

A Master Class in Brand Planning

The Timeless Works of Stephen King

Edited by
Judie Lannon
Merry Baskin



John Wiley & Sons, Ltd

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For Sally, Sam, Matt and Sophy.

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Introduction

By Jeremy Bullmore

It's impossible to accept that one's grandparents were ever young. Rationally, we know they must have been, but all personal experience suggests otherwise. I'd certainly never attempt to persuade my own grandchildren that I was once a frisky teenager: they'd look at me very strangely.

In this book, a number of respected and current marketing practitioners have written excellent commentaries on selections of Stephen King's most perceptive articles. He's consistently described as prescient, intellectually rigorous and possessed of great clarity of thought and expression: a theoretician whose theories were all intensely practical, a giant in the world of marketing and advertising. All absolutely true. As the co-inventor of account planning as a distinct discipline, his benign influence has touched tens of thousands of people he'd never met. He was widely held in awe, no more so than in India, where they think more intelligently about advertising than just about anywhere else in the world. An invitation to hear him speak to the Delhi Advertising Club in 1992 reads in part, "... advertising has many gurus, many professors, many geniuses and many mavericks. But only one King."

When you read his collected articles in this book, you'll agree that every tribute has been well earned. He's all the things they claim for him. The only thing that's missing – and inevitably so – is more than a glimpse of the man himself. Just as we find it impossible to believe that our grandparents were ever teenagers, so the weight of Stephen's reputation and the richness of his legacy incline us to picture some austere, aesthetic figure, permanently late middle-aged and not a lot of laughs to be around. (How else do you imagine a Visiting Professor of Marketing Communications at the Cranfield School of Management to be?)

In the pages that follow, you'll find all the evidence you need of his professional achievements. And on page 341, there's a curriculum vitae that charts the skeleton of his life and works. But for now, I'd like to try to fill in with a bit of frivolous but all-important detail.

Improbably, we knew each other for more than 60 years. He turned up at school about a year after I did. We were in different Houses but went to the same French classes. (When, 50 years later, we were both summoned to have dinner with David Ogilvy in Paris it was clear that we'd either learned very little or forgotten a lot.) I remember him as small and wiry: it seems he didn't start growing till he was 15. He was good at games, was an ace squash player and dabbled (as I did) in theatricals.

Then we both, separately, did our National Service. As he left the Army, he wrote what may have been his only advertisement. It was for his 1936 Fiat – “Condition of body, shocking” – and was headlined “A RATTLING GOOD BARGAIN”. It was marked down from “Any bids over £65?” To “£5 or near offer”. I knew most of his cars after that and they were all neglected.

Then we both went to Oxford. Stephen, unlike me, lasted the full term – in his case, four years – and got a degree in Greats (philosophy and ancient history). We saw each other regularly but were never part of each other’s inner circle. He played squash and tennis for the university and continued to dabble (as I did) in theatricals. He was in an Edinburgh Festival production of *Ralph Roister Doister* and there are records of an OUDS touring production of *Twelfth Night*. Stephen played Feste but couldn’t sing the songs. Viola was played by Maggie Smith.

I joined J. Walter Thompson London in 1954. Stephen, for reasons I never fathomed, joined Mond Nickel (a business as far removed from the consumer as it’s possible to imagine) and worked in their publicity department where he came into contact with their advertising agency. They offered him a job. Prompted by this, he decided to look around – and knowing that I was having an extremely agreeable time at JWT, he got in touch. I don’t remember doing so but, according to Stephen, I fixed for him to have an interview – and in 1957, he joined. We worked together there for the next 30 years.

Stephen and JWT suited each other perfectly (it even provided him with a wife, Sally: a JWT copywriter). The agency traditionally honoured intellect (the old “University of Advertising” tag had been earned in New York before the Second World War) and had been the first agency to make serious use of consumer research through its wholly owned subsidiary The British Market Research Bureau. It was, however, in need of a new infusion. It was also fun: an irresistible combination. There was as much for Stephen to build on as there was for him to be irreverent about. He was good at irreverence.

An account director once called us all together and solemnly gave us a new Unilever brief. We were to invent new product opportunities for them. Blue-sky thinking was urged upon us: we should in no way be constrained by existing manufacturing capabilities or practical considerations of any other kind.

