



# Kick Start

**A methodology for  
producing ideas**

Excerpt from Mario Pricken's book  
**Creative Advertising**

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## **1) Without words**

How could the USP be depicted without words?

Are there scenes or situations in which the product benefit could be conveyed without words?

How can the benefit be portrayed in one picture?

How might the USP be communicated in a silent film?

How can the benefit be summed up without words in a simple picture?

How could a story be told in simple sign language?

## **2) Mixing and matching**

**How can the product be combined with something else in order to make the USP clearer?:**

Mix the two together?

Collage?

Selection?

Rearrangement?

Combine several objects to make one?

How can the problem and solution be combined to make the product message unambiguously clear in a single picture?

## **3) Comparative juxtaposition**

What before and after comparison could underline the product benefit?

What can the product be compared with, to make the benefit obvious at a glance?

What kind of juxtaposition could represent both the problem and the solution in surprising, provocative or humorous terms?

How can the benefit be communicated by comparing the product with something from a completely unrelated context?

## **4) Repetition and accumulation**

How can the product benefit be emphasised by repetition?

How can repetition attract attention, and represent the problem situation in a witty, provocative or exaggerated way?

How can the benefit be reinforced by an accumulation of problem situations?

## **5) Exaggeration**

**What exaggeration could represent the benefit more forcefully?:**

What can be added?

Make it bigger? Longer? Heavier? Thicker?

Give it added value?

Increase the number of components?

Multiply by two? By twenty?

The sky's the limit?

**What reduction, no matter how extreme, could represent the USP more forcefully?:**

What can it do without?

Make it more compact?

Smaller? Shorter? Flatter?

More aerodynamic? Lighter?

Can the parts be shown separately?

## **6) Turn it right around**

**How can the benefit be depicted by inventing something familiar into its opposite?**

Convert the benefit into a disadvantage?

Show the negative instead of the positive?

Achieve the opposite of the USP?

Turn it upside down? Reverse roles?

Change the perspective of the people involved?

Switch cause and effect?

## **7) Omission and suggestion**

What could replace the product? Who or what could take its place in order to focus on the USP?

How can attention be attracted by omissions in headlines, copy, spoken dialogue or TV spots?

What can be reduced or removed to emphasise the benefit?

How can the product be reduced to its essentials?

How can the product, packaging or benefit be represented, or replaced, by suggestion?

## **8) Paradoxes and optical illusions**

How can a paradoxical or contradictory statement emphasise the benefit of a product or service?

How could an optical illusion represent a product features visually?

How can an optical illusion attract attention by making the target group play a game?

## **9) Provocation and shock tactics**

How can the product or its benefit be depicted provocatively?

What has no one else ever associated with this product?

What would no one dare to say about the product?

Can you break a taboo, or provoke the target market by other means, to draw attention to the product message?

How can use a provocative allusion or double meaning to make the target group think?

How could the product be depicted to have an especially horrifying or funny effect?

How could it be made to scandalise or provoke?

How could shock be used to dramatise the product benefit?

## 10) Playing with time

What effect does time have on the product or user?

How will the product change the user's future?

What possibilities does it open up? How will it affect the user now views the past?

How might the user have had to solve problems previously without the product?

Where does the new product take the user?

What can be used from anywhere in history to throw positive light on the USP?

How can the product be associated with historical events in a way that emphasises its benefit?

What vision of the future or futuristic image can help to make a product feature visible at a glance?

## 11) A change of perspective

How can the product be presented from the viewpoint of other creatures, things or events associated with it?

How can playing with extreme closeup or extreme distance communicate something about the product or service?

How can the benefit be presented from the viewpoint of things or creatures affected by it?

## 12) Spoofs and parodies

What opportunities for spoofing or parody does the product offer?

### **Spoofs**

What legends, stories, fairy tales, movie plots, other ads, TV shows etc can be spoofed by changes of time, place and tone, to put across an idea?

### **Parodies**

What stereotypes, clichés or behaviour patterns can be parodied in connection with the product?

## 13) Symbols and signs

How can the product benefit be represented more simply by symbols or signs?

How can symbols and signs convey a complete message without words?

Are there any signs or symbols which will communicate a message without words?

Are there signs or symbols which will communicate a message if inverted or altered?

What symbols and signs can be combined to generate a new meaning, representing the product advantage?

What sign language can be used to convey the product message without words?

## 14) Come and play

What kind of games can you use to get your target group involved: riddles, DIY instructions, something to make (fold/roll/glue together/look for/draw); quizzes, board games, optical illusions, party games, anything else you can think of?

What could you do to the medium (press, poster, direct mail, banner etc.) to turn it into a toy?

What witty, provocative or intriguing instructions could you use to get your target group to play?

## 15) Telling stories

What everyday situations could you develop around the product to show its advantages in the best light? What sort of story could involve the product as best friend or partner? In what everyday situation could it attract attention in a provocative way? In what situation could it become a star, a lifesaver or a helper? In what everyday story could it make people laugh?

Which of the following dramatic styles would be beset for presenting the product strength in an everyday situation or story?

Horror	Thriller	Adventure	Slapstick
Comedy	Action	Costume	Love story
Drama	Soap opera	News	Documentary
Chat show			

## **16) Absurd, surreal, bizarre**

What is the most surreal or absurd idea that would put the brand or benefit centre-stage?

What absurd or bizarre ideas can the product be associated with?

What is the most bizarre use for the product?

What stylistic conventions can you use to spin the most absurd story possible around the product?

What is the best way to represent the benefit within a surreal or fantastic situation?

