



Slogans in Advertising

When well-used and oft-repeated, a slogan can become part of the fabric of a brand. But how do you build a strong connection between slogan and brand? It's not simply a matter of tacking a slogan onto an ad, because an ad with a slogan isn't necessarily more effective than an ad without one. A slogan that is merely an endline or sign-off to an ad is unlikely to make a contribution to the success of either the advertising or the brand; the creative must integrate the brand and slogan in such a way that the slogan can strengthen branding, or have some other effect.

Main

Slogans are a familiar feature of advertising; about two-thirds of all the ads in our global Link database include slogans. However, we observe a great deal of variety in the way slogans are used. The brand name may or may not be included. The slogan may be set to music. The slogan may be a new phrase or it may be one that is already familiar. Overall, among all TV ads that include slogans, 44 percent include the brand name, 36 percent include slogans that have been used before, and 7 percent include slogans set to music.

At an overall level, we see few real differences on key measures among these different groups of ads. (See the table below, where the differences we do observe are noted in bold.) Ads with slogans that are part of a jingle have slightly higher enjoyment as well as higher branding. Ads with slogans that have been used before also show slightly better branding.

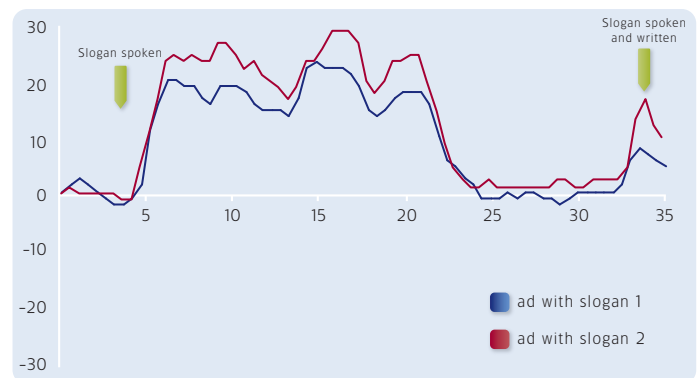
Key measures for ads with various types of slogans

	Ads with Slogans			
	Total (29,000+)	w/ Brand Name	Slogan Used Before	Set to Music
Percent of total ads w. slogans	100	44	36	7
Scores indexed on:				
Branding	100	101	102	103
Enjoyment	100	100	101	102
Involvement	100	100	101	100
Understanding	100	100	100	100
Key Message	100	100	100	101
Reason to Believe	101	101	101	101

What Slogans Can Do

While it is impossible to make generalizations about ads with slogans, it is clear that a slogan can make a difference. The chart below shows the interest levels for two ads that were tested in Germany. The ads were identical except for the slogans. At the points in the ads where the slogan was introduced, Slogan 2 generated more interest than Slogan 1. What was the difference between the two slogans? Slogan 2 was more closely related to the product and its key feature.

The Difference a Slogan Can Make

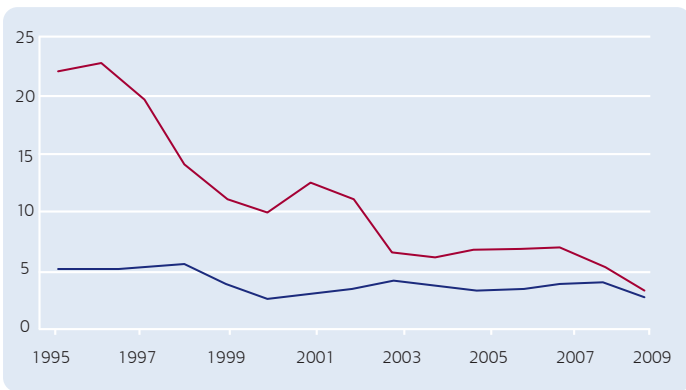


What makes a slogan work

As seen, we've identified two ways in which slogans seem to lead to stronger branding. The first is when a slogan is part of a jingle. Gillette's jingle "*Gillette, the best a man can get*" is a good example.

