

Rochester Institute of Technology

RIT Digital Institutional Repository

Theses

6-5-1991

A Promotional campaign for a self-created computer animation "Ernie the Bird"

Barbara-Leigh Chesnut

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.rit.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Chesnut, Barbara-Leigh, "A Promotional campaign for a self-created computer animation "Ernie the Bird"" (1991). Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed from

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the RIT Libraries. For more information, please contact repository@rit.edu.

Rochester Institute of Technology

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the College of Fine and Applied Arts in
Candidacy for the Degree of Masters of Fine Arts

A Promotional Campaign for a Self-Created Computer Animation
"Ernie the Bird" © copyright 1990

by

Barbara-Leigh Chesnut

Advisor: James Ver Hague

Date: 6.5.91

Associate Advisor: Robert Keough

Date: 6-5-91

Associate Advisor: Nancy Ciolek

Date: 6-5-91

Special Assistant to the Dean for Graduate Affairs: Philip Bornarth

Date: 6/13/91

Acting Dean, College of Fine and Applied Arts: Dr. Peter Giopolus

Date: 6/18/91

I, Barbara-Leigh Chesnut, hereby deny permission to the Wallace Memorial Library of RIT, to reproduce my thesis in whole or in part.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my late father Herman H. Chesnut Jr. Without his influence and guidance, both while living and from the "other side," this whole graduate study experience would have never taken place.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my family first and foremost for their financial and moral support throughout my graduate studies.

I would also like to thank Rodney Martinez for doing the voice of Ernie and bringing him to life.

A special thanks to Kanchen Rajanna, Malinda D'Attilio, Edwin Walker, Catherine Hu and especially Shan Yeung for support both technically and as friends.

And I thank my committee members Jim Ver Hague, Bob Keough and Nancy Ciolek.

Table of Contents

I. The Beginnings

A. First Ideas.....	2
B. Brief History of Animation.....	3
C. Finalized Idea.....	7
D. A Few Fundamentals of Animation.....	12
E. The Business Side of a Promotional Campaign.....	14

II. The Creation

A. The New and Improved "Ernie the Bird".....	29
B. Fine Tuning.....	34
C. Final Production.....	36

III. Conclusion.....38

IV. Bibliography.....40

I. The Beginnings

First Ideas

The initial thesis concept is very much like the final project, which was to do an animation suitable for Disney Studios.

Later the thought came to mind of doing a HyperCard™ stack on a timeline of animation methods and address the issue of the subject matter in animation affected by time.

An offshoot of the first idea was to do a visual display of the selected parts of the history of animation using the same clip displayed from the earliest method to the latest - namely the computer. An issue to be addressed was the comparison of each method as to which ones are more effective than others or perhaps just the plain different views of the same subject matter.

Brief History of Animation

Animation is the art of movement. Sheer movement exists simultaneously on many levels and speaks in many ways. Movement conveys a story, character and theme. Animation creates tension through development of expectation and release through curiosity. With resolution, movement creates structure for the passage of time. It's intimately related to music, dialogue and other elements of the audio portion of film. Movement is the essential magic of motion picture technology - it's the beginning and end.

In Heraldson's Creators of Life: A History of Animation, he states that the earliest documentation of animation was in 70 BC. Lucretius describes an apparatus that projects a hand-drawn moving image on a screen in his work called DE RERUM NATURA. One of the next earliest publications was during the American Civil War when Coleman Sellers published the Motion Picture Handbook.

Shortly after, in the 1900s, a Norwegian inventor, Poulson, recorded sound on wire and sold his recorders commercially. Meanwhile, in England, Leon Gaumont was making movies with sound on a disc. Then in the 1920's, Germany had started manufacturing magnetic sound recording tape.

Thomas Edison was the first to hold patents on motion picture photography. Two of his inventions that made projected film possible were electric light and sound recording. After the creation of electric light, the inventions came at a remarkable rate too numerous to name.

Photographic animation

The first step is to produce a sound track be it narration or dialogue. Then the music is added for dramatic effect or to enhance mood. Both narration and music are recorded on 16mm or 35mm magnetic film. When there are 2 or more separate tracks a synchronizer is used to match the tracks and sound information is plotted on a bar sheet.

The bar sheet is also used for any other form of animation including full-motion or "classic" animation.

3-D Animation

3-dimensional animation consists of clay figures, puppets, cutouts, or anything that must be moved by hand instead of drawn on a cel or flat surface.

An important point is that all movement will be recorded by the camera including camera shake or other vibrations so the animator should build a rigid set and background to eliminate those problems.

Cameraless animation

Thaumatrope

A thaumatrope is an optical toy that begins the prehistory of animation in the early 19th Century and maybe even earlier than that. The toy is simplicity itself made up of a disc attached to two pieces of string. When the disc is twirled by hand, images placed on either side of the disc are perceived together as a single object which is the perceptual phenomenon known as persistence of vision causing our eye to hold on to the image.

Phenakistoscope

In 1832 a Frenchman, Joseph Plateau, invented the first machine that really created the illusion of sustained movement. Phenakistoscope is a spinning wheel that bears a series of drawn images and viewing gates that frame the viewer's vision of the image.

Zoetrope

A zoetrope is a revolving drum that has slits in the sides that are spaced equally so as the drum is spinning glimpses are seen of a series of drawings created on a strip of paper placed inside. The name "zoetrope" means wheel of life, so titled by Pierre Devignes in 1860. An earlier version was developed in England by William Horner in around 1834.

Praxinoscope

Invented by Emile Reynaud. In 1892, Reynaud opened the world's first movie theatre in Paris. Reynaud's Theatre Optique projected a "movie" made of individual drawings on a long piece of paper. The show lasted just a few minutes. His invention parallels the modern projector.

Flip-books

Small paper pads or index cards work best. First the drawing is made on the last page with proceeding drawings similiar but with a slight change to create the illusion of movement.

Computer Animation

In Rivlin's Algorithmic Image, he states that basically commercial computer animation started at New York Institute of Technology doing mainly the cartoon business and flying logos.

