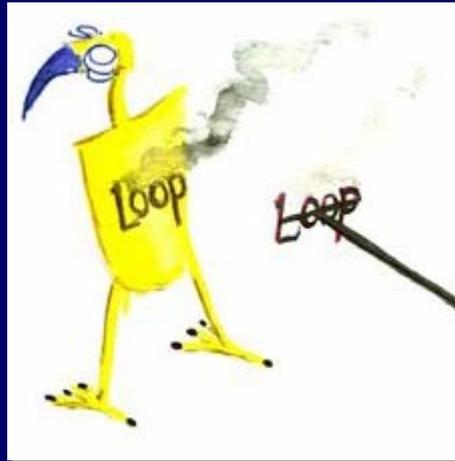
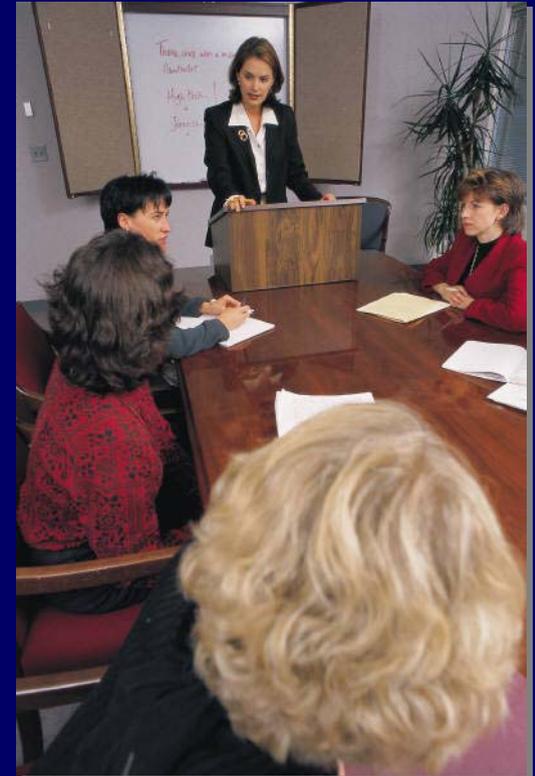


Agenda 2006



Setting the agenda

- Agenda 2006 is part of an annual series that identifies some of the key issues that will impact marketers and brands over the next twelve months.
- Further information can be found through the links at the foot of each page.



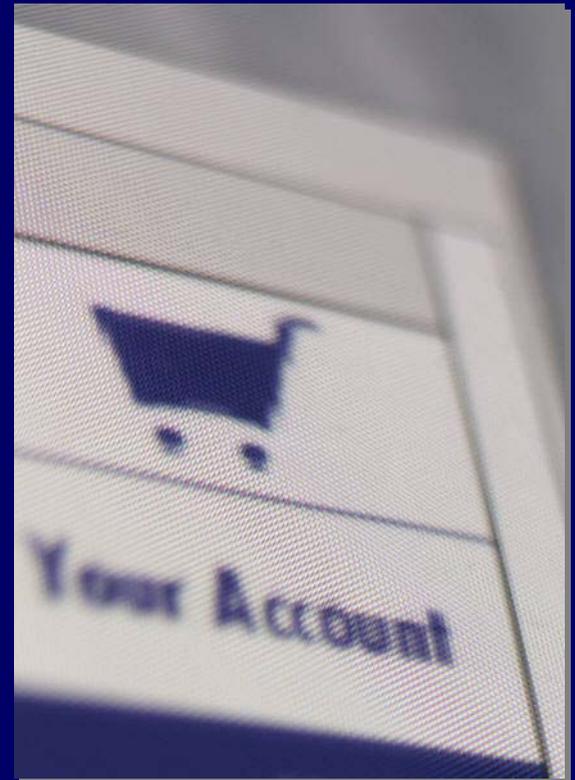
The marketing environment

- The marketing environment is certainly becoming more challenging.
- Trends that impact on marketing are becoming less clear-cut.
- The development of a range of alternative scenarios and strategies is becoming increasingly vital to business.



Evolving retail structures

- There are major changes underway in the retail environment.
 - Growth of on-line and other direct channels.
 - Strength of the discount channel in some markets.
 - Improved consumer knowledge at the retail level.
 - More technology at point-of-sale.
- Are there opportunities for the manufacturer or brand owner to become closer to the consumer, a position traditionally held by the retailer?



Quality of life

- Quality of life has become more important.
 - Consumers are moving away from possessions towards experiences.
 - Growth in niche retail channels such as farm shops and farmers' markets.
 - Quality of food and drink.
 - Desire for more “spiritual” input into life (though not necessarily religion).
- Marketers need to not only ensure quality but develop products so that they satisfy the mental or spiritual requirements of consumers.



Upheaval in “traditional” advertising channels

- The role of television in the marketing communications mix is changing.
 - Major brands are reducing expenditure on television (Unilever recently reduced its TV budget by £60 million in the UK).
 - Television (and other media channels) have become more fragmented.
 - The effectiveness of television has been questioned.
 - Newer media channels are taking a larger share of consumers’ time.
- However, television can be used in new and different ways as part of the marketing communications mix.



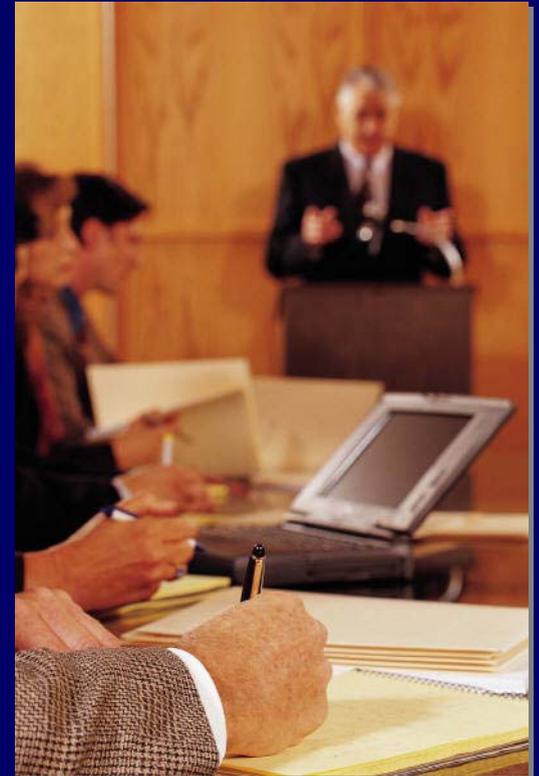
Mobile goes mainstream

- Mobile marketing has become more viable as a marketing communications medium.
 - Higher penetration of mobile phones.
 - More WAP-enabled phones and more WAP usage.
 - More brands using mobile elements in their communications campaigns.
- Mobile offers more personal or location-based marketing.
- Potential to communicate with “hard to reach” audiences.



Branding consistency

- Consistency in the approach to the brand is essential in providing clarity to consumers.
- However, this also applies with internal branding:
 - Are employees focused on the brand?
 - Is there a conflict between short-term pressures and long-term brand health?
 - Who is responsible for the brand?
- Branding is at the centre of an organisation's mission. Without this, external consistency will be difficult.



The way forward

- Understanding current and future issues is crucial for companies and brands.
 - Analysing the likely impact on your category, your company and your brand?
 - Development of alternative strategies that address the issue?
 - Identifying and executing the optimum strategy.
- Through the Loop's unique approach takes both qualitative and quantitative information from a wide and rich variety of information sources to:
 - To understand how the issue fits in the widest possible context.
 - Define possible decision-making paths as well as ongoing issues that should be tracked.

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