

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT PLANNING

PLANNING AND MANAGING AN IMC CAMPAIGN

THIRD EDITION

LARRY D. KELLEY
AND
DONALD W. JUGENHEIMER

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Preface and Acknowledgments

Advertising Account Planning: Planning and Managing an IMC Campaign, Third Edition, was designed for anyone charged with developing a comprehensive advertising campaign.

Account planning is a crucial aspect of integrated marketing communications (IMC) yet little has been written on it in general and even less on how account planning affects each stage of the IMC process. Our goal with the first edition of this book was to try to fill this void. It introduced the reader to the basics of account planning: what it is, where it came from, and the role it plays in advertising agencies. The second edition provided much more detail on how account planning impacts the entire IMC process. Here we included a comprehensive review of hundreds of case studies from professionals as well as student competition work to provide context for how account planning works. The third edition takes this even further.

Since the publication of the first edition, many changes have taken place in the world of communications. The rise of digital channels, the introduction of social media, the convergence of communication disciplines and the rapid pace of change in the technology and consumer environment. The communications industry is in the midst of radical change.

Account planning has changed as well. Account planning and account planners are now a part of public relations practices, digital agencies, and even client organizations in addition to advertising agencies. Advertising account planning has a clear role in the full communications process. As a result, more colleges and universities are developing a curriculum around advertising account planning. We also see the impact of account planning on student competitions such as the National Student Advertising Competition (NSAC), in which hundreds of colleges and universities compete annually through the American Advertising Federation (AAF).

This third edition is designed to be a guide for developing an IMC campaign using account planning principles at each stage of the development process. Because of the importance of account planning, it makes sense to

train future practitioners in its art and practice. This training may occur in formal advertising and marketing courses at colleges and universities, in training programs in the industry, or on the job by those who need to use and apply account planning in their work situations. Thus we see this book as especially relevant for students who are taking an account planning course or participating in a campaigns course either through their college or university or through the NSAC competition. We also believe this book will serve the needs of new employees in the advertising business as well as more experienced advertising practitioners who want to use or understand account planning principles in their business and work.

Advertising Account Planning: Planning and Managing an IMC Campaign, Third Edition, is designed for the practical side of account planning and campaign planning. All theories or models are specifically drawn from professional award-winning campaigns. Specific examples of their application are drawn from both professional and student award-winning campaigns. The examples offer students and practitioners practical examples of how account planning is incorporated into IMC campaigns.

The third edition follows the logical development and execution of an IMC campaign. After the initial chapters, which cover the history and role of account planning, we follow a campaign structure that begins with a discussion of the brand destination process tied to a situation analysis. From there, we discuss the role of research in determining what consumers think and feel about a brand. Within this aspect of the book, we address consumer insights: what they are and how to find them. We tie consumer insights into developing a big idea and discuss how to tie a big idea to every aspect of an IMC campaign. We conclude with how to measure all facets of a campaign before and after it is implemented.

The following material is new to this edition: a discussion of the role of advertising within the marketing challenge; current examples of target segmentation, brand positioning, brand personality, and an exploration of how to determine a brand's essence; an entire chapter dedicated to the concept of "the big idea"; and the briefing process and a complete review of how account planning cuts across various communication disciplines. The book has a thorough discussion of the role of creative testing in advertising and how to isolate the contribution that advertising makes to a marketing campaign.

Review questions, discussion questions, and resources round out each chapter. These features help the reader review and understand the material. Three full case studies are provided in which account planning can be put into action.

The authors have published a number of widely used advertising textbooks

that cover the areas of advertising and public relations research, advertising management, advertising media planning, and advertising account planning. Larry D. Kelley has significant advertising agency experience in account planning, working on many national brands as well as teaching this and a variety of courses at the University of Houston. Dr. Donald W. Jugenheimer has many years of experience in teaching college students a variety of courses, including advertising campaigns, advertising management, and advertising account planning. Both authors are or have been advisors to the student NSAC competition teams and understand the role that account planning plays in this process. Together, their background and strengths have come together to provide a unified learning experience.