The idea was to automate the incredibly laborious frame-by-frame production method by which animated cartoons are created. Conventional animation starts with a set of key frames for the movement sequence created by an animator. The key frames show a character in the most important positions of the movement cycle. Next a team of "in-betweeners" create all the steps between key frames. The cels are given to a team of inkers who hand-ink each cel. Then they are given to painters who paint inside the lines drawn by the inkers.

Finalized Idea

There are a great deal of possibilities in this idea for a visual presentation of the history of animation for another thesis as well as a whole museum devoted primarily to animation with each section of the museum displaying each phase and tangents of the development of the history of animation. This would indeed be an interesting and worthwhile display, but a small section in a gallery could not do it justice.

It was decided to return to the idea of a promotional campaign, not so much for a self-created work, but for an actual company such as Disney, Hanna-Barbera, Warner Brothers, etc.. The main gliche in that plan was hooking up with one of these companies and finding exactly who to contact. Plus, even if a company could be found willing to allow an outsider to work on one of their projects, the legalities involved in releasing it prior to its finality could very well be next to impossible. Another disuasion was the fact all the time would be spent collecting the gear to climb the proverbial mountain without any leftover to take the first step up and over it.

This led back to the original concept for a thesis project. The distinct advantage in using a self-created work is the freedom to choose any direction one desires to take with it and not having to please someone else. It also provides the option to be as innovative as one wants.

How Ernie Came About

Ernie emerged a few years ago, one Sunday afternoon, while doodling with a rapidograph pen. The form that had taken shape looked like a bird. Adding legs to the bird and giving him a name started to bring the bird to life. The name came fairly instantaneously and completely out of the blue. It's not clear when the story of "Ernie the Bird" was made up, but it wasn't too much later. The story was short consisting of just a few pages and paralleled some personal views and experiences of life.

The Original Story

Ernie the Bird isn't an ordinary bird. No! He's what you'd call a "jetsetter" bird. He sets the pace for all the other birds, but only those who are worth their weight in feathers - gold feathers that is. (Never horsefeathers! That simply would never do!) He even has his own exclusive gold Birdland Express card, he never leaves his nest without it.

Well, Ernie is, of course, fluent in all the trades of the birds, but presently he has a job of glueing twigs together so they can be model nests for Birdland realty and quite frankly he doesn't like it. He doesn't feel it properly makes use of his talents. He did get a Bachelor's of Bird degree from Birdland University in creative feather designing. The top styles keep one warm in the winter and just puddle wash and dry in the summer, but are also fashionable and up-to-date. It's a very competitive business and very hard to get started in. The best companies usually hire graduates from name schools such as Swan College and Peacock University. Unfortunately, Ernie could only afford to go to Birdland University, so Ernie was having a very hard and frustrating time reaching his goal of being a world famous feather designer.

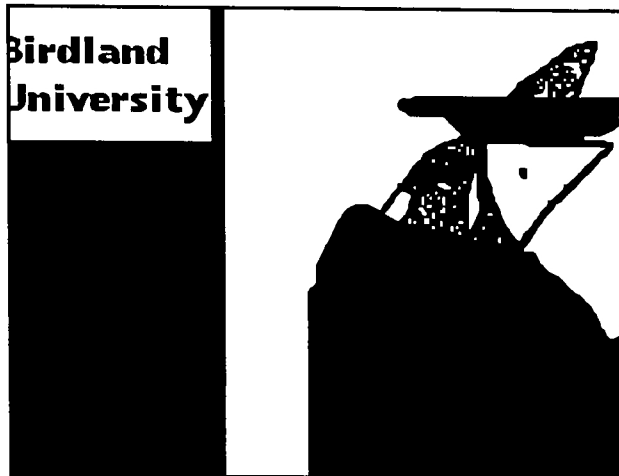
Ernie never gives up his dream, although times are quite discouraging for poor ole Ernie. His experience in this specialized field is only from school and that just doesn't cut it out there in the real world.

Besides being a tad depressed about not finding the job of his dreams just yet, he also misses his friends from Birdland University. Even though he transferred there from Bird State College closer to home, he managed to make quite a few friends at Birdland University.

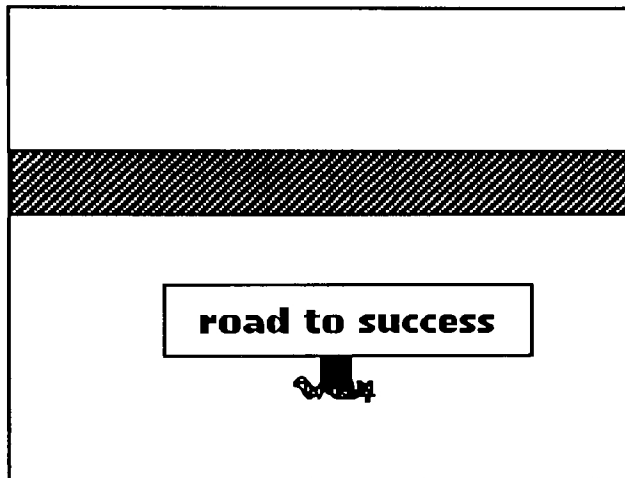
One special friend, whom Ernie loves very much, is Charda. They care about each other quite a bit, but Charda flies in a different flock from Ernie and even though these differences can be easily tolerated in friendship, they stand on very shakey ground in a more meaningful relationship. Both Ernie and Charda would love to fly off together and start their own flock. However, their differences hold them apart and deep down they know they're just not meant for each other. Someday soon Ernie hopes and prays to find a very special bird for his very own.

The story definitely needed to be modified and lengthened if it were to fit at all in an animation. So during the fall quarter the storyline was changed and the animation was created.

