

THOSE MAD MEN ... & WOMEN

Business English for Marketing Communications

Handout for Presentation

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Mad Men refers to advertisers working on Madison Avenue in New York City. The TV series 'Mad Men' is set in the late 1950s and the 1960s - a golden era that saw the birth of modern advertising.

Today, marketing communications exist in a new age - an era of change that is just as radical, creative and dynamic as the Mad Men era.

English is a major driver of this change but Business English materials fail to meet the needs of the industry.

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This presentation has 3 sections:

- 1. Revolutionary Times**
- 2. TEFLese Doesn't Work**
- 3. Food for Thought**

REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

Marketing Communications are experiencing an explosive era of radical change that is exciting, fascinating and challenging. This change is pervasive and is generated by:

- The Industry**
- The World**
- The People**
- The Brands**

THE INDUSTRY

The industry is characterised by global consolidation and dominated by huge holding companies.

The BIG FOUR:

- 1. WPP (UK)**
- 2. OMNICOM (USA)**
- 3. PUBLICIS (France)**
- 4. INTERPUBLIC GROUP (USA)**

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Each holds major global advertising agencies

Examples include:

WPP - Ogilvy, Grey

Omnicom - BBDO, DDB, TBWA

Publicis - Leo Burnett, Saatchi & Saatchi

IPG - McCann

+ a myriad of other agencies for public relations, branding, corporate identity & design, healthcare communications, direct marketing, digital, promotions, market research, sports marketing, B2B marketing, media planning & buying, web site design etc.

THE WORLD

This changing industry exists in a changing world.

In this world

consumers

- **share**
- **discuss**
- **create**
- **have new ideas of ownership**
- **operate in virtual worlds**

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using

- **facebook etc.**
- **blogger, tumblr. etc.**
- **twitter**
- **youtube etc.**
- **instagram, snapchat etc.**
- **netflix, ebooks, spotify, car2go, etc.**
- **new technologies**

GREATER FREEDOM

THE PEOPLE

Attitudes to brands and advertising have changed and are still changing. Consumers no longer respond to the hard sell or perceived manipulation.

Generation Y

Advertising should:

- **connect**
- **be emotional, useful and / or entertaining**

Brands should:

- **not trick, patronise or stereotype**
- **involve and add value to life**

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Generation Z

Brands should:

- **connect, inform and assist**
- **enhance online communities**
- **talk the talk, be authentic and engaging**
- **be on top of trends and fashion**
- **gain approval**
- **build trust and long lasting relationships**
- **have consistent content through ALL brand channels**

THE BRANDS

Global Brands

- **strong consistent brand cultures**
- **single global positioning**
- **unified marketing approaches**
- **global companies are global brands (e.g. GE, Coca-Cola)**

**interconnectivity
cohesion**

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ENGLISH

is the language of this revolution

TEFLese Doesn't Work

Although English is a major driver of change, TEFL materials do not address the needs of the industry.

Materials on marketing communications tend to be irrelevant and do not reflect the true business of an agency. The issues that are raised do not demonstrate understanding of the real context, procedures and functions. As a result, teachers and trainers are merely set up for failure.

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Considering the changes outlined in the section on 'Revolutionary Times' as well as the needs of in-house corporate communications and marketing departments, a *huge* market is being ignored.

One example of a typical TEFL task is discussed in the following section. Then, this task is modified to address the actual context in an advertising agency.

TEFLese Doesn't Work

EXAMPLE TASK

A picture of a print advertisement is shown and the following questions are asked:

What do you like about this advertisement?

What makes this a good advertisement?

COMMENTS

The question of whether advertisers *'like'* an advertisement is largely irrelevant. These professionals need to present adverts that successfully fulfil a client's creative brief in order to sell ideas. Liking the ideas can help but is not absolutely necessary. In fact, selling an idea that is not liked could be more relevant in some cases. Similarly, *'effective'* is a better adjective than *'good'* but effectiveness can only be understood by appreciating the importance of client briefing, campaign duration and consistency of message. So, the context is not taken into account.

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ACTUAL CONTEXT

modification of task to address real needs

Campaign Management

1. client briefing
2. MESSAGE STRATEGY
3. EXECUTIONAL FRAMEWORK
4. creation - execution
5. presentation of creative ideas to client
6. production
7. media placement

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The task is introduced in context and becomes:

A picture of a print advertisement is shown and the following questions are asked:

What message strategy is used in this advertisement?

Is the strategy used effectively?

What executional framework is used in this advertisement?

Is the executional framework used effectively?

A variety of print advertisements are then analysed to generate a more relevant discussion.

MESSAGE STRATEGY

- **functional (USP)**
- **symbolic (psychological differentiation)**
- **emotional**
- **generic (brand synonymous with category)**
- **pre-emptive (assertion of superiority)**
- **comparative**

message strategies can be summarised as:

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- **cognitive strategy (rational and logical)**
- **conative strategy (direct response)**
- **affective strategy (emotions and feelings)**

EXECUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

- **slice of life (eavesdropping)**
- **testimonial**
- **authoritative (brand attributes given by expert)**
- **fantasy (make-believe)**
- **animation**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Planning to work in marketing communications?

Here are some tips:

‘People tell you who they are, but we ignore it because we want them to be who we want them to be.’

Don Draper, Creative Director in Mad Men TV series

- avoid being a naive user of TEFLese assuming you know what they want when you don't!
- immerse yourself in this world
- read extensively
- talk to the professionals
- get to grips with the specialist vocabulary
- research the agency (history and clients)
- understand the structure and functions in an agency (i.e. don't evaluate adverts with the media guys!)
- adapt business English materials (e.g. presentations and negotiations) to the agency context
- develop your own material
- do not assume everyone in an agency wants to talk about advertising (e.g. HR and finance functions)
- research what different kinds of agencies do
- learn what pitching is all about
- do not work in advertising if you actually believe it is downright immoral

- ... wait for the right book to come along!

The presenter has 15 years' experience working in major global agency networks. The presentation is also based on her development of the 'Business Skills in English' module for B.A. Communications & Media at the University of Applied Sciences in Düsseldorf, Germany.

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