Use this book as it was intended: as a teaching and learning aid as well as a resource for those who actually practice the art and science of account planning.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank the following people and organizations for their help and support during the writing and editing of this book: Kathy Liandro, who worked diligently to coordinate research for the book and to get the manuscript into its final form; FKM, which helped champion the project; the American Association of Advertising Agencies, the Account Planning Group, the International Practitioners of Advertising and the American Advertising Federation, which provided content and case studies for the book, and the individual agencies and universities that allowed us to use their case studies.

We owe special thanks to Harry Briggs, our editor; Stacey Victor, our production editor; and Elizabeth Parker, who helped us negotiate the production cycle at M.E. Sharpe. We especially thank our spouses and families for all their support, without which this project would not have been feasible.

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ADVERTISING
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Chapter 1

Account Planning History and Practice

Every member of a company or organization can affect its success by enhancing its brand equity. Perhaps you are a brand manager responsible for a specific brand or portfolio of brands. Maybe you are the president of a company or the chief marketing director. Or maybe you are an account planner, account manager, or president of an advertising agency. Perhaps you are working on a campaign for your college or university to compete in the National Student Advertising Competition (NSAC). Regardless of your situation, how your brand or company is positioned and perceived in the marketplace is crucial to your success.

Positioning your brand and then determining how that positioning is to be executed in all forms of communication can be a daunting task even for the most seasoned professional. However, ensuring that the time you spend positioning the brand is properly accepted by all the brand's stakeholders, whether within the company or among consumers, is vital to the ultimate success or failure of the brand. There is nothing more disturbing to a brand manager than for the advertising, the promotions, the public relations effort, and the digital effort to be misaligned. In today's complex world of communication, disconnects happen every day in hundreds of companies.

It can be a difficult task to pull together a brand's position and to have that position properly executed in all the appropriate marketing communications channels. The process can be confusing and sometimes elusive. The simple fact is, you cannot develop an integrated marketing communications campaign and hope to evaluate its impact on the brand without proper planning. The purpose of this book is to help bring clarity to the job of developing an integrated marketing communications campaign by linking the brand's positioning with communications. This task revolves around the art and science of account planning.

Account planning can be a job or a department, or it might be a process within an agency or a marketing group. No matter how account planning is handled on your brand, it is one of the most important aspects of placing

the consumer at the heart of every decision that you make for your brand and its communications.

Origins of Account Planning

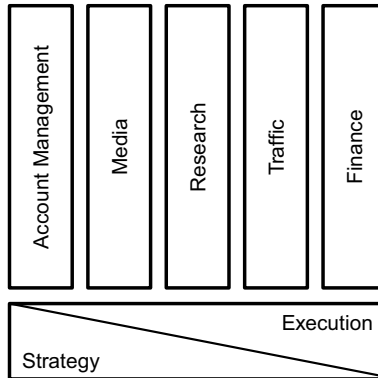
Although the history of account planning has its origins in the United Kingdom, the reason for the rise and adoption of account planning is truly an international tale. Account planning came of age because of a variety of circumstances in the history of advertising.

In the 1950s, advertising agencies were the pioneers of advertising and marketing research. At that time, advertising agencies had large market research staffs or subsidiary companies that conducted marketing research. Agencies were the informational source for consumer behavior and attitudinal trends. For example, Leo Burnett in the United States had a marketing research staff that rivaled the top twenty research companies of that era. Investment in primary research allowed advertising agencies to act as consultants to their clients on all aspects of marketing and advertising. Large consumer marketing companies that promoted consumer packaged goods, automotive merchandise, and general goods and services relied on advertising agencies to tell them about their customers. The account manager of the advertising agency often filled the role that today's brand managers do in consumer products companies. Figure 1.1 shows a traditional advertising agency structure.

But this situation began to change in the 1960s, when consumer products companies began to move from manufacturing or operations management systems to what we now know as the brand management system. Prior to this period, consumer brands or companies were headed by operations executives with limited marketing know-how. In the 1960s, companies shifted toward having marketing experts lead the charge. This period of transition began to change the relationship between the client and the advertising agency. The clients, now run by brand managers, brought market research into the company rather than relying on the advertising agency for the majority of consumer input. Brand managers wanted to devise their own research and saw the current agency/client system as cumbersome. This shift placed advertising agencies in more of a specialist role, working only on advertising instead of on all aspects of marketing. With consumer knowledge and understanding moving away from advertising agencies and to the client, marketing strategy was also the responsibility of the client rather than of the agency. Agencies struggled to cope with these changes.