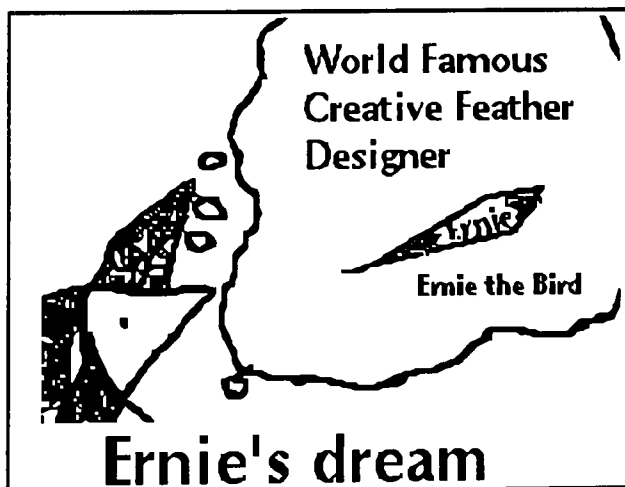
The Original Storyboard



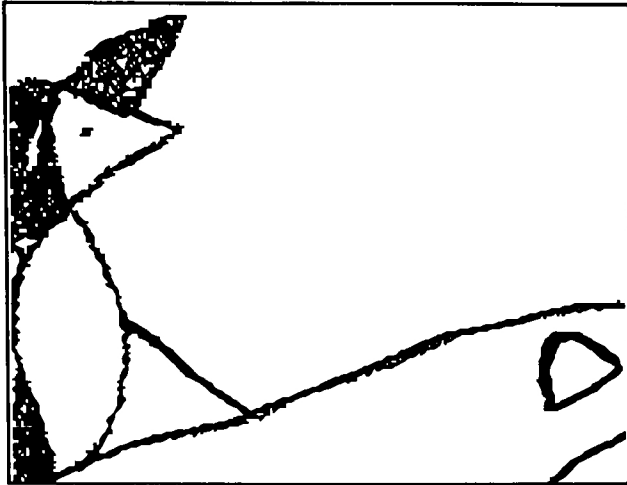
Having just graduated from Birdland University with his Bachelor's of Birds degree,



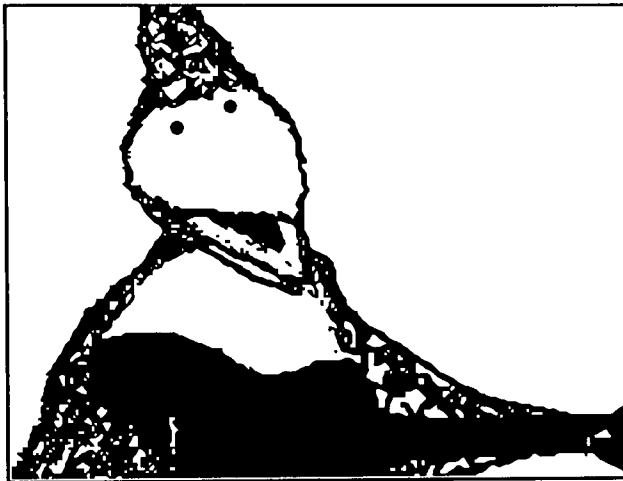
Ernie sets off on the road to success.



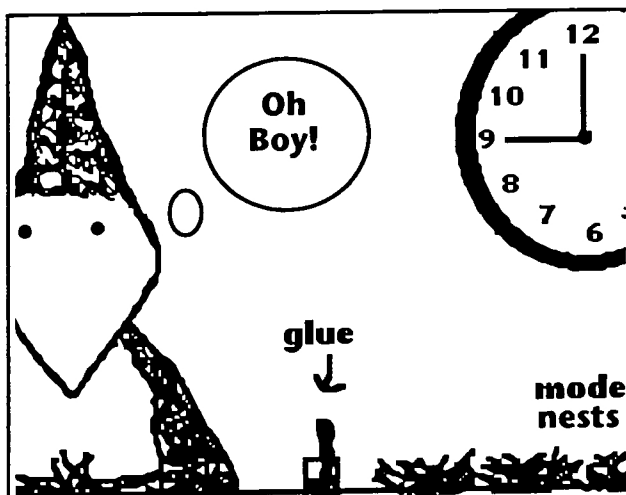
His dream is to become a world famous creative feather designer.



Ernie is no ordinary bird. Ernie's a jetsetter bird - he sets the pace for all the other birds to follow. He even has an exclusive Birdland Express card and he never leaves his nest without it. However, starting out on his road to success, Ernie faces many diversions and stops along the way.



His first stop is at "Jim & Bob's Bar & Grill" where he gets a job as a country singer calling himself "Country Ern". His song is "I'm so glad I ain't dead and my name ain't Fred Yeehaw Yeehaw Yeehaw." He doesn't want to do this anymore, so back on the road he goes.



His next stop is at Birdland Realty where he gets a job in the model nests department gluing twigs together for model nests. A bubble thought is above his head at the 9am start of "Oh Boy!" and another one at 5pm of "I'm outta here!". Again this is not what he wants to do, so back on the road he goes once more.

A Few Fundamentals of Animation

There are two basic methods of traditional animation which are: "cels" and "cut outs". Cels are moving elements of a scene that are traced onto transparent sheets of acetate laid out in correct sequence over a master background for photographing. Cut outs are manipulated for the purpose of single frame shooting over an appropriate background. In either method, all the creative work should be done before shooting.

In creating a character there are three basic units - head, body and limbs. The main job is to get the proportion right. In real life a man's head represents approximately 1/7th of his total height. In the average cartoon character the head is the most important because of the facial reactions.

Timing is the essence of successful animation. A fundamental fact about timing is that the duration of any action on the screen is determined by the number of individual frames that compose it, according to the formula.

$$\frac{\text{Duration of action in seconds} \times \text{Projection speed in frames per second}}{\text{\# of frames exposed on each phase or cycle}} = \text{\# of phases or cycles required for each action}$$

Key positions are the defining limits of an action or natural breaks in a series of actions. Once key positions have been established then the in-betweening can be done.

There are two kinds of cut-out techniques which are manipulation - moving just one element around, and substitution - the replacing of an element.

Animation can use and/or bend the Natural Laws. Also in animation these laws can be suspended and/or exaggerated.

Newton's Laws of Motion

1. An object will remain still or keep moving unless some force acts upon it.
2. An object will keep going in the direction of the applied force until its course is changed by another force.
3. Every action produces an equal and opposite reaction.

