

# VIEW FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

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## **"60 Minutes" and a Brilliant Marketing Minute**

*How Donny Deutsch Made Advertising Relevant Again--For a Moment*

A few weeks ago, "60 Minutes" ran a segment that focused on network TV and advertising's perpetual fixation with youthful target audiences. They interviewed Donny Deutsch and also showed some clips from the Mitsubishi campaign.

When the segment was over and they went to commercial, guess what the first spot in the break was? Yup —a Mitsubishi spot. Brilliant move, Donny.

This media buy might have been a coincidence, but I'm willing to bet it was intentional.

Seems to me the audience of "60 Minutes" doesn't reflect Mitsubishi's target demographics on an ordinary Sunday. In this case, however, the fit was perfect, and the subject matter of the story put me in the right frame of mind to see the commercial moments later.

I use this example because the impression I get is not that Deutsch has savvy media buyers (though they might be) or that Donny Deutsch is a whiz at his own PR (though we all know he is), but that his agency overall is a more creative and effective agency in terms of what they do for their clients.

So much talk focuses on why PR is more effective than advertising these days, but ad agencies don't have to become irrelevant. Perhaps we can learn from Deutsch's example—an example of why he's an effective brand steward for Mitsubishi.

The fundamental premise of advertising is built on paid airtime or space—agencies and clients control what the message is, who sees the message and when they see the message.

Do ad agencies utilize the benefits implied in that premise? Hell no. We have so much control over a brand's communications, yet most advertising is still dull, irrelevant, and in ever higher quantities that numb the senses.

Can one person, or one creative team, one AE, fix this problem one ad at a time? Sure.

While we determine how brands should fit into a consumers' lifestyle, we should also determine how a brand's advertising more closely matches the media environment.

As a creative person, I have always made it a point to find out when and where an ad will appear before I begin concepting, because all information pertaining to an assignment, including media placement, is powerful. I keep all the information in mind so I create a more creative and effective ad.

If I know the ad is going in the sports section, I write an ad relevant to the people who read the sports section. If an ad's going to air primarily late at night, I write with insomniacs in mind.

I thought this logic could be easily applied at smaller agencies where it's easy for every department to work closely together, and small clients could appreciate the added value of strategic thinking that blends creative, media and PR. Unfortunately, in my experience, small agencies, in particular, seem ill-equipped to implement such a process.

Every assignment for a brand fits into The Big Picture. Every point of communication can further build a brand. Any client can benefit from integrated ideas (and in Mitsubishi's case, sharp thinking and good timing) that make budgets go farther.

But many agencies don't encourage their employees to embrace interdisciplinary thinking. Nor do agencies strongly advocate to their clients the benefits of that approach. In the haste to simply get work out the door, people fail to consider the big picture, big ideas go unrewarded, and our clients' money gets wasted.

Maybe that's why people are beginning to think advertising has decreasing relevance. Maybe that's why small ad agencies stay small. Maybe that's why Deutsch went from a small agency to national prominence in only a few years.

So here's to you, Donny. Your PR stunt, backed with paid advertising, worked on me. Just don't get a big head because I'm giving you props, okay?