However, of all the ads we have tested that contain slogans, only 7 percent put them to music. We have seen this percentage decline steadily in recent years, especially in the United States (see below).

Percent of ads with jingle or slogan in music



* Data based on ads with slogans

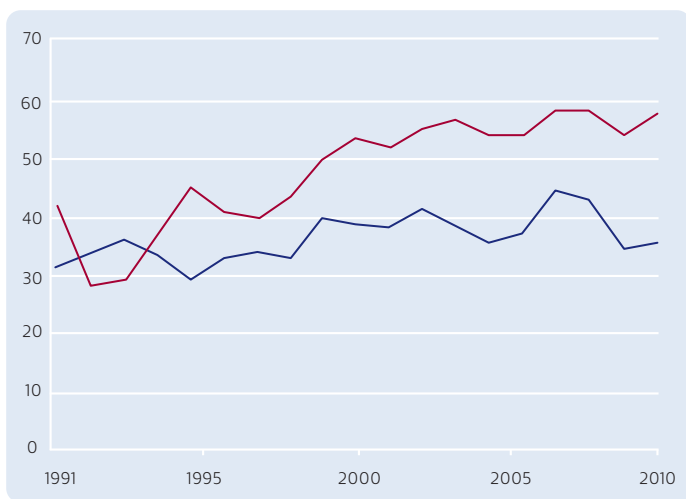
■ UK
■ US

The second factor that seems to allow a slogan to lead to better branding is familiarity – that is, the slogan has been used before. Slogans such as L’Oreal’s “Because I’m worth it” have developed as strong established branding devices over time.

Once a slogan catches on, it can have a long shelf life. Peugeot’s “The drive of your life” ran for a total of 13 years. In India, Kellogg’s Cornflakes makes heavy use of the slogan “Iron Kahoge To Dimmag Chalega Nahi Daudega” (“your brain will run not walk”), which enhances the ad’s message “Eating more iron will help your memory.”

Among ads we’ve tested in the United States, we have seen a steady increase in the reuse of existing slogans.

Percent of ads using slogan that has been used before*



* Based on ads with slogans

■ UK
■ US

The memorability of slogans

When we take an across-the-board look at the recall of slogans, we see that, in general, they are not well remembered. In the United States, across over 2000 ads with slogans, the median percentage correctly recalling the slogan is 11%. In the UK, across 400 ads, the median is 8%.

What makes slogans memorable?

From looking at some characteristics of the most – and least-remembered slogans (see the table below) we can make some inferences about what makes slogans memorable.

Slogans are most likely to be remembered when they are included in a jingle. There is also evidence to suggest that slogans that have been used before and that are repeated within ads are better remembered. These findings reinforce the earlier findings on branding. (It is also worth noting that the overall length of the slogan wording seems to make little difference to recall.)

Characteristics of the best – and worst – remembered slogans

	% Remember a Slogan			
	UK Top 10%	UK Bottom 10%	US Top 10%	US Bottom 10%
Slogan used before	56	33	66	34
Brand Name part of slogan	45	49	37	29
Slogan spoken	67	77	67	76
Slogan written	82	76	81	78
Slogan sung	8	1	20	3
Jingle/slogan in music	13	1	25	5
*# of slogan exposures: 1	72	72	72	56
*# of slogan exposures: 4+	6	1	8	1
Base: *# of ads	(162)	(180)	(480)	(478)

*# of slogan exposures = how many times the slogan was said, sung and written within the ad

Examples of memorable slogans

The best-remembered slogans fall into a number of categories.

A simple slogan can be effective if it is **relevant** and **meaningful**. In Slovakia, the people from the Šariš region are renowned for their warmth, friendliness, and sense of humor. So the beer brand Šariš has succeeded with a slogan that communicates this regional pride: “Šariš Srdcom vychodniar” (“Šariš, heart of Easterners”). In Hungary, Kinder Chocolate’s simple yet assertive slogan “A csokoládé extra adag tejjel” (“The chocolate with an extra dose of milk”) was also very well recalled.