A ponderous person would have drafted a two-page memorandum pointing out the pointlessness of such a project. Stephen responded with an instant list of new product breakthroughs. The two I remember with the greatest affection were Spray-on Socks and Bed-Making Fluid. Nothing much was said about this project from then on – but it was to be a familiar King tactic. He could use wit and parody with telling effect.

When preparing a client presentation on the dangers of greed in brand positioning, he and I invented a brave new niche product for the dog food market. It was formulated exclusively for bitches and was called *Good Girl*. After three rounds of fictional but accurately simulated research, the fictional client realized that the brand had little appeal to 50% of the dog market and lost his nerve. The launch ad was amended accordingly – and the strapline now read: “Good Girl’s Good for Boy Dogs, Too!” The real client absorbed the moral with grace and gratitude.

Nothing incensed him more than marketing people who thought that marketing’s job was nothing more than somehow to get rid of stuff. He called it Thrust Marketing and invented a marketing director called Colin Thrust to personify it. For one industry presentation, Colin developed his all-purpose 10-Point Marketing Plan, which went as follows:

1. Up weight 10p-off flash packs to 80 % of throughput.
2. Increase over-riders to selected major multiples and cash-and-carries.

3. Re-motivate sales force with incremental incentive-linked sales targets.
4. Initiate tailor-made in-store merchandising with dealer-loaders, individualized gondolas and shelf-wobblers.
5. Upgrade pack design, to dramatically improve visibility and shelf-appeal.
6. Widen distribution to include discount stores and garden centres.
7. Increase stock levels to create product push.
8. Implement a country-wide back-to-back coupon drop to create consumer pull.
9. Draw up a 5-year PR plan.
10. Launch a massive consumer promotion to up-rate brand awareness and share of mind.

At no point, of course, was it evident what the actual product was or what purpose it had. At no point was it even considered that product quality might usefully be examined. Half his audience went away properly mortified but a great deal wiser. The other half just took notes.

As in his 10-Point Plan, his only use of jargon was to mock it. Once, just a couple of years ago, I asked him, for a piece I was writing, to select any speech from Shakespeare and give it the treatment. He chose the Polonius speech from *Hamlet*, “Neither a borrower or a lender be . . .”

In overseas assignments it is essential to keep an appropriate and sustainably balanced credit/debit ratio. Unsecured loans may be irrecoverable and can endanger potentially profitable relationships, while sporadic borrowing inflows can conceal the underlying reality of cash flow projections.

Stephen’s writings share many qualities but the rarest is this: when you’ve read them, and absorbed them, you know exactly what you have to do. His familiar criticism of vacuous corporate advertising – “why are they telling me all this?” – could never be applied to his own papers: they are all intensely practical. And so was he. He may never have bothered to clean his cars, but he could re-fit the entire inside of a house on his own – and so indeed he did: woodwork, cabling, plumbing, the lot. He called his internal JWT manual *The Account Planner’s Toolkit* – and that’s exactly what it is.

Had his dress sense been as immaculate as his thinking, he’d have been intolerable.

SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Stephen’s wife, Sally, has been behind this book from the beginning. She welcomed our offer to make it happen and has given the two editors, Judie Lannon and Merry Baskin, endless help in tracing papers and filling in with facts and background.

In prospect, the task seemed simple enough. In reality, the amount of work involved has been immense. Judie and Merry have undertaken it all with a dedicated commitment – fuelled by their huge enthusiasm for the project.

All of the distinguished contributors, whose words preface the King articles, have given their services for nothing: they haven’t been paid for what they’ve so thoughtfully written and they’ll benefit not at all from any royalties that may accrue. We are deeply grateful to them.

All costs incurred in preparing the book for publication have been generously absorbed by our three sponsors: APG (the Account Planning Group), JWT and WPP.

All author's royalties from this book will go to Sally King. Stephen's work forms a priceless legacy and it's entirely right that Sally should inherit it.

And finally: beware, throughout this book, of the word "advertising". Today it's often used, very restrictively, to mean advertisements in mass media and nothing much else. Almost invariably, Stephen uses the word advertising to cover all forms of brand communication.

About the Book: How it Happened

The collected wisdom of Stephen King already exists – but not in one piece. If no-one steps forward to perform the task of publishing the Stephen King Collection it will be the ultimate proof that ours is a truly trivial trade.

