line, then many of the young female viewers would stay tuned and attend to the medication ad.

Case 9 — If we had data on a particular viewer that showed that he or she watches a lot of golf and very little basketball, then for a Nike ad placement we would prefer showing Tiger Woods and his Nike shoes to Michael Jordan and in Nike garb.

Case 10 — With advanced interactivity we have a situation wherein a viewer may if properly seduced become actively involved, and that generally spells opportunity for the advertiser.

Case 11 — At the top of the pyramid of persuasion we can imagine Inca ads for viewers whose behavior and preferences are recorded. Say a young male viewer who generally skips most car commercials who all of a sudden starts watching multiple recreational vehicle advertising. Bingo, a very live buy signal indeed has been captured.

Playing the Come Line

If by these gentle persuasions and bits of legerdemain, logic as well as sophistry you now spy a little merit in the idea of pursuing in-context advertising, you might wonder about practicalities, feasibility, complexity and the like. Such concerns are most appropriate, and every advance does come at a price, but what is the alternative here? Surely, as new DVD, VOD, DVR and other new boxes and services flood the home market, the value of TV advertising in its current form will soon be decimated. Thus Inca to the rescue means just that, take it at a price or leave it, but those who choose to stay behind are likely to end up paying a greater and more severe price, the price of failure.

Suppose for argument sake that it were to cost an additional \$5 billion per year to enable effective Inca advertising in the US, would it be worth it and would the advertisers be willing to pay for it? Over the next few years most of these very bright and very practical folks will realize that Inca is a part of the trajectory that leads toward a successful new TV advertising future for them and their brands. Therefore, whether \$5 billion or

“.very practical folks will realize that Inca is a part of the trajectory that leads toward a successful new TV advertising future..”

twice that much is needed, they are certain to line up and pay the piper in due time. For that dear reader is how most valid solutions to a great crisis are generally and inevitably accepted. In-context advertising properly

implemented will significantly raise the likelihood that the TV advertising will be watched by its target audience, and skipped over one way or another — via new technologies — by the grateful rest of the audience.

For a \$60 billion US TV advertising industry, a few billion more dollars invested in software to implement advanced databases containing metadata to make Inca a practical reality is a small price to pay. Also the additional investment in new hardware to split the communications Quam and unmultiplex the program streams on cable fibre so as to splice in the metadata and the Inca message is a small price indeed to pay for economic survival. No Pollyanna here, just a realization that this is the right way to go forward to preserve the critical advertising underpinning of advanced TV (and PC) based entertainment and news. Such an approach, along with the valid

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new advertising metrics needed to validate and account for the process, will bring in a new era of prosperity to television and associated enterprises. So: “Hey, hey what do you say let’s go back the other way; and make love not war with the TV viewer!”

(Leo Willner and Greg Kalsow contributed to this issue. In order to discuss any of these points with the authors, please e-mail them at: leo@ad-assoc.com, greg@ad-assoc.com)

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—Georgia Pech, Editor

KALSOW’S BACK-CHANNEL: “Validating the Middle Ground”

■ When one of the finest media publications — *Television Week*, in its October 20, 2003 issue contained an article entitled *DVR Threat Real, Growing* I found myself dumbfounded — how surprisingly wrongheaded of them. How is it possible for a technology that greatly improves the television experience for the vast majority of viewers to be called a threat? Clearly what the author may have meant to say, or at least should have meant to say was that unless the TV advertising community upgrades its act and grows with this new technology, perhaps along the lines described in this issue of CMS NewsLine, there could be a big problem. True indeed! No folks, DVR and PVR are not a threat, instead they are a boon for everyone including the commercial interests that will allow busy people to watch more television and to choose the advertising they watch based on their interests and their needs.

■ The fact that the TV show *The Reagans* was pulled off the CBS network at the last minute was not the crime, as many historians and other experts seem to agree that it was a lousy characterization of the life of a distinguished American. The crime and indeed there was a violation, was committed by the agents of big corp., big ideology and big government via their control and ownership of the TV networks and its news organs. Let’s face it, they subjected the wee people at CBS News to irresistible pressure. With their faces held in the mud, their jobs threatened by Viacom and no Edward R. Murrow, Walter Cronkite or Eric Severied to shield them, what were these Lilliputians to do? It makes one wonder whether the American democracy can long endure without a fully free electronic media 4th estate, unencumbered by corporate goons, Wall Street sycophants, Congressional arm twisters and White House ideologues.

■ As the lessons of the Prohibition should have taught us all, when government or business choose to stand in the way of the will of the people, no good will come of it. With a whole generation of grammar school, high school and college children now being trained to violate copyright law by the shortsighted misdeeds of corporations, U.S. Congressmen, the FCC and the Department of Commerce, great harm is afoot. The greatest loss will not be the reduction of income to music companies and Hollywood Studios, however great that turns out to be. The real damage is being done to the nation, as a whole generation of young Americans is being trained to disrespect our commercial system and its laws. Congress in its zeal to befriend big business is surely partly to blame — let's face it, there is plenty of blame to go around, shame on us all. The answer friends, if there is one, is to be found as always in the pricing model!

[Your mileage may vary. —RGK]

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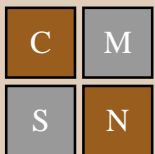
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