

Principles of Exceptional Marketing

The following 21 principles were collated during a workshop at the 2015 ICCA Research, Sales and Marketing Programme (RSMP), “Why good marketing is no longer good enough”, aimed at identifying the factors that differentiate genuinely outstanding marketing (= “non-vanilla” marketing) from good, competent marketing (“vanilla” marketing). It doesn’t list core marketing principles which can be found in any good marketing textbook or website resource (eg segment targeting, needs analysis, pricing, product differentiation, channel selection, clear messaging, brand-values definition, etc), but instead represents a check-list that will help identify whether any marketing project could realistically be described as exceptional.

ICCA members from any Sector or region of the world can easily examine how many of the below attributes can be found in any of their marketing work, from major destination rebranding exercises to one-off promotional projects, from print to social to experiential, either using internal staff to self-analyse the work, or preferably by asking focus groups of clients to give their objective opinions. Any campaign or project with fewer than four of these attributes is highly unlikely to be genuinely outstanding in terms of creativity, implementation or results. Any meetings-related campaign or project scoring four or more should be considered as a potential candidate to be entered into ICCA’s annual Best Marketing Award.

We would like to thank the delegates from 2015 RSMP for their valuable contributions towards this new ICCA marketing resource.



Principles of Exceptional Marketing: Checklist

- "Stickiness" – cannot forget even if they try
- Dramatically shifts perception (eg gives new twist to known values or highlights important but previously unknown facts)
- Generates positive emotion - makes them smile or laugh
- Creates surprise or shock – "wow" moments!
- Raises strong curiosity ("I must find out more about this")
- Sensory – works with multiple senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste)
- Reinforces your overarching storyline & brand values - contextually relevant
- Logo, strapline, tone of voice, images, mood – all elements work in harmony
- Has a recognisable, authentic "personality" - could be Friendly, or Efficient, or Innovative, etc.
- Has clarity of message or focal point - no mixed messages (unless this is done deliberately for some other reason on checklist)
- Impactful, sophisticated use of visual and verbal metaphors
- Feels "personal" to each individual targeted (could be real or perceived)
- "Forces" someone to do something; very strong call to action (eg respond; share; sample)
- Generates or maintains interactivity or dialogue
- Uses other voices in a way that gives credibility or authenticity (eg clients, respected figures, staff)
- Someone else pays or does much of the hard work (eg local partners use the same imagery, key messages, tone of voice, in their own marketing; eg clients or delegates spread your message)
- Remove the name and logo – instantly recognisable as you
- Serves a very specific purpose that's capable of ROI evaluation
- Addresses a clearly articulated problem or need
- Satisfies or works on multiple levels and different channels
- Longevity – campaign or brand or concept has great potential to evolve and increase in value over many years