Campaign, 24 February 2006

Stephen King had a very big idea, and that very big idea changed the way advertising agencies were structured, how they thought, and even what they produced. He changed our lives and the lives and careers of many others both in the UK and around the world where the idea of account planning has been adopted. Although Stanley Pollitt of BMP had a similar idea about the same time, Stephen did the most to codify and explain what this new discipline was and how it worked.

Like many original thinkers, he documented his ideas as they evolved in a number of articles and books published over a 30-year period – a total of about 40 or so. When he died in February 2006, there was, naturally, a flurry of talk about re-publishing his work to make it available to a wider and younger audience.

We felt we should do more to make the ideas described in his work relevant to today. After all, much has changed in the media, marketing and consumer environments over the last decade, never mind a 30-year period.

The solution was to choose a range of his articles that seemed to offer most guidance to readers today. For each, we chose an eminent practitioner to comment on what has changed in the intervening years and how the thoughts and principles apply now.

As testament to Stephen's breadth of interest, the articles and contributions cover four separate but related areas:

1. The origins of account planning: its ideas and structure
2. The account planner's craft skills
3. The use (and misuse) of research
4. The wider marketing world.

The hype, flimflam and promise of certainties that surround so much marketing and advertising writing are conspicuously absent in these articles. The writing is transparently honest, reflecting a great integrity; a mind searching for a way to bring order out of chaos.

The articles are not so much about *what* to think, but aim at teaching that most precious skill of all, *how* to think. The collection in this book of Stephen's work, along with the thoughts and

ideas of today's practitioners, represents a treasure trove of insights, principles and guides to thinking that anyone in the world of marketing communications will find immensely valuable.

These principles were uniquely valuable in a simpler age and are even more valuable and necessary now.

Judie Lannon
Merry Baskin

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to this book and we are heartily grateful for the time, effort, advice and encouragement we have been given. In addition to the contributors and Sally King, our thanks go to the many people who helped along the way: from WPP, Sir Martin Sorrell, Jeremy Bullmore, Marie Capes, Vanessa Bryant; from JWT, Bob Jeffrey, Claudine Heinemann, Louise Hinchliffe, David Faulkner, John Furr; from WARC, Mike Waterson, Matthew Coombs, James Aitchison; from APG, Steve Martin; from John Wiley & Sons, Claire Plimmer; and our freelance typists, Hilary Watson and Janet Barbour.

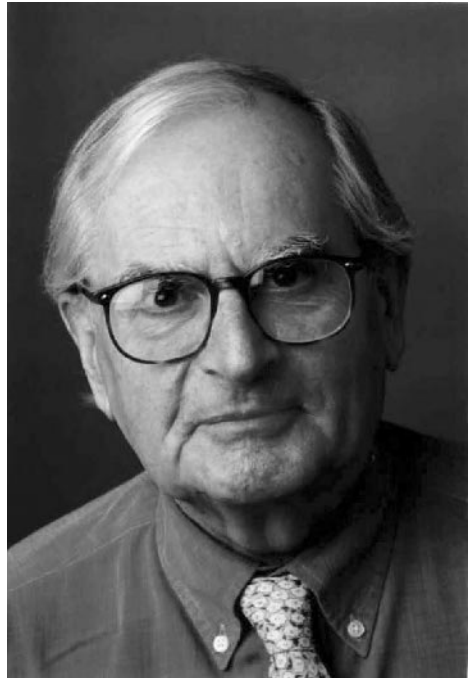
About the Contributors

JEREMY BULLMORE WPP

Born 1929. First job, trainee copywriter with J. Walter Thompson in London, where he stayed until retirement in 1987. Successively writer/producer, creative group head and head of television; 1964 to 1975, head of the creative department; 1976 to 1987, chairman. Chairman of the Advertising Association, 1981 to 1987.

1988 to 2001, non-executive director of the Guardian Media Group; 1988 to 2004, Non-Executive Director of WPP. Currently member WPP Advisory Board. Past President of NABS, and current President of the Market Research Society. Columnist for *Campaign*, *Management Today*, *Market Leader* and *The Guardian*. Awarded CBE in 1985.

Publications: *Another Bad Day at the Office?* Penguin, 2001; *Behind the Scenes in Advertising Mark III (More Bull More)* WARC, 2003; *Ask Jeremy*, Haymarket, 2004; *Apples, Insights and Mad Inventors*, John Wiley & Sons, 2006.