## **17) Take it literally**

What images do you get if you take descriptions of the product benefit literally?

What ideas or statements about the product can be taken literally in order to generate witty, satirical or flippant visual images?

What idioms or verbal metaphors can be taken literally?

How can slogans, common expressions, keywords, or text associated with the product be converted literally into pictures?

What slang phrases, metaphors or turns of phrase could be translated literally into a visual image that will get the product or service noticed?

Are there any names, acronyms, slogans or other verbal concepts that can have a double meaning if taken literally?



## **18) Alter the product**

**How could the product be depicted differently to best communicate its benefit?:**

Change its shape

Change its use?

Change its location?

Combine it with things from nature or technology?

Alter the way it looks, moves, sounds, smells?

Can you change anything else?

How could the product be altered to communicate the benefit at a metaphorical level?

How could the product be altered to communicate one particular feature by overstatement?

## **19) Alternative uses**

Where else could the product be used so as to communicate its USP clearly?

**Can you imagine ways in which the product can be used in new and different context?:**

By other people or target groups?

In unexpected situations?

In a different environment?

How could the product itself represent its benefit or the problem situation?

What unorthodox ways of using the product would give a striking demonstration of its USP?

## 20) Double meanings

What opportunities for ambiguity, double meanings or wordplay are there in the words you use to describe the benefit?

How can the benefit be illustrated in a picture with a double meaning?

What verbal ambiguities emerge from the brief, in slogans or taglines, product descriptions, or from discussion in meetings?

**Describe the product, without naming it, in such a way as to produce double meanings of the following types:**

Obscene

Provocative

Sexually suggestive

Playful

Reckless

Paradoxical

Witty

Attacking (the rival product)

## 21) Play with words

How can you play with the typography to represent the USP in an effective visual image?

How can words, symbols or logos be integrated into the picture without using the usual typographic techniques?

How can the central advertising message be reinforced by altering the typography?

How can words be integrated into the picture in an unusual way, attracting attention and underlining the central advertising statement?

## 22) In the beginning was the word

With the following KickStart questions, get help from reference books: dictionaries of quotations, popular idioms, sayings, proverbs or graffiti.

What sayings or proverbs does the product or its USP make you think of?

What sayings might other people think of: your grandparents, politicians, housewives, etc?

Can you make these sayings or proverbs seem unfamiliar, or take on a new meaning that involves the USP? Eg Where there's a will, I'm away.

What quotations does the product suggest to you?

What quotations from other areas: politics, art, everyday life, the media? What quotations from current celebrities might be borrowed?

Can you think of any appropriate graffiti? Are there any famous passages of dialogue from films, plays or novels, or well-known running gags from TV series that you could use?

### **Everyday language**

Listen to how people talk: what common jargon, dialect or slang phrases would describe the product perfectly? How would the ordinary man in the street describe the USP? Or someone cool? What slang does it suggest to you? Run through the following examples:

An old lady

A lawyer

A child

One of the target group, etc.

### **Taglines**

What tagline can you develop around your goal or the product? Formulate the tagline like a book title and try to derive ideas from it. Sample 'titles' could include:

The Art of Travel

100 Ways to Build a House

The Shortest Route to Money

### **Wordplay**

Can you construct rhymes, puns or other kinds of wordplay from the product or brand, which will underline the USP? Collect terms relating to the product or its benefit and try them out as answers to the following questions:

What sounds like the terms that describe the product? Can wordplay, puns, rhymes, or other verbal jokes be developed from them? Can they be combined or rhymed with words from foreign languages?

What contradictions do descriptions of the product provoke? What images occur to you if you think about oxymorons like 'eloquent silence', 'bittersweet'?

Can compound terms be split up and used in meaningful new combinations with other product descriptions?

Can these compound terms be reversed? For example, 'heartsweet' from 'sweetheart'?

Give the product a nickname, or find a pet name for it. Spell the name wrong! Invent a word for the USP.

## **23) Reframing**

How can you alter the frame or context from within which events are seen, and so change their meaning?

Is there a larger or different frame or context within which the product will acquire a new and positive value?

Is there a context in which seemingly negative aspects acquire a positive meaning?

Is there another context within which the product would be startling or surprising?

Can you attach a new label with positive overtones to forms of behaviour, events or objects, in order to reveal new and interesting perspectives?

## **24) Metaphor and analogy**

What metaphors or analogies can be found in nature or technology that will represent the brand or benefit at a glance: the brand is like X?

What can the product or USP be compared with?

What looks like it or works on a similar principle?

What parallels can be drawn?

What visual images do these metaphors and analogies suggest?

What other ideas does the product suggest?

What could you take as a model?

How can you represent a new product by comparing it with something familiar, so that the benefit is immediately obvious?

How can metaphor or analogy present a problem situation so that it can be seen at a glance and needs no explanation?

## **25) Break out of the frame**

How can the advertising medium be actively involved in the message in order to make the benefit immediately apparent?

How can the context of the medium be integrated into the message in a meaningful way?

How can standard media be altered to give the benefit more impact?

How can the medium be involved in the message in a playful and intelligent way?

## **26) Alternative Media**

How could an outside installation be used to tell a story about a product in the open air or in a large space?

How can an outdoor site be used in a fun way to attract and involve the attention of passers-by?

How can an advertising message be integrated into an everyday location in an attention-grabbing way?

What everyday objects could be used for advertising, to put the message across in an amusing or original way?

What unconventional ad formats could be used to grab your target group's attention?

What familiar places or objects can you use for your ad to attract attention in a provocative way?