
Executive Summary

Developing Winning Strategies For Consumers Of All Ages Identifying and leveraging age-based expectations

(ESOMAR 2005 Congress, London)

For a full copy of this paper please contact Genroe at
info@genroe.com.au

Authors
Robert Passikoff (Brand Keys Inc)
Kerry O'Connor (Mirror Group Newspapers Limited)

Background

This paper investigates a multi-national financial brand – American Express – and identifies the different expectations various age cohorts exhibit in the United States, Japan and England. It then accurately predicts the importance of various brand attributes and the performance of three age targeted “tag lines” on advertising effectiveness.

Implications

Publishers using this methodology can add value to their advertisers by helping them to select the most effective advertisement (i.e. maximum sales impact) based on their publication’s demographic and brand profile. This quantifies the value that advertisers will derive from placements with the publication prior to investment.

On the other hand an advertiser can predict the advertising effectiveness of different media outlets prior to investing and optimise their investment effectiveness. Previous Brand Keys studies have proven that this optimisation can lead to a halving of cost or a doubling of brand recognition.

Methodology and Results

Using the Brand Keys methodology, a financial services category – credit cards – was examined amongst three age cohorts (18-29, 35-49, 50+) of American Express (green) cardholders in three countries (United States, Japan, and England). Research was conducted in two phases.

Phase 1

- a) Identify the category drivers for the credit card category;
- b) Determine the order of import of the drivers;
- c) Identify country and age cohort-specific similarities or differences in the driver configuration;
- d) Determine category driver expectation levels for each of the 3 age cohorts in each of the three countries.

Phase 2: Determine whether age-based “expectation” strategies would produce more effective market results for the brand.

A single geographic market, England, was selected to test the expectation based strategies. Each strategy was turned into an American Express Blue Card newspaper advertisement. Each was then “placed” into the 23 November 2004 issue of The Daily Mirror.

Via a standard, proven, ad awareness test, the three ads were monadically exposed to samples of each of the three age segments. After “reading the paper just as they usually would at home or at work,” respondents were asked about category-aided ad awareness. The ad was then force-exposed and respondents were asked to rate the American Express brand “in the ad” and how likely they would be to “trade up” to an American Express Blue card.

In every instance, the Brand Keys based expectation-based strategy designed for the specific age cohort resulted in the highest levels of proven advertising awareness, the highest levels of increased brand imagery and highest top 2- box propensity to “buy.”