MERRY BASKIN
Planning Consultant, Baskin Shark



Merry has spent most of her 30-year career as an account planner, but started out as an international market researcher. Her resumé includes stints at blue chip firms such as BMRB, Saatchi & Saatchi, Chiat/Day and J. Walter Thompson, and over the years she has worked in London, Paris, New York, Stockholm and Brussels.

In 2000, Merry launched her own planning consultancy, Baskin Shark (Where Brands Move Forward or Die!), which offers strategic communications planning as well as planning craft skills training.

Her client experience extends from classic fmcg (Kellogg, Kraft, Unilever) to travel (British Airways, Avis) to financial (Visa Europe, Goldman Sachs) to retail (Argos, Subway, IKEA, Boots). She admits to being an Advert Tweaker and aspires to Grand

Strategist, but is probably happiest as a brand planner.

Industry credits include APG chair 1998/99, MRS conference committee and Best Paper winner (2001), IPA Effectiveness Awards winner and judge, and winner of several US Effies.

TIM BROADBENT
Regional Effectiveness Director and Regional Planning
Director Ogilvy & Mather Asia Pacific

Tim is the Regional Effectiveness Director and Regional Planning Director of Ogilvy & Mather Asia Pacific, based in Beijing, China. He is the only person to have won two Grand Prix in the IPA Effectiveness Awards, was Convenor of Judges of the Effectiveness Awards, and served as Chairman of the IPA Value of Advertising Committee. He has been an account planner since the 1970s, starting at BMP. Most recently he was Planning Director and Managing Partner of Young & Rubicam, and then Chief Strategic Officer of the Bates Group EMEA region. He is a Fellow of the IPA and Visiting Professor of Marketing of The University of The Arts London.



HUGH BURKITT
Chief Executive, Marketing Society



Hugh Burkitt is Chief Executive of the Marketing Society – the leading network for senior marketers in the UK. He has been responsible for the launch of the Society’s *Manifesto for Marketing*, introduced the *Marketing Leaders Programme* for potential marketing directors and established the *Panoramic Group* – a new forum where all the UK’s marketing organizations have agreed to work together to promote marketing.

He began his career as a Unilever trainee at Birds Eye Foods and progressed via the Manchester Business School to Collett Dickenson Pearce in 1972. He spent the next 30 years in advertising, founding the agency Burkitt Weinreich Bryant in 1986, and leaving in 2002 as Chairman of Burkitt DDB.

He is co-author with John Zealley of *Marketing Excellence: Winning Companies Reveal the Secrets of their Success*, John Wiley & Sons, 2006 (a review of the lessons to be learned from the winning companies in the *Marketing Society’s Awards for Excellence*).

STEPHEN CARTER
Group Chief Executive, Brunswick Group LLP

Stephen Carter is the Group Chief Executive of Brunswick Group LLP, which is a privately owned corporate and financial advisory firm operating in 12 countries and head quartered in the UK.

Previously, Stephen was the founding Chief Executive of Ofcom, Managing Director and prior to that Chief Operating Officer of NTL UK & Ireland, and Managing Director and Chief Executive at J. Walter Thompson UK Limited.

He is an Honours graduate in law from Aberdeen University and also a graduate of the Harvard Business School's AMP programme.

He is an ex-Chairman of the Marketing Group of Great Britain, and is currently a Non-Executive Director of Travis Perkins plc, a Governor of the Ashridge Business School, a Vice President of UNICEF.

Stephen was awarded a CBE in the 2007 New Year's Honours list for services to the Communications Industry.



NEIL CASSIE
The Cassie Partnership



Neil is the Founding Partner of The Cassie Partnership (tcp), which helps clients like Visa Europe and Diageo to close the gap between the vision of the company and the behaviour of its key people.

Neil was previously Director of Brand Planning, Worldwide at Leo Burnett. He wrote the company's new global positioning and methodology "The Brand Belief System". This incorporated a core brand competence in organizational design and management, which is the foundation of the work his company undertakes today.

Prior to his global role Neil was the Deputy Chairman of Burnett's London agency.

While Head of Planning at GGT, Neil was a member of the APG committee and was responsible for training for three years.