In the late 1960s, two UK advertising agencies, Boase Massimi Pollitt (BMP) and J. Walter Thompson (now called JWT), started what we refer to

Figure 1.1 Traditional Advertising Agency



as *account planning*. However, while each of these agencies began the trend at around the same time, they came at it from very different directions.

BMP approached account planning from the research function. Research in its advertising agency, like most, was typically a backroom activity. The researcher would conduct research and pass it along to the account manager, who would interpret the research for use in the client's business. BMP saw flaws in this system on a couple of fronts. First, the account manager was not a research expert and might not interpret the results accurately. Second, the account manager was sometimes too close to the account to be truly objective when dealing with consumer perceptions of the brand. Third, the account manager was torn between satisfying the client, on one hand, and providing creative direction, on the other. So BMP developed an enhanced research role that placed the research department on equal footing with the account management and creative departments within the advertising agency. In essence, BMP brought research to the forefront of the process as an objective role between the account manager, who served the client's needs, and the creative group, which worked to develop messaging to influence the consumer. Stanley Pollitt envisioned the role as an "account man's conscience" and someone who would help direct creative strategy and determine how a campaign was measured.

At about the same time, JWT London merged its marketing department with its media and research departments and called it "account planning." Stephen King of JWT probably coined the term *account planning*. King saw a dilemma at JWT similar to the one that Pollitt found at BMP. However, King envisioned the account planner's role more broadly than did Pollitt. In the BMP model, the account planner would be more of a creative strategist working with the account manager and the creative department on creative strategy and ultimately campaign measurement. In contrast, JWT London

saw the account planner as having a much broader strategic planning role in advertising. At JWT, the account planner had a role in the complete advertising strategy, from defining the role that advertising plays in an account to target segmentation, media strategy, and brand positioning, as well as creative strategy and development.

Both agencies made changes in an effort to add consumer response to the client and creative viewpoints.

Advertising account planning began to take shape in the United Kingdom in the 1970s. Account planning groups were formed in the late 1970s to bring together a discipline that had various roots, practices, and criteria. It was highlighted in 1979, when the British Account Planning Association shifted its International Planning Awards for advertising from pretesting to the use of planning and strategy as a gauge of advertising effectiveness. This shift also set the stage for some account planners to break away and form their own advertising agencies. Clients quickly followed suit and supported this new type of agency oriented around account planning.

Spread of Account Planning

Account planning didn't make its way to the United States until the late 1980s, almost twenty years after its introduction in the United Kingdom. Jay Chiat, the founder of the Chiat/Day agency, is credited with introducing account planning in the United States. Chiat's reason for bringing an account planner to his agency was simple. He thought that more innovative and compelling advertising was being done in the United Kingdom than in the United States at that time. He believed that account planning was the secret to this innovation. Prior to the introduction of account planning, Chiat/Day was known as a very creative advertising agency. After the addition of a UK account planner and the subsequent introduction of the famous 1984 Macintosh computer commercial and a string of impressive new business wins, other U.S. advertising agencies stood up and took note of this phenomenon.

Other U.S. advertising firms began to import UK account planners to their advertising agencies. One such account planner was Jon Steel, who migrated to Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, a fierce competitor of Chiat/Day's. Steel's success with Goodby, Silverstein & Partners and his 1998 book, *Truth, Lies and Advertising: The Art of Account Planning*, brought the world of account planning into the mainstream. Since the late 1990s, account planning has been largely adopted by advertising agencies in the United States and across the world.

In the 1990s and into the 2000s, other seismic changes had taken place in the advertising agency landscape. Media services that were once a part of a full-

service advertising agency were spun out as separate companies. The rapid rise of digital advertising has spawned a new set of advertising agencies that focus on this space. With the rise of social media and other new channels of communication, public relations is also being redefined. All these changes have led account planners to adapt to new agency structures and environments. It is not unusual for media, digital, and even public relations agencies to have account planners on staff to add consumer insights or to serve as strategic leaders.