A slogan that acts as a resolution and makes **sense of the whole** ad can also be memorable. For example, in the uniquely styled Guinness campaign, the mysterious narrative of each ad is finally clarified by the slogan “*Good things come to those who wait.*” In the Felty campaign for Anchor butter, the slogan “*Anchor, the free range butter company*” serves the same purpose. And the slogan “*Kinder Maxi King – Tyèinka s maxi chuti*” (“*Kinder Maxi King – Bar with maxi taste*”) not only resolves the story of the ad (in which a rapper-gangster eats a Kinder Maxi King bar at a party where everything is “maxi”) but also communicates a message for the Kinder brand in the Czech Republic.

Catchy slogans that use rhyme or alliteration to connect the phrase to the brand are also well remembered. Examples include “*Lick the lid of life*” for Muller yogurt in the UK and “*Sulit sa Pito Prito*”, a rhyming slogan that summarizes the offer for Golden Fiesta Cooking Oil in the Philippines (“*A cooking oil that can be used seven times over*”).

Incorporating the brand name in a catchy way can also prove effective. Two examples from the UK are PC World’s “*Where in the world? PC World*” and “*Don’t search. Just YELL.com.*”

Creative slogans that evoke some memorable image or stimulate a new way of thinking about a brand also have staying power with viewers. The Brazilian ad for Johnson’s Pele dos Sonhos, “*Boa Noite para seu Sono, Bom dia para sua Pele*” (“*Good night for your sleep, good morning for your skin*”) cleverly communicates the key message, which is that a relaxing fragrance had been added to the moisturising product to help with sleep. Milky Bar’s “Ungrow up” in the UK also proved to resonate with viewers.

Distinctiveness can also make a slogan memorable. In Bulgaria, Fanta lent distinctiveness to its slogan “*Pij Fanta – budj Bamboocha*” (“*Drink Fanta – be Bamboocha*”) through the use of the made-up word “Bamboocha,” which suggested parties, fun, and happiness.

Slogan Use Across Touchpoints

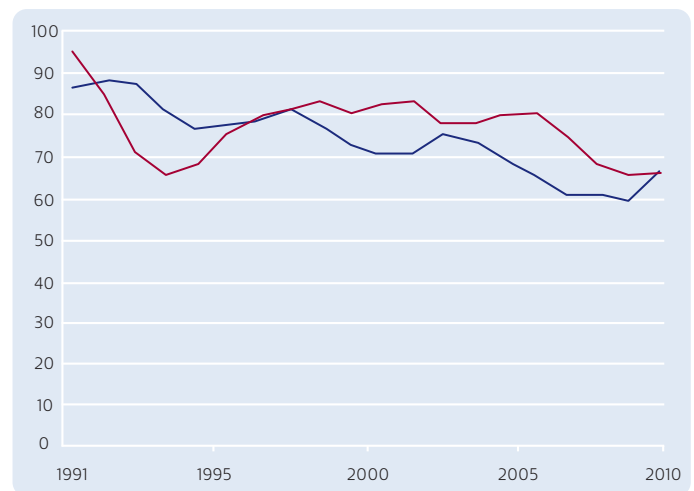
Most of the effective slogans quoted in this Knowledge Point were used across most, if not all, of a brand’s touchpoints. Repetition across different media seems to help establish slogans in consumers’ minds. Slogans can also support a brand by being used on packaging or at the point of purchase. When used on the pack or the store shelf, a slogan can bring key communication to the shopper’s mind during the decision process.

Decline in slogan usage

We have been monitoring the use of slogans in advertising for over 20 years. Over that time period, we have observed a decline in the incidence of slogan use in both the United States and the UK (the countries for which our data goes back the furthest).

However, as this Knowledge Point highlights, the right slogan can be a major contributor to brand success.

Percent of ads containing slogans



■ UK
■ US

Knowledge Points are drawn from the Millward Brown Knowledge Bank, consisting of our databases of 132,000 brand reports and 70,000 ads, as well as 1,400 case studies, 900 conference papers and magazine articles, and 350 learnings documents.

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