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# Intel's New Slogan Shifts Its Focus to the Present

By STUART ELLIOTT

THE “sponsors of tomorrow” have determined that consumers are more interested in the present than the future.

The Intel Corporation, which has been using “Sponsors of tomorrow” as its marketing theme since May 2009, is replacing the phrase with a less ethereal entreaty, “Look inside.” The new theme purposely echoes the “Intel inside” cooperative advertising program that Intel has been running since 1991 with companies like Dell, which buy Intel’s chips; the idea is for each theme to reinforce the persuasive effect of the other.

“‘Sponsors of tomorrow’ didn’t leverage our heritage as much as ‘Look inside’ does,” said Deborah Conrad, vice president and chief marketing officer at Intel in Santa Clara, Calif. “‘Look inside’ is a call to action, and ‘Intel inside’ says, ‘Hey, here I am.’”

The new theme also “serves all our new businesses and existing businesses,” she added, whereas “Sponsors of tomorrow” was perceived, not surprisingly, as less relevant to Intel’s current products.

Ms. Conrad acknowledged that “Sponsors of tomorrow” had “reached its limits” in engaging with consumers, although it remained popular internally at Intel.

Recently, “it didn’t do all it needed to do,” she said.

In addition to changing ad themes, Intel is changing how it assigns creative tasks to agencies. After experimenting the last two years with a “jump ball” approach — deciding case by case which of its roster agencies would create each campaign — Intel is reverting to the so-called agency of record model, designating Venables Bell & Partners in San Francisco as its lead creative agency.

“It was whoever had the best brief got the work,” Ms. Conrad said. “When you have a lot of different agencies taking the lead on a lot of different projects, it gets unruly and the work can suffer.”

Designating Venables Bell as the lead creative agency “is part of a bigger effort to get supercrisp, supersimple, about who we are and what our brand means,” she added. “Simplicity is the order of the day now.”

Venables Bell is, of course, pleased with Intel’s decision.

“It’s always a little tricky competing for every project you’re trying to win,” said Will McGinness, executive creative director at Venables Bell. “This allows us to focus on the brand and think more strategically.”

To that end, “Look inside” is a more strategic way to express the Intel brand promise of innovation, Mr. McGinness said, and will capitalize on “the tremendous equity in the word ‘inside.’ ”

“If you ask consumers what Intel does, what a processor does, they can identify it’s really important, equating it to the heart or brain of a computer,” he added, “which has a great emotional appeal.”

In fact, the first commercial to use the “Look inside” theme tugs at the heartstrings with a paean to the potential of young women. The spot promotes Intel’s partnership with 10x10, an initiative to educate girls around the world, for “Girl Rising,” a documentary that CNN and CNN International will telecast on June 16.

“A girl is not defined by what her society sees,” the commercial declares. “A girl is defined by what she sees inside herself.” Intel, the spot concludes, “is fiercely committed to empowering girls everywhere through education.”

The jettisoning of “Sponsors of tomorrow” for “Look inside” is indicative of the elaborate efforts marketers make to ensure that their ad themes resonate with target audiences. A theme deemed memorable and effective can last for decades, as lines like “Just do it” (Nike), “Good to the last drop” (Maxwell House) and “We try harder” (Avis) attest.

Then, there are lines like “Sponsors of tomorrow.”

“It sounds like a parody,” said Allen Adamson, managing director of the New York office of Landor Associates, a brand and corporate identity consultancy that is part of the Young & Rubicam Brands division of WPP.

“It probably sounded great in the conference room” when it was first proposed, Mr. Adamson said, laughing. “But it’s a big promise, almost too big for most brands.”

That said, Mr. Adamson acknowledged that developing a great brand theme was difficult. “Too aspirational, and it’s not believable,” he said, “and if it’s too bold, it tends to be forgettable and not ‘sticky.’ ”

“One of the biggest challenges is getting something that connects back to your brand,” Mr. Adamson said. That explains the popularity of a strategy known as nameonics, in a hat-tip to mnemonics. Such themes incorporate the brand’s name to jog consumer memories, as in “Zestfully clean” (Zest soap), “It’s time for a Maacover” (Maaco) and “Have you found your Balance?” (Balance Bar).

Although many on Madison Avenue mock nameonics as corny, it has its fans.

“Tag lines are not supposed to be cute,” said Gary M. Stibel, chief executive at the New England Consulting Group in Norwalk, Conn. “They’re supposed to sell, by making it easier for a buyer to remember what it is they’re supposed to buy.”

Before a reporter told Mr. Stibel that Intel was abandoning “Sponsors of tomorrow” for “Look inside,” he offered that one of “two things that Intel has going for it” is the company’s association with the word “inside.”

The other advantage, he said, is an aural branding device, the chime sound that denotes Intel, which will continue in the new campaign.

“The only thing I would have liked better than ‘Look inside’ is ‘Listen inside,’ ” Mr. Stibel said.

Listening or looking, consumers will be hearing and seeing a lot of “Look inside.” Intel spent more than \$53.8 million to advertise in major media last year, according to the Kantar Media unit of WPP.

*This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:*

**Correction: June 4, 2013**

*An earlier version of this column misstated the date that “Girl Rising” will be telecast by CNN and CNN International. It is Sunday, June 16, not this coming Sunday.*