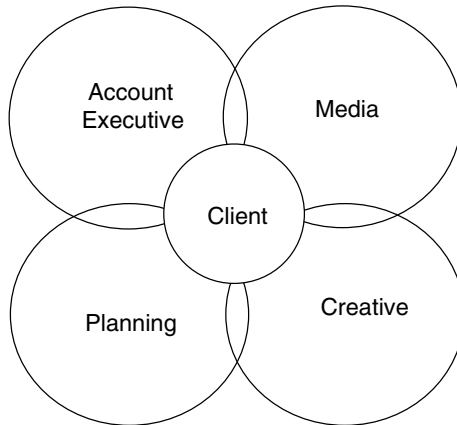
As late as the mid-1980s, U.S. advertising agencies had no account planning function. Now, the trade association for the U.S. advertising community, the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA), holds annual conferences on account planning that attract hundreds of attendees. The AAAA's Jay Chiat Planning Awards have hundreds of entries each year. Account planning certainly has come of age and is a mainstay in the advertising community.

Changing the Fundamentals of the Agency Structure

The origins of advertising account planning rest with two advertising agencies that saw the need for someone to bridge the gaps between client, agency, and consumer. What may be construed as an elevated research function performed by people who excel at interpreting research and making it useful has developed into a method or process that makes advertising more effective.

For many agencies, advertising account planning is the fourth pillar of agency function. The other three are account management, creative, and media. Agencies that have adopted account planning see it as a different skill set, separate from account management or research but spanning both areas. Traditionally, account managers manage the client/agency relationship and counsel the client. Researchers are more often concerned with using the right research technique to fit the problem and are heavily weighted toward quantitative research. The account planner fills gaps or voids in this process by synthesizing consumer information that must be thoroughly considered in the application of marketing and advertising strategy and execution.

The fundamental change of inserting an account planner into the advertising process as an equal to account management, creative, and media has had a profound effect on each area. For the account managers, it has meant giving up some control of the advertising process. Whereas the account manager once dominated advertising strategy, now the account planner has a significant say in the matter. It means that the creative group will influence the message development throughout the creative process. The creative process now has ongoing consumer critiques whereas before it had to pass muster only with the client and the account manager. For the media group, it has

Figure 1.2 **New Way of Structuring Agency/Client Relationship**

meant that selecting media is not just about cost efficiencies. The account planner adds another dimension to the media planning process. Figure 1.2 shows the new structure of an agency/client relationship.

This shift to account planning has not always gone smoothly. Few people are willing to cede control of their work. Yet that is what the account planner is asking each department or discipline to do. Obviously, this shift in power has had its share of skeptics and critics within the agency community. This has led to variation in the account planning role, depending upon the agency's philosophy and culture.

What an Account Planner Does

What an account planner does varies from agency to agency. An account planner can have a focused role in the advertising process or a more generalist role in the full spectrum of marketing and communications strategy.

In the broadest sense, the account planner represents the consumer's point of view in the marketing and advertising process. Much as an actor understands his character, the account planner immerses himself or herself in the consumer mindset at every phase of the brand purchase cycle. As a result, the account planner can add value to a wide variety of business and advertising areas. Thus the description of an account planner's work can range from business strategy to advertising strategy down to specific creative content and media contact strategy briefs.

In the narrowest definition, the advertising account planner is a part of the advertising creative process. In this case, the product that the account

planner produces is the creative brief, which is the basis of various forms of message content produced by the creative group.

While advertising account planners certainly know a lot about research and use research in their jobs, they are very different from traditional market researchers. A market researcher finds out about a consumer through various research methodologies. An account planner takes it a step further and identifies with the consumer, internalizing the research. A market researcher can show you statistics about how consumers behave. An account planner should be able to tell you not only who your customers are but what they feel.

From an advertising viewpoint, the account planner should insert the consumer's viewpoint all along the path of advertising strategy and creation. This differs from the role of the market researcher, who tests ideas after the creative work is completed. This is one of the fundamental reasons account planning took hold in the United Kingdom and continues to gain traction around the world today. The account planning process engages the consumer and aids the agency in understanding the consumer's emotions.