The Business Side of a Promotional Campaign

After arriving at what was thought to be the final animation, the need arose to focus on the business aspects of a promotional campaign. The information gathered here is from Foundations of Marketing by Boone and Kurtz.

Marketing Variables

- Product Planning
- Distribution Strategy
- Promotional Strategy
- Pricing Strategy

Product Planning

Decisions about package design, branding, trademarks, warranties, guarantees, product life cycles and new product development are made during the product planning stage.

One needs to consider more than the physical product to satisfy all consumer needs in relation to the good or service.

The product here is mainly "Ernie the Bird" and the satisfaction comes from the idea of obtaining things that represent "class" or "status". The character goes through the struggle of trying to fulfill his dream of success and is successful in achieving it. This will further make people want to identify with Ernie. In his celebrity endorsements of the BMW (Bavarian Motorless Works) Skateboard, Evian bottled water (which was later eliminated because of hearing about a Madonna video pertaining to an Evian bottle and I don't want Ernie to associated with her in any way, shape or form) for his birdbath, and his exclusive Birdland Express Card (which was changed to the American Express Card so not to have to explain what a Birdland Express Card is to those who hadn't yet seen the animation).

The target audience is approximately 18 - 35 college educated people - so-called "yuppies" - "young urban professional persons". The very products which Ernie endorses are things that would appeal most to that particular group of people.

Distribution Strategy

Physical distribution of the goods and the selection of marketing channels. Marketing channels refer to steps a good or service follows from producer to final consumer. Channel decision-making involves establishing and maintaining the institutional structure in marketing which include retailers, wholesalers and middlemen.

The items featuring Ernie the Bird, such as tee shirts, buttons, key rings, etc., would be channelled mainly to retailers.

Promotional Strategy

Personal selling, advertising, and sales promotion tools are all promotional strategies.

The best promotional strategy for Ernie is media advertising.

Pricing Strategy

One of the most difficult parts of marketing decision-making deals with methods of selling profitable and justified prices.

The total package forms the marketing mix.

A product can be defined as a bundle of physical, service, and symbolic characteristics designed to produce consumer want satisfaction.

Warranty can be an important product component. The warranty is a guarantee to the buyer that the manufacturer will replace a defective product or refund its purchase price during a specified period of time.

Product Life Cycle

The typical path of a product's life cycle has four stages from introduction to eventual deletion.

1. Introductory Stage

The promotional campaigns stress information about its features.

The campaign may be directed toward middlemen in the channel to introduce them to the product.

In this initial phase, the public is also being introduced to the merits of the product and acceptance is being gained.

Losses are common during the introductory stage due to heavy promotion and extensive research and development expenditures. However, the groundwork is being laid for future profits.

Ernie's introduction is the pilot episode of his show.

2. Growth Stage

Sales volume rises rapidly during the growth stage as new customers make initial purchases and repurchases are made by earlier buyers of the product. Word-of-mouth and mass advertising help induce hesitant buyers. * For instance, word-of-mouth saved Disneyland Theme Park when critics gave it rather harsh reviews.

Word-of-mouth is the essential key to making Ernie a success. The more people talk about him, the more people will be likely to watch his show and buy his promotional items.

* "Instant Replay" television show - channel 4 Boston, MA 3:30pm Fri. 11/23/90.

3. Maturity Stage

Industry sales continue to grow during the early portion of the maturity stage but eventually reach a plateau as the backlog of potential customers is exhausted and available products exceed industry demands.

This is when exciting new episodes for Ernie would have to be created to keep up people's interest in him.

4. Decline Stage

Final stage of the product's life. New innovations or shifting consumer preferences bring about an absolute decline in total industry sales.

Industry profits decline and in some cases actually become negative as sales fall.

It is hoped that the step taken during the maturity stage will deter this stage from coming.

The major advantage of the product life-cycle concept is that it provides insight about developments at the various stages of the product's life. One can extend the product life cycle if actions are taken early in the maturity stage:

- to increase the frequency of use by present customers.
- to add new users.
- to find new uses for the product.
- to change package size, labels or quality.

Consumer Adoption Process

Potential consumers go through a series of stages from first learning of the new product to eventually trying it and ultimately deciding to make regular purchases or to reject the product.

Awareness: Consumers know of it but not about it.

Interest: Consumer learns about the product.

Evaluation: Consumer makes a mental consideration whether or not product is beneficial.

Trial: Consumer makes trial purchase to determine its usefulness.

Adoption: If trial purchase is satisfactory, decision is made whether or not to make regular use of the product.

The public would be made aware of Ernie through television clips, radio announcements, and newspaper ads. The next step would be for those people to view the show establishing Ernie's initial ratings.

The five characteristics of innovation that determines the Rate of Adoption

1. Relative Advantage

The lower the price, physical improvements, and ease of use means faster the adoption rate.

2. Compatibility

The degree to which the innovation is consistent with the values and experiences of the potential adopters determines the compatibility.

3. Complexity of the Innovations

The more difficult the change is to understand the longer it will take to be accepted.

4. Divisibility

The degree to which to innovation can be used is on a limited basis. The first adopters face two types of risks - financial losses and risk of ridicule by others if product proves unsatisfactory. The option of sampling the innovation on a limited basis reduces risks.

5. Communicability

Communicability is the degree to which the results of the product can be observable or communicated to others.

Types of Goods

Consumer Goods

Those products destined for use by the ultimate consumer and not intended for resale of further use are called consumer goods.

Industrial Goods

Those products that are used directly or indirectly in producing other goods for resale are called industrial goods.

Three categories of Consumer Buying Habits

Convenience Goods: Products that are used frequently such as milk, bread, eggs, etc.

Shopping Goods: Products purchased only after comparisons are made in price and quality.

Speciality Goods: Products that have unique characteristics such as Porsches, Rolex watches, etc..
Ernie's promotional products fall into the category of speciality goods.

A critical variable in a firm's marketing mix is the products it plans to offer to its market target. The best price, most efficient distribution channel, and most effective promotional program cannot succeed in gaining continuing purchases of an inferior product. Consumers do not view products solely in physical terms as a tangible item, but more often in terms of expected want satisfaction. The broader marketing conception of a product encompasses a bundle of physical, service and symbolic characteristics designed to produce this want satisfaction.