Neil learned his trade at Halls in Edinburgh and then Ogilvy & Mather in London.

SIMON CLEMMOW
Clemmow Hornby Inge

Simon has worked in advertising for 25 years. He has always been based in London, and has always been an account planner, except for a short spell as CEO at TBWA. He is currently planning partner at his second successful start-up agency, Clemmow Hornby Inge.

Simon worked first at Benton & Bowles, and quickly moved on to Gold Greenlees Trott in 1983. He co-founded Simons Palmer Denton Clemmow & Johnson in 1988. The agency won accounts like Nike and Sony PlayStation and produced outstanding creative work, before selling to Omnicom and merging with TBWA in 1997. Simon co-founded Clemmow Hornby Inge in 2001. In 2004 the agency was British Television Advertising's Agency of the Year, and *Marketing* magazine's Creative Agency of the Year.



RITA CLIFTON
Chairman, Interbrand

Rita graduated from Cambridge and began her career in advertising. She worked at Saatchi & Saatchi for 12 years, becoming Vice Chairman and Executive Planning Director in 1995.



In 1997 she joined Interbrand, the world's leading brand consultancy, as Chief Executive in London; in January 2002 she became Chairman. She is in demand as a speaker and media commentator on all areas of brands, reputation, marketing and communications around the world. Her writing has included the book *The Future of Brands* and The Economist book *Brands and Branding*.

She is a Non-Executive Director of DSG International plc (formerly Dixons Store Group plc) and Emap plc. She also chairs Populus, the opinion pollster to *The Times* and is a Visiting Professor at Henley Management College. Other advisory boards have included the Government's Sustainable Development Commission, the Judge Business School at Cambridge University, BP's carbon offset programme and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

MARTIN DEBOO
City Analyst, Investec Securities

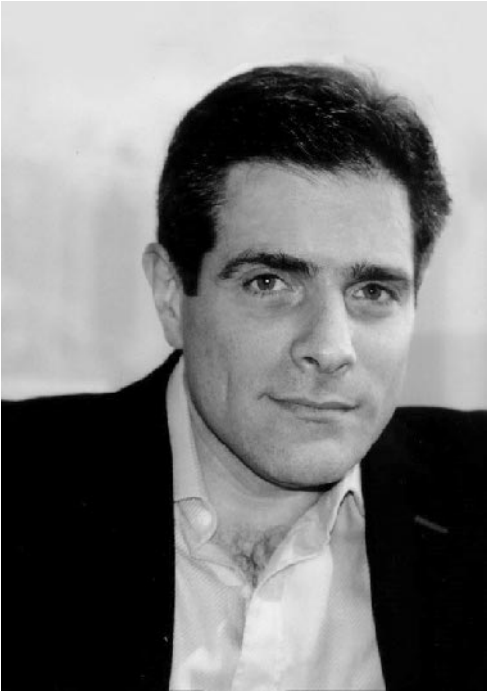
Martin Deboo is a City Analyst at Investec Securities in London, where he follows the fortunes of major consumer goods firms including Cadbury, Unilever and Reckitt Benckiser.

Martin is rather unique within the City in that he began his career not in finance or accounting, but as an account planner in advertising, with BMP and Publicis. Following an MBA at the London Business School he spent 12 years in strategic management consulting with OC&C, the last five as head of their Consumer Goods practice.

Martin speaks and writes extensively on the financial and economic aspects of marketing and retains an active involvement with London Business School, where he serves as a Governor.



TOM DOCTOROFF
JWT, Northeast Asia Area Director, Greater China CEO



Tom, born and bred in America's Detroit and educated in Chicago, somehow took a detour to Hong Kong in 1994 and never quite made it back to the States. In the meantime, he has become one of Asia's most respected advertising minds. Having started his advertising career at Leo Burnett (Chicago) in 1989, Tom jumped ship and joined JWT Chicago in 1992. In 1994, Tom moved to Hong Kong as Regional Business Director, managing several of JWT's largest multinational clients across Asia Pacific. Further promotions followed, and in 2002, he was appointed Northeast Asia Area Director (China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Korea) and Greater China CEO. In 2003, Tom was named Regional Agency Head of the Year by the region's leading marketing and advertising publication, *Media Magazine*. He is also the author of *Billions: Selling to the New Chinese Consumer*, published by Palgrave Macmillan in January 2006.