Account planning plays an important yet slightly different role in digital advertising. Rather than being just a consumer advocate, the account planner in digital advertising is a user's advocate. This means understanding how consumers are interacting or using your Web site, microsite, or social media. The user experience (UX) director and the information architecture (IA) director function as account planners for the digital space. Their role is to determine how to make the digital experience a useful and engaging one for the consumer.

Just as an account planner may look at a consumer's relationship with a brand, the UX or IA director is looking at the relationship that a consumer has with a brand's digital assets. The goal of each is to craft an insightful and strategically sound brand experience.

Depending on the organization, an account planner can be an advertising strategist, a business consultant, a consumer ombudsman for the creative or media group, a UX or IA specialist, or merely a creative brief producer. It all depends upon the commitment that the organization may or may not have to account planning. In this book, we view the role of the account planner as a complete advertising strategist who impacts all aspects of the advertising process.

Impact of Account Planning

Some people in the advertising community still wonder what the big deal is about account planning. Advertising has always been planned and campaigns

have always been measured in some manner. So some may ask: Aren't we doing this activity anyway? Do we really need a separate department or function for this activity? Isn't the advertising account planner really just a glorified qualitative researcher? What exactly is the return on investment for adding an account planner to the staff?

All are valid questions that have been debated inside as well as outside the advertising community. However, the advent of account planning came at a time when the advertising industry needed it. The rise of the information age has greatly increased the need for account planning within an agency. As consumer information became more pervasive and reliable, marketers were much more able to understand the behavior of consumers regarding their brand. However, all the information available in today's marketplace makes the need for insight even greater. Turning information into insights about consumers is the essence of good account planning.

Another area where account planning is making its mark is from within the marketplace itself. The United States and many European countries are mature marketplaces for many goods and services. This has led to an increasing difficulty in differentiating one's brand or service based on a unique product attribute. This maturity of the market means that brand differentiation is more likely to come from an emotional benefit than from a unique product attribute or functional benefit. Helping guide marketers through the emotional maze is one of the hallmarks of account planning.

The explosion of media choices, the rise of digital media and conversational marketing, and an increasingly fragmented marketplace have led to a need for more complex brand contact strategies. In today's marketplace, no longer do cost efficiencies alone drive media programs. The goal of communications planning is understanding how the consumer engages with media and the brand. An understanding of the consumer reflects strength in account planning.

For the advertising community, the account planner is one of the keys to swinging the pendulum back in favor of agencies as thought leaders in consumer insight. Account planners are leading the charge to glean insights from the morass of marketing information that is available today. They impact every aspect of the marketing communications process.

Advertising account planning can be a job, a process, or a way of approaching business planning. Regardless of what it comprises in an organization, it should become the mindset for all those involved in an IMC campaign. Advertising account planning is about keeping the consumer at the center of the marketing and communications universe. That is why account planning has truly become a force in communications planning.

Review Questions

1. How does advertising account planning differ from market research?
2. How does account planning differ from account management?
3. How does account planning bring together the various marketing and advertising functions?
4. How has account planning changed the role of the advertising agency in the client relationship?
5. How does user experience in digital agencies parallel the role of the account planner?

Discussion Questions

1. What is meant by the differences between qualitative and quantitative research? Give some examples.
2. How can an account planner work effectively with so many different communications functions?
3. Why does account planning impact the integrated marketing communications process at all levels rather than at just a single level?
4. How does the job description of the account planner differ from others at the agency?

Additional Resources

Many of these sources will be useful throughout this book.

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Chapter 2

The Role That Account Planning Plays in a Campaign

Account planning can play a role in virtually every phase of the integrated marketing communications (IMC) process. While some agencies choose to limit the account planning role to creative development, others offer a more expanded view. With the integration of account planning at media, public relations, and digital companies, one way or another account planning or the principles of account planning are being woven into various facets of campaigns.

