THE ROLE OF ALTERNATIVE BRAND CONTACT PLANNING IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION INDUSTRY

by

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This study is dedicated to Marieke and Albert Enslin

My gratitude to:

My parents, Japs and Erna, for your limitless love and support
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The Veganites, for your wisdom and magic
Gordon Cook, for your brand passion and leadership
SYNOPSIS

This study explores the nature, role and planning of the alternative brand contact. The concept of alternative brand contact is embedded in integrated brand contact management. Based on the outside-in and zero-based planning philosophy of integrated brand contact management, the alternative brand contact is defined as a planned point of contact with the brand that is experienced by consumers as unexpected and unconventional. The alternative brand contact is thus media neutral. It is the unexpected and unconventional appeal of the alternative brand contact that defines its status and not the use of one medium as opposed to another.

The study of literature explores the nature, role and planning of the alternative brand contact to deliver a central research proposition and primary research objective, namely:

The unconventional and unexpected point of planned brand contact can break through commercial clutter barriers to impact on consumers and communicate or reinforce the single-minded positioning of the brand.

The literature study furthermore identifies a myriad of barriers and requisites to the alternative brand contact and the planning thereof. These are evolved into integral research propositions and related supporting research objectives.

A qualitative exploratory research study is conducted to engage the opinions, attitudes and motivations of the South African marketing and communication industry on the defined central and integral research propositions. For motivated reasons, exploratory focus groups are conducted with senior account teams in a sample of Integrated Communications Agencies. This first phase of research is followed by two further phases of research namely, semi-structured depth interviews with key clients of the senior account teams and semi-structured depth interviews with key players within the senior account teams.
Thus depth of thought and opinion is gained on the nature, role and planning of unconventional and unexpected points of brand contact.

The qualitative exploratory research study produces one primary and fifteen supporting key findings. The key findings are employed, in conclusion to this study, in the design of a Conceptual Model to Alternative Brand Contact Planning.

It is envisaged that those agencies and clients that are responsive to the explorative and experimental nature of alternative brand contact planning will find the proposed conceptual model to be of immediate strategic value. Companies and agencies in need of empirical evidence can apply the key findings of this study in the development of hypotheses for future research.
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