All products pass through the four stages of product life - introduction, growth, maturity and decline. Consumers also go through a series of stages in adopting new product offerings from initial product awareness to interest, evaluation, trial purchases and adoption or rejection of the product. Although first adopters of new products vary among product classes, several common characteristics have been isolated. First adopters are often younger, better educated, more mobile, and have higher incomes and a higher social status than later adopters.

In defining Ernie's character, the objective was not to have him be a blue collar worker content to do the same meaningless job day after day, year after year for the rest of his life. He's a bird with a dream, a goal of accomplishment and success in his chosen career. Even though Ernie did gain employment at Birdland Realty gluing twigs together for model nests which can clearly be defined as a blue collar type job; he didn't stay there. He moved on and achieved success. Ernie is by no means a snob either nor an elitist, but he does have class.

Product - Marketing Matching Strategies

Three Basic Market - Product Strategies

- 1. Undifferentiated Marketing:** Those firms that produce only one product and market it to all customers with a single marketing mix.
- 2. Differentiated Marketing:** Those firms that produce numerous separate products with different marketing mixes designed to satisfy smaller market segments.
- 3. Concentrated Marketing:** A type of differentiated marketing where the firm decides to concentrate all marketing resources on a small segment of the total market.

Ernie definitely would be best served through an undifferentiated marketing strategy.

Promotional Strategy

A promotion has the function of informing, persuading and influencing the consumer's purchase decision and is closely related to the process of communication.

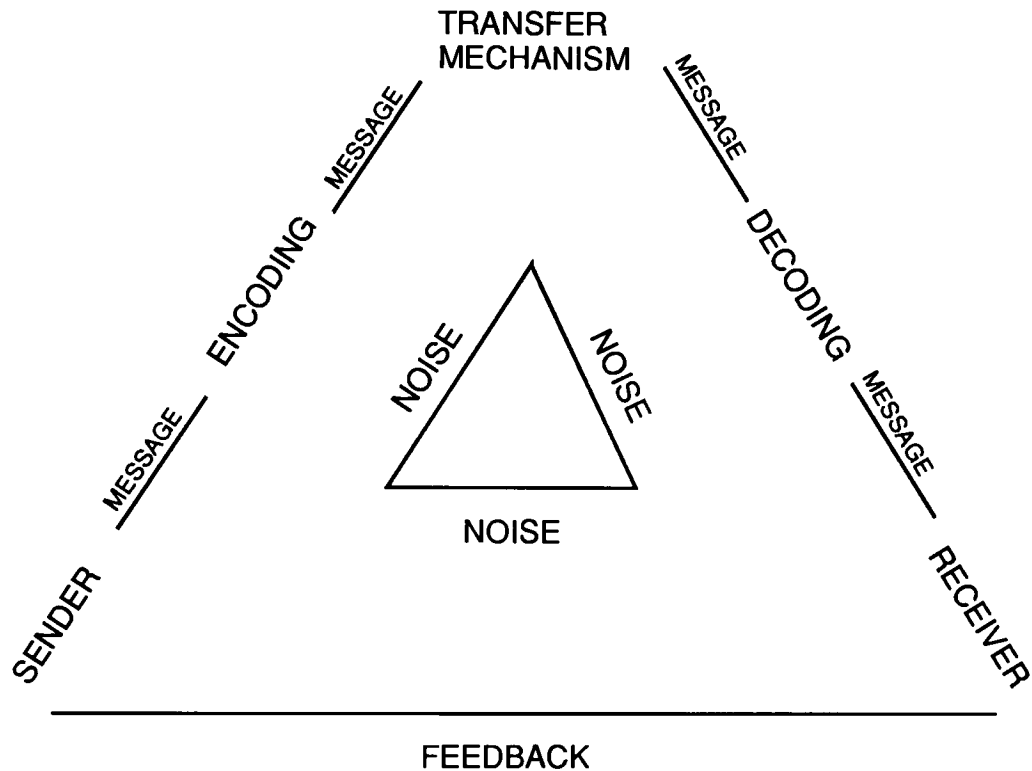
Communication

The transmission of a message from a sender to a receiver.

Marketing Communications

Those messages that deal with buyer-seller relationships and is a broader term than promotional strategy since it includes word-of-mouth and other forms of unsystematic communication. A planned promotional strategy is the most important part of marketing communication.

A Generalized Communication Process



The SENDER is the source of the communications system as it seeks to convey a message to a receiver.

The message must accomplish three tasks in order to be effective.

- It must gain attention of receiver.
- It must be understood by both receiver and sender.
- It must stimulate needs of receiver and suggest appropriate method of satisfying these needs.

The message must be encoded - translated into understandable terms.

DECODING - the receiver's interpretation of the message.

FEEDBACK - the receiver's response which completes the process.

Throughout the process NOISE can interfere with the transmission of the message.

TRANSFER MECHANISM - used to deliver the message.

I.E.= salesperson, public relations channel, advertising media, etc..

Developing an optimal promotional mix - two promotional policies

1. Pulling

A promotional effort by the seller to stimulate final user demand which then exerts pressure on the distribution channel which builds customer demand and then supplying the need.

2. Pushing

A promotion of a product to members of marketing channel rather than final user. This relies heavily on personal selling and utilizes cooperative advertising allowances, trade discounts and other dealer supports.

In most cases a mixture of the two is employed.

Objectives of Promotion

- Provide information
- Increase demand
- Differentiate the product
- Accentuate the value of the product
- Stabilize sales

Budgeting For Promotional Strategy

Marginal Analysis

The most effective allocation procedure is to increase promotional expenditures until each dollar of promotion expenses is matched by an additional dollar of profit. The results are in the maximization of the inputs productivity.

Percentage of Sales

This is the most common way of allocating promotion budgets where future sales are forecasted on basis of past sales. It's simple but not very effective as it does not allow for flexibility.

Fixed Sum per Unit

This is the same as Percentage of Sales except it applies a predetermined allocation to each sales or promotion unit - car dealers use this method.