As we mentioned previously, our point of view is that account planning can and should play a role in every aspect of an integrated campaign. That raises the question of what goes into a complete IMC campaign. To answer that question, we reviewed hundreds of case studies from both the professional and academic sectors. Since marketing and advertising campaigns and their playbooks are proprietary, we sought the published case studies from the Effie Awards, IPA Effectiveness Awards, Jay Chiat Planning Awards, and the American Advertising Federation (AAF)–National Student Advertising Competition (NSAC) award winners to act as proxies for what makes up a campaign.

The Effie Awards and IPA Effectiveness Awards are cut from the same cloth. Both focus on the effectiveness of communications. To win either an Effie or an IPA Effectiveness Award, the campaign must contribute to some metric of moving the brand forward. This involves both market and mind metrics. From a market standpoint, the goal to be measured may be building sales, increasing brand penetration or frequency of purchase, among others. And from a mind standpoint, the goal may be to change a perception, increase awareness, get the brand into the considered set, and add to its quality perception, among other metrics. The campaign must show results, and the judges must consider the problem to be difficult to overcome; so much so that the strategy and results are surprising.

Where the Effie Awards and IPA Effectiveness Awards differ is in structure and intent. The IPA Effectiveness Awards, based in London, are associated

with the World Advertising Research Council (WARC). The core purpose of the IPA Effectiveness Awards is to demonstrate financial payback for investment in marketing communications. Every year, the winners are added to the IPA databank of cases, which provides a tremendous research resource on how communications work. As a result, the IPA Effectiveness Awards are more rigorous in terms of identifying the specific communications impact on the brand's finances than the Effies are. And the IPA Effectiveness Awards are all written in a similar format so that they can be catalogued and analyzed for future research. This is not a knock on the Effies, which are very prestigious awards and draw more worldwide competition than the IPA Effectiveness Awards. However, the IPA Effectiveness Awards are a much richer resource in the study of advertising.

The AAAA Jay Chiat Planning Award is the only industry award that focuses on account planning. In 2002, the AAAA, the U.S. trade association, inherited the Account Planning Group—U.S. Account Planning Awards and renamed them the AAAA Jay Chiat Awards as a tribute to the man who brought account planning to the United States. While the criterion for these awards is the creation of campaigns that have an impact on the market, the focus is more on the strategies of thinking and creative message formulation. The key criterion for winning this award is linking a great strategic idea with an equally impactful creative expression of that idea.

The AAF—NSAC competition is the only national collegiate advertising competition in the United States. Every year, hundreds of colleges and universities compete through the AAF to win the account. Every school has the same client brief or case study and must develop a thirty-seven-page plan book covering all aspects of an IMC plan and then deliver a twenty-minute presentation of the plan to judges in each of the eighteen AAF districts. It is probably the largest new business pitch in the advertising industry. Obviously, beyond the difference between student and professional work, the AAF-NSAC competition is about what you plan to do, compared to the industry awards, which are about what you have done.

From these award-winning plans, we can spot some clear patterns in how campaigns are organized, the judging of what makes an award-winning effort, and how account planning plays a role in the process. Let's first review the outline or structure that is included in a campaign.

Campaign Contents

To review the content of a campaign, we review the IPA Effectiveness Awards and the AAF—NSAC student competition awards. Something can be learned from both the professional and student sides of the equation. The

IPA Effectiveness Awards are consistent in their case study approach, and while the AAF–NSAC plan books vary in approach, over the years, the winning teams have demonstrated a strong pattern of success. The outline in this book is a composite of the winning plan books from the past ten years.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 provide outlines for the IPA Effectiveness Awards and the AAF-NSAC plan books. What is covered show some similarities and some differences. We review the major sections of the plans. The key to a well-written plan includes the following:

- Put the plan in context for the reader.
- Establish the situation.
- Define the target market.
- Identify the problem.
- Identify the insight to build the strategy to solve the problem.
- Discuss how that insight is executed creatively.
- Discuss how that insight is executed in communication channels.
- Discuss the results or how you plan to measure the results.

These are the fundamental building blocks for organizing a successful campaign plan. It is then up to the author to tell the story in a fun and interesting manner. Let's discuss each of the key sections.

