

If it ain't broke...

Thomas Cook's readoption of its 'Don't just book it' phrase proves the value of a classic tagline

W e all know by now what the Redknapps do on their holidays. First they dream about it, then they plan it. Once they are on it, she rides horses while he plays golf with his shirt off.

Forget the naysayers who point out that the couple is unlikely to actually use Thomas Cook. There is a difference between a target market and aspirational advertising, and this campaign knows it. Great advertising.

It's what happens at the end of this 60-second spot that really fascinates me, though. As Jamie and Louise cuddle up in economy and head home, they review their wonderful vacation and exclaim: 'Don't just book it, Thomas Cook it.'

One of the most famous slogans of the 80s is back, having been dumped in 1993 by a marketing director keen to move on to better, more contemporary brand messages. Thomas Cook has done a marketing 180.

It isn't the only brand going back to the future when it comes to slogans. A year ago, Heinz resurrected Beanz Meanz Heinz, despite having culled the slogan in 1993 when its ad agency, BMP DDB, came up with a new line: 'Heinz Buildz Britz'. It was a similar story for Mars, which stopped using 'A Mars a day helps you work, rest and play' in 1995, despite the fact that it had continually topped the polls as one of Britain's favourite slogans since its invention in 1959. After a series of

anaemic and unsuccessful replacements, including the particularly crap 'Pleasure you can't measure', the brand reverted to its original slogan in 2008.

Many modern marketers underestimate just how difficult it is to break through the clutter to build a slogan that resonates with the target market. 'A Mars a day' and 'Thomas Cook it' were built in a bygone era of mass-media, when Britain had only two commercial TV stations and people bought and read newspapers on a daily basis.

We called this era of marketing planning the '20th century', and it proved to be a fertile period for the production and establishment of great slogans. How fertile becomes apparent to brands who commission research on their current slogan only to discover, to their horror, that an ancient one that has not been used for more than a

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decade is beating the pants off their current effort and its £5m media budget. Thomas Cook, for example, learned in 2008 that despite a 15-year absence, 60% of consumers could still recall its original slogan.

The other explanation for why old slogans work best is more contentious. Marketers back then were better at it than you. They used simpler, more creative methods. Today's legion of brand managers and creative directors are so confused by strategic positioning and social media they have forgotten the fundamental art of the slogan.

When Maurice Drake came up with Beanz Meanz Heinz in 1967, he did it the old-fashioned way – he went to the pub, had a couple of pints, and, at some point, the slogan came to him. According to Drake, the new generation is not in the same league. 'Nowadays,' he says, 'it seems as long as you can drive a car round a bend in the rain, you can make it in the ad business.'

So take a long, hard look at your current slogan. If it isn't working, you have three options. One: raid the archives and go back to the future. Two: hunt down one of the old-school creatives like Maurice Drake and bring him out of retirement. Or three: get out of your office and down the pub. Ten pints later, who knows what you might come up with?

Mark Ritson, PPA columnist of the year (business media), is an associate professor of marketing and consultant to some of the world's biggest brands

30 seconds on... brands that should go back to their original slogans

■ **The Olympics** Sydney 2000 was promoted with 'Share the spirit'. The Beijing Games went even more generic with 'One world, one dream'. The Vancouver Winter Olympics is about to kick off 'With glowing hearts'. Let's get back to the original Olympic motto: 'Citius, altius, fortius' – 'Faster, higher, stronger'. Hardcore stuff.



Thomas Cook ad combines aspirational images and old slogan

■ **Guinness** Please, Diageo, stop trying to improve the unimprovable. Your most recent slogan, 'Bring it to life', sounds like you're promoting yoghurt. Let's get back to 'Guinness is good for you', because recent medical research has shown that a pint of the black stuff a day may work as well as aspirin to prevent blood clots.

■ **Hilton** You are the world's most prestigious hotel chain. So why waste time with the thoroughly underwhelming 'Travel should take you places'? Get back to 'Take me to the Hilton'. Your own research in 2004 confirmed that this ancient tagline outperformed 10 other alternatives. Go on, take me to it.