CASE STUDY

Levi Strauss & Co.

Sue Swenson, a member of the research group at Foote, Cone & Belding/Honig, a San Francisco advertising agency, was reviewing four copy testing techniques, all of which cost about $10,000 per commercial (plus media costs where required):

1. Burke DAR (spots are purchased in three markets for the test ads)
2. Mapes and Ross
3. McCollum/Spielman
4. Tele-Research

A meeting was scheduled with the Levi Strauss account group for the next day to decide on which copy test to employ on two new Levi’s campaigns. The following week a similar meeting was scheduled involving a campaign for a new bar of soap for another client. In each case the task was to determine which testing approach would be used to help make the final selection of which commercials to use in the campaigns. Swenson knew that she would be expected to contribute to the discussion by pointing out the strengths and limitations of each test and to make her own recommendations.

Levi Strauss & Co. had grown from a firm serving the needs of miners in the Gold Rush era of the mid-1800s to a large, sophisticated clothing company. In 1996 it had sales of over $2 billion, drawn from an international and domestic operation. The domestic company, Levi Strauss USA, included six divisions: Jeanswear, Sportswear, Womenswear, Youthwear, Activewear, and Accessories. In 1996, Levi Strauss was among the 100 largest advertisers, with expenditures of $38.5 million, primarily on television.

Concerning the Levi’s campaigns, Swenson recognized that two very different campaigns were involved. The first was a corporate-image campaign. The overall objective was to build and maintain Levi’s brand image. The approach was to build around the concepts of “quality” and “heritage,” the most meaningful, believable, and universal aspects of the Levi’s corporate personality. Unlike competitors who claimed quality as a product feature, Levi’s 128-year-heritage advertisements had an important additional dimension. More specifically, the advertising involved the following strategy:

1. Heritage-quality: communicate to male and female consumers, ages 12 to 49, that Levi’s makes a wide variety of apparel products, all of which share in the company’s 128-year commitment to quality.
2. Variety-quality: communicate to male and female consumers, ages 12 to 49, that Levi’s makes a wide variety of quality apparel products for the entire family.

Figure IV-1 shows one of the commercials from the pool that was to be tested for the corporate campaign.

The second campaign was for Levi’s action suits. In 1996, the Sportswear division responsible for action suits spent approximately $6 million on network television commercials and co-op newspaper ads to introduce Actionwear slacks, which topped the sales of both leading brands of men’s slacks, Haggar and Farah, in that year. The primary segment was middle-aged males, who often suffer from middle-aged spread. Actionwear slacks, a blend of polyester and other fabrics with a stretchable waistline, were presented as a solution to the problem. The advertising objectives for the new campaign were guided by the following:

Focus: Levi’s action garments are comfortable dress clothes.
Benefits: Primary—comfortable; secondary—attractive, good-looking, well made, long-wearing.
Reasons why:
1. Levi’s Action slacks are comfortable because they have a hidden stretch waistband and expandable shell fabric.
2. Levi’s Action suit jacket is comfortable because it has hidden stretch panels that let you move freely without binding.
3. The Levi’s name implies quality, well-made clothes.

Brand character: Levi’s Action clothing is sensible, good-value menswear manufactured by Levi Strauss & Co., a company dedicated to quality.

Figure IV-2 shows a commercial from the pool for the Levi Action campaign.
Swenson also knew that previous Levi’s commercials had proved exceptionally memorable and effective, owing to their distinctive creative approach. In part, their appeal lies in their ability to challenge the viewer’s imagination. The advertising assumes that viewers are thoughtful and appreciate advertising that respects their judgments.

In preparing for the next day’s meeting with the Levi account group, she decided to review carefully the four copy testing services. The immediate problem

**Figure IV-1**  A corporate commercial. (Courtesy Levi Strauss & Co., San Francisco, CA.)
was to decide which of the services to recommend for testing commercials from the two Levi’s campaigns. She knew that similar issues would be raised in discussions with another of the agency’s clients the following week concerning a national campaign for a bar-soap line extension. Positioning for the bar-soap essentially involved a dual cleanliness–fragrance theme. A demonstration commercial focused on these two copy points.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. What copy testing service or services should Sue Swenson recommend for testing the two Levi Strauss commercials?
2. What service or services should she recommend for testing the bar-soap commercial?

**TV. 30 Sec.**

**Title: “Action Suit/Bus”**

ANNCR: If a man’s suit jacket fits like a straight jacket . . .
WIFE: Hold on, Joe!
JOE: I can’t raise my arms.

ANNCR: If his pants fit their worst around his waist,
WIFE: Sit down.
JOE: I can’t—these pants are too tight.

ANNCR: Then he needs Levi’s* Action Suit . . . perhaps the most comfortable suit a man can wear.

ANNCR: The waistband stretches to give more room when you need it.

JOE: Comfortable.
ANNCR: The jacket lets you move your arms without binding.

JOE: I can sit.
OLD LADY: Hmmmmmmph!

ANNCR: Levi’s Action Suit from Levi’s Sportswear.

JOE: I can stand, too.

Figure IV-2  An action suit commercial. (Courtesy Levi Strauss & Co., San Francisco, CA.)
PRACTICAL EXERCISES

Q1. You have the results of the market research conducted by the Cues Company. The management wants you to present the results at the next board meeting. Prepare a format for a written and oral presentation and list the essential items that need to be included in it.

Q2. Spring Fresh is a leader in the mouthwash industry, but lately competitors have been eating into its market share. The management believes that introducing a new flavor and in turn a new product can help Spring Fresh regain its lost market share and hence put it back in a comfortable position. As a consultant for Spring Fresh conduct a need/concept identification study in your area to identify a new version of Spring Fresh that is attractive and viable.

Q3. Create a database of the students in your college/classroom. Based on this database identify the hobbies, interests, and the demographics of each student. Using this information create a personalized direct mail ad-campaign for the upcoming Girl Scout’s fund raiser.

Q4. Jumpin Jucy is a local brand of soft drinks and is immensely popular in your school. Conduct a suitable study to measure the brand equity of Jumpin Jucy among the students.