Putting the Plan in Context

All the campaign case studies or plan books have a similar start. Each uses an introduction or executive summary to tell the story of the campaign. The role of the account planner is to establish the context for what the readers will see as they plow through the case study or plan book. It also sums up, in four or five short paragraphs, what the problem was and how it was solved.

For example, here are the opening sentences for the introduction to the 2008 Gold Award–winning IPA Effectiveness Award winner, written by Ed Booty and Jude Lawson of BBH in London. The campaign was for KFC in Europe:

This is the story of a dramatic revival in the fortune of one of the nation's best-known fast food brands. It is a revival against all odds, and a revival achieved by going against every received wisdom in the category.

As you can see, this is very compelling copy. It makes you want to see how they solved this dilemma. For the AAF-NSAC plans, putting the plan in context is like an executive summary of what you plan to do. Unlike the IPA or other

Figure 2.1 **Effectiveness Awards: Case Study Outline**

1. Introduction
 2. Background
 3. Statement of problem
 4. Role of communications
 5. Communications strategy/idea
 6. Creative solution
 7. Media solution
 8. Communication measurement results
 9. Business measurement results
 10. Return on investment
-

Figure 2.2 **NSAC Campaign Outline**

1. Executive summary
 2. Situation analysis
 3. Primary research plan and results/brand positioning
 4. Target segmentation analysis
 5. Creative objectives/strategies
 6. Big idea
 7. Creative executions
 8. Contact plan: Traditional, nontraditional, digital, promotions, and public relations
 9. Campaign evaluation and return on investment
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industry awards, the AAF-NSAC competition is about what you plan to do rather than what you have. However, it still should be written in a compelling manner since that is the first thing that a judge will see when reviewing the plan book.

Establish the Situation

The situation or background paints the picture of what the brand is facing and covers a number of key elements. The role of the account planner is to synthesize the information and to make the situation into a compelling story. One easy way to organize your thoughts in the situation analysis is to think of the three Cs: Company, Competition, and the Consumer. The first is a review of the company and the brand itself. This may contain elements such as the company history, its size and scope, its assets, and any brand elements that it has previously featured.

There should also be a section devoted to the market and market conditions. For example, if you were working on KFC, as in the example above, you would want to understand the breadth and depth of the fast food industry as well as any trends that might impact it. This could be a rise in healthy eating or a demographic trend, such as fewer young adults that can feed the category. It should also include how the industry is segmented. This can be by type of business or by the benefits that the business or brand delivers.

Another aspect of the situation analysis or background that is tied into the market and market conditions is an analysis of the competition. Identifying who the competitors are and their specific strengths and weaknesses is a crucial aspect of determining the situation.

The other aspect of the situation analysis is a review of the consumer from a demographic and a psychographic perspective. This includes secondary and primary research regarding the consumers, their needs, and how your brand meets these needs within this competitive framework.

Define the Target Market

One aspect that typically comes out of the research developed in the situation analysis is a segmentation of the target audience. This segmentation generates the platform and insights to help develop the campaign. Obviously, determining the target market is a key component to the success of any communications campaign. Whether working on the demographic, psychographic, or behavioral goals, the role of the account planner is to ensure that the target market opportunity is quantified in terms of how it can meet the overall marketing objectives as well as how it can be influenced from a communications perspective.

Painting a picture of the target market is crucial to brand positioning as well as creative and media development. A good example of painting a picture of a target audience is in the 2008 AAF-NSAC award-winning campaign plan by students at Ohio University. Here is how they described the target for the America Online's Instant Messenger product: "The target audience is 18–24-year-old males and females, who we refer to as Constant Connectors. These individuals are hyper-active, trendy, tech-savvy, and dependent on fast and easy communication."

The segmentation in this case is an eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old age group, which is further refined by how they choose to communicate. In every case study, whether it is from the industry or from the student competition, developing a cohesive target market is the bedrock of any good campaign.

Identify the Problem

While identifying the problem may sound simple, it can actually be quite difficult. That is why the IPA Effectiveness Awards require a statement of the problem and the role that communications play in solving the problem. This is a crucial area for account planners since they are largely responsible for stating the consumer problem and linking it to the business problem.