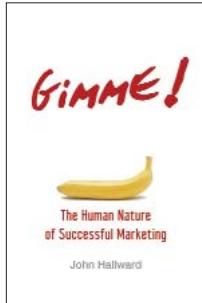


## Keep it Fresh—Desensitization & Wear-Out

### Gimme! The Human Nature of Successful Marketing



**For too long, many marketers have ignored the basics of how human beings are wired and how they work emotionally. And as a result, the effectiveness of their marketing and advertising suffers.**

**Marketers who understand the emotional triggers and genetic characteristics of their consumers are better able to persuade and convince them with their marketing programs. *Gimme!* explores these evolutionary traits in ways marketers can easily understand, so they can better leverage these primary human drivers of behavior for greater marketing success.**

Published by Wiley  
ISBN 0-470-10029-X  
US \$24.95 / CAN \$29.95 / UK £16.99  
Available from booksellers everywhere or online at [gimmebook.com](http://gimmebook.com) and [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

### About the Author



**Advertising research expert John Hallward started his career with Procter and Gamble, and Johnson & Johnson. He then co-founded the**

**Canadian firm of Tandemar Research Inc., a leader in tracking advertising campaigns for top advertisers. After Tandemar was acquired by Ipsos, he went on to become Director of Global Product Development for Ipsos ASI, where he is also a member of the board. *Gimme! the Human Nature of Successful Marketing* is his first book.**

In issue No. 9 of *Lessons Learned*, Gimme author John Hallward shares his keen sense of when enough is enough for an ad.

Have you ever noticed that when you detect an odor in a room that, over time, you adjust and lose your sensitivity to the smell? Do you feel your watch on your wrist right now, or a pierced earring, or the ring on a finger? Probably not. Why is that? Your body initially detected each stimulus, and it reacted. The initial stimulus was processed in the limbic system, and emotionally evaluated and tagged. After your brain has assessed and judged the stimuli, it no longer wastes energy continually concentrating on it. This is a natural energy saving process for the brain. It also helps to avoid sensory overload.

The implications of desensitization are large for the advertising world: Our brains gear-down on the continuous presence of familiar old stimuli. Thus, repetitive advertising that keeps being aired over and over gets tuned-out as we become familiar with it. Brands that are much the same in look and presentation, year after year, get little attention from us. Again, our brains have made their evaluation and no longer pay much attention to what has become familiar, as we are programmed to pay less and less attention to frequent advertising exposure. On the other hand, our brains are programmed to detect, process, evaluate, and emotionally tag new stimuli. For new stimuli, we pay attention and judge it for threat or pleasure, and we build new neural networks. Thus, new advertising, new packaging, and new ways to think about a brand catch our attention. We observe in our databases that ads which contain some form of news for the viewer are more persuasive. Ads without news are less persuasive.

How often do you recall an ad (particularly on TV, but also print ads, billboards, on the radio, etc.), for which you do not remember the brand being advertised? In our Ipsos ASI databases, overall about half of consumers who can recall a TV ad when described to them (without using the brand name) cannot correctly attribute the advertising to the advertiser.



Ipsos ASI

## Ipsos ad wisdom

Few campaigns fail in the short term and then work in the long term. Few ads will wear in. The majority of successful advertising creative goes to work very quickly. This raises the question; When does the short-term success end, calling for a replacement ad? At Ipsos ASI we feel an ad has worn out when it is no longer the best use of your next advertising dollar. This happens before the ad stops working. This definition of wear-out reflects the point of inefficiency. In our Ad\*Graph tracking databases of TV ads, the point of inefficiency appears (in general) at about 1,000 to 1,300 cumulative TRPs of exposure. And there are clear examples of shorter periods of wear-out. This is all about optimizing the efficiency of the advertising budget.

When freshening and changing the brand campaign, think evolution not revolution. In general, new marketing programs are more efficacious if they evolve forward with reflection and appreciation of current brand properties without being too revolutionary. Marketing programs that are much different from consumers' current understanding of the brand are more apt to fail. Consumers do not work hard to see, hear, internalize, and think about each of the hundreds of advertising stimuli they are exposed to daily. Thus, if a brand team needs to follow a new marketing program in the future, it needs to be made easy for consumers to appreciate the change. The marketing needs to recognize consumers' current impressions rather than to suddenly pretend the current situation is over and now it is time to add a new and different brand proposition. Consumers may have cognitive dissonance – a disconnect between what they know and what they are now seeing. Consumers will be saying to themselves that this new brand proposition can't be for Brand X because I know Brand X and this new thing isn't the same, so it must be for Brand Y or Brand Z! We have seen many new marketing programs suffer from this cognitive dissonance, and end up with brand link failure, doubt, confusion, and denial.

New marketing efforts need to help the consumer evolve and bring them along into the future. The most efficient approach is to constantly bring fresh new ad stimuli to avoid desensitization (wear-out) while not causing a revolutionary change leading to a brand disconnect. Think in terms of evolving the campaign platform to add newness while leveraging proven or known brand properties. And avoid excessive frequency.

*Please share these newsletters with others.*

*Write us at [info@ipsos-na.com](mailto:info@ipsos-na.com) with questions and comments.*

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***Gimme! is a fun and very practical read. It is a sharing of over twenty years of John Hallward's research experience, studying, and reading. You won't agree with it all, but you will find it all thoughtful and thought-provoking. What more can you ask from a book!***

— Bob Barocci,  
President/CEO, The Advertising  
Research Foundation

## Ipsos ASI



**Ipsos ASI is a leading global advertising research firm, and is part of the worldwide Ipsos Group. Ipsos ASI offers a full range of advertising research solutions to help clients make the best decisions at all stages of the advertising process: advertising development, advertising pre-testing for qualifying advertising, advertising tracking, and brand equity/brand health evaluation.**

**Ipsos ASI has also launched a set of new holistic integrated advertising assessment tools designed to provide advertisers with the insights to help in the development, evaluation, and improvement of their advertising efforts.**

**Next\*360** brings Ipsos ASI's proven methods and sales-validated measures to an interactive, multimedia pretest. Evaluative measures gauge the campaign's overall potential for visibility, branding, and persuasion. A unique rotation analysis shows you what each message contributes to the whole. In-depth diagnostics reveal what's working, what's not, and why, to help you refine the fit and the mix across media.

**Brand\*Graph 360** tracks the in-market reach, impact, and cost effectiveness of all your communications. A powerful consumer mix model shows you the contributions of POS, packaging, sponsorship, even uncontrolled communication like word of mouth, in addition to each part of your ad media mix. By analyzing the effect of each consumer touch point on brand equity, purchase intent, sales and other measures, we can help you to focus your communication on the messages that work best.