

Defining a Concept Statement

By Bruce McTague

The following is a description of a concept statement founded in traditional P&G discipline.

A concept describes a product, service or brand and how it will improve a consumer's life. A concept statement answers:

- Who is it for?
- How does it fit into their life?
- What will it do for them?
- Why should they believe you?

The concept is developed because through it, we can learn the best way to communicate an idea to the consumer, understand the idea's importance to consumers, and determine the commercial viability of the idea.

The concept is part of the foundation for the brand. Along with the brand character, it contains key elements that are translated into a creative brief and a copy strategy. This consistent message is used across all forms of marketing communications—direct marketing, catalogues, television advertising, merchandising etc.

There are typically three parts to a concept

Accepted Consumer Belief (ACB) – “You understand me”

The ACB is a statement that expresses the target consumer's frustration of an unmet need. The ACB should create a context or perspective for the rest of the concept (the benefit and RTB). It acknowledges the consumer's point of view with understanding and empathy. Insights are gained into why the consumer does what she/he does.

- Developing the ACBs is done through primary and secondary research, field work— store visits, home visits, and studying habits and practices, (attitudes, and needs and wants).

Examples of ACBs:

- Dyed hair doesn't look natural.
- Stopping for gas takes too much time and interrupts my trip.
- Soap dries my skin.

Benefit –“What's in it for me?”

The benefit statement is a promise which answers the question: “What's in it for me?” The benefit fulfills the consumer need or want that was described in the ACB. Benefits can be tangible or emotional. They make the consumer's life better and should be single-minded (more than one benefit in a concept can be confusing to consumers and is difficult to execute advertising against).

The benefit should be competitively distinct and important to the target customer.

- Examples of benefits:
- Crest™ makes dental checkups easier.
 - No more embarrassing static cling with Bounce™.
 - Have it your way at Burger King™.

Reason to Believe (RTB) – “Why should I believe you?”

The RTB provides permission for consumers to believe that the benefit will be delivered. It answers the question: “Why should I believe it?” The RTB can be a feature (unique ingredient or special process) or an endorsement. The brand equity also contributes to the RTB.

Examples of RTBs: - Pantene’s™ special vitamin
- Tylenol’s™ hospital endorsement
- Volvo’s™ car crash demonstrations

About Bruce McTague:

In a career spanning over 20 years, I’ve been involved with a wide range of industries including packaged goods, restaurant, pharmaceutical, retail, business-to-business and tourism. I won’t bore you with all the details, but the bottom line is I have touched so many businesses across so many categories the headline for my career should probably be “Collector of experiences and knowledge.”

If you would like some additional work experience details and see what a number of people have said about me, visit my [LinkedIn Profile](#) my blog, [Enlightened Conflict](#) or contact me directly by [email](mailto:bruce@brucemctague.com) at bruce@brucemctague.com.