Match Competitors' Outlays

Meet competition or "Keeping up with the Jones". A traditional approach but not appropriate for many contemporary marketing programs.

Task Objective Method

This defines particular goals the firm wants the promotional mix to accomplish and determines the amount required to accomplish each of the objectives. A crucial assumption underlying the Task Objective Method is the productivity of each promotional dollar is measurable.

Measuring Effectiveness of Promotion

Most marketers prefer to use a Direct Sales Result Test which ascertains for each dollar of promotional outlay the corresponding increase in revenue.

At this early stage, it is difficult to predict the actual prices of the promotional items and how well the show will do.

Types of Advertising

1. Product Advertising

This deals with the nonpersonal selling of a particular good or service.

2. Institutional Advertising

This deals with promoting a concept, idea, philosophy or good will of industry, company or organization.

Media Selection

1. Newspapers

Have the largest share received by any of the media.

The primary advantages are flexibility; community prestige; intense coverage; and reader control of exposure.

The disadvantages are short life span; hasty reading; and poor reproduction.

2. Magazines

The advantages are selectivity of market targets; quality of reproduction; long life span; prestige associated with some magazines along with the extra services offered by many publications.

The disadvantage is it lacks flexibility.

3. Television

The advantages are the impact; mass coverage; repetition; flexibility; and prestige.

The disadvantages are it relinquishes control of the promotional message to the telecaster; higher costs; high mortality rates for commercials; some evidence of public distrust; and a lack of selectivity.

4. Radio

The advantages are the immediacy; low costs; flexibility; practical; low costs; audience selection; and mobility.

The disadvantages are fragmentation; unavailability of the advertising message for future reference; and less research information than for television.

Outdoor Advertising

1. Posters

The advantages are communicating quick and simple ideas; repetition; ability to promote products that are available for sale nearby. Particularly effective in metropolitan and other high traffic areas.

The disadvantages are the brevity of its message and public concern over esthetics.

2. Direct Mail

The advantages are the selectivity; intensive coverage; speed; format; flexibility; complete information; and personalization of each mailing.

The disadvantages are high costs per reader and the dependency upon the quality of the mailing lists.

An advertisement should accomplish a lead to buying action.

All forms of media advertising about Ernie's show will encourage people to view it. The more viewers there are, the higher the ratings of his show will be. This in turn will persuade people to want to identify with Ernie and buy his promotional items.

Two Ways Prices Are Determined

- Theoretical price derivation - classical concepts of supply and demand.
- Cost - Plus type of approach - characterizes actual business practice.

Important influences are custom, tradition and social habits.

Pricing Criteria

The turnover is not the only criteria that must be considered in pricing decisions. The amount of promotion, product type mode of manufacture, market coverage, degree of product obsolescence, technological changes, type of production, market share, length of distribution channels, stage of market, profit perspective, product versatility; promotional contribution to line, extent of ancillary services, and length of use also affect prices.

II. The Creation

The New and Improved "Ernie the Bird"

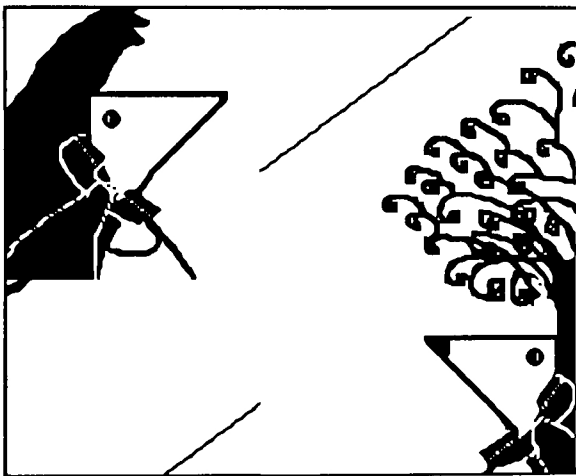
Many of changes needed to take place with Ernie himself as well as the animation. The main problem was that Ernie was a flat and fairly passive character and wasn't involved participating in the action first hand. Also the animation relied too heavily on type causing it not to flow like a cartoon type story but rather like flipping pages in a book. It never stated exactly "who" Ernie was or what his background is, his beliefs, ambitions, etc. One very important thing the animation lacked was a dilemma and the main character's logical decision in overcoming it. For instance, in Warner Bros.' "The Road Runner" the basic plot was on how not to catch a road runner and in Hanna-Barbera's the "Flintstones" and the "Jetsons" the main character's boss provides the dilemma in Fred and George achieving success. That brings up another problem - the ending or rather lack of an ending. Ernie had achieved success rather instantaneously and that is not something with which too many people can identify.

So, it was decided to start over again from scratch using the previous story only as a base. I redesigned Ernie making him solid black and white instead of a lot of swirling lines. This filled out Ernie making him a slightly plumper bird and actually easier to animate.

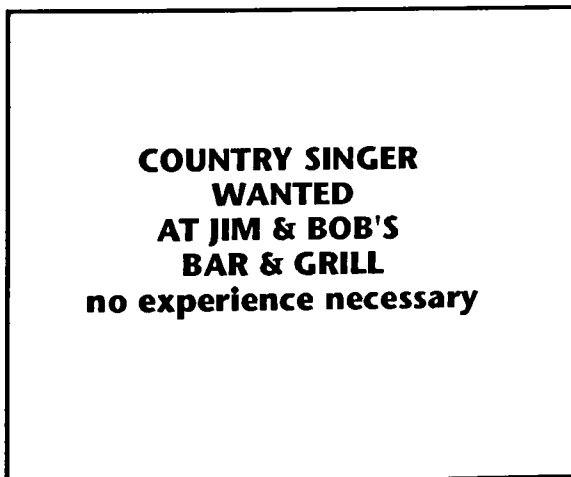
Final Storyboard



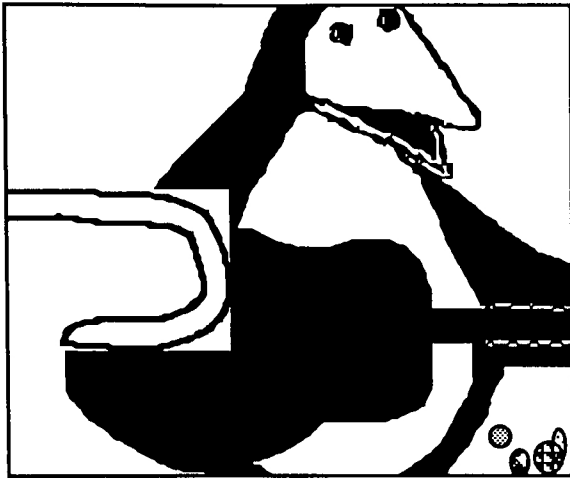
The animation opens with Ernie entering and graduating from Birdland University with his Bachelor's of Bird's degree.



The phone rings.
Ernie: " Hello?"
Ernie's Mother: "Hello Ernie this is your mother."
Ernie: "Hi Ma!"
Ernie's Mother: "I heard from your sister. She got all A's in her premed classes."
Ernie: "Great Ma!"
Ernie's Mother: "Your brother just opened up his own law firm."
Ernie: "Great Ma!"
Ernie's Mother: "So Ernie, have you found a job yet?"
Ernie: "heh heh! Not yet Ma! Talk to ya later!"

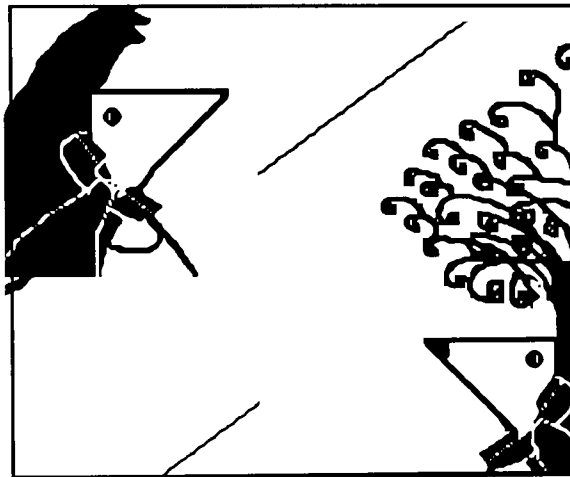


Ernie then sees in the paper an ad for a Country Singer at Jim & Bob's Bar & Grill - No experience necessary. So he skates over to Jim & Bob's Bar & Grill where he performs his debut as "Country Ern" singing his catchy little tune -



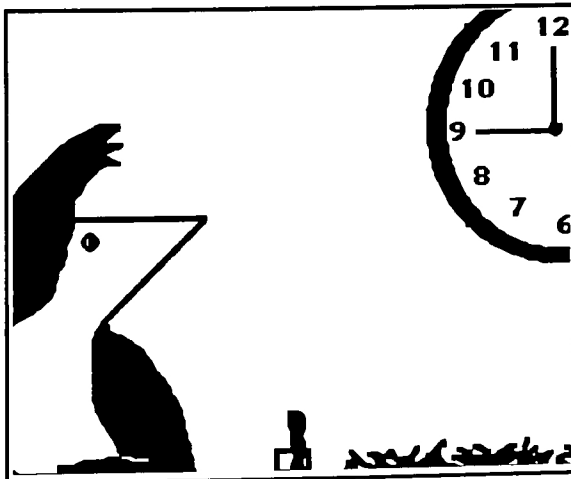
" I'm so glad I ain't dead
and my name ain't Fred
Yeehaw Yeehaw Yeehaw!"

As a large hook comes out
to drag poor Ernie off
stage, the audience throws
things at him and boos.

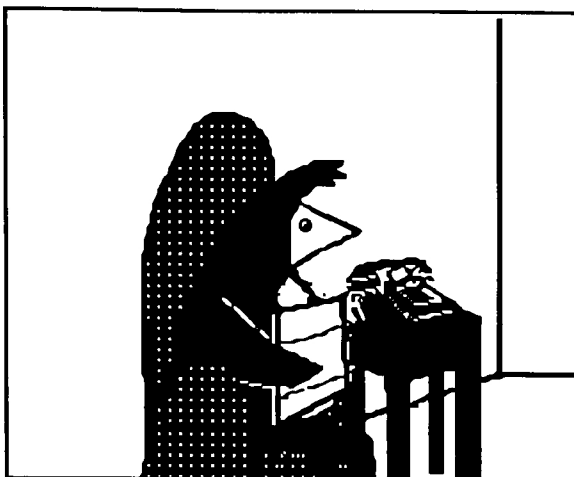


The next scene opens with
Ernie on the phone with
his mother again.

Ernie: "Hello?"
Ernie's Mother: "Hello
Ernie, this is your mother.
My boss Nancy Sparrow
says you can start
tomorrow in the Model
Nest Department at
Birdland Realty. Be there
at 9 sharp!"
Ernie: "Great Ma! See ya
later!"



Ernie then skates over to
Birdland Realty. The clock
on the wall starts off at 9
o'clock and changes every
hour with Ernie turning his
head to look at it. Finally
the hour turns to 5 o'clock
and a bubble thought is
above Ernie's head saying
"I'm outta here!"



Back inside Ernie's studio nest apartment, Ernie sits in his chair reading a letter from Feather Design International, which reads:

Dear Ernie,

We are very impressed with your resume.

Would like to meet with you first thing Monday morning.

Sincerely,

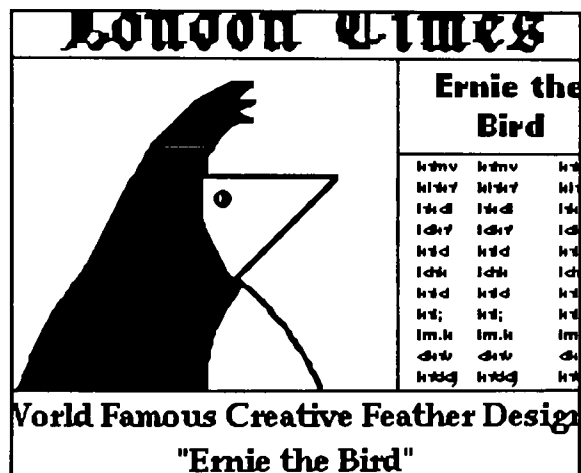
Feather Design International



After reading the letter, the next scene is Ernie asleep in his bed Sunday Night and he dissolves into a dream.



Ernie skates over to Feather Design International and as soon as he gets there his portfolio of his feather designs zoom in and out.



Followed by newspapers from around the world with the headline "World Famous Creative Feather Designer ---- Ernie the Bird". The newspapers are the New York Times, London Times, Bangkok Times, Hong Kong Times, Paris Times, Madrid Times, Moscow Times, and Sidney Times.

The end.

The decision of how Ernie was going to achieve success needed to be made. Ernie was definitely going to be successful, but it also needed to be realistic. However, the "...and then he died"- type of ending was being rather abrupt. The solution was to have Ernie's travelling to Feather Design International and becoming an instant success be in a dream sequence so one doesn't really know what will happen.

Fine Tuning

A rather big change made in the animation was the format. The "movie" format no longer seemed right for Ernie. There needed to be the freedom to be able to put Ernie in a variety of situations that didn't necessarily relate to one another. He would become a world famous creative feather designer as established in the animation clip. The animation could now be treated as a test pilot for perhaps a weekly series rather than just a sample of coming attractions. A movie of Ernie would make him be too constricted. It wasn't ever decided how the movie would end and furthermore there wasn't any desire for one anyway.

Another minor change made was the deletion of the video box. Since Ernie was no longer a movie it really wasn't necessary.

Another important element to an animation is sound. It adds a whole other dimension. The original background music selection was Manhattan Transfer's "Birdland". It's a jazzy kind of tune and was thought at the time it would go perfectly with my animation. This assumption was wrong. The story the song told was nothing like Ernie's story so a major search was on for suitable music. It was decided upon two selections: Spyro Gyra's "Catching the Sun" for the beginning of the animation and Calloway's "I Wanna Be Rich" to start after the dream sequence begins.

Voices were added to Ernie and Ernie's Mother. The results were better than first anticipated.

The actual length of time of the computer animation was 1 minute 26 seconds. Edited with the music and voices the time expanded to 3 minutes 22 seconds. It was recorded six times on a 3/4 inch, 20 minute video tape.

Final Production

Key Rings

The key rings themselves were small plastic photograph holders purchased at Freddy's Drug Store for 96¢ a piece. The image was a small scale full figure of Ernie the Bird with the text "Ernie the Bird" going straight beneath him. They were created in Aldus Freehand 2.0.

Tee Shirts and Poster 1

They both consisted of a full figured image of Ernie the Bird with the text "Ernie the Bird" on a curve beneath him. The image of Ernie was photo silkscreened onto the screen and used for screening both the tee shirts and the poster.

Poster 2 and Flyer

The poster was an enlarged version of the flyer. The laser print of Ernie was rather bit mapped so it was necessary to touch up the edges with a black felt tip pen. After the stats were made they were printed at a local print shop called "Ultra Print". They didn't do a great of a job but it was acceptable. The poster had to be recut because the stock was cut crooked. Overall this printer is not recommended although priced reasonably enough.

Buttons

The image of Ernie's head with the text "Ernie the Bird" printed on a curve beneath the image was featured on the buttons. It was created in Aldus Freehand in which six buttons could be printed on a page. 250 button parts were ordered from the Badge-A-Minit company and a button bench press maker was borrowed from the College of Fine and Applied Arts. Each button had to be produced one by one. The casualty rate wasn't too bad - 47 were lost out of 250. There are no clues about what was done differently to result in a successfully made button and one that was not. In total 137 buttons were handed out at the opening of the thesis show as part of the promotional campaign.

III. The Conclusion

In conclusion Ernie's outcome was a success. The turnout for the show was the largest ever seen and the response was very positive. It is hoped that one day Ernie will be bigger in popularity than the present Bart Simpson. It is desired to see Ernie in his own weekly television series like the Simpsons.

Future plot ideas could be Ernie going on vacation and the kinds of vacations a world famous creative feather designer takes. It would no doubt be different than the average vacation events. Other plot ideas could be Ernie's dating life - maybe even marriage - perhaps his wife wouldn't meet the grade from Ernie's overbearing mother or perhaps his mother could fix him up on some blind dates with daughters, nieces, cousins, etc. of her friends.

Another idea could be his family's reactions and feelings toward Ernie's fame in a profession that they may or may not hold in a very high regard. The situations and issues Ernie could deal with are limitless. The comments about Ernie were that he is a much higher quality cartoon than most of what is shown on tv these days.

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bailey, Adrian; Walt Disney World of Fantasy; NY: Everest House; 1982

Boone, Louis E. and Kurtz, David L.; Foundations of Marketing; Hinsdale, Ill.: The Dryden Press; 1977

Cleave, Alan; Cartoon Animation for Everyone; London: Fountain Press, NY: Morgan & Morgan, 1973

Columbia University; The Columbia-Viking Desk Encyclopedia 2nd. Edition; NY: Viking Press; 1960

DaSilva, Raul; The World of Animation; NY: Kodak; 1979

Heath, Bob; Animation in Twelve Hard Lessons; NY: Robert P. Heath Productions Inc.; 1979

Heraldson, Donald; Creators of Life: A History of Animation; NY and London: Drake Publishers Inc.; 1975

Laybourne, Kit; The Animation Book; NY: Crown Publishing; 1979

Madsen, Roy; Animated Film Concepts, Methods, and Uses; NY: Interland Publishing; 1969

Rivlin, Robert; Algorithmic Image; WA: MicroSoft Press; 1986

Software

Aldus Freehand 2.0 Software; Aldus Corporation; 1988

Design Studio 1.0 Software; Letraset; 1989

MacroMind Director 2.0 Software; MacroMind Inc.; 1989

PhotoShop 1.0 Software; Adobe Systems Inc.; 1990

Music

Calloway "I Wanna Be Rich"

Spyro Gyra